



# Cheam Woodturners Association

Associated with the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain

Twinned with Central Oklahoma Woodturners Association

Aug 2016

## It's Club Night on August 17th

**Derek Dowle reports on the evening's demonstration by Mark Baker.**  
**70% of the membership attended this evening's demonstration and to meet our COWA guests.**

### **Making a Calabash with Mark Baker**

Setting the scene Mark explained the origins of the piece that he was about to turn. A calabash is a gourd from the calabash tree. These fruit have hard skins and once the flesh is eaten and the skin allowed to dry the resulting vessels were used by nomadic peoples for containing foods and liquids. A calabash has a semi-spherical base which needs to be set down on a soft surface to prevent it toppling; e.g. sand. With modern hard surfaces a turned calabash would need to sit on a ring to keep it upright.

Mark was to make the calabash from a piece of London Plane Burr. He remarked that some cracks had developed in the blank and this fact was to influence how he decided to tackle the piece. Due to the configuration of the cracks he decided that the safest route to pursue was to hollow into the end grain as opposed to the side grain.

The block of wood was set between head and tail stock utilising a revolving ring centre to spread the imposed loads. The initial task was to cut across what was to become the base of the calabash and then to ascertain a little further the extent of the cracks. To do this Mark used a swept back bowl gouge. This tool was used to form a spigot on the foot and also to create the outer shape of the calabash. The shape was later refined using scrapers. A roughing gouge was not used initially to create a cylindrical shape.



The cracks in the blank were more extensive than Mark would have liked. The CA glue first aid kit came into action, with several applications of glue plus accelerant being applied. Mark noted that if he were in his own workshop and with the benefit of time an epoxy resin would be an alternative way of reinforcing the cracks. The CA glue turns white which detracts from the wood. A remedy would be to use a Dremel to remove the surface of the hardened CA glue and replace it with a coloured epoxy resin.

Mark reminded us that when spindle turning it is best to work from high to low but noted that sometimes this rule does not always apply when turning burr.

The outside of the calabash was now ready to decorate and Mark intended to emulate a simple ancient design of shallow grooves around the object. To create the design a male thread cutting tool was used, starting from near to the spigot and working up the piece, but leaving a clear band towards the top. The grooves were left with micro-flats at their tops. If this area was to be sanded the effect would be destroyed. A bronze brush was recommended for cleaning out the grooves.



The blank was then reversed in the lathe and the base spigot secured in the chuck. A spigot was then turned at the other end. Mark noted that for safety the larger the piece being worked then the greater the diameter of the spigot. As the calabash was to have a lid the top section of the blank was parted away and set to one side for later.

**Making a Calabash with Mark Baker continued:-**

Before hollowing out the blank, as a precaution due to the cracks, Mark wrapped the blank with tape. Cling film or shrink wrap were alternative solutions which could have been used.

Mark noted that consideration has to be given to the diameter of the opening. The smaller the opening the more challenging the hollowing becomes! He then proceeded with hollowing out the blank discussing and utilising combinations of gouges and scrapers on the way, each having a particular use. Mark stressed the importance of the turner focusing on the position of the cutting edge of the tool, maintaining the bevel on the wood. When using the swept back bowl gouge the bevel should be positioned at 3 o'clock, working from the outside towards the centre. If at any point the tool begins to judder, then consider working in that area from the centre outwards. The important thing is to be aware of the depth to which the vessel is being hollowed.



With the hollowing complete attention was then given to removing the spigot from the base of the calabash. Initially, from a piece of spare wood, a friction chuck was turned to support the open/top end of the vessel. The bottom was supported by the revolving centre in the tail stock. The spigot was then turned from the base leaving a small stub of wood. To complete the groove decoration, the thread cutter was used to continue to cut the grooves on the underside of the calabash. To remove the stub Mark used a skew chisel working from the underside of the piece. The secret was not to cut right through the stub. The final removal of the stub was done off the lathe with a carving chisel.

Mark then turned the lid ensuring that it fitted snugly but not too tight onto the base, allowing for the shape to change a smidgen. With the lid on the calabash the final task was to blend the shape of the lid and base together. The vessel is put back in the lathe with the lid against the friction chuck separated by a paper towel and the base by the revolving centre. To protect the base from the point of the revolving centre Mark suggested using a beer bottle cap with a wad of paper tissue. The final shaping of the base and lid could then take place.

Time and the 'crack' problems encountered during the evening meant that finishes were not applied to the completed piece. During questions; however, Mark suggested that if the calabash was to be 'food safe' then liquid paraffin could be used. Tung oil is also food safe. If the vessel needed to be watertight then apply 3 to 4 brush coats of West System Epoxy Resins.

Mark explained and demonstrated the many tool options that can be used in hollowing vessels but of equal interest was the way to overcome structural problems in a blank which become evident when turning.



## Pleased to meet you!

Cheam Woodturners is known as a welcoming and friendly club and this was confirmed when on July 13<sup>th</sup> we welcomed 2 of our members from across the pond to a specially re-arranged meeting to co-incide with their visit to London.

Michael & Carol Reggio, members of Central Oklahoma Woodturners our twinned club in the USA, joined us for the evening. Both were instrumental in arranging for the twinning/sister club arrangements between the 2 clubs, together with all the members of the Cheam 2013 committee.

Although some of our members have visited the US and met several COWA members, this is the first time we have received a visit from members of COWA. Whilst we know a lot of the COWA members from photos in the regularly exchanged Newsletters, it is always good to be able to say "Pleased to meet you" to them in person.

During set-up time, Michael and Carol circulated and met as many members as they could and also again after Mark Baker had concluded his demo.

Our demonstrator on the evening was Mark Baker, Editor of *Woodturning magazine*, who had also met Michael Reggio in Phoenix in 2014, so was aware of our relationship with COWA from the beginning.

At about half-time, our Chairman thanked the Reggios for coming to see us and to present them with some gifts on behalf of Cheam. Individual turning smocks and a supply of new timbers from Dalmann Timber were presented. COWA members had made items for Cheam and pictures of these can be seen in the July newsletter.

Michael was then asked to make a short speech, so "According to Michael H Reggio", COWA feel that the sister club arrangement had brought benefits to both clubs and hoped that the range of shared activities would increase. COWA always make a point of emphasising the relationship between them and COWA wherever possible. Michael also suggested that we might consider participating in the Beads of Courage and Tops for Tots initiatives that the AAW run in the US. Finally he thanked everyone for the warm welcome given to him and to Carol during the evening.

Our table theme for the evening had been chosen by the Reggios as "twinning, family, together" and our members did us proud with a wide range of items on this theme. The piece chosen as best representing the theme was Jeff Cordery's two "Emerging Bowls".



Michael & Carol have asked me to thank you for your warm welcome, hospitality and the friendship shown to them and have extended an open Invitation to all to attend a COWA meeting if you find yourself across the pond.

Remember, we are all members of both clubs, albeit it a few miles apart, but I can assure you that you will have a lot of people saying to you, "Pleased to meet you" should you venture across the pond.

August 2016

Please check our Facebook page for more photos of the club evening.



Michael and Carol Reggio arrive at Cheam.



Chairman Derek Dowle welcoming and presenting gifts to our guests.

Thank you to David Buskell for providing this article.

## Apple Wood Available at the August Meeting

David Buskell acquired some apple wood from the Rangers at Ashted Common some months ago. The wood has dried out considerably and is ready to turn but David is not able to use all of it so he is offering the surplus apple wood to members at the August meeting.

The Rangers at Ashted Common are keen to demonstrate how the wood has been recycled so the only condition if you take some wood is to provide John Fenn with a photo of the item you have turned with any comments if appropriate to pass on to the Rangers. Please email your photo to [johnfenn27@gmail.com](mailto:johnfenn27@gmail.com). In addition, if one or two of you felt able to give a turned item to the Rangers I know this would be very much appreciated and the items would be displayed in their office - please liaise with John Fenn on this.

# On the July show table

## Best on show

Jeff Cordery's two "emerging bowls" were chosen as the best representing the theme chosen by the Reggio's for this month. The egg cup with egg below by Derek Dowle was chosen by our own CWA secret shopper.



A nut cracker by Richard Crook in American Blackwood and finished with Tung Oil



A spalted offset ash bowl and piece of fruit by Brian Ash

Derek Dowle produced this beech egg in a laburnum egg cup.

Also this Oak bottle shape with a large crack which was filled with Araldite and Schmincke bronze powder.



Tony Bellingham with a selection of wood and Acrylic pens

1.



Gordon Cookson presented:

1. A piece called space Odyssey made from Horse Chestnut.
2. Heart shaped Brazilian tulipwood bowl.
3. An Oak clam after David Nash.

2.



3.



Twin mahogany bowls finished in oil by Max Hicks.

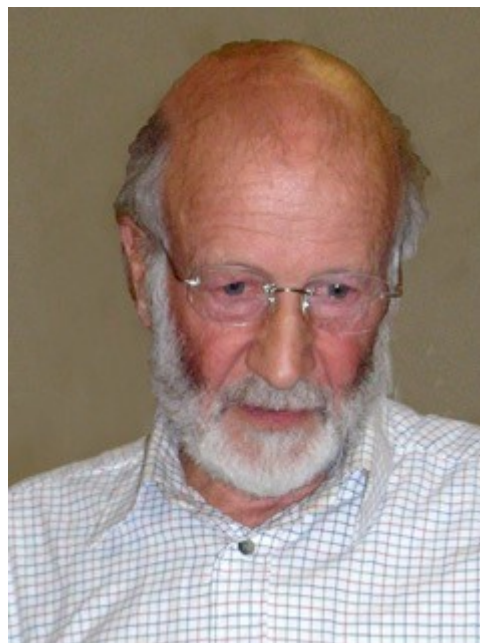
The **Belmont Festival** is a biennial event at which funds are raised in aid of The Royal Marsden Hospital. It was held on Sunday 3rd July 2016 in the grounds of St John's Church and surrounding streets in Belmont Village.

Cheam Woodturners Association attended the festival providing a display and demonstrations, thank you to Brian Ash, Jeff Cordery, David Buskell, Chris Taylor and Derek Dowle for giving up a long day and making this such a success.

Due to our attendance we now have two more new members.

This year's Belmont Festival was a great success with the largest attendance ever. We were very lucky (again) with the weather which was gloriously sunny all afternoon. It is estimated over 7,000 people attended the event to enjoy the many stalls and attractions that were on offer. The Festival is gaining a great reputation as a popular event and has no difficulty filling their pitches.

Cheam Woodturners donated £120 towards the Royal Marsden Hospital.



Congratulations to one of our members, Peter Westermann for his article:

**'Turning small natural edge bowls'**

in the world's leading magazine for woodturners, *Woodturning* August Issue No 295. Peter offers four design options for natural edge bowls.

### 2016 Programme

**August 17th** :- Club Night Teaching Turning

**September 21st**:- Chris Grace

**October 19th** :- Mark Hancock

**November 16th**:- John Plater.

**December 21st** :- Club Social Evening and  
Frank Clarke competition.

Buyers beware by Chris Taylor.

I recently purchased a piece of spalted Beech from a reputable supplier, only to find a couple of weeks later that numerous holes appeared. It was infested with beetles. Luckily it was in a plastic carrier bag and placed on the garage floor on its own, so there was no chance of other wood being infected. I was very disappointed to find that it had been a waste of money. Should suppliers have treated the timber before selling it or are we all potential victims when purchasing timber?

**Deadline for the  
Sept issue of the  
e-newsletter**

**Aug 31st**

**If you have any article or  
information you would like  
included in the e-news.**

**Contact: Chris Taylor**

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