

RICHARD FINDLEY: HOW TO AVOID THOSE DREADED CATCHES

Woodturning

THE WORLD'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR WOODTURNERS

FUNDAMENTALS OF TURNING HOLLOW FORMS

Andy Coates explains
what you need to know

10 top workshop
tips by
David Springett

Turn a rustic beaded
box with **Pat Carroll**

Colwin Way looks
at using pedestals
on work to give
them lift

Kurt Hertzog
Explores shellac
and lacquer
finishes





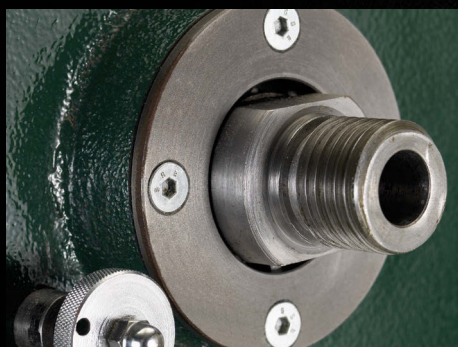
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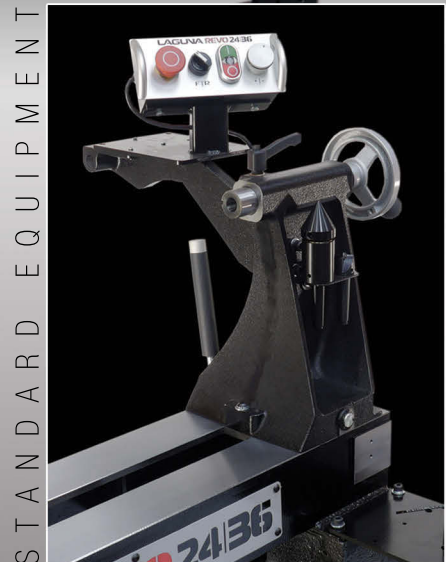
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STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Questions, questions and more questions



There isn't a day goes by when I do not see new challenges or ways of doing things. I am on record as saying I do not like change for change's sake. That just seems a waste

of time to me, but there are always new ways of doing things. In the case of woodwork there is a caveat that needs to be borne in mind when trying something new and that is – is it safe to use that technique?

Now, for beginners knowing what is safe and not safe is a daunting task. There are myriad opinions in magazines, books, web content and such like as far as seeking help or knowledge are concerned, but a similar comment applies. How does one know whether the information is good or bad?

I am so glad that I learned from recommended books and tutored by people who are respected turners rather than now trying to find a route through everything that is available for people to see. Life seemed simpler back then somehow. However, the learning curve of actual turning was not.

Many of the clubs and national organisations have lists of useful video clips, recommended books, mentors or mentoring systems in place for turners to ask questions of, resource lists of companies and so on for people to make use of. If you have access to such things please do make use of those resources. They will all help you in your journey. They will not stop you making mistakes, we all make those, but these resources will help minimise them and also set you on a smoother path to working safely.

Despite people moaning about the safety aspects of turning being mentioned over and over again in publications and media of various sorts, it is something one should be aware of and take precautions to minimise risk. Now, of course people must take



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personal responsibility in their workshops for what they do or do not do and, despite some people's comments otherwise, it is not always someone else's fault if something goes wrong.

You can't blame someone for selling a tool that is designed to be used for a given purpose and then complain that it won't work well or is dangerous if used in another situation. In my apprenticeship I was never allowed to use a tool unless I had been shown how it was meant to be used. Only then was I allowed to use it and yes, of course I use it differently to its intended purpose at times, but I am aware of the risks and make an evaluation accordingly. I have used a screwdriver as a can opener, but I knew the risks. I once saw someone use a woodworking chisel as a can opener and the resulting snapped chisel was definitely his fault. It could have resulted in something far worse.

When we are working with timber that needs holding on a lathe and use tools that work against rotating work generating shavings and dust, as well as using finishing materials, the potential risks are myriad. But, as I say, risks can be managed and minimised.

But please, do not just use one source of

information as far as learning is concerned. Cross check what you have seen with other sources and ask plenty of questions. Someone once told me to make myself a pain in the backside with questions. I remember my children asking 'are we there yet?' when on journeys. It was most annoying, especially after only five minutes of driving with two hours to go. But asking questions is a must. I say 'question everything'. I am always asking why do we do something that way, what are the implications of using another tool for the same job and can we make it easier and safer? That has held me in good stead over the years. The newer you are in your journey the more you will need to ask but, even when more experienced, I can guarantee you will still ask the questions.

Have fun,
Mark

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, or see us on Facebook & Twitter.

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June 2017

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of Andy Coates. See page 33



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HEALTH AND SAFETY

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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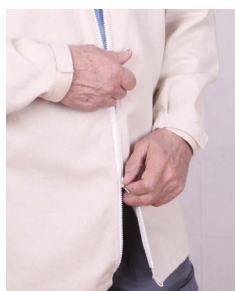
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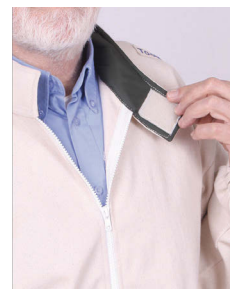
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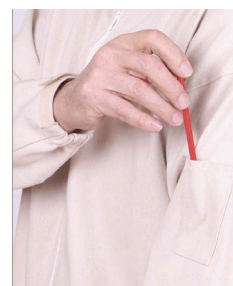
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Those dreaded catches

This month, **Richard Findley** begins a new short series exploring common catches, why they happen and how to avoid them

Catches are the bane of a woodturner's life. All can be going well and, seemingly without reason and usually without warning, bang. Your work has an unsightly scar in it, which will call for minor adjustments at best and a major design change, or even scrapping the work entirely at worst.

In this new series I intend to explore these catches, looking at why they happen and how to avoid them, beginning with the most common catches that occur in spindle work. I will use the three main spindle turning tools – the spindle roughing gouge, the spindle gouge and the skew chisel – and hopefully will be able to shed some light on the issues that are commonly encountered. Often, as with most things in turning, a little knowledge and some tiny adjustments to how the tool is presented to the work is all that is needed to avoid these frustrating catches.

BASIC CATCH AVOIDANCE

Some simple steps can be taken to reduce the chances of catches:

- **Ensure the tool is on the toolrest before touching the wood** – This is the most basic of catches, but is still easy to let happen, often through a lapse in concentration. There's nothing like the bang of a tool to toolrest to remind you that full attention is required at all times.
- **Sharp tools** – I have said this before and I will no doubt say it again, but sharp tools are the cure for the vast majority of turning-related issues. A sharp tool will cleanly and smoothly slice the fibres of the wood, whereas a blunt tool will be harder to control and be less predictable.
- **Toolrest position** – This is less critical the more experienced you become at the lathe, but the forces involved in turning increase as the tool overhang increases over the rest, in turn increasing the risk of a loss of control and so a catch. Keeping the toolrest close to the work will maximise tool control.



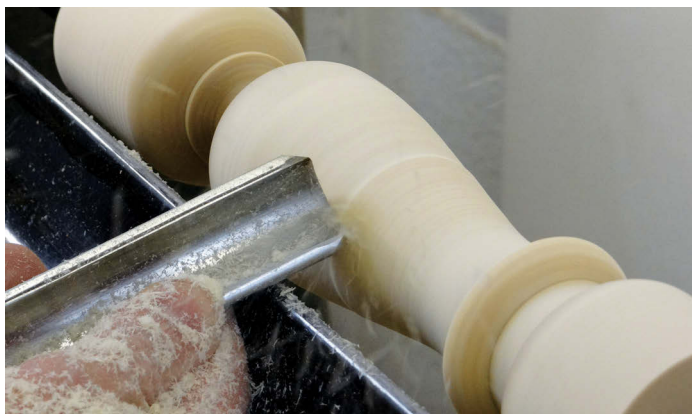
❏ Spindle roughing gouge

The spindle roughing gouge is one of the first to be used in spindle turning. It is largely a simple tool, both in design and the way it is used. For roughing or smoothing cuts in a straight line there is virtually no chance of a catch. In my experience the time to be aware of a catch is when adding more depth into the shaping of a spindle. As the cut progresses and the shape of the work becomes steeper, the tool can become more difficult to control. The reason for a catch is usually that the wrong part of the edge comes into contact with the work, which

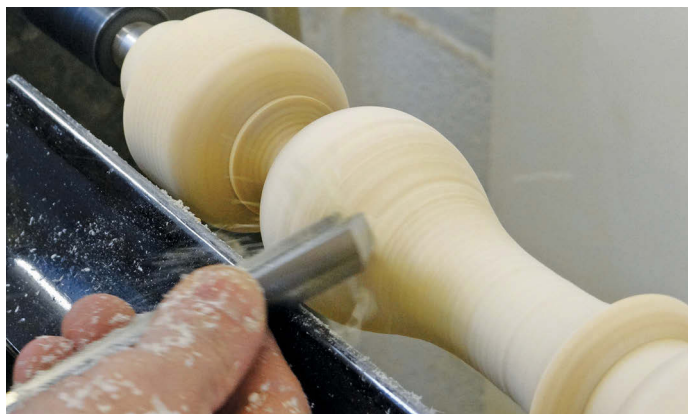
can aggressively grab the tool and pull it back up the slope that is being cut. The larger the diameter of the work, the more chance there is of this happening, as the forces involved increase with the diameter of the work.

The key to success is to keep the flute pointing in the direction of travel and keep the cut over the part of the tool that is in contact with the rest. In the photo below I am cutting downhill from left to right, so the flute is tilted down to the right, but if the left side of the tool contacts with the work, or the cut

moves too far to the left of the cutting edge, the tool will be pulled back uphill and to the left. Depending on how aggressively you are cutting, there can be warning signs that a catch is imminent. Usually, at the first sign of the tool fighting me I take it as notice to switch to a different tool, generally either a spindle gouge or skew, to finish refining the curve. That said, I know of production turners who do far more shaping with a roughing gouge than I do, while keeping perfect control of the tool.



Spindle roughing gouge used correctly to 'rough out' the shaping of a spindle



If the wrong part of the edge contacts the wood, a catch is sure to follow



A roughing gouge catch, running up the hill



When a catch happens it happens quickly and is uncontrollable and the damage can be small or large

Skew chisel

The skew is something of a 'love it or hate it' kind of tool. It is possible to get through life without using one, but if you watch the best production turners they all use a skew of one type or another, whether it be a traditional rectangular skew, a round skew or a square one. The reason those who hate it do so with such a passion is because it is an unforgiving tool that dramatically punishes inattentiveness with a large, ugly catch.

The two main operations a skew is used for (there are others which I shall look at next month) are planing and bead rolling. In both cases, catches can largely be avoided by paying close attention to where on the edge the cut is coming from.

Planing

Planing is the most basic of operations with the skew. The main thing to understand is that, because the tool is presented at an angle with only its lowest corner in contact with the toolrest, the weight of the cut needs to be over this part of the tool, which is supported by the toolrest.

If you try to cut higher up on the edge, a part that isn't directly supported by the rest, the reward is the tool being twisted down, slammed against the rest and a catch mark with varying degrees of severity on the work.

The easiest way to ensure only the correct part of the edge is cutting is to use a marker pen to mark the 'sweet spot' or 'safe zone' on the edge. Ideally the cut should come from the lower quarter of the edge and not much

higher than the centre of the blade, so a dot on this quarter point and a central line easily shows where the cut should be made.

Once this is understood, it is just a case of manipulating the tool and adjusting the presentation to ensure the cut is always coming from this part of the edge. For planing the point isn't used, although if it does cut it won't result in a catch, just a less clean surface finish.

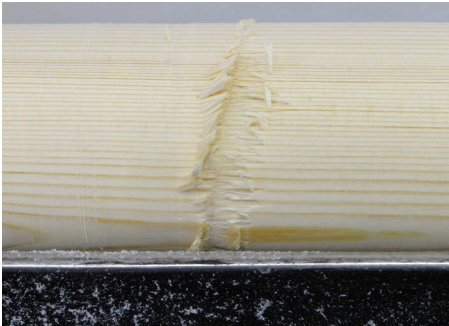
Some people say a wider tool is better to use because the 'safe zone' is larger. Others will tell you a narrower chisel is better as it doesn't pull down as much of your cut high on the edge. The fact is they are both right and each turner must decide for themselves which style of skew best suits them.



The correct planing position with a skew is in the lower quarter of the cutting edge



If the cut moves past the centre toward the top of the edge, a catch is sure to follow



The result of a planing catch with a skew



How to mark out a skew to help your planing technique

PLANING WITH THE SKEW

Adjusting the height of the toolrest can help if you have issues with planing. Again, with experience the need for this reduces, but by raising the toolrest above the usual centre height, it can help to keep the higher 'no go' part of the tool's edge away from the spinning work and give a much clearer view of what is going on at the cutting edge of the tool.



Raising the toolrest while planing can be a great help in learning to control the tool

Bead rolling with a skew

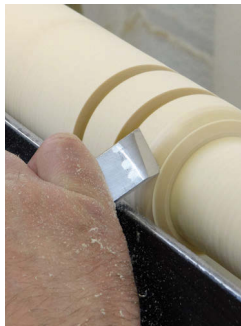
This is possibly one of the most likely places that a catch can occur. Despite the difficulty and the associated frustrations in this action, the solution is actually quite simple. Once again, it all relates to the part of the edge that is used in the cut. Unlike planing, which uses the edge rather than the point, use of the point is the key to success.

If the cut is on the point of the tool it forms

a small v-shaped groove and raises a feathered edge just in front of the cut. As long as you can see this throughout the cut, you can be certain that the cut is on the point and so in control. It is important to keep the tool rolling around the curve of the bead and moving forwards at all times. Hesitation and back-tracking are generally a recipe for a catch, so smooth, progressive cuts and movements are key.



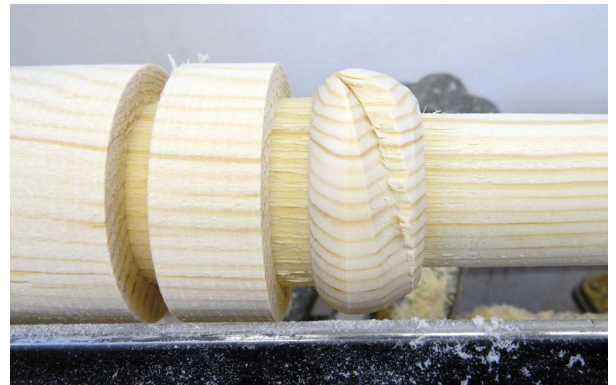
Correctly rolling a bead with the long point of the skew



Correctly rolling a bead with the short point of a skew



Cutting away from the point makes it virtually impossible to control the cut. This picture was taken a split second before a catch



The results of a bead rolling catch with a skew

Cutting on the point of the tool when rolling a bead gives complete control of the tool throughout the cut. A more advanced version of rolling a bead begins with a planing cut but will always end by cutting on the point. Which of the two points to choose is less important, but the long point gives far more visual feedback. It is very easy to lose sight of the short point as the cut progresses so, by using the long point, you can see exactly what is going on at the sharp end of the action.



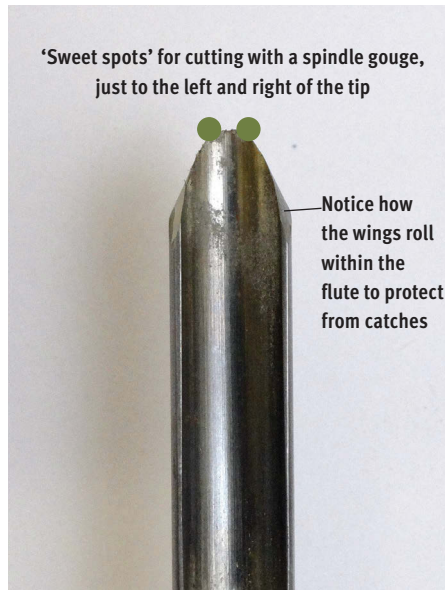
The result of a skew catch. Although caused by the edge of the tool taking a cut too heavy to control, it is a combination of the tip and the edge that causes the damage

Spindle gouge

A spindle gouge is generally more popular than a skew simply because it is much more forgiving. Catches are still perfectly possible, but they are usually less dramatic and less damaging to the work. The pattern emerging here is that the part of the tool's edge that is used is vital to the success or failure of each different cut and the spindle gouge is no different.

The most common catch with a spindle gouge I find is during the entry into a cove. If the presentation of the tool is just slightly off, the tool will skid to one side or the other.

For spindle turning with a spindle gouge, all the action happens right on the tip of the tool. If you are cutting to the left, the shaving should come from just to the left of the tip. When cutting to the right, the shaving comes from just to the right of the tip. The wings on a fingernail grind gouge are shaped like this to keep them out of the way and for shearing



Here is a gouge showing the cutting edge and the sweet spots for cutting

cuts on faceplate work, but are otherwise not used for spindle turning.

The reason the gouge skids off to one side as it enters the wood is that, at the point of contact, the edge needs to be vertical. If it leans to one side or the other it will pull the tool in that direction.

To adjust this angle at the point of contact is simply a case of rolling the tool in the opposite direction to the way it is pulling. The best way to practice is to cut a series of grooves in waste wood with the tip of the tool, adjusting the presentation of the tool each time until the correct position is found.

My other recommendation for success with this cut is to make sure a slicing action is used, rather than jabbing at the wood with the tool. If the cut begins with the handle low and it rises in an arc as the tip enters the wood, the result is a clean slicing action and the success rate of this cut will increase dramatically.

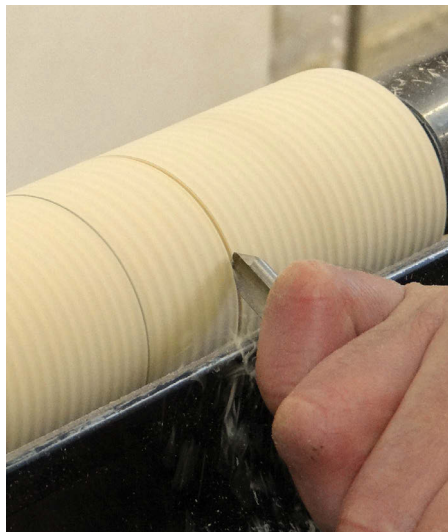
MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOUR TOOLS

When you consider that every tool manufacturer produces tools with slightly different flute shapes, and every turner will grind their bevel angles and nose profile slightly differently, it becomes clear that my tools with my preferred grind are likely to react and feel slightly differently to another turner's tools

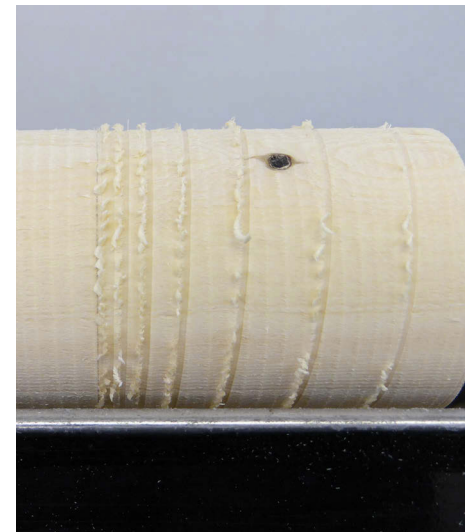
from a different manufacturer and ground to their preferred grind. I recommend getting to know how your tool cuts best and if you can't get it to do what you want, regrind it until it will. Hands-on nights at a local club are a great chance to try out other turner's tools and profiles and compare their efficiency.



Beginning to cut into a cove, the flute here is too open and so a catch follows



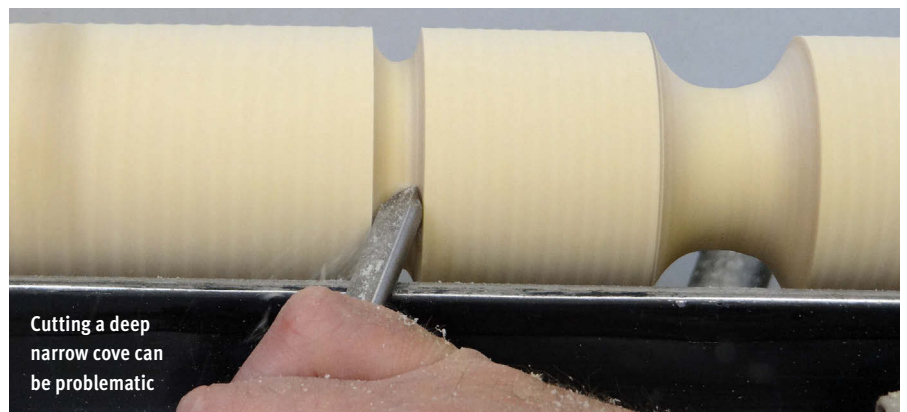
The difference is subtle, but this cut is successful as the flute is more closed



The result of a gouge catch at the entry to a cove cut

Further into the cove

As a cove cut progresses, a catch is possible if the wing of the tool touches the far side of the cove. This is particularly likely on deep and narrow coves as there is less room to manoeuvre. I have found that, as well as vigilance to ensure the tool is still cutting near the tip as it should be, the grind I use on the wings of my gouge can be beneficial. By rolling the tool beyond 90° as I sharpen it on the grinder, it brings the cutting edge to a more closed position, which I find still allows it to shear cut on faceplate work when I need it, but means the wing is less exposed so less likely to catch accidentally.



Cutting a deep narrow cove can be problematic

Bead rolling with a gouge

There are two ways a gouge can catch when rolling a bead. Despite my best efforts I struggled to make either happen when I was shooting the pictures for this article and only finally managed it by combining the two faults I describe here. As before, as long as the shaving is being made close to the tip of the tool, then the tool should be perfectly controllable. The problems occur when the cut moves to the higher part of the edge which is unsupported, which can cause the tool to grab, twist and catch. I found that with my preferred grind I couldn't get a catch, but different makes of tool and grind profiles are likely to produce different results.

The second issue with bead rolling occurs when the tool handle swings too much, lifting the bevel from the work and making the tool want to run back up the bead. Again, I struggled to force this to happen, but have experienced it on tall beads with quite straight sides. This issue will be revisited next month when I look at end grain slicing on spindle work. ●



A gouge catch on a bead is the result of tool presentation

TOP TIP

Practice spindle turning. So much successful turning relates to practice and I would recommend starting with softer timbers such as pine or tulip/poplar before moving on to more dense timbers. Wood such as oak is much tougher so a little more difficult to work, with the added blunting effect it has on tool edges meaning more regular sharpening is required. That said, the techniques to work these timbers are exactly the same as described for the softer timbers.



Practice spindle turning with softer woods before moving on to tougher wood

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Community news

We bring you the latest news from the world of woodturning and important dates for your diary

We try to give accurate details on forthcoming events. Please check with organisers for up-to-date information if you are planning to attend any of the events mentioned.

In memorium – Liam Flynn

PHOTOGRAPH HARRY REID



It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Liam Flynn. Liam unexpectedly passed away on Saturday 8 April 2017 at the age of 48. Our thoughts are with his partner Mary and his family and friends at this time.

Liam was an exceptional turner whose attention to detail resulted in exquisitely

crafted and highly tactile items that were much sought after and were collected and seen all over the world. Liam was one of life's gentlemen. He was quietly spoken and was always willing to share his knowledge and had time for everyone.

Emmet Kane commented: 'Liam is best described as the oldest child of modern woodturning in Ireland and of the Irish Woodturning Guild founded in 1983. He received one of his first prize awards at the Guild's seminar in 1990. Ireland and the world have lost a highly talented craftsman and artist. The craft and turning community is the poorer for his passing but, in the words of his good friend Brother Cairan Forbes at his funeral, though Liam has died his spirit will live on in the remarkable pieces of work he has created.' We will miss his knowledge, friendship and passion for woodturning.

PHOTOGRAPH HARRY REID



PHOTOGRAPH LIAM FLYNN

An example of wonderfully crafted work



PHOTOGRAPH HARRY REID

LEFT: Liam turning at the lathe ABOVE: carving a project

News from the AWGB

Following an appeal to the membership for help with running the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain I am delighted to report we have had a fantastic response. As a result, we have appointed these people to help with running the AWGB:

- Mike Wilson – membership secretary
- Howard Hughes – regional representative

(North England and North Wales)

- Pat Murphy – regional representative (Midlands and Mid Wales)
 - Mark Hogan – seminar booking coordinator
 - Mark Miller – assistant webmaster
 - Paul Middleton – assistant webmaster
- Additionally, we have created a list of

willing volunteers to help us at the shows we attend throughout the year and a range of other activities. I'd like to welcome them to the team and wish them well in their respective roles.

Dave Atkinson, chairman

Contact: AWGB

Web: www.awgb.co.uk

AAW and the Furniture Society collaborate for Fresh Eyes on Furniture: Tradition and Innovation

The American Association of Woodturners (AAW) will host its 31st International Woodturning Symposium, 22–25 June 2017, in Kansas City, Missouri. The conference will bring together more than 1,000 turners from around the globe to learn, share, and celebrate the art and craft of woodturning.

New this year, the AAW and The Furniture Society (FS) have partnered to present registered symposium attendees with a series of joint sessions, entitled Fresh Eyes on Furniture: Tradition and Innovation, scheduled for 23–24 June. The Fresh Eyes on Furniture sessions will include both demonstrations and panel discussions on furniture-related topics, from inlay and embellishment to cold metal casting and computer controlled routing, as well as how the disciplines of furniture making and woodturning intersect. Featured presenters include Scott Grove, Bart Niswonger, Mark Sfirri, and Kimberly Winkle.

‘We are very excited about this first-ever joint meeting opportunity with our turning friends,’ says Furniture Society executive director Bill Hinman. ‘It’s a great way for FS members to expand their horizons, explore new design paradigms, and share expertise



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF AAW

Mark Sfirri, New Hope, Pennsylvania, is an author, educator, and woodworker, who studied furniture design at Rhode Island School of Design, where he received a BFA and MFA while studying under Tage Frid

and enthusiasm with a new audience.’

Speaking of the collaboration, Phil McDonald, executive director for AAW, says: ‘Wood is at the very heart of both the furniture making and woodturning traditions. There is a great deal our organisations will be able to learn from one another since many techniques are

transferable across disciplines. We welcome the Furniture Society and its members, and look forward to the incredible added value that Fresh Eyes on Furniture: Tradition and Innovation will bring to the event.’

Contact: AAW

Web: www.woodturner.org/?page=2017KC

SHOWS AND EVENTS

The Toolpost Open House

This event will feature Jan Hovens and Ronald Kanne – both top turners from the Netherlands – as well as woodcarver Simon Clements, pyrographer and woodturner Bert Butterfield and woodturner Les Thorne, as well as representatives from key suppliers.

When: 3–4 June, 2017

Where: Unit 7, Hawksworth, Southmead Industrial Park, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7HR

Web: www.toolpost.co.uk

AWGB: Birthday celebrations with Yann Marot

Chelmer Valley Woodturners present a day with Yann Marot as a double birthday celebration for Chelmer Valley Woodturners’ 20th year, sponsored by the AWGB with a 30th Birthday Bash Grant. Tickets: £17, including refreshments and buffet lunch (10am–4.30pm). The event is open to all interested woodturners. See the website for application forms and details.

When: 4 June, 2017

Where: Mountnessing Village Hall, Roman Road, Mountnessing, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 0UH

Web: www.chelmerwood.co.uk

Woodfest Wales

An interactive festival of wood crafts, including traditional skills, art, sculpture and construction. There are seven arenas with displays of artefacts, demonstration stands and 18 of the UK’s leading chainsaw artists will be creating sculptures.

When: 29–30 July, 2017

Where: Caerwys, Mold, North Wales, CH7 5BP

Web: www.woodfestwales.co.uk

SWAT symposiums

The annual gathering of the South West Association of Turners (SWAT) features nationally and internationally recognised turners, as well as outstanding regional turners selected from clubs and across America.

When: 25–27 August, 2017

Where: Waco Convention Centre, Texas

Web: www.swaturners.org

Yandles Woodworking Show

A highlight on the woodworking events calendar, thousands of visitors come from across the country to enjoy the informal and friendly atmosphere that is created within the surroundings of this historic timberyard. The

usual working site is transformed to host a vast array of leading craftspeople. Live woodworking demonstrations will keep you entertained with loads of hints and tips and workshop knowledge.

When: 8–9 September, 2017

Where: Martock, Somerset, TA12 6JU

Web: www.yandles.co.uk

European Woodworking Show 2017

This is the best woodworking show of its kind in the world as judged by many well journeyed demonstrators and woodworking aficionados from around the globe. It is located in historic grounds and it is demonstration-led with an eclectic mix of workers in wood, from furniture makers to basket makers, chair makers to fabulous woodturners, carvers, bodgers, pyrographers, knife makers, marionette makers, Japanese joinery and toy makers to toolmakers. Show opens at 10am both days, closing at 5pm on the Saturday and 4pm on the Sunday.

When: 16–17 September, 2017

Where: Cressing Temple Barns, Witham Road Cressing, Braintree, Essex, CM77 8PD

Web: www.europeanwoodworkingshow.eu

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Ten top tips and tricks

David Springett shares his workshop know-how to help your turning



1 Foam chuck

This is a method of holding an awkwardly shaped part so that it can accept additional turning. Start by turning a hollow into a prepared softwood chuck. This hollow has to be of sufficient size to accommodate the awkwardly shaped part you want to hold.

Make a collar with opening which will fit over the turned hollow and hold the shaped part firmly in that hollow. Wrap the part to be held in cling film and set on one side. Now for the fun.

Into the turned hollow spray builder's expanding insulation foam



Press the cling-filmed part into the foamed hollow, making sure the edges of the cling film are wrapped over the edges of the chuck. This will stop the collar from being permanently glued in place



Screw down the collar, locking the shaped part in place and stopping the foam from over expanding, keeping the foam firm and compressed

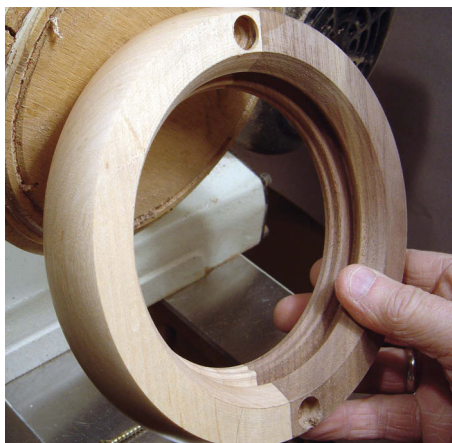
Leave the foam to set. Check the tin for setting times for your foam. Remove the collar and slip out the shaped part exposing the bespoke hollow. Identical turned parts will fit the newly formed foam chuck

2 Old techniques, new ideas.

Don't dismiss old techniques and ideas as being of little use now that you own all the hi-tech 'stuff'. Think how you can bring those old techniques up to date.

You know the problem with turned chess sets, it's the knight.

Do you turn a form and have to explain that this really is a knight or do you carve a knight? It suddenly came to me – ring turning, that old technique traditionally used to produce animal forms could be used to turn a knight profile.



Here is the ring I turned. I used a few templates and careful measurements to get the right shape.



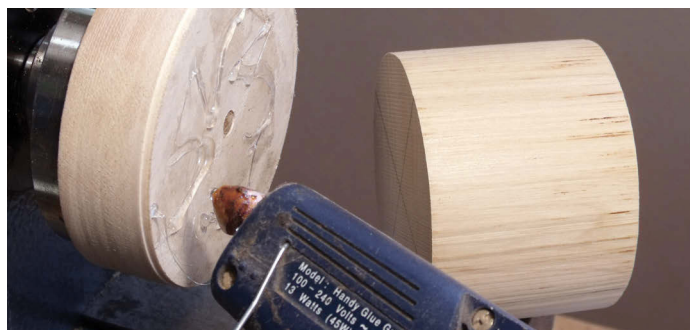
When it is cut the knight profile is revealed. The blank for the ring was made up of two halves, light sycamore and dark walnut, so both light and dark knights were produced from one blank.



The profile ring, when sliced, obviously produces multiple identical shapes. How can you develop this idea?

3 Hot melt glue a temporary fixing

Some of you may remember John Sainsbury, who worked for Record Tools' education department. It was he who, in the '70s, introduced me to the benefits of using hot melt glue to hold wood when turning. At the time it was a novelty to me, but over the years it has proved to be an invaluable holding method.



Smaller pieces can be hot melt glued directly on to a wood faceplate. It helps if both the faceplate and work piece are first warmed to prevent the glue from chilling, which would form a weak bond. Both parts can be warmed in a microwave [15 seconds on full power] then the hot melt glue is applied.



The parts are pushed together with pressure from the tailstock holding them until the glue cools.



The wood can then be turned, but do take light cuts and wear a face shield. The joined parts can be separated if they are placed in a microwave on full power for 20-30 seconds. But take care – too much heat will cause the glue to become runny and it may soak into the grain.



For larger pieces a hot melt glue weld will be enough to hold the work. Do make sure that the weld is substantial. When the turning is complete the weld can be picked off or the glue can be softened using a hot air gun.

4 Never dismiss what you think is a crazy idea



I had been turning a variety of shapes which, when split, exposed their cross-section which had 'rotational symmetry'.



One half could be rotated upon the other, which when rejoined and glued produced interesting, and sometimes unexpected, twisted forms.



Once I showed the finished piece to a non-woodturning friend and he said: 'It's a pity it is solid in the middle. Can't you turn it without its centre?' Foolish remark, he doesn't understand, he's not a woodturner, it can't be done. But thinking about it, I realised that it could be turned without its 'centre'.



These rings, when split and rotated and reformed, would go on to produce a most interesting 'ribbon' form.



I was forced to think differently. It could be turned as three distinct rings – one large and two identical smaller ones.



I am so grateful for that 'foolish' remark. Don't dismiss suggestions, even if you think they are foolish for they can make you think in a completely different way.

5 Tomato sauce bottle glue dispenser

While washing out a plastic sauce bottle ready for recycling it occurred to me that it would make an excellent glue bottle. As I buy my PVA glue in bulk it seemed sensible to pour off a small quantity into one of these clean bottles. It works so well.

6 Shelf tool rest



This tool rest is sometimes called a box tool rest. It is unconventional for it supports the tool flat, allowing only horizontal movement. Don't reject it as it is extremely useful. I often turn flat-bottomed hollows using what I call a 'square-end tool'. This tool can be seen supported on the tool rest in the photo.



When turning deep grooves or flat-bottomed hollows with this tool supported on a conventional tool rest the slightest catch would pull the tool into the work. In this case the conventional rest would act as a fulcrum. The problem is resolved if this particular tool is supported flat upon the shelf tool rest. But when using this tool rest it is vital to keep the tool completely flat on the rest and to ensure that it cuts at, or slightly below, centre height.

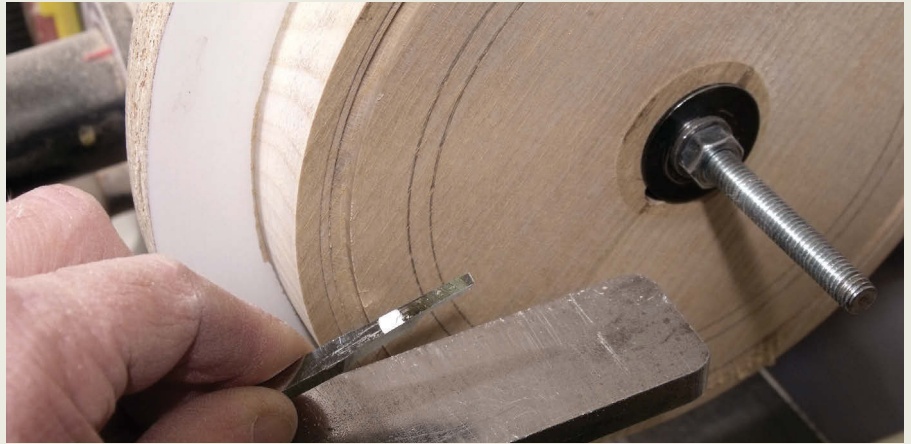
If you wish to try out this form of rest you can easily make your own.

7 Typist correction fluid

I find typist correction fluid very useful when you need to temporarily mark a position on a turning tool, or even on a tool rest.

I use it regularly when marking a position on a tool to indicate the depth I wish to reach. If the mark needs to be precise then a dark line can be drawn upon the dried white surface using a fine tipped black marker.

Temporary marks on tools



'Fit a pair of nuts and washer on to the threaded rod. Next a section of wood with a hole drilled through the same diameter as the threaded rod. Now a rubber bung, another drilled section of wood, a rubber bung and the final section of wood, followed by a washer and two nuts. It will look like a kebab'

8 Rubber bung mandrel

I needed to fully turn a piece with a hole through its centre, so I developed this mandrel with expanding centre. Here's how you can make your own.

Take a threaded rod and at one end drill, using an engineer's centre drill, a conical hollow. The revolving centre will fit neatly into this drilled end.

Next you will need four nuts, two

washers, two rubber bungs and some sections of wood.

Drill the hole through the blank about to be turned. In this case it was 25mm [1in] and set it aside.

Fit a pair of nuts and washer on to the threaded rod. Next a section of wood with a hole drilled through the same diameter as the threaded rod. Now a rubber bung,

another drilled section of wood, a rubber bung and the final section of wood, followed by a washer and two nuts. It will look like a kebab.

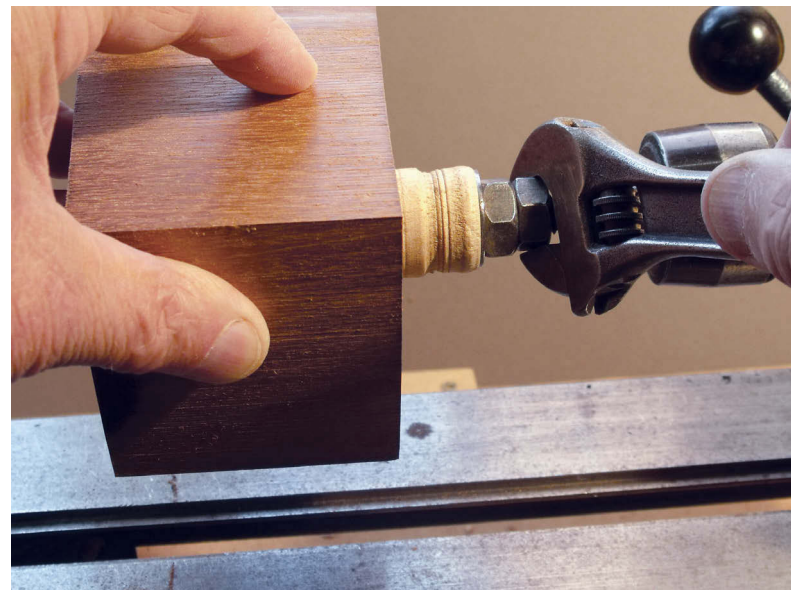
Set the threaded rod 'kebab' on to the lathe holding it, at the headstock end, in a Jacobs chuck and supported at the tailstock with revolving centre fitted into the prepared conical hole.



Tighten the nuts at one end to lock the rubber bungs and wood sections tightly together.

Turn the whole 'kebab' until it is the same diameter as the hole in the blank, in this case 25mm.

Position the blank on the mandrel so that the rubber bungs are inside the hollow. The exposed sections of wood at either end will allow a turning tool to make safe contact when turning over into this area.



Next, at the tailstock end, begin tightening the nut closest to the wood section. This will squeeze the wood section against the rubber bungs inside, forcing them to expand and grip the drilled hole in the blank. Continue to tighten the nut until the blank is firmly locked in place. Now tighten the second nut against the first, locking the two together. This will prevent them from rattling loose when turning.

Turn the blank as normal. When complete the work is simply removed by undoing the nuts and slipping it off the mandrel.

9 Newspaper/glue joint – another temporary fixing

All you need is white PVA glue, a sheet of newspaper and two flat surfaces on the parts to be joined.



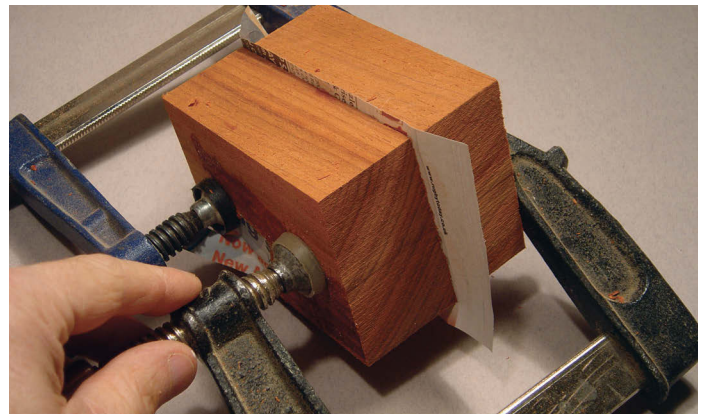
Apply a moderate layer of white PVA glue to the flat wood faceplate and also to the flat surface of the work piece. Press a sheet of newspaper on to the glued wood faceplate then press the glued surface of the work piece on to the newspaper covering the faceplate. This will make a wood/glue/newspaper sandwich.



Bring the tailstock forward, with centre, and apply pressure while the glue dries. If you don't want to mark the surface of the wood with an indent then place a piece of scrap wood between it and the centre. Leave overnight until the glue has thoroughly dried. Turn the piece as normal but do not take aggressive cuts and remember to wear a face shield.



To remove the turned part use a craft knife, tapped with a hammer, to begin to open the glue joint between work and faceplate. It is always best to use wood wedges to fully open the joint as this prevents damage to the work.

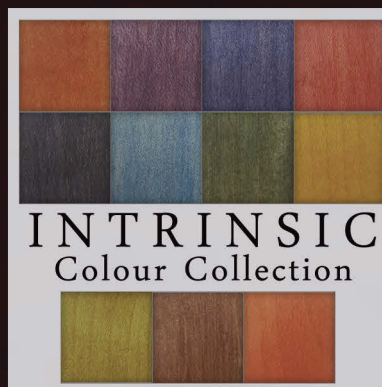


I have found that white PVA glue is best for this method. Other glues may soak through the newspaper and make the joint permanent (ask me how I know...). And don't forget a newspaper/glue joint is ideal for split turning.



10 And my final tip

A friend once said to me: 'If someone else can do it, so can I.' So never defeat yourself before you begin. Be positive – who knows what you might achieve? The lathe is as versatile as you make it so now go and turn some square holes. ●



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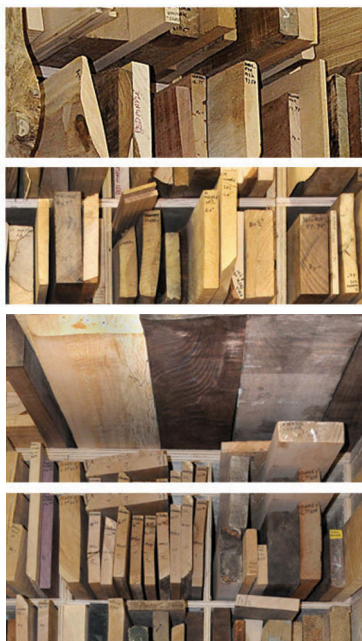
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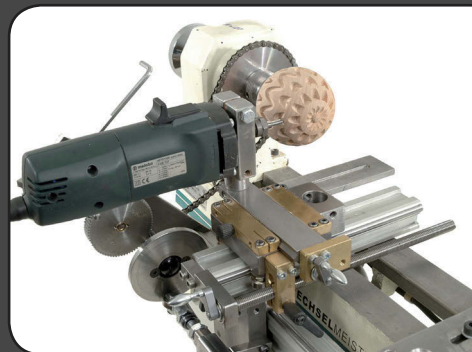
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How hazardous is wood dust?

In this series of short articles, **Geoffrey Laycock** looks at essential topics, myths and misunderstandings affecting the safety and health of woodturners

The headline asks a question as to whether wood dust is hazardous. The answer is: Yes, it is. That said, when it comes to discussing wood dust, size matters. Dust is an aerosol of solid particles, mechanically produced, with individual particle diameters measurable from 0.1µm upwards. An aerosol is a suspension of fine solid particles in a gas, in this case wood dust in air. For exposure assessment purposes, two size classifications – inhalable and respirable – are defined.

Inhalable dust is small enough to enter the nose and mouth during breathing and respirable dust is that part of the inhalable dust which will penetrate down into the lungs, usually less than 10µm in size.

How we consider dust hazards depends on whether we are in a work situation or a hobby one. At work in the UK, Workplace Exposure Limits (WELs) are legally enforceable. They are measurable and used to set standards of protection and judge compliance with legislation. Wood dust has assigned WELs for both hardwood and softwood, at 5mg/m³. Workplace exposure to wood dust must therefore comply with this assigned limit, meaning the exposure should not be more than this level and as close to zero as possible. Softwood dust is also noted as a 'sensitiser', meaning it can cause occupational



asthma, while hardwood dust is noted as both 'sensitiser' and 'carcinogenic', meaning capable of causing cancer. For the hobby turner, it is strongly advised this maximum level of exposure is adopted and worked down to as close as possible to zero.

in the nasal passages, can result in cancer. Penetrating the respiratory system further, we can have adverse effects such as bronchial disorders, decrease in lung function and development of asthma. Some examples include cedar (*Callitropsis nootkatensis*), Central and South American and western red, iroko (*Milicia excelsa*), maple (*Acer campestre*) and most species of pine (*Pinus* spp). Surprised? ●

SIZE MATTERS – WHAT DOES 5MG OF DUST LOOK LIKE?

The photo below shows 5mg of dust from beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) veneer. For comparison, we have a standard LR44 cell; the dust is about one-fifth or less its volume. On the right is a drink stir stick and a piece that represents 5mg of whatever wood that is. The pile of dust is bigger as it contains air. Now imagine that pile of dust equally distributed in a metre cube of air – not much, is it?



Health hazards explained

We tend to think of wood dust being inhaled as the health hazard, but there are other health effects and we will return to those another time. Inhaling dust initially causes a problem in the nose where some particles are trapped by the wet surfaces – exactly what they are designed to do.

Unfortunately, stopping some dust particles from moving further into the lungs, they can cause irritation to those wet surfaces. One result can be rhinitis and some dusts are specifically known for this problem. African Mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*), obeche (*Triplochiton scleroxylon*) and European walnut (*Juglans* spp) are examples. Dust, particularly hardwood, trapped

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further Information is available from www.hse.gov.uk

The various HSE documents below are highly recommended reading

- **WIS 14 (rev1):** Selection of respiratory protective equipment for use with wood dust.
- **WIS 23 (rev1):** Wood dust – controlling the risk
- **WIS 30 (rev1):** Toxic woods
- **WIS 32 (rev1):** Safe collection of wood waste: prevention of fire and explosion.

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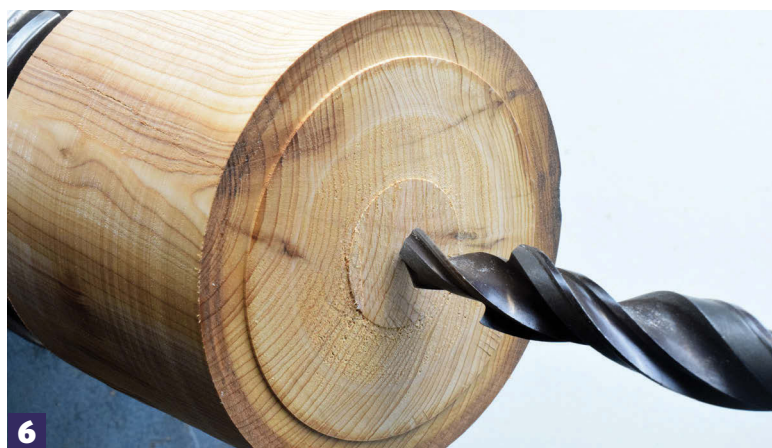
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Rustic beaded box

Pat Carroll uses a classic design feature that looks great and also disguises the join

A rustic beaded box made from basic tools other than a homemade beading tool. The timber for this project is Irish yew (*Taxus baccata*). Further enhancements were added to the piece by using texture on the handle to accentuate the rustic feel of a well-used object. A design change was made to the piece with the addition of colour. Then Verdigris wax gave the aged look to the piece, finished off with a light brush of copper gild cream. A loose-fit lid suited this piece as it was designed as a trinket or jewellery box. The base needs to stay in place when the lid is opened so as not to risk losing its small contents.





5 Complete the parting with a saw if you are not confident completing the parting off with a chisel when the lathe is rotating. Note the scrap wood on the lathe to protect the saw and lathe bed.

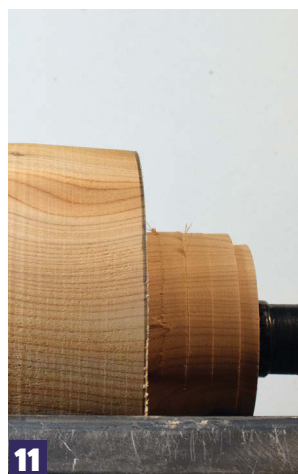
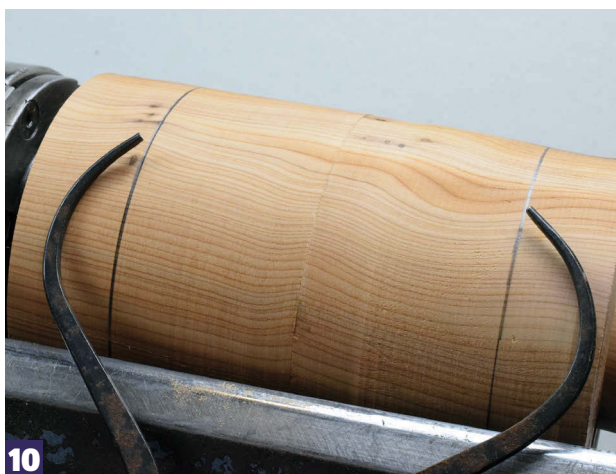
6 Drill a hole to the required depth into the piece. Use masking tape on the drill bit to give exact depth. This allows an easy starting point for the gouge.

7 With the flute of the 13mm spindle gouge at 45° or the flute facing 10 o'clock, gently pull from the centre out, allowing the tip of the tool to cut. Although there is plenty of waste wood light cuts are best, helping to avoid torn grain.

8 Proceed all the way out with the cut stopping 1mm away from the witness mark left by the parting tool. Use the parting tool if preferred to clean the recess, and keep the walls parallel.

9 Offer up the bottom of the piece to check the fit. Proceed with very light cuts until the two pieces fit comfortably together. Align the grain and bring up the tailstock for support.

10 If an exact sphere is the desired shape, check the diameter of the piece with callipers, then transfer the measurement to the piece ensuring the joining is in the centre. Cardboard templates or sphere jigs can be used. For this project, freehand was applied.



11 Remove as much waste wood as possible with the parting tool, working from the outside inwards. Light cuts to help minimise the risk of damaging the piece. Working to the line on both sides.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Always ensure all health and safety issues are addressed regarding tools and equipment. Good dust prevention measures should always be adhered to in order to protect your health. A clean workshop helps make it safer.

Think twice, cut once.

12 Using a 13mm spindle gouge shape the piece, working from the highest point towards the centre with each cut. Working from the outside towards the middle, forming the piece, continuously check the shape.

13 Light cuts rolling the tool as if forming a bead. Refine the piece to the required shape, remembering not to cut into the joint area as this will cause problems with the spigot and tenon.

14 The tip of a 6mm spindle gouge has been ground to approximately 40°. The sides have also been ground to minimise burnishing the neighbouring beads with friction. Practice on a scrap piece of wood is advised.

TOP TIP

The angle used on the homemade beading tool is personal choice. Grinding the tool in stages helps to not heat the tool, and lose its temper. Many manufacturers make dedicated beading tools in various sizes.

15 Use as fast a speed as is safe to help give a clean cut. With the left point of the tool exactly in the joint the cutting tip is exactly on centre, by raising the handle lightly engaging the cut. The tool is very minimally rocked from side to side allowing the wings to shear cut each side as it is rocked. Once the centre of the bead is formed, withdraw the tool or tear out can occur.

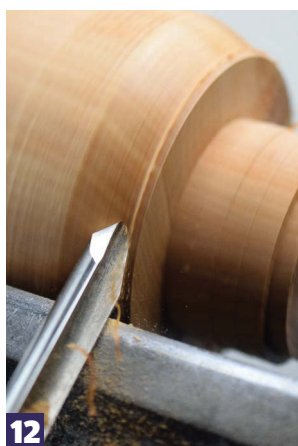
16 The next bead to the left of the joint is formed next, ensuring the point of the tool is again in the joint. Check for a clean joint on the piece.

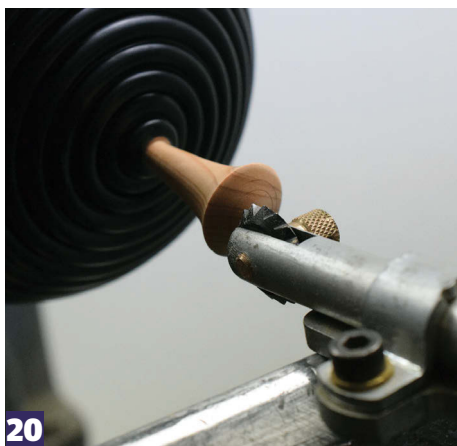
Proceed with marking out at least three beads at a time, using the beading tool. This also gives a reference point for the tool to engage the cut. Proceed as far around the piece as possible on both sides.

17 At this point the piece is sanded, starting with 150 grit and finishing with 400 grit. Note extractor pipe in picture. A dust mask is also recommended. There is never overkill in safety precautions.

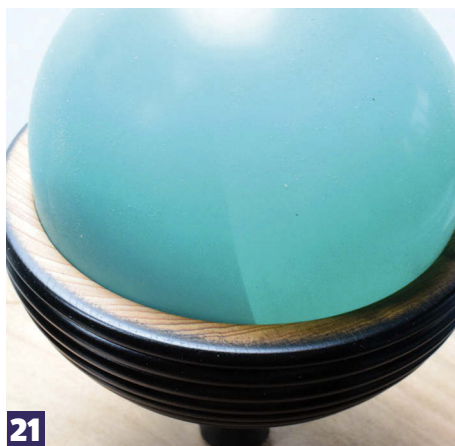
18 The top is now hollowed with a 13mm spindle gouge, using the same technique as in step six. The inside is refined using a 25mm round nose scraper and a bead added for design, then sanded through the grits and finished inside with Danish oil.

19 The top is removed from the chuck and the bottom fitted and secured in the chuck. The top is fitted and masking tape is added for further security. More waste wood is removed and the beads on the top completed. Always use the tailstock when possible for securing the piece.





20



21



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23



24

20 As the handle was finished and texture applied to the top, the decision to add colour was taken. With the piece sprayed black, several light coats are applied and allowed to dry. Use caution with dyes as they can bleed into the inside of the piece.

21 Due to the afterthought of the colour addition, the inside of the rim had to match the outside. The inside was finished with Danish oil and, to protect it from over-spray, a balloon was inflated to fit tight to the surrounding edge.

22 The top is removed and the rim is painted to match the outside of the piece. The base is then hollowed using the same procedure as in step six. The inside is sanded from 150 grit to 400 grit and Danish oil applied.

23 A scrap piece of wood is used as a jam chuck to finish the base. Masking tape is again used as a further safety precaution. The beads are completed and the remaining natural wood is sprayed black.

24 Verdigris wax is added for an aged, worn look. A light brush of copper gild cream adds to the rustic effect. When the paint dries, the base is cut back to the natural wood, again sanded through the grits and detail lines added for visual affect. Two more coats of oil are added to the interior. It is lightly denibbed with 320 grit between coats.

25 Here's the finished piece with a loose top lid. •

WATCH ON YOUTUBE

If you have time take a look at how Harvey Meyer creates beads and to make his signature beaded, basket illusions. See YouTube, Basket illusion by Harvey Meyer



25

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The fundamentals of hollow forms: part 1

In the first of a three part series, **Andy Coates** take a look at turning hollow forms. In this article he deals with turning the simplest shape – an egg form

Hollow forms are a relatively new object in the panoply of the turners' output, gifted to an eager fraternity by David Ellsworth, and have always seemed to be viewed as the ultimate turning project for the novice turner. But what is a hollow form? In the most readily accepted definition it is simply an enclosed form that has an opening of a lesser diameter than the widest part of the form. This factor provides for the attendant difficulty with hollow forms –

removing the interior waste wood through a narrow hole.

The novice can be forgiven for thinking that expensive tools are required to make one. There are expensive specialised tools available, but equally there are less expensive tools and, in fact, tools which can be homemade from bright steel and HSS cutters intended for metal lathe work.

My advice to novices wishing to embark on hollow forms is always the same: start small

and work up. Deep hollowing is a physically demanding form of woodturning and a day at the lathe can be an exhausting one. By starting small you will reduce the likelihood of mishaps and give yourself a fair chance of finishing the project.

In this, the first part of the series, I will introduce the most basic tools and peripheral equipment and go through the basic steps for making a simple endgrain hollow form from a branch or small log.

Basic hollowing tools

The most basic range of hollowing tools comprises bars which are straight, offset, cranked or swan-neck in shape, on to or into which each will have tips that are fixed in one position or can swivel. The swan-neck and cranked variants we will look at in other articles when we deal with more complex hollow forms with shoulders. In this issue straight-shaft tools with a small toothpick or bullet-shaped tip are what we will use.

This straight-type of tool is ideally suited for the initial hollowing of all hollow forms and, if the forms are either

straight or taper to a wider base, this type of tool can do the whole of the hollowing process.

The temptation is to have a wide range of tools but the reality is that to start one requires very few and I think it is important that you learn to turn a very basic hollow form using simple tools so you fully understand the process before spending money on more complex kit. As with any hobby, we all buy plenty of kit and tools and much of it ends up not being used as often as we thought it would be. So for this simple and straight forward is the best option to get you started.



Basic hollowing tools, many of which are homemade



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF GMC PUBLICATIONS

RIGHT: Shop-bought tools showing a variety of tools suitable for hollow forms. The straight ones are ideal for your first hollow forms

Sharpening

Essentially, each of the scraper-type tipped hollowing tools work in much the same way and the cutting edge on a scraper tip is created on the bench grinder, or with a diamond hone.

Due to the nature of the edge it will not be terribly durable and it will require periodic honing/re-grinding during the turning of any project. These types of tool are simple, effective and reliable, and can either be purchased or fashioned from suitable quality steel by anybody able to use a drill press and a hacksaw. Bright steel is best for shafts, and modified HSS bits intended for metal working lathes for cutters.

If you have no experience of working tool steel the safest option is to buy a commercial variant of the toothpick tool of your choice. There is a wide choice commercially, with variants available from Sorby Crown, Hamlet, Henry Taylor, Kelton, Ashley Iles and other manufacturers who can provide fixed tip or swivel tip variants.



Sharpening a cutting tip

SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR YOU TO REMEMBER

- The smaller tips remove wood fast but leave a bad finish. But there is less downward pressure on the tip so are they stable in use.
- The further the overhang of the tool blade/shaft over the rest, the more vibration or flexing on the tool shaft one will encounter, so you need a larger-diameter blade to counter the flex.
- The larger the tip the more downward pressure there is on the tool shaft. Rotating the tip so it cuts in shear cutting mode will reduce the pressure and give a finer finish than that of a small tip used in scraping mode – but this cut is best when using a larger round or heart/tear-drop shaped tip for refining the surface after the small tips have removed the bulk of the waste.
- Always cut on or above centre, never below, but never have the tip higher than the tool handle.

Holding work securely

How you mount the blank on lathe is vitally important – it should be safe and secure. In order to achieve this a few essentials will be required.

Initial mounting is usually between centres, and a serrated-edge drive and revolving ring centre provide possibly the most secure option. A faceplate drive, a ring or flat plate with pointed screws that impale the end grain can also be safely adopted, and commercial varieties are at long last available. These are driven into the end grain then mounted either directly on to

the spindle nose, or held in the dovetail jaws on a scroll chuck.

At the tailstock end either a serrated-edge revolving centre or a revolving ring centre are best suited to the task.

For secondary mounting, a four-jaw scroll chuck should be regarded as a bare minimum. As most hollow vessels are produced from end-grain material, a screw chuck is unsuitable for initial mounting and completely out of the question for secondary mounting, and, while a faceplate or faceplate ring may be



A selection of work mounting accessories

utilised, they should be avoided if at all possible. Screwing into end grain can seldom be considered a satisfactory, or wholly safe, holding method. By far the safest option is to use a scroll chuck with gripper jaws, although dovetail jaws are

perfectly safe if care is given to producing the tenon.

As a general process, the blank, often a section of branch wood or small log, is mounted between centres and roughed down to a clean cylinder, checking for faults which

may lead to potential danger later on. Once the blank is running true a tenon can be turned to suit either gripper/toothed chuck jaws or dovetail chuck jaws. Ensure that the dimensions are precisely as prescribed in the handbook for your particular chuck.

Preparing stock and mounting

The ideal situation when creating hollow forms is for the pith to run through the middle of the form. While this may not always be possible, it is sensible to take advantage when it is. Splits and cracks can begin at the heart (pith) during drying, and keeping the heart central spreads the stress out uniformly rather than favouring one side or another, which may help to reduce the likelihood of them occurring. Scribing the largest possible circle about the pith as centre provides a useful mounting centre.

Any out-of-balance material will be obvious – note the hatched out section on the top of the branch picture – and will need to be removed during initial roughing out. The image of the

bottom of the branch shows the same size circle is not possible at the opposite end, but is scribed nonetheless. These two markings will ensure the pith runs directly through the centre of the piece as closely as possible.

Using a serrated-edge drive centre and the revolving ring centre ensures the workpiece will be mounted securely. Tailstock pressure should be sufficient to drive the serrated teeth of the drive into the wood. It is important to ensure tailstock, quill and tool rest are securely locked down, and that the workpiece is mounted in a way that the off-centre portion does not foul the tool rest when rotated by hand. Initial lathe speeds for roughing down are always low, 500-900rpm, according to

material, size, and any out-of-balance to be considered. Once the workpiece is running in a balanced manner the speed can be increased slightly to aid cleaner cutting.

TOP TIP

When first venturing into turning hollow forms it is best to avoid wood with faults such as cracks, fissures, voids or burred timber. While these features may be considered attractive they present a number of potential safety issues for the inexperienced turner that are best avoided until more experience has been gained.



The top of a branch section showing the pith



Bottom of the branch showing the location of the pith



The branch mounted between centres

Preparing for success



Cutting the tenon for the chuck

Hollow forms require perfect support and holding in order that the process is as safe and stress free as possible. When forming your tenon you need to ensure that its dimensions are absolutely accurate for the chuck and jaw set you are using. Contrary to common misconception your chuck will have a very small range of acceptable dimensions



The wood held in the chuck and dimensions marked

and it is vital that you discover what this range is, understand the relevance, and adhere to the guidance.

Decide early on what the design is going to be, maybe even sketch a shape out prior to starting. Once you have a clear idea of what the shape will be you can transfer such dimensions as are appropriate – base, widest point, entry



Rough shaping the exterior of the hollow form

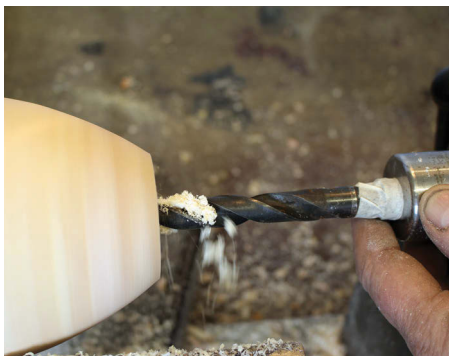
hole diameter – on to the workpiece to help you achieve a successful outcome.

Remember that you need to leave some of the exterior base of the hollow form unturned. The extra material will provide much needed support during hollowing. Once the hollowing is completed you can return to finish the exterior shape.

❏ Boring the central core



Potential items to help with boring the centre



A standard twist drill will suit most instances



Using a spindle gouge to remove the waste wood

There are numerous accessories that will help with creating an initial hole on the wood – known as boring the central core – that removes some initial waste that will make hollowing out the form easier.

Typically you would drill out waste with a twist drill or Forstner bit, on a Morse taper or held in a Jacobs chuck, or a twist drill on a long shaft and handle. The central core runs slower than the surrounding wood, and removing it not only provides an edge to work against, but also removes what is often

the most difficult area of wood to turn away.

The central core, through the pith if you have positioned your blank well, is the slowest-running area of wood to be removed, and as such can be a difficult area to turn. Coring out the centre, using a twist drill on a Morse taper or held securely in a Jacobs chuck mounted in the tailstock quill, is probably the easiest and safest method. You can also drill to slightly less depth than the anticipated depth of the finished piece, which will show you the depth to stop hollowing.

If you do not have a Jacobs chuck you can

core the centre using an ordinary 10mm spindle gouge. This works better with a gouge with a fingernail grind, but a conventional ground tool will also serve. The gouge is presented to the centre of the blank with the flute facing up and left as in the image. The tool is pushed forwards, and the handle pushed away, making a short sweep. The lower wing of the tool will cut and the forward pressure leads the gouge to act like a drill bit. Withdraw and clear swarf regularly to prevent binding.

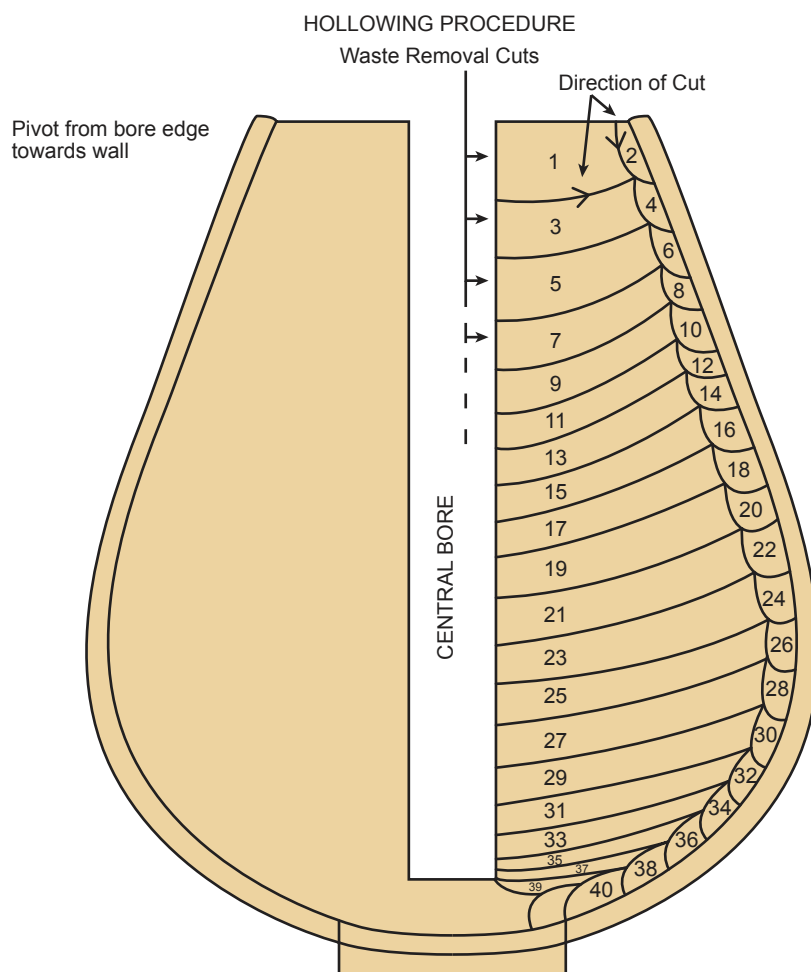
Sequence for hollowing

This diagram can be used as a guide for the hollowing process. Working from the edge of the central bore hole clear waste towards the wall. The next cuts set the wall thickness to the depth of the clearance hole, then the process is repeated, increasing the depth with each increment. In this manner an even wall thickness can be achieved with little trouble. Callipers may be used to assist in this process.

TOP TIP

End-grain freshly felled, unseasoned (or green) wood is far easier to turn in general, but for hollow forms even more so. Even small, 150mm diameter branch wood can provide useful material for hollow forms. Green wood can be 'rough turned' to slightly over size, left to season and then finish turned later. Or, if the walls are turned thin enough (3-4mm), then they can be completed in one session. Any warping that occurs would be considered part of the design.

If you cannot complete a hollow form in one session, and especially if you are using green wood, wrap the unfinished form in a plastic bag filled with damp shavings to reduce the risk of the form cracking, splitting or warping during the down time. Remember to keep the base of your hollow forms the same thickness as the walls. A thicker base is more likely to lead to splits from the pith.

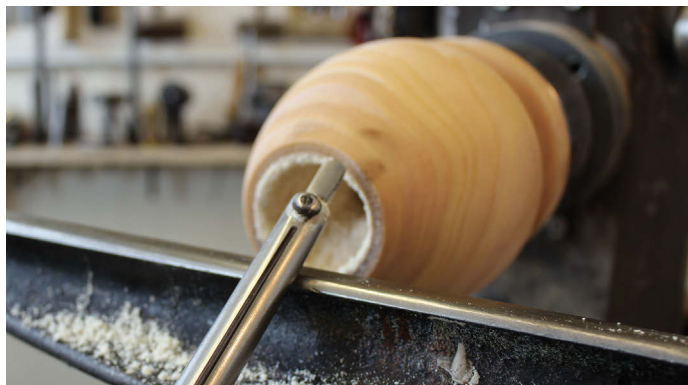


Odd numbered cuts remove waste to make working space
Even numbered cuts set wall thickness

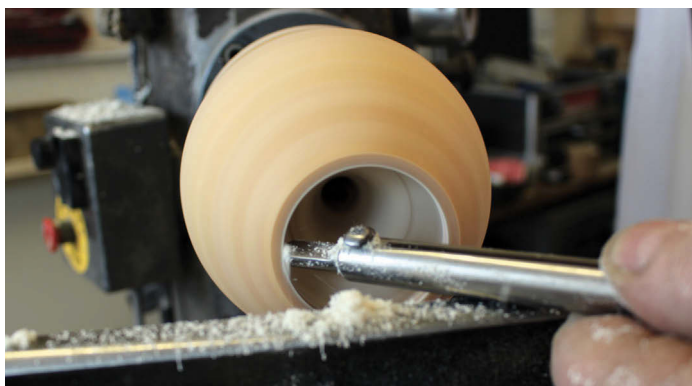
Hollowing using a straight toothpick-type tool



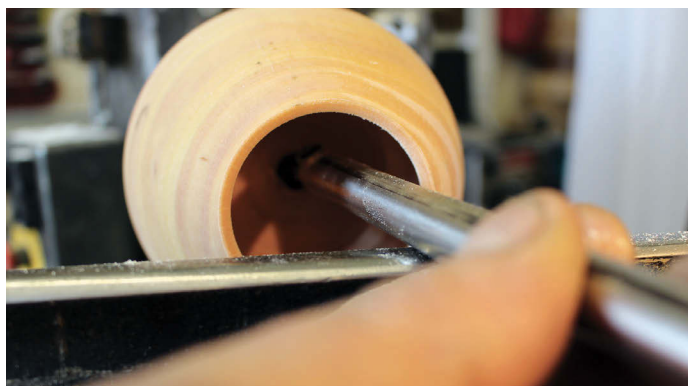
Toothpick or bullet-tipped hollowing tools should be presented to the edge of the hole created by the central coring with the cutting edge on the centre line of the workpiece. Use the section on the tool rest as a fulcrum point and swing the tool tip left to remove waste up to your wall thickness line. The tool should cut cleanly but will not produce a shaving as a gouge will.



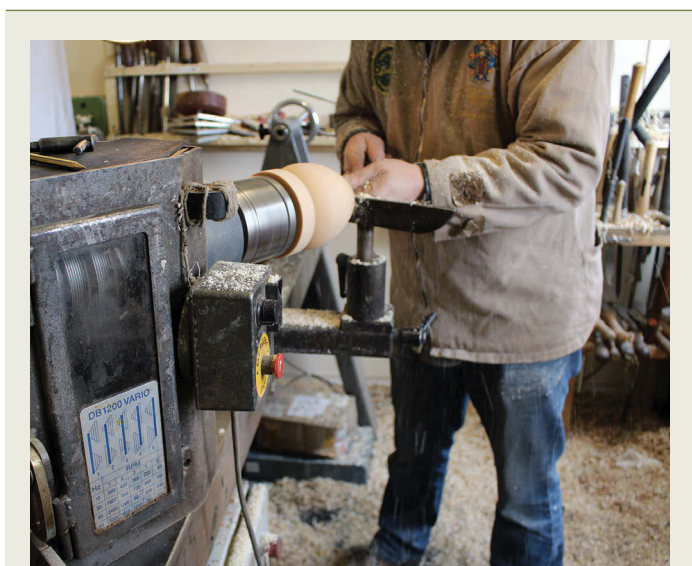
As you increase the depth and the interior becomes obscured with swarf, it is easy for the novice to lose sight of where the cutting edge is. Simply marking along the tool shaft can provide valuable information to assist in keeping the tool working well and on track. Stop the lathe and clear the swarf regularly.



You need to work from the bottom of the hollow form out to the widest part and from the rim down to the widest part to ensure the cleanest cuts.



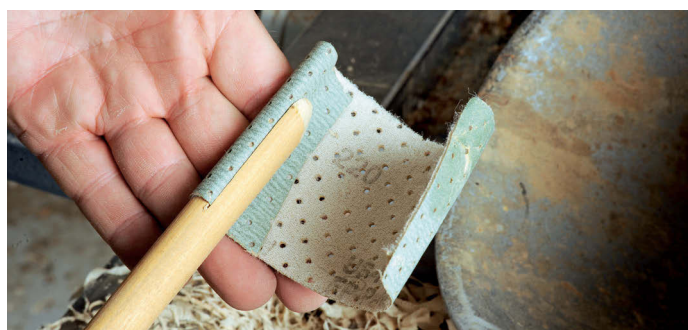
As the depth increases there is a tendency for the tool to cut below the centre line, and this provides an opportunity for a catch. You may need to raise the tool rest slightly in order to keep the cutting edge on centre in a controlled manner.



STANCE AND POSITION

If you have the facility to rotate the headstock you will find it helps enormously. You will be able to stand directly in front of the workpiece and this will not only improve tool position but relieve the stress on the body. Always keep feet at shoulder width apart for a stable stance. Avoid bending to peer inside the workpiece while working as this will very quickly lead to an aching back.

Finishing interiors of hollow vessels



An example of a simple sanding stick. There are numerous variants to make

Specialised multi-tipped scrapers used at a shear angle can clean up the interior walls of hollow vessels, but with practice this can often be achieved with the hollowing tool alone. If you wish to abrade the interior this is best achieved with abrasive on the end of a carrier, be that a dedicated long-reach arbor designed for hollow vessel use, a split wooden rod with abrasive wrapped through and around it, or the ball type that holds abrasive by hook and loop material and Velcro-backed abrasive.

You should never put your hand or fingers inside a vessel with the lathe running – the risk of breaking fingers is very real. Abrade gently and take care, remembering that while the dust may not be as apparent as when abrading the outside of a vessel, it is still being produced but is captured inside the form. Extraction by vacuum is ideal here. ●

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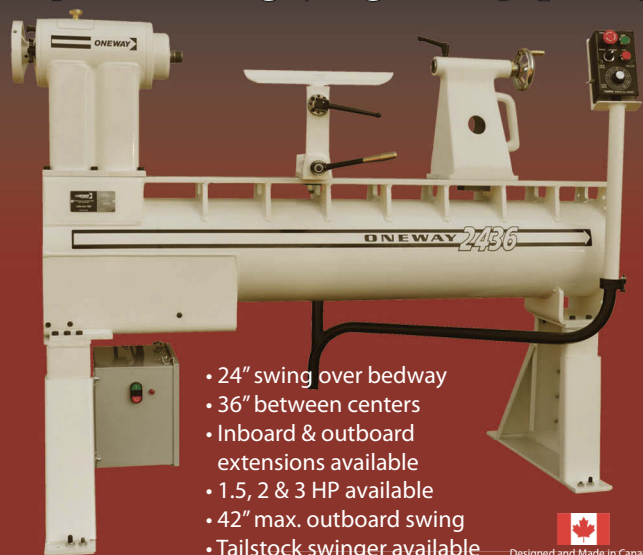
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Using pedestals on work

In the first of a two-part article, **Colwin Way** looks at supporting and giving lift to work

The word 'pedestal' refers to a stand or base to support structures or vessels but the shape, size or purpose of the supported form will have a great influence on the pedestal in different ways.

For instance, a goblet will have a pedestal base that forms part of the goblet's shape, whereas a statue's pedestal is there purely to elevate the subject and give it some gravitas. The phrase to 'put on a pedestal' springs to mind. Apart from these there are several questions to ask when thinking of pedestal projects and they are concerning design, size, functionality and material used, all of which need addressing to get things to work and look right.

I want to break a few key elements down and look at what options we have when taking on either a single- or multi-piece pedestal project. I want to also look at surprising sources of inspiration, either present or historical. You won't need to look too far to find a pedestal form somewhere.

When I started thinking about this article I was heavily influenced by my idea of a pedestal, which was a separate base elevating an ornament or statue. But actually, when you understand the meaning of the word, the range of projects able to be turned increases dramatically – from goblets, tables, plant pot holders and bowls through to garden structures and such like. Some items will have a one-piece construction but some – due to the differing

dimensions of the base, stem and top – may need to be made from several pieces.



Lidded bowl



Plant stand

Tazzas

Tazzas are a great example of a pedestal project. A tazza is a shallow bowl either mounted on just a foot like a conventional bowl or a stem and foot, elevating the bowl for serving food or displaying things. The pedestal foot needs to be of adequate size to support the contents. If you look at the picture you will notice how much bigger the foot is on the raised tazza bowl compared to that of the low tazza. These forms are really nice to make and transform a normal bowl into a completely different project.

Multi-part constructs

A raised tazza, due to its dimensions, really needs to be made from several pieces of timber for two reasons. First the grain orientation, as the bowl and foot will have the grain running from side to side while the stem will have the grain running up its length. Second there would be an awful lot of waste if you turned from one solid section as well as movement and potential splitting. If you take the idea of a tazza and keep stretching it we can start to see how we get into other structures such as plant pot holders. The pedestal here will now start to get so tall it may be the case that the base may need to become larger in diameter than the top section. Its job here is to allow a potted plant to cascade down below the level of its foot and that extra size and weight repropotions the overall design of pedestal and plant together. However, it wouldn't take



Raised fruit bowl – tazza

much imagination to alter this proportion again, making the top larger in diameter before ending up with a wine table. If you were going to do this you could also replace the round base with a tripod base.

Goblets

If we think literally about the meaning of pedestal, goblets are an obvious option for a project. Most of the time goblets can be turned from a single piece of timber as the grain direction supports a form of this size, with just a suggestion by the turner that it's



Goblet

made from three parts – base, stem and cup. It's easy to see how you could use this form as practice for a larger project and break it up by turning everything separately.

Goblets also give you a lot of options in design in all areas, such as flutes, ogees and flares. Have a look in the drinks cabinet if you have one and see how the foot size will vary depending on the shape and size of the cup. Two that spring to mind would be the tall slender cup and foot of a champagne flute against the large bowl and foot of a brandy glass.

Functionality and design

Just because a piece of work is intended to be functional doesn't mean we have to forget about a balanced design. However, it does mean sometimes it will dictate certain criteria. Take two examples here, which are completely different projects. One is a functional raised tazza bowl intended for fruit, and the other a beautiful ogee-style



Raised fruit bowl – tazza

laburnum bowl, designed as an object to be looked at and ornamental only.

The ornamental bowl has no need for a large footprint, it's extremely light and will never be used to hold things. Its small base is more than adequate to support it and the perfect size for the shape to elevate the bowl and show off its flowing curve, demonstrating a description of a pedestal.

But imagine the fruit bowl with a foot of this size. It has to support itself and the weight of the fruit, plus people reaching in and taking pieces out. For this reason the base needs to be much wider to support this width.

I would always try to add some height to incorporate some shape to raise the piece. As you can see here the base has an ogee profile drawing the eye up and presenting the bowl.

It is not just bowls that use pedestals to elevate the form – see this stunning tulip wood finial ring box. Most of its weight is at the bottom so the need for a large foot isn't as important. It's both functional and decorative, designed for keeping rings in, but will be picked up to open it meaning the foot or pedestal can be kept small.



Lidded box by Stuart Mortimer



Ogee bowl

Inspiration

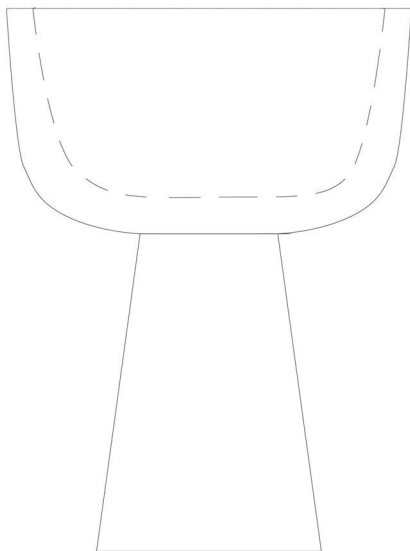
It doesn't take much to find inspiration for our shapes. They can be taken from historical sources by visiting museums or looking on the web. You will very quickly learn that most of the shapes we use and think of as being current are, in fact, ancient designs. I love looking at the older forms – they have a certain beauty which translate so well on to timber, as most pottery does.

Look at pottery and ceramics. Bowls and vessels thrown on a wheel or hand-shaped from clay really flow and seem to follow all the right design rules. They have to support themselves as gravity is trying to collapse them while they are being made.

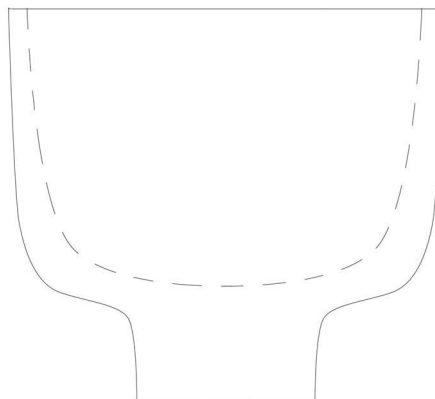
The drawings here have three different and distinct pedestals which can be stretched, compressed and manipulated to size. One has a very tall pedestal, is very heavy and a cross between a bowl and a goblet. If you scale this foot down you come to a more bowl-like vessel intended to be picked up when used or decorative in nature if the right timber is selected. Finally a carved pedestal where part of the turned foot has to be carved away to create three individual tiny feet.

Each of these bowls has a completely different foot size but all work against the bowl their supporting, yet a certain degree of manipulating also works either by stretching or compressing which is something we're going to be looking at next month. One of

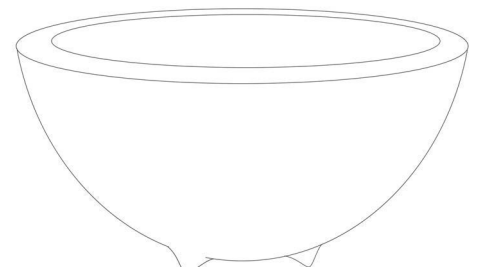
my biggest sources of inspiration for bowl or pedestals projects is pottery, either by looking in books, antique shops or simply your own pottery items. Of course as a woodturner you get to see an awful lot of bowls and you soon start to get a good eye for design which at first may be a bit of a struggle when learning how to use the tools properly. If you like a design it's worth noting it with a drawing and keeping for reference, take photos if you have permission and build up a scrapbook. You will also find that you probably go through phases where a piece inspiration takes you on a journey, I really like this and looking back through my work can tell you exactly where inspiration started with the work I was doing at that time, but also with my turning friends, seeing a series of work start and evolve in different ways, taking a basic idea and adding their own unique twists.



Ancient tall bowl



Vessel with tall foot



Vessel with carved foot

Historical forms

Carrying on from sources of inspiration we can look to historical architecture both in buildings and the ornament structures adorning them.

For instance, if you think of one of the oldest buildings in most towns it is often a church and there are plenty of objects to look at in there. The font is a great structure, usually visible toward the front of the building, it's a very strong, robust structure,

often much bigger than the bowl it supports and, in most instances, carved in stone.

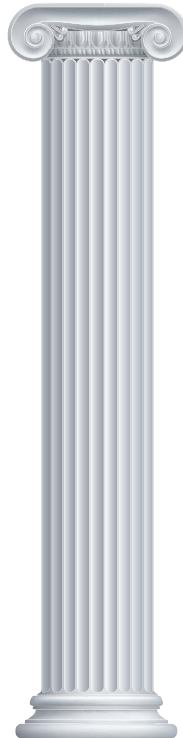
Moving further into the church, candlesticks and chalices are all great examples of pedestal forms and very rarely plain. These items are made mainly of metal but it's easy to see their potential as a source of inspiration.

Just a quick walk around your town centre or park the next time you're walking the dog and it won't take you long to find

something using a pedestal. The fountain in the picture below shows how these forms can be tiered up to form interesting cascades – against all the design theory we've been talking about so far as this form starts large at the bottom and slowly decreases in size as you get to the top. And of course really recognisable forms such as Roman or Greek columns can often be seen scaled down as pedestals for plants and sculptures.



Chalice



Greek column



Candlestick



Font



Fountain

Pros & cons with material choice

This is a woodturning magazine after all, so I think it's appropriate to assume that most of you will be attempting a pedestal project in timber.

I say most of you because it's not unusual to turn certain soft stone. Only five miles from where I'm writing now there is a stone being quarried and turned on a daily basis called Beer stone, taking its name from the village in which it's situated.

The stone is turned with similar tools to those of the ones we're used to and turned into the exact forms we're looking to create in these pages – candlesticks, tazzas and bowls, as well as carved forms from historical buildings.

As woodturners, our choice of timber is a vital part of getting things right. If we want to make a bird bath outside, the timber has to be able to be used outside. Also, the finish applied has to protect it from the sun and weather and possibly be suitable for constant water contact.

Some timbers, such as oak (*Quercus* spp) and chestnut (*Castanea* spp.), are great choices for pieces to be used outside and will last for years even untreated, whereas tulip is a great choice for larger structures to be painted due to its close grain and ease of work. However, all of them will lose their colour if the sun gets to them and all will revert to the same grey colour after time.

However timber as a material is relatively easy to source and shape compared to the other options, we just need to consider its weaknesses, for instance a bird bath made from oak with a lead or copper liner would compliment each other really well and last for years while weathering beautifully.



Bird bath

Types of pedestal

So far we've talked about conventional types of pedestal but let's have a look at some alternatives, such as squares, tripods and rings. Square pedestals can be seen in a variety of different projects or to display pieces in galleries. If you've ever entered any of your work into a woodturning competition at your woodturning club I suspect it would have been placed on a square pedestal to raise it to show its whole form.

That type of pedestal is separate from the main project, however integral square

pedestals on a round base also give a well balanced design if used in the right proportions – see the drawing below of the stone plant pot, the integral square base leads up to a leaf design pot and works really well for garden structures or urns.

Tripods are also well used in woodworking projects and in a previous article I used this form of tripod on a wine table. However, I'm choosing another garden structure to demonstrate the object in the form of a Japanese pagoda lantern. This is a bit

harder to form for a woodturner as it involves a bit of joinery skill, but on the right project is a really pleasing part of the build.

Finally, the simplest pedestal of them all and easy to overlook as even a pedestal – a ring. Rings are simply that and can be seen here with one of Jason Breach's wonderful orbital arcs, supported on a custom-made split ring. It is an unusual use of a ring pedestal as the item sits upright and is not laid flat as would be expected.



Pagoda



Plant pot



Orbital arc by Jason Breach



Refining a support column with a skew chisel

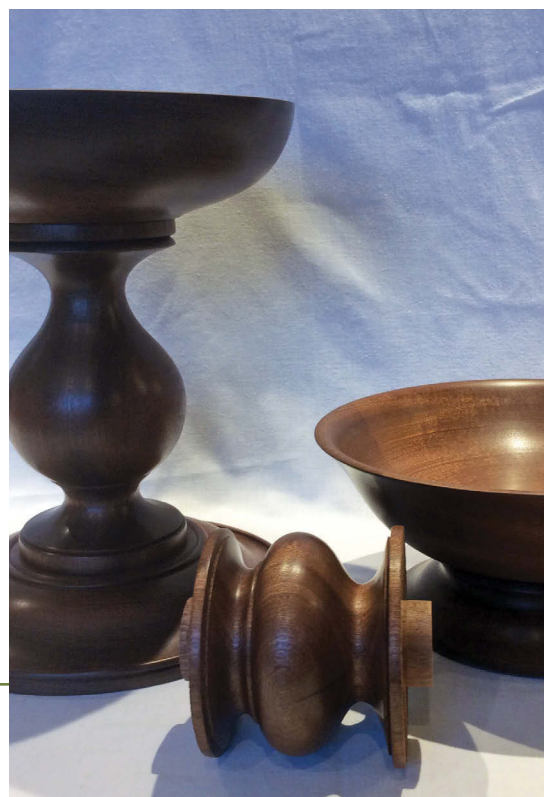
Putting things into practice

Ok, so that's some of the theory and, to be honest, a lot has been covered here regarding design ideas. Next month I want to take a couple of these projects mentioned but make them able to be interchanged, just to demonstrate the variations to be had with altering the dimensions.

I want to also look at how we can join these forms together. We can then take these techniques and start playing with scale, stretching and compressing the dimensions to suit the project. I'm really excited to crack on and make the first form. I have a timber and design in mind, so get designing, do your research and join me next time for the hands-on version of our pedestal projects. ●

TOP TIPS

- Draw it out. Sketching is a great way of getting things out of your head so you don't forget them later. They can be as detailed or as basic as you want. You don't have to be an amazing artist but carry a jotter around with you – you never know when you may be inspired.
- A simple piece of string moved around on the table can be formed into interesting shapes, giving ideas in form.
- Make a scrapbook. Again, like sketching, this is a great way of keeping ideas and spurring on new ones. Designers use this for many projects which would include the design brief swatches of material, types of finish, texture and potential hardware to be used.
- Cut outs. Make a series of card shapes in all aspects of the design, base, stem and bowl to be able to move around to form different design variations.



Next time...

A sapele tazza with a selection of different bases and spindles giving a range of pedestal ideas

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Let there be light

Mark Baker shows how to make a simple, decorative tealight holder



Tealight holders may seem a bit old hat or not something often thought about as a prime project for turning. That is a shame because they are functional, well liked as presents, they sell well at craft events and, depending on the grain orientation selected, are either spindle turning – a squat or tall form of a wide candlestick – or, if faceplate grain orientated timber is selected, the processes used are the same as those used for turning bowls but with a smaller internal hole. These are great items on which to practice and refine

your turning skills. There are myriad design options to explore and you can choose almost any timber you like, whether it be figured or plain. They do not take a lot of timber so are low cost – unless you splash out on a rare or highly figured piece of wood – and can be very quick to make, so are ideal for us time-poor turners who want to have fun and make something useful when we get time in our workshop. This article shows how to make one and also gives you a few design variants.

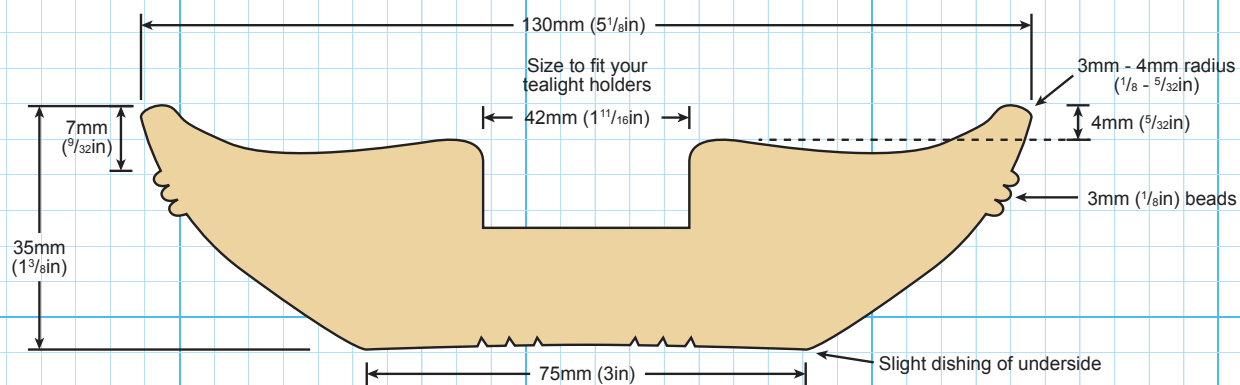
HEALTH AND SAFETY

- There is much debate as to whether one does or does not need to use some form of heat shield/insert between the tealight and the item it sits in. There may – depending on the country one lives in – be specific laws or guidelines to cover this and, if there are, follow them accordingly, but if they are ambiguous as to whether you should or should not have a heat shield in place, my opinion is why take the risk

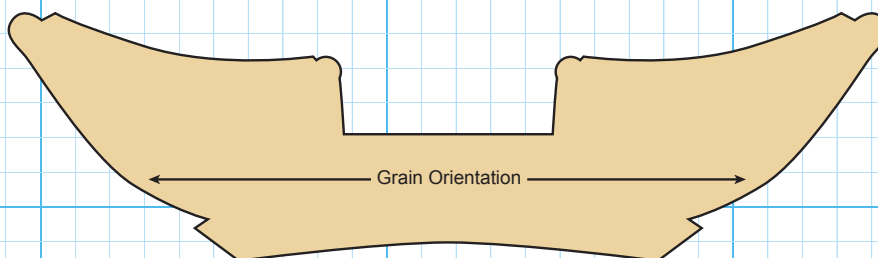
- of not using a purpose-made glass or metal holder? That way you know that you are minimising the risk of something untoward occurring for minimal cost. The inserts can be incredibly attractive too and add something extra to the piece.
- No matter what height you make the tealight holders, always ensure that the base is wide enough to support the piece without it toppling over if accidentally knocked.

- If you do stick the glass or metal holders in place, use a heatproof adhesive and, if using glass, make sure that you leave a little bit of an expansion gap between the hole and the glass holder to allow for any wood movement.
- Never leave a lit tealight or candle unattended or place one near any flammable material.

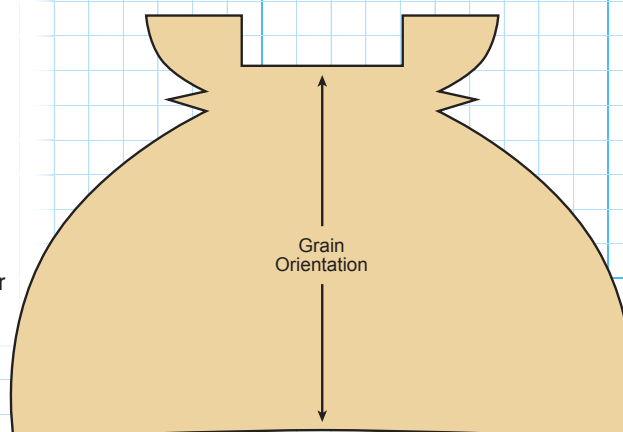
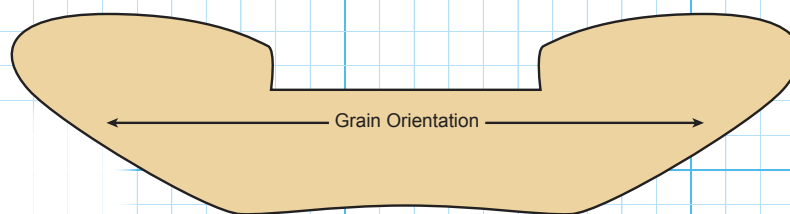
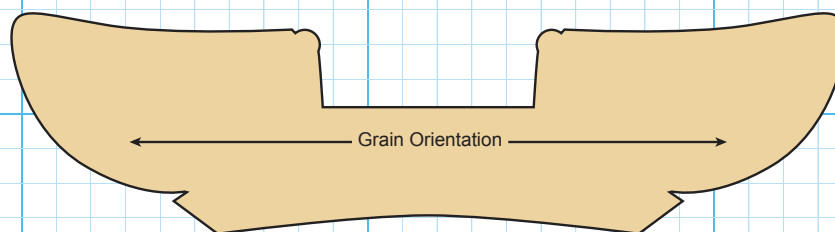
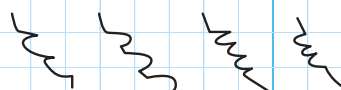
PLANS AND EQUIPMENT



ALTERNATIVE DESIGNS



Leave the body plain or decorate.
Beads, coves or V cuts are simple & effective ways
of achieving a different look.



EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Tools

- 10mm bowl gouge
- 3mm bead forming tool
- 10mm beading & parting tool
- 2mm or 3mm parting tool
- Square end or angle-edged scraper
- Round-nosed or French-curve scraper
- Calipers
- Tealight insert of your choice

Materials

- Timber of your choice – I chose pear for this project
- Finish of your choice

1 First, decide on your timber choice and grain orientation. I chose a small pear (*Prunus* spp.) bowl blank. I chose to drill a hole and mount it on a screw chuck. It is quick and simple. The hole drilled will eventually be turned away to fit the tealight holder in. I chose to initially mount this piece on a screw chuck.

2 Once the work is mounted on the lathe begin to shape the underside of the tealight holder. A 10mm bowl gouge is ideal for this. You will need to mount this timber in a chuck later to turn the top and a spigot or recess can be used. I chose a spigot, so roughly set out the approximate size when you start removing waste material. Use a combination of a pull cut with no bevel rubbing to quickly remove the bulk of the waste prior to moving to a push cut to create fine finishing cuts that refine the shape and remove any damage caused by the pull cuts.

3 One thing that I do is to not make the push cut straight through to the top edge of the piece. I have found on fractious timbers, no matter how slowly one cuts to the top edge, there is a risk with micro or larger shards of timber breaking off. So the last cut I reverse the cut to just trim that last bit away.

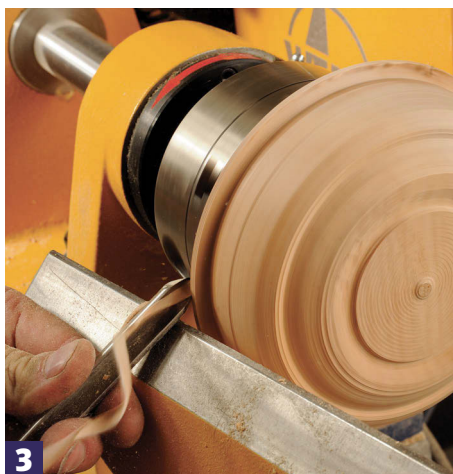
4 Continue to refine the shape with the gouge until you get to the shape you require. Use a scraper after the gouge to refine the shape a little if required. But at this stage, do have the width of the eventual base determined and also make sure you have cut a tenon to suit your chuck jaws.

5 Whether you leave the outside shape plain or choose to decorate it is up to you, but I like some decoration and chose beads in a band. To turn lots of small beads of the exact same size by hand is a wonderful skill to have and learn, but a simpler and effective way of creating uniformly-sized beads is to use a bead forming tool.

6 The trick with these is to never use them to reduce the diameter of the work, only cut to the surface you have shaped and make the last cut to fully form the crown of the bead with the cutting edge in trailing mode to minimise fracturing the crown of the bead. Once you have cut one bead, repeat the process until you have the number of beads you require

7 You can leave the beads flush with the external profile or create a raised band of beads, but refining the shape either side of the bands of the beads. A combination of a bowl gouge...

8 ... and scraper will allow you to depress the surface of the tealight holder so you have a raised band of beads. The shape of the depressed bodyline should mimic the arc that the beads follow or you will have a visual disjoint as far as the flowing body curves and the raised bands of beads.





9



10

9 Once shaped, sand and apply a finish of your choice. I tend to use an oil finish. Then remove the piece from the screw chuck, mount it in your chuck jaws and use a bowl gouge to true up the face of the wood.

10 You now need to check and measure the sizes and shape of your tealight insert. This metal one I am using has a plain body that is 20mm deep and 40mm wide with a rim that has a 2-3mm flare on the lip to cover the rear hole making the hole simple to cut. Tapered ones need a bit more care in measuring and cutting.



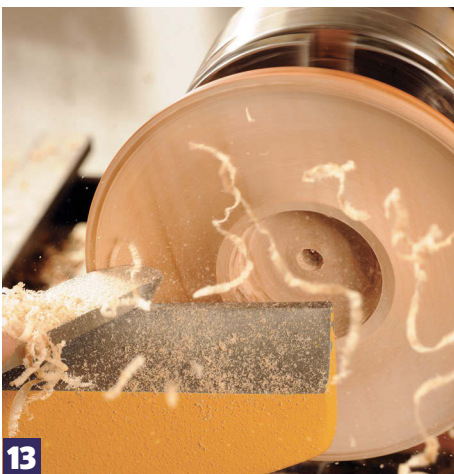
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12

11 Transfer that width measurement of the insert to the face of the blank and either drill the hole – using a Jacobs chuck in the tailstock fitted with the correct size bit or just smaller than that required – or make a parting cut into the wood with a parting tool on the inside of the marked size to just shy of the depth required.

12 Now use a bowl gouge to remove the bulk of the waste, then use a combination of a beading and parting tool to refine the hole and corners. The depth of hole cut is slightly deeper than the cup due to there being a slight dished profile in the top of the tealight holder. Note the hole in the bottom for the screw chuck. This will be covered later by the insert which will be glued in place with heatproof adhesive so I tend not to worry about that.



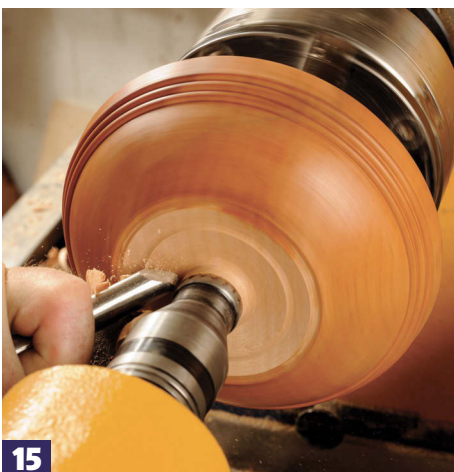
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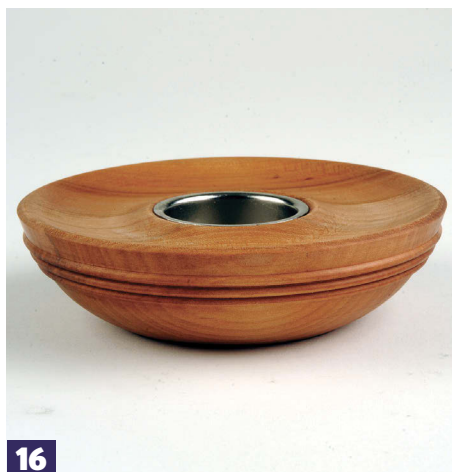
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13 Create the slight dished profile from the rim leading down to the inner hole then slightly radius the top outer edge of the holder and inner edge of the tealight insert hole. Next, refine the shape with a round-nosed or French-curve scraper if you need to. Once done, sand and oil the piece and once again check the insert for fit.

14 To finish the base of the piece I tend to use a jam chuck to hold it while I refine the base. To do this, mount a piece of endgrain material and cut a tapered tenon that will lock into the hole cut for the tealight insert.



15



16

15 Adjust the tapered tenon until you know you have a secure fit, place some kitchen towel over the tenon and mount the tealight holder on to the tenon using the tailstock to keep everything in place at the moment. Once secured, use a gouge to remove the waste material on the underside of the tealight holder to get the shape you want. I like a slightly dished underside. I know it will sit well on a surface. I used the corner of the beading and parting tool to create a series of V cuts in the bottom to create a little bit of decoration. Once done, stop the lathe, remove the tailstock, check the piece is securely held on the jam chuck and remove the stub left from the tailstock. After this, sand and finish as required.

16 Now all you need to do is glue the insert in place and you have a simple and effective tealight holder. ●



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Wailoa Arts Center, an inspiration born of fire

Emiliano Achaval reports
on the Big Island Woodturners
19th annual exhibition in Hawaii



INSET PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK & KAREN STEBBINS

A view of lava from the volcano going into the sea. Inset: Mark & Karen Stebbins' Platter – Plumeria won the Artists' Choice Award

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED
The Wailoa Arts Center – situated on the Big Island city of Hilo in Hawaii – held a Woodturning Exhibition in March to celebrate its 50th Anniversary. The city is just 28 miles from the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, one of the most visited parks in the US, where an active volcano sends flowing rivers of molten lava all the way to the ocean. The Wailoa Center is located in the park next to the Tsunami Memorial, which commemorates the 60 deaths that occurred

on a fateful day in 1960 when a tsunami devastated sections of Hilo's bayfront.

To help celebrate the 50th anniversary milestone, the Big Island Woodturning Club decided to make it the first ever inter-island woodturning exhibition

Diverse exhibits

Work from all of the woodturning clubs in Hawaii – Five American Association of Woodturners (AAW) Chapter clubs

from four major Hawaiian Islands – was represented. More than 40 people had work exhibited at the event to create a wonderful display.

The first Wailoa Woodturning Exhibition was the brainchild of legendary Hawaiian woodturner Jack Straka. He sent a handwritten note to each of the few club members asking them if they wanted to start an exhibit of their work in the state-run Arts Center. Jack personally ran the show for

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For further information about the Wailoa Centre, event and exhibitors go to:
www.bigislandwoodturners.org/big-island-woodturners-invitational-19th-annual-exhibit.html

A section of exhibition space



The Wailoa Arts Center in the park

the first few years. It has become the State of Hawaii's most prestigious and longest-running woodturning exhibit.

The Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts Program selected two great pieces for its travelling state-wide art exhibition. Two purchased awards went to Aaron Hammer's huge chocolate albizia (*Albizia julibrissin*) natural edge bowl and Dennis Hakes' Cook pine (*Araucaria columnaris*) footed bowl. Those two pieces

will now have a new wandering future through some of the most iconic places in Hawaii, such as the State Capitol, the governor's mansion, state libraries and the Downtown Honolulu State Museum. It's considered a great honour to be one of the artists chosen by the panel of jurors working with the Foundation of the Arts.

Demonstrations

In addition to the display of work there was

a series of demonstrations each Saturday over the month of March by various turners. I had the pleasure of spending two days with some of the club members in charge of this great show. It's an amazing group, full of very talented woodturners and all-round great people.

I was asked to do a demo on hand-chased threads boxes. A very receptive crowd on the opening day watched me do my best Bill Jones attempts at humour and thread chasing.



After me, Doug Leite, a founding club member, treated us all to an amazing demo of his homemade Rose Engine lathe. Yes, you read that right. Doug is a retired engineer, a college professor and he has built from scratch a perfectly functional Rose Engine.

The demonstrations at the event proved a great draw for people and showed a wider audience what turning was and what can be created.

Visitors could then put what they had seen in the display of works in context. The display was not only well received by visitors, they had the chance to buy items too.

The visitor interaction was wonderful and there was a People's Choice Award, which went to John Mydock for his piece titled *As Above So Below*. As an aside, this platter was also selected by the US State Department for its Art in Embassies programme and spent three

years in the US Embassy in Australia. John only just got it back in time for this exhibition.

On way home to Maui, as I was thinking about the event and working with the Center to put on a exhibition of wonderful turned work, the plane flew close to where the lava is entering the ocean. In the dusk you could see the golden glow of the lava, a huge plume of smoke going up to the skies, and it hit me – Wailoa, inspired by fire.



Chocolate albizia (*Albizia julibrissin*) bowl by Aaron Hammer



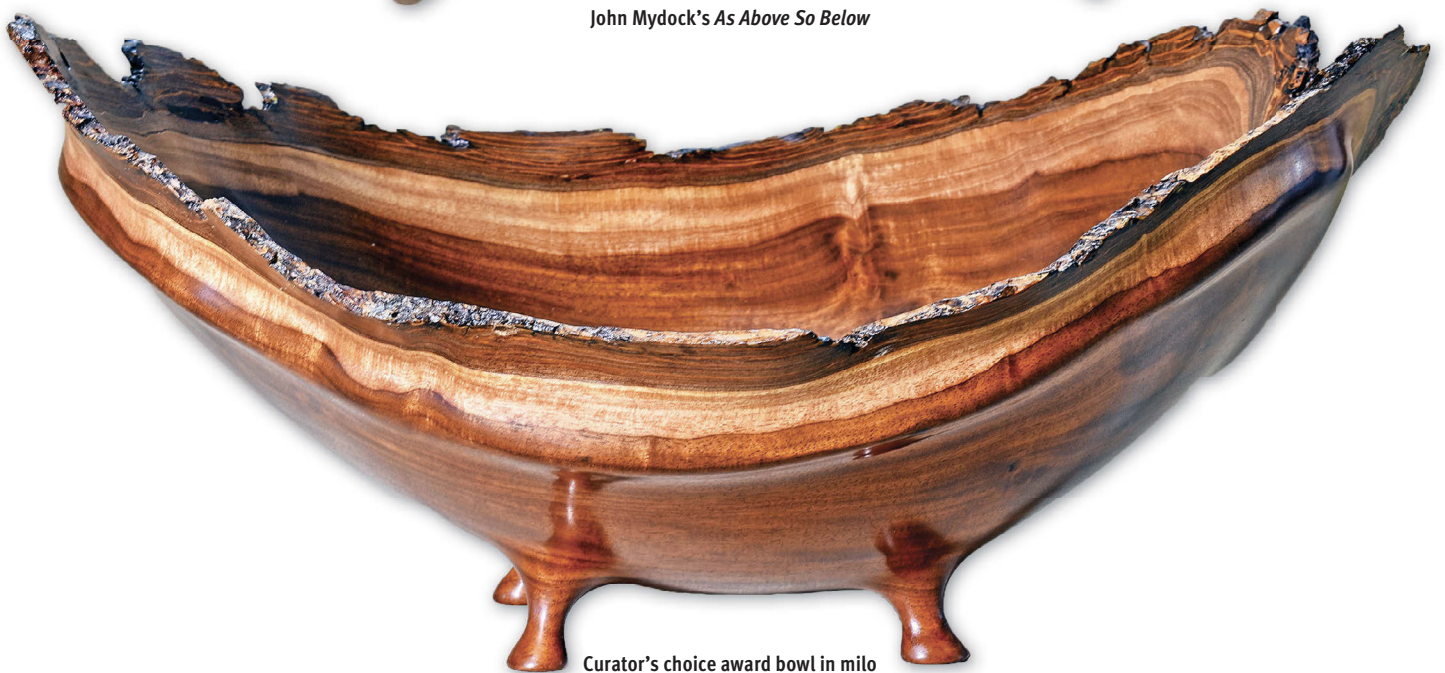
Milo calabash by Cliff Johns



Dennis Hakes' piece in Norfolk Island pine



John Mydock's *As Above So Below*



Curator's choice award bowl in milo
(*Therpsia popalnea*) by Pat Kramer



Collaboration by John Mydock and Greg Smith



Cook pine (*Araucaria columnaris*) hollow form by Doug Keown

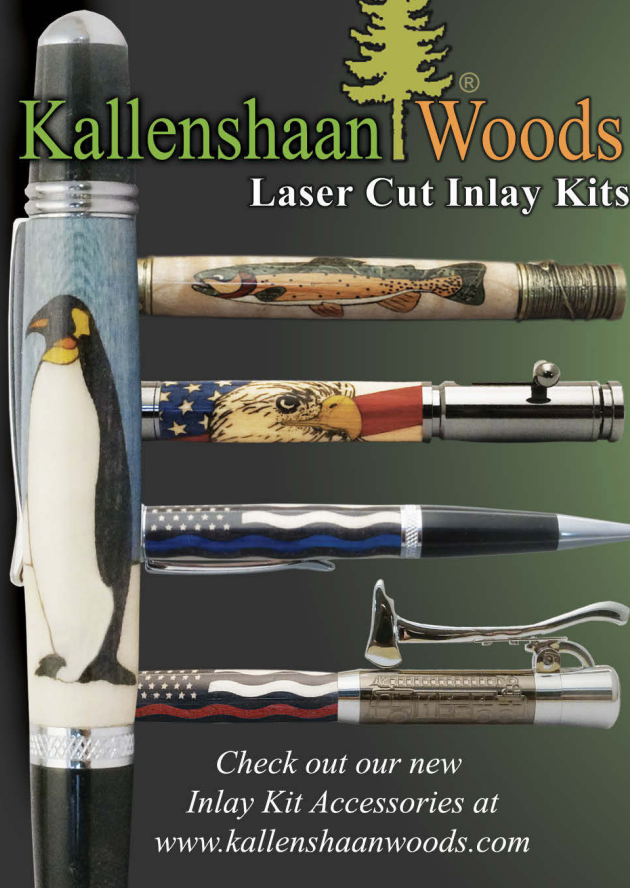


Doug Leite's lidded kamani (*Calophyllum inophyllum*) calabash

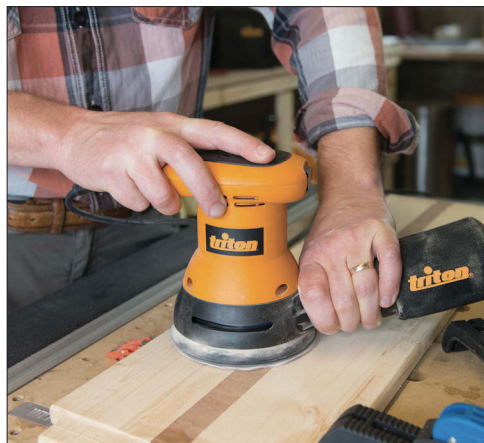
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Evaporative film finishes

Kurt Hertzog has some tips for success with shellac and lacquer

For the woodturner seeking easily applied finishes that offer good looks and protection, I usually recommend shellac or lacquer. Most woodturners are in the hurried mode so using long, involved finishing tasks find little favour.

Newcomers as well as the more experienced can easily and quickly apply either of these finishes by following only a couple of basic rules.

Both shellac and lacquer are evaporative film finishes. They can be built by applying multiple coats for thickness and appearance. Personally, I like the look and feel of both of these finishes and use them often. Each offers different benefits of application, protection and appearance. Knowing about these differences will help the woodturner pick the time and place for each. We'll explore these popular film finishes and how best to be successful with them.

DID YOU KNOW?

Shellac is derived from the secretions of the female lac bug. She secretes the resin on trees in Thailand and India. Depending on end-product goal, harvested lac resin goes through varying degrees of processing. The resultant solid flakes are subsequently dissolved in alcohol to make liquid shellac.

Safety

With any finish, read, understand, and follow the manufacturer's safe use instructions.

PPE indicated can include protective gloves, plenty of ventilation and activated charcoal respirators. Learning the proper PPE is only part of the information available from the manufacturer.

The safe use instructions on the packaging will indicate the parameters for application that will yield the best results. Substrate preparation and condition, ambient temperature conditions, humidity and other information will be suggested. The few moments spent reading these can help you protect yourself and get the results you desire.

Preparation for finish

Regardless of the finish or the method of application, a poorly prepared surface will always be a detriment to a well-finished final result. Review *Woodturning* 265, April 2014 – What You Need To Know About Sanding – if you need additional information on creating a finish-ready surface.

Shellac basics

Shellac is a bug excretion that has been processed to clean and sort it for use in a wide variety of applications. These range from coating edible produce and pharmaceuticals to being applied to woodturnings and

woodworks. A key to good results with shellac is having fresh product. From the moment shellac is made, it begins a degradation in performance with age.

Buying fresh commercial product is a challenge since it is day/date coded and begins ageing the day of manufacture. If you wind up buying at a slow turnover merchant, you may have problems with application and final results. When creating your own shellac mixture, the age and storage condition of the flakes, as well as the alcohol used to mix your shellac, can have an effect on the results. The shellac purists have special alcohol brands, special blends, or proofs that they use.

Shellac is one of the most versatile finishes available. Purchased at your retailer or easily made, it will function quite nicely as a finish by itself. It also works marvellously as a



Shellac flakes are available in many colours and purities. Sealed for lifespan, open when ready to mix

separation or barrier layer between non-compatible finishes, a colouring agent carrier, and a final finish over a different type of finish. Shellac can be purchased pre-mixed in a can from your home improvement store or paint retailer.

VERSATILITY

Shellac is a very versatile finish. In addition to being used as a finish for woods, it is used as a fingernail polish, final coat for sweets and pills, adjustment agent in watchmaking, a fuel for fireworks, water resistance in felt hats, adhesive for fixing pads in musical instruments, binder for ink sacs in vintage pens, a shine agent for fruits, the time-release coating for medicines and more.



Shellac is available in a ready-to-use form from home improvement centres and your woodturning retailer

One brand in the US is produced by Rust-Oleum brands company Zinsser and sold under the Bulls Eye brand name. It is available in different 'cuts' or, in reality, different loadings of shellac flakes. A cut of shellac is made with a given weight of shellac flakes dissolved into a volume of alcohol. For example, 1lb of shellac flakes fully dissolved in one gallon of alcohol produces a 1lb cut of shellac. Two pounds of flakes dissolved into one gallon of alcohol is a 2lb cut, etc. Obviously you can make any cut you want by varying the ratio and make it in any volume based on needs.

Purchased shellacs usually don't indicate the cut on the can but are known to be about a 3lb for the Bulls Eye shellac and a 2lb cut for the Seal Coat version. Based on your needs, lighter cuts can be made with proper dilution with alcohol.

Having mentioned Zinsser, please note there are many other makes of ready-mixed shellac products around the world – Chestnut products, Liberon, Mylands, Rustins, Colron, Barretine, Blackfriar, Morrells, Briwax and many more for you to choose from.

If you have special colour needs, the colour of the shellac bought or home-mixed can be altered with alcohol-based dyes. Virtually any colour of tinting can be accomplished using alcohol-based stain, aniline dye, or universal colourants. A colour wheel may be a valuable addition to your kit. The dyes available through your retailer will let you achieve virtually any colour you wish.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CHESTNUT PRODUCTS



Ready-mixed formulations come in various packaging options from numerous manufacturers



With the wide variety of alcohol-based dyes and their mixability, you can create any colour you wish



Depending on where you live, there might be date codes on ready-mixed formulations. Key to mfg. dates: second digit – last digit of year, third digit – month (1-9 plus O, N or D), fourth and fifth digits – day of month



Shellac, brushed on, over pyrographed and dyed cherry (*Prunus* spp) roof



To create your own shellac, flakes and alcohol along with any colourants you wish to tailor the shade



Shellac finish, brushed on to raw wood. Multi-piece assembly of purpleheart (*Peltogyne* spp)

PROBLEMS AND FIXES

If shellac stays tacky and never hardens, it is too old. Get or make fresh shellac.

Three years is about the maximum life from canned premade product. Home mixed is less. Fresher is always better.

If sprayed shellac or lacquer 'blushes' the humidity is too high. Changing your diluting agent from denatured alcohol to isopropyl alcohol is said to help with shellac.

Retarding agents are available for lacquers. The best solution is to spray either finish on a cooler, less humid day. The evaporation of the distillates in the finish causes cooling, in turn condensing moisture on the finish causing clouding or blush. Retarders are available but beyond our scope.

❏ Lacquer basics

Generically, lacquer refers to hard finishes that can be applied to wood. By that definition, shellac actually falls under the heading of a lacquer. We'll leave it separate and try to reign in 'lacquers'.

Intentionally ignoring Urushiol-based lacquers and the other exotic forms, we'll focus on the modern, readily available and more easily used nitrocellulose, acrylic, and water-based lacquers. These more modern versions still require skills to use well but are available to the consumer in nearly any market. Usually shiny but sheen is



Here's one example of the brands of lacquer available for brushing or spraying, with proper thinning, from your retailer

controllable. We'll deal with that near the end of the series. Nitrocellulose lacquers have been around since their use painting automobiles back in the 1920s. Currently, these lacquers find most of their use on furniture and musical instruments.

The preferred way to apply nitrocellulose lacquer is by spraying. Be aware of the PPE and safe handling precautions needed to use this finish. Acrylic lacquers use a colourless acrylic resin as their basis. Water-based to be dealt with later. Catalysed lacquers are used extensively in the professional arena and beyond the scope of our series.



Cellulose-based lacquers are available in spray or brushable options from various manufacturers



Acrylic variants are available too

TOP TIPS

- Unless you are an expert and have a special need, avoid waxy shellacs. Always opt for the dewaxed shellac.
- Avoid finishing, whether brushing or spraying, on vertical surfaces whenever possible. It is difficult to avoid drips and runs.
- Many finishes degrade with age. Mark the date when purchased or first opened. Buy from a vendor that turns over stock rapidly.
- Finish degradation is usually caused by oxidation. There are products available to displace the air before sealing the container, thus helping extend the finish shelf life.
- Proper storage of finishes is key to good results and longer usable life. Freezing and high storage temperatures can negatively impact the product usability and storage life.
- When in doubt as to the efficacy of any finish, try it out on a scrap piece of the same species to determine the curing time and final result quality.



Instruments are a big user of lacquer, particularly spray when from a gun or aerosol

Finishing environment

Few of us have the space or can afford a dedicated finishing area or booth. It would be nice but often we are forced to use the shop area where other work occurs. The problem that presents is dust. The biggest enemy you are likely to have in finishing is dust that will settle on a wet finish.

The two solutions that I use with varying degrees of success are finishing outdoors and finishing in the shop first thing in the morning. My finishing process is to do all brushing of finish inside and spraying of finish either inside or outside depending on the season, weather, temperature and winds.

Finishing outdoors has some perils that you don't have indoors. The season of the year and your locality can dictate your ability to work outdoors. The weather of the day and the potential change in weather can be a problem.

The beauty of working outdoors is the prevailing light breeze will carry off the overspray and fumes but do be wary of

stronger breezes that might carry dust. Other than the seasons when you have plants shedding materials, a warm, sunshiny day is a joy to be outdoors spraying lacquer or shellac.

Barring the outdoor opportunity, putting a finish on your project in the shop needs to be done with minimal airborne dust. I also try to make sure that I do a batch of finishing rather than just one thing at a time.

Typically, after I have finished turning for the day I will have a workshop clean up. That means removing large shavings and then vacuuming up any other debris and dust that is evident in my workshop and finishing area. I then leave the overhead dust filters on overnight to capture any errant particles. Then first thing in the morning I do all my finishing tasks to minimise any risk of dust settling on my wet finishes as they cure.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHELLAC AND LACQUER

- Lacquer is more durable than shellac.
- The gloss of lacquer is controllable from ultra matte to very high gloss.
- Lacquer doesn't watermark as shellac will.
- In respect of thinners, alcohol is more user-friendly than lacquer thinners
- As applied, both finishes will chemically melt into the previous layer.
- Acrylic lacquers feature a very fast drying time.
- Lacquers may have use/disposal legal requirements based on usage quantity and local environmental regulations.



A heavier than air oxygen displacement product that works well to maximise life of finishes



Lacquer finish over the top of pyrographed and alcohol dyed cherry roof sprayed on from a rattle can



HVLP, standard spray gun, or rattle can aerosol dispenser. All work well but the aerosol requires no cleanup



Whether painting or finishing, outdoors is great if the weather permits



Spraying lacquer outside in the warm weather enhances drying times and solves the fumes issue, but might introduce contaminants into the finish

Application techniques

Both shellac and lacquer can be applied in the same two manners. Either will work nicely if brushed on in a dust-free environment with a quality brush. The key word is 'quality'. You'll find that purchasing and using a quality brush will make the finishing far easier. You can keep a quality brush in shape for many years with prompt and proper cleaning. I never mix my brushes. Brushes for shellac are never used for anything else and the same for lacquer.

Each is cleaned with the appropriate solvent. Lacquer thinner for lacquer and alcohol for shellac. A thorough cleaning in the solvent and drying of the brush, along with flattening and wrapping in newsprint for storage, will keep your brushes ready for use for years. I try to use the lathe as my workholding and brush apply without power. I brush on the finish while rotating the lathe by hand. Like any painting, keeping a wetted edge and brushing on sufficient material to allow for settling without running works best.

Once I have a complete coat, I will often turn on the lathe running at the slowest speed. The rotation will keep everything settling without running. Shellac will take only moments with a light enough cut. The viscosity of lacquer will usually take a bit longer.

Don't apply the next coat until the previous is dry. You can go away and come back the next day if you wish. You won't need to but you could, since the solvent in both finishes will cut into the previous layer – that is, the next coat will partially dissolve the dried previous layer just a bit and bond the two layers together.

This goes on over and over with each successive coat until you have built the thickness you desire. If the coats are properly applied and you use the premise of many coats of very thin applications, you should have no need to 'level' the coats. Everything should be ready for the final sheen control, buffing and polishing. Remember, problems always arise when you try to apply the next coat too soon.

Application by spray

Shellac and lacquer both work very nicely being sprayed. Virtually any spray mechanism will work provided you have the correct viscosity. Each applicator will require something different.

You can apply lacquer or shellac via an airbrush, a standard spray gun, an HVLP system, or a rattle can aerosol applicator. I am perhaps the worst spray painter there is. I own and use an HVLP system but rarely use it because I find I get successful results with an aerosol applicator. I don't spray shellac at all any more and always brush it.

For lacquer, I don't brush it any more but always spray it from a rattle can applicator. You can buy versions of lacquer from the most inexpensive to some of the finest available in these applicators.

If you are spraying furniture or large projects, you'll likely need an HVLP or standard spray gun system. My projects are sized so I can apply lacquer from a spray can quite nicely. I use the same method as above

being held in the lathe and rotated by hand or positioned outside so I can walk around it. The same guidance as above. Many light coats get the job done properly. Applying too thickly just once will cause a run that will ruin the job.

How many coats? I've never really counted to get a minimum and maximum number. Put on the number of coats it takes to give you the appearance you want.



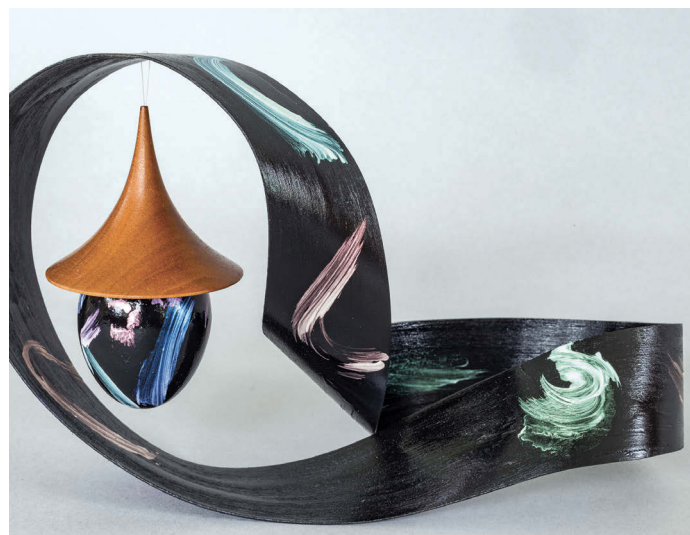
One of the products available to rotate the work and have stick-free plastic elevation supports

Sheen control, buffing and polishing

We'll deal with sheen control, buffing and polishing of the entire finishing matrix near the end of the article series. There are some differences but, for the most part, they are all so similar that it

DOS AND DON'TS

- Always be cautious spraying shellac. It is a flammable finish until the alcohol flashes off.
- Shellac is a great primer to seal knots prior to another finish. It will seal in bleeding.
- When mixing shellac, always date and indicate the cut on the container. When in doubt, mix fresh.
- Read the technical labels and always follow the recoat guidelines. Failure to follow the recommended guidelines may result in a poor or useless finish.
- Don't rush! Having spent all the time creating something you are proud of, rushing is likely to introduce errors that may result in a bad finish. We all know a bad finish will ruin a great piece of work.



Lacquer over raw cherry roof of ornament and over acrylic paint of stand. All spray can lacquer

will be easier to cover the commonalities and identify the few differences. Look for the buffing and polishing topic in the last segment of this series.

Conclusions

One of the takeaways from this series will probably be that there isn't any one best finish. As with virtually everything else, there are pluses and minuses to be considered and weigh in the selection decision. This issue, we compared two popular film-type finishes that have ease of use, wide acceptance and many years of history. Are they the 'answer'? Perhaps, but you've got many more to put into the decision matrix as we go forward.

Your decision will vary from project to project based on the relative importance of materials cost, ease of use, repairability, special equipment/facilities needed, level of PPE, your familiarity with the product, size of project and more. Nearly any finish we'll present will do the job. The selection you make should be the best balance of the benefits and drawbacks for your situation.

Next month we'll venture into reactive finishes. They will add many more potential finishes to the selection matrix. ●



From my collection, a hollow form done by Chris Pytlik. In my opinion, spray lacquering at its finest

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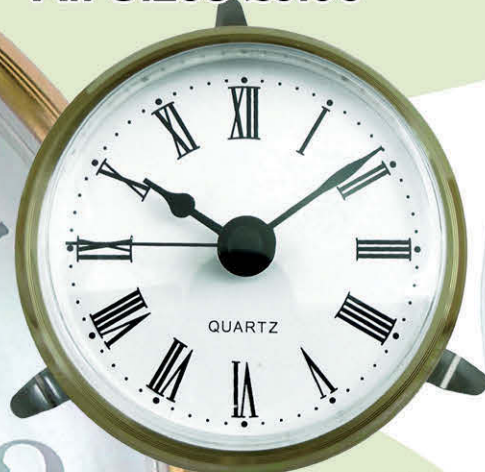
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First impressions

The Editor jumped at the chance to try out the new Zebrano lathe from Wivamac when he heard one was coming to the UK

Wivamac is a Belgian company that has been producing lathes for many years and there has been a lot of talk of a new design over the past year or so, but any information other than that was scarce, to say the least.

I am on record as saying that I am like a kid in a candy store when new kit comes to my attention and hearing about something

coming without any information is a form of mental torture. All I heard was that it was a new concept with lots of added features. So when I heard a Zebrano lathe from Wivamac was coming to the UK for people to see I booked a time slot to give it a go so I could comment on my initial impressions. I have every intention of putting it through its paces properly at a future date.

The lathe

Well, this lathe is best classified as a large lathe. It is very heavy and solid looking with a slightly futuristic element to the stylish design. That futuristic element is something I will come back to later on. The lathe is heavy. The headstock has a sturdy, thick-walled skeleton frame that is cast iron with a hinged moulded polycarbonate clear front screen and a black moulded rear housing where the electronics are housed. The tailstock, lathe bed – which has extra webbing and struts underneath to provide even more support and extra vibration-dampening qualities – tool rest assembly and stand are all cast iron. The finish on the lathe – a smart black coating over the well-machined and fettled castings – is well done. The headstock can slide along the bed as well as swivel and has a locator block – adjustable – to ensure perfect alignment with the tailstock. There is a lever arm inside the headstock to allow the releasing or locking of the cam system which clamps the head in place.

Headstock assembly

The skeleton-type open casting of the headstock is very neat. The clear polycarbonate front facing allows the turner to see everything that is happening in the headstock which is a very nice aspect. I think. Given that this material is virtually unbreakable it is more than up to the job of the day-to-day use it will be subject to. There is a micro switch on the housing that prevents the lathe from running when open. The casing is also locked in position via a special key.

The spindle is housed in a slot-like arrangement in the headstock casting that would allow the easy removal of the spindle and bearing assembly – Wivamac calls it a cassette assembly – should one ever need to change bearings. This is a very neat idea and I am assured there is no loss in structural integrity or alignment due to the way the spindle and bearing system is housed.

That sounds like a win, win option to me.

There are five pulleys which have a poly-V

belt attached to them, giving a speed range of 0-3,600rpm. That makes the lathe capable of being used for anything from large, out-of-balance work down to small, delicate spindles.

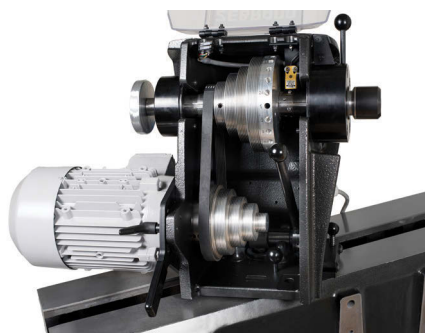
The motor is housed at the back and to change the belt to a new pulley there is a simple lever lock system to allow you to lift the motor, change the belt and lock the motor back down in position. There is also a numbered 24-position indexing system on the largest pulley. This is locked in position by a bar inserted from the top of the motor housing. You can see exactly what is happening by viewing through the clear front screen.

There is a series of holes to lock the spindle too. Again, a small bar is inserted into a hole on the front spindle casing to lock the spindle off.

There is a small handwheel on the spindle at the outboard end of the spindle.

The spindle

The spindle is M33 x 3.5tpi and has a new design that complies with the new European chuck and faceplate unwinding security standard. Effectively, there is a deeper groove at the back of the chuck that allows the fitment of a device on the new European chucks that prevents the chuck or faceplate from inadvertently unwinding. That said, it works on the standard M33 x 3.5 chucks too. It is bored with a 2MT taper. The spindle height is 280mm above the lathe bed, giving this lathe a maximum turning capacity of 560mm (22in) diameter.



The headstock assembly



Cast webbing and support struts under the lathe bed



The rear side of the headstock assembly



The lathe status lighting colour system



Electronic variable speed

There is a control panel that houses the on-off master switch and in addition to this is a moveable, hand-held control unit that you place where convenient. This allows you to stop and start the lathe, change from forward to reverse rotation and adjust the speed. It also comes with a memory function that allows you to preset speeds. It has a strong magnetic back that holds well on the lathe frame as well as having a large domed emergency stop button.

If you remember, I mentioned the futuristic element earlier on. Well, this lathe not only looks smart, it has a visual colour-coding light system that shines in the headstock to give a visual indicator of the lathe's status.

There are three colours: blue means that the lathe is ready to run, green is active when the lathe is running and red is for danger, door open or to denote something is wrong. I think this visual display is very good. It is a visual identifier as to what is happening or able to happen and one quickly gets use to the glowing lights.

Toolrest assembly and tailstock

The toolrest assembly comprises a decent-length toolrest that sits in a machined steel column. The column sits on a body that has two round swells on the side, on to which the steel column is affixed. The column is eccentrically drilled to allow the rest to move so that none of the base protrudes beyond the face of the toolrest allowing the toolrest to be brought right up to the face of a bowl. The base unit is easily moved and locked in position via a level-cam-lock system.

The tailstock is sturdy too. There is a lever arm on the rear side to lock/unlock the unit. The quill is bored through to allow the use of a knock-out bar or long-hole boring. The quill is graduated so you can drill accurately. The base of the tailstock casting has a couple

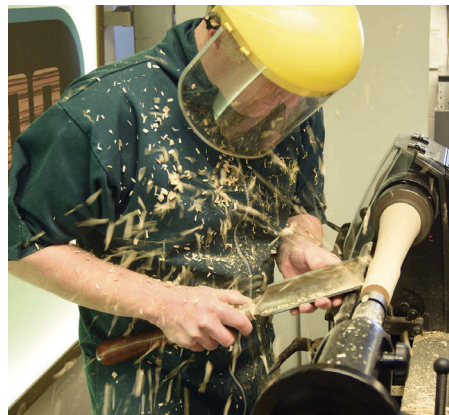
of holes drilled in too so you can store drives and centres. The hand wheel is solidly built and free running.

Lathe bed and stand

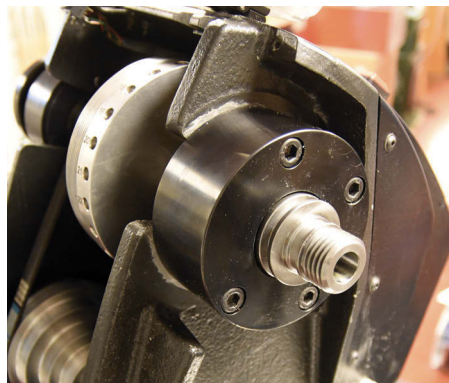
As with the rest of the lathe, the bed and leg assembly is well made and solidly built. The legs are detachable from the lathe bed, but when placed together meet and align perfectly. The lathe bed and legs have machined sections on them at different positions and heights that allow the fitting of optional extra bed extensions so you can have better turning configurations for the work you do. The leg stands have integral adjustable feet so you can level the lathe properly. The top of the bed bars are machined well and are wide enough that when I applied a lot of lateral pressure on the toolrest assembly – not something usually encountered much in turning – it stayed put.

In use

My thoughts about the time I used the lathe are that this is a solid, heavy-duty lathe that put up with me thoroughly trying to get it to stop on faceplate and large spindle work. No matter the cuts I used – even deliberately nasty ones – it didn't baulk. The power delivery is very smooth and this is one of the quietest lathes I have tested and everything worked well. The speed control was easy and responsive. Everything that was meant to be able to be moved did so easily. The vibration dampening qualities were very good.



Spindle work was no problem at all



The new style spindle

I must admit that the toolrest assembly took a little while to get used to, but this is a similar design on other Wivamac lathes. It worked fine, it's just that the swells are not something I am used to, but didn't find they got in the way once I adjusted the central toolrest support. It is created to provide versatility and provide better work access but I didn't do any work that would allow me to see the full versatility of the assembly. It was solid as a rock in use, so that is good enough for me.

The headstock look and configuration allows the turner to see what is happening and have a clear view of everything. The coloured status lighting is something I like and can only imagine how lathes will develop in the future.

Whether faceplate or spindle turning, this lathe would no doubt suit turners who want one lathe to do a wide variety of work. Yes, it comes at a cost and, depending on model, that will be between €4,200 and €5,400, but the weight, power delivery and ease of use makes this an interesting and very worthy contender in the larger lathe market. ●

CONTACT

For UK enquiries contact:

The Toolpost: www.toolpost.co.uk

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The tailstock



The toolrest assembly

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sharing expertise

Branding turned work

In the final article in this series **Molly Winton** explores embellishing a turned project with home-made brands using nichrome wire

Designs can be imprinted into the surface of the wood by stamping a heated shape into the wood fibres, just as branding is done to mark ownership of cattle. Brands can be made using nichrome wire, copper rivets/nails, copper tubing, and/or brass tubing. When copper and brass are used, ensure they are solid copper or brass, not plated. Copper conducts heat better than brass, however brass does work. Nichrome wire can be bent and configured by hand, or through the use of a variety of pliers or wire-bending tools prior to heating the wire. Once the wire has been heated (annealed), the metal hardens and will no longer be flexible. Attempting to bend and manipulate annealed wire will result in breakage. This article will explore the use of nichrome wire brands only.

Analysis of interchangeable tip pens

In order to be used, the home-made brands must be attached to a power source to heat the tips/brands you intend to use. An interchangeable tip pen that is capable of securing the legs of the tip/brand to the pen body must be used. Pens with set screws are necessary to ensure the electrical current travels up one leg, through the body of the brand, and then back down through

the second leg. If electrical conductivity is broken, or not secure, the brand will not heat.

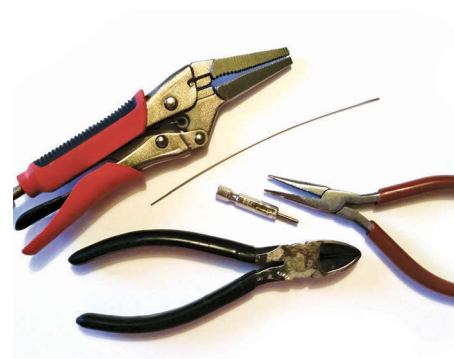
There are numerous machines available. Some are perfect for pyrography – which typically uses low heat – but branding requires a high-heat output using potentially quite thick tips and some units cannot deliver the heat output to brand well. Also, some of the handles can become hot when used

with high-heat output, which makes them uncomfortable to use. You also need to find a holder that feels right, does not get hot, can deliver the heat output required and can be used with a variety of wire thicknesses to create the effects you want. Best advice is to talk to people already doing this type of work and ask what they are using. Talk to retailers and it is also worth trying before you buy.

Making the basket weave brand



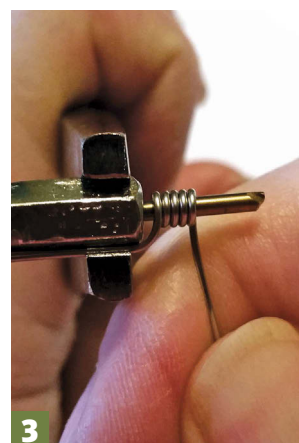
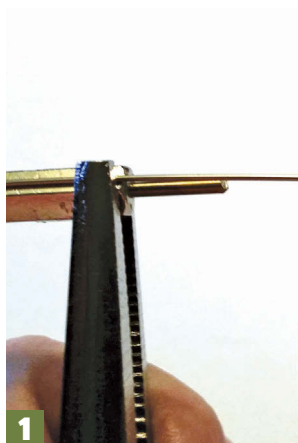
Bare nickel-chromium resistance wire (nichrome) is needed to make the brands. It does not seem to matter whether it is nichrome 60 or 80. Both work fine. Two sizes (22 gauge, and 20 gauge) are commonly used by the author. The higher the number, the finer the wire.



Equipment used to make the basket weave brand include locking vice grips, wire cutters, needle-nose pliers, a mandrel, and approximately 5in (130mm) length of 20 gauge nichrome wire.

MAKE YOUR OWN MANDREL

Make your own inexpensive mandrels by purchasing hex-ended drill bits and removing the fluted portion of the drill. I found this two-piece set that works great for my standard size, and small size brands – 1.5mm and 2mm



1 With the locking vice grips anchor the wire, with approximately 1in of the wire extending along the mandrel base (this is one leg of the brand) next to the base of the round mandrel. The wire needs to be firmly anchored, with no wiggle.

2 Maintaining strong tension on the wire, wrap it snugly against the mandrel with no gaps between the coils.

3 Wrap a total of five coils with the wire exiting the brand on the same side of the mandrel that the wire entered the coils.

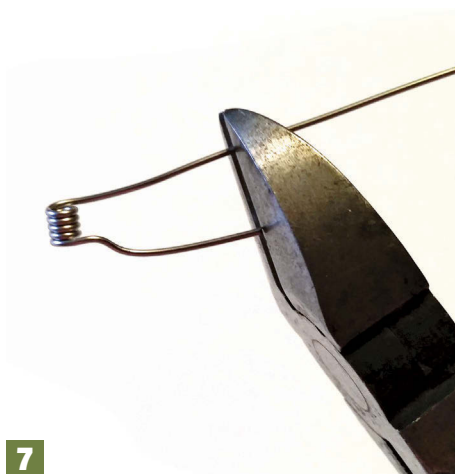
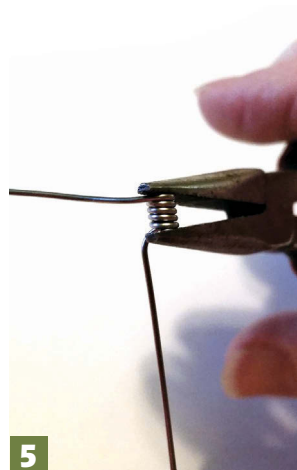
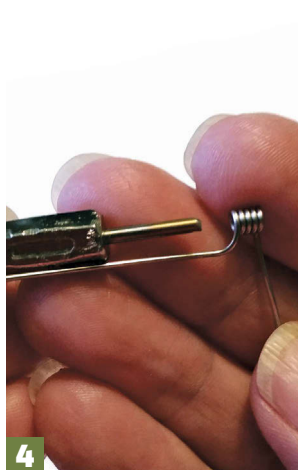
4 Release the vice grips and slide the brand off the mandrel.

5 Now grip the coiled end of the basket-weave brand with your pliers.

6 Hold the coils between the jaws of the needle-nosed pliers gently but firmly, so they don't distort, and bend the shorter of the two legs parallel to the other.

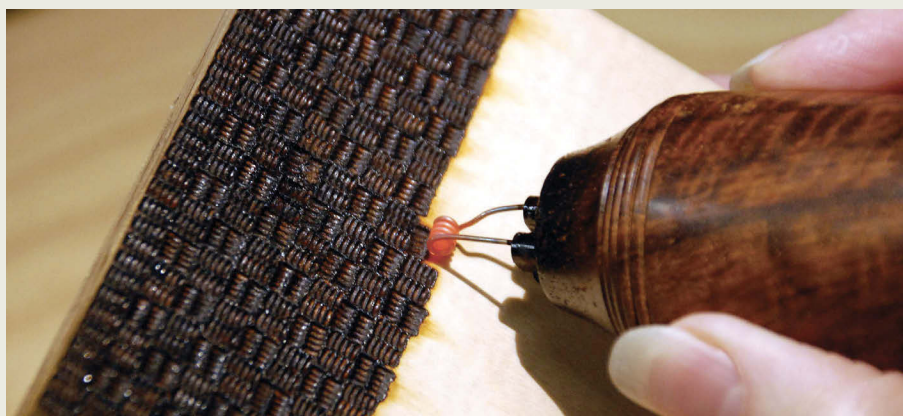
7 Trim the legs to an approximate 20mm. Leaving the legs too long will lose stability of the legs when the brand is heated and applied to your project.

8 The completed brand.



BASKET WEAVE PATTERN

To get a nice even pattern you need to view the work as if the surface is gridded out with squares or rectangles to match the shape of and size of your brand. Draw in a grid if you want. Keep your brand in line with the starting position and gently place the brand onto the surface. Maintain an even pressure until you get the shading and depth you want. Now make another brand in the same orientation next to your previous one. Now rotate your brand 90° to the previous ones and create two new brands side by side. Then repeat the process until you have finished.



MAKING THE S SPIRAL BRAND

The equipment used to make the S spiral brand includes locking vice grips, needle-nose pliers, dual round cone pliers, something to hold the vice grips (you can use a bench vice) and an approximate 150mm length of 20 gauge nichrome wire. The types of pliers and clamps shown will help make most brands so you are set to go with making many more brands to suit your requirements. All you need in additions is a selection of nichrome wire in various gauges.

1 Lock the wire securely within the jaws of the vice grips, extending the wire approximately 25mm into the jaws.

2 This 1in length will be one leg of the brand. Bend the wire extending out of the jaws, so it is perpendicular to the secured leg.

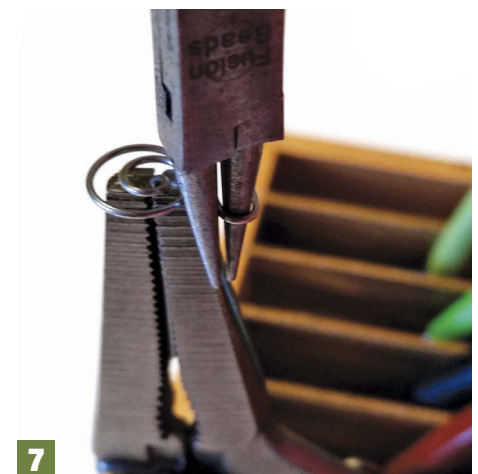
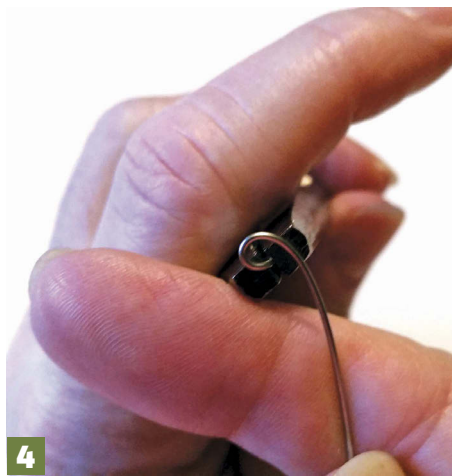
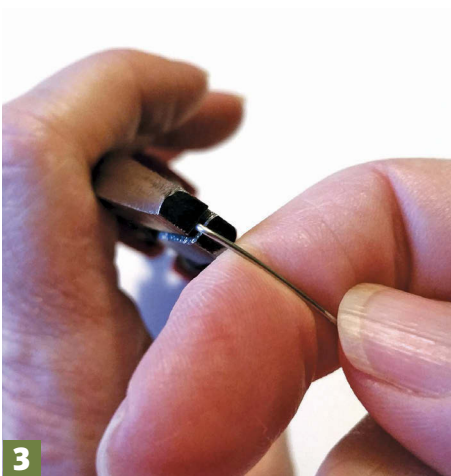
3 Hold the wire in a relaxed underhand grip with your right hand, and the left hand holding the vice grips.

4 Rotate the vice grips to make a tight centre hole of the spiral.

5 Continue to rotate the vise grips, gently feeding the wire into the spiral leaving a small gap between the wire. After two spirals, stop and secure the vice grip into something that will hold it (I've used my tool box. A bench vice is also handy.)

6 Firmly grasp the long end of the wire, close to the spiral, with the round cone pliers.

7 Bend the wire back on itself to create a S-shaped profile. The severity of the profile is up to you, but a gentle curve is what I am aiming for with this brand. This is the beauty of brands, you can create as many variants or styles to suit your requirements and tastes.



8 Bend the long end of the wire backwards, snug against the right side cone.

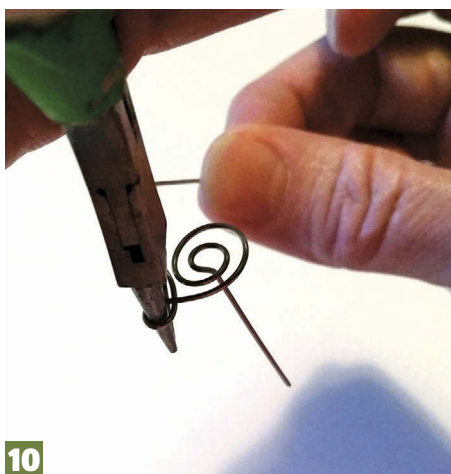
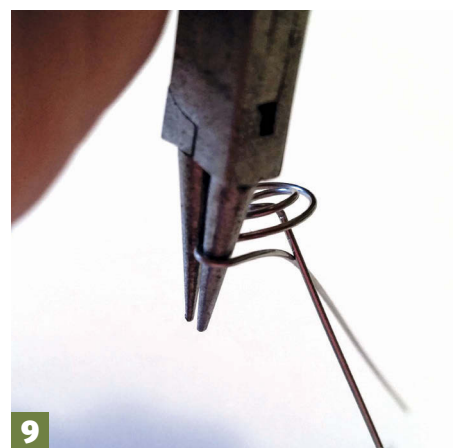
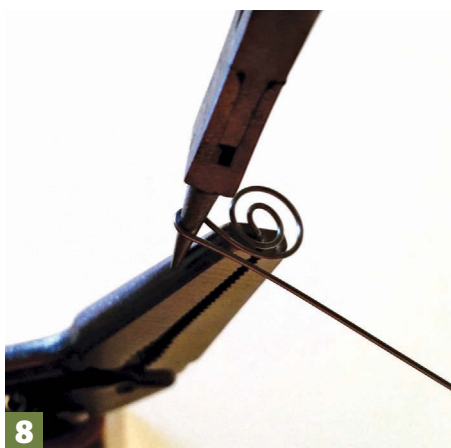
9 Remove the brand from the vice grips and continue to grip the cone pliers firmly. Gently move the long end of the wire to the inside of the first leg. There is enough flex in the wire to manage this without distorting the brand.

10 Continue bending the long portion of wire to cross under where the wire enters the cone plier, making a circle.

11 Switch to the needle-nosed pliers, spanning the top circle, and bend the long end of the wire down parallel to the first leg.

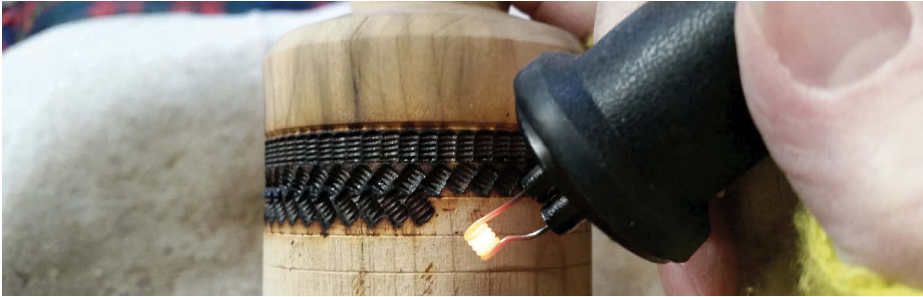
12 Gently tweak the coils of the brand to ensure each coil is on the same plane, so all parts of the brand will make contact with the surface of your project. If a coil sits slightly higher than the one next to it, gently bend them to the same level. Leave a tiny gap between the lower intersection of the single circle. If the wire touches at this intersection, the electrical current will short out at this point and not heat the entire brand. The electrical current needs to flow uninterrupted.

13 The completed brand ready for fixing into your pyrography unit.



Application of the brands to your project

When turning the project I placed shallow score lines within the area designated for the herringbone pattern, in the hope this would assist with the calculation of the number of lines to be burned and ensure an even layout. As I burned each line it became obvious they were not helping. Since they were shallow, they did not present a problem, because the brand burned them away.



I burned the first line in a vertical orientation to provide a border. For line two I tilted the orientation of brand placement approximately 45° to the right, completed that row, and, for row three, tilted the orientation 45° to the left. Each subsequent line was alternated back and forth to achieve the herringbone pattern.



Prior to the final line of the herringbone pattern I burned the bottom border row of an all-vertical orientation to match the top border. This allowed me to blend the final herringbone line into the border row.



The S spiral brands were then randomly placed around the base and top of the vessel.

FOR MORE VARIETY

To add a little variety to the project I made a second S spiral brand using 22 gauge nichrome wire, to scale the size of the brand down. It was made exactly the same as the larger S spiral, just smaller.

Application of finish

The finishing technique I have decided to apply is a combination of black acrylic paint (semi-gloss), followed by application of a product called Gilders Paste. I painted the entire vessel inside and out with the paint. Apply the paint sparingly to avoid filling the branded portions with the paint. Once dry, I taped off the herringbone portion so as not to accidentally colour it with the paste. Application of the Gilders Paste can be done using a cotton cloth or other applicator, but I prefer using the pad of my index finger. I have better control of where the paste goes, and the quantity applied. Copper in the primary coat and Celtic Bronze was used to highlight the small S brands to provide some visual depth. ●

GILDERS PASTE

Gilders Paste is a mineral spirit-based finish with a consistency similar to shoe polish. It comes in 28 colours, 12 of which are metallic. They can be found in some art and craft supply stores, but frequently the entire 28 colours are not available. To see and purchase from the entire stock, visit the website at gilderspaste.com.



The completed project

Shhhhh! Keep it to yourself!

Hamlet have added another profile to their affordable Double Ended Bowl Gouge range

It is called "Masterflute"

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Made in the UK



45 Degree

comes in two versions
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it has a "parabolic" flute
which gives you more control over the
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traditional gouge, achieving a higher
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55 Degree

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Community letters

Here are just a few letters the Editor has received from you, the readers

Pewter work

Hi Mark,
My name is David Miles I am the chairman of Torbay Woodturners.

Some of the members of our club, including myself, spent a day at Axminster Tools & Machinery, which we all enjoyed.

While there I was speaking to Colwin Way about a project I had made using Richard Findley's article from *Woodturning* magazine issue 301. Colwin looked at my version of the bowls and he suggested I write to you and send some photos of my bowls.

I followed Richard's method until it came to making the mould for the pewter. I used MDF which I found successful, although very dusty.

I had taken my finished bowls to my club night for our Show Table, which we have monthly. The members were really impressed with my bowls, and asked me to do a demonstration of how I made them.

Last month (May) I did the demo for our club members, using my method with the MDF (with full mask etc), and told them all where I had first seen the project and who had written the article.



Dave Miles' pewter work in sapele, walnut and cherry

Because of time limits and safety issues I melted the pewter and did the demo with the aid of pre-made items at various stages of the creation process. The demo was a real success, the members were asking questions galore and were really fired up to try.

As woodturners most of us do subscribe to your magazine, but seeing the demo in real life puts a whole new outlook on working with pewter.

*Safe turning,
Dave Miles*

Skew chisels

Dear Mark

Referring to the article by Ernie Conover in the February issue 302, page 47. He refers to sharpening a skew chisel with a slightly convex bevel. For a planning cut with the skew chisels, the upper surface acts as a chip breaker. The greater the chip breaker angle the more effective this becomes.

Typically a skew with a 15° flat ground bevel angle gives a chip breaker angle of 30°. When he sharpens the same chisel with a slightly convex grind the chip break angle is increased and the chisel becomes more user friendly and will handle wood with wild grain more easily. The opposite occurs when the skew is sharpened on a 160mm diameter grinder. The bevel angle at the cutting edge is reduced, the chip break angle is reduced and the skew becomes less user friendly and more likely to pull up the wood in front of the cutting edge. To return the skew to the same performance (flat ground) when sharpened on a 160mm grinder the bevel angle needs to be increased to between 20° and 25°. I use 25° for my skew chisels, and 30° to 35° for wood with difficult grain.

John Speedy

Spread the word

Mark,

I am sitting in my room at the John C Campbell Folk School in North Carolina where I start teaching a natural edge class tomorrow which I call 'Bark'ing Bowls and I brought *Woodturning* magazine issue 303 with me to read. The first thing I read was your editor's note, so figured I had better write ASAP.

Our club, Flint Hills Woodturners (FHW) in Manhattan, KS, takes our responsibility of being a non-profit educational organisation seriously. Certainly we educate ourselves but our mission is to educate the public and, hopefully, thereby draw others into the woodturning fold. We participate in a big craft show each year with a double wide booth demonstrating the craft. We also participate in the annual Mini Makers Fair just outboard of Kansas State University campus. We go each year to Meet the Makers, an event at our local Discovery Centre plus participate in the Flint Hills Fair in Manhattan. The local newspaper is willing to publish a summary of what we did at the last meeting, along with news of other clubs' activities in its Clubs and Organisations section. We have four-fold, slick full-colour brochures which we hand out at all events. And we all carry brochures in our cars, so if we happen to get into a conversation with someone about woodturning and FHW, we can whip out a brochure to give them.

Tom Boley

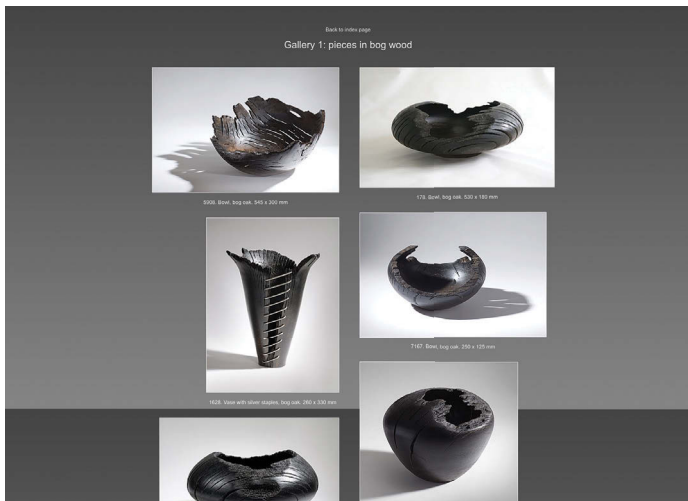
Community links

We have searched the internet for the best, most interesting and fun websites, blogs, pins and pictures, so you don't have to

Websites of the month

Kieran Higgins

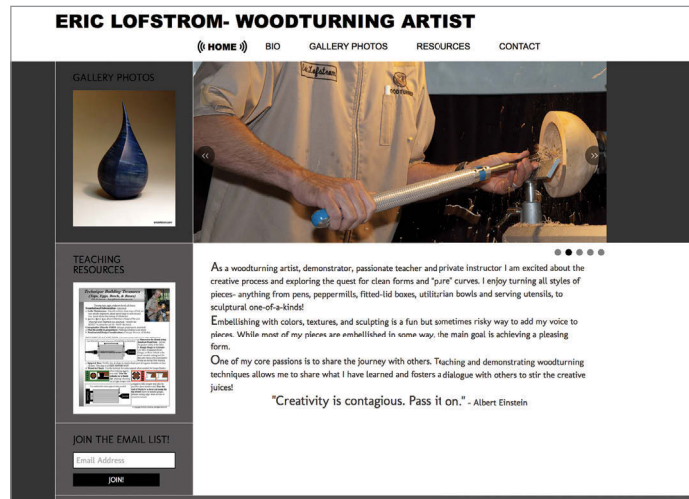
www.kieranhiggins.com/gallery_index.htm



Keiran lives and works in West Cork, Ireland, and is a full time turner and member of the Cork chapter of the Irish Woodturners Guild, Cork Art & Design and the West Cork Craft & Design Guild. Keiran's work is delightful. He uses Irish hardwoods and the style of turned work can be natural as well as sculptural work featuring carved detail. It is a real treat to look at.

Eric Lofstrom

www.ericlofstrom.com



Eric is a well-known turner with a passion for sharing his knowledge. His website is a rich visual feast as well as having lots of resource material that he has generated for turners to download, covering subjects such as translucent bowls, square-rimmed work, sharpening and much more.

Turning club site of the month

Huddersfield Woodturners

<http://www.huddersfieldwoodturners.org.uk/home>

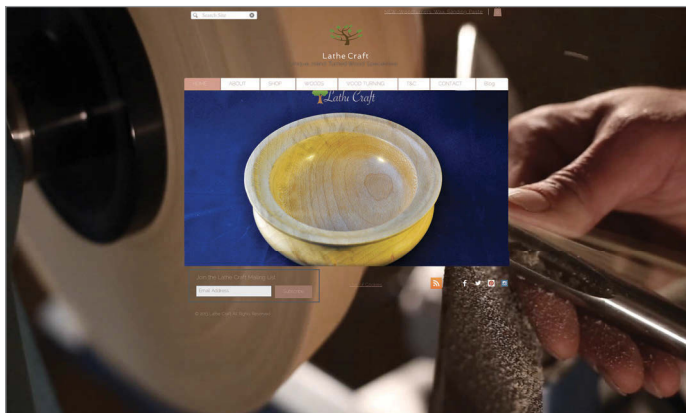


Huddersfield Woodturners has a site that is easy to navigate and has a nice amount of information to tell people what is happening, what the club has been up to and features some designs and ideas from club members.

Blog of the month

Lathe Craft

www.lathecraft.com



William Hint has a very interesting website and also blog. In his blog William shares his thoughts about various subjects and shows what he has been working on and making and includes, in some instances, work in progress shots of what he is working on.

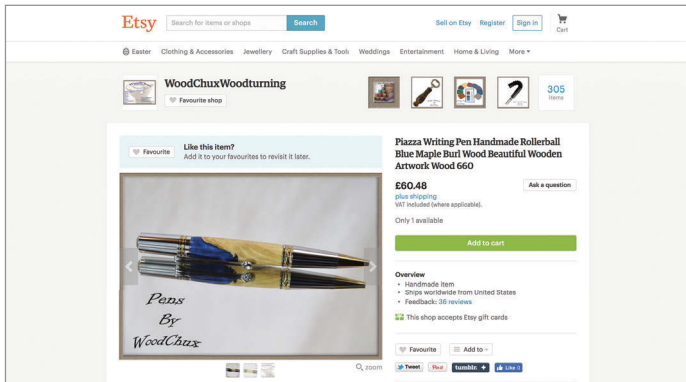
Video clips listed have been selected for their interest to other turners. We do not endorse any of the videos or websites selected. We take no responsibility for any information contained or acted upon in any sites listed. You need to be aware of your own skills and your own responsibility as far as wearing appropriate protective equipment and turning as safely as practicable.

Etsy

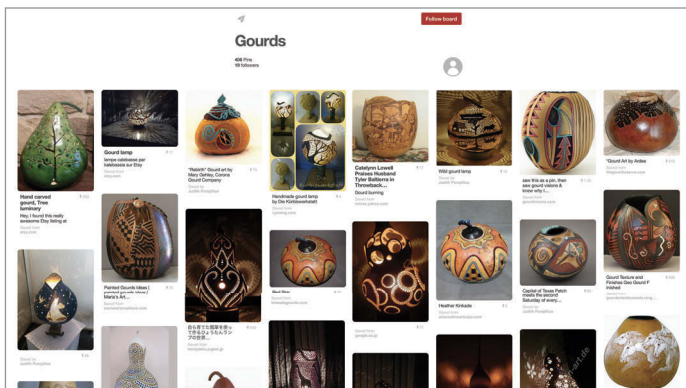
WoodChuxWoodturning

www.etsy.com/uk/listing/497441338

Raymond Sprouse has a shop on Etsy where he shows and sells his wonderful array of pens. Each pen has a description of what the pen is and what it is made from.



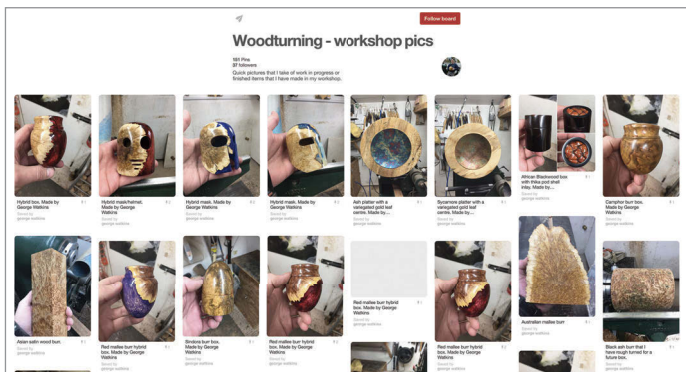
Pinterest boards of the month



Judith Pompilius

<https://uk.pinterest.com/judithpompilius/gourds/>

We know that this site relates to gourds, but the shapes of the vessels relate directly to some of the earliest and also current shapes turners create. Couple that comment with how the work is then enhanced, again using many of the techniques turners and carvers are using especially on thin-walled items, this site is a rich feast of wonderfully crafted items.



George Watkins

<https://uk.pinterest.com/georgewatkins2/woodturning-workshop-pics/>

George Watkins has a great board of postings of his beautiful work for people to explore.

FROM THE FORUM

Here we share with you the pieces that readers have posted on our *Woodturning* forum. If you are interested in your piece appearing here, or would simply like feedback and advice on your work, visit www.woodworkersinstitute.com and click on the forum button.



Tuag Undod – Towards Unity

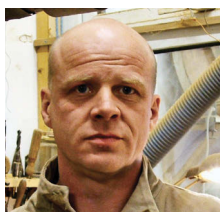
Les Symonds wrote: 'This is a sculpture that I've been working on for a few days, but which has been buzzing around inside my head for months, and it is going to be submitted to a selection panel for the National Open Art Exhibition at this year's national Eisteddfod of Wales, on Anglesey.'

'The title, *Tuag Undod*, means *Towards Unity*. The overall height is 480mm (19in) and the baseboard is 450mm (18in) square. Materials used were spalted beech for the cones, sycamore for the ring of unity and anything that I could get my hands on for the rest.'

Greg McAteer commented: 'I have nowhere near the imagination required to conceive this sort of thing, do thank you for the explanation. What I do know is that it is, IMHO, an absolutely stunning piece of art and workmanship.'

'Love it. Thanks for sharing.'

Our contributors



ANDY COATES

Andy is a professional woodturner and has a workshop and gallery in Suffolk. He mostly makes one-off pieces, but is just as likely to be doing small-batch runs, antique restorations or any number of strange commissions.

He also demonstrates and teaches turning.

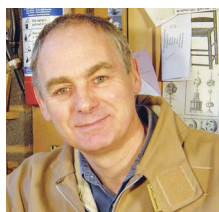
cobwebcrafts@btinternet.com
cobwebcrafts.co.uk



COLWIN WAY

Colwin started turning aged 13 and has since gone on to teach the craft. He wishes to continue to give people confidence to try the wonderful hobby for themselves.

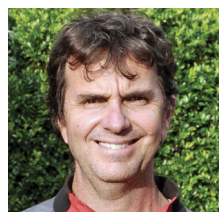
colwinway@btinternet.com



DAVID SPRINGETT

David has been a professional woodturner for more than 30 years. He is the author of the books *Woodturning Wizardry*, *Woodturning Full Circle* and *Woodturning Trickery*, and, with Nick Agar, *Woodturning Evolution*. All available from GMC Publications.

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EMILIANO ACHAAL

Emiliano is an 'almost' full-time woodturner, demonstrating, selling his turnings, teaching and living on the island of Maui in Hawaii. He is the president of the Maui Woodturners Association and one of the pioneers of the Live Remote & Interactive demos.

www.hawaiiankoaturner.com



ERNIE CONOVER

Ernie is best known for teaching and writing about woodturning, as well as designing and marketing the Conover lathe.

erconover@conoverworkshops.com



GEOFFREY LAYCOCK

Geoffrey is a Chartered Safety Practitioner, Chartered Ergonomics Practitioner and Fellow of the Royal Society for the Protection of Health and has written extensively for our sister magazine, *Furniture & Cabinetmaking*.

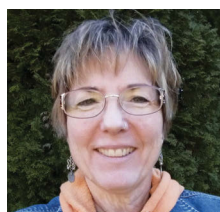
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KURT HERTZOG

A professional woodturner, demonstrator and teacher, Kurt writes for various woodturning and woodworking publications in the US. He is on the Pen Makers' Guild Council and is past president of the American Association of Woodturners.

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kurthertzog.com



MOLLY WINTON

Molly is a professional woodturner, demonstrator and teacher who lives in the Pacific Northwest, US. She began turning in 1998, and embellishing in 2002. Molly currently serves on the Board of Directors of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW).

www.turningmaven.com



PAT CARROLL

Pat is a builder and carpenter who has always loved working with wood. After taking his first woodworking class in 2002 he is particularly drawn to hollow forms. He is currently looking to introduce a combination of texture and colour into his work.

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RICHARD FINDLEY

Richard discovered woodturning while working for his father as a joiner. He makes all kinds of work to commission, and offers demonstrations and a range of woodturning supplies.

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WALTER HALL

Walter Hall is a woodturner who has specialised in making pens and pencils for more than 20 years. Based on the beautiful Northumberland coast in the UK, Walter sells his bespoke pens and pencils through local craft centres and via his website.

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GMC Reprographics
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Precision Colour Printing
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Seymour Distribution Ltd
T: +44 (0) 20 7429 4000

Woodturning
(ISSN 0958-9457)
is published 13 times a year by
the Guild of Master Craftsmen
Publications Ltd.
Subscription rates
(including postage & packing)
12 issues: UK £47.40 Europe £59.25
Rest of World £66.36
24 issues: UK £94.80 Europe £118.50
Rest of World £132.72
US subscribers should visit www.lightningpublications.com
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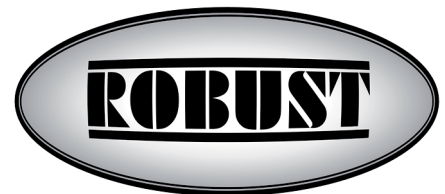
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Turning slender spindles with a steady rest is a walk in the park

Steady rests

Ernie Conover looks at turning long spindles with the aid of steady rests – also called centre steadies – which can make the task much easier

Steady rests are used in both metal turning and woodturning. In metal they take two forms, the first being identical to those used for wood – a support placed about the middle of the spindle which keeps it on centre by applying pressure at three points. The second is what is called a ‘follow rest’. A metal lathe has a carriage, instead of a banjo, that travels along the ways with the cutting tool mounted at its top. The follow rest also mounts on the carriage and contacts the work at two points, the tool being the third. I bring this detail into the narrative for reasons that will later become apparent.

Woodturning steady rests take two forms – commercial and shop-built. I have used both extensively and must say that the commercial form takes all the hassle out of long spindles. Plans abound for shop-built steady rests. Frank Pain, in his seminal book of 1956 *The Practical Woodturner*, gives plans for

one that is no more than a hinged wooden toggle with a V notch that supports the work at two points. These two points are each about 120° from where cutting takes place, making it much like a metal turning follow rest. He claimed that the design was used by the High Wycombe turners.

I once turned 70 stair balusters using this High Wycombe rest. I think the scheme was well adapted to the spring pole lathes of the High Wycombe turners but is poorly suited to powered lathes. The notch has to fit the work precisely, supporting in just two strategic spots, and must be prodigiously waxed. Although the wood species has a great influence on the tendency to burn (my balusters were white oak but cherry burns at any speed), at speeds much in excess of 600rpm you have an Aboriginal fire maker and not a steady rest. Once burning occurs the burned area must be scrupulously

removed from the notch as charring accelerates with further use. The charring is akin to a catalyst in a chemical reaction. To say there is a lot of rigmarole in the High Wycombe Rest is to put it mildly.

Solving a problem

I finally hit upon facing the notch with high molecular weight plastic. This worked splendidly up to about 1,200rpm but the adhesive in the double-sided tape I used for attachment began to fail at this speed. Driving carpet tacks through the plastic at the mouth of the notch was the solution to this problem.

Fortunately, the inline skate craze of the last quarter of the 20th century brought the perfect component for woodturning steady rests – specifically, a ball bearing wheel with a resilient polymer tyre that has a hyperbolic form with a narrow contact area.



The advantage of having two banjos is enormous – necessary if you are going to tackle production spindle work

All commercial steady rests that I know of use skate wheels and there are plans in periodicals, and online for any number of shop-built rests employing them.

You simply mount your spindle blank, turn a round spot, bring in the wheels to support and progress with the turning.

Even if you scrupulously joint two faces and saw perfect squares in the table saw the spindle will likely be bowed by the time you get it to the lathe because of internal stress in the timber and changes in humidity.

Fortunately, most spindles are tapered so I initially chuck on the exact centres with the spindle's larger end against the headstock spur centre. With the tool rest at the centre of the spindle, I turn the lathe by hand. Placing a pencil on the rest, I mark the corner or corners nearest the rest. I now re-chuck the tailstock end away from the pencil mark, bringing the middle of the spindle on centre. Next a $\frac{1}{2}$ in spindle gouge is used to make a round spot in the centre. This finicky work can be quite difficult. Resist the temptation to turn any other area of the spindle round, for leaving as much of the spindle square as possible adds considerable rigidity.

Once a round spot is achieved the wheels, or the notch, of the steady are brought solidly against the cylindrical area. Turning can progress as usual and the offset contributes to tapering.

Carefully does it

I have observed that turning authors and instructors frequently mention steady rests but strongly suspect few have actually used them much, if at all. Therefore, I would like to add these further details. Great care must be taken at all times in working close to the steady's contact area for a pinch is painful,

if not catastrophic, for your fingers, hair, dangling bits, etc. Second, two banjos are necessary kit. For one spindle, you can get by with one banjo but the fuss of breaking down the setup to move from one side of the steady to the other soon becomes abhorrent. Third, a common wisdom is that it is better to place the steady slightly off centre as this cancels vibrations in the two halves of the spindle. I have found this to be balderdash – placing the steady in the middle makes no difference from placement off centre.

Placement should be for workflow, off centre is often better suited to finding a round part of the turning and not over a bead or cove. Try to turn the cylinder where the steady is supporting slightly oversize by about 3mm. At the final stages, it is far easier to sand this oversize area away rather than turning it away. A 46 grit disk on a sanding arbor in an electric

drill makes quick and trouble-free work of it. We call it the electric skew. If it must be turned away move the steady a few centimetres away and re-support the work.

Final thoughts

There are numerous steady centres available and there are some excellent ones about. You need to find one that is easy to adjust to any spindle height, is rock solid and quick to bring in and out of play for part loading and unloading. The key to finding one that suits you is to try before you buy and ask around to find out what others are using. Of course, visit trade shows and talk to the manufacturers too. You also have the option of making your own. Whether you buy or make one, there is no doubt with spindle turning long items steady centres help with your spindle turning, so steady the course and enjoy quiet sailing. ●



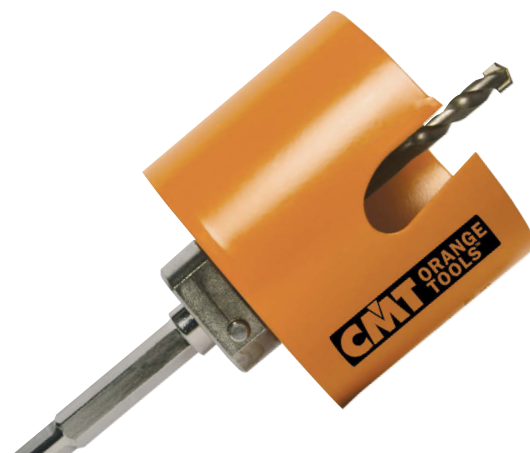
Ease of use is the key to a good steady rest



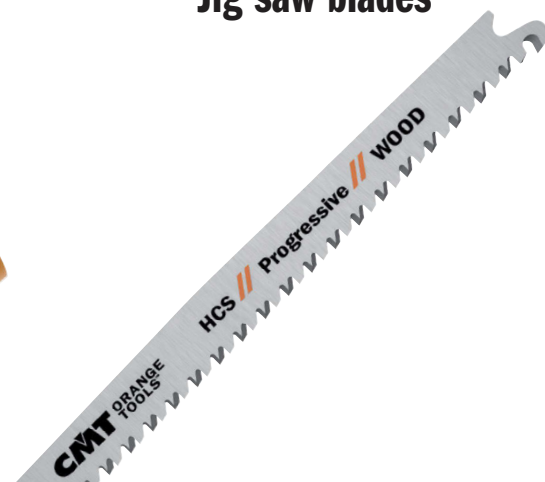
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Axminster lathe and chuck on test

Walter Hall puts the Axminster Trade Series AT1016VS Lathe and the Axminster Woodturning Starter Kit SK100 Chuck Package through their paces

The introduction of the AT1016VS lathe fills a gap in the Axminster range between its Hobby series lathes and the previous entry level to its professional series, the AT1416VS, with which the new model shares the same cast iron bed, bringing a professional quality lathe within the budget of those seeking to spend under £600.

The AT1016VS differs from its larger sibling in having an electronically controlled 560-watt DC motor in place of the inverter technology and three-phase motor found on the AT1416VS. The swing over the bed is also reduced from 350mm to 250mm while the distance between centres remains the same at 400mm.

What does not differ, however, is the solid cast iron construction and build quality that we have come to expect from Axminster professional series machines. The headstock is compact but robust and fitted with 24 point indexing, using a removable pin that has a rare earth magnet fitted so that it may be stored conveniently on the headstock when not in use without fear of it disappearing into the shavings. The compact design gives ample clearance around the headstock to allow work to be undertaken on the back of a workpiece, especially when partnered with the Axminster SK100 Chuck, which may be secured to the M33 x 3.5mm spindle with grub screws to facilitate reverse sanding etc.

The details

The drive from the DC motor is by three stepped pulleys giving three speed ranges of 170-960, 300-1,660 and 660-3,600 rpm, which are changed by accessing the belt through the large panel at the rear of the headstock and by swinging the electronic switch box to one side. The switch box is equipped with an on-off switch at the rear, a pull-on/push-off safety switch on the front along with the potentiometer to vary the speed, while on the top of the box are the LED readout of spindle speed in rpm and the forward/reverse switch. My only minor quibble is that the box is fitted at the end of the bed on the opposite side of the tailstock to the operator when undertaking faceplate work, and is less convenient than the moveable magnetic switch mounting of the AT1416VS should rapid access be required to switch off the machine.

Just above the switch box and at the tailstock end of the bed are fitted lifting handles which make the lathe, at 38kg, reasonably portable or facilitate movement around the workshop when mounted on the optional floor stand, which has heavy-duty wheels at one end and rubber feet at the other. This arrangement is most convenient if space is limited,



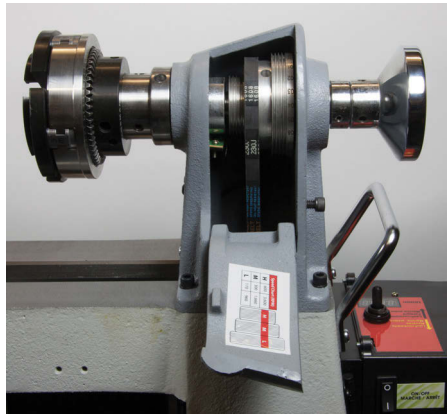
but if unbalanced or off-centre work is proposed then bolting the floor stand down would be a better option.

The tailstock and toolrest holder are each held by robust cam lock levers and slide along the bed easily with minimal lateral movement. Useful etched marks on the tailstock quill facilitate accurate drilling. The quill and offset tool post are held in place with heavy-duty Bristol locking levers.

Using the lathe

In operation I found this to be an excellent little machine – possibly the quietest and smoothest lathe I have ever used. The DC motor performed with negligible speed reduction, even when making heavy cuts on faceplate work to the machine's maximum capacity. Some vibration was evident with initially out-of-balance blanks but would be less so if the machine had been bolted down. Accuracy between centres was good enough for precision work such as pen making or drilling. The lathe comes as standard with a good quality four-prong drive and revolving tailstock centre of Axminster's own manufacture, along with a 3in (75mm) faceplate.

A knockout bar for centres and retaining spanner for the spindle are also provided.



The pulley arrangement in the headstock



The hinged control unit



Banjo and toolrest assembly



The tailstock



SK100 Chuck

The test machine came supplied with Axminster's Woodturning Starter Kit SK100 Chuck Package, which includes dovetail 'C' jaws, matching faceplate ring and screw chuck, is direct threaded for the M33 x 3.5mm spindle and features safety accessory mounting jaws with rounded ends to reduce the risk of injury. I found this chuck to be an excellent companion for the AT1016VS lathe and no doubt this chuck will suit many other lathes too. It is well engineered, accurate and easy to use and if one buys this chuck there is a wide variety of other chuck jaws as optional extras.

The rounded ends of the carrier jaws are an excellent addition to the chuck and will mitigate some of the risk of hurt if one inadvertently comes into contact with the extended carriers. The only downside with the chuck – and this is subjective – is that one can extend the opening of the jaws so much that the carriers come out completely from the chuck body. There are pros and cons to this. An advantage is that the jaws are easily changeable without the need to remove a stop screw or similar to do so. But you have to be careful about how far you open the jaws to ensure that all carriers are fully engaged in the scroll mechanism before starting the lathe. This means one has to be accurate in matching the recommended sized of spigot/recess to match to jaws used.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I found this an excellent little lathe and a fine choice for anyone seeking a professional quality first lathe or upgrade from Axminster's own hobby range of lathes or similar machines. Its portability and the ease with which it can be moved around the workshop would also make it a sound option for anyone seeking a lathe for demonstrating at craft fairs, or for whom workshop space is at a premium. The chuck performed as well as the lathe and is an excellent partner for the lathe. The lathe is priced at £599 and the chuck package is £179.95. With a combined price of under £800 it would allow a beginner to add a set of quality chisels and gouges and still have change from £1,000. ●

STARTER KIT SK100 CHUCK PACKAGE

Comprises a stainless steel chuck with carrier jaws, dovetail jaws (C) with a recommended range of 50-70mm internal grip and 65-85mm external grip, matching faceplate ring and screw chuck, packed into a strong plastic storage box.

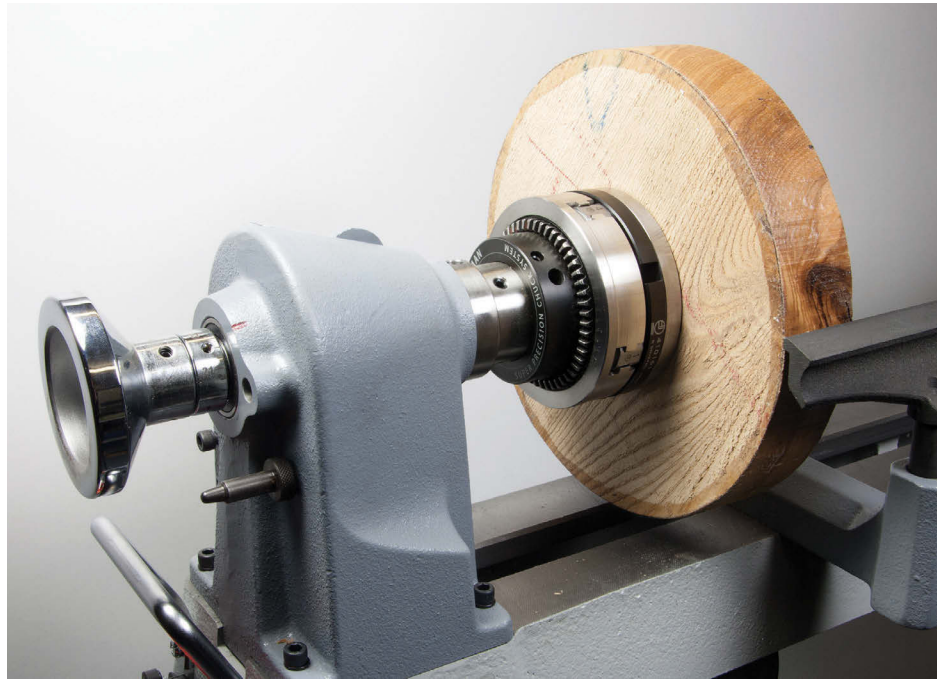
Price: £179.95

Prices may be subject to change without notice.

For both the lathe and starter kit Contact:

Axminster Tools & Machinery

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The chuck fitted to the lathe

AT1016VS LATHE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Distance between centres: 400mm, depending on the type of centres fitted

Max diameter over bed: 250mm

Net weight: 38kg

Overall L x W x H: 900 x 390 x 365mm

Power: 560W, 230V, 1hp

Speed: 170-960/300-1,660/660-3,600rpm

Spindle taper: 2MT

Spindle thread: M33 x 3.5mm

Tool rest stem diameter: 16mm

Tailstock taper: 2MT

Price: £599 (price may be subject to change without notice)



Axminster's Woodturning Starter Kit SK100 Chuck Package

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When you enjoy a reputation as revered in woodturning circles as that of Jimmy Clewes, you don't lend your name to a product unless you have 100% confidence in it, in all respects. Jimmy is a great fan of Hunter carbide tipped tools. Not just any carbide tools, note: only Hunter carbide tools. Jimmy has 'Mates' wherever he goes but here are two Mates which he designed to be *your* Mates! These two tools will enable you to hollow bowls, boxes and forms easily and safely. The cutters are self-limiting on cutting depth and the tools are used simply laid flat on the rest. Equally at home in side- or end-grain, wet or dry and in the very toughest of tough timbers.

Right: Mate #2 with
8mm cutter.
£185.77 unhandled,
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Left: Mate #1 with
6mm cutter.
£185.77 unhandled
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Osprey #1 & #2 Gouges

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Right: Osprey #2, 1/2" shaft, 8 mm cutter
£88.37 handled; £78.17 unhandled

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



Hercules & Mini-Hercules Roughing Tools

The very name Hercules gives a hint of what to expect of this mighty tool and its junior sibling! These tools work effectively in almost any application: roughing, bowl hollowing, deep hollowing and even spindle turning. The Mini is finding great favour as a universal roughing-to-finishing gouge for pen-making. Versatile and so easy to use. The definitive "point and shoot" woodturning tool!

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cutter. £87.24 handled; £79.30 unhandled



Left: Hercules, 5/8" shaft
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Right: Hunter #5 tool with
10 mm cutter.
£101.98 handled;
£93.47 unhandled

Left: Swan-neck #5 tool
£118.98 handled;
£110.47 unhandled

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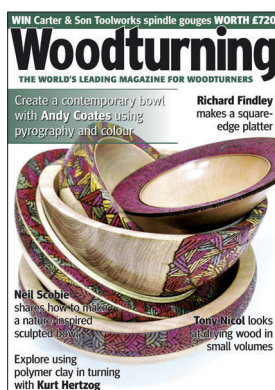
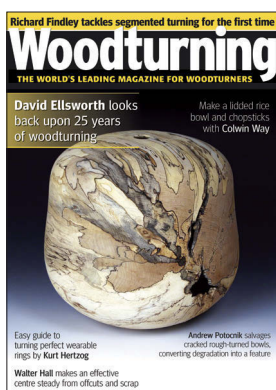
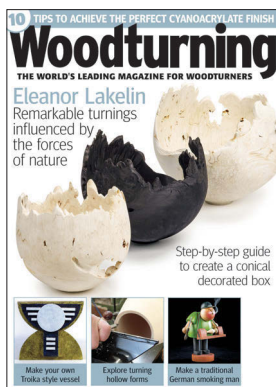
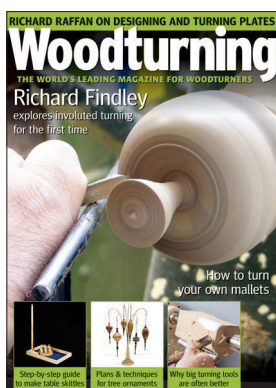
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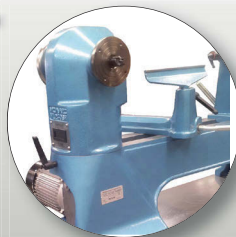
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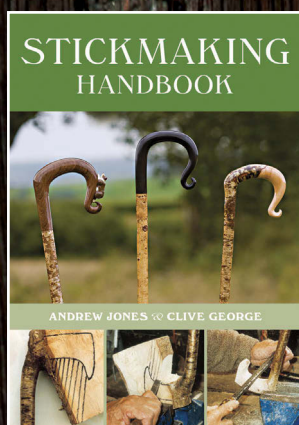
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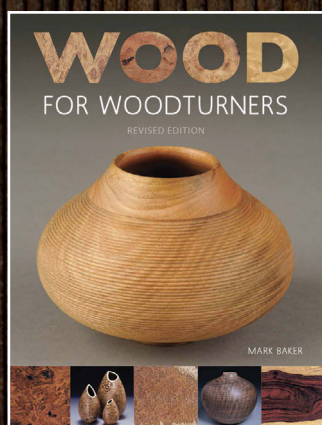
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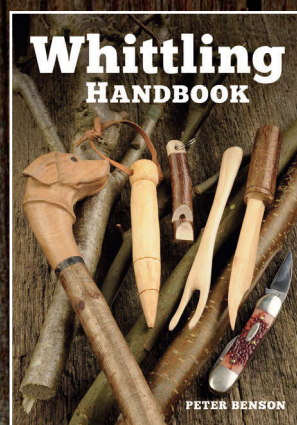
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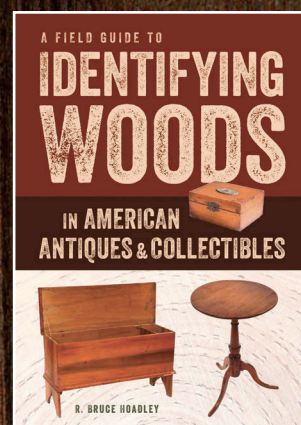
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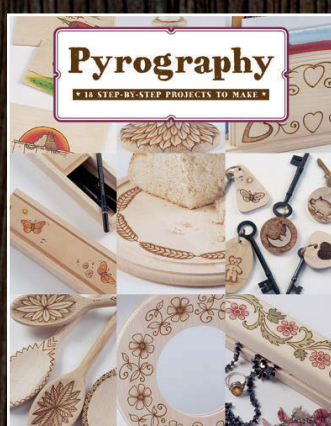
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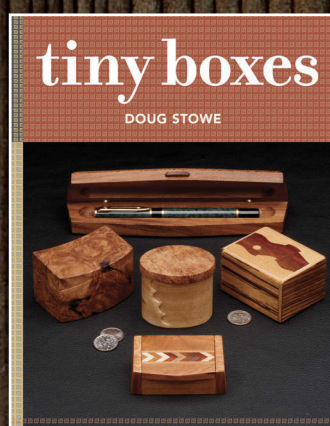
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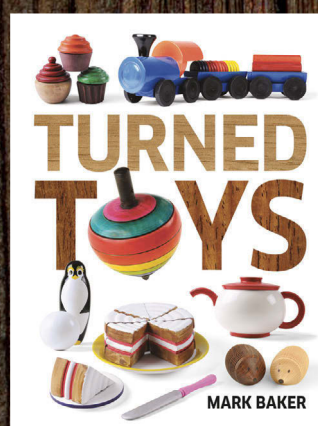
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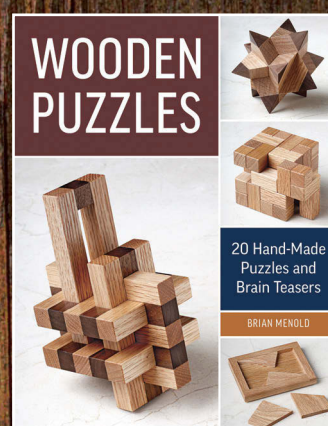
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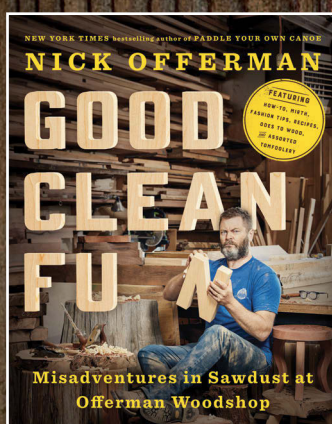


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10mm (3/8in)
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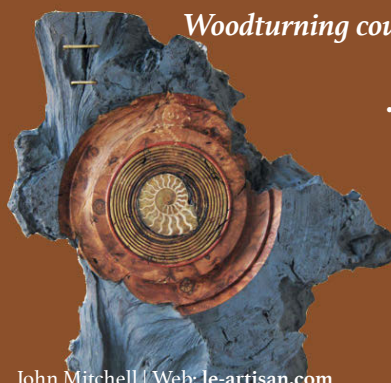
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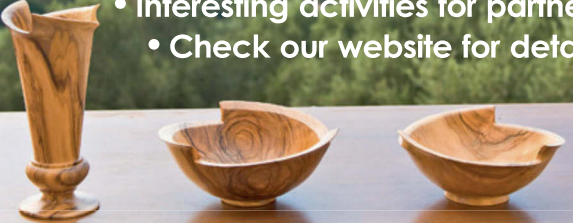
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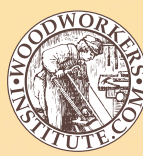
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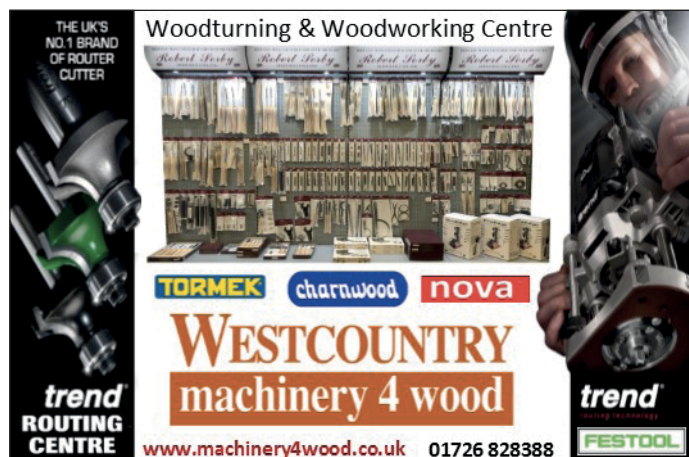
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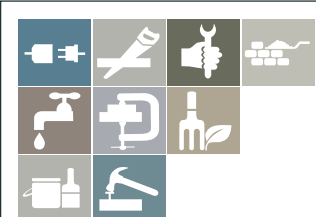
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