Woodturning

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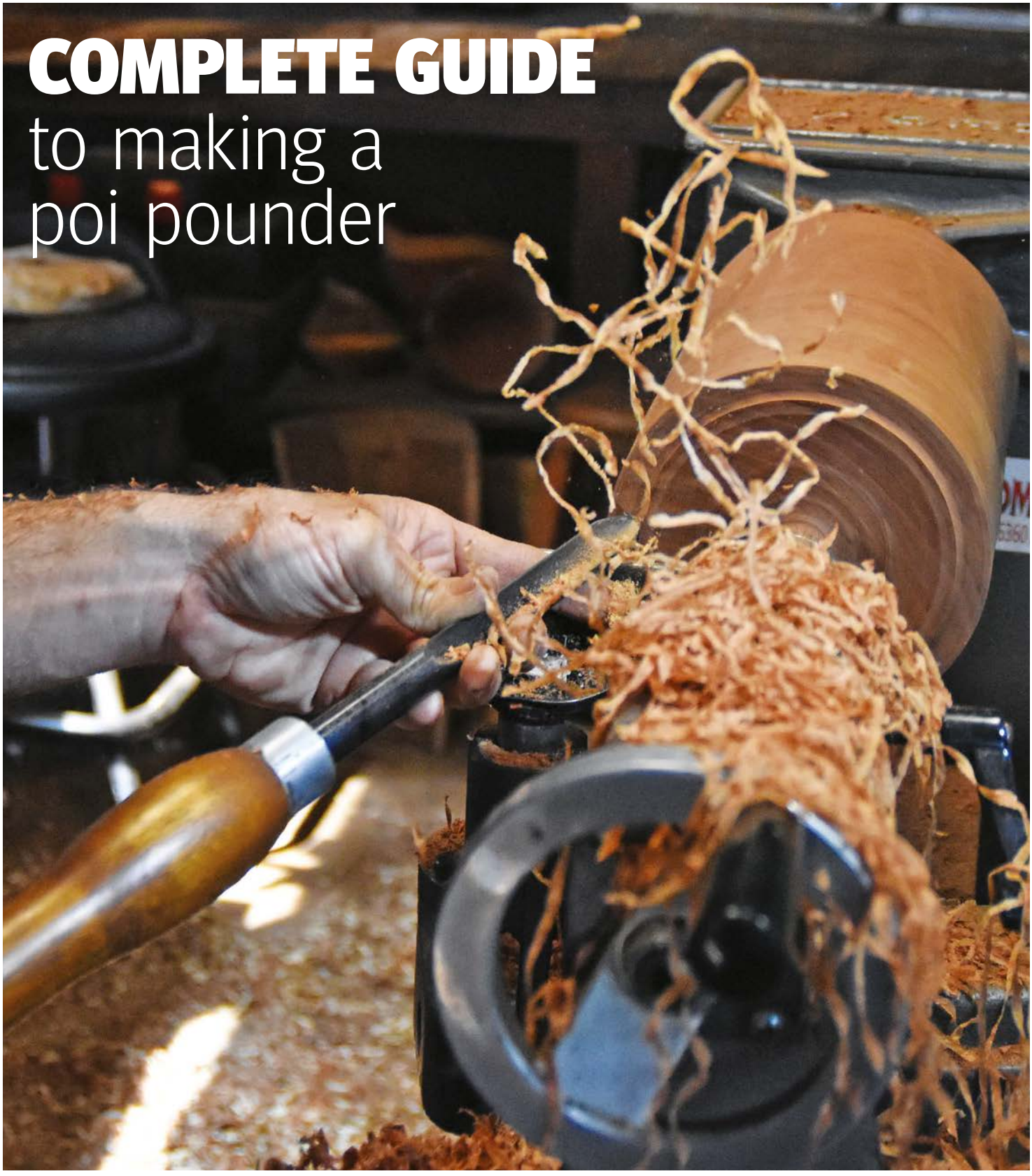

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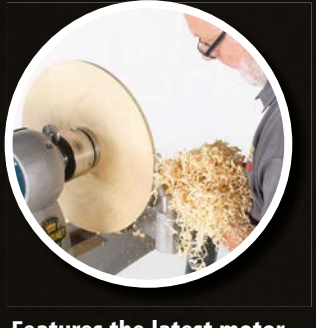

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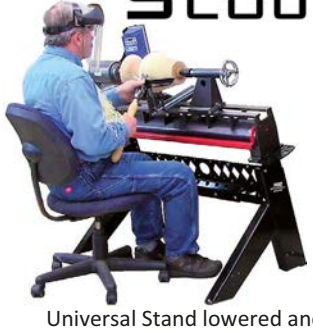

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An interesting dilemma

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY BAILEY

I was a bystander during a recent conversation at an event between two people which centred around a chap's desire to create a turning which was to be a hollow vase form. Let's call the person being asked the question John, and the person asking the question Alan. They are not the real names.

Alan went on the explain in detail that the vase was to comprise a narrow opening neck, tear-drop shaped for the main body, made in three parts, one of which was to be a three-layer segmented band made from various timbers and the item was to have a handle too. He was enthusiastic and excited about the possibility of making this.

I loved the sound of the project and it intrigued me. My mind was already running through potential designs, ways of constructing it and the joins involved and the potential pitfalls. I have already got some designs in mind.

John asked about the experience Alan had with turning and cutting of wood accurately and enquired about what equipment he had and would use. Alan responded: 'I haven't done any turning yet but want to make this. I saw some work on the internet and liked what I saw and thought I would like to make something like it. Here's a sketch.' He passed the sketch to John saying: 'I have a bench and some woodworking tools but only a drill and a sander power-tools wise.' John explained that the item required the facility to be able to turn or carve the lower and upper section and the segmented area needed accuracy of cuts to make it work. They could be done by hand, but one would need jigs and such to hand-cut them and accuracy as to how to effectively join all the parts together. He also said the handle could be cut and created by hand too.

Alan then commented: 'Can I go on a course just to make this? I just want to make that not anything else like it at the moment?' Now to have to admit that last comment was one I didn't anticipate. Neither did John.

John said that he was not aware of anyone doing courses where something so specific could be made and encouraged Alan to search the internet and ask tutors if they could tailor a course specifically for him. John did say that he thought it unlikely due to one having to learn certain skills which take time and if any one did do such a course, it would likely be expensive.

Alan pondered a bit, said 'thank you' and went about his business. I would love to know if he made the item. Now, the fact that Alan had some woodworking equipment indicated that he did something in his work area – quite what I am not sure. But it was abundantly evident he had a desire to make something. I, and others, encounter so many people like that but, as with Alan, many do not know that yes, things can be made, but it is potentially going to take some time to make them and it will require learning techniques and how to use tools and other equipment.

I do wonder if such tailor-made courses could be done, but then the question is, at what expense? Here's a question for you. Is it better to help someone to learn the fundamentals of tool use and processes and how to work safely so they then expand and adapt skills as they require if they choose to make other things? Or, if asked, should we just show them how to make one thing they want to make, acknowledging that they may never make another, but of course monitoring that they work safely and such like? Effectively that would mean acting as guides, making sure they worked safely, but accepting that certain core knowledge is not passed on so they are not learning all the skills required to make something else at a later date for themselves. But, they have made something they wanted and have been introduced to a craft.

I know the latter approach would not satisfy the readers of this magazine, but I am pondering if we are missing a trick by not giving people a chance to try to make something small so they can have a taster of what's involved in the hope that they might like to explore something more fully at a later date.

Have fun,
Mark

markb@thegmcgroup.com

Cover image: Emiliano Achaval (see page 14)

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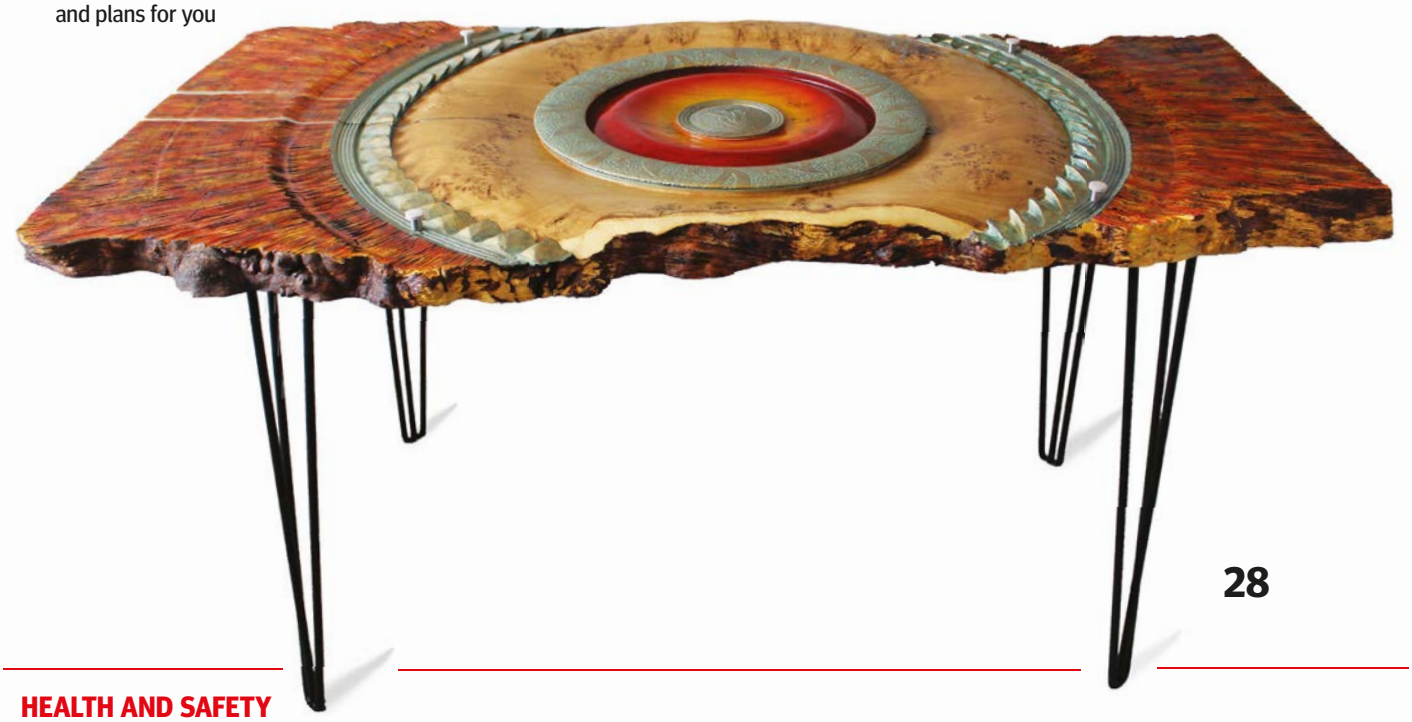

HEALTH AND SAFETY

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 when turning and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

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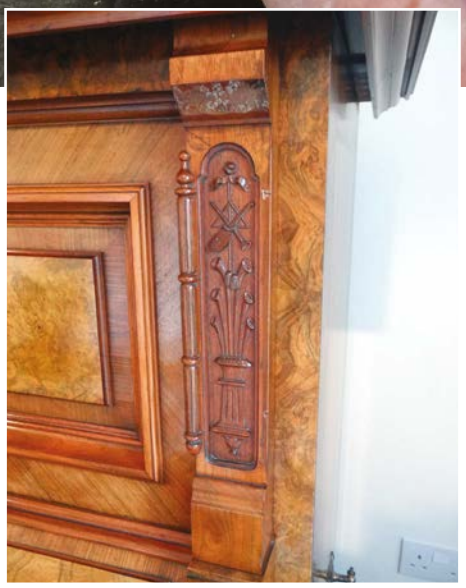
Piano restoration

This month Richard Findley undertakes the replacement of some missing parts for a piano and discusses some of the associated issues of restoration in the first of a two-part article

The undamaged side of the piano



The damaged side of the piano

I have always disliked site work. I am happiest in my workshop, with all my tools and machines to hand, but every so often a job will come along that tempts me out of my safe haven. On this occasion the job was for a nice lady who had recently moved house, but the removal people had damaged her piano, knocking off two decorative details which now needed replacing. My name had been suggested to her and, after an initial call to discuss her requirements, I visited to take a look.

I was shown a lovely upright piano. The main body looked to be veneered with burr walnut with heavy decorative mouldings fixed to it. On the vertical pillars at each side of the piano was a carved panel with a turned spindle either side of it and another shorter spindle fitted horizontally above it. The vertical spindles featured flutes, turned beads and finials at each end, the horizontal spindle also had flutes and a carved pea moulding detail. The left side of the piano was fully intact but the right side was missing the outer vertical spindle and the horizontal detail.

Plan of action

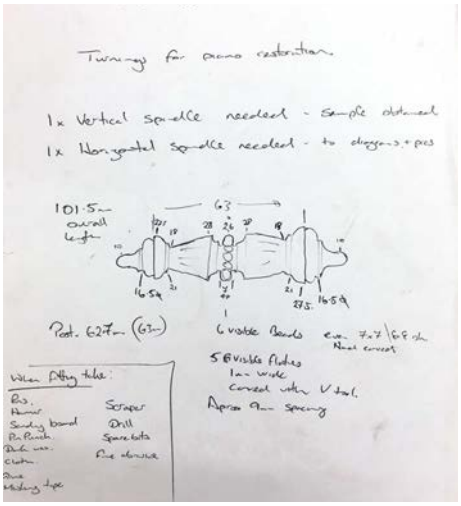
Clearly replacements would be needed and straight away I could see that this was exactly the sort of challenge I love. I carefully studied the existing details. To add to the intricacy it became clear that the vertical spindles had a quadrant removed from them to allow them to sit neatly on the corners of the piano. The horizontal detail was mounted similarly at an angle and would need a section removing to allow it to sit correctly and match the other side.

Usually when I make replacement parts such as this, an original is sent to me so I have a physical item to copy, both in the shape of the turning and in the colour and finish I am trying to match. Clearly I couldn't take the piano with me, but what if I could 'borrow' one of the existing mouldings? A look at where the missing pieces should have been showed that the horizontal detail had been glued so the other was unlikely to come off easily. But the vertical one showed no signs of glue and two small areas of damage that suggested it had been held in place with pins, so I had a look at the opposite spindles. As I suspected, the horizontal detail was stuck fast and showed no signs of movement, but the vertical spindle was easy to remove with a little gentle persuasion with only my fingertips. Had it not moved I would not have forced it with tools and would have needed to come up with a new approach, but fortunately for me I was now armed with an original spindle to match, and most importantly I would be able to match the colours of the new details from it.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD FINDLEY

The horizontal detail which was fixed firmly in place would have to stay where it was, so I took several photos of it from different angles (where would we be without phones with cameras?) including a couple with a ruler held in strategic positions. I also took as many measurements as I could and labelled up a very rough sketch with everything I could possibly think of that I might need. Although the customer lives only a few miles from the workshop and it would be easy to pop back for more measurements should I miss anything, I feel it is more professional to get everything first time, so the next time I see the customer I have the finished items ready to install them.

Photos of items next to a ruler can be very useful for reference



My very rough sketch and notes

Ethics of restoration

I have written about my various approaches to restoration a number of times and always stress that I am not a professional furniture restorer, but a turner who dabbles – albeit to a high standard – in restoration.

The sort of restoration I undertake is usually to replace missing parts of a piece of furniture, such as knobs or pulls, finials, legs or feet. As such, if at some point in the future someone decides my work isn't up to scratch or is in some way unsuitable for the piece of furniture, it can usually be removed relatively easily.

This doesn't mean I can throw all caution to the wind and do completely my own thing by way of restoration. I have an ongoing internal debate with myself about whether or not my methods are the 'correct' way to treat these restoration jobs. Should I really be using more traditional products, mixing powders with water or meths to achieve the coloured stains before using traditional shellac-based polishes or old-fashioned varnishes? What would the original makers of these pieces of furniture think of my techniques?

My current thinking (and this may change over time as my knowledge and skills increase) is that, because I am making a tiny new replacement part for a piece of furniture, which will most likely be added to the item without any further work being undertaken, it seems acceptable to me to meet my four key goals that I have previously written about:

- To match the original timber as closely as possible
- To turn it to match the existing shape
- To colour-match to the original as closely as possible
- To match the sheen level of the original

To me, as long as my new addition sits in place on the furniture without causing any damage to it, and looks as if it has always been there, I have done my job properly.

Should the job be working to restore on an entire piece of furniture it would be a different story and a job for a properly qualified restorer. Qualified and experienced restorers will go to great lengths to exactly match original timber species and veneers, using traditional glues, stains and finishes to bring life back to an antique. Even within the restoration community however, there are debates about just how much antiques should be restored. Should they be brought back to almost-new showroom quality, or should they still show 100-plus years of use in dents and scars? Well, if the professionals can't decide between themselves, who am I to say? The one thing that they do all agree on is that any work carried out should be reversible, which my additions certainly are, so even if some might not entirely approve of my methods or the products I use, they do at least adhere to this golden rule.

Most of the furniture I work on is perhaps old and might have sentimental value within a family, but usually has very little actual value on the open market. I have been involved in high-end restorations, but only in the turning work. For example, one long case clock I did some turning for later sold at auction for around £75,000, but I just turned some walnut parts in timber supplied by the customer.

For now, with my little restoration components, I am comfortable with my methods, but this may well change in the future.

The plan

Back in the workshop, armed with the original spindle and my photos and drawings of the second spindle I need to make, my first job is to match the timber. While the piano looked to be veneered with burr walnut, looking closely at the back of the spindle in my hand I would have to say that a mahogany would be my best guess as to the timber. It isn't uncommon for mouldings and details to be made from different timbers to the rest of a piece of furniture. It is also entirely possible that the veneer on the piano is so sun damaged that it could well have been much more of a red mahogany colour originally. Looking again at the photos of the piano, it looks like the base material beneath the veneer was mahogany and the mouldings still seem to have a certain hint of red about them and don't appear as bleached as the walnut veneer, which is known to suffer from exposure to the sun. Whatever the true story of this piano or how it had originally looked fresh from the workshop in which it was made, the only course of action I can really take is to match the sample material as closely as possible.

I still have some of the pale-coloured mahogany windowsill boards that I used for the split finial restoration a couple of months back and, once again, this timber looks to be ideal, having a good colour match to the back of the sample spindle (which has never seen the sun) and a good grain and texture match too.

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP: A view of the full piano shows how the veneer is faded and the mouldings still show a hint of red mahogany

Preparation of the spindle blank

The vertical spindles sit around the corner of the piano so my new spindle needs a quadrant removing from its back corner to match. I contemplate trying to rout this out after turning but can't work out a way to do this safely, so I decide to remove it on the router table while it is still square and temporarily fix a sacrificial piece of timber in its place, using the paper joint technique.

The spindle blank is only around 25mm square so care is needed when removing the quadrant on my router table. I use a special tenon cutter which leaves a very clean surface on both faces of the cut, although a standard cutter would work almost as well. I use a simple wooden fence clamped to the table and support blocks to ensure the blank stays tightly against the fence. These wooden supports are a simplified workshop-made version of the commercially available finger boards. I have been using this set-up for years and get on well with it. The only possible addition which some might like to use would be a third support above the work, giving a little downward pressure to prevent the blanks from riding up over the cutter, but this wasn't a problem I encountered and so didn't feel the need to use one.

A push stick allows me to keep good constant pressure on the blank as I feed it over the cutter, taking several light passes to remove the necessary quadrant of material. I then cut a piece of tulip as the sacrificial strip, planing it square and testing the fit. I liberally spread white wood glue on both faces of the quadrant on the spindle blank and carefully lay a piece of newspaper, crisply folding and pressing it into the corner. The sacrificial tulip piece also has glue spread on the two corresponding faces and the whole thing is clamped up and left to dry overnight.

The tenon cutter I use to cut clean rebates

My router table set-up

Routing in action

The glue-up

Ready to turn

Turning the spindle

With the glue dry I am ready to turn it to shape. As always I rough the blank to a cylinder first, holding it between ring centres to support the paper joint. I find the combination of the almost-white tulip wood and the red mahogany multi-coloured shavings fascinating to watch as they fly from the edge of the roughing gouge.

As there is only one, I don't make a story board but just transfer the positions of the details to the work once it is turned round and take the dimensions from the original as I progress through the turning.

The turning itself is quite straightforward. My main focus after turning it to diameter is initially on getting the beads in exactly the right position and then on making sure they match the original shape as they are slightly more 'pointy' than some beads I have to turn.

After roughing with the roughing gouge, I use my 6mm beading and parting tool to cut the diameters, roll the beads and to plane the straight sections cleanly. The finials at each end of the spindle are quite delicate and, as I still need to cut flutes along the spindle, I need to try to keep as much strength on the spindle for as long as possible to prevent it snapping off as I work on it, so leave turning these until later.

Multi-coloured shavings flying from the spindle roughing gouge

Transferring details from the original spindle

Rolling the beads

Sizing the spindle with Vernier callipers

Flutes

I have previously written about a workshop-made router jig that I usually use for cutting flutes and, generally speaking, making something like flutes is made incredibly easy by such a device, but, in this case, the originals are very fine and my smallest round-ended cutter is 1.5mm, which is way too big. On closer inspection it appears that the originals are hand carved so, in the spirit of making an ethical reproduction, the only option open to me is to dust off my Grandpa's old carving tools.

Before I got into turning I dabbled with carving for a while and always felt like I needed some larger gouges for the types of projects I had in mind, and indeed purchased a couple of new tools to add to the set. However, the original tools are the carving tools of a fine cabinetmaker, tools my Grandpa bought from retiring cabinetmakers when he was an apprentice or bought separately, carefully selecting appropriate tools as the need arose, and as such are perfect for the carving work I would be undertaking on this restoration project.

In the box are two V-tools of different angles. After making some test cuts in scrap wood I choose the 60° V-tool which seems to give the best match to the original.

If I were using a router I would set up my indexer to give the most accurate results, but after checking the spacing of the original flutes using dividers it is clear that this level of accuracy is excessive and actually probably undesirable. I set the dividers to an average distance of the flutes of the original and simply run a pencil along the toolrest guided by the spacing of the dividers. I also see from the original that the flutes don't all stop at an exact point so again take my lead from this and decide to simply work up to a pencil mark.

After a few test cuts I am reasonably confident in my skills so set to it. The razor-sharp tool responds amazingly well to my instructions and cuts lovely crisp flutes, raising a beautiful curl of mahogany before it as I cut. Naturally, despite my best efforts, there is some wandering from the dead straight lines I was aiming for, but comparing it to the original they seem to only add to the authenticity of the work.

I look over my handiwork and, as always, there is a little tidying up to do and I adjust a couple of the cuts in length and depth, but on the whole I am pleased with the outcome. I have not yet sanded the spindle as the grit left behind by abrasive only damages the keen edge of carving tools, so I turn the finials at each end to shape with a 6mm spindle gouge, still leaving some material to give some strength, and sand the spindle with 240 and 320 grit. This light sanding has the effect of crisping up my carved flutes. Once satisfied I part the spindle off and get ready to remove the sacrificial wood.

Marking the flutes using the toolrest as a guide

The sharp carving tool cuts a curl of mahogany

The finished flutes

Compared to the original

Splitting the turning

I take the spindle over to my bench and set up a waste block held down with a G-cramp. This allows me to rest the end of the spindle against it while I correctly position a sharp chisel into the join line at the other end. A few light taps with a mallet and the strip of tulip begins to lift up and pops off of the mahogany spindle, snapping at the narrowest point next to the first bead. I repeat the process and end up with the piece of tulip in four pieces but, importantly, the mahogany spindle remains intact.

As always with a split turning, the newspaper de-laminates, leaving a layer of newsprint on all faces of the joint. I sharpen up my cabinet scraper and scrape off the remnants of the newspaper, leaving the surface clean and ready to fix back on to the piano. ●

Removing the sacrificial piece

Using a cabinet scraper to remove the newspaper backing

The finished reproduction spindle, ready for colour matching

CONTINUED NEXT MONTH With the vertical spindle all turned and sanded and the flutes carved, I'm ready to colour match and finish it, but I still need to turn and carve the replacement horizontal spindle, so next month I will describe how I cut it to sit at the awkward angle on the piano, along with a look at how I carve the pea moulding and then get them all to match the original in colour. The final test will be a site visit to reattach them both to the piano. Will they meet my target goal of looking like they have always been there? Find out next month.

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Hawaiian põhaku ku'i 'ai

Emiliano Achaval makes a traditional Hawaiian poi pounder

I have always been fascinated by history. I enjoy reproducing ancient Hawaiian vessels, namely calabashes, one of the mainstays of my studio. Another item that I often get requests for is the poi pounder, an ancient artefact used by the Hawaiians to pound taro.

Taro was, and still is, one of the food staples here in the 50th state. There are two species of taro – wet and dry. Both have a potato-like root which, when pounded, becomes poi. The poi has a soft, pudding-like consistency, and it's a must in all the traditional Hawaiian get-togethers – birthdays, weddings and, the most famous of them all, the luau.

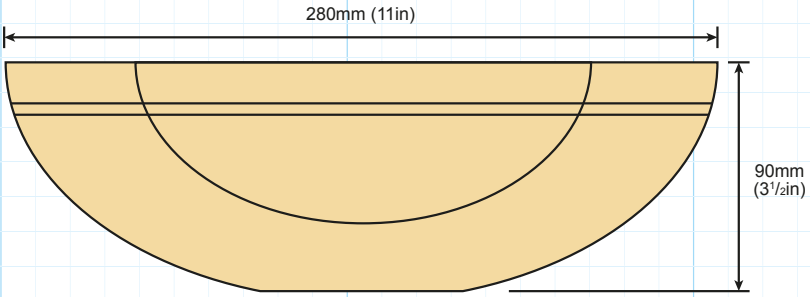
Pounding taro was a common weekly chore in ancient Hawaii. The original poi pounder was a fairly heavy tool made out of basalt volcanic rock. It was polished smooth by the craftsman who created it, and made even smoother by the hands that used it for generations. The poi pounder is the most recognisable stone artefact in Hawaii.

Each island had a different shape and/or variations. For inspiration I have always used one poi pounder that has been in my wife's family for more than 100 years.

For this project, I decided to make a functional poi pounder. Other cultures have very similar items, known as mortar and pestle. Because traditionally the taro was pounded on a large wooden board, I made a small one for the pounder to sit on and to be able to crush anything, such as medicines or kitchen ingredients, including spices, garlic, etc.

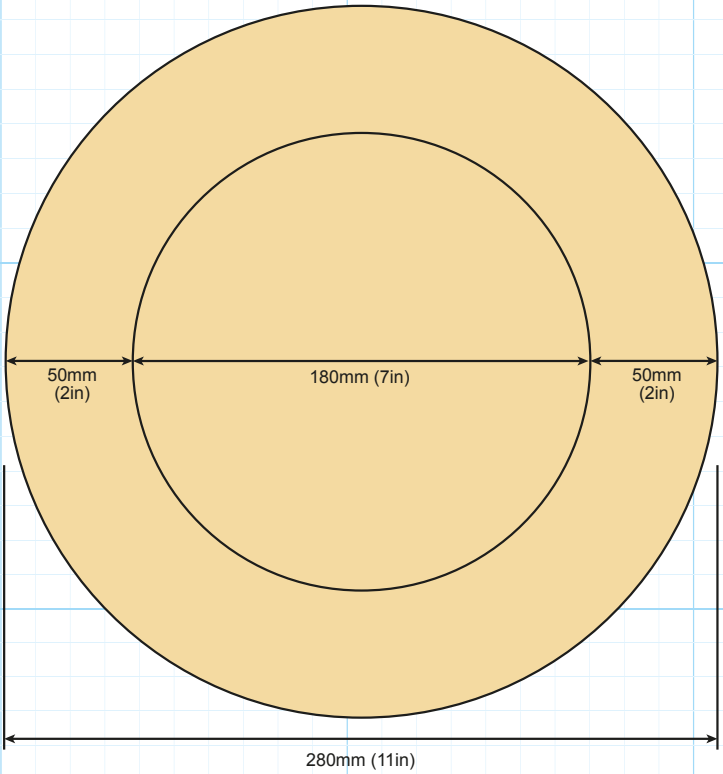
PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILIANO ACHAVAL

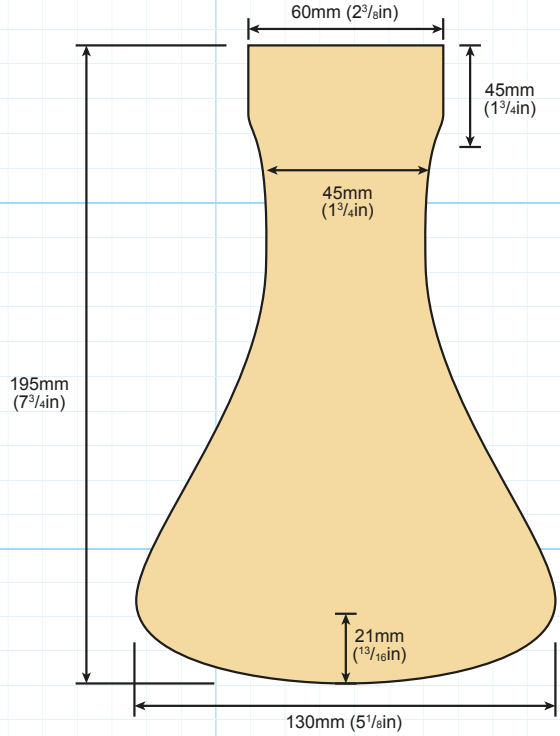
Early 1900s postcard depicting a native Hawaiian pounding taro with a poi pounder on a poi board or 'papa Ku'i 'ai'



TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- PPE & RPE
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Bowl gouge with long grind
- Spindle gouge
- Skew chisel
- Curved scraper
- Parting tool
- Danish/finishing oil
- Pewa repairs
- Abrasives down to 320 grit





Making the pounder

1 For this project I decided to use lychee wood (*Litchi Chinensis*), a fruit tree fairly common here in Hawaii. Its wood is one of the densest and hardest available in the state. By using hard, dense woods you could crush anything that you need to. Using softer woods will result in the surface being marred in time, especially when crushing/grinding hard items such as nuts and peppercorns.

To start, mount the spindle grain-oriented blank between centres on your lathe and use a spindle roughing gouge to create a cylinder of timber a maximum diameter of 125mm. The whole pounder can be turned while between centres.


1

2 Start working from the bottom of the pounder. First shape the gentle curved bottom section of the pounder. Use either a spindle gouge or bowl gouge to cut the profile. Remember, this is end grain you are cutting, so start the cut from the outer edge of the cylinder of wood down towards the revolving tailstock centre. Make sure you maintain bevel rub contact with the surface of the wood so you have full control of the tool and a clean and efficient cut.


2

3 When you have done the best you can with a gouge, have a look and see if you have any tool marks or surface bumps that may be difficult to remove with abrasive alone. If you have, you can consider cleaning up the curve a bit better by using a scraper to make the most delicate of cuts to refine the surface further. If you do not have a scraper, use a skew, if it has a curved cutting edge profile, laid on its side. When using a scraper or a skew on its side as a scraper, have the handle slightly higher than the cutting edge to make a light and delicate scraping cut to remove the tool marks. If your timber is dense enough you will get a surprisingly clean and glossy surface.


3

4 Set your callipers to the be just thicker than the thinnest dimension of the pounder at its narrowest section. Measure and mark where this is on your cylinder of timber with a pencil, then use a parting tool to make a parting cut to a depth just shy of the finished smallest diameter. You may need to make a clearance cut.


4

5 Now that you have the bottom done and the thinnest part of the neck, start making a nice curve towards the top – you want to blend the high part with the lowest. Take a good look at the dimensioned drawing so you have an idea of the curve you are after. Remember that no matter the tool you choose, when working on spindle grain-oriented timber you should always cut downhill, from high to low, so that you are cutting with supported fibres for a cleaner cut that will need little sanding.


5

6 If the curve gives you a hard time with a gouge – it's not as easy as it looks to make a nice smooth continuous curve – use a scraper or a sharp skew on its side with the handle slightly higher than the cutting edge to refine the curve. It's not as clean a cut as with a gouge, but it works.


6


7


8


9

7 Here you can see the scraper refining the overall shape of the curve. A curved-edge negative rake scraper (NRS) is being used here. The NRS is a scraper that has a secondary bevel on the top of the blade, which is like having a skew chisel laid on its side. The top bevel means that even if the handle of the tool is horizontal, you still have a trailing angle on the cut. So, to recap, a gouge is typically the optimum tool for cutting efficiency and for minimising grain damage but a scraper, while not quite as effective, may help with getting the shape required, but will not create as nice a surface finish on anything but the densest of timbers .

8 With the bottom area done, it's time to turn the handle or knob. Make a series of cuts with a parting tool or gouge to remove the waste in readiness for refining the shape.

9 Adjust your callipers to the thickest part of the round knob as per the dimensioned drawing. Carefully measure and, using a parting tool or gouge, bring it down to near the required size. Stop the lathe to measure if you are not comfortable measuring and cutting at the same time.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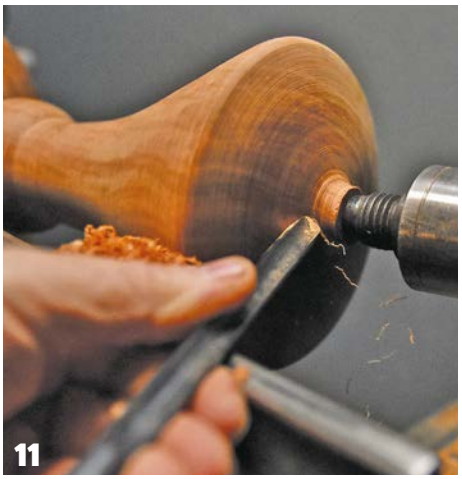

11

10 Now use a spindle gouge and start shaping the top of the pounder. Alternatively you could use a skew chisel if you are comfortable using one so close to the end of the project. Once shaped, sand all the areas you can reach. You will have to hand-sand the area of the bottom and top, so don't go to the final grit there, stop at around 320 grit.

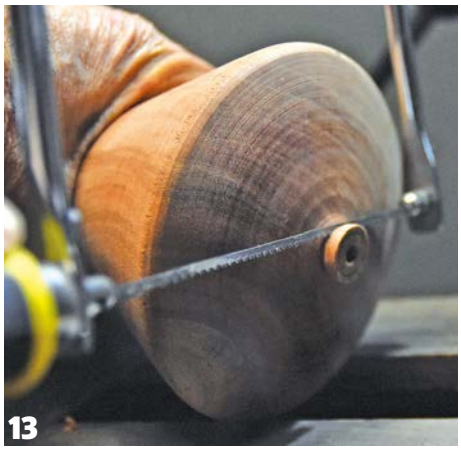

12

11 Using a low lathe speed, carefully remove as much as you safely can off each end of the pounder, near the drive and revolving centre, without risking the piece coming off. The stub of timber at each end will be removed later. Don't rush it, you need everything to stay in place – you are almost there!

12 Using a very low lathe speed, use a thin parting tool to make a cut carefully on each end, cutting almost through each stub of timber but not quite. This will help you in the next step, when you will remove the stubs with a small saw or chisel. If you do not have a thin parting tool, don't worry – go to the next step. The smaller the stub the easier and quicker the next stage.

13 Remove the pounder form the lathe and use a thin-bladed saw and remove the stub of timber at each end. Leave enough wood to be able to have a smooth round top and bottom without any indentations. You are now ready for sanding.

14 You can use any method that you prefer or have access to. I have an orbital hand-held sander. A belt sander might take too much wood off too quickly and usually has a coarse grit, so be careful and go slow if you do use one. A sanding arbor with a soft interface pad fitted in a drill works well for this. Sand off any marks left by the cutting of the small knobs. Blend all surfaces together for a smooth, seamless round top and bottom.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14

Making the bowl

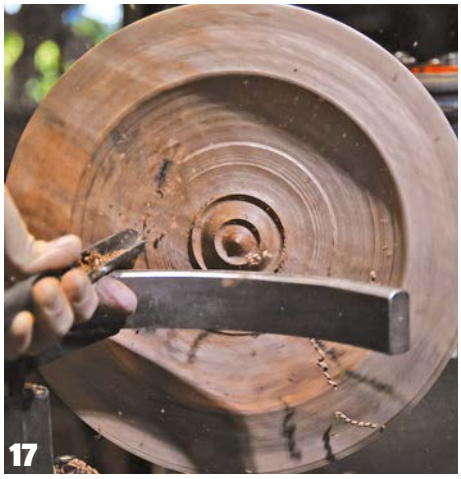
15 To make a grinding base for the pounder, which is called a poi board., mount a piece of matching, or contrasting timber on the lathe. I fixed this blank between centres. You could also use any other dense timber available if you don't have matching timber. The bottom of the poi pounder is 125mm wide. Make the bottom of the bowl a minimum of 150mm. To emulate a poi pounder board do not make the bottom too deep. I make mine just deep enough as not to have the garlic cloves running away from me. Start shaping the outside with a bowl gouge remembering to cut a spigot to suit your chuck jaws.


15


16

16 Once you have the shape you want, blend all tool marks with a suitable-shaped scraper. If the scraper leaves some torn grain, re-cut with a gouge using a push cut or use a light ,sheer scrape with a swept-back grind bowl gouge to refine the surface further. The picture shows the surface left by the scraper. Now sand to about 320 grit and then mount the bowl in your chuck.

17 Now turn an internal form with an opening wider than 125mm of a shape that works to suit the bottom curve of the pounder. Typically, the poi board used to pound the poi was on the shallow side. Don't make the internal curve too deep, we are not trying to make a traditional mortar and pestle, which were often deeper. You want a nice, continuous curve that matches the round bottom of the poi pounder.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18

18 With the lathe running, carefully hold the poi pounder on the base – the high spots will be burnished. Carefully and slowly remove them with a negative rake scraper then sand the inside and edge. Remove the piece from the lathe and remove the spigot and sand the lower area leaving a nice flat stable base.

Alternative design

- I love boxes, especially boxes with hand chased threads. Here is a sample of a poi pounder box with a secret or hidden compartment. Pounder and base made out of koa'ia (*Acacia koa var. koaia*) with boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) threaded insert and lignum vitae (*Guaiacum officinale*) cover. ●

Using the long-grind bowl gouge

Mark Sanger looks at getting the most from this versatile tool

In this article I want to talk about and show you what is my go-to tool in my turning – the long-grind bowl gouge. The long-grind bowl gouge is a versatile tool that can produce numerous cuts and lend itself to many scraping techniques, negating the need to pick up another tool. Often, I turn a bowl, outside profile of a hollow form or similar cross-grain and end-grain vessel from the shaping of the spigot through to final finishing cuts prior to sanding with abrasive.

First, I am going to look at the profile of the long grind, how we can grind this by hand and by using one of many jigs available on the market today followed by how I use the long grind for the various cuts I use.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK SANGER

There have been several names given to the long grind over the years, such as the Celtic grind, Ellsworth grind, swept-back grind, side grind and here the long grind. Simply put, these are the same with slight variations as preferred by the individual use. For the purposes of this article I will refer to it as the long grind.

Bowl gouge geometry

Ask 10 turners how they grind their gouges and you'll get 10 variations on the theme. There are, however, three main profiles for gouges.

The basic grind is called the standard/traditional grind. It has a cutting edge that is square across or has the wings pulled back either side of the tip of the tool by about 10° or so.

The fingernail profile is called such because the profile resembles a fingernail when shaped. Typically, the wings of the cutting edges curl back along the side of the blade. It is worth noting that they not only curl back they curl inwards towards the flute as the wings extend backwards too.

The long grind has an edge profile which has the wings pulled back along the sides of the blade, but not rolled/curled back into the flute so much as the fingernail profile does.

On the long grind, the wing edge should be slightly convex or flat but must never be concave. A concave side wing will not allow you to present the tool correctly or control the cuts properly.

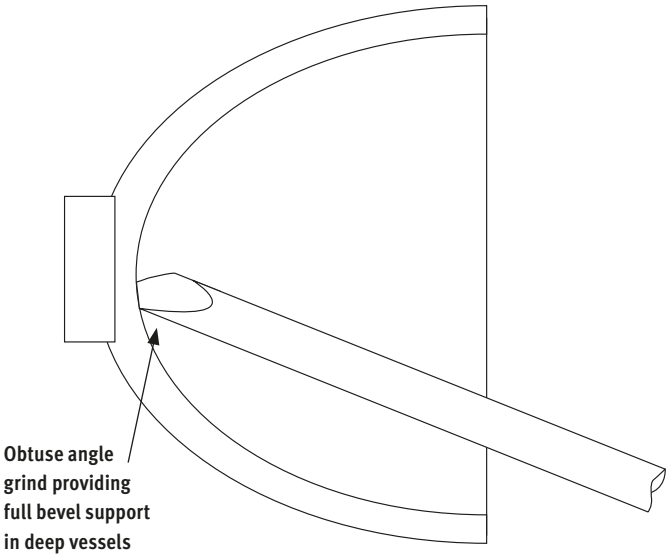
The standard grind

The fingernail grind

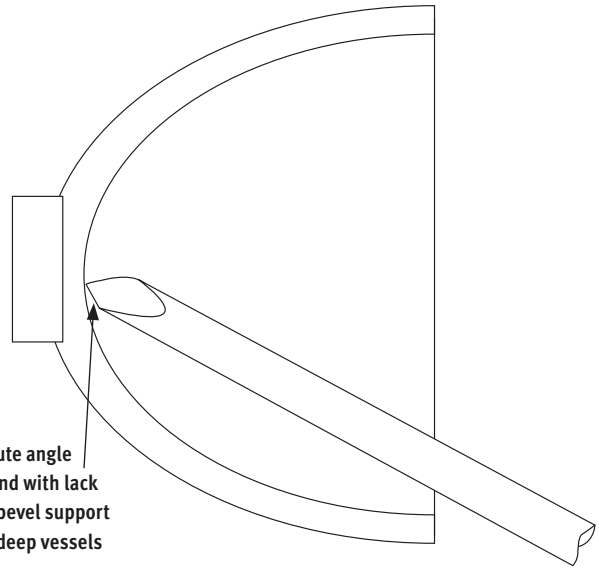
The long-grind gouge showing the wing grind and a bevel of about 45°

Angle

The grind angle of a bowl gouge is produced for the preferred cutting method and project turned. An example is turning the inside of a deep bowl where the angle of grind must be obtuse enough to provide bevel support around the internal profile from rim to base. If the grind angle is too acute bevel support cannot be fully achieved into the base due to the shaft contacting the rim. A versatile angle for the bowl gouge is 40°-55°. But if you work deep with narrow openings, you will need a blunter grind to prevent the blade of the tool fouling the rim as you work the bottom curve and a more acute angle working down the side-wall.



Full bevel support from an obtuse grind without the tool blade fouling the rim of the opening



An acute angle may, depending of the shape of the item being worked on, result in the tool blade fouling the rim

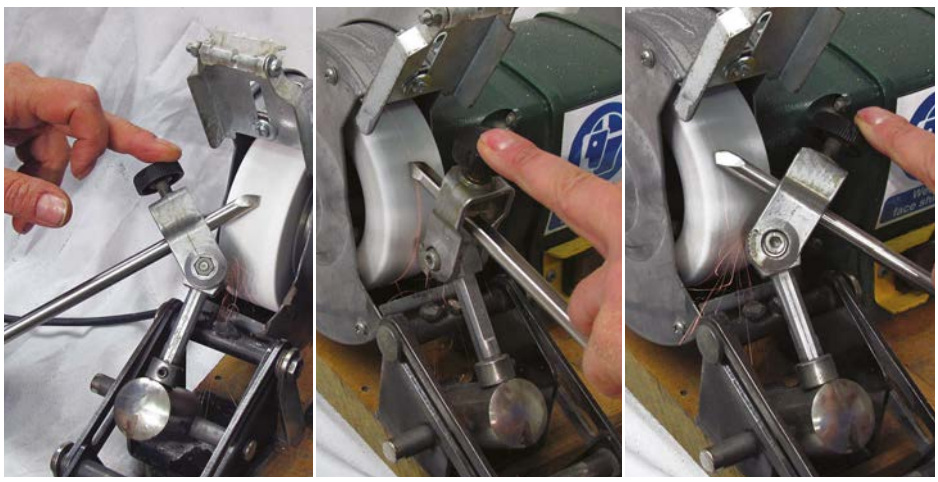
Sharpening

There are two ways to sharpen, by using a jig, or by hand. The latter allows for the tool projection and angle to be set, giving accurate repeatable sharpening. Due to the number and types available it is beyond the scope of this article to go into any depth, but a good jig is worth the investment. Free-hand sharpening, while requiring practise, is an efficient, low-cost useful skill to have and is shown here.

It is worth noting that many manufacturers now sell gouges pre-profiled to a long grind. This is generally more expensive due to manufacturing costs. A standard profile, however, can be quickly and simply re-profiled as shown.

SHARPENING WITH A JIG

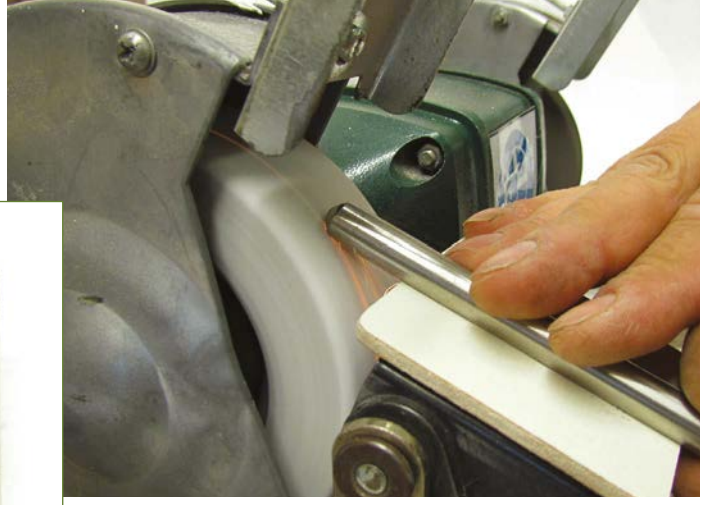
A sharpening jig fixes the tool in a constant position, giving very accurate profiling and repeatability. The jigs usually comprise a flat platform that can be positioned at the desired angle on to which flat profile tools, such as skew chisels, parting tools and scrapers, can be presented for sharpening, as well as a fingernail/long-grind profile attachment that can be set at a specific distance and angle to achieve the desired repeatable profile on both spindle and bowl gouges. Each manufacturer supplies instructions so take a good look at these before undertaking use.



Using a jig arcing the blade from side to side to create the wing profile and the bevel angle required

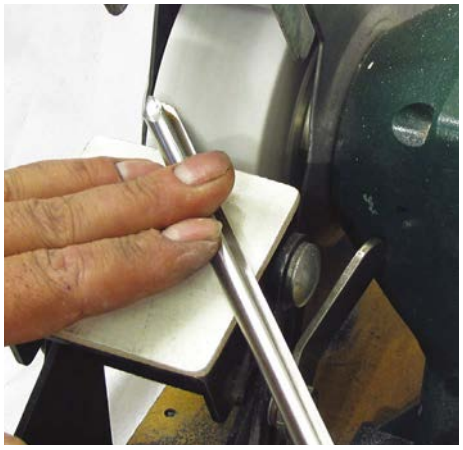
SHARPENING BY HAND

To sharpen the long grind freehand, so to speak, you need an adjustable rise and tilt platform of a size that will support the gouge properly as you shape the cutting edge to your chosen profile. There are many models of such tables for you to choose from. The picture sequence shows the process. One point to remember – once you have created the shape of how far you want your wings to come back along the gouge, remove as much waste metal from each side of the wing area before refining the grind to create the correct wing shape and profile and the bevel angle on the front of the gouge.



First, remove the bulk of material from the top of the wings by placing the wings upside down on the grind wheel while grinding gently back and forth until profiled. This produces a foundation shape for us to work to and efficiently removes much of the waste metal

Set the rest at the desired angle to create the bevel angle you require. Next, place the tool flat on the toolrest, with the shaft perpendicular to the wheel, with the flute pointing at the 12 o'clock position, if viewed as the hand on a clock



Then, hold the handle of the gouge and swing it slowly to the right in an arc while rotating the shaft clockwise to roll the edge up to the top of the flute. Note my right hand is holding the handle as I swing to the right. Only apply light to moderate pressure – let the grind wheel do the work, taking several light passes each time to prevent excess heat which can alter the temper of the metal. Keep the wheel dressed as you work as continued grinding will soon build up metal particles in the wheel leading to excess heat build-up

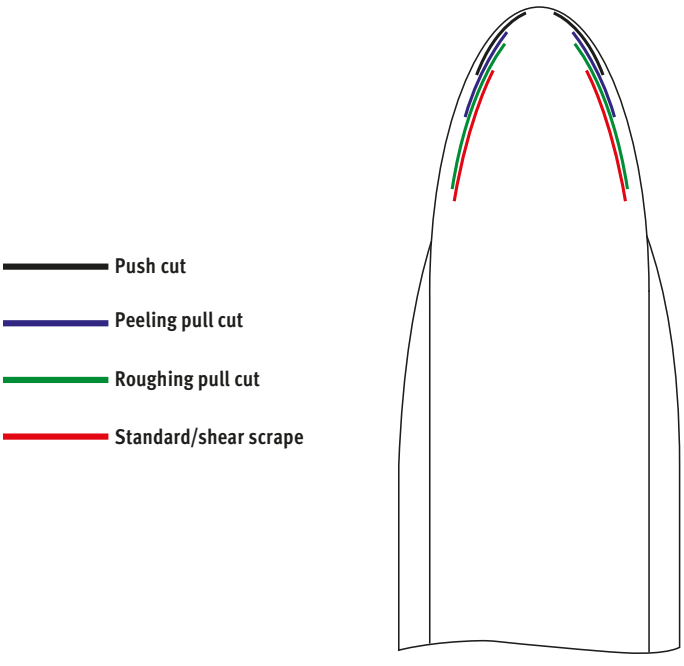
Once the right hand side profile is correct, repeat the process working on the left wing of the gouge. Exert the same pressure on the wheel and mimic the same curve on the wing remembering to maintain light pressure during the process

Continue until the profile is produced with the cutting edge running sharp along the length of the wings. Take time during initial profiling to allow the tool to cool in stages until the finished edge is achieved. Once the desired grind has been produced, to resharpen a few gentle passes is all that is required to maintain the sharpness of the edge

Versatility and cutting positions

The long-grind gouge is versatile and allows for numerous cutting and scraping techniques to be achieved outside and inside of forms using the push cut, where the handle is behind the cutting edge when turning, or the pull cut, where the handle is in front of the cut with the turner pulling the cut edge across or around the surface of the wood. Due to its profile it is a versatile grind giving the turner the ability to produce roughing, peeling and finishing cuts, as well as being able to be presented to the wood for scraping and shear scraping. The narrow profile of the tip compared to the traditional grind also enables us to reach into places that may otherwise be restricted with a different profile tool.

As with any grind, there are presentation angles to bear in mind so that you can work safely and efficiently.



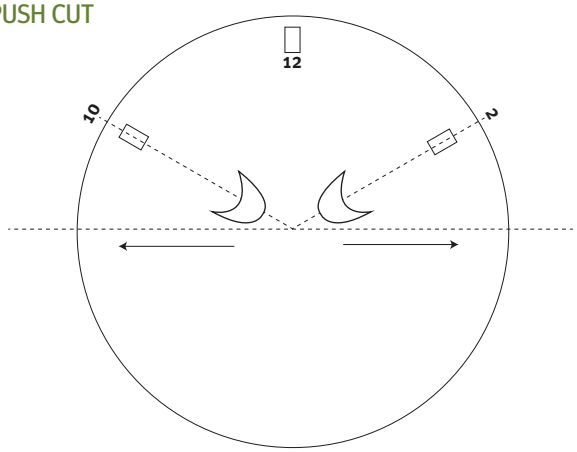
These are the primary cutting areas for each type of cut used with the long grind.

Push or pull cut?

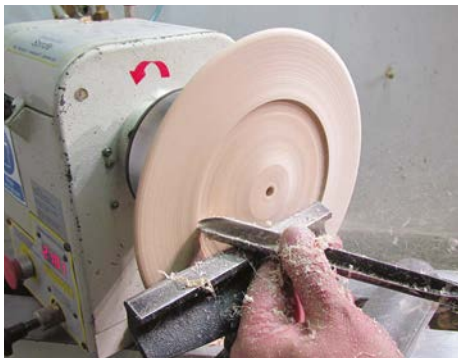
The pull cut has the advantage of free cutting with tail centre in place, so adding safety without fouling the tailstock, and is particularly important during the turning of large blanks

It might be difficult using a push cut to reach the area close to the foot without the handle being restricted by the tailstock. Trying to cut like this without full bevel support can result in catches, damage to the project and/or injury to the turner

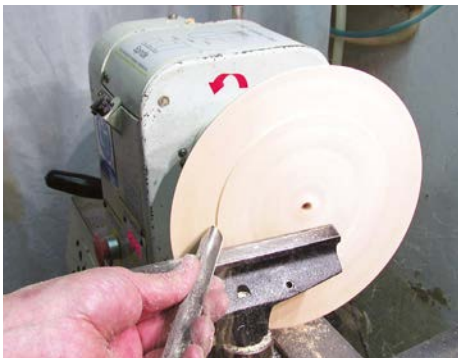
PUSH CUT



The push cut is often the cut first used in turning so I will start with this and how we set up for this cut. A way to remember correct presentation of flute direction is 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock as shown in the diagram



If cutting right to left or from tail centre out, place the tool on the rest to cut at centre height with bevel rubbing so the flutes point to 10 o'clock



To cut left to right or outside in towards the tail centre present to cut on centre height with bevel rubbing and flutes pointing to 2 o'clock

PULL CUT

To set up the pull cut align the tool with spindle axis of lathe

Angle the gouge at a 45°, angle the handle down to the right angle for your cut

Finally rotate the tool so the flutes are pointing towards 10 o'clock (for cutting right to left or from tailstock outwards) or 2 o'clock (for cutting left to right or outside in towards tail stock). Rotating the flutes further up toward 12 o'clock will make for an aggressive cut and raise the chance of a catch

ROUGHING CUT

For a roughing cut, the gouge is used with a pull cut for general roughing down of stock to the round. This cut breaks the general rule of bevel support behind the cut with the tool shaft being presented horizontal and flutes at 10 or 2 o'clock, depending on direction of cut as previously covered. Here the tool shaft is held almost horizontal, reducing the chance of an aggressive catch on out-of-round stock. It is not a refined cut by any stretch of the imagination and will compromise the surface finish. But for balancing a blank such as a log by taking off the high spots it is a useful cut to know

PEELING CUT

This cut is often the most rewarding in that the result is the long streams of shavings that we all like to produce and is the main shaping cut I use once the blank is balanced. Here the flute direction is as before, the handle is lowered to around 30° to present a slicing edge. As before, with the roughing cut the bevel here is not engaged so the finish will also not be the finest. It is, however the main shaping cut that removes a lot of material very efficiently. Shown here is the cleaning up of the front face of a cross-grain bowl

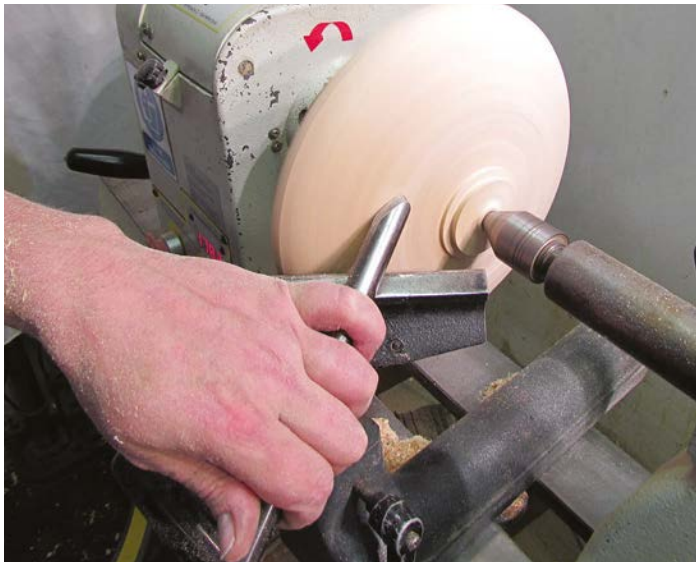
FINISHING CUT

After initial shaping it is time to refine the finish. To do this raise the tool rest slightly to present the cutting edge above centre. Drop the handle to 45°-50°, thus producing a shear angle/cut. First rub the heel of the gouge on the surface and slowly rotate the tool anti-clockwise until you pick up the cut. Once you have the cut keep in this position and gently proceed, taking only the finest of cuts. Keep the bevel fully supported always behind the cutting edge. This cut does takes some practice but once achieved will mean that the final finish will be excellent

SCRAPING

This cut is useful for general surface refinement. Present the tool edge on centre with the handle higher than the cutting edge with tool shaft trailing down slightly to prevent catches as with a standard scraper technique. Close the flutes by pointing to 9 or 3 o'clock depending on direction of cut and gently scrape in the direction required for the grain direction being turned. For example, if using this cut to refine the base of a cross-grain bowl then I would be scraping from the tail centre out to the rim

SHEAR SCRAPING



For a shear scrape producing a fine finish present the cutting edge on the centre height with the flutes closed and at 45° to the wood surface, this being achieved by dropping the handle. Here the scrape is achieved on the bottom wing/cutting edge with the top just off the surface of the wood and scrape from spindle axis out. Again take into account the grain direction of the wood being turned and scrape in the appropriate direction

CONCLUSION

There is little doubt in my work that the long-grind bowl gouge is the most versatile and most indispensable tool in my collection by far and I compare it to the spindle turner's skew. The versatility, efficiency and finish that can be achieved with the long-grind bowl gouge means it is well worth the investment of time in learning to use and initially the hard-earned cash investment of a suitable jig for sharpening. There is a steeper learning curve in the use of the long-grind gouge compared to the traditional grind but it is worth exploring as an option and you certainly won't regret it. Happy turning. ●

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.

American Association of Woodturners Symposium

The symposium features a broad selection of demonstrations and panel discussions that appeal to wide variety of skill levels – bowls, boxes, vessels, hollow forms, spheres, spindle turning, multi-axis turning, segmented turning, natural edge turning, ornament, jewellery, finishing techniques, surface design, texture and embellishment, and more.

Demonstrators include: Eli Avisera, Mark Baker, Donna Zills Banfield, Marilyn Campbell, Jeff Chelf, Kip Christensen, Mark Dreyer, Cindy Drozda, Karen Freitas, Keith Gotschall, Steven Hatcher, Kristin LeVier, Eric Lofstrom, Tom Lohman, Jon Magill, Guilio Marcolongo, Wayne Miller, Kai Muenzer, Mike Peace, Ed Pretty, Graeme Priddle, Rick Rich, Jay Shepard, Al Stirt, Dan Tilden, Hans Weissflog, and Ray Wright.

When: 14-17 June 2018
Where: Oregon Convention Center
777 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, Portland, OR 97232

To learn more about the AAW's 32nd Annual International Symposium, visit http://tiny.cc/Portland2018

Tree planting

More than half a million free trees are currently winging their way to schools and community groups across the UK thanks to the Woodland Trust. It's the charity's biggest ever distribution of free trees and a sign of the public's growing desire to plant. The saplings – 561,000 to be precise – are equivalent to approximately 350ha. And some 24,000 are set to brighten the Northern Ireland landscape.

People right across the country – from heritage groups to hurling clubs, and prep schools to colleges – were preparing to enhance their local grounds this March.

Collective efforts are helping to green local landscapes and tackle Northern Ireland's lack of woodland cover. The country has a mere 8% woodland cover, compared to the European average of 46%.

The Woodland Trust's director of woodland outreach, John Tucker, said: 'The popularity of our free tree pack scheme is testament to how much the public love trees.

'Schools and community groups obviously hold trees in great affection, valuing them for the many benefits they bring. People tell us they're planting to encourage wildlife, to combat climate change, prevent flooding and improve health and wellbeing.

'Trees and woods are under threat like never before, from pests, disease and development. We need more trees, and we're thrilled our scheme is going from strength to strength.' The trees are generously funded by Sainsbury's, Ikea Family and Yorkshire Tea.

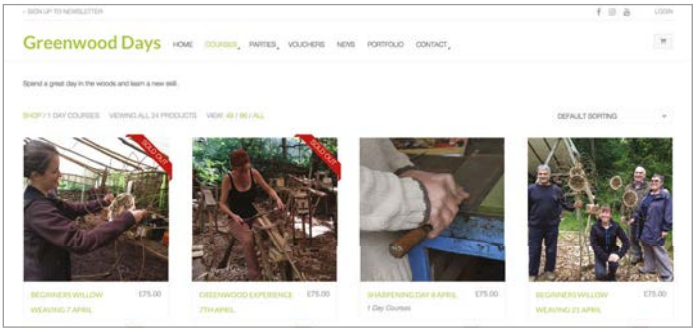
Web: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/freetrees

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALLAN BAXTER

Greenwood Days

Greenwood Days has been running woodland craft courses since 1998. The course centre is set in a beautiful 90 acre wood in the National Forest on the Leicestershire/Derbyshire border. It offers day, weekend, midweek and week-long courses, ranging from traditional Windsor chairmaking to contemporary willow sculpture, longbow-making to spoon carving.

For further information about the courses visit: www.greenwooddays.co.uk



New UK forest festival for 2018

The National Forest at Feanedock, Derbyshire, will host a brand new festival in July 2018. 'Timber' will be an international forest festival 'exploring the transformative impact of forests'.

Featuring writers, artists, musicians, scientists and thinkers from across the world, Timber will explore what woodlands can mean to us and how we can re-imagine our relationship with our environment. The festival has been created by the National Forest Company and Wild Rumpus, award-winning producer of the Just So Festival. There will be a variety of activities and experiences on offer including talks and discussions, live music performances, craft workshops, farmers' markets, organised forest walks and much more. Camping will be available on site.

Timber will take place 6-8 July, 2018. For more information about the festival and to book advance tickets, visit the Timber website.

Contact: Timber Festival
Web: www.timberfestival.org.uk

SHOWS AND EVENTS

Midlands Woodworking & Power Tool Show
When: 23-24 March 2018
Where: Newark Showground, Nottinghamshire, NG24 2NY
Web: www.nelton.co.uk/midlands-woodworking-power-tool-show.html

Yandles & Sons woodworking show
When: 13-14 April 2018
Where: Hurst Works, Hurst, Martock, Somerset, TA12 6JU
Web: www.yandles.co.uk/event/1-yandles-woodworking-show

Makers Central
When: 5-6 May 2018
Where: National Exhibition Centre, Marston Green, Birmingham, B40 1NT
Web: www.makerscentral.co.uk

Utah Woodturning Symposium
When: 10-12 May 2018
Where: UCCU Events Centre, 800 W University Parkway Orem, UT
Web: utahwoodturning.com

Woodworks@Daventry 2018
When: 11-12 May 2018
Where: Daventry Leisure Centre, Lodge Road, Daventry, NN11 4FP
Web: www.tudor-rose-turners.co.uk

The Toolpost Open House
When: 2-3 June 2018
Where: Unit 7, Hawksworth, Southmead Industrial Park, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7HR
Web: www.toolpost.co.uk

Norwegian Woodturning Cruise
When: 20 August-1 September 2018
Where: Starting at Stavanger, Norway
Web: www.woodturningcruise.com

Yandles & Sons woodworking show
When: 7-8 September 2018
Where: Hurst Works, Hurst, Martock, Somerset, TA12 6JU
Web: www.yandles.co.uk

AWGB Seminar
When: 5-7 October 2018
Where: Yarnfield Park Training & Conference Centre, Stone, Staffordshire
Web: www.awgbwoodturningseminar.co.uk

Woodworking and Powertool show
When: 26-27 October 2018
Where: Westpoint Centre, Clyst St Mary, Exeter EX5 1DJ
Web: www.wptwest.co.uk

A life turned around

Mark Baker talks to Darren Breeze and finds out more about him and his work

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DARREN BREEZE

I've just turned 49 and am in the throes of yet another major change in my life – more on that later. I feel very fortunate generally – having suffered numerous problems and setbacks I've always managed to pick myself up and move forwards. I've been in the building trade most of my life, having originally trained as an industrial electrical technician, I moved around quite a lot, spending several years in the south west, and some time living aboard a dive charter vessel, working up to first mate and dive marshal, and learning to scuba dive in the crystal clear waters around the Isles of Scilly.

I'd had problems with drink and drugs in my teens and, in my late 20s, I ended up living on the streets in Devon. My lifestyle and circumstances were on a rapid downward spiral and, in desperation, I made my way back to East Anglia where I'd grown up, and still live now. I eventually managed to get clean and sober, became a father to twins and I set up in business as a builder. For about 10 years things were good. I had a family, I was still clean and sober and had a business that gave us a reasonable living. In 2007/8 the recession hit and, with every penny I had invested in the building trade and incurring a debt of near £100k on one job, my business and home life were on the point of collapse. I had no hobbies, my life revolved around my family and work, and with stress and depression hitting hard I knew I needed a release. I felt I was on the brink of a nervous breakdown but a chance flick though a magazine in my local newsagent changed my life entirely.

WHEN DID YOU START TURNING AND WHY?

It was late 2007 and I'd sauntered into my local newsagent simply to look at publications to try to find some form of hobby to occupy my mind and time – a release from the pressures I felt would drag me back to the bottle, or worse. I flicked through numerous magazines on various subjects, most of which I knew I couldn't afford to pursue. I had a basic workshop and had dabbled in a bit of joinery work, so I picked up a woodworking magazine, I don't remember which one. I wanted to buy it, but I didn't have a penny in my pocket. Flicking through the pages I came across an article about woodturning – I'd never had any interest in that. Round wooden bowls and staircase spindles was my naive view of the subject, but suddenly I was faced with a picture of a piece by Nick Agar called 'Squidoo'. I remember being transfixed. What was this? I needed some reassurance that what I was seeing was actually woodturning. Quickly looking at the other pictures and reading the write-ups, it suddenly dawned on me that I had found something I wanted to try. Could I make this sort of stuff?

Within a week I had borrowed some money and bought a secondhand lathe, which came with a few tools, some bizarre-looking extras and a couple of lumps of unknown wood. The lathe was set up in my workshop and I was desperate to make something.

FIRST TURNINGS

Up until this point I'd never even watched wood being turned – I had no idea what to do. I found a ring thing with screw holes in it which seemed to fit on to this chuck-type thing, which was duly screwed to a chunk of wood and fixed to the lathe. I'm not saying my first bowl was bad, but let's just say that after some horrid bangs and snatching of this weird-shaped tool

'Horns of Odin' table

I was using, I ended up having to sand the outside with a 100mm belt sander, then an orbital sander working through whatever grits I had available. The inside fared no better – that was sanded using a 115mm angle grinder and by hand. And what the heck do I do with these six screw holes through the bottom of my masterpiece? I thought, it's not as easy as I thought it was going to be. I went home to proudly exhibit my efforts, in the back of my mind thinking I'd made a big mistake buying this stupid lump of machinery and already considering how I was going to sell it on to the next delusional victim.

But I decided I wasn't going to give in so easily. I've always been of the mindset that if someone else can do something then there is no reason I can't, so a few more sessions of being attacked by this damned machine ensued, culminating in the realisation that perhaps I needed a bit of help. A bit of research led me to the door of a local woodturner, a nice chap by the name of Andy Coates.

I showed him my first bowl and he seemed quite impressed, although he did say it 'resembled a dog bowl'. I didn't have the heart to admit the finishing techniques I'd employed – to be honest I don't think I've ever told him, but guess he'll know the truth now. I had a few hours' tuition with Andy, which helped immensely in learning to rub the bevel and use it as support to the cutting edge etc. It made the whole turning experience less traumatic.

I continued to practise, not really making anything, just getting used to what the tools would do, and before I knew it I was hooked – this dark art had dragged me in.

LEARNING CURVE

I joined both the Waveney Woodturning club and the Norwich Woodturners, bought tools, books, magazines – I had an insatiable appetite to learn. The rest of my life was still crumbling around me, yet even after a 10-12 hour day at work I would still head to the lathe most evenings, so consumed in what I was doing that time was insignificant and I often ended up only getting to bed three of four hours before having to get up for work again.

Brown oak waney-edge board wallhanging, 1800mm x 340mm x35mm, incorporating various colouring and texturing techniques.

I met up with Norwich turner Nick Arnull a few months after starting turning and a day's tuition with him to learn the basics of hollowing. It was an enjoyable day but somewhat bewildering with the array of tools that basically do the same job to one degree or another. Again my wallet took a beating with the purchase of some hollowing tools, and another avenue of woodturning was opened up to my inquiring mind.

Apart from those two sessions of tuition everything else I've learned has been self-taught, with club demonstrations being watched like a hawk. Now, after 10 years of turning, I still think I learn something from every demo I see or each session in my workshop.

WHAT ARE THE INFLUENCES ON YOUR WORK?

I like to use colour and texture, whether it's on a simple bowl or a large wallhanging. The works of people such as Nick Agar, Dennis Elliott, David Barkby and Douglas Fisher, among others, have influenced me in the large-scale work I do. I don't try to copy what anyone else has done but similarities in certain aspects can be seen. If I see a technique or tool and I like the effect it achieves, I'll often buy the equipment to enable me to copy that aspect as a point of learning, then later that technique may get used in another form. On the smaller-scale pieces there are so many people whose work I have admired – Andy Coates, Nick Arnull, Les Thorne, Mark Sanger, to name a few. I think every turner I've watched, met, read about, or seen on the computer will have had some influence, even if only in a small way. The most notable influence recently was watching a demo by Ray Key. It wasn't what he turned that influenced me, but the way he makes the best use of the form of a piece. I came to realise I had been using colour and texture too much and at the expense of the form. I now take time to create the form prior to any application of colour and or texture.

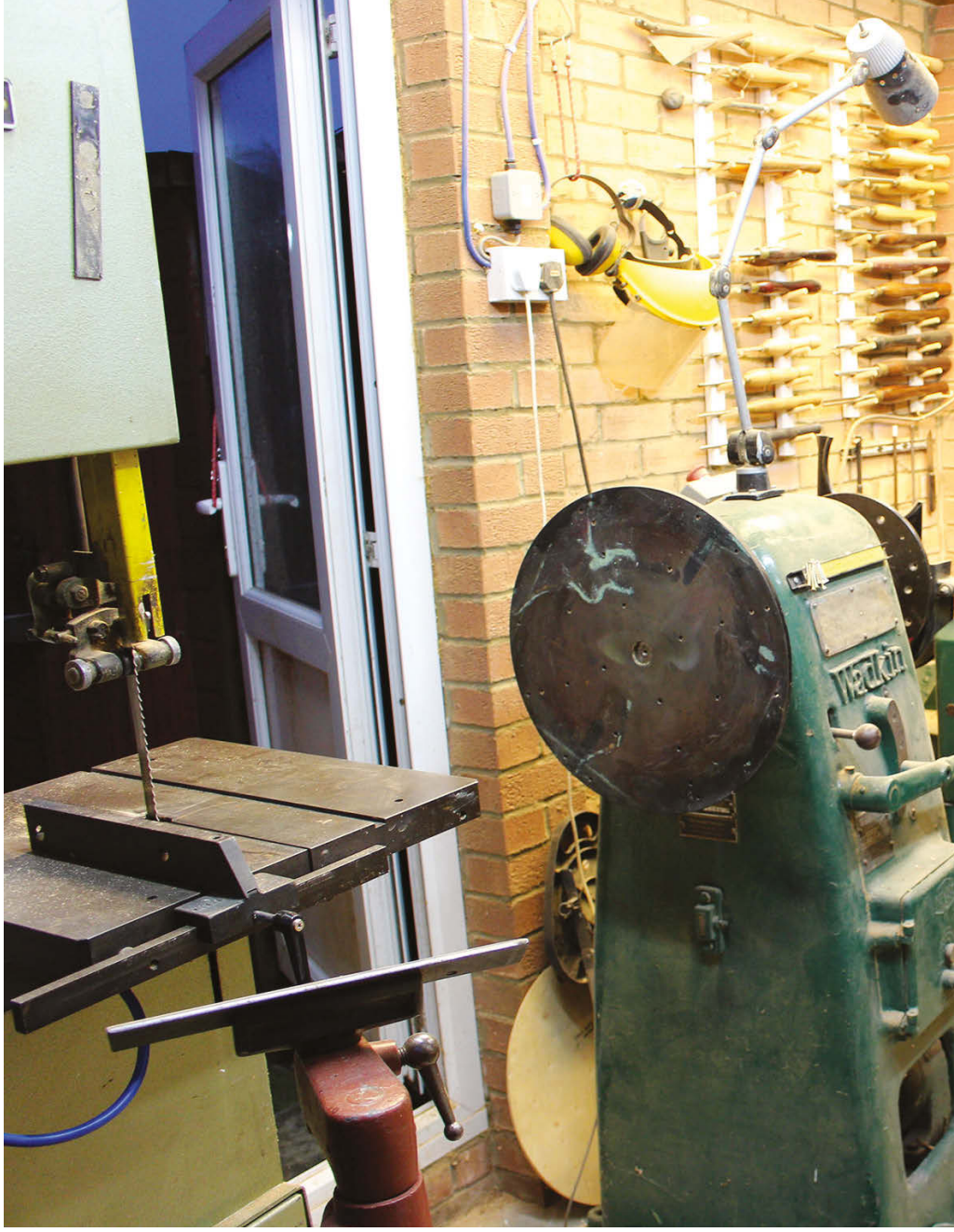
BIGGEST MISTAKES AND CHALLENGES

Like so many others, probably my biggest mistake when I started turning was to buy so many tools. When a reputable company is selling a tool which does a specific job, the novice turner assumes they will need it. But it turns out that, for the majority of turning work, you only need a few basic tools, and as long as they are suitable for the job each tool can have a multitude of uses. Saying that, I've collected such a huge selection of tools and equipment I feel I'm now in a position that when doing demonstrations or tuition I can show the benefits of a variety of tools which carry out basically the same job, hopefully saving others buying the wrong item for their needs.

My biggest single challenge has to be space, or lack of it. Hopefully that will be addressed soon, spinning a 6ft plank of oak in a single garage which is filled with two other lathes, bandsaw, planer thicknesser, sanding machines, tablesaw, dust and chip extractors and storage cabinets etc. means I struggle to move about. This is to the extent that I only turn large-scale pieces when I can have the garage door open so I have a means of escape should something untoward happen while turning such a piece.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Earlier this year I was awarded a bursary from the Worshipful Company of Turners, most of if for the development of my spindle turning skills. This is something I can do but repetitive spindle work is an area where I'm severely lacking in skill level. I hope to take some tuition soon with people such as Les Thorne



Darren in his workshop

Elm (*Ulmus* spp.) wallhanging, 780mm x 675mm

inclusions somewhere and I work with these 'defects' as opposed to trying to cover or hide them.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE TYPE OF TURNING?

This has to be the large-scale pieces, closely followed the thin and delicate. The large-scale pieces are always a little intimidating and keep me on my toes. Things can go wrong very quickly with a momentary lack of concentration, but they also give me great scope for artistic license. They are the biggest draw at events where I sell my work. The general public usually haven't seen work on this scale and are intrigued. I have a 6m x 4m marquee for events and have a display of my large pieces opposite the entrance. I don't have any signage outside as I found many people have preconceived ideas about woodturning, as I did, but as they wander past my marquee a cursory glance through the entrance will often draw them in. Usually a discussion ensues and a seed of interest in woodturning is planted. Often a sale follows – perhaps not a large-scale piece but any sale is rewarding. Many of these chance customers become regular buyers of my work, some start turning, some just turn up at the same events every year intrigued by what I've come up with since our last meeting, all of which are rewarding in their own right.

and Gary Rance, both turners I have watched and admired for their speed and accuracy – factors that are required when undertaking production work. I intend to continue 'playing' with colour and texturing techniques and I'm always on the lookout for new products that I may be able to incorporate into my work.

HAVE YOU EVER GIVEN UP ON A PROJECT?

Oh yes, all too often. When I started, I would give up on a piece if I found any type of flaw in the wood. Now I realise most wood will have a flaw in it somewhere – it's dealing with the flaw in a safe and practical manner where beginners struggle. With experience you build up a collection of techniques with which to enable the piece to be finished, whether it's glued, filled, braced etc., and then possibly making a feature of the flaw in the final design. Most of my large pieces are made from the piece of timber as I picked it up from the wood yard. Most have cracks, shakes, holes and bark

'Battle scarred' mounted shield in burr oak, 700mm x 500mm

'Get a life buoy' elm table, 1300mm x 850mm

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE?

Well, this is where the 'major change in life' I mentioned earlier comes in. Turning is my passion, I'm at my happiest and most content when I'm in the workshop. As I said, I feel fortunate, I've found something I can do, that I enjoy immensely, and can hopefully earn a living from. Luckily I've also lost the 'money makes you happy' notion – that stupid idea cost me way too much of my children's younger years with me constantly chasing the £££s. It's a good job too as I've never met anyone who's made a fortune from woodturning. Generally I turn what I want to turn and hope I can sell it. I'll never make a lot of money, but that isn't a goal in my life anymore. I'm in the process of buying a shop in Lowestoft on the East Anglia coast, which will give me a gallery, workshop and accommodation in one building. I will also be able to live, work and sell from one building with enough space to work better and offer tuition for all levels of experience. I have made contact with a few galleries with a view to them displaying my work. I'd also like to expand my demonstrating locally to go national and possibly internationally too.

WHAT ARE YOUR LIKES AND DISLIKES WITHIN WOODTURNING?

I like the way woodturning is developing around the world. It is slowly receiving higher regard as an art form in its own right. The line between 'art' and 'craft' is slowly eroding.

My biggest dislike is underpricing work. I've always tried to charge a fair price for anything I've made. I'd rather not sell a piece than sell it too cheap. We can all buy a blank for £20, spend all day turning it and sell it for £15. Unfortunately that devalues every turner's work. I can appreciate why this happens – for many, woodturning is purely a hobby and if they can sell some of their work at whatever price, it pays for the next piece of wood and it becomes a self-funding hobby.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHER TURNERS?

Practice, practice, practice. If I haven't turned for a while, I'll often put a cheap piece of wood between centres and spend 10 minutes turning a series of beads with a skew and coves. This, I believe, kickstarts the muscle memory into action and helps whether I'm intending to do spindle work or faceplate work.

For beginners I'd say join a local club, get some tuition so you know how to present the tools correctly and safely.

Turners are a friendly bunch so ask club members for advice about potential tool purchases before you open your wallet.

Above all, take the pieces you make to your club meetings. When I first started I found three members whose work and standard I admired. I would ask them individually what was wrong my work requesting frank and honest opinions. If all three gave the same answers then chances are they were right – if you only ask one person then that is only their opinion. Once you know where your weak points lie, you're able to concentrate your efforts on that area.

TOP TIPS

Protect your lungs and eyes. When I started I occasionally wore a basic dust mask when sanding which helped to a degree, but now I wear a full-face protection air-fed helmet. They are worth every penny – no point having £1000s-worth of tools and equipment if you're not healthy enough to use them, so spend your money wisely.

EMAIL: darren@breezewoodturning.com
WEBSITE: www.breezewoodturning.com

Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) round-bottomed bowl, 330mm x 100mm

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Wall sculpture

Pat Carroll shows how to make a striking display piece

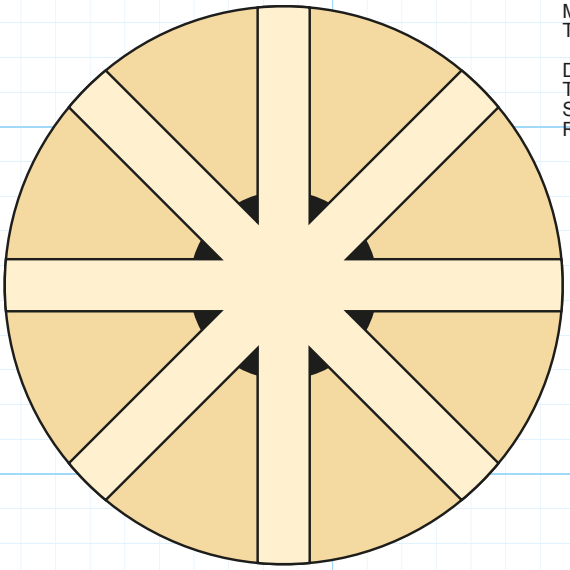
Wall-hangings come in all shapes and sizes, whether they are completely turned, or mediums added to enhance or create unique one-off items.

The piece in this article is created using different timbers to complement the colour and characteristics of each other. The main body is made from bubinga (*Guibourtia* spp.). I made the decision to keep the sapwood as this would complement the burr oak (*Quercus* spp.) centre boss. The backing plate was made from yew (*Taxus Baccata*). I chose to paint the backing plate black so as not to take from the colours but form a nice, subtle back-drop and support. Bearing that in mind, you can use any hardwood that will take the texture you apply to it and apply the colour. The black detailed lines of the centre boss are a reflection of the black backing piece. As a router was used to create the design, be sure to follow all guidelines regarding direction of cut and safety. A two-part epoxy resin was used to glue the piece together. Two eye hooks and picture wire were used for hanging the piece.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAT CARROLL

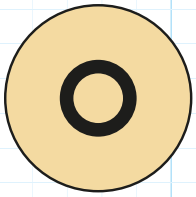
TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- PPE & RPE
- 16mm bowl gouge
- 6mm detail tool
- 25mm flat scraper
- 25mm round-nosed scraper
- Faceplate
- Chuck
- Revolving ring centre
- Friction drive plate with non-slip facing
- Drill chuck
- 25mm Forstner bit
- Router
- 8mm straight router bit
- 28mm reed router bit
- Cordless drill
- Angle grinder with carving wheel or use a hand-carving chisel for creating texture
- Abrasives
- Rule
- Pencil
- Black paint or spray
- Clear lacquer
- Sandpaper
- Two-part epoxy
- Eye hooks and picture wire



Measurements are guidelines only.
Turn to your ability and lathe capacity.

Diameter 300mm (11 7/8in)
Thickness 50mm (2in)
Straight router bit 8mm (5/16in)
Reed router bit 28mm (1 1/8in)



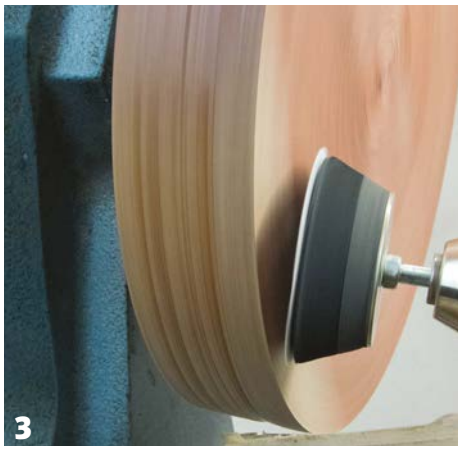
Diameter 100mm (4in)
Thickness 50mm (2in)
Outside ring 18mm (23/32in)
Black ring 12mm (1/2in)
Internal circle 40mm (1 5/8in)

Length 740mm (29in)
Width 90mm (3 1/2in)
Thickness 20mm (3/4in)
Hole diameter 25mm (1in)
Distance from top to centre of hole 300mm (11 7/8in)

Main body

1 Let's start with the main face of the sculpture. Check that your chosen wood has no defects that might compromise the safety and the quality of the piece. Once happy it is safe to use, mount the piece on a 100mm faceplate and then secure it on the lathe. Bring up the tailstock, which helps support the piece during the turning process. Use a freshly sharpened bowl gouge to true up the outer edge. Take light cuts with the gouge bevel running parallel to the bed of the lathe.


1



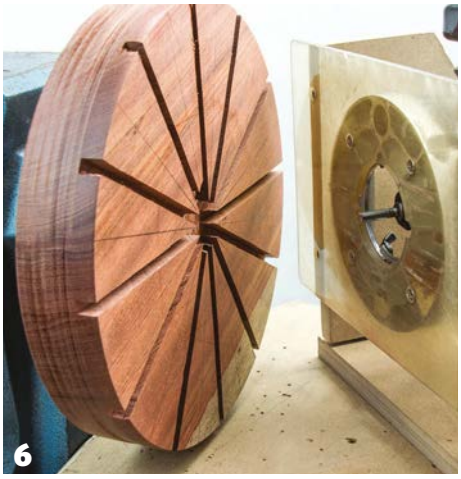
2 With the edge trued up, stop the lathe and move the toolrest to the front of the piece. Use the bowl gouge to true up the face. A straight surface is required for this design. Normally a chucking point is added at this time, but it is unnecessary for the design of this piece.

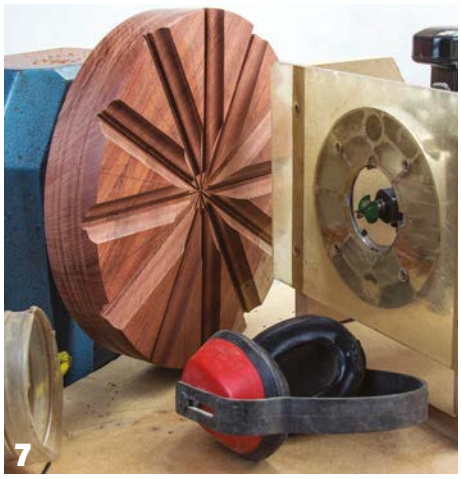
Stop the lathe periodically to check with a straight edge that the surface is straight. Once this has been achieved the tailstock can be removed and the centre area turned flat.

3 Now sand the face down to 600 grit. Although further surface work is needed, sanding the complete surface is easier and helps maintain any crisp corners required.

4 Using a homemade platform that fits into the toolrest banjo, the index system is locked in place. The design was intended to have 12 sections, but 24 sections were marked for a visual reference.

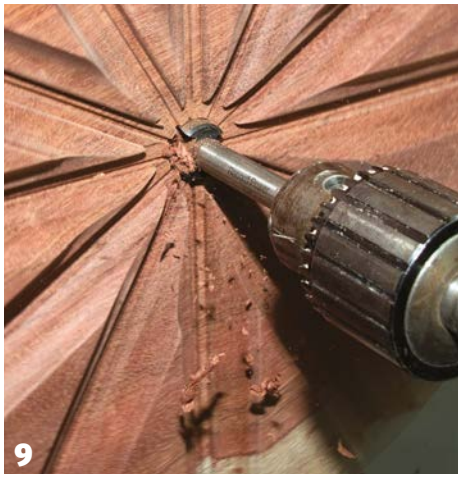
5 With the tailstock and toolrest assembly removed, a platform which fits the bed lathe is added. This platform allows the router sled to slide freely. Guide pieces can be added to the wooden base if necessary. The router has a flat base to slide across the workpiece, hence the reason this piece was turned with a flat surface.





6 A 4mm router bit is used for the first cuts, cutting from the outside towards the centre in 2mm-deep cuts per pass. This helps stop breakout on the external corners. All 12 sections are cut to an 8mm depth. Note extractor pipe connected to remove as much dust as possible.

7 Once all the straight bit has done its work on all the sections needed, switch off the router at the wall and fit the 12mm reed bit. As the piece has not been removed from the lathe, using the index system again the cuts are exactly on centre. Several light passes are made to cut to the required depth. Go gently so as not to burn the wood.



8 Now sand the piece down to 600 grit. Take care not to round off any corners.

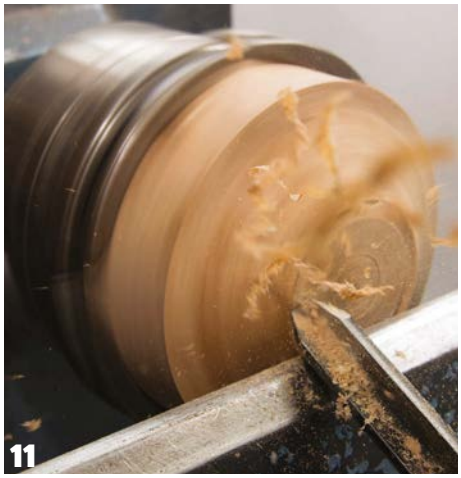
9 Use a 25mm Forstner drill bit in a drill chuck held in the tailstock quill to create a hole in the centre of the main body piece about 25mm deep. The lathe speed needs to be quite slow, approximately 500rpm. A slow, steady approach gives the bit a chance to cut and also clear debris at this depth of cut.

10 Once sanded, remove the disc from the lathe and remove the faceplate. Fit a neoprene-faced/non-slip-faced disc to the lathe. This is going to be a friction drive. Place the routed section against the friction drive, bring up the tailstock revolving centre and secure it in place. Check everything is stable and then, using a freshly sharpened bowl gouge, shape the back as required, leaving a 25mm spigot in the centre. Now sand the back.


10

Centre boss

11 Take the oak timber and hold it in your chuck. I had large jaws which held the blank securely. You might need to hold your piece on a spigot or recess to suit your chuck jaws. This can easily be removed later. Use the bowl gouge to shape the piece. Due to the grain orientation the cuts are from the centre towards the outside. Be careful to stop well short of the chuck jaws.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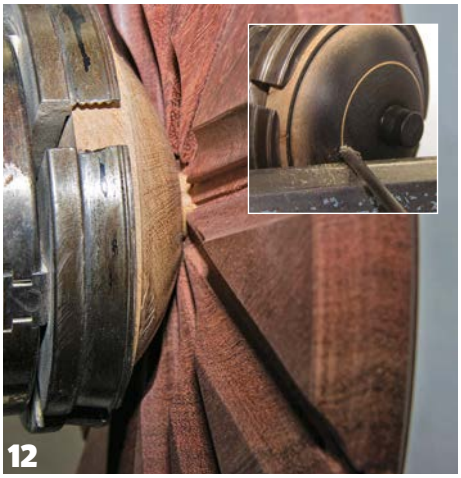
12 Check that the 25mm spigot fits in the bubinga centrepiece. It was very noticeable where the pieces were joined, so I sprayed the piece black to put the spigot in shadow and not draw the viewer's eye towards it. When the paint had dried a detail line was added to the base as a reference mark.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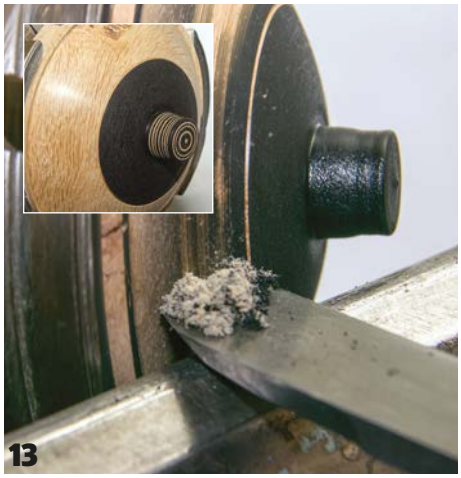
13 Use a 25mm flat scraper to remove any black colouring from the outside of the piece. The detail line was the finishing point for the scraper and left a crisp transition between the paler wood and the black. Going through the grits from 180 to 600, the piece is then sanded. Again, be careful of the chuck jaws.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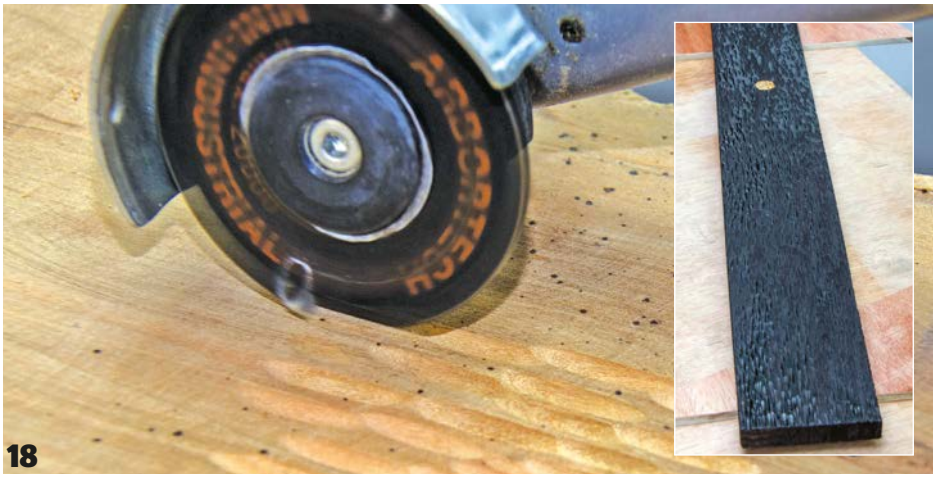
14 Remove the piece form the lathe and fit the 25mm spigot in your chuck jaws – a wooden jam chuck would work well too. Drill a 25mm hole in a scrap piece of wood fitted into your chuck. Insert the spigot of the piece and bring up tailstock support. Using the bowl gouge, true up the face of the piece.


14

15 With the face trued up, add a band of detail lines 1mm apart on the face. Don't worry if you add too many as they can be removed later. Now spray the detailed area black. Overspray is inevitable but not a concern at this point as far as the work is concerned, but do protect your lathe from the overspray.

Once the paint has dried the flat-edged scraper to used to clean up the flat surface at the outside of the piece.


15



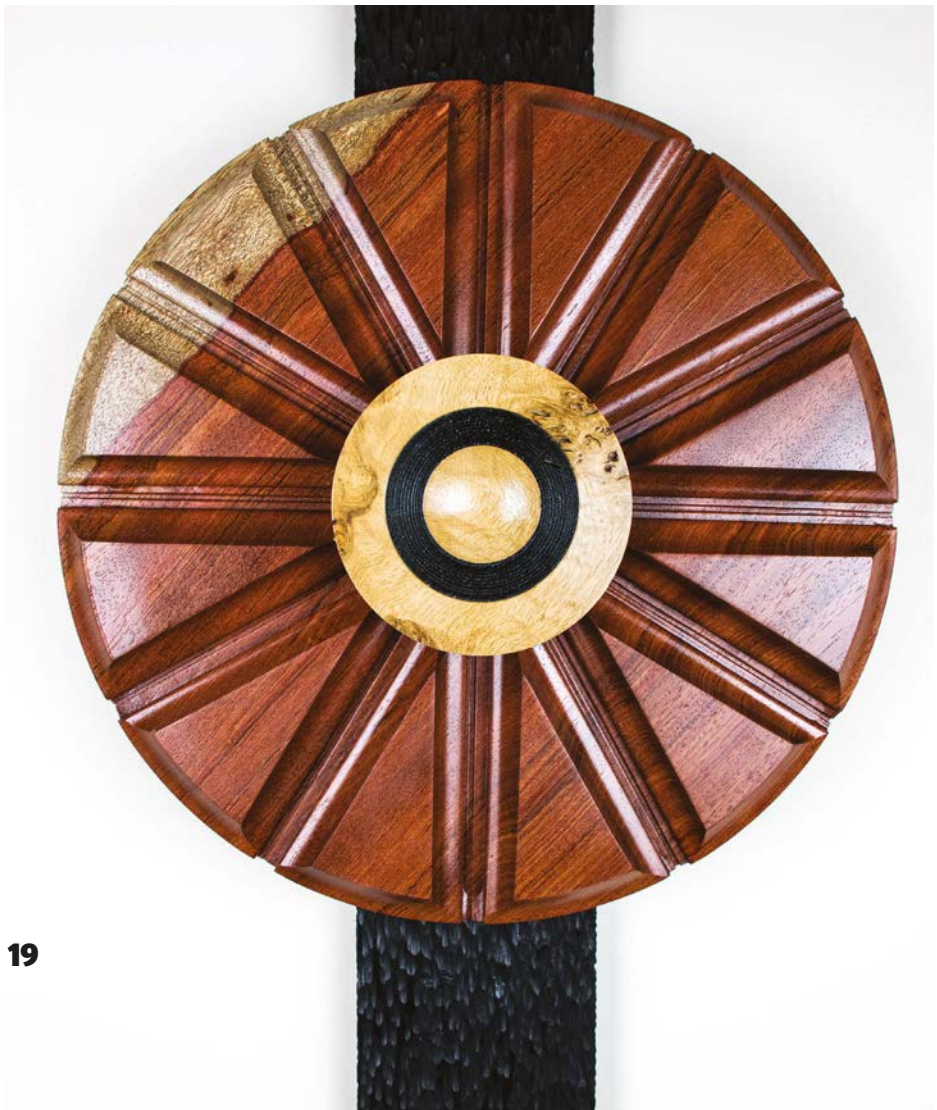
16 With the tailstock removed, use the bowl gouge to remove the waste wood. Use the most delicate of cuts and place as little sideward pressure on the piece as possible to minimise the risk of breaking the spigot. Once shaped, make a gentle cut with a round-nosed scraper to create a shallow curve at the centre of the piece inside the detail lines. Once shaped, the piece can be sanded, going through the grits from 180 to 600.

17 After sanding, apply the first of three coats of clear lacquer. The end result should look something like this.

Backing plate

18 A piece of yew was selected for the back of the piece. I wanted to texture the piece and opted to use an angle grinder fitted with a three-toothed cutter that allowed me to make multiple, gentle-curved, randomly positioned cuts in the surface. I cut in the direction of the grain to create a rippled surface texture. The sides and top need to be textured in the same manner. You could hand carve these, but yew doesn't hand carve as easily as it power carves. But maple (*Acer* spp.) or similar woods will. After texturing, the piece was gently sanded. Now apply the first of three coats of paint. You will need to drill a 25mm hole at your preferred position to accept the spigot of the centrepiece.

19 Now finish spraying the piece and, once dry, glue and assemble three pieces in place. ●



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THRIVING ON INNOVATION

Paper towel stand

Rick Rich makes a project for the kitchen using a midi-lathe

This project was a result of wanting a practical, yet fairly simple-to-turn gift. It incorporates faceplate and spindle turning, fits neatly on the midi-lathe and it can be completed in an evening.

For durability, the column tenon – I used ash (*Fraxinus* spp.) – is wedged securely into the mortise on the base, for which I used cherry (*Prunus* spp.) I want to show off some exotic wood in the design, so I used a wenge (*Millettia laurentii*) pen blank for the tab that the paper pulls and tears against.

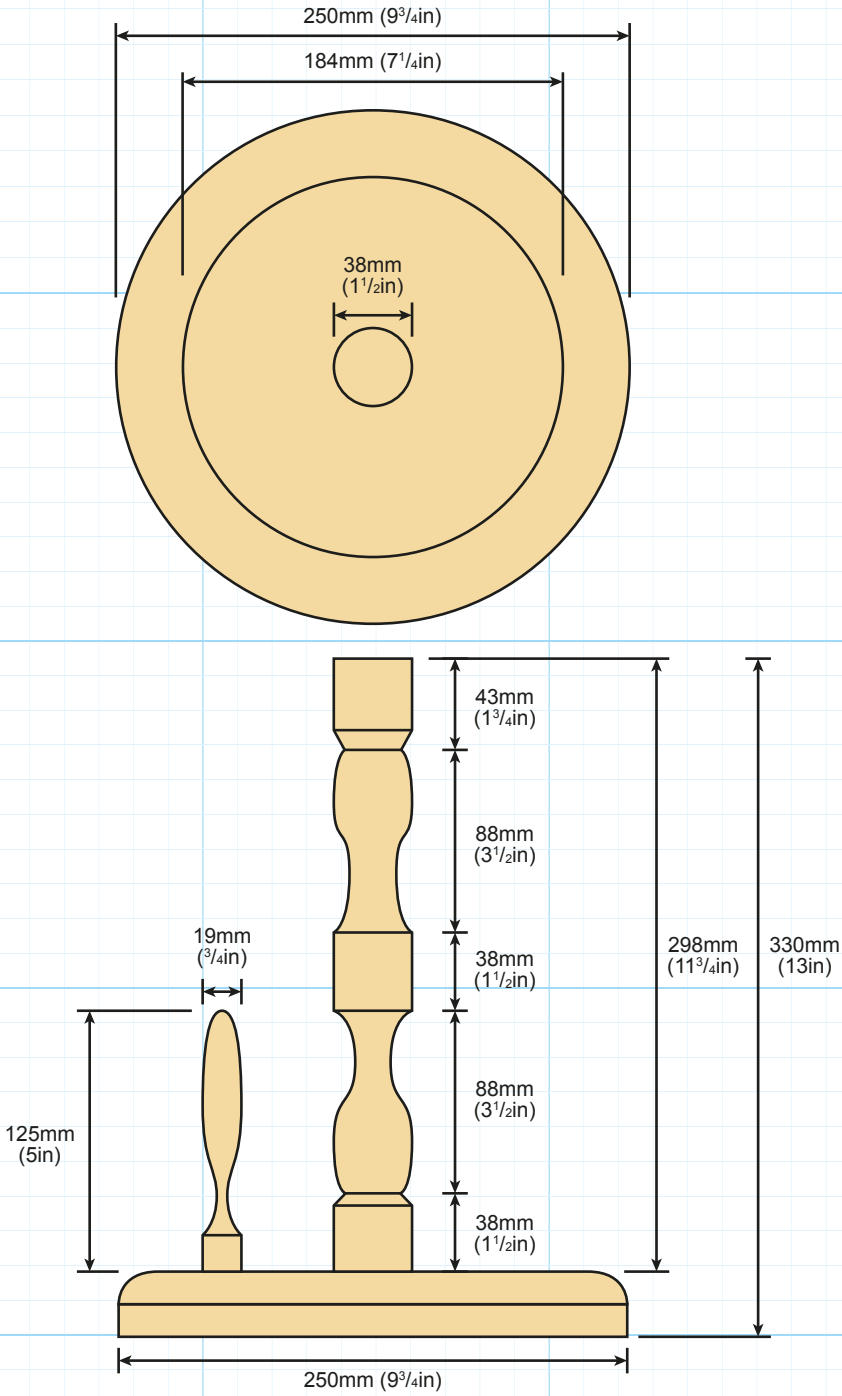
No special turning or woodworking tools are needed for this project. It was sized for the average kitchen paper towel roll, which seems to be consistent among brands at 280mm or so with an inner tube diameter of about 45mm.

Now your gift recipient may freely place the humble roll of kitchen towel in the kitchen. When the towel roll is on the stand, it is easy to remove individual towels one-handed due to the sturdy base and the stopper tab. With the roll removed, the handsome spindle turning of the column is revealed.

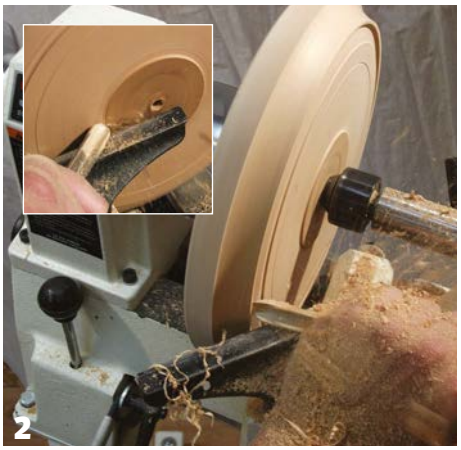
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICH RICH

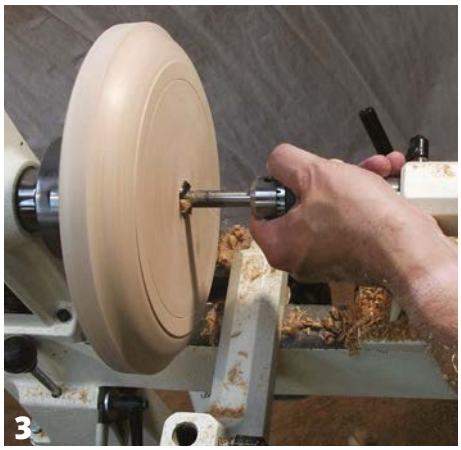
TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal and respiratory protective equipment
- Bowl gouge
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Skew chisel
- Spindle gouge
- Parting tool
- Chuck
- Screw chuck or screw chuck insert
- Drive spur
- Revolving centre
- 20mm Forstner drill
- Drill chuck
- Saw
- Clamp
- Abrasives
- Adhesive
- Finish of your choice
- Cherry base 250mm round by 38mm thick.
- Ash column 32mm x 32mm x 343mm long
- Wenge 20mm x 20mm x 125mm long
- Wedge 38mm long x 25mm wide x 3mm thick with one end tapered



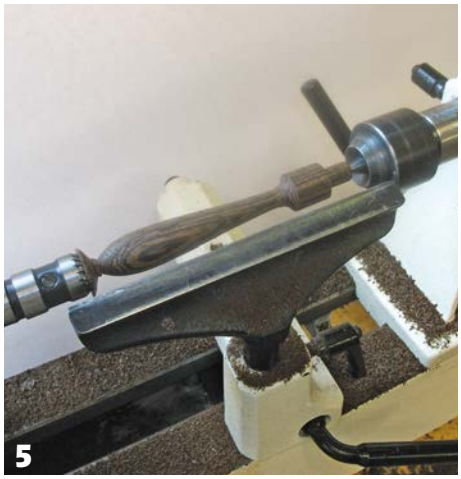
1 Mount the base on to a screw chuck and secure to the lathe. Using a bowl gouge, true up the blank across the side and bottom face. Mark a circle 20mm in from the edge on the bottom, and from this mark create a concaved surface about 6-10mm deep in the centre. Now, cut a recess for your expanding jaws in the centre. Sand this lower area then remove it from the lathe.





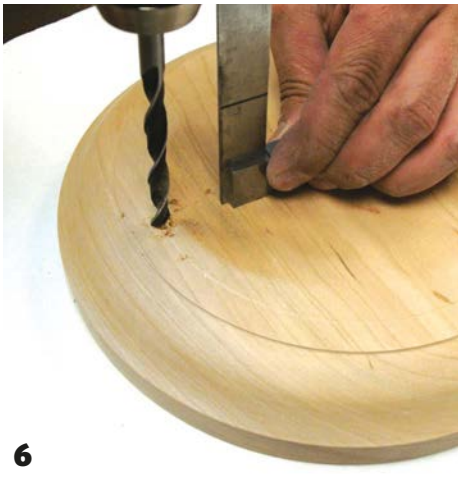
2 Mount the base using the recess. When possible, use the tailstock revolving centre for extra security. True the top. Mark a line 20mm from the headstock side on the side of the blank. Mark two circles from the edge on the top at 25mm and 38mm. Connect the side mark and the first circle with an ogee shape. Make a small V-groove on the remaining circle. Make sure the plan top area is flat.

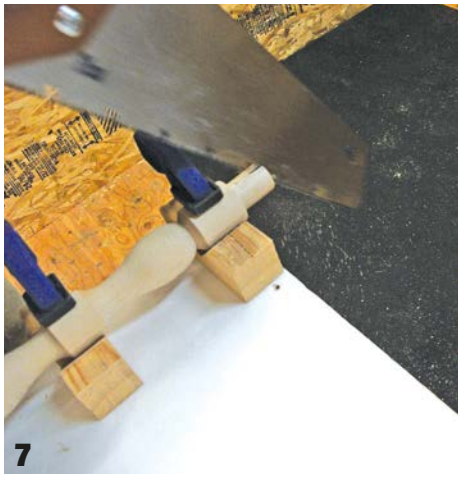
3 Install a 25mm Forstner bit into the drill chuck and place into the tailstock. Keep the lathe speed low, advance the bit into the blank and drill completely through. IMPORTANT: You can measure and drill to the measurement or, if you listen carefully, you will hear the bit breaking through the other side. Do not drill too deep or you will hit the chuck jaws. Once drilled, sand and remove.



4 Mount the column blank between centres. Turn the desired shape, including a 32mm long x 25mm round tenon on the bottom end for mounting in the base. Undercut it very slightly so it will set squarely on to the base. Check the tenon with the drilled base to ensure a proper fit. Now sand and then remove.

5 Mount the stopper tab (pen blank) between centres. Turn the desired shape. At the bottom turn a ½in long tenon 3⁄8in round. Part inwards so the base will seat properly. Sand and part off.





6 Using the V-groove on the base top as a guide, drill a 10mm hole just over 13mm deep. Ensure the stopper tenon fits snug.

7 Mark the tenon bottom at a 90° angle to the grain line of the base. Draw a line down the tenon from the line on the top, stopping about 6mm from the bottom.

8 Spread adhesive in the mortise and tenon and seat the column completely. Turn upside down, glue the wedge and hammer it into the sawn kerf. When it makes a dull thunk or will not go further, it is done. Finally, glue and seat the stopper tab. When checking mortise/tenon fit, turn the column to the desired design and check tenon fit in the mortise. It should fit snug and go in relatively easy. Like other woodworking mortise and tenon fits, try the gravity test. Install the tenon into the mortise and lift it up. The pieces should stay together, at least briefly

9 Leave to dry and you should have something similar to this. ●

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Quaichs, porringers and handled ware

Andy Coates looks at some of the techniques for making handled drinking and eating vessels on the lathe

Of all the things I ever turn at the lathe, wooden drinking and eating vessels are probably the objects that give me the greatest and most enduring pleasure. There is something quite special about taking a lump of wood and turning it into a cup or bowl and then being able to use it for something fundamentally human – a vessel for eating and drinking from. As woodturners we already love the material, we make objects with it, but nothing else brings us closer to it than daily use as a drinking or eating vessel; the relationship with it is almost intimate.

The quaich (pronounced 'quake', with the 'ke' sounding as a Scottish 'ch') is a traditional Scottish drinking vessel with either two, three or four handles. Its development is believed to date from the 16th century with the design remaining largely unaltered for the past 400 years. Fine examples were often made with staved construction, like miniature open-topped barrels, and others were given a solid silver rim. Superb contemporary versions are made by polelathe turner, Robin Wood. Traditionally used for whisky and brandy, quaichs are an abiding form and remain popular today. A version I will use for illustrative purposes here is loosely based on one of Robin's.

The porringer, or handled bowl, is a typically English vessel, and its history probably runs parallel to the quaich. A small handled bowl was a useful object to have, and the dimensions are such that it could be packed and carried by the owner as part of a personal dining kit. Today they make equally useful vessels, and can be used for soups, cereal, snacks, and are ideal as a sharing bowl.

Polelathe turners have never really lost the love of this type of vessel – the slow, highly controllable action of the polelathe lending itself to the process, and the use of an axe, turning, turning saw, which is also know as a frame saw, and carving tool to complete an object being firmly established practice. As powered-lathe users we tend to think in terms of an object being made to completion on the lathe, but we can move away from the lathe and adapt to suit our available tooling, or combine techniques to achieve our aims.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the procedures for making bowls and cups are virtually identical, often only the scale and dimensions altering between objects, which means we can quickly adapt one project into a further project using the same techniques. There is also great scope for personalising projects, tweaking styles and designs, finish, and enhancements.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDY COATES

Basic tools and peripheral equipment

The basic toolkit required is quite simple and comprises personal and respiratory protective equipment, long-grind spindle gouge, long-grind bowl gouge, parting tool, bandsaw with minimum 100mm clearance, or a large fretsaw or turning saw, carving or bench chisel and a carving or craft knife.

It should not need stating, but all tools should be freshly ground to the keenest edge possible, and the edges must be kept keen throughout the turning process.

Stock selection

Stock should be a suitable species for food use. If uncertain, stick with established utility species such as sycamore (*Acer Pseudoplatanus*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Vessels obviously vary in size, and here the sycamore blank was 200mm x 90mm. As you can see here there were a number of faults in the blank, but this type of project is ideal for such blanks as the damaged areas can be removed when forming the handles. You should, of course, take a sensible view on the potential safety ramifications of turning any blank with faults, and in this case I deemed it likely to be safe to proceed.

Sycamore blank with obvious flaws

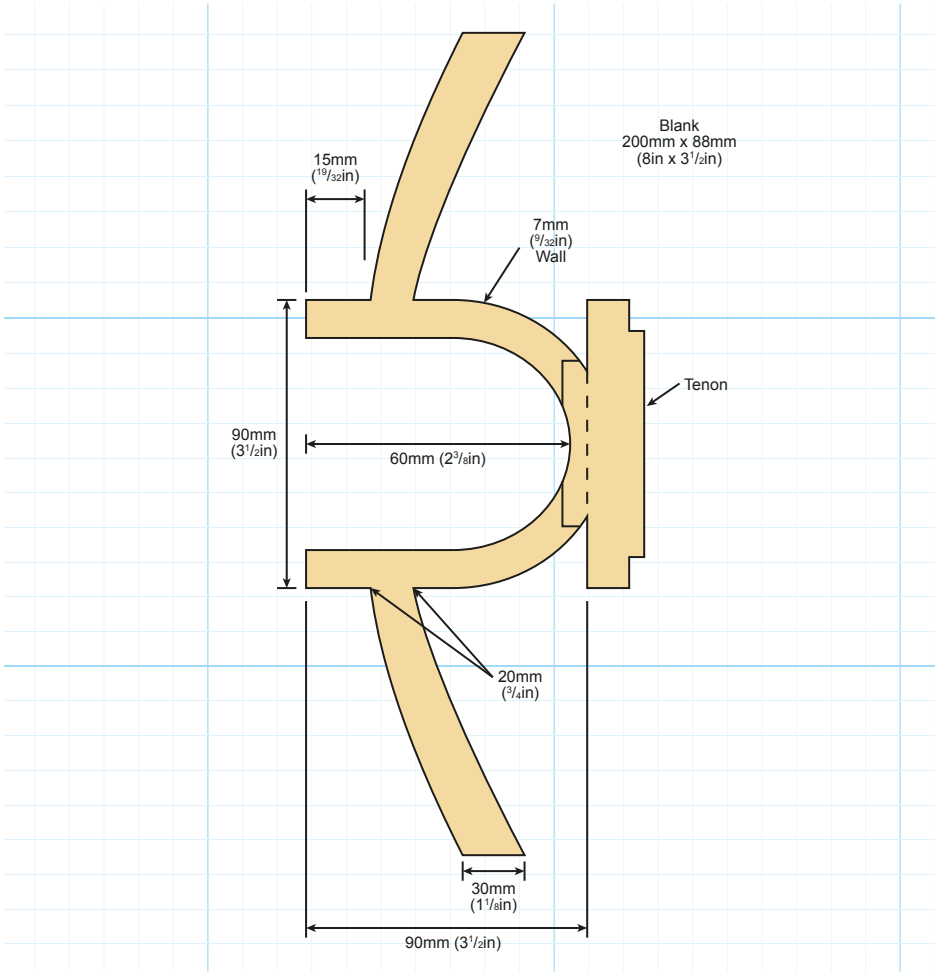
Creating a quaich

Mounting on a screw chuck provides a safe and secure method of holding a blank of this size. The base, side, and first 20mm of the headstock face should be trued to provide accurate references for marking out the dimensions of the vessel. Mark out the wing section and finished depth of the vessel and proceed to remove the waste to form both wing and body section, and form a tenon suitable for your particular chuck.

The two handles of the quaich will be formed from the angled wing that you form extending from the body of the cup. The angles are not desperately important, but care should be taken to ensure that the 'wing' tapers from the outside edge to the inner edge, to ensure a pleasing shape can be formed from it later. Check that the diameter of the cup body is the same at the headstock side of the wing and the tailstock side, directly at the intersections. The underside of the wing is undercut, and this cut can be tricky – a 10mm spindle gouge with a swept-back grind can be a real boon here, allowing access in a difficult place. Take care to rub the bevel and avoid a catch. Position the toolrest as close as possible to the face to be cut.

With the body and wing formed, reverse the blank in the chuck and hollow the interior, taking care to keep the wall thickness even. The interior base can be curved or have an appropriately sized flat – the choice is yours. Once the hollowing is completed, sheer scrape for a good finish and round over the rim inside and out for a mouth-friendly feel.

As is usual with these types of vessel, abrading is entirely the choice of the maker. A tooled finish is in keeping with the period nature of the objects, but modern tastes may dictate an abraded finish. Do be aware that first contact with a liquid will raise the grain, so if abrading it makes sense to wet and knock back the raised grain prior to completion.



Mounting timber on a screw chuck

Forming the body and wings

Checking dimensions above and below the wing

Cleaning the interior surface

Fairing the rim area

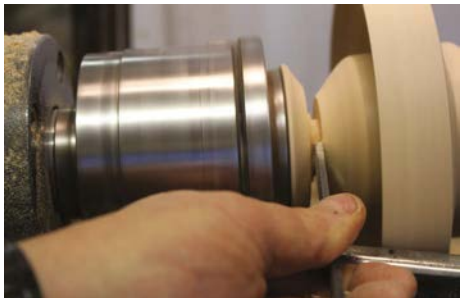
Marking out the handles

The penultimate stage on the lathe is to use the indexing system to mark out equal segments around the wing. If you do not have indexing then you can achieve this with a pair of dividers. I tend to mark all the way around to give me the most options for final siting of the handles. Around the outer edge I mark a line about 5mm in.

Parting the vessel off can be tricky due to the weight of the wing, so part down as far as you feel safe doing and then, with the lathe stopped, cut the vessel off the lathe with a small saw. The base can be cleaned up later.

Marking out the handles is straightforward. I went for a two-segment width at the outer edge and marked this off with a timber pen, continuing the line around the outer edge and through to the underside. This produces a pleasing taper which you can accentuate later. Repeat the process directly opposite to create the matching handle. If it helps you can crosshatch the waste areas to make it clear where they are.

Using the indexing facility to mark equal segments on rim



Parting off

Marking out handle lugs

Removing the rim waste

There are a number of ways to remove the waste to form the handles. A polelathe turner might use an axe alone to remove the waste, but without the required hand skill and a properly sharp axe, this can be a difficult and potentially disastrous method.

Holding the quaich in a wood vice the waste can be cut away with a coping or turning saw. This is probably the best way as it is very controllable and slow enough to allow for minor changes in direction as you cut. The waste can be removed in just eight cuts.

The waste can also be cut away on the bandsaw. Turned upside down the quaich has a good flat support at the rim. Feed the cut in from the edge of one handle and curve the cut in to follow the line of the intersection between the wing and the cup body. Any excess material left on the cup body can be removed later. Reverse the cut to remove the small triangular section left when the cut was curved in. Repeat for the opposite side.

The bandsaw is an unforgiving machine, so if you are at all uncertain or hesitant, opt for the coping saw method.

Removing waste with a coping saw

Removing waste on the bandsaw

Refining the piece

The surface left by the removal of the waste may require fairing. This can be achieved with a carving chisel, sharp craft knife, bench chisel, or even abrasive. You may prefer a surface to match the body of the quaich, but it is quite acceptable to leave a tooled finish as this would be in keeping with traditional quaichs. A nicely scalloped surface fresh from a sharp chisel is a joyous thing, and my preference is to leave it like this.

The handles are now marked, at approximately 3-5mm in from the edge, around all the edges of the handle. Returning the quaich to the vice, cut the marked areas away in clean sweeping cuts to form an arris along each edge. Clean up the corners using the sharp chisel. These arrises make a comfortable and visually appealing handle.

Cleaning up the waste cuts with a carving chisel

Marking the arrises

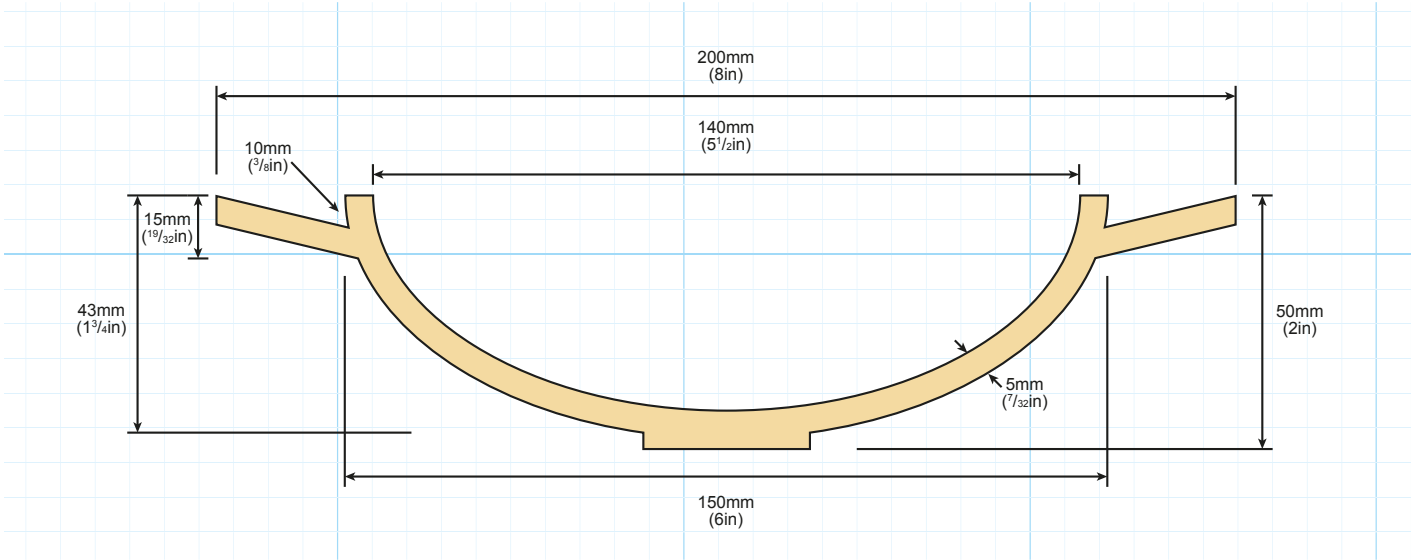
Cutting the arris with a bench chisel

The porringer

The porringer is essentially no different in terms of the turning and finishing process to that of the quaich – it is just wider and shallower, and the handles are a different shape. After turning the outer shape the bowl can be burnished with the resulting shavings and a little walnut oil to produce a gentle glow to the surface.

Marking out the handles is the same as for the quaich, but for a bowl the handle needs to be significantly wider. Removal of the waste can be achieved with a saw or on the bandsaw, just as previously detailed. Here you can see the triangular section left by the entry cut. Reverse the bowl position and carefully blend the fresh cut into the waste and cut to the corner.

The cut surface, just as for the quaich, needs to be faired to the rest of the bowl, and the final choice of finish is entirely personal. Here you can see the scalloped surface left by a carving tool and the clean blended surface left after abrading. Both have their merits.



Burnishing the porringer

Cutting the waste away on the bandsaw

Scalloped surface left by carving chisel

Surface abraded to match porringer body

A small collection of variants

Conclusions

Quaichs and porringers make interesting projects, are fundamentally useful objects when finished, and they are more likely to be used on a regular basis than much of what we make as woodturners. One of the advantages of this constant use is patination. The porringer in the image (left above) is my workshop porringer. It even survived a fire! I use it for soup, chilli, cheese and bread, or just about anything. I have been using it for more than 10 years now, and it is rarely re-oiled, but has developed a beautiful patina of age and use and is a joy. It was a very quick make and the decoration on the handles was achieved with a heated nail in the fashion of Poker work.

People are often concerned about using wooden objects to eat and drink from, but the concerns are founded only on a lack of understanding. Wood has been a utility material for thousands of years, and its use is as valid now as ever. And for me the final pleasure is getting to use an object I made on a daily basis. It's almost a gift to yourself.

There is a large amount of information on such vessels available in books and online, and examples of vessels discovered on archaeological excavations that you could copy or develop. So, as I often say, the world is your oyster. Make, use, enjoy. ●

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Mechanical manipulation in the lathe

Ernie Conover looks at a simple and very effective jam-chucking method

Charles and John Jacob Holtzapffel, father and son, wrote five books on woodturning between 1843 and 1894. Charles wrote the first three and his son the last two. I will save you time here and discourage you from reading volumes I, II, III or IV and state that *Volume IV, Hand or Simple Turning: Principles and Practice* is the only one of great interest to amateur turners today. It is readily available in facsimile and still worth the read. The Holtzapffels were also makers of what most consider the finest ornamental turning lathes ever built.

They are things of true beauty and if this tickles your fancy then you need to read Volume V as well. It goes into the fine details of ornamental work.

In *Hand or Simple Turning*, John Jacob speaks at length on turning skills but makes a distinction where manipulating the work in the lathe, either between centres or in chucks, can further augment the turner's skill.

I think no exercise better illustrates this idea than the turning of a ball. In Britain billiard balls were turned from ivory this way up until about WWII. The subject of turning spheres is taken up in its entirety in Chapter XI, with the turning of billiard balls specifically outlined, down to how to cut up the elephant's tusk in the best way.

The process of turning billiard balls is, in my opinion, better described starting on page 44 of James Lukin's book, *The Lathe & its Uses*, published in 1868.

He was the exhibition turner for Munro Lathes, a competing maker of ornamental lathes. The book can be read at this web address: www.woodworkslibrary.com/repository/the_lathe_and_its_uses.pdf

Because of the flowery Victorian prose, either Holtzapffel or Lukin's books can be a slog. However, if you see the process, either book takes on real meaning. Therefore, I present the following photo essay on turning a ball.

To protect Jumbo, please make it from a durable wood as I have.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERNIE CONOVER

1 Chuck a billet of wood a bit bigger than the diameter of the ball you want to turn. For a 50mm-diameter ball I would chuck a blank that was 55mm x 55mm x 60mm, the extra length being for getting rid of centre marks. Turn this blank round and chamfer both ends. The chamfer is most important because it creates an outside edge that is at a perfect right angle to the axis of the lathe/billet.

2 Mount a jam chuck in the lathe and scrape a conical pocket that has the same opening diameter as the ball. Tap the blank into this opening with a mallet. Turn the spindle by hand and tap as necessary to bring the blank into perfect concentricity with the lathe's axis. Use a round-nosed scraper to bring the exposed face dead flat. Put a pencil dot at the exact centre – this is what I call the north pole.

3 Use dividers or a compass to measure the radius of your freshly scraped face. Now set this off from that face to draw a line at what will be the equator of the ball. Use a spindle gouge to turn a curve from just shy of this equator to just shy of the north pole. This curve is outside of the sphere that will form the ball.

4 Knock the work out of the chuck. Use a long piece of drill rod, or a dowel, to do this through the outboard end of the spindle. Turn the piece 180° and re-chuck. Tap until the equator runs perfectly true and is just outside the chuck. You may have to scrape back the face of the chuck to reduce the diameter of the internal cone to do this. Set off the radius from the equator again with the dividers/compass. Use a V scraper to scrape the work dead level at this new line, which demarcates the south pole. Draw a dot on the spinning work to denote the south pole.

5 Use a spindle gouge to round from the equator to the south pole is the same manner as the north pole. You now have a turning that resembles an egg. Knock the work out of the chuck.

6 Now turn the work 90° so that the equator becomes a meridian. The chuck will hold the piece. Check alignment by touching a pencil at the centre of the spinning work. Stop the lathe and if the dot is on the meridian all is well. If not, tap or un-chuck and tap to bring the meridian on the centre axis of the lathe.

7 Now use a square-edge scraper to scrape the exposed half to the ghost. A strong light can help here. Because the equator (which is now a meridian) is spinning in the lathe's axis it generates a sphere and that is the mechanical manipulation. Sure, it takes skill to do all of this but it is the manipulation that creates an amazingly accurate sphere.

8 Once you have just scraped to the pencil line that is the meridian away, draw a new equator just in front of the chuck. Un-chuck and turn 180°. Tap the work around until the new equator runs true. Scrape the second half to the meridian line, reading the ghost carefully. You now have a ball.

9 Un-chuck and insert hand-tight at any random angle from the original. Sand the exposed half with 60 or 80 grit abrasive. Keep un-chucking and turning randomly and use ever finer grits until you have a smooth ball. If you do not start with coarse grit you will attack plank grain faster than end grain and sand the ball out of round.

I have turned up to bocce and croquet-sized balls by this method. Take a perfectly turned ball to your next club meeting and amaze them with the accuracy of a ball turned by this contrivance. ●


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Presenting work

Kurt Hertzog suggests ways of showcasing your pens

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT HERTZOG

There are thousands of pen turners in the world cranking out the same kits, often using the same or similar blanks and finishes. With all skill levels available, finished pen quality is usually the separator between turners. Once the final product is flawless, how do you separate yourself from the masses? Creating unique blanks is one method. Resin casting and other blank creation methods have gained popularity and can be an area of distinction. One of the areas that I think is ripe for exploration by pen makers of all levels is presentation.

I believe giving a handmade pen of any sort in a velour bag or plastic sleeve is degrading to the end result. The bag or sleeve is discarded and the pen, depending on the result, may or may not find ongoing use. Creating a turning or other artistic presentation method can elevate the entire project as well as ensure the recipient will display and use both the pen and presentation piece. Exotic presentation cases are nice but unless they easily double as a penholder or stand, they may also be relegated to the desk drawer. As we close the series, I'd like to offer simple methods that will let your pen live on the recipient's desk, night stand, hall table, telephone nook or other ongoing use location, rather than get put into the drawer with all the other pens. Another benefit is that the pen and stand photograph well, showcasing both rather than a pen leaning on a plastic holder. Many of the illustrations use my kitless creations but all work well with any of the kit pens. I'll show the presentation ideas I've used from about 20 years ago until now, not as answers but as thought starters for you.

Turned bases

You can probably sketch dozens of shapes and ideas for turned stands right off the top of your head. If you have sufficient stock, you can use the pen species for the stand as well. If not, other species can be used as well as being painted, pierced, or decorated after turning. Sizes and shapes are very flexible and can be tailored for the end user's pen location. One of the shapes that I've used often is that of an ink bottle or reservoir. Much like a dip pen ink supply, you can create a stand that resembles an ink bottle that will stand the pen up presented for easy use.

Given as a set, this pen and stand will decorate any office desk or area needing a pen. A collaboration with Binh Pho

Simple-shape stands with solid colours do not compete with more ornate pens, and by giving the owner a way to keep the pen on their desk, it will always be ready for use rather than in the drawer

Woods that don't exhibit character on their own can be pierced or in other ways enhanced

While it doesn't beam with figure, this piece of cherry turned to resemble an ink reservoir is pleasing

A desk pen and stand done in blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) in collaboration with Bill Ooms

The bases need not be exotic species or designs. Here's a simple, pretty maple turning accepts any kit pen

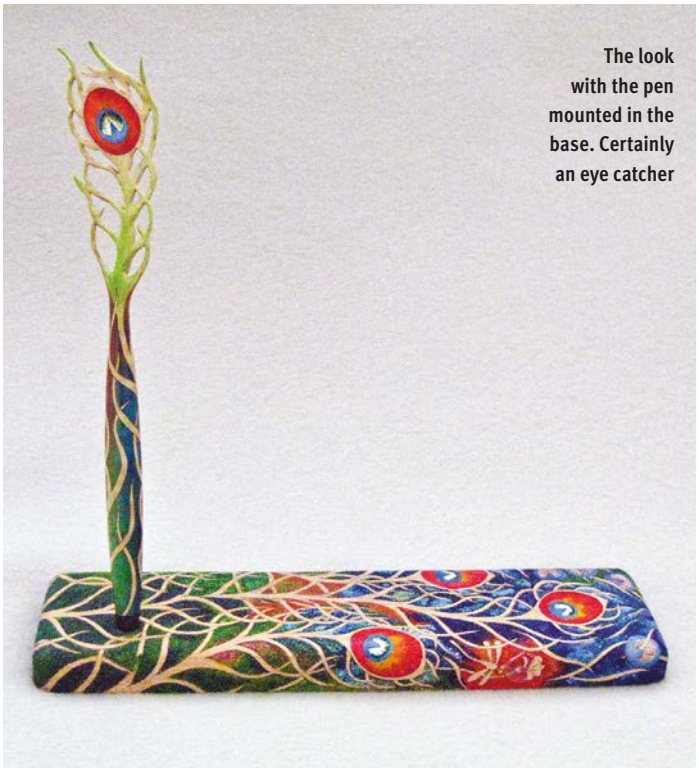
Cut material bases

When you are dealing with artistic decorations such as painting, pyrography, carving and others, sometimes all you need is a flat canvas. Scraps cut at the bandsaw into the desired shape will serve well. I often take burl cap that doesn't lend itself to other applications and turn it into a base for a pen. Flat stock from resawing can be used if it has any figure by cutting the funnel feature. If there isn't any figure, it can be painted and otherwise decorated. Leaving the rough saw marks gives a rustic character if that is your goal.

A burl cap that resembled a turtle is pressed into service as a stand for these three laser-cut pens

Rough-sawn and painted stand to go along with a matching painted pen

A collaboration done with Binh Pho as a donation to the AAW Educational Grant fund



The look with the pen mounted in the base. Certainly an eye catcher

A rose wood dip pen with abalone scales. The stand is white Corian with turned mounting pegs

Solid block bases

I'm often at a loss at to what to do with nicely figured blocks that are offcuts from bowls or other projects. These make ideal bases or stands for pens. Their irregular sizes and shapes lend themselves to a 'free-form' result. Rather than trying to square things up and make perfect geometrical shapes, I sand them at the belt sander just enough to get a flat for sanding and finishing. Taking every surface at whatever angle it is cut and sanding only to flat creates interesting shapes for pen bases.

An assortment of shapes done from scraps. Irregularly sanded angles create interest

These solid base stands work well with pens in the same species or something in contrast

Drilling holes

For many of the bent shapes and certainly the desk boxes/nests, there is no need for a tapered drilling. If any holes are needed, they are usually a straight-through clearance hole accomplished with a Forstner bit. If you want a pen to nest in the funnel style, you'll need to be able to drill a tapered hole. I haven't found a tapered reamer yet that is perfect. Of course, the angle needed varies by the kit and for custom nibs. I have two different sized reamers that I pick from that will get me close enough to serve my purpose. I use my drill press for both perpendicular holes and angled holes. The only difference is the need for a fixture or nest to drill angled holes. For all of the drilled holes, I use a machinist's starter drill to precisely locate and provide a good starting point for the drill. I then drill a 6mm hole just deeper than my planned finished depth. The tapered reamer is then used to provide the taper for the pen. This is trial-and-error drilling since I want to see the seated depth versus the amount of exposed nib. This is all tempered by the stability of the pen when seated in the taper. Straight holes could be drilled in the lathe if the base is mounted. A pistol drill could also be used with care and good clamping. A woodworker's bench vice with padding can provide straight or angled mounting.

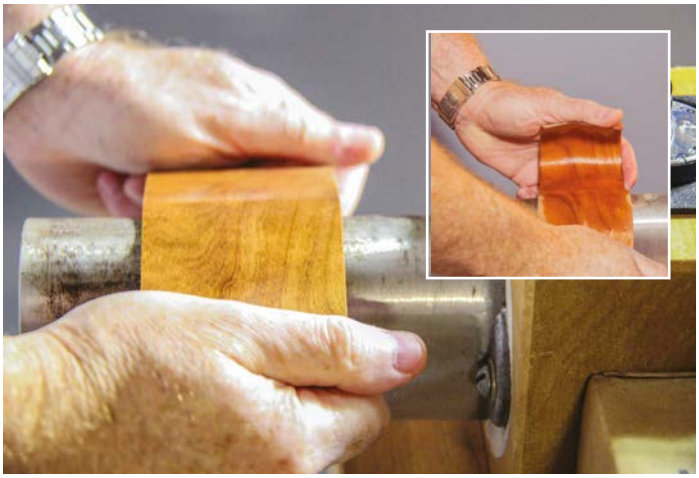
A starter drill for location followed by a body drill will set things well for the tapered reamer

Tapered reamers don't match the angles perfectly but they get close enough to seat and support the pen

Fixturing for safely done angled drillings can be quickly done with scraps and hot-melt glue

Bent shapes

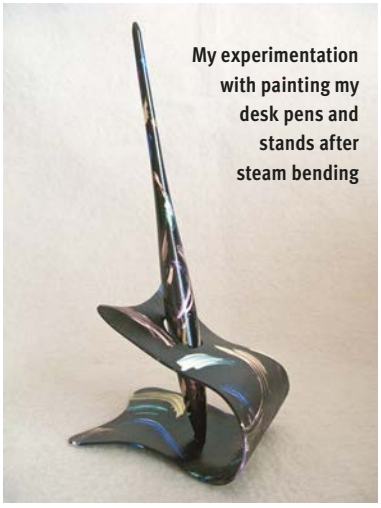
For many years I've been enjoying experimenting with steam bending. Many of my ornament stands are created by steam bending resawn stock. Steam-bent stock also lends itself to pen stands. These can be sanded and finished to enjoy the beauty of the existing figure or altered. I paint, pyrograph, burn, and pierce these steam bendings to suit the occasion. There are two cautions for those who undertake steam bending for stands. Do your bending before you pierce or drill holes. Bending with these alterations in place usually results in failures during bending. Holes and piercing sites are a location for cracks and separations to begin during the stresses of bending. More information on steam bending can be found in *WT270*. Piercing can be done without special precaution after bending, but drilling does require some attention. Applying tape to both sides of the material at the site of the hole to be drilled helps minimise fracturing during drilling. Support backing is paramount when drilling any bent work to provide a solid support to the material while drilling. Step up in sizes from a pilot size to a finished size in several steps. Forstner bits work better when drilling larger sized holes.



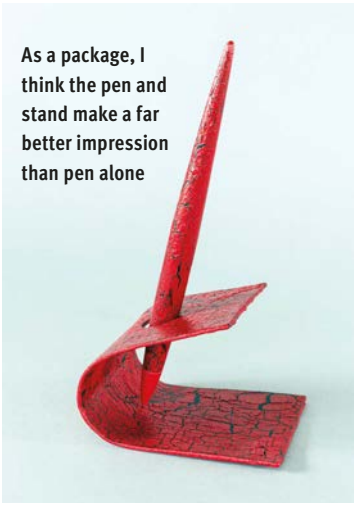
Steam bending isn't a daunting task and can easily be learned, opening a whole new horizon in stands and pens

Once I am set up for steam bending, I'll do several to have some readily available when needed

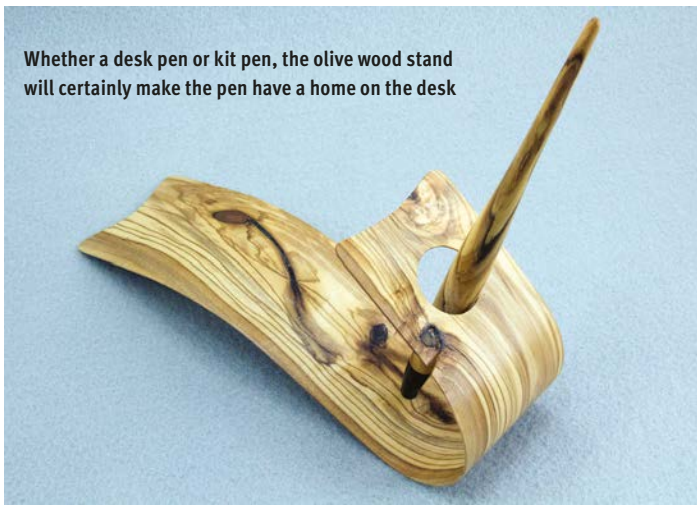
A different look at the pair. Yes, the curves in the pen were steam bent. Far more challenging than the stand



My experimentation with painting my desk pens and stands after steam bending



As a package, I think the pen and stand make a far better impression than pen alone



Whether a desk pen or kit pen, the olive wood stand will certainly make the pen have a home on the desk

Cutting shapes

If you have no interest in steam bending wood, you can make pen stands and bases by cutting wood to shape. One of the great uses for bowls that have met with the misfortune of the inside reaching the outside is cutting the remains into ornament and pen stands. Observe the necessary precautions when cutting bowls on the bandsaw. Curves and twists that can be done with steam bending can be replicated by cutting on the bandsaw. The disadvantages of using this method are the waste of material that is cut away as scrap and the grain orientation. With steam-bent creations, the grain all runs on axis and provides great flexibility and durability. With bandsaw-cut creations, the grain alignment and changes can cause weaknesses and fracture initiation sites.

Laser engraving a box will help a bit. My 25th anniversary AAW donation of 25 pens and boxes

A presentation box I made for the occasion. Colour fill of laser engraving by Pat Lawson

In my opinion, this takes pen giving to a new level. It certainly will spend its time on the desk for use

A special occasion requires an appropriate box. I made one for the presentation

In honour of Mike Roux's 50th birthday, the box I created and inlaid with abalone shell

Premade and custom

There is a wide variety of premade pen boxes available through the various retailers. The faux leather versions and the speciality shaped boxes are nice for delivery but they usually wind up in the drawer. Some of the wooden boxes can double as a display and use stand, especially if the interior is nicely adorned. The wooden boxes, pens themselves, and specially made stands can all be enhanced with laser engraving and colour fill. Any image that can be delivered to the laser vendor can be engraved. This personalisation adds value and can be as simple or as ornate as desired. There are many vendors available to provide this service.

Conclusions

Presentation is a method for you to enhance your pen creations, potentially create a signature style, and show off your other woodworking and artistic skills. Because nearly all of the bases, stands, and cradles you create can be 'universal', you can prepare them in advance. You can work on stands as time permits and stockpile an assortment of them. When you need one, you can select the one that best suits the current application. If you haven't cut the funnel until now, you'll need to finish that one item to suit the application and you'll have a very special presentation method available for your pen. The balance of time and materials you select between your pen and your presentation method is your choice. I think presentation is a wide-open field. You can express yourself with both your pen and your presentation methods. Experiment with it and use it to help separate your work from that of the masses. ●

Presentation isn't difficult and can certainly upscale your pen work. Let your creativity loose in this area

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Pitching a sale

John Plater looks at ways of selling work directly

Display of work at the Craft in Focus show in Winchester Guildhall, 17-19 November 2017

How often do we hear about needing to sell work in order to make space for the new pieces being made? Over the past 10 years I think I have explored all the selling opportunities which are available to craftspeople and tried many of them out. I remember Bert Marsh stating that one should not be too proud about where a sale is made – a sale is a sale. I was not active during what people tell me were the golden years of selling crafts and have only experienced selling in times of recession. One thing that I have noticed, though, is how the openings for selling work are increasing in number. The potential customer has lots of buying opportunities to choose from, so it is important for the maker to get it right.

In the main I favour selling in a context where the potential customers get to see and handle the work and where I make the sale directly, in person. I think that meeting the maker adds something to the purchasing experience. I have seen people 'buy into the story', perhaps relating to the provenance of the timber or the way in which the piece has been made. Or they develop a liking for a body of work and choose to support the maker. At its most simple it might be a local craft fair in a village hall with a tablecloth placed over a trestle table. At the other end of the scale is a commercially run craft show in a marquee or building with a 'shell scheme' in place so that each craftsperson is selling from a standardised space. In between are craft shows where one is allocated floor space and provides one's own display screen and plinths. There is a corresponding sliding scale of costs, from tens of pounds to hundreds of pounds.

These shows may be oriented towards wood and woodturning or arts and crafts across a range of different media. In my experience, the more successful ones are mixed-media shows which involve a selection process and where the maker sells their own work directly. I have found that the least successful are wood fairs and farmers' markets, which have no selection and one might be in direct competition with cheaply made products bought in from abroad.

Many areas have organised Art Trails and Artists' Open Houses/Studios schemes. Generally the overheads are quite low but there is a lot of competition for sales. Also, the work is not necessarily assessed for quality and one might be showing alongside some dubious pieces. One sees lots of people chasing around to tick off as many venues of a trail as possible without really taking any interest in the work. However it is a surprisingly good way of meeting and networking with people in a local area. Check the catalogue or brochure before setting out.

It is important not to forget to cost one's own time spent on selling activities. I spend around a quarter of my woodturning time in pursuit of sales. I take my own photographs of pieces I make as one is often asked for images to go on flyers, inside catalogues and to accompany artists' statements. Sometimes these are uploaded to websites or onto social media. I am not a great fan of the latter and always leave it to other people to do, but appreciate that they do help to maintain a profile and to promote events.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN PLATER

As satisfying as Belgian beer and chocolates - but even better to own

WivaMac Zebrano lathe
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Rolling pin

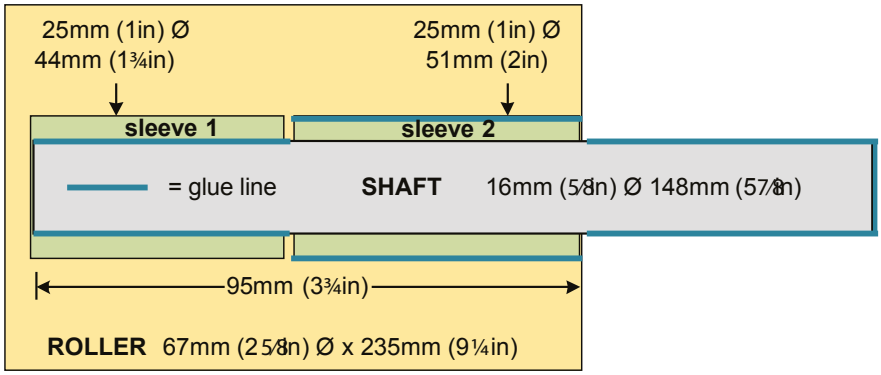
Chris West provides some inspiration and plans for you

PHOTOGRAPH BY RITA MITCHELL

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Spindle roughing gouge
- Spindle gouge
- Skew chisel
- 25mm or other suitably sized Forstner bit
- 16mm drill bit
- Drill chuck

Body: Beech (*Fagus* spp.), maple (*Acer* spp.) or cherry (*Prunus* spp.) Handles: Contrasting wood to the main body timber
Waterproof PVA adhesive



BODY

Blank 70 x 70 x 267mm. Allow enough wood for spigots on each end. Between centres rough turn. Square off one end. Hold this end in compression jaws. Once running true, ensure that the wood is firmly in the jaws and drill a 25mm hole, 95mm deep. Reverse, measure the overall length – 235mm in this instance – part off and drill as before. Turn a 25mm jam plug to hold the roller between centres with the livestock at the other end. The roller is turned to a diameter of 67mm.

Sand and apply a finish, such as mineral oil or a food-safe liquid.

HANDLE

Blank 2 required 40 x 40 x 115mm. Between centres rough turn and form a spigot. Hold the spigot in compression jaws. Face off and drill as shown. Remove from the lathe, remount between centres and shape.

SLEEVES 1 & 2

Blank 2 required 32 x 32 x 120mm. Between centres rough turn the blank which will be enough for both sleeves. Hold one end in compression jaws. When running true, face off and turn to be a good fit into the roller. Drill sleeve 1 as before. Part off sleeve 1 and repeat for sleeve 2.

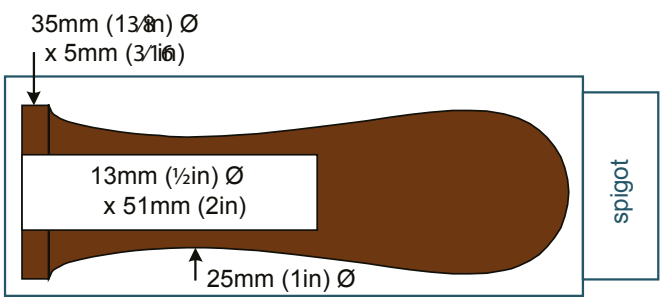
SHAFT

Blank 2 required 32 x 32 x 75mm. Between centres rough-turn the blank. Hold one end in compression jaws. When running true, face off and turn to be a good fit into the handle. Ensure that the part of shaft where sleeve 2 will be running is loose. Part off at a length which will leave approximately 2mm 'slop' between the handle and the roller when it is all glued together.

ASSEMBLY ORDER

Glue both sleeves no.1 to the shafts and allow to dry. Apply only sufficient glue to the outside of the two sleeves no.2 before carefully sliding them into position in the roller. When dry, each end of the shaft is glued into the handles. Finish the handles as for the roller.

A minimum of three coats is recommended.



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PHOTOGRAPH BY STUART THOMAS

Pro-shop tips you need to know

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Processing green wood ready for turning

Howard Lewis and his eclectic work

Heavy-duty lathe

Mark Baker gives his initial thoughts and findings on the new Killinger KM3100SE lathe after putting it through its paces

Getting the chance to try out a new lathe, or any tool for that matter, is always an interesting part of my job. Hearing that the Killinger lathes were free for me to go and see at The Toolpost, I set about finding out for myself what they were capable of. The downside with such a recce is that I only get the best part of a day to try things out. So all I can give are my initial findings. That said, in the time I have I try my best to find out how well they work, hunt for any weak areas and make cuts that are deliberately designed to test them.

There are four main models of Killinger lathes, and the range gives between-centre options from 715mm to 2330mm and bowl-turning capacities from 360mm-560mm diameters over the bed, depending on the model selected. Bowl-turning attachments are available for those wishing to turn large-diameter work.

I concentrated on the largest of the range for this test, which is the 3100SE, but I will look at the smaller lathe from the range in a future issue.

The KM3100SE tested has a between-centre capacity of 850mm and weighs 440kg. There are also 1540mm and 2300mm between-centre options weighing 510 and 590kg respectively.

All three versions have a maximum diameter turning capacity of 560m over the bed.

KN3100SE lathe

Lathe inspection

The KM3100SE is the largest Killinger lathe and on seeing it for real the I thought: 'That is a heavy-duty beast.' I use that term in the nicest sense, in that it is a solid-looking, no-nonsense type of lathe that, in my opinion, won't win any fashion contests, but looks as though it will do its intended job well and without fuss.

LATHE STAND AND BED

The lathe sits on two heavy-duty fabrications, comprising thick plate sections which bridged by a central bracing system. The flanged feet on the supports have two tapped holes on each side, into which can be placed a threaded bolt to micro-adjust the level of the lathe. On the rear of the lathe stand there are two plug sockets. These are there so you can plug in your power tools and not have to search for extra sockets in your workshop. The lathe bed is thick, wide, well machined and webbed for maximum stability.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF KILLINGER

HEADSTOCK

The headstock, as with the tailstock, has a round cylinder top section that sits on a rectangular base section. The headstock can slide along the bed and/or swivel at six indented postions or at a position of your choosing. When you want to to realign the headstock to the lathe bed after it is swivelled, there is a centralising plate that is relocated into a bracket on the lower front end of the headstock to lock everything in line.

The headstock comprises a motor at the rear of the lathe and is mounted so the rear end of the motor is pointing towards the tailstock end of the lathe. There is a lever lock handle and a handwheel at the outer end and a metal sheet housing in which there are the three speed pulleys with poly V-belt, and 36-point index wheel. To change pulleys one releases a locking handle and pulls the motor via a handle mounted on the motor, shifts the belt position and then locks the motor back in place. The housing-cover release catch, indexing lock pin and master stop switch is on the front of the lathe. The lower face of the headstock has the headstock release pin to enable it to swivel once the location/alignment block, situated on the lower inboard turning face of the lathe, is released.

On the spindle end of the headstock, there is a handle to help when sliding the headstock along the lathe. On the underside of the spindle housing is a spindle lock pin.

The headstock spindle itself is M33 x 3.5 and sports a 2MT bore for fitments. There is a 15mm bore hole in the headstock spindle all the way through. The spindle is machined to accept the new chuck security collars, a collar is supplied as one of the accessories, for equipment with this matching facility. The maximum swing over the bed bars is 560mm. That is a big swing and of course one can use the optional extra bowl-turning attachment or swivel the headstock or move it to the tailstock end and use a floor-standing rest for turning larger work.

Toolrest with height adjustment collar to set at your preferred position

There is a moveable magnetic control box, which means you can have it near where you are working at all times, which has the on/off buttons and the variable speed control. One can also have the lathe run in forward or reverse.

TAILSTOCK AND TOOLREST ASSEMBLY

The tailstock, as with the headstock, is a solid unit that sports a handwheel at the end and a quill-locking handle on the top. The quill has a 2MT front end bore and there is a 10mm hole bored all the way though to not only tap out any centres used, but also do long hole boring of lampstands etc. The whole assembly is locked in place with a lever lock mechanism at the rear of the tailstock.

The toolrest assembly comprises a toolrest that has a ridge further down from the toolrest top to allow one's fingers to get close to the tool where it is supported. The 30mm main stem fits in a solid main support shaft and is held in place by a lever-lock handle on the side. The whole assembly is locked in place using a lever lock handle, which one lifts to lock in place, rather than pressing down to lock. ▶

Rear-side of the lathe. Note the two plug sockets under the lathe bed

STANDARD ACCESSORIES

The standard accessories supplied with the lathe comprise:

- Three four-prong drive centres
- Ring and point revolving tailstock centres
- Double-ended alignment morse taper
- Chuck-securing ring
- Knock-out bar (not shown)
- Allen key
- User's manual
- Two-year warranty on mechanical parts and one on electrical/electronic parts

THE FINISH

As I pored over the lathe, I ran my hand over every edge and checked the machining of the various parts visible as well as the paintwork. I could not find any sharp edges, everything was finished nicely and the paintwork was consistent with no blotchy or thin areas. Every moveable part moved and locked well.

IN USE

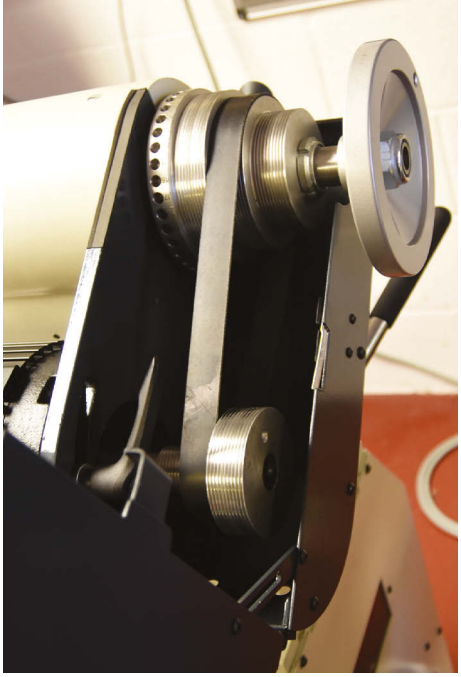
When switching on the lathe, the first thing of note was how quiet it was. No annoying whines or loud noise, just a gentle whirr. The headstock and tailstock aligned perfectly when using a double-ended morse taper, which is supplied as part of the accessory pack that comes with the lathe. Despite the mass of the tailstock it moved along the lathe bed easily and locked in place securely with minimal pressure. The headstock, when released to slide along the bed, also was easy to move and lock in position, as was it when swivelling. It was easy was to swivel and then realign. The same can be said of the toolrest assembly. It too was easy to move and lock in place and, as with all of the moving parts, locked and stayed put when put under pressure.

TURNING A LARGE BLANK

Turning something on the lathe will put a different type of strain on the various parts and to that end I mounted a 535mm-diameter out-of-balance disc of 100mm thick timber, which was just under the 560mm maximum capacity over the bed, between centres. I used the revolving ring tailstock centre and a four-prong drive spur. Once between centres and secured in place, I set the belt to pulley number two and picked up my swept-back grind gouge where the wings were swept back about 30mm or so. I call this gouge my hog due to it being able to remove a lot of wood very quickly when I need it to and that is exactly what I did after truing up the face of the blank with a pull cut.

I made both pull and push cuts of varying depths up to the maximum wing length to see if I could cause the lathe to stop, slow down or do something other than run at the speed selected for the size of blank being worked on. There was no power fade in any sense to indicate that is was not running at the selected speed and no increase in noise. This continued all the way to shaping the complete external shape in readiness for reverse-turning it to shape the inside.

Large cuts made without any fuss



The pulleys and indexing ring in the housing

VIBRATION AND SMOOTHNESS

The other aspect to comment on was that the lathe remained rock-steady. Other than finding the initial speed range for the timber when first mounted, there was no hint of vibration whether I made roughing cuts or refining cuts. There was no instability at all, and the lathe was not even bolted down. That may well be down to the fact that the lathe weighs in at 440kg, so it has a lot of mass to minimise any vibration and, let's face it, a lathe of this size with the capacity it has needs the mass.

When turning the inside, making very large waste-removing cuts the lathe did not stutter at all and, as with turning the outside, everything ran smoothly and without fault.

Conclusion

This lathe is large and heavy-duty and clearly fit for purpose. It delivered everything I asked of it in a no-fuss, calm and orderly manner. The build quality of the lathe is excellent. The quietness is great too. Hearing the cut being made without any other noise about is a real boon as it helps me hear what is happening during the cut as well as seeing a cut being made.

I have only one minor niggle, which is that I would like to see the motor oriented so the end of it is past the end of the lathe rather than pointing towards the tailstock. The reason for this is that when I mount rough-turned or finished work between centres I have to use a longer friction drive to keep the rim/outer edges of the item being turned away from the end of the motor.

Such large-capacity lathes finished to this quality and weighing this much, obviously come at a price. The one tested here sells for £5363. Is it worth it? I would say, without reservation yes.

For those seeking a larger capacity lathe this is definitely worth trying before parting with your money. ●

KM3100SE Specifications

- 3hp motor with 230V1Ph inverter
- Electronic variable speed with three pulleys
- Speed range: 40-3025rpm
- Swivel and slide headstock
- Centre height: 280mm giving a 560mm swing
- Three between-centre options available: 850mm, 1540mm and 2330mm
- Spindle: M33 x 3.5mm
- 2MT headstock and tailstock
- 350mm cast iron toolrest with 30mm toolpost diameter

PRICES:

From £5363 (850mm between centres as model tested) to £7329 (2330mm between centres)

OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

Outboard bowl-turning attachment, with support leg, for use with KM3100SE lathe, giving bowl-turning capacity with headstock swivelled of approx. 900mm diameter. £388.57

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Chatter work

Mark Baker explores using a chatter tool to decorate work

Chatter work has been used as a deliberate decorative effect for many years. I mention deliberate because many will have encountered a cut with a gouge, parting tool or skew where there is vibration resulting in a rippled surface. Its cause is typically due to either the wood flexing, or to having too long an overhang of the tool shaft over the rest so the blade flexes during the cut. Too much overhang means the tool is not properly supported and/or is too thin for the given overhang, resulting in blade flex/bounce. This in turn results in the cutting edge bouncing or vibrating across a surface causing the cutting edge to cut/bite then release quickly, only to repeat that cut and release sequence over and over again. This is why the term chatter is used – the process is often accompanied by a high-pitched staccato screech. This hit-miss cut pattern on the surface of work is rarely what one wants or needs and it requires time to try to clean it off. Go on, own up – most of us have encountered this issue on work.

Well, a long while back, some people noticed this effect and thought that it had potential to be decorative. It was identified that the turners required more control over the process and that is how the chatter tool came about.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK BAKER /GMC PUBLICATIONS UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

A chatter tool with various cutters

The chatter tool

The chatter tool is simply a device which holds/clamps a piece of springy steel in one of many positions along the length of the cutter.

The cutter needs to be springy or it would be too rigid and snap easily when it chatters against the work. The spring in the cutter allows it to cut, flex and rebound and then repeat the process many times.

Some chatter tools have a clamp that fixes the blade on to a flat section on the shaft of the tool, some have a hollow tool shaft in which one places the cutter to then be clamped in position.

There are many shapes of cutter end profile, and those one most often comes across have a square end, angled/skewed edge, pointed, round or have a concave/hollow profile.

Some of the tools even come with a scraper tip to help clean up the surface prior to applying chatter decoration.

FUNDAMENTALS

Here are 10 fundamental things to bear in mind which will help you create better chatter-work effects:

1 Keep your cutters sharp.
2 The projection of the cutter past the clamping point will affect the amount of spring/give in the cutter. The shorter the cutter projection, the finer the flex and resulting pattern. Too little projection and the cutter just scrapes the surface and does not chatter.
3 Conversely, a long projection of the cutter allows it to flex more, creating a coarse/bigger pattern, but the chatter produced can be very aggressive and is prone to chip the grain out in some areas on all but the densest of materials.
4 The speed the work is rotating at and the angle at which the cutter is presented to the work have an effect on the chatter pattern created.
5 Chatter work is most commonly done on the end grain of hard, dense close-grained timbers. Maple (*Acer* spp.), being a neutral creamy colour, is a good timber to start practising on. A neutral, plain-coloured timber with close grain will enable you to see the pattern easier than using a highly figured or multi-coloured timber or those with a more open-grain structure. That said, you can experience grain tear-out or breakage on maple if you try to create very coarse chatter patterns or use too much pressure. Acrylics, resins and soft metals such as brass, bronze and aluminium can be used to decorate with chatter patterns.
6 Very dense timbers such as boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) and similar timbers will yield more consistent results and enable you to create finer and coarser chatter work with less grain pull or breakage.
7 While chatter work is most commonly seen on end grain, you might, if using some of the very dense, close-grained timbers, be able to get a chatter pattern on faceplate-oriented work and also the sides of spindle work.
8 Using a small amount of chatter work as a contrast or counterpoint to clean areas is often the best way of maximising visual appeal.
9 Don't even think about using conventional abrasive paper to clean up a chatter surface – you will sand away any pattern created. If you need to tidy the surface up a bit use a very soft bronze wire brush, a non-woven abrasive pad, or a fine grade of radial bristle brush. If, however, the chatter pattern is very clean, use a short, stiff natural-hair brush to get into the nooks and crannies of the pattern and burnish the surface.
10 Any clear or coloured translucent finish will be differentially absorbed into the pattern and surrounding surface, which can be very effective in further highlighting the chatter pattern. You can apply gilt creams or coloured waxes over the pattern to highlight patterns too. Brush pens applied to the chatter work while the work is spinning will highlight the tops of the chatter pattern.

1

2

3

SAMPLES AROUND THE EDGE FROM TOP LEFT 1: Square-end cutter cutting just above centre 2: Diamond-shaped cutter traversed across the work just above centre 3: Hollow cutter used cutting on centre 4: Round-nosed cutter cutting just below centre 5: The pattern highlighted with brush pens

4

5

Sharpening

The first thing to be aware of is that, in order for the cutters to cut, they have to be sharp. I find that for best results in most circumstances, one needs to create a fine burr on the cutting edge. This can be done on a fine grinding wheel where the cutter is placed cutting edge down, so a burr is raised on the cutting edge although a shaped wheel will be required for the hollow cutter. The lightest of touches is required.

I find that honing the edges with a diamond hone works well. It raises a small burr and shaped hones can be bought to suit all the shapes of cutter typically encountered. I hone first and it works 95% of the time for me. If that does not work, I use a grinder. Experiment to see what is right for you.

Using a chatter tool

Having stated some fundamental aspects of getting the best results, such as cutter projection affecting the pattern created and such like, one also has to consider the pressure one uses to maintain cutter contact with the work. Too much and you increase the severity of the cut. You need to experiment a lot, not only with the timber used, but also the cutter projection and the presentation angle and position of the cutter in relation to the work. Most users of chatter tools will present the cutter in trailing mode to the work. That means the cutter points downhill a bit from the handle. This prevents the cutter from grabbing – we want it to chatter but not twist and dig into the work.

The easiest cutters to learn to use are the square-end and diamond-point. The square-end cutter can be used square on to the work. The diamond-ended one can be used point into the work to chatter a V-cut, or you can use one of the angled sides to create a band the width of the cutter edge, or pull that edge along the work to create a wider area of pattern.

It is essential you play with the presentation angle of the cutter by raising the handle higher than the cutting edge but also, if safe to do so, by rotating the blade too. Simple adjustments can alter the gentleness, severity and therefore the pattern created.

The square-end cutter being used square on to the work, but at a negative rake/trailing angle

The diamond-shaped cutter being traversed along the work, but cutting below centreline

The diamond-shaped cutter is being used but note how the handle is rotated so the cutting edge is pointing at about 40° to the work

THE ROUND AND HOLLOW CUTTERS

The round-end and the hollow cutters are the trickiest to use. Don't let that put you off. On some timbers, you can present them straight into the surface and cut to the form of the cutter without issue and the chatter pattern is cut during the whole process. If you are using the round-nosed cutter you can have a small or full cutter-width cove form created as you require. The hollow cutter is not as forgiving.

If you want a bead the full width and depth of the cutter hollow form, you are better off shaping a bead to as close a shape of the cutter as possible and then chattering that, accepting that a bit of shaping by the chatter tool cutter will occur as it cuts the chatter pattern. If you try to form the bead by pushing the hollow cutter directly

The round-nosed cutter is used to create these patterns. V-cuts were used to define the outer edges of the pattern

Example of damage due to not pre-shaping the beads and using too much pressure and too long a cutter projection

into the wood, there is a lot of pressure and the cut typically is not clean.

In truth, if you want the best chance of clean-cut patterns with these two cutter forms, shape the cove or bead form prior to creating the chatter pattern. Try cuts on the waste wood area using the cutters you will later want to use so you know how the timber you are using responds to the different pressures, presentation angles and cutter projection and such like.

The result of too much blade projection in conjunction with too much pressure applied during the cut

Above: A hollow form in maple with a band of fine chatter work near the opening ready for cleaning up and sanding

Right: Andy Coates made these patterns with a round-nosed cutter, then dyed it and applied gilt cream

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDY COATES

Cleaning up and finishing

The surfaces can be a bit fuzzy on anything but the densest of timbers and, as mentioned, if you use standard abrasives you will wear away the pattern. Experiment with a very soft bronze wire brush, a non-woven abrasive pad, or a fine grade of radial bristle brush.

As for what finish to use, you can use almost anything from clear to coloured. I don't recommend the use of thick wall paint that would cover and obscure the pattern, but the normal lacquers, oils, waxes, dyes, stains and so on can be used to great effect. ●

Various products to clean up the chatter pattern

Cleaning up the surface of chatter work

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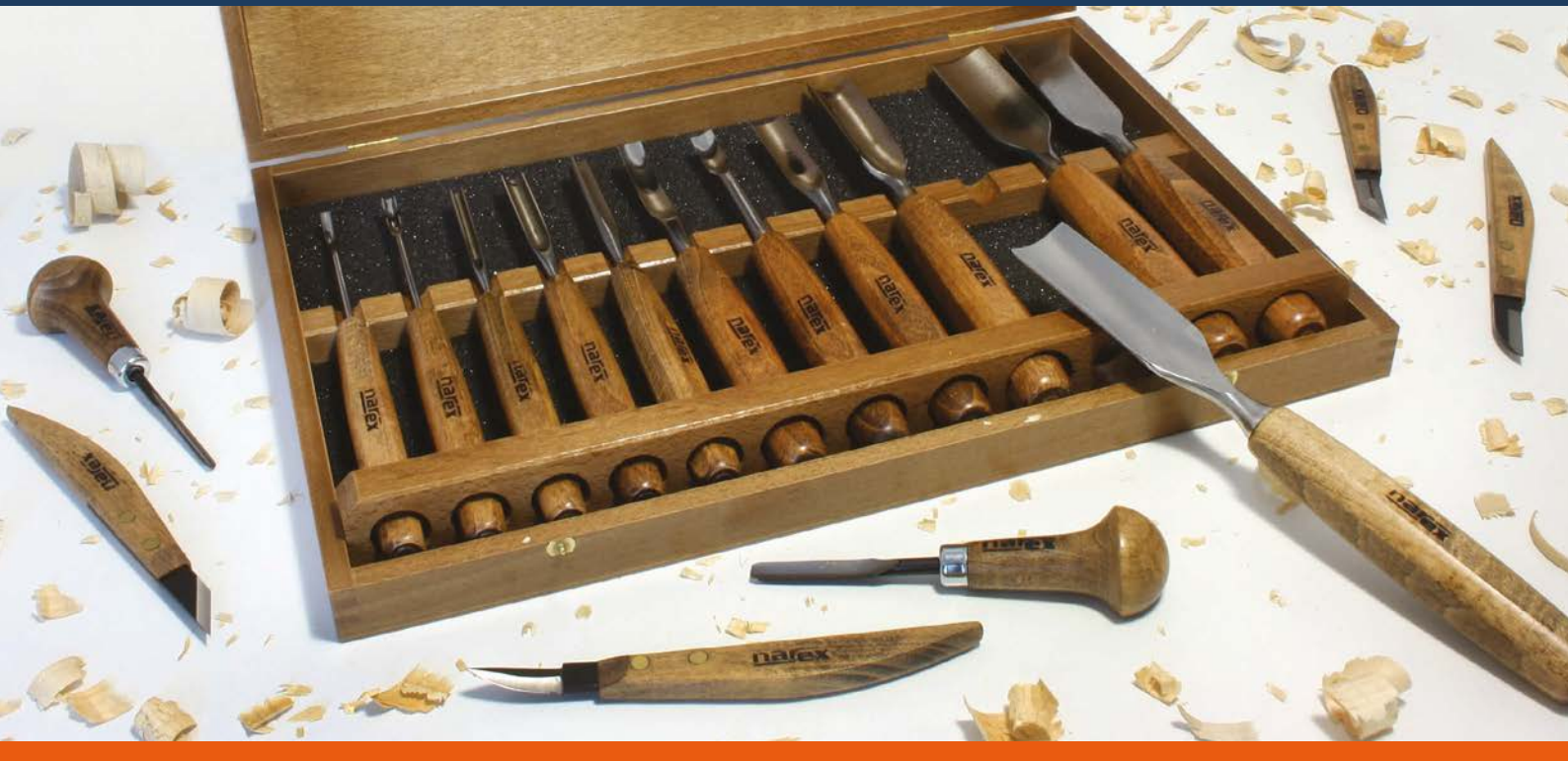

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CuBoroN

With the release of the new R-series CBN wheels from The ToolPost, sharpening for woodturners enters a new phase. Produced to the same high standards as our renowned series of face and rim-coated CBN grinding wheels, the R-series brings the brilliance of CBN sharpening within the reach of most turners. By eliminating the CBN coating on the little-used face of the wheel we have been able to substantially reduce the price. Of course, we still keep face and rim-coated wheels for those who prefer this format of wheel, but now we offer a choice. Not just a choice of wheel styles, but a choice of wheel diameters, widths, grits and mounting bush sizes. All of which seemed to warrant a new name: CuBoroN, superior CBN wheels from The ToolPost. From £99.50.

Sharp Tools = Sharp Turner

If you're going to take full benefit from having the best CBN wheels available, then it makes perfect sense to pair them up with the best sharpening jig too. For very good reason, many folk get more than a little anxious when it comes to sharpening their turning tools. They have seen experts and heard them extolling their own ability to sharpen "freehand" and are frequenty left with the impression that this is the 'proper' way to sharpen. Nonsense! The 'correct' way to sharpen is the one that enables you to get the best edge, quickly, accurately and repeatably.

That way, there's nothing to fear and nothing to discourage you from sharpening as often as neccessary to keep your tools turning-sharp - and that can mean as frequently as every few minutes. Without sharp tools, you can never be a sharp turner, so it is important to get this particular little trick under your belt as soon as possible.

So make it easy: always sharpen using a jig - and use the best jig available for bench grinders: the Oneway Wolverine.

This is a jig developed by turners for the benefit of turners and produced by one of the most respected engineering companies in the business. The basic system satisfies all standard turning sharpening needs but accessories are also available to complement the system and to meet virtually any turning tool sharpening requirement - including really precise wheel dressing. Standard system with long arm and platform (above), including setup and operation DVD: £85.67. Varigrind jig accessory for Celtic profiles (right): £51.18.

The ToolPost

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STRATOS

An unbelievable spec for an unbelievable price! Hopewoodturning is a UK distributor of the Stratos woodturning lathes. "After demonstrating on these lathes in Germany, I was so impressed with the quality of the lathes for such a keen price, I pursued the main producer to allow me to become an agent for UK customers. I own both models in my workshop and use nothing else. You are welcome to come and try one!"

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The STRATOS XL combines high weight, stability and power with precision and ease of use. The goal was the development of an extremely solid, stable and quiet machine which, due to its versatility, offers countless possibilities for beginners as well as advanced and professional woodturners.

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Centre Height	230 mm
Spindle Length	700 mm
Speeds	80-1350 / 180-3700 U/min
Spindle	M33 x 3.5
Weight	178 kg
Dimensions	1350 x 510 x 1230 mm

Additional Add-ons

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PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER BRISCOE

Predictable unpredictability

The American Association of Woodturners talks to Christian Burchard

Expressive vessels and sculptures that exude a sense of tension, connection, and balance, echo the fascinating and enigmatic life of woodturner Christian Burchard. His creative process embodies an exquisite conflict between control and freedom, ultimately revealing the essence and spirit of the wood.

Burchard says: 'To be working this closely with nature is a blessing, but is also often overwhelming. It is a struggle. At times I find myself needing to put my foot down, to control the outcome of my work, only to find that I trampled something beautiful. At other times I feel overwhelmed, scared. What is needed of me here? How can I match the beauty of this living thing? How am I to know when to be loud and when to be quiet? Maybe this stuff just matches my personality, something to wrestle with, something that stirs my imagination, something to control. That nature versus man-made thing, that struggle, that tension, that conflict. My work is about my relationship with nature, my desire to connect with it on a deep level. Trying to get under its skin and be part of it. Searching, finding something sacred, adding my touch, wrestling with it. Showing the beauty of it under a different light: exposing, transforming. I make things out of a deep urge to create and out of a driving curiosity. I need to do it. I don't really have a choice in the matter.'

While today Burchard trusts his creative process, he says it was once hard to find his way.

Born to a respected family in Hamburg, Germany in 1955, Burchard, like many of his generation, was drawn to the '60s counterculture. He craved freedom and individuality, welcomed change and risk,

and was determined to explore the world. At 18, he journeyed to Australia where he worked as a cowboy and for a mining company. After that, Burchard hitchhiked through Asia before returning home. At that point, his parents hoped he would attend university. But Burchard had other ideas. His thirst for both adventure and knowledge were overwhelmingly intense, along with his desire to work with his hands.

Burchard sought skills he could put to use anywhere in the world. So, for the next two years, he was an apprentice in a large furniture maker's shop. While there, he learned to understand wood technology, produce high-quality work, and run a business. However, it was not an environment where individuality and innovation were encouraged.

Burchard moved to Austria, where he refinished furniture, made toys, and remodelled old houses. His journey continued when his practice of Tai Chi brought him to Colorado where he studied with a renowned master prior to touring the US and Canada in a Volkswagen bus. After that, he contemplated pursuing art and was accepted to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, in Boston, Massachusetts, where he spent 14-hour days studying a broad range of subjects, including drawing, ceramics, metal sculpture, and video art. Burchard continued his art education at the Emily Carr University of Art & Design in Vancouver, British Columbia, studying Northwest Coast Native American Art, as well as toolmaking, forging, and metal casting.

After moving to Oregon in the early 1980s and establishing a studio, he supported his growing family through timber-framing, house-building, and furniture-making, all while experimenting with lathe-made forms.

Burchard used books and videos to teach himself woodturning and attended a week-long workshop taught by Richard Raffan. He worked methodically to master aspects of woodturning and imitated work he found exciting and challenging.

Eventually, he found success exhibiting and selling vessels at fine craft galleries and shows. As Burchard's work evolved, he discovered a new-found sense of freedom in creating sculptural work, using his imagination and pushing boundaries.

He says: 'That's the most important part – seeing the work, focusing on your visions, taking chances, always risking it all. It's scary, of course, but it doesn't get any better than when it all comes together. Then there are those days, of course, when I am all off, when there is no magic, and I should rather be splitting firewood. There has to be a balance.'

Today, Burchard lives on seven heavenly acres of land nestled between mountains and vineyards on the outskirts of Ashland, Oregon, where raising goats and making cheese are integral parts of his life.

He works almost exclusively with Pacific madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) burls and roots, which he describes fondly as 'as wild and unpredictable as it gets'. Burchard is continually fascinated by what he describes as madrone's 'predictable unpredictability'. When turned or worked green, madrone requires openness to change and risk, but the creative rewards are great.

He explains: 'I do take a lot of chances and I fail a lot. Many ideas just don't turn out after all. I burn a lot of my work. It can feel at times as if I am holding a whole lot of strings and am weaving them together. I push and pull till it sings. And I am learning to ask more of the right questions, to set things in motion, set possibilities in motion. I allow my

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROB JAFFE

Baskets #3, 14 Parts, 200mm to 25mm diameter, madrone burl

relationships and my need for connection to flow into and inform the work. It is different now to how it was 10 years ago. There used to be lot of fear in my work, a rush to succeed and a fear of failing. Life has changed and I have slowed down, and my work has gotten simpler and quieter. The difference is that I am not looking for something new all the time. I have gained a deeper understanding of the wood that I am using, there is more breadth in our relationship. I have learned to trust the process, to give it the time and confidence it needs and deserves. That, in turn, is stretching my creative abilities, strongly affecting me and the work.'

Traveling the world continues to be a life practice. In 2014, Burchard went to Tuva, in southern Siberia, lured by a long-time fascination with the rich arts and culture of the Scythians, an ancient nomadic people. While there, he immersed himself in the Tuvan culture and became a student of throat-singing.

He says he's 'rather addicted' to making music these days, and recycles his old vessels and baskets into stringed instruments.

To learn more, visit his website at www.burchardstudio.com

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROB JAFFE

A Gathering #4, 300mm x 510mm x 460mm, bleached madrone root

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROB JAFFE

A Certain Attraction, 510mm x 510mm x 250mm, bleached madrone burl

CHRISTIAN BURCHARD: Predictable Unpredictability

Thursday, 14 June, 2018
AAW 32nd Annual International Symposium: Oregon Convention Center
777 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, Portland, OR 97232

The American Association of Woodturners (AAW) 32nd Annual International Symposium will be held in Portland, Oregon, 14–17 June, 2018. In conjunction with the event, Christian Burchard will present a special lecture open to registered AAW symposium attendees on Thursday, 14 June, entitled Predictable Unpredictability, during which he will reflect on his journey in life and in woodturning.

The symposium agenda continues Friday-Sunday, 15-17 June, with a broad selection of demonstrations and panel discussions that appeal to a wide variety of skill levels – bowls, boxes, vessels, hollow forms, spheres, spindle turning, multiaxis turning, segmented turning, natural edge turning, ornament, jewellery, finishing techniques, surface design, texture and embellishment, and more.

Attendees are invited to focus on sessions that will enhance their woodturning experience the most.

To learn more about the AAW's 32nd Annual International Symposium, visit http://tiny.cc/Portland2018. ●

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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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.
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Chris has spent a good deal of his time designing, turning and writing on the subject of salt and pepper mills. His latest book, *Adding Spice to Woodturning: 20 Salt, Pepper & Spice Shaker Projects for Woodturners*, was published in 2017 by Artisan Ideas in North America.
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JOHN PLATER
John has woodturned in the UK since his schooldays but in a more meaningful way since taking early retirement 10 years ago. He likes making decorative hollowed pieces from interesting woods with holes, sap and bark. He thinks that he's OK with a bowl gouge but useless with a skew.
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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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MARK SANGER
Mark pursued woodturning full-time in 2004, making one-off sculptural pieces that include colour and texture as well as pure woodturned forms. He demonstrates and teaches in the UK and abroad and is the author of *Turning Hollow Forms* from GMC Publications.
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PAT CARROLL
As a builder/carpenter, Pat has always loved working with wood. In 2002 he took a woodturning class and was very quickly hooked. With the influence of many great artists he is keen to explore the combination of texture and colour in his work today.
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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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Rick is a part-time woodturner from Washington state. He is a member of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW), the Cascade Woodturners in Portland, Oregon, and a founding member of the Southwest Washington Woodturners in Vancouver, Washington.

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Community letters

Here are some letters the Editor has received from you, the readers

Christmas carousel

Mark,
Colwin's Christmas carousel project inspired me to make my own. I thought his project was very attractive and that it would be great to make for Christmas. I thought it would stimulate my imagination and would test and develop my skills. I decided to create a nativity scene, which would reinforce the message of Christmas for us, rather than make snowmen. This meant I had to sort out how to do these and explore new techniques to get them right. I had a lot of fun making this.

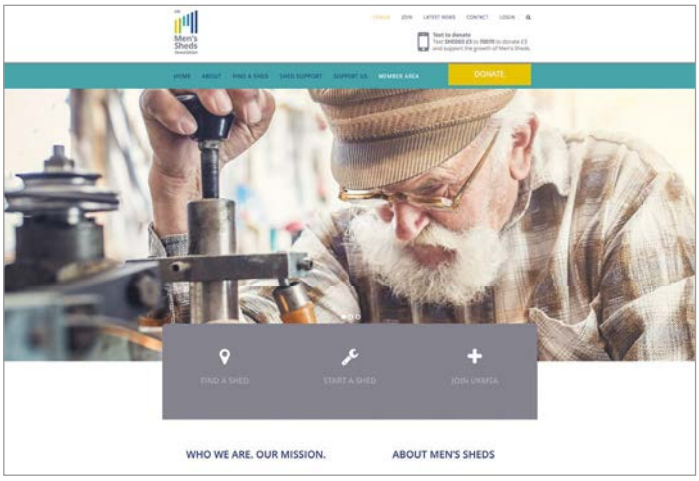
Geoff Harrison

Men's Shed proliferates

Hi Mark
You mentioned community workshops in a recent edition of the magazine.

There is a group just like you describe called the Men's Shed. This started in Australia and is spreading rapidly. I belong to the shed at Pakefield in Suffolk, just on the outskirts of Lowestoft. There is one at Halesworth and a new one at Beccles. They are becoming increasingly common in the UK, normally based in a large building with the community helping to supply tools. Once open and running, members purchase their own tools. The Pakefield shed opens twice a week and you can just turn up for a chat, learn woodworking skills, gardening – and they are considering whether they can put in a kitchen to teach people to cook. I teach woodturning twice a week when not involved with other activities. The club is trying to secure a metalworking lathe. It is very socially minded and all the instructors on any of the equipment at this club have to have a certificate in that discipline and all members are assessed in using the equipment before being allowed to take it on unsupervised. Health and safety is taken very seriously.

Eric Smith



menssheds.org.uk

Chapel Hill Woodturners attend 2017 Irish Seminar

Mark, I just wanted to let you know that 15 members of the Chapel Hill Woodturners club (and a few spouses) from North Carolina, completed a 14-day Jewels of Ireland tour last October that included stays in Dublin, Kinsale, Dingle, Ennis, Galway, Donegal, and Belfast. The group also visited a several locations of natural and historic interest: Bunratty Castle, William Cairnes Gastropub, Titanic Belfast, and the Cliffs of Moher.

We also attended the 2017 National Seminar of the Irish Woodturners Guild. Assembling at the Glenroyal Hotel in the university town of Maynooth, the group saw many demonstrations by a roster of international woodturners that included: John Boyne-Aitken (UK), Jason Breach (UK), Clive Brooks (UK), Vivien Grandouiller (France), Franz Keilhofer (Germany) and Alan Lacer (US).

We were treated warmly by the Irish hosts and encouraged to return in 2018, when the Guild's next seminar will take place in Limerick.

When asked if we would be welcome in 2018, Eugene Grimley, the Ulster area representative for the Irish Guild, said: 'By all means,' adding with an Irish lilt, 'you'll do us no harm.'

Charlie Ryan, the Guild's president, was more emphatic, declaring: 'We will bloody have twice as many of ye next year – and twice as many the year after that.'

Willie Creighton, chairman of the guild, indicated that plans are already being formulated for a contingent of Irish Woodturners to visit their new friends in Chapel Hill and attend the 2019 AAW meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Orlan Johnson

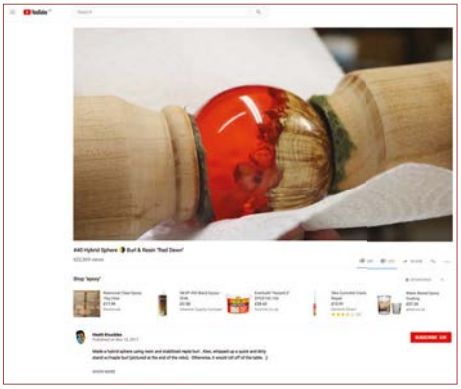
Community links

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

YouTube

HEATH KNUCKLES

https://tinyurl.com/y9yu6g45



Heath Knuckles has posted a clip on making a hybrid resin and burr sphere. There is no audio on this video apart from an interesting soundtrack, but the speeded up-footage shows what he does at what stage. It is interesting to watch and the end result is excellent.

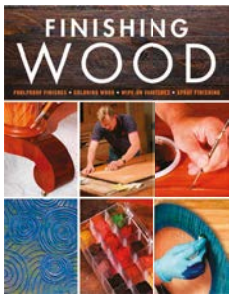
Club Website

SHEFFIELD WOODTURNING CLUB

www.sheffieldwoodturningclub.org.uk

Sheffield Woodturning Club has a clear and nicely laid out website that is simple to use and navigate and full of relevant at-a-glance information about the club. It also has a nice archive section of demonstrations the club has had over the years for people to browse.

BOOK OFFER



Finishing Wood
Editors of *Fine Woodworking*

A great finish can make even a simple project look terrific. A bad finish can ruin the most well-built, sophisticated piece of furniture. Finishing can be a daunting and mystifying task to many woodworkers, who fear wrecking their projects at this late stage in the process. This collection of articles from *Fine Woodworking* brings together the best information on a rich variety of finishing techniques, including the all-important surface preparation and using shellac, French polish, pigmented lacquers, dyes and stains, milk paint, and 'crackled' paint.

ISBN: 9781631868931
Published by Taunton
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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.

BURR ELM PLATTER

https://tinyurl.com/yd2j2uu7

Hi all – an uncoloured piece – makes a change for me, but this wood needed nothing added! Finish is Chestnut Finishing Oil

Les Symonds commented: I'm so pleased that you didn't add any colour to that, it's a stunning piece of timber that deserves to be seen as nature made and as you fashioned it. Great job, Stewart.

CHJ posted: Yes, definitely one to keep the colour arsenal away from. Good choice of finish. Did you just apply enough to seal and maintain wood character with slight sheen (my inclination) or use added coats? difficult to see the gloss level in image.

You're fired!

Geoffrey Laycock discusses fire safety in the workshop

Isolator switch on a socket

Fuse board

No, not an episode from that 'Marmite' show on TV which I personally hate, but a reminder, especially over the winter, to think about fire safety in your workshop and perhaps consequences later. This came to mind as I sorted through a few things being moved into my new workshop and I completed a fire risk assessment. Yes, that is major overkill for a workshop next to the house and, at least initially for my own, hobby use. It's a habit though. I have carried out so many in very different premises that I found it useful to refocus. It's only a couple of A4 pages and in part I have done it because the local building inspector seems rather over-zealous considering this is not a domestic dwelling. It will be handy if there is any discussion when the final inspection happens.

Basically, we look at what can be ignited and what can cause that ignition, how we know we have a problem and what we then do – ether in fighting the fire or getting away from it safely. My new workshop is really my dream workshop. It is about 80m² with small kitchen and WC, office and storage above of about 45m². An internal window is very expensive Fireguard glass and the upper floor is protected by Fireline plasterboard and fire door with self-closer. It has a wired heat and smoke detection/alarm system and appropriate fire extinguishers.

ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

We have mentioned fire ignition sources before and I want to concentrate on electrical installations and equipment. Having spent a long time thinking about where I want equipment and work activities, I had detailed layout drawings for the electrician. This is an outbuilding and I have come across many people who have wired up their own workshops/sheds/garages etc. Since 2005 this has been a problem as Part P of the Building Regulations are clear that such installations must be carried out either by a qualified electrician who can test and certify the work, or it must be inspected and tested by Building Control. There are a few things you and I can do but I'm seriously paraphrasing here. In our case Mike, our sparks, can inspect and test and satisfies all the legal requirements. I have carefully thought through where I want lights, 13 and 16 amp sockets, water heater etc. It's all obviously brand new, using the latest all-metal split-load consumer unit. After the building is finished I will have a document clearly showing that every item of that installation has been tested and found within the required parameters.

Contrast that with a workshop I saw a while ago. Wired up by the owner, all the 13 amp sockets were wired in series, effectively one spur after another. The tube lighting units had no visible earthing and the consumer unit was a 'found' old one using wired breakers. None of those new-fangled circuit-breakers here. One piece of kit that needed a 16 amp supply had a 'fiddled' 13 amp plug to allow it to work. All of that was supplied from the back of a house 13 amp socket.

Now a reasonably common ignition source is electrical installation/electrical equipment. Which of the two examples is most likely to go up in smoke? That is bad enough but what happens later? Our 'car barn' is fully insured and the value of contents worked out so there is no argument with the insurance company. We can produce evidence that the installation was all compliant with Part P, I have a simple assessment showing I had considered ignition sources and flammable hazards – and cleaning, firefighting equipment, detection and alarm system, means of escape. Now think about what would happen in my second example – in short it is very likely the insurance company would review evidence and propose that 'reasonable care' had not been exercised, Part P was not complied with and the installation was unsafe due to being carried out by an unqualified person. That is assuming the insurance covered it as often it is easy to forget the value of all your kit and be underinsured, or forget insurance altogether if the building is not automatically included with your house contents. Inspection and testing of the electrical installation is not a legal requirement but the recommendation is every 10 years for domestic property – have you had yours done?

Why not make this a 2018 resolution, to sit down with a cup of tea, or something stronger, and think about fire, electrics, and insurance? It hopefully will never happen, but if it does where would you be?

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEOFFREY LAYCOCK

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Kit & Tools

A collection of tests and press releases showing the latest tools and products on the market

All prices are correct at time of going to press but are subject to change without notice. Products from US & overseas to UK are subject to shipping & taxes

Accurate sharpening

Mark Baker tries out the Stuart Batty Universal grinding system and angle gauges

We all know that sharp tools are vital to turning, and that sharpening platforms/systems of all kinds are available to help, and I have seen and heard good things about the Stuart Batty Tools Universal grinding system for a long while. So I decided it was time to put one to the test. The system is available in three forms: small or large square table or large round table configurations. I opted to test the round table version. Each table is available in two options. They have a machined gap on the front of the platform to suit wheels up to 25mm or wheels up to 50mm and the sides of the platform fit around the wheel. The grinding system is supplied with an adjustable tilting table mounted on two adjustable-height side arms, which lock on to a sliding base which is attached to a mounting base.

There are two mounting bases available which are not included in the price of the grinding systems. You can buy a standard mounting base which can be screwed to the platform where your grinder is sited and then one slides the grinding system into the base section and locks it in place at any point along the travel. Alternatively, you can buy an adapter for a working in conjunction with the Wolverine grinding jig to hold the grinding systems in place.

The grinding system is a mix of extrusions, castings and cut and plate all of which are nicely machined and finished and comes in a neat box with comprehensive setting up instructions.

To help find accurate angles once the grinding system was set up I opted to try the SB angle gauges. There are three options available with different grind angles. They are made from machined aluminium plate and are clearly marked angles – each have either six or eight marked angles to choose from and each is available individually. They come with clear instructions which show how to use them with 150mm or 200mm wheels. The difference is how you present them to the different wheel sizes.

Setting up

Following the instructions, I aligned the mounting base correctly to the wheel, fixed it in place and inserted the assembled grinding system in the base, sliding it right up to the wheel, leaving a 2mm gap between the platform and the wheel. The two side buttons on the upright support arms are undone to adjust the table position to the angle you require and, because of the way the platform pivots, it is always close to the wheel, thus minimising gaps and risk of tool fall off.

The angle gauge allows one to quickly set up the table at any one of the marked angles.

The gauges being used to set the platform prior to sharpening

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK BAKER

SB Tools UGS Large Round Platform

The standard mounting base

The angle gauges

In use

The angle gauges are easy to use and nicely machined, as is the grinding system. The platform is very easy to move and is incredibly stable in use. The round platform also means there are no corners to snag fingers on when sweeping a tool from side to side. I really do like that there is minimal gap between the platform and wheel and the ease with which one can move the tools about on the large platform, so there is always plenty of support for the tool being sharpened.

This is a well thought-out system that is very well designed and built to withstand the rigours of workshop use. I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying you should be sure to take a look at this when researching quality sharpening platforms.

It comes at a cost and the angle gauges are extras, but it is definitely worth it.

Prices

Universal grinding system $115
Mounting base: $25
Stuart Batty angle gauges $34.95 each
Contact: Woodworkers Emporium
www.woodworkersemporium.com

ROBERT SORBY FINGERNAIL PROFILE ARM

Robert Sorby has recently introduced a new fingernail profile arm designed to create various swept-back grinds on gouges. It features a new brass clamping bar, a burgundy knurled aluminium locking wheel, a new style of shank and an arm that can be adjusted to your preferred sharpening settings. It is available as a single unit or as part of a number of sharpening kit alternatives including the ProEdge and Universal Sharpening systems. It is not yet available in the US.

Price £50.77
Contact: Robert Sorby
www.robert-sorby.co.uk

DUST RIGHT LATHE DUST COLLECTION SYSTEM

Aimed at pen and spindle turners, the Dust Right has an adjustable steel arm with a 228mm x 70mm polymer dust scoop which affixes to a vertical, 380mm-long mounting post. All of this is secured to the lathe via a 380mm connection plate. The flexible hose attaches to the dust port without clamps and this is connected to your extractor unit. The whole unit can be moved to get as close to the work as possible.

Price approx. £50
Contact Toolstream
www.toolstream.com

EVOLUTION WOODTURNING SMOCK

Axminster Tools & Machinery has introduced a new turning smock. Made from a cotton and polyester mix it features a zip-up front, adjustable neck fit and the short sleeves on the arm can be adjusted to create a tighter fit.

Price £29.95
Contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery
www.axminster.co.uk

Conversion chart
2mm (5/64in)
3mm (1/8in)
4mm (5/32in)
6mm (1/4in)
7mm (9/32in)
8mm (5/16in)
9mm (11/32in)
10mm (3/8in)
11mm (7/16in)
12mm (1/2in)
13mm (1/2in)
14mm (9/16in)
15mm (9/16in)
16mm (5/8in)
17mm (11/16in)
18mm (23/32in)
19mm (3/4in)
20mm (3/4in)
21mm (13/16in)
22mm (7/8in)
23mm (29/32in)
24mm (15/16in)
25mm (1in)
30mm (1 1/8in)
32mm (1 1/4in)
35mm (1 3/8in)
38mm (1 1/2in)
40mm (1 5/8in)
45mm (1 3/4in)
50mm (2in)
55mm (2 1/8-2 1/4in)
60mm (2 3/8in)
63mm (2 1/2in)
65mm (2 5/8in)
70mm (2 3/4in)
75mm (3in)
80mm (3 1/8in)
85mm (3 1/4in)
90mm (3 1/2in)
93mm (3 2/3in)
95mm (3 3/4in)
100mm (4in)
105mm (4 1/8in)
110mm (4 1/4-4 3/8in)
115mm (4 1/2in)
120mm (4 3/4in)
125mm (5in)
130mm (5 1/8in)
135mm (5 1/4in)
140mm (5 1/2in)
145mm (5 3/4in)
150mm (6in)
155mm (6 1/8in)
160mm (6 1/4in)
165mm (6 1/2in)
170mm (6 3/4in)
178mm (6 7/8in)
180mm (7in)
185mm (7 1/4in)
190mm (7 1/2in)
195mm (7 3/4in)
200mm (8in)
305mm (12in)
405mm (16in)
510mm (20in)
610mm (24in)
710mm (28in)
815mm (32in)
915mm (36in)
1015mm (40in)
1120mm (44in)
1220mm (48in)
1320mm (52in)
1420mm (56in)
1525mm (60in)

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Advertisers Index

The owl has landed

Paul Howard shares with us his inspiration for his latest creation

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY BAILEY/GMC PUBLICATION

I have always liked owls and, living in the country, I have on a few occasions seen them in flight at night. Barn owls are my particular favourite.

I was at the North of England Woodworking show in Harrogate about four years ago and I saw a turned wooded owl on a display stand. I do not recall the name of the maker or if there was any name label attached to the piece. I liked the idea and thought it would be fun to have a go at making one. Being busy most of the time, I added it to the list of things I would like to make, but actually never got round to it.

At the following year's Harrogate show, I was looking at Andrew Hall's stand and among his wonderful display of hats I saw some owls similar to the ones I had seen the year before. That rekindled the desire to get started making something like it. If I like an idea and want to find out how it is done, I like to adapt it and put my own ideas into it as well.

The next step to making my own version was to work out some dimensions for the owl. A 100mm sphere seemed a good starting point, so I turned the sphere and then played around with dividers and a compass to mark out the spacing for the eyes. The next problem was how to hold the sphere to turn the eyes. The obvious answer was a vacuum chuck, but I ended up making a doughnut chuck.

I turned the eye shapes and then decided to put flutes around each eye as this was something I had not seen on the other owls. The flutes worked so I then proceeded to carve the beak, similar to the one on Andrew's owls, but I made a complete mess of it. That presented a design opportunity, so I made a beak from a separate piece of timber, sanded and turned it and glued it in place. I had not seen this on the other owls. I have modified things further. I add hats, create threaded hollow recesses behind the carved eye areas so there are a couple of boxes in the design too and I am looking at further options.

I think the pieces we make are always a combination of other people's work in one way or another. It is very difficult to come up with a totally new idea – you have only to look around the British Museum or similar places at the ancient bronzes and pottery to find all the basic shapes you currently use in the vessels and bowls there. Having made my own version, and before showing it to others, I saw my good friend Andrew Hall at the following year's Harrogate show and said I liked the idea of the owls, had altered the design somewhat and showed him what I had made. We discussed it and I asked if he minded my showing people how I made my version. He said no problem and commented that he had seen the inspiration for his owl from a chap called Gunther in Germany.

We are all inspired by what we see, but if we make something based on someone else's work, credit should always be given to the original maker, source material/inspiration if the item is to be displayed or shown to people.

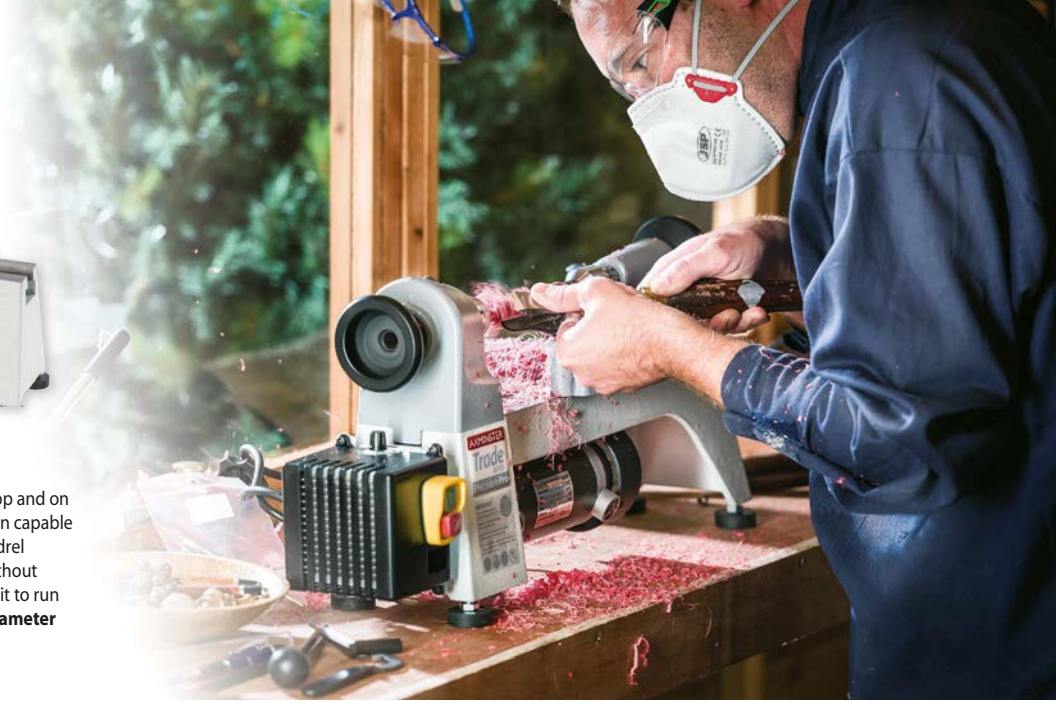
I will show you how I make my versions of the owls I saw in the next issue of the magazine. They are a lot of fun.

www.paulhowardwoodturner.co.uk

Precision Pro with Compression Pen Mandrel

£434.96 Inc.vat Code **508477**

Perfect for pen and small project making both in the workshop and on the craft fair circuit. This lathe is highly accurate and more than capable of producing work on a commercial scale. A unique pen mandrel comes with this lathe which creates grip on the pen blank without exerting compression force on the mandrel spindle, allowing it to run freely. **Distance between centres 250mm and maximum diameter over bed 150mm. Weight 22kg.**



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A compact package, yet offering the same level of quality and user friendliness as the larger lathes in the range. An extension bed for the lathe plus floor stands for both lathe and extension bed are available as optional extras. **Distance between centres 400mm* and maximum diameter over bed 250mm. Weight 38kg.**

AT1628VS

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Complete with stand

£1,939.96 Inc.vat Code **717616**

So impressed are we with the quality and performance of this lathe, that it is our lathe of choice for woodturning courses in the Axminster Skill Centre. Supplied as a bench top model with the option of a leg stand. A bed extension kit is also available as an optional extra and this can be bolted onto the leg stand or either end of the lathe bed. **Distance between centres 710mm* and maximum diameter over bed 406mm. Weight 96kg.**

AT1416VS

£896.96 Inc.vat Code **501214**

Complete with stand **£1,092.96** Inc.vat Code **717617**

With electronic variable speed, this lathe uses reliable inverter technology usually found on much larger machines. Popular for both teaching and craft demonstrations, it is neither too big nor heavy but has enough capacity to show off your turning skills. Supplied as a bench top model with the option of a bed extension and leg stands. **Distance between centres 400mm* and maximum diameter over bed 350mm. Weight 41kg.**

AT2030VS

£2,749.98 Inc.vat

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The big gun of the range, this quality lathe has all the features a serious woodturner would need for almost any woodturning project, large or small. It comes with a bed extension that can be used in three positions for bowls or long spindles and a digital position readout for precision working. **Distance between centres 762mm* plus 500mm with extension bed and maximum diameter over bed 508mm. Weight 280kg.**

*For more information, call **0800 371822**, search **axminster.co.uk** or visit one of our stores.*

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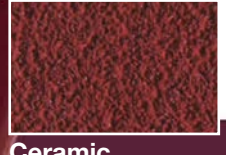

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