

# Woodturning

THE WORLD'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR WOODTURNERS

## Raku-inspired form

Mark Sanger shows  
how to create  
a distinctive  
vase



**TECHNICAL** Traditional wood colouring • Further explorations with pewter **PROJECTS** Christmas candle arch • Stacking box • Sugar bowl and spoon • Hedgehogs • Natural-edge box

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| <b>Spindle speeds:</b>          | 96-3890 rpm           |
| <b>Motor input P1:</b>          | 1000 W                |
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| <b>Thread:</b>                  | M33 x 3.5             |
| <b>Taper:</b>                   | 2 Morse taper         |
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**Woodturning 317**



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# Happy Christmas



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK BAKER/GMC PUBLICATIONS

**It is that time of year again and it has come round so quickly. Mind you, the older I get the quicker Christmas seems to come round. So let me start by saying Merry Christmas and wishing you all the best for the festive season. I know you don't know what presents you will receive but I bet that you buy yourselves one or two. I have already. I know, it is way too early, but it was a must-do thing and I bought myself an early Christmas treat. I have promised that I won't buy anything else for Christmas for myself. Let's see if that willpower will last until Christmas or New Year. Anyway, I bought myself some new workshop lights.**

The old lights were fluorescent and I had four of them. I now have four new LED lights. Wow – what a difference they make. The light is brighter but the downside is – actually it is an upside – I can see my mistakes more easily. The difference is huge. I wish I had changed over a while ago. Being able to see things

more clearly is a true delight and it just makes life so much easier and, in many ways, safer too. What type of lighting do you have in your workshop?

I know we all have different spaces within which to work – or should that be play? Most turners tell me they do not need to earn a living from turning per se, so comment they have a lot of fun in the workshop instead and I am glad about that. Having spent all that money creating a workshop and space you wanted for yourself and not using it to have some fun is a waste. Just imagine how many holidays you could have bought with what has been spent on your hobbies. I bet that if you had a stock take and priced it all up it would cause a bit of an EEEK! Don't go there – there lays a grimace, or two, or six.

You have, as many will attest, enjoyed the journey of acquisition and enjoyed meeting people and visiting new places along the way. As a result, you have

ventured into a wonderfully creative hobby that you otherwise might never have done. What is so bad about that? I am glad that I ventured into this wonderful world of woodworking. I count myself privileged to have met so many wonderful people, had the opportunity to visit many clubs, shows and symposia around the world. Being part of the wonderful community of woodworkers of all persuasions has been one of the greatest joys I could have ever hoped to have experienced and I count myself a very lucky person indeed.

Thank you to you all for your friendship and I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and New Year. Have fun and let me know what you have been making.

Mark

markb@thegmcgroup.com





COVER IMAGE: Mark Sanger (see page 79)



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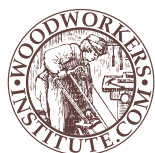
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### NEWS, LATEST PRODUCTS, MAGAZINE UPLOADS & EVENTS

can all be found on [www.woodworkersinstitute.com](http://www.woodworkersinstitute.com). These all appear on the magazine homepage and you can see a bigger selection by scrolling down the page and clicking on the individual stories. We also have an extensive online archive for you to browse, or see us on Facebook & Twitter.



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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).



# TURNING TOOLS AND ACCESSORIES FOR MAKERS

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# Candle arch

Colwin Way creates this beautiful lighting display



Now that time has reached us again and preparation has truly started for the big day. Yet again I'm looking to Germany or, to be exact, the Erzgebirge region of eastern Germany for our inspiration. This region's name translates into Ore mountains and gives you an idea of what the main industry of the area was – mining. Most of the heirloom decorations of this area depict this and have their origins and folk law revolving around it. This month we're going to make a candle arch (schwibbogen) which, from my research, is heavily set in the Ore mountain mining history.

The stories say that the candles were used when the miners finished their working day, at which point it would be dark. Later a Christmas tradition called Mettenschicht, which marks the last shift worked before Christmas, resulted in celebration and the creation of many lights and candle arches being used at the entrance of the mine to illuminate the celebration and festivities.

The candle arch should have an odd number of candles. Commonly seven candles were used, however, this is no longer the case and candle arches now come in many elaborate designs.

We're going to keep it simple and make an oak (*Quercus robur*) arch with five holders for battery-operated candles. Using battery/LED candles or tealights makes things safer than using real candles or tealights as the fire risk is no longer a concern. However, if you choose, you can use real candles as an option but, with a vast array of wonderful LED and battery-operated candles and tealights available, why take the risk of fire?

There is a safety panel later on regarding using real tealights and candles in the candle arch, next to the where the dimensioned drawing is shown.

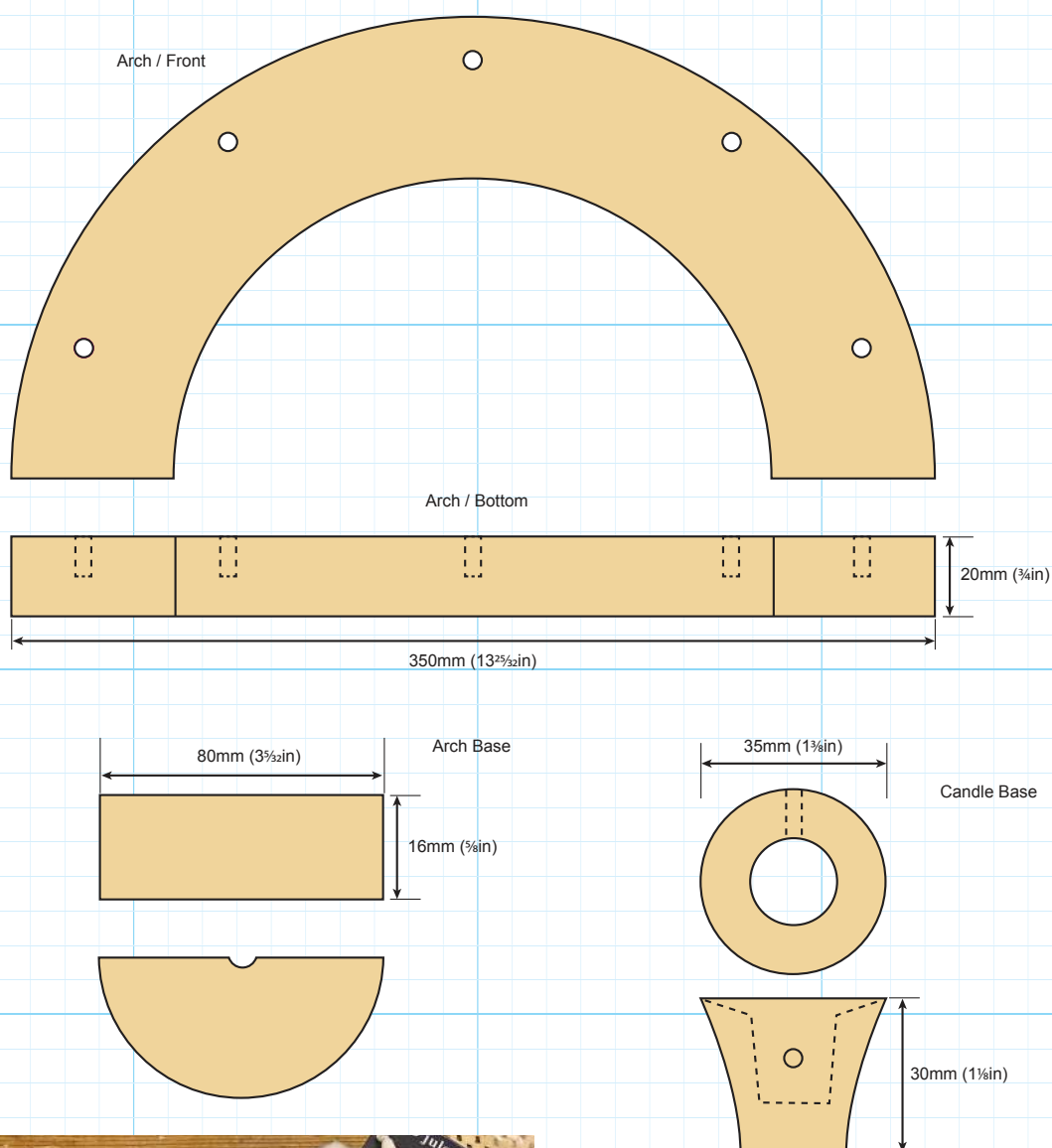
## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal and respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- 6 & 10 mm bowl gouge
- 3mm parting tool
- 10mm spindle gouge
- Chuck
- Screwchuck/faceplate

- Bandsaw/jigsaw
- Revolving tailstock centre
- Drive spur
- Tailstock drill chuck
- 3, 6 & 22mm drill bits
- Countersink bit
- Sanding disc
- Square

## MATERIALS

- 300mm birch-faced plywood disc
- Timber of your choice to suit plans
- Strong duct tape
- Sheet of router matting
- 6mm beech dowel
- Battery-operated candles
- PVA adhesive



Pictured are a variety of candles and candle holders especially designed for Christmas decorations. These candles burn the wax and prevent wax drips from forming. The candles holders create a barrier between the candles and the flammable timber and must be used when a naked flame is intended. These are easy enough to obtain online in all shapes and sizes.



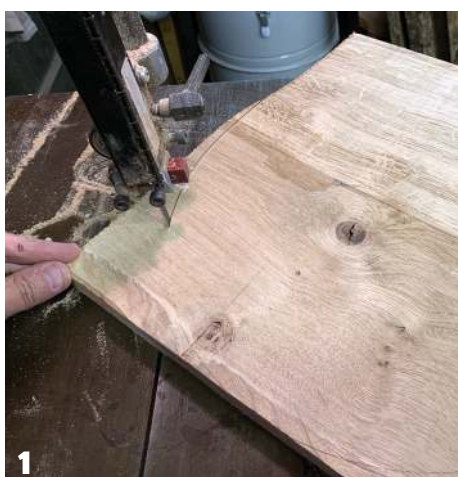
## TEALIGHT & CANDLE SAFETY

There is much debate as to whether one does or does not need to use some form of heat shield/insert between the tealight or candlestick and the item it sits in. There may – depending on the country you live in – be specific laws or guidelines for making and using candlesticks and, if there are, follow them accordingly.

But if they are ambiguous, or not given at all, why take the risk of not using a purpose-made glass or metal holder? That way you know that you are minimising the risk of something untoward occurring for minimal cost. The inserts can be incredibly attractive too and add something extra to the piece.

### General guidelines for working with real candles and tealights are:

- Always use an appropriate heat shield made from either metal, ceramic or glass.
- If you stick the glass, metal or ceramic heat shield insert in place, use a heatproof adhesive and make sure you leave a little bit of an expansion gap between the hole and the holder insert to allow for any wood movement.
- Never leave a lit tealight or candle unattended or place one near any flammable material.
- Never place tealights or candles too close together.
- Always make sure the holder of the candle or the tealight is of a design and weight and has a suitable width of base to be stable enough to stay where it is placed and withstand accidental knocking.



## Candle arch

**1** This arch is 350mm in diameter so either buy or cut a disc of faceplate oriented grain timber of your choice. An alternative to a solid wood section is to glue two pieces of timber together. If you do this, ensure you use exactly two halves so that when you cut it in half later, the cut will be down the join.

**2** Now, screw a 300mm-diameter disc of 20 or 25mm-thick birch-face ply on a faceplate, mount this on the lathe and clean up the edges. Now, drill a 6mm hole through the centre using a drill chuck mounted in the tailstock.

**3** You will need to drill two holes in your oak blank. One is 6mm in the dead centre to line up with the 6mm hole in the birch ply, which is used to bolt the wood to the ply. The other is a 3mm countersink one 25mm from the centre hole. This takes a screw to lock the timber to the ply to stop any potential slipping between the mounting plate and the timber blank.

**4** Now clean up the outer edge. Once done cut a slight radius on to the outer edges. If you have used a clean, flat blank, or you were careful with your gluing up by using two dead-flat halves of the same thickness timber, you won't need to touch the face with a chisel. Instead just sand this surface along with the edges to a good finish.

**5** Here you can see the medullary rays of the quarter-sawn oak I used. I still find this sort of feature really exciting and inspiring. There are so many beautiful timbers you can use for this project that you will not be short of choice.

**6** Now the shaping and sanding of the face and edge is done you can cut the ring for the arch. To do this, fix the outside edge of the disc to the birch faceplate with extra-strong duct tape. Make sure you've wrapped the tape around enough that it's fully stuck down and cannot come loose.

**7** The width of the arch is 60mm so, with a low lathe speed, use a parting tool to make your first plunge cut about 6mm deep at the right width. Once done, make a second cut directly next to it to prevent the tool binding. Then make small cuts in either slot until you break through into the birch-ply.



**8** After you've broken through, carefully sand the inside edge of your arch before removing the tape and taking your ring away from the birch ply. Be careful when unwrapping the ring that you don't drop it as it is fairly brittle.

**9** Once released from the ply, mark the central divide line of the two arches along the grain using a rule and pencil. It's best to lay the ring on a piece of router matting to stop it slipping around.

**10** Using either a bandsaw or handsaw cut along your lines to give you your two arches.

**11** Finish tidying the two arches by sanding bottoms flat on a sanding disc. Now turn the piece over and sand the reverse of the arches, which so far haven't been touched, but also the inside back edge which was closest to the birch backplate. This can be done by hand which makes the job nice and easy. Make sure all the surfaces are nice and smooth.

**12** The design shows five candles being used on this arch so you need to find the dead centre of the arch. This can be done very simply by fixing a piece of timber held in a vice with the timber sticking up from the jaws 30mm or so. Then butt the arch against the piece of timber, measure the length of the arch, halve the measurement and mark the halfway point on the scrap wood before using a square to mark the centre of the arch. Repeat this for the other arch or arches you have created.

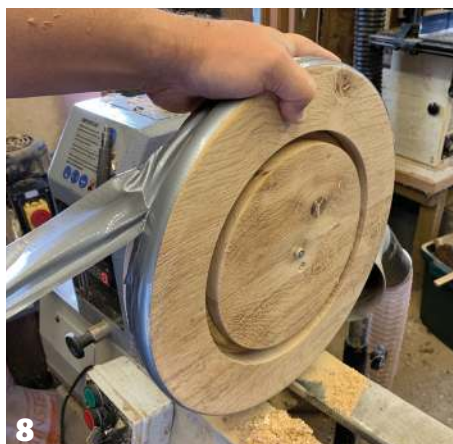
## Candle holders and base sections

**13** The candle holders are fixed to the arch with 6mm dowel, so all of the 6mm-diameter fixing holes are required to be 20mm in from the outer edge. For the correct spacing simply divide the spacing equally between all five holes using the middle hole as your starting point.

**14** So that's the main arch finished and you can move on to the supporting feet/bases. Keeping with the same theme as the arch itself, take a second piece of your chosen timber and turn it to a 80mm disc, mounting it on to a screw chuck. Shape the base and keep the top surface dead flat as this will be the join area between the base and the arch. Once shaped you can sand it.

**15** Just like the arch itself, after shaping the base take it off the lathe and over the bench and scribe across the centre along the grain before cutting it into two halves with your handsaw or bandsaw.

The processes involved in making the arch are all very simple. The next phase is the candle holders. The shape you choose to make them is up to you. I have chosen a fairly simple form but five are required, and they are spaced reasonably close to each other, so any discrepancies in shape or size will clearly be visible. So take your time on the next steps to ensure you get every holder as close to the required form as possible.







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**16** Cut six blocks of timber to size, having one spare handy in case of an error. The battery-operated LED candles I am using measure 22mm in diameter so I am using a 22mm Forstner bit to drill to depth the hole in the end grain of my five blocks, but the hole size should match the candles you use. For safety, use a clamp to secure the block while drilling.

**17** After drilling the 22mm-hole, drill a second 6mm-diameter hole in the side of the block, halfway up and halfway through the block. This will be used to fix the candle holder to the arch after it's been turned. To ensure you drill the block in the same position every time, add a piece of scrap wood clamped to the drill table to act as a fence.

**18** Start by turning the blocks between centres inserting your tailstock revolving live centre into the 22mm holes. Rough down to a cylinder and cut a small tenon to hold in the your chuck. Once secure in your chuck, taper the front face down into the 22mm hole then sand and finish this area.

**19** Now you've tidied up the front of all the holders, set them aside. Create a friction drive by holding a piece of scrap wood in your chuck and create a gentle taper down to 20mm at the hole in your holders. Once cut, place the candle holder hole onto the friction drive, bring up the tailstock revolving centre and shape the holder.

**20** After shaping the holder to your desired shape, stop the lathe, remove the tailstock and check the hold of the candle holder on the friction drive. If it is secure, use a low lathe speed and turn the end to shape and sand it. If the wood is not secure, remove it off the lathe and sand the very end of the holder to shape. Repeat the process with the other holders.

**21** Now cut five pieces of dowel to 35mm long. Glue the dowels into the drilled holes on the arch.

**22 & 23** Glue the candle holders to the arch and, to help ensure alignment, fit the candles in place to see that they are upright. Work quickly so the adhesive doesn't dry. Once done, glue on the feet. It is wise to also drill screw the feet on for added security.

**24** You have now made a candle arch with battery candles. I hope you have enjoyed it. ●



24



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# Community news

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

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

## 2020 SHOWS AND EVENTS

### Tennessee Association of Woodturning Symposium

When: 24-25 January 2020  
Where: Marriott Hotel & Convention Center, Franklin, TN, US  
Web: [www.tnwoodturners.org](http://www.tnwoodturners.org)

### Turnfest

When: 24-25 January 2020  
Where: Seaworld Resort & Water Park, Main Beach, Queensland, Australia  
Web: [www.turnfest.com.au](http://www.turnfest.com.au)

### Florida Woodturning Symposium

When: 7-9 February 2020  
Where: Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center, 39034 Country Road 452 Leesburgh, FL 34788, US  
Web: [www.floridawoodturningsymposium.com](http://www.floridawoodturningsymposium.com)

### The Midlands Woodworking Show

When: 27-28 March 2020  
Where: Newark Showground, Lincoln Rd, Winthorpe, Newark, NG24 2NY  
Web: [www.nelton.co.uk](http://www.nelton.co.uk)

### Totally Turning

When: 28-29 March 2020  
Where: Saratoga Springs City Centre, 522 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, US  
Web: [woodworker.org/about-totally-turning](http://woodworker.org/about-totally-turning)

### Les Forgaxes Woodworking Festival

When: 24-26 April 2020  
Where: Pravia, Asturias, Spain  
Web: [www.forgaxes.com](http://www.forgaxes.com) & [www.tornyfusta.com](http://www.tornyfusta.com)

### Woodworks@Daventry

When: 15-16 May 2020  
Where: Daventry Leisure Centre, Lodge Road, Daventry, NN11 4FP  
Web: [www.tudor-rose-turners.co.uk](http://www.tudor-rose-turners.co.uk)

### AAW Symposium 2020

When: 4-7 June 2020  
Where: Kentucky Exposition Center



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE AWGB

Tim Yoder is one of the demonstrators at the AWGB symposium

937 Phillips Lane, Louisville, KY 40209, US  
Web: [www.woodturner.org](http://www.woodturner.org)

### Saskatchewan Woodturners Symposium 2020

When: 17-17 July 2020  
Where: Regina Trades & Skills Centre 1275 Albert St, Regina, SK, S4R 2R4, Canada  
Contact: James (Bryan) Milne  
Email: [jbmilne@accesscomm.ca](mailto:jbmilne@accesscomm.ca)

### Turn-On! Chicago 2020

When: 24-26 July 2020  
Where: Pheasant Run Resort, 4051 East Main Street, St. Charles, IL 60174, US  
Web: [www.chicagowoodturners.com](http://www.chicagowoodturners.com)

### Woodturning Weekender 2020

When: 1-2 August 2020  
Where: Orchards Event Venue, New Road, East Malling, Kent, ME19 6BJ  
Web: [www.chestnutproducts.co.uk](http://www.chestnutproducts.co.uk)

### SWAT 2020

When: 28-30 August 2020  
Where: Waco Convention Centre, 100 Washington Ave, Waco, Texas, US  
Web: [www.swaturners.org](http://www.swaturners.org)

### Yandles Woodworking Show

When: 11-12 September 2020  
Where: Hurst, Martock TA12 6JU  
Web: [www.yandles.co.uk](http://www.yandles.co.uk)

### AWGB Seminar

When: 9-11 October 2020  
Where: Yarnfield Training & Conference Centre, Yarnfield, Stone, ST15 0NL  
Web: [www.awgb.co.uk](http://www.awgb.co.uk)

### Virginia Woodturning Symposium

When: 7-8 November 2020  
Where: Expoland, 277 Expo Rd, Fishersville, VA 22939, US  
Web: [www.virginiawoodturners.com](http://www.virginiawoodturners.com)



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# Pewter in turning: further explorations

In the third and final part of this series, Andy Coates takes the use of this decorative metal to a higher level



**In parts one and two of this three-part series I have looked at the basics and beyond of using pewter as an adornment to woodturning. Before moving on to the ideas in this article it might be a good idea to recap on those articles or read them if you have not already done so, specifically the safety information.**

Pewter is a wonderful material to work with due to its softness, ability to be melted, cast, and turned, and the precious-metal-like look of it when polished, so it is a superb addition to our decorative armoury.

In the process of designing these articles I have had several ideas that have not ended up here for one reason or another: metal spinning, flat sheet work, creating plugs for voids on curved surfaces, and the production of decorative pewter butterflies for stabilising cracks on turned work, but they are there for future exploration.

## Safety

Before continuing it is perhaps wise to underscore the basic safety considerations involved in working with pewter. More detailed information can be found in the previous two articles.

- Appropriately rated safety eye and face protection should be used at all times.
- Long-sleeved gloves with forearm protection should be used.
- Clothing and footwear should be appropriate to protect against splashes of molten material.
- A fire extinguisher should be sited close to the work area.
- When pouring molten pewter always ensure the mould is flat and stable.
- REMEMBER, when using a heat source, make sure there are no flammable materials nearby and to turn the heat source off after pouring.



## ◀ Making a pre-tenoned mould

As previously discussed, the bone of the cuttlefish is a highly usable material for making moulds for casting pewter. In a slight change to my previous practice, this mould is made to produce a boss with an included tenon for mounting on the chuck.

Having decided what size of boss is required, the cuttlefish bone is drilled with a Forstner bit of this diameter to only 5-6mm deep. A second Forstner bit is then used to drill on the resulting centre mark to a diameter suitable for your chuck jaws. I made mine at 40mm to suit a set of O'Donnell jaws.

The pewter is melted and a digital infra-red thermometer is used to ensure the pewter is at the optimum temperature for pouring (between 260°C and 290°C). Overheating the pewter results in discolouration on the surface and the production of slag, which then has to be removed. Using appropriate safety practice the pewter is poured into the mould and then left to completely cool.



Cuttlefish bone mould



Checking temperature of molten pewter



Casting cooling

## Preparing the boss

The cast boss is mounted directly into the O'Donnell jaws on the scroll chuck and a negative rake scraper is used to clean and flatten the surface. A large piece of paper laid on the lathe bed catches the shavings for recycling later. Once the surface is clean and flat it is abraded with conventional abrasives down to 240 grit. 'oooo' wirewool is then used to produce a fine finish. Next, the face and edges are polished with metal polish and a soft tissue.

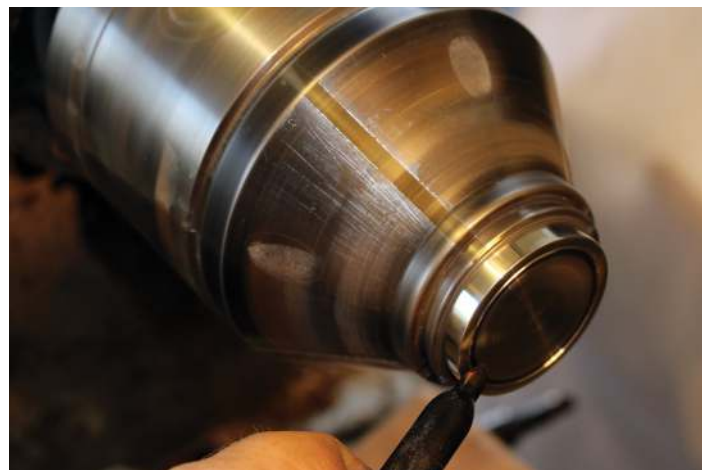
With the tip of a detail tool a V-cut is made a few millimetres from the outside edge. This will frame a decorative effect. To the inside of this cut a thick line is drawn using a marker pen on the surface. This will be the reference edge for the decorative effect.



Cutting a definition line



Cleaning the face with a negative rake scraper



Marking a working edge after the definition cut



## Decorative tools

Decorative punches are ideal for use with pewter. While many are intended for use on leather they are still suitable for pewter, but punches made for metalsmithing are even better. You may also find standard punches and drifts useful for mark making, or you can make your own from nails and Allen keys.

Standard woodturning texturing tools can also be used, but remember to run the lathe slower than you would for wood, as tools can quickly become

inefficient due to swarf build-up in the tool cutting surfaces.

Using a carving jig in the toolrest banjo, the chuck is mounted securely and locked in place. Mark one face of the punch to ensure that positioning is always done from the same face, and have this marked face towards you each time you make a mark. Using the gap between jaws as a guide, the initial four marks are made at the cardinal points, and then a further four between these. Obviously the size

of your boss, and the punch, will determine how many equally spaced marks you can make.

Hold the punch firmly in position at the inner edge of the black reference ring and drive the punch in with a sharp hit of a heavy mallet. It may require some practice to get the marks deep enough and regularly spaced/positioned, but persistence is everything. If you mess up the surface can always be re-cleaned and you can start again.



A range of punches



A range of texturing tools



Using a punch

## Cleaning up and adding further decoration

Once the punch marks have been made the surface can be tidied up with a quick rub of wire wool to remove the black reference line and any stray strands of pewter. A second V-cut is made to define a central boss. Try to make the second cut the same distance away from the motif as it is on the outside of the workpiece.

The central boss is now textured using a teardrop burr on a texturing tool. The lathe speed is about 600rpm and the cutter

is applied and the handle moved until the cutter rotates at speed. At this point the tool is swung to run the cutter in an arc upwards. Different approaches will produce different texture. You may need to practise until you find a texture you like. Once again the surface is cleaned up with wire wool.

Using appropriately sized jaws the workpiece can be reversed and the tenon cleaned up. Its dimensions now dictate the size of the recess to be cut in the lid of your box.



Cleaning the surface with wire wool



Defining a central boss



Decorating the central boss



## ◀ Patinating pewter

It would be perfectly acceptable to leave your cast and turned/ textured workpiece as it is, but patinating can add a further level of decorative effect. Pewter can be treated with what is often termed 'antiquing fluid', which is a cold patination treatment based on a strong acid. For pewter, nitric acid at 5% concentration can provide the required effect. Nitric acid is a powerful acid and appropriate safety measures should be taken: acid-proof gloves and eye protection are a must.

NB: If making your own patinating fluid do remember that acid **MUST** be added to water and not water to acid. Also wear appropriate protective equipment for the face, eyes, skin to protect yourself from accidental splashes and spillages.

The pewter must be perfectly clean prior to patinating, so

remove any grease with detergent if necessary and then rinse and dry the workpiece. Apply the patinating fluid with a natural-hair brush. The surface will react within 20-30 seconds and it will blacken. Wash off the acid using clean water and a blackened surface will be revealed. Using '0000' wire wool again carefully clean the surface, aiming to remove the patination from only the high spots of the texture. You can now re-polish the surface using metal polish. This produces a pleasing two-tone effect and highlights the glow of the pewter.

Your boss is now ready to be used as an inset in a turned object. I like to use these for box decoration, and find objects made from a darker wood species work best, so use either a dark wood or stain a lighter wood to suit.



Applying patinating fluid



Resulting appearance after cleaning

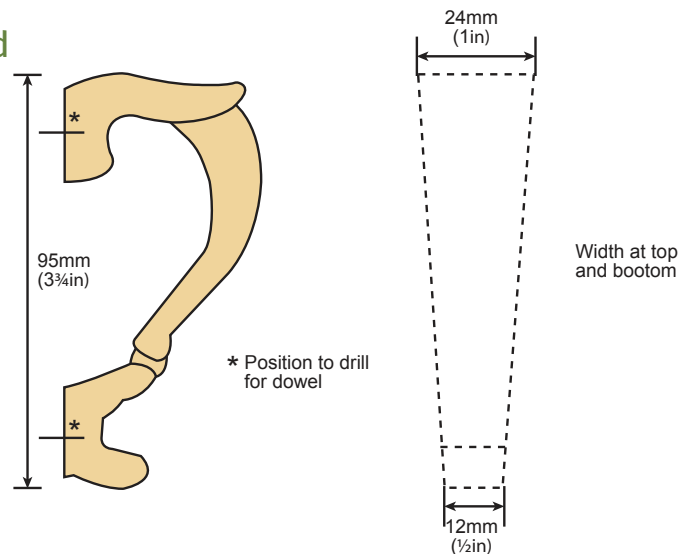


A boss fitted as a box decoration

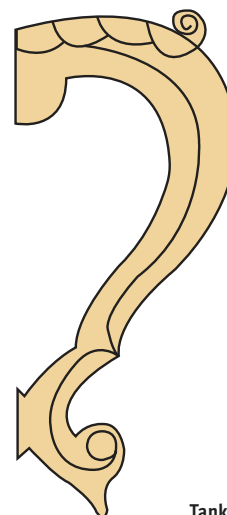
## Making a reusable, high-temperature silicone mould

Cuttlefish bone is a perfectly usable material for making moulds, but it is easy to damage or break them, and in time the heat shock can destroy them. In order to make a reusable mould the easiest option for the home cast-maker is high-temperature silicone. These silicone products are widely available from a number of sources – just ensure that they are suitable for casting metals.

I wanted to have the ability to make a repeatable cup handle to add to wooden tankards, and making them in pewter offered the possibility for a high-end tankard as opposed to a standard one. First I needed to carve a handle to make a mould from. The handle is carved from a block of sycamore 110mm x 25mm x 25mm thick. Keep the design simple the first time you try this. Once completed pencil a centreline around the handle. While



Carving a wooden handle



Alternative design for more experienced carvers

Tankard handle carving templates



this is not a project article I have included a drawing to give you a head start on carving a handle. This handle is for a tankard 110mm tall and 90mm in diameter.

The handle I make is tapered top to bottom, and to make a mould requires that it is level in the mould, so 1mm brass pins are pushed into the handle at appropriate places to make the centreline horizontal. This will, of course, mean you have to remove and clean up the resulting pewter copy of the pins, but

there will be some clean-up and finishing to do anyway.

The casting box is a simple, four-sided plywood box, with two loose sides that can be restrained with a rubber band. These sides make the removal of the mould easier later on. The inside of the box needs to be coated in a release agent to ensure that the silicone does not bond to it. Wax-based release agent is ideal for this, and should be available from the same source as the HT silicone. The carved handle should be similarly treated.



Making a casting box



Materials for mould-making

## First stage of the process

Forming the mould is a three-stage process. Enough silicone is mixed as per instructions to fill the casting box to a 10mm depth; this is the base pad of the mould. Allow this to fully cure. NB: Do not treat this surface with release agent. The next pour needs to bond fully with this surface.

Once cured, lay the carved handle on the surface of the base pad and mix a second batch of silicone to provide enough to fill the mould to the centreline of the handle. Pour the silicone from

as high as you dare and pour slowly to ensure no air is introduced during the process. Allow this pour to fully cure.

Once cured, the handle can be gently pulled from the silicone to check the impression. At this point you need to add some short location dowels – I used steel rod cut to length. Drill holes at the corners and push the dowels in place. Before you do the second pour the whole of the silicone surface and interior needs to be treated with a release agent. Silicone will fully bond with silicone so

failing to do this is fatal. Talcum powder is the ideal treatment here. Dust talc all over the surfaces of the first mould half and then blow or tap the excess out. Replace the handle firmly in the cast impression and treat it with talc in the same way. Mix and pour the third batch of silicone, ensuring that it covers the handle by at least 5mm, and allow it to cure. Dismantle the casting box and gently pull apart the two mould halves.

You may have some flashing to remove with a craft knife.



Base pad poured



Handle on base pad



Second pour to centreline



Handle removed from first mould half



Handle replaced and talced



## ◀ Casting a handle

Once the two halves are ready you need to cut a pouring sprue and an air-release vent. The sprue is simply a cone, half cut in each mould half, and the vent is similarly cut at a low point on the mould – this allows air to escape when the pewter is poured. A sharp craft knife is ideal for this. Be aware that some molten pewter may also escape, so position the vent away from you when pouring.

Put the two halves together and make two boards to sandwich the mould between using clamps. Apply only enough pressure to keep the mould together, and avoid deforming the mould. Make sure the

mould is stable and secure, and the vent pointing away from you, and pour the molten pewter into the mould and leave to fully cool. Once cool the mould can be split and the cast handle removed.

The first clean-up task is to remove the sprue, vent, and the levelling pins. This can be achieved with hacksaws, burrs on a drive, hand files, or snips. The surfaces can then be cleaned and polished. If you have a bench polisher then mops and compound can speed up this process, but do be careful as pewter is very soft and it is easy to destroy a casting by removing too much material.

The faces on the two mounting points of the handle need to be shaped to fit the diameter of the cup, mug, or tankard they will be fitted to. This is easily achieved using a bobbin sander but does take some practice. Using a half-round hand file is less aggressive and less prone to destroying the handle by removing too much pewter. Using a table vice, 6mm holes can be drilled into the centre of the end faces and a short dowel glued in place to allow fitting to the tankard in 2mm-deep location holes. Two-part epoxy suitable for metals is the preferred adhesive for this.



Cutting a vent and sprue



Supported mould and pouring



Cast handle

## Conclusions

Using pewter on turned objects has proved to be far more interesting, exciting, and rewarding than I could have imagined. As a woodworker, metal work has always seemed the dirty, difficult relative, but working with pewter is none of these things. The ability to produce a small range of repeatable components, handles specifically, is an incredible boon, and one that paid for itself very quickly.

Making HT moulds can be a tricky process with a steep learning curve and a dreadful failure rate in the early stages, but it is achievable with thought and care, and, for me, with a little guidance from two pewtersmiths. And there are many refinements I could make to improve the process and outcomes, but these will come with time. Thankfully the cleaning-up process is quite therapeutic. ●



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# Lidded sugar caddy

Life is sweet for Emiliano Achaval making this functional item for the home



**I enjoy turning utilitarian items. I love to make something that is going to be used, handled, moved daily around the kitchen. I have several bowls that see heavy use. They have a patina and a weathered look that would be impossible to reproduce. The more I use them, the more beautiful they look. Don't get me wrong – I do turn bowls that will never be able to hold soup or a salad and I also turn art pieces that will only be handled when they need cleaning.**

To follow up on practical and useful pieces for the kitchen (I did the tea caddy a few months ago), in this article I will show how I made a stylish lidded sugar bowl with spoon. I will take a central core from the bowl to create the lid. This

saves on waste and is a technique that you can use more often, getting more items from your blank. I knew I wanted to keep this turning, so I chose a timber to match the tea caddy: milo (*Thespesia populnea*). A little side note about milo. I'm the invited artist to an art exhibition sponsored in part by the Nature Conservancy. The only requirement is to use woods native to Hawaii. Milo is not on the list of approved timbers.

Scientists now consider that milo got here on the canoes of the travelling Polynesians, thus making it an introduced species. If you ever have the opportunity to turn milo, you will see why ancient Hawaiians made sure that wherever they were going, milo was readily available.

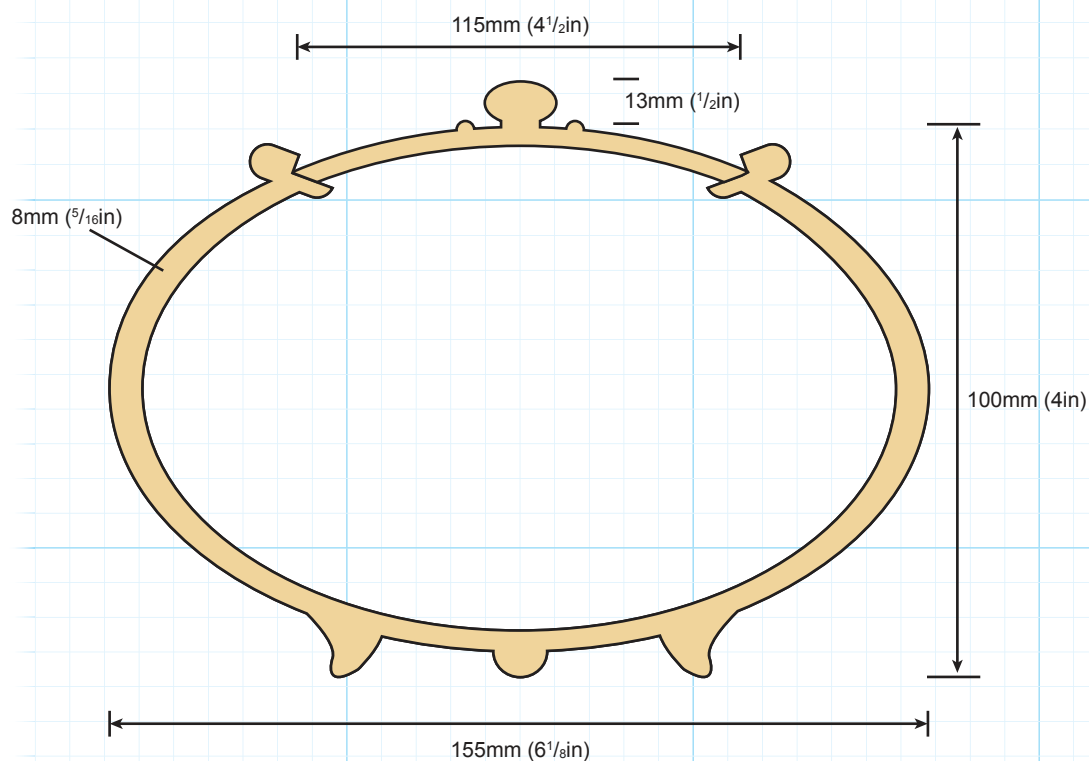


**TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

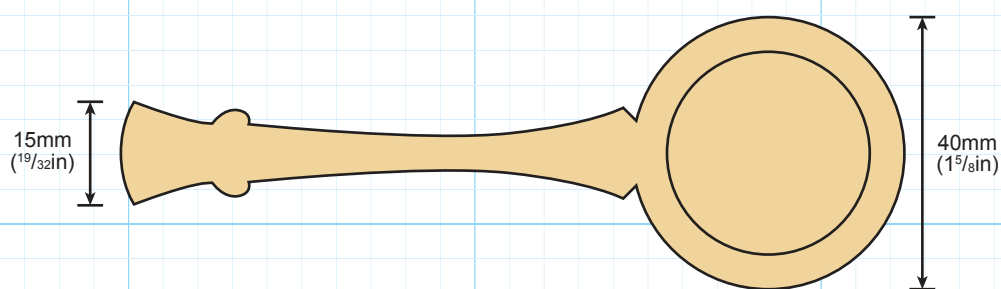
- Personal and respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- Bowl gouge
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Angled or square-end scraper
- French-curve scraper
- Parting tool
- Hollowing tool
- Bead-forming tool
- Drive spur
- Revolving tailstock centre
- Chuck
- Tailstock drill chuck
- Drill bit
- Forstner bit
- Fine-toothed handsaw
- Glue gun
- Rotary carving unit cutters/ carving tool or file

**MATERIALS**

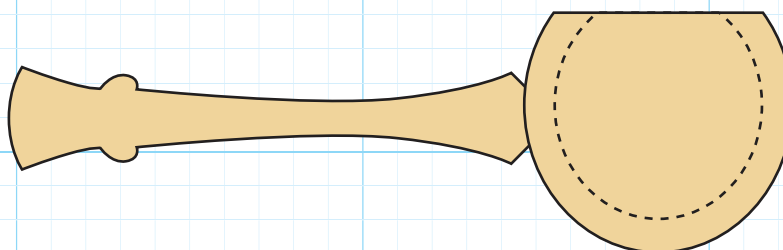
- Faceplate grain-oriented blank of your choice for bowl
- Spindle grain-oriented blank for the spoon
- Abrasives to 320 grit
- Cyanoacrylate adhesive
- Finish of your choice
- Hot-melt adhesive



TOP VIEW



SIDE VIEW



## ◀ Outside of the caddy & lid

**1 & 2** Select your bowl blank, where the grain is running at 90° to the axis of the lathe bed, and mount it between centres. You could also attach a faceplate with some heavy duty screws. Once aligned the best you can, rotate the timber blank by hand to ensure the toolrest assembly does not come into contact with the wood. Once checked, select a low lathe speed setting and use a bowl gouge to make a tenon to suit your chuck jaws at the tailstock end of the blank. With the tenon cut, shape the bowl.

**3** To shape the front end, you can work left-handed and cut from the drive spur outwards to the widest part, but it is easier to go against the grain, leave the shape slightly over size and clean up later when you have better access. Leave enough timber for a bead later. Also, cut a tenon on this end in order to hold the lid and allow you to finish off the bottom section better. Once cut, mount the blank on to this tenon.

**4 & 5** Now you can work without the revolving tailstock in place, giving you better access to clean up the lower section of the bowl. Refine the shape as required. If you have any tool marks or undulations you need to correct a scraper will help. I use a negative-rake scraper.

**6** Adjust the tenon on the bottom to fit your chuck jaws. Make sure there is a square shoulder for the jaws to sit squarely against to help with stability. Note the overall shape of the bowl. This is the shape you are after. Notice the extra wood for the bead at the top.

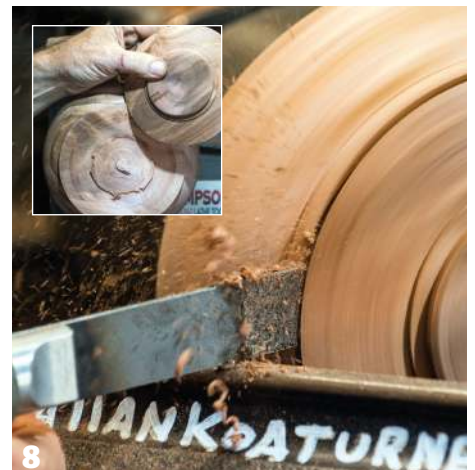
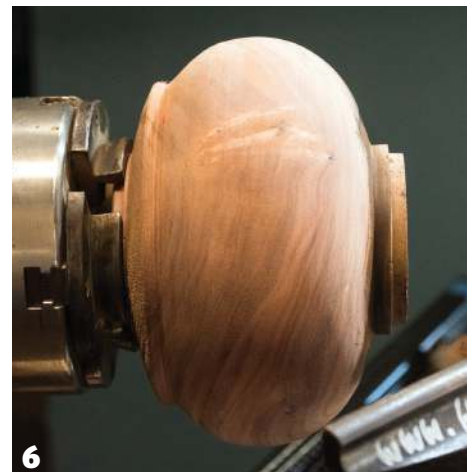
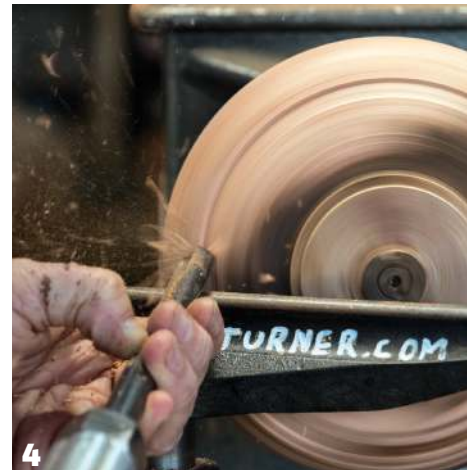
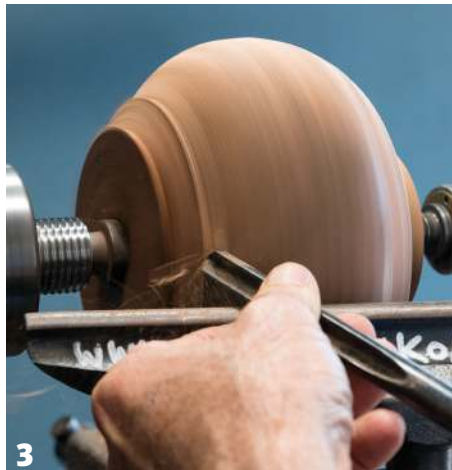
**7** Reverse the bowl, hold it by the base tenon and bring up the revolving tailstock centre to support the work. Now, using a bowl gouge and bead-forming tool, cut a bead to set the lid parameters.

## Creating the lid

**8** To create the lid, you cut a small core/shallow cone-type shape of timber using either a specialist micro/small straight coring or a strong machined or solid parallel-length parting tool 2 or 3mm wide, not one with a wasted/stamped tapered tang 2 or 3mm parting tool. It is best held in a long metal handle. For safety reasons, if you do not possess such a tool or are in any doubt whatsoever, make a lid with another piece of timber.

To cut the core, make a shallow, angled parting cut just inside the inner edge to start creating the cone shape. You cannot present the blade too far into the wood without creating a clearing cut to prevent binding. So make multiple light plunging cuts, alternating between a shaping cut and a clearance cut. Do not cut all the way through.

Continue until you have about a 25mm tenon at the bottom and then remove the revolving centre and press on the side of the lid to see if the tenon will snap across the grain. If it does not, make another cut and repeat until it does.

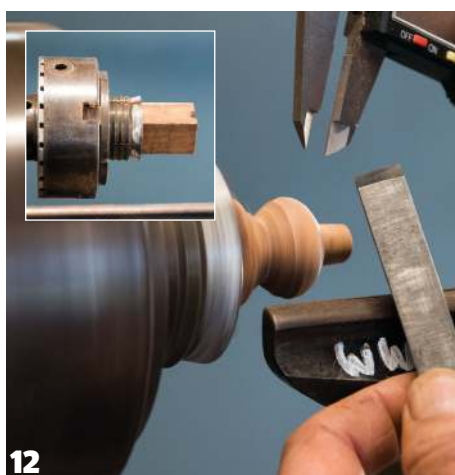
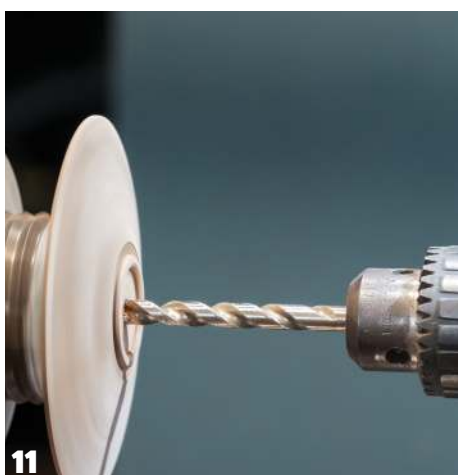






**9** With the lid parted off, remove the bowl from the lathe and mount the core out on the tenon. Use a bowl gouge to clean up and shape the underside of the lid. Now measure the width of the your chuck jaws closed all the way. Transfer that measurement to the lid and make a shallow recess. Once cut, You can leave this small recess or remove it later on. I left it in place. Clean up the outer edges of the lid and then sand the edges and underside.

**10** Now reverse the lid and hold it on the chuck using the recess you just made. Using a bowl gouge, shape the lid. The lid is going to have a knob, so add a decorative bead, V-cut or other decorative effect around the centre if you want. I added a small bead. Once done, sand it.



**11** With the lid shaped, you need a knob to lift the lid with later on, so drill a 6mm hole in the centre using a tailstock drill chuck and a drill bit. If there is enough thickness make it a blind hole so you avoid having the tenon coming through when you fix the knob to the lid and cutting off and cleaning up any excess later.

**12** Now you need to turn a simple knob for the lid. Find a piece of wood at least 32mm and length. Mount the wood in your chuck and turn a tenon long enough to fit on the lid and shape the holding section as you choose. Once shaped, sand as much as you can reach, then part off and sand any remaining areas left.



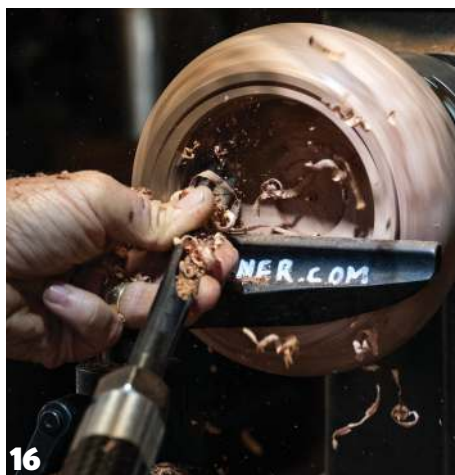
**13** Glue the knob into the drilled hole. If you have a slight protrusion of the tenon, sand it clean.

## Hollowing the inside of the caddy

**14** Put the sugar caddy back on the chuck. Measure exactly the width of the lid and mark this on the bowl so you know the width required for the lid opening. The lid does not need to be a tight fit, but it shouldn't be too sloppy either. The first thing you will do is cut the lip/inside of the bead previously cut where the lid will sit. Make small parting cuts until you have the right depth and width. Check regularly as you go.

**15** To speed up hollowing out, drill a central hole with a Forstner bit. This central section is the hardest to turn due to it turning at a slower speed than the rest. So anything to help. It also allows you quick and easy access to remove the rest.

**16** It is now time to do the main hollowing. The open form allows you to do most of the internal form with a bowl gouge. Make multiple light cuts to remove as much waste as possible. The shavings will get thrown out to the widest internal areas and will inhibit cutting. Never be tempted to remove these with your fingers while the lathe is running. The shavings get compacted and your fingers can get caught in the shavings. Stop the lathe regularly and clear them out to allow you to continue shaping the inside as far as you can.





**17** To cut the undercut section, select a swan-necked or articulated-headed hollowing tool of your choice. Create the curvature required and, once done, sand the outside and inside.

**18** There are three feet on the underside of my vessel. There does not have to be and if you do not wish to do this, reverse the piece and just doctor the tenon to create the foot you want. To create the tripod foot arrangement an indexing unit makes it easy. Now remove the bowl and determine the width and size of the feet and mark out the waste areas.

**19** There are a lot of tools available to carve the feet. Files, rasps, microcarvers – the list is endless. Use whatever you have available, anything that will get the job done. I'm using a mini long-necked angle grinder unit fitted with a toothed disc. Shape the feet, and blend them into the main body form. Check regularly that the curves of the body form flow nicely through the open feet areas and such like and make adjustments until everything works well together. Sand to a fine finish.

## Spoon

**20** For the spoon/scoop, mount a piece of spindle grain-oriented timber, where the grain is running parallel to the bed bars, about 175mm or so long between centres and using a spindle roughing create a cylinder of timber.

**21** Refine the shape using a spindle gouge, ensuring you create a nice handle and a ball end, which will be hollowed out to create the spoon. Once shaped, sand it.

**22** To hollow out the spoon, and not mark the bowl of the spoon by holding it in the chuck, mount a scrap of wood in the chuck and create a jam chuck. To hold the bowl of the scoop see pic 23 to see the wooden jam chuck section sits in and proud of the chuck jaws. Cut a slot for the handle to locate into the side of the wooden jam chuck. You can adjust the slot to allow you to position the handle to allow you to angle the hole in relation to the handle as required. The fit was snug, but to make sure it was safe and secure, I added a little bit of hot-melt glue on the outside and all around it. Clean-up is easy. The hot-melt glue will peel off or can be softened with denatured alcohol.

**23** Drill to depth a small hole then hollow out the scoop. You want to undercut the rim a little. Once shaped, sand it, take the scoop out of the jam chuck, clean up the glue and sand clean.

**24 & 25** Now that you have the scoop ready, you can cut the slot in the edge of the lid to allow the spoon handle to sit into it. I used a homemade sanding jig on the lathe, but you can use a rasp or rotary unit to do the same. Measure often for a nice fit that is not tight, but neither must it be sloppy. Once done, apply a finish of your choice to everything. If all has gone well, you now have a finished sugar caddy with spoon. ●





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# Natural-edge box

Andrew Potocnik makes an unusual little container



**I'm precious about wood so I think long and hard about scarce timbers I sometimes use. Most often they lay dormant in my stash and wait for just the right project. Unfortunately that means many will still be there when I'm gone.**

A small log of Australian sandalwood (*Santalum spicatum*) was awaiting its purpose in my life, and when I looked at it standing upright on my bench, the penny dropped. It's crazy how you can have a piece of wood sitting there for years without seeing it as anything more than a piece of wood to possibly use one day, and then a moment of insight tells you exactly what it can be used for. My mind was off on its journey of potential variations and a series of sketches evolved. Strangely, this is how my

brain works, frustrating as it can be, struggling for ideas, then flourishing with possibilities once the trigger is flicked. The size meant I could have created a vase, spoon, tealight, candlestick holder and such like, but to maximise use of the small log I thought a simple, natural-edge box would work well.

We all have different ways of arriving at designs, ways of using our best wood and what inspires us. The bottom line is go with what works for you, and never stop looking – looking for stimulation, looking at what your wood tells you, looking at existing work. Given time, we all find the perfect use for most of the wood we hoard, and for the pieces we haven't, then there is still time.

# Focus on Australian sandalwood

- **Australian sandalwood:** (*Santalum spicatum*)

- **Grows:** Southwest Australia

- **Density:** 950 kg/m<sup>3</sup>

Sandalwood is a slow-growing, long-living tree growing to about 3-8m tall with a trunk of 10-30cm in diameter. Australian sandalwood generally has a heartwood pale yellow to pale or dark brown with sapwood being pale yellow to creamy in colour. Its texture is very fine and even. Shrinkage is about 2.5% radial and 3.5% tangential. There are about 25 related species occurring in Asia, Australia,

Indonesia, and the South Pacific Islands.

Traditional markets of Hong Kong and China continue to be the largest consumers of Western Australian sandalwood. Demand for sandalwood continues to grow, with new markets developing in Malaysia, Singapore, India and Thailand. Initially the wood was exported to China to be ground down and burnt as joss sticks on ceremonial occasions. It is also used for carving and the making of trinket boxes. Sandalwood oil obtained by distillation is used in soap, perfumes and medicines.

The sandalwood industry is one of

the oldest export industries in Western Australia. First exports were recorded in 1844, continuing ever since, and at one time, wild Western Australian sandalwood provided 30% of the state's export income.

Most old-growth sandalwood was destroyed in clearing of land for wheat growing, hence its natural growth area has continued to be reduced due to the expansion of farming. Now it is being grown as a plantation tree requiring a maturation period of 50-100 years, and is still considered a scarce source of wood.



The trunk section my blank was cut from



A branch section turned into a tall container showing side grain of sandalwood and some very fine knots found in this wood



Grain of my blank, sanded and partly oiled



A cross-grain section of root wood, showing drastic contrast in colour between sapwood and true wood



End grain of root section of about 30 mm diameter, partly oiled



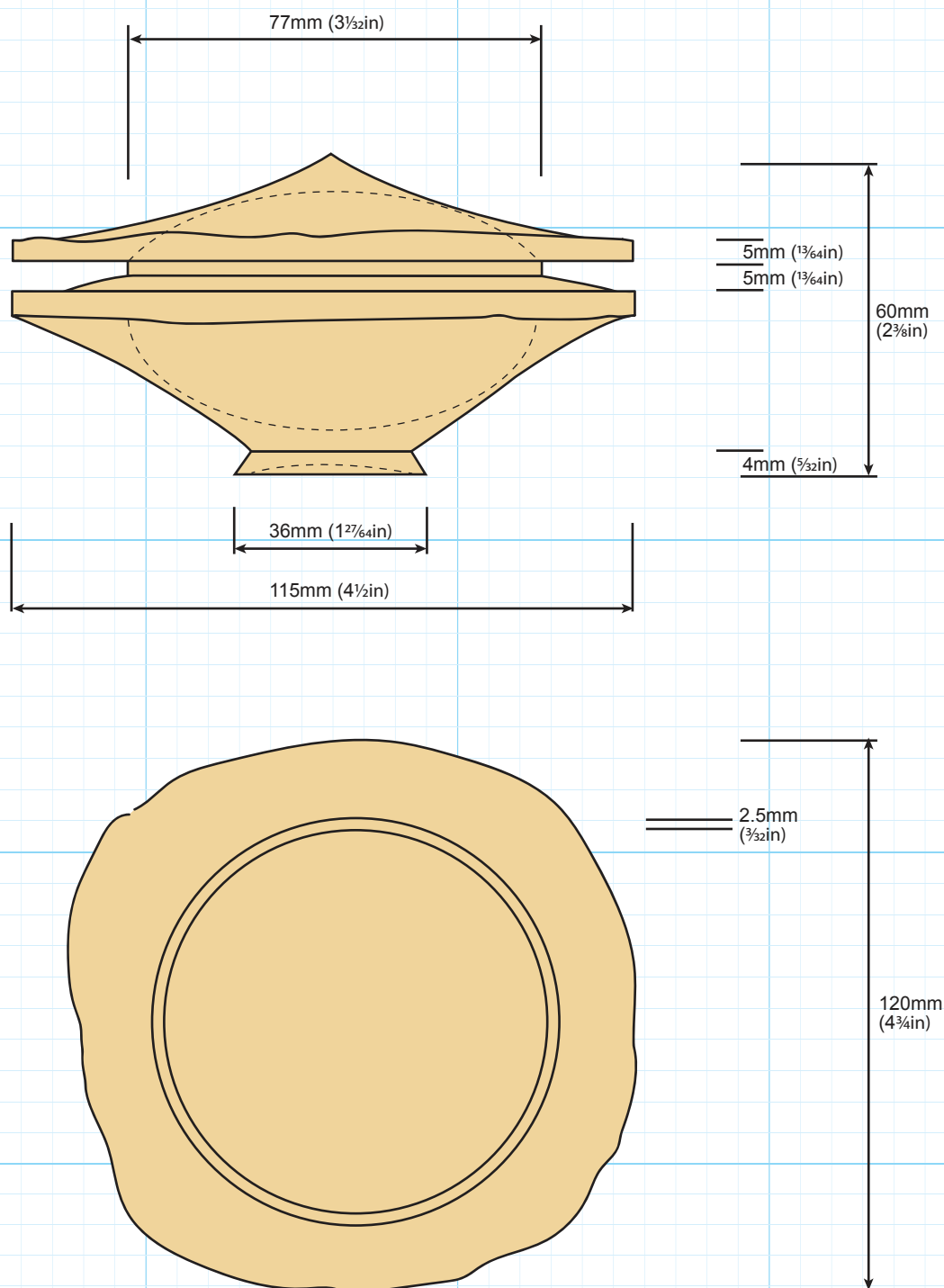
**TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

- Personal and respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- Bowl or spindle gouge
- Round skew chisel
- 3mm parting tool
- Round-nosed scraper
- Granny-tooth scraper
- Chuck
- Revolving tailstock centre with ring end

- Drive spur
- Fine-toothed saw

**MATERIALS**

- Timber of your choice
- Cyanoacrylate adhesive
- Abrasive down to 320 grit
- Ultra-fine non-woven abrasive pad
- Finish of your choice



**1** Find the centre at each end of your log by measuring the halfway point across several angles and then take an average reading. Punch the centre point but be prepared to adjust the blank once mounted between centres. Rotate the blank by hand to see whether its outer edges are centred as close as possible and that it clears the toolrest. Once done, the ends can be trimmed down and a tenon established at each end.

A bark inclusion needed attention so I decided this would be at the base of the box where it narrows and would most likely remove the unwanted material. I generally like to include features such as this, however, this time it would not suit the type of box I was trying to create. You can also see how dense the growth rings of this wood are, making it a joy to turn.

**2** With tenons turned at both ends, it's time to separate the lid and base of the box. To minimise waste, use a thin parting tool to separate the lid and base sections. When parting, always make sure to make the gap wide enough that the tool will not bind and stop when you're down to about 12mm of wood left, then use a saw to separate the two parts.

## The base

**3** Fit the base section in your chuck on the tenon, trim the face and create a small spigot/tenon to join into the lid. Here I planned to have a recess on the inside of the lid so it can sit on top of the protruding rim of the box. This means that I can have a space between the two natural-edged outer surfaces.

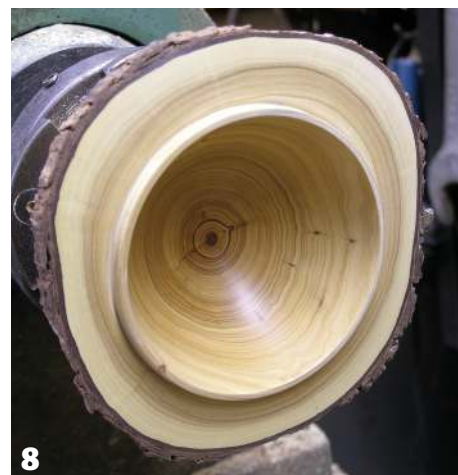
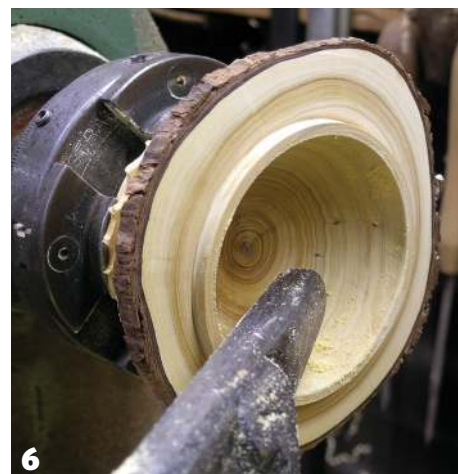
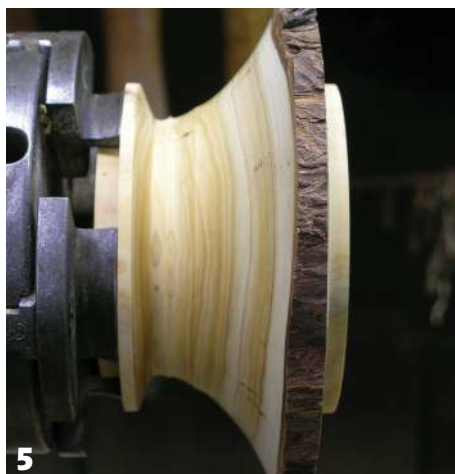
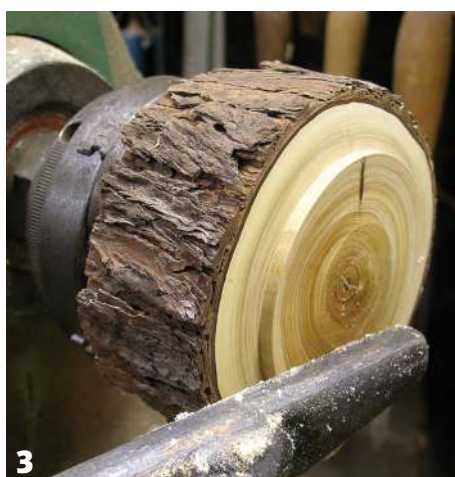
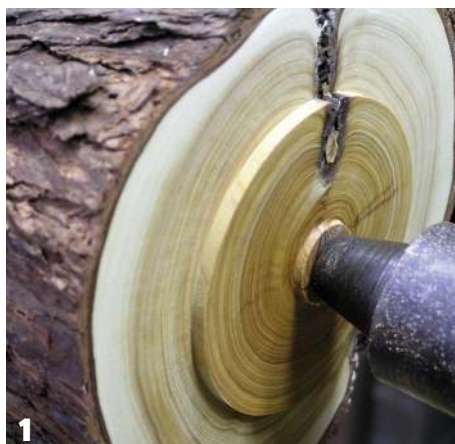
**4** I like to create crisp intersections between mating surfaces and in situations such as this I opt to make a small V-cut with a skew chisel, which means that after sanding I won't lose definition of form. The tenon should not be sanded so it stays clean, crisp and true.

**5** Time to remove unwanted material from the underside of the box body and establish how thin the natural edge should be in proportion to the overall diameter and height of the box. The profile needs to also take into account the diameter of the protruding tenon. You'll need to have a mental image of the internal profile of the box and aim to keep wall thickness relatively thin. I aim for about 5mm at its thinnest.

**6** The interior of the box can now be shaped using a bowl or spindle gouge.

**7** Final shaping can be done with a round-nosed scraper. Take delicate, light finishing cuts. This wood cuts and scrapes like the proverbial hot knife through butter. The shavings were powdery and smelled great, making it possibly the nicest wood I've ever turned.

**8** Once shaped, sand the top sections through to 320 grit and then ultra-fine non-woven abrasive pad. The resulting surface has a wonderful lustre.







**9** To finish off the base it's necessary to reverse it. I opted to make a jam chuck from scrap wood fitted to a scroll chuck because the tenon of the box will not be marked, unlike if you mounted it in a chuck.

**10** Fitted into the jam chuck it's best to support your wood as long as possible with the revolving tailstock centre in place. Shape as much of the required profile as possible.

**11 & 12** To complete the base, you'll need to remove the tailstock. Check the piece is held securely, select a low lathe speed and use a scraper to hollow the base taking light passes to prevent a catch before cutting another definition line where the foot and body intersect.



**13** All surfaces need to be sanded and this is where the definition line allows you to sand to a crisp intersection of surfaces, rather than ending up with rounded meeting points. My tip is to cut the edge of your sandpaper rather than tearing it so you can sand right into the V-groove. Again I finished sanding with ultra-fine non-woven abrasive, leaving a subtle lustre which highlights the wonderful grain of this wood.

### The lid

**14** To create the lid, mount wood into a scroll chuck, trim the face flat and mark the required diameter of the recess that will rest on top of the box itself. I used Vernier callipers to help set my pencil guide marks. You could use dividers or a ruler.



**15** Clear out unwanted material with either a gouge or scraper before creating a neat shoulder that matches the diameter of the box's collar. I used a homemade 'granny-tooth scraper' to cut a straight shoulder that fits over the box. The remaining inner surface can be scraped smooth to a slight concave surface and then sanded.

**16** Time to test and see whether the gap between base and lid is visually appropriate, and if the natural edges of base and top suit each other. It's really a matter of thickness and my thought is that the top edge should be slightly thinner than that of the base.



17 Using a chuck in expansion mode, the lid is gripped in place but it's best to add security with the tailstock centre brought up to support the wood as you refine its final shape.

18 If you have long-nose jaws fitted to your chuck, and the lathe is stopped, it's possible to get your fingers between the jaws and use the good old finger gauge to determine how much wood you still have to play with as you trim down to a final shape.

19 As is often the case with log or branch sections of wood, there may be some cracks.. There were a few here and thin cyanoacrylate adhesive can be used to fill them and any space around small knots prior to refining the top.

20 Shaped to a fairly flat sweeping curve and small spike I sanded the top following my usual progression of abrasives. Here you can see how I use my fingers and thumb to bend the sandpaper in the lower half of the wood, so below centreline, so it gradually comes into contact with the wood, allowing me to bring it up to the natural edge as it touches, misses, and touches again.

21 With the wonderful fragrance this wood has, I was reluctant to apply any finish at all for fear of overriding the scent, but eventually settled on a wipe-on, wipe-off polyurethane in the hope that, once its odour diminishes, the fragrance of the sandalwood will take over and enrich the scent glands of anyone who comes near it. You can, of course, use any finish of your choice. I hope you have fun making this project in a timber of your choosing. ●





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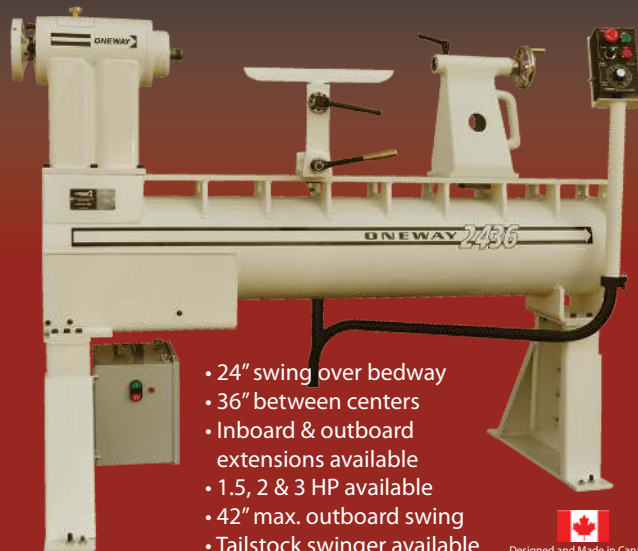
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# Traditional colouring techniques

This month the Editor challenges Richard Findley to try some old-school methods of colouring wood



**The challenge this month came in the form of a phone call from the Editor. 'You know how colouring is all the rage at the moment? I'd like you to experiment with traditional techniques, so fuming and making your own ebonising solution.' I'm aware of both techniques, but having never tried either I'm keen to have a go. I plan to conduct a few experiments then apply what I learn to a final project.**

As with many of these challenges, I have read about the use of these techniques in the past but have never been called upon to use them. So I have a base knowledge of roughly what I'd need and how to do it, but not much more than that. As usual, I turn to the internet to do a little research.

## Ebonising solution

I begin with the ebonising solution as I think there is likely to be a little preparation needed here. The solution is a mix of acetic acid and iron which, when applied to a wood with a tannin content, should turn it black. At the mention of acid most people (including me) get a little nervous, but acetic acid is actually no more exotic than the standard vinegar you might add to your fish and chips, and the iron can come from anything with an iron content, including steel items such as screws, nails and steel wool.

I do several searches online and read a number of articles and forum discussions about it. While there are several slightly differing opinions about the exact approach,

there is a general consensus that any vinegar can be used as a base liquid for the solution. I read a number of discussions about whether rusty screws and nails are needed – many seem to think they are, but it seems clean steel wool can be used as long as there isn't too much oil in it. Some wash it first but I know good quality 'oooo' steel wool used by furniture restorers is very fine (so should dissolve quite quickly) and very clean, so as not to make a mess of antique furniture.

I was slightly concerned about the length of time the steel wool might need to sit in the vinegar, but most seem to suggest a couple of weeks should be enough, so that should just about work for the article deadline (at least I have a good excuse for it being late this time).



## MAKING THE SOLUTION

My first stop is my local supermarket where I look for vinegar. I had no idea there would be so many options. Armed with the knowledge that any vinegar will do the job I look for the cheapest and find a choice of malt vinegar, which is the familiar brown liquid I would add to chips, or a clear version called distilled vinegar. It seems to me that a clear liquid will make it easier to monitor the progress of the chemical reaction so I splash out a full 40p on a 528ml bottle.



Distilled vinegar and steel wool to make the ebonising solution

On the way back to the workshop I call into my local tool and hardware shop and pick up a small pack of good quality '0000' steel wool, which at £2.79 also doesn't break the bank.

I always keep a few glass jars at the workshop – you just never know when they'll come in handy. A mayo jar with a screw-down lid should be ideal here. I'm not really certain about correct quantities or ratios so I tear off some steel wool and put it in the jar until it looks a bit over half full, then pour the vinegar over



Adding the vinegar to the steel wool

it until the jar is mostly full. I can't help feeling it should be more scientific than this, but hopefully it should work.

The final job is to drill a 3mm hole in the lid of the jar. Before my research I hadn't realised that the chemical reaction produces a certain amount of gas, which needs to escape, so this small hole should do the trick. I give the jar a good shake (with my finger over the hole) and put it to one side to do its thing. I also re-label the jar to make it clear what is inside, which is a sensible precaution.



The relabelled jar with the fresh solution

## Fuming

This seems to be a less complex process, but also involves a chemical reaction between the natural tannins in some types of wood and the gases that come from ammonia. A little reading proves that there are two main types of ammonia – a strong industrial version used for this purpose on a bigger, industrial scale, or household ammonia, which is effectively a cleaning product. For the purposes of this article, where accessibility (and safety) is important, I opt for the household version.

Ammonia doesn't seem readily available in supermarkets but I do find some in a small independent hardware store locally. At £2.30 this combination of products promises to be some of the cheapest methods I've ever used to colour wood.

## Health and safety

The innocuous sounding name 'household ammonia' on the front of the bottle is in stark contrast to the back of the bottle, where the list of hazard warnings is quite alarming. Reading the instructions, when mixed into water (importantly, not the other way around) it is used at about a 50:1 ratio of water to ammonia, but straight from the bottle it can severely burn skin and eyes, vapour damages lungs and immediate medical



Household ammonia

advice must be sought should any be swallowed. Throughout this process, when I handle ammonia I wear long sleeves, protective gloves, an FFA1P2 rated spray mask, eye protection and work in a well ventilated area (outside) just to be on the safe side.



Safety warnings on the ammonia



## Fuming experiments

Both these colouring techniques are best known for working on oak, but I'm curious to see if they do anything to other woods. I've seen fuming done before using a thick plastic dust extractor bag, but during my online research I saw a description of using a plastic stacking box with a locking lid for fuming small items. Having some of those in regular use in the workshop, this seems ideal.

I decide to begin with an experiment. I know that oak should show some sort of reaction, but I'm not sure about other woods. I cut sample pieces, around 100mm long in typical woods I have laying around in the workshop:

- Oak (*Quercus robur*)
- Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
- Steamed beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
- Sapele (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*)
- Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)
- American black walnut (*Juglans nigra*)
- Iroko (*Chlorophora excelsa*)

The fuming process was first discovered when it was noticed that oak boards stored in a stable darkened, caused by the fumes from naturally occurring ammonia in horse urine. Experiments proved it to be a great way of speeding up the natural darkening of some wood – particularly oak.

I carefully pour some ammonia into another glass jar and place it into the storage box, along with samples of the different woods, which I place on another piece of wood to allow the fumes to circulate. I'm guessing the part of the wood sitting on the baseboard won't change colour.

After 24 hours I carefully take the sealed box outside to allow the fumes to dissipate once the lid is opened, and take a look inside. I have a piece of each of the timbers to compare how the fuming has affected them. Each of them looks slightly 'aged' but really the oak is the only one with a significant colour change. It now looks closer to the walnut sample than to the original piece of oak. As predicted, the back of the sample has not changed colour. This confirms to me that oak is the wood I will use for my final project.



The wood samples ready for fuming



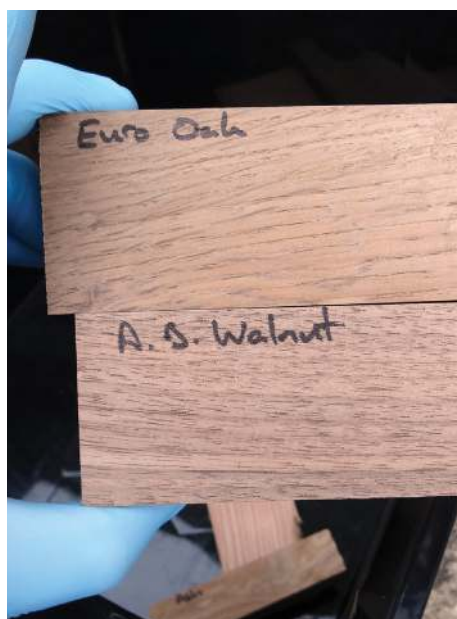
Laid out in the box with the jar of ammonia



Left to fume for 24 hours in the sealed box



The oak has the most colour change



The fumed oak is closer to the colour of walnut



Even the beech has changed colour a little, looking slightly more aged

## TWO (AND A BIT) WEEKS LATER...

Having left the steel wool in the vinegar for a good two weeks, giving the jar a good shake nearly every day, there is a layer of rust forming at the top of the liquid and it looks decidedly murky. I have paint strainers in the workshop from when I did a lot of spray finishing so I decide it would be a good idea to run the liquid through a filter before applying

it to any wood. I select another jar and filter into it. The new liquid is still murky, but at least it now has no bits floating in it. The remnant of the steel wool left in the original jar shows just how much has been dissolved, which I take as an encouraging sign. I think another two weeks would have seen it totally gone.



Filtering the solution



Still murky but now with no bits



The remnant of steel wool

## Fancy a cuppa?

My research had thrown up an interesting piece of information. It seems that this method of colouring wood works best on wet, or at least partially seasoned, wood. My issue, as I've mentioned before, is that all of my wood is prime furniture grade, seasoned timber, so I wonder if this will be an issue? One answer to this, apparently, is to apply a coat of strong tea to the wood before adding the vinegar and steel mix. Tea is full of tannin, so presumably adds to the effect.

As these articles are all about learning, I decide to give it a go. I use masking tape on an oak offcut to give me four sections to play with. The article I'd read about the tea hadn't gone into much detail about it, other than to say it should be strong.

Should I let it dry? Should it be wet when I apply the ebonising solution? I don't know, so I decide to leave one square bare as a reference, use just the ebonising solution on one, and apply tea to the other two, but leave one wet and dab the other dry.

I make a cup of tea using five standard teabags (the article said it should be strong) but don't add any of my usual milk or sugar. After letting it mash and cool for a good while I make a start on the experiment. I spread tea on two of the squares with a paintbrush and after a couple of minutes I dab one dry with paper towel. I then paint on the ebonising solution, starting with the bare wood square.

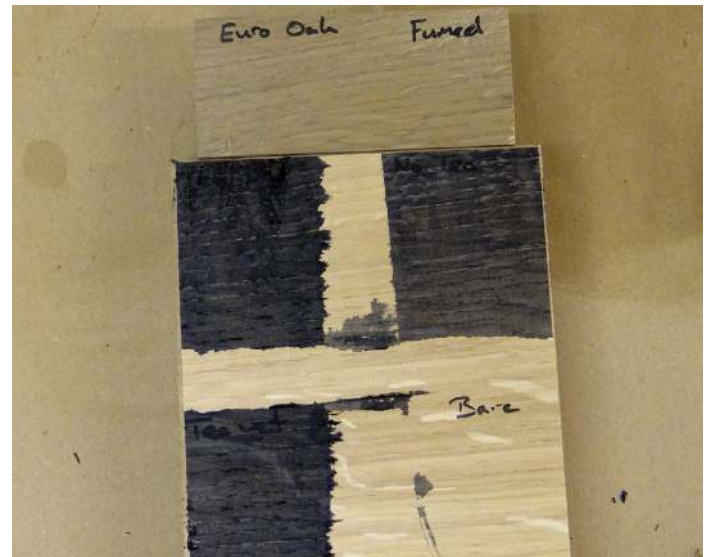
Each of the quadrants begin to darken

quickly but the wet tea section goes a deeper colour way faster than the others, followed by the dry tea section and finally the bare part. It seems that the tea does have an affect, but within 15 minutes of applying the vinegar mix, all three sections are the same deep blue/black colour, with hardly any difference between them.

I know that this is one experiment on one piece of wood, which is hardly scientific, as the most accurate results will always come from a much larger controlled experiment, but it seems that my ebonising solution works perfectly well on kiln-dried European oak and the addition of strong tea makes no difference to the end result.



The tea experiment with freshly applied ebonising solution



After 15 minutes there is no difference between them



## Project

I have proved that both techniques work well on European oak so I select a piece of 50mm thick quarter-sawn oak and decide to make a wide-rimmed bowl/platter to one of my favourite shapes. I turn an ogee-shaped underside with a broad foot. The top rim is a gentle curve with a small fillet, which gives a sharp contrast to the sweeping and slightly undercut bowl.

Before turning the inside I apply the ebonising solution to the rim with a paintbrush. At this point the bowl is still fixed in the chuck and both are removed from the lathe together to allow me to paint on the solution flat on the bench. Initially it turns a dark brown, and within minutes a deep black with a slight blue hint to it. I dab off the excess solution and leave it overnight to fully dry.

The following morning I replace it on the lathe, checking the bowl is still firmly gripped by the chuck. Despite my careful application of the ebonising solution, there are some slight brush marks on the edge of the underside. I hope these will sand away and I am relieved to find that is the case, so I re-sand the underside from 180 to 400 grit to ensure it is all clean. I am then able to turn the inside of the bowl and sand to match

the rest. I carefully remount the bowl and remove the chucking tenon, sanding the base of the foot smooth and to the same standard as the rest of the bowl.

At this point the contrast between the pale oak and the ebonised rim looks great. I'm not a huge fan of coloured work, but where a detail like this adds a contrast I do like it and I'm aware that by fuming it the contrast will be reduced somewhat as the oak darkens to deeper shade, but I am certain that contrast will still be effective.

It occurs to me at this point that I'm not sure exactly what will happen to the ebonised portion in the fuming box. I guess it should only get darker, if any change happens at all, but I will find out soon enough.

I place a flat disc of wood on the floor of the box and sit the oak bowl on it. My aim is for the bottom of the foot to remain light oak in colour as a surprising contrast to anyone (presumably a woodturner) who might turn it over to take a look at the base. I pour a similar amount of fresh ammonia into the same jar as before and shut down the lid of the box for 24 hours.



Turning the oak bowl



Applying the ebonising solution



Allowing it to work



Slight colouring on the back of the edge sands off easily



Turning the inside



LEFT: The finished bowl before fuming ABOVE: Bowl in the fuming box



## ◀ The big reveal

I'm excited to see how this looks when it comes out of the box. As before, I carefully take it outside to allow the fumes to dissipate harmlessly, and open the lid. Two things immediately strike me. First, the darkness of the oak. Seeing a small sample is one thing but when you see the effect on a finished piece it has so much more impact. The advantage of fuming over staining becomes obvious too, as the colour is even no matter

the grain direction, whereas with a stain, the end grain will always absorb more and be darker. Second, the ebonised rim is something of a surprise because, rather than the blue/black it had been when it went in to the fume box, it is now an incredibly deep, rich, dark brown. Applying my favourite hardwax oil to it only brings out the richness of the colours further. Three coats of oil and a gentle buff later and it is finished.



ABOVE: Fresh from the fuming box

ABOVE RIGHT: The underside with the light oak base

RIGHT: Applying oil



## Conclusion

This has been an enjoyable experiment and I am pleased with the outcome of the bowl. I have found it fascinating how using a combination of essentially everyday items in the correct way can produce such dramatic results. There is nothing new in what I've done – these are very traditional techniques after all – but having these techniques in my armoury of ways to change the appearance of wood could be very useful in the future. ●





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# Just in time for hibernation

Les Symonds makes a simple hedgehog as a garden ornament



**I am always looking for simple, fun little projects to use up board ends by turning them into inexpensive pieces that will have sales appeal for the customers of my shop, but which may sometimes also be attractive as a keepsake.** This latest project involves making very simple hedgehogs and I'm keeping one of them for my grandson to search for among the garden beds and borders as we move it

from place to place each day. At my shop, a batch of several hedgehogs rarely lasts longer than a week or so – they do seem to be one of those on-trend items and the customers just love them.

There are many ways to texture timber to give a suggestion of a hedgehog's spines. Reality isn't needed – just so long as the viewer's eye sees a texture which is quite distinct and different to that of

the face, their subconscious mind will do the rest for them. However, scorching lends itself well to this project as it can be carried out in stages with the timber off the lathe, but do please refer to the H&S notes included.

I have chosen to use European oak (*Quercus robur*) for its excellent properties, both as a timber to scorch and as a timber to use for a garden ornament.

## Health and safety

There are three main issues with this project. Primarily the scorching, secondarily the working of off-centred material and thirdly parting off. For the scorching, refer to the article in issue 320 – essentially, carry out the scorching out of doors with adequate safety precautions. Work over a fire blanket/non-flammable surface and have no flammable materials near the scorching area. Also, have water

and wear a suitable face mask and respiratory equipment.

For the off-centre working, be sure to follow the information in Step 2 and work slowly and cautiously, while for parting off and blending the curve of the body, the single most important issue is that you do not rotate the parting tool any more than necessary to achieve the scraping action referred to.

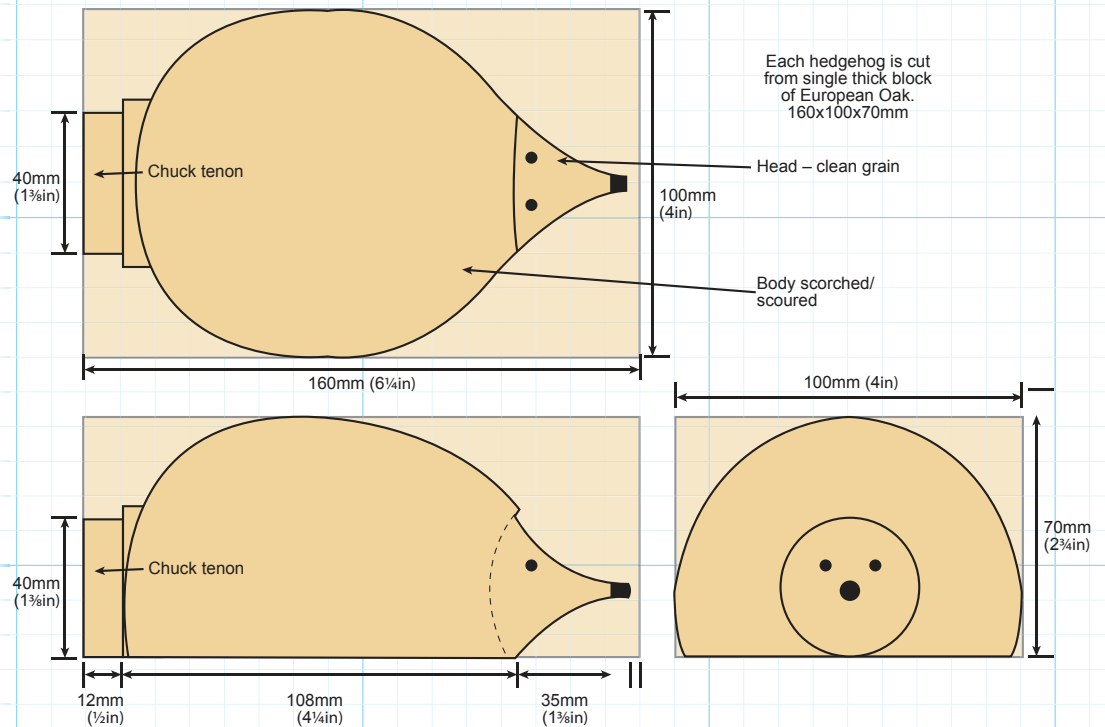


## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal and respiratory protective equipment [PPE & RPE]
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Spindle gouge
- Parting tool
- Drive centre
- Revolving tailstock centre
- Chuck with jaws to fit 40mm tenon
- Fire blanket/non-flammable surface outside of workshop and away from all flammable materials and items
- Heavy-duty leather gloves
- Blowtorch
- Wire brush
- Mallet
- Drill and sanding arbor
- Fine-toothed handsaw

## MATERIALS

- Oak 160 x 100 x 70mm
- Abrasives to 240 grit
- Oil finish of your choice

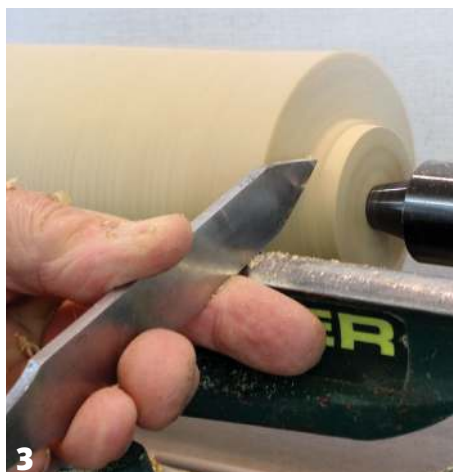


**1** Prepare the timber blank, several if you wish to make an 'array' of hedgehogs, by cutting to the dimensions in the drawing, then establish centrepointh for the drive and live centres by drawing 45° lines down from two top corners on each end. Use a drive centre and mallet to punch distinct marks into the end grain in preparation for mounting on the lathe.

**2** Mount the blank between centres, ensure that the toolrest gives good clearance to the off-centre blank and revolve the blank by hand to ensure it is safe. Now, set the lathe at a suitably low speed and gradually reduce the size of the timber with a spindle roughing gouge, until three of the four surfaces form a continuous curve, with the fourth surface remaining flat. This flat surface will be the underside of the hedgehog.

**3** Cut a tenon to fit into 50mm or so chuck jaws. In this case my chuck just accommodates a 38mm-40mm tenon, which fits the jaws perfectly. Whatever system you use, make the tenon an accurate fit for the jaws and of a size to counter any forces associated with off-centre turning.

**4** With the tenon formed, use your spindle gouge to round over the hindquarters of the hedgehog, leaving sufficient material directly in front of the chuck to allow for the eventual parting off of the finished hedgehog. Ensure you do not make any cuts which may compromise the shape of the chuck tenon previously formed.







**5** Repeat the rounding-over process on the head-end of the hedgehog, paying attention to the shape suggested on the drawings. At this point, do not make the final gouge cuts to finish the head, leaving this final feature a few millimetres full of its finished size for now. Coarsely sand with 120 grit and remove from the lathe.

## Scorching and finishing touches

**6** Now, scorch the body of the hedgehog. If you are not familiar with this process, refer to the article in issue 320 of this magazine. Essentially, do not do this in your workshop, but use a safe, sheltered area out of doors. Scorch heavily and evenly, stopping short of the chuck tenon but scorching over from the body on to what will become the head. Also, refer to the H&S notes of this article.



**7** Place the chuck on to your lathe and set the hedgehog into it, using the tailstock centre to help to centre it correctly. Once running true, remove the tailstock and use a gouge to finish the shape of the head. This will cut a clean line into the scorched area, leaving the head with exposed grain and the body scorched. With the head shaped to your satisfaction, abrade to 240 grit.

**8** Use a freshly sharpened parting tool to commence parting off, retaining sufficient stock to maintain rigidity. Use the parting tool to gradually blend the curve of the end of the body into the point at which it will finally be parted. To achieve this, tilt the parting tool clockwise by no more than a few degrees such that its long, top edge gently scrapes the surface, following along behind the tip as it cuts material away around the final part of the curve. Be careful not to tilt the tool more than is needed to achieve the lightest scrape.



**9** Part into the wood until only a centimetre remains. Stop the lathe, remove the toolrest and cut the hedgehog free with a saw. Try not to leave too much excess material in place, so as to reduce the amount of abrading needed.

**10** Gently abrade away the stub of timber, blending it into the end of the body. Don't worry if you abrade over some of the scorched area as this will re-scorch readily without there being any visible line – just ensure you scorch to a similar depth as before. Repeat Steps 2 through to 10 for each of the hedgehogs you wish to make.



**11** Gather your array of hedgehogs together, sit them on the lathe bed and turn them to face you, then, with an indelible black marker, mark the snout and the eyes. Orienting them this way will help to ensure that the eyes are appropriately positioned. If you choose, you can buy eyes off the internet, or, mark them with a pyrography unit.

**12** Brush away any surplus free carbon from the body and give each hedgehog a good soaking with a suitable oil. Allow to dry and get them into the garden in plenty of time to allow them to build their own little winter homes, ahead of hibernation. ●



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PHOTOGRAPH BY GACANTHONY BAILEY

# Community letters

Here are some of the letters readers have sent to the Editor

## Meetings with a difference

Hi Mark,

Certainly a first for West Sussex Woodturners and possibly a first for the clubs of the country. Our meetings are held in the morning of the first Sunday in the month and a number are simply entitled 'member-led mornings'. For these we have three club lathes out and ask, by previous arrangement, various turners to demonstrate their skills in differing aspects of our hobby to try to expand our members' knowledge, keep their interest and hopefully help those of less experience among the membership move on. It can be a bit of a challenge to arrange but, with help from a core of members, we hopefully have a good programme throughout the year.

For September as a first we had asked three of our female members to do their thing, keeping the subjects as a bit of a surprise. The three, being Penny Chatham, Terry Hill and Nicky Millard, excelled with their lidded boxes with resin inserts, various types of earrings and a table lamp featuring long-hole boring and the wiring, the latter via a commercially available kit.

Along with the women showing their skills we had our grinding station open, with members bringing in two Tormak wet grinders, two Sorby Pro Edge belt machines, a traditional grinder with toolrests and my own grinder with various pre-set fixed angle guides. Between us we helped a number of members with the dark art of creating that sharp edge and explaining how to keep it.

I think all in all we had a good morning.

*Ian Rudge, chairman WSWT*



## Speaking up

Hi Mark

I read with interest your editorial in issue 336 with regards to encouraging members to speak up in order to make a difference for the good of everyone.

We are experiencing an extremely successful time at our club in the heart of Lincolnshire. Membership stands just short of 100, our club nights on average attract 55 attendees and at our workshop nights we regularly welcome more than 40 members and visitors.

Therein lies the problem, although it's a good problem to have. On a workshop

night we have seven lathes available – unfortunately 40 members into seven lathes doesn't go particularly well, resulting in many present being unable to have a turn. We generally try to get new attendees turning, as they are new to the hobby and have not yet purchased a lathe. Having spoken to those who attend, most are quite happy not to have a go, as it's not just about turning. Many attend for a social evening, to watch others and to talk about our great craft. However, it's important to keep progressing and improving, going forward for the benefit

of all, yet we need new ideas. We have put out questionnaires to the members for ideas, yet the response has been disappointing. Maybe they are happy with what we are doing at the moment and the attendance would support this. But we don't want to rest on our laurels.

We would appreciate your comments and ideas. Maybe readers of the magazine could share their club ideas and experiences?

Many thanks in anticipation,

*Kevin Walker, committee member, Lincolnshire Association of Woodturners*



## Unhandled tools

Dear Mark

I am a long-time reader of your magazine and look forward to receiving it each month. There is something that gets my goat, but I never see any letters or articles about it and that is that a vast number of woodturning tools are only supplied handled. I admit that there are still some manufacturers who give us a choice.

I have always tried to buy unhandled tools, but any that I have had to buy handled, I have usually removed it and set about making my own handle for the tool. The supplier doesn't know me, or how tall I am, how long my arms are, how big my hands are, whether I have arthritis in my hands, what lathe I have, the items I make or what type of wood

I turn – so how can they make a tool handle to suit me?

Do any other turners look at the number of turning tools they have and multiply that number by the estimated cost of commercial handles and cry when they realise that, for the cost of those handles, they could have purchased many more tools.

Other than perhaps beginner sets, why would any woodturning tool need be sold with a handle?

After all, we are woodturners, making tool handles for us is easy, fun and satisfying, plus we can tailor-make them for our own needs.

*Denis Drew, Victoria, Australia*

## From the forum

Here is this month's selection of postings and work from the Woodworkers Institute:

[www.woodworkersinstitute.com](http://www.woodworkersinstitute.com)

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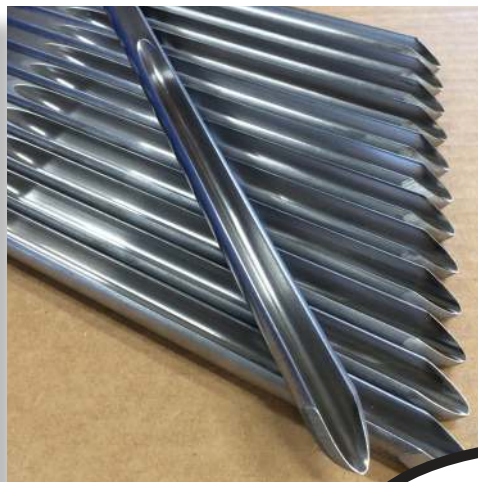
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# Pat Carroll

The south east of Ireland-based wood artist gives some insight into his life and work



Group of hollow forms various woods



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAT CARROLL

At my workshop enjoying making shavings fly

**At secondary school my first love was metalwork and woodwork with a mix of technical drawing. My grandfather was a carpenter/handyman so I had an introduction to this area from an early age. My father and brothers were butchers by trade so it was assumed I would follow suit, but this wasn't to be.**

I started work in a flourmill at the ripe old age of 15 and worked there until I was 18 years old. A friend of mine was labouring for two plasterers and he was offered an apprenticeship. So I took on the job as the labourer, which was hard work, tending to three tradesmen. Soon after my friend left to work in the UK and I went on the tools. Being a plasterer back then meant that if the carpenter had not fitted frames and other necessary woodwork, you either did it yourself or you went home without a day's pay. So carpentry was almost a must-have knowledge in my trade at the time.

## When and how did you start turning?

I loved working with wood in every way and discovered a discipline called woodturning. This was easy, I thought – put the wood on this machine, stick in the round top chisel for the 'roundy' bits and the flat tool for the square flat bits. Easy.

I had a very rude awakening to this mad hobby. Why would anyone try something so dangerous? But I was hooked, and after some lessons with master turner Willy Stedmond, I was in love with

woodturning. I even managed to keep a piece on the lathe. I found that shavings could be produced without lumps flying from the wood. My hands were no longer going numb from holding on to blunt tools for dear life. The joy of using a truly sharp tool is a game-changer.

## First piece and development

The first piece I made was a wooden vase from some wet elm (*Ulmus procera*), which distorted to an almost square rim. Faceplate screws were visible in the base and it rocked beautifully due to the distortion and movement of the wood, which I knew zero about. I am happy to say that I have progressed a lot since

then. My main influences are from turners at every level all around the world, some of whom I am proud to call my friends.

Ceramics and pottery are big influences in my pieces, especially my hollow forms. Shape and form are an essential part of my turning. I am using a lot of texture on my current pieces and I look to mother nature and my surroundings in everyday places for inspiration.

I would like to make more pieces in which I combine colour, texture and carving. I would love to create a piece with an unmistakable style that people will look at and say: 'That's a Pat Carroll piece.' I hope to get there one day.



Ash bowl with inclusions, storm-felled tree





Latest work, square boxes in various woods and pewter disc inclusions



Sphere, beauty in decay. 6 inch, Sycamore hollow form



Rescue, a different piece in a former life transformed into the above piece, hence the name, 16 inches diameter

### Quick-fire questions YOUR BIGGEST MISTAKE?

My first mistake in woodturning was not to get tuition at the very start. Due to my lack of knowledge I had no concept of the dangers and risks I was overlooking due to my inexperience of woodturning. Finding time to woodturn is always a challenge. Making pieces from gnarly wood or outside my usual type of work always gives me welcome challenges.

### ODDEST EXPERIENCE IN TURNING?

A lesson I learned in my early stages of turning, from my dog. Yes, my dog. My dog would come into the garage and put her tennis ball on the lathe bed for me to throw. On one occasion as the dog put the ball on the lathe, I had a huge dig in, ripping the piece from the faceplate. With the piece in mid-air, my smart dog ran through the flap in the door to safety from my heavy-handed work. The following evening, I decided to try to take some more from this huge piece of wood (it was 4in). Midway through the cutting my dog went like a bat out of hell through the flap in the door. I immediately stopped the lathe and the piece of wood fell to the floor. There was my lesson. My dog heard the difference in sound and knew from the previous encounter to get the hell out of there. This lesson stands to me in my hollow forms, where listening to the tool cut on the inside is paramount to a successful outcome.

### MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE?

I remember several items in my addiction to woodturning that resembled bowls. My euphoria moment when I created a lovely long stream of shavings on the outside of a bowl. This was due to some tuition, in





Raw series, working with wet timber and no finish or sanding, allowing mother nature to decorate with movement and colour as it ages

paying attention to tool presentation and angle and my sharpening had improved.

#### BEST ADVICE RECEIVED?

This has to be the words of Ray Key: KISS – Keep It Simple Stupid. A simple ethos Ray lived by, but definitely one of the best.

#### HAVE YOU EVER GIVEN UP ON A PROJECT?

I have used wood which I thought was suitable for the intended project. If I thought it was better to dispose of it, I would use it for practice and try to learn from the wood by altering angles, shear cuts, scraping and anything I needed to improve upon. So, maybe the project was postponed but benefit was taken from the wood in use.

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE TYPE OF WOODTURNING?

Hollow forms have been my passion from the start of my woodturning career. Shape and form were my challenges, but with so many inspirational artists in the world of woodturning and ceramics, there was a lot of help available. Now my interest lies in embellishing, colouring, texturing and piercing these pieces.

#### BIGGEST CHANGES?

I, like many turners, at the start believed it was sacrilege to colour, carve or

embellish such a beautiful medium as wood. But as my interest grew so did my exploration of other additions to my work. I believe the equipment available has made major improvements to help artists improve or achieve their desired results. Personally, the difference I see is my knowledge from watching and exploring other artists' techniques and finishes.

#### FAVOURITE EQUIPMENT?

Definitely my lathe. A Vicmarc VL 300 long bed. My first lathe was not quite up to par and my purchase of the Vicmarc was a make or break decision. If I can get good results from this machine, I am going to try my best to create half-decent pieces. I am happy to say it has never failed me.

#### THE FUTURE

Personally, I have recently finished construction of my new workshop, so the courses and lessons are gaining interest and I would like to do far more of these. I would also like to create the many, many pieces that I have stored in my files (my head). I am often asked would I like to be a full-time turner. My answer is, I would like to be a full-time artist creating wooden pieces. I would also like to see more opportunities made available to kids to encourage the next generation of turners/artists to help keep our heritage alive.

#### DISLIKES?

I like the diversity of woodturning, with no age or gender boundaries. I like the camaraderie and friendliness of the people involved. Woodturning is an enjoyable, satisfying hobby with the potential to inspire people from all walks of life. I dislike people plagiarising another person's work and claiming it as their own. I see this all too often on social media when they receive compliments for the work they display and give no credit to the originator of the design. Granted, all turning is a variant of someone's work, but when it's a blatant rip-off of a design, dislike is an understatement.

#### ADVICE?

Invest in safety equipment from the start. Join a club. Seek tuition from as many different turners as possible. Attend shows, craft fairs and symposiums any chance you get. Don't be afraid to explore and experiment. Above all, follow all safety guidelines and wear full PPE (personal protection equipment)

#### TOP TIP?

Have fun and be safe. Invest in the best equipment you can afford as there is a far better resale value on quality equipment than for inferior products.

**Website:** [www.patcarrollwoodturning.com](http://www.patcarrollwoodturning.com) ●





Hollow form with Luc Deroo-inspired opening



Mother and daughter, two natural edges on slate



Hollow form with pewter rim insert



Raw series



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# Stacking box

Jason Breach shares his process for a challenging project

**Having looked at a few simple shapes and styles of boxes in the past few issues, the aim with this box is to push and practise those skills. I have made a number of stacking boxes over the years – these are a challenge and take a little more time and concentration. The major design aspect with this is that the lid will fit all the sections so, in simple terms, the lid-fitting spigots that join the sections together are all turned to the same diameter, and the recesses cut in the base of each section are turned to the same size. This takes patience.**

The material for this needs to be dry and well seasoned. Try to get something of a good density as this will cut cleanly. The timber must be free from splits or defects as these will create problems with how the sections fit and hold together.

As with all the boxes that I make I like the lid to fit and hold together – although this has more sections this rule still applies.

Ray Key once told me that a loose-fitting lid is a sign of shoddy workmanship – words which still haunt me today. The timber for the box in the article is a piece of acacia that I have had a few years and knew would work easily – there are enough challenges within the design so something that works nicely and cuts cleanly takes a little pressure off this task.

With making this type of box the first problem is cutting each section to length and the easiest method for this is to cut them on the bandsaw. This is best done while the wood is still a square length as this is a lot safer. I cut each section 2mm over in length, which allows each section to be cleaned up and turned to the desired length. This is easier than trying to cut all the spigots on the lathe as one long length – the parting cut can create a lot of heat, there is also leverage pressure on the longer length out of the chuck.

Careful labelling of each section is important to ensure that the grain

continues. A sharp blade and good set-up of the bandsaw is important as any wander of the blade will affect the lengths of each section. To mount these on the lathe I have used the chuck jaws as a drive centre with a ring centre in the tailstock to hold each section safely and accurately. This set-up helps keep the blocks nice and parallel but only works nicely as long as the saw cut is square. The spigots cut need to be a larger diameter than the finished diameter of main body of the box.

The design of this box is based on the shape of a post box – a tall body with the flared and domed top for the lid. This works well as a shape, but can easily be adapted. Each section within the box gets longer in length, the bottom section being the longest, but they could easily be the same length.

As a challenge this might look very daunting, but take your time, and enjoy the processes involved.

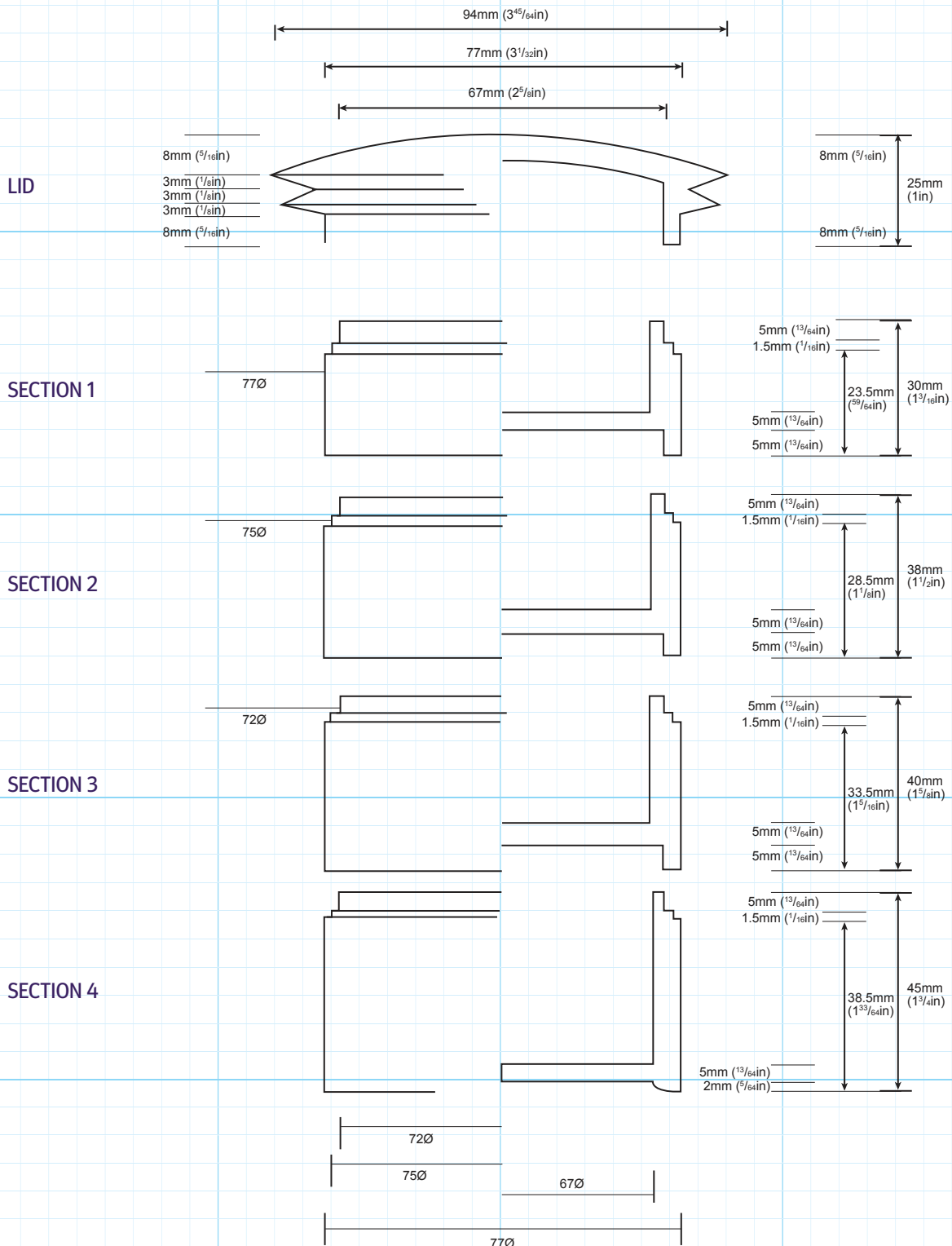
## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal and respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- 6mm and 13mm bowl gouge
- Spindle gouge
- Skew chisel
- Square side & end refinement scraper
- Beading & parting tool
- 1.5mm parting tool
- Chuck

- Revolving tailstock centre
- Polishing mop system (optional)

## MATERIALS

- Timber size starting block 100mm square x 200mm long
- Scrap wood block for jam chuck
- Abrasives
- Finishes of your choice



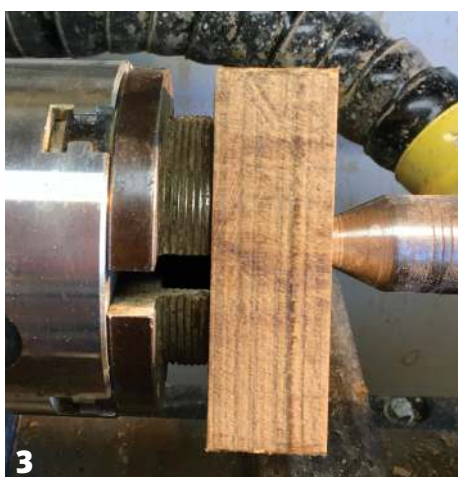




**1** Cutting the sections to length can be easier to do when square using a bandsaw, I add 2mm to the length of each section to allow for the cleaning up. A sharp blade is important as the cuts need to be accurate.

**2** To ensure that the grain orientation of the block continues correctly mark these in some way to show the order. These blocks will need to have a spigot cut on one end so they can be held in a chuck. The 'S' indicates which end this is cut on.

**3** On the end with the 'S' accurately mark the centre, mount on the lathe using the chuck as a drive and a ring centre to support, turn to a cylinder and cut the spigot. The diameter of this needs to be bigger than the finished diameter of the straight body of the box.



**4** The lid section is the first part to be turned. Do a peel cut to create a guide of the external diameter of the main straight section. Drill a depth hole with a 6mm spindle gouge, and use a 6mm bowl gouge with the flute between 9-10, working from the centre outwards remove the waste,

**5** With the bulk removed with the bowl gouge, clean the internal shape with a square-ended scraper. You need a straight, parallel-sided interior with a gentle domed curve toward the centre. Clean up the rim edge to remove the bandsaw cut.



**6** Ensure that the opening is parallel – check this with expanding callipers and adjust as needed. When done, sand, seal and wax. Remove the lid from the chuck, and replace this with section one.

**7** Measure the opening of the lid and set this up on a set of dividers. Transfer this measurement to the end of section one – this becomes a guide to the diameter of the lid and base joining point.

**8** Cut the spigot to join inside the lid using a beading and parting tool. Creating a slight taper towards the tailstock will allow the lid fit to be tested. With the lathe off, gently twist the lid on the spigot so that a shine line appears. This helps indicate the diameter required to fit the lid and base together.







**9** The lid needs to fit tightly on to section one, so carefully fit this removing a little at a time until both parts join together. With the two parts fitted together shape the exterior profile of the lid and section one. Remember to remove the lid to check the profile and thickness of the lid.

**10** Hollow the inside of section one, set up a depth gauge 10mm less than the overall length. Hollow using the same technique as used to hollow the lid, then sand, seal and wax the interior only. Reduce the speed to reduce heat, which will affect the fitting of the lid.

**11** Replace the lid and sand only the top curved area, the rest will be sanded when the box is assembled as one length.

**12** Cut a small shadow line back from the lid joining spigot. This will help hide any misalignment if the wood moves over time.

**13** Mount section two into the chuck. Repeat the lid-fitting process so that the spigot is the same size as on section one, then hollow the interior in the same way as section one. Sand seal and wax as before.

**14** Repeat this process on sections three and four. The aim is to have the four sections on to which the lid will accurately fit.

**15** To enable the recess to be cut in the base of the four sections, make a jam chuck from a scrap block, level the face and use the dividers to mark out the diameter. Remove the waste using a bowl gouge, cutting from centre outwards.

**16** Clean up and make the recess parallel with a skew chisel to create a crisp edge. The spigot on the sections one to four need to fit this accurately, and firmly. The joints on all the sections need to be accurate. Do not rush this process, take your time and make the micro adjustment to get everything right.







17



18



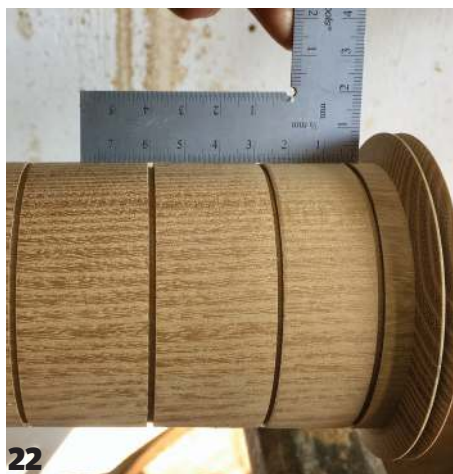
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22

**17** Mount section one into the jam chuck and turn down the chuck-holding spigot, blending into the body. Carefully use the dividers to set out the diameter of the recess to be cut.

**18** Using a bowl gouge cut from the centre outwards, removing the bulk. Take light cuts, stopping short of the divider guide line. The depth needs to be 5mm. With the bulk removed, rub the bevel of the gouge, have the flute pointing in the direction and cut towards the outer section to create a clean, flat surface.

**19** Using the long point and side edge of the skew chisel open the diameter out so that the next section fits into this. Take some time on this as this makes or breaks the box. Carefully sand as you don't want to open out the joining recess. Seal and finish.

**20** Repeat this for sections two and three. Section four needs to be left with the chuck-holding spigot so that the exterior shape of the whole box can be refined and sanded.

**21** With section four held in the chuck assemble the box. I used the tailstock and a foam pad to hold this together – the foam protects the sanded dome on the lid. Use callipers to check the diameter and turn the main body to a straight cylinder.

**22** Check that the main body is straight and check that the small shadow grooves are about the same depth and width. Reduce the speed and sand using the abrasive held around a shaped block to help keep even.

**23** Replace the jam chuck into the chuck, load the fourth section and remove the chuck-holding spigot. Level across the bottom. This does not require a recess as cut on the other sections. Sand and seal.

**24** To polish I used a polishing mop set-up. Do each section as an individual part and buff to finish. You now have a finished stacking box ●



23



24



# Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers some readers' questions

## Drying timber for stabilising or casting

**Question:** I'm looking to ensure small scraps of wood are dry before stabilising or using them in casting. What is the best method to be certain they are dry?

**Answer:** If you are trying to dry them in short order, I recommend a microwave or a small oven appliance. But several cautions are in order. Never leave either machine unattended while they are in operation. You really need to be nearby should your drying go awry and ignite.

The second caution is that you should use dedicated shop equipment. Never use a machine that will be used for food service afterwards. Get a microwave or oven at a garage sale or discount store and dedicate it to shop use only.

Go slowly. You are far better to dry wood on the defrost cycle than to blast it with intense heat or microwave energy. Also, do not set the oven too high – about 95°C is about right – and let the wood 'bake' until dry.

In the microwave, to avoid cooking the wood too much, put it on the defrost cycle and let it cook for a while, then let it cool and keep repeating the cycle until it's dry, checking progress between each cycle.

If you are interested in the best method to ensure dryness regardless of your heating method, weigh the wood on a digital scale (capable of the low value weights) at the beginning and jot down the value. Between cycles, check the weight again



PHOTOGRAPH BY KURT HERTZOG

**Use a shop dedicated oven or microwave for drying wood and baking castings**

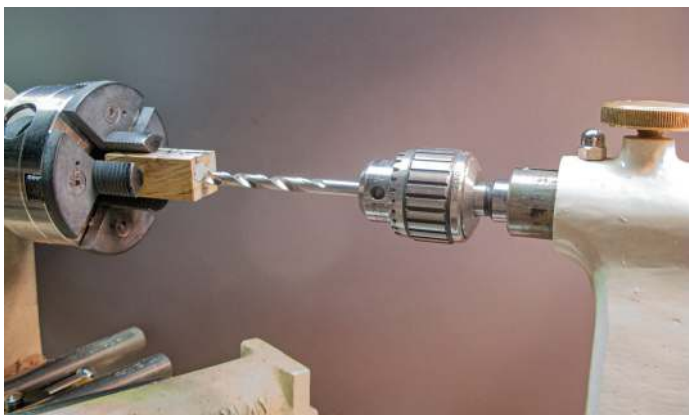
and make a note of the value. When the weight doesn't decline appreciably any longer, it is dry. Put the wood into a sealable plastic bag, expel the excess air, and seal it. If you leave it out in the environment, the wood will reabsorb moisture until it reaches the current equilibrium content. Sealed in the bag, it will stay dry until you open it when you are ready to perform your casting or stabilisation.

## What's best for hole drilling?

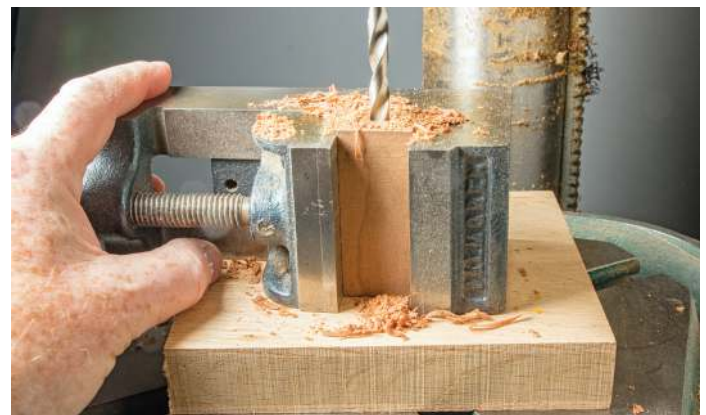
**Question:** I bought a 200mm drill press a discount store and it doesn't drill all the way through my longer pen blanks. I've tried flipping the blanks over and drilling from the other end, but it never lines up with the first hole I drilled, causing problems when I'm trying to get my tube through. I've also moved the blank up the bit, turned it on and drilled through, but with my longer blanks it's still not long enough to drill through. I think my drill press has a 63mm travel depth. What would be a better drill press for me, please?

**Answer:** I can't recommend a specific brand name for you but I can suggest that, when you shop, you check the machine specifications for the manufacturer's listed quill travel. You know you need more than you have. Be certain that the machine you are considering gives you as much or more than you need. Solutions that are immediate and potentially at little or no cost are to: use your lathe as a drilling system; use a spacer block(s) on your existing drill press; or use a pistol drill. Your lathe is the best drilling system there is. Obviously, you'll need a drill chuck

that fits your taper and a chuck to hold your blank. If you have these you are all set and are limited to a drill depth only by the drill bit length. You mention using spacers with your current drill press but I can't understand why that doesn't work. Again, your quill travel only limits the stroke on each pull. By drilling to maximum depth, turning off the drill press, allowing the quill to retract while keeping the drill bit bottomed in the blank, putting a spacer block underneath to support your blank (be certain the faces are parallel), and drilling again to the quill depth



Boring a hole on the lathe



Drilling on hole with a drill press



repeating the process as often as needed should work. You may need to move your drill press platform as part of this. Again, your total drilling depth is limited by the length of your drill. Perhaps the simplest solution is to hold your blank to be drilled in a vice and make the hole with a pistol drill. A starter point will help start the drill where you wish and you'll need to keep things reasonably aligned to exit the blank with sufficient wall thickness of wood for turning. As with the other suggestions, your drilling depth is limited to your drill bit length. Should you need longer drill bits, mail order or internet industrial suppliers will certainly be able to offer you myriad choices in drill types, geometries, and lengths.

There are plenty of options when it comes to drill bits



## Sealing fresh-cut blanks

**Question:** I just got these pieces of maple from my neighbour as he was cutting down his dying tree. How long do I have until I have to seal them and what is the best method for doing this?

**Answer:** The cut tree will begin losing moisture immediately through the open end grain from the felling and trimming. Depending on your availability, you can leave a cut tree for quite some time without excessive wood loss if you leave it as a tree. Once you cut it into smaller sections, you'll need to seal the end grain quickly to minimise cracking loss. Depending on the environment, the lengths you cut and your willingness to accept some cut end loss, you have anywhere from hours to days to seal the end grain cuts.

You are trying to seal the end grain so the moisture loss is minimal. The bark protects the tree from moisture loss and your unsealed end grain cuts let it bleed moisture profusely. Uneven drying is what causes cracking. There

are several commercial wood sealing products available. The ones with which I have experience are emulsified paraffin. They are heavy, so shipping becomes an important part of the cost. I live near one of companies that invented end grain sealer nearly 100 years ago. My turning club drives to its manufacturing site, buys in 55-gallon drum quantities, and repackages in smaller sizes for the members to buy at a very reasonable cost. This spares the members the small-quantity mark ups and especially the shipping costs that can drive the retail prices way up.

An alternative to the emulsified paraffin products commercially offered is consumer latex paint. Use the latex paint to seal the grain of any cuts, especially end grain. Don't be frugal with it. Slobber it on

and get good coverage to the edges and around the corner on to the bark. This is a great use for those leftover quantities of paint from decorating around the house.



Sealed logs



Sealed blanks ready for storage before use

Send your questions to Kurt's email: [kurt@kurthertzog.com](mailto:kurt@kurthertzog.com)

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# What I want for Christmas

Geoffrey Laycock is wondering about some practical gifts for this year's list

**Like many other readers, If I was asked what I wanted for Christmas this year I may suggest a tool or something connected with the workshop in some way. Yes, it would be nice to add a new plane to my collection, or maybe an attachment for my Myford metalworking lathe, or, of course, a different turning tool. We value these objects and they are always welcome, but sometimes money directed at more practical things can be a better investment. I'd like to suggest something else.**

Consider a fire extinguisher. Or two. Even if your workshop is a small shed and you are still building up your woodturning machinery and equipment, have a think about what you already have invested. Then consider that your shed is probably timber, filled with pieces of timber and surrounded by piles of chips and shavings and dust. Naughty – you should clean up each time you finish play, but it's easy to leave it. So what we have is easily ignited shavings next to timber ready for the next stage of a fire, surrounded by a timber shed waiting to play its part, and all with intent to produce heat and smoke to destroy your precious contents. If it does happen it is more than likely your tools and equipment will be unsalvageable. I believe we have mentioned insurance quite a few times in previous articles so once more will do no harm – check you are insured just in case all goes wrong.

If the worst happens and a fire starts you could deal with it if: A – you have suitable means of fighting it; B – you know how to. I'm not going to deal with B as there are ways you can check this out yourself. But selecting a suitable portable fire extinguisher may be confusing as the choice is large and there is lots of misunderstanding out there.

If you go to your large retail DIY shed it is likely your choice will be a small 'domestic' dry powder unit and similarly in many automotive outlets. Now, dry powder is effective at 'knocking down' a fire, especially burning flammable liquids, but we are really interested in what are called Class A fires – paper, cardboard, wood, coal etc. Yes, a dry powder extinguisher will work on almost all types of fire and is safe for electrical fires, but the small ones usually are too small, have a use-by date as the powder can clump and – worst of all – what a mess. That mess can lead to a reluctance to use the

thing, trying other actions until it's maybe too late.

Go for a water or foam nine-litre extinguisher. You may be surprised at the price – not as much as you think if you shop around. Water has been the long-term choice for Class A and a spray extinguisher is even better: it gives better coverage and is less likely to stir up loose shavings and dust than a direct jet. Foam is my personal choice.

What about all our electrical equipment you ask? Turn it off. If you have a fire your first action should be turn off all the electrics then, if the fire was started by electrical equipment, you turn off the heat source and it is then safe to use a wet form of extinguishant. I have a number of foam, plus a large dry powder and large CO<sub>2</sub>, extinguishers but I work on vehicle restoration in the second half of my workshop and want to cover the potential for liquid fires and fires inside vehicles in difficult-to-access areas. I would never use either of those latter types in the wood shop. Carbon dioxide extinguishers could make it worse by blowing loose dust and shavings around.

What is called first aid firefighting has moved on over the years. Water was just about the only choice for a very long time. Foam additives were a significant leap forwards and dry powder similarly so. CO<sub>2</sub> can be invaluable as was halon at the time. This was one of the most effective extinguishants available but eventually banned as it is a significant ozone layer destroyer. We do now have some clever extinguishants such as Zero 360 and 3M Novec, etc. but these tend to be used in specialist situations and I'm familiar with them through historic motor racing.

We have, in the past, had some very



PHOTOGRAPH BY GEOFFREY LAYCOCK

specialised extinguishers and I thought I would share a couple of examples from my small collection. I love my Conrex cone extinguisher, which needs a glass bulb full of acid to make it work. The brass pump units were incredibly common, found in virtually all military vehicles, buses, cars, trucks – everywhere. Filled with CTC – carbon tetrachloride – they were very good at knocking down a fire and safe to use on live electrical equipment. No pressure to leak out, no shelf life, why are they not still around? One tiny problem: CTC exposed to high temperatures degrades to form phosgene gas – highly dangerous and used as a battlefield weapon in WW1. So the very action of using one puts any exposed person in grave danger. CTC was also in common use in industry, as an early dry cleaning fluid, as a degreasing solvent – often heated – and an early refrigerant gas. It is all but gone these days for obvious reasons.

Things have moved on – get yourself a water spray or foam extinguisher and it is most likely you will never need it. If you don't have one... happy Christmas.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK BAKER/GMC PUBLICATIONS

# Maintaining carbide-tipped tools

Mark Palma shares some top tips on getting the most from your tools

**Carbide insert tools can be a great addition to the turner's kit. With proper maintenance they can provide years of service and safe turning.**

## SAFETY

Carbide tools should be considered a system, so use the manufacturer's recommended replacement cutter and screw whenever servicing the tool. Inspect the tool handle, ferule and shaft to make sure each is secure. Never use a tool with a bent shaft, nor should you ever alter the tool – say, to put on a different size or shape of cutter. Never use a carbide insert that is cracked or shows signs of damage.

Carbide tools can remove a surprising amount of material quickly so make sure you are keeping the toolrest near the work, and that you do not over-engage the tip of the tool. Only a small portion of the tip should ever engage the work at one time, so be careful to know where on the carbide tip you are actually cutting.

## Removing the insert

Before removing an insert clean out the screw head so no debris remains in the socket before inserting a removal tool. Failure to do so will result in the key not locking properly in the screw and will create burr out, thus damaging the head



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK PALMA UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

## Some useful cleaning items

of the screw. This will soon result in further damage as you adjust/remove the cutter. If too damaged, then they are a nightmare to remove.

A dental pick, bent paperclip or sewing needle all do a great job of removing ground-in dust and debris in the head of the screw. Once clean, make sure you have the correct size removal tool and that it is undamaged. Many of the screws

used on carbide inserts are quite small and can be rounded over by a poorly fitting tool. Fully engage the tool and gently turn the screw. If it doesn't budge, turn the tool over, lubricate the screw with some penetrating oil from the back side, wait an hour, and try again. If you strip out the Allen or Torx head, you are in trouble. To further minimise the risk of damage, replace the screws regularly.



## Inspect the screw, cutter and cutter pocket

The screw, cutter and cutter pocket act as a system to maintain a safe operating tool. Make sure the pocket is free of debris and has no burrs. If needed, a light touch with a small diamond hone will clean up this surface. New manufacturers' inserts come with a new screw for a reason – they need changing. Make sure the screw properly fits the pocket in the carbide insert. Any play will cause a dangerous condition.

If the insert is chipped, cracked or shows signs of damage, throw it away. Carbide inserts are brittle and can shatter. Do not risk injury on a damaged insert. If unused areas on the insert you remove are still sharp, rotate the cutter and reinstall.

## How inserts work

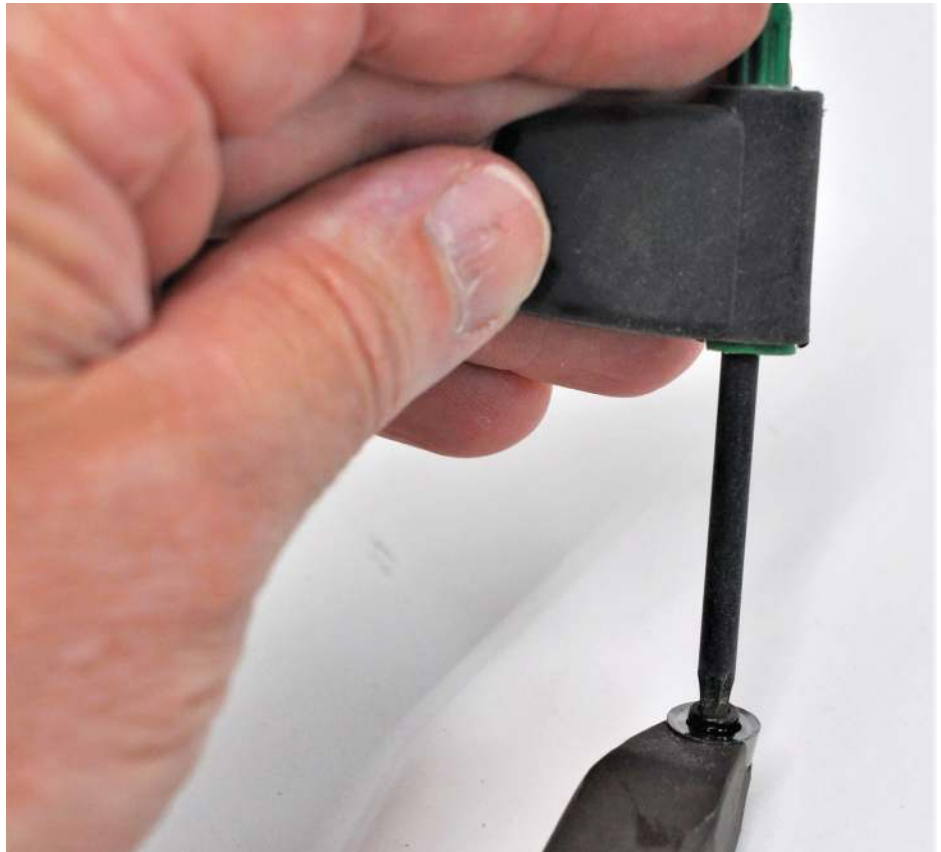
All carbide inserts fall into two categories – cup-style cutters and flat-top cutters. Cup-style/contour-ground cutters have a raised outer rim and in fact cut wood fibres. Flat-top cutters, which are the vast majority of all carbide insert tools, have the same side profile as a traditional scraper and act as scrapers when they touch the wood. If you keep this in mind it helps you understand what is happening at the tip of the tool.

Make purposeful choices, as opposed to accidental ones, where you engage the insert to the work. With traditional tools, very little tool actually engages the work. With carbide insert tools, particularly the larger sizes, you can accidentally engage an entire side or multiple sides of an insert simultaneously, resulting in an unsafe condition. So don't let the ease of use allow you to lose focus on what is happening at the cutting edge.

## When cutters get dull

On cup-style cutters/contour-ground cutters that become dull, loosen the screw with the proper driver/wrench, and rotate the cutter after each use. When cutting action ultimately fails to perform at factory levels, replace the cutter and screw with a new set from the manufacturer and start over. Always lubricate the screw with oil when you loosen or remove it.

Flat-top cutters cannot be properly sharpened, but can be honed. If, however, they are chipped, cracked or damaged, discard them. Also discard Allen wrenches with damaged flats as they can strip out the screw. Clean off any debris, lay the top surface on a fine diamond sharpening stone or a ceramic hone, and rub the insert over the entire stone surface slowly. The cutter will not return to a factory edge, however you can get a reasonable



Properly tighten screws

edge which extends the life of the cutter. Once sharpened, lubricate the fixing screw with oil and reinstall.

When a flat-top cutter is dull, I strongly suggest replacing it with the manufacturer's recommended replacement. There are many universal replacement inserts on the internet, however they vary in their construction and, importantly, on the screw that comes with them. Some are great, others do not fit properly and can

work loose and create a very dangerous condition. Never shim an insert, or grind away the pocket around an insert, to make another cutter go on the tool shaft.

## Turning wet wood

If you are using any carbide insert tool to turn wet wood, after each use completely disassemble the tool cutter, and put a light coating of oil on the screw, insert and pocket to avoid rust. ●



Using a contour-ground tipped tool

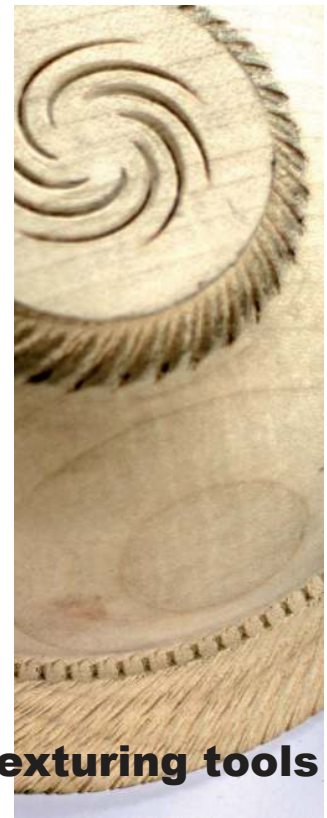
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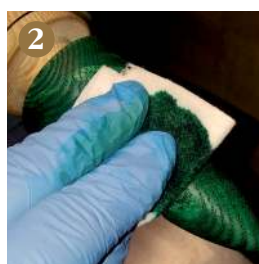
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## *Decorating a Christmas Tree*

WITH ANDY MATTHEWS



**1** Turn a Christmas Tree shape using an open grained wood such as Ash or Oak. To get the best effect from this method use a Liming Brush to open (deepen) the grain even more.



**2** Stain the tree part with Green Spirit Stain using a cloth or brush, taking care to only stain the parts you want to be green. If you want to colour the 'pot' or the trunk this should be done now. Once dried, spray on a coat of sanding sealer to seal the pores of the wood, which will give a more dramatic effect later.



**3** Using a cloth, apply Gilt Cream to the whole of the green area. Apply quite liberally, ensuring that it is totally covered (we've used Gold here but Silver or Copper are also very effective).



**4** Wait just a couple of minutes, then using a cloth dampened with oil (Lemon Oil is great for this but most will do) wipe off the surplus Gilt Cream so that it only remains in the open grained areas.



**5** Polish using WoodWax 22 or Microcrystalline Wax to seal and protect the Gilt Cream and to make the greenery shine. Now, where's the star for the top?

See our YouTube channel for more tips!

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# OUR CONTRIBUTORS



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Andy is a professional woodturner and has a workshop and gallery in Suffolk. He makes one-off pieces, small-batch runs, antique restorations and other strange commissions. He also demonstrates and teaches.

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## ANDREW POTOCNIK

Andrew sees inspiration around him every day. He 'arrived' on the Australian woodworking scene in 1983, and since then his work has developed into areas of sculpture, furniture-making and the odd bit of cabinet work.

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## CHRIS WEST

Chris has spent a good deal of his time designing, turning and writing on the subject of salt and pepper mills. He has also published a book, *Adding Spice to Woodturning: 20 Salt, Pepper & Spice Shaker Projects for Woodturners*.

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## COLWIN WAY

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

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## EMILIANO ACHAVAL

Emiliano is an almost full-time professional woodturner who resides on the Hawaiian island of Maui. He is the president of the Maui Woodturners Association. When he is not in his shop, he's deep-sea fishing.

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## JASON BREACH

Jason started turning at the age of 12 and has built up a reputation as a tutor and demonstrator that has taken him around the world. He produces a range of items, but is best known for his unusual turned boxes.

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## LES SYMONDS

After a career in teaching, Les developed his hobby of woodturning into a career. He is on the Register of Professional Turners and has a small shop and gallery in Bala in the Snowdonia National Park, where he displays and sells his work.

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## MARK PALMA

Mark believes turners are the most thoughtful and sharing people he has ever met. Over his 15 years of turning, teaching and writing he has found many friends and acquaintances on his journey with the lathe.

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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.

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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. He is keen to explore the combination of texture and colour in his work.

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## RICHARD FINDLEY

Richard is a full-time production turner specialising in small production runs, one-off commissions and turning for furniture and restoration work.

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## PETE MONCRIEFF-JURY

Pete learned turning in school and, when made redundant 12 years ago, became a full-time woodturner. He focuses on making for high-end shows. He also demonstrates and teaches.

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# Woodturning

January issue 340 on sale 26th Dec

## Andy Coates looks at maximising timber use from turning blanks



How to turn spoons and ladles,  
with Les Symonds

Mark Sanger creates a wall-hung  
mirror with a difference

Jason Breach's step-by-step guide to  
making a lidded jar with thread-chased top

Pat Carroll produces a decorative  
wide-rim platter

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDY COATES

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(ISSN 0958-9457)  
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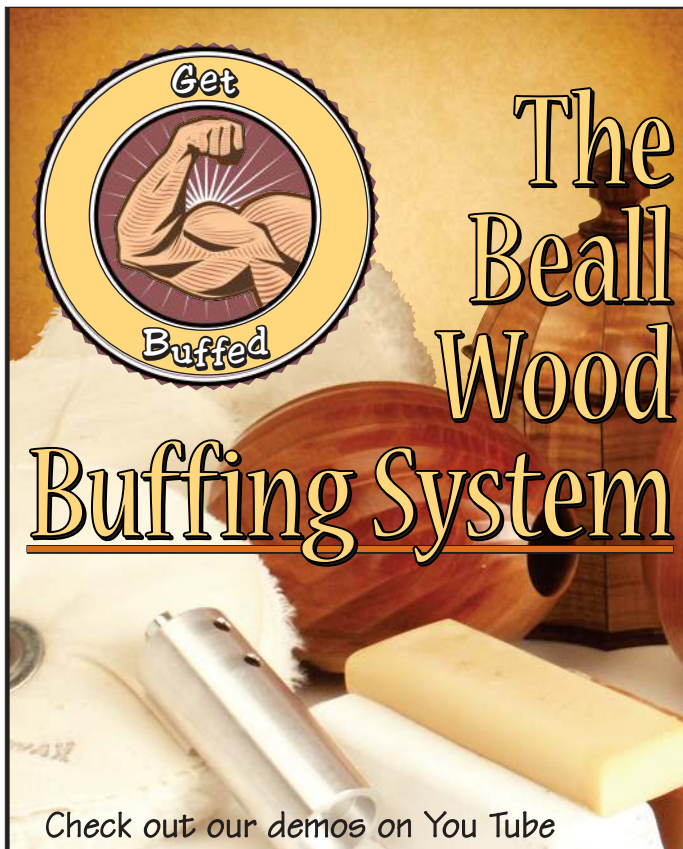
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# Raku pottery-inspired form

Mark Sanger creates an interesting decorative effect on a simple end-grain vessel

**For a long time now I have been fascinated with the surface colours and effects that are achieved in the craft Raku pottery that originated in 1500s Japan. Its beautiful colours and textures are produced by firing the pottery to high temperature, after which it is exposed to the air. If the pottery survives this process it is exposed to a further process of being placed in a container with sawdust and similar that ignite, producing various smoke, textural and colour effects on the surface of the piece. Horsehair, feathers and similar delicate objects can be laid on to the hot surface and produce amazingly delicate effects.**

## AN INTERESTING PROCESS

This process is mesmerising and, while we would for obvious reasons have problems subjecting a wooden vessel to such high heat, the effects produced within Raku pottery offer a huge resource of painterly faux effects to study and develop for a

turned vessel. Within this project I wanted to produce my take on a Raku fired pot. So I turned a simple form from a small, seasoned sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) log, aligning the pith between the lathe centres for turning. After turning, the surface was coloured with white automotive acrylic primer spray, which, due to its thick consistency, allows for it to be cut back with abrasive. Further coats are applied and cut back until the surface is smooth and void of any grain, so replicating a ceramic surface.

After this, acrylic ink colours of yellow ochre, deep red, burnt umber and pearlescent gold were added using an airbrush on to which fine lines were painted again with the airbrush by setting the flow to allow minimal paint through the brush while holding the nozzle close to the surface. The airbrush I am using in this article has a 0.35mm nozzle. With this I painted the smoke lines as fine as I could using dark sepia

acrylic. Finer lines were then applied over the airbrush lines using a .2 mm pigment lining pen, available from any good art shop. After this, fine highlights of gold-coloured acrylic spray were airbrushed on to the surface with the surface being sealed with acrylic satin lacquer.

As with all projects, the form and colours can be adapted for your own take on the project or you could just leave the form natural wood and apply your preferred finish.



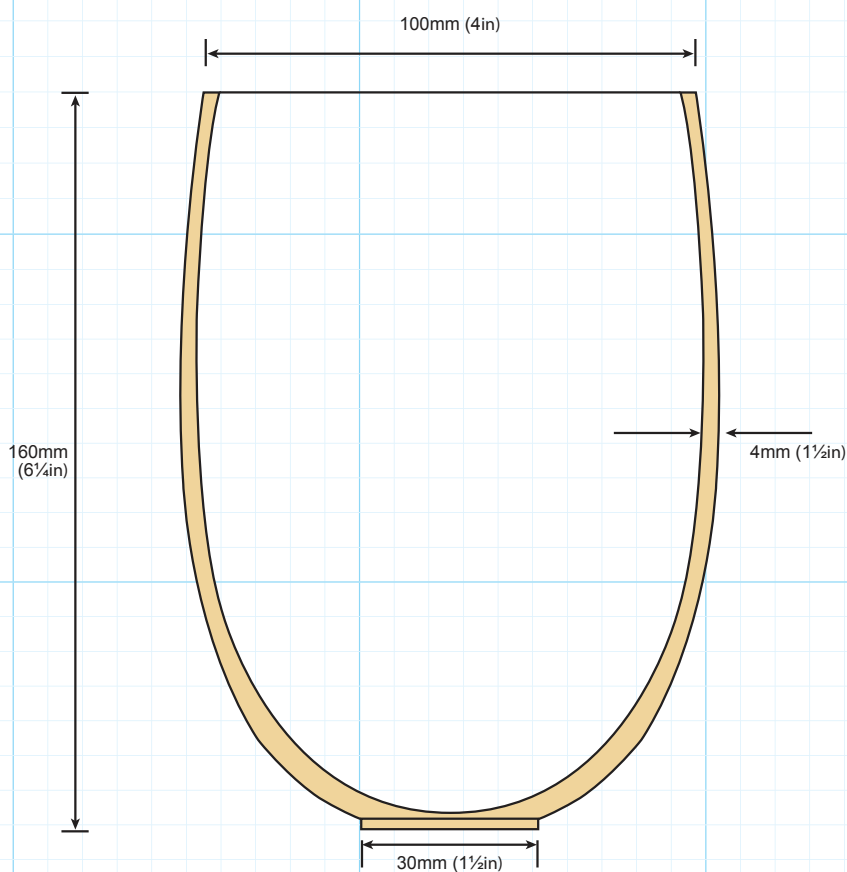
Airbrush inks

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal and respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Long grind bowl gouge
- Skew chisel
- Thin parting tool
- Chuck
- Drive spur
- Revolving tailstock centre
- 25mm diameter long-series Forstner bit
- Compressor/airbrush

## MATERIALS

- Seasoned sycamore log with pith included, 120mm diameter x 200mm long
- Abrasives down to 320 grit
- Airbrush
- Paintbrushes
- White automotive acrylic matt/primer spray paint
- Yellow ochre acrylic artist ink
- Deep red acrylic artist ink
- Burnt umber acrylic artist ink
- Gold pearlescent acrylic artist ink
- 0.2mm black pigment archive pen
- Acrylic spray sanding sealer
- Acrylic satin spray lacquer



## Shaping

**1** Mount the log between centres by aligning the pith. Remove any loose bark and rough to the round using a spindle roughing gouge to just oversize of the final project (see main illustration). Make sure when doing this that you have the toolrest protruding past the end of the log in the direction you are cutting so the tool is supported fully during the cut.

**2** Using a bowl gouge or spindle gouge clean up the front face and turn a spigot to suit the jaws of your chuck and a waste section around 25mm wide.

**3** Refine the spigot as required to suit the profile of your chuck jaws using the toe of a skew chisel presented horizontal on the toolrest in scraping mode. Make sure here the handle is higher than the cutting tip in contact with the wood surface to prevent the edge catching.

**4** Using a bowl gouge, shape from the widest section of the form down toward the waste section and foot. Here I am using a pull cut, working towards the tailstock with the long grind gouge, for quick timber removal, and will alter this to a push cut for finer cuts. The key is to get the main body profile you are after.







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**5** Remove from between centres, mount into the chuck and clean up the front face, cutting from rim to centre using the bowl gouge or a spindle gouge. Here the cut is presented on centre height with the flutes of the gouge pointing towards 2 o'clock.

**6** Continue with the bowl gouge, refining the shape for the incurve working from the largest section down to the rim. View the illustrations for the form produced, as it is difficult to see on the picture due to the camera angle. Here I am aiming from a smooth transition of curve from the foot to the rim without any obvious changes.

**7** Refine the surface of the form taking fine cuts until you are happy with the final form. Here I am using the long cutting edge of the long grind gouge for a skew cut. Alternatively you could use a standard push cut or refine with a skew chisel as shown inset.

## Hollowing and refinement

**8** Accurately measure the height of the form and subtract 5-10mm from this, marking this measurement on the outside of a long series 25mm Forstner bit held in the tailstock. Drill out to depth with lathes set to around 500rpm, withdrawing the bit regularly to prevent binding in the shavings.

**9** Hollow out the inside of the form to depth using your preferred hollowing tool. Here I am using a ring tool-type end-grain hollower as these produce the best surface finish straight from the tool. Check the depth as you proceed with a rule or depth gauge, but if you measured and marked the depth on the bit correctly, once the spur hole of the bit has been turned away from the inside you will be to depth and not need to measure.

**10** If required, refine the internal profile using a curve scraper, making sure that the cut is presented on centre and with the handle higher than the cutting edge so as to prevent the cutting edge from catching.

**11** Finish the outside and inside of the form with abrasive, working from 120 to 400 grit. For the inside I used a long reach inertia sander with a small 25mm sanding arbor, but you can wrap the abrasive around the end of a long section of dowel. Make sure when finishing that you use direct dust extraction and wear a suitable dust mask.

**12** Remove the piece from the chuck and mount the face on to a rubber-faced friction drive, aligning the spigot into the revolving tailstock centre using the initial indent left when roughing to the round in step 1. Mounting against a friction drive allows you access to safely refine the base of the form using a small spindle gouge. Shape and refine cutting down into the waste section from base curve and spigot, leaving a small amount of the spigot for remounting in step 15. Aim for a smooth curve and finally define the small foot as shown.



**13** Using a thin parting tool part in 5mm, undercutting the foot. This allows for the final finishing and colouring to be completed over the entire piece, including the foot, thus removing the need for blending the colours later as the latter can result in mismatch issues during the painting phase later.

**14** Finish the base profile and foot with abrasive to 400 grit, seamlessly blending in the turned parts together.

## Colouring

**15** Remount into the chuck. Apply several fine coats of acrylic spray sanding sealer to the outside and inside and allow to dry. When applying any spray finishes wear appropriate lung protection.

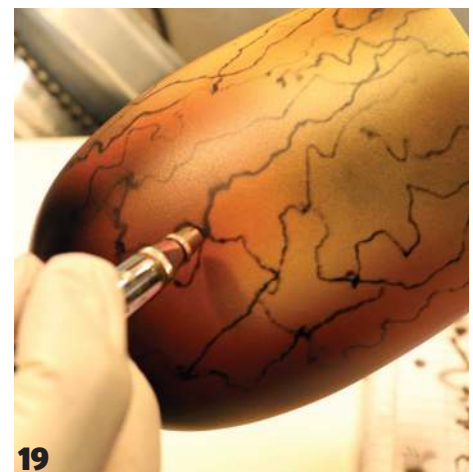
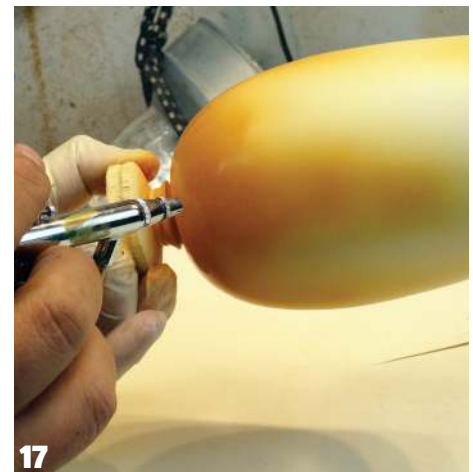
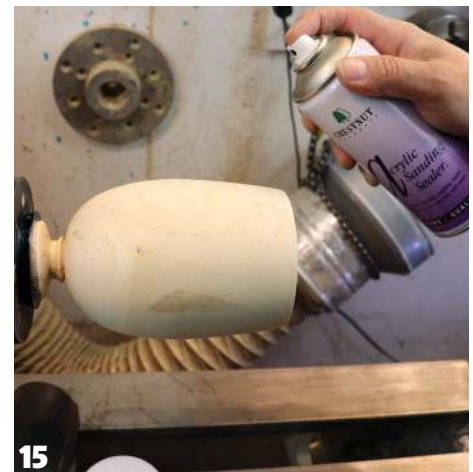
**16** Apply several fine coats of white acrylic primer automotive spray to the inside and outside of the form, allowing to fully dry between coats. Make sure here you direct the spray into and under the foot at the base so that there is even coverage over the entire surface. Cut back the sprayed surface using fine abrasive or synthetic alternative until the surface is ultra-smooth. Apply more coats of spray paint, allow to dry and repeat these processes until the surface of the wood looks and feels like ceramic.

**17** Using an airbrush apply a fine coat of yellow ochre acrylic ink. Start by laying a fine, even coat over the foot and base up to one-third of the form and then apply graded areas up to the rim, leaving areas of white showing through.

**18** Next, mix a drop of deep red into the yellow ochre and continue to shade over the previous ochre sections, slowly building up the shading and depth of hue. Take your time, applying very fine coats with each pass to build up the depth and interest around the outside of the vessel.

**19 & 20** Next, clean out the brush and refill it with burnt umber, again applying fine coats of this to the previous areas as well as in between to produce the impression of smoke on the surface. With this achieved I reduced the air and paint flow, placing the nozzle of the brush as close as possible to the surface of the form, and painted the lines to represent cracks. As with cracks within any surface they are all different widths and depths, so aim to alter the width and depth of colour randomly as you spray.

Next, due to the limitations of the detail I could achieve with the airbrush I was using, I applied fine lines over the previously sprayed lines as well as adding finer detail on to the sprayed lines using a black 0.2mm pigment archive pen, available from all good art shops.







20



21

**21** With the fine detail lines finished, lay a fine random coat of pearlescent gold-coloured acrylic ink randomly over the entire surface of the vessel so that when it is moved the viewer will get just a hint of gold reflecting from the surface. Allow to fully dry.

### Finishing touches

**22** Mount the form against a flat, rubber-faced friction plate, bringing the tailcentre up into the dent in the base spigot. With the lathe running slow at around 300-500rpm, use a spindle gouge to refine the underside of the foot, reducing the waste to around 6mm diameter. Finish the underside of the foot with abrasive from 180-400, being careful not to mark the previous painted surfaces of the foot.



22



23

**23** With the lathe stopped, cut through the remaining waste using a fine-bladed saw. Refine the underside of the foot using a small sanding arbor held in a waste section of wood in the chuck of the lathe to 400 grit abrasive.

**24** Seal the underside of the foot and outside of the form with acrylic spray sanding sealer and allow to dry. Finish with two fine coats of acrylic satin lacquer and allow to dry. The project is now ready for display. ●



24



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Two Technologies Giving Unequalled Performance

# Totally Turning

Mark Baker reviews this large US event



Nick Agar in demonstration mode

**Totally Turning is an annual US woodturning symposium run by the Adirondack Woodturners Association, which is a special interest group of the Northeastern Woodworkers Association.**

Held in 2019 at the Saratoga Springs City Center and the adjoining Saratoga Hilton, Saratoga Springs, New York, the event is part of a larger woodworking show entitled Showcase. The two are run as separate events, so a ticket to Totally Turning does not allow you to see the woodworking rotations, but the trade show and exhibition areas for Totally Turning and the woodworking exhibition are open to all, so you get a chance to see what other amazing creations and goodies are on display.

I was fortunate enough to visit the exhibition in March 2019 and have to say I had a great time.

## REASONS TO GO

Symposia are places to learn, share and experience new things on a scale it is difficult to find anywhere other than at major woodworking shows. But the atmosphere and experience is different at those events than at symposia and this is why people love attending them when they can.

Symposia are events that are dedicated

to and focused on what people love and want to learn more about. As is usually the case, attendees learn and gain new insight from what they see there.

But – and this is a big part of symposia – people also meet up with friends, make new ones, share thoughts and ideas, see what others are doing and hopefully go away with some new enthusiasm and ideas to play around with.

Well, my visit to Totally Turning was a real treat and trust me when I say there was plenty to see.

## FRIENDLY AND WELL RUN

Totally Turning is all you would expect from a symposia, and it is friendly, unrushed and of a size that's not overawing. All comers are met with the same enthusiasm, friendliness and kindness and everyone appeared to be well cared for, looked after and helped when required.

There are, as you might guess, many diverse rotations for people to attend as they choose, but the variety and mix is such that there is plenty to see, be challenged by and learn from. But the organisation is such that it's easy to work out what you would like to see and not be so overcome with choice that you end up like a startled rabbit in headlights.

I met many people at the symposium, and they loved the demonstrations. I saw many people among the trade stalls, which covered turning, carving and woodworking, and – as is usually the case at such events – people were carrying away bags of goodies they had bought to add to their workshop.

## TREATS ON SHOW

The display of turning and the woodworking exhibition were real treats. The turning display showed a wide variety of items and, when talking to people in the gallery, they were busy sharing thoughts and asking questions as to what techniques were used.

The display of woodworking in the main hall showcased everything from carving, intarsia, and scrollsaw work to furniture and cabinetmaking – along with so much more.

Brilliant work indeed and it definitely gets the creative mind working.

Nothing seemed rushed about the event. I am sure that there were some hiccups but the helpers and organisers – at least as far as I could see – had everything covered and running like a well-oiled machine.

I suppose that is what 28 years of hard-earned experience brings.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK BAKER





A selection of work by Stan Blanchard

### THE FUTURE

It's a fact that many events either thrive and survive or fail. Given this particular one's long history, it must be getting something right.

I must admit I loved this event. It was large enough to provide a wide variety of attractions for attendees, but small enough that I felt as though nothing was too much trouble and that every person at the symposium was valued and cared for. That is not just my opinion either. When I was chatting to people, many spoke of the event in a similar and glowing-terms manner – that included the woodworking events too.

If you get the chance to go, I think you will have a great time and the locality is ideal for further exploration of the wider area too.

The 2020 event heralds the 29th such show and it will be on 29 and 30 March. Just to give you a heads up, the line up of demonstrators will include: Art Liestman, Hans Weissflog, Michael Blankenship, Rudy Lopez, Derek Weidman, Kurt Hertzog, Joe Fleming, Rick Angus, Lynda Zibbideo and more.

For more information visit:  
[www.totallyturning.com](http://www.totallyturning.com)



Cherry and holly form by Malcolm Ray





Ambrosia maple bowl by Andy DiPietro



Bamboo and resin form by Michael Smith



Basket weave-effect vase  
by Jim & Shelley Kent



Sculptural bowl by Peter Walen





Chair, by Jim Lewis, part of the Woodworkers Showcase exhibition



Murmuration, by Michael Foster



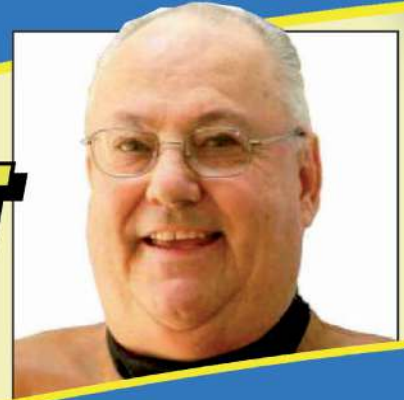
Teapot in Ash & Leather, by John Jordan



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# The basics of circular wooden inlays

Chris West has some hints and tips

Attractive decorative features using inlays for lids were seen in Jason Breach's ring-inlaid box article (issue 337). You may have seen that though things might look complex, there are often simple solutions. You can create something and achieve a wonderful result without necessarily spending large sums of money on speciality chucks or holding devices. Having said that, you have to bear in mind that, to create this type of effect means working methodically and accurately. Here, I create a fridge magnet with circular wooden inlays using a low-cost solution to accurately make inlay rings ready to fill, or in this case, insert wooden rings of various colours.

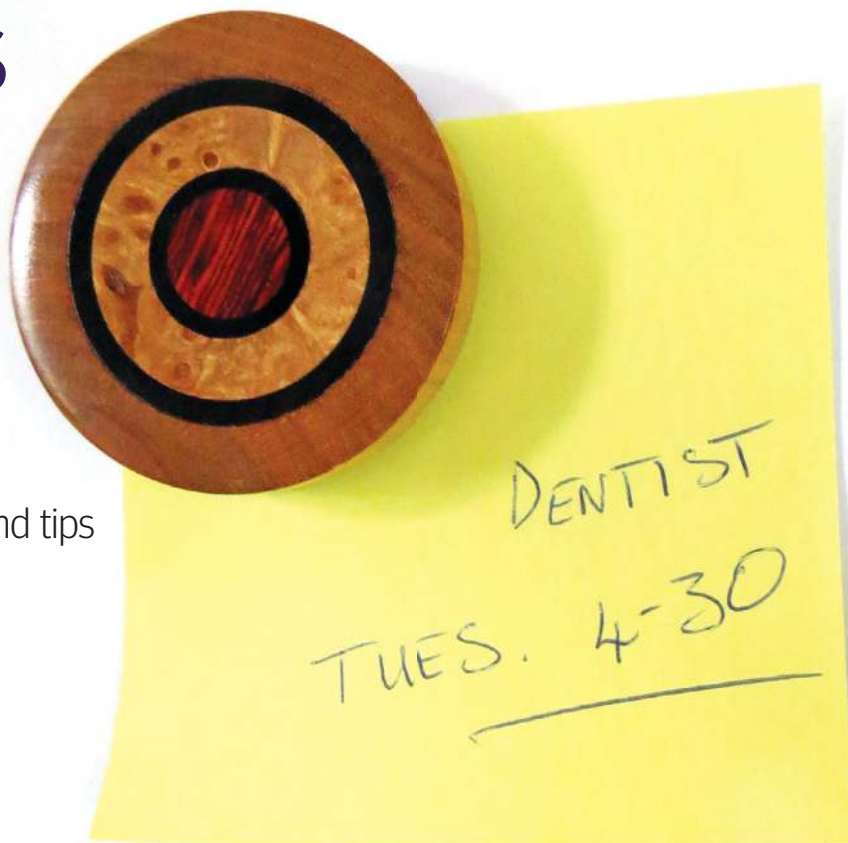
## THE THREE MAIN ASPECTS OF THIS PROJECT ARE:

- 1 Double-sided carpet tape is used to move the receiving blank inlay rather than a commercial eccentric chuck.
- 2 There are inlays turned within an inlay.
- 3 The inlays themselves are turned from different woods.

Circular inlays of contrasting wood are a way of bringing interest to a number of woodturned utilitarian items. While they take longer than texturing they do give you the opportunity to use up odd pieces of wood you may have around your workshop.

Inlays in this article refer to wooden discs, which are fitted tightly and glued into a recess of a contrasting or figured wood, i.e. a burr. The inlays are sliced cross-grain to show off the wood's grain to its best.

Normally they are glued using a medium CA to a depth of around 5mm and protrude another 4mm or more if a convex dome is going to be added.



## TOOLS USED

The final cuts are required to give an accurate cut at 90° to the base on the outside of the disc and are achieved by careful use of a 3/8in spindle gouge being pushed towards the headstock. This gives a more level cut than pulling the gouge.

Before I mention homemade tools I would like to acknowledge that all the tool development work mentioned here has been carried out by Dick Sing. Dick's skills are regularly seen at AAW chapter demonstrations and seminars throughout the US.

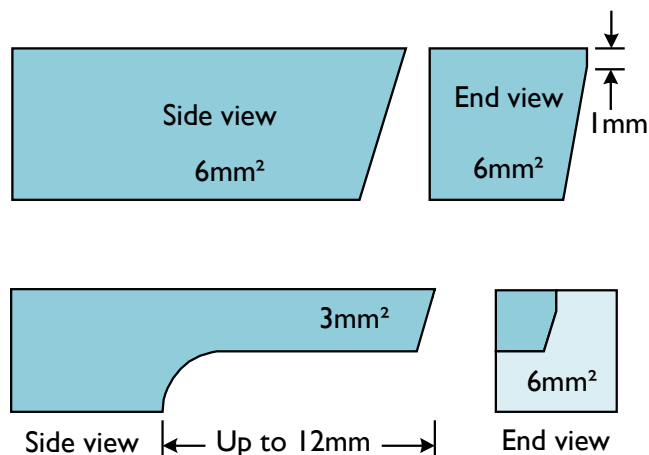
## END CUTTERS

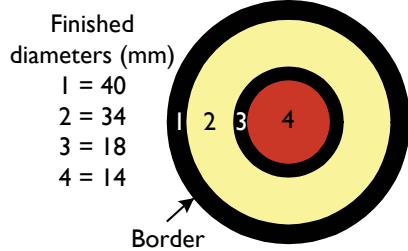
Homemade end-cutting tools, which allow you to plunge-cut into the wood

by a limited distance to create grooves of a specific width can be made from a piece of 6mm square x 200mm HSS bar obtainable online for less than £6 (\$8). Using either a fixed grinder and/or a Dremel-type rotary carving tool and a suitable grinding bit, a tool can be ground to cope with inlays over 20mm in diameter.

The 1mm relief provides a non cutting edge to deepen the hole while not increasing the diameter as the tool enters the wood.

A similar end cutting tool can also be formed from 6mm x 6mm but ends up as a 3mm x 3mm tool for use with inlays less than 20mm in diameter.





## Creating inlays

In this series of articles, different methods of laying out the inlays will be shown. The first is used to turn a fridge magnet. The inlays are turned prior to working on the project.

### INLAY WOOD USED IN THIS PROJECT:

- 1** Ebony, 40mm Ø x 10mm
- 2** Light-coloured burr, 34mm Ø x 7mm
- 3** Ebony, 18mm Ø x 7mm
- 4** Cocobolo, 14mm Ø x 10mm

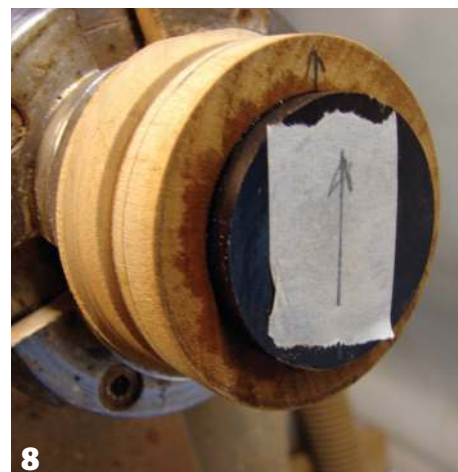
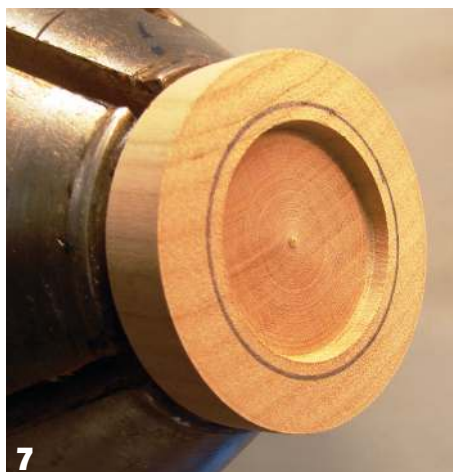
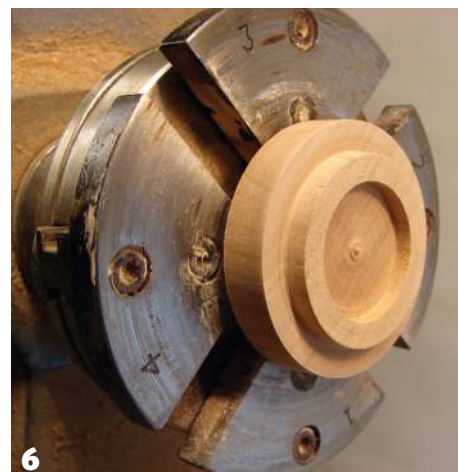
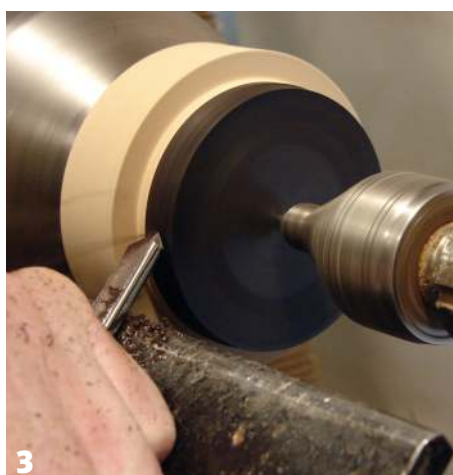
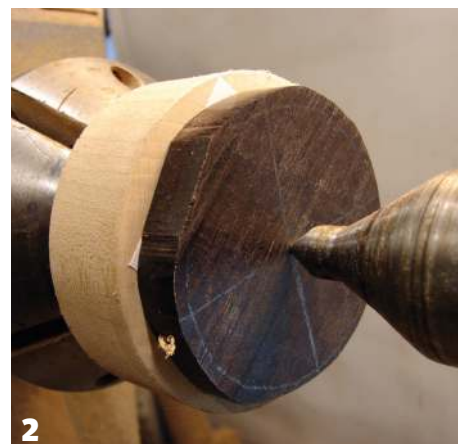
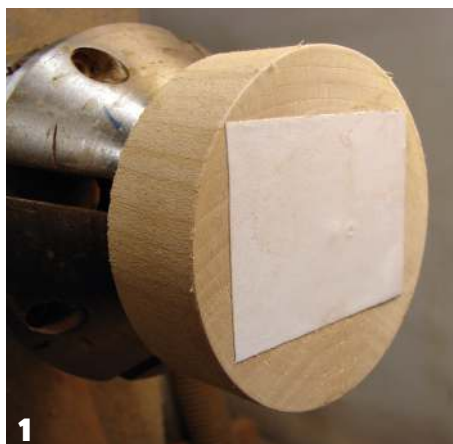
**1** The first step is to turn a scrap block from any hardwood. It will need a dovetail or spigot for holding it in a chuck and needs to be approximately 51mm deep. In most cases its diameter depends on the diameter of the border inlay. The front surface must be flat. A piece of strong, double-sided tape is stuck on to the front.

**2** Bandsaw out a blank. Hold one side of the inlay number 1 (border) blank against a belt sander to get a flat surface. Place the flat side on to the double-sided tape using a live centre to position the blank centrally.

**3** Always cut with the gouge moving towards the scrap block. Turn the blank to its designated diameter (for the fridge magnet, 40mm). The finished diameter can be  $\pm 0.05\text{mm}$  as the blank receiving the inlay will be opened up to the required diameter. Notice that a small part of the scrap block has been reduced in diameter to that of the finished inlay. This will enable a sharp tool such as a wood chisel to be inserted to gently remove the inlay when it is finished.

**4** Remove the inlay from the lathe and put aside. Repeat the steps for the second and third inlays. For inlay number 4, the diameter (14mm) was too small to be supported in the headstock by a step centre. The way forward is to cut a cross-grained-section of your chosen wood to a length long enough to be held safely in chuck jaws. The end is faced off and the piece turned to the required diameter before parting.

**5** You should end up with four inlays as shown. These inlays will be used in the project to produce the fridge magnet.





## Fridge magnet

### Tools:

- Spindle roughing gouge
- $\frac{3}{8}$  Spindle gouge
- 10 or 13mm flat skew
- 3mm parting tool
- 3mm end scraper (homemade)
- 6mm end scraper (homemade)

### Accessories:

- Magnet, 30mm  $\varnothing$  x 5mm
- 51mm (2in) double-sided tape
- Blank size: 60 x 60 x 30mm

The hardwoods you use are your choice, depending on what you have in your wood pile and what you think will look the most attractive. The blank itself should contrast nicely with inlay 1.

In the drawing of the fridge magnet above I have shown the dovetail at the top. A spigot is an alternative. This way round is perhaps the quickest method but does rely on your collection of chuck jaws, including expansion jaws, to fit into the magnet's recess. This is my chosen method but an alternative is included later.

**6** Start by rough-turning the blank, face off and form a dovetail to fit your chuck jaws. Mount the blank on the chuck and face off what will be the bottom of the fridge magnet. Turn the outside down to 56mm  $\varnothing$ .

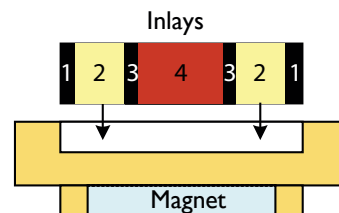
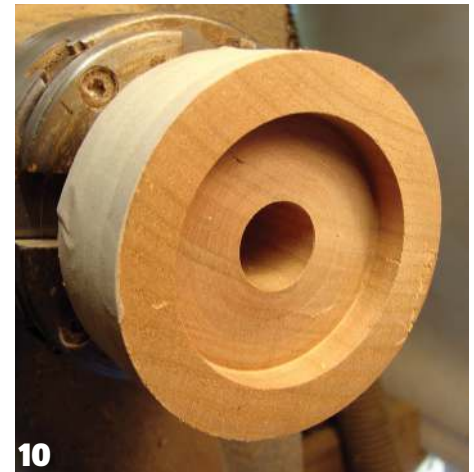
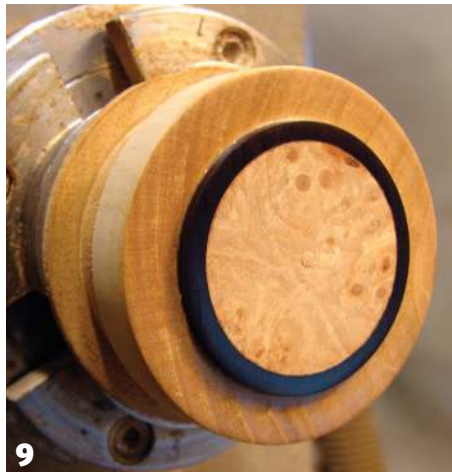
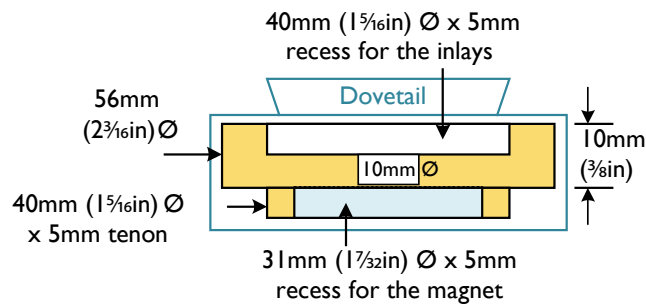
Measure and mark the overall height of the fridge magnet, 15mm plus 2mm for cleaning up. Form the 31mm  $\varnothing$  magnet recess and the 40mm  $\varnothing$  tenon as shown, reverse holding the magnet recess in expansion jaws.

**7** Face off to give the correct height, 10mm. Begin turning the recess for the inlay 1, 5mm deep to a diameter smaller than required, i.e. 38mm  $\varnothing$ .

**8** While widening the recess to fit inlay 1, continue offering the inlay to ensure that the fit is a good one. I used a 10mm flat skew to achieve this. The alternative tool is a 13mm flat skew chisel. Mark the grain direction of the fridge magnet and also the inlay before lining them up. The inner and outer surfaces of the two inlays are coated with sanding sealer before medium CA is applied on the flat surface of the recess for a width of approximately 6mm from the outside diameter. The centre of inlay 1 is going to be removed so there is no point in gluing it in at the centre.

**9** Inlay (2) follows. The thickness of the inlay is a minimum of 7mm. Follow instructions as above for 1 & 2. Glue it in as before.

**NOTE:** If your tools make fitting inlays 3 & 4 difficult, then just have the fridge magnet with the two inlays in, forget 3 & 4. Glue in the magnet with a silicone adhesive. Finally, face off the inlays to the top of the fridge magnet. Sand, seal and use a waterproof finish.



## Alternative way of turning the magnet

**10.** Mount a piece of scrap wood between centres and form a dovetail. Holding this dovetail in suitable chuck jaws, face off the end, mark and part off. Turn a 56mm  $\varnothing$  x 9mm deep recess for the magnet's blank to fit in. Finally a 13mm ( $\frac{1}{2}$ in)  $\varnothing$  hole is drilled through the jam chuck to allow a softwood dowel to be used to knock the fridge magnet out if required.

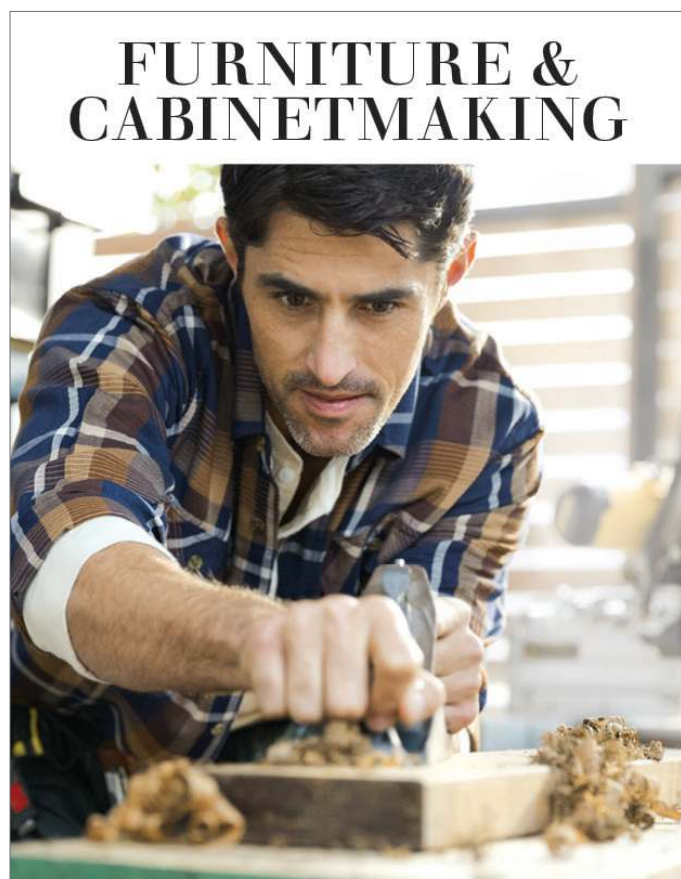
Fit the fridge magnet into the jam chuck with a live centre in place. Face off the fridge magnet to the 15mm mark you made earlier. Remove the live centre and form the 31mm  $\varnothing$  x 5mm recess for the magnet. With a live centre in place, form the 40mm  $\varnothing$  x 5mm tenon, which will allow easy gripping of the fridge magnet. Remove from the jam chuck.

Sand, seal and use a waterproof finish.  
Buff to complete the project.

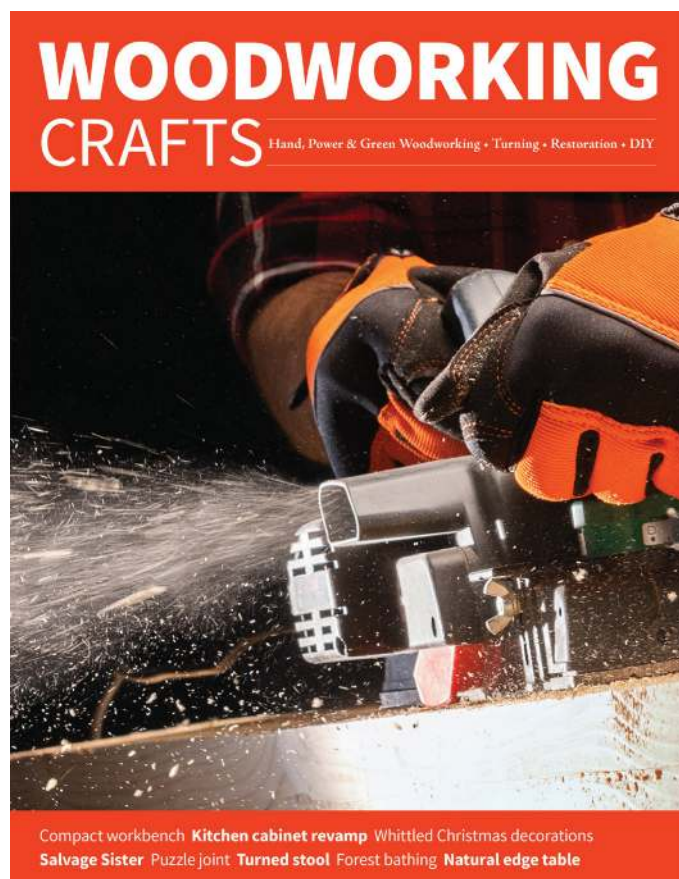


The next two issues include further projects which are incrementally more difficult. Shown are the inlays for the next project, a glass jar lid. If you wish to try some of these projects, may I suggest that you keep this issue in a safe place for reference later on in the series. •

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## ON TEST

### Vinces WoodNWonders finishing products

Vinces WoodNWonders is a company that I have seen over the years at the AAW symposium. It essentially deals with sanding arbors from 1-5in with many variations to suit most instances – soft, hard, thin, ultra-thin, flex-edge, thick foam and more. Innerface pads 2-5in diameter, radius, tapered, medium radius, very soft, custom soft, palm sanders, a vast array of abrasives from aluminium oxide, silicon carbide, ceramic and more. Then there are other finishing accessories, such as micro-fibre polishing buff pads, palm sanders in various shapes, sanders drills, quick-change pads and other items that are connected with all things to do with surface preparation and refinement after the turning has been done.

I have to say that the range of items the company offers is very impressive and it is only when you see all of the items on display in front of you and touch and feel them that you realise what a well thought-out mix of products it has that have been developed to cater for as many eventualities as possible a turner and many other woodworkers will encounter.

#### Long-term test

I have had a few of the items from the range of things it offers on a long-term test – the photographs show what I have been testing. I am on record as saying that the surface preparation will make or break a project. Many turners have all the tools under the sun and can create wonderful work, but do not spend the time to prepare and refine the surface ready for the final processes to really make their work stand out from the crowd.

The sanding arbors of various sizes and types and innerface pads, which are placed on the arbors to alter the density and allow the abrasives to work in different ways as far as how they

interact with the surface of the wood, are exceptionally well made. The ability to pick up an arbor and alter it to how you need it to work to maximum effect is a real boon. You do not have to put up with what you have, you can tailor things to suit what you are working on.

I know they might seem just small items, but the buffing pads are a real treat. The ability to impregnate one with wax, have a range of them with different grit grades of polishing compound, use one for buffing oils and such like is a real plus. It makes life a lot easier than using disposable paper all the time. Now, it has to be said that it is a must to mark on the back of the pad what each one is loaded with and used for, as it is easy to forget.

#### Conclusion

I know these are classed consumable items, but I cannot state enough that they are very well made and have surpassed my expectations of them. I am over 12 months in on using these to see how they perform and have yet to have an arbor or innerface pad fail on me.



That is not to say that they will not wear out or get a catch with them or something like that, but they are built to withstand the rigours of what they are intended to do and I have churned through lots of abrasives of various kinds on them during that time. As for the buffing pads, the only time I have had to discard them is due to them becoming dirty or contaminated. Ten of the 12 pads I had are still in use but kept in a storage drawer when not.

I have no reservations about these products at all. The range is impressive, the items are very well made, last a long time and do exactly what they were designed to do at prices that are very reasonable.

**Prices from: \$4**

**Contact: Vinces WoodNWonders**

**Web: <http://vinceswoodnwonders.com>**



# Simon Hope negative rake scrapers

Simon Hope is well-known for his range of turning tools and has recently introduced two heavy-duty negative rake scrapers. The scrapers comprise a metal body, which is created from 35mm wide by 15mm thick by 265mm long steel, which incorporates a 55mm by 15mm diameter tang. The front end of the bar features a machined section on to which is placed a thick interchangeable cutter which is either round or convex. The cutters are 48mm wide/diameter depending on the cutter and are created from cryogenically treated HSS. The cutters are held in place by a large, heavy-duty machine screw. The scrapers are designed to fit in an interchangeable handle of your choice.

You can buy two different scrapers – one with a round tip and one with the convex – or you can buy one scraper type and then buy the other cutter tip to swap over as required.

## In use

These scrapers are very heavy and designed to work with minimum fuss. Now they are designed to be used with the cutter on the lower face of the shaft, which means that the hopewoodturning.co.uk logo is uppermost. I know most tipped tools have the cutter sitting on top of the blade, but trust me when I say that they will not work the other way up. I tried and they didn't. Look closely at the way the cutter edge is created and you can see it is designed to be used as described earlier.

They may look a beast and many will likely as not have never used such a large heavyweight scraper as this. But they are designed to dampen vibration to the maximum, provide stability and, despite their appearance, are easy to manoeuvre and are able to be used on quite small work. And, of course, they will cope with the very largest you are likely to tackle too.

## Conclusion

These scrapers are very well made and are very easy to use. The large sizes of the cutter quickly blend out any surface anomalies and they are capable of making heavy-duty cuts through to the most delicate ones you can imagine. There is no question this is aided by their exceptional mass and vibration dampening abilities. The cutting edges can be sharpened easily on a belt



or wheel unit of your choice but can also be honed with a diamond file. These are definitely worth looking at and having in your tool kit.

**£55 each or £99 for round plus convex deal**

**Single cutter £30 of either type**

**Contact Simon Hope**

**Web: <https://hopewoodturning.co.uk>**

# Clewes Mate tools



Jimmy Clewes is well known around the world and has introduced four tipped turning tools. There are two straight tools: Mate #1 & Mate #2. These are 300mm in overall length and are constructed of 16mm square bare bar and feature a 35mm long, 16mm wide tang. The front end is ground and the cutter is set in a machined pocket at approximately 22° negative rake angle. The cutter is drawn into the pocket by a conical-tapered screw,

There are also two tools suitable for hollow forms titled Mate #1 & Mate #2 undercutting tools. These are 220mm overall length and are constructed from 16mm-wide, 9mm-thick bar with a 50mm-long, 16mm-wide tang. This unit features a curved front end and the end is ground exactly the same as the Mate straight tools and the tip seated and fixed in the same.

The cutters used and fitted to the tools are contour-ground/cup-type microcrystalline cutters. On the #1 tools a 6mm-diameter cutter is used and the #2 tools sport an 8mm cutter of the same type.

## In use

These tools are very well made and have that wonderful solid feel to them that instils confidence that these were designed for a purpose and that they will do it well.

The cutters are designed to cut, not just scrape, and when dull can be rotated round to present a fresh edge to the work.

The tools both have enough mass to stay put and minimise vibration. The straight tools are designed for both rough

shaping and gentle refinement cuts. The nose shape of the straight tools allows you to guide the cutter in both directions with ease and the angle the cutters on this and the undercutting tools are set at means that the cuts are gentle rather than aggressive, so make the turning experience controlled and pleasurable. Having said that, with the 8mm cutters you can hog timber away quickly, but still in a controlled and easy manner. The 6mm cutters are, for want of a better phrase, a little more refined in use but still capable of quick material removal and delicate cuts in a controlled manner.

The undercutting tool is a real boon for hollow and undercut forms. It is very stable in use and reaches around undercuts with ease. These too can remove material quickly but are also able to take the most delicate of peeling cuts.

## Conclusion

Jimmy has done a great job in creating and refining four replaceable-tip turning tools. They are not cheap, but they are well made and do exactly what they are designed to do – that is, help people create work they wish to with minimum fuss. I think these are well worth looking at and trying for yourself.

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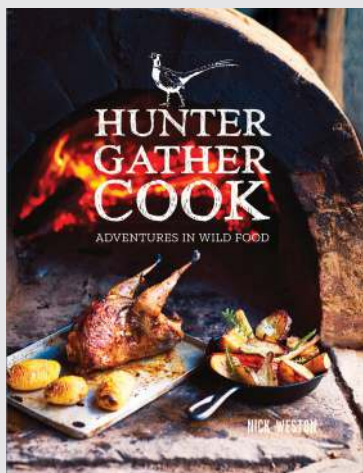




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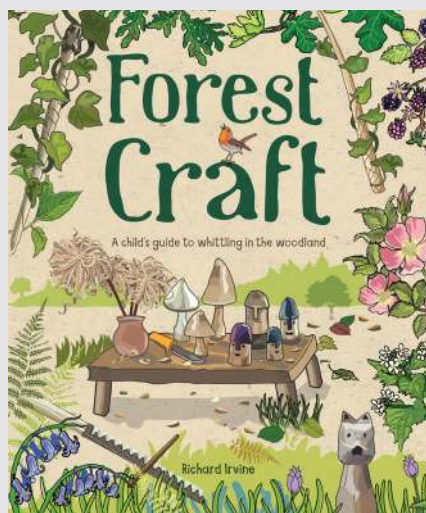


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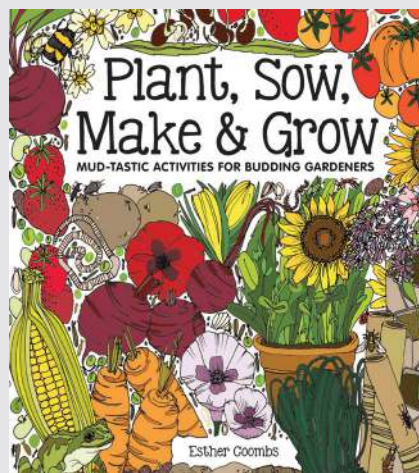


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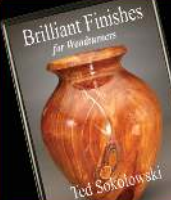


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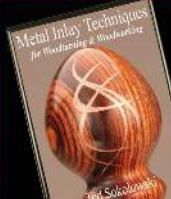
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# It's Christmas time

Pete Moncrieff-Jury has some suggestions for festive gifts

If you want to make things either to sell or give as gifts at Christmas then it is never too early. If, like me, you are a skinflint it is also a good time to dig through that pile of offcuts and scrap woods and find a use for them. I am sure most of us have a box or shelf full of bits such as the ones pictured – now is the time to start going through it and using those valuable remnants. There is a limit to how many bowls, pens, bottle stoppers and so on you can sell or give to long-suffering relatives and friends who then have to muster up another 'oh how wonderful, thank you'. So maybe it's time to think of something different.

Remember there are only a few weeks left – 13 as I write this but about three for you reading it. So we aren't looking at super-decorated items here. We want things that can be different but quick to make. Think odd, quirky and perhaps a bit off the wall. What can we make from this pile of junk – sorry, the amazing resources we have been hoarding all year?

Decorations are always a good start. Snowmen, penguins and hanging decorations are always popular and easy to make and decorate. People like the unusual and things they can keep from year to year, as opposed to the plastic baubles that go in the bin on the 12th night. For the snowmen and penguins, you need a wood you can get a good finish on from the abrasive. The pendants can be made from all sorts of wood and either decorated or, if it's a well-figured or spalted wood, left au naturel. Split wood can be filled with a contrasting material such as brass, copper or glass frit.

## CREATING CHARACTER

Everyone makes snowmen, lots make penguins, but how do we make them different? Simple – give them character. The ones shown have waistcoats and ties but we always have both male and female – you'd be surprised how many prefer their penguins with long eyelashes. LOL. We often put names on them, personalise them. Don't forget, snowmen can also be snowwomen. They all have scarves, made from a woven ribbon you can pick up cheaply, and as big a variety of hats as possible. Noses for both are made with either cocktail sticks or barbecue skewers coloured orange. If you want to practise your skew work by all



Before and after



means shave some wood down to 1mm for each nose but I am too lazy for that. For the colouring use a simple felt tip but do it free hand, not on the lathe.

The pendant ornaments can be really classy, using woods such as yew, laburnum, walnut etc., and highly polished. Use contrasting woods for the finials and hollow out the centre as much as possible. As no one is going to stick their finger in you just need to get as much wood out as possible to lighten them up. Experiment with different-shaped centres – ball shaped, pear shaped, egg shaped – and, quick tip, make sure that the finials look good before gluing down. If you are artistic you could use a plain wood such as sycamore, lime etc. and decorate it

yourself but often the wood itself is attractive on its own.

## HOW TO HANG THEM

The final bit is how do you hang them? For the smaller items such as the snowmen and penguins I use a small brass eyelet in the top, but for the pendants I make a finial and put a 4mm hole through it into which I place a ribbon for hanging.

These things are quick to make, each one can be personalised and look different and they are a great way of clearing that shelf of all those offcuts of burr, spalted wood, etc. that you have been loath to throw away.

Also, in my experience, they are usually more acceptable than bowl number four. Go for it, empty the shelf, get creative and have a merry Christmas.





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