TURNING KNOW-HOW: CHOOSING A SHARPENING SYSTEM

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DECEMBER 2013
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Woodturning

THE WORLD'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR WOODTURNERS

Tools of the trade:

Richard Findley looks at spindle turning gouges

In profile:
The work of Helga Winter

Michael Scarborough guides us through the key steps for creating one of his teapots

PROJECT
WINGED BOWL

PROJECT
ASYMMETRIC VASE

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Woodturning 245

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Making vs. buying

On one of my rare trips into town, I recently saw people tearing about all over the place dashing into tinsel and sparkly light-adorned shops that only too well tells us it is the silly season called Christmas. Yes, I know this magazine comes out in November and there is the Winter issue, which comes out in December, so the 'on sale' dates of the magazine move closer back in line with the cover-stated months for a while. However, even though it is November, the shops know no bounds when it comes to trying to get you to spend money on things as early as possible. I should have expected it, to be honest. Easter eggs were on sale in mid-January this year so came on sale just after the Christmas/winter sales. The shops, in relation to this Christmas, have been somewhat slow by comparison.

I loved a trend that started last year where people made something for someone as a present instead of buying something. I don't necessarily mean turned work, although there are still family and friends of mine who are not inundated with the stuff from me yet. People I know had said that it was about time they made something for each other and get back to hand-work. The cost of shop-bought items is sometimes too much when buying for a large number of friends and family, so many realised they had some time spare and decided to make things instead. I thought this was a great idea. Some made the most exquisite cards and bought presents, but this still fell within the spirit of the concept. I am working on some veneered cards and I will maybe even make them into pictures with frames. I am about to start with the sand shading for some of the veneer sections. I would much rather receive something made by someone. It shows me they have thought about it rather than simply plonked something in a trolley in a shop.

So, here is the challenge: what are you making for your family and friends this year? As yet, I am still undecided but I know I am going to make five things this year. I would love to hear about what you make, even if it is not turned work. If you are able to do this, please email or send me your photos.

If the cards don't work out according to plan, I'll no doubt end up making some turnings!

Mark Baker

twitter

Woodworkers Institute website (www.woodworkersinstitute.com) is thriving. It would be great if you took a look and participated in the various discussions and competitions in our community.

Cover image by GMC/Anthony Bailey
Using a spindle roughing gouge on a candleholder

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FEATURES

NEWS, LATEST PRODUCTS, MAGAZINE UPLOADS & EVENTS can all be found on www.woodworkersinstitute.com. These all appear on the magazine homepage and you can see a bigger selection by scrolling down the page and clicking on the individual stories. We also have an extensive online archive for you to browse

COMMUNITY

Round & about

We bring you the latest news from the world of woodturning as well as letters from the Woodworkers Institute forum and important dates for your diary from the woodturning community

The Christmas Craft Fair – RHS Garden Wisley

Craft In Focus is returning to Wisley from 27 November–1 December to stage its popular Christmas craft and design fair. Anyone visiting the craft fair this year can also visit the Garden the same day for free saving on the normal Garden admittance.

The craft fair will be held in floored and heated marquees in front of the main entrance and features around 160 of the UK's finest professional contemporary craftworkers and artists working in wood, glass, metal, textiles, ceramics and more. All exhibitors at Craft In Focus events design and make the work they display and are selected for their individuality and innovation in contemporary design, as well as outstanding technical ability. The event is a must visit for anyone seeking something unusual and original, produced by an individual business that has a real passion for the work they create. Visitors will enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and breathtaking creativity from an exciting range from both emerging British talent as well as more established designer-makers. This event really is a refreshing alternative to Christmas shopping on the high street. The craft fair opens from 9am each day with late night opening on Thursday.

DETAILS:
When: 27 November–1 December, 2013
Where: RHS Garden Wisley, Nr Woking GU23 6QB
Tickets: **On the door – £9; RHS members and accompanied under 16s – free** **Contact:** Craft In Focus
Tel: 01622 747 325
Web: www.craftinfocus.com

TOP TO BOTTOM: Work by Graham Beebag, Jeff Soan and David Patrick Brown

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE WORSTER

Wounded warriors to get woodworking workshops fit for heroes

Robert Sorby is to work closely with world-renowned military charity Help for Heroes providing woodturning workshops to support soldiers on the road to recovery.

The project is part of the Sheffield-based manufacturer's corporate social responsibility initiative to bring woodturning to a wider audience through community-orientated workshops. The joint effort with Help for Heroes has been designed to work closely with the charity's new skills and adaptive hobbies programme, which focuses on enabling wounded, injured and ill soldiers to learn new things that can act as a launch pad to life outside the military. The initiative is run by Help for Heroes and forms part of the military's Defence Recovery Capability.

Robert Sorby plans to offer workshops as a long-term opportunity to the four recovery centres across the country. The state-of-the-art purpose-built centres are located at military bases in Catterick, Colchester, Plymouth and Tidworth and have been paid for through the generous donations of the British public.

Facilities are available to serving and veteran residents, day visitors and their families and provide education, vocational training, welfare, sport and adventure training. Phoenix House, based at Catterick army base in North Yorkshire and Chavasse VC House in Colchester, Essex, are the first of the recovery centres to get help with the woodturning workshops at the end of September. See below for further details.

FUNDRAISING IN SUPPORT OF HELP *for* HEROES

DETAILS:
Contact: Robert Sorby
Tel: 0114 225 0700
Web: www.robert-sorby.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT SORBY

Making a **profit**

Mark,
Your blog on making a profit has quite a few home truths. If, as woodturners, we are in it for a living then selling, demonstrating and all the additional work that goes with it needs to be covered by the cost of the work being sold.

However, for most turners who have, like myself, no need to make vast profits from our work as we have another income, we buy timber, turn a bowl and nine times out of ten, give it away for free. If, over a course of time, like me, people venture into selling at craft fairs, then we have to reflect the cost as we don't have the same access to big galleries and our work is not known to them to warrant being worth a great deal. This is not to say the work isn't as good – it's all horses for courses. If the timber is free, then why do we feel embarrassed when we make a profit on it? Yet if we buy a timber blank for £20 and give it away to a family friend, we feel fine if, as you say at the end of your blog, as long as we the woolturners enjoy what we make and are happy to sell, or give away our work and we feel happy at the end. It's not all about profit but for a lot of us, the feel-good factor as well.

Terance Rand

Excellent tools & after-sales service

Dear Mark,
For a novice turner, woodturning is an activity that is sometimes fraught with incidents such as catches. I was turning an oval form roughly in line with a design in your *Woodturning Projects* book, using a piece of cherry (*Prunus spp.*) that I had recently scavenged. The wood was wet, but not green. I had a spectacular catch that stopped the lathe and unfortunately seriously bent my Mid-Size Easy Hollower #3 tool.

Dignity went out of the window and a few words were uttered. The wood stayed on the chuck and did not fly around the garage. Even so, I was glad I was wearing a full-face safety visor.

I contacted Easy Wood Tools by email for advice and to my surprise, Alan Ballard, the company's sales and service representative, immediately offered a replacement tool and, even better, was in contact with the UK agent Garry Rowberry, sales manager at Wood Workers Workshop. As I write, a new hollowing tool is winging its way to me. This is what I call first class service after the sale.

I also agree with the comments of one of the *Woodturning* reviewers about the Easy Hollowing tools; they are easy to use and give excellent results. You judged two of my pieces last year at the Surrey Association of Woodturners' open day, and both were made using this tool. I am still working on the cherry piece and will send you a photo when it is completed.

Best regards,
Paul Spaven

Tasmanian blackwood box with American hard maple, sourced in Oklahoma in 1992, with an African blackwood finial

Spalted hornbeam and African blackwood vase

Wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*) burr bowl by Allan J

Spalted hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and wenge (*Millettia laurentii*) goblet, 150mm high

Platter with ring diameter of 430–450mm by guido512

Woodturning **stockist theft**

Dear Mark,
Well, I didn't see that coming! Thieving from turning stockists? Whatever next? Having met quite a few turners – only a fraction of those you've met, obviously – I have found them without exception to be decent, kind, informative and helpful, definitely not the sort of people you'd expect to see stuffing a gouge inside their coat. I do hope the thieves weren't turners themselves.

I have to admit that I've lost stock at craft fairs. You can't watch every piece on your tables all the time, especially if you're fortunate enough to have more than one customer to deal with at any one time. At one regular venue in a shopping centre, where I had two tables in line, during a rare busy period I had to explain to one customer how a paper pot maker works while another was enquiring about a parrot-on-a-stick toy.

When they'd gone I looked over the rest of the stock and could see at once that one of my footed clocks had disappeared. This was obvious as I'd put four on the table and hadn't sold any up to that point.

The sellers' tables were arranged in a square and nobody else had noticed anything. The experience didn't stop me going to the venue; that happened when they and other venues doubled their fees last year and now I just have my internet shop.

A friend who works in retail tells me that all the retail businesses he knows build in a factor for 'shrinkage', which is business speak for shoplifting. I think tool retailers already employ a fairly high mark-up and I hope as an industry they won't see the need to add another percentage point or two for shrinkage.

Best wishes,
David Thomas

Conversion chart

2mm (5⁄64in)	35mm (1⅜in)	145mm (5¾in)
3mm (⅛in)	38mm (1½in)	150mm (6in)
4mm (5⁄32in)	40mm (1⅝in)	155mm (6⅛in)
6mm (¼in)	45mm (1¾in)	160mm (6⅜in)
7mm (9⁄32in)	50mm (2in)	165mm (6½in)
8mm (5⁄16in)	55mm (2⅛ 2¼in)	170mm (6¾in)
9mm (11⁄32in)	60mm (2⅜in)	178mm (7in)
10mm (⅜in)	63mm (2½in)	180mm (7in)
11mm (7⁄16in)	65mm (2⅝in)	185mm (7¼in)
12mm (½in)	70mm (2¾in)	190mm (7½in)
13mm (½in)	75mm (3in)	195mm (7¾in)
14mm (9⁄16in)	80mm (3⅛in)	200mm (8in)
15mm (5⁄8in)	85mm (3⅜in)	305mm (12in)
16mm (⅝in)	90mm (3½in)	405mm (16in)
17mm (11⁄16in)	93mm (3⅝in)	510mm (20in)
18mm (23⁄32in)	95mm (3¾in)	610mm (24in)
19mm (¾in)	100mm (4in)	710mm (28in)
20mm (¾in)	105mm (4⅛in)	815mm (32in)
21mm (13⁄16in)	110mm (4⅜in)	915mm (36in)
22mm (⅞in)	115mm (4½in)	1,015mm (40in)
23mm (29⁄32in)	120mm (4¾in)	1,120mm (44in)
24mm (15⁄16in)	125mm (5in)	1,220mm (48in)
25mm (1in)	130mm (5⅛in)	1,320mm (52in)
30mm (1⅛in)	135mm (5⅜in)	1,420mm (56in)
32mm (1¼in)	140mm (5½in)	

New Axminster store now open in Basingstoke

Axminster Tools & Machinery opened a new store during a Basingstoke launch event on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 October.

The new store will be number six for the company. With 7,700 square feet of retail space, Basingstoke will be the first of the Axminster stores to open seven days a week in line with most other retail outlets in the area. It will also be the first store to display the new company signage and trade under the new name.

The store will stock all of the most popular lines and brands, plus it will be possible to order in-store anything from the full range of the Axminster Tools & Machinery catalogue.

Retail Development Director, Darran McLeod said: "While this new store may be smaller than some of the other branches, we are introducing a new format with improved layout and different merchandising techniques, which will enhance the product and provide the customer with more information. Despite these changes, the store will still maintain the Axminster ethos of offering high quality advice and customer service." See below for further details.

DETAILS:
Contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery
Tel: 03332 406 406
Web: www.axminster.co.uk

The new store opened on 19 October

Vase in carob wood entitled 'The Fire Inside' by traffico-wood

Oddments box in oak (*Quercus robur*) and walnut (*Juglans regia*) by CHJ

Offcentre platter by Phil Bradley

Proskills UK announces the launch of the fifth MakeIT! Wood, along with a new website

The reduction in technical learning in UK schools is something that we have highlighted more than once – so you can imagine our delight when we heard that an initiative to get kids into woodwork was returning, bigger and better, for a fifth year.

The MakeIT! Wood competition engages students in the wood and timber industries by asking students to research, design and produce a wood or timber structure. A curriculum-mapped competition for school years 9 to 12, teachers are supplied with a guide that includes a series of prepared lesson plans, downloadable interactive multi-media resources and interactive presentations.

MakeIT! Wood also includes a twinning element by introducing schools to local timber businesses in order to give students the chance to experience the industry first hand. The aim is to show students and teachers that the industry is exciting and widespread and holds a wide range of career possibilities, and with brand new workbooks and a wide range of tasks for students it is set to be the best one yet.

The new website launched for the fifth MakeIT! Wood is simple yet inclusive. It has been designed with its audience in mind with a clear and concise structure for students, teachers and employers. All resources and tips are easy to find and registering for the programme couldn't be easier with step-by-step instructions.

MakeIT! Wood 2013/14 is available to all schools and is now open for registration via the website or by contacting the team. Proskills UK are also looking for employers to team up with schools and to support the programme to help them deliver this fantastic initiative.

DETAILS:
Contact: Proskills UK
Tel: 01235 432 030
Web: www.makeit-wood.org.uk

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PROSKILLS

An exhibition of work completed by previous year's entrants

Aldi Workman lathe

Mark,
I bought the same lathe in France five years ago in Carrefour in the Cite Europe, Calais, for the equivalent price of €38.

This started my woodwork hobby and collection of just about every tool and gadget Aldi sell. Their customer service for tools is brilliant: the manufacturer in Germany supports them with no-quibble spares and sends them within a couple of days, free of charge.

My shed is too small now and I'm planning an extension of about 80sq.ft, but it will never be as good as the Tommy Walsh workshop/Aston Martin garage!

Cheers,
Nick Morgan

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ALDI

Multistar & Peter Child

Following the successful relaunch of the range of Multistar products, Constable Woodcrafts is pleased to announce a joint venture/trading partnership with Peter Child Woodturning Supplies.
Such is the variety of designs available from Multistar, it was felt necessary to have the amenity of a shop with full display facilities and the back-up of one of the most respected names in the woodturning supplies business. This partnership will take place with immediate effect.

On behalf of Constable Woodcrafts, Brian Fitzsimmons wishes to thank all those who have already supported him with their orders and Werner Wolfrum of Maderas Drechseltechnik whose prompt supplies have made this possible. See below for details.

DETAILS:
CONTACT: Constable Woodcrafts
TEL: 01206 299 400
WEB: www.constablewoodcrafts.co.uk

25th anniversary

24 August saw the South Auckland Woodturners Guild celebrate its 25th birthday with a special anniversary dinner. The current President, Bruce Wood, officiated over the evening. You can learn more about the club's history by visiting their website. We would like to say a big congratulations to the club.

DETAILS:
CONTACT: South Auckland Woodturners Guild
EMAIL: president@sawg.org.nz
WEB: www.sawg.org.nz

Annual auction

Last month we gave the incorrect date for the annual auction of used tools and equipment, which will be held at the meeting place of the Northumbrian Woodturners. The correct date is 13 December, 2013. The sale starts at 7.30pm.

WHEN: 13 December, 2013
WHERE: The Briardale Community Centre, Briardale Road, Blyth NE24 5AN
TEL: 07986 903 494
WEB: www.northumbrianwoodturners.com

INDUSTRY NEWS

Each month, different companies within the woodworking industry share their latest news and products with us

All roads lead to **Harrogate**

There is an amazing line-up of turning demonstrators at the 'Harrogate' show. Eli Avisera, Andrew Hall, Stuart Mortimer, Mark Baker, Margaret Garrard, Mick Hanbury, Sue and Graham Harker, Reg Slack, Les Thorne and Tony Wilson are just some of the people you will see.

Visitors to the show, which is just days away now, will be in for a real treat as clearly the 'Harrogate' show is not to be missed.

When: 22–24 November, 2013
Where: Hall 1, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, Yorkshire, HG2 8NZ
Contact: Nelton Exhibitions
Tel: 01474 536 535
Web: www.nelton.co.uk

Stuart Mortimer – just one of the demonstrators you will see at the show

News from **D&M Tools**

'The' Tool Show '13 – another record year!

Visitors flocked to Kempton Park in Sunbury-on-Thames, on an unusually sunny and warm weekend at the beginning of October for D&M Tools' 13th annual exhibition, 'The' Tool Show '13. Once again, the show proved to be their most successful, with visitors travelling from far and wide to take advantage of the exclusive show deals and offers, and to see and buy newly launched products, many on show for the first time in the UK. These included the new Makita cordless 4Ah, the new DeWalt oscillating tool and new cordless drills and drivers from both Fein and Festool. Next year's show dates will be 10–12 October, 2014, so put it in your diaries!

Contact: D&M Tools
Tel: 020 8892 3813
Web: www.dm-tools.co.uk

Visitors flock to this popular event

A hand tool demonstration

A woodturning demonstration

The North of England Woodworking & Power Tool Show

Gt Yorkshire Showground Harrogate (HG2 8QZ)

22 November 2013 10am - 5pm
23 November 2013 10am - 5pm
24 November 2013 10am - 4pm

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Creating 'Tea in the Afterglow'

Michael Scarborough takes us through the steps for creating 'Tea in the Afterglow', a piece which is rich in history and decorative techniques

I have found that the inspiration to create a piece of wood art can spring from many different sources: a conversation, a historical fact, a piece of music, a certain material or a special place. 'Tea in the Afterglow' was inspired by the combination of a very special material found in a very special place.

People speak of places so rich in history that just being there makes one feel as if the past has come alive. My brother has a farm in the mountains of northwest Georgia, near Chickamauga, and it is just such a place, steeped in millennia of history. Native American campsites have been identified there and respectfully preserved; arrowheads are found regularly. And, sadly, it was the scene of one of the bloodiest battles of the American Civil War.

A little back-story: I grew up in Japan and am now finding that, in predictably Japanese fashion, the sun and moon are playing an increasingly important role in my work. I particularly love sunsets with all their amazing colours: reds and fiery oranges and golds kissing the low hung clouds. But, I have always been most moved by the subtlety of dusk and its afterglow – that short time when the sun is well below the horizon. This is perhaps nowhere more true than in those history-steeped mountains in Georgia. The afterglow makes the red clay seem to, well, glow. I also love the subtle lustre of copper. Dusk, red clay and copper – surely these three could somehow be combined? In this article I will take you through the key stages for creating this piece.

MICHAEL SCARBOROUGH

About the author:
Growing up in Japan influenced Michael's turning style, which he describes as 'Japanese-inspired art'. He works with a broad range of materials and techniques and spent 25 years as a classical singer.

Email: michael@michaelscarboroughdesign.com
Web: www.michaelscarboroughdesign.com

INSPIRATION

It is not often that the inspiration for the finish of a piece comes before the actual form, but when it happens, I tend to just go with it, which is what happened with 'Tea in the Afterglow'. This willingness to listen to the voice within is becoming a recurring theme in my work. But, what of the form for this inspired finish? What type of a piece would it be: a bowl, kettle or vase? The creative process can be an unpredictable one: things don't always come to us in the order we wish they would. For instance, this piece came into being after its companion pieces, 'Tea at Sunset' and 'Tea at Midnight', had already been finished.

SKETCHING THE IDEA

I puzzled over it and sketched and sketched some more, but I found myself getting nowhere. I needed a subtle form that spoke of the time between the full, round orb of the sun near the horizon and the formless black of night.

I keep a pad and pencil at my bedside in case any dreams that seem significant need jotting down. It is always an amazing thing to wake up in the morning and discover a dream I do not remember recounted on the pad. Well, imagine my amazement when I awoke during the 'Afterglow' pondering process to see this image scrawled on the paper! I decided there and then to set all other projects aside and begin work to bring this image into three dimensions.

My initial sketch

TO THE LATHE

As I had no solid blanks large enough to make the piece, I began by gluing up blocks of maple (*Acer campestre*). I then planed the pieces glass-smooth and used two-part epoxy for its solidity and gap-filling properties.

I began turning, and the form I'd sketched began to be coaxed out of the wood. To help break up the mass of the piece, I'd decided to leave a raised band, which I hoped would have decorative carving, the design of which had yet to be determined. I chose to position the spout in that raised area. The interior was hollowed next.

The form, once roughed down

I chose to position the spout in the raised area

HOLLOWING

The piece was then reversed on the lathe, the throat removed and the top created from poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). I also fabricated a jam chuck to fit into the bottom of the workpiece. This jam chuck allows me easy access to the entire surface of the piece for finishing purposes.

The hollowed interior

The piece placed on a fabricated jam chuck

The piece covered with paint and some dry Georgia clay

The clay, once dry

FINISHING

Now the real fun began – the finishing. I love finishing and the gooier the finish, the better. I began by slathering the piece with a heavy coat of paint. I then rubbed some dry Georgia red clay into the wet paint.

At this point, I decided to add beading to the wide raised band, as I had on the upper band and the lid. I do not know what made me think of doing so, but I really like the effect it creates. I had begun the piece thinking I wanted a wave pattern carved there, but I have learned that when something comes along to spark an idea such as this, even if the process is well under way, I listen. Before committing fully to it, I sketch, I ponder, I meditate on it, I listen to the voice within, and, if it still feels like the right choice, I go with it. It is only now upon writing about this process that I realise that the beads were put into my subconscious by the view of the Georgia hills, marching, row upon row, almost like a serried ranks of soldiers, off into the distance.

OVER-COATING

Once the clay and undercoat of paint were fully dry, I over-coated the entire piece with black, oil-based paint. It is essential to use oil-based paint because it can be sanded and burnished in ways that acrylics cannot. When that coat of paint had really hardened, which took at least a week, I then sanded it to knock off the high points of clay. This is an incredibly dirty process as you are not only sanding paint, you are sanding dirt. Respirator and cross ventilation are a necessity. By using increasingly finer grades of sandpaper and then '0000' steel wool, this process also begins to burnish the finish. I then began building layers of glaze mixed from spar varnish and decreasing amounts of the black paint. This building up of increasingly transparent layers creates visual depth in the finish of the piece. It is necessary to allow each layer to fully harden before applying the next.

The piece undercoated with black oil-based paint

Building up layers of glaze mixed from spar varnish and black paint...

... creates increasingly transparent layers to give visual depth

The template for the handle

The handle, once cut out on the bandsaw and carved

CARVING THE HANDLE & SPOUT

The handle was then carved, followed by the spout. The initial shapes of both were created on the bandsaw. I then worked with rasps and files and a spindle sander used very judiciously. I finished it all off with hand sanding. I worked diligently to create a visual balance between the disparate parts of the piece. One misstep with a spindle sander can wreak havoc with that balance. Better to take the time to sand by hand than rush it and have to start a new spout.

I wrapped the handle in wire using the following method: I drilled a small hole in the back of the handle and then epoxied in the end of the wire to secure it in place. I then mixed a small batch of five-minute epoxy, coated a portion of the handle with it and tightly wound the wire in place. I continued this process until I had the entire handle tightly wrapped. I kept a small dish of alcohol close at hand and wiped off the epoxy that inevitably oozed out during the process. This is a messy, messy process, to say the least.

The various stages of creating the spout

Applying copper leaf to the beading

APPLYING COPPER LEAF

The careful viewer may wonder why the colour of the copper wire on the handle doesn't match the colour of the copper leaf. Simple answer: I had purchased copper wire with which to train Bonsai plants – only it turned out to be copper-plated wire and thinly plated, at that. In fact, it might have just been copper-coloured paint! One good buffing with waxed steel wool and it was good-bye copper 'plate'! In the end it worked out well, as these things most often do. There is enough copper colour left to relate to the other copper portions of the piece, but there is also a chromatic difference that adds interest.

I then applied copper leaf to the beading. Being much thicker than gold leaf, copper leaf is far more forgiving in its application and might be a good bet for a first project in applying leaf. I used oil-based quick size as an adhesive and was not concerned about wrinkles or overlaps, as these would actually add to the rustic look of the piece. I find that leaving the piece chucked in the lathe makes the leafing process far easier than having it flat on the bench. Once the leafing was completed, the spout was inserted and the handle mounted.

Creating a patina on the leaf and the rest of the piece involved long processes using lots of chemicals, glazes and waxes. After lots of experimentation and sample-making, the initial warm brown patina on the leaf was created by using ferric chloride and ferric nitrate. I also used household ammonia, but did so outdoors. In all cases, I wore eye protection, a respirator and gloves.

Over the patinated leaf, I sponged on mixes of oil-based paints: ochre, sienna, umber – lots of earth tones to fit the overall feel of the piece. I also added a bit of the original clay to the mix to create a sense of chromatic harmony. There is no specific formula to any of this other than to experiment, experiment, experiment and play a lot. Warning: when you find a formula you like, may I suggest that you write it down, as details can be forgotten in the 'Eureka' moments of discovery. I look back at some of the pieces created in my pre-note-taking days and think, "I'd give anything to know how I did that."

Once I had the copper where I liked it, I waxed the entire piece using dark oak-coloured wax and dry pigments as follows: I wrapped a piece of cotton cloth on my finger, dipped it in wax, then in the dry pigment. Again, earth tones were used along with a bit of the original clay for chromatic harmony. The coloured wax/pigment combination stays in the slight crevices left in the finish and also gathers in the beads.

FINAL FLOURISHES

As a last step, I gently sprinkled rottenstone on the piece and waxed over it with clear paste wax. The rottenstone gathers in the beads and around the spout and handle and gives a sense of age to the piece. It also acts as a very fine abrasive and, when buffed along with the wax, adds a subtle glow to the finish.

All of the glazes and wax are sufficient to seal the copper. But those same layers of wax will grow rich with age and, in time, a glowing patina will encase the entire piece. ▶

Rottenstone and clear paste wax create an aged feel

THE FINAL RESULT

When viewed between the other two pieces, 'Tea at Sunset' and 'Tea at Midnight', I think the feeling of afterglow is apparent in this piece – not as solar red as 'Sunset', not as black as 'Midnight', but a subtle blend of both.

This was a very rewarding project and proved to me, yet again, that creating turned wood art is as much about using the head as the hands. ●

TOP: 'Tea at Midnight', mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*), mixed media finish, 2011, 280mm high x 200mm wide x 150mm dia.

ABOVE: 'Tea at Sunset', maple (*Acer campestre*), 23k gold leaf and a mixed media finish, 2013, 330mm high x 220mm wide x 150mm dia.

RIGHT: 'Tea in the Afterglow', poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), copper wire, copper leaf and a mixed media finish, 2011, 200mm high x 250mm wide x 235mm dia.

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INSET: An alternative pod made from silver ash with black palm seeds

Offset seed pod

Neil Scobie takes inspiration from nature and creates an offset seed pod with contrasting seeds

This is another of my projects inspired by nature, very loosely based on the seed pod of a blackbean (*Castanospermum australe*) tree. Most timbers would be suitable for the project, though I would choose a species that is reasonably dense but good to carve. For the seeds, a contrasting coloured wood looks best. I have chosen Tasmanian myrtle (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) for the pod and black palm (*Ravenea flabellifer*) for the seeds. Myrtle is very dense and close-grained but works well with hand- and power-carving tools. Black palm, that grows in north Queensland, Australia, is very dense and takes a fine polish. The contrast between both of these timbers suited my tastes. I have also made some of these pods using silver ash (*Flindersia schottiana*) for the pods and darker gidgee (*Acacia cambagei*) or black palm for the seeds. However, if you don't have access to these timbers then don't worry – just use whichever timbers you have available.

NEIL SCOBIE

About the author: Neil is a full-time woodworker who makes custom-made furniture and turned and carved art pieces for private clients and selected galleries. He also writes for a number of woodworking magazines. Neil lives in New South Wales, Australia.
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Web: www.neilandlizscobie.com

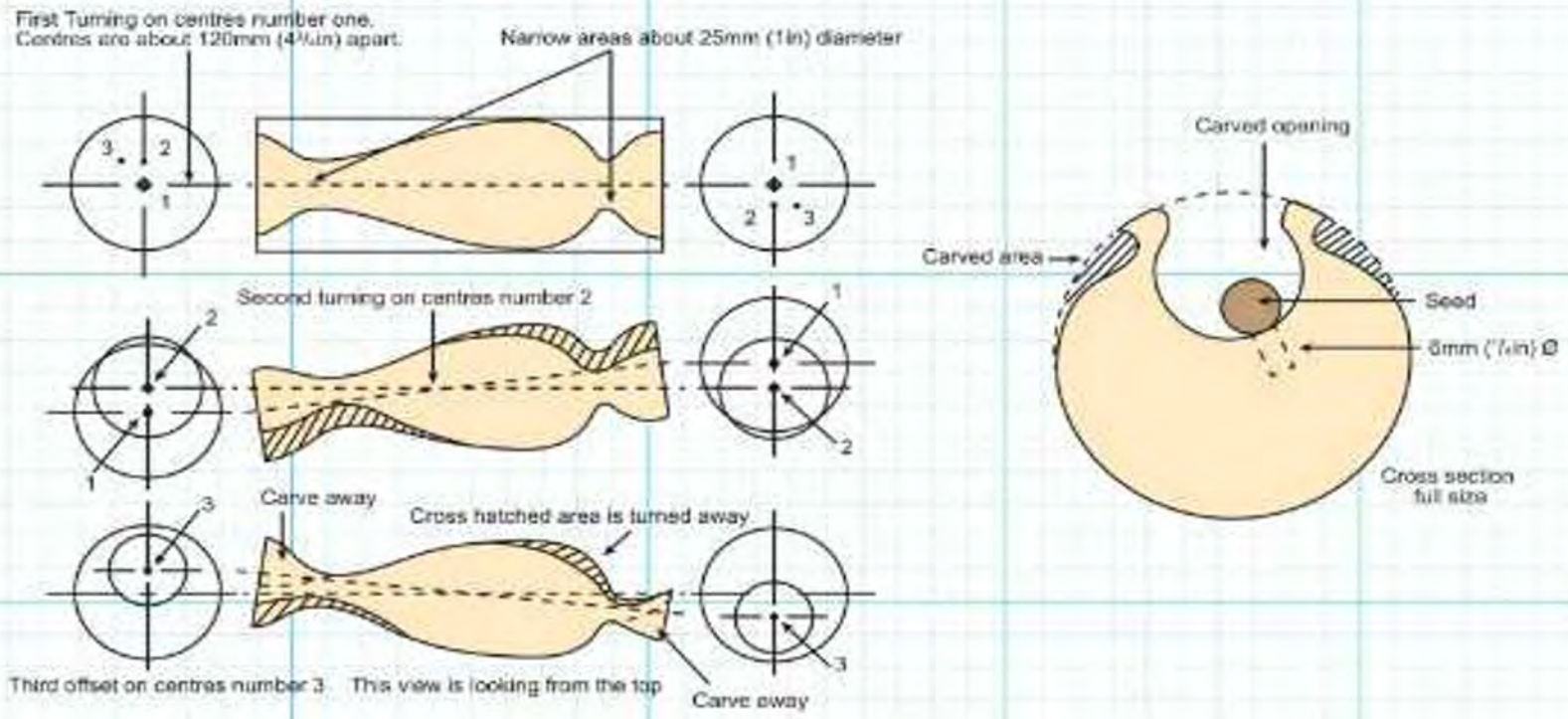
INFORMATION

TIME TAKEN & COST
Time taken: 5 hours
Cost: £4.50

TOOLS REQUIRED
- Spindle roughing gouge
- 10 or 12mm spindle gouge
- Small spindle gouge
- Parting tool
- Electric drill
- Brad point drill
- Sanding pads
- 15mm round burr
- 'V' tool
- Shallow curve gouge
- Soft drum sander
- Centre punch or awl
- A range of abrasives
- '0000' steel wool
- Home-made soft sander
- Five-minute epoxy glue
- Oil finish – or any oil sealer
- PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

ADDITIONAL TOOLS
- Mini Arbortech or Proxxon long-neck angle grinder
- Ball-shaped burr
- Die grinder or rotary tool
- Rotary cutting disc
- Dentist-type ball burr

SEED POD DIMENSIONS



1 Take a piece of timber measuring 75mm square x 220mm long. Mark out the three centres as shown on the drawing – 12mm offset is enough to give you the offset stems on each end. Use a centre punch or awl point tool to punch in the centres so they are easily distinguished. Mark these as '1, 2 and 3' on each end, making sure they are horizontally opposed on each end. Place the blank between centres with a spur drive or steb centre in the headstock and a revolving cup on the tailstock end. You should be on centre 1 on each end. Rough the blank down to a cylinder, then the drawn shape, using a spindle roughing gouge. If you cut downhill you will be cutting with the grain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2 Turn the shallow sections down to the given size, which is about 25mm. You may prefer to use a smaller spindle gouge on the tailstock end when reducing the bottom of the hollow. There is no need to sand the surface as most of it will be shaped with the offsetting and carving


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3 Place the blank on centre 2 on both ends ready for re-shaping. Double check that it will not hit the toolrest when rotating by hand. You can still keep the speed up on the lathe because you have offset the same diagonally on both ends. The blank will be horizontally opposed on each end, thus making it balanced


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4 Now turn away about half of the shadow line, which you will see while the piece is spinning. Use a 12 or 15mm spindle gouge as you can cut down into the shallow sections. You should only turn the outside one-third on each end, just touching the middle part to blend the curve to the offset. Turn some of the ends away, but check that you have not turned too close to centre 3

5 You can now place the centres on number 3 at both ends of the pod. Centre 3 is sideways from centre 2. This step is just to turn the end sections offset so they are sideways to the last offset

6 Now as in step 5, turn away about half the shadow line, checking you don't get the end stems less than 12mm. You also need to blend the curve of the centre section into your new offset shape

7 Here you can see the shape after the offset turning is finished. The stems on each end of the pod will be reduced in the carving process, which is coming up. You still do not need to sand at this stage; leave this until all the shaping is completed

8 Draw on the part that you want to cut out for the hollow section in a curved shape rather than just a straight 'V' shape, as it will look far more interesting. Start by drawing a curved centreline followed by the outside open section, shown in blue marker pen. Now draw on the folded sections, shown in red marker pen. The red-marked section will look like the seed pod has dried and opened from the centre opening

9 Leave the turned piece between centres and engage the spindle lock on the lathe; this will stop it moving while you are carving out the hollow section of the pod. I started the hollowing out with an Arbortech mini carver. However, any of the Arbortech cutters would be suitable to use in this process, especially the new Mini-Turbo blade. You will find that the mini carver will not let you cut in as deep as you want. Just rip out the bulk waste with the stronger carver

Handy hints

1. Make sure you choose contrasting timber for the pod and seeds
2. If you use a softer timber, make the stems a little thicker, this will avoid breaking them
3. Practise the stippling on a waste block of the same timber before attacking your pod, just to see if you are happy with the look

10 Using a Proxxon long-neck angle grinder with medium rotary rasp attached allows you to cut in the hole with more control. You could use this machine to do the whole process if you prefer. Rolling the cutting disc in from both sides allows you to remove most of the waste

11 Here you can see the hollowed out section. If you are a person who likes to use hand-carving gouges, this hollowing process can all be achieved with gouges – it may just take a bit longer. It depends what tools you have available to you

12 To cut in deeper and smooth out the inner hole, use a ball-shaped burr in a die grinder or rotary tool. This ball was about 15mm diameter. Use a smaller diameter burr near the ends

"Use a smaller diameter burr near the ends"

13 Use a rotary cutting disc to make the grooves under the folded out sections; this allows for easy waste removal. The disc I have used is a flatter curve with a rounded outer edge. Cut in as close to the line as you can and blend the shape to the outer diameter of the pod, as in drawing 2

14 Use a smaller burr with a rounded end to shape under the folds. This burr was about 6mm in diameter

15 You can now use the same tool with a less aggressive burr to complete the other side of the pod

16 Use a smaller sanding disc to clean up the area under the fold. This tool is a small-angle handpiece that fits onto a rotary tool and is ideal because of its lightness and option to slow down the speed so that the abrasive does not burn easily. Start with 120 and work up to 400 grit. Sand what you can of the opening with the small sander

Handy hints

4. Take your time: step back and look at your design while turning the offset ends
5. Be careful not to get oil in the stem holes. To stop this from happening, roll up some rag and use this to seal off the holes before oiling. This will ensure that the glue will stick
6. Try displaying the seed pod on an 'O' ring measuring 25mm diameter; this will prevent it from rolling


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17 Using a 'V' gouge, cut the lead-in parts to the opening with a 'V' shape. Now hand sand the fold-outs and the 'V' shapes by folding abrasive around an old credit card. You only need to sand to 120 grit if you intend to stipple the inside opening

18 For the seeds I place short pieces of the black palm between centres and turn them to about 17 or 18mm diameter. Hold these pieces in a scroll chuck with small jaws so that you turn one seed then part it off and then turn another one out of the same piece. Use a small spindle gouge to turn the ball shape, working downhill from the top of the sphere, then turn a stem with a parting tool about 12mm long and 6mm in diameter. Fully sand each ball before parting off. Sand up to 600 grit, followed by '0000' steel wool. The diameters of my seeds were 15mm in the centre, then 12mm on each side and 10mm on each end. You can make these to suit your hollowed-out section

19 Here you can see the seeds placed in a waste block of timber for the oiling process. Give each seed three coats of oil

20 Now drill the holes for the seeds with the same diameter drill that you used for the seed stems. It is best to use a brad point drill here. Start in the middle and work towards each end so that the seeds just touch. Now bandsaw off the marked out waste sections on the stems and shape them on a disc sander

21 Using a home-made soft sander, sand the smaller diameter parts of the pod and the stems. I made these drum sanders out of a piece of 20mm plastic pipe covered with soft rubber sleeve that is usually used to protect hot water pipes. When you wrap abrasive around the rubber and tape in place at each end you have made yourself a cheap, light and very effective drum sander for jobs like this. Using a slightly larger sanding disc with a soft interface pad between the disc and the abrasive, sand as much of the pod as you can, right up to 600 grit, with the soft pad powered by a variable-speed angle drill

22 To stipple the inside use a dentist-type ball burr held in a rotary tool, running at high speed. Once all the stippling is complete, rub the stippled surface with a grey scouring pad to remove any torn grain

23 Hand sand the surface to 600 grit then apply four coats of oil to keep the surface looking bright. I used Livos KUNOS, allowing one day between coats, with a rub back between applications. After the finish is dry, glue the seed stems into the holes with some five-minute epoxy glue, taking care not to spill any out onto the stippled area. The offset pod is now complete •

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sharing expertise

Asymmetric vase

Richard Kennedy creates an asymmetric vase that can either be left plain or spray painted to give a ceramic-style effect

As a woodworker, there is nothing better than to find a lump of tree with amazing figure or unusual grain patterns. Being able to sand and polish the surface to highlight this natural beauty is one of the reasons we all work with wood but, sometimes, we do come across bland or marked material. As an extension of this project I wanted to see if I could create a white ceramic-style vase using a piece of cherry (*Prunus spp.*) that might have made its way to the firewood pile. Nick Arnull and Nick Agar have both used techniques to create this porcelain effect, and while I didn't want to reproduce their work, the idea of 'wooden china' appealed to me. I do, however, accept that some prefer pure turned objects, and so to this end, I have created two vases: one in its natural state and the other in a 'ceramic' style.

This project sits between a deep bowl and a fully closed hollow form and as such, is a good introduction to hollowing. Any hollowing tool you own can be used here.

For this project I decided to use a straight section of a cherry log, thanks to a neighbour who had lost their tree in a storm and offered it to me. In this instance, excessive bends or oddly shaped pieces of the tree should be avoided. They can cause problems when trying to rough out a piece and can contain hidden stresses that could ruin any finished item. Try to find a log that is quite round in section as this makes life a lot easier, especially if you are less experienced or have a smaller, lighter weight lathe. Care needs to be taken when working with green wood as it does have a tendency to split. Maintaining a consistent thin wall thickness right to the base is critical, as is allowing the part completed vase time to settle and dry out. Taking these issues into consideration, I made this project over a couple of weeks, with time spent on other projects while I allowed the vase to dry. During this time, I kept the partially completed pieces in a sealed paper bag. Storing them this way creates a micro-environment that helps to slow evaporation, minimising the risk of serious splits or distortion.

RICHARD KENNEDY

About the author: Richard has been a full-time woodturner for the last five years. Working principally on gallery pieces, Richard is interested in form and line. Working exclusively in native British woods, he is trying to raise the profile of the range and beauty of wood art.

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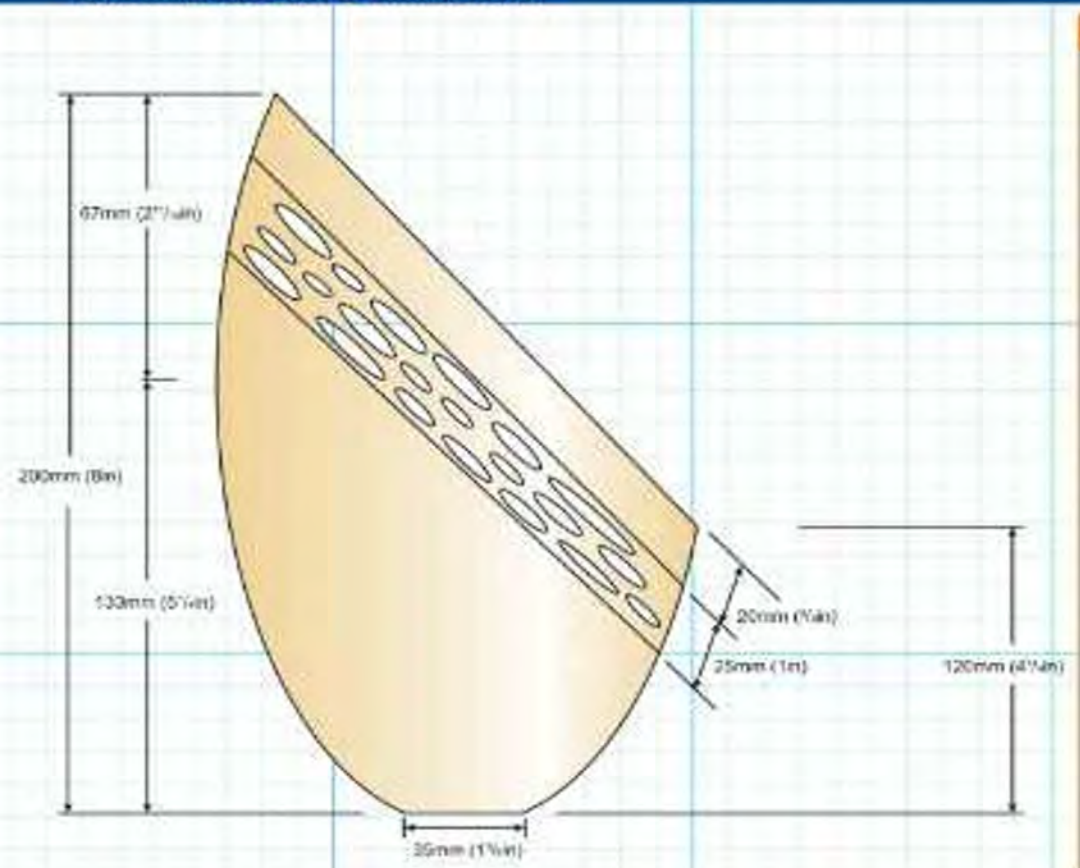
ASYMMETRIC VASE DIMENSIONS



INFORMATION

TIME TAKEN & COST

Time taken: 2 days

Cost: £5

TOOLS REQUIRED

- Spindle roughing gouge
- Spindle gouge
- Hollowing tool – I used a Woodcut tool
- Skew chisel
- Parting tool

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

- Pair of compasses
- Ruler
- Mallet
- Two- or four-prong drive centre
- Cyanoacrylate adhesive
- Jacobs chuck
- Large beam drill or similar
- Abrasive wrapped around a stick
- Callipers or a piece of bent wire
- Sanding sealer & range of abrasives
- Rotary multi-tool with a small straight sided piercing bit or a fret saw
- White primer spray paint
- Gloss spray acrylic lacquer
- PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

1 When using green wood from a log, cut off about 100mm from the end before cutting out the piece to use. Using a pair of compasses, mark a point in the centre of the log that allows you to draw the largest uninterrupted circle on the end grain. Do this on both ends

2 Use a mallet to hammer either a two- or a four-prong drive deep into the end grain. This is critical to ensure the heavy log will not come loose

3 Mount the log onto the lathe. Rotate the piece of wood by hand to ensure it is as balanced as possible and that it clears the toolrest. Using a freshly sharpened spindle roughing gouge, gently begin to remove the bark. Look for any high spots where, perhaps, branches have emerged from the trunk. Don't be too aggressive at this stage; cut towards the ends of the log and remember to stop the lathe periodically to check the tailstock is tight and to adjust the toolrest so that there is not too big a gap between the gouge and the wood

4 As soon as the high spots are removed and the piece is balanced, increase the speed. Keep checking the tailstock is tight and adjust the toolrest so that it doesn't get too far from the wood. Square up the ends of the log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5 Once the log is roughed down and in balance, increase the speed, then create a chucking spigot. It is a good idea to use the end of the log that was further from the cut end of the log from which it came. As soon as the hollowing process begins, any small shakes radiating from the pith will be removed. Create a spigot appropriate to your chuck

6 Measure out the depth of the vase, in this instance, 200mm. Also mark out a line 66mm from what will be the top; this will be the widest part of the vase

7 While held between centres, create the initial basic shape of the top half of the vase. This is not cut to a finish as there could be some movement when the log is placed in the chuck. However, roughly shaping the log now removes more weight and potential vibration

8 Cut off the nub of wood where the drive is situated; this will allow the chuck jaws to close on the larger spigot. Also, it is worth pointing out the importance of creating a flat or slightly concave surface adjacent to the spigot. This shoulder will sit flush against the top of the jaws, eliminating any movement or vibration that can occur when hollowing. Another good idea is to coat the pith and any shakes that may be visible with some thin CA adhesive

9 With the piece transferred to the chuck, start to form the shape of the top one-third of the vase. Keep the tailstock in place while doing this. Place the basic sketch of the piece in your eyeline, which will give you a reference during shaping. Do not be tempted to cut too much away from the bottom one-third of the piece; leaving wood here will reduce any vibration created in the hollowing process. Sand this area with 120 grit abrasive

10 Once complete, it is time to start on the hollowing. Firstly, drill down to establish the depth of the vase, using a Jacobs chuck with a large beam drill – or similar – to remove the centre of the vase. Run the lathe at a slow speed and aim to drill little by little. As this vase is to be 200mm tall, mark the drill bit at 193mm, including the point

11 Start hollowing steadily, allowing the hollowing tools to cut and not pushing too hard into the wood

12 The aim here is to gradually work down the inside, creating a finished surface as you progress. Don't wait until the entire piece is hollowed before sanding. Hollow about 50-75mm at a time. Keep the abrasive moving at all times. Eventually part of the rim will be cut away revealing the inner wall; while it will be more accessible once this is done, it is better to completely finish the interior surface now ▶

13 Continue working down the piece, blending each finished part into the next. Once you have hollowed the top one-third, return to the exterior and continue to shape the outside. Once satisfied with the shape of the middle one-third of the vase, return to the interior and continue to hollow

14 Callipers will reach a long way down; however, you can also use a piece of bent wire. Bend the wire so that the two ends are about 5mm apart. Place one inside the vase touching the inner wall. You are aiming for a wall thickness of approximately 3-4mm so look for a gap of 1-2mm between the tip of the wire and the exterior wall

15 Venturing deeper into the vase, I switched to my hollowing rig but most hollowing tools will work fine. Again, stop frequently and measure the wall thickness. Continue to hollow until the vase is finished. After sanding the interior, seal the surface with sanding sealer. Now drill the vase out to 193mm leaving 7mm in the bottom. Sand the vase exterior to 240 grit, apply sealer, then remove from the chuck

16 At this point the vase needs time to settle. There is a possibility that it will want to lose moisture and move slightly, turning a tight-fitting lid for your vase will help maintain its shape. Apply CA glue to any visible pith and end grain and store the piece in a paper bag in a cool, dry place. I left my vase for about two weeks and checked it every couple of days

17 Mark out the vase in preparation for the piercing. Divide the surface into 24 segments of 15°. You can do this without indexing on your lathe, as the lines are there to serve only as a guide

18 Use a ruler to mark every centimetre from top to base. Depending on the design, the entire surface may need marking out. Once complete, lightly spray the surface with sanding sealer. Using your sketch, plot the basic outline of your design onto the surface. Use the squares that were created when the bowl was marked out as a guide to ensure the lines remain parallel. The curved transition areas will need to be added freehand, and having the grid marked out on the surface of the piece is a great help. Sand from 240-400 or even 600 grit

19 Using a sharp skew chisel or spindle gouge, remove the waste wood from the base until you have a small spigot. Cut the vase off with a saw then clean up the base. Remember to cut the bottom to a slight concave shape. Once removed, the base can be further sanded to 240 grit


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20 Using a rotary multi-tool with a small straight-sided piercing bit, or a fret saw, cut away the side of the vase to create the angled rim. Cut just outside the line that was drawn so that you can further refine the rim

21 Now attention can be shifted to the area to be pierced. Check that the outline of the angled band drawn earlier runs parallel to the rim. When happy, begin to draw the design to be pierced. The elongated holes need to fit within the band that was drawn; however, it isn't a problem if the odd one crosses the line. Continue to draw the holes right the way around the piece, then lightly spray with sealer

22 Now begin to pierce the holes. Take time to ensure that the holes are not too big or that they get too close to one another. Use a sharp burr. If the wall thickness is thin enough there will be minimal scorching, which will save a lot of time when the holes are sanded. Keep an eye on the holes around the one being cut. Don't be frightened of changing the position of the holes slightly from those drawn if the need arises, although working with the template of holes that was drawn earlier is recommended

23 Once all the holes are cut it is time to start sanding. Scorch marks also need to be sanded away. At the same time the elongated holes that have been cut can be refined in shape to create smooth-sided voids. Using 240, 320 and 400 grit abrasive, remove all traces of the pencil marks

24 If a natural finish is required, once the sanding is finished use either an oil or a spray lacquer finish, building up thin coats. Allow the piece to dry for 24 hours

25 To create the ceramic-style finish, the piece needs further work. Begin by creating a safe area to apply spray paint. I used white primer paint. Some of the best is that used in the car industry as it dries to a very flat finish. However, it does need to be applied in very light coats. Allow about 30 minutes between each one and try to build up a solid finish. Spraying the interior of the vase is quite tricky as the paint can build up on the rim faster than at the bottom of the vase. It is important to spray from about 250-300mm away. Rub the surface down with 400 or 600 grit abrasive every two or three coats. Once a flat white finish has been achieved, use gloss spray acrylic lacquer to create a glaze over the top. This too needs to be built up in light layers. Again, the lacquer benefits from being rubbed down with 600-1,000 grit abrasive. This creates a very consistent finish akin to a ceramic glaze

26 The completed ceramic-effect vase should look something like this •

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Tools of the trade – spindle turning gouges

A selection of spindle turning gouges

In this next part of his new series, **Richard Findley** looks at some more tools of the trade – this time a range of spindle turning gouges

Last month was all about turning chisels – skews and parting tools. You will have noticed just how many variations of each of these tools are on the market. This month I will be looking at spindle turning gouges, and I'm afraid that these are no more straightforward. There are spindle roughing gouges and spindle gouges, right? Well, yes, but there are so many variations of them that it is quite mind-boggling and frankly impossible for one person to cover every single variation of these tools. So what I aim to do in this article is show you the tools that I use, and how and why I use each of them, trying to explain some of the possible variations along the way.

Despite the variations in profile that exist – and this applies to both chisels and gouges – the basic rules, or perhaps I should say guidelines, as to their use, remain consistent, and these are what I shall try to explain and clarify in this article: how best to present a tool for a particular cut, and why.

RICHARD FINDLEY

About the author: Richard is a registered UK professional woodturner living and working in Leicestershire. He discovered woodturning while working for his father as a joiner. Richard makes all kinds of work to commission, from replacement antique components, walking canes and stair spindles, to decorative bowls. It is the variety of work that he loves. He also offers demonstrations, tuition and a range of woodturning supplies. See his website details below.

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The profiles of my spindle roughing gouges

Presenting the tool to the wood to make a cut, rotating the wood by hand

Making the cut with the spindle roughing gouge

The spindle roughing gouge on its side, working up to the pommel

Forming a long curve with the spindle roughing gouge

SPINDLE ROUGHING GOUGE

The spindle roughing gouge is perhaps one of the first gouges a beginner will pick up, and it is important to re-state that this is a spindle turning tool and unsuitable for bowl work. We have bowl gouges for bowl work, which I will cover next month, but this tool is purely for spindle work. Why? Well, because the tall wings, which are so useful for spindle work, become a catch hazard on bowl work; and because of the way the tool is forged, in particular the shape of the tang – the part where the tool enters the handle – there is a natural weakness that, although plenty strong enough for the forces involved in spindle work, is not designed to stand up to the increased forces of bowl work.

My personal preference is for 25mm and 32mm diameter tools, formed into a sweeping 'U' shaped curve. Some tool manufacturers have some funny ideas about the best shape for this tool, making them more 'V' shaped, but I have found this is a less versatile shape and can cause some issues when sharpening, often producing protruding wings, which are virtually useless and more of a catch hazard than anything else. I grind my spindle roughing gouges straight across and at about a 35° angle.

Probably, the first thing you will use your spindle roughing gouge for will be to take a square section of timber down to a cylinder. This is pretty straightforward; starting at the centre of the spindle you will need to present the tool, initially with the handle low. This gives only bevel contact. Raise the handle gently until it produces a shaving. This is then the perfect presentation angle to turn a cylinder.

Having picked up the cut, simply move the tool along the toolrest to the end of the spindle, continuing the cut as you go. It is important to start the cut in the centre and move out, rather than at the end and move in, as this can lift up a corner and cause a large and usually sharp splinter to head towards you! As soon as the first cut is made, this risk is eliminated and so turning can continue. Simply move across the spindle, first one way and then the other, until it is round. There is no need for elaborate rolling of the tool, simply pick a part of the edge and use it. The beauty of sharpening the tool as I've described, is that when this spot on the edge begins to dull, you can simply rotate the tool by a few degrees in either direction and use a fresh section of the edge.

This process is the same, whether the spindle is 25mm in diameter or 150mm – the only difference would be the choice of tool. I would use the larger 32mm version for the larger section of timber, simply to resist the vibration and increased forces produced.

Although thought of as a heavy waste removal tool – which in fact it is – it can also be used in a quite delicate way, too. When turning a spindle with a pommel, I would initially cut the shoulder square with a skew chisel, as described in last month's article, although this can also be done with a gouge in much the same way, and then continue to work the spindle with the spindle roughing gouge. With the majority of the spindle down to round, there is just the section close to the pommel to tidy up. By rotating the gouge onto its side, you can use the very tip of the wing, much like a chisel, to work right up to the square edge of the pommel.

The other job for the spindle roughing gouge is in the initial shaping of spindles. To add the beginnings of a long flowing curve, simply use the spindle roughing gouge in the same way as for roughing, only as you form the shape, initially a taper perhaps, and then into a curve, the handle of the tool will need to be gradually lifted with a little extra forward pressure. This will develop the shape from parallel, to taper, to curve. Be sure to always work downhill when making these shapes; this will allow you to maintain control and achieve a good finish on the piece you are turning.

SPINDLE GOUGES

I own four sizes of spindle gouge: 3mm, 6mm, 10mm and 12mm. The choice of tool is purely linked to the size of work I am doing. The 10mm is my 'go to' tool, with the 12mm being used for larger diameter work, and the 6mm for smaller work. The 3mm is for one particular job, which has a tiny cove, otherwise it stays in the tool rack. They are all round bar spindle gouges, sharpened to the same profile, which is known as a fingernail grind. I also remove the heel of my gouges, which helps to get round those tight curves and is much more gentle and friendly to the wood. I will go into the whys and wherefores of sharpening in more detail in a few months' time. The spindle gouge is probably the tool most used by turners. It can turn beads and coves and cut pommels and it easily adds fine details and smooths curves. Let's start with looking at how to roll a bead.

The grind on my spindle gouges

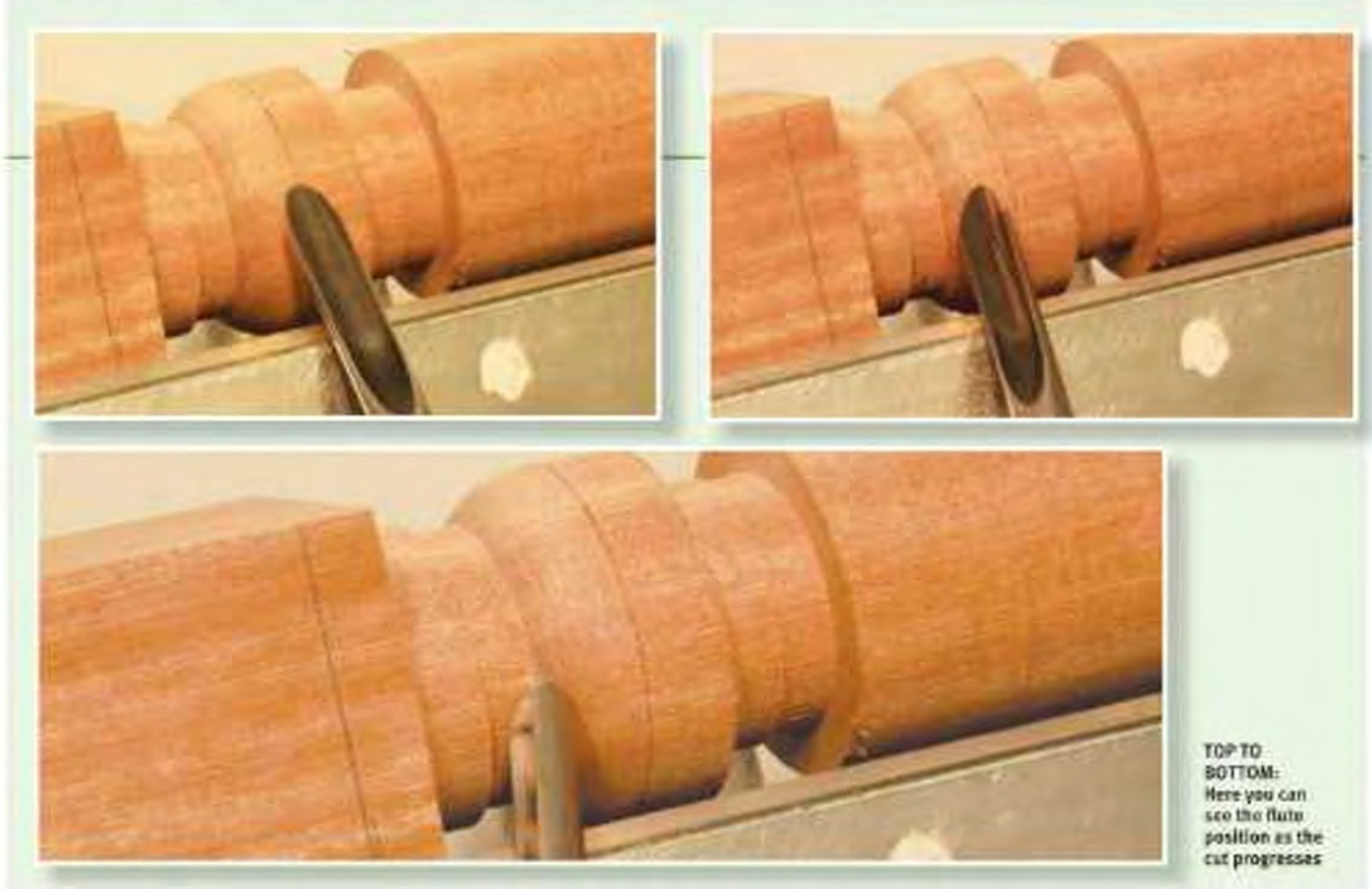
ROLLING BEADS

Much of the movement is the same as for the skew chisel, which was described in last month's article. To do this, I usually make a cut either side of the bead with the aid of a parting tool, which gives me space to work, and add a pencil line to the centre of the bead to help balance the shape I have created.

The gouge starts with the flute up, and will eventually finish with the flute on its side. The purpose of the first cut is to remove the corner of the bead, which can be achieved by just rolling the tool on its side.

It is very important to notice which part of the edge I am using throughout the cut. Despite those long wings, all of the action happens close to the tip for spindle turning. When working to the left, the cut sits just to the left of the tip throughout the cut, and to the right when cutting to the right. Catches occur when rolling beads for two reasons:

1. The cut goes to the wrong part of the edge – a part that is unsupported by the toolrest – and this, in turn forces the tool to twist, then a catch follows.



TOP TO BOTTOM: Here you can see the flute position as the cut progresses

ROLLING BEADS (CONT.)

2. As the bead is formed, the handle needs to be swung slightly in the direction of the cut; this will keep the tip of the tool cutting. If this swing is too much, the bevel is lifted off the work and so control is lost and a catch will follow.

I think a catch is as likely with a spindle gouge as it is with a skew chisel, but because the catches are far less spectacular, people have less fear of the gouge, which in turn, makes it easier to use, but no less frustrating at times! As the bead is rolled, initially just rounding the corner, then working from the centreline and forming the shape toward its base, always working downhill, the tool is rolled through 90°, the handle is slightly lifted and is swung in the direction of the cut, moving to the left as the left side of the bead is rolled, and to the right as the right side is rolled. All the time, the cut stays near the tip of the tool. It is always best to form these shapes gradually, in several smaller cuts, rather than trying to do it in one hit. You will have much more control over both the tool and the shape you are forming.

With the bead almost finished, it is important that you fully complete the cut. When you make an initial sizing cut with a parting tool, the sides of the cut will be ragged and torn: as you shape the bead this is removed but if you don't completely finish the cut, right down in to the corner, there will be a ring of torn grain that will not sand out. So whichever tool you choose, be it a gouge or a skew chisel, be sure to fully finish the cut.

This photo shows the area on the tip of the tool that is being used

Here you can see the cut in action

The bead being fully finished

CUTTING COVES

Coves are the negative image of a bead. Where you begin a bead with the flute up and roll it onto its side, with a cove, you start with the flute on its side and cut in and roll it until the flute faces up.

On the face of it, a cove is pretty straightforward. You make a series of scooping cuts, first one side, then the other. Each cut makes space for the next. Once again, the cut needs to stay near the tip of the tool to maintain control.

The most difficult part of cutting a cove is the entry cut; this gives the cove its characteristic 'U' shape, but this is where most people have difficulties, as the gouge often wants to dive to the side. The reason it wants to fight is because, to get this cut right, you really need to make first contact with a part of the edge that is vertical, but on a gouge with a curved edge, this is not so easy.

Every manufacturer will produce a slightly different shaped flute, some very shallow – sometimes known as a detail gouge – whereas others are much more curved. Every turner will produce a slightly different shaped grind, some finding a more pointed profile better, while others prefer a more rounded end. Discussions over bevel angles have, and will continue, to go on through the years. All of this means that the exact position that you need to hold the gouge will vary from tool to tool.

I always say that you need to make friends

A cove cut in action

Finishing the cove

Making the practice cuts

Finished bead and cove combination, including the curved pommel, all cut with the spindle gouge

◀ CUTTING COVES (CONT.)

with your gouge, get used to how it cuts – or re-grind it until until it works how you want it to – and work with it rather than fight it. My suggestion is to move to a part of your spindle that is yet to be turned, or another piece of wood, and practise making a series of lines with the tip of the tool. The tool should start on its side, the bevel pointing in the direction of the cut, and rather than just closing your eyes, poking it into the wood and hoping for the best – an action I refer to as 'poking and praying' – you need to move in a very positive manner, starting with the handle low and lifting it into the cut, pushing forwards in an arcing and slicing motion. If the tool still pulls to one side, all you need to do is slightly rotate it in the opposite direction, slightly opening or closing the flute, and try again. This will present a slightly different part of the edge to the wood, giving the control you are looking for. Once you have done this a number of times, you can move to the cove and make the cut. Once the tool is in the wood successfully, it is just a case of forming the cove. This is a scooping motion, working down to the centre, alternating the cuts left and right. The most common problem here is to end up with a rather square-shaped cove, with a flat bottom, rather than the flowing curve that was aimed for. My main suggestion for this is to form the shape by moving your body, rather than just your hands and arms. There is a lot more body movement than people often think, but I will go into this in more detail in a future article.

The Continental gouge in action

The profile of a round bar spindle gouge, a Continental gouge and a skew chisel

CONTINENTAL SPINDLE GOUGE

I have a confession. In all the years I have been turning, I have never actually used a Continental pattern spindle gouge. These tools are traditionally forged from a flat bar and the production methods have not changed significantly over the years. These tools are still extensively used in mainland parts of Europe and are much loved due to their versatility in use. Their shape allows shearing and slicing cuts to be made with ease and they are effectively a flatter version of a spindle roughing gouge. However, the modern round-bar spindle gouge is more widely used in other parts of the world. With the knowledge that this article was coming up, I decided that I would buy one, just to see what I'd been missing out on.

The thing that people always tell me about these tools is how good they are. After playing around with the tool, I found that this was indeed the case, but I realised that I could do everything they did by picking up a skew chisel, my trusty beading & parting tool or a standard spindle or spindle roughing gouge. So why is it so good at this? After studying the profile I found that actually, the shape is more closely related to a skew chisel than to the modern gouge, being a flat bar with a slight curve. The cut is made in much the same way as you do a planing cut with a skew chisel, using the lower half of the edge, and moving it in a smooth sideways action.

Having experimented, I don't feel I have missed out by not using this tool, but can see it being a useful addition for anyone lacking the confidence with a skew chisel. I now have one on my tool rack, and it may well get used from time to time, but if someone were to ask me, "do I need one in my tool kit?" I would probably answer "no."

CONCLUSION

I hope that my explanations and photos of the use of the various spindle turning gouges have been useful to you, perhaps explaining why a catch happens or how to best present the tool. Next month, I will look at the bowl gouge and its various uses. ●

A completed leg, made almost entirely with spindle turning gouges, apart from sizing cuts, which were made with my beading & parting tool

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK SANGER

Garden bell

Mark Sanger makes a garden bell from an oak post, which can also be modified for indoor use if you so choose

Recently I decided to produce an ornamental bell to add interest to a corner of my garden. I saw a similar item at a friend's house, which was made from a coconut shell, and was struck with inspiration.

After some thought, I decided to produce one similar to a temple bell, which would fit with the theme of my garden. Of course, the style of bell is limitless, from church, temple bells to those produced to replicate the many forms of trumpet flowers found in gardens and hedgerows.

A quick trawl of the Internet or time spent in the garden looking at the flora and fauna will get the creative juices flowing. Be creative and think outside of the box.

This project can also be modified for displaying indoors, if you so choose. I decided to use end-grain oak (*Quercus rubur*) for the main bell and wall bracket, with holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) for the clapper, although other woods can be used – just make sure they are suitably treated to protect them from the elements. The colour and finish for the bell and clapper is simply an application of a home-made ebonising solution. To make your own, get a cup of malt vinegar and add a golf-ball size piece of '0000' wire wool. Seal and store in a glass jar for a couple of weeks. The vinegar breaks down the iron and produces a solution of iron oxide which, when applied to woods with a high tannin content, causes a reaction and darkens the wood. It works particularly well on oak. The reaction is slightly less on holm oak due to its lower tannin content, but adds a contrast of the separate parts in the finished piece. Finally the mounting bracket, bell and clapper need to be sprayed with teak oil; this will protect them from the elements. This is not essential with oak as it can be left outside without a finish; it will silver and last for decades without rotting. Any suitable external oil can be used, but I would steer clear of spray lacquers as the elements will eventually cause these to flake, whereas oil can simply be applied each year after the surface has been brushed clean.

The bell is hung from the stand with three-ply jute twine, which can be purchased from local DIY suppliers. The cross-section of the oak is drilled with two holes: one to feed the twine through and the other, larger hole, to hide the knot, once tied, to secure the bell. The clapper is fixed into the bell with two threaded picture wire eyelets, joined by opening one with pliers, inserting the second and tightening the first again with pliers. Not wanting unsightly screws to be visible, the finished project is mounted via two slotted mirror brackets recessed into the back of the main post. Two suitable screws need to be fixed to the wall or fence post for the plates to slide down onto, which can also be purchased from a DIY store. All the other fixings used in the project are also widely available and easy to source.

MARK SANGER

About the author: Mark is a professional turner living and working in Dorset. He specialises in creative turning that incorporates texturing, colour and mixed media. Mark has written numerous woodturning articles, demonstrates the craft, runs courses and has produced DVDs on the subject.
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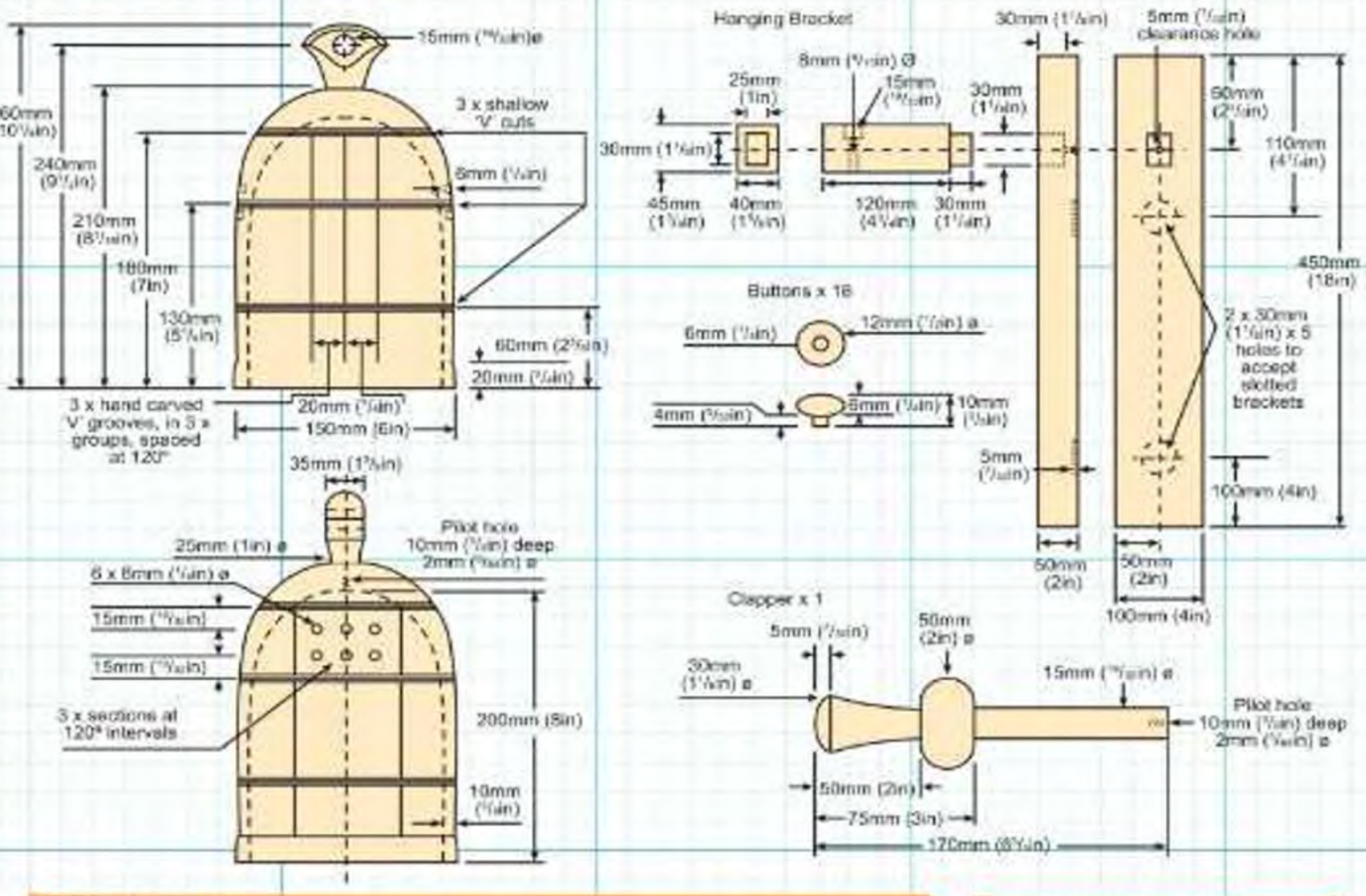
GARDEN BELL DIMENSIONS



INFORMATION

TIME TAKEN & COST

Time taken: 8 hours

Cost: £30

TOOLS REQUIRED

- 25mm spindle roughing gouge
- 10mm bowl gouge with fingernail or long grind
- 10mm spindle gouge with fingernail grind
- End grain hollowing tool
- 25mm round-nose scraper
- 25mm skew chisel

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

- 2 x 10mm dia. x 30mm length of 3mm thread dia. screw eyelets
- 2 x 25mm brass slotted mirror hanging plates or similar
- 500mm three-ply jute garden twine or similar
- Vinegar and wire wool solution, or similar purchased wood stain
- Teak, Danish or other suitable outdoor oil finish
- Abrasives from 120-400 grit
- 1mm wood drill bit for pilot hole – for hanging plate screws
- 2mm wood drill bit for pilot holes – for 3mm screw eyelets
- Fine tooth pull saw or similar
- 150mm flexi rule
- Pencil
- PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

TIMBER REQUIREMENTS

- All the blanks should be processed using a bandsaw from the same oak post, except for the clapper blank
- **Bell:** 150 x 150 x 280mm oak end grain post – 1 off
- **Stand:** 50 x 100 x 450mm prepared/planed end grain blank – 1 off; 40 x 50 x 150mm prepared/planed end grain blank – 1 off
- **Buttons:** 20 x 20 x 100mm oak end grain blanks – 4 off
- **Clapper:** 50 x 50 x 180mm holm oak end grain blank – 1 off

HEALTH & SAFETY

The wood used in this project was sourced from a section of oak post, which, by its nature, more often than not includes some cracking. Always check large sections for cracks and splits and never use a piece if the cracks run all the way to the middle of the blank. It is always best to use sound wood but, if, as in this case, you do include cracks, faults or inclusions, you must ALWAYS wear a full-face mask as a minimum precaution. Also, reduce the rpm of the lathe and take fine cuts. Before hollowing, always wrap the form in a strong cloth reinforced tape several times to stop the wood from coming apart. Masking or wrapping type tapes are not suitable, but ultimately, if you are not confident in turning wood that includes faults, then reduce the size of the project and use sound stock instead.

1 Mount the bell blank between centres and rough to the round using a 25mm spindle roughing gouge. Using a 10mm bowl gouge, clean up the front face and produce a spigot to suit the jaws of your chuck. Turn a shoulder to the left of the spigot 50mm wide x 60mm diameter. This area will eventually be shaped to produce the crown of the bell with the chuck spigot being turned away. Refine the profile of the spigot to suit the chuck jaws, using a skew chisel or a small spindle gouge in scraping mode

2 Continue with the 10mm bowl gouge and shape the main profile of the bell, always working downhill. Using a pencil and rule, mark the base of the bell with a second line to denote the lip. In this instance, 20mm in from the first line

3 Using a 6mm parting tool, part in to a depth of approximately 5mm to the right of the second line drawn

"Rotate the indexing stem to produce two further lines, dividing the circumference of the bell into thirds"

4 Continue with the bowl gouge from this parted line, reducing the diameter of the main form to the crown, working to the same diameter as previously parted. You can then refine the surface with a 25mm skew chisel

5 Mark the position for the grooves/ decoration using a pencil and rule – here you can see they are marked in groups of three

6 Using the toe of the 25mm skew chisel, cut 'V' grooves at the line marked. Alternatively, a point tool could be used and will produce a similar result

7 Next, using a 10mm spindle gouge, blend over the shoulder of the lip to a radius

8 You can now lock off the indexing system and set the toolrest to centre height. Using the toolrest as a rule, mark a vertical line from the lip to the crown of the bell. Rotate the indexing stem to produce two further lines, dividing the circumference of the bell into thirds. In this instance, the indexing system of 24 is divided into 3 steps of 8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9 Using a small rule, mark two lines either side of the lines drawn at a distance of 20mm. Here the rule I am using is 20mm wide, so I just used it as the width of the sections being drawn. The measurement here is not critical; as long as the sections are equal in width it will be fine

10 Using a 3mm 'V' hand carving chisel, carve with the grain following the lines drawn to produce the vertical line decoration. Work away from the turned grooves and change direction on approaching the opposite grooves, as there is a chance you can over-run and cut into the radial grooves. Alternatively, you could use a 'V' chisel in a power carver, however, I found this was not as easy to control on such fine carving/grooves. Repeat using the indexing system to lock off the project until all the grooves drawn have been carved

11 Next, reverse and tighten the project into the chuck, bringing up the tailcentre for support. Clean up the base from the line previously drawn to a safe distance from the tailcentre

12 Use a 50mm sawtooth bit held via a Jacobs chuck in the lathe or directly in the quill of the tailstock and drill out to depth as per the diagram. Remember to keep removing the bit from the blank; this will allow you to remove the shavings and will also prevent the bit from binding

13 Stop the lathe and wrap the outside in multiple layers of material-backed tape. Reduce the lathe speed to around 500rpm and, using an end grain hollowing tool, hollow out to depth, peeling out from the centre to the rim. Finally, refine the inside with a 25mm round-nose scraper or scraping attachment for the hollowing tool

14 Using a 2mm wood drill held in a Jacobs chuck, drill a pilot hole to accept the eyelet for the clapper, once it is produced

15 Finish the outside with abrasive from 120–400 grit. Here I left the inside with a scraped surface as it was more than satisfactory, but you can finish the inside with abrasive if you wish. If you do not have an inertia sanding arbor, do this by wrapping abrasive around a long piece of dowel

16 You can now reverse the project onto a friction drive made from a waste piece of wood to fit into the base, bringing up the tailcentre for support. Finish the vertical hand-carved grooves by holding 240 grit abrasive around a thin straight edge. Here it is a good idea to use a metal rule. Using the 10mm bowl gouge, reduce the waste and blend the top of the form into the crown, then...

◀17 ... produce the profile of the crown, working downhill, then finish the top

18 You can now mark the location for the button holes. Start by setting the toolrest to centre height, rest a pencil on this and rotate the chuck by hand to mark the first radial line shown in the diagram. Move along the rest and repeat for the second line. Use a flexible rule and draw the centre point of these two lines. Mark two more lines either side at a distance of 25mm, producing six points for drilling. Drill a hole at each point perpendicular to the surface with a 6mm diameter spur bit in a low-speed drill driver

19 Set the toolrest to centre height to line up with the central line of the vertical carve lines. Draw a line following this across the top of the crown to the tailcentre. Rotate the indexing through 90° and mark a second line. Remove from the lathe and mark two further lines 15mm either side of this, so you end up with a parallel section 30mm wide perpendicular to the central carved line. Cut the waste away from the outer lines using a fine-tooth pull saw or similar

20 Finish both cut faces with 240 grit cloth-backed abrasive attached to a ridged 100mmm sanding arbor, held in a Jacobs chuck in the spindle of the lathe

21 Mark the central position on the face of the crown and drill a 20mm diameter hole through the face

22 The next step, using a power carver or sharp chisel, is to remove and blend the waste; then finish by hand with 320 grit abrasive

MAKING THE CLAPPER

23 Mark the centre point at each end of the clapper blank and at one end drill a 2mm diameter x 10mm deep hole using a pillar drill and suitable workholding method. Mount between centres with the drill hole aligned at the drive centre end. Rough to the round using a spindle roughing gouge and mark the dimensions on the blank with a rule and pencil. There should be a small amount of waste at each end. Use a 6mm parting tool and callipers to dimension the main areas to the waste side of the lines drawn. Start at the tailcentre end to a diameter of 25mm followed by the three further sections of 15mm diameter

24 Next, use a 10mm spindle gouge to profile the shape, working downhill at all times


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25 Continue with the 10mm spindle gouge and round over each shoulder of the large section – you are looking to essentially produce a large bead

26 Continue with the spindle gouge and convex the base, stopping a safe distance from the tailcentre

27 Using a 3mm parting tool, part in at the base and stop short of the drilled hole. Stop the lathe and cut through the remaining waste with a fine saw blade or, if proficient, part through with one hand while holding the clapper, with the lathe running and the rpm reduced to slow

28 Finish each end with abrasive by hand from 120-320 grit. Screw one of the joined eyelets into the drilled end of the clapper

29 Mount each button blank between centres and rough to the round and dimension down to a size of 15mm through the length, using callipers to check this as you proceed. Mount each blank in button jaws or similar and feed blanks into the chuck to reduce the amount of overhang from the jaws. Mark a line 6mm from the end and using a 6mm parting tool and callipers set at 6mm, part into depth to the left-hand side of the line

30 Working downhill, use a 10mm spindle gouge to profile the bead and finish by hand with 240 grit abrasive, taking care not to reduce the diameter

31 Using a 3mm parting tool, part the button off the blank; this will leave a 3mm spigot on the base of the button for later gluing into the drilled holes of the bell. Repeat processes 29-31 for the other 17 beads

32 Drip exterior PVA glue into each drilled hole of the bell and fix the beads in place. Twist each bead so that the grain in each group runs in the same direction; this keeps the presentation tidy and uniform. Allow to dry ▶

Handy hints

1. When applying any spray finish, make sure the immediate area is dust-free. If when spraying, dust particles have settled on the surface, then do not touch and allow until dry. Once dry, cut back the surface with 600 grit abrasive or 0000 wire wool, continuing to apply fine coats of top coat, cutting back between each to produce a smooth finish. When using spray finishes, it is far better to apply 4-5 fine coats than fewer heavy coats

33 Using a brush, apply a coat of ebonising solution to the main bell and clapper. Wait a few minutes and apply more coats, then allow to dry

34 Apply several coats of exterior oil to the bell and clapper, wiping away any excess with kitchen towel

35 Prepare the hanging bracket, which is simply two sections of oak. On the smallest section, produce a tenon to fit into a matching size mortise within the larger section. Here, drill a hole centrally through the mortise to allow for a 5mm diameter wood screw to fix through into the tenon; this will provide extra strength as, over time, using the clapper could loosen the joint

36 Using a sawtooth bit, drill two 40mm diameter recesses into the back of the upright; this will allow you to accommodate the slotted hanging brackets. Drill a second 20mm hole within these to allow for the screw to slot in behind the bracket. Fix both brackets in place and check the clearance with the head of a 50mm wood screw. If it isn't correct, remove and drill the 20mm diameter hole slightly deeper, which will allow you to accept the screw head. Here you can see the hole that was drilled through the centre of the mortise – note that it has been countersunk. Apply exterior PVA glue to the mortise and tenon, then fix together. The mortise and tenon should be a good fit but will need fixing home using a mallet. Make sure you protect the surface of the smaller section with a waste piece of wood, as hitting with a mallet may damage the surface. Drill a 5mm pilot hole through the hole in the back into the tenon. Use a 5mm diameter x 50mm long standard wood screw to fix through this into the tenon. Apply several coats of the same oil to the mounting bracket and wipe off any excess

37 Screw the remaining threaded eyelet into the pilot hole, which was previously drilled inside the bell

38 Take a length of twine, fold in half and feed the loop through the hole in the crown of the bell. Feed the other end through this loop, tightening the twine. Now feed it up through the hole in the bracket, pulling it so that the bell is tight up against the bracket. Tie several knots into the twine so that, once pulled, it leaves the bell hanging 25-50mm from the bracket

39 Measure the gap between the screw mounting holes of the back brackets and mark this location onto the wall or fence post. Mark the location of these holes using a ruler and spirit level. Screw in two 25 x 5mm diameter wood screws, mount the project and you're done! ●


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Helga Winter in profile

Helga Winter the philosopher-turner, lets wood find its own form. **Lindy Dunlop** learns how she uses moisture, grain and colour to amplify its natural character

Helga Winter, a turner known for working exclusively with green wood, is the subject of this month's profile. A symbiotic relationship with timber is of fundamental importance to her turning. Helga's approach and methods allow the 'life' in wood to influence the final form of her vessels and bowls. Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) and holly (*Ilex spp.*) are her timbers of choice. She discovered madrone by accident, but on first turning became "enamoured with its ornery tendencies." As she explains: "I like the dance we perform. I turn a completely round shape, the wood takes its own shape back."

As I spoke with Helga and came to understand her curiosity and need to experiment, this attraction to unpredictable woods made sense. Much of the enjoyment she finds in woodturning comes from "investigating and excavating the tree and working together by letting the vessel find its own shape during the drying process." She is clearly not an artist driven by the need to bend materials to her will.

She tells me about her philosophy of life, of the importance of balance and the need to be attentive to what you do. This becomes apparent when you pick up one of her pieces – set it down and the narrow foot and uneven shape require your attention. Her gift to you is the unexpected stillness of the piece; you are rewarded with the vessel standing well on its own, despite the centre point appearing quite offset at times.

Background

Helga was born in Germany and moved to America as a young woman to study Education. She received her undergraduate degree in 1978 from the University of Texas in Austin, and her graduate degree in 1982 from Peabody College, Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, Tennessee. She followed these academic studies with apprenticeships covering furniture making, woodcarving and woodturning, and woodwork is not alone in her artistic skills. In 1986 Helga received an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Tennessee Arts Commission; Artisans on Taylor offered Helga her first show in mixed media paintings in December 2009; and in January 2010, she was an Artist in Residence at Centrum, Port Townsend, Washington State. She is currently pursuing both turning and painting. This November sees her return to Centrum where she will display 'From Tree to Treasure', an open-studio benefit show for the centre.

Discovering woodturning

Helga discovered woodturning by chance while studying in Nashville. She walked by a wood shop with a Windsor chair and a Shaker chest in the window and was drawn inside. "I chatted with the owner, Paul Pitts, for quite a while. Weeks later I became very clear that after graduation I wanted to work in this wood shop and learn to make things by hand while looking for my perfect job." And this she duly did. Having secured an apprenticeship with furniture maker and woodcarver Paul Pitts, she also took a weekend woodturning workshop with David Ellsworth and Rude Osolnik. From that workshop she took home a translucent bird's-eye maple (*Acer saccharum*) bowl. Someone saw it the next day and placed an order for three. And so her career as a woodturner began.

Achievements

Helga's work has been included in both printed and gallery collections, including The American Art Company and Artisans on Taylor, both in Washington State; and The White Bird Gallery and Imogen Gallery in Oregon. Her essays and articles have been included in many magazines, in both English and German, and she has been invited to participate as a juror at some annual arts shows.On a personal level, Helga finds it rewarding to have people collect her work through all her changes in style and medium.

Inspiration

As you would expect from someone with such an eye for form and design, Helga draws on visual elements from routines in her everyday world. "Nature in general inspires me. I am also influenced by events in my life. Walking on the bottom of the ocean – at low tide – the multitude of patterns I find there inspires me."

It is obvious that her experience in turning informs her paintings: "When I started to turn in Nashville, there was a great variety of green and seasoned woods available; that made my display of turned vessels very colourful. At that time I simply oiled my work, making it functional. Moving to Washington State in 1987, I encountered mostly soft woods until, by accident, I saw a whitish looking wood in a waste dump, lugged it home and turned it. Madrone wood turns brown with age when oiled, so I have added colour and design to make up for all the colourful woods that I used to turn in Tennessee."

ABOVE: Helga turning a piece in her compact workshop

FAR LEFT: 'Spheroid on Seaweed Stand', 125mm high x 125m wide x 75mm dia, madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), dyes and acrylics

LEFT: 'Dancing Dishes', 63mm high x 305mm wide x 305mm dia, madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) crotch, paper transfers, dyes and acrylics

RIGHT: 'Bathos Sphere', 230mm high x 255mm wide x 215mm dia. madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), seaweed stand, paper transfers, dyes, acrylics and oils

BELOW LEFT: 'Sea Shell', 100mm high x 330mm wide x 200mm dia. madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) and dyes

BELOW RIGHT: 'Attitude # 2', 150mm high x 305mm wide x 280mm dia. madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) crotch, dyes and oils

Work ethos

Helga includes a quote from the Greek philosopher Zeno in the artist's statement on her website: "The goal of life is living in agreement with nature." I can't speak for her life, but she has clearly succeeded in this with her painted vessels. She is a philosopher-turner, aiming to achieve harmony and balance through working with her materials, allowing their natural form to shine through.

Her respect for nature can be seen in all aspects of her work. She gathers seaweed and harvests timber herself, and uses every part of the tree: the trunk, the branches and the roots. She also makes use of trees that have been felled by storms, because of disease or for construction work. And today, with her reputation spreading, people leave salvaged local woods in her driveway and share stories about their trees.

I get a strong sense of the spirit behind her work as she talks about what she aspires to. She attempts to create objects that are pleasant to be with, that engage the observer, inviting touch and inquiry. "The process of my work is self-discovery. The pieces are felt and become known to me, only to be discovered anew through the beholder's imagination. I use dyes and patterns to invite a closer look. The vessel, when given a new appearance, allows a quiet conversation to take place. Does appearance enhance the self or cover it up? I strive to show the pureness of the wood – the essence of being."

Turning style

How do you describe Helga's turning style? It is organic in a true sense – 'derived from or characteristic of living plants' – but the wood is also Helga's canvas. The symbiosis in her turning works two ways: between the wood's form and her turned form, and between the wood's grain and her painterly skills. Two words that spring to mind when thinking about Helga's work are 'form' and 'colour'.

Helga herself describes her style as "free form". "I would say that discovering madrone wood and its instability changed my style. I now turn exclusively green wood – madrone and holly (*Ilex spp.*). Mostly I turn thin-walled vessels that I embellish with colour and design. Turning green wood from start to finish allows the wood to take back its own shape after I have turned it into something completely round. Ideally I turn the vessel soon after I have chainsawed my blanks so that the wood contains a lot of moisture and the movement that occurs during the drying process can be extreme," she tells me.

Workshop

"My workshop," Helga hesitates. "Well, I have two. The workshop where the turning takes place is very small. There is room for a Oneway lathe, a grinder, a dust collector outside, tools along the wall and a bit of space to store some wood blanks. That is my 6 x 8ft space. And then I have a bright space where I finish my work, with a spacious workbench, running water, a place to make tea, ledges and shelves to display the finished work, as well as room to slowly dry the turned work," she tells me. This drying space is cool to allow the slowness required, and Helga wraps her pieces in paper and, if needed, plastic bags as well.

On tools

A great many turners love their turning tools, but asked what tools she couldn't do without, Helga had this to say, which is a response that we have not heard before: "On tools that can be purchased I have nothing special. I have a chainsaw, a lathe, a grinder, a dust collector, gauges and an electric drill. The most important tool for me is the desire to investigate and excavate my life. That is what makes my work personal and keeps me inspired. The best thing about turning is looking inside a tree." Following all we had discussed before, this did not come as a surprise to me.

"Nature in general inspires me. I am also influenced by events in my life. Walking on the bottom of the ocean – at low tide – the multitude of patterns I find there inspires me"

RIGHT: 'Finding my Way', 125mm high x 90mm wide x 330mm dia. Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), seaweed, oils and encaustic medium

BELOW: 'Palimpsest', 63mm high x 255mm wide x 235mm dia. madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), paper transfers, dyes and acrylics

What she could do without is self-promotion. While she uses social media, along with gallery exhibitions, and newspaper and magazine articles, this is one tool she doesn't enjoy.

A typical day

Generally, Helga turns in her turning workshop in the morning then moves to her 'bright space' in the afternoon for finishing work. "I like to have a rhythm in my work and accomplish that by working on a regular basis," she explains. "On a typical day I walk about a mile to my turning shop at around 8am and turn a piece or two, then walk home for lunch. Sometimes I hang out at the beach for a bit. During the afternoons I work on two- or three-dimensional pieces at my finishing studio." However, in the interest of safety, she will adapt her routine: "When I have chainsawing to do and I don't feel rested or astute, I choose paperwork instead."

Her penchant for rhythm runs beyond her daily routine to inform her yearly cycle. "It generally takes me a year or more to complete a piece. I harvest and turn the green wood during fall and winter, let the vessels dry slowly during spring – depending on the thickness of the wall in the vessel this can take from 1 to 12 months – then complete the finishing and selling process during summer."

The future

Helga took copious notes of her painting techniques on wooden vessels when she moved to Port Townsend and discovered that putting her ideas and experiments on paper opened up greater possibilities. She comments that she has been spending much time contemplating the creative process of late. She has noticed that the surface treatment of her turned work is sometimes influenced by her two-dimensional work, and this is something she'd like to explore. She is considering teaching and discussing this process in the future. ●

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Handy hints

1. Breathe, dance – be loose – and give yourself over to turning
2. I only turn when I am astute and well rested – I find this helps me to achieve better results
3. Observe nature and other shapes that appeal to you. Look at many different types of work in terms of shapes that appeal and look at as many different mediums as possible

LIKES & DISLIKES

Likes:

- Turning green wood eliminates a lot of dust
- Working in unison with the wood: turning a round then seeing the vessel take back its own shape on drying
- The physical involvement of lifting and chain sawing
- Turning the tree 'inside out'
- Accentuating grain with coats of oil or bleach: I delight in that particular action
- Observing people behold my work and hearing them exclaim my own feelings about the piece
- Observing people behold my work and hearing comments that take me to a totally different place

Dislikes:

- Sanding
- Promoting myself

TOP TECHNIQUES

My top techniques would definitely have to involve my surface techniques, although they are so multi-faceted that explaining them would take up another article! In short, I utilise wax-resistant dyes, acrylics, paper transfers, bleach and oils. I experiment a great deal with the various surface treatments I use. I take the shape of the turned object into account when I decide on the colour and/or pattern I will create. Most of the pieces I make receive several layers of patterns before I deem them completed.

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Sharpening system selection

Kurt Hertzog covers the basics of sharpening systems and looks at the items needed to create and maintain sharp tools

As with many pastimes, there are some mundane tasks that are absolutely critical. Tuning a musical instrument might qualify. It is necessary but usually isn't the highlight of the musical session. Needing to be done sometimes several times before and during playing, being efficient lets you move on to or continue the more enjoyable parts of the pastime. Sharpening falls into this same category for most of us. Speak to any woodturner and few, if any, would say that sharpening is the fun part of turning. It is relegated to the 'necessary evil' category. It needs to be done, and often, so the shavings can fly.

Like other aspects of woodturning, there is a lot of mystique and misconception about sharpening equipment and the process. These range from the colour of the wheel being used to the angle of the grind being imparted to the various tools, and even the after-sharpening treatments. In this article we'll try to put some of these beliefs about sharpening equipment into perspective. Getting to the end goal of a sharp and functional tool can be achieved in many ways. There isn't one answer but really many ways to get to the desired end point. Let's look at the items needed so you can create and maintain the needed sharp tools with minimum amounts of equipment and time.

KURT HERTZOG

About the author: Kurt is a professional woodturner, demonstrator and teacher and regularly writes for *Woodturning Design* magazine. He is on the Pen Makers' Guild Council and is a member of the Board of Directors of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW).
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SHARPENING SYSTEMS

SHARPENING EQUIPMENT SELECTION

Depending on your learning method or person coaching you, you might view the bench grinder as the sharpening equipment of choice. Others available are the belt sander and the Tormek-style waterstone equipment. Any of these will work nicely depending on what you have and what you were taught to use. I've used them all and they all yield quality results. My choice is the bench grinder. I think it is probably the most widely used by woodturners based on the cost and availability of the basic tool – the grinder itself.

Why would you choose one over the other? If you already have one available or are more experienced with one particular system, that could make you choose it. Also, preference of a flat grind from a belt sander versus a hollow grind from a grinding wheel might sway your decision. Among those favouring a hollow grind, you might have a preference for the radius of the hollow grind. Standard bench grinders are commonly 150, 180 and 200mm wheels with the Tormek-style systems having approximately a 250mm wheel. Which you choose is your own preference providing you do your sharpening on the same equipment, or at least the same size equipment, each ▶

The Tormek or other water wheel sharpening systems offer a larger wheel diameter and a finer grit size. There are jigs and fixtures available to accommodate woodturning tools

Whether home-built or commercially available, a belt sanding sharpening system will provide flat ground tool sharpening. With the belt running away from the edge, there are some safety advantages

As a turner, you will need a sharpening system. It is as key as the lathe. Without sharpening skills and the merits of sharpening your tools in an ongoing manner, every tool will functionally become a scraper. Using your cutting tools as such will be much like getting a hair cut with a pair of pliers. It will work, but it will not be pretty or enjoyable. As important as your ability to control your turning tools will be your ability to put an effective cutting edge on your tools. Depending on what you are turning, both material and technique, you may need to sharpen a tool only once a session or every few minutes. If you don't become proficient in your sharpening abilities, your woodturning results will hit a plateau and limit your further progress. While you may never get to love the sharpening process, you'll do well to develop the skill and enjoy the fruits that sharp tools will bear. Whether you use a bench grinder, belt sander, or waterstone-style machine, you'll have the sharpening machine itself, toolrests, task lighting, jigs and fixtures and dressing equipment. All are key to having a useful method of sharpening your tools.

"Using your cutting tools as such will be much like getting a hair cut with a pair of pliers"

The standard 150mm bench grinder makes a good choice for the basis of a sharpening system. Notice the task lighting included, which still needs some accessorising

SHARPENING EQUIPMENT SELECTION (CONT.)

time. My grinder has 180mm wheels. I like the larger radius wheel hollow grind but can't physically carry a 200mm grinder. Using the 180mm grinder gives me the ability to use 25mm-wide grinding wheels on the grinder yet with a gentler curve hollow grind than a 150mm grinder. The choice is yours. Use what you have access to or favour, but use the same each time or you'll be regrinding your tools each time you change sizes.

My choice of a bench grinder over the belt sander or Tormek-style equipment is based on the availability, portability and preparation required. My grinder travels with me far more easily than my belt sander. My Tormek isn't ready at a moment's notice. It takes filling the reservoir, soaking the stone, using the machine, draining the system, cleaning the tank and disposing of the water and steel filings properly lest they turn to concrete somewhere in my drain pipes. The results possible are certainly worth the trouble when sharpening plane irons, bench chisels, scissors, knives, etc. I wait until I have a lot of those things to sharpen on the Tormek, which makes the preparation and cleanup time worthwhile. I don't want all of the setup and teardown time each time I want to do bit of woodturning. Because of the overwhelming popularity of the grinder, we will focus on the standard bench grinder and accessories as a sharpening system.

The 200mm bench grinder offers the advantages of a gentler-radius hollow grind and the ability to house 25mm wide grinding wheels. Available in both high and low speed as desired

GRINDER SIZE

In the bench grinder arena, the most prevalent sizes are 150mm and 200mm or imperial equivalent. While available, the 180mm bench grinder is a bit of an anomaly, being available yet not extremely common. Regardless of your type of turning and selection of tools, either a 150mm or 200mm grinder will work nicely. A 180mm will as well should you decide on it, but accept the fact that the wheel availability may not be as extensive. This is particularly true if you rely on your woodturning retailer as opposed to the machine tool supplier for grinding wheels. The difference in the hollow grind is minor between 150, 180 and 200mm and the availability of grits and wheel parameters are extensive in all sizes. Pick the size that suits you or better yet, pick the size of the grinder that you have available. The only real distinction is that most 150mm grinders sometimes have smaller wheel widths that will fit into the protective covers.

The more modestly-priced grinders have very flimsy toolrests. In order to be effective, these can be replaced being mounted to the same platform that the grinder is mounted on

If the grinder has substantial rests, they should be sturdy and reasonably sized. Too big is as much of a problem as too small. Balance your working space and ability to work with small tools

Regardless of the rests that are installed on the grinder, a sharpening system benefits from having an after-market grinding fixture system. This accommodates those special needs effectively

GRINDER SPEED

You'll hear of high-speed and low-speed grinders. There are even variable-speed grinders. For the most part, any speed will do the job at hand. The old wives' tale about needing a slow-speed grinder is just that – an old wives' tale. High-speed or low-speed will work nicely, although a slow-speed does give the newcomer a bit of forgiveness while learning and developing the touch. That said, don't fret over not having a slow-speed grinder. Get whichever speed you have access to and learn to sharpen on it. After a short learning curve, you'll find that you'll be able to sharpen quite nicely on either system. The key to selecting a grinder is to choose one that will accept your chosen wheels and run true when used after initial wheel mounting, balancing and truing.

GRINDER WHEEL SELECTION

Depending on whom you listen to, you'll be told that you need pink wheels or white wheels or some other colour wheels, or no special colour at all. Truth is that virtually any wheel, other than those meant for carbides, will work quite nicely. If the wheel is coloured green, it is made for grinding carbides and not intended for your high-speed steel turning tools. All other colours are fair game. The white wheel is usually a highly friable grinding wheel. Friability is the wheel's ability to break down as it is being used to expose new and sharp edges to continue the sharpening process effectively. Paying premium for a white or pink grinding wheel might be money that could be spent more wisely. My suggestion is that you get a wheel dresser and 'sharpen' the wheel as needed rather than counting on it crumbling as needed to present new edges to the steel during use.

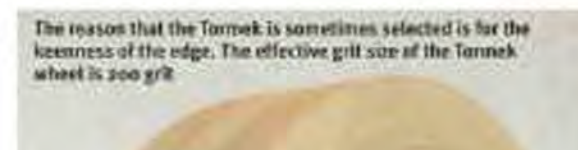
Wheels coloured white are usually an indication of high friability or the ability to break down during use to present unused and sharp particles. Wheel dressing will accomplish the same function, and on demand

There is an alphanumeric code that will detail all of the grinding wheel specifications, including abrasive, bonding, grit, density, friability, hardness and more. Middle-of-the-road on all suits the turner

Grinding wheels and their use is an extremely complex subject. There is a multi-digit code that will tell you everything you need to know about wheels and probably a lot more than you want to know. Should you wish to learn more, a quick search on Google will yield pages of websites by the various wheel grinding manufacturers that have in-depth explanations of the design, manufacture, selection, use and safe operating procedures. For the average woodturner, getting a general purpose aluminium oxide grinding wheel that is middle of the road on all of the other characteristics such as friability, hardness, density, etc. will serve well. Probably the most important specification needing selection is the grit.

If you think of the grinding wheel as a sander for your woodturning tools' edges, you can relate grit directly to sandpaper. The coarser the grit used, the bigger the scratches and the faster the steel removal. The finer the grit used, the smaller the scratches and the finer the finish at the expense of slow material removal. Most woodturners use one wheel grit rather than the machinist method of a coarse grit on one side of the grinder and a finer grit on the other side. Rare is the turner with dedicated turning grinder with a coarse grit on one wheel and a finer grit on the other. If you are the one wheel grit fits all person, your selection of grit size will be a balance of coarseness for cool and effective steel removal needed when shaping the tool and fineness for putting a keen edge on the tool. Whether a belt sander or a grinding wheel is used to sharpen your turning tools, sharpening creates a serrated knife edge on the tools with the grit of the abrasive being the spacing on the serrations. A close look at the ground edge of a tool will reveal the wheel grit size used for sharpening.

When picking your wheel grit size, I recommend something in the middle of the range. I wouldn't go coarser than 60 unless you have special grinding requirements, and not finer than 80 unless you never intend to do any shaping of your tools. With a 60 or 80 grit wheel, you'll be able to sharpen and shape your tools as needed yet not compromise the ability to do both pretty well. Will a finer grit than 80, such as 100 or 120, yield a finer ground edge? Certainly it will but you'll consume a lot of wheel life if you do much shaping with that wheel. It is your choice on wheel grit selection but somewhere in the middle of the range – 60 or 80 – will serve you well.



Grit selection is a balance of steel removal capability and fineness of ground edge. A look at the end of the tool will tell what grit grinding wheel was used

The reason that the Tormek is sometimes selected is for the keenness of the edge. The effective grit size of the Tormek wheel is 200 grit

◀ WHEEL DRESSERS & HONES

If you have opted for a standard grinding wheel that you will dress as needed to rejuvenate the ability to cut steel well, you'll need a method for dressing the wheel. The other need for dressing is if you habitually use the same spot on the wheel and create a 'dish' where the wear is excessive. In that case, you'll also need to dress the wheel to flatten the front face on occasion. My suggestion to use a randomly selected spot on the wheel each time will leave you with the need to dress the wheel only to sharpen the edges for cutting.

There are several tools for dressing a grinding wheel, ranging from the old to the new. All work but some are relegated to the museums. In essence, you are breaking the bonding of the aluminium oxide cutting particles to expose new and unused ones underneath. This fracturing of the bonding and cutting materials exposes new sharp edges ready to grind your tools in the same manner as reaching for a new piece of sandpaper. New sharp edges are available to do the work. Often asked is when do you dress the wheel? Not being smart but the answer is, 'it depends'. The wheel needs to be dressed when needed. If you use it little it won't need dressing as often. Properly selected and used without creating dishing, a wheel needs to be dressed when it doesn't cut efficiently. If you have been shaping tools, the wheel might need constant dressing. The sandpaper analogy will do well. You reach for a fresh piece of sandpaper when the current one begins to cut ineffectively. This is exactly the same with dressing a wheel. Don't worry about the appearance of the wheel – whether shiny, dull, black in the white, or other discolourations. How it cuts your tool steel is what is important, not that it is perfectly white or perfectly absent of shiny spots.

The last item I would add to a sharpening system list is a set of diamond hones. I am not a fan of honing tools for the sake of removing the burr or doing the honing process. I do, however, use hones to perform the sharpening process. I recommend a set of the inexpensive hones, which are available from a variety of manufacturers and retailers. More on this in the next article when we'll tackle the sharpening process.

Wheel dressers from old to new. The 'devil stick' – lower left – is from another time – with the star wheels – right – not far behind. The most modern and effective diamond dresser is in the upper left

A properly dressed wheel will be flat across the face with the colour being 'dull'. The absence of shiny spots, embedded steel and the dullness indicates fresh sharp cutting particles ready to work

A set of very modestly-priced diamond hones rounds out the sharpening system list. These are available from a variety of manufacturers and retailers

CONCLUSION

The topic of sharpening is so important to a successful woodturner that it can't be effectively conveyed in the space allowed for this column in a single issue. As much as I dislike having multi-part topics, the actual process of sharpening will be contained in the next issue. This background on equipment selection and why will be built upon next time. We'll cover safety procedures, angles and selection, toolrests, jigs and fixtures, honing tools, placement, wheel dressing and general best practices. The goal will be to make sharpening a simple, repeatable process to make and keep your tools sharp. There is no magic formula other than understanding what you are doing and having a bit of practice doing it. The requirements of a sharpening system can be modest and one can be obtained at a reasonable cost. It is, however, as important as any other part of the woodturner's kit and perhaps the most important. With sharp tools in skilled hands, the turner can work on nearly any project. ■

The ability to sharpen your tools efficiently is absolutely key to your success as a woodturner. Without sharp tools and proper usage, every tool becomes a scraper, thus limiting your progress

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Natural-edge winged bowls

Paul Hannaby shows you how to turn a natural-edge bowl, using a choice of two different methods

Natural-edge bowls have always appealed to me as a way to use the whole log and as something visually appealing due to the fact that the finished product retains more of its original form. Generally, the natural-edge bowl will be based on a circular blank but that doesn't have to be the case. A longer blank can be used, which allows the 'wings' of the bowl to be extended.

There are no rules dictating the proportions between length of bowl against width for winged bowls, but as a starting point, I would suggest trying a bowl that is twice as long as it is wide and progressing from there to blanks that are longer in relation to their width. Bear in mind that any irregular blank can catch you out if you don't pay attention and these bowls are no exception to that rule.

"A longer blank can be used, which allows the 'wings' of the bowl to be extended"

Always remember to check the work won't hit the toolrest before starting the lathe and keep your fingers clear when turning and sanding.

PAUL HANNABY

About the author: Paul Hannaby is self taught and has been turning for around 13 years. He is based in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. Paul's main interest is decorative turned wood and he also likes including colour and texture. He enjoys exploring new ideas and learning new techniques. He also demonstrates and provides tuition. Paul is a member of the Guild of Herefordshire Craftsmen and the Cotswold Craftsmen.
Email: paul@creative-woodturning.com
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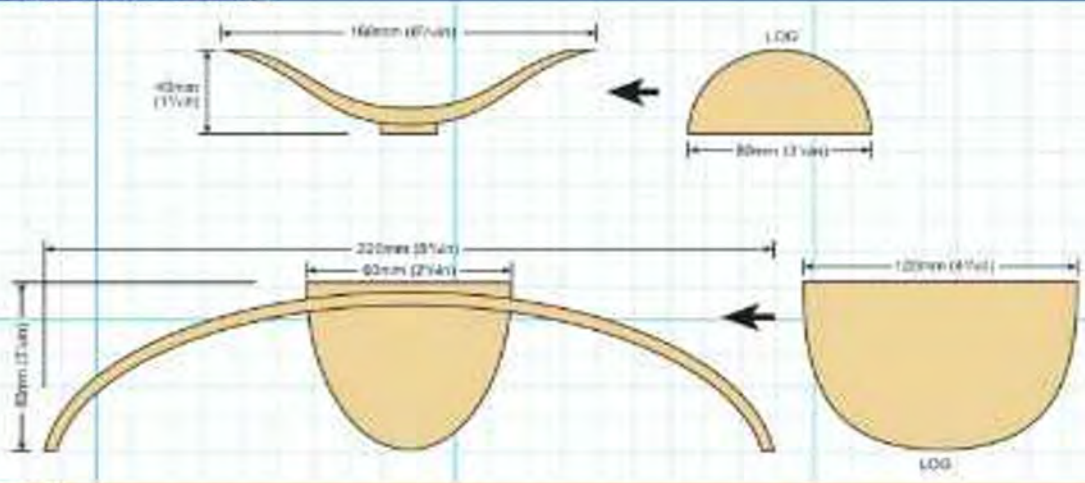
WINGED BOWL DIMENSIONS



INFORMATION

TIME TAKEN & COST

Time taken: 1 hour & 2 hours

Cost: £5

TOOLS REQUIRED

- 13mm spindle gouge
- 6mm bowl gouge
- 10mm bowl gouge
- 6mm parting tool – optional

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

- Sanding sealer
- Renaissance wax
- Steel wool
- Wax of your choice
- Safety cloth
- Kitchen tissue
- Router mat
- Sanding arbor
- PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS

- 180 x 80mm dia. half log
- 220 x 120mm half log
- 100 x 80mm dia. scrap piece for mandrel

METHOD ONE

1 Cut a log so it is approximately twice as long as its diameter and cut it in half lengthways. My log was from someone's garden and I think it's lilac, but I could be wrong!

2 Mount the piece of wood between centres with the bark side towards the headstock. Adjust the wood so both ends on the bark side will end up level when the bowl is finished. I do this by putting the toolrest close to one end and then rotating by hand to check the other end is the same distance from the rest. Also pay attention to centring the log both along the blank and across it

3 With a relatively small diameter log, the four-prong drive centre doesn't make contact across its entire width. With some bark-edged blanks like this, it is also possible that some or all the bark may be loose, so I usually either remove some of the bark to give the drive centre a flat area to locate on, or I turn the blank by hand to 'drill' the drive centre through the bark so it is resting on solid wood

4 Once the blank is securely mounted, position the toolrest and check the blank rotates freely without hitting it. Use the 13mm spindle gouge to begin shaping the outside curve on the bowl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5 Form a dovetail spigot; this will allow the blank to be held in the chuck for hollowing of the inside of the bowl

6 Next, use a shear cut to refine the surface curve and to remove any ridges that are left by the gouge

7 Remove the blank and remount in the chuck. Commence hollowing with the 10mm bowl gouge. Aim for an even wall thickness, which will be reflected in the thickness of the remaining bark edge. Use this as a visual guide to achieving an even thickness

8 Sand the bowl by hand; this will avoid rounding over the edges of the wings. Apply sanding sealer and when dry, cut back with steel wool. Apply some wax to the inside of the bowl and buff with safety cloth

9 Remove the bowl from the chuck and reverse it on a wooden mandrel. I use a piece of router mat against the mandrel and a piece of kitchen tissue between the router mat and the bowl, which protects the finish

10 Reshape the chuck spigot into a foot for the bowl. Also, cut away as much of the waste wood around the tailcentre as possible. Sand the outside of the bowl and foot, seal with sanding sealer and polish with wax

11 Remove the bowl from the lathe and use a sanding arbor to remove the remaining waste wood from the centre of the foot. Finish the foot in the same way as the rest of the bowl

12 The finished bowl should look something like this

HEALTH & SAFETY

1. Bear in mind that any irregular blank can catch you out if you don't pay attention and these bowls are no exception to that rule
2. Always remember to check the work won't hit the toolrest before starting the lathe and keep your fingers clear when turning and sanding
3. Here, I used a visor rather than goggles as there is a risk of loose bark being thrown out when turning and also there may be stones or other debris hidden or embedded in the bark
4. It is advisable to check for and remove any loose bark before mounting the blank on the lathe. Also, check for cracks or other faults that might be dangerous
5. When sanding, always use air filtration and the appropriate PPE – see information sidebar on page 66

METHOD TWO

1 Select a log that is roughly twice as long as its diameter. I used yew (*Taxus baccata*) because I like the contrast between heart and sapwood, but almost any wood could be used. Cut the log lengthways on the bandsaw. In my example, I cut about 90mm across because that was where the heart of the log was and it would enable me to make a deeper bowl

2 Mount the log between centres in the same way as before. Check the height of the wings is even and 'drill' the centre in; this will give it a better grip

3 You can now level off the bottom edge of the blank using a pull cut with the 13mm spindle gouge

4 Form a chuck spigot that will ultimately be the top rim of the bowl, so make sure this ends up bigger in diameter than the bowl diameter you are aiming for. Continue shaping the outside of the bowl

"The inner bowl should be narrower than the diameter of the chuck spigot on the top side"

5 With this piece of wood, I found that the edge was chipping if I used the pull cut from centre to edge, so I switched to using a push cut from edge to centre. This goes against the rules because you are cutting into end grain but in this instance, by taking light cuts, the resulting finish was far superior, so it goes to show that sometimes, rules are made to be broken!

6 Check the outer curve on the bowl wings is as you intended. At this point, it is worth considering that there are two ways to go – you can cut the ends of the wings flat so they will become the support for the bowl, which effectively becomes suspended in the middle, or you can cut the wings as natural-edge all the way round and turn a separate pedestal to stand the centre of the bowl on. I chose the first option

7 Mount the bowl in the chuck and start to cut away the waste wood between the inner bowl and the wings, using the 10mm bowl gouge. Do this by cutting down the wings and around the bowl

8 The inner bowl should be narrower than the diameter of the chuck spigot on the top side; this will allow for that being turned down to create the top rim. Next, turn the underside of the wing so it is an even thickness. You can see here that the wing at the centre is still too thick


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9 Using the 13mm spindle gouge, form a chuck-holding point where the inner bowl is of the right diameter, which will later be turned away. I did this by just leaving the bowl a little thicker than it will eventually be so the chuck point is integral to the bowl rather than being a protruding spigot

10 Remove the bowl from the chuck and mount the other way up. Re-turn the outside edge of the top rim, which will remove the chuck marks and match the diameter of the lower bowl so the sections above and below the wing look continuous

11 Cut the top of the bowl flat and hollow with the 6mm bowl gouge. Make the wall thickness of the inner bowl the same as the thickness of the wing, which will allow the edge of the wing and the top rim of the bowl to look balanced. Next, sand the inside of the bowl, taking care to keep fingers clear of the wings. Sand the top surface of the wings by hand to avoid rounding over the edges. Apply sanding sealer, cut back and polish with wax

12 Use a piece of scrap wood to form a mandrel, slightly smaller than the inside of the bowl and of a similar shape

13 Mount the bowl between the mandrel and tailcentre, using a piece of router mat against the mandrel and a piece of kitchen tissue between the router mat and bowl, which will protect the finish. Use the 13mm spindle gouge to remove the chuck point and reshape the outside of the bowl

14 You can now sand the outside of the bowl, taking great care to keep clear of the wings. You need to sand the underside of the wings by hand. Apply sanding sealer and polish with wax

15 Turn the remaining stub near the live centre as small as is safe to do so. Remove the bowl from the lathe, then sand the remainder away using the sanding arbor. Seal and polish as for the rest of the bowl

16 The finished piece should look something like this ●

Handy hints

1. Keep fingers clear of uneven or irregular edges when turning on the lathe. Keep your fingers on the right-hand side of the toolrest at all times
2. When cutting a round log on the bandsaw, put wedges under it – this will stop it from rolling over

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Two-part candleholder

Philip Greenwood shows you how to make a two-part candleholder using only a basic selection of tools

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIP GREENWOOD

This two-part candleholder is an alternative design to the one I made in the first article of this series. This type of candleholder is normally made in pairs, but they can be made individually if you wish. This design incorporates a base, which means it will be more stable in use, but do take into account the height of the stem and how tall the candle placed in the holder will be. I used a metal holder. I would not recommend placing a candle directly into any timber, including a tealight, even though they are placed in a metal case. I always use a glass or metal insert, as the timber could scorch or even burn without a barrier. The regulations do vary between countries so check if you intend to sell or even give away any candleholders.

The base can be decorated and a handle attached if you wish. If you do decide to make a handle, it could just be a turned circle attached to the base, but the design is down to personal tastes. I decided to use an ogee shape from the base to the rim on the outside, which will make this candleholder easy to hold. The wall thickness is around 5mm and over; any less could compromise the weight, needed for stability and durability of the base, and could also make this top-heavy when a candle is placed in the cup. If this piece is only intended for decorative purposes then it could be turned a lot thinner. I made both parts from the same species of timber, but you could use contrasting timber for the stem and base – the choices are endless. I chose to use sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and the particular piece I used had some ripples running through it, which made this more interesting than plain sycamore.

The finish used is cellulose sanding sealant. Acrylic sanding sealant could be used instead, but it is better to use a fast-drying sealant to cut down on finishing time. I use Carnauba wax to finish the piece off after the sealant has dried and been de-nibbed. I like to use a mop to apply it, as Carnauba is very hard and if applied directly to the piece, could scratch the finished surface.

"The base can be decorated and a handle attached if you wish"

PHILIP GREENWOOD

About the author: Philip has been turning wood since 1980 and started turning professionally in 1986. He was accepted onto the Register of Professional Turners (RPT) in 2006. He is also a member of the AWGB. He can be seen working in his workshop in North Yorkshire and has demonstrated at the woodworking show at Harrogate since 2008. He also runs courses at his workshop.

Email: philip@woodturningintoart.co.uk
Web: www.woodturningintoart.co.uk

CANDLEHOLDER DIMENSIONS

INFORMATION

TIME TAKEN & COST

Time taken: 60 mins

Cost: £5

TOOLS REQUIRED

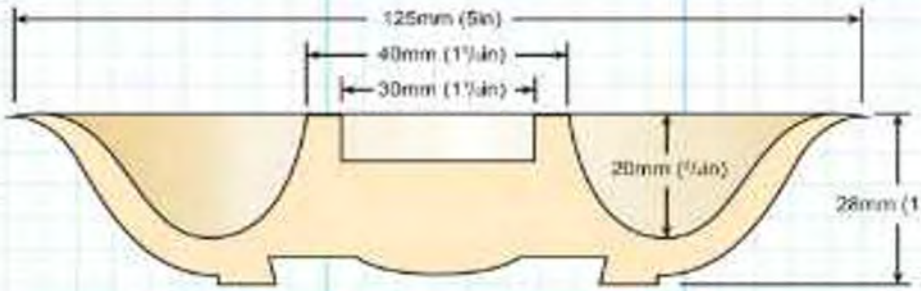
- 10mm bowl gouge
- 25mm French-curve scraper
- 3mm parting tool
- 20mm skew chisel
- 20mm spindle roughing gouge
- 10mm spindle gouge with a fingernail profile

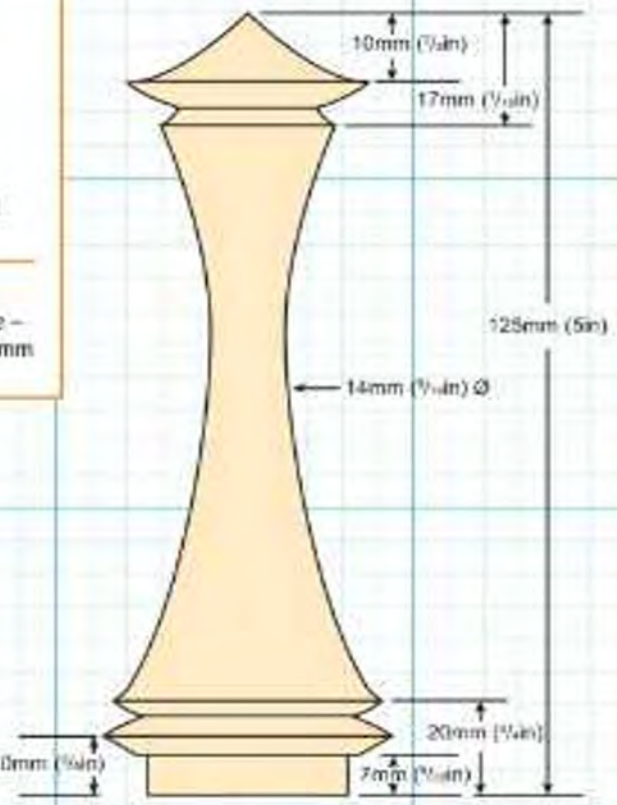
ADDITIONAL TOOLS

- Chuck
- Drive centre
- Revolving centre
- Range of abrasives
- Cellulose sanding sealant
- Carnauba wax
- PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

TIMBER REQUIREMENTS

- Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*): spindle – 125 x 30 x 30mm; base – 125 x 125 x 30mm



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1 Start the project by finding the middle of both ends of the spindle then mount between centres. At the headstock end I am using a steb centre, which will save you knocking a four-prong centre in with a mallet, and at the tailstock end a revolving centre. Only tighten the tailstock until the drive grips – over-tightening will only place stress on the bearings

2 Next, use a spindle roughing gouge to make this round, using bevel contact to get a good finish on the spindle. After a few cuts, you need to stop the lathe and move the toolrest closer; this will avoid too much tool overhang, which would cause problems with tool control

3 You now need to create a spigot at the base of the stem to fit into the base. This needs to be 7mm long and 30mm in diameter, which means you avoid the steb centre. Using the parting tool to cut the spigot, angle the tool slightly, as this will allow you to undercut the bottom of the stem so it sits flush when it is inserted into the base ▶

4 Use the spindle roughing gouge to remove most of the waste in the middle section, starting in the middle and gradually working towards the ends. Remember to always turn from the largest diameter to the smallest diameter, and face the flutes in the direction of the cut

5 Start to refine the top using the spindle gouge. This is a slight concave; use the gouge with the bevel in contact with the cut surface to maintain tool control — this will leave a very clean surface needing minimal sanding. Stop just short of the revolving centre — the hole from the revolving centre will be used to attach the candle holder

6 The next task to complete is turning the 'V' for the underside of the top; this is a slight convex shape on the right-hand side with a smaller one on the left-hand side. Use the skew chisel with the long point facing down

7 Refine the middle part of the stem with the spindle gouge. Working from the sides down to the middle, keep the bevel in contact to achieve a smooth curve. If you find that fine marks are being made on the surface, this may be from the heel of the tool — just round the heel off when grinding

8 Refining the bottom bead is almost a repeat of turning the 'V' at the top of the stem – step 6. You can see very clearly how the bevel is in contact with the surface; try to achieve this with all your finishing cuts for a good result

9 Continue refining the base of the stem. I used the spindle gouge to cut the other side. You can see the fine shavings coming off the gouge just to the right of the tip; these have a spiral to them, meaning they are coming off the gouge at a sheer angle, leaving a finish that needs little sanding

10 Remove any tool marks with abrasives, starting with 120 and working through to 400 grit. Check to make sure all marks have been removed, clear off any dust, then seal with sanding sealant. Wait until dry, then de-nib


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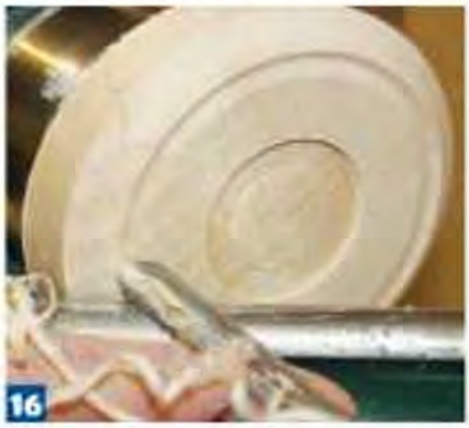
Handy hints

1. Always use eye protection when working on any project in the workshop
2. Wear a dust mask and use a dust extractor when sanding
3. Ensure adequate ventilation when using sanding sealants
4. Remove any excess glue before it sets
5. Keep your tools sharp; this will ensure you achieve a good finish on your work



11 You now need to mount your base on a screw chuck. I cut the base from the same plane of sycamore, found the centre and then used a compass to draw a circle prior to bandsawing round. Place a screw in the chuck ready for the base to be screwed on

12 The next step is to use the bowl gouge to true up the outside of the blank; this will reduce any vibration you may experience. Keep turning until the blank is fully round with no flats on the outside edge. If you find the end grain is tearing, this can indicate that your gouge needs sharpening or you are holding the gouge at the wrong angle – normally too high – and it's pulling the end grain out due to a scraping action

13 True up the bottom of the base with the bowl gouge. I am using a push cut, starting at the edge and working towards the centre, with the flutes facing the direction of the cut. You may need to take several passes to remove any saw cuts. You can see the ripple in this piece

14 The recess needs to be cut to enable this to be attached to the chuck once the underside is finished. After marking the recess diameter with a pencil and ruler, use a parting tool to cut to the right of the pencil line, then the bowl gouge to remove the centre part

15 Lay the skew chisel flat on the toolrest, hold horizontally, and use the long point to take a fine cut at an angle to suit the dovetail angle of the chuck jaws. I will also use the point to place a ring in the recess for a bit of detail

16 Use a bowl gouge with a push cut to remove some of the waste from the underside of the base. I am looking for an ogee shape so I started at the base, removing only a small amount, and removed more near the top where it goes to a concave shape

17 You need to leave an 8mm-wide rim for the base to sit on. Finish the outside with the bowl gouge; this will leave a clean surface. Sand and seal the underside before removing from the screw chuck

18 This now needs to be held in the recess. Tighten the chuck sufficiently to grip in the recess but don't overtighten as this may break the rim. Now use a push cut to clean off the top face, working towards the centre ▶

Handy hints

6. Don't let shavings gather near your grinder as sparks could ignite them – even after a few hours

19 You now need to mark a 30mm diameter hole. This is the size of the stem spigot on the top face. Use a parting tool to remove the waste, take several cuts and, when near the diameter, stop the lathe and check the fit. You can use the long point of the skew chisel flat on the toolrest to remove a small amount of material until the stem fits

20 Rough shape the inside of the holder and start to remove the waste from the centre with the bowl gouge. Always work from the top into the base and face the flutes in the direction of the cut

21 Once you have the basic shape, start to refine the surface. Take smaller cuts, coming from both sides and don't forget to leave a small rim in the middle for the stem to sit on. If in any doubt, stop the lathe, place the stem in the recess and decide if you need to adjust the shape by removing more wood

22 Use a scraper to remove any tool marks left from the bowl gouge. Always work downwards from both sides for a smooth surface. If only dust comes from the scraper, you need to re-sharpen it

23 Sand through the abrasive grades, finishing at 400 grit. Remove any dust and apply sanding sealant to the surface, but leave the hole for the stem without sealant as this will be glued. Wipe any excess off and allow to dry

24 I used a three-part buffing system, which can be purchased from Chestnut Products. The first mop is used with Tripoli, which removes any brush marks left by the sanding sealant; the second mop uses white diamond, a fine buffing compound; and lastly, the third mop applies Carnauba wax, which give a gloss finish to the work that will last

25 Use a good-quality glue to hold the joint, making sure the stem sits flush on the base. You don't want a leaning candleholder. Remove any excess glue before it dries, then drill a small hole in the top for the candleholder to screw into

26 The completed sycamore candleholder should look like this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Handy hints

7. Make a habit of cleaning up your workshop at the end of a day's work
8. When sanding, stop the lathe to make sure that all the tool or grit marks from the abrasives have been removed before moving on to the next grit

Oneway Workcentre; Sorby Pro-Edge; Record grinders; O'Donnell ruby wheels; Holzer CBN wheels; Ashley Iles honing systems; Tormek wet grinding systems; Kelton jigs; Hamlet grinding guides & jigs; etc. etc.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY WALTER HALL

Hold Fast vacuum chucking system

Walter Hall looks at the vacuum holding system from Hold Fast and finds it to be versatile, well made and cost effective

This system, which is designed to fit any lathe with a hollow headstock spindle and a No.2 Morse taper, includes an adaptor kit consisting of a threaded tube that passes through the lathe headstock spindle, a sealed rotary bearing, which fits the outboard end of the tube, and a locking spindle adaptor, which seats into the Morse taper and against which the assembly is tightened.

The assembly

This assembly is connected by means of a small diameter vacuum hose to a vacuum generator, which works on compressed air and must be attached to a compressor, producing a minimum of 2cfm of air at between 75 and 150 psi. The vacuum could alternatively be supplied by means of a vacuum pump. Chucks of 150mm and 75mm diameter are available to fit lathes with a 1¼in x 8tpi spindle thread and adaptors are available to convert these to fit 1in x 8tpi spindles. A nylon anti-lock washer is provided to fit between chuck and spindle.

In use

My first impressions on taking the system out of the box was that the aluminium-bodied rotary bearing adaptor seemed a little small and flimsy and the vacuum tube reminded me of car screen washer tubing, but my concerns were soon allayed when the system was fitted to my lathe and operating. While I cannot comment on the long-term robustness, having only used it for a short while, I can confirm that these components are certainly up to the task. The vacuum generator is a small aluminium box with a standard ¼inbsp inlet for the compressed air, an outlet nipple for the vacuum tube, an on/off switch, a regulator valve and a vacuum gauge. Attached to my 2hpP 115psi compressor it produced vacuum which measured at around 20hg. The box, as supplied, has no means of attachment to the lathe or any other surface, but the aluminium back panel is easily removed and could be drilled for a mounting to be fitted. The vacuum adaptor kit is fitted to the lathe by passing the threaded tube, with rotary bearing adaptor

The components included with the Holdfast vacuum chucking system

The system once set up and attached to the lathe

already fitted, through the spindle from the outboard end. The locking spindle adaptor is then attached to the inboard end of the spindle and the assembly hand-tightened by turning the rotary bearing adaptor. Any excess tube on the inboard end must be cut back with a hacksaw so that it projects about 13mm beyond the locking spindle adaptor. This is then de-burred and tidied up with a fine file. This was all carried out fairly easily, although the provided instructions could perhaps be a little clearer. The system is then connected to the vacuum generator by means of the vacuum hose. I found the aluminium threads on the chucks to be a little rough and they needed a spray of PTFE lubricant to order for them to screw easily onto my lathe spindle.

Further tests

While vacuum chucking systems are primarily designed to allow reverse chucking for the removal of chuck mountings and the finishing of bases etc., I gave the system a thorough workout by mounting a 200mm x 80mm imbuia (*Ocotea porosa*) blank and taking some fairly heavy cuts with a 13mm bowl gouge. In normal use I would provide support for such cuts with the tailstock but even without the benefit of support the blank held firm on the chuck with no movement. I also mounted a smaller square of sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) to see if the additional forces generated by the irregular cutting action would dislodge the work but found the corners could be turned off without any dislocation of the work.

It is of course possible to dislodge a workpiece from the chuck, but when I took the system to get a second opinion from my friends Bob Chapman and Neil Lawton, we found it was only really possible to do this by deliberately initiating a catch or taking an unrealistically heavy cut.

If used with a compressor with an air storage tank rather than direct feed, the system is safe in the event of power failure as the residual pressure in the tank will maintain the vacuum for some time. The on/off switch on the vacuum generator will, however, turn off the vacuum immediately and should, on no account, be turned off while the system is in use.

Verdict

My overall impression of this system was good. It is more than adequate not only for reverse chucking but also for the making of platters and other work, where physical mounting of the work is difficult. Those who do not own or have any other use for a compressor might find it more cost effective to buy only the vacuum adaptor kit and a separate vacuum pump, rather than incur the dual costs of compressor and vacuum generator.

INFORMATION

Scores
Ease of use: 90%
Versatility: 98%
Build quality: 90%

Details
Prices: From £249
Contact UK: Turners Retreat
Tel: 01302 744 344
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The first of these new box sets from Simon Hope contains contains 6 x 47mm arbors, 20 discs of Indasa hook-and-loop backed abrasive of grits including: 120, 180, 240, 320, 400 and 600. There is also a replaceable neoprene pad and a soft interface pad, as well as a quick-release bit so this can be mounted into the drill for every arbor of a different grit.

The 72mm kit comprises of 1 x 72mm arbor, 20 x each grit of the following abrasives – 120, 180, 240, 320, 400 and 600 – a replaceable black neoprene pad and a soft interface pad. Both box sets offer fantastic value for money compared to purchasing the abrasives separately.

Contact: Simon Hope Woodturning
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Just in case you need another reason to buy this machine, Tormek are now also offering 'free grindstones for life' when you buy a T-7. To take advantage of this offer, all you need to do is register your T-7 purchase before 15 January, 2014 at www.tormek.com and put 'FGL' in the comments section. This offer is valid for machines purchased from 1 November until 31 December, 2013.

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Roy Weare – 'Vessel 2013'

Roy Weare shares this piece, which was recently on display at the AWGB Seminar. The surface texture of this hollow form in cherry was influenced by a piece of coral and features longitudinal splits and piercing

'Vessel 2013', hollow form is turned, carved and textured cherry (*Prunus spp.*). This piece also won the Tony Boase tribute award at this year's AWGB Seminar

I have been a woodturner for over 20 years and during this time it has been more of a passion than a hobby. About six years ago, I began to embellish my pieces with surface texture and then the adventure began.

In recent years, my work has focused on exploring the hollow form by surface decoration, pyrography, piercing and texturing. These most recent pieces are a continuation of that process and represent experiments in surface decoration and texturing on hollow vessels. The inspiration for many of my pieces is often a marine creature, although the forms are clearly not realistic and the carved decoration might come from a number of different sources.

My preferred material is sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) or cherry (*Prunus spp.*) turned into a hollow form. The pieces are often left thick so that there is sufficient material for the texturing. It is important that the hollow form is turned well both inside and out and that the shape is pleasing. There is little point in spending hours decorating a piece if the initial form is poor. The time spent on the lathe is relatively short compared with the time taken to decorate the piece. Away from the lathe, the texturing and shaping is done with a variety of tools but primarily I use a micro-motor and fine burrs. The bulk of the wood is removed using a pendant motor and rasps. Some of the pieces are textured using pyrography and often the sycamore is bleached. In order to produce some of the textures, I have to use three or four layers of different carving to achieve the desired effect.

This piece is a hollow form made in cherry. The vessel has been opened by longitudinal slits and piercing. The idea for the surface texture came from a piece of coral and was made using small burrs. The fingers around the mouth of the vessel were shaped, textured and pyrographed.

Email: roy.weare@tiscali.co.uk

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