

Issue 326 • December 2017

Good

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- On test: the new Trend T35 M-Class dust extractor
- Find out why Marc Fish's students are top of the class
- Variations on a theme: Les Thorne's lidded pot designs

HITTING THE SLOPES

How Jamie Kunka is making
a name for himself as one of
the most exciting wooden
ski-makers around

mytimegroup WOODWORKING GROUP

Welcome to our December issue,
which contains all manner of
Christmas treats for you to enjoy!



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26

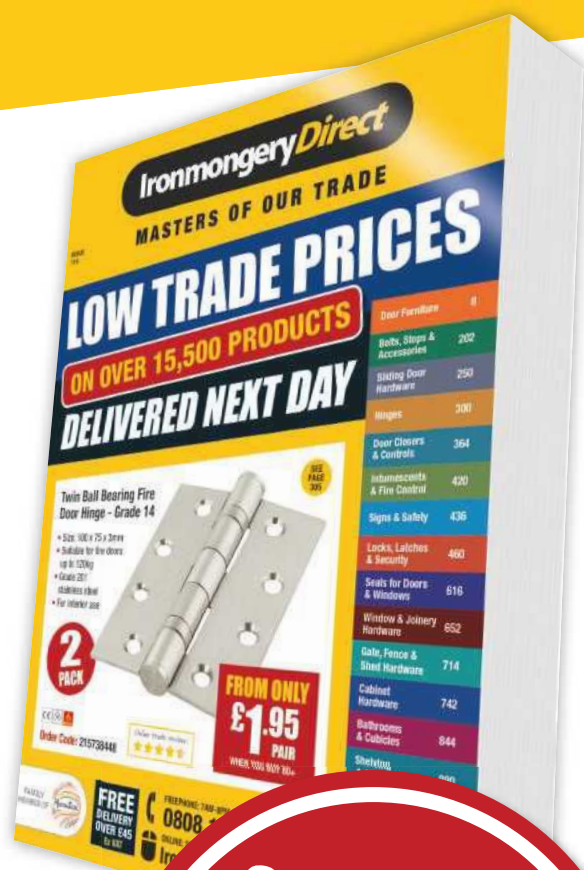
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Welcome

'A selection of the best Christmas-themed projects'



Yes, believe it or not, Christmas is nearly here and we've almost come to the end of another great year. We hope you've enjoyed our 2017 issues as much as we've enjoyed putting them together. Thanks to all of you who've got in touch over the last 10 or so months, sharing your projects with us, as well as your comments and suggestions on the magazine, not to mention kind words of encouragement, which, let's face it, we all need from time to time.

Getting in the festive spirit

We're seeing 2017 out in style with a feature on an exceptional young talent who is taking the world of wooden ski making by storm - also this month's cover star, we meet and discover more about Jamie Kunka of Lonely Mountain Skis. Learning about the process of making a ski from the arrival of the raw material to the finished item was truly fascinating, and as you'll see from the profile (p.62), he's developed some incredibly clever techniques, which help make his award-winning products stand out from the crowd.

From skis and snow, it's just a short hop to our whimsical Christmas projects - it is our December issue after all! So why not try your hand at making Carl Jacobson's wooden snow couple, or how about Tristan Dare's lovely ribbon box? Either way, make sure you're having fun doing what you love.

New worktops

Thinking about what I've been up to recently, I actually called upon the help of *The Woodworker* Editor Mark Cass, whose workshop is very near

my new house. I asked if he'd pop round to take a look at the solid oak worktops in my kitchen, which although very attractive, were untreated, meaning that anything placed on them instantly left a mark (think coffee cup ring marks, water, etc.). They were nightmarishly impractical, but he quickly recommended Danish oil, and the next day there I was with lint-free cloth in hand applying the three coats he suggested (with drying time in between, obviously). Now, not only do they have a lovely golden lustre, but I can place items on them without the worry of leaving unsightly blemishes. And before anyone asks, yes, I was careful to dispose of the rags and I have to say that I found the whole process thoroughly enjoyable - there's time to make a seasoned woodworker of me yet!

Christmas inspiration

As you can see above, I've collated some images of Christmas-themed woodworking projects for you here, which will hopefully give you all some inspiration. Don't forget, we love to see what you're making, especially anything in the festive vein, so do send in an email with a few photos.

A very Merry Christmas to all of you, and good luck to those who enter this month's competition - what a perfect present that would make!

Tegan

Email tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com



Tegan Foley
Group Editor



Phil Davy
Technical &
Consultant Editor



Dave Roberts
Consultant Editor

We endeavour to ensure all techniques shown in Good Woodworking are safe, but take no responsibility for readers' actions. Take care when woodworking and always use guards, goggles, masks, hold-down devices and ear protection, and above all, plenty of common sense. Do remember to enjoy yourself, though

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WIN!



TOP OF THE CLASS

Furniture magician Marc Fish is a traditionalist when it comes to learning the craft, and has relaunched his school. Andrea Hargreaves reports

A woodworking activity holiday for two people at Gartmore House, worth over **£1,100!** One lucky winner and a friend will enjoy a two- or five-night break at Gartmore House, set in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. See **page 36** for details – good luck!

Marc Fish
Fine Contemporary Furniture



Good Woodworking

December 326

• TOOLS • PROJECTS • TECHNIQUES • ADVICE

PROJECTS

30 All wrapped up for Christmas

Perfect for Christmas, Tristan Dare takes us through the steps for creating a wonderful wooden box complete with handmade ribbon



49 Festive frolics

Carl Jacobson shows you how to turn this fun snow couple using leftover pieces of timber, which will make the perfect festive addition to any home

72 Festive glow

Phil Davy presents two festive candle holder designs, which will be perfect for that last-minute present or surprise table decoration

80 Variations on a theme

A classic turned vase with contrasting finial never gets boring, and as Les Thorne shows here, there's a lot you can do to make your designs stand out from the crowd

TECHNICAL

24 Choosing & using a planer/thicknessener

As John Bullar demonstrates, a planer/thicknessener takes much of the donkeywork out of preparing wood for furniture making and here he gives a comprehensive account of how to choose and use this great machine

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An Englishman's home is his Welsh castle: after last month's theatrics, Dave Roberts is back at work on The Old Vic

40 Defining timber defects

Peter Bishop looks at the definition of a timber defect, gives examples of each one and also shows ways in which these can sometimes be incorporated as opposed to discarded



PEOPLE & PLACES

46 Centrefold

This unique piece by Howard Butler was specially designed to collect and store memorabilia over the passage of time



62 From bows to skis

Jamie Kunka of Lonely Mountain Skis is making a name for himself as one of the most exciting hand-crafted wooden ski-makers around. Operating from his Perthshire workshop, we discover more about the fascinating steam-bending process behind building a ski from scratch

90 Are you a goat?

'When goats are content they normally make no noise, but they do sometimes hum'

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www.getwoodworking.com

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Suite 25, Eden House Enterprise Way,
Edenbridge, Kent TN8 6HF
UK and Overseas Tel: +44 (0) 1689 869 840

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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BACK ISSUES & BINDERS

Contact: 01733 688 964
Website: www.mags-uk.com

EDITORIAL

Group Editor: Tegan Foley
Technical & Consultant Editor: Phil Davy
Consultant Editor: Dave Roberts

CONTRIBUTORS

Phil Davy, Edward Hopkins, Mark Cass, John Bullar,
Dave Roberts, Tristan Dare, Peter Bishop, Carl Jacobson,
Andrea Hargreaves, Les Thorne

PRODUCTION

Designer: Nik Harber
Retouching Manager: Brian Vickers

ADVERTISING

Group Advertising Manager: Rhona Bolger
Email: rhona.bolger@mytimemedia.com
Tel: 01689 869 891

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions Manager: Kate Hall

MANAGEMENT

Group Advertising Manager: Rhona Bolger
Email: rhona.bolger@mytimemedia.com
Chief Executive: Owen Davies
Chairman: Peter Harkness

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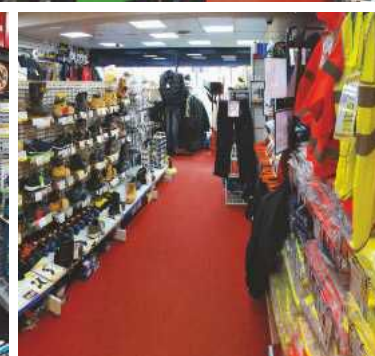
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Bosch 18V cordless tool range expands again

Bosch has underlined its status as a key player in the growing 18V cordless power tool market with the introduction of six new products. Adding extra options in terms of hammer drilling, angle grinding, shearing, nibbling and dust extraction, they expand the Bosch Professional 18V Li-ion range to more than 40 tools. Covering every trade professional's needs, the collection includes a wide variety of drills, drivers and hammers for different applications. There are other tools for sawing, cutting, grinding, planing and sanding, along with dust extractors, lights and even an onsite radio.

The new models are:

- GAS 18 V-1 Professional dust extractor
- GAS 18 V-10 L Professional dust extractor
- GBH 18 V-20 Professional rotary hammer drill
- GSC 18 V-16 Professional shear
- GNA 18 V-16 Professional nibbler
- GWS 18 V PC and PSC Professional angle grinder

Innovation

Bosch points out that its latest 18V cordless tools continue the spirit of innovation, which has drawn so many individual tradespeople and group buyers to Bosch in recent years. Often the innovations relate to safety, as with the GWS 18 V PC and PSC Professional angle grinder, whose automatic safeguards include KickBack Control, Restart Protection, Soft Start and Vibration Control.

To combat dust-related illness, which has been a focus of recent safety campaigning by Bosch, there are two new extractors: the GAS 18 V-1 Professional is light and compact but features two rotational airflows, which effectively remove most dust before it even reaches the filter, and for sustained high suction over long periods, Bosch

offers the GAS 18 V-10 L Professional, with its specialised HEPA filter capturing more than 99.99% of all dust.

A combination of high power and efficiency is promised by the GBH 18 V-20 Professional rotary hammer drill, an SDS-plus model, which delivers 1.7J of impact energy along with impressive runtimes. When it comes to ergonomic design, the GSC 18 V-16 Professional shear and GNA 18 V-16 Professional nibbler score highly with their small grip circumference and perfect balance.

Battery life

Bosch innovations in battery technology, as well as motor efficiency, continue to push the boundaries of runtime. Building on the inherent advantages of its Li-ion packs, the company has invented new systems to extend their lifetime even further. Bosch Electronic Cell Protection (ECP) prevents overloading, overheating and excessive discharge, while Bosch COOLPACK temperature control adds as much as 100% to a battery's life compared to a pack without it.

Full compatibility

An important characteristic of all the 18V power tools is their full compatibility – forward and backward – with each other's batteries and chargers. The tools and their accessories are also fully compatible with the Bosch Mobility System. Its space-saving L-BOXX storage units, which click and stack together for convenient transport, ensure that everything is held securely, protected from damage and well organised.

The latest Bosch 18V Li-ion power tools, and all others in this comprehensive range, are available now from specialist retailers. For further info, see www.bosch-professional.co.uk.



Makita introduce two new versions of the 10.8V Brushless CXT jigsaw

Expansion of the Makita 10.8V cordless range continues with the introduction of two CXT jigsaws: both with Brushless motors and 90mm cutting capacity in wood, these models will challenge higher voltage cordless products within the current market. The new JV102D features the barrel grip with raised front pommel, which allows two-handed control of the machine, while the JV103D is a top handle model that is most often used for single-hand operation.

Both new jigsaws will run up to 3,000 strokes per minute with a 23mm stroke length and tool-less blade change for the B-type bayonet blades. Integral dust extraction is standard, while a host of features in these compact and lightweight jigsaws include electric brake, variable-speed dial, constant speed control, soft start and a soft no load function, LED job light and matching capacities of 90mm in timber, 20mm in aluminium and 10mm in mild steel. Bevel capacity is 0°-45°, left or right.

A side-mounted change lever enables three orbital settings or straight cutting to be selected. On the top handle model, which is only marginally heavier than the JV102D jigsaw at a comfortable 2kg, the lock-on button is positioned on the trigger and the push button on/off switch is conveniently positioned to the side of the barrel grip model.

Both models are available as body only machines; alternatively they are available with two 10.8V 2.0Ah batteries and fast charger in a Makpac case. Priced from £159.60 (body only), see www.makitauk.com to find out more.

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The first in a family of products, The Ant from AntCraft, is an innovative modular system that comes equipped with five different tips and adaptors to get you started in almost any hot craft task. The toolkit includes a mini iron, pointed, script and calligraphy tips for foiling, stencil and pyrography work, as well as a flat gem tip, with over 50 additional tips available separately.

AntCrafts Suretip system allows tips to be switched fast, even when hot using the tip puller, leaving more time to focus on creativity and design – there's no need to wait for your tool to cool.

The ergonomic handle, designed for comfort and close work, features 10 controlled temperature settings for you to choose between, depending on the craft requirement.

The Ant Family Accessory packs include: Pyrography Pack – 19 tips; Wax Pack – three tips; Fabric Pack – seven tips; Foil Pack – 10 tips; Calligraphy Pack – 1 tip; Gem Pack – nine tips; Stenciling – 1 tip; and an iron tip pack, with prices starting from £4.99. Available for £69.99, see www.antcraft.co.uk for more info.



Mirka's commitment to intelligent technology

Anticipating the changing environment, Mirka's new 'Our Clean Commitments' Sustainability Report focuses on the possibilities of digitalisation, so that it can offer its customers intelligent tool solutions that generate added value, while also assisting in safeguarding workers' health.

Working closely with its customers, the R&D department has developed the myMirka dashboard to enable businesses to monitor and measure the working environment through the myWorkplace section of the dashboard with the help of different sensors in the workplace. As part of the continued evolution of the system, Mirka will introduce sensors across its tool range for connecting to the dashboard and can easily integrate customers' own sensors to the dashboard as well.

Some examples are related to safety: the myTools part of the dashboard shows the running hours, motor and PCB card temperatures, speed, etc., which are important predictive maintenance indicators. There is also considerable automated equipment used in the workplace; myMirka dashboard services also allow these systems to be connected with the help of APIs, so the customer can easily see from one view that their equipment is safe to use.

In addition, when its electric sanders are connected with an operator, Mirka can monitor and follow how the operator is using the tool. If the speed and motor temperature are not at the recommended levels, the operator might be using the tool the wrong way, which is potentially dangerous from both a health and safety standpoint. If this is the case, Mirka can offer the business more training on how to use the tools to correct these issues. To find out more, see www.mirka.com/uk.

Winners announced for the Structural Timber Awards

Put it down to perfect timing, with the heightened interest in offsite technology, combined with the abundance of outstanding projects, and it's easy to see why the 2017 Structural Timber Awards surpassed all previous events in terms of the calibre of entries and attendance.

Construction professionals recently gathered at this prestigious award ceremony – at the National Conference Centre, Birmingham – to celebrate the great, the good and the simply outstanding.

With over 200 outstanding submissions, this year's Structural Timber Award judges had an onerous job of selecting the winners. The big winner on the night was B & K Structures and Waugh Thistleton Architects for Dalston Lane who scooped the Winner of Winners. One of the judges described the project as "Inspirational in demonstrating what is possible using the correct balance of time, cost and performance."

There has already been a large amount of attention focused on next year's awards, which will be returning in October 2018. The Awards, once again, will reward excellence, celebrate expertise in timber technology and the ways it contributes to an attractive, energy efficient and sustainable built environment. For the hundreds of construction professionals who attended this event, there is no need

to explain the promotional opportunities that go hand in hand with it. The Awards provide one of the most effective platforms to promote brands or companies alongside the best of the best.

For further details, contact amy.pryce@radar-communications.co.uk and note that the submission deadline for entries into next year's Awards is 31 May 2018.



All Winners of the Structural Timber Awards 2017

New limited edition tool chests from Sealey

Sealey's limited edition, carbon fibre effect wrapped design topchest and rollcab comprises of a heavy-gauge steel construction and is manufactured with steel inner walls for extra strength and durability. Heavy-duty 35mm ball-bearing slides provide superior performance and carry heavier loads, and the full height rear locking mechanism locks full-length drawers in multiple locations. Added security is provided by a cylinder lock (supplied with two keys), and each drawer features black aluminium drawer pulls for added style while the lid is fitted with gas struts for smooth opening and closing. The rollcab includes four heavy-duty Ø125mm yellow PP castors with black alloys, two swivel with large toe locks and two fixed; the AP26CFSTACK features a black powder coated side handle to enable smooth manoeuvrability. For further info, see www.sealey.co.uk.



New from UJK Technology – OTORO Compact Palm Router Table



The UJK Technology OTORO Compact Palm Router Table is a unique and ingenious piece of equipment, which is perfect for model makers, dolls' house builders and any craftsman wishing to make smaller sized, precision components. It is designed to be used with a palm router, either the Bosch GKF 600, Makita RT0700CX2, or DeWALT D26204K. The Bosch and DeWALT fit directly; the Makita uses an adaptor sleeve, which is supplied. Install the router, connect the dust extractor port and you are ready for business. You can clamp the table to a benchtop or work table up to 60mm-thick, allowing you to use it wherever it is convenient. The table has both coarse and fine feed adjustments for exact height modification of the cutter. Three modes of operation are possible with this router table: preparing an edge, planing the board to width, and moulding.

Preparing an edge

The rear planing fence consists of two sections: a fixed outfeed and an adjustable infeed. The adjustment uses a 'folding wedge' arrangement, where one slides against the other to control the depth of cut. Very fine control and accuracy come from the 10:1 scale, and moving and locking the leading wedge 1mm produces a cutting depth of only 0.1mm. A featherboard is included to keep the timber securely against the fence.

Planing the width

The rear featherboard fence replaces the rear planing fence, and the front fence, complete with a similar folding wedge adjustment, is used to set the planing width of the board. Although looking a touch unconventional, this method will produce very precise thicknesses. The maximum board width that will fit between the featherboards is 130mm. By using double-sided tape and sticking a workpiece onto a carrier, you can prepare very thin material.

Moulding

The compact router table performs in much the same way as a conventional router table; in this case, the result is a small and exact profile. The table includes a selection of table inserts to accommodate different sized cutters, and when not in use the table can be stored under a bench or in a small cupboard. Priced at £299.96, see www.axminster.co.uk to find out more.

Pallet innovation unveiled

James Jones & Sons Ltd has revealed a new venture it says will dramatically improve the quality, length of life, and environmental benefits of wooden pallets, while significantly reducing their whole life cost.

UPALL® manufactures and fits robust protectors at the points of entry on wooden pallets. This means the pallets last longer, need far fewer repairs and stay in circulation for longer than conventional non-protected pallets. The protectors are based on the US pointGUARD invention, which UPALL® has redesigned and developed for the European market.

Tests on the protectors show that they increase the life span of a wooden pallet by three times and potentially longer; this is because UPALL® protected pallets experience substantially less damage with significantly fewer wood chippings and debris; to find out more about this exciting new innovation, see www.upallpallets.com.

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COURSE DIARY

Winter is here, Christmas is close, so why not treat yourself to a woodworking course?

DECEMBER

- 1 & 1* Pen making
- 4–5 Introduction to milling
- 4–5, 7–8 & 7–8* Beginners' woodturning
- 5–8 Make a side table
- 11–15 Make a Windsor chair
- 13* Sharpening with Tormek Woodturning
- 15* Scrollsaw course

* Course held in Sittingbourne, Kent
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- 11 Greenwood spoon carving – a taster day
- 15–17 Woodturning – bowls with texture
- 18 & 19 Make a small bowl – a taster day

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 Tel: 01243 811 301
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- 9–10 Dovetailing weekend
- 29 Half-day woodwork taster
- 30 Half-day marquetry taster

Chris Tribe, The Commill, Railway Road
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- 11–15 Skills week: sharpening & essential cabinetmaking hand skills

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- 3 Intro to spoon carving

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- 11–15 Furniture making for beginners – fundamentals & tool sharpening
- 18–19 Safe operation of wood machines

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Trend Airshield Pro

The Trend Airshield Pro TH2P powered respirator offers combined respiratory and eye/face protection using lightweight materials for comfortable, all day long use.

Driven by a battery that lasts a full eight hours on a single charge, the Airshield Pro uses a powerful fan to provide a constant positive airflow through the visor. Unlike cartridge type respirators, this allows easy, unrestricted breathing and with the large visor and elasticated face seal is ideal for spectacle wearers and those with facial hair.

The polycarbonate flip up visor is Optical Class IB3 rated and provides impact resistance for high speed particles, liquid droplets and splashes, as well as medium impact resistance. Replaceable overlays on the visor keep the viewing area clean and scratch-free during use, and a removable



brow guard houses the battery pack, motor, fan and twin TH2P replaceable filters, all of which are distributed around the brow guard to provide balance and reduced noise levels in use.

The filters give an Assigned Protection Factor of APF20 – suitable for use with MDF and the good all-round vision and impact resistance the visor affords makes it especially suitable for woodturning and routing where small pieces of flying debris are commonplace.

The AIR/PRO is certified to approved standard BS EN 12941 TH2P for respiratory protection and BS EN166 for eye protection. Priced at £269.96 (inc VAT), additional batteries are also available and priced at £52.75; see www.trend-uk.com for more info. To request further information and details of your nearest Trend Dealer, see the website or call 01923 249 911.

Introducing the free Hilti Connect App

An easy-to use tool management app has been launched by Hilti, which allows customers to make informed decisions about equipment and its best usage instantaneously.

The free Hilti Connect App provides immediate access to comprehensive data about a Hilti tool using a smartphone or mobile device, thanks to Near Field Communication (NFC) technology tags, which will be installed in new tools at manufacture. Customers with existing Hilti tools can also use the mobile App as Hilti will continuously fit the NFC tags under the rating plates of all Hilti tools, batteries and chargers when they are in for a service.

The mobile App provides the user with direct access to information including tool type, 'how-to' instruction videos, warranty information and whether it was purchased outright or via the Fleet Management service. It also displays the date of the last service and repair – as well as the frequency and cost of repairs – to provide the most comprehensive information possible for users to base future decisions about that tool. If the tool needs a service or repair, the App allows the user to schedule collection and delivery at a time and location convenient for them.

Additional attributes include tracking the usage of some Hilti tools – for example, with the new Hilti DX 5 Powder-actuated direct-fastening tool, users can see the number of fastenings done to ensure optimum cleaning and maintenance is carried out. The Hilti Connect App also suggests the best accessories to use with each tool as well as related products to make repeat ordering of consumables quick and easy.

Available to download for free in Google Play as well as the App Store, the Hilti Connect App is the latest addition to the Hilti suite of tool management products joining both ON!Track and Fleet Management, all of which can be tailored to the needs of different user groups thereby improving overall company productivity. For more info and to watch the video, see www.hilti.co.uk/connect.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hilti has recently been named the winner of the Volunteer Company of the Year at the prestigious national 2017 WellChild Awards, in association with GSK. Over the past two years, the company has provided funding, donated over £5,500 worth of tools to Helping Hands, and staff have given their time across 13 projects to provide life-transforming home and garden improvements to families of seriously ill children across the UK. The WellChild Awards celebrate the courage of children coping with serious illnesses or complex conditions and honour the dedication of professionals, carers and volunteers who go the extra mile to help sick children and their families; to find out more, see www.wellchild.org.uk

Christmas at Wilderness Wood in East Sussex is not just about the Christmas trees. On the two first weekends of December, there will be a BBQ in the new Cook House, mulled wine, mince pies and chestnuts, and you can also buy presents from local artisans and try your hand at making decorations, woodturning, spinning, willow-weaving, spoon carving, plus much more! To find out more, see www.wildernesswood.org

The Cambridgeshire Christmas Crafts & Food Fair – 9–10 December – gives you an opportunity to purchase a wide range of hand-made gifts, including woodturnings, carvings and ceramics. Food and drink are also available. Taking place at The Arena Wood Green, see www.oakleighfairs.co.uk for more info



Timbersource film uses parkour to promote their fast running service

Timbersource, a timber supplier in Shepton Mallet, Somerset, has made a spectacular film with a renowned parkour athlete, to showcase its new 'while you wait' service for completing orders of wood. The parkour action was recently directed by Shayne House at the Timbersource timber yard, which is approximately 1,650m² in size with some additional small external areas. There was plenty of space and many obstacles for the athlete to interact with during the shoot, including a forklift truck, wood piles, trucks and staircases.

Timbersource is breaking new ground in the timber supply industry with their 'order while you wait' service and wanted to reflect the dynamic nature of their innovation with an exciting film that shows the speed of the process, in a fun way. To find out more, see www.timbersource.co.uk/parkour.

Beat the freeze this winter with Clarke turbo fan gas heaters

The Clarke range of efficient turbo fan propane gas fired heaters from Machine Mart are perfect for heating any garage, workshop or warehouse this winter. The Little Devil II provides a heat output of 10.3kW, with models in the range delivering a heat output up to a massive 131kW. Some also feature variable heat output control and all are supplied with a regulator and gas hose. Dual voltage (110V/230V) varieties are also available and all are built within a corrosion resistant stainless steel casing. With fuel safety cut out and a sturdy handle on top, these heaters are perfect for warming all your cold spaces this winter. Prices start from £95.98; see www.machinemart.co.uk to find out more.



FREE READER ADS

Rema DMXA table saw; 3hp motor; 12in blade; 45° tilt; comes with extension table and 2 x re-tipped TCT blades; £100 ONO **01371 870 792 (Essex)**

Triton Workcentre WCA201 series 2000 & Triton TA235CSL precision power saw and blade height winder – assembled but never used; £420 **07811 510 950 (Dorset)**

Record PT260 planer/thicknesser with dust extractor; £225. Also, Trend router table & DeWalt 625 router with various bits; £200 **01444 246 922 (West Sussex)**

Record Power WG200 8in wetstone sharpening system, complete with accessories. Cost £150, unused, still in box; selling for £100 **01322 664 388 (Kent)**

For sale – various Woodworker magazines from 1946–2013. All are in pristine condition. A wonderful collector's item – please call to make an offer; collection only **07847 394 507 (Derbyshire)**

14 years' worth of various woodworking magazines – call for details **01423 868 465 (North Yorkshire)**

Carving chisels by Addis, Kirschen and Cannon – 39 in box; all good to go; £200 **07904 433 520 (Newark)**

Metabo BAS 317 precision bandsaw – in good condition; £100 – call for details **07716 994 616 (Derby)**

Jet JSS16 scrollsaw; brand-new; never used; bought in error; £40 – buyer collects **01432 270 757 (Hereford)**

Coronet Minor with circular saw table; sanding mortising table; planer with thicknesser attachment; single phase;

good condition; £230 **01684 592 968 (Worcs)**

Shopsmith MKV 510 – with jointer, as new, most attachments still boxed; buyer collects – highest bid secures sale **01634 232 191 (Kent)**

Record multi-purpose machine – circular saw, router, planer/thicknesser; £450; buyer collects **01903 243 526 (West Sussex)**

Axminster APTC lathe – used once and in pristine condition; set of woodturning tools included; £250 – buyer collects **01344 486 214 (Berkshire)**

Send your adverts to: tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com



Sturdy sawhorse

This sawhorse pair from Axminster is definitely worth considering if you saw outdoors or simply need a temporary work table

A pair of wooden sawhorses may often be regarded as equipment mainly for the site chippy, but they can be just as useful for the home workshop.

Primarily used for sawing boards or sheet materials, with a bit of ingenuity they can be adapted so that height is adjustable. Stacked for storage, though, in a small workspace, the splayed legs create quite a large footprint, so what if they had folding legs to save space?

This pair from Axminster solves the problem. Made from powder-coated steel with zinc-plated legs, each one weighs about 6.4kg and is seriously heavy duty. As a result, load capacity is a maximum of 590kg (1,180kg per pair), which is impressive.

Legs fold easily into the top rail for storage, while a strong plastic carry handle makes them simple to move. Overall size of each unit when packed down is 895 x 150 x 85mm.

In use

Depressing a spring-loaded button at one end of the rail enables you to unfold the first pair of legs, repeating the process at the other end. A hinged cross-brace locks the legs apart, then you can adjust working height. With a choice of eight settings, outer legs are simply slid downwards and locate in notches at 27mm intervals. Minimum working height is 560mm, while maximum is 825mm. A hard plastic ledge



Legs fold easily into the top rail for storage...



... while a strong plastic carry handle makes them simple to move

stops boards sliding around and means there's less chance of saw blades hitting the steel casing, should you cut across them.

What makes each sawhorse clever is the cut-out at each end for a piece of 95 x 45mm softwood. These mean you can link both trestles together with a length of timber along each side to make a really strong temporary work table. You may need to shave these stretchers down to fit as the slot actually measures a tad less, but better too tight than too slack. Use CLS timber (which finishes at around 43mm) and they're fine, though.

Once stretchers are in place, you have a rigid, pop-up work surface; this provides an ideal method for supporting boards while sawing or routing, with blade or cutter passing through the material and simply notching the stretchers, without these losing strength.



Overall size of each unit when packed down is 895 x 150 x 85mm



Depressing a spring-loaded button at one end of the rail enables you to unfold the first pair of legs



A hinged cross-brace locks the legs apart, then you can adjust working height



With a choice of eight settings, outer legs are simply slid downwards and locate in notches at 27mm intervals



What makes each sawhorse clever is the cut-out at each end for a piece of 95 x 45mm softwood



Use CLS timber (which finishes at around 43mm), to achieve a tight fit into the slot



Once stretchers are in place, you have a rigid, pop-up work surface

Conclusion

You can buy cheaper, but I doubt you'll find sawhorses as sturdy as these two. Worth considering if you saw outdoors or simply need a temporary work table. **GW**

Specification:

- ▶ Use to create a strong worktable anywhere on site
- ▶ 590kg support capacity per trestle
- ▶ Quick and easy to set up
- ▶ Independently adjustable telescopic legs
- ▶ Powder-coated and zinc-plated for long life
- ▶ Fold neatly for transport and storage
- ▶ Easy carry handles – no sharp edges
- ▶ Supplied as a pair

▶ **Typical price:** £89.96 per pair

▶ **Web:** www.axminster.co.uk

THE GW VERDICT

- ▶ **PROS:**
Folds for storage; heavy-duty; adjustable height; telescopic legs
- ▶ **CONS:**
Timber stretchers a tight fit; pricey for the occasional user
- ▶ **RATING:** 4 out of 5

Pinie precision

This solid beech mortise gauge features easily adjustable drawing arms, two measuring scales, and hardened steel marking pins

Unlike most mortise gauges we're familiar with, this tool from Czech Republic manufacturer Pinie follows the continental pattern, with two sliding stems. Built from beech, it's nicely made with rounded edges to upper and lower stems. A shallow groove along an inner edge locates with a tongue on the mating edge, enabling them to slide neatly. There's no chance of a stem falling through the stock, as small pin heads limit their travel.

At the business end each hardened steel marker pin could be sharper, a simple enough task with a small file. Metric graduations along each stem can be read clearly and display up to 100mm. Maximum width capacity is a respectable 171mm, however.

The lacquered stock is quite chunky and includes a plastic thumbscrew for locking the setting. Although stems move easily, adjustment takes some getting used to when setting the gauge to a chisel. This is where the graduations



make sense, as you have to rely on adding or subtracting dimensions to suit the chisel.

Conclusion

Making minute adjustments to match a blade exactly is awkward, but something you'd probably get used to. I'd be more inclined to use the tool where you sometimes need two marking gauges to give a pair of lines to work with. **GW**



The lacquered stock is quite chunky and includes a plastic thumbscrew for locking the setting

Specification:

- ▶ **Marking capacity:** 0-170mm
- ▶ **Material:** Beech
- ▶ **Typical price:** £10.99
- ▶ **Web:** www.johnsonstools.co.uk

THE GW VERDICT

- ▶ **PROS:**
Nicely made traditional tool; very good value
- ▶ **CONS:**
Unusual mortise marking method; pins could be sharper
- ▶ **RATING:** 4 out of 5



Metric graduations along each stem can be read clearly and display up to 100mm

Effortless extraction

Benefitting from a long hose, cable and power tool take-off, this professional rated wet and dry M-Class dust extractor from Trend should be on many a woodworker's Christmas list

Extractors may not be the most exciting items in the workshop, but they're among the most essential. Whether or not you have a full-blown shop system for your machinery, a smaller portable unit can make a huge difference when using power tools. I'm probably not the only woodworker who does unpleasant routing or sanding tasks outdoors when possible, to avoid covering the workshop in dust...

Trend's latest offering is a professional vacuum extractor (M-Class category) designed to be hooked up easily to almost any router, circular saw, biscuit jointer or sander, provided the tool has a suitable dust port. The impressive 5m hose has a standard 35mm diameter spout, so will fit most tools without an adaptor, although a stepped one is included. Its other bayonet end locks into the unit with a twist of your hand. Inside

the plastic drum is a disposable fabric collection bag, slotting into a groove just inside the inlet. A second bag is included, though spares are pricey at more than £5 a time. Fitted with four castors, the extractor is highly portable, with a large top handle, too. The heavy mains cable is seriously long at 6.9m and can be wrapped around the handle for storage.

The lid contains a powerful 1,400W motor and is detached by flipping open a couple of locking levers. Inside, you'll find a plastic float cage beneath the motor, over which a polyurethane foam sleeve fits. A second paper cartridge filter fits over this and attaches securely. Dry capacity of the drum is 27 litres, reducing to 16 litres if used for wet vacuuming. The paper filter is removed for



The impressive 5m hose has a standard 35mm diameter spout, so will fit most tools without an adaptor, although a stepped one is included



Its other bayonet end locks into the unit with a twist of your hand



Inside the plastic drum is a disposable fabric collection bag, slotting into a groove just inside the inlet



The heavy mains cable is seriously long at 6.9m and can be wrapped around the handle for storage



The lid contains a powerful 1,400W motor and is detached by flipping open a couple of locking levers



Inside, you'll find a plastic float cage beneath the motor, over which a polyurethane foam sleeve fits



A second paper cartridge filter fits over the polyurethane foam sleeve and attaches securely



Operating the T35 is a cinch. A red selector dial enables you to choose manual suction, power tool mode (with run-on) or filter cleaning



The machine can also be used as a blower, simply by removing the air outlet grille...



... and inserting the hose here instead



A comprehensive range of accessories is provided, including straight and angled extension tubes, various spouts, brush and floor cleaner



I tested the T35 with an orbital sander...

wet use, and a float regulator automatically blocks suction when maximum level is reached. It's important to use an RCD device when using the extractor in this mode.

Power tool take-off

Operating the T35 is a cinch. A red selector dial enables you to choose manual suction, power tool mode (with run-on) or filter cleaning. Simply plug a power tool (up to 2,200W) into the 13A socket alongside and the extractor kicks into action as soon as you hit the trigger. It will then run on for five seconds after switch off to clear the hose, followed by a further six seconds of automatic filter shake. This last cleaning process is pretty noisy, though at least you'd be able to hear it above the din of a busy workshop. A red airflow lamp indicates when the collection bag is full.

The machine can also be used as a blower, simply by removing the air outlet grille and inserting the hose here instead. Behind the grille is another paper filter, easily cleaned under the tap. There's sufficient power for a good blast, though it's always advisable to remove workshop dust by suction rather than blowing, particularly with power tools or machinery where cooling vents are vulnerable.

A comprehensive range of accessories is provided, including straight and angled extension tubes, various spouts, brush and floor cleaner. The tubes enable you to reach up to about 3m above the floor, so there's no excuse for cobwebs unless you have a very high ceiling.

Conclusion

I tested the T35 with an orbital sander, circular saw and 1/2in router and it performed as



... circular saw...



... and 1/2in router, and it performed as expected

expected. If you're not used to using a vacuum extractor then the suction hose dragging across a surface can be a bit of a pain, but the benefits far outweigh this minor inconvenience.

Most of us will probably need to save up for Trend's new Italian job, but this is a sturdy extractor that works extremely well, whether with power tools or for cleaning up the workshop. And there's the bonus of wet vacuuming should you need it, too. Definitely one to put on your Christmas list if you have generous relatives! **GW**

THE GW VERDICT

- **PROS:**
Long hose and cable; power tool take-off; wet and dry functions; blower function
- **CONS:**
Cost of spare bags; noisy filter cleaning
- **RATING:** 4 out of 5

Specification:

- **Rating:** Professional
- **Power input:** 1,400W
- **Voltage:** 230V
- **Dust category:** M
- **Power Ampage:** 5.2Amp
- **Auto-start max (230V):** 2,200W
- **Auto-start min:** 50W
- **Container volume (dry):** 27l
- **Container volume (wet):** 16l
- **Airflow:** 4,200l/min (70l/s)
- **Vacuum pressure:** 270mbar
- **Negative pressure:** 21Kpa
- **Filter surface HEPA:** 2,600cmq
- **Filter surface pre-filter:** 1,400cmq
- **Filter efficiency:** 0.3 micron
- **Bag volume:** 24.5l
- **Dimensions (L x W x H):** 350 x 390 x 610mm
- **Weight:** 7.5kg
- **Typical prices:** 230V version (1,400W) – £418.80; 115V version (800W) – £454.80 (inc VAT)
- **Web:** www.trend-uk.com



The Veritas Tenon Rip Saw:
excellence for a narrow market

Saw point

Despite its superb build quality and engineering credentials, this tenon rip saw from Veritas together with the dedicated depth stop appeal to a fairly limited market

The Tenon Rip Saw by Veritas is a work of art. Veritas excels in ergonomics, visual design and technical execution. As with the honing guides reviewed in GW323, this saw would work perfectly well sitting on a shelf in your living room just being looked at. This, however, is not its stated purpose.

'Its high-carbon steel blade is set with 9tpi, at a 14° rake using the typical 60° included angle – and a set of 0.003in on each side.' It will cut down the cheeks of tenons to a depth of 100mm, leaving a fine finish. But what else will it do? It will not cross-cut those same cheeks because the rip-set does not allow a cross-cut. It will not rip down a plank because the back will not permit it. When else do you want to saw down end-grain? When dovetailing, perhaps; but this is a large saw to wield (545mm approx. from stem to stern) if a beautifully balanced one, and here a conventional

dovetail saw is probably more appropriate. And another thing: how finely cut do the cheeks of a tenon need to be?

Specialised uses

The most obvious customer for this saw is the worker dedicated to handwork, possibly on site, such as a fine green oak framer. In the workshop it is easy enough to use a bandsaw, a router (in a jig) or even a table saw to cut the cheeks of tenons. I use a radial arm saw slung over to cut parallel to the table (GW321) and it works brilliantly, if noisily. I can imagine a framer delighting in the quiet accuracy of the Veritas saw; and a greater connection with materials than electrified woodworkers such as I enjoy.

The framer would not chuck this saw in a tool-bag at the end of the day. Firstly s/he would retouch the points of the teeth, for this saw is, of course, re-sharpenable. Secondly, s/he would not chuck it anywhere, but more likely wrap it in lightly oiled cloth and lay it like a baby in a protected zone, for this saw (are you sitting comfortably?) costs over £100.

Depth Stop

As if that isn't gasp-worthy enough, the depth gauge costs an extra £27. Again, it is cleverly

designed and well made, but comprises very little. A magnetic bar clings to the blade while a couple of rods, adjusted and fixed by knurled brass wheels, hold it in its vertical place. When the set depth of cut is reached, the saw will cut no more. But I can't help thinking that the fine framer I envisage using this lovely tool would not need – or want – a depth gauge. Proficiency and practice would be enough.

Conclusion

I've tried to conjure up a project requiring multiple end-grain cuts of precise depth where this combination of saw and guide would prove its usefulness, but I cannot. And I suspect I'm missing the point. You don't buy a saw like this because you have to; you buy it because you want to. You want to use it, if only occasionally; you want to keep it as part of your collection, and eventually you want to pass it on (it is, as the supplier volunteered, 'an heirloom tool'.) We all know the pleasure of an old quality tool. It has to start somewhere. **GW**

Specification:

Veritas 9tpi Tenon Rip Saw

- ▶ Choose from rip-cut (9tpi) or cross-cut (12tpi)
- ▶ Brass nut secures comfortable bubinga handle
- ▶ Good feel and balance
- ▶ 9tpi with a 14° rake using 60° included angle
- ▶ Kerf: 0.56mm
- ▶ Length of blade: 400mm
- ▶ High-carbon steel blades: 400mm long

Veritas Saw Depth Stop

- ▶ Effective way to control the depth of cut
- ▶ Simple to set up; fits virtually any tenon saw
- ▶ 230mm long aluminium rail with magnetic strip
- ▶ Brass knobs lock rail at the desired cut depth
- ▶ Range of adjustment: 60mm

- ▶ Typical prices: Rip Cut (9tpi) – £102.30; Cross Cut (12tpi) – £102.30; Veritas Saw Depth Stop – £27.04
- ▶ Web: www.brimarc.com



The Depth Stop: neat – but necessary?



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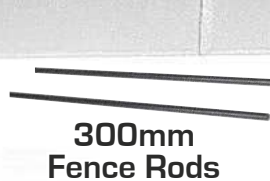
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Carpenter's best friend

Solid, comfortable and with a low centre of gravity, the **Festool HK 55 EQ** is a pleasure to use

This truly is a golden era for power tools; never have they performed so well nor suited user requirements so completely. The new rail saw from renowned German specialists Festool is a case in point. Designed purely with the on-site carpenter in mind, the combination of a robust and reliable plunge saw with the versatile accuracy of a lightweight rail is an irresistible solution. Proving the worth of lengthy research, stringent quality control and a loyal workforce, Festool has upped

the stakes again in the worldwide quest for improved performance and constant precision. That's not to say it's perfect, mind, but this particular sawing system is definitely heading in the right direction.

Solid & comfortable

It's a solid and comfortable fit in the hand and, although designed primarily for right-handers, it's not as cumbersome to use for lefties as some power tools can be. If anything, the improved

view of the blade could be considered an advantage by some of this particular minority. It shares most of the features common to a hand-held circular saw, and there's nothing to stop you using it freehand if you so wish; it functions just as well as a regular circ. Sharing a feature with a few other design-conscious manufacturers in the market, the user interactive elements of the tool are cast in the company's trade mark lime green colour (RAL 6018), and clearly identify all of the controls and adjusters.



The Festool HK 55 features a solid and comfortable build format with a low centre of gravity



Depth adjustment is precise and with an easy-to-read scale



This lever controls the blade guard and will flip it back with ease



The hex key for changing the fine-kerfed blade is tucked away in the handle



The guide rail, showing the plastic edge strip – a darker colour would have shown up better

Plunge facility

There's a standard soft grip handle from which the thumb slide can be reached and enables the trigger to be pulled. This activates a short slow start for the motor, the running speed of which can be readily set prior to operations courtesy of a rolling switch nearby. Speeds vary from very slow indeed to the familiar brisk rate to be found on most other similar machines. It's a comfortable saw to use, especially with the forward-mounted handle or tote, and its weight and balance inspire confidence right from the start. This model is the 55 – the 55 being the maximum depth of cut from the blade (without the rail). The cutting depth can be set from the start by means of a sprung lever, a clear scale, and a positive adjustment action. The saw also has a plunge facility, useful for piercing cuts as might be found on a kitchen worktop, for example. The saw is first set to depth then, on releasing the plunge lever, the body of the saw lifts off from the base from whence it can be readily plunged into the workpiece.

The rail

The rail, available in three different lengths, features a sliding stop on one side, which enables the user to make a variety of angled cuts (on either hand) and sets the whole system up as a serious rival to a portable chop saw. Common to this type of saw, there's a plastic strip at the cutting edge of the rail, which is lightly trimmed on setting up for the first time; from then on the blade will give the cleanest of cuts and with no break-out on cross-grain work.

Blade guards on hand-held circular saws can often prove troublesome, frequently getting snagged on even the smallest of obstructions. You definitely don't want to be employing excessive force when using a power saw (and don't even think about taking the blade guard or riving knife off!) so it's always necessary to stop and attend to the problem. Most saws only have a tab on the actual guard itself, but the Festool saw boasts a geared lever, which flips the guard out of the way from the safety and comfort of the handle. Top stuff.



Speed control: at its fastest, it remains un-scary

Saw & rail connection

One feature I wasn't sure of at first is the way the saw and rail stay connected throughout; after each cut the rail springs softly back into place in readiness for the next job. This conjoining soon grew on me throughout the day on site, however, and I realised it was actually a boon for awkward repeat cuts or when you can't spare another hand.

Conclusion

A terrific cutting system; after the initial shock of parting with the money wears off you'll never regret buying one. **GW**

Specification:

- ▶ Power: 1,200W
- ▶ Idle speed: 2,000-5,200rpm
- ▶ Blade diameter: 160mm
- ▶ Angular range: 0-50°
- ▶ Cutting depth: 0°/90°-0-55mm
- ▶ Weight: 4.4kg

- ▶ Typical price: £387
- ▶ Web: www.festool.co.uk



On site the saw really proved its worth, and was judged indispensable. It saved me having to drag my chop saw along, too

THE GW VERDICT

- ▶ **PROS:**
Accurate; efficient; versatile
- ▶ **CONS:**
The plastic edge strip on the rail could be better adhered
- ▶ **RATING:** 4.5 out of 5

Clarke

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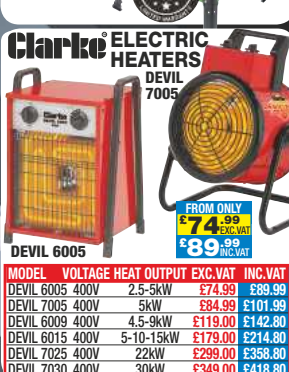


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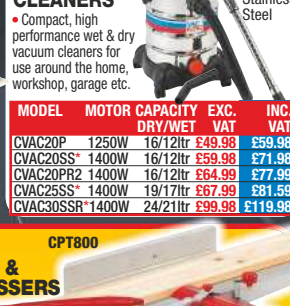


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- Induction motors
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Choosing & using a planer/thicknesser

As **John Bullar** shows, a planer/thicknesser takes much of the donkeywork out of preparing wood for furniture making, and here he gives a comprehensive account of how to choose and use this great machine

Furniture makers like to start with smooth, flat, straight-edged boards, of precisely the right width, thickness and surface quality for their fine furniture.

The machine we are looking at in this article does two jobs: firstly, acting as a planer it will flatten one rough uneven face or edge on a dried timber board,



PIC 2. Dried timber often has a hollow or cupped surface, which must be placed downwards on the planer so it will not rock



PIC 3. Timber is fed slowly from right to left, over the planer tables and cutter beneath the yellow guard

and secondly, as a thicknesser it will make the opposite face or edge flat and completely parallel to the first one.

We will look at how the main parts of a planer/thicknesser work and the pros and cons of some of the options available, using examples from different makes. You can of course buy a separate planer and a thicknesser instead of one of these dual-function machines. But, as most furniture makers want to do both jobs together, the combined planer/thicknesser makes good sense and saves space.

As with any woodworking machine, the planer/thicknesser needs an efficient dust extractor alongside.

The main components

The action of every planer/thicknesser is centred on the cutterblock – a rotating cylinder with typically two or three long straight blades or ‘knives’ clamped around it.

On top of the machine is a pair of tables used for planing. As the cutterblock rotates, timber is pushed over the top of it from the infeed table on the right to the outfeed table



PIC 4. The thicknessing table can be raised or lowered in height with a handwheel

on the left. The infeed table is adjusted to be a millimetre or two below the top of the cutter, while the outfeed table is level with it. The cutter guard may either be adjustable in height to just clear the wood, or designed to automatically ride over the wood.

Beneath the cutterblock is a third table used for thicknessing. With its underside previously planed flat, timber is laid on this table and fed into the machine. The distance between this table and the underside of the cutterblock is adjusted to set how thick the board will come out.

Planing timber

To operate the planer you must lay timber on the infeed table and slide it with the palm of your hands under the guard and over the cutterblock onto the outfeed table. At first both hands are kept on the right side until enough wood emerges under the guard to place the flat of the left hand there. Finally, as the tail end of the board passes under the guard, both palms are used on the left side.

To plane the edge of a board it is pressed vertically against the side fence and the



PIC 5. Timber is passed from left to right beneath anti-kickback fingers, grabbed by the serrated infeed roller, passed under the cutterblock, then out beneath the smooth outfeed roller



PIC 6. This larger machine has both planer tables flipped up, allowing you to see more of the wood being thickened



PIC 7. This compact machine is thickening large section timber with one planer table flipped up



PIC 8. The compact machine has a rubber infeed roller rather than a serrated one before the cutter

cutter guard is adjusted to just let the wood through. Fingers and thumbs are hooked over the fence to keep them safe.

The most important things to watch are that fingers, hair, clothing, etc. cannot be dragged under the guard or onto the cutterblock. Also avoid trying to remove too much wood in one pass.

Thickening timber

For thickening, the machine operates automatically as rollers move wood over the table beneath the cutterblock. Having previously planed the underside flat, you hold the board level on the thickening table and feed it in until the rollers grab it.

Again, only remove a millimetre or two at each pass and do not allow fingers, etc. underneath unless the machine has been electrically isolated.

Flip-up planer tables

Some manufacturers design their planer tables to be flipped up when the machine is used for thickening; this gives you a better view of the wood and easier handling.



PIC 9. End snipe is a common problem when using a thicknesser. Snipe results from the board drooping as it leaves the machine

Traditional planer/thicknessers have rigidly fixed top tables that also minimise vibration.

Feed mechanisms

Rotating rollers feed wood under the cutter while it is thickening. The infeed roller needs to grip tightly so the wood does not slip or judder against the force of the cutter, and this requires firm pressure and a high friction surface, usually serrated or sometimes covered in rubber.

A common problem when thickening is 'end snipe' where the board is thinned slightly more as the tail end passes the cutter. Sometimes this is due to bad adjustment of the rollers, but often it happens when a long board is poorly supported as it leaves the machine.

Cutter mechanisms

The cutterblock may either be fitted with re-sharpenable knives held by adjustable clamps, or with proprietary disposable knives that slide in a fixed position.

A special jig is essential to maintain the straightness of knives when sharpening.



PIC 10. Conventional flat, wide blades – 'knives' – are fitted in a cylindrical cutterblock where they can be adjusted in height or removed for sharpening

Re-sharpening your own knives saves some cost and removes the temptation to continue using them after they have lost their razor-sharp edges. On the other hand, disposable knives obviously save work and they come in a variety of steel alloys and carbide for use with different materials.

Conclusions

A planer/thicknesser takes much of the donkeywork out of preparing wood for furniture making. Provided it is well maintained and adjusted it guarantees the quality of surfaces and edges the maker has to work with, but as with any machine, it is essential to read the manufacturer's safety instructions before use. **GW**

NEXT TIME

In GW327, John will look at making lapped dovetails, sometimes known as 'half blind dovetails' – the sort used for traditional drawers. When elegantly made, these are seen as a mark of fine furniture



PIC 11. Laminated Tersa knives can be slid into the cutterblock on this machine without adjustment



Household Words

An Englishman's home is his Welsh castle: after last month's theatrics, **Dave Roberts** is back at work on The Old Vic'

Household Words – the weekly publication founded and edited by Dickens – precluded nothing as possible subject matter; its contents ranged from poetry to popular science by way of soapboxing about domestic current affairs, and correspondence from around the world. In pursuing this brief, the paper's aspiration was, to use Dickens' words, "to be interesting, of course; if somewhat romantic, so much the better; we can't be too wise, but we must be very agreeable." This catholic appetite and amiable curiosity strikes me as a rather attractive model, not least because working wood – from fine cabinetmaking down to the more workaday stuff done with my tools – often touches on disciplines other than woodworking, and many materials besides timber.

Stonewalled

While preparing (belatedly) to begin tackling The Old Vic's window frames, for example, I again found myself wishing that I'd paid more attention to chemistry, and understood more about the forces that bind materials. The problem is a slightly daunting task that's part of the grand scheme to reinstate an 1860s approach to managing damp and moisture – stripping the outside of The Old Vic' of its coat of 'plastic' masonry paint, replacing any cement pointing underneath with lime mortar, and then repainting the house with a breathable lime wash. However it's approached, the job won't be a weekend's work, but I've been struggling to decide where to begin...

Heat is my preferred method for removing paint, but a hot-air gun just melts the masonry paint without breaking its bond with the stone; similarly, the friction of powered mechanical methods – surface-preparation wheels, for instance – also serves to put heat into the paint, first melting the stuff, and then smearing it over the stone.

I don't want to use an abrasive medium to blast off the paint for several reasons, not least because I don't want to damage or alter the texture of the axe-hewn stone. There are some 'sympathetic' blasting media, of course – sodium carbonate (so-called 'soda blasting'), is an example – but even so it'd be a fiercely expensive process, and still not without risks to the stone that would make the Conservation Officer (and me) twitch.

Chemical stripping, therefore, seemed to be the only way to go, but proprietary masonry paint removers – whether of the older caustic or solvent varieties, or the newer 'greener' products such as Home Strip, Peel Away or the Rawlins' strippers – cost upwards of £7 per litre, which, in some cases, buys you about one square metre of coverage. So, given the area involved at The Old Vic',



PIC 1. Drastic action: the sodium hydroxide gel lifted off even the heaviest of the masonry paint (the yellow paint on the stone at the bottom of the picture), tho' it wasn't pleasant to use



PIC 2. Steam-powered solution: using steam required more elbow grease, but is an altogether more pleasant method, with fewer risks to user and environment

I've been looking for a method that will hopefully cost just pence per square metre.

The chemistries of the green products are something I need to explore, but in the meantime a solvent as obvious as petrol would do the job of softening the paint and encouraging it to loosen its bond with the stone, and so make it possible to manually wire-brush it off. In the quantities required, however, the idea sounded rather, well... incendiary. The alternative would be to dissolve the chemical bonds within the paint using a caustic: a solution of sodium hydroxide (also known as caustic soda, or lye) will pickle paint and reduce it to a sludge that can be hosed off onto hessian for disposal. The trick, however, lies in making the stripping medium stick to walls while it works. To this end, I thought I'd hit upon a recipe of Mary Berry cleverness when I tried modifying a caustic solution with wallpaper paste to create a gel that will stick to vertical surfaces, but it seems that I'm years too late to shout "Eureka!" Even so, the sodium hydroxide gel is very cheap to make - far cheaper than Nitromors - and when tested on small areas of stone it proved to be extremely effective (**Pic.1**), so you may want to file away the gelling idea against the day you have to tackle an awkward wood-stripping job (but first see 'Would I lye to you?').

However, after cleaning up and disposing of the paint sludge created by the caustic paste, I began to have serious doubts about the wisdom of spending a couple of winters in protective clothing stripping the outside of The Old Vic - often over paths and doorways, and with animals and other people coming and going - using the chemical equivalent of a rattlesnake sponge. In the end, it was a publication from the State Heritage Office of the Government of Western Australia (Dickens would've loved the over-the-horizon quality of that), which provided an altogether more benign solution:

BLEACHED, BURNED & 'BLASTED



British turner and carver, Eleanor Lakelin, who was interviewed by GW back in 2013 and whose work is widely exhibited and collected, uses both heat and sandblasting to create what she calls the 'landscapes' of her work: the one creates a contrast with the often bleached surfaces of her pieces; the other softens her carved shapes, and exploits the differences of hardness within the timbers to create contours that reflect the processes of erosion in work that draws upon natural, and often geological forms for its inspiration



Visit www.eleanorlakelin.com for more on Eleanor and her work; and since we're talking chemistry, you can look up oxalic acid's uses in bleaching wood, too

"Steam at low pressure applied to the paint via a hose capped with a concentrator of the type normally used for stripping wallpaper can be very useful in the stripping of paint." It also suggests that, "steam in conjunction with methylated spirits can be effective in removing multiple applications of old emulsion paint." And d'you know, they're right: I didn't try the meths mix, but straight steam from my wallpaper stripper lifted the paint, and will do the large-scale job no more slowly than the caustic method, with all its necessary precautions, but with none of the health risks or quantities of hazardous waste (**Pic.2**).

It's ironic, of course, that heated water should be part of the process of helping the house to dry - especially after last month's remarks on water damage. However, enthused by this most uncomplicated of solutions, I decided to put more steam to work inside the house in a spot of furniture repair. >

Photographs courtesy of Ester Segarra



PIC 3. Claw marks, water-damage, and a tired wax finish make for a fair test of steam's ability to revive damaged timber



PIC 4. Mid-steaming: you can see how the scores are starting to recover; the colour becomes more even (and water marks vanish) as the old wax is removed



PIC 5. Even allowing for variations in lighting on different days, the steaming and a light sanding has worked wonders in erasing damage from the re-polished lid

A swell solution

One of the advantages to simple materials and finishes – in this case, the waxed lid of a pine blanket box that'd had the misfortune of being the right height for a dog to see out of a window – is that some damage can be repaired equally simply (**Pic.3**).

Claws being harder than softwood, the lid had been badly marked, but – also as a function of it being softwood, perhaps – there were very few broken fibres; they were instead only heavily 'bruised'. I didn't want to sand the lid if I could help it; exposing fresh timber would change the colour by stripping away the 'tannin tan' created by 20 years of daylight; in any case, some of the scores were so deep that removing them would've been more of a job for a plane than a sander, and would've definitely have removed too much material. Instead of working the existing surface down to the bottom of the marks, then, I planned to bring the bottom of the marks back up to the surface by driving moisture into the fibres and encouraging them to swell, and so lift out the dents.

Experimenting with nothing more than an ordinary tea-towel and an electric iron – these are household words, after all – I found that a single thickness of tea-towel, kept thoroughly damp but not to the point of being dripping wet, and the lowest 'steam' setting on the iron (an inaccurate measure, but it gives you an idea), generated steam with enough vigour to drive itself through the cloth; keeping the heated sole moving prevents any scorching, meanwhile. As with the paint process above, adding a dash of methylated spirits to the water will apparently help the steam to penetrate the timber.

As the steam heated the lid, much of its wax finish softened and lifted away with the cloth (**Pic.4**), which had the effect of taking away the water stains that the finish had collected over the years – or, more accurately I suppose, it turned the finish into one, uniform area of 'water-damage'. The aim, of course, was only to drive moisture into the surface, and I kept a weather eye on the glue joints in the lid, that I guessed are made with PVA, which softens with steam and hot water (a reaction that has uses of its own, of course). However, the heat involved in steaming also encourages the wood to dry, making it possible to proceed steadily, applying moisture,

and giving the fibres time to respond and dry a little before adding more steam; as areas answered to the moisture, I narrowed my efforts to the more stubborn marks.

In this way, almost all of the dents were raised; the

WOULD I LYE TO YOU?

Sodium hydroxide is a strong alkali, and will cause burns that are worse in their way than acid – it's a corrosive that just keeps on eating. Though it has many valuable industrial uses, the fact that bulk quantities are available over-the-counter is a source of surprise, and in current times should perhaps be a cause of worry, too.

The penny-sized scar I have – a sodium hydroxide splash that worked around the cuff of a protective glove – serves me as a caution when using the stuff; you, too, should keep my ideas regarding its use safely at arm's length until you've read the materials safety data sheet (MSDS) for sodium hydroxide yourself, and made your own decisions about the risks and necessary precautions. Above all, though, protect your eyes

remaining marks were confined to disrupted fibres in the softer earlywood, but were eventually brought close enough to the surface for them to be carefully sanded out (**Pic.5**).

Once the lid had dried thoroughly, circumspect use of coarser grades of abrasive cut away all but the faintest traces of damage, before working through to the finer grades. The final finish was laid over the top of a coat of shellac sanding sealer by applying uncoloured wax with 1,500 grit Webrax; I like the way that the final cut made by the abrasive, and the way it works in the wax while its open mesh lifts off excess polish and any residual dust, leaves a uniform coating that can be buffed to a soft shine.

Yes, the lid's final colour is slightly lighter than the rest of the box, but this is due not only to the removal of some UV-tanned wood, but also in part to the removal of the dirt that was inevitably ingrained in the old wax, as well as the fact the lid is now more polished than the rest of the box, and therefore brighter. The remainder of the piece will lighten when cleaned and re-waxed with Webrax, and I'm happy to let time and the action of daylight soften whatever differences remain.

Talking of wax, I tripped across a couple of recipes for making wax finishes – one water-based, the other turpentine-based – among the almost alchemical formulae in the polishing section at www.restoration-advice.org (where, if talk of petrol and jellied caustic has made you doubt my methods, you'll also find corroborative advice on steaming dents in wood). The recipes' thunder belongs to Restoration Advice, of course, so I won't steal it by reproducing them here, but I did notice that the water-based polish can be modified to include ammonia, which will deepen the colour of oak when applied – another little dash of household chemistry. **GW**



NEXT MONTH

In starting to repair one of the chairs that'll be my first hide glue project, and perhaps a test bed for some paint recipes, I've been using what I think is a mechanical repair technique with decorative potential

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All wrapped up for Christmas

Perfect for Christmas, **Tristan Dare** takes us through the steps for creating this wonderful wooden box complete with handmade ribbon

If you want to impress everybody you know, then learn how to make this handmade ribbon box with simple but detailed steps, which will show you everything you need to know to get another step forward. Taken from *Creating Wooden Boxes on the Scroll Saw*, published by Fox Chapel Woodworking, this was a very fun project to make, and with me being only 14-years-old, it was great to see that it made quite an impression on the people I showed it to – let's get started!

MATERIALS & TOOLS REQUIRED

Please note that pieces have been labelled for ease of following, and are referred to as such in the main text:

MATERIALS

- A. Purpleheart – 2 off (70 × 6 × 140mm)
- B. Walnut – 2 off (76 × 6 × 70mm)
- C. Curly walnut (76 × 6 × 150mm)
- D. Honduran mahogany (140 × 6 × 64mm)
- E. Alder – 2 off (125 × 6 × 76)
- E2. Honduran mahogany (125 × 6 × 76mm)
- F. Alder – 2 off (25 × 305 × 6mm)
- F2. Honduran mahogany (25 × 305 × 6mm)

TOOLS

- Scrollsaw
- Abrasives from 120-1,000 grit
- Scraper
- Wood glue
- Palm sander
- Clear Coat (spray lacquer)
- Disc sander (other tools can be used if you don't have one available)







PIC 1. Choosing the wood



PIC 2. Measuring 140mm (5.5in)



PIC 3. Cutting the wood using the scrollsaw



PIC 4. The curly maple I used for the project...



PIC 5. ... and here's the Honduran mahogany



PIC 6. Glue sides A to sides B



PIC 7. Make sure sides A are on either side of side panels B



PIC 8. Glue panel D to the bottom of your box



PIC 9. Use a scraper and/or hand plane to clean up the outside

Cutting your wood

The first step is to cut all your wood to size. This is going to be a small box, so you won't need a great deal, and all the lengths are given in the sidebar on page 30. For the box shape I used the following timbers: Honduran mahogany, walnut, curly walnut, and purpleheart, although you can use whatever suits you, depending on the varieties you have to hand. I cut all my pieces using a scrollsaw, and refined the edges that needed to be straight on the disc sander. Note: all these pieces will be labelled for ease of following, so pay attention to how they are laid out.

Glue & clean up

After your wood is all cut to length, you can begin to glue the box together. **Pics.6-9** will help you configure how the box is assembled. The first step is to glue sides A to sides B (**Pic.6**),

making sure sides A are on either side of panels B (**Pic.7**). Next, glue panel D to the bottom of your box (**Pic.8**), checking to ensure you don't smear glue on your inside wall. Save side C for later, then use a scraper and/or hand plane to clean up the outside (**Pic.9**).

Make your bows

While your box is drying, you can make your bows. These are fairly easy to do, so don't be too scared to give it a try. You need to take pieces E and E2 and glue them together (**Pic.10**). You want to make sure that E2 is placed in between both parts of piece E. Refer to **Pics.10-17**, and at the same time glue pieces F and F2 together, making sure F is on either side of F2. Try not to skimp on the glue – you'll require some extra so you get squeeze out, which will ensure a good bond. Once it's glued and dry, you can trace your

template (**Pic.11**). This template was taken from the book mentioned earlier (see details at end of article), and is free to photocopy. Once it's traced, begin by drilling a blade insert hole (**Pic.12**), then proceed to cut the outside of the shape first. You will need six of these, so ensure to make enough. Once you've cut them out, insert the blade through your entry hole and start cutting out the inside of the shape. Try to be precise on the inside, otherwise you can choose to refine it with abrasives. Once your shapes are cut, they should come together. To refine the shape, take the ribbon to the disc sander and/or use abrasives, and begin refining the outside surfaces. Try to get it as thin as 2-3mm to ensure it resembles a bow.

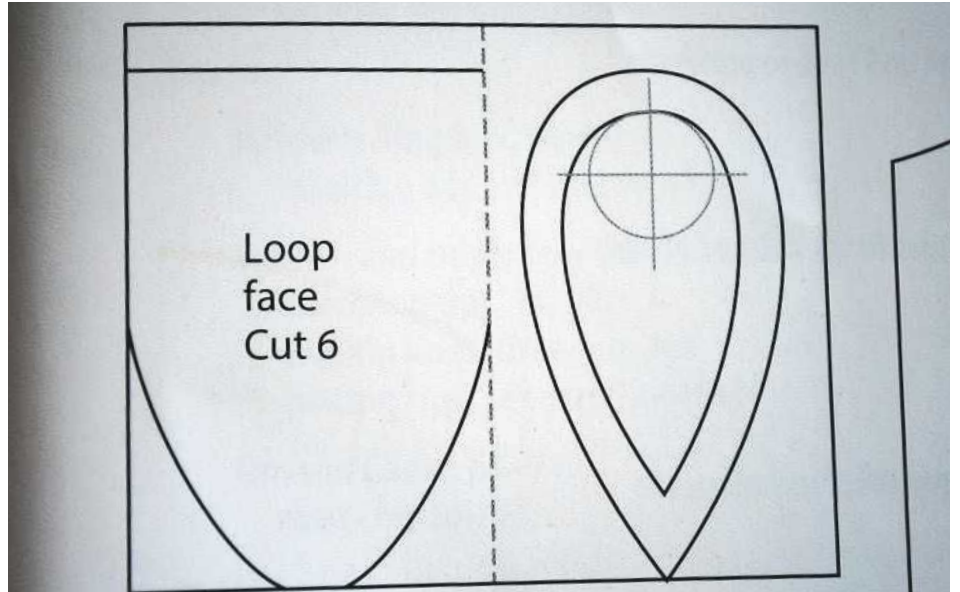
After you've completed the bows, take the glued F pieces and cut 3mm strips – you'll need these for a future step.



PIC 10. Glue the strips together



PIC 12. Drilling the ribbon hole



PIC 11. The print template required for the ribbon construction



PIC 13. Cutting out the petals



PIC 14. Cutting out the inside of the shape



PIC 15. Ribbon petals



PIC 16. Refining the shape of one of the petals

Make the lid

Now you need to make your lid. I used piece C for this and chose to use curly walnut (**Pic.18**). This will be the piece that makes the whole box 'pop', as you can see in **Pics.18-22**. You need to cut two pieces of any type of wood, making sure they measure $140 \times 6 \times 46\text{mm}$. You want to glue these 6mm, top and bottom, away from the perimeter of the lid (**Pic.19**). Make sure the lid fits snugly into the box before the glue fully sets (**Pic.20**), and once dry, put the lid on the box. You may get some overhang (**Pic.21**), but you can use a disc sander (or tool of your choice) to trim this down (**Pic.22**). Simply mark the overhang and trim off the excess material, although it's advisable to experiment with a scrap piece of timber first.



PIC 17. All materials gathered together



PIC 18. The piece of curly walnut used to make the lid

Attaching the ribbons

When attaching the bow, you'll need to experiment a little – this step is very tricky, so be careful! You need to lay the pieces of bow out before gluing them so there's five on the bottom (Pic.23). It helps to picture a star when you're laying this out. Make sure they're well aligned so they don't look sloppy, and once happy, glue on your top piece, which should cover the entire middle of the bow (Pic.24). You don't want anything to show and give away the secret of their construction. Once it's setting, go back and tweak it, moving pieces around as required, as once dry, there's no fixing mistakes.

Sides of your lid

Now you want to glue small pieces of the strips to the sides of the lid. Make sure they're as tall as the ribbon and lid combined (16mm). You will use pieces from side F and glue these to all four sides, which will give the impression of the ribbon going all the way round the box. As I cut these on my scrollsaw, mine weren't perfect, so

I took the pieces to the disc sander and sanded them down so they were about 1.5mm-thick (Pic.27). They have to be fairly thin to accurately resemble a ribbon – go as thin as you like, but aim for around 1.5-3mm.

Add a finish

The box is now practically complete! You can hand sand it from 400-1,000 grit before you apply your finish. I wanted mine to be really glossy, so I chose to use spray lacquer/Clear Coat as a finish (Pic.28). I applied about three coats, although you can apply more or less depending on the finish you're looking for (Pic.29). Ensure to keep shaking the can, which will prevent the lacquer from coming out in drops and not giving such a good finish.

And that's it, you're done. This project is sure to impress even the best woodworkers, and it's also ideal for Christmas. Made using 100% exotic woods, this project is fairly easy to make, so virtually any woodworker with the appropriate tools can give it a try. **GW**



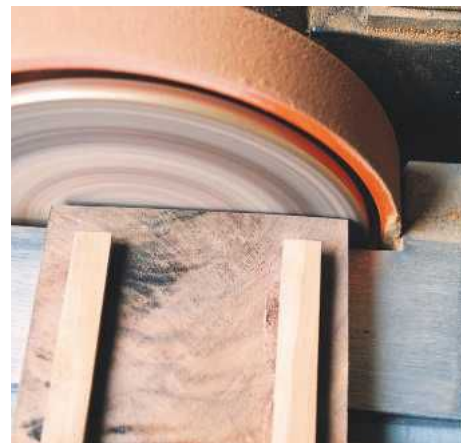
PIC 19. The two pieces glued top and bottom, away from the perimeter of the lid



PIC 20. Make sure the lid fits snugly into the box before the glue fully sets



PIC 21. If you have an overhang on the lid, this can be sanded down



PIC 22. Trimming the lid edges down on the disc sander



PIC 23. The five components of the bow in place



PIC 24. The top piece should cover the entire middle of the bow



PIC 25. Aligning the edges of the bow to ensure they correctly continue down the side of the box



PIC 26. Tracing with a pencil



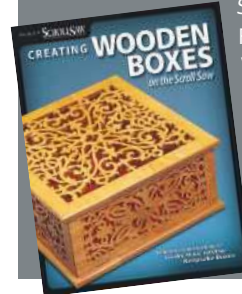
PIC 27. Sanding the strip to bring it down to the required size



PIC 28. I used a clear gloss spray to finish my box

FURTHER INFO

Want to see more from Tristan? Visit his YouTube channel – www.youtube.com/burlywoodworks – or website – www.burlywoodworks.com – for more projects like this one. The ribbon box shown in this article was taken from *Creating Wooden Boxes on the Scroll Saw*, published by Fox Chapel Woodworking, which is available to buy via Amazon for around £13



PIC 29. The box once sprayed and left to dry



PIC 30. The completed ribbon box – a perfect Christmas gift

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Beginners' two-day course – making a bird house or spice rack

The beginners' course is designed to give attendees the knowledge required to start making their own items at home or begin their path along David's series of wood courses, to learn more advanced techniques. Attendees are given the choice of making a spice rack for the kitchen or tool rack for the workshop. There is also a demonstration on how to (safely) use a multitude of hand and power tools, from table saws and hand planes to sanders and biscuit jointers, not forgetting the most important tool – the measuring tape (or ruler).



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Sunday 21–Friday 26 October 2018
Sunday 18–Friday 23 November 2018

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Glenn Lucas demonstrates his master woodturning skills during visit to Tormek

Professional woodturner Glenn Lucas, famous for his bowls turned from native Irish wood, recently visited Tormek's sharpening studio and delivered a day of inspiration.

The demonstration was open to anyone with an interest in woodturning and keen to watch Glenn in action. Visitors came from all parts of Sweden and, in front of an enthusiastic audience, Glenn demonstrated how he turns his classics bowls; the same bowls that have become his trademark in galleries and exhibitions across the globe. During the day, he also shared his most valuable tips in woodturning and the sharpening of different tools.

About his visit, Glenn said: "I very much enjoyed my visit to Tormek in Sweden. Having worked with a Tormek for many years, I was delighted to get a tour of the headquarters and witness firsthand the quality control and close attention to detail. I think what impressed me most was the pride in workmanship and the strong team spirit among the staff. My all-day demonstration to a full house took place in their bright, well-equipped sharpening studio; I made a Viking bowl, a platter, and discussed my use of Tormek systems personally in my production of bowls and in my own busy classroom in Ireland. With my passion for quality tools, I was delighted to be invited to visit Tormek. The Swedish audience at the demo were very enthusiastic and left me with an appetite to return."

For more information about Tormek products, please visit www.brimarc.com. **GW**



From left to right: Pontus Gyllby, Wolfgang Hess, Glenn Lucas, Stig Reitan and Sébastien Ehnevid

DEFINING TIMBER DEFECTS

Peter Bishop looks at the definition of a timber defect, gives examples of each one and also shows ways in which these can sometimes be incorporated as opposed to discarded



A live knot that has been turned into a feature



A partly dead knot in oak

This is an interesting subject because defining what a 'defect' is can be a tad controversial at times. It's a bit like the old saying "one person's meat is another's poison." Simplistically there are the purists who would never consider using any component that had any signs of defect such as a knot, split or discolouration, and at the other extreme there are those who don't seem to notice if such aberrations (that's a joke) are included in their masterpiece. In fact they can be called 'features' and used to enhance and highlight in some cases.

So, perhaps, in this little treatise we should forget the word defect and simply describe a number of naturally occurring

inclusions that we, as woodworkers, should be able to identify and then decide how we will deal with them. We'll start with the most easily identified one and then move on.

The knot

There are two primary classifications of knots – live or dead – with a number of sub-categories popularly known as, say, tight or loose, pin, cluster or star. However, when grading timber, these classifications are much more controlled – we'll discuss this at some later date.

But what is a knot? It's simply a cross-section through a branch that has been included within the plank when it's been converted from a log. A 'live' knot is a

branch that has been cut while it is still growing while a 'dead' knot is one that has ceased to grow at some point in the past. If you think about a larch tree, for example, you will see some short, stub-like old branches towards the lower end of the trunk while at the top the branches have green, living leaves on them.

If a knot is live it is most likely sound and will often be included within the project piece. Apart from the look of such a



The true proof of the craftsman's love for juniper: some of the knots on top of the table were added and enhanced



Natural Building Specialists' mulberry bench makes the most of natural features such as bark and knots



Joints rotted out





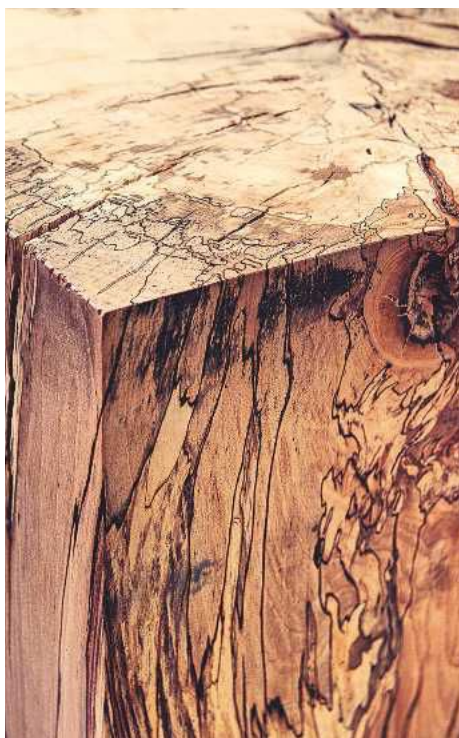
component, the only other consideration would be 'can the knot be planed without the surface breaking out and, if so, does this matter?' With a dead knot there are a few more issues to address. Will the said knot or knots disfigure the component to such an extent that it becomes useless or structurally affects the finished piece? If it does it may need to be rejected; if not then it could be used. I suspect that most projects, unless the component is hidden, will not >



Rot damage



A piece of spalted timber mounted on the lathe, ready to be turned into a vase



Spalted beech cube table by Ed Brooks Furniture

benefit from a gaping hole where a dead knot used to be.

Rot

Wood rot can be found in a variety of forms that will range from a softening of the wood surface or structure through to a discolouration of the object piece. Rot can sometimes be found in conjunction with a knot. A branch may have been dead for some time before the trunk was converted and rot



An end split

had set in. Most rot, that softens the cellular structure, is there because the primary planks have not been looked after correctly during the drying process. Discolouration of wood surfaces can be found in a number of forms. Some such as 'spalting' can be considered a feature and others such as, say, blue stain, a problem.

Wood rotting is part of the process that occurs during a fungal attack. These attacks occur when all the factors associated with fungal growth come together. What is generally needed is moisture, warmth and an undisturbed environment. Planks of wood that are cut from a log and not stacked or stored correctly will most often be damaged by rot. In other cases the living tree itself may have a primary fungal attack that results in some sort of staining. We often see spalted beech where the trunk can be affected before and after felling. In some instances, this veined-like fungal

discolouration can appear to be quite attractive and, providing the attack has ceased, will not cause any future problems.

Splits & shakes

A split generally goes along the grain and a shake across it. Sometimes these are clearly visible on the surface of the wood, sometimes not. Splits usually occur during the drying process while shakes may be caused during growth or felling.

Imagine a series of random, partly sealed tubes, running in one direction and all interconnected. This, simplistically, is the structure of wood. While a tree grows, nutrients in water move around the trunk in these tubes - cells as they are known. Once in plank form the moisture needs to be removed in a controlled fashion. However, what tends to happen is that the moisture vacates the cells from the easiest exit point it can. It'll go out of the tube from the end



Cutting round end splits



Filling splits with solid wood



Splits that have opened out

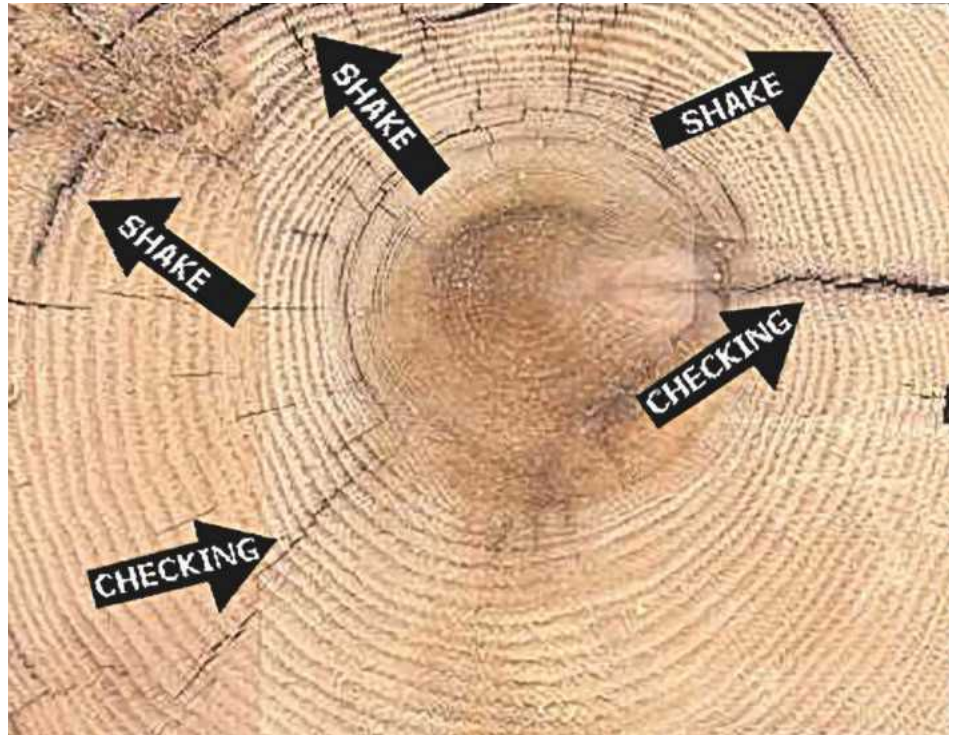


Filling woodworm holes – a thankless task!

or side. If these are cut through it will leave a lot quicker. Where are they cut through the most? On the ends, of course, and this is where a lot of splits will occur.

As the moisture evaporates the wood shrinks quicker at the ends and something has to give, so splits result. The same applies to the surface. If the moisture leaves too quickly, then the face of the plank shrinks against the core and splits. There are many variations on this theme but this is the core reason why splits appear. All we can do to stop this process is to try and control how the moisture is lost. Slowing down the surface loss by reducing the gap between layers is one way; sealing the ends with wax or paint is another.

Shakes, across the grain, can be caused when a growing tree is subjected to a violent trauma, such as a tropical storm. Whipping of the trunk fractures the structure which, if left to recover, may be overgrown with



Examples of shake and checking

Photograph courtesy of www.vermonttimberworks.com



So badly affected it's friable



The common furniture beetle (*Anobium punctatum*) in situ

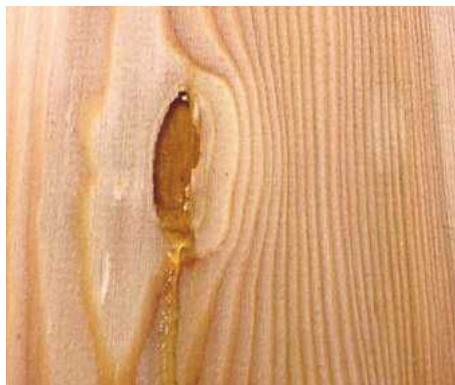


Extensive woodworm damage



These resin pockets are timber faults that render the top useless unless one does a bit of nifty work to get around the problem

Photograph courtesy of petertrueguitars.blogspot.co.uk



A great example of a resin pocket in this piece of Syberian larch destined for a window frame



Trend's TEMP/TRKX8MM Template Timber Repair kit allows oval pockets to be routed, to disguise ugly resin pockets and knots in timber

further layers of sound wood. Some shakes occur, especially in tropical hardwoods, when the tree is felled. The shock on impact with the ground causes a rupture across the grain. You'll spot a shake by a fracture line, most likely on a planed surface.

Splits can be simply cut out or off. If they don't affect the structure or aesthetic finish, then they can be left. They can, of course, become features as well. A split that is filled with a contrasting colour, be that solid wood or stopper, can be attractive. Shakes are not repairable and, depending on size and frequency, should not be used as part of a structural component.

Woodworm

These wee beasties deserve a treatise all to themselves! Worm, of course, is a misnomer, the incorrect name by which wood boring beetle attack is named. A bit like fungi, woodworm (we'll still call it that) only occurs when the conditions are right. If you have it,

or want to stop it, you can freeze them, apply extremes of heat, poison them, or, if you really want to, just leave them alone. The problem with the latter is you might end up with a pile of beetle droppings!

There is a number of different types of woodworm but they all operate on a similar life cycle, and, of course, there are no worms! Here in the UK the cycle begins in Spring. Depending on the specie of borer, the beetle emerges from the wood anytime between March through to May or June. This is the time to put an old newspaper under your cherished piece of antique furniture and see if little piles of dust appear. Once the beetle has emerged they look for a mate. As soon as the female has been fertilised she finds a suitable crack, crevice or rough surface that you won't see and lays hundreds of eggs. These then hatch out into little grubs, with jaws disproportionately larger than their bodies, and bore into the wood. These grubs – 'worms' – then

stay hidden, chewing away madly, for anything from three to five years! This is when the damage is done. When they are mature they will bore towards the surface, turn into a chrysalis and await the spring. From the chrysalis they emerge as a beetle, bore out and start all over again.

Different types of woodworm will produce different patterns of damage. This is one of several ways in which to determine which little devils have infested your prized possession or stock of wood. From the wood pile, if you can eradicate the woodworm and feel confident it will cause no further damage, then the affected pieces may still be used. Depending on the extent of the attack you could cut out and patch or fill the individual holes. If the wood is too 'friable', soft and liable to collapse, the bonfire or wood burning stove is the best solution.

Resin pockets

These are most often found in softwoods but



Warped Wood Ink-Fuzed Decorative Throw Pillow by Design Skinz



The best way to get around a warped board is to strip it into narrow pieces



A slightly warped table top

Photograph courtesy of sajanabraham.com



Sight down the face of a board. If the opposite ends aren't parallel, it's twisted. Put it back
 Photograph courtesy of *Popular Woodworking* magazine



Sealing end-grain with glue



Straightening a wane-edged board

can occur in hardwoods as well. They're usually a sticky mess that requires something like white spirits to get off your hands. In some hardwoods, if they've been cooked enough in the drying process, they may appear as a hard, crystal-like substance. Structurally, unless large, they don't cause a problem, but aesthetically, they probably need to be cut out or removed.

Other defects

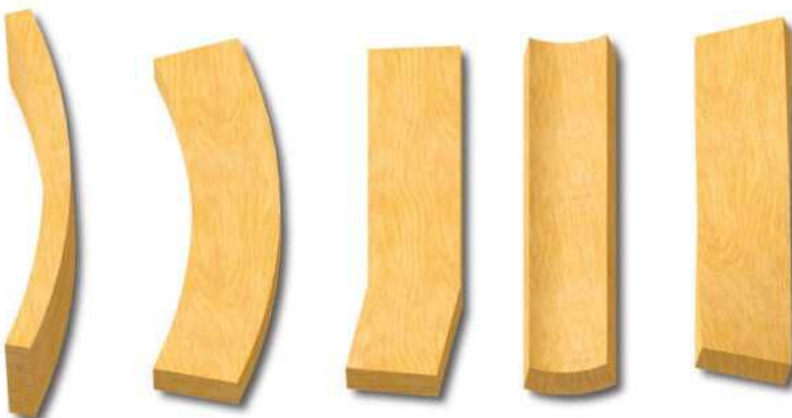
There are a few more defects that could be added such as warping, twisting, sapwood and wane - bark, for example - but the key to dealing with most so-called defects is to assess their impact on the project in hand and then take appropriate action as necessary. If they don't affect and could possibly enhance the finish, then they can be left alone. If they need to be removed or replaced, then so be it. It's really just a case of selecting the right piece of wood for the job in hand. **GW**



Cupped flooring

NEXT MONTH

It doesn't matter how hard we try when working projects down from raw materials, waste cannot be avoided, as Peter Bishop discusses in the next instalment



bow crook kink cup twist

Different types of wood warping



Beautiful wane edge yew serving board with blue resin inclusions by InWoodWithLove on Etsy

Treasure Box

This unique piece by **Howard Butler** was specially designed to collect and store memorabilia over the passage of time

This chest, commissioned as a wedding gift for the groom from the grandparents, is sure to become a family heirloom, collecting and storing memorabilia over the passage of time, and it is hoped that many generations will enjoy the family treasures stored within. Showing an exceptional eye for detail, Howard initially visited the client and started by suggesting some ideas, while also leaving plenty of room for their own suggestions. Next, he proceeded to sketch some on-the-spot drawings, which gave them a real feel for how they wanted the treasure chest to be. Going away and refining his sketches, Howard soon returned with a design that the clients instantly fell in love with, and thus he was given the OK to start sampling different leathers and wood types.

Chest construction

Constructed using oak, Howard jointed the top panel before shaping it to an apex by hand, and at the front and rear of the chest there is another angle, which is bisected from the shelf position. Once the carcass had made its shape, he then concentrated on the hand-cut dovetails that hold the legs and handles in position. "These joints were completed while the maple legs were in square section," he says, "which made it easier to hold in the vice for hand work." The feature dovetail has two sides of the tail square to each other rather than the conventional dovetail, which is angled both sides of the tail. "This was a bespoke joint for the client," he comments, "which was mirrored on the front panel inlay work." Shaping the legs was enjoyable and important to achieve the correct fluid shape of flow, and Howard uses a Georgian drawknife as opposed to an ordinary spokeshave, as the steel is better quality and can hold a sharper edge. Being a traditionalist, after shaping, Howard then hand-carved a 'V' groove into the base of the leg, which helped to break up the mass of maple into softer visuals.

The drawer is hung on two side runners, and lapped dovetails are used in the construction here with an angled shoulder. Howard made the drawer slip profile using a scratchstock, which consists of him shaping an old handsaw blade into the radius required; he can then pull the scratchstock across the work to create the round. A drawer slip is a decorative piece of wood with a groove that the bottom panel can sit in; this allows natural movement of the solid timber drawer bottom with no risk of splitting as a fixed drawer bottom would. Internally the compartments are housed together for positioning and constructional visuals before a leathered panel can then be inserted.

Leathers & bespoke lock

A wide selection of leathers were offered for the interior and as Howard says: "The inlay is a stylised representation of the dovetail joints, which tie the handle to the top panel." Constructed using traditional joints with a bold spin of modern design on legs and handles, it is lined with the finest leather and finished with solid brass hardware. Howard hand-filed the escutcheon plate into the shape of a heart as befitting a wedding gift, and he also created his own design of lock. **GW**

"The inlay is a stylised representation of the dovetail joints, which tie the handle to the top panel"

Howard Butler – cabinetmaker & designer



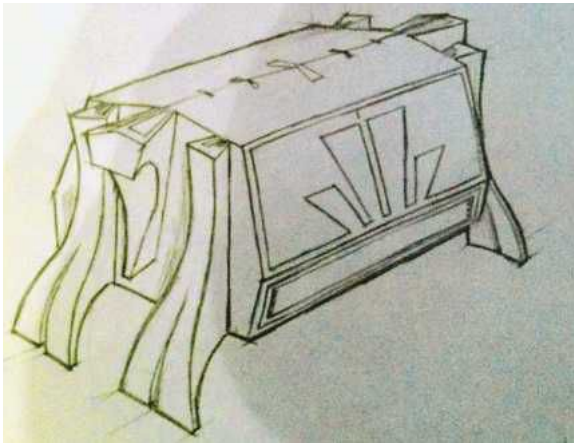
HOWARD BUTLER

Howard Butler is a cabinetmaker and designer living in the Cotswolds, and it is from this stunning and inspirational part of the UK that he now runs his successful business. He designs modern contemporary furniture to order, accentuating traditional cabinetmaking methods. Hand-cut joints are one of Howard's specialities and the use of a specific joint for bespoke items is discussed with the client during the design process.

"I hand pick the finest materials," he says, "and the joints reflected in a design are chosen to allow the timber to breathe while gently ageing, thus resulting in long life and durability while maintaining functionality and the freshness of the design."

"Practical modern art serving functional requirements," is how Howard describes the pieces he makes, and he comments how he has always had the passion to create and design from an early age. "As a young lad," he says, "I could often be found making benches, seating arrangements or storage out of old pallets." His passion remains and having served an apprenticeship and having gained experience from working internationally, he consequently has a wider knowledge of the trade, which in turn benefits his clients. Howard has worked in New Zealand and Switzerland, installing furniture within homes that have architectural importance.

To see more of his furniture, visit **www.howardbutler.co.uk**



Initial sketch of the treasure box



Heart-shaped lock and leather key fob



Plan of butterfly wedges



Hinge let into the shelf rail



Bookmatched dovetails

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Festive frolics

MATERIALS & TOOLS REQUIRED

MATERIALS

- Maple firewood (or another light hardwood)
- Osage orange (or another contrasting wood – anything with colour)
- Piece of natural-edge burl for each of the bases, or your choice of timber
- Cyanoacrylate (CA) adhesive and activator
- Decorations from the craft shop – beads, cloth, buttons, etc. to suit your snow couple
- Wooden mounting pins for arms
- Spray lacquer

TOOLS

- Lathe with chuck
- Turning tools: bowl gouge, spindle gouge, your choice of hollowing tool, detail gouge & skew chisel
- Bandsaw
- Spindle sander

Carl Jacobson shows you how to turn this fun snow couple using leftover pieces of timber, which will make the perfect festive addition to any home

With Christmas just around the corner, it's time to start decorating the house. In this project, I will show you how to create a pair of decorations on the lathe – your very own snow couple. Not only is this a great festive project, but it also provides valuable practice with a variety of turning tools, so it's a perfect skill builder for beginners and those looking to hone their techniques.

As for woods, I used maple for the bodies and Osage orange for the accessories, but only because I had them available – you can use any hardwoods you like. A light hardwood will look more effective, and a darker wood >



PIC 1. The piece of maple firewood used to turn the snow couple's bodies



PIC 2. Cutting out the shape requires using the bandsaw



PIC 3. Using the bowl gouge with the lathe speed set low, begin to form the basic features



PIC 4. Here you can see the snowman shape starting to emerge



PIC 5. Change to using a hollowing tool for the inside followed by a detail gouge



PIC 6. Forming the basic shape using a spindle gouge



PIC 7. Using the Easy Wood Rougher to face off the top of the snowman's hat – you can also use a parting tool to do this



PIC 8. Turning a recess inside the hat to accept the tenon on top of the head



PIC 9. Here you can see the hat starting to take shape...



PIC 10. ... and here it is!



PIC 11. Applying a CA finish to the top hat

for the accessories provides contrast, but you could also paint or stain the pieces to any shade you like. The final pieces measure a little less than 229mm tall, but as with most woodturning projects, the dimensions can be changed to suit your needs.

Turning the bodies

I decided to use firewood for the bodies (**Pic.1**), so started with the lathe set to a low speed until the piece was turned true and round. I picked a relatively straight piece with some character to it, because I intended to leave some of the bark intact on the bottom.

With the lathe set to 1,000rpm, start out with a bowl gouge. Form the basic features: snowman shape, a flange at the bottom for the 'ground', and a tenon on top for the hat. Having a tenon in place allows you to secure the hat with plenty of glue surface.

Once the basic shapes have been roughed out, speed up the lathe to about 1,500rpm and change

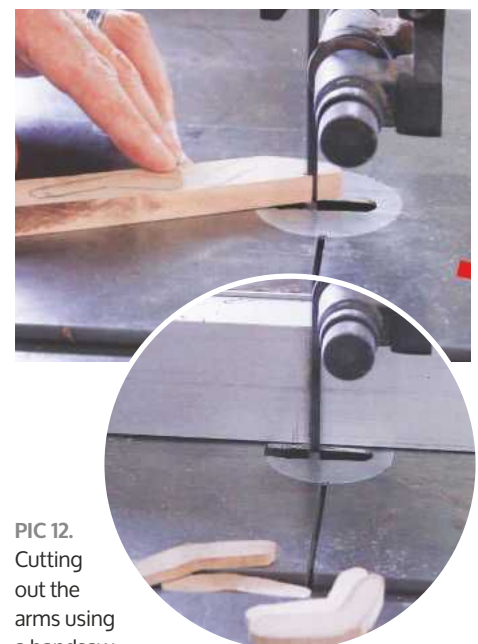
to using a hollowing tool – here I'm using the Easy Wood #1 Hollower and detail gouge (**Pic.5**). At this stage, you can add more detail to the body by slowly removing material. Shallower cuts will give you a cleaner finish and require less sanding later, so take your time here.

Turning the hats

To form the hats, I used a spindle gouge with the lathe set at 2,000rpm to form the basic shape (**Pic.6**), before switching to a parting tool to face off the top of the snowman's hat (**Pic.7**). Turn a recess inside the hat to accept the tenon on top of the head (**Pic.8**), then you can apply your finish of choice – I used CA glue as the finish due to its speed, durability and clarity (**Pic.11**).

Making the arms

The arms are the only pieces of this project not turned on the lathe; instead, these are cut on the bandsaw (**Pic.12**) and refined on the spindle sander (**Pic.13**). The shape can be free-formed, >



PIC 12. Cutting out the arms using a bandsaw



PIC 13. Refining the arms on the spindle sander



PIC 14. Drilling the holes for the mounting pins



PIC 15. Turning the snowwoman's handbag



PIC 16. Turning the noses from scrap hardwood using a skew chisel

but be sure to leave enough material at the shoulders to accept the mounting pins (Pic.14). The arms can be drilled after sanding.

Adding the wooden details

We're getting near the finish, but a few details still remain. I made a handbag for the snowwoman by turning a small disc of Osage orange and then removing material from one side (Pic.15).

The noses were turned from scrap hardwood using a skew chisel (Pic.16). You can get very detailed, slender pieces using this tool; just ensure to take your time and be careful. I also used the skew chisel to make a cane for the snowman (Pic.17).

Assembly

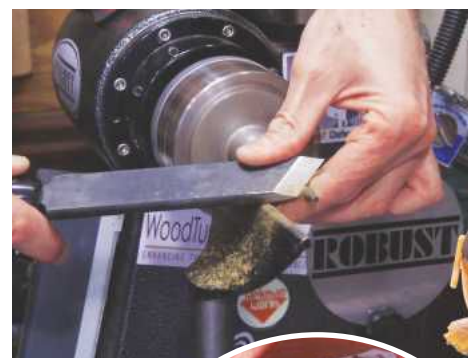
To assemble the snow couple, drill the shoulders to accept the arms (Pic.18), and the face to accept the noses (Pic.19). You can simply glue these pieces in place using CA or wood glue (Pic.19) – they won't take weight and aren't structural, so any glue will do. If you are careful with your

gluing, the arms can swing freely after assembly. As I did, you can also add a base for the snowman and snowwoman to stand on – I used a few small pieces of leftover natural-edge burl, which looks really effective.

Finish & accessorize

Finish each of the pieces with several light coats of spray lacquer. Lacquer dries quickly and leaves a nice finish, but be sure to use it in a well-ventilated area. Wear a respirator or mask if you have one.

At this point, the snow couple are finished! Now you can add decorations using common items from the craft store, including buttons, beads, etc. I added some jewelled details to the snowwoman's hat and handbag as well as buttons to the front of each. Scarves made from scrap fabric are also a nice touch (Pic.25). This is a great time to involve your children or grandchildren – all of the power tools have now been put away and all that remains is a relaxing craft activity. Enjoy! **GW**



PIC 17. Using a skew chisel to turn the snowman's cane





PIC 18. Drilling holes to accept the arms...



PIC 19. ... and the face to accept the noses



PIC 20. Applying glue to the holes drilled in the arms



PIC 21. Placing the wooden mounting pin before attaching the arm



PIC 22. Finishing the pair with several light coats of spray lacquer



PIC 23. Gluing on the hats and accessories



PIC 24. Adding final touches to one of the hats



PIC 25. Pieces of coloured ribbon or scrap fabric make great scarves





TOP OF THE CLASS

Furniture magician Marc Fish is a traditionalist when it comes to learning the craft, and has relaunched his school. **Andrea Hargreaves** reports

ABOVE: Marc Fish's latest exhibition piece, a chaise longue, has sharp, crisp lines blending into sweeping curves, with interweaving sections
Photograph courtesy of Marc Fish

The river-fronted street in Newhaven, East Sussex, which houses robinson house studio – this is too cool a place for initial letters – is also home to a boat yard and a number of small manufacturing businesses scrabbling for space. The premises of the furniture design and making school, and studio to world-class maker Marc Fish, stand out for their pristine neatness. Indeed, we are greeted at the doorstep by a young woodworker on work experience meticulously sanding and vacuuming the entrance steps, a pointer to the level of attention to detail that is taught to the students here.

Inside the immaculate workshops, senior tutor Theo Cook is teaching dovetails; his own are mind-bogglingly intricate, and one of his Japanese dovetails had more than 40 million views on Facebook. Edward Barnsley Workshop-trained Theo takes charge of most of the teaching at robinson house studio and Chris Funnell works as a maker with Marc's designs. While Theo is working on his complex joints, Chris is painstakingly interpreting a technique developed by Marc, constructing a piece entirely from veneer laminates. Meanwhile, Marc is experimenting with complex chemical processes with which to embellish his functional art pieces, which are sold almost exclusively to a New York gallery.

A busy environment

While originally the workshop was solely for Marc's furniture creation and crafting, it has expanded and grown into a thriving furniture school. "We want to relaunch the school," says Marc. "In the past it was focused on me as I set it up, but it's not all about me; it's about having the right people teaching the right



This Japanese dovetail took Theo Cook four days to perfect. No wonder a similar one called Sunrise attracted 40 million views on Facebook

subjects. We have expert staff and expert lecturers that come in and teach subjects like drawing, steam-bending, French polishing and carbon-fibre infusion. We currently have capacity for 15 students and fill this with three intakes a year, with up to five per intake – ensuring a high staff-to-student ratio." Although Theo does most of the day-to-day teaching on subjects like dovetails, Marc adds: "I do a lot of sessions on business, design, model making, laminating, metal work, glues and finishing."

It's a busy environment, and students are given the scope to experiment on their own, with tutors always at hand. Students start off in the bench room, working on things like hand skills, joints, veneering, laminating and wood finishing, before graduating into the bigger workshop and working on larger pieces of their own design. The length of time they spend here varies, with some here for three months, some for a year, and others for a whole two years. The school also recently started



Marc Fish outside his workshop



FAR RIGHT: Veneers are artfully draped in a frame to start the creation of a sculpture

ABOVE MIDDLE: Chris Funnell consigns tiny laminations to the veneer press. On with the next lot...

ABOVE LEFT: ... until the shell gradually assumes its unique form

a 20-week course, specifically for non-EU international students who want to study here for as long as possible while on a six-month visa.

A new student entering the workshops might see Theo advising a more senior student on the preparation of a piece to show at the New Designers graduate show, while Marc could be working on a coloured drawing for a new design, and Chris could be patiently gluing tiny strips of unforgiving veneer over knobbly fibreglass.

These intricate designs are typical of Marc's own work, and the same high standards and attention to detail are expected of the students. But it's not an elitist atmosphere; the young man on work experience whom we saw sanding the steps, Callum Cutts, has even been helping out. "He's doing site carpentry at Brighton [City College]," Marc explains. "He can't find a job. No one wants to take on a 17-year-old first-year carpentry apprentice, but they might if they knew that he'd been trusted to laser-cut and complete to glue-up the lamination work for sets of vases that sell for \$12,000."

The set, depicting increasing stages of decay, starts life as 600 pieces of laser-cut veneer. "We put them together and then shot-blast and sand them. The inside is unique, a silver glaze that has taken us four years to get there; an aged mirror finish that we can tint to any metallic colour we choose."

Continuous innovation

In his office and design studio, Marc's innovative piece, the L'Orchidée desk, sits at the rear of the room, underneath the Guild Marks he and Theo have been awarded. Just returned from New Designers, he unwraps an achingly fine side table in laminated carved wood like stretched toffee, with a resin top. Marc explains his process for creating free-form, experimental furniture: "I do the prototyping, the designing, and work with Chris who does the making. I do the internal finishes and most of the resin work." After creating the initial design, he

then has to work out how to accomplish it, since there's no textbook on work this unique. Take the resin, for example: "Wood reacts with it and comes out in bubbles. We had to develop a way of it not doing that," says Marc.

The studio always aims to push their techniques forward and be innovative. Six years ago, when Marc constructed his all-laminate Nautilus table, "no one else was veneering to make double-compound curves," says Marc. The table has each veneer 5mm apart from its neighbour. "We swapped veneers over and the glue was line-tinted to make the shell pattern. When we exhibited it for the first time, a woman asked where we had got the shell from!" Always aiming to keep pushing forward, Marc comments: "We are probably the most experienced laminators working in Europe, even the world, but we have much to learn still. If the knowledge doesn't exist you have to go through the process, so we are always two or three years behind what we want to be doing." >

ABOVE RIGHT: Student Felix Wills and Marc Fish discuss how to achieve fine and interesting leg curves



Yes, the plane on the right does a fine job, but Theo much prefers using the Krenov plane he made himself



Marc sets up his laser-cutting machine in moments

Well-equipped school

It might seem intimidating for a new student to join such an experienced studio, but the school is well-equipped to take on students with absolutely no experience and train them up. Marc himself has won four Guild Marks

RIGHT: The Relics Triptych comprises three vases in increasing states of decay, made of 600 laminated pieces, and each set is one of 25 in the series... you do the maths – it's an awful lot of gluing

Photograph courtesy of Marc Fish



and sells his pieces internationally (mostly in New York), while Theo has won two Guild Marks as a maker. He spent seven years as an apprentice and craftsman at Edward Barnsley, a year at the James Krenov College of the Redwoods, and nine years at Senior and Carmichael. He originally contacted robinson house studio looking to rent one of their benches, but on learning of his experience, Marc had another idea. "He had a bench in return for a day's teaching, finally going full time." He is now a partner and looks after the day-to-day teaching at the school.

Their newest member of staff, Laurent Peacock, is a testament to the level of teaching, learning, and craftsmanship going on at the school. After taking a one-year course with Marc, Laurent was awarded a Guild Mark for one of his pieces, which is an extraordinary feat. He has since been employed by Marc and now works at the studio as a maker alongside Chris. Also on the team are Marc's partner, Vanessa, who runs the website; Brenda, who manages the accounts; and Harriet, who works on PR and marketing.

On his way to his next meeting, Marc stops in front of a frame filled with resin that will be one half of a two-part mirror set. One will have a mirror at the top with a wood frame and resin at the bottom, and the other will be the reverse, with the resin at the top, exposing the cable holding it to the wall. Like the traditional school and Marc's own contemporary work, two halves make a very satisfactory whole. And, two hours on, Callum is still not satisfied with the steps' finish. **GW**



The L'Orchidée desk is the pivotal point in Marc's design direction and owes something to Louis Majorelle's desk of the same name, which is displayed at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. The tambour roll-top appears to be a solid piece of wood; however, it is veneered canvas layered upon strips of wood in a technique that had hitherto not been seen (Photograph courtesy of Marc Fish)



'Nautilus', Marc's first all-laminated piece, seems to combine something from a Victorian collector's cabinet, Art Nouveau and something definably Marc Fish
Photograph courtesy of Marc Fish



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✉ Letters & Makers

Letter of the month

Wedding sweet cart

Dear Tegan,

I'm writing to ask for some guidance from one of your knowledgeable team on a project I am looking to undertake.

I have recently been fortunate enough to be offered a position where I will be making instruments full-time; however, there are many techniques I am still to learn in the world of woodwork. I have been reading your magazines for several years now since I first became interested in woodworking in an attempt to absorb as much as possible, but I find myself lacking knowledge for an unusual build.

A close friend's wedding is coming up next June and among some smaller projects, I offered to make them a 'sweet cart' on a bit of a whim, and although I am fairly confident in making the majority of the cart, I am hoping for some advice on wheels...

Whereas most examples I have seen on the internet have wheels which aren't functional and purely for aesthetics, I was hoping to make something a bit more ambitious that actually moves on two cart wheels and an axle.

Any advice on design, construction or methods (whether modern or old) would be greatly appreciated.

Many thanks in advance and thank you for many hours of happy reading,
Sam Ward

Hello Sam, you don't say what sort of size the project sweet cart will be, but I'm guessing it's likely to sit on a table or shelf? The easiest option would be to buy wheels ready-made. Hardwood versions (probably beech) up to about 63mm diameter can be obtained from Hobby's (www.hobby.uk.com). If you're considering building something larger, then how about bike wheels or something similar?

Hope this has been of some help.
Regards, **Phil Davy**



Examples of wooden sweet cart designs



Various wooden wheels can be purchased ready-made, such as the ones shown above

Finishing touches

Hello Tegan,

I've been doing a few things recently: fixing up a tea towel rack for my wife as well as starting a TV cabinet in a rustic cottage furniture style.

I've just read the finishing touches article by John Bullar (GW322). The whole series has made for very good reading, but this final article was particularly good. I found the comparison of the different finishes to be very informative and thought provoking. Please pass on my thanks to John.

Regards, **David Moody**

Hi David, thanks for your email and I will certainly pass on your kind words. Yes, I agree that this article was a great end to the series, which has been extremely well received by all. John certainly knows his stuff and it's an honour to have him regularly contributing to the magazine. It's always great to hear that readers have been able to take advice given in the magazine and apply it to their own projects, so we hope you enjoy his new series – improving your furniture making – as much as the last one! Good luck with the coffee table and do send in a photo when it's finished.

Best wishes, **Tegan**



John Bullar demonstrating how traditional French polish, a natural shellac lacquer, can be worked into the surface in layers using a folded cloth and absorbent wadding known as a 'rubber'

Word play winner

Hi Tegan, in reply to Edward Hopkins' word play riddle in 'from bole to bowl' (GW324), where he poses the following: changing one letter at a time, can you get from bole to bowl using two intermediary words? My solution is: bole, boll and bowl.

Kind regards, **John Higgins**

Hi John, very well done indeed! I have to admit to not giving this a go myself as yet, but your solution is certainly a good one! Happy word play!
Best wishes, **Tegan**

WRITE & WIN!



We always love hearing about your projects, ideas, hints and tips, and/or like to receive feedback about GW's features, so do drop us a line – you never know, you might win our great 'Letter of the Month' prize, currently the new Trend 1/4 inch 30-piece Router Cutter Set, worth over £100. Simply email tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com

for a chance to get your hands on this fantastic prize – good luck!

One to watch: Silvia Song

Describing herself as a wood potter as opposed to a woodturner, Brazilian-born Silvia Song practised architecture for over a decade before she decided to pursue a career that was more hands-on – she missed the act of doing despite the fact her job was creative. It wasn't long before she purchased a few hand tools and started building a set of simple wooden shelves. This was her starting point, and while she was considering trying her hand at ceramics, she decided to embark on a five-day woodworking class, where she would learn about the process for turning wooden vessels. It wasn't long before she was hooked and made the decision to pursue a career in wood full-time.

A love for vessels

Mostly known for her turned bowls, vases and serving dishes, Silvia explains that vessels are her favourite items to turn, and she's also recently started experimenting with dyeing various pieces, such as her indigo-dyed bowls (see below), which we discovered on her Instagram page. Using a variety of timbers, including Claro walnut, which only grows in Northern California, and one of her favourite timbers, maple, Silvia's pieces exhibit fine technique and form. She has also now evolved her portfolio of work to include various items of tableware and chopping boards.

A passion for turning

Displaying a meticulous eye for detail and an obvious passion for turning wood and woodworking in general, it's clear to see that Silvia is certainly a gifted maker who is dedicated to the craft and who is succeeding in elevating turning to a high art form. Her work is currently being sold at various high-end retailers throughout the USA, but you can also browse the online store on her website – www.silviasong.com – or follow her on Instagram – @silviasong



↑ Silvia working at her lathe



↑ Various turned vessels



↑ Indigo-dyed bowls

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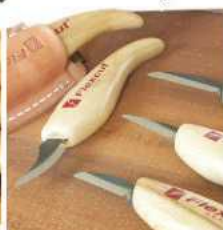
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FROM BOWS TO SKIS

Photographs courtesy
of Alun Callender

Jamie Kunka of Lonely Mountain Skis is making a name for himself as one of the most exciting hand-crafted wooden ski-makers around. Operating from his Perthshire workshop, we discover more about the fascinating steam-bending process behind building a ski from scratch

Cross-country skiing is not something I know a great deal about, but upon learning more thanks to the vast resource that is the internet, I found that its history is certainly incredibly fascinating. I discovered that wooden skis are highly sought after by those serious about the sport, favouring these over fibre glass versions due to their ability to hold the wax better, which is apparently a good thing! For those who are wanting to know more about wooden skis and their history, Greg Fangel's website - www.woodenskis.com - is a great place to start, as it is jam-packed full of wonderful resource material. I also discovered that these intriguing items date back to 1880, with wonderful photos of leather thong bindings found on Nordic skis all the way through to the Gresshoppa cable bindings popular in the 1960s. If I sound like I know what I'm talking about, I don't, but before I set about profiling a woodworker, I like to immerse myself as much as I can in their specific craft. Fast forward to the present day of wooden ski-making and it was by chance that I heard about a Scottish micro ski company based in Perthshire, Scotland, which builds handmade custom skis that blend traditional and modern materials and techniques. Jamie Kunka, Head Ski-maker, is the man behind Lonely Mountain Skis and the wonderful pieces he produces are certainly a far cry from the crude Nordic examples I saw online. The skis are also hand-pyrographed by an artist called LeRoc whose designs help to add a contemporary edge to the beautifully crafted items, and Jamie's friend Philip Ebert then goes on to test them.

Background

So, how did Jamie come to discover woodworking and how did this subsequently lead to him starting a company making bespoke wooden skis? I was very

eager to find out. Jamie tells me that his first foray into woodworking came when he was 14, which saw him becoming fascinated by making bows: "I threw myself into trying to make a functioning bow and learned all I needed to about the suitable springy woods and how to shape them and use the correct traditional tools," he says. Taking this knowledge and running with it, Jamie explains that he had his first go at ski-making after watching a Ray Mears episode where a Swedish ski-maker made a ski from dead standing pine: "I was studying product design at Dundee University at the time," he says, "and had the perfect workshop environment to prototype these simple wooden skis. They were very basic solid pieces of redwood pine, steam-bent at the tips and coated in pine tar. It was incredibly satisfying to try these traditional skis, even if they were a little out of control on the Scottish ice."



Ripping the beech to make the laminated cores

Jamie prepares
to hit the slopes
with a pair of
his favourite
handmade skis



RIGHT: Hand sharpening the edge of a Sneachda ski

FAR RIGHT: Flattening the base and sharpening the steel edges



This didn't dissuade Jamie, however, and two and a half years of prototyping later and he's pretty much perfected how he goes about making a hand-crafted ski from start to finish. It was back in the summer of 2015 when he set about designing and making the first production ski, the 'Sneachda', which, to Jamie's surprise, went on to win the prestigious Gold award in the Ski Touring category at the famous ISPO trade show in Munich. Buoyed by this success, he has been refining the process ever since.

Design & manufacture

So, what makes a good ski and what does the manufacturing process look like? Jamie already mentioned the steam-bending process, but it turns out that making a ski that stands up to the rigours of the rugged terrain of the Scottish Highlands is no mean feat.

Reminiscing about his first handmade ski and the nerve-racking test run that followed, Jamie tells me that this happened to be a simple steam-bent Norwegian design from the late 1800s, which was long and covered with pine tar: "I was nervous as I was using traditional leather boots," says Jamie, "however, the skis were fantastically light and manoeuvrable – a real revelation. Yes, they were slower but it was a more real experience to feel the solid pine gliding along the snow." Things have certainly moved on a pace since then and the range of skis Jamie now makes are aimed to try and suit all conditions and tastes – from a thinner ski for harder snow and longer adventures to big, wide skis for deep snow. All the ski cores start life in FSC-certified woodland where they are felled and arrive as boards at the workshop. They are then ripped into strips

before being glued together into cores. "This way we can ensure consistent, defect-free ski cores," he says. "I mainly use four different timbers for making skis: maple, poplar, beech and cherry, all of which are great elastic woods. These are wrapped and reinforced with flax (an amazing natural fibre that is stronger than fibreglass and offers improved damping) as well as carbon fibre, which enables the skis to be stiff where they need to while keeping the ski weight low and giving great power transmission. They are then glued together using Entropy Resins' Super Sap epoxy resin – a specially developed, amazingly elastic and durable ski resin that is derived from sustainable sources."

Jamie also uses the best quality base and edge material available to ensure a fast, hassle-free ski that's going to last for years: "The base is a sintered racing PTex 7000, which is capped with a special NV4-coated steel edge. This special NV4 substrate coating ensures the best bond between edge and ski to prevent pesky blown-out edges if you decide to ski sideways over rocks, for example," he explains.

All of the skis, cores and tooling are manufactured in-house at the Birnam workshop, and Jamie takes a great deal of pride in overseeing every stage of the ski-making process to ensure every product that leaves is of the highest possible quality and accuracy.

Answering my question as to the level of demand for such a bespoke and unusual product, Jamie says that he has been pretty much flat out in the workshop, designing and testing new shapes to feature in the range of skis the following year, as well as the day-to-day production work that the business entails. In terms of commissions, he explains that he works on these from autumn to

BELOW: Assembling the beech and poplar core

MIDDLE: Clamping the core together

RIGHT: Planing the laminated core to size





FAR LEFT: Sneachda ski production

LEFT: Jamie working on a Crua 168 in the laminating chamber

spring, before moving on to the design and testing phases as the year progresses.

Interested to hear more about the machines used in the production process, Jamie says that he tends to use a lot of these to make the larger components, but comments that he loves the final stages of finishing when he's given the opportunity to use various planes and spokeshaves, which allow him to really get a feel for the wood and bring character to the skis. As well as general hand tools, some of the main tools Jamie uses are of his own design, which is certainly a proud achievement, and these include clever handmade adjustable jigs and templates, all of which makes the process a lot more accurate.

Describing how he makes a typical ski, which as Jamie confirms is typically half handmade and half machine work, he says that the first step is to smooth down the rough timber before ripping, then gluing together in a series of vertical laminations. This is then profiled and tapered on a planer, and becomes the spine of the ski. It is then glued together with another six layers of material in a vacuum press, which pulls the ski together; this ensures every ski has an even flex pattern and is free of air bubbles. The whole ski is then cooked to help it set into shape.

Jamie is also proud to tell me that where possible, the company tries to keep a low carbon footprint, which is why they use as many sustainable and natural materials as possible. "From the wood and bio-resin that holds the ski together, to the flax fibres that give the ski spring and smoothness, 80% of our materials are from grown sources; this way we know we're not negatively impacting the environment that gives us snow." For

every ski Jamie sells, he aims to plant two trees to offset the CO₂ that is produced during the making of them.

Ski range

Lonely Mountain Skis currently make three ski designs, starting with the award-winning 'Sneachda', which is designed to be pushed hard on steep descents or when doing laps of the piste. With its rocker-camber-rocker design it's both playful and stable. It uses a carbon/flax construction to reduce weight while giving fantastic performance on and off the piste. There is also the 'Crua', which excels in all conditions on and off piste. It utilises the same technology as the Sneachda to bring all the performance and stability on a narrower, lighter chassis. This ski is a very capable all-mountain tourer with a playful camber profile and great power transmission from edge to edge, and finally the 'Ord', which is inspired by deep snow days in the backcountry and sidecountry. Due to its triaxial carbon and flax construction, the ski not only performs in the deep but remains fun even on the hardpack. Its chassis is built from an extremely light balsa-flax core, which makes turning, jumping and general mucking about a whole lot of fun.

These are Jamie's 2017 range of handmade skis, but as mentioned earlier, he brings out a new shape every year. Potential customers are also encouraged to get in touch if there is a design they've always dreamed of, and Jamie is happy to discuss a completely bespoke ski if someone has a specific idea (see 'The future' and details of the company's first ski-building workshop).

When I asked Jamie as to whether there were any upcoming projects in the pipeline, he tells me that

BELOW LEFT:
A finished Sneachda ski with leather strap

MIDDLE: Jamie receiving the ISPO Gold Award for his Sneachda skis

BELOW: Examining a finished Sneachda





ABOVE: Crua skis

he's looking forward to working on a ski inspired by Japan: "This will be a long, wide ski designed to float through the deep, cold snow of northern Japan. LeRoc is going to burn a design into the whole ski that will be inspired by Japanese wood block artists, such as Hokusai, so watch this space." We certainly will, and I'll be sure to share a photo of this amazing piece of work when it's finished.

BELOW LEFT: A pair of Cruas in Glenshee

MIDDLE TOP:
Crua ski testing
near Glenshee

MIDDLE BOTTOM:
LeRoc's design on a
Sneachda 178

BELOW RIGHT:
Pyrography wizard
LeRoc with the special
edition rutting stag
Pudar skis

Business ethos

Commenting that if he wasn't building skis he would probably be working in another design discipline trying to work out how to break away and make skis for a living, Jamie's passion for what he does is certainly strong. He explains that his ethos is very simple: to make the most high performance and beautiful skis in the most sustainable way. Picking up on the fact that Jamie is clearly a man in touch with nature, I then tried to find out whether or not natural figuring in the timber he uses can be exploited or whether such additions are merely

seen as redundant, or perhaps even an annoyance? Jamie replies that while the internals of the ski have to be as straight-grained as possible, the final layer of constructional wood veneer can be very interesting in terms of grain and figuring; this becomes important when LeRoc uses the grain to inspire his art work. Jamie says that he has done some great work with adding Scottish wildlife to the skis, which can be seen in the photo below showing the special edition rutting stag 'Pudar' skis.

The future

In terms of the future of Lonely Mountain Skis and what new avenues Jamie is exploring, he's pleased to announce that he recently ran his first ski-building workshop, which involved a customer coming in and making a swallowtail powder ski based on the 'Ord' design. Martin joined Jamie in making the ski from start to finish and some great photos of the process are featured on the website (see details below).

From carrying out this profile, it is easy to see why bespoke skis are so popular. Jamie has clearly tapped into this industry and is making a living doing what he loves, all the while being increasingly innovative and meeting like-minded creative folk along the way who are also being given the opportunity to showcase their skills through Jamie's work (artists such as LeRoc, for example, whose pyrography designs are simply stunning), so in this sense the business structure is somewhat mutually beneficial. While Lonely Mountain Skis is only really in its infancy, if the success of the last few years is anything to go by then the future for Jamie and his micro ski company looks to be very bright indeed. If you fancy visiting the ski shop and learning more about what Jamie does, you can also take advantage of trying some of their home-brewed Lonely Mountain craft beer, which is surely an offer that can't be refused! Jamie confirms he has a few interesting projects that he is working on at present, which are really going to push his ski design, so stay tuned to see the fruits of his labour, the results of which should be available to see in the next year or so. **GW**



FURTHER INFO

To find out more about Jamie and Lonely Mountain Skis, visit the website:
www.lonelymountain.ski

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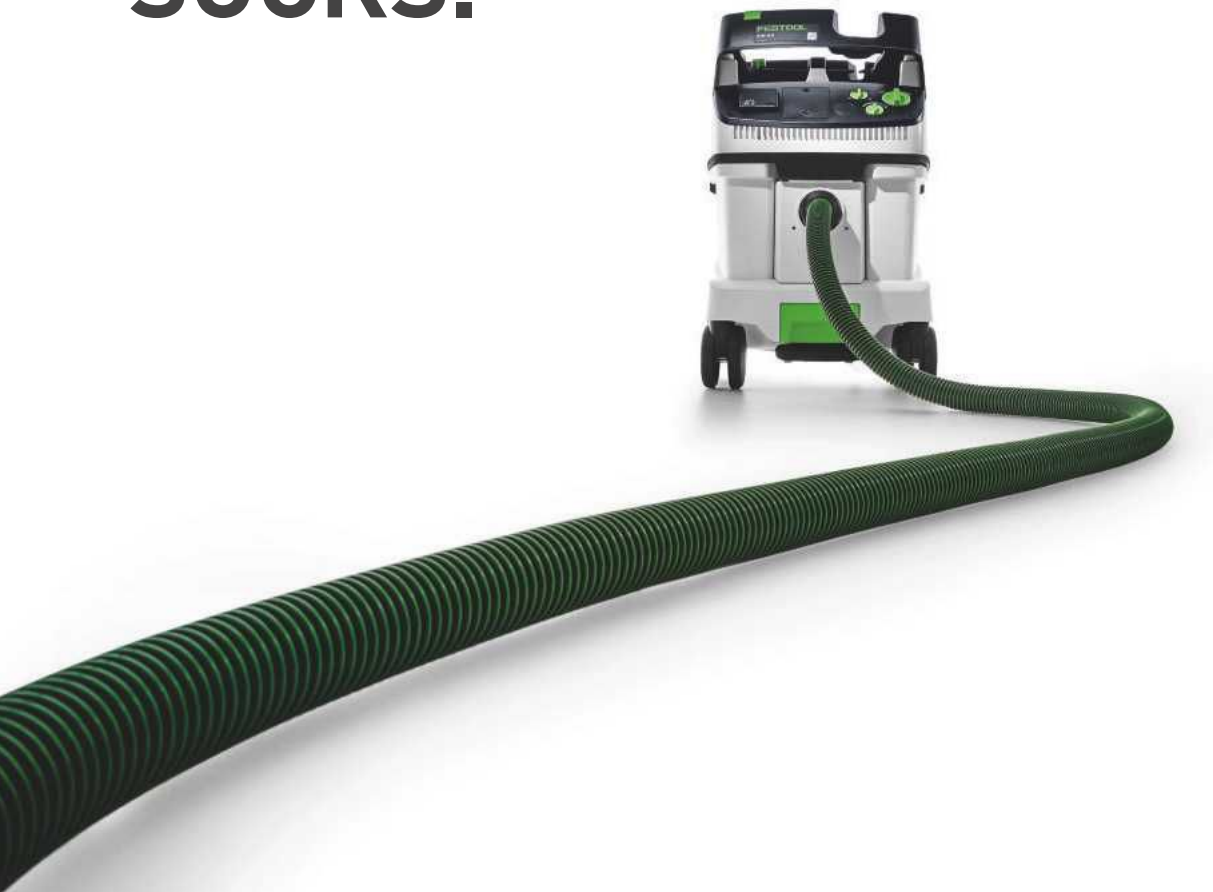
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AROUND THE HOUSE with Phil Davy



No doubt you watch the odd woodworking YouTube video clip on occasions. There's plenty of great material, but there's some dodgy stuff, too. I was quite shocked to see the construction of a plywood electric guitar recently. To say the construction was crude is putting it kindly. Even the neck was ply, with no glued on hardwood fingerboard. Not a good idea with plywood's potential voids and defects, though these were filled with superglue. Plus crooked frets. Not only was the workmanship dreadful, but the use of power tools looked quite dangerous. By the end I was unsure whether the entire video was a joke. Somehow, I think it was serious. Surprisingly, the completed instrument actually sounded quite reasonable in a later video!

OUT & ABOUT:

European Woodworking Show 2017



If you've never had the chance to visit the European Woodworking Show then sadly you've missed the boat. This year's extravaganza at the sublime Cressing Temple Barns was apparently the last event. Attracting visitors from across Europe and beyond, it's been a unique weekend in the woodworking calendar since 2009. Besides European dialects, I detected several north American accents among the crowds and these were not just exhibitors. Although a fairly common concept in the States, a UK show focusing mainly on hand tools has

its risks. Would the lack of power tools attract enough punters? Judging by the food queues and overflowing car park, there was little to worry about concerning numbers. Classic Hand Tools has created a successful recipe over the years, a healthy mix of new and established tool brands, plus individual demonstrators. But disappointingly, it's now the end of the road.

Temple of tools

Situated in rural Essex, Cressing Temple consists of three medieval barns, with the

Barley Barn apparently the oldest in the world. A perfect backdrop for demonstrators and a rare chance to get your mitts on some beautiful tools, then. For hand tool aficionados I can't think of a more comprehensive cluster of respected names: Lie-Nielsen, Veritas, Hock, Bad Axe, Clifton, Pax, Dorchester, plus a healthy mix of smaller makers. I caught up with Phil Edwards, who 10 years on is still creating gorgeous planes from an array of hardwoods. Like many, he was glad to have been part of the event over the years.



A selection of Oliver Sparks' exquisite planes



Shane Skelton's jaw-dropping Mallard saw

Relative newcomer Oliver Sparks showed me some exquisite planes, some of which feature German silver, brass or phosphor bronze, with exotic hardwood infills. We mustn't forget Bill Carter, either, who also had a mouth-watering display of planes.

We featured Skelton saws in *GW* a few years back, but this was the first time I'd actually tried one of their beautiful tools. These back saws just ooze quality and Shane builds them to order. In fact, his wife Jacqueline was actually measuring a customer's hand to establish the handle size. Something I've never seen before! Special mention must go to Shane's jaw-dropping Mallard saw, though as the saying goes, if you need to ask the price...

From the USA was established maker Blue Spruce Toolworks, with some fantastic sliding bevels and try squares on display. A row of their dovetail chisels had the most stunning curly maple handles. Then there were the gorgeous squares and sliding bevels from Australian

maker Chris Vesper. Inlaid with timber such as Tasmanian blackwood, these are certainly worth checking out if you're after the highest quality marking tools.

You could easily have spent the best part of a day trying out these tools for yourself, but time was marching on. I met up with Tom Lie-Nielsen, proudly overseeing his remarkable range of hand tools. Long time *Good Wood* readers may remember we visited Lie-Nielsen's Maine headquarters many years ago, certainly a highlight of that particular US trip for me.

Outdoor inspiration

Many demonstrators were regulars at the show, though a new name to me was Suffolk luthier Otis Luxton, busy inlaying a couple of fretboards for his lovely parlour guitars. Lee Stoffer (Covert Craft) made spoon carving look a fairly straightforward process, though I reckon it was his clear explanation that helped. He certainly drew a sizeable crowd.

Although not strictly woodworking, I should mention Natasha Mann, an artist who specialises in traditional Moroccan Zouaq painting techniques. Her hand-painted boxes featuring geometric designs were exquisite, decorated with natural pigments and gold leaf. I'd guess not too many craftspeople make their own paint brushes from cedar and donkey hair!

Outside the barns and marquees you could almost imagine life in another century. Basket maker Peter Dibble was practically up to his eyes in willow work, while I was fascinated by fletchers Willy Rackham and partner crafting arrows while talking through the history of the longbow. Many punters munched their lunch while watching the Hawthorn Heavy Horses in action. Clever stuff indeed from our four-legged, Suffolk Punch friends. And budding mariners could have done worse than to chat to the guys from Lowestoft's IBTC, who offer courses in both furniture-making and boatbuilding.

Did I mention timber? No woodworking show



Many punters munched their lunch while watching the Hawthorn Heavy Horses in action



Basket maker Peter Dibble was practically up to his eyes in willow work



Blue Spruce Toolworks' dovetail chisels had the most stunning curly maple handles



Chris Vesper's gorgeous squares and sliding bevels are inlaid with timber such as Tasmanian blackwood

would be complete without a few stunning boards to drool over. New East Anglian supplier Bois Jolie had some huge oak slabs for sale, with the most amazing tiger stripe figuring. Felling and machining is carried out by just one man, Michael Ferland. Not sure about manhandling those massive boards alone, though.

Particularly noticeable was how peaceful most demo areas were. Almost the only power tools I came across were on the Trend stand, plus a handful of lathes which weren't exactly noisy. And outside, a hefty Mafell planer demonstrated by timber framers Noahs Oak Joinery was about the only exception, although this didn't detract from the general tranquility around the venue. If you went to Cressing Temple hunting for a new bandsaw or cordless drill you may have left disappointed, though...

So, our thanks must go to the team at Classic Hand Tools for staging one of the best ever British woodworking events. Let's hope someone else will rise to the challenge.



Natasha Mann's hand-painted boxes feature geometric designs and are decorated with natural pigments and gold leaf



Suffolk luthier Otis Luxton, busy inlaying a couple of fretboards for his lovely parlour guitars



A selection of Lee Stoffer's hand-carved spoons



Supplier Bois Jolie had some huge oak slabs for sale, with the most amazing tiger stripe figuring



A fletcher preparing her arrows



A hefty Mafell planer being demonstrated by timber framers Noahs Oak Joinery

WINTER PROJECT – CANDLE BOXES

TAKES: Half a day

TOOLS NEEDED: Block plane, bench plane, router table and bits, drill stand, scrollsaw or jigsaw, biscuit jointer

Phil Davy presents two festive candle holder designs, which will be perfect for that last-minute present or surprise table decoration

With Christmas almost here there's still time to make that last-minute present or surprise table decoration if you've got a few spare hours. These two projects include tea lights or candles, but before the Health & Safety police descend on me, I've also featured battery-operated LED lights as alternatives. These don't look as good as the real thing, of course, but are far safer, especially with kids around. If you want to use real wax candles, just be aware of the risks.

I bought the LED tea lights and candles from www.lights4fun.co.uk, and both sizes of wax tea light from IKEA. Make sure you use suitable glass or metal holders with burning candles.

Candle boxes are ideal for using up offcuts, whether hardwood, softwood or even MDF, though this will need to be painted. If using timber 13mm-thick or more, you can use No.10 biscuits for jointing the corners. With thinner timber, either rebate the edges or simply use butt joints. I thickened both the oak and pine to 14mm. Ideally you will need a scrollsaw for cutting the decorative shapes, though if you don't have such a machine there are alternative methods. With care, a piercing or fret saw can be used for more delicate cuts, but practice first on offcuts. For larger, simpler cut-outs you could use a jigsaw fitted with a fine, narrow blade, but cutting tight radii neatly would be pretty tricky. Certainly an outline consisting of straight lines (such as a star) could be cut with this tool. You should aim for the neatest saw cuts possible, as trying to clean them up later is tedious and unnecessary... Whatever method used you will need to drill a few holes first for the blade to pass through the wood. Make sure you have a backing piece in place before drilling to prevent breakout.

For creating the starburst/snowflake effect you only need a pillar drill (or drill stand), so no powered saw is required. This design is simply based on dividing a circle up into 12 segments.

Festive fun

Of course, candle boxes do not necessarily need to have a Christmas or winter theme, so outlines can be whatever you like. Once you're decided on the shapes to feature, draw them full-size and make some photocopies. Prepare the sides of each box so they're ready to glue together, then stick the appropriate paper pattern to one surface with spraymount adhesive. If duplicating shapes

on opposite sides of a box you can either tape the edges of two pieces together, or dab glue in the corners to hold the wood together temporarily. Cutting two sides at the same time ensures consistency and obviously saves time, though thinner timber is easier to cut. Once cut, separate glued pieces with a palette knife or similar.

If you're using real candles it's important to cut a recess in the base to stop them sliding about. For the larger tea lights the diameter of the glass holder is about 68mm. A Forstner bit this size is expensive, so I used an expanding bit fitted in a swing brace, finishing off with a router. Probably the easiest method is to use a router fitted with a circle cutting attachment.

You can finish these boxes any way you like. If using MDF a painted finish is effective, particularly if you want a Christmas theme. I used General Finishes Milk Paint in Brick Red (www.generalfinishes.co.uk) for the softwood box, while for the oak version I used two coats of Chestnut Finishing Oil. Finishing with clear wax gives a gorgeous lustre. Happy Christmas!



STEP 1. Sketch out a few ideas for festive shapes or photocopy the drawing shown here

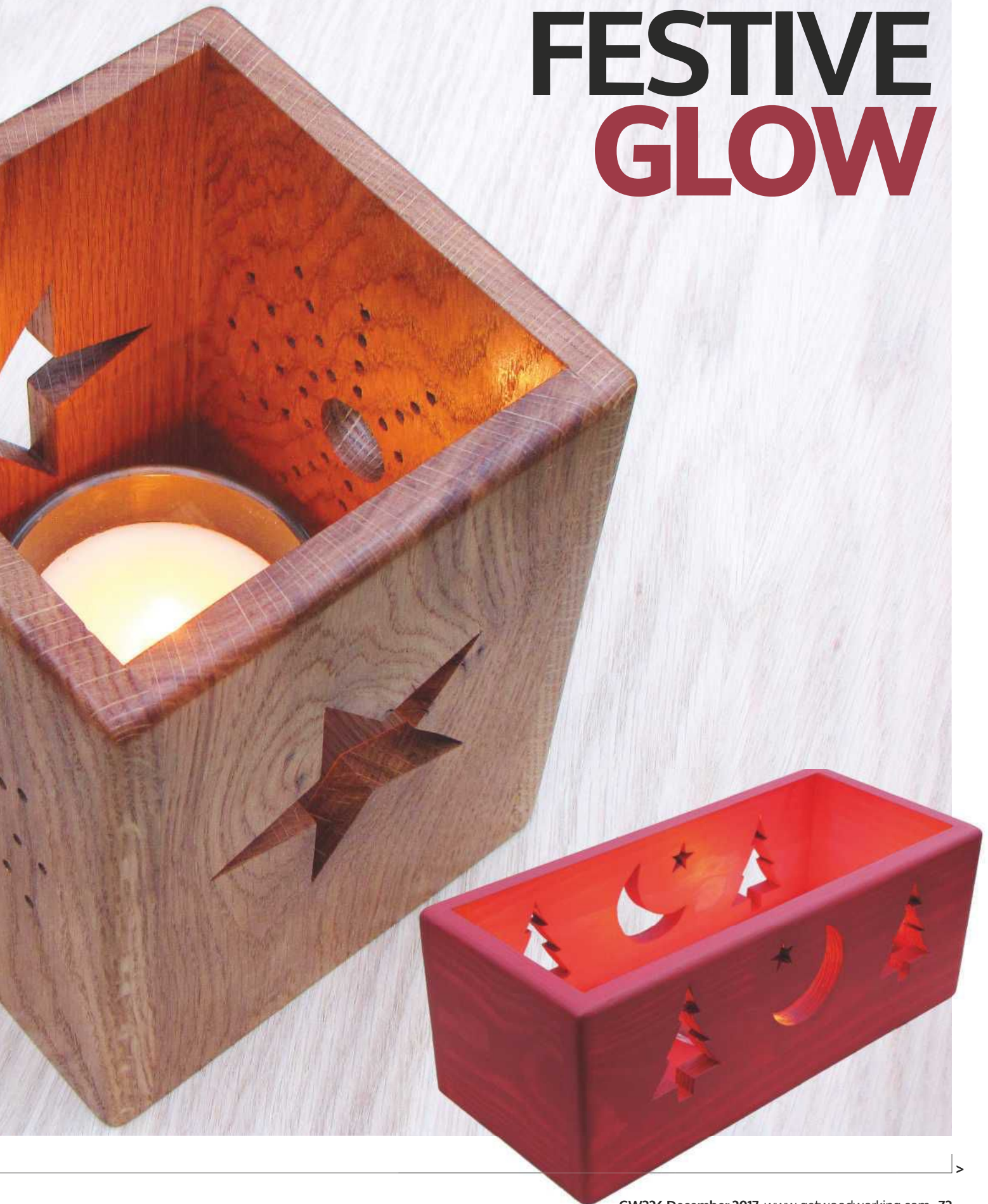


STEP 2. Lay out the tea lights to determine the overall measurements for the box





FESTIVE GLOW





STEP 3. Plane the timber to width and thickness, then saw the box components to length



STEP 4. Trim the ends square using a shooting board and bench plane for accuracy



STEP 5. With the box components planed to size, mark out positions for No.10 biscuits



STEP 6. Cut slots for biscuits. If using wood less than 10mm-thick, rout rebates instead



STEP 7. Rout a rebate to accept the base on the lower edge of each component



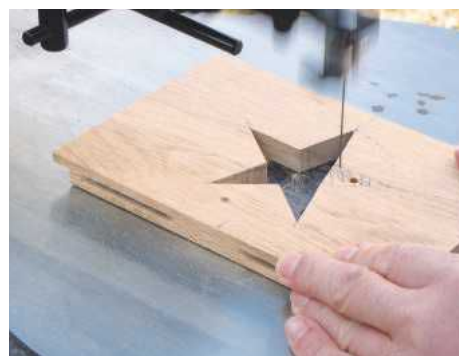
STEP 8. Apply with spraymount and drill a series of holes to enable you to start the internal cuts



STEP 9. Slacken off the scroll saw blade, feed an end through the workpiece and re-tension



STEP 10. Carefully cut out each shape, following lines exactly. Use the hold-down if necessary



STEP 11. Saw the oak the same way. Stars can also be cut with a jigsaw fitted with a narrow blade



STEP 12. Use a chisel or cabinet scraper to remove the paper pattern after sawing



STEP 13. Check sides fit together, then apply PVA glue to the biscuits and insert into the slots



STEP 14. Assemble the box, checking everything is square as you tighten up the cramps



STEP 15. Mark the starburst design and tape opposite sides together. Drill with scrap beneath



STEP 16. Glue up the oak box in a similar way to the pine version. Wipe off excess glue



STEP 17. When the glue has dried, trim protruding edges flush with a finely set bench plane



STEP 18. Mark the centre of the base and use a router or large Forstner bit to cut a recess



STEP 19. Cut the base to size and glue it into the rebate around the bottom



STEP 20. Use a bearing-guided rounding over cutter in the router to soften the edges



STEP 21. Sand with 120 grit abrasive, finishing with 240 grit. Moisten the oak and re-sand



STEP 22. Brush on two coats of oil, denibbing between them. Sand and finish with wax



STEP 23. Either stain or paint the pine box. Milk paint doesn't need a primer coat first

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Variations on a theme

A classic turned vase with contrasting finial never gets boring, and as **Les Thorne** shows here, there's a lot you can do to make your designs stand out from the crowd

Turning something as an experiment is always fun and this is something I don't get to do too often as I am usually working to the designs of my customers. These days, it's really difficult to be an innovator in woodturning and it

seems the opportunities are getting fewer and fewer as most things have been done before. It is possible, however, to combine ideas, shapes and designs into a piece that is unique to you. If you're struggling for inspiration, then use books or look online at the vast amount of turning-related content available.

The TV test

Sometimes, the learning curve can be a struggle: how often have you walked out of the workshop clutching your latest creation that you are really pleased with only to look at it in a few hours, days or weeks, then start finding fault with it?

In days gone by, I always liked to use what I termed my 'TV test': I put my newly designed piece in constant view before deciding whether or not it was right. This was ideal back when televisions were bigger and had a large area on the top. Now, however, I often use a quorum of friends – some of whom have no woodturning experience – which is often a bonus as you have to remember that it's not generally turners who are buying your work. This particular design is nothing new but the square base does add something else to the design, plus having two finials helps to create a choice – I like both equally. **GW**



STEP 1. I decided to use sycamore for the finials and the body of the vase and tulipwood for the base as I already had some planed square, which was left over from a production job



STEP 2. After marking the centres, always use a bradawl to mark the middle; this makes mounting on the lathe easier. If the timber you use is really hard, then you could tap the drive into the end to give it a head start



STEP 3. Once you've mounted the body on the lathe, rough the sycamore down to about 80mm in diameter using a spindle roughing gouge. You should get great shavings from sycamore



STEP 4. The work will need to be held in a chuck so it can be hollowed. As always, the chucking spigot needs to be accurately cut to suit your jaws – in my case, with a small dovetail to suit a Nova chuck



STEP 5. A useful tip is to always cut a new centre mark on the end with the corner of a skew chisel; this gives the drill a good, accurate start. If using a big drill bit like I am here, you could always cut a cone shape to suit the end of the drill being used



STEP 6. When drilling from the tailstock, use a bar fitted into the hole of the Jacobs chuck to stop it spinning in the tailstock quill. The speed of the lathe is around 600rpm – ensure to clear the sawdust away regularly by pulling the drill out



STEP 7. I like to shape most of the outside at this time using the signature spindle gouge. The top section could be turned to the final shape but do leave some 'meat' at the chuck end, which will help to give the piece a little more strength



STEP 8. The initial hollowing is carried out using a spindle gouge. Keep the flute of the tool pointing around 11 o'clock and make sure that the point of the tool doesn't touch the inside anywhere but dead centre, otherwise you run the risk of a dig-in



STEP 9. A shoulder needs to be created for the lid to sit on using a 10mm round skew chisel. This shoulder shouldn't be too wide or too deep – just enough for the lid to sit on



STEP 10. As you go deeper, the spindle gouge will start to vibrate due to the overhang off the toolrest, so it's time to reach for something a little more substantial – the small carbide hollower from Simon Hope fits the bill perfectly



STEP 11. This is a special homemade tool – if you don't have compressed air to hand, then a teaspoon taped to a piece of wood makes the perfect implement for removing the shavings from the inside



STEP 12. A pair of figure-of-eight callipers will help to give you an indication of wall thickness once you go below a finger's depth. You need to leave the base a little thicker as the outside requires further shaping



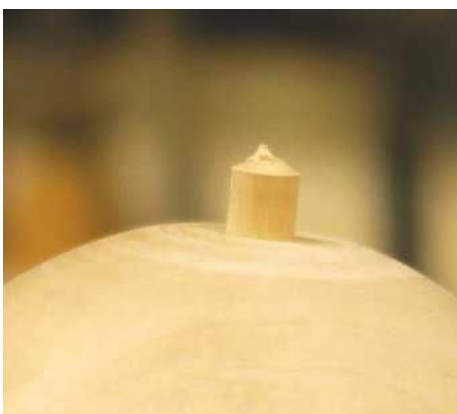
STEP 13. There are many different ways to sand the inside – here I'm using a sanding ball that used to be available commercially, but all you need to do is make a hook-and-loop ball that you can attach the abrasive to



STEP 14. This bead-forming tool from Ashley Iles is great for creating small, uniform, decorative beads. Don't force the tool into the wood as it will tear-out the fibres – a slight wiggling motion is the best method



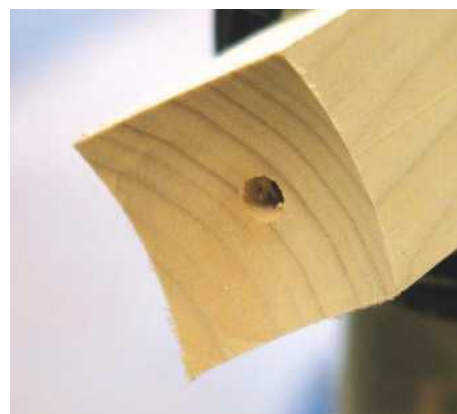
STEP 15. Finish shaping, constantly checking the wall thickness at the base as you go along. You must leave enough clearance at the chuck end to allow you to do this



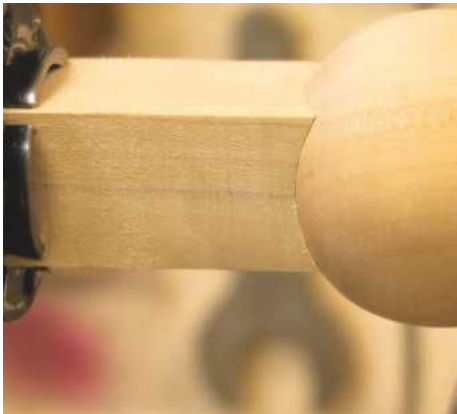
STEP 16. I have left a 7mm spigot on the base of the vessel; this will locate in a corresponding hole in the stand. The very bottom of the vessel doesn't need to be finished as it will not be seen



STEP 17. Accurately mount the square for the stand in the chuck; the timber has to be square or the stand will be one-sided. Light cuts with the small bowl gouge are best here



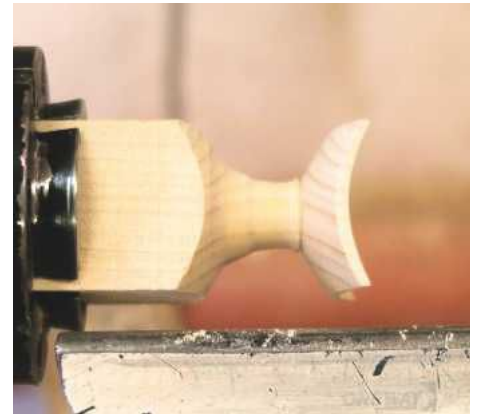
STEP 18. I drilled a 7mm hole with a tailstock-mounted drill and was able to get the curve in the top pretty close to the curve of the pot. The larger the square, the more difficulty you'll have in matching the curve



STEP 19. I'm pretty happy with this, although it did take me a couple of attempts to get it right. If you knock the corners off by mistake, you could always just have a round dish for the pot to sit in



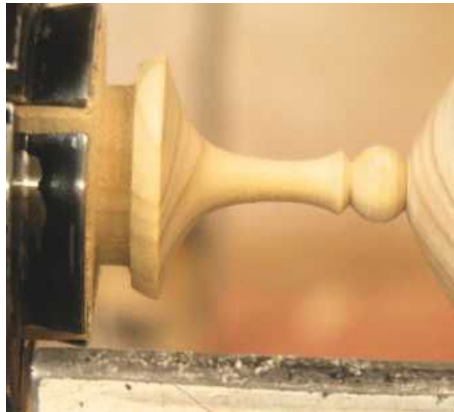
STEP 20. The square shoulders need to be sanded and this is best done using a sanding block, which will ensure you don't round off the square section. I don't bother to sand the inside of the stand as you're likely to round everything over



STEP 21. In order for it to look its best, the square section needs to have an even wall thickness. I carried out the cuts using a small spindle gouge, with very little pressure applied to the wood as you'll find it gets very weak the thinner you go



STEP 22. When completing any detail on the underside of the vase, remember you have a 7mm hole up the middle. Here, I'm using a 10mm skew to create a small 10mm bead at the transition point from base to stem



STEP 23. A nice simple shape is all that's needed. You can see how I have angled the bottom over; I do this on all of my egg cup and goblet bases as it creates an idea of elevation at the point of contact with a surface



STEP 24. Mount the first finial lid in the chuck and clean up the underside with the signature spindle gouge. The bevel of the tool is presented at the same angle as the toolrest, which is set square across the face



STEP 25. A little detailing on the underside proves that you have gone to the trouble of turning this part rather than the easier option of just parting it off. I'm sure this is often done just to please other woodturners!



STEP 26. The lid needs to be a good fit rather than a really tight one. Keep removing tiny amounts of material as you go until the pot will just hold on without falling off. If you make it too slack, just cut another spigot and try again



STEP 27. I like the simple lines of this first finial, which is very similar to the stem of a spinning top. The bevel of the gouge must be in contact with the wood otherwise the tool will dig in and you will break your top



STEP 28. You can part off the piece using a skew chisel. Complete a series of 'V' cuts with the long point of your skew until the piece just falls into your hand. Holding the tool in one hand with your fingers right up the blade will afford you the best control



STEP 29. A simple MDF disc with a chucking point on one side and some double-sided tape on the other will make a disc sander. Sand the top of the first finial off at an angle to create a pleasing and interesting shape



STEP 30. I normally like to try and re-turn the bottom of my work but this stand was a little too weak for me to be able to do that, so I once again used the disc sander to create a flat bottom. I made up a few discs with different grades of abrasive on them



STEP 31. The second lid is going to have a much thinner finial and for that reason I made the lid a slightly looser fit. You need to learn how to support the timber with your fingers when turning a thin item such as this



STEP 32. Always work towards the chuck and finish each section as you go. Here I was aiming for a diameter of about 3mm – if it starts to wobble, then slow the lathe down. The skew is used to form a small flame shape on the top prior to parting off



STEP 33. I didn't achieve the desired shape on the top so the scrap here that is left in the chuck is being turned into a jam chuck so I can remount the lid



STEP 34. All remounted and it was no easy feat to finish the top: I had my hand wrapped around the piece so it was impossible to photograph the process, but it was worth it to create the shape at the top



STEP 35. Lastly, spray the finials black using ebonising lacquer. I gave the natural wood a couple of coats of acrylic satin lacquer and when dry, I used a lathe-mounted buffing system; this will give the piece a really nice tactile finish



STEP 36. The two completed sycamore vases, each with a different shaped finial

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ARE YOU A GOAT?

'When goats are content they normally make no noise, but they do sometimes hum'

Are you a mountain goat? Many woodworkers are. If you have a stubborn determination to stand your ground; if you're sure you can solve the problem no matter what other people think, and despite them (and because of them) you'll clamber over rocks to get there; if you are prudent, resourceful, prone to grumbling and above all practical, your first name is probably Billy or Billie. Your middle name might be Smelly. Probably not in the bathroom sense, but in the effect your opinions have on other people. Or is that just me? Capricorn (the astrological sign of the goat) comes in mid-winter and survives. It makes do with what it has. It understands structures – both physical and human – their possibilities and limitations. It recognises authority, though quite which authority does vary. It might seem sombre or dour to others, but only if they miss its quiet humour. It may seem restrictive and conservative, but I'd prefer to say sensibly cautious.

The Capricorn woodworker

We all have Capricorn somewhere. Some of us have it in the garage; others in the shed. You can have it on a Workmate in the morning sun. Not all Capricorns are woodworkers of course. Officers, osteopaths (understanding skeletal structure) and (self-made) entrepreneurs can be equally hircine. Goats are prone to being monks. Jesus 'the Nazarite' (i.e. 'dedicated') was Sun in Capricorn (probably) and he famously combined woodwork with a somewhat religious attitude. Carthusian monks worked wood in silence alternated with periods of prayer. Cistercian monks were builder-monks – similarly ruled by a mix of spirituality and practicality. I know several woodworkers who have the air and general inclination of a monastic (for good and for bad) as if they were reincarnated – or repeat – specimens.

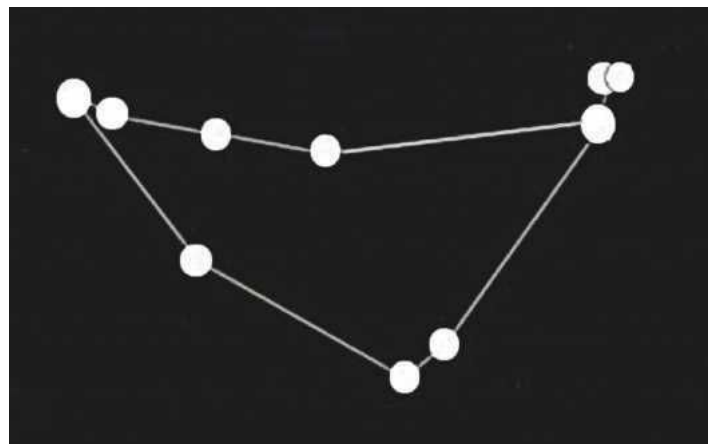
Monks and mountain goats spend time by themselves (partly for the aforementioned reason). They'd have it no other way. It is a happy state (but not completely so: association with fellow goats is desirable), and the Capricorn woodworker typically works alone.

But solitude does have drawbacks. There is no one to talk to. No one to disagree with and thereby learn something. No one to put you right. No other ox, sorry, goat in yoke. No one to save your back. No quips or merry banter. No spark of the unexpected because you know yourself all too well.

Astrologically speaking

On the other, um, hoof, the goat has no one to obey; no one to oppose, or confront. Except himself. No one for whom to turn the music down. No one to please or humour. No one to offend when things go badly, and profanity fills the air. No one with whom to compromise. This is the strength of solitude that it allows you to do what you want even though you may not know what that is. You can unfold of your own accord.

The goat stands, at least in its own mind, as proud as a stag on a crag. It faces into the wind in a pose redolent of resilience and determination, but a pose, one suspects, with another pertinent purpose.



The constellation of Capricorn: not a goat in sight

Astrology does not imagine that the movements of the sun and planets cause our individual characters, but that, being born at a particular time, we resonate with the world as it is. It is not difficult to think that the season of the year, the time of day or night, and the strength (gravitational alignment) of the moon at our first breath and our first awareness of the world (however mutely) might set the tone for the rest of our lives. Astrology is an extension of that idea.

*Capricorn (or any of the 12 zodiacal signs) does not refer only to your Sun sign (the month in which you were born: here, 21 December–19 January) as seen in the back of newspapers. You also need to know your Moon sign (its position in its 28 day cycle); and your Ascendant, or the time of day you were born, which sounds as easy as looking at a clock but is instead a ferociously complicated calculation. That's to say nothing of the planets or the houses which add permutations beyond number. Astrology is a study of human psychology, and every bit as complex. **GW***

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