

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT STABILISING WOOD

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NOVEMBER 2014
NO. 272 £3.95

Woodturning

THE WORLD'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR WOODTURNERS

Projects to make

Laminated serving tray

Multi-axis paper knife

Desk clock & calendar

IN PROFILE:

Mark Sfirri and his
multi-axis turnings

Techniques for
making a textured
two-part vase in
unseasoned oak

Looking at timber:
European yew

Stephen Hogbin
shows how he made
a colourful wine table

Starting turning:
10 rules for turning

We report from the
2014 Norwegian
Woodturning Cruise

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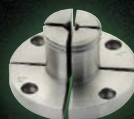
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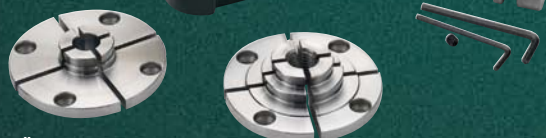
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ROBUST

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David Nittmann – a tribute to a great turner



I am saddened to report that David Nittmann passed away on 13 August, after battling with cancer for some time.

David was an extraordinary character and I had the pleasure of meeting and working with him at various events around the world.

David's signature work is 'Basket Illusion'. This work shows an effect he perfected by creating a texture akin to woven baskets. I must admit I loved his work. I liked that he was always probing, exploring new concepts and ideas and trying to develop his work. His work has featured in many shows, museums, galleries and private collections all over the world.

In the years that I have known David, he always had a smile on his face and was an excellent teacher and communicator. His laugh was infectious and no matter when I saw him, he was always able to find time for people, willing to help, share, encourage and genuinely wanted to see everyone do well. I can only imagine how many people he has helped, inspired, befriended and, like me, I know that they have gained greatly from knowing him.

My thoughts are with Cindy Drozda, his family and friends at this time. We have lost a true free-thinking spirit and a generous talented friend.

Mark Bahr

markb@thegmcgroup.com

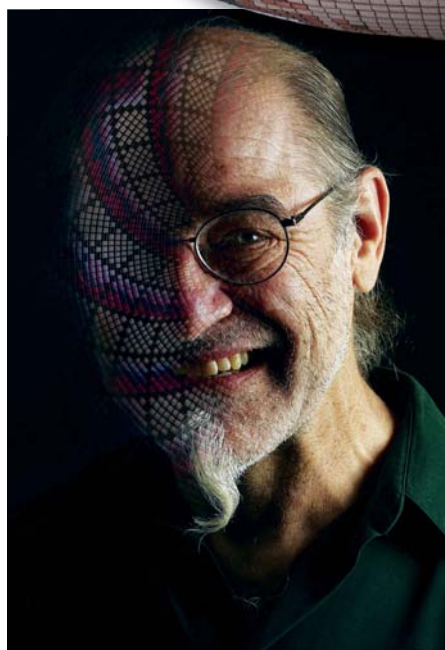


Woodworkers Institute website (www.woodworkersinstitute.com) is thriving. It would be great if you took a look and participated in the various discussions and competitions in our community.

'Two Grey Hills', 2011, jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) 305mm high x 330mm dia.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TIM BENKO, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED



'Spiderman' portrait by Tim Benko; an image loved by David



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK BAKER

David loved to share his techniques and ideas with people



Cover image by Mark Sfirri. A selection of Mark Sfirri's eccentric turnings. To read the full profile, see page 48

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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



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Subscribers! Turn to page 69 for subscription special offers and you could save 30%!

Woodturning is an inherently dangerous pursuit. Readers should not attempt the procedures described herein without seeking training and information on the safe use of tools and machines. All readers should observe current safety legislation.

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Community news

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

Woodturning experience for young people



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN LEACH

Gilwell 24 participants at the closing ceremony



Young people experiencing hands-on woodturning

For the fifth successive year, the East Herts and Cambridge Woodturners, with support from several other AWGB clubs, held woodturning taster sessions for Explorer Scouts and Senior Section Guides at the largest annual Scouting event in the UK. Gilwell 24 is a 24-hour activity packed camp and was attended by over 4,500 young people and their leaders at the Home of World Scouting, Gilwell Park in North London.

Over the five years the weather at the event has ranged from very wet to heat wave. This year the weather provided both. After weeks of good weather, the weekend in July arrived. On the Thursday night it had been raining and the roads were flooded. On arriving at the 80 x 40ft marquee allocated for woodturning to set up the equipment, it was discovered that the heavy rain overnight had resulted in a stream running through the middle of the woodturning area, so the first job was to cover the wet areas. Having sorted out the flooding, the woodturning area was set up with 15 lathes – six of which were generously loaned by Axminster Tools & Machinery.

Event day

The following day, the event day, started misty but by mid-morning the sun had broken through and the marquee became very hot. By midday, the woodturning activity was fully booked for the whole 10-hour day. The young people were given a short introduction and safety talk before having half an hour working, one-to-one, on a lathe with an experienced turner, making a simple item such as a toadstool, a dibber, a wand or similar. The Gilwell 24 logo had been made into a brand head and the handiwork produced by the participants was branded as a souvenir of the day. The young people thoroughly enjoyed the woodturning experience and each thanked the turners and support staff several times. Talking to the turners at the end, I was left unsure whether the youngsters or the turners had enjoyed the day more!

Gilwell 24 closing ceremony

The Gilwell 24 closing ceremony was in the arena adjacent to the woodturning marquee. It was clear that, despite being exhausted, the young people had enjoyed a fantastic 24

hours of activity and most would, no doubt sleep on their journey home.

The event, which was organised by East Herts on behalf of the AWGB, was supported by people from East Herts, Cambridge, West Suffolk, SECB, Martock and District and Chelmer Valley clubs. During Saturday morning the organiser of hands-on woodturning at the Norfolk Scout Jamboree, to be held at Norwich in August, visited the marquee. A number of the woodturners at Gilwell 24 will be helping with the woodturning at NorJam.

The East Herts Woodturners acknowledge the support of Axminster Tools & Machinery, Chestnut Products, Henry Taylor Tools, The ToolPost and Birchanger Wood Trust, and thank the members of many AWGB clubs for their efforts in setting up and providing such an enjoyable woodturning experience for over 125 young people.

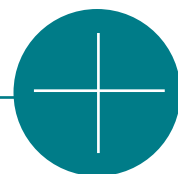
John Leach

DETAILS:

Contact: John Leach

Email: woodturningsurf@aol.com

Web: www.gilwell24.info



Handmade in Britain 14 – The Contemporary Crafts & Design Fair

This November over 100 UK-based designer-makers will showcase the best of contemporary fine crafts in all disciplines across interiors and fashion over three days at Chelsea Old Town Hall. The show is an inspiring alternative to the high street and a unique opportunity to browse exceptional crafts, buy unique and handmade gifts or commission a bespoke piece of work. This is a luxury shopping experience with added value, a very special chance to buy directly from the makers and discover the inspirations and processes behind

the work of Britain's most skilled craftspeople. This event offers a unique opportunity to explore British contemporary crafts in a showcase of innovative design alongside exceptional craftsmanship presenting a rich variety of form, function and style.

DETAILS:

When: 14–16 November, 2014

Where: Chelsea Old Town Hall, King's Road, London SW3 5EE

Contact: Handmade in Britain

Tel: 0207 2865 110

Web: www.handmadeinbritain.co.uk



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF HANDMADE IN BRITAIN

Jonathan Pearce's jewellery chest of drawers

Help for Heroes Workshop Project



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CHRIS MORGAN

'Phoenix Mouse from Phoenix House' by Glenn Proshio

Dear Mark,
I have read the article and letter concerning the Help for Heroes Workshop Project, involving the Woodworking Volunteers and Robert Sorby. The Project is proposing to build and equip a workshop fit for use by recovering service personnel, veterans and their families. I came across this project at the South East Woodworking Show, and members of the East Herts Woodturners have donated a number of lathes and have held an auction to raise money to support the project.

I understand that the workshop building has been approved and will be constructed shortly. The workshop will need to be equipped and ancillary equipment such as dust extraction and benches will need to be obtained or purchased.

The rehabilitation benefits of the workshop, for recovering service personnel, are huge. Any support which your readers and/or their clubs can provide would, I am sure, be very welcome by the project. Any offers of equipment as well as monetary donations can be sent to Chris Morgan, Phoenix House Recovery Centre, Richmond Road, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire DL9 3AW. Cheques should be made payable to H4H – Phoenix House – or you can email Chris: chrismorgan222@hotmail.com. I agree with the writer of the letter in issue 267 and I encourage other clubs and individuals to consider whether they can support this worthwhile activity.

*Yours sincerely,
John Leach*

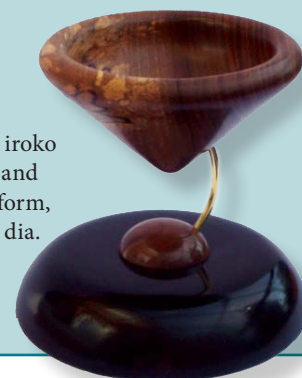


Wooden pepper mills: forgery macassar ebony (*Diospyros celebica*); marbled cherry (*Prunus spp.*) and obeche coloured pressure, by guido512

'Dyed Tree of Heaven' by edbanger, tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), 170 × 90mm



'Suspended' by Dalboy, iroko (*Milicia excelsa*) base and walnut (*Juglans regia*) form, 125mm tall × 125mm dia.



Beads of Courage

Beads of Courage was founded by Jean Baruch, when she developed and piloted the programme in February 2003, at Phoenix Children's Hospital. Jean was able to launch the programme through the financial support from her family and friends.

Now based in Tucson, Arizona, Beads of Courage provides innovative, arts-in-medicine supportive care programmes for children coping with serious illness, their parents, families and for the health care providers. Not only is Beads of Courage in Phoenix, but it is implemented in over 150 children's hospitals throughout the US, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and the UK. They are currently supporting over 300,000 children with the programme.

The programme

Beads of Courage is a resilience-based intervention designed to support and strengthen the children and families involved. The children can tell their story through the programme, using colourful beads as meaningful symbols of their courage. The beads communicate

the milestones they have achieved along their unique treatment path.

The colour of the beads, which relate to each milestone, were carefully thought about and determined with help from experts in the field – nurses, doctors, child life specialists and social workers. Each bead reflects a meaningful acknowledgement of a child's treatment journey. The programme is available for those children with cancer and blood disorders, cardiac conditions, burn injuries, chronic illness and neonatal ICU families.

Woodturning with Beads of Courage

Beads of Courage receives donations of one-of-a-kind wooden boxes from woodworkers, in which the children can keep their beads. The boxes for the children are suggested to be of 150mm in diameter, rectangular lidded boxes about 100 × 150 × 100mm and if possible, have the Beads of Courage logo within the design. See www.beadsofcourage.org for further details.

Conversion chart

2mm (5/64in)	85mm (3 1/4in)
3mm (1/8in)	90mm (3 1/2in)
4mm (5/32in)	93mm (3 3/4in)
6mm (1/4in)	95mm (3 3/4in)
7mm (9/32in)	100mm (4in)
8mm (5/16in)	105mm (4 1/8in)
9mm (11/32in)	110mm (4 3/8in)
10mm (3/8in)	115mm (4 1/2in)
11mm (7/16in)	120mm (4 3/4in)
12mm (1/2in)	125mm (5in)
13mm (1/2in)	130mm (5 1/8in)
14mm (9/16in)	135mm (5in)
15mm (9/16in)	140mm (5 1/2in)
16mm (5/8in)	145mm (5 3/4in)
17mm (11/16in)	150mm (6in)
18mm (23/32in)	155mm (6 1/8in)
19mm (3/4in)	160mm (6 1/4in)
20mm (3/4in)	165mm (6 1/2in)
21mm (13/16in)	170mm (6 3/4in)
22mm (7/8in)	178mm (6 7/8in)
23mm (29/32in)	180mm (7in)
24mm (15/16in)	185mm (7in)
25mm (1in)	190mm (7 1/2in)
30mm (1 1/8in)	195mm (7 3/4in)
32mm (1 1/4in)	200mm (8in)
35mm (1 3/8in)	305mm (12in)
38mm (1 1/2in)	405mm (16in)
40mm (1 5/8in)	510mm (20in)
45mm (1 3/4in)	610mm (24in)
50mm (2in)	710mm (28in)
55mm (2 1/8-2 1/4in)	815mm (32in)
60mm (2 3/8in)	915mm (36in)
63mm (2 1/2in)	1,015mm (40in)
65mm (2 5/8in)	1,120mm (44in)
70mm (2 3/4in)	1,220mm (48in)
75mm (3in)	1,320mm (52in)
80mm (3 1/8in)	1,420mm (56in)

Turning Competition Exhibition

The Worshipful Company of Turners will be holding their biennial Turnings Competitions and exhibition from 28–29 October, 2014.

The competitions will be at Apothecaries Hall in London on Tuesday 28 October and the exhibition will be held on 29 October. Prizes will be awarded on the afternoon of 28 October, by Lord Mayor, Alderman Fiona Woolf.

The exhibition will be open to the public, entry will be free. All turnings will be on display until 4pm on 29 October. Pieces of work from the

2013 AWGB Seminar will also be on display as well as the WCT Permanent Collection. Many of the pieces on display will not have been seen in public before. In addition, there will be the Fred Howell Collection on display, mostly ornamental works in ivory, and Stuart King's collection of wooden bygones and treen.

DETAILS:

When: 28–29 October, 2014

Where: Apothecaries Hall, Blackfriars Lane, London EC4V 6EJ

Web: www.turnersco.com



A display of salt and pepper mills from the last 'Wizardry in Wood'

'Omega fountain pen' by Walter Hall, mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) finished with CA adhesive



Latticed ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) pot with goncalvo alves (*Astronium fraxinifolium*) rim by colinjp, 125mm high × 85mm dia.



Border Woodturners' annual open day

The Border Woodturners' annual open day will take place on Sunday 26 October. There will be a display and sales table of members' work and various members will be running turning demonstrations during the day. The annual inter-club competition, with entries from seven clubs from the surrounding area, will be judged in the morning and all of the entries will be on display throughout the day. Also attending will be Martin Pigden with a large selection of timber for sale. Anyone requiring specific orders can contact Martin and he will bring them to the day. Also attending again will be Mark and Lisa Raby, with an extensive range of colouring and finishing products for sale. Mark will be demonstrating various colouring and finishing techniques during the day and offering advice and encouragement to anyone wishing to try something new. A new addition to the show this year is Biven Machinery Sales, displaying a wide range of woodturning and woodworking tools

and accessories. They will also be offering advice and technical information on lathes, bandsaws and other woodworking machinery. In addition, you can expect to see the usual raffle and tombola, with a large selection of prizes to be won. This is an excellent day to view woodturning, purchase tools and supplies, some at show discounts, and to meet and discuss turning with fellow enthusiasts from across the North of England and South Scotland. There is free parking in and around the centre and light refreshments, snacks and lunches are available in the centre café throughout the day.

DETAILS:

When: 26 October, 2014

Where: Brampton Community Centre, Union Lane, Brampton, Cumbria CA8 1BX

Contact: Malcolm Ferguson

Email: mferguson1@talktalk.net

Web: www.borderwoodturners.co.uk

Other hobbies

Hi Mark,
In your leader in issue 268, you spoke about other hobbies and asked us to let you know what we have been making. As I like having a go at other things and not doing the same thing all the time, I have, over the years, had a go at all sorts of things. Most recently 'intarsia' as per Mark Wayne at Detling this year. I like mine better with a green coat. Other pastimes I enjoy include scrollsaw portraits, stained glass, marquetry, making bandsaw boxes – as you can see in the photo here – as well as woodwork projects for others.

Regards,
Pat Hughes



A selection of Pat's bandsaw boxes

WD-40 – a water dispersant, not a rust inhibitor

Dear Mark,
Following the article written by Richard Findley in the June 2014 issue, I must bring to your notice that the practice of using WD-40 to protect metal surfaces from rust is not a treatment that I would recommend.

WD-40 is in fact a water dispersant and does that in an admirable way, but unfortunately, after an application of WD-40 when the solvents have dried, there is a residue left behind that is hygroscopic, which means that it attracts water and thereby promotes corrosion. That is not what we are after. I gleaned this information

from an airworthiness directive as issued by the CAA banning the use of WD-40 in all aircraft maintenance facilities. I therefore suggest to you that the readers of your wonderful publication would appreciate this little pearl of wisdom. My personal treatment to protect tools and machinery is to use a dry silicone spray, which is not sticky and will not attract dust that will clog up the works.

Keep up the good work.

Best regards,
Graham Morse
Thameside Woodturning Association

Snainton Woodworking Supplies demo days

Throughout the year, and continuing into 2015, Snainton Woodworking Supplies will be holding a number of demonstration days, where you can see professional woodturners in action. The next date in the diary is the David Lowe demo, which takes place on Saturday 25 October. Dave has a passion for working with wood and looking at ways to show off its natural beauty, using traditional techniques combined with modern ideas, such as airbrushing, texturing, piercing, etc. Admission is free.

WHEN: 25 October, 2014 (10am-4pm)

WHERE: Snainton Woodworking Supplies, Barkers Lane, Snainton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO13 9BG

CONTACT: Snainton Woodworking Supplies

TEL: 01723 859 545

WEB: www.snaintonwoodworking.com

Triton open day at Yandles

Yandles will be holding a Triton Day on Saturday 18 October to celebrate the opening of their new Triton Academy and Showroom display.

The day starts at 10am, with demonstrations on the full range of Triton power tools and machinery and there will be seating available for this part of the day. There will also be an opportunity for visitors to try out the products for themselves.

In the afternoon, customers will be able to get specific advice on Triton products and there will be a trip around the sawmill with a general talk about timber. The sawmill talk has limited places and those wishing to attend should book through the office.

During the day there will be special offers available on all Triton products and discounts on timber. There is a café on site, a hobbies store, gallery and plenty of free parking. For further information, see details below.

WHEN: 18 October, 2014

WHERE: Yandle & Sons Ltd, Hurst Works, Martock TA12 6JU

CONTACT: Yandle & Sons Ltd

TEL: 01935 822 207

WEB: www.yandles.co.uk

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* Compared to Tormek T-3

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Laminated serving tray

Andrew Potocnik uses some offcuts to make a laminated tray and presents a number of different options for how you can make this project more challenging, to really push your turning skills

ANDREW POTOCNIK



About the author:

Andrew sees inspiration around him every day. He 'arrived' on the Australian woodworking scene

in 1983, and since then, his work has developed into areas of sculpture, furniture making and the odd bit of cabinetwork.

Email: andrewpotocnik@telstra.com

There are several ways you could approach this project: it could either be a small and quick weekend job, or it could be a great way to use up all those wonderful offcuts you've been hanging on to for years, not good enough to use but too treasured to use as firewood.

Going through one of my periodic 'clearing out' phases, I realised so many of my treasured offcuts could be converted into a myriad of laminated practical items, the most obvious being cutting boards, which so many kitchens have a need for.

You could divide this project into three stages. A beginner's form may be made with a flat base.

For those willing to go further, the option of carved feet may provide greater challenges, while further off the lathe shaping can be explored in developing the bevelled elliptical final shape.

If you so choose, you can build small pieces into larger blanks, especially as large sized timber is becoming more difficult to find. Alternatively, if you have a board with imperfections that you'd rather leave out, you could cut it down then laminate it and still have a piece large enough to work with. It is only your imagination that limits the full potential of where lamination can lead.

SERVING TRAY DIMENSIONS

INFORMATION

TIME TAKEN & COST

Time taken: 3 hours

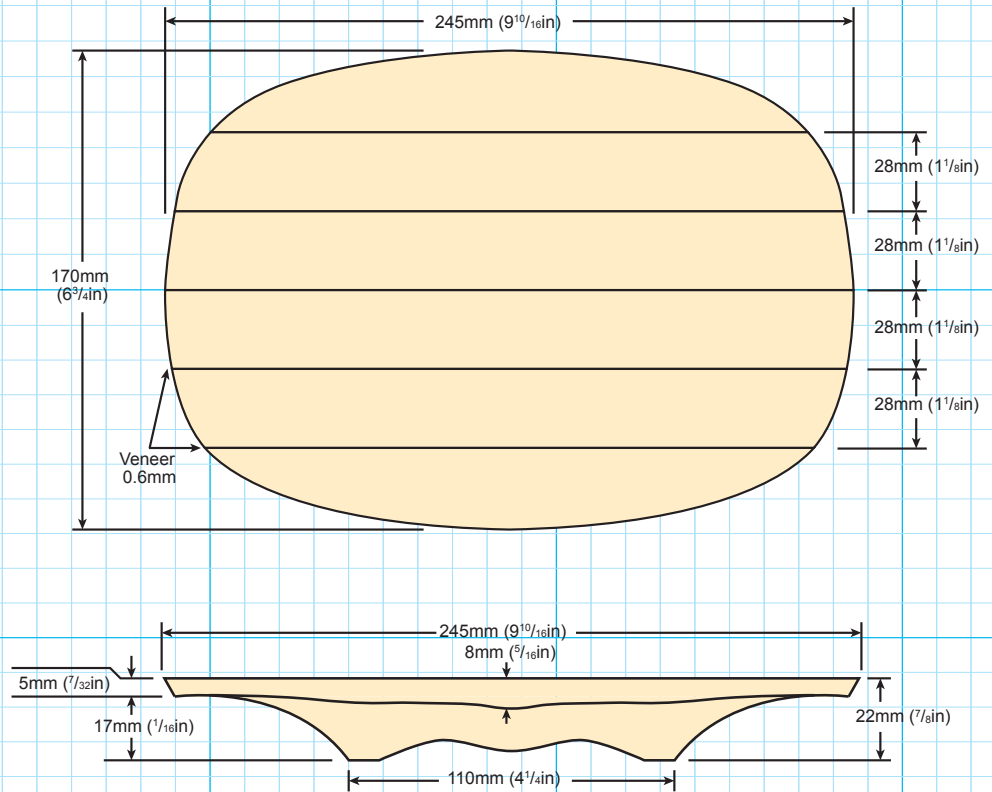
Cost: £3

TOOLS

- Bowl gouge
- Scraper
- V-shaped scraper

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

- Sharp knife
- Steel ruler
- Thick-gap filling glue PVA
- Clamps
- Bandsaw
- Range of abrasives
- Mallet
- Vernier callipers
- Heat-sensitive glue
- Microplane
- Belt sander
- Carving gouges or an Arbortech mini-carver
- PPE: latex gloves, facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction



1 Once you have selected timber of similar dimensions, arrange them in several combinations until you find one that appeals to you

2 Using a sharp knife and steel ruler, cut a veneer of contrasting colour into strips slightly wider than the selected timber. It is best to err on the side of generosity simply so there aren't any fine gaps where the veneer won't slide into place – it's easier to manipulate solid wood into place than those fine sheets of flexible veneer

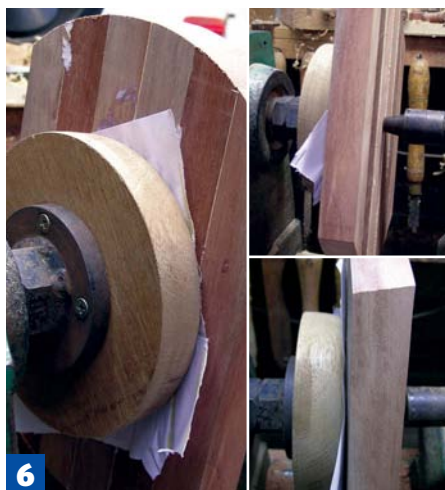
3 Place a layer of veneer between each piece of wood – you can vary the colour of veneer used or even add several veneers of different colours between each piece of solid wood, making sure ample glue is applied to all mating surfaces. I like to use a thick gap-filling PVA glue, but you could use epoxy resin, just keep in mind the 'open time' of the glue

4 You can then glue and clamp all the material. Place a sheet of paper underneath so any glue that squeezes out won't drip onto your bench. If you use sash clamps you don't need to worry about glue that squeezes out, but be warned: do not overtighten your clamps otherwise you run the risk of 'starving' the joint of glue and weakening the join





5



6



7



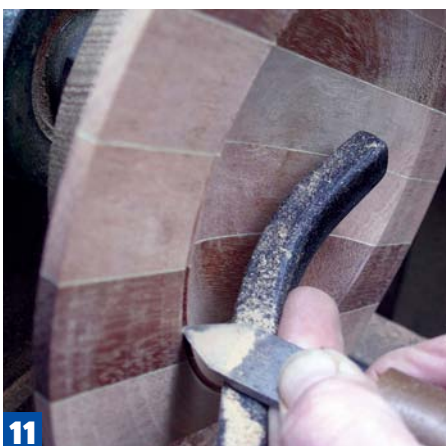
8



9



10



11



12

5 Scribe the largest possible diameter circle onto your blank and cut on the bandsaw. As the piece I made was fairly small, I didn't add any sacrificial timber to the sides; however, if you're working on a larger scale, do add extra timber to produce a full disc – it's safer and makes turning easier as you don't need to deal with potential tear-out on unsupported timber edges. If working on a big piece, it may be worth attaching sacrificial timber running across the end of the laminated material

6 Glue the blank to a carrier with a layer of paper placed between the two pieces of wood. This method works well on smaller turnings, but if you're working on a larger piece, use a more secure holding method. I used the tailstock as a clamp to centre the blank while the glue dried

7 Once dry, and with the tailstock still in place, trim the blank down to the largest diameter possible, working at a speed of about 1,200rpm, aiming to cut the end grain as cleanly as possible. Roll the bowl gouge over so it creates a slicing cut similar to a skew chisel. Flatten the face of the tray with a scraper...

8 ...and then hollow the bowl section with a 12mm bowl gouge

9 With the tailstock still supporting the blank, begin to shape the underside of the tray, trimming the rim to about 5-6mm with a curved profile that runs down to the base of the tray. Here, you are simply roughing the underside and visualising what overall proportions would work for this item

10 Now to finish turning the top of the tray. Remove the tailstock and complete the bowl section with a scraper, keeping in mind how much timber will be left in the base of the blank. My mind was already wandering onto possible developments in this project – creating carved feet on its base, hence I needed to leave a bit more 'meat' in the blank and not hollow the bowl too far. At this point, you could hollow deeper into the blank and simply sand the bottom of the tray flat once completed – it's a matter of how much time you're willing to put into this type of project, or if you've turned your hand to carving before

11 Using a V-shaped scraper to incise a neat and clear definition between flat and curved sections of the tray, I was faced with some timber tear-out that wasn't expected

12 To overcome this problem, roll the top edge of the bowl section while sanding and converting the change in angle into a neat bead while eliminating the tear-out. Your repertoire of problem-solving techniques can never be discounted!

13 With the upper surface of the tray sanded to 320 grit, you can then remove it from the carrier, which is simple. Place a chisel or plane blade on the paper line and with a swift blow of a mallet the paper will split. A very simple technique, but also very effective when used in the right situation

14 To find the centre of the base, use Vernier callipers to measure the diameter of the base, set the callipers to half the measurement and mark the centre from both ends and both sides. If all goes to plan you should end up with one centre mark; however, if there are several, you should be able to establish the very centre by eye

15 Using the same carrier as before, apply heat-sensitive glue to its outer edge then press the tray into place using the tailstock for correct location and pressure while the glue cools and hardens. Allow the glue to heat up to the point where it begins to bubble then gently warm both mating surfaces with a heat gun so the glue doesn't cool too quickly, thus giving a little extra 'open' time. This also allows both surfaces to press together neatly

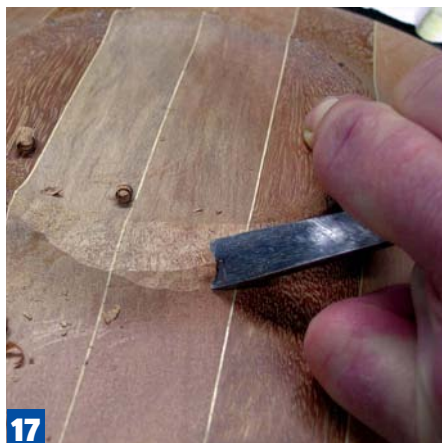
16 Turn a ring into the base allowing sufficient material for feet to be carved. It's important to ensure the tray's form flows from outside the ring to the inner surface as this will be the final form once the feet are created. Although I didn't use one in this case, you could use a profile gauge to ensure the two surfaces match. Sand the surface to 320 grit before removing it from the carrier

17 A deft knock to the tray with the heel of your hand should be enough to separate it from the carrier in preparation for carving the feet. You can take one of two options here, depending on what tools you have available: hand carve or power carve. Using carving gouges is quieter and allows you to engage with the wood, working with the grain and generates the sweet sound of the tool shaving away curls of timber, leaving a shiny textured surface

18 The alternative is the quicker and noisier option of using a tool such as the Arbortech mini-carver, which reduces the time required significantly and raises the noise level likewise! Horses for courses...

19 Nevertheless, if you're after a smooth transition between turned and carved surfaces, the inevitable progression is unavoidable – hand shaping. My major tool was the file...

20 ... however, I used a Microplane, carving gouge, file, scraper and angle drill fitted with a sanding pad to get rid of any unwanted lumps and bumps, scratches or tool marks





21



22

21 It is now time to hand sand along the grain to ensure any unwanted marks are removed and that all surfaces 'feel right' to enquiring fingertips

22 I decided that my tray would look better with curved sides and ends. An easy way to draw a uniformly curved line is to trace along the edge of a steel ruler held in both hands and bent with equal pressure; however, this requires two people. The alternative is to place the ruler in a clamp and tighten it until you have the desired curve. The benefit of this is that the curve will stay fixed for every line you draw



23



24

23 Use the laminations to line the ruler up evenly and then trace the line on each side of the tray

"Use a belt sander to smooth all the edges..."

24 To run the curves of the sides and ends into each other, use the base of a tin to provide a suitably radiused curve, ready for trimming on the bandsaw

25 Use a belt sander to smooth all the edges...



25



26

26 ...then, with the aid of a small angled support, bevel the edges, ready for hand sanding to smooth everything off

27 Add your name and the timber types with a fine felt-tipped marker, then apply a wipe-on, wipe-off polyurethane finish

28 The finished tray should look something like this •



27



28



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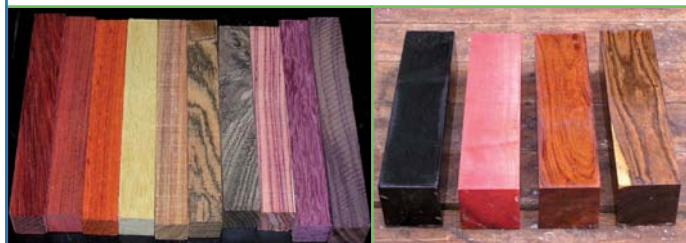
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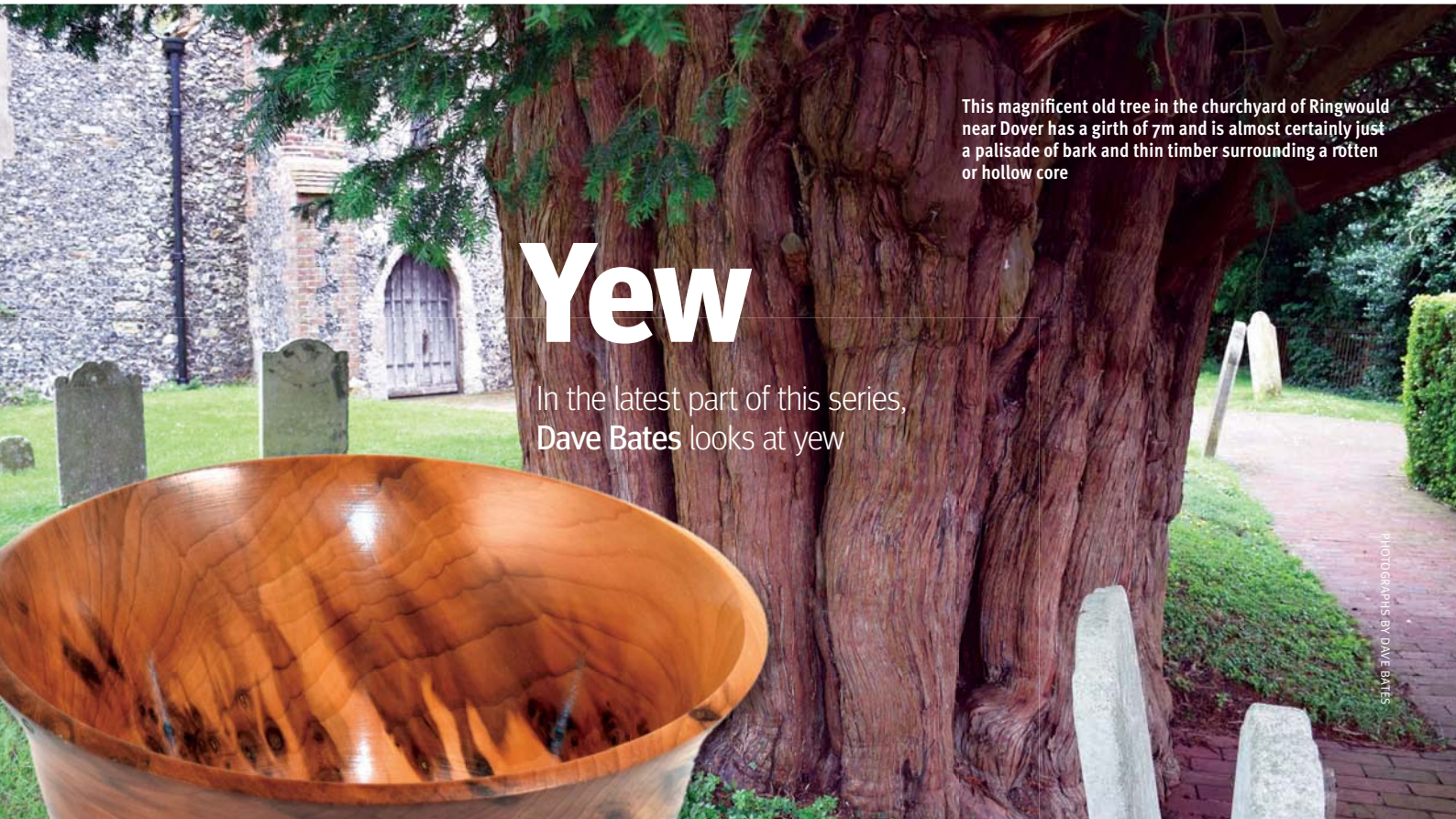
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This magnificent old tree in the churchyard of Ringwould near Dover has a girth of 7m and is almost certainly just a palisade of bark and thin timber surrounding a rotten or hollow core

Yew

In the latest part of this series, Dave Bates looks at yew

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE BATES

DAVE BATES



About the author: Dave, who is on the Register of Professional Turners, started turning when he was about nine years old but didn't start taking it seriously until he saw three

bark edge bowls by Bert Marsh in the early '80s. From a background in horticulture and then tree felling, he took up arable farming in 1979, and in 1987 following the Great Storm, set out to acquire a few trees for his hobby. 50 trees in 17 types filled most of the farm buildings and in 1988 he set about collecting more! By 1990 it was clear that he would have to sell some – reluctantly – and so a hobby became the business of Stiles & Bates, which is now larger than the farm. The business is run by Dave, his wife Janet and their son Pete.

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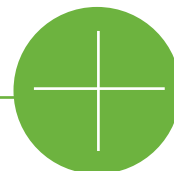
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Steeped in myth and legend, the yew (*Taxus baccata*) is native to Europe, parts of Asia and North Africa, but commonly referred to as English or European yew. Technically a conifer, it is one of the few softwoods popular with turners, who can utilise most parts of the tree from planks to branchwood. Setting aside the myths associated with yew, both in Paganism and Christianity, the most common legends are based upon the longevity of this tree. It seems that almost every large yew tree in the UK is reputed to be in the *Domesday Book*, but according to many botanists, very few are likely to be over 600 years old. Counter to this, there are trees in the churchyard of Kergrist in Brittany that are estimated to be over 1,000 years old and the living remains of one in Fortingall, in the Scottish Highlands, that is judged to be 1,500 years old and therefore maybe the oldest living organism in Europe. Dating them, however, is currently impossible because the core of almost every tree over three feet in diameter is usually hollow, or dry and decayed, so there are no annular rings to count. Some years ago I was asked to fell a local giant with a girth of nearly 19ft, which was one of the last two of seven that were also reputed to be in the *Domesday Book*. The tree had been stripped of most of its bark by

sheep during the drought of 1976. The sheep survived, despite the fact that all parts of the yew are documented as poisonous, except for the red fleshy cups – 'berries' – surrounding the cones. My assistant had arrived before me and spent some time setting out the felling gear, the trailer bolsters and the chains and shackles for loading it. I rolled in about an hour later with the loader.

The tree had some slivers of live bark in a deep flute and a small, single branch in leaf. It wanted to live! Even if the whole tree had been long dead, as I walked around it reflecting on the history that must have passed and the people who would have lived and died while that tree slowly grew there, I knew it was not this short lived human that was going to take a saw to it. I am not a tree hugger – OK, maybe slightly – and I believe that the bottom line of good timber management must be the felling and utilisation of this long awaited resource while it is in its prime, not after it has passed into decay. It is true that this tree would have yielded almost no useful timber, but there is something quite humbling about an old tree that has defied the ravages of time.

20 odd years later, the single branch is now a cluster of green within a skeleton of old, dead branches and it is fenced off against stock. Left alone, the chances are that the remains of this old tree will still be around 100 years from now.



◀ SCARCITY

Yew is a very slow growing tree, which usually grows under the canopy of larger trees, its seed spread by birds eating the fleshy berries. Back in the Dark Ages we ran low on yew in the UK, due to the demand for longbows and this carried on for several hundred years with disputes between rulers

and Popes vying for supplies, and of course, taxes on the timber. The conservation status of yew is listed as being of 'least concern', according to the IUCN – International Union for the Conservation of Nature – red list criteria. In terms of useable timber, given the huge wastage incurred during

conversion, the inherent faults always found in the timber and despite the fact that woodturners can use the timber right down to the branch tips, good yew is in my view a potentially diminishing resource with a need to balance harvesting with natural replacement.

THE TIMBER

Yew timber is rarely better than it looks. In an age when digital images are so easy to email or send straight from a phone, I rarely buy logs unseen, even from long trusted foresters and they would not expect it any other way.

It is a timber prone to ring shake, star shake, calcium deposits, dead knots and ingrown bark, all of which are part of the character of the tree and can add interest, but do make the cutting of small blanks for turning wasteful and frustrating.

Ring shake shows as the timber separates around the annular rings. Star shake – or heart shake – shows as fine cracks radiating from the pith and will run right through the tree. These are quite distinct from the shallow radial cracks that appear in a fresh cut end of any tree as it dries and shrinks. Calcium deposits build in these shakes and show like chalk. If you're lucky, they will be in only the older wood in the centre, but can run right out to the sapwood.

In terms of colour, yew is characterised by a range of colours from deep to reddish brown, to pale sapwood. Mineral deposits in the soil or iron in the tree from nails and suchlike can produce deep purple to blue/black colouration. Burr patches are fairly common, but pure burr is rarer and usually ends up as veneer for the fine furniture market.

Listed in some manuals as 'moderately difficult' to work, the timber is usually firm and quite soft and where the grain is even, it cuts and turns easily. However, swirling grain, knots and ingrown bark will mean that however it is turned, some opposing grain is liable to lift, especially if heavy cuts are taken, so shear scraping is the ideal method to use in these problem areas.

Shakes too can open up and in bad cases cause the piece to separate, so inspect the blank before you start – as you should with any timber – and take the trouble to stop the lathe while turning to check for any that did not show to start with. Keep some cyanoacrylate glue handy; this glue has saved many a yew blank and hardly shows if applied just before the final cuts.

Having described it as being quite a soft timber, it is a fact that logs left lying around

for a few years become as hard as bullets.

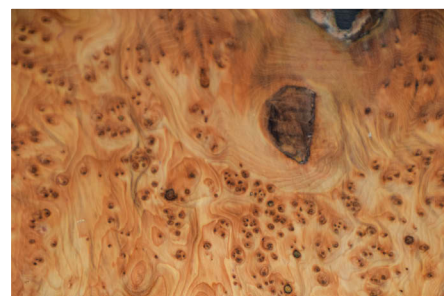
The sapwood rots away, but the wood can be too hard to mill, even to the point of hard knots taking teeth off 100mm blades with a 50mm set, so we avoid these. Chainsawn blanks are probably the only option for these logs and those used for end grain hollowing will present a challenge and take the edge off tools quickly. Branchwood is fun and very popular for bud vases, mushroom shapes, fruit and the like, but still liable to split even weeks after turning, as the moisture content of the timber stabilises in a heated room and the tension is released, so is probably not best suited to lidded boxes.

Well documented in terms of tensile strength for longbows, yew is weak across the grain so can easily be split, especially where the timber is clear of knots or swirly grain. Many bowl and platter turners use four-jaw chucks to create a recess in the base into which the jaws are expanded to grip the piece. A thin, delicate recess is asking for trouble, so on larger pieces where I would want to remove the chuck grip anyway, I glue on a sacrificial beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) chuck grip.

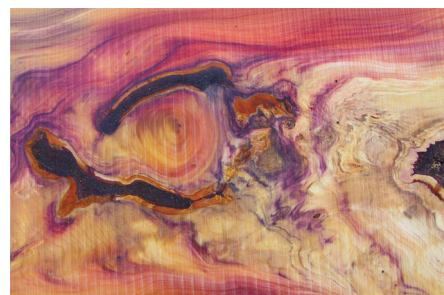
So yew can be fun and frustrating; beautiful yet unpredictable. For every virtue, it has a vice, but is worth the effort for the bright contrasting colours and high finish.



A variety of boxes



Burr yew grain pattern



Wild yew grain



A spectacular, albeit faulty, yew plank, which has come straight off the sawmill



A yew disc with ingrown bark and white shake. This had the potential to become two pieces very suddenly

ABRASIVES AND FINISHING

Abrasives should always be used as another cutting tool, but with difficult areas there is the temptation to lean into it and sand away with gritted teeth. The end grain of yew will develop heat checks in seconds if you do this, especially on timber with some moisture in, so take special care and use light pressure. Working down to 400 or 600 grit, the finish will become lustrous.

In terms of finishing products, I have only tried a few and most often use a cellulose sanding sealer followed with a hard wax on spindles, and microcrystalline wax on bowls

– the latter because any bowl is liable to move or distort while being turned, so keeping a hard wax in contact while it spins is almost impossible. Using a buffing wheel loaded with carnauba wax is another method that works particularly well.

Finishing oils will darken the timber, accelerating the ageing process. All timbers darken and go brown with age, but the sap of yew timber will remain pale for many years, as with the boxes pictured.



A selection of turned mushrooms in yew



Vase in yew branchwood, 255mm long × 100mm dia.



Wall vases

ERRATUM: In issue 271, there was a production error and a page of the article was missed. To see the full version of the article, see www.woodworkersinstitute.com

IRISH YEW (*TAXUS BACCATA* 'FASTIGIATA')

Yew is an unusual conifer in being either male or female. The males produce flowers bearing huge amounts of pollen, while the females produce the single cone seeds surrounded by the sweet red cup. A farmer discovered two female trees in Ireland

in the late 18th century and recognised them as being different from normal yews by their tall, straight growth. From the seeds of these trees he propagated more and it is from these that every Irish yew is descended. Fascinating! ●

A NOTE ON SAFETY

With the exception of the fleshy red cups that surround the single seed cone, yews contain taxane alkaloids, which are highly poisonous by ingestion and can be fatal to humans and animals. The dust can also cause a reaction with the skin of some people, so good PPE and efficient dust extraction are always sensible. The Wood Database – www.wood-database.com – makes interesting further reading

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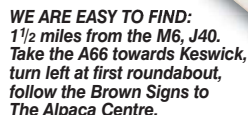
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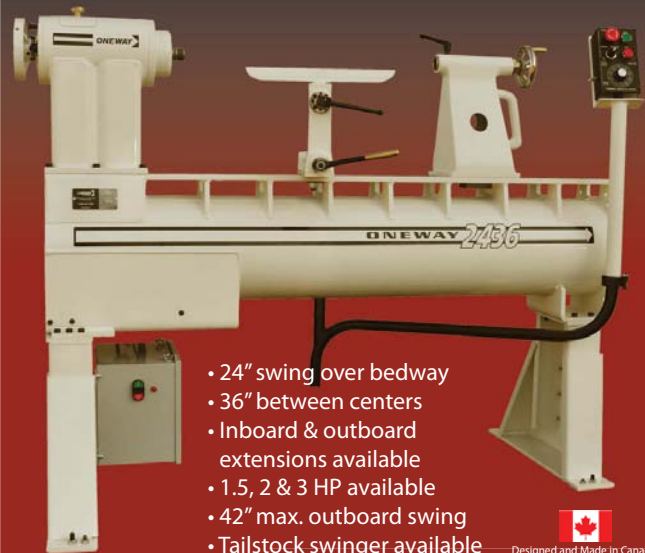


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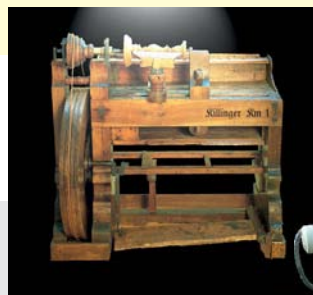


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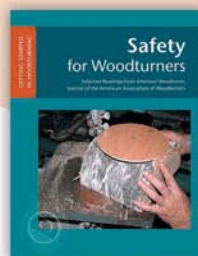
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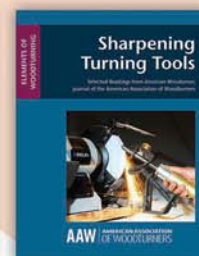
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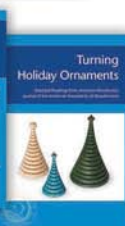
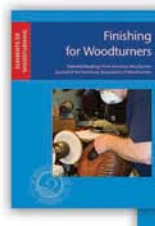
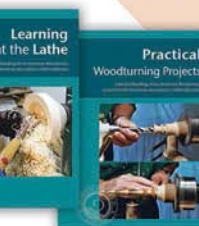
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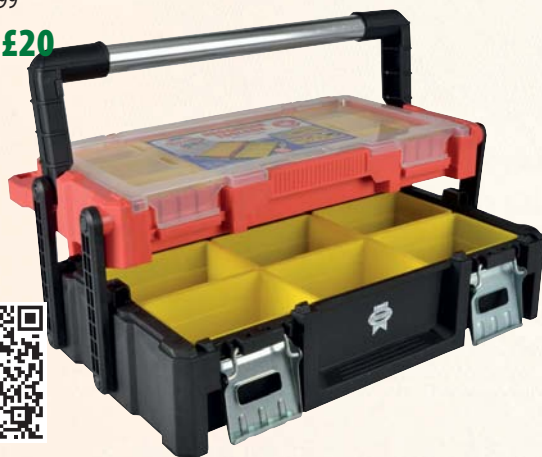


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Two-part end grain wet turned oak vase

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK SANGER



Mark Sanger takes us through the stages for making a textured two-part vase in unseasoned oak

In this project I make a vase in two sections using an unseasoned oak (*Quercus robur*) log, which is textured with a wire brush and grooves, which are then highlighted with burn lines. Making forms in several sections is useful for larger projects that can normally only be made on large capacity lathes or with additional equipment, such as a running steady or dedicated hollowing rigs. A hand-held hollowing tool with a 19mm shaft can generally hollow to a depth of around 300-350mm, depending on the wood turned, lathe used and experience of the user. Smaller lathes, while having a sizeable capacity between centres, can struggle with vibration during hollowing; this is to be expected as they are not designed for the purpose, so dividing a project into sections allows us to get over this issue.

Safety

Here I am turning a sizeable oak log that weighs 30kg. You can of course scale down the project to suit your lathe and tools – it is important when turning any item to use safe practices. Large sections turned without respect will cause serious injury if not death. For starters, think about your back: do not handle if too heavy to carry or mount safely on the lathe. Make sure the lathe speed is set to slow and take lighter cuts than normal, stand to one side when starting the lathe, wear suitable clothing, including a full facemask and take your time. Always turn within your own ability, that of the lathe and the wood being turned. Do not attempt a large project if you are not confident. Instead, scale the project down and build up slowly with experience.

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.

Email: info@marksanger.co.uk

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◀ SUITABLE BLANK

Seasoned wood over 100mm-thick is generally not available, which leaves us two options: laminating seasoned sections or using unseasoned stock. As wood dries it shrinks and moves, so choosing a suitable section is important. Here an oak log 500mm long × 230mm diameter is selected with the pith running centrally through its length and concentric growth rings – as shown here – and is known as normal wood; this will shrink and move consistently as it dries, thus reducing the chance of cracking. Reaction wood – also shown here – has an offset pith with compressed eccentric growth rings and will warp excessively during seasoning, so is therefore best avoided.

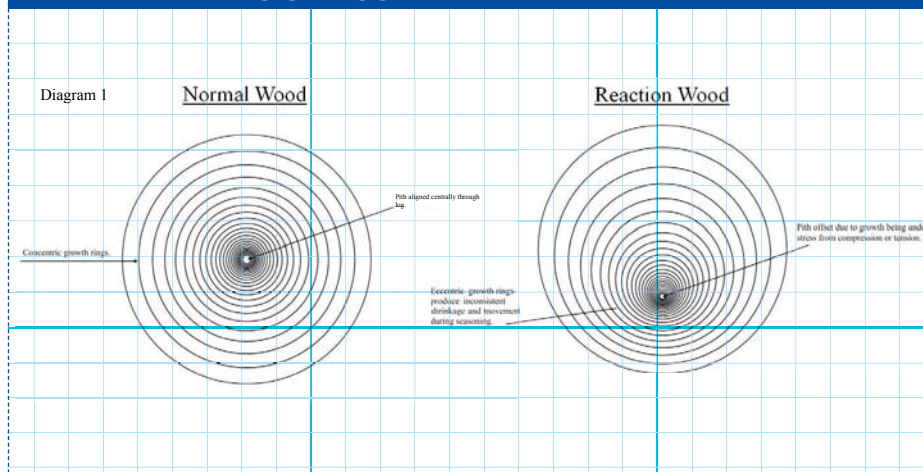
MOUNTING ON THE LATHE



The log is mounted with the pith running centrally through the spindle axis of the lathe

The log is mounted with the pith running centrally through the spindle axis of the lathe. For added support, drill a hole in the pith at each end to a depth of 10mm slightly larger than the drive and tailcentre. This will encase the drives adding to the support and safety.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF WOOD

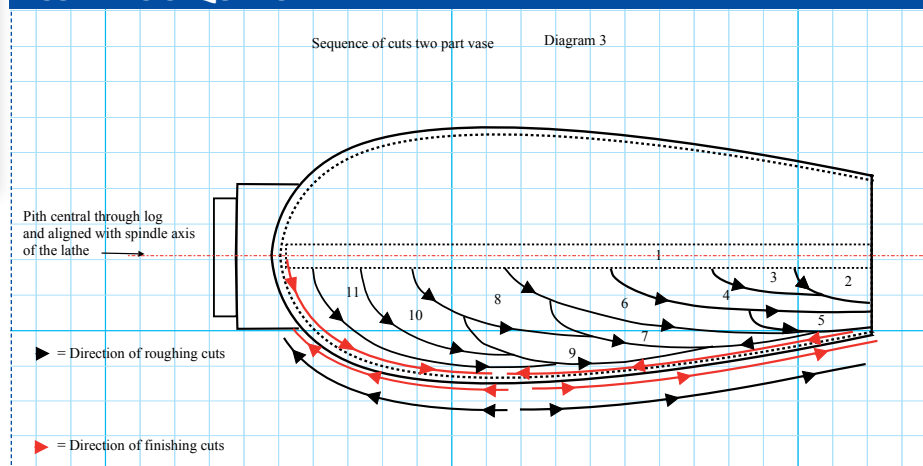


CUTTING SEQUENCE

The sequence and direction of cutting wood is essential in achieving an efficient cut and

good finish from the tool. Where possible, always cut with the grain, as shown in diagram 3 below.

CUTTING SEQUENCE



WALL THICKNESS

Generally unseasoned wood turned to finish should have a consistent wall thickness of 3-6mm thick, in turn allowing the wood to remain flexible during seasoning. The wall thickness can be thicker than this as long as the seasoning, discussed later, is controlled. In either case, the wall must be consistent throughout so if the rim is 8mm thick, then this must be maintained throughout right down into the base. Any variation of thickness will produce uneven shrinkage during seasoning, thus raising the chance of cracking.

FINISHING AND SEASONING

Seasoning wood must be controlled to allow the internal moisture to evaporate at a rate which allows the wood fibres to

relax and settle into shape without cracking. If left in a draught or an excessively hot location without controlling the moisture loss, then the wood will crack. A method I use to season is to apply oil during turning/finishing in order to fill the voids within the wood fibres. This in turn slows the rate of moisture released. Any good quality finishing oil that will penetrate the wood can be used. Allow this to penetrate for a few minutes, then wipe away the excess with a cloth. Moisture loss is further controlled with the finished project being placed into a plastic bag and recording a note of the weight and date. Every 2-3 days, remove from the bag and turn the bag inside out, then replace the project back inside. Repeat until the moisture, which condensates on the inside walls of the bag, is no longer felt. Weigh every week until the weight stabilises for several weeks, at which point,

the moisture in the wood has reached equilibrium with the environment. Remove from the bag and place in a cool, draught-free location in your home for a couple of weeks to settle. It is now fully seasoned. Re-oil, wipe away any excess, then it is ready for display.



TWO-PART OAK VASE DIMENSIONS

INFORMATION

TIME TAKEN & COST

Time taken: 4 hours

Cost: £10

TOOLS REQUIRED

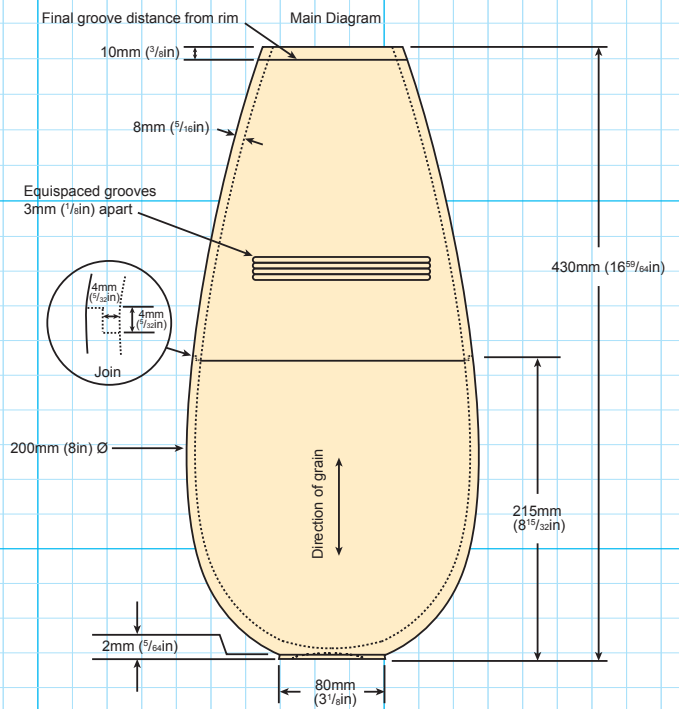
- 25mm spindle roughing gouge
- 10mm bowl gouge
- 10mm spindle gouge
- 6mm parting tool
- 2mm parting tool
- 12mm skew chisel
- 3mm beading tool
- 19mm end grain hollowing tool

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

- Abrasives from 120-320 grit
- 50mm round wire brush
- Battery drill driver
- Danish oil
- 50mm long series Forstner bit
- High viscosity impact resistant CA glue or quick drying two-part epoxy resin
- PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

TIMBER REQUIREMENTS

Unseasoned oak (*Quercus robur*)
log: 500mm long x 225mm dia.
Moisture content recorded as 46%



“The log is mounted with the pith running centrally through the spindle axis of the lathe”



Step 1: mount the blank between centres and remove the bark using a screwdriver to initially lift the loose sections. Always ensure to push away from your body



Step 2: using a 25mm spindle roughing gouge with the lathe set to slow, start to rough to the round



Step 3: using a 10mm bowl gouge, produce a spigot and waste section at each end to suit the jaws of your chuck. Here I am using 100mm gripper jaws for maximum security as standard ‘C’ jaws do not offer enough security



Step 4: mount in the chuck and bring up the tailcentre, using a 25mm spindle roughing gouge to rough down the general shape, always working from large diameter to small towards the tailcentre and chuck. At this stage, leave oversize



Step 5: you now need to mark a point approximately halfway up the form. Use a 6mm parting tool to part in central to this line to a depth of 10 × 8mm wide



Step 6: use a 2mm parting tool to part in slightly to the right of the shoulder left by the previous parting tool. You want to leave a register on the front face. Continue parting through and stop with around 25mm wood remaining



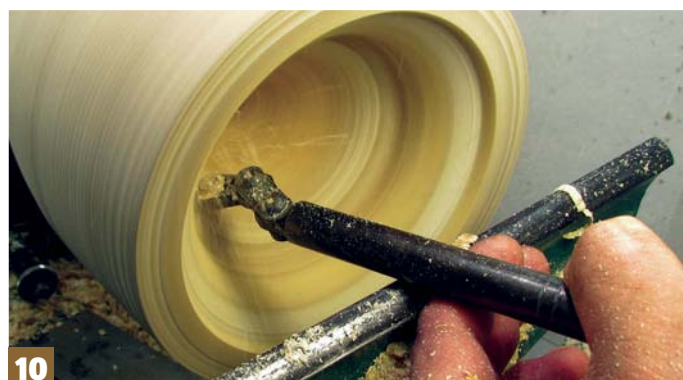
Step 7: stop the lathe and cut through the remaining using a hand saw



Step 8: using a depth gauge, measure from the front face to the final location of the base...



Step 9: ... mark this onto the shaft of a long series 50mm sawtooth bit or the quill of the tailcentre, then drill out to depth. It is important to measure and drill out accurately to depth, so measure twice and cut once



Step 10: using your preferred end grain hollowing tool, hollow out the inside to a depth of around 75mm stopping around 5mm from the registration line left on the front face when parted



Step 11: use the toe of a 12mm skew chisel, presented horizontally on the toolrest in trailing mode, and plunge gently in to produce a shoulder; this will allow you to accept the remaining spigot on the top section previously parted



Step 12: check the fit regularly with the top section – you are aiming for a snug fit



Step 13: insert both together, bring up the tailcentre for support, refine the outside shape and blend together using a 25mm skew chisel. Remove enough material so that the rim accepting the spigot of the top section is around 4mm thick. This can be gauged by removing the tailcentre and opening the joint slightly. Re-clamp and continue until you reach the correct thickness



Step 14: remove the top section and using callipers and the depth gauge, continue to hollow down into the base with the hollowing tool. Check the wall thickness is equal right down into the base and aim for a thickness of 8mm



Step 15: use a 25mm round-nose scraper to refine the inside



Step 16: apply finishing oil inside and out, excluding the internal recess at the rim



Step 17: finish the inside of the form with abrasives from 120-240 grit



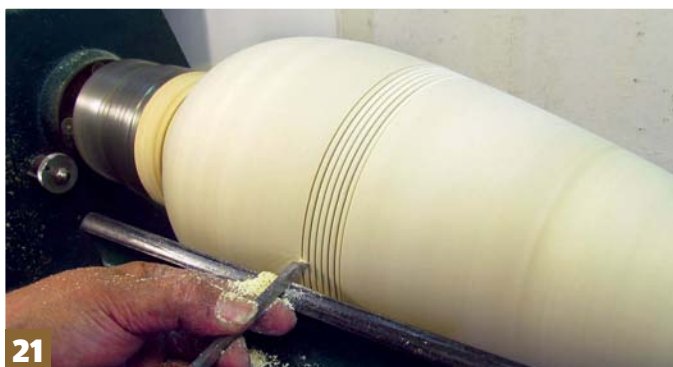
Step 18: mount the top section into the chuck and drill out as before using a sawtooth bit. Measure from the front face to the proposed rim below the waste section in the chuck, add 15mm to this and drill out to this depth. In effect, you are drilling 15mm too deep and beyond the rim height



Step 19: hollow out so the spigot that fits into the base is 4mm-thick; this will allow it to fit into the base and blend without the join being obvious. Continue hollowing out to a wall thickness of 8mm right down to the drill depth. Make sure the internal profile continues into the extra 15mm depth you have drilled



Step 20: run a bead of low viscosity high impact CA glue around within the base recess. Line up the grain of the top section and press in place bringing up the tailcentre and applying moderate pressure until set



Step 21: refine the final part of the rim using a 10mm bowl or spindle gouge. Starting at the join, produce equally spaced grooves using a 3mm beading tool. Rather than produce a full bead, use it to produce accurately spaced grooves



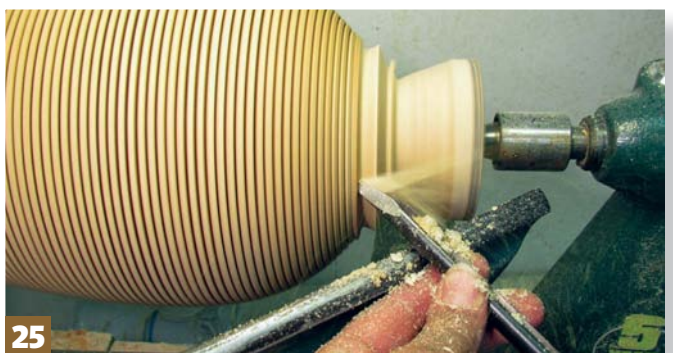
Step 22: with the lathe stopped, texture the outside using a 50mm round wire brush fitted in a power drill by running it perpendicular across the beads. Using a thin piece of Formica or a medium wire burner, burn lines in the base of each



Step 23: using a 2mm parting tool with the lathe set at around 200rpm, plunge gently in and part through into the hollowed void within the neck. Or, part in 5mm, stop the lathe and cut through the remaining using a fine blade hand saw



Step 24: clean up the front face and internal section of the rim using the toe of a skew chisel held horizontally in trailing mode. Taking fine cuts only, refine with abrasive by hand from 120-320 grit



Step 25: using a 10mm bowl gouge, blend the base into the foot and reduce the waste as you go. Continue the grooves up to the foot and burn lines as before



Step 26: using a 10mm spindle gouge, concave the base and reduce the waste as you go, leaving around 10mm, then stop the lathe. Cut through the remaining using a fine blade hand saw



Step 27: blend the base using a power carver or sharp chisel, always cutting away from your body. Finally refine with abrasive attached to a sanding arbor held in the chuck of the lathe. Apply oil and season as described in the seasoning section. The completed form should look something like this

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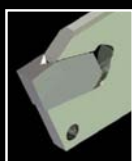
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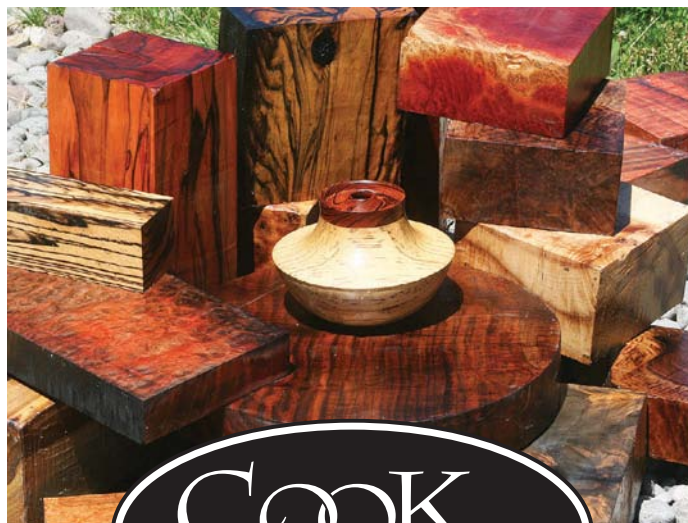
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Stabilising wood – part 1

In the first part of his series on stabilising wood, **Kurt Hertzog** introduces us to the topic of stabilising wood and shows how effective and simple the process can be

When you talk about stabilising wood you need to define whether it is a temporary aid to making final cuts, stiffening some soft or punky areas or completely and permanently stabilising the entire blank. Each and all will be covered in the coming months. This month, we'll tackle the subject of permanently stabilising the entire blank. This used to be the realm of the commercial stabiliser whose apparatus and access to industrial grade chemicals precluded the home hobbyist or even the woodturning professional from performing it themselves. If you had wood needing stabilisation, you shipped it off to a company who would batch process it along with many others. You paid by the weight increase, i.e. after weight minus before weight times the per ounce multiplier. It could get costly very quickly depending on your needs not to say the delay in shipping, processing and return shipping. Over the years, many woodturners experimented with various chemicals and processes with the hopes of finding a home version of stabilising. Virtually every wood finish, adhesive, preservative and more was thinned, vacuum processed, pressure pot processed and just plain soaked in this search. That search led to a chemical and



Whether spalted, punky or otherwise difficult to turn, stabilisation using heat cured resin offers assistance

home process that could be done safely without a huge additional investment. I'll cover the process and the two materials that I've used successfully for the past several years.

Cactus Juice and Stick Fast stabilising resin

There may be more than two companies offering stabilising resin to the non-commercial woodturner but I am not familiar with them. I include the TurnTex Woodworks Cactus Juice stabilising resin and TMI Products' Stick Fast stabilising resin in this article on stabilising wood because I have

personal experience with using both. My experience with stabilising began in 2011 and I've been a fan of it ever since. If you have access to other stabilisation products in your area, by all means investigate them for your personal use. I do urge caution against the basement chemist offerings, however. You need to be certain that there is a company behind the product with the testing and safety documentation to support their products. Just because someone on some forum has a way to dissolve plastic in a solvent and claims it is the real deal doesn't make it so. Always be safety conscious when working with chemicals. ►

◀ SAFETY

Both of the companies offering the resins I use provide specific use instructions on the packaging and will provide the MSDS documentation. This includes PPE, safe handling and storage, transport, etc. You should always read the instructions thoroughly before starting a project; this will help to ensure that you are following their recommendations correctly. The chemicals from both companies are listed as safe for use. They do always recommend safety glasses and gloves to

minimise contact but the chemicals are water soluble and clean up with soap and water. That said, be certain to read and follow their instructions particularly with the vacuum recommendations. Because you'll be dealing with curing temperature ovens and vacuum and/or shop air pressures, be certain to read and understand what you are doing prior to launching into this. It is all straightforward, easy and safe providing you follow the instructions in the correct manner.

KEY POINTS ON SAFETY

1. Always wear your safety glasses and gloves when handling any chemical
2. While curing is 200°F, use protection against burning
3. The vacuum used will range from 27inHg to 29inHg so follow directions
4. Never leave your curing oven unattended
5. Resin can be cleaned using soap and water and is drain safe

THE RESIN IMPREGNATION PROCESS

Both stabilising processes are nearly identical. The wood you wish to stabilise is put into a vacuum chamber with stabilisation resin. A vacuum is drawn to remove the air in the wood allowing for infiltration of the stabilising resin. That resin impregnated wood is then cured at the specified temperature for the time needed to fully penetrate the entire piece of wood. At the conclusion, the resin is cured to a plastic that will stabilise the wood forever. Properly done, the wood blank is now either solid wood or solid plastic throughout and the plastic will withstand temperatures around 400°F. The keys to the process are few yet unforgiving. The wood should be dry. Although dry is a relative term, it doesn't hurt to put your wood to be stabilised into an oven at a low temperature; this will help to drive the moisture content down. Once done, seal it in a plastic sandwich bag to prevent reabsorption of the moisture until ready for stabilisation. The wood to be processed is placed in the vacuum chamber and prevented from floating by use of a weight or a holding mechanism. The stabilising chemical is added until there is more than enough to cover with allowances for absorption. The chamber is sealed and a vacuum drawn to remove the air from the wood. The time required can vary based on the porosity of the wood as well as the quantity being processed. The vacuum is maintained until the size and amount of bubbles leaving the wood is miniscule. At that point, the vacuum is released allowing the wood and chamber to return to ambient pressure. Depending on whose process you use, you either let the blanks continue to be submerged in the resin for additional 'soak up' time or you can package the blanks for heat curing. If you are allowing for additional soak time, when that is over, you follow the same exact process of wrapping the blanks and performing heat curing.



Use the smallest tank you can to minimise the need for quantity of resin to cover. Unabsorbed resin can be reclaimed



The catalysed resin is poured in to generously cover the wood being stabilised. Sufficient resin is needed to allow for impregnation



The chamber is evacuated but done slowly to prevent foaming over the rim. Use any vacuum limits, as per your chamber manufacturer specs



Maintain the vacuum until the rate and size of bubbles diminishes to a minimum. At that point, the vacuum can be released



After the vacuum is released and the blanks have had their 'soak' if you follow those instructions, the excess resin can be reclaimed

KEY POINTS ON RESIN IMPREGNATION

1. Be certain your wood is dry prior to resin impregnation
2. Wear gloves and glasses when handling resin
3. Be certain your vacuum chamber is in safe working order
4. Work within your instructions on safe vacuum limits
5. Resin is reusable so reclaim the unabsorbed resin

HEAT CURING THE RESIN

With the wood fully impregnated with the stabilisation resin, you can now prepare your wood for the heat curing process. If you are working with multiple pieces, you'll need to wrap the pieces in aluminium foil so each piece is separated. Failure to do so will fuse all of the pieces together, which you don't want. The foil separation allows for easy separation at the conclusion of the heat curing process. If you have one block of wood, then wrap it entirely in foil. The purpose of the foil is to contain any resin that leaches out of the blank during the heat curing process. It is a safe plastic but it will make a clean up of the oven necessary unless you contain it in the aluminium foil overwrap. While you can use your food service oven for this, I do recommend you have a toaster oven or shop oven instead. The curing is nearly odour free and the chemicals are safe with easy cleanup but I always try to separate my processing from our food preparation equipment. It is important that you heed the temperature and process information very carefully at this point. Failure to do so will cause problems with your stabilisation and it is a one way trip. Temperature is key: both manufacturers ask for 200°F as the process temperature. Regardless of your oven selection, I can almost guarantee that the dial is way off. I use a modestly priced digital thermometer with a remote probe that I can place in the oven. I begin preheating the oven to 200°F and let it settle in to that area by adjusting the temperature dial. Regardless of the temperature dial reading, I use the digital thermometer as my guide. Once I have the oven under control, I quickly open and place my foil wrapped blank(s) into the oven. At that point, I monitor the oven to be certain that the temperature stays within the 200°F area. It will wander a bit but stay close. How long depends on the size of your blank(s). It is a heat penetration problem. Much like



After draining, the blanks are wrapped in aluminium foil to separate them, preventing fusing together and to contain bleed out



It is advantageous to keep the size of the package to be heat cured to a reasonable size. The full temperature needs to reach the centre



Regardless of the oven used, an accurate temperature reading is necessary. The dials are extremely inaccurate



Some of the bleed out shown to illustrate the final result. The resin within the blank is turned to a clear plastic, stabilising it forever

your Christmas turkey, you can add a lot of heat energy from the outside but it still takes time to get all the way down inside. The bigger the bird, the longer it takes. Be certain to wait long enough. It doesn't hurt to let it heat soak all the way through and then some. Removing the materials from the oven prior to curing all the way through leaves a partially processed blank. Once cooled, it can't be reheated to try to complete the process. At that point, what you have is all you'll get. In short, avoid huge, thick blocks of blanks in one go. Thinner and smaller batches make it easy to be successful. Of course, a one piece blank will need what it needs. Give it sufficient time while controlling the temperature within the window specified.

KEY POINTS ON HEAT CURING

1. This is a one way trip, therefore it is important to get it right the first time
2. Be certain of your temperature. Dials are always off
3. The temperature is 200°F. Stay very close
4. Keep your thermal mass low; this will allow faster temperature penetration. The foil wrap will contain the resin that will leach from the wood
5. The block is hot. Let it cool before handling or use protective gloves
6. When curing, err on leaving in for excess time. Too long doesn't seem to be detrimental

CURING OPTIONS



The beauty of boiling water curing is the simplicity. Easily done anywhere, inside or out, and simple stable temperature control



I checked my low boil temperature and found it to be 197°F. The actual will vary with barometric pressure

Both manufacturers specify and illustrate in their videos how to use the oven technique to perform the heat curing. In discussions with the technical folks at TMI, they suggested a boiling water process much like the industrial customers use. In industry, these heat curing impregnation resins are used to seal porosity in castings. The casting is processed via the vacuum as we detailed and then it is immersed in boiling water. Because of the thermal mass of the casting and the heat conductivity of the water, it cures the resin far faster than any serious dilution can

happen. They suggested their testing of the boiling process and I tried it. It worked wonderfully. After impregnation, the blanks were foil wrapped as usual and they were placed and sealed into a sandwich bag. The stainless steel vacuum tanks as offered by TMI were used as a boiling tank. The tank was filled to a level higher than the block height and the water was brought to a slow boil right on the stove. The plastic bag was immersed into the water with the anti-floatation mechanism used to keep it submerged. Floating off the bottom to prevent heat conduction from the stove yet being kept

submerged provided a 200°F heating process. When measured, the actual temperature at that off boil point – at my elevation – was 197°F. In the range perfectly and stable at that temperature. Because of the high heat conductivity from the water to the wrapped blanks, the entire curing process was in the 20 minute range. In an oven with an air medium as the heat conductor, curing times range in the couple of hours time frame. Both work yet the water process seemed far superior because of the uniformity and lack of monitoring required that is needed with an oven heat cycling.

VACUUM SYSTEM OPTIONS

You will need a vacuum system to perform stabilisation. I own a vacuum pump for the lathes for their vacuum chucking capabilities. When I am using the vacuum chamber available from the Cactus Juice folks, I use my vacuum pump. I have one of their older chambers done in clear plastic. It will hold pen blanks and bottle stoppers in sufficient quantity and is weighted with a metal screen. Being clear, you can watch the process and easily clean the chamber when done. The folks at TMI offer a stainless steel tank system for their vacuum chambers. The tops are clear providing the visual access needed to monitor the bubbles being drawn from the wood. The stainless tanks are available in different sizes and also require a vacuum source. They recommend keeping the vacuum to 27inHg as a high threshold based on the size of the tanks and the covering system. You can do the sums, but suffice to say that forces are a cross-sectional area calculation along with the vacuum drawn and the ambient baro. Like compressed air, treat vacuum with the respect it deserves and follow the recommendations. In addition to the vacuum tanks TMI offers, they offer a vacuum generator. If you don't have a vacuum pump and don't wish to obtain one, you can use their vacuum generator along with a compressed air source to create the necessary vacuum. A venturi design, it uses the compressed air flow to create a vacuum. Nicely done in a small package, the vacuum source worked well with their vacuum tanks. Because the venturi design uses a pretty good flow of air, you'll need a compressor capable of a couple of CFM. My small shop compressor worked perfectly yet my silent airbrush compressor couldn't provide sufficient airflow to draw full vacuum. I expected it would fall short but it did provide enough air flow to draw nearly 20inHg.



I use one of the older Cactus Juice vacuum chambers. It is clear and spec'd to 29inHg vacuum though my pump doesn't make it



TMI Hold Fast offers a very functional venturi vacuum generator. It uses compressed air to create the needed vacuum



The TMI Hold Fast vacuum chambers are stainless steel with clear plastic lids. They recommend 27inHg maximum for their use

KEY VACUUM SYSTEM POINTS

1. Follow the manufacturers' recommended vacuum chamber limits to be safe
2. Vacuum flow rate is low but the vacuum draw needs to be sufficient
3. When first evacuating the chamber, slowly introduce vacuum to prevent foaming
4. You can interrupt the vacuum process to add resin as needed
5. Keep the chamber seals clean and intact to allow for easy evacuation
6. The forces involved using a vacuum chamber deserve respect. If you have any doubts about the integrity of your chamber, don't use it until properly checked

COSTS OF STABILISATION

The end user costs of stabilising wood varies considerably. Both vendors have distributors and retailers in many countries of the world. You should be able to find it in your woodturning retailer. If not, the chemicals are shippable but like any weighty material, distance and weight can make the shipping costs considerable. Any unabsorbed resin is completely reusable so the only material used is what is consumed into the blank(s). You may have additional costs depending on your need for a vacuum source and/or compressed air. Chambers can be made but for the nominal costs the vendors offer, it is probably more economical to buy rather than use your time and materials to make one. Your choice. If you do the sums, you may find that you are better off sending your work out if you have a quality and readily available provider. I find that the fun and convenience of stabilising what I want, when I want, is well worth the cost. You'll need to determine that for yourself. The materials do have a storage lifetime. Once the resin is catalysed, the clock starts ticking. Stored at a cool temperature and in a UV free area, the catalysed resin easily keeps for six months and can be usable far longer. Heat and UV are the enemies. Both



The dozen very porous blanks stabilised for this column consumed only 24oz of resin. All of the rest was reclaimed for future use

catalysed and uncatalysed resin should be stored in a cool dark environment for maximum shelf life. I've never tried to re-catalyse resin when it needs attention but I'm told there is a possibility of doing so. I err on the side of storing properly and using within its shelf life.



The catalysing resins are shippable yet are heavy. If your local retailer doesn't stock them, both vendors will ship internationally

KEY POINTS ON COST

1. The wastage is minimal but the more porous the material, the higher the cost
2. Shipping can be a factor because of the weight of the resin
3. Proper storage can stretch the usable life to eliminate out of date waste
4. Proper processing to get it right the first time eliminates lost wood and lost resin

BIGGER STUFF

The typical home user stabilisation has always been on the pen blank and bottle stopper size items. Commercial stabilisation really can be on the railroad car size but the home user doesn't have access to the vacuum chamber or curing mechanism. You can now do larger work by using the vacuum bags offered by TMI and the boiling water process. I used the larger bag available from TMI to enclose a spalted maple platter. Partially turned yet still very porous, it needed far more than CA adhesive was going to provide. Making a cradle as shown on the video available from TMI, the vacuum bag could contain the platter and will

need a minimal amount of resin to provide coverage. I haven't yet processed it but plan to use a large stainless salad bowl with boiling water as my curing system. I'll find a baggie big enough to enclose it from the water and will keep you posted. The ability to do larger turnings or just large blocks of wood is now very doable using their vacuum bag and the boiling water process. The bag and boiling water curing process will work with any heat curing resin. Of course, the bigger the material, the more resin it will absorb, and the more costly your stabilising will become. You can decide if the blank you want to stabilise is worth the cost both out of pocket and time.



Using a cradle for support and a vacuum bag, much larger work can be stabilised without large quantities of extra resin

KEY POINTS ON BIGGER BLANKS

1. Vacuum chambers become unworkable because of the pressures involved
2. Vacuum bagging works great but is an additional investment
3. Larger pieces use more resin and therefore drive costs higher
4. Unless you use a kitchen sized oven, heat curing is a boiling process

Continued next month...

In part 2, we'll continue to explore stabilising wood covering the use of dyes, multiple colourings, processing of larger stuff, tips and tricks

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Multi-axis paper knife

Lionel Crabbe shows how to create this clever project using multi-axis turning methods

I enjoy multi-axis/off-centre spindle turning, making items which are of a practical use rather than just for show. Examples of this type of turning include, oval handles, napkin rings, candlesticks, cabriole legs and human body shapes.

Recently, I have turned up/come across a number of these forms I made some time ago, which all look beautiful, but I have never found a practical use for them until now. I don't know how to put this, but here goes: handling and looking at these it occurred to me that the torso felt very tactile and fitted into my hand like a handle. A few sketches later and I decided to turn these forms into paper knives. I hope this is of interest to you.

I have chosen purposely not to draw and dimension the profile, as I felt it could be too restrictive, so instead I suggest you draw to scale the piece of wood you have chosen and sketch your favourite form within it for you to work from. This will help you to obtain the shape, size and proportions you prefer. When finished, you can keep the knife in your letter rack, where it will be on display and at hand, ready to slit open your mail. This fulfils the objective of the exercise.

There are numerous ways you can turn this form. The method I have used was not created by me, but as you can see in the hints and tips, by changing the position of the offset centres, I have put my own slant on it, which changes the shape of the basic form. Most straight-grained hardwoods are suitable, but try to choose one similar to ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with quite a pronounced grain pattern; this choice of timber will help you to position and display your project to its best advantage.

LIONEL CRABBE



About the author:

Lionel discovered woodturning after retirement, when he was working in a school and art college. His main interest moved from woodcarving to woodturning and

today, part of his enjoyment is making his own tools to develop different turning processes. Email: lionelcrabbe@mail.com



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIONEL CRABBE

INFORMATION

TIME TAKEN & COST

Time taken: 60-75 mins

Cost: £1-2

TOOLS REQUIRED

- 20mm spindle roughing gouge
- 10mm long-grind spindle gouge
- 8mm skew chisel

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

- Belt sander
- Abrasives
- Sanding sealer
- Polish
- Buffing mop
- PPE: latex gloves, facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS

- **Ash blank:** 30 × 30 × 270mm long
- **For the drum sander:** hardwood blank – 75-100mm dia. × 150-200mm long. A piece of router matting to suit and a piece of soft or plastic sheet or wood 2-3mm-thick to use as wedges, plus your choice of sandpaper

1 Start by marking off the centre axis and indent both ends. Mount on your lathe between centres, and using a spindle roughing gouge, turn to round leaving the blank 20mm long, square at the headstock end. Check and mark off the radial centre of the prominent grain pattern, rotate the mark to the horizontal centreline and set the toolrest height so the point of your marker lines up with the mark you have made. Now, draw a line the length of the blank

2 Remove the blank and mark off at the headstock end two offset centres on a 20mm pitch circle diameter. Mark a line across the square end, at right-angles, to the two offset centres. You can then indent the centres

3 Mount the blank on one of the offset centres, headstock end and mark the letter 'A'. Next, use the 10mm spindle gouge to turn the head and neck of the form to your liking, at the tailstock end

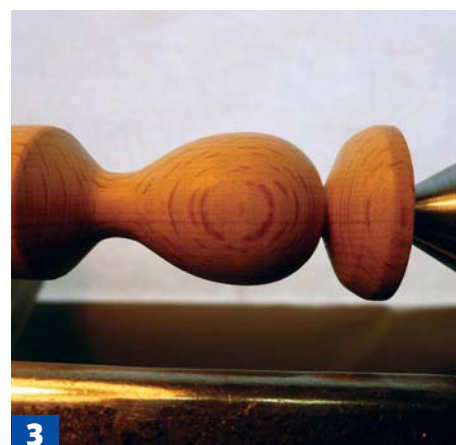
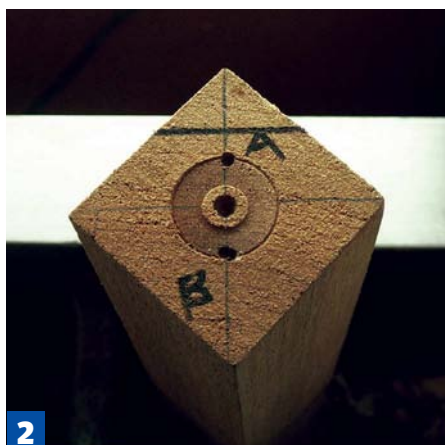
“Mark a line across the square end...”

4 Remount on the other offset centre and mark the letter 'B'. Use the same tool to turn the torso form in proportion to the head and neck. You can then sand to remove any tooling marks

5 The next step is to mount the part-turned form on its true axis and turn the legs/blade using the spindle roughing gouge, or if you prefer, use your own choice of tool. Sand to remove tooling marks and re-scribe the centreline. Re-check the form and proportions and when you are satisfied, mount it on the appropriate centres and apply the final finish. Using an 8mm skew chisel, turn the head to remove the centre, then sand and polish

Handy hints

1. When turning long, thin spindles mounted offcentre, you should always make sure the tools you use are sharp
2. Check the speed setting and clearance between the workpiece and the toolrest before starting the machine
3. The radial position of the offset centres will determine the relative position of the grain pattern to the finished form. Support the workpiece behind the cut and guide the tool with your thumb when turning long, small diameter spindles; this will help to eliminate chatter and unintentional textured finishes. Like most things, this cut takes practice





6



7

6 Cut off the surplus material to the line at right-angles to the offset centres. The flat produced provides the location for option 9

7 Locate the flat cut relative to the grain on to the band/fretsaw table and cut one side of the knife blade using the centreline as a guide only as far as the square, then remove the figure from the saw blade and repeat the cut on the other side

8 You can then cut off any surplus material. Use a belt or drum sander to form the final shape of the blade. Sand with the grain, then seal, polish and buff to a final finish

MAKING A DRUM SANDER



8

9 Not having a belt sander, I made a drum sander to use on my lathe; this helped me to form the final shape of the blade. To make this, hold the blank between centres and turn the outside diameter to clean. Form a spigot on both ends to suit your chuck jaws. Remove the blank from the lathe and cut a slot 3mm wide x 12-15mm deep the full-length of the blank. Wrap the matting around the drum and tuck the ends into the slot, then do the same with the sandpaper. Press the plastic/wooden wedge in position and check it is holding the sandpaper securely. If not, adjust the slot to suit. When satisfied, cut the wedge to width and check when in its position: 1-2mm below the sandpaper. Remove the matting, then use a suitable adhesive to stick the matting to the drum tucking the ends into the slot. Note: I use three different grades of sandpaper on the same drum. Mount the drum between centres or in your chuck using the spigot you have cut to suit your chuck jaws – centres are safer



9

10 I also turned a mandrel to suit my polishing mops, which gives me clear access when mounted on my lathe with tailstock support



10

11 The completed multi-axis paper knife should look something like this •



11

Handy hints

4. When you are turning, protect your lungs and eyes at all times and purchase the most efficient dust extraction/air filter system available. If the noise annoys you, then wear ear defenders

5. Work at a speed you are comfortable with. Should the sound of the machine change while you are cutting, stand to one side out of the line of fire, switch off the power and check the workpiece is still securely held

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Mark Sfirri in profile

We meet **Mark Sfirri** and find out about his unusual multi-axis turnings



Mark Sfirri is a Pennsylvania-based woodworker who incorporates lathe-turned forms in his furniture and sculpture. He studied furniture design under Tage Frid at Rhode Island School of Design, where he received both his BFA and MFA. His speciality within turning is the use of multiple axes, which has allowed him to create forms that are more sculptural than one would expect from the lathe. He is also a professor and has been the coordinator of the Fine Woodworking Programs at Bucks County Community College in Newtown, Pennsylvania since 1981.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK SFIRRI

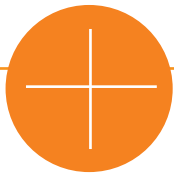
Education

Mark grew up in a suburb of Philadelphia and was interested in drawing and art from a very early age. He took this interest further at school. "I had a fabulous art teacher in high school named Claude Falcone who really helped me to develop a strong portfolio because of the rigour of the art programme. It is the only public high school that I am aware of where one could major in art, taking it five days a week." After such a good start to his education, Mark's goal was to get into the Rhode Island School of Design, which he achieved. At first, he majored in architecture because of a

deal he had struck with his parents to be able to go to the college. However, after a year he felt disillusioned with architecture and started looking around for an alternative. "I made a point of visiting every studio in the school to see what sparked my interest, and it was the woodshop. The fact that Tage Frid was the teacher was not a factor as I did not know who he was at the time. There was a graduate student there named Alphonse Mattia who was also a huge inspiration."

Starting woodturning

Mark began studying at the Rhode Island woodshop in 1972, learning



'Building Blocks' column in white pine (*Pinus spp.*), aluminium, plywood and poplar (*Populus spp.*), 3.66m tall



traditional joinery and doing a lot of carving. This was also where he first tried woodturning. "On a whim I tried doing some turning – just simple small plates. I was pleased with the speed of making but really wanted to get away from the predictable roundness that resulted." So he started making experimental turnings and a few years later, he began to incorporate these turnings into furniture. "Most of that early work was faceplate turning, I even did some multi-axis faceplate turnings in 1976. I did some spindle work in 1978 but that has become the focus of my turning for most of my career.



Coffee table in bubinga (*Guibourtia demeusei*) and mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*) with split-turned legs. Turned, split on the paper glue lines and then bandsawn out and shaped, 405mm tall x 1,065mm wide x 460mm deep

Folding screen in curly maple (*Acer saccharum*) and poplar (*Populus spp.*) with hand-shaped columns, 2,133mm tall x 1,370mm wide x 405mm deep



My serious investigations into multi-axis turning started in 1992," he says.

Turning style

In terms of his style, Mark explains that most people associate his name with his 'Rejects from the Bat Factory' series and his offset candlesticks, so multi-axis spindle turning is what he is most known for. However, he also incorporates turning into furniture and sculpture, and his artistic range extends to non-turned wooden work, watercolours and block prints.

Mark told us that his work is constantly changing, "My work has changed a lot since I first started



turning but it also changes a lot from year to year. I really enjoy trying out new things. Reproducing old themes keeps me in shape but the challenges of the new are what excite me most."

Mark takes an interesting approach to his work: "Throwing a pot in clay and blowing glass have some similarities to turning but the materials and results are so different. In wood, symmetry and roundness are an absolute result from day one. In ceramics and glass those properties are not a given and it takes a lot of practice to make a symmetrical object. I enjoy the miscues of early glasswork. A goal of mine in turning is to break away from the radial symmetry to produce objects that seem to have characteristics of glass or ceramics," he explains.

Inspiration and influences

Mark finds inspiration in a variety of sources, including popular culture, current events and music of many kinds. He is particularly inspired by the works of his favourite sculptor Constantin Brancusi, and Wharton Esherick, the founder of the studio furniture movement in the US. "I get excited by work that is innovative and breaks new ground. In the turning world, that would be Stephen Hogbin and Michael Hosaluk. I've collaborated with both of them, more with Michael," he says.

Workshop and tools

Mark has an 84m² studio, which is located right next to his house. It is a full woodshop with a tablesaw, jointer and planer, as well as a 2036 Oneway lathe with two bed extensions. When asked which tools he could not do without, Mark replied: "A lathe, a router, carving tools and rasps, the list goes on and on!"

A typical day

There isn't really any such thing as a 'typical' day for Mark, as he goes on to explain: "I teach full time at a community college, but it gives me ample time to work in my studio several days a week and the summer. But with researching, writing, demonstrating, photographing, etc., there is always something different going on, which is exactly how I like it. I really enjoy the diversity of my endeavours and like the diversity within those endeavours." There is

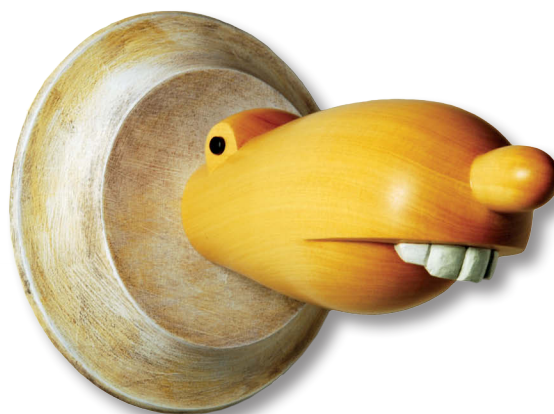


'Continuous Column', single axis turning in poplar (*Populus spp.*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). It was hand carved after turning, 635mm tall × 140mm × 140mm



'Rejects from the Bat Factory'. This series began in 1993. The bats are turned on multiple centres, 965mm tall × 610mm wide × 150mm deep

"Throwing a pot in clay and blowing glass have some similarities to turning but the materials and results are so different"



From an ongoing series called 'Game Hunting in North America', 150mm tall × 150mm wide × 220mm deep





The legs on this hall table were turned on three different axes but they are all the same, just rotated 90° from one to the next, 915mm tall × 1,040mm wide × 380mm deep



Bat in quilted maple (*Acer saccharum*) turned on two sets of centres with no special jigs or chucks, 150 × 535 × 75mm



'Curved Bench', walnut (*Juglans regia*) bench. The columns were angled out to make the bench top seem more bent than it actually is, 535mm tall × 2,057mm wide × 305mm deep

no such thing as a typical piece either – a piece can take anything from an hour or two to several hundred hours to complete.

Woodturning highs and lows

Mark has experienced very few lows in his career. He has been disappointed when his work has occasionally been overlooked by particular exhibitions or publications, but he has learnt not to get upset and to just move on. Fortunately, there have been many highs. "I feel like I got into the field at the right time and have made the most of it. I've gotten several national awards, which were surprises. I've had some great demonstrating opportunities around the world and have had some wonderful exhibitions as well," he says. For Mark, the best thing about woodturning is being part of the worldwide turning community. He believes that the number of people practising turning has led to an improvement in equipment. "It has resulted in the design of equipment and tools that are so superior to what I started working with. It has also opened up the door for so many to take part in it."

Promotion

"I should have a website, but I don't, I should have a video, but I don't!" Mark says. Instead, he promotes himself and his work through writing. "I write articles on technique, design and history, something that I'm able to do because my wife is such a great editor. I love doing the research. That was a real surprise to me, as I hated anything to do with writing or reading when I was growing up."

He believes that the unusual nature of his work makes it easier to promote: "I've tried to keep my name out there and I do work that is outside of the norm. The fact that it is spindle turning alone would make it out of the norm, but doing multi-axis turning pushes it even further outside the norm."

Future plans

Mark says that he does not have any specific aims or aspirations for the future: "I've made a career of not setting goals for myself so I don't think that I'll be starting now. I do survey the landscape and look for opportunities and try for them. I did that much more earlier in my



A variation of an inside out turning in oak (*Quercus robur*) and poplar (*Populus spp.*), 510mm tall x 305mm wide x 150mm deep

Foyer table in bubinga (*Guibortia demeusei*) and maple (*Acer saccharum*). The columns were turned on a single axis and then hand carved, 840mm tall x 1,525mm wide x 305mm deep

career but less of it now.” Also, the versatile and experimental nature of Mark’s work makes it hard for him to say what his future plans are. “I’m not sure where I’m heading tomorrow!” he said. “I’ve worked large and small and in between. I only work on furniture on a commission basis and have been doing a fair amount of that lately. I also enjoyed working on some large sculpture.” We look forward to seeing the new forms that Mark comes up with! ●

Email: marksfirri@gmail.com



‘Little People’, multi-axis turned figures, variety of sizes: largest is 185mm tall x 100mm wide x 85mm dia.

TOP TECHNIQUE

My favourite technique would be figuring out multi-axis turning and what the possibilities and limitations are. I’ve spent many years experimenting with this and I still find it complicated. It’s easy to produce something that I didn’t want. It keeps me on my toes!

Handy hints

1. Use a safe centre, such as the Oneway cup centre, as a driver for all spindle work. It is safe and if you were to have a catch, the wood stops moving and you just tighten up the tailstock
2. Use a cup centre in the tailstock. This is far superior to a cone centre
3. Learn how to sharpen your tools correctly and be willing to adapt the grinds to ones that work better for you
4. Take notes when you’re trying out new things and take process photos for future reference for yourself

LIKES & DISLIKES

Likes:

- The challenge of trying new ideas
- When new forms emerge, although sometimes that’s the result of a mistake
- I like mistakes and don’t consider them that because sometimes they can be modified to create something new and completely different from the original idea

Dislikes:

- Taking a great piece of wood and making a mess of it. I generally try out new ideas on scrap wood of similar proportion and do my experiments with that so the result is known before taking that great piece of wood and making something more to my liking
- Mistakes that truly have no redeeming qualities and are just trash. I dispose of them



Aladdin's Cave-with Coffee

You know, it's amazing what you learn from your customers - if you listen, carefully. We know folk travel from all corners of the globe, to come and see us. Yet it never occurred to us that, after our "facilities", it is our coffee that folk find sets us apart from our peers. Maybe it's the fact that the coffee (or tea, or chocolate) is free. We recognise the pattern: 'relief'; browsing over 300 square feet of showroom; refill the liquids; shopping - and maybe "one for the road".

Our clients often present us with great new products ideas too, as do our Open House demonstrators. Without them we might not have found some of our "good finds". Those include the superb Carter & Son Toolworks gouges made from M42 steel that holds a superbly keen razor-sharp edge for longer than any steel tool you've ever tried. And those beautiful, solid aircraft grade aluminium handles that the tools are mounted in. Strong, comfortable, secure, robust but so achingly beautiful that tool nuts - like us - fall in love with them on sight. For more information, call us, but if you're really serious - and these are serious tools - then come over and take a test drive.

Then there's my new favourite finishing oil: Steinert® Drechsleroil. I've been using it to good effect in finishing some of my workpieces made from the stunning Chilean Laurel Burr that we stock. It makes the fabulous gold to cream spectrum of hues really pop. It covers well, is easily absorbed and makes no discernible change to the timber colour. Being toy safe too, its range of applications is much wider than other oils. Here's a tip too: whilst



applying and burnishing it with a safety cloth gives a great satin gleam, you can enhance the tactile qualities of the workpiece surface by using Chestnut Nyweb to apply the second and subsequent coats prior to burnishing. Not only does your work look great, it feels great too (remember silk stockings? ...)

Happily, we also contribute to our client's knowledge, experience and success. One of the easiest ways of doing that is to introduce them to the superb Wolverine sharpening system produced by Oneway from Canada. Here's a system that, without exaggeration (would I?), can make any turner capable of perfect sharpening every time. Repeatable sharpness in the minimum of time with the minimum of effort. Using a good jig minimises the amount of metal you remove at each sharpening, so not only does your turning improve but your tools last longer - which saves you money.

So there we are, not just the folk who bring all sorts of woodturning exotica to your attention - and to your door - but also purveyors of tea, coffee and wisdom. We offer the benefit of our experience when we talk to, and guide, our customers

(I'm tempted to say 'long experience' but that's self-evident if you take a glance at the picture below - and yes, Myrtle, I'm the one on the right!) For those who know me well, note that the photo shows me making a credible attempt at a smile, but if you want the real thing then you can always have the pleasure of talking to Jen instead. She's the one that does the sweet smile, polite chat and all the things that Old Grumpy just finds too difficult these days. And have I told you about my backache



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Turning designs into working samples

In the second part of his new mini-series, **Richard Findley** makes his box design a reality, creates a working sample and begins to develop his design

The plan for this series was to show a work in progress, from initial conception of an idea, and how that idea was formed, through to rough sketches, which are then made into working samples and then finally a finished product, ready to go to market. Last month, I wrote about how I came up with the idea by taking inspiration from various pieces of treen and putting them together to form a new and, hopefully, unique product. The product I came up with was a turned jewellery box, with four compartments for various items of jewellery.

At the end of the last article, I had the idea formed in my mind and committed some sketches to paper to try and flesh it out a little. This month my task was to make these sketches into a full-sized working sample. I knew roughly the shape I wanted, but first I needed to look at the size. With this being a practical object, the proportions not only have to visually work, but it also needs to be able to hold jewellery and be easy to use.

Timber considerations

While I haven't yet fully decided on the timber I will use for the final product, I know from experience that my usual timber merchant carries hardwood in boards of various widths, but it is often difficult to buy boards wider than 200mm. With this in mind, it made sense to base the design on a size that I knew I could easily buy the timber for. This is never going to be a big box; it makes sense that to appeal to the widest market it needs to be able to sit on an average sized dressing table comfortably, without overpowering it or filling it completely. That said, it does need to be big enough to hold a reasonable amount of jewellery. While I wear a wedding ring and a watch on weekends and special occasions, I know many people have quite a collection. I'm also aware that the end user of this box is likely to be a woman, so the end product needs to appeal to that market as well.

Getting this balance right, between a size that visually works, practically works and is made from an easily obtainable

timber dimension, will be key to the success of the finished box.

I had some 65 × 180mm softwood in stock, which certainly fits the bill as far as obtainable timber dimensions goes. I know I would be able to get any of the commercial hardwood that my supplier stocks in this size. This would be my starting point for the project.

RICHARD FINDLEY



About the author: Richard Findley 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

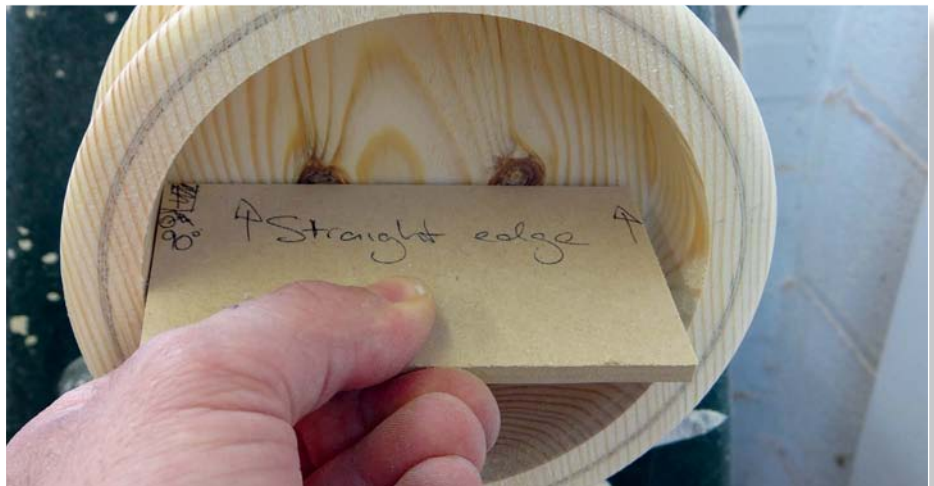
antique components, walking canes and stair spindles, to decorative bowls. It is the variety of work that he loves. He also offers demonstrations and a range of woodturning supplies.

Email: richard@turnersworkshop.co.uk

Web: www.turnersworkshop.co.uk

FINALLY GETTING SOME SHAVINGS FLYING!

After all this design work, it was nice to finally get some timber on the lathe and see it begin to take shape. I started by cutting a disc on the bandsaw and then mounting it on the lathe. For this project, the order of work was the same as turning a standard bowl: screw chuck, true up and cut spigot, then reverse onto the chuck. Once I knew exactly how much timber I had to play with, I started cutting my design into the edge with my 10mm spindle gouge, which I find works best for detailing work like this, as long as you keep the toolrest close to the work.



The MDF jig I made to check the shape of the inside of the box

FORMING DETAILS ON FACEPLATE WORK

It's worth remembering that to form details such as beads and coves on the edge of faceplate work like this, they are cut in the opposite way to when doing spindle work. With spindle work, the cut comes from near the tip of the tool and shapes are formed from the top down to the base, in a downhill fashion. On faceplate work, the shapes are formed by drawing the tool from bottom to top, using the wing of the gouge in a trailing cut. This means you are working with the grain, which is always essential in turning



Cutting the halving joint on the dividing sections

With the outside shape cut I could start to hollow the inside. A bowl gouge made short work of this, but this design called for a straight side and flat bottom, rather than the usual curved inside of a bowl. Throughout this stage I had to be aware of the wall thickness: there needs to be enough to house the dividing sections, but thin enough to look elegant. Once I was about there I made up a

typically simple jig to check the squareness of the inside of the box: a piece of MDF, cut on my saw bench to a true 90°. This easily showed how much adjustment was needed to square up the inside.

Happy with the box so far, the next step was to sort out the dividing sections. A strip of softwood was cut and I planed and thickened it square and flat. Initially I

finished it at 10mm but decided that was too thick and reduced it to 8mm. I then cut the length into two over-long pieces and marked and cut a halving joint on each, slotting them together to form the cross of the dividing section. With the divider made and sitting squarely, I was able to mark its position on the box. This is where I hit my first problem.

FITTING THE DIVIDING SECTION

My original idea was to saw down to depth and pare out the waste timber with a sharp chisel, the problem was that because the box has a bottom and curved sides, access is restricted inside, and while it might be possible to make the cut I had planned, it wouldn't be easy, and there would be a possibility of making a mess of the box at this stage.

A spot of lunch allowed me to mull over the problem. It occurred to me that if I drilled the box with a sharp lip and spur bit before turning out the centre, once turned, there would be four perfectly semi-circular housings ready to have the

dividers fit in to. So, with this in mind, I cut a second blank for another box, turned the outside as before, carefully measured and marked the positions and took it over to my pillar drill and, using an 8mm lip and spur drill, made the holes. I then mounted it back in the chuck and turned out the inside as before.

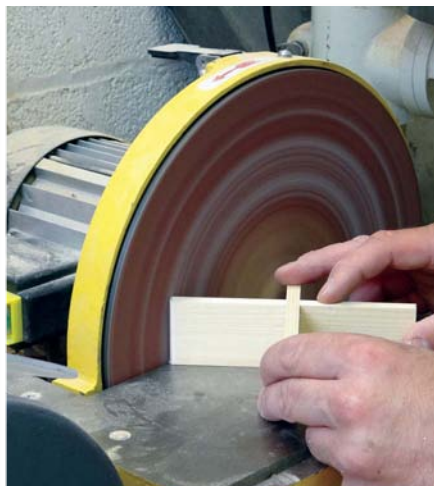
With the box turned I was able to measure the length I needed to cut the divider. I then took it to the disc sander and gently rounded the ends, allowing them to fit into the housings. A light tap with my trusty deadblow mallet slotted the divider into place.



Paring the housing



Drilling the housings for the dividers



Shaping the ends of the divider on my disc sander



The box with the dividers in place

THE LID

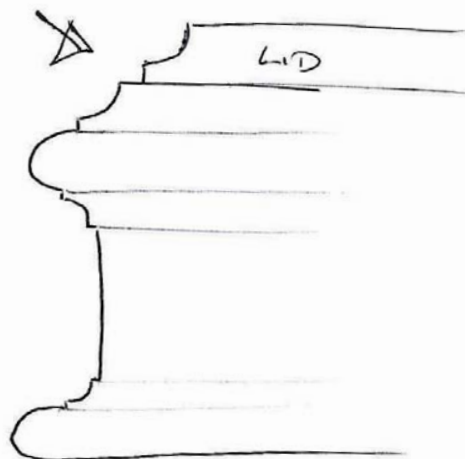
Turning the lid was pretty straightforward: a disc around 10mm-thick with a cove edge detail and a rebate to correspond with the rebate I had earlier cut on the rim of the box. They fitted together beautifully.

I then cut it into four quadrants on my saw bench. The plan was to cut a rebate on the two cut edges of the lids to sit around the dividers. It was at this point that the next problem showed itself. While my design of matching rebates in the lid and box is ideal for a single lid, because the dividers are below the surface of the box,

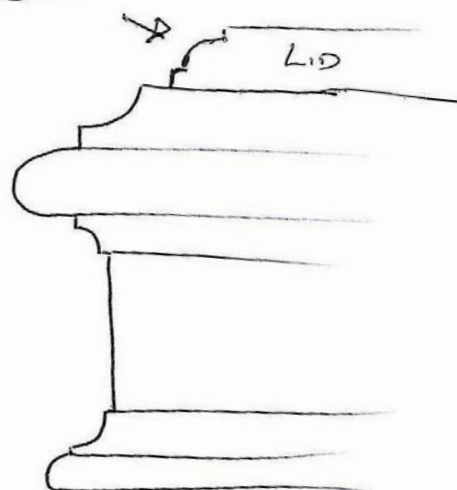
unfortunately it wouldn't work like this. This caused some more head scratching.

It became apparent that the rebate in the rim of the bowl wasn't necessary. As long as the lid quadrant had a rebate all around its three sides, it could sit flat on the top surface of the box. Looking again at the box though, without the rebate, the top edge appears incredibly thick at around 20mm. It was this wide because the top detail is a bead, but there was no way to reduce this without making the top bead look small and weak. A redesign was required!

2 Coves together looks wrong



ovolo works better.



The box with the lid fitted



The lid quadrant didn't work, as the dividers were at a different level to the rim

COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN (CAD)

This process of designing and making a product showed me the potential value of Computer Aided Design, or CAD, as it is otherwise known. When it was first introduced it was a revolution to the design world as it meant that products could now be drawn out to scale; new interesting shapes could be experimented with without having to waste a lot of time, money and resources making tooling and samples that may or may not work out.

I have played around with a couple

of CAD programs for woodworkers and turners and they work well. If you ever see a rendered design by a skilled programmer, they look almost like a photo, but this takes considerable practice and hours can be whittled away at a computer screen and even less can be achieved than I have so far.

Nearly all of my production work now comes through on scaled CAD drawings, so for industry, it is now standard practice and the benefits have been realised, but for a small scale designer-maker, I am still unsure

It wasn't entirely back to the drawing board for me as, overall, I was pretty happy with the look of the box so far, it was just the width of the rim that jarred. A quick sketch showed that if I lowered the top bead and added another fillet and cove, it immediately reduced the thickness and weight at the top of the box, but the lid then didn't look right with a cove edge detail. Another sketch, changing the lid edge detail to an ovolo made it look much better. This had always been an option for the lid, right from my original sketches, shown last month, but now I would have to make a third box and try again.

FRUSTRATING!

This process has given me a new found respect for successful designer-makers. While I have enjoyed the change that this project has given me, I have found it all somewhat frustrating. Normally, I get a drawing and some sort of specification of what I need to make, and I make it. Simple.

I usually have very little input to the design process, beyond implementing tiny changes to make an item more practical or economical to produce. As a production turner, I always have an eye on the clock, and as I have been working on the project, I have been watching the hours tick by as I've had to make yet

another version of the box, slightly different to the previous one. Time is still a constant pressure for me; I allowed myself a day to play with this project, after this I have deadlines to meet with other work to get out, but I am trying to enjoy the design and development process as much

FINAL VERSION

This being my third adaptation of the box, the turning was becoming faster and easier and I soon had the latest incarnation turned. I made a lid, this time from an offcut of sapele (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*) as I had no more thin softwood. It was turned and cut into quadrants as before. I then set up my router table to produce the rebates on the two cut edges of the lids.

The trial fit went well and it all looks good together, I think. Making this version showed me that I need a little more care when cutting the rebates to ensure a really good fit for the lids and a little more depth on the rebates would certainly help here too. This lesson was enough to remember for the final version; I didn't feel I needed to remake it again.



The final design appears to be coming together

THE KNOBS

I somehow feel that the knobs I use for the box may well make or break this as a successful piece. Too big and they will overpower it; too small and they won't be practical. I also wanted to reflect some of the design details in the knobs.

As I have been working on the box I have been playing with ideas in my head. I have referenced Stuart Dyas' excellent book *Classic Forms* before and it is a constant companion in the workshop, but this time I couldn't find anything in it that I felt worked. Then I remembered a job I'd done a couple of years ago for a client who needed some new knobs for

a cabinet that had lost some. They were tiny little knobs, which I thought may well fit the bill. Amazingly I found the copy template straight away – sometimes it can take ages to find old ones, especially when they are this small!

I made one but found I couldn't visualise how the finished box would look from this, so had to make all four. I fitted them in place and stood back to look at the 'finished' job.

I'm still not 100% on those knobs, but I decided I would live with them for a bit and see how I felt over the next couple of days.



The completed box sample

IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE DESIGN PROCESS

You might think that that is the end for the design and development process, but there are still some very important things to do before committing to a final design.

1. Get the opinions of others
2. See it in a more natural environment
3. Live with it

That evening, I took the box home to show my wife. She has seen a lot of woodturning over the years, both my own and others at various shows that I've dragged her to, and in books and magazines. While she doesn't particularly get involved with the turning, she has pretty good taste and isn't afraid to voice an opinion. Her first reaction was to the knobs: 'they look like mushrooms' she said. Not a good start! She conceded, however, that they are very functional and feel nice when picking up the lids. Otherwise she liked the box.

The next thing I did was to take it upstairs and swap it for her usual jewellery box – a walnut (*Juglans regia*) box with dovetails that I made some years ago for her – to see how it would look on a dressing table. Seeing things on the bench at the workshop doesn't give a real sense of proportion or scale – my bench is 3m long and 1m wide, whereas the dressing table is actually the top of a chest of drawers and is a mere 500mm square. In place I thought it looked good – see for yourself!

When demonstrating bowl work, I always suggest to the audience that, once the outside shape of the bowl is turned and they think they are happy with it, they should take it in the house and see it in the place they plan to put it. There is nothing worse than spending your day in the workshop turning, sanding and polishing something, then taking it in and seeing it in place, only to find that the shape doesn't quite work or there is some other issue which could have been resolved earlier, but it's too late now. This is exactly what I'm doing now. I have the box on my desk at the workshop and I'm taking it home each evening and putting it on the table at home. I'm going to keep looking at it from different angles and viewpoints. It will either grow on me and I will love it after a week or two, or something is going to bother me and I will decide to change it. I am something of a perfectionist, and almost everything I have ever made, given the chance, I would make again and improve in some way. This is no exception, only this time I have the chance to refine it until I'm happy with it, which is a rare opportunity for me.



The box in place on our dressing table

WHY MAKE SAMPLES?

When I was turning for a hobby, I would decide to make something and do it. I would never make a sample or maquette. Hopefully, from the process I have gone through in this article, you can see how making various versions of the box has helped with the design. Yes, it adds extra work. Yes, it adds time to the production of the product, but hopefully, as long as you can be honest with yourself about what works and what doesn't, then you can develop the design, and refine

it until it's perfect. Something that can be helpful, if you find the grain of the softwood distracting, is to spray it black so that all you see is the pure form, rather than the wood itself. This is something I plan to do after living with the wood version for a few days or weeks. It goes without saying that I have not sanded this sample; the finish is straight off the tool. Choosing whether or not to sand the sample is entirely up to you ●



NEXT MONTH

Having lived with the box for a few weeks, I will make any final changes before choosing the timber and making the final box

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Left: Osprey #1, 3/8" dia. shaft, 6 mm cutter
£84.97 handled; £76.46 unhandled

Right: Osprey #2, 1/2" shaft, 8 mm cutter
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Right: Mini Hercules, 3/8" square shaft, 6 mm cutter. £87.24 handled; £79.30 unhandled



Left: Hercules, 5/8" shaft with 10 mm cutter. £93.47 handled; £84.97 unhandled



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Left: Swan-neck #5 tool (inboard or outboard)
£118.98 handled;
£110.47 unhandled

Right: Hunter #5 tool with 10 mm cutter.
£101.98 handled;
£93.47 unhandled



Mark St Ledger #1 Box Hollowers

Now guess what these little beauties are designed for (the clue is in the name!). And "designed" is the operative word: all built on a 3/8" tapered shaft, the straight tool does the main hollowing; the swan neck tool cleans up the base and walls of the box and the brilliant back cut swan neck tool, with its shear skewed tip does a dream job under the shoulders of even the smallest forms.

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Wine table

Stephen Hogbin tells us how he made this colourful wine table

STEPHEN HOGBIN



About the author: Stephen lives in Ontario and is a world renowned woodturner who is known for his groundbreaking techniques. He exhibits his work in Canada, the USA and beyond. Primarily a

studio artist with an inclusive and multidiscipline approach, he is also an occasional curator and author. Last year he received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and more recently has released a new book: *Hogbin on Woodturning*.

Email: stephen.hogbin@gmail.com

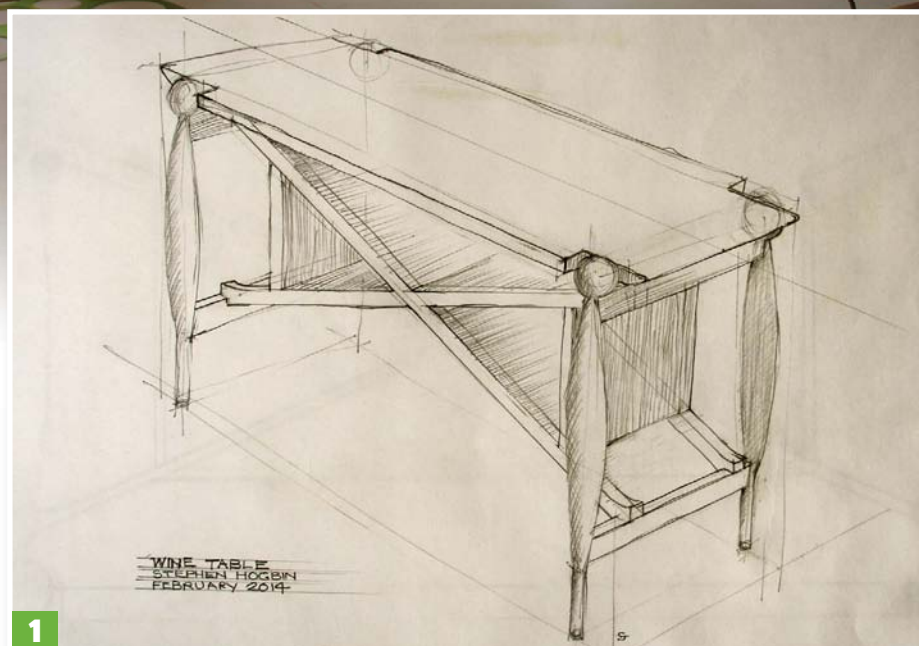
Web: www.stephenhogbin.com

My clients needed a table to go between their dining area and the living room. It would function for both areas as a serving table and hold a selection of wine bottles. These clients have collected my work over the years and understand the development of my ideas, forms and techniques. They had made a concept sketch suggesting how the wine bottles may be stored, this was an excellent structural solution for the table and was easy to adopt. They also suggested turned elements, carving or milling marks and colour in the table. Their living room already has two of my artworks on the wall as well as pieces of my furniture. It is a colourful room with all the artwork referencing nature.

THE TABLE DESIGN

Step 1

The table's height and length were established in relationship to the clients' sectional couch. The depth of the table top was determined by the length of a wine bottle. Even with these well-established criteria I made several drawings to look at the table's proportions. While it had to function, the clients also have a keen eye for aesthetics. The sketch and measured drawing were presented to the clients for discussion and approval.



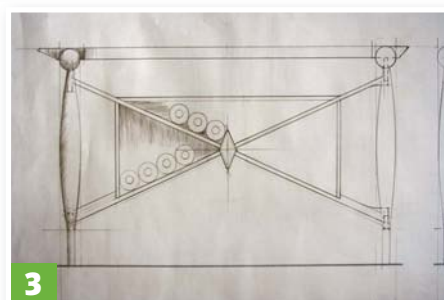
1



2

Step 2

I wanted to incorporate turnings as their family heirloom dining table has turned legs, which are traditional and heavy. For the wine table, I wanted to turn lighter legs that would reflect the roundness without slavishly copying the older table legs. The idea for the wine table included two turnings both of which would be split to make the four table legs. The split or cut turnings may create two to four legs from one turning. The size of each split element is identical whether it's cut in half or quarters. The combination of



3

curved and straight lines brings variety to the form. Structurally there are advantages and the construction is simplified with flat planes to which rails may be attached.

Step 3

A full-size drawing was made on a sheet of plywood. The design of the table required accuracy of all the parts, especially the X frame. From the full-size drawing I could see precisely what the proportions would be and could assess the details of the joinery. Marking out the shape of the X frame became easy. ►

TURNING THE TABLE LEGS

Step 4

Two or four legs could be made from one turning by preparing the stock as either two boards or four boards. It is preferable to hold the square parts together at both ends with stainless-steel band clamps.

Step 5

Split turnings are best prefinished on the inside of the turning. I prepared the boards and finished the inside before fixing them together. In the sidebar below, you can see that I have demonstrated three different ways

to prepare the turning blank for going on the lathe: the quick way, the half way and the best way. The best way keeps the square cross section on the ends, which will be useful later.

THE QUICK WAY



Using this method, the corners of the parts are removed on the tablesaw. The loss of the square may be a disadvantage when drilling, mortising or carrying out additional operations. Also the band clamp, which is strong, comes in various sizes and can be reused, does not fit snugly and may even bend the clamp. That may not be an issue but it does not feel so well engineered.

THE HALF WAY



The boards are held together with clamps. The ends are then marked with a circle using a compass. Square around the parts the width of the band clamp. Cut with a hand saw to the square edge and as deep as the diameter. Chisel off material to the diameter and the square edge. Attach the band clamp. This becomes a well-fitting clamp while retaining the square cross section.

THE BEST WAY



The best way is also unfortunately the slow way. The parts are kept square to the maximum length. Crescent shapes are cut on the bandsaw, then green taped to the square cross section. The band clamp fits smoothly and it's all easy to remove. The setup is fiddly, but well worth it in the long run. The crescent shapes, like the band clamp, may be used again

NEXT STEPS

Step 6

It is essential to add a tiny bead of glue on the ends before the final band clamping. I used a 3mm PVA bead to secure the relationship of the parts. When the turning chisel catches, the parts want to slide in relationship from one to the other. To take it apart, a sharp chisel and a gentle tap on the end of the turning will separate the parts. Cleanup is easy as the very end is probably waste material.

Step 7

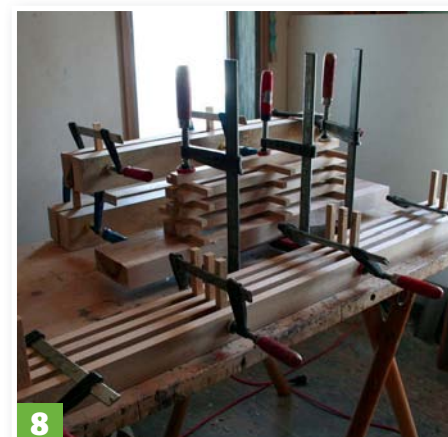
The blank was placed into the lathe and the length of the leg was marked and scribed around with a square. Using a hand saw, I cut down approximately to the radius of what will be turned. This prevents the square block on the end splintering. A production turner would be able to machine this, but I am suggesting a simple way to avoid mishaps of a chisel catching.



MAKING THE RAILS

Step 8

All the rails for the table were cut to dimension, stacked or clamped and left for a week to settle down to an equal moisture content with the studio workshop. The surfaces were then belt and orbital sanded to 180 grit as I needed the parts. When assembled, the final sanding went through 220 and 320 grit papers.



Step 9

Marking out the X rails was very easy with a full-scale drawing. I took one of the oversized blanks for the X frame and laid it under the drawing. The finished face had to be up. I thought about the grain pattern when positioning the wood as there were structural and decorative considerations. The lines in the grain needed to run parallel with the edge of the rail to be cut out. This not only looks stronger, but is also structurally stronger as it avoids short grain. I used an awl to mark where the lines intersected, then removed the board from under the drawing.

Step 10

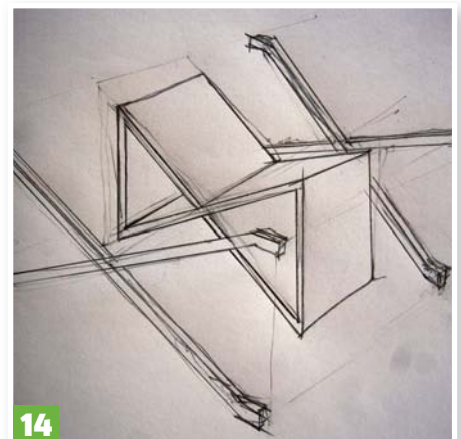
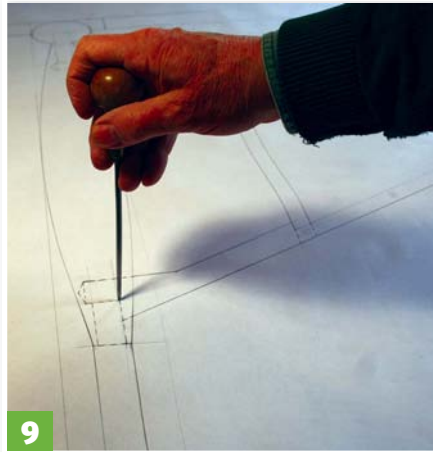
A straightedge was used to connect the awl punch marks.

Step 11

I used a bandsaw to cut out the shape. I prefer to not get too smart and end up with no line so I just cut next to the line, knowing that taking care with this cut will save a lot of time when cleaning up. The pencil line was needed as the bandsaw marks were removed. I used a smoothing plane for the straight runs and a couple of files for the rest. On this occasion I used a bastard and mill files. The mill file leaves a fine finish that will need minimal abrasives. I used a square to check that all surfaces were true and at 90°. The cutout rail was used as the template for the next X rail. I paid close attention to grain pattern when laying it on the next oversized blank. There is a left and a right for the front and the back. I kept the very best grain pattern for the front of the table. These rails are long and slender. They didn't feel very strong at this point. After laying the template rail onto the next blank, it was clamped down. I placed a straightedge next to it to make sure it had not deflected. Even a pencil may push the template one way or another if it rides into the grain. I drew lightly around the template before taking it apart to go over everything with a steel straightedge. The rest could now be marked out. I used the small bandsaw with a new blade, and checked everything for square. I kept all the offcuts as they will be used to make lipping on other parts of the plywood wine holder. The edge that had the bandsaw marks was planed with a smoothing plane and the last parts with rasps, bastard files, mill files and abrasives.

Step 12

With the two X frames prepared I made a cross halving joint. The rails were laid on the drawing to get the correct angles. There were two spacing strips on the ends holding them in the exact relationship to fit the table rails. The dimension was taken from the full-size drawing. The spacers were kept on all the



time I was working. The plywood was cut to fit the rails. The edges are lipped but could have been left to expose the structure of the plywood for a more contemporary look.

Step 13

The back X frame was glued and screwed to the plywood back. The next morning as I took off the clamps I had one of those darned epiphanies on how to make it a quicker way...

Step 14

Instead of integrating the box into the frame, I discovered that it could be

expressed as a linear structure holding a box – which can be seen in the above illustration. Conceptually and visually the form of the table becomes clearer. The first solution is more traditional, whereas the second more contemporary. There is no wrong way and right way, rather different ways to make and express the ideas in the wine table. The concept drawing shows another way of creating the project. Make the box and the table frame independently. Prefinish everything and then fix the two together using screws and plugs as the most direct solution or biscuit joint for a hidden connection. ►

Step 15

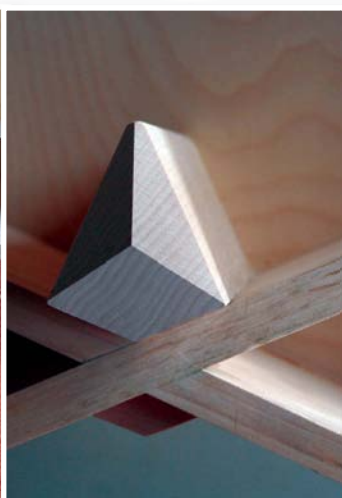
Rather than remake many parts, I proceeded with the first idea and started to build on the glued-together back panel and X frame. The end panels were fitted, followed by the first diagonal. The front X frame was also fitted on top. The parts were joined together with biscuits, which was a useful method for helping to locate the plywood and frame. Next, I glued the end panels and the first diagonal, but not the front X frame at this stage. The front frame was fitted dry while the plywood box was gluing. Then I glue fixed the front X frame. A useful principle is to only glue two pieces of wood at a time. That is the best way to maintain control. Inevitably, though, the design does on occasion call for more than two pieces.

Step 16

All the beads of glue were then cleaned off. I prefer to do this part when everything is leather hard.

Step 17

There is a specially designed feature at the centre of the X that stops the bottles from rolling to the centre. It also strengthens the X frame and brings visual interest. There are two screws holding it in place fixed from the bottom. A smaller block hides the screws and gives the table a higher finish. The drawing shows a larger centre piece, but visually it appeared too heavy.



BACK TO THE LATHE

Step 18

For the legs, a template was cut from sheet metal to form a semicircle.

Step 19

When the leg was on the lathe it looked OK so it was essential to take it out and look at it in the vertical position. It was too close to symmetrical, which made the form look like it was sagging. The section between my fingers had to be slightly longer than the top section to prevent the sagging. Also, note the additional support at the centre using a band clamp. As the work is thinned the legs are prone to separating or gapping apart.

Step 20

Having completed the turning and sanding on the lathe, I stood the leg up and used a large chisel to split the turning apart.

Step 21

I kept the square block ends or waste material on the ends, this is where the block on the ends becomes useful to clamp to the bench as it offers a square and true surface. I marked out where the rails would be placed.



Step 22

There are several ways to make the joinery for the rail to the leg. The setup shows marking out for the biscuit jointer. The larger top rail has two biscuits and the smaller lower rail has one biscuit.

Step 23

Before the glue up phase, it is important to ensure that all the surfaces were adequately finished with abrasives. A block was placed under the turning to enable sanding. Occasionally when turning the edge, the turnings may break away. This is the best time to fix any problems.

Step 24

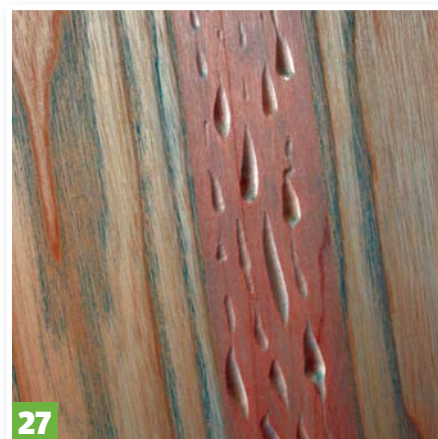
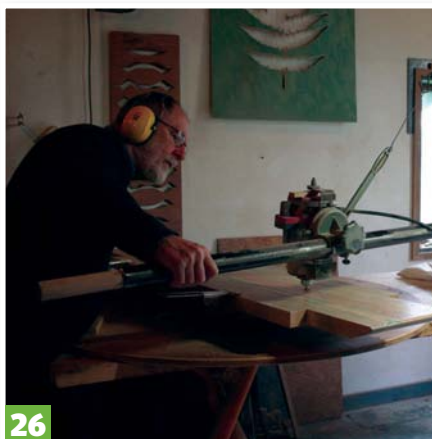
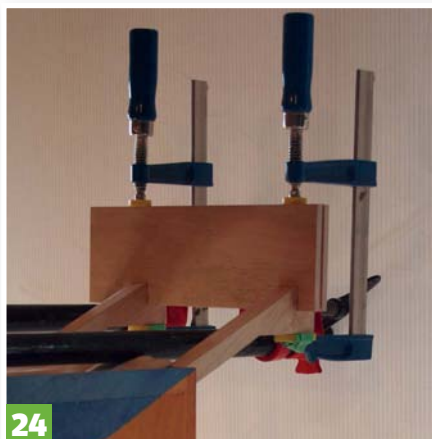
I glued the rails to the carcass X frame and then attached the legs. The biscuit joint does give the tolerances a chance to be plus or minus a hair or two. The X frame does have some flexibility when clamping the rail with the bar clamp. I had to take care not to distort and get the rails out of square alignment. I clamped on a spacing strip to make sure through measuring that distortion was not taking place.

Step 25

The legs were glued onto the rails of the X frame. Band clamps worked well for this. On one end, at the last minute of gluing, I had to add a couple of C clamps. A hairline crack in the joint needed to be coaxied away. The gluing was left overnight before removing the beads of glue around the joints. The X frame connection to the rails had a dowel drilled in after the gluing. This makes the connection and helps any short grain that may be structurally weaker. The dowel has a raised head to feature the connection. The table top was fitted to the frame. The top is made up from two ash (*Fraxinus americana*) boards and a strip of maple (*Acer rubrum*) down the middle. The ash holds a rubbed stain in the open pores of the wood and the maple carves well with the milling machine. The top was fixed using a simple cleat. This method was in keeping and consistent with the rest of the design.

Step 26

The first milling machine was made back in 1976. This milling machine is a smaller version, which is suitable for benchtop work. It has the potential of three axes when carving. This setup shows the arm with the router attached, hanging from a bungee cord. It allows a fingertip control and a nice fluid bounce for the router to carve the lines. The work is clamped on a turntable, which gives the milling machine the third axes it requires. It has the potential to carve circles, spirals and fluid lines, reminiscent of rippling water.



Step 27

The table top was finished with urethane in which a pigment dye adds colour – see www.colorvie.com. I started using this pigment system recently with great success. Before that I was using artist's quality acrylic paints. Typically I will apply many coats, varying the colour with each layer to build up a depth of finish that is subtle, deep, rich and clearly done by hand. It looks great, with a nonindustrial aesthetic and an exceptionally hard finish.

Step 28

Now open a bottle of your favourite wine, pour a glass, stand back and enjoy the work. ●





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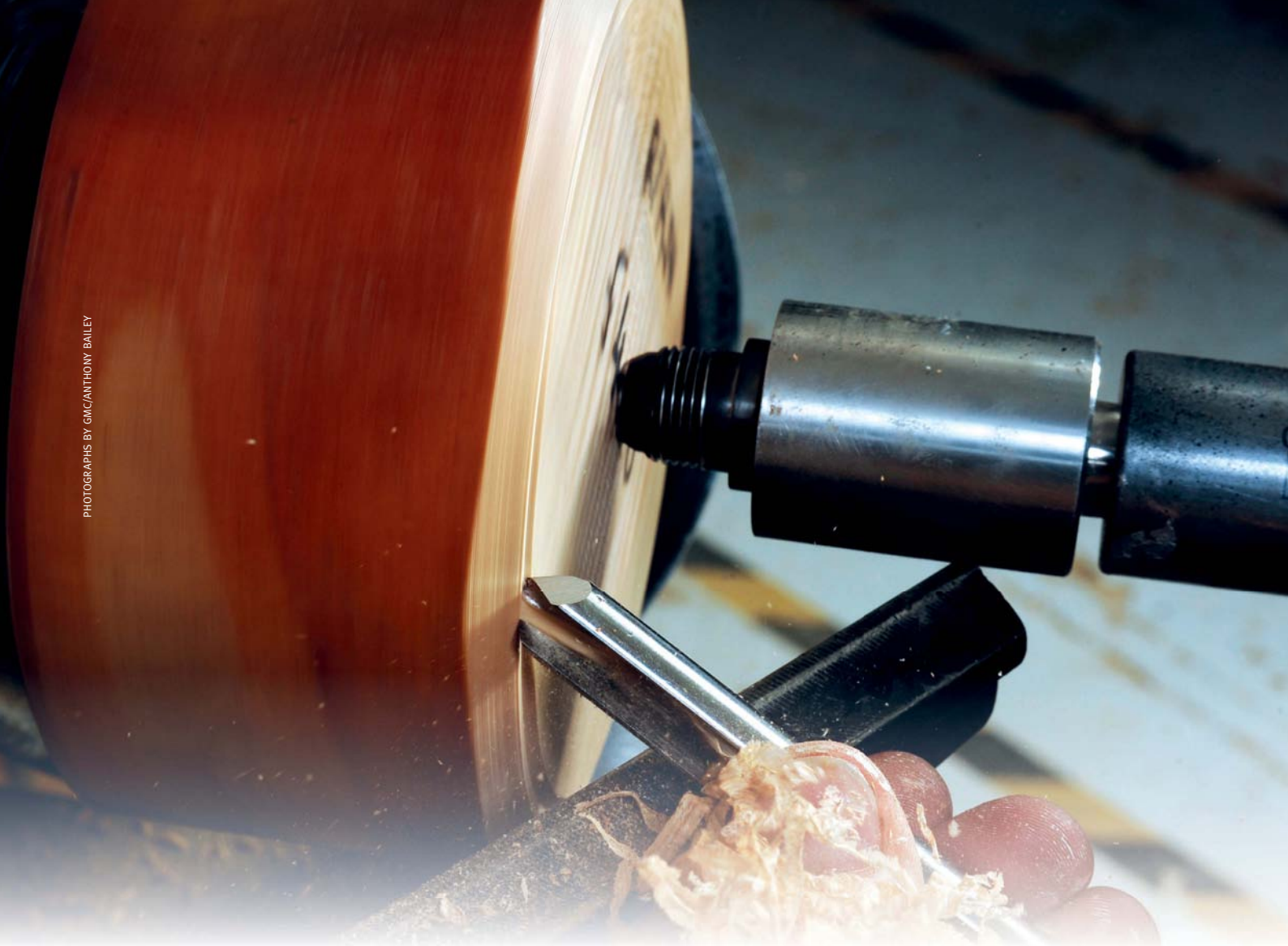
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Starting turning – part 8

In the next part of this series, **Mark Baker** looks at 10 rules for turning and minimising risks

Having finished sharpening tools in the previous issue, we are almost at the stage of turning wood so this article includes some guidelines that are worth knowing before you start using your turning tools. There are inherent risks involved when turning: items of work spinning at great speed, materials that may have naturally occurring flaws, sharp tools that you are unfamiliar with and powerful equipment are just a few of the potential hazards. But it takes just a few sensible precautions and safety checks to minimise the potential problems and risks so you can better enjoy the process of turning.

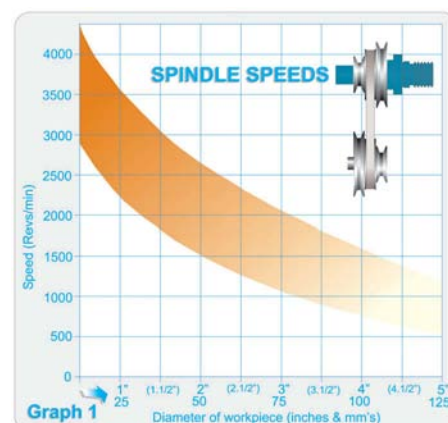
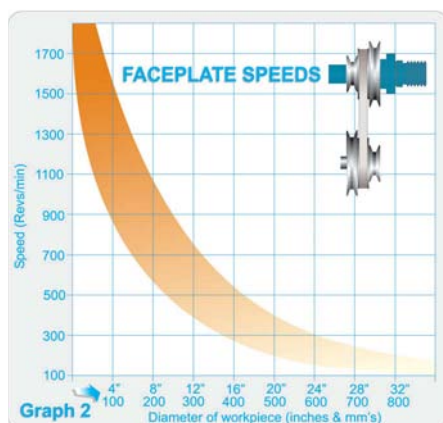
Rule 1

When mounting work on the lathe, double check that the work is held securely and that everything is locked and/or secured in place as it should be before switching on the lathe.



Rule 2

Before switching on the lathe, check that you have selected an appropriate lathe speed to suit the size, weight, length and condition of the work being turned. While the speed charts shown are good speed guidelines for the different types and sizes of work being turned, they do not take into account if the wood has any faults, such as bark inclusions, voids, fissures, splits, cracks, irregularities, density or shape differences, and so on. So use these charts as guides, but always err on the side of caution and lower the speed if in any doubt whatsoever. It is always better to start at a slower speed than is 'optimal' and increase it once you're sure it is safe to do so.



Rule 3

Before starting the lathe, fully rotate the work by hand to make sure the toolrest – which needs to be as close as is practicable – is clear of the spinning work.



Rule 4

Do not wear loose sleeves or items of clothing or jewellery that could potentially get caught in the work. Also, tie long hair back out of the way.



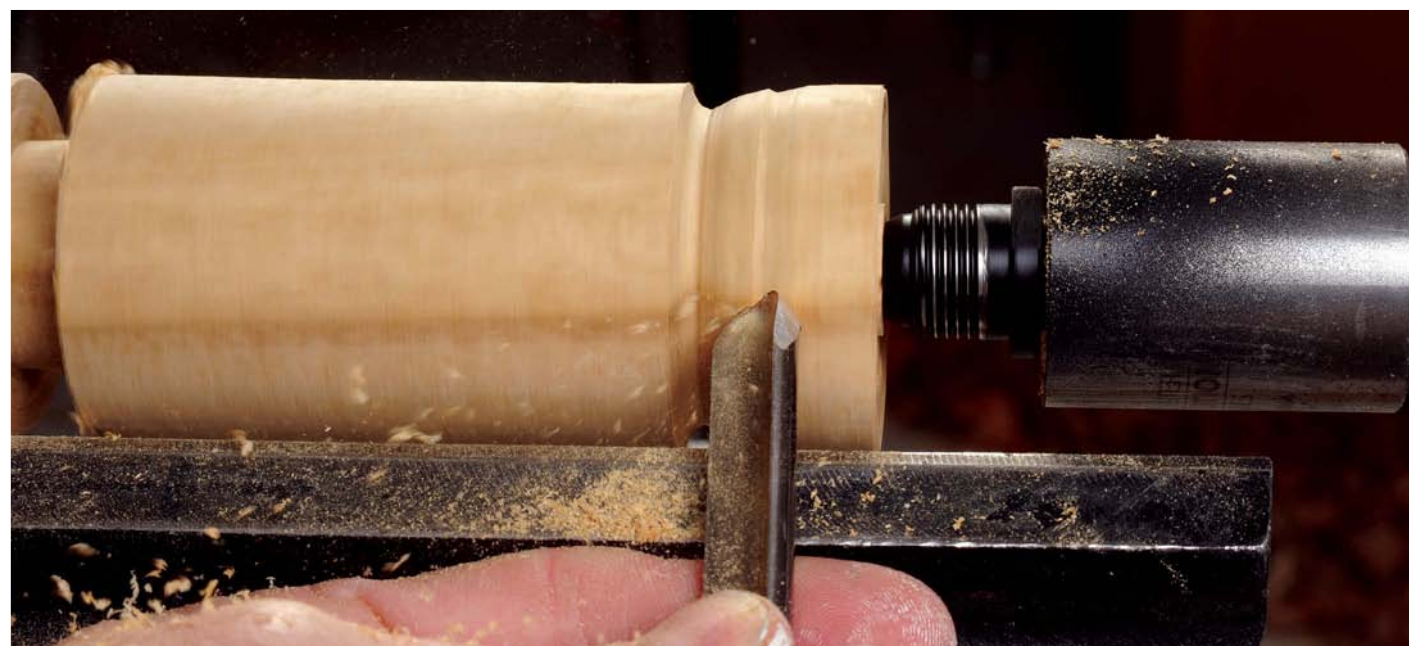
Rule 5

The tools should be in contact with the toolrest prior to it touching the wood and also at the right presentation angle prior to entering into the wood.



Rule 6

When using gouges, always have the flute pointing in the direction of the cut and make sure the cut occurs on the lower wing of the tool. This will afford you optimum control of the tool and provide you with the best cut.



Rule 7

It is best practice to stop the work when moving the toolrest to a new position, or if you need to adjust its height. This is very important when working with out-of-balance, eccentric work, branches and natural-edge work – one wrong move if you shift the rest when the work is rotating could result in a catch on the work.



Rule 8

For maximum control and to obtain the best finish, bevel-rubbing tools such as gouges, parting tools and skew chisels should have the bevel rubbing against the work, so that they cut the wood effectively.



Rule 9

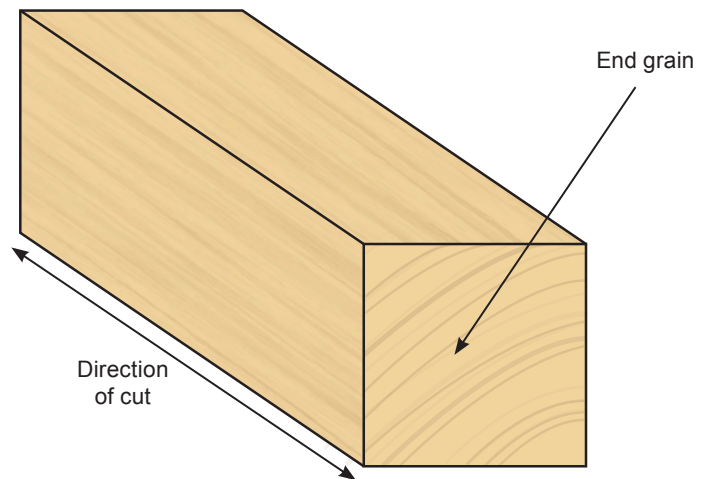
Scrapers should ideally be placed flat on the toolrest and used in trailing mode, i.e. with the handle higher than the cutting edge. This minimises the risk of a catch. Typically on external work the gouge should cut on or just below the centre of the work. For internal work like bowls and goblets, the cut should occur on or just above centre. Never lower the handle to have the cutting edge higher than the tool blade.



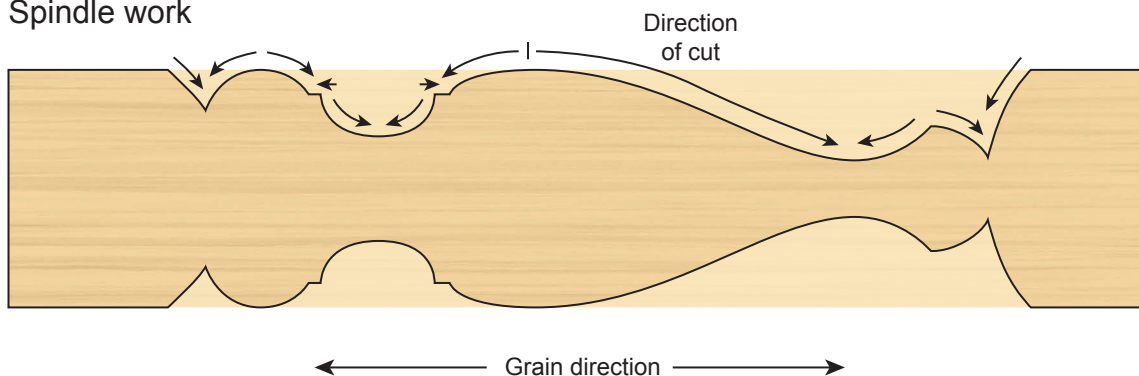
Rule 10

Try to cut the wood with the grain also known as 'downhill'. This will mean that there is always a longer fibre behind the one that is being cut, providing support and minimising the likelihood of grain tear-out. As you can see in the illustration, for spindle work you will be working from the highest section of the shape down to the lowest part of shape to be cut.

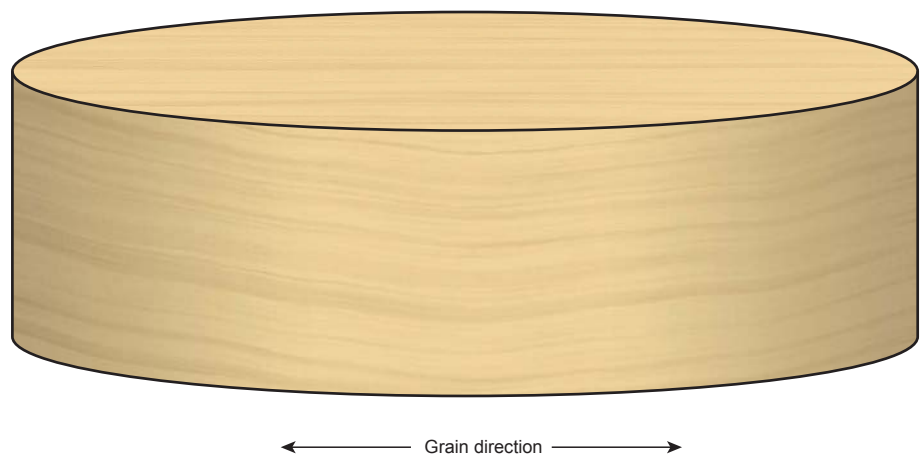
For faceplate/bowl working the outside shape – underside of the piece – you will be working from the smallest down to the largest diameter. The inside section you will be working from the top face of the work down to the smaller inner section. We will look at this further when using tools later in the series. ●



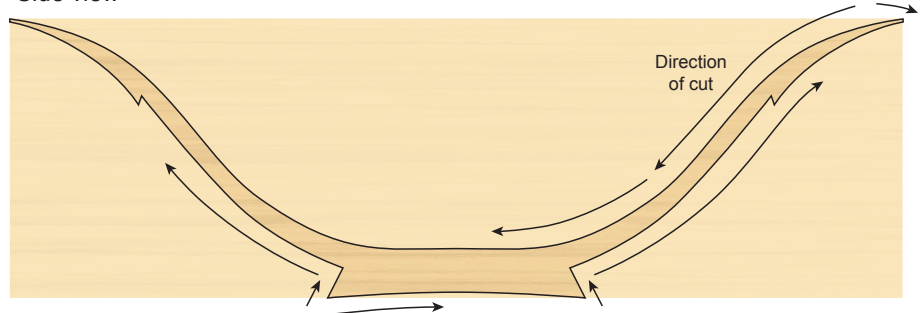
Spindle work



Faceplate turning



Side view



SAFETY

Safety is a state of mind and putting in place a simple, easy to remember checklist means you can check each item off before starting any cutting and working. I have not mentioned everything you need to check but some others would be:

- Is the floor area around the lathe and working area clean with no trip hazards?
- Are you wearing appropriate PPE: eye and/or face protection and dust protection as well as dust extraction in place?
- Is the rest position in relation to the work set correctly?
- If you have changed the work on the lathe do you have the right lathe speed?

I will mention more things to know further on in the series, but only when you are sure you have checked everything and minimised relevant risks should you turn on the lathe and start cutting. It might sound onerous or too problematic, but it is like driving for the first time. There is so much to remember, but once we practice and get in the habit it becomes second nature

Rule 10: Try to cut the wood 'downhill', or with the grain

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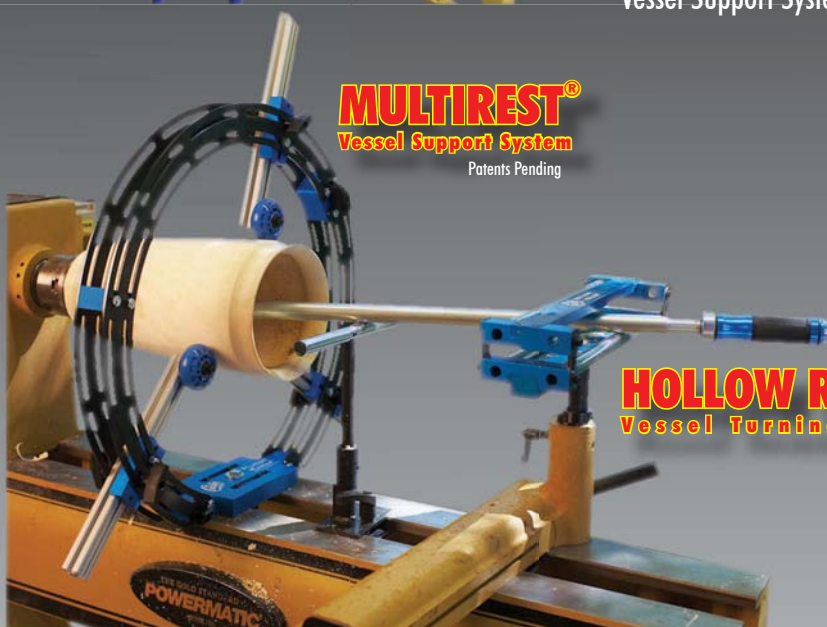
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Norwegian Woodturning Cruise 2014

Mark Baker attended this year's Norwegian Woodturning Cruise. Here, he shares his experiences with us

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK BAKER

Michael Hosaluk demonstrating how he makes boats

Norway – the ancient land of the Vikings – is without doubt a land of contrasts. Its rugged mountain ranges, amazing fjords and waterways, towns, cities and communities that nestle in among them that are a wonderful mixture of ancient and new – oh, and I haven't even started on the breathtaking mix of wildlife yet! All in all, this is a country that has a lot to offer both visually and culturally. Couple that with the inventive idea by Odd Erik Thjømøe – the owner of WWW VERKTØY AS – that this wonderful country has much to offer and there might be the opportunity to combine a cruise that visits various towns, cities, fjords and other wonderful locations of beauty with woodturning, and you now have the gist of how the now world famous and unique experience that is the Woodturning Cruise came about. The cruise this year was the sixth such one – the first one started in 1998. This year, there were passengers from 16 different countries.



Much to see & do

The 11-day cruise itself is primarily about turning, but there are courses available to take – for a charge – concerning carving, knifemaking, pyrography and felt making. The turning instruction is free, but if you want to make something from a special wood, then that is something you have to buy. There are also plenty of opportunities to sign up for various time slots throughout the day so you can go ashore when docked, on excursions and still – if you want to – have some lessons.

Effectively the rear half of Deck B and also part of the lower deck were set aside for stores and displays, which was well stocked and there were lots of manufacturer representatives there to help people,

TOP LEFT: A piece of work by Kare Tangen

TOP RIGHT: A short stay in Svolvær at 11pm was a real treat

ABOVE LEFT: Colwin Way and Margaret Garrard teaching on the sun deck, weather permitting

ABOVE RIGHT: For those crossing the Arctic Circle there was a little ceremony – if they chose. Brent English and many others took part and a lot of fun was had. Neptune's helper was not always kind and some got more than just a spray of water!

show them how to use the products and also demonstration and the turning teaching areas. The other courses were situated in various locations on the boat.

Wonderful scenery

At each stop along the 11-day journey, the ship docked and people came on board to see the sales areas; the demonstrators and the passengers often went ashore to explore and go on excursions. The teaching continued for those who wanted to stay on board and do that if they chose, but likewise, some people just sat, enjoyed the view and relaxed.

You can imagine how busy it got at times when in dock with people coming on board to see what is new and learn and have the opportunity to

buy. There was also a lot of interaction where people shared what they were making. Woodworking is alive and well in Norway and is still very much part of their culture.

Aside from the wondrous landscape and scenery, the highlights for me were the opportunity to meet and talk to people and to learn from each. I liked being part of the teaching team and as with all teaching environments, I learned things too.

The trip is unique and unlike anything else you are likely to experience. The combination of all the different things will appeal if you want to do something different, and rest assured, the cruise will certainly offer you that. Odd Erik is looking to organise another cruise for 2017. Watch this space.



Just some of the pieces on display in the gallery. There was certainly a variety and a real visual treat to see



Mike Gibson was one of the team of demonstrators



Odd Erik had a wind operated automaton created on the last trip. This year, it was Mette's turn to have one created by Jim Sterling. When the blades turned the effigy gyrated its hips, as though it was disco dancing

COMMENTS FROM OTHER PASSENGERS

“The best of both worlds”

When I stepped on board *M V Gann* in Stavanger on 11 August, I was not sure what to expect. I had booked on the Woodturning Cruise for the first time. We were going to cruise up to the North Cape and back to Stavanger over the next 12 days and I was quite excited. On board were some of the best turners in the world, including the likes of Richard Raffan, Nick Agar, Rolly Munro and Mark Baker, along with about two dozen others, perhaps not as well known, but equally talented.

I was not disappointed. I was on a lathe four or five times getting instruction, hints and tips and when not actually turning, I was watching some great turners and learning all the time. When not involved in the woodturning, I went ashore at some lovely locations and went on some fantastic excursions. Norway really does have stunning scenery. This trip really was the best of both worlds and I thoroughly recommend it.

Ian Ballance



PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER HILLS

There are lots of other activities for non-woodturning partners, such as felting

“A wonderful experience”

My wife and I have recently returned from a wonderful experience on the Woodturning Cruise 2014. We met experts in many fields and made new friends from all over the world. One of the side benefits was the range of activities for non-woodturning partners. I'm not sure how long it will take me to forgive my wife for making a felt troll that looks like me!

We had opportunities to learn from hands-on time with real experts – in my case Stuart Mortimer, Mark Baker and Terry Martin. I have some strange, thin wet-birch (*Betula pendula*) products slowly drying out at home.

We enjoyed seeing Norway in summer – even if not ‘bright summer’ – as a contrast to winter cruising. Unfortunately the North Cape was mainly grey and misty, but some of the land excursions were fantastic. The coastal towns like Alesund and Bergen were delightful. However, for me the Trollstigen – The Troll's Steps or Troll's Footpath, as it is otherwise known – scenic route was truly awesome. Would we go again? Yes, almost certainly. We've already contacted Odd Erik Thjømøe who organises the cruises. Hopefully, the next one will be in 2017.

Peter Hills



Passengers could try their hand and learn various techniques in teaching areas. Creating spirals with Stuart Mortimer was one option



Tromsø overlooking the central waterway and bridge towards the ice/arctic cathedral



Picturesque Bergen had lots for people to talk about and see



People also had the chance to go fishing. While only a few were caught, I believe Colwin caught the largest; the catch of the day went to Bob Neill



The Trollfjord was a prime example of rugged and snow-capped mountains



The scenery is simply stunning with rugged landscapes and islands aplenty

CONTACT

This year's on-board auction raised over £9,000 for Cancer Research. For more information, see www.woodturningcruise.com; for more photos and stories, see: www.facebook.com/woodturningcruise

DEMONSTRATORS

Asmund Vignes – woodturning
Bob Neill – pyrography
Colwin Way – woodturning
Cynthia & Michael Gibson – woodturning & pyrography
Hans Holmen – woodturning
Inge Hagensen – knifemaking
James Barry – Trend diamond sharpening
Jan Tore Solberg – woodturning
Jim Stirling – scrollsaw
Jostein Tvedt – woodcarving
Knut Sandvik – woodworking
Lars Tveit – knifemaking
Magne Grude – woodturning
Margaret Garrard – woodturning
Mark Baker – woodturning
Michael Hosaluk – woodturning
Nick Agar – woodturning
Richard Raffan – woodturning
Rolly Munro – woodturning
Stuart Mortimer – woodturning
Terry Martin – woodturning
Theo Haralampou – woodturning
Tone Tvedt – felting

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The next Woodturning Cruise will be held in 2017 – check the website for further information ●

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Sierra Elegant Beauty Black Titanium/Platinum Pen Kit w/ Polymer Clay Blank



Desk clock & calendar

Philip Greenwood makes a desk clock and a desk calendar

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WENDY GREENWOOD



This article shows you two projects that can be made with small pieces of timber, often bits left over from a previous project. The main expense is the inserts you will have to buy for these items. Both the desk clock and calendar make ideal gifts for friends and family and are ideal for selling as well! The insert can be found in local woodturning shops or online at several suppliers.

I have been asked how you make the hole for the desk clock to fit in. There are two ways depending on the size of hole required. You may find the hole required corresponds to a drill size you have or can buy. If you intend on making a few, then this is the best and quickest way and the way I make mine in my workshop. Just make sure that if you have a swivelling headstock it is lined up perfectly with the tailstock, if not you will experience vibration and an oversized hole, meaning that the insert will fall out. The way I am showing you means that no matter what size hole is required,

you will be able to turn it. Once you have the technique this can be applied to many items. With a piece of scrap timber I will show you how to finish the opposite end without the need for any additional jaws. The flat can be completed by using a piece of timber with some abrasives glued on and sanded by hand, instead of the disc that I use. The timber is a piece of branch wood, so the grain will be running parallel to the lathe bed meaning that this will be turned with spindle tools.

The calendar is going to be made with cross grain timber, meaning that a bowl gouge will be used on this item to complete most of the turning. One point with cross grain timber, when using inserts, is that the timber is fully dried, if not when it does dry fully it will shrink and may damage the insert. Even though the timber I use is fully dry I still leave a very small gap around the outside of the insert to accommodate any movement if placed in a very dry atmosphere.

The timber for the clock is apple (*Malus sylvestris*), which came from a museum garden after a storm around four years ago. The timber for the calendar is yew (*Taxus baccata*), which has been in my workshop for years so this is fully dry and down to 10% moisture content when tested.

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 runs courses at his workshop.

Email: philip@woodturningintoart.co.uk

Web: www.woodturningintoart.co.uk

DESK CLOCK & CALENDAR DIMENSIONS

INFORMATION

TIME TAKEN & COST

Time taken: 60 mins for both

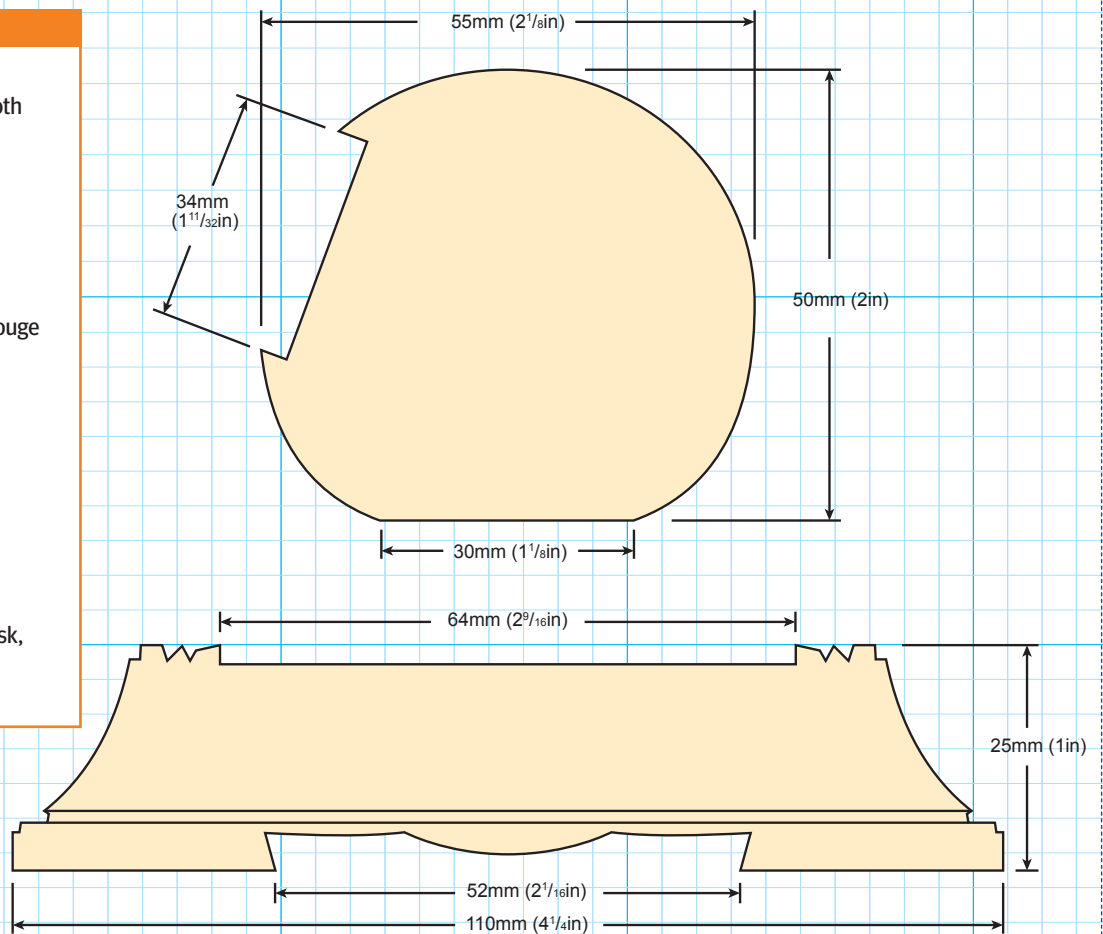
Cost: £3.50

TOOLS REQUIRED

- 10mm bowl gouge
- 3mm parting tool
- 19mm skew chisel
- 19mm spindle roughing gouge
- 10mm spindle gouge with a fingernail profile

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

- Chuck
- Screw chuck
- Steb centre
- Revolving centre
- Abrasives
- PPE: latex gloves, facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction



DESK CLOCK

1 Find the centres at both ends to help location when placing between centres. Once located, lock the tailstock in place and then advance the revolving centre into the end of the apple and tighten sufficiently to engage the teeth on the steb centre

2 Use a spindle roughing gouge to turn it round. Mine has moved while drying, so needs truing up. Even though it is a roughing cut, I am still rubbing the bevel to give good tool control. Remove all high spots

3 Use a parting tool to turn a spigot to match the chuck jaws' diameter – take more than one cut to widen the width if using a thin parting tool. Once you have the correct diameter, you need to place a dovetail on the spigot to match the profile of the jaws. This is carried out with a skew chisel laid flat on the toolrest and using the long point to cut the dovetail

4 Held in the chuck, clean the end with a spindle gouge, keep bevel contact throughout. Repeat until the end is clean

5 Use a pair of callipers to measure the clock back; this is to determine the recess diameter needed for the insert to fit. Use the calliper to mark this dimension on the blank face, then use a pencil to highlight the mark and double check before the next stage

6 Use the parting tool to part into the depth needed – in my case this was 6mm deep – but check what is needed for your inset. You can see I have cut on the inside of the pencil line. You can then remove the waste in the centre using the parting tool taking several cuts, or use a gouge to remove the centre waste

7 Switch the lathe off and offer up the clock insert to the recess, to check the fit. At this stage it should not fit, but best to make sure. Use the skew chisel laid flat on the toolrest to open the recess diameter up slightly, stop the lathe and check the fit, continue until the insert fits in the recess

8 Using the spindle gouge, start shaping the outside of the clock. Starting at the right-hand corner take small cuts and work towards the recess. Continue until you are one-third of the way along the length from the right. With the grain running parallel to the lathe bed, always turn from the largest diameter to the smallest. This is only rough shaping at this stage; you are looking for a ball shape

9 Now, start shaping the left side, this is just a repeat of the right side. You can see I have turned some from the part near the chuck to give some clearance – again just rough this to a ball shape

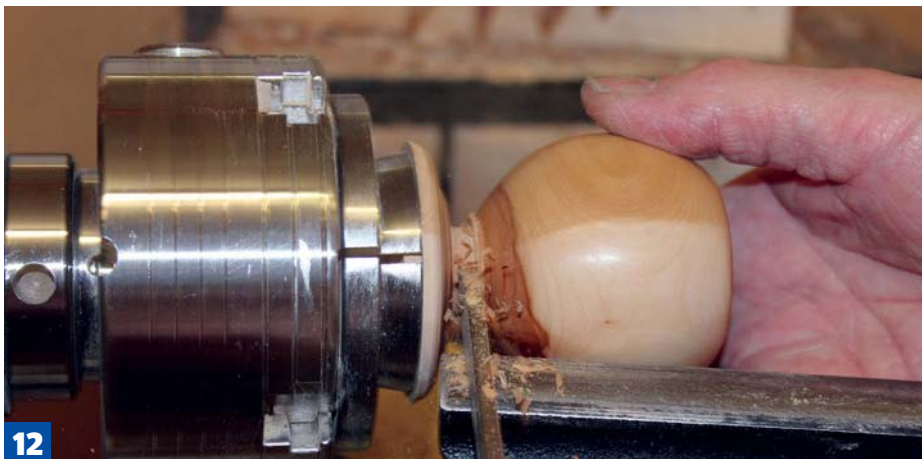
10 With a sharp gouge finish the right-hand side on the clock, going right down to the opening of the recess. Keep bevel contact all the way through the cut to achieve an even radius and clean surface; this will minimise sanding at the next stage

11 Now, finish the left-hand side with the spindle gouge, looking for an even flow from the right-hand side to the left-hand side and making any adjustments as needed. There should be no transitional line in the centre where the two halves meet. Now sand through the grades of abrasive until all marks have been removed, then apply sanding sealant

Handy hints

1. Be aware of the fumes that can build up in your workshop when using finishing products. It is important to properly ventilate your workshop if using a lot of products. Also, always read the safety labels





12

12 Place the toolrest as close to the work as you can, but check before you switch the lathe on that the rest will not catch on any part of the work or the chuck. Hold the parting tool in your left hand and hold the clock in your right hand; this way you don't have to reach over the chuck with your left hand and arm. Slowly part in until the clock is parted from the waste



13



14

13 I am using the waste still in the chuck to create a spigot the same size as the clock recess; this will enable me to finish the back of the clock. Once close to the diameter, check the fit, which needs to be very tight. This method is called a 'jam chuck'

14 Now held on the jam chuck, take very small cuts to finish off the clock back. If you try to take a large cut, then the clock may come off the jam chuck. Blend into the upper part and keep the flowing curve, then once happy, sand and seal as before

15 Place a flat on the bottom of the clock at an angle, so the clock face slopes slightly upwards. This can be completed as shown, with a sanding disc held in the chuck, using a wood file or any other safe method

16 The finished clock should look something like this

CALENDAR



15



16

17 Mount the disc for the calendar. With this being a thin piece of timber, use a packing piece to reduce the length of the screw

18 True up the outside of the disc with the bowl gouge. As you can see, only a small cut is needed to clean the disc. Face the gouge flutes slightly in the direction of cut

Handy hints

- 2.** The dust from yew can cause health problems as many timbers can, so use a dust mask and also wear eye protection
- 3.** You should always throw used abrasives away if worn; using worn out abrasives will only cause heat to build up and can cause heat check in end grain; this can happen in yew
- 4.** This project is ideal for using up small pieces of timber that have been left over from previous larger projects
- 5.** It is important to let the sanding sealant dry fully before using a buffing system or applying a wax finish
- 6.** Make sure your tools are sharp when taking a finishing cut; this will help you to achieve the best finish possible



17



18

19 Turn the toolrest around so it is parallel with the bottom of the disc. This will be the base of the calendar, so this needs to be flat or slightly concave towards the centre for it to sit flat on a table. Take the minimum amount off to clean the bottom



19

20 First, mark the diameter of the recess needed to fit the chuck jaws, then use a parting tool to make the first cut. Use the bowl gouge to remove the waste from the centre. Once this is done, use the long point of the skew chisel to cut the dovetail; this is used flat on the toolrest. Now, sand this through the various grades of abrasives and apply sanding sealant



20

21 Fit the disc on the chuck in the recess you have just formed and clean the face with the bowl gouge. This photo shows the way to measure the calendar to fit in the recess; you will be able to transfer the radius to the front of the disc



21

22 Line up the right-hand leg of the calliper with the centre hole of the disc and mark a line where the left leg is with a pencil, then draw a full circle with the pencil. Use the parting tool to cut the recess and remove the remaining waste with the bowl gouge. Check the fit; I would suggest a 2mm clearance around the calendar, which will allow for any slight movement



22

**“Check the fit;
I would suggest
a 2mm clearance...”**

23 Place a cove on the edge of the disc, which you will add detail to later. Leave a flat of 11mm on the top face and 8mm at the base; this will be slightly reduced when you take a finishing cut



23

24 Sharpen the gouge if needed to take the final cut; take this slowly to achieve a fine finish. If you have any ridges still, use a round-nose scraper to remove them; this will reduce sanding needed at the end



24

25 Use the parting tool to cut a small shoulder at the top and bottom of the cove to add detail. I only part in 2mm wide and deep. Then use the long point of the skew chisel to place two 'V' cuts on the top face to add more detail



25

26 Sand through the grades and apply sanding sealant to the disc. Once dry, use a three-part buffing system to finish both the clock and calendar. The finished calendar should look something like this ●



26

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In the workshop with... Paul Howard

We find out more about the turning work of former engineer **Paul Howard**

Paul's is an interesting story as he is not only a woodturner, but he also comes up with the ideas for and manufactures his own tools. In his own words, Paul spends much of his time teaching, demonstrating and continuing to develop ideas of how to further his woodturning skills.

Tell us about your background

I left school at 16 and started an apprenticeship working on electronic and electrical equipment. After I had served my time, the company I worked for was closed down so I moved around a few companies doing a similar type of work. Eventually I was made redundant from a small electronics company and started

working for myself; during the early days I would take on all sorts of things to keep my head above water. One company in particular started to consume most of my time as they started to build their own machines for the production of automotive parts. This was the beginning of a great adventure for me as I ended up managing the electrical design team to produce the machines for their own in-house production.

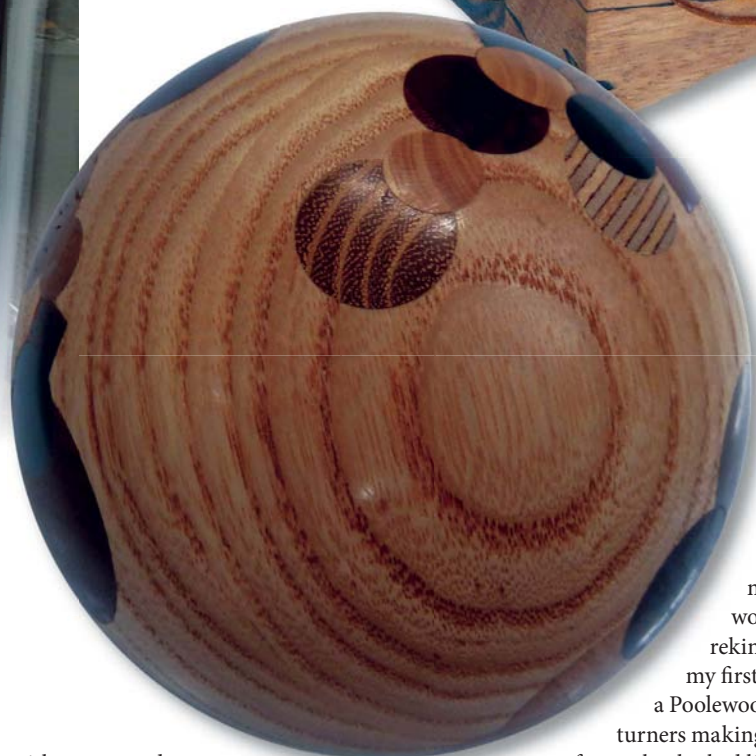
As the company grew, I ended up going to America for them to install and help to run a new plant for several years. By this time, I had gained a great deal of experience in not only electrical but also mechanical, hydraulics and anything



'Pagoda Fluted Box', oak (*Quercus robur*), 80mm square x 120mm high



Sphere in a zebrano (*Microberlinia brazzavillensis*) cube – all one piece – 75mm cube



Sphere in ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with an assortment of other timbers used for the inserts

to do with automated systems. I am now semi-retired and have more time to teach and develop ideas for woodturning and making jigs and things that interest me. I now teach woodturning and do a range of demonstrations at local clubs.

How, why and when did you start turning?

My first experience of woodturning was at school where we had a choice of either metal or woodwork classes – I chose woodwork. This was mostly, from what I remember, using a scraper to produce spindle and faceplate pieces. I think it is a great shame that many schools do not seem to teach woodturning anymore for what I think are unfounded reasons.

After leaving school, it was not until

the late 1980s when I went to one of the woodworking shows that my interest in woodturning was rekindled. I purchased my first lathe at this show, a Poolewood 28-40. I saw turners making interesting things from what looked like very rough and uninteresting pieces of wood; I think from this point on the seed was sown and has been growing ever since. After a while I started to meet other woodturners, I joined a club and the AWGB. It now seems that wherever I am I seem to meet another woodturner.

What and who have been the greatest influences in your work?

I think the people who had the greatest influence on my work in the early days were the late Tony Witham and Keith Rowley, but as time goes on I think so many of the professional and amateur turners from all over the world have made me think far more about the shape, form and quality of my work. The technology available to us now also has a great influence on

the things I like to experiment with, CAD drawing systems, the new tools with carbide tips and so many other things, too numerous to mention.

If you were to offer one sage piece of advice to someone what would it be?

Join a club and an association and then attend as many demonstrations and seminars as possible. Do not be afraid to ask what you may think is a silly question.

I have asked all sorts of questions to various turners and they are only too happy to help. This will improve your knowledge and skill in woodturning; you will also make a lot of friends. The camaraderie among woodturners is awesome.

What music and which book are you into?

I like most types of music, but since I've been working in the USA for several years I now listen to a lot of country and western.

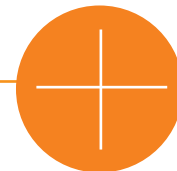
I am currently reading Rod Stewart's autobiography; I find it interesting to see how peoples' lives change and develop as they get older and find out about the things they are interested in other than what they are well known for. It goes without saying that *Woodturning* magazine is always a good read!

What is your silliest mistake?

Over the years I have made many mistakes in my woodturning, but I have always learnt from them. Trying to take shortcuts will usually end up with a disaster or a poorly finished piece. I think the silliest mistake was driving for about an hour to a club meeting to find the car park empty and nobody around because I had arrived on the wrong day.

What has been your greatest challenge?

My greatest challenge has been at the design stage of a piece. When I look at some of my early work I think 'how did you come up with such a poor design?' I am sure the reason is that when you first start turning the fascination of seeing the shavings flying off and the ever-changing shape of the wood leads you to adding so many features that the design is never



really considered.

As my skill and experience has grown, design is considered at the very beginning of a piece. My inspiration comes from other turners' work, architecture, sculpture, nature, etc. The Internet is also a great source of inspiration and information, all for free. I am constantly amazed at the new ideas that we see at shows and seminars – the possibilities seem endless.

Name one thing on your 'to do' list.

This is a very hard question to answer because as I get older my 'to do' list gets longer, even though I am getting through loads of them. To choose just one would be to go to the Utah Symposium home of Craft Supplies USA. The late Dale Nish critiqued one of my pieces at an AWGB Seminar several years ago, what a great character and woodturner he was!

Tell us about the piece you are currently working on.

I have just started working on a pair of goblets for the Worshipful Company of Woodturners' competition. These will need to be something special, so I have started to think about different ideas for the piece. The first consideration is whether it will be made of multiple parts or all from one solid billet of timber. The shape of the bowl, base and stem all have to be thought about. I need to think about the design around the intersection of all the elements and whether to add other materials at these points or let that make it all look too busy. The type of timber or timbers used will have to be carefully chosen if it is to be a functional or decorative piece. So you can see that even with a fairly simple project like a goblet so many things have to be considered. I find it best to make some sketches and trial pieces first.

What is the one piece of equipment or tool you would not be without and why?

Other than my woodturning lathe and normal tools, I think my metalworking equipment is

something I would not like to be without as it has opened up so many opportunities to make special tools jigs and even turn wood to a very high precision. I have seen some ideas from an American woodturner called Bill Ooms whose work fascinates me, much of his work is done on a small metalworking lathe.

If you could change one thing what would it be and why?

If I could change one thing it would be to have spent more time in the workshop with my Father when he was around. He was a toolmaker and had his own small business when he was working. I know I could have learnt a lot from him as he made all sorts of things out of his head, he made moulds for casting model train wheels, a small machine to make the little brass ladders all fully automatic and so many other interesting things.



ABOVE: Paul using his fluting jig

ABOVE LEFT: Pedestal vase, banksia nut (*Banksia grandis*) with an African blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) stem, 150mm high x 180mm wide

What is your favourite type of turning?

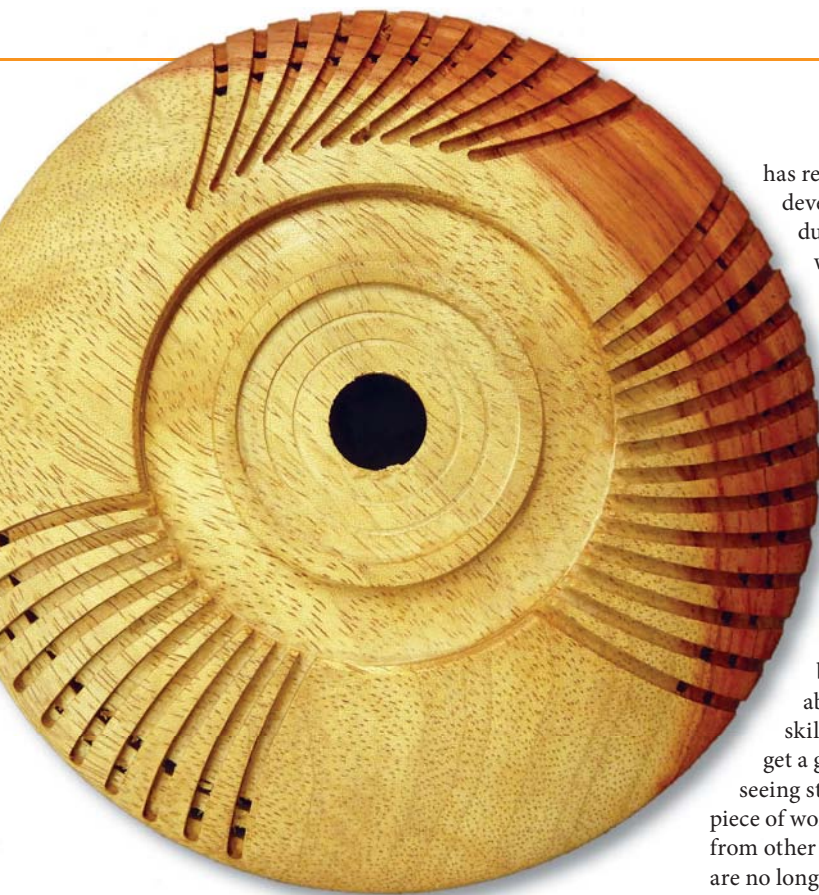
I like spindle turning as I believe if you can master the techniques needed to produce good quality parts consistently then most of the other types of turning will come easy. When I teach beginners to turn I always start with spindle work as it helps students to learn how to control the tool properly right from the start.

If you could have one wish, what would you wish for?

This is not an easy question to answer as very materialistic things come to mind but I think good health is something I would wish for so I can carry on turning and passing on my knowledge for many years to come.

If you could have one piece of equipment what would it be and why?

A piece of equipment I would like to have would be a good quality airbrush



system as I have yet to venture into the world of colouring wood using this method. I have seen Binh Pho and Joey Richardson's work at demonstrations and have some ideas on how I would integrate this into some of my work.

Does your engineering background help with your turning?

I think my engineering background has had an influence on my turning; the precision I like to work to and the ideas that I have come across in electrical and mechanical engineering can be used in woodturning. The downside is in some ways my background

ABOVE: Experimental piece made using Paul's fluting jig to decorate a padauk (*Pterocarpus dalbergioides*) platter, 250mm dia.

has restricted the artistic development of my turning due to always having to work to precise limits and deadlines. I now study artistic work from other turners much more closely and try to incorporate some ideas.

Why did you start teaching?

I started teaching as I have always seemed to be able to pass on my knowledge in my working career. Now, being semi-retired, I am able to pass on more of my skills to woodturners and I get a great deal of pleasure from seeing students produce their first piece of work. I have learnt so much from other turners who unfortunately are no longer with us; it is good to be in a position to pass on their ideas and knowledge to keep the craft alive.

Problem solving seems to crop up a lot in our conversation. Is this something you enjoy?

Problem solving comes naturally to me as for most of my working life I have had to repair things or improve the performance in one way or another to get better results. I get frustrated if I find something that is poorly designed and hard to use, which, with just a bit more thought could be much better. I find myself modifying all sorts of things. ●

E: paulhotm@hotmail.co.uk

W: www.paulhowardwoodturner.co.uk

PAUL'S HOME-MADE FLUTING JIG



The jig suits lathes with a spindle height from 80-310mm and the jig also has a micro height adjustment attachment included. The manual can be downloaded from Paul's website, which gives all the information on using and setting the jig.

The index system has a 60, 48, 36 and 14-hole pattern. Most spindle sizes can be accommodated with the appropriate adaptor, which is supplied to suit customers' needs at no extra cost. The index plate is positioned to the required point and then can be locked in place. Small radial adjustments can be made to realign a piece or to add detail between index position by sliding the locking mechanism across the bed of the lathe. The locking mechanism can be fitted to lathes with a flat bed or round bed bars.

Handy hints

1. Always work safe. Before starting the lathe, ask yourself 'have I checked the toolrest, tailstock and chuck for tightness, and most important the speed setting?'
2. Use good-quality PPE equipment, particularly eye and face protection
3. Join a club to meet other turners
4. At demonstrations, try to study the tool techniques not only at the cutting end but also the way the turner holds and positions the tool in relationship to their body
5. Take your work to club meetings so people can see what you do as it will help them and you to hear their comments

LIKES & DISLIKES

Likes:

- To see the shape and a good finish forming on a piece of wood from a sharp tool
- The expression on a new turner's face when they have produced a turned item
- To experiment with new ideas
- I like to read about woodturners and how they became involved in turning and how they decided on their signature pieces

Dislikes:

- Well-made but poorly finished turnings
- Badly made tools and equipment



Kit & Tools

A mixture of tests and press releases showing the latest tools and products on the market. *All prices include VAT, correct at time of going to press*

Pete Bouclier tests this impressive long hole boring kit from Axminster Tools & Machinery

Test

Axminster Evolution series long hole boring kit

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER BOUCLIER

Straight out of the box, the weight of the 178mm long rubber-handled high-grade steel handle becomes apparent – this was promising. The boring bar is essentially a custom-made Austrian HSS-M2 steel, 8mm parabolic fluted drill bit, which tapers to 7.9mm where it is fixed to the 6.5mm steel bar. This gives it a very useful 880mm overall length. Being a tool junkie, I also purchased the matching 25mm counterbore drive and the system's hollow revolving centre, which comes with two removable points in two sizes and three chip ejection ports.

In use

I decided to test this system against a standard and also new shell auger, side by side, on the same piece of end grain oak (*Quercus robur*), at 1,000rpm. The cam lock handle is simple in use, works well and eliminates the prospect of touching the counterbore by simply marking the shaft and sliding the handle as a depth stop. The rubber feels almost sticky and comfortable and I did think I would like to be able to apply more pressure for speed purposes, if I had several lamps to make. This was unnecessary as the cutting speed, when equal force was applied to both tools, ensured that the revolution was at least twice as fast as the shell auger and cut

a good straight hole. It was very impressive in this respect and actually does not need to be forced, even on hard oak.

The ejection ports on the hollow centre work well, ejecting the chips efficiently. After use, the tailstock still needs some air to blow out the remaining swarf, but no system will eliminate this. I did try this with a standard hollow centre and it proved a much, much slower process overall and not very efficient as there was too much swarf left inside the tailstock. So the evolution hollow centre is, in my view, a necessary purchase. The counterbore worked well, but even I resisted buying the additional cutting head as the old trick of using the counterbore itself to cut a mortise worked fine for me, although this is probably a slower option.

Verdict

Axminster has made a very impressive hollowing system – the quality of the steel overall is high. It should last any turner a very long time. If you have a run of lamps to make, then this will save a considerable amount of production time. Axminster should, though, in my opinion, have included the matching hollow centre as part of the kit as I do feel it is needed to get the full benefit of this system. The boring bar and handle kit,

the hollow centre and the counterbore may be a little expensive for some, but the quality in use really does shine through.



Axminster long hole boring kit, plus optional extras of Evolution Hollow Live Chip Ejection and Counterbore Drive

INFORMATION

Scores

Ease of use: 95% **Versatility:** 85%
Build quality: 97%

Details

Price: £62.45 – not including accessories
Contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery
Tel: 03332 406 406
Web: www.axminster.co.uk

JET JML-1015VS LATHE

This new variable speed lathe from Jet is very smooth running and has the power and precision to turn any number of projects, ranging from pens to platters, boxes and bowls.

Powered by a 375W variable speed DC motor, it drives a strong spindle through three belt pulley ratios, giving a good range of speeds. The electronic variable speed control system has sensitive feedback and the speed within each ratio is varied by a simple control knob located on the right-hand side of the bed. Speed ratio changing is easy with convenient doors giving full access to the belt and pulleys; a grab handle is used to raise the motor and to re-tension the belt.

The bedway is precision ground to allow smooth sliding of the tailstock and toolrest. A camlock mechanism allows tool-free adjustments of the tailstock and toolrest base. The tailstock also has a 2MT internal bore, the spindle having 50mm travel and is self ejecting. The spindle has a M33 x 3.5mm thread and a 2MT internal taper. The headstock also has 24 integrated indexing positions.

The standard version of this lathe – the JML-1015 – has many similarities. It has a standard 375W motor driving a spindle through six belt pulleys, which will actually give an adequate range of speeds for most projects. Belt speed changing is a simple and easy task, enabling the correct speed to be used. Both are supplied with 80mm faceplate, 2MT drive and tailstock centres and knockout bar.



Contact: BriMarc Tools & Machinery
Tel: 03332 406 967
Web: www.brimarc.com



MAKITA DCL500 CORDLESS CYCLONE VACUUM

This advanced cordless vacuum cleaner is suitable for use in domestic or office environments and is powered by an 18V Lithium-ion battery, from 1.5Ah up to 4Ah. The DCL500 generates a maximum sealed suction of 6.6kPa with a maximum airflow of 1.3 cubic metres per minute. When fitted with a 4Ah battery this vacuum cleaner will run for 40 minutes on the low speed setting and 16 minutes on high.

This technically advanced vacuum uses the cyclone filtration system, which employs centrifugal force to separate dust from the air as the first of a two-stage process. The large dust particles are removed at this stage and then the airflow is directed through a HEPA filter with high filtration capacity to clean the air before exhausting from the machine. The large dust particles are collected in the dust cup of the cyclone section and simply removed by pulling the dust cup release lever and pushing the release button. When running, the maximum noise generated by this useful vacuum is just 64dB. The DCL500 is also very compact and weighs just 3.8kg.

Contact: Makita
Tel: 01908 211 678
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Please note that all products from USA to UK are subject to shipping & taxes

PRO XL ACRYLIC GLOSS LAQUER

Available from Mark Raby Woodfinishing, this high build acrylic lacquer incorporates HVLP – high volume low pressure – style technology, thus giving a very high build and excellent coverage. This product has very good water resistance, is more durable than traditional acrylic lacquers and also has excellent UV resistance. It is supplied with an adjustable spray fan nozzle and a traditional spray nozzle. According to Mark, this product lasts up to four times longer than traditional aerosols.



Contact: Mark Raby Woodfinishing
Tel: 07704 940 126
Web: www.markrabywoodfinishing.co.uk

THE DESERT STORM PEN BLANK KIT

Rockler Woodworking and Hardware has introduced a new laser-cut, inlay pen blank kit, which features the Desert Storm service ribbon symbol to honour men and women who served in the United States military during that conflict. The pen blank kit features dyed, laser-cut wood pieces that comprise the Desert Storm service ribbon emblem when it is assembled and turned. This kit is the latest addition to the line of Service Ribbon Pen Blank Kits Rockler already offers, which includes Vietnam, Iraq/Afghanistan and Purple Heart kits.

The kit contains dyed, laser-cut basswood pieces that form the colourful service ribbon design when assembled as part of the pen barrel. The kit fits Manhattan-style pen hardware kits. Each kit includes a set of instructions.

Contact: Rockler Woodworking and Hardware
Tel: (001) 800 279 4441
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TORMEK T-4 – REDEFINING PRECISION

This second generation compact sharpening machine from Tormek, Sweden takes precision and stability to a whole new level. Vital functions like the motor and the main shaft are mounted in the zinc cast top, which also includes the integrated sleeves for the Universal Support. The result is a rigid machine with a significantly improved level of precision for the Universal Support, which is the base from which the Tormek jigs operate. Tormek have been able to improve the rigidity by 300%. The new cast zinc top section also has an integrated handle, which makes the machine easy to move and place when necessary and the new metal machine plate is a convenient place to store the Tormek AngleMaster, which has magnetic feet. The necessary start-up accessories include the Stone Grader SP-650, handbook, DVD, AngleMaster and honing compound. Customise and configure your Tormek T-4 with the Tormek jigs to fit your specific sharpening needs.

Contact: BriMarc Tools & Machinery
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TREND COMPLETE SHARPENING KIT

Designed by world renowned expert James Barry, who has more than 25 years' experience in the diamond sharpening abrasive industry, the new Trend Complete Sharpening Kit offers solutions to sharpening techniques and problems. The kit allows anyone the ability to sharpen tooling in seconds with precision diamond whetstones and means no-one needs to be wary of in-house maintenance.

The kit comes complete with a double-sided credit card sized stone, 75mm taper file, 100ml lapping fluid, cleaning block, non-slip mat, instructional DVD and a Sharpening Made Easy booklet. The sharpening stone uses a complex manufacturing procedure where electroplated nickel locks the diamonds to the surface. This product will last for years if combined with the lapping fluid, which with its unique formula helps prolong the life of sharpening stones by preventing the clogging, rusting and subsequent lifting of diamond particles.

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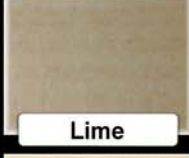
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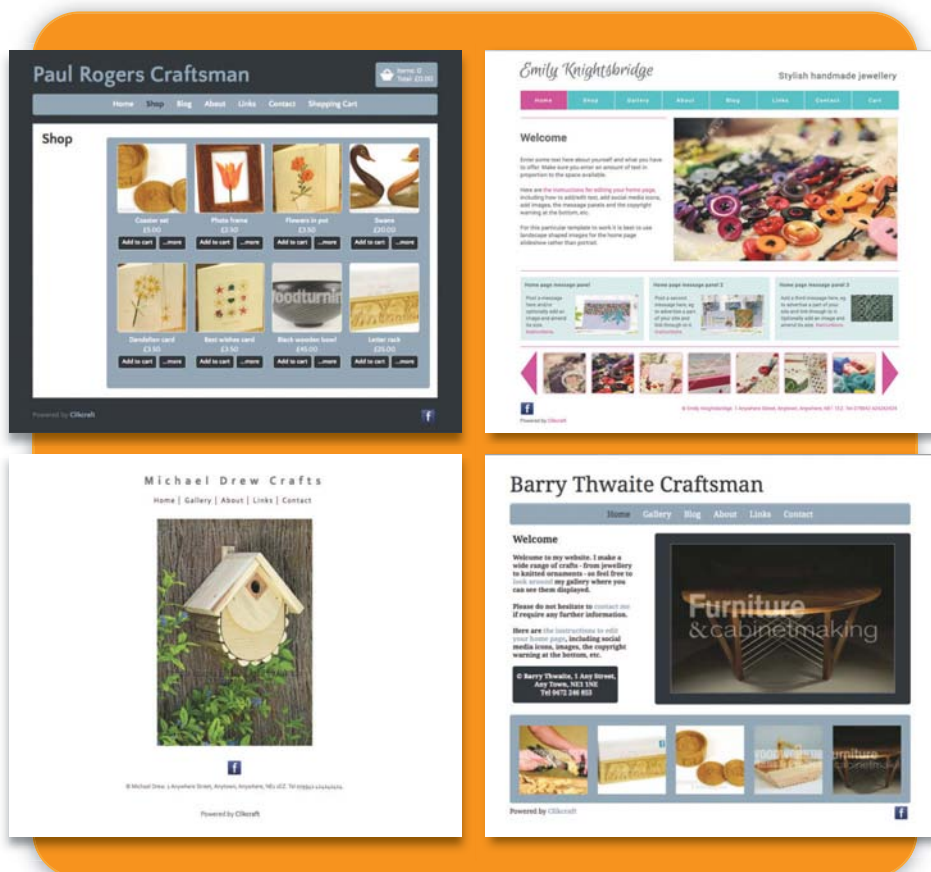
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Laurence Brand shares these two vessels with us, which are made using ebonised ash and brass

PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURENCE BRAND



Working primarily with fine native hardwoods, my work aims to celebrate honest and minimal design, elevate beautiful materials and bring to light the rich process of making. I strive to create elegant, refined objects for the home and am motivated by the work and ethos of designers and craft workers such as Dieter Rams and James Krenov.

The curious relationships between wood and other materials formed the starting point of this body of work. Elegant and harmonious combinations, such as young white ash (*Fraxinus americana*) paired with warm, radiant brass, alongside gritty, industrial cast concrete provide me with an endless supply of inspiration. The interplay between the vessels themselves and the environments they inhabit is also crucially important to

my practice. All the vessels are turned from a fast growing English ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and feature brass components. The vessels are turned in two parts: a base and a stained upper section and they are glued together using flexible silicone based glue. The stain used is a homemade solution, made by dissolving steel wool in vinegar to create iron acetate, which reacts with the tannin in the wood and gives a gunmetal grey colour. A brass disc fits into a rebate in the bottom of the upper section of the vessel and reflects off the interior of the vessel producing a warm glow. The brass band, with its delicate fixing serving as an important decorative element, also hides the glue joint.

There is an element of movement in these pieces; they swivel on conical bases, which allow them to be positioned in an interesting

manner, facing and interacting with each other.

I would encourage anyone to experiment with alternative materials, such as non-ferrous metals, plastics or resins. Through making this work I have found that woodworking techniques and skills are often transferrable to new materials. I am looking forward to further exploring the vessel, experimenting with scale, form, finish and materials.

These pieces were produced for my graduate degree show at Hereford College of Arts and have since been exhibited at New Designers 2014, London. You can see more examples of my work on my website, details of which can be found below. ●

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Vessels in ebonised ash (*Fraxinus americana*) and brass



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