

BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices #050: Sister Guild or Twinning Heading: Chapter Outreach



There are two resources:

1. Michael Reggio mreggio@mcloudteleco.com (Central OK chapter)
2. David Buskell davidbuskell@yahoo.com David will have the connections with chapters in Europe to connect the US chapters.

My club is Cheam Woodturners Association and we're about 10 mile or so south-west of Central London. We've been around for a long while and have always prided ourselves on being a warm and friendly club. We have had visitors from USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, Italy and South Africa - that I know of! Have a look at us at www.cheamturners.co.uk

Michael is President of Central Oklahoma Woodturners (COWA), whom I guess you know. I will leave it up to Michael to add in information about his Chapter.

Our connection with COWA came about through an introduction from a mutual friend - Jimmy Clewes. Jimmy had demonstrated at COWA and then a month or so later, was here in the UK and did his first UK club demo with us. He had been to Cheam several times before he went across the pond. I guess Jimmy, knowing both clubs/chapters well, thought there might be some synergy and put Michael and I in touch.

Both our respective Boards had to consider how to move matters forward and lots of ideas and plans went back and forth across the water. In between all this, Michael and I had a long chat on the telephone to discuss the whole issue.

We agreed that there was a synergy and following approval by our respective Boards, entered into a twinning/sister club arrangement as from January 1st, 2014. We have currently put in place some initial contacts such as ensuring each other are mentioned on our respective websites. We also exchange newsletters and where, for example, a club member has a query, this is also routed to either Cheam or COWA to see if they can assist. We also exchange DVD's of club demonstrations when we can.

There are other activities planned and yet to be put in place but as the Cheam/COWA arrangement was the first of its kind, we're kinda feeling our way along! Whilst twinning of towns and cities is a relatively old (1950's) phenomenon, twinning woodturning clubs is not.

OK, that's all the background to Cheam and Central Oklahoma, which I hope helps you.

My summary for any club/chapter thinking of doing the same, would be:

1. Assess how your chapter is seen by the outside world
2. Do you regularly get overseas visitors?
3. What do you want from a sister club arrangement?
4. Investigate possible prospective sister clubs in your chosen territory (It helps if you both have a mutual contact as we did)

5. Make contact and see if there's any synergy
6. If there is, make a formal agreement between your chapter and the overseas club
7. Continue to work on the relationship over time

These are just my thoughts based on what Michael and I did to get our arrangement off the ground.

I'm happy to point you in the right direction as far as any chapters in Europe are concerned if you decide to proceed.

Submitted by

David Buskell, Sept 2014