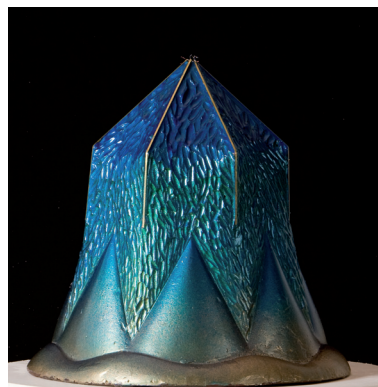


The Discovery of the Heart Bell ~ the Work of Frank Chester

by Tom Raines



The Saturn Bell

The building of the first Goetheanum, at Dornach in Switzerland, with its two interlocking cupolas, one greater, one smaller, commenced in 1913. Wood was used extensively in its construction. In the great cupola, working to Rudolf Steiner's artistic design and direction, seven, great, symmetrical pillars were erected, freestanding, whose capitals and plinths were carved in images of evolving cosmic metamorphosis. The pillars themselves were seven-sided constructions and each pillar stood for a part of the evolution of the Earth; past, present and future. Standing in a sweeping curve from left to right, these pillars carried the names of the planets as we know them and ordered, as are the days of the week from Saturday to Friday, for this is where the week day names originally came from: Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter and Venus. But another way to experience these pillars with their carved motifs was from Steiner's cosmic world-view which showed that the Earth has passed through its own 'incarnations' as Old Saturn, Old Sun and old Moon. In its present stage of evolution, two planetary conditions relate to its incarnation as the Earth – Mars and Mercury. Steiner explained that this was because the martian forces in the blood was gradually to be transformed into a peaceful Mercury condition due to the coming of Christ into the affairs of humanity and the Earth some 2,000 years ago. Then would follow further incarnations of the Earth into a condition called future Jupiter and then, Venus.

The carvings on the capitals were renderings of what a 'seer' hears, when he allows the streaming 'spiritual music' to work on his shaping hand. Thus these motifs are as 'frozen music' held in a plastic form. Steiner was deeply artistic; when working on the interior of the First Goetheanum he taught himself and then others a new form of carving the wood, using the carving tool in such a way that each cut would be done with a slight rotation thus making a concave followed by a convex surface, producing a double-curvated surface that is everywhere evident in living nature. Of the carved capitals Steiner was certain that if one would penetrate livingly into their every line and curve, then everything in these forms can awaken dormant forces of the soul.

This First Goetheanum was destroyed by fire on New Year's Eve 1922/23 and a second one built, this time of concrete. Here, in 1998, Frank Chester made a visit and

saw the models for the capitals and was completely taken, particularly by the Saturn capital and felt inwardly moved to try and create a seven-sided sculpture. Two years later he had discovered a unique geometric form, a seven-sided shape with equal surface areas that he named



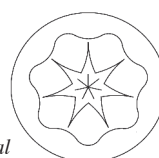
The Venus Bell

the chestahedron (fig. left). In a previous article in *New View* (Summer 2010) I shared how Frank then went on to discover that the geometry of this form underpins the formation of the human heart. An artist and sculptor himself Frank had had no real exposure to geometry, but today he is a profoundly capable geometrician after more than a decade of intense

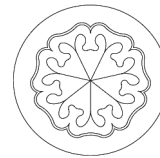


research and exploration.

He first learned about the geometric forms called the Platonic solids from Patricia Dixon at Rudolf Steiner College in California and shortly afterwards took part in a form-drawing class in that same college led by a visiting English woman, Roswitha Spence. She used drawings by Steiner of the seals of the seven planets. These seals were drawn in such a way that each seal



Saturn Seal



Venus Seal

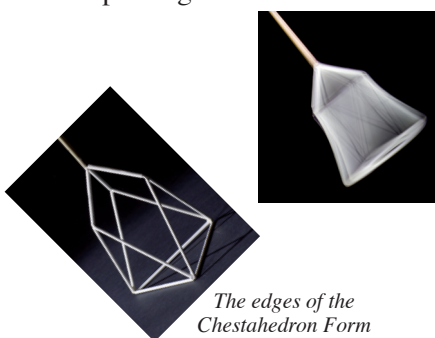
was a metamorphosis in form of the preceding seal. Over time Frank found himself more and more trying to understand these seals, particularly the Saturn and Venus ones. These are not any ordinary geometric designs and do not yield easily to being understood. And Frank was to take a very interesting journey before they began to open up for him.

Over the years the geometry of the Chestahedron was to take him into many interesting areas and connections, but all the time Frank was aware that he was also being educated in the way spiritual forces work into our life here on Earth. He learned about alchemical approaches to working with matter and how to place questions into

processes that would yield further insights. He became more connected with the principles and approaches of Goethean science and the wide ranging works of Steiner. He recognised that the four 'bodies' of the human being; the physical, etheric, astral and Ego relate to the four elements of Earth, Air, Water and Fire. Frank learned that certain questions attend these different elemental realms; with Earth and the Physical: what is it that is different?; with Air and the etheric: what is it that is changing?; with Water and the astral: what is it that is reversing?; with Fire and the Ego: what is transforming and integrating into a whole? Frank has said that "If we can manage change that occurs in life by cooperating with the underlying laws that govern change, then here we have an opportunity to regain equilibrium and a healthy relationship with change in these tumultuous modern times rather than having polarities control and disintegrate our lives."

But what of the changes in Frank's life? It is probably fair to say that since he began questing for the seven-sided form everything has changed for him. And it did not cease when he discovered the form itself. Rather, it seems that his life has opened further in the service of where the insights of this remarkable geometric form take him. Earth geometry has opened up and an increasing interest in embryology has awakened. All, it must be said, because Frank can see the underlying substance is the heart. That the Chestahedron has this deep relationship to how the human heart is formed gives rise to increasing possibilities in different fields to awaken and apply new knowledge.

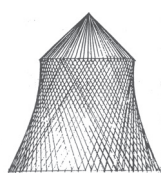
In this short article I wish only to convey how Frank discovered the heart bell and where this might lead. In one sense this came forward easily enough. Taking the outline of the edges of the Chestahedron form and spinning them reveals immediately a bell shape and the



The edges of the Chestahedron Form



Spinning the edges...



The form of the Heart Bell

form of the bell then follows. Coming as it does from the heart geometry Frank calls this form the Heart Bell.

For some years Frank studied the human heart and its workings; how the blood flows through the body as two opposite turning vortices. Frank was looking at how vortices and spirals occur in nature; applying different questions to come to understand these processes. For a time he studied the spiral shapes in sea shells, recognising the vortical forces at work. But he was puzzled, because in the shells he only saw a vortex spiral moving in the pattern left in the shells in one direction. But he knew, as Steiner had shown with his carving, that the duality

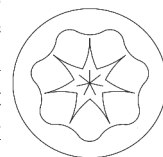
present in our world means that one should also find the spirals going in the opposite direction, bringing balance. It is interesting how we get a nudge in the right direction without knowing it is about to happen.

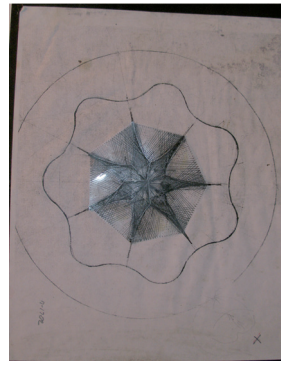
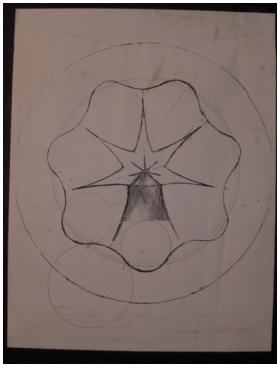
So, Frank took himself off to a proprietary shell shop and explored. There he found that when the little sea-shell creature is living in the sea in its shell it has a cap, or flap, to close off the entrance to the shell so that hungry crabs and other creatures cannot enter and eat him! Now this cap is also made of shell, but when the creature dies it usually drops off and is separated from the rest of the shell. But here Frank now had such a cap in his hand. And it was mostly flat and thick, so as to make a good barrier. But, it exhibited the same spiral formation, although not so pronounced, as the rest of the shell, but in the opposite direction! It was as though the cap had sacrificed its possibility to spiral outwards and grow curved and large, instead remaining almost flat. And it was at this moment Frank realised, imaginatively, if one could pull out the spiral in the cap it would become the larger, rounded, shell. He now found himself looking at the Saturn seal with new eyes. If one was looking down on the top of a form (a bird's eye view) the form indeed might seem flat. So if the flat, drawn form, of the seal could be pulled up vertically, as it were, it would surely reveal the 'hidden' form, from its two dimensional drawing to a three dimensional form in space. But Frank was aware that there ought to be a lawful way to do this, based upon this alchemical approach of the bodies and elements.



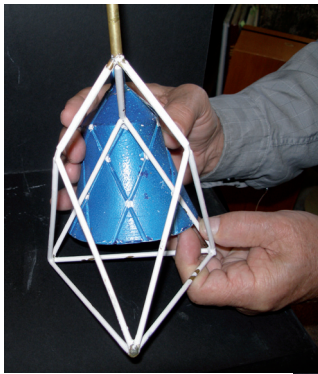
Frank's original shell cap

Another experience should be mentioned here. Frank had tried to understand how Steiner came to draw the Saturn seal. He could see how the curvy line (concave/convex) would be formed by circles pressing in from opposite sides of the line, but the geometry of the central part of the figure evade him. Then it struck him. The central part of the form was a repetition of the outline (seen in two dimensions) of the sides of the heart bell! Frank placed a Heart bell shape, in proportion, onto the seal and it fitted. He could see that this Saturn seal was based on a seven-fold form, so he placed seven heart bell shapes on to it. It confirmed to Frank that there was a deep connection between the Saturn Planetary seal, the Chestahedron and the human heart. As an artist and sculptor, Frank set about 'pulling-up' and revealing the Saturn seal as a bell form. He took his Heart Bell and placed the edge geometry of the Chesthedron into it and in so doing created bands on which to work and carve. He could see how the bell

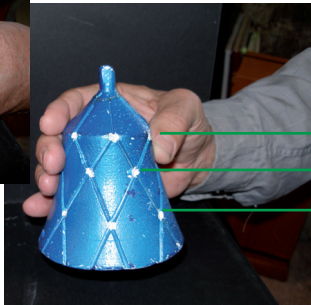




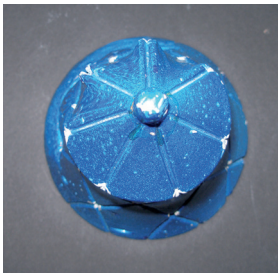
was divided into four bands (the white painted dots are there to help see this. As this was a seal from out of the Cosmos, in-forming us as human beings, Frank saw the bands as pertaining to, from the top of the bell, the physical, etheric, astral and the ego. He felt that when



looking from the top he should be able to see all these four realms, or areas on the bell. That meant that after the physical



Divided into four 'bands'



'band' Frank had designated on the bell (showing what is different) the etheric showed what changed as the carving had to change direction from

the way the form of the bell had been going. The Astral, which is about reversal, then required changing the direction of the carving again so that all was still visible when looking down from the top of the figure. In this way Frank arrived at the Saturn bell and later did the same thing with the Venus seal. What is interesting is that this process was carried out artistically and not mathematically. So, whilst the finished form may be pleasing to the eye, the importance lies in what is experienced and learned whilst carving the form – following this lawful alchemy of process – that starts to reveal how things really work in the cosmos, in that these seals have yielded some of their secrets to an artistic process which is sensitive to the laws of the various realms by which we are all constituted.

I suppose one could say that this is what is working on a person when they meet forms, geometry, that the gods have placed down here so that we might learn the lawful (in the sense of cosmically lawful) sense for doing things in ways that bring about real balance in our lives.

Frank told me that the bell shape has been used in

ancient Egyptian paintings to represent the human soul, coming down to earth from the heavens to incarnate in flesh. These bell shapes, seeds of spirit, are the geometric templates for growing a human heart. Steiner stated that the evolving soul, before it becomes living matter as we are on earth, is apparent to the inner eye as the shape of a downward opening bell. The gesture of a bell is



The Temple of Hador in Egypt, where women go to give birth. There is a painting on the ceiling of Princess Nut who swallows the moon and gives birth to the sun. Hador is in a cube, facing us, representing the fact that in earthly incarnation we are in three dimensional space. This picture also shows the souls as bell shapes streaming down to Earth from the Sun.

just that, opening, ever wider as it moves out from its centre. And when it 'speaks' its unique tone it re-sounds in spiralling rings of music.

Frank's exploration into the deeper geometry of the human heart and all that can be learned and understood thereby, is a work in progress.

