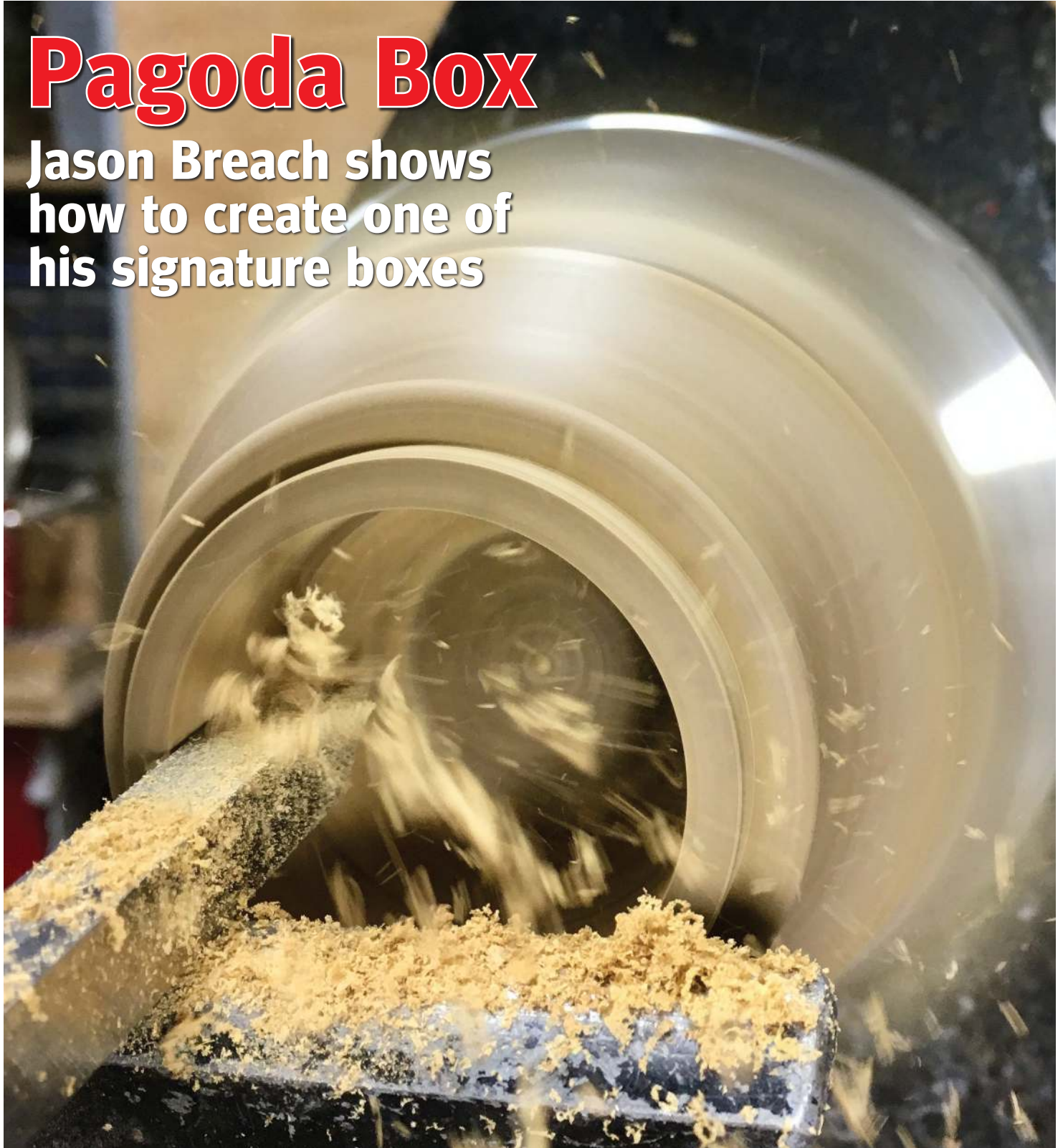


Woodturning

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Woodturning 317



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Happy New Year



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The weather is cold and wet for many and I have been assured by many readers that this is not the time to be in the workshop. Well, if the workshop is not insulated and heated and you work in a shed rather than a purpose-built building – oh to be so lucky – then I can wholly understand. I am fortunate to be able to use a garage. I must admit that I have insulated it to an extent but it can get very cold in the winter months – so much so that over Christmas it is often used to store some food as the fridge gets somewhat full.

I do not like hot workshops but do like them to be about 16°C or so, not that it has reached that recently. And I wear short sleeves when turning because I can't stand the shavings in the cuffs or up the arms. I tried using a fan heater to take the chill off a while back but it took a lot of time to do anything, so I gave up on that. I did think about a radiator, but I have no space and couldn't be fussed in the end. I get on just about alright most of the time in there so why change it?

Workshops are precious but funny things – we always want to do something with and to them. I once asked a group of turners discussing their workshops: 'When is enough enough?' The universal

comment was 'never'. But caveats such as when 'money runs out', 'when I cannot fit anything else in' and 'when I get fed up and try a new hobby' were mentioned among many others.

The last comment, 'when I get fed up and try a new hobby', was one that has struck a chord more recently. Not for myself, more with regard to some of the older turners, carvers and woodworkers I know from my many travels. Some have said they are trying something new due to not being in the workshop so much, but still want to do something and be creative. They mentioned that they were trying drawing, painting, pottery and other things that could be done in the home rather than in a workshop. They also mentioned that it was warmer doing those sort of things than being in their workshops at this time of year.

The overriding comment that came from the discussions, and also the letters and emails I receive, is that the social aspect is very important. All the people commented that they liked drawing, painting, pottery, walking, photography and travel and wanted the social aspect of being with people as well as doing something. This social aspect of clubs has been a theme

throughout my years as editor. The camaraderie is as important a part of what we do, if not more so, than the time in the workshop when we get the urge to create something. Both are valuable and fulfilling, but it seems that most people, without the social aspects, do not gain as much pleasure as when the time is shared with others too. It is as though something is missing.

So it isn't, it seems, the size of the workshop, or how much kit we have crammed into that space over the years, or whether the workshop is big enough or it is hot or cold that are any of the overriding factors in what we do. It is having fun and that it is better still if we are able to share and enjoy that time with others, no matter what hobbies, crafts and pursuits we undertake.

So have fun – and let me know what you have been making.

Mark

markb@thegmcgroup.com



COVER IMAGE: Jason Breach (see page 60)



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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Woodturning is an inherently dangerous pursuit. Readers should not attempt the procedures described herein without seeking training and information on the safe use of tools and machines. All readers should observe current safety legislation when turning and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

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Adorable adornments

Colwin Way has fun making these fashionable jewellery items



This article provides a great opportunity to clear out the timber box offcuts and concentrate on some smaller projects: jewellery. These small items offer exciting opportunities to use various materials and there are myriad design possibilities to explore. That said, in this article I am sticking to using timber and I will show you how to create an offset pendant and a lovely necklace with matching earrings. I've tried to keep the jewellery as delicate as possible and remembered that these pieces have to be worn. It's also worth remembering that, used in small sections timber can lose its wow factor, unless you're using pieces

that are the most highly coloured or figured.

These are really fun projects and can get you thinking, but I would suggest starting on the simple designs shown here and mastering these before you move on to making more complex items.

Now, it has to be said that I'm no expert when it comes to the wearing of jewellery. However, I know a lot of people who are, my wife being the first and most important, of course, and it is wise to seek the opinions of loved ones who do know about jewellery when considering the designs and sizes of various items. The other considerations are the findings,

the findings/metal attachments you add the turned jewellery items to.

There are loads of shops and online retailers selling such things – just search 'jewellery findings' online – and these include plated metal to silver, gold and so on, so this area too helps you add your personal tweaks.

In making the pieces for this article I got carried away and made nine pendants, two rings, two necklaces and over a dozen earrings, but had to cut back due to the fact that 96 photos wouldn't work in page allocation. But there is enough information for you to see the fundamentals so you can experiment for yourself.

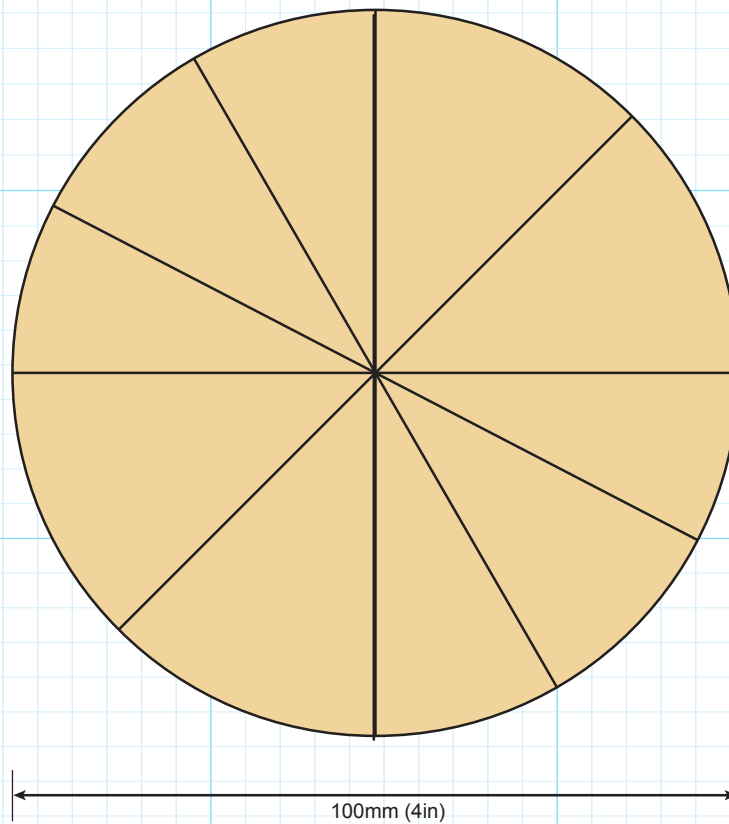
TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal & respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- 6mm bowl gouge
- 2mm parting tool
- Skew chisel
- Chuck with small pin jaws
- Wood plate soft jaws
- Tailstock drill chuck
- Handrill
- 1 & 10mm drill bits
- Hot-melt glue gun
- Japanese pull saw
- Disc sander

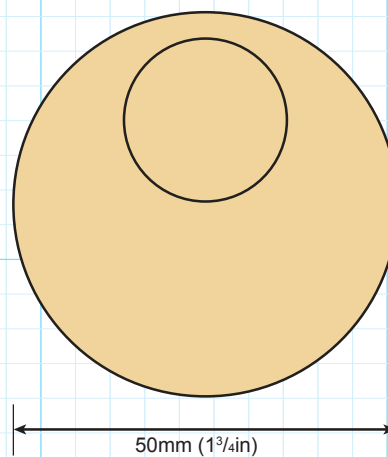
MATERIALS

- Assorted jewellery findings
- 20mm beech dowel
- Polishing mops
- Buff polishing compound
- Friction polish

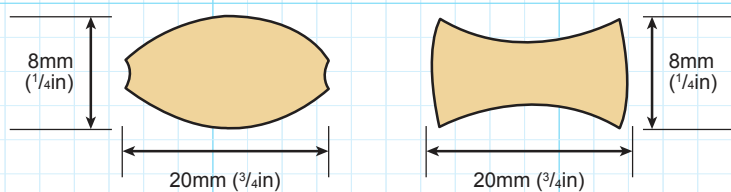
NECKLACE SEGMENTS



PENDANT



NECKLACE BEADS





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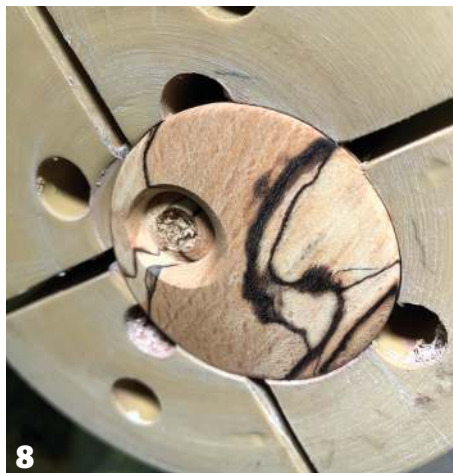
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Offset pendant

1 Like I said, this would be a good time to raid the offcuts box where all the colourful timbers live. I also cast a fair amount of resin for jewellery, which opens up the possibility of using other materials such as pine cones, corn cobs and banksia nut. Whatever you decide to use it needs to be heavy in colour and figure and free from defects.

2 & 3 Depending on the piece of jewellery you're going to make you may need to do some preparation. If using offcuts, start by cutting all your chosen timber into circular pieces for the pendants and necklaces. Then, using hot-melt glue, stick some short lengths of 20-25mm dowel centrally on the back of said discs. The dowel will be held in suitable chuck jaws to turn the pendants. The items being turned are small, and so as long as the adhesive is used correctly and the joints are close-fitting, this method is great for turning small pieces. Select one of the pendant blanks and, using suitable jaws, hold the piece of dowel securely with the back of the pendant sitting against the jaws. Support the position on your toolrest and clean up the edge avoiding any chuck jaws.

4 Shape the first face, creating either a flat or slight convex curve. Once you're happy with the shape sand down to 600 grit.

5 To shape the opposite side you will need to change jaws, so if you're making more than one pendant get all of them to this point before you move on to the next section. The jaws seen here are wood plate jaws – these are homemade, you're in control of the jaw size you make and you drill your own central hole/jaw width of a size of your choosing. You can buy ready-made nylon jaws that you turn to suit your needs. Here you can see that I've made a shallow jaw of a suitable width and 2-3mm deep to hold the pendant.

6 Now you can shape and sand the pendant to the same form as the opposite side, starting by turning off the sacrificial piece of dowel then gently scraping with the skew on its side before sanding to a fine finish.

7&8 With the main form created, it is now time to create the offset-turned piece. The easiest way to do this is to use another wood jaw plate or a set of nylon jaws mounted on your chuck. With the nylon/wood jaws mounted on the chuck, take the chuck and jaws to the pillar drill and drill an offset hole of the size to hold the pendant. Drill to a depth of about 2-3mm to hold the lip of the pendant. You can see in the image a set of jaws known as soft jaws, which are designed to be turned to form your own custom jaws. Just a comment about the wood/nylon jaws – you can drill a series of holes in the one set of jaws to hold various sizes of pendants. With a suitable offset hole drilled mount the pendant in the jaws and, using a tailstock drill chuck and suitable bit, drill a small hole through the pendant. With the hole drilled, work out what shape the hole and face are to be.

9 I like to make a domed face and blend the drilled and shaped hole to a gentle radius on both sides with the flat of a small skew used in scraping mode before sanding once again to a fine finish.

10 To polish the jewellery it's easiest to use a polishing mop on an arbor. You can either use a polishing pigtail that fits into your lathe or a version that fits into your chuck. The latter allows you to move the tailstock out of the way, giving you a bit more space. Be careful not to lose any pieces down the extractor – to help prevent this put some netting or gauze over the nozzle while polishing.

11 I use an ultra-fine buffing/polishing compound, which works on epoxy blanks as well as wood and brings them up to a glass-like finish. Here you can see several pendants finished and ready for fitting up with their fixings. The picture includes some resin and wood but also some resin with pine cones, which gives a really interesting pattern and is something we're going to explore at a later date. Once buffed they are ready to have the necklace attached to them.

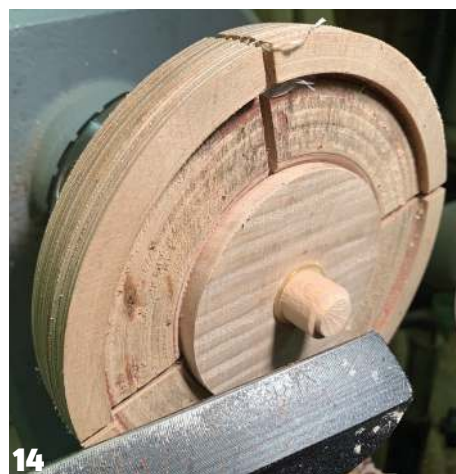
Multi-part necklace & earrings

12 Now the offset pendants are made you can move your attention to the necklace and earrings. Start in the same way you did with the pendants but this time you will notice that the blank is much larger in size and is held in the chuck by the glued dowel with the back of the disc sitting against the face of the chuck jaws. If you wish to have extra support for the work bring up the revolving tailstock and shape bulk of the work. Only remove the tailstock to shape the very middle section.

13 For the necklace shown you will need to keep the surfaces flat rather than having a radius – you will see why later. With the lathe set at a low speed of around 500-600rpm, take light cuts with a sharp bowl gouge to clean up the edge and face. However, if you start to struggle in anyway with the hold of the piece, use a larger dowel to increase support. Sand to a fine finish.

14 Once the front face has been turned mount another set of wooden jaws and cut a suitable hole to hold the discs. Again a dovetail profile has been cut. Hold the piece to turn the second side. You can see how similar this process is to the pendant you made earlier.

15 & 16 Once turned sand to a fine finish. Here you can see the sort of thickness we're looking for so don't make your wood jaw plate recesses too deep and don't start with a much-too-thick jewellery blank. The disc you've just made can now be cut in such a way as to make several pairs of earrings and a couple of necklaces. For this, plan how many divisions you're going to make and mark out accurately before you make your first cut. I use a fine-cut Japanese saw which cuts on the pull for this.





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17 You can now see where we're heading with this large disc and why so many pieces can be made from it. I made a few discs using different coloured timbers, which will give more options when creating each necklace.

18 Fitting your individual pieces to the necklace will vary depending on the findings you can get. I'm keeping these simple and starting with a small 1mm hole, which can be used to attach a silver or gold clamp through. The drill bit is too small for my pillar drill and hand drill so I'm using a small collet drill to hold the bit and the collet drill is held in my pillar drill.

19 Using a small sanding disc attached to the lathe, or disc sander, sand the point back to just short of the drilled hole and tidy up the edges of the rough-sawn pieces. Because these pieces are so small you can sand with a fairly fine abrasive of 240 grit. Be careful not to lose any timber sections down the extractor though. Once sanded repeat the polishing process with the polishing mops used on the pendants.

20&21 The necklace being made requires some beads to separate the key components, but to be honest some are so small I'm not going to turn them. However, here you can see the main beads being turned. To make them, start by drilling the main 1mm hole with a bit held in a tailstock drill chuck. Drilling a hole this size requires patience and clearing the waste very regularly is really important otherwise the drill bit will seize and snap. The blank for the beads required here is 6mm square stock and held in the chuck jaws. The timber is long enough that when some beads are turned and finished the timber can be fed up through the chuck, turning a bead then feeding out a bit more timber each time. Vary the bead shapes to suit your taste. Here I'm simply turning a set of convex and a set of concave ones. Use a skew or spindle gouge to define the shapes.

22 After turning the main shape you can sand and finish before parting off with either the skew or a thin parting tool. This will leave a very small rough area on the parted-off surface, which can be sanded off with your disc sander mounted in the lathe using 600-800 grit abrasive

23 This is what the pieces look like so far, ready for fitting with the individual findings to create small or larger pieces like the necklaces. Jewellery findings are fairly easy to find either in hobby shops or online and I just get a selection of different pieces and also different chains and cords for the necklaces and pendants. ●

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Split-turned sculptural vase

Mark Sanger creates an unusual form

The pieces I create other than the purely sculptural originate from the commonly turned foundation forms made in woodturning, such as bowls, platters, boxes, vases, lidded or hollow forms. From this foundation I often play around with ideas to produce a different take on these forms, incorporating colour, texture, mixed media and carving.

A fun technique to play around with is that of split turning. Split turning is a age-old production technique for producing multiple balusters or spindles for architectural accents on furniture and in buildings. One method used is to cut a spindle grain oriented blank through its length one or multiple times, gluing these sections back together with a paper joint between each piece. The spindle is then turned to the desired form. Once turned, the sections are split apart, producing two or more identical spindles which can then be fixed into cabinets and similar.

A further addition to this, as shown in this project, is to sandwich a waste piece of wood between the timber used, beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) in this instance, and cut sections with paper joints prior to gluing and clamping. The result is that, once the desired form, in this instance a simple vase, is turned and split apart with waste removed, an oval form is produced, in turn adding a further dimension and sculptural feel to what would be a simple vase form. The vase created here was adapted from previous items and includes a cut-out section at one of the joins, two thirds the height of the vase. This allows the viewer to see inside the vase. The inside was painted with black acrylic textured gesso primer before the sections were glued back together. A hole was drilled centrally into the base of the vase allowing it to be fitted on to a metal rod fixed in a rectangular prepared plinth of oak (*Quercus robur*) that was stained with black spirit stains to connect with the colour applied to the inside of the vase. The result is a sculptural take on the original simple vase form.

Playing around with ideas such as this is fun and challenging – the possibilities are probably limited only by our imaginations so have a think about how you can produce your own take on this project, or simply produce the one shown here. Stay safe and have fun turning.



TOOLS AND MATERIALS

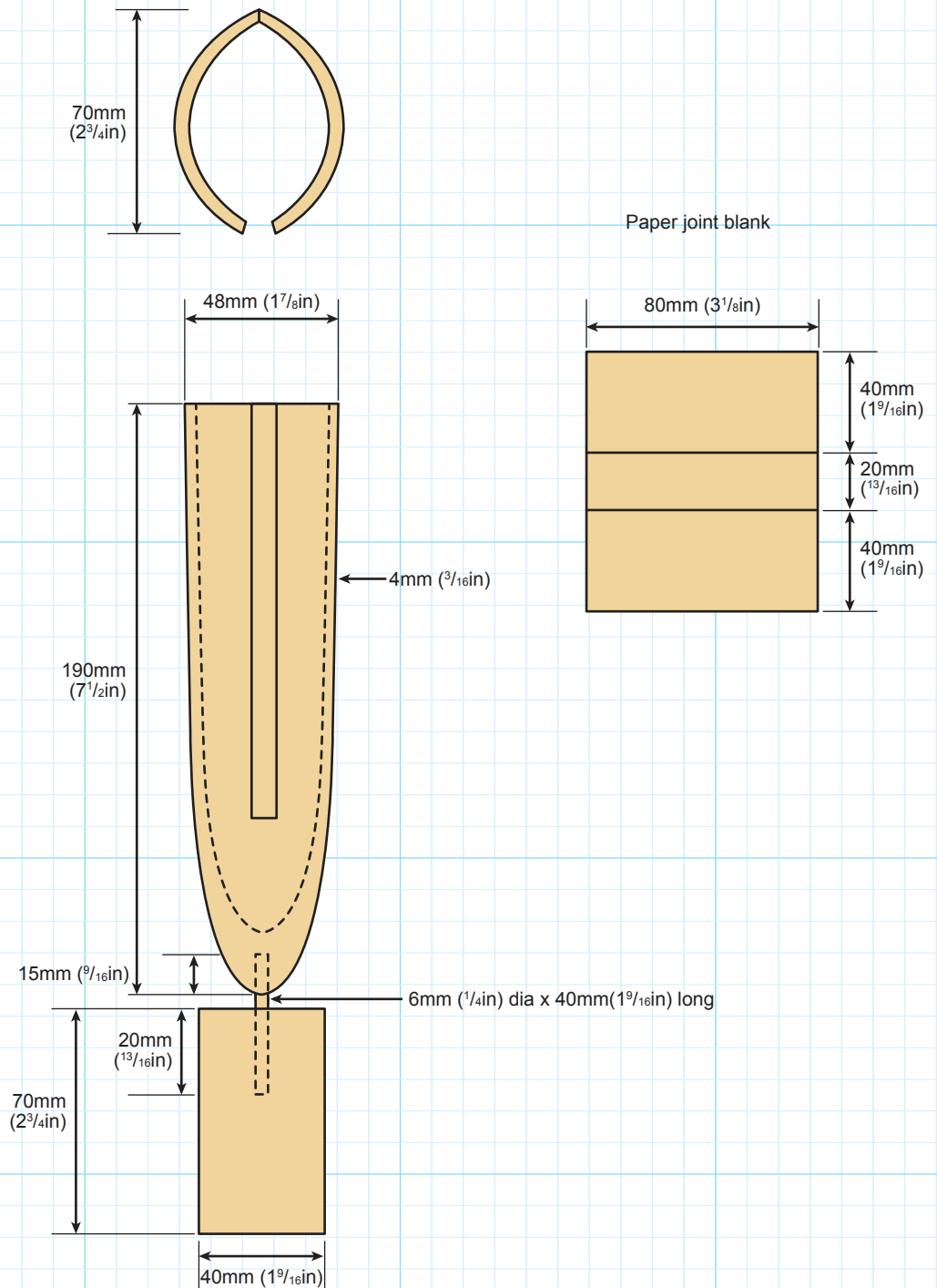
- Personal & respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Spindle gouge
- Skew chisel
- 6mm parting tool
- Chuck, revolving tailstock centre and drive spur
- Tailstock drill chuck and drill bits
- Elastic bands and clamps

MATERIALS

- Main form: 80 mm square x 250 beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) spindle grain oriented timber with laminated paper glued seasoned blank (see illustration)
- Plinth: 40 mm x 40 mm x 70 mm long end grain oak (*Quercus robur*)
- Pencil
- Abrasives down to 320 grit
- Acrylic spray sanding sealer
- Acrylic spray satin lacquer
- Artist's black gesso primer
- Black acrylic paint
- Black spirit stain
- Small brush
- PVA adhesive
- Quick-dry two-part epoxy adhesive
- Medium viscosity cyanoacrylate (CA) glue
- 6mm dia x 60mm metal stem

SAFETY

- Always wear a full-face mask when turning, especially with a split-turned project.
- Always turn at a lower speed than normal to reduce the chance of delamination.
- When producing a split turning, make sure the mating faces are machined flat and always use a high-quality wood glue to reduce the chance of delaminating during turning.
- Always check the lathe speed is slow before starting and stand to one side, out of the direct line of rotation, as much as possible while turning.



PRODUCING THE PAPER JOINT BLANK

Take an 80mm square x 250mm long seasoned end grain beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) blank and cut centrally through its length on a bandsaw. Plane both faces flat, apply a good-quality PVA wood glue to one of the planed surfaces, and place on to this heavy grade decorator lining paper cut to slightly larger than the blank. Apply PVA to the surface of a planed piece of 20mm x 80mm x 250mm spindle grain oriented seasoned waste hardwood and the face of the waste wood and place down, sandwiching another piece of paper between before clamping together. Allow the glue to fully cure as per manufacturer's instructions





1 Accurately mark the centre of both ends of the blank and indent the centre mark with a bradawl. It is important to be accurate when marking out so both sections match later when assembled after splitting, apart from the waste section. Indent one end with the four-prong drive and mount between centres. Rough down with a spindle roughing gouge, stopping just short of turning to the round and leaving the wood slightly oversize for the final shaping.

2 Create a spigot at the tailstock end of the blank to suit the diameter of the chuck jaws you will be using. Turn a waste section approximately 10mm larger in diameter than the spigot and 25mm wide to the left of this. Refine the profile of the spigot to match the profile of the jaws of your chuck. You can use a dedicated tool for this or a skew chisel laid on its side, presented in scraping mode, making the cut with the toe/pointed section of the skew. Make sure that the corner of the spigot is cleaned so that the jaws will seat fully when clamped.

3 Rough down the main shape of the form using a spindle gouge and working down towards the tailstock, cutting from large to small diameter with the grain. Leave the waste section thick at this stage to allow for strength when hollowing later.

4 Remove the work from the lathe, mount the spigot in the chuck and bring up the revolving tailstock centre for added support. Now refine the shape using a skew chisel or spindle gouge, again working from large diameter to small, so cutting with the grain.

5 Accurately measure the final height of the vase, take 25mm from this and mark this measurement on the shaft of a long series Forsner bit or a bit held in an extension. The base of the vase needs to be left thick as it will later be drilled out to accept the stem for fixing on to the plinth. Drill out the waste with the lathe set to 500rpm, removing the bit regularly to clean the shavings and prevent binding.

6 Using a suitable end grain hollowing tool, hollow out the internal profile to an even wall thickness down into the base. The wall thickness must be consistent throughout – use callipers to check – as it will be seen through the cutout produced later. Any irregularities will be evident in the final piece.

7 Finish the outside and front face with abrasive from 120-340 grit by hand, followed by finishing the inside to the same grit. Make sure you use suitable direct dust extraction at source and PPE and RPE. Here I am using a long-reach inertia sander to get down inside the form. Alternatively you can stick abrasive around the end of a long dowel to achieve the same result.

8 Mark the width of the cutout using Vernier callipers and a pencil to mark 8mm from the join each side from the middle waste area.

9 Using a T-square, mark the vertical lines of what will be the cutout from the rim to the required length. Here I am using a homemade T-square. If you do not have one of these position the toolrest close to the form and, using the pencil on the toolrest, rotate the form by hand until the tip lines up with the point marked in 8 and scribe along the vase.

10 Measure the overall length of the cutout and mark this using a rule and the pencil. Resting the pencil on the toolrest at this mark rotate the form by hand to mark the base of the cutout.

11 Using a 2mm drill bit in a battery drill driver, drill through the wall of the form just inside the intersection of one of the corners. Continue drilling along the line to the opposite corner, staying inside the line to the other corner within the waste of the cutout. Now use a fine-blade saw to carefully cut along inside the lines drawn, working from rim to base. Stay inside the lines cutting what is the waste of the cutout as further refining is achieved later with files and abrasive.

12 Carefully cut through the remaining waste of the drilled section of the cutout using a small carving chisel or craft knife. Make sure you are always cutting away from your body.

13 Reverse the blank on to a jam chuck that has been turned from a waste block of wood, cutting a recess in the face to match the rim diameter of the form to encapsulate the rim and prevent splitting the paper joints apart. Bring up the tail centre into the indent of the base previously left and apply moderate pressure from the tailstock.

14 Continue shaping the base profile of the form with a spindle gouge, working down into the waste section toward the direction of the tailstock. Create a smooth curve and stop the lathe at the point you start cutting into the central waste section beyond the paper glue joints.

15 Finish this area with abrasive from 120-320 grit as before.

16 Gently split apart the form from the waste using a mallet and thin chisel or knife along the paper joints.

17 Place each section face down on to a length of 120 grit abrasive stuck to a section of thick plywood. Rub gently back and forward to remove any remaining glue and paper, making sure you keep the face flat against the surface as you abrade or you will affect the match of the surfaces when glued together later.





18



19



20



21



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23



24

18 Using a small carving knife or chisel refine the corner/base of the cutout of each section. Always make sure you cut away from your hands and body while wearing suitable anti-slash gloves. Alternatively, clamp each section into a vice with soft jaws, being careful not to crush and split the wood.

19 Apply abrasive to a flat length of plywood and refine the inside surfaces of the cutout further by hand from 120-320 abrasive.

20 Apply artist's black gesso primer to the inside surfaces of each section, excluding the previously finished edges of the cutout. Apply working up and away from the edges to keep these areas clear of gesso. With a thick coat applied, tamp the tip of the brush over the surface and create a texture to add a surface contrast to the smooth outside. This can be omitted and black acrylic artist's paint or similar applied instead of the gesso. Leave to fully dry then remove any over-painted areas from the edges of the cutout and rim of each section using a sharp knife and scraping the gesso or paint gently away. Alternatively, fine abrasive can be used to achieve the same.

21 Mix two-part quick-drying epoxy glue as per manufacturer's instructions and thinly apply to the edges and base sections of one of the sections, making sure you do not apply so much that it will squeeze out when clamped. Epoxy is used here not only for its strength, but the ability it gives you to take time aligning the sides for clamping – something that would be difficult to achieve if using CA glue. Cut a small rectangular section of waste wood the width of the cutout, align the edges and initially wrap a small elastic band around to hold together. Now accurately line up the edges, sandwiching the waste wood inside the opening, and clamp together using several clamps. Take time to apply clamping pressure while maintaining alignment/joins of the edges. Once satisfied set aside to fully cure.

22 Mark the centre position for the hole to accept the stem of the plinth with a pencil and bradawl this position on to the base of the form. Using a pillar drill fitted with a 3mm drill bit, drill a pilot hole followed by a hole using the correct size larger bit that suits the metal stem you will be using.

23 Once drilled, apply acrylic spray sanding sealer to the form, allow to dry and cut back with fine abrasive, then apply several fine coats of acrylic spray satin lacquer. Produce a rectangular plinth, dimensioned as shown in the main illustration, from oak and dill out to accept the metal stem. Stain with black spirit stain and allow to dry. Apply medium viscosity CA glue into the hole and press the stem into place. Apply CA glue into the hole of the form and secure on to the stem, aligning with the plinth.

24 The project is now finished and ready to display. ●



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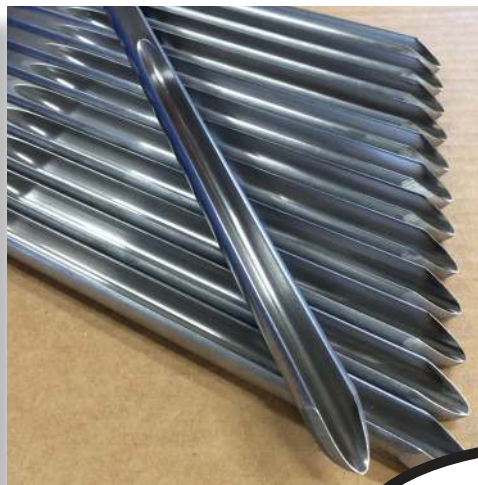
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Saving wood and finding a use for it

In the second of a two-part series Andy Coates looks at using some of the saved wood that would ordinarily be turned to shavings



In part one I looked at the two primary methods of saving wood to be used for other projects: coring and ring taking. Using cores effectively does not require a great deal of thought – they are essentially odd-shaped blanks requiring little imagination to find a use for. Rings, however, present some opportunity for head-scratching.

In part one I made an offset clock using a saved ring, and the same methodology could be used to make mirror or picture frames, or even chapter rings for clock bodies of contrasting coloured wood.

Each of these objects is worth making, but what else is there that we make from saved rings?

Bowls from rings

I recall seeing some years ago a project somewhere for making a deep bowl from

a slim board by cutting rings from the board, but the cuts were angled to allow for stacking and gluing later on. This was a different process to that which is possible to undertake from randomly garnered and gathered saved rings, but it was the door to a solution.

With a random selection of rings it is possible to prepare and then turn a stacked bowl, but it does take some preparatory work. In all honesty it doesn't always end well, but it is worth the effort if you succeed.

This is a tricky project, and requires a sufficient stock of saved rings, but building up a stock is not difficult when you only need between a 6 and 20 – depending on the depth of bowl – to find enough that are of the correct size.

I would aim for one saved tenon and

scrap block to form the base and then a selection increasing in size to produce the block of a depth that you feel comfortable working at.

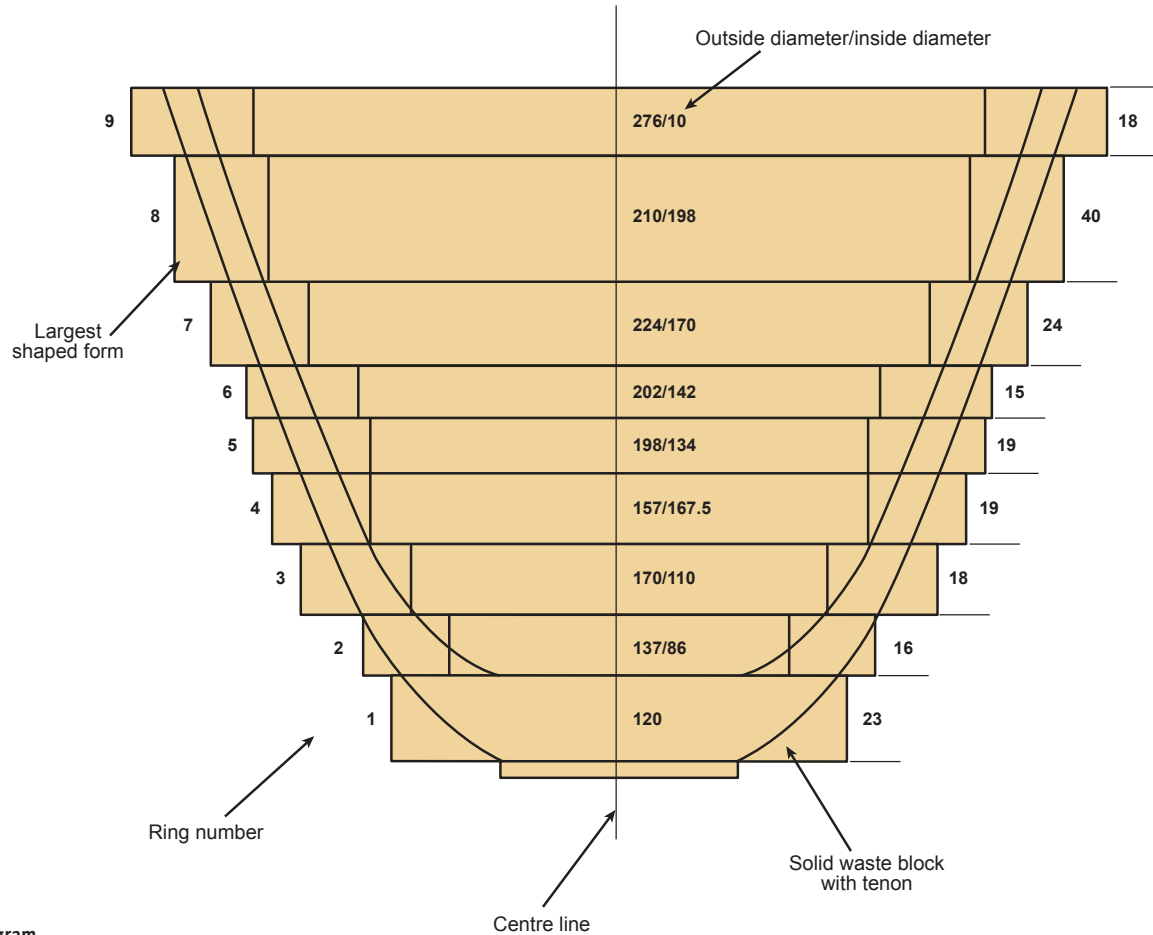
Starting with a shorter bowl is perhaps the best way to go. Preparation of the rings is paramount to a successful outcome, and these stages should not be rushed. Making a vessel from saved rings can be stressful because you begin from a position of not having the usual structural support offered by the central core of wood, so progress slowly with very sharp tools, and take your time.

A face mask as well as personal respiratory protective equipment is always recommended when turning, but a full face shield is vital for this type of project due to the increased possibility of a vessel failing during turning.

PLANNING

Drawing a planning diagram is a great help when building a bowl from saved rings. Measure the depth and OD and ID dimensions and draw out accurately to a 1:1 scale. This will show you what

waste needs to be turned away, and what material you will be left with to turn to shape. Having made the plan you may find you can do better with a different arrangement of rings.



Planning diagram

PREPARATORY WORK

Having selected the rings you will need to ensure all the faces are true and flat. If you have a disc sander of sufficient size you can use this, if not then a simple shop-built one can be used on the lathe. Once again this sanding platten is made from recovered and saved wood, so the only cost was a 300mm diameter self-adhesive 120 grit abrasive disc.

Scribble in pencil over the whole surface, ensuring you mark

the edges at various points, and abrade until all the marks are removed. Check for flat with a straightedge and then proceed to rectify any problem areas or move on to the opposite face. Do this for each ring and for the face of the tenon scrap block.

NB: This process can produce a vast amount of dust so do ensure you use extraction and wear face and lung protection.



Selected rings



Abrading the rings flat

PREPARING FOR THE VESSEL BUILD

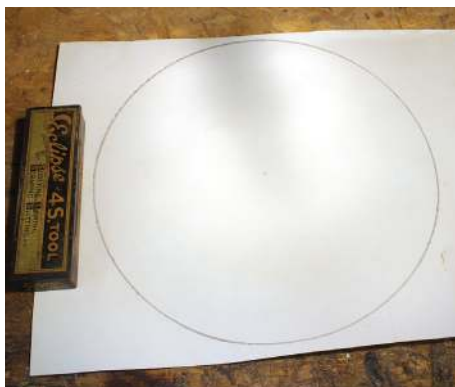
Centering rings on top of each other can be something of a nuisance, but this is the method I use. You may have a better idea of how to achieve it yourself, but this works for me.

Using the central line on your build plan set your compass to record the diameter of the first (largest) ring and scribe it on to a sheet of paper – to avoid confusion we will call this the positioning plan. Place that ring in its scribed circle on

the positioning plan. Now take the diameter of the second largest ring (ring 8 here) and scribe this on to the face of ring 9. Note: Depending on the depth of your rings you may have to adjust the compass to account for the difference in height between the point and the pencil point. Now add the same dimension to the positioning plan and place ring 8 in its circle. Continue this process until each ring is marked with the diameter of each subsequent ring.



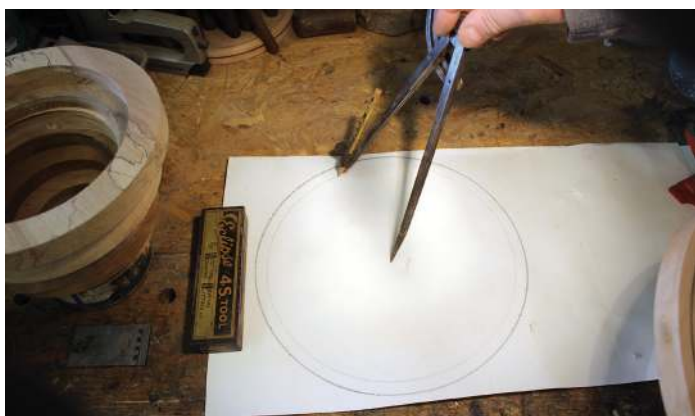
Taking a dimension from the build plan



Transferring the dimension to a positioning plan



Transferring the diameter of ring 8 to ring 9



Scribing diameter of ring 8 to positioning plan



Transferring diameter of ring 7 to ring 8

BUILDING THE VESSEL

The glue-up process can be tricky as the rings are prone to misbehaviour. Be methodical and patient and all should go well.

Apply glue with a spreader and aim for an even coating covering every part of the flat surface. The initial laying down needs to be done carefully so that the scribed line is not obscured. Work until all the rings are laid down and then check for centralisation as best you can.

Two squares of melamine-faced scrap board are used as a clamping aid. The top board has a hole slightly larger than the tenon on the last block to provide a secure clamping action. Clamps are fitted on each of the four faces and then left for 24 hours to ensure complete curing occurs.



Applying wood glue



Clamping the vessel for curing

PREPARING FOR TURNING

The built vessel is now ready to be turned, but unlike a conventional blank this vessel has no interior support, so a support disc is turned from... can you guess? The disc seats snugly into the first ring and sits against the shoulder of the next ring down. The vessel is then reversed on the lathe and held on the pre-existing tenon, and the revolving ring centre in the tailstock is brought up to support the support disc.

Start the lathe on its slowest speed and assess the degree of out-of-balance. If it is not too bad take the speed up a little.

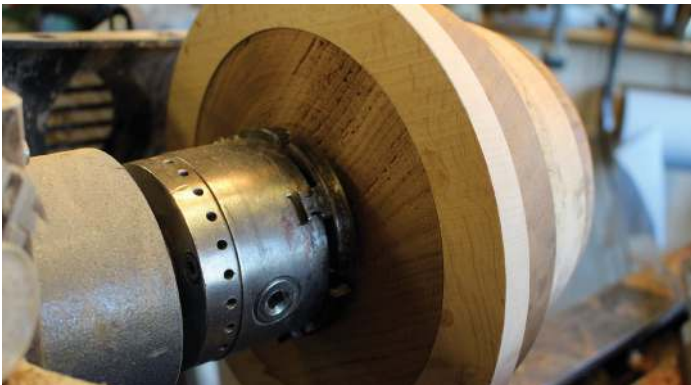
There is no science to what speed to set but some common sense should indicate a far slower turning speed than usual.

Gouges should be properly sharp and cuts should be gentle and careful. The build plan will have indicated how much material there is to be removed and from where, so take note of it to mitigate any sudden accidents.

Shape the exterior until you are satisfied and then abrade to a finish before removing the support disc and proceeding to turn the interior. If you have a suitable lathe steady it might help to set it up to

support the exterior during this process; otherwise proceed with great care.

Starting at the rim begin to shape to the finished thickness and progress down the vessel. Turning will be markedly different from a conventional vessel, but the process is not terribly nerve-racking. Keep the gouge sharpened throughout the process and ensure you have toolrest support as far into the vessel as is safe and practicable. Work to the base and then abrade the interior as usual. The vessel can now be sealed and finished in oil or wax.



Support insert fitted



Shaping the exterior



Turning the interior



The finished piece is 270mm D x 180mm H

Alternative build block

I quite often turn large forms for a commercial customer who clearly has no concerns over wood wastage, or cost to him, but that does not mean I will waste his supplied wood – I still take rings and cores wherever possible. As a result I have close to 100 large – 450mm x 20mm – maple and sapele saved rings. I considered them for months until eventually I simply decided to have a play and see how I might use them up.

The most promising result of this play time is what follows. This can be done with rings of any appropriate size that will result in a build block of usable dimensions.

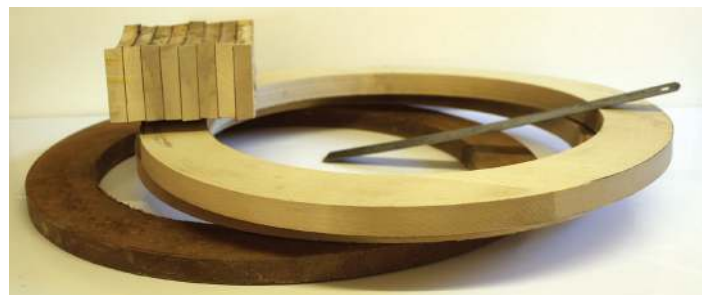
The saved ring was cut on a chopsaw into eight segments (45°). One segment is then used as a template to cut veneer into matching shapes. I used a contrasting mahogany veneer.

The surfaces of the segments need to be completely flat. You could use a belt sander to achieve this with some care, but I affixed the segments to a long, thick board using double-sided tape and ran each side through the thicknesser to ensure flat surfaces.

The whole block is then glued and clamped overnight to cure. The

ends are then carefully trimmed on the chopsaw using a custom support block to prevent kick-back.

The resulting build block already has the appearance of a bowl shape. The centre points are marked as accurately as possible (Note: I flattened the central areas to allow for a safe hold) and the block is held between a steb-type centre and a revolving ring centre.



Donor rings and resulting build block

Turning the build block

The block is securely mounted between centres. The natural curve of the ring segments already indicates an external shape so I went with this and simply turned it true. Due to the square corners you need to turn the blank as fast as you feel safe to do so. Often a pull cut from

tail centre to rim using the wing of a long-ground bowl gouge is easier to control than a push cut into the corners. Turn a tenon to suit your chuck. Ensure the surface is fully turned and then abrade by hand with the lathe off. Reverse the block on to the tenon. Now begin to turn the interior away, taking extra-special care not

to knock the corners off the workpiece.

At this point I decided that I very much like the large, flat expanses on the sides of the block and thought a central bowl would be appealing, leaving the upright walls alone. The face still requires some cleaning up and truing so progress carefully.



Block mounted



Outside shape turned



Ready to turn inside shape



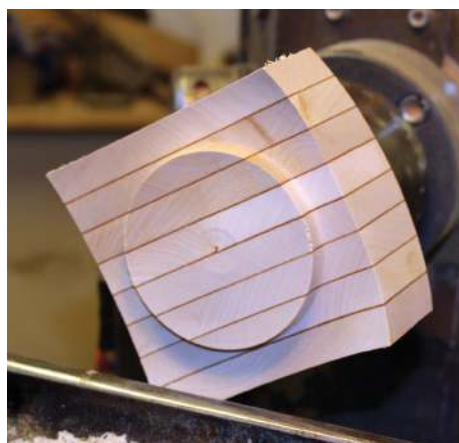
Turning the inside

CHANGING COURSE

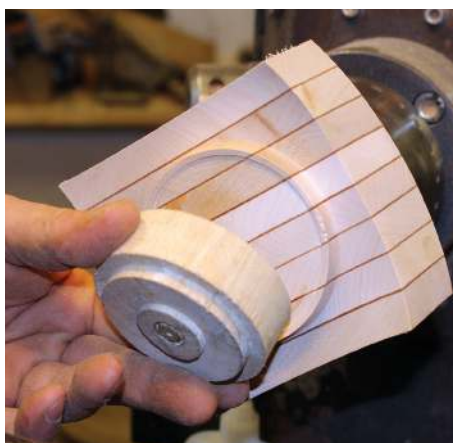
As I was cleaning the interior face it occurred to me that I would be wasting the time, effort, and material I had assiduously saved by simply turning out a bowl, so the plan changed right there.

Another scrap tenon on a block was glued to the centre

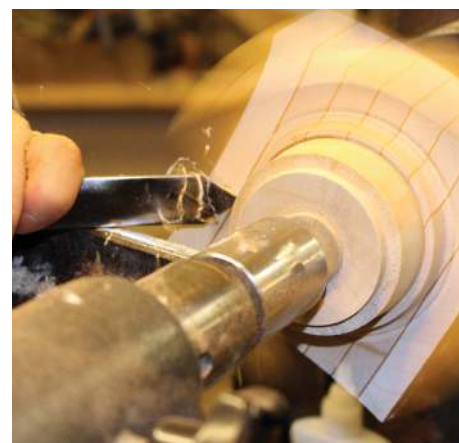
of the workpiece and trued up once the CA glue had cured. The workpiece was then cored using a heavy parting tool (as used in the previous article). The edge of the resulting cored block was trued parallel and abraded to a finish and the interior was turned slightly concave and also finished.



Changing to plan of action



Attaching a scrap tenon



Coring the block

◀ Turning the lid and fitting a finial knob

The lid section is fitted with a tight fit initially to allow for exterior shaping. A small section is left centrally to take a short finial knob turned separately from wood of a similar colour to the veneer.

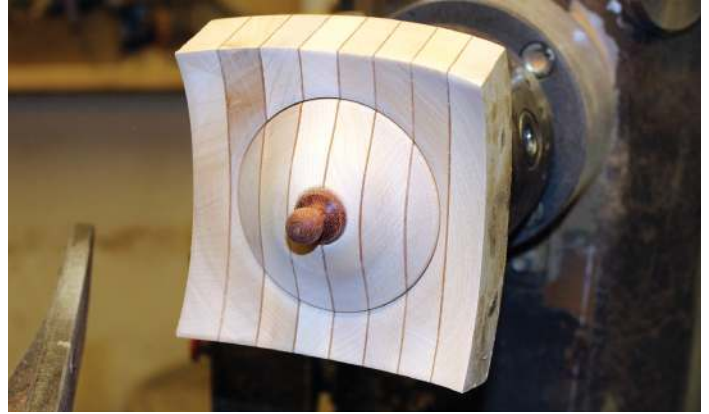
Once the exterior is shaped the finial is glued into place and

the lid abraded and finished. The interior is a simple bowl shape and finished similarly. The outer flat surfaces on the side of the box are abraded on the belt sander, or the platten disc you may have made earlier.

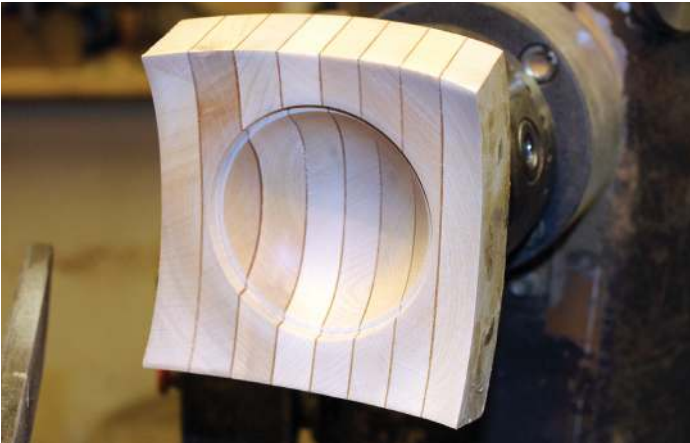
This process has been detailed in the previous and other articles.



Shaping the lid



Finial fitted



Interior detail



Finished box 12mm D x 110mm W x 150mm H

Conclusions

Saving wood may be a compulsion. It is one that I am only too happy to have though. A recent commercial job involved turning 3m posts, largely down to 150mm cylinders for much of the length. Due to ill-considered blank production by the customer there was an awful lot of wood to be turned away and subsequently disposed of as shavings. So I cut the arrises off on the tablesaw, even the stopped ones, and pretty soon had a large stock of triangular poplar waste. A few passes

on the surfacer and some glue and clamps and now I have a very large stock of 50mm x 50mm spindle stock. Quite what I will use these for is entirely another matter, but one thing is for certain – I don't need to bag the waste up and dispose of it. And it was free. Making anything useful or beautiful from material you have saved from the ignominy of the black sack and dump will always be a joyful experience. Give it a go. ●



Waste cut from 3m posts



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Experiments in piercing

Richard Findley's Editor's Challenge this month is to try piercing for the first time



The challenge came, once again, in the form of a phone call this month. 'Have you ever done any piercing work?' asked the Editor. 'No, but that does mean I don't have a tool to do it...' was my reply. 'That shouldn't be a problem, leave it with me' was the Editor's slightly ominous response.

I've seen a couple of demos of piercing and I know several professional turners who use the technique in their work. While I greatly admire these turners and their work, I have

to admit piercing work isn't really my thing, so the Editor has certainly achieved his aim of taking me out of my comfort zone. I will, of course, step up to the challenge to the best of my ability.

A couple of days later a box arrived from John Woods at Woodart Products. True to his word, the Editor had arranged a tool for me to have a play with. Having never done this before, some research is needed.



The kit from Woodart Products to experiment with

Research

Before doing anything else I open the box and examine its contents. Neatly packed in there, along with an instruction leaflet, are: a motor unit, a hand piece, a foot pedal, a cradle to rest the hand piece in when not in use and a pack of piercing cutters. The unit is a Marathon N8 Hi-torque 45K micro drill/detailer and retails at £290 plus postage, from Woodart Products.

I decide the easiest place to start for information is with John, who sent me the machine. He is very helpful and, after a good chat on the phone, sends me an email full of handy hints and useful information. All that's left for me to do is to roll up my sleeves and have a go!

TIMBER PREP

John recommended practising with 3mm birch ply, but this isn't something I have in stock and I don't fancy buying a full 8x4 sheet just to practice piercing. When I've seen pierced work before it's usually been in sycamore, so I select a piece from my wood pile, but I am curious to see if other types of wood will work too, so I also pick a piece of walnut and a piece of tulip. I avoid oak, despite it being my favourite – I decide with its open grain it



Cutting 3mm-thick pieces on the bandsaw



Checking the thickness with a Vernier

won't be suitable for this type of thin and delicate work, whereas sycamore, walnut and tulip are all reasonably close grained and not overly dense.

I have a new blade in my bandsaw, so I set up a rudimentary fence (my old bandsaw didn't have one when I bought it second-hand a few years ago) using some 50mm x 50mm pine and some quick-release



Ready for piercing

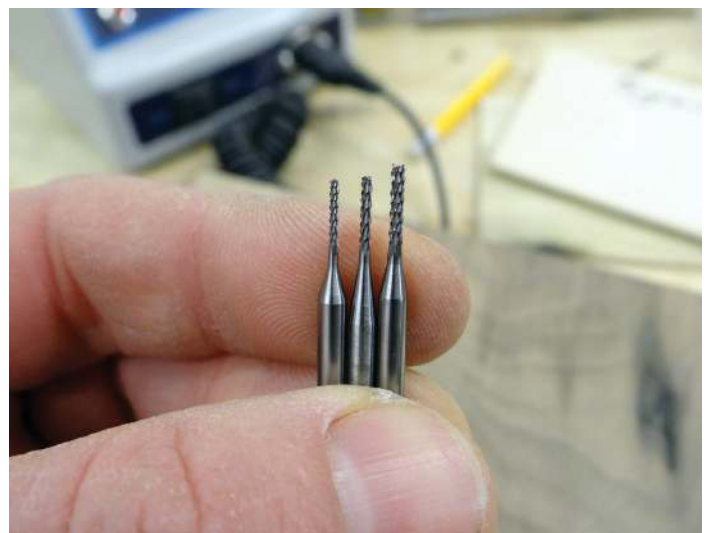
cramps. I set the fence to 3mm and deep cut – sometimes called re-sawing – the three pieces of wood into thin sheets, you could almost call them veneers. Although I only use a 10mm-wide blade, it cuts true and I am pleased with the results. I find a 10mm blade to be the most versatile for my work, although a wider blade is usually used for this type of straight cut.

Piercing

My plan, as it usually is with these articles, is to experiment with the tool and then make an item using the techniques I've learned, although this will run over to next month as I expect there's a fair bit to learn about this technique.

The pack of cutters that John supplied has three sizes: 1mm, 1.2mm and 1.5mm, and three of each. He warned that, as they are so small, they can be delicate as carbide is a little brittle, so it is possible to break them. We'll see.

Looking closely at the tools, they are a kind of spiral cutter. They're known as carbide piercing cutters, which means that they will act like a drill and make a hole, but unlike a drill, they will also cut sideways from the hole, more like a router cutter. A router cutter usually only has two blades though, which can make them quite aggressive and, even if you could get one this small, unsuitable for this type of work. The spiral layout of the cutter should, theoretically, make them very clean cutting and, importantly, controllable. The fact that they are carbide should also mean they stay sharp for a long time.



Carbide piercing cutters

SETTING UP THE MACHINE

The power unit simply plugs into the mains, as any power tool would. The hand piece, which is best described as a chunky pen, has a cable which plugs into the front of the power unit and the foot pedal plugs in at the rear of the unit with a cable long enough to easily reach the floor and place in a comfortable position. The foot pedal is included in the set but its use is optional, with a switch allowing you to override it and simply use the on/off switch on the unit instead.

The cutters are easily changed in the hand piece. A collar turns and opens the collet and the cutter can be taken out and swapped. Everything feels very well made and of good quality and I like that there are no tiny spanners or tools to lose in the shavings.



The hand piece fitted with a cutter



Working with the piercing cutter



Working off the edge of the bench was tricky



Working off a block of waste worked much better

STARTING TO PIERCE

I start off with the foot pedal and, as advised by John, the 1mm cutter, which is theoretically easiest to control as, being so small, it removes the least wood. There is the slightest of kicks from the hand piece as I press on the foot pedal and the machine hums into life.

I've managed to reach 39 years old without any major dental work, so I find the noise that this machine makes no problem at all, but I am aware that some people do find the high-pitched whining hum a little unsettling. Compared to most machines in my workshop it is quiet and I don't feel the need to wear ear protection, even after using it for some time.

I make a few exploratory holes and shapes and it all seems quite straightforward. John had advised me to keep the cutter horizontal and square to the wood, which is quite tricky – I seem to have a tendency to lean the tool over a little as I work, but with conscious effort I seem to get close to vertical, although I'm not sure how much it matters at this stage.

Initially I work off the edge of the bench but find this limiting, so place a thick offcut on the bench and work off the edge of that, which allows me to position the work and myself far more easily. I can imagine that when I make a turned item and pierce it, holding it could be a more interesting challenge.

Shapes

In the piercing work that I've seen, most people tend to make a series of quite random, sort of free-form puddle shapes – I suspect because it is relatively easy to do and to produce an apparently random pattern quickly. I make a series of these holes and, apart from a bit of fluffiness, it's quite easy to do. It's this shape that I'm not particularly keen on though, so I want to experiment with making different shapes.

I sketch a star and cut it out. The advice is to work in a clockwise direction, like when using a router, to give the best control. The star is interesting because it criss-crosses the grain of the wood, so some cuts are more easily controlled than others. I find that when working across the grain there is more control than working with the grain, where the cutter sometimes seems to get carried away and want to wander off track.

I make a few more random shapes and find that, largely, the process is a little like colouring in with a pencil crayon. As long as there is a line to work to I can carefully and gently glide the cutter against the line, back and forth, and pretty much follow any line I want.

The star was a very rough sketch so the result is a little rough too. Next I try drawing a circle with a compass and

cutting it out. The initial rough cut was simple, working in a clockwise direction and well in from the line, the centre quickly drops out of the wood. I then set about following the line. I am quite pleased with the result although I am now aware of the importance of keeping the cutter vertical as I can see that, in places, the side is somewhat undercut.

The pattern left behind in the wood is



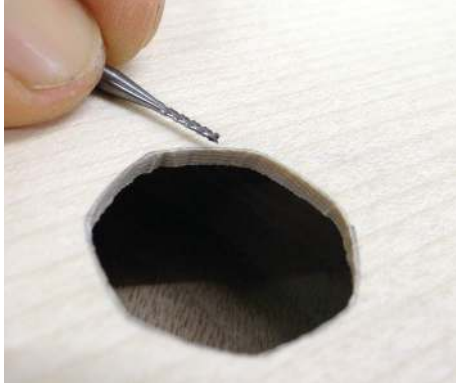
Random, free-form piercing pattern



My first star and circle and a few other random shapes

interesting. The cutter leaves a series of score lines in the edge of the wood, leaving clear evidence as to how the cutter is working.

Feeling more confident now, I feel that I need to work to a definite shape, so I draw around a 50p coin and repeat



The pattern left behind by the cutter

the process. The coin drops into the cut out with a good, neat fit. Immediately I can see how this process could be used to make a display box for a collector's coins or medals or similar. Being able to see a practical use for a technique like this appeals to me far



The 50p piece fitted in the hole

more than for artistic purposes, being the very practical-minded person that I am. I do the same with a 10p and, although the pure circle is clearly more difficult to achieve, the result is passable, considering I've only spent about 40 minutes playing with it so far.



A further experiment with a 10p piece

Personal protection

For most woodworking tasks around the workshop I wear my powered respirator, which gives full face and lung protection. It is a little bulky though, so initially, while I am getting used to this new tool, I just wear protective glasses. The fact that I can blow away the dust from the work was useful, however, within about 30 minutes of working, I begin to get a runny nose and to sneeze, a sure sign that there is more airborne dust than I had perhaps realised. I put on my respirator and the problem almost immediately goes away. I find that just by wiping the surface with my hand I can clear the shavings almost as well. Alternatively I could use a brush but don't feel the need.

I don't like to bang on about health and safety too much, deep down people know what they should be doing without constant reminders from me, but this experience has reinforced for me that no matter how small the task appears, it's always a good idea to wear your protective equipment.

FOOT PEDAL

Initially I use the foot pedal to stop and start the motor. This works much like the foot pedal on a sewing machine, keeping your hands free to hold the hand piece and the work. After a while I realise that, for me, working in the position that I currently am – seated at a bench with everything to hand in front of me – there isn't much benefit from the foot pedal as it is as easy to simply switch the machine on and off as I need it. Depending on my final project I may find myself working in a different position though, maybe stood at the lathe, and the foot pedal may be more convenient.



Wearing my respirator while I pierce

DIFFERENT WOODS

I try out all three of the timber species that I cut and there isn't much difference between them. Sycamore and walnut seem to cut in a very similar way – the downside to the walnut is that the pencil line is hard to follow because of the darker colour of the wood. I find tulip is perhaps slightly easier to work, although it is also possible that my hand is getting steadier and my skill level improving as I work and I am just getting better at it.

DIFFERENT CUTTERS

I try out all three of the cutters and I settle on the 1.2mm as my preferred size. The 1.5mm is definitely a little more aggressive than the smaller cutter, wanting to pull more. The 1mm is best



All three timber samples worked well

for getting into a tight space, but cuts a little slower, and the 1.2mm seems like a good balance between them. When we're talking the difference of half a millimetre it is subtle and I have no doubt a more experienced hand would feel the difference far more than I could, but when I undertake the project I will most likely go for the 1.2mm.

ALTERNATIVE PIERCING MACHINES

I realise this machine, while not prohibitively expensive for someone who wants to follow this path, is not particularly cheap, so I decide to do a little online research into other options that might be available. It seems speed is the key to a clean, controlled cut, so at 45,000rpm this machine is good. At the top end of the market there are air-powered machines which run as fast as 320,000 rpm but seem to be nearer £800-£900, which does rather make them less viable unless you are really committed. There is also the need for a compressor with a good capacity, either in terms of the tank size or the speed at which it refills. My compressor has a 100-litre tank but is very noisy while in use, so I wouldn't like to have it running continuously while I'm working on a delicate piercing project. At the other end of the scale, hobby rated multi-tools can be as cheap as £40 but are far more bulky, noisy and less refined. The speeds seem quite a bit lower too, which is likely to impact on the cleanliness of the cut, but these tools do give a good entry-level option to someone curious to try out piercing.

BREAKAGE

In John's very informative email he warned of several instances that can lead to the cutters breaking:

- 1 If the cutter isn't at right-angles to the work on entry and as you work, it can vibrate and break
- 2 If you cut anti-clockwise the cutter can run away, round the hole, vibrate and break
- 3 If too much sideways pressure is applied in use, it can break.

So far I haven't managed to break a single cutter, despite the warnings. I decide, purely in the interests of the article, to see how easy it is to break a 1mm cutter. I start off by making holes with the hand piece angled, this made no difference



Continuing to experiment with different shapes

at all. I then start to widen the holes, tipping the hand piece over, gently at the beginning, then more dramatically. Still nothing. I then start cutting some lines in the tulip, slowly at first, then faster and slightly more aggressively. Finally, it snaps. Not dramatically or dangerously, the lower end of the cutter just stays in the wood as I carry on moving the hand piece and I only notice when the line I had been cutting stops appearing.

The result of this test is I can confirm that, using 3mm-thick wood, you really shouldn't be able to snap a cutter unless you are being far too aggressive with it. I'd imagine on thicker wood it might be easier as the forces on the cutter are likely to increase quite a bit as the wood gets thicker, but right from the start I have known that the wood should be thin and John confirmed that, ideally, it should be less than 4mm.



It took quite a bit of effort to break a cutter

Conclusion

I have enjoyed these initial experiments with piercing. I'm pleased to see that I am not limited to using just sycamore and the fact that I can work up to a pencil line, effectively allowing me to make a limitless number of

shapes in the wood, is encouraging and opens the possibilities of exactly what I can make. I haven't yet decided what it will be but hope for some inspiration to strike me so that I might make something perhaps a little different from the norm. ●



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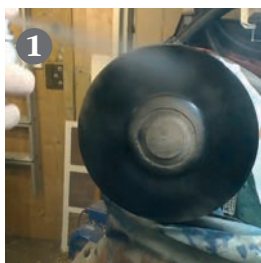
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Iridescent Centrifuge Effect Platter

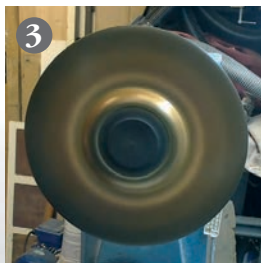
WITH STEWART FURINI



1 Sand the platter rim to 240 grit and spray with Ebonising Lacquer. For best results apply two coats, allowing time for each coat to dry.



2 With the lathe spinning fast (1000 rpm minimum), apply the Iridescent Paints using a paint brush. Yellow and Cerise have been used here. If you don't want the colours to blend together, allow them to dry before adding another.



3 Leave the lathe spinning for a minute or two to allow the paints to spread out. On this platter each colour was added about three times. Other colour combinations, or just a single colour, can look very effective too.



4 Once the paint is dry, protect it with a coat of Acrylic Gloss Lacquer. Allow this to dry then turn out the centre and sand to 240 grit or finer.



5 Finally, use Cut'n'Polish and Microcrystalline Wax to complete the centre of the platter. These are more controllable and make it easier to avoid any damage to the decorated edge.

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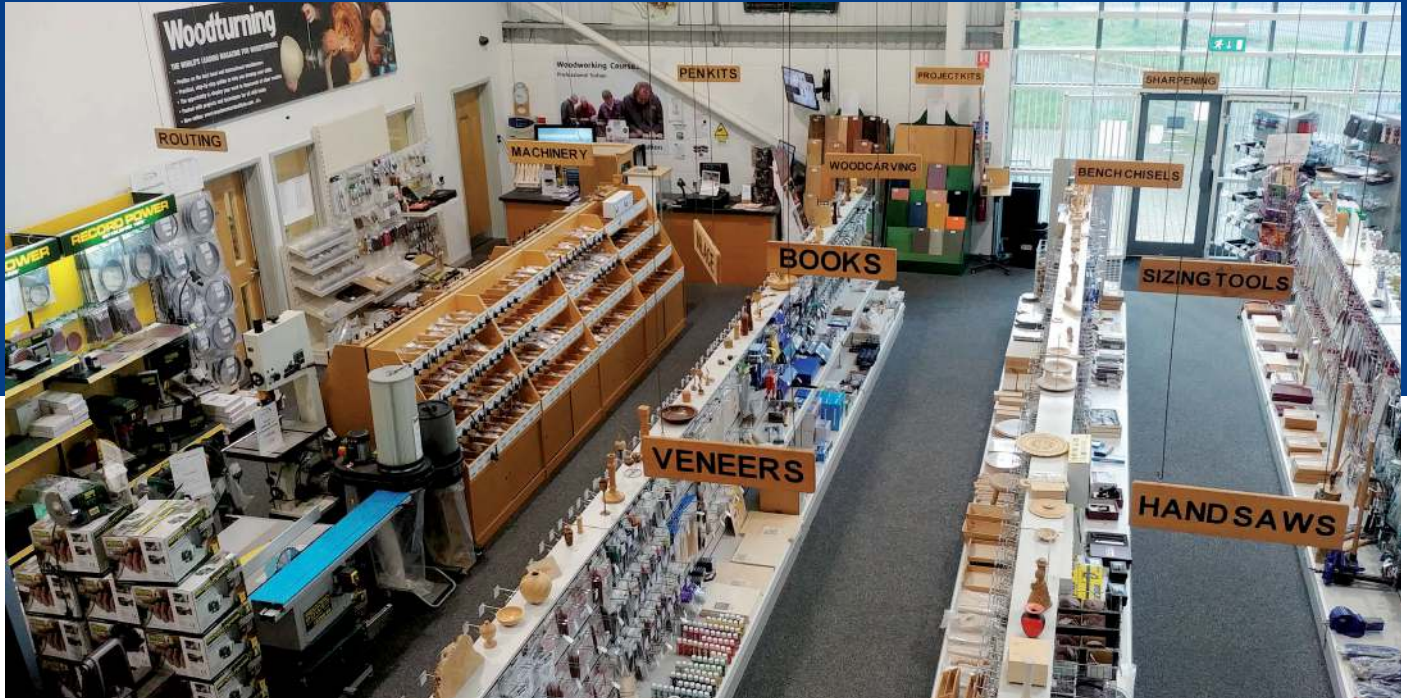
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Community news

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

Florida Woodturning Symposium

When: 7-9 February 2020
Where: Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center, 39034 Country Road 452
Leesburg, FL 34788, USA
Web: www.floridawoodturningsymposium.com

Honolulu Woodturners Symposium

When: 21-22nd March 2020
Where: MRC Sand Island, 1041 Puuwai Street Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Web: www.honoluluwoodturners.org

The Midlands Woodworking Show

When: 27-28 March 2020
Where: Newark Showground, Lincoln Rd, Winthorpe, Newark, NG24 2NY
Web: www.nelton.co.uk

Turnfest

When: 27-29th March 2020
Where: Seaworld Resort & Water Park, Main Beach, Queensland, Australia
Web: www.turnfest.com.au

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

Les Forgaxes woodworking festival

When: 24-26 April 2020
Where: Pravia, Asturias, Spain
Web: www.forgaxes.com & 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

AAW Symposium 2020

When: 4-7 June 2020
Where: Kentucky Exposition Center 937 Phillips Lane, Louisville, KY 40209, US
Web: www.woodturner.org

Saskatchewan Woodturners Symposium 2020

When: 17-19 July 2020
Where: Regina Trades and Skills Centre 1275 Albert St, Regina, SK S4R 2R4, Canada
Contact: James (Bryan) Milne
Email: 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

Woodturning Weekender 2020

When: 1-2 August 2020
Where: Orchards Event Venue, New Road, West Malling, Kent, ME19 6BJ
Web: 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

Yandles Woodworking Show

When: 11-12 September 2020
Where: Hurst, Martock, TA12 6JU
Web: www.yandles.co.uk

AWGB Seminar

When: 9-11 October 2020
Where: Yarnfield Training and Conference Centre, Yarnfield, Stone, ST15 0NL
Web: www.awgb.co.uk

Wizardry in Wood 2020

When: 14-17 October 2020
Where: Carpenters' Hall, 1 Throgmorton Ave, London, EC2N 2JJ
Web: www.turnersco.com/turning/wiwi

Virginia Woodturning Symposium

When: 7-8 November 2020
Where: Expoland, 277 Expo Rd, Fishersville, VA 22939, US
Web: www.virginiawoodturners.com



PHOTOGRAPH BY STUART KING

This cup and cover gained 1st place for Paul Coker in the Fred Howe category at a previous Wizardry in Wood competition

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INDULGE YOUR PASSION!

In a spin

Andrew Potocnik shows how to make an unusual box with a spinning top lid



This lidded container is the result of a collaborative event I attended recently, where an offcut of another project sparked something in my mind. I don't like to waste good wood, and looking at the offcut of a bandsawn box sent my mind off on a tangent... mount the waste material in a chuck, hollow the interior and then shape the exterior, and think of a lid option... Once I had completed the bulk of the item I passed it on to a fellow collaborator to complete, entrusting him to apply techniques as he saw fit.

I suppose this is an appropriate

opportunity to explain my attitude to collaborating. When you hand something you've partly made on to someone else to develop further, you need to relinquish ownership of the piece and be confident that the other person will either take your work in a new direction or enhance what you've made. In a perfect scenario both of you will learn more about your own work and potential developments for the future. If the result isn't to your satisfaction maybe collaborating isn't for you, but most often the results are positive.

Returning to my own workshop I realised

there were lingering options in the back of my mind urging me to explore the concept further, so the collaboration was successful – it had set my mind off in a new direction. Now to find suitable material while there was fire in my belly, so to speak.

I always have projects on the go and wood that might be suited set aside on one of my benches, and once my eyes hit a couple of blackheart sassafras blocks I knew exactly what they would be used for. Then there's the extra twist, or spin, on the lid... it's a spinning top.

Focus on blackheart sassafras

- **Australian blackheart sassafras (S)**
- **Grows:** Southern regions of NSW through parts of Victoria to southern Tasmania
- **Density:** 630kg/m³

Atherosperma moschatum is known as blackheart sassafras, southern sassafras or Tasmanian sassafras

It is a small to medium-sized tree, 10-15m in height but occasionally reaching 25m and 0.75m diameter.

Southern sassafras grows from southern regions of NSW through parts of Victoria to southern Tasmania, inhabiting cool, moist sites with a high annual rainfall. It is usually found in gullies and along

creek lines. In Tasmania it grows alongside myrtle beech (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) celery top pine (*Eucryphia lucida*) and several smaller species.

Heartwood of the sassafras is naturally grey to golden ranges of brown. The sapwood is pale yellow to whitish brown or greyish. However, some trees are infected with a staining fungus which causes colourful streaks and veins of dark brown and black, giving rise to the common name blackheart sassafras.

Its grain is straight, with a uniform fine to medium texture and usually no pronounced figure, while ADD is about 630kg/m³. It is easy to season with shrinkage about 2.5% radial and 6.5% tangentially,

The wood is easy to work with both hand and machine tools and it responds well to steam-bending operations with little spring-back. It turns, glues, stains, and finishes well to a low natural lustre and is good for joinery, cabinetry, furniture, flooring, musical instruments, carvings, and turned objects. It also has a low tannin content.

Besides the standard health risks associated with any type of wood dust, no further health reactions have been associated with blackheart sassafras. However, it should not to be confused with common sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) an unrelated species native to North America and used to make root beer or sarsaparilla.



Side grain of clear sassafras



End grain of clear sassafras



Side grain of one face of blackheart sassafras



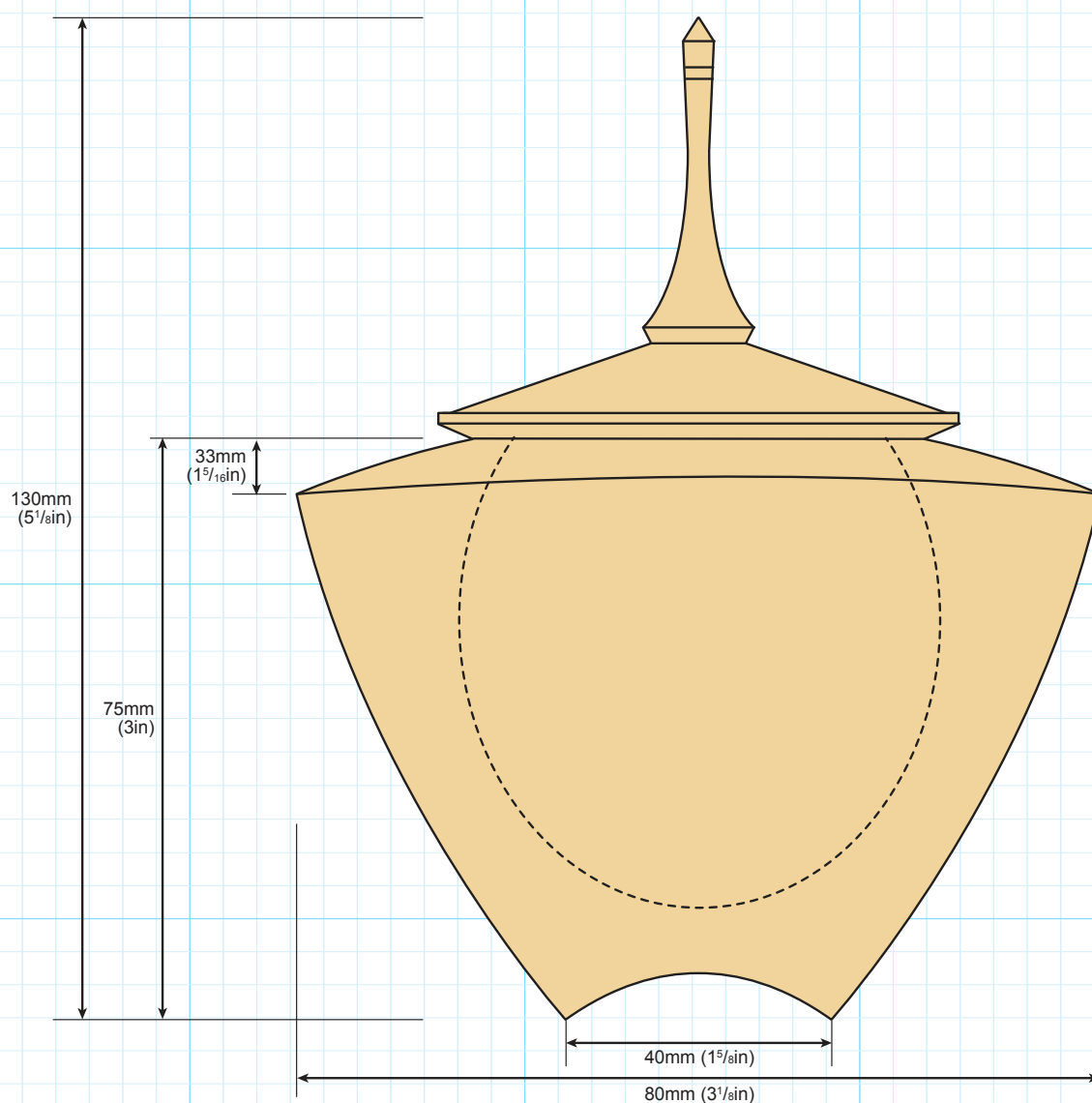
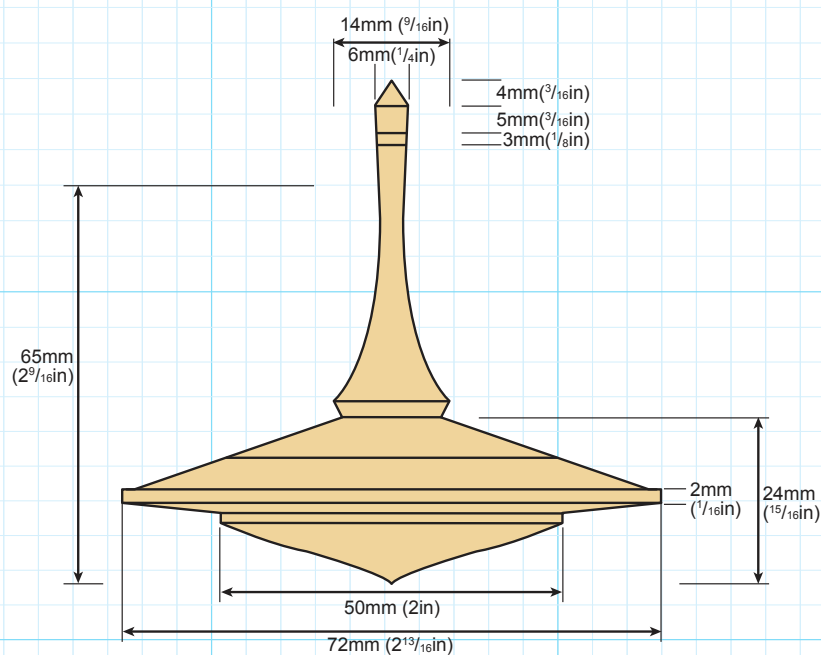
End grain of blackheart sassafras

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal & respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- Bowl gouge
- Round skew chisel
- 3mm parting tool
- Point tool
- Hollowing tools of your choice
- Chuck
- Revolving tailstock centre with ring end
- Drive spur
- Fine-toothed saw
- Sanding bobbin
- Wire burner

MATERIALS

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



◀ Preparation

1 The block I used for this project had been cut while green and coated in wax possibly about 15-20 years ago, during which time it gradually dried and seasoned. Cutting and dressing the material in preparation for sample shots, I aimed to remove as little waxed timber as possible, so exposed wood may well have been oxidised and end grain was quite dark. Cutting the blank to size exposed wood that was far livelier with more vibrant colour and greater distinction in striations.

2 To get this project started I cut all four sides of the 80 x 80 x 70mm tall block to an angle of about 10° on my bandsaw. You could create a variant of this project by using multi-axis turning techniques, but whatever approach you take, make sure all safety procedures are followed. I used a bandsaw with push sticks to keep hands and fingers well away from the blade.

Box body

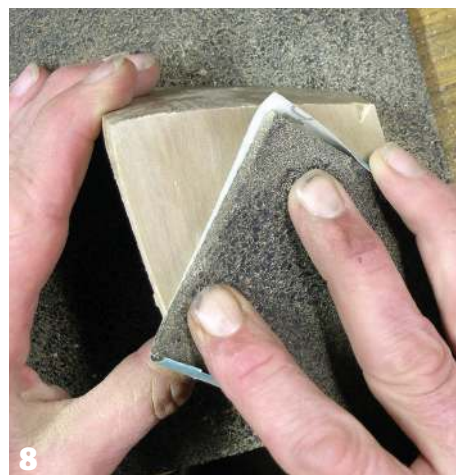
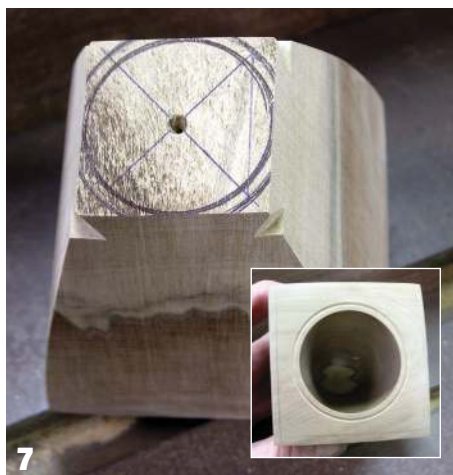
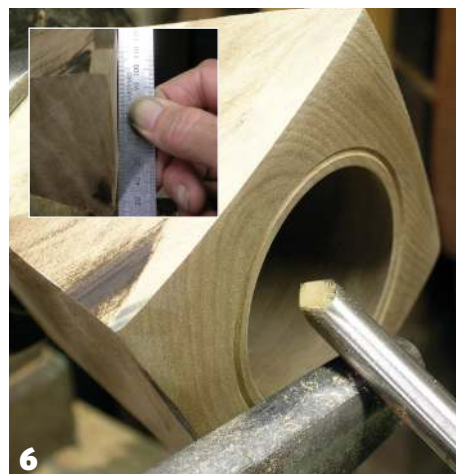
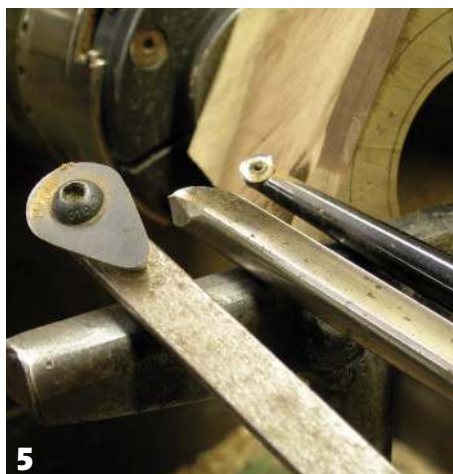
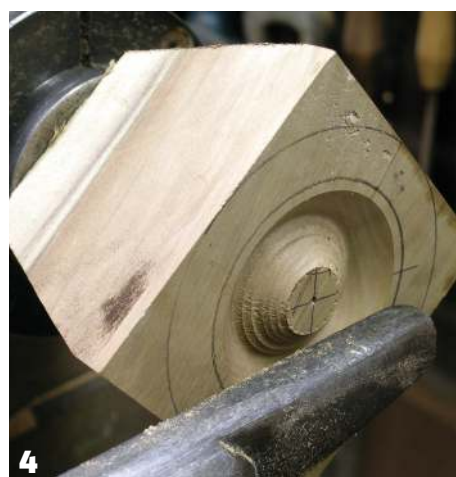
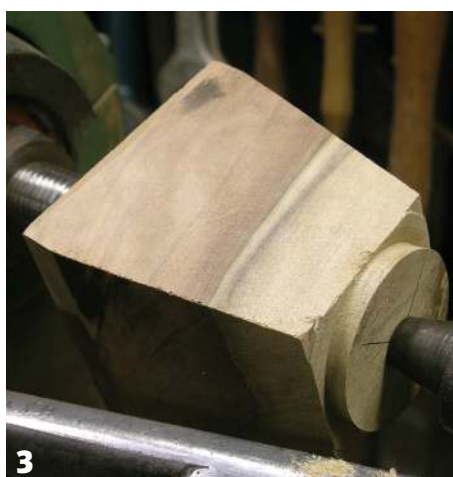
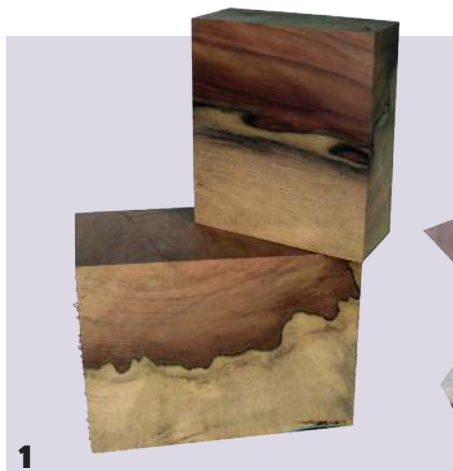
3 Once cut, mark the centres on the top and base of the block, then mount it between centres and cut a tenon to suit your chuck jaws at the narrowest end, the base, which is at the tailstock end of the wood. Once done remove the body and mount the just-cut tenon in your chuck jaws.

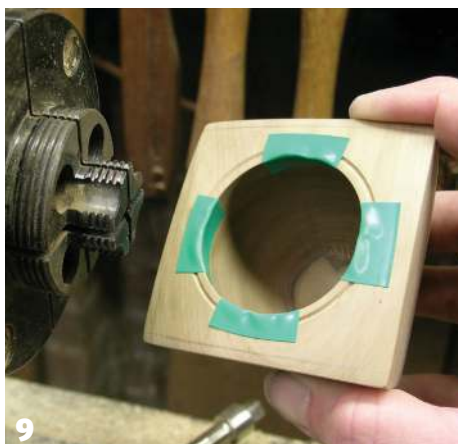
4 & 5 On the face mark two circles, one indicating the maximum working circumference of the blank, the other showing how far to cut the opening. When turning square blocks it's very important to keep your fingers well clear of the sharp edges and always rotate the toolrest before starting the lathe. I find it helps to keep my toolrest at the front of the work so it also acts as a guard. Use a bowl gouge for the initial hollowing out and then move on to whatever suitable tools will help you create the hollow internal form and refine it to the shape required.

6 Once the internal form is created, the top needs to be turned so it has a slight dome. Once done, sand the inside and top to 400 grit. I find sassafras can be somewhat frustrating to sand as scratches tend to linger, so it's important to check carefully before moving on to the next grit. To create a visual break in the top surface I cut a small V-groove using a three-point tool. A quick sand with fine sandpaper will soften the edges of the groove and improve its feel under your finger tips.

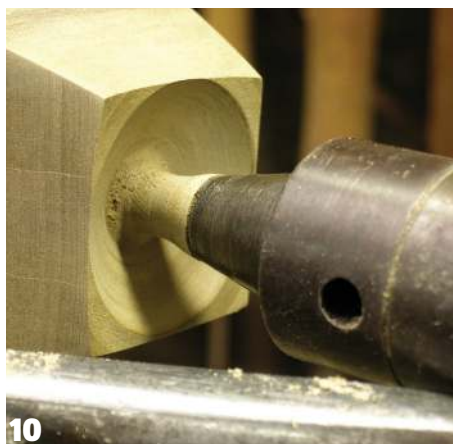
7 Remove the piece from the lathe and draw a couple of circles at the base to enable uniform shaping as the four faces will be curved slightly. I used a belt sander but disc sander would work just as well for this task. I felt that a straight taper didn't work aesthetically. It is advisable to place pencil lines on the top section of the top as a precaution to stop you from accidentally removing wood from the top edges of the container.

8 Now sand the sides. I used a rubber pad with abrasive on it, which moulded to the surface.





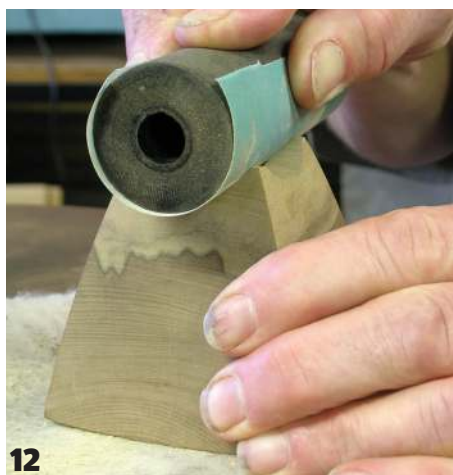
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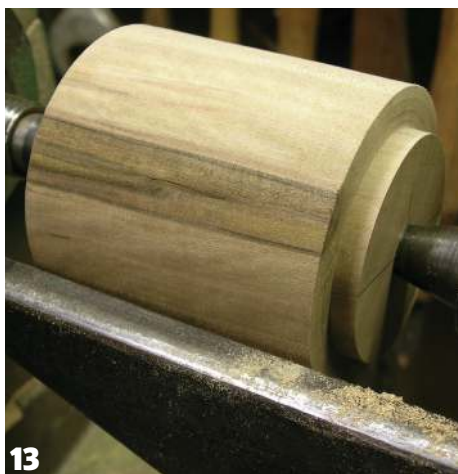
12

9 Now, reverse the box on to a chuck, gripping inside the internal opening so you can finish the base. But, preferring to be safe rather than sorry, I applied some thick electrical tape at points where jaws and wood meet to minimise damage.

10 For safety, bring up the revolving tailstock centre into place for extra support. Once everything is secure, hollow out the base with a gouge, but of course do not go too deep. The hollow is there so I could create an arched-footed base. Once hollowed, remove the revolving tailstock support, check the security of hold and turn away the central pip. Then sand the hollow section down to 400 grit.

11 To create feet and lift the box from its display surface I moved to a spindle sander where a neat arc can be shaped with ease. You could use a range of rasps instead. Once the initial shaping is done...

12 ...either use the rubber sleeve of the spindle sander to fine sand arched surfaces, or use a turned cylinder or a piece of suitably sized dowel. Note the piece of thick cloth on which the box sits to protect the upper surface of the box while sanding the base. It's small details like this that determine how much effort you need to put in later in the refinement process to ensure the finished piece is the best it can be.



13



14

The top

13 Now for the top, or should I say lid? Another piece of blackheart sassafras is used for this. Mount a suitable-sized section of wood between centres and cut a tenon on the tailstock end to suit your chuck jaws, then remove it from between centres and mount the tenon in your chuck jaws.

14 Once cut, remove it from chuck and mount it in the chuck jaws and cut the angled pointed section of the spinning top. Now mark a pencil line that will indicate the outer dimension of the box opening on the spinning top underside. Cut a step/tenon with a parting tool to the pencil mark and check that the width sits just inside the opening of the box body, you can then trim the outer edge of the top to size.



15



16

15 Add any extra details on the conical form that you want. A couple of V-grooves worked well here. Once done, sand the conical form down to 400.

16 Working with a gouge create the top of the spinning top and remove some of the waste from the stem section, but leave enough material on the top of the lid section to ensure it is stable for refinement later. While it is stable apply a finish to the underside of the top.

17 Now shape the upper surface of the lid. There is quite a bit of material in the body of a spinning top and if you have made the stem too thin at this stage, any detail work you may wish to do will place pressure on a thinly turned stem, leading to chatter or worse, breaking the stem.

18 Add any decoration on this face now. A V-groove was cut with the corner of a parting tool about 6mm in from the outer edge. Now sand the surface and start refining the stem form. I cut two small V-grooves near the upper tip of the top's stem to add a visual break. However, I chose to burn these for greater definition and colour contrast using a fine copper wire pulled tight on the wood as it rotated. The ends of the wire are secured in wooden balls which you holds on to so as not to cut fingers.

19 Usually when you turn a spinning top it is cut free of the stock with a skew, leaving a pointed tip that can later be neatened with a sharp knife. The step cut on the underside of the top can, in this case, be used to reverse to top and finish off the stem's point. All that's left is to apply your preferred finish.

20 & 21 Here is the finished box. •



17



18



19



20



21

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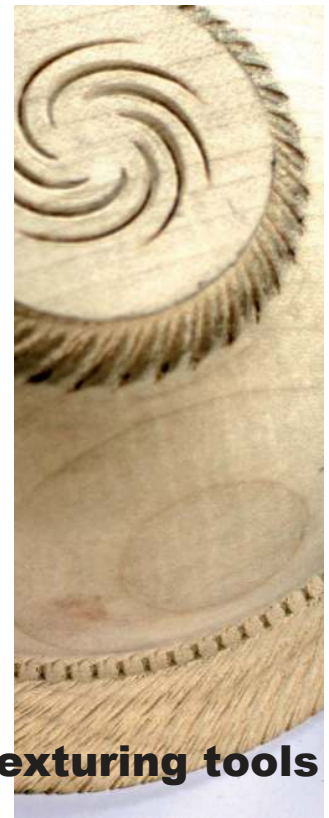
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Ticking the boxes for a fulfilling retirement

Dale Guilford talks to Mark Baker about what drives his creativity

My woodturning journey has been driven by an interest in wood, tools, techniques and community. Throughout my childhood I was always around wood and tools in my father's shop. Seventh-grade shop class is where I created my first turning, which was a lamp turned from a bowling pin blank. I am always surprised to learn how many woodturners had a similar beginning.

Later, when I started my own family, having a workshop was always a priority. Woodturning was never the primary activity for me, it was only to support my furniture-making with spindles for tables and chairs. It wasn't until years later, when I was nearing retirement, that woodturning became a primary focus. Woodturning now satisfies many of my needs for a comfortable retirement, including keeping busy, being creative, working with wood, shopping for tools, making things for family and friends, and researching methods and techniques.

AFTER RETIREMENT

During my first year of retirement I began to turn on a regular basis and then I took a detour. I started a small online business, AzCarbide, providing a selection of carbide inserts to woodturners. This detour satisfied more of my needs – connecting with woodturners, creating new products, selling online, and making money. It was like I came out of retirement. Or, as they say, I found a way to monetise my hobby. However, as the business activity increased, I had less time for woodturning, which is my real passion.

So, after six years I decided to sell my business to a fellow woodturner in Michigan, Ron Campbell. I was pleased my business was going to someone who would grow it, and who is a leader in the woodturning community.

I do miss the daily discussions with woodturners, learning about their

latest projects and sharing with them my experiences and ideas.

After turning many bowls it was time to find new challenges by learning different techniques to improve my skills. Over the past few years I have tried turning many objects, including pepper mills, kaleidoscopes, boxes, platters, basket weave illusions, bottle stoppers, and segmented bowls. I am always searching for new things to make.

Currently I am perfecting my 'pottery illusion' technique after viewing Native American pottery and baskets at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, AZ, US. Other ideas come from the turnings that fellow club members bring to the club meetings. Viewing these gives me ideas for my next project and the required techniques I need to learn.

I am fortunate to live in an area with three active AAW chapters and many excellent woodturners, all willing to share their knowledge and expertise.



ABOVE LEFT: A selection of miniature hollow forms with southwest style designs ABOVE: At home in my 3.68 x 4.27m woodturning shop in Gilbert, AZ US



Pottery Illusion collection turned from various timbers, adding paint, texturing and other features

Recent challenge

I started adding piercing and carving to some of my work. Certainly bringing out the natural colour, figure, and shape is always my goal for all my turnings. However, now I find adding piercing or carvings can provide an interesting aspect. So far these techniques have been the most challenging steps I have taken in woodturning, but I am enjoying the results and working with new tools.

Gifting my turnings gives me the greatest pleasure, somewhat of a way to leave my mark. I also frequently reach out to neighbours with a gift of a small bowl, box or pepper mill, sometimes made from their own tree. Needless to say, my neighbourhood boundaries continue to expand. I have sold very few items as commission work does not excite me. The environment of no commitments and schedules is ideal for my work style.

Of all the parts of wood turning, community is the most important to me. The best thing I ever did to expand my awareness and advance my skills as a woodturner was to join a woodturning club. The second best thing was volunteering to participate in demos at local expos. Not only does it promote woodturning and club membership, but also I am able to strengthen and create new relationships working beside fellow club members. I have found that the opportunities to volunteer and support a club and promote woodturning are limitless.

Always searching

Another part of woodturning that adds enjoyment is having an abundant supply of turning blanks. There's something about the hunt and discovery of usually free wood. I like to try different species for their unique characteristics of colour, density and figure. Living in the desert south west many think we have a limited supply of wood. Quite the contrary – we actually have more than 20 species available, many that have been imported for landscaping.

On every vacation trip to parts of the US I am always looking for turning blanks to add to my inventory. Each piece I turn has a story about the wood and how I acquired it. Some of my previous customers and I started a wood exchange, trading turning blanks from the states of Iowa, Minnesota, California, Washington and Victoria, Canada.

Pierced Indian rosewood (*Dalbergia sissoo*) hollow form following the natural grain pattern

As I demo at our local county and state expos, I experience the interest in woodturning first hand. I am always intrigued by the attention paid to it and the curiosity, especially from the younger generation.

Unfortunately, many schools have

discontinued their hands-on industrial arts programmes and this puts more responsibility on turning clubs and organisations, as well as the opportunity to fill this void by promoting woodturning. I feel so fortunate to have found woodturning as my passion for it continues to grow.





28cm diameter maple (*Acer* spp.) platter, using polar graph paper for design layout



Natural-edge honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) bowl



Accent piercing added to Indian rosewood hollow form



Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) hollow form with piercing



Added vine design with wood burning (pyrography) pen to a cotton wood vessel

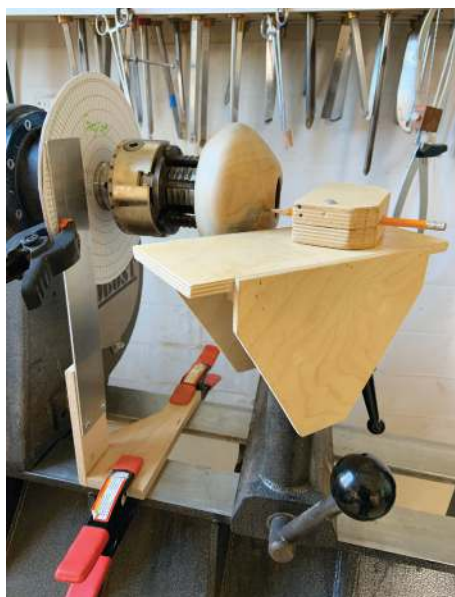
DALE'S TOP TECHNIQUE: INDEX JIG



Homemade index wheel using polar graph paper and shop clamps



Simple to set up on any size of turning



Easy to follow any contour



Angle the platform for marking diagonals, creating unique designs

Many of my turning designs require indexing, sometimes over 100 segments. I decided to make my own index wheels using polar graph paper. This allows unlimited options with more details and control. I use a software programme from Blackcat Systems (www.blackcatsystems.com/software/graph_paper_maker.html) to produce a grid with the number of segments required. This programme allows the user to create custom graph paper with any number of segments needed. I print the graph paper and glue it to a 6mm-thick piece of hardboard and drill a hole to match my spindle. Next, I clamp a thin piece of aluminium to the lathe bed that allows the spindle to turn freely until clamped at the appropriate segment. As a guide for my

pencil block I mounted a piece of 18mm-thick plywood to the top of a tool post and over that added a plywood tiltable jig that can be moved to any desired angle ready for scribing.

The block holding the pencil can be easily manoeuvred to scribe a line at any angle or contour you may have turned. The jig can be modified to your preference but the key component is the simple index wheel made from the printed polar graph paper and hardboard. There are a number of indexing tools available, but for total control I have found this indexing jig I use works the best for me. I have a number of wheels pre-made with different numbers of segments to help with the various designs I wish and like to make.



Pagoda box

Jason Breach shows how to make a box inspired by buildings in the Far East

I have been making turned boxes for many years and over this time developed many shapes and style, one of my favourites is inspired by the pagodas of the Far East. The major motivation driving the idea of making square-edged boxes came from when I purchase my timber – I have to view it, pick it up and examine the grain. I like to have a variation; a contrast, a splash of sapwood can in many timbers be very different from the solid colour of the heartwood, or variation of grain pattern. These features add to the draw of the material and this creates a problem as turning this to a round cylinder removes the very interest that was the lure of purchasing the timber. I wanted to stop wasting these features as a pile of shavings on the floor.

So, the challenge was set – could I develop a shape which incorporated the square section? I had seen Chris Stott's pagoda in his book, and decided to see if I could take it a little further and refine the shape. With the basic ideas from this book I started researching and looking at shapes of pagodas. This research was in the form of books and holiday magazines and, of course, then I went online – lots of shapes. The basic skills covered in the previous box designs are the building blocks for this style of box and the major challenge within this is the clean cutting of the corners.

The choice of timber is very important for this. All the boxes are made from spindle stock square section – close grain will work best, it must be dry, or it will shrink to an oval shape and it needs to be split free. Start with something cheaper, because you will break a few. Ash is a good choice. Do not machine up the outer edge, as you will end up chipping something and doing it again. This can be cleaned up at the end. The material used for the project is laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*), an amazing timber, great colour and contrast, a UK-grown timber that could easily be mistaken for an expensive, exotic timber from a faraway place.

Safety is always important, but working with uneven-edged work makes things tricky. The square sections of timber used in this project mean that there are 'wings and points' to consider. The easiest way to cut the corners cleanly is to run the lathe at a slightly faster speed than normal for the size of work being tackled, as this reduces the time gap between the rotating corners and you end up with a more even cut. That said, this can be tricky for those new to this type of turning and even experienced turners can struggle with this. If in doubt, stick to normal turning speeds and use light pressure against the work with more pressure down on the rest



as you glide along the work. But these spinning corners create a whirlwind effect, picking up the shavings as they are cut and making these particles airborne, so wearing a suitable dust mask and faceshield – or, better still, a powered respirator face shield and hood – is a must.

The other problem of turning the square corners at high speed creates a dangerous hazard, in simple keep fingers away from the rotating workpiece, if they make contact it hurts believe me. So, for this type of work always keep all parts of the body the tailstock side of the lathe and go gentle with the cutting. Always rotate the work by hand before switching on the lathe to ensure that it is all clear of the toolrest assembly. One other safety aspect is to never move the toolrest assembly when the work is rotating. Always switch off the lathe and move the rest and check that the work is clear before doing so.

To help cut the corners cleanly and accurately sharp tools are a must. I sharpen the gouge to cut this cleanly. A sharp tool will also reduce the pressure and force when cutting, which is so important to help maintain the corners. As always when turning, concentration, tool approach, technique and attention to what is happening needs to be right – get it wrong and irregular-edged work can be very unforgiving.

The finished thickness of the corners is important, too thin and they will be too fragile. The corners of the lid and the feet also need to look about the same thickness, if not accurately centred will effect the thickness on each side. For this reason it is important to locate and mount each piece accurately on the centre of the workpiece. I use a toothed, spring-loaded point headstock drive and a ring-faced revolving tailstock centre. I do not use a single point revolving centre in the tailstock as I have found this can split the fibres of the timber and damage what will be the finial, which results in the finial disintegrating while you're trying to turn the shape. A ring centre compresses the fibres.

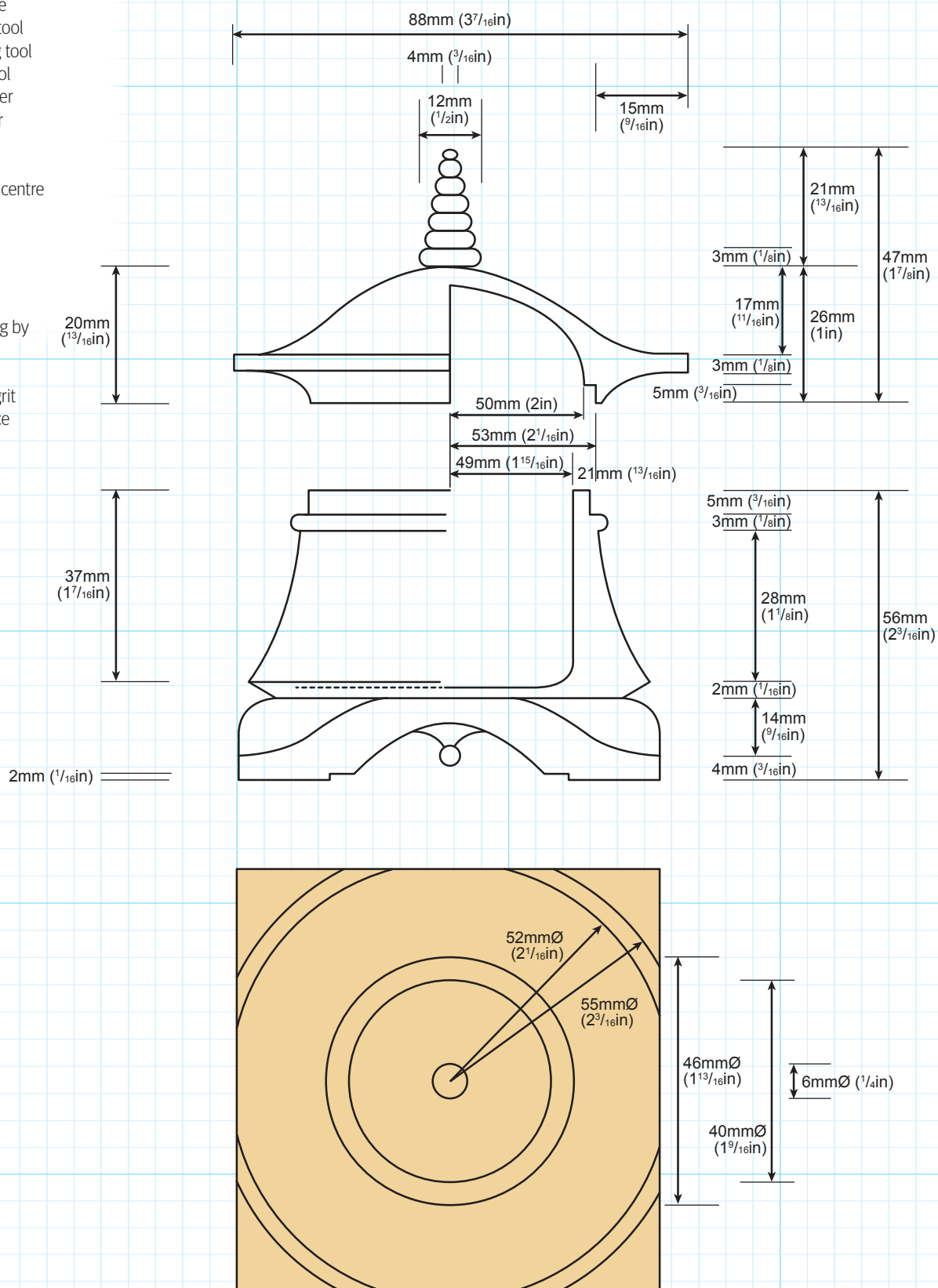
When sanding the interior and the outer rim section, remove the toolrest and lower the speed on the solid areas to reduce heat build-up. On the corners run at a faster speed to ensure the abrasive does not soften the crisp detail by rounding off the corners on the lower speed, but use a sanding pad to keep you fingers away from the work. Work through the grit grades down to 400 grit using a pad to hold the abrasive and not your fingers as the corners do hurt if you get it wrong or are careless. To polish I use a polishing mop set-up, with carnauba wax creating the overall finish.

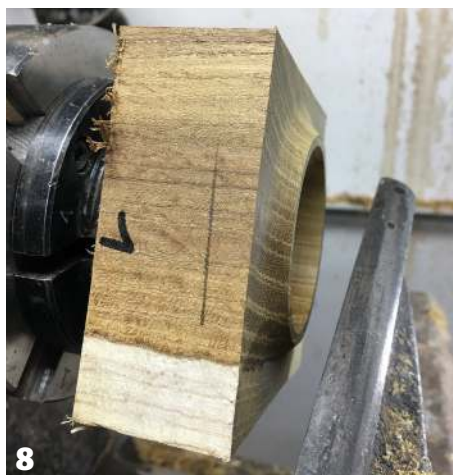
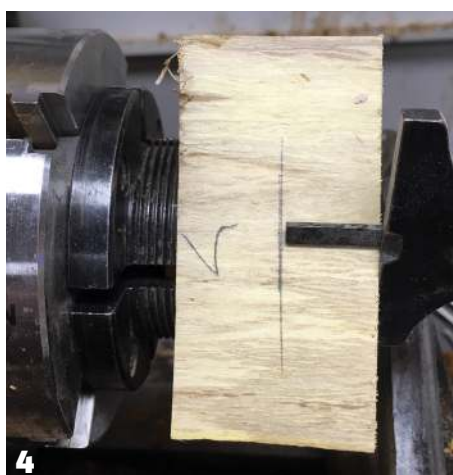
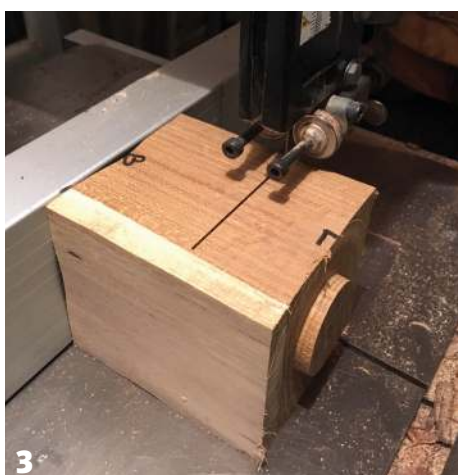
TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal & respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- Bowl gouge
- Small spindle gouge
- Beading & parting tool
- 3mm fluted parting tool or bead-forming tool
- French curve scraper
- Square end scraper
- Chuck
- Drive spur
- Revolving tailstock centre with ring end
- Callipers
- Depth gauge

MATERIALS

- Timber 150mm long by 90mm square
- Cyanoacrylate
- Abrasives to 400 grit
- Finish of your choice





Initial preparation

1 Having marked the centre points, mount the selected material on the lathe. The lid of the box is mounted towards the tailstock using a ring centre. On the tailstock end cut a spigot using a beading tool to the diameter of the chuck jaws.

2 Remove the centres and mount the chuck, load and hold the work on this spigot. Set the toolrest parallel to the base. Using a 6mm bowl gouge to create the spigot on the base; the aim is to leave the four outer corners of the block. These will become the feet of the box.

3 To part the lid and base, a bandsaw makes the task easier and there is less waste, while a parting tool will damage and splinter the corners. The proportions are 2/5 for the lid and 3/5 for the base. Use the fence and cut with the base of the box against the fence.

The lid

4 Mount the lid into the chuck, set up a depth gauge to half the length of the lid and cut a small V in the centre with the point of a skew chisel to acts as a centre drill. Using a 6mm spindle gouge or drill bit, drill a hole to the depth of the gauge.

5 Using a 6mm bowl gouge with fingernail shape, position the flute to 9.30 o'clock, cutting from the centre outwards. The drill hole will create easy access, the fingers on the left hand will become a pivot point and the right hand will move away from the body. Aim to create an even curve which will remove the bulk quickly but not leave a good finish.

6 To clean up, rotate the flute to 2 o'clock, rest the bevel inside the opening without this cutting, and gently swing the handle away from the body to find the cutting edge. Lock the left thumb on the toolrest and, keeping this angle, slide the bevel back to the opening. Start the cut and drive the cutting tip to the centre, creating an eggcup curve.

7 To cut the corners cleanly I run the lathe at about 2100rpm – about 500rpm higher than normal for the diameter of work. With the gouge flute at 2 o'clock, rest the bevel where the material appears more solid and not blurred. Move the handle away from the body to find the cutting angle, maintain this angle and gently slide the tool back to clear the corner points, selecting the amount to be cut, gently push forward creating the shape.

8 Stop the lathe regularly and have a look at what is happening – it is very difficult to see the shape when it is spinning. Make multiple light cuts to create the shape required.

9 & 10 Clean up the internal hollow and the rim carefully using a round-nose scraper. On the internal hollow work from the centre out towards the rim, then sand to a finish. Now, cut a recess just inside the opening on the interior using the point of an oval skew used flat on the rest. It is paramount that this cut is parallel as it creates the joint between the lid and base and this needs to be a minimum of 6mm in depth. Check it is parallel using expanding callipers then seal and wax it.

The base

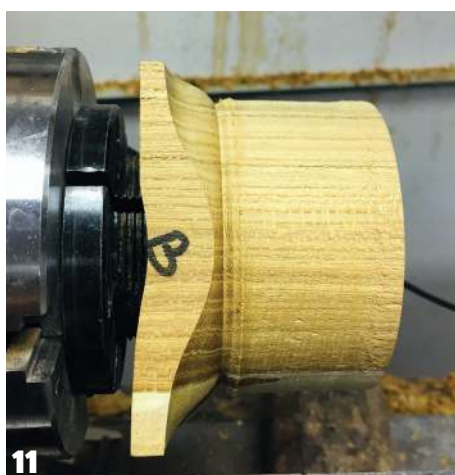
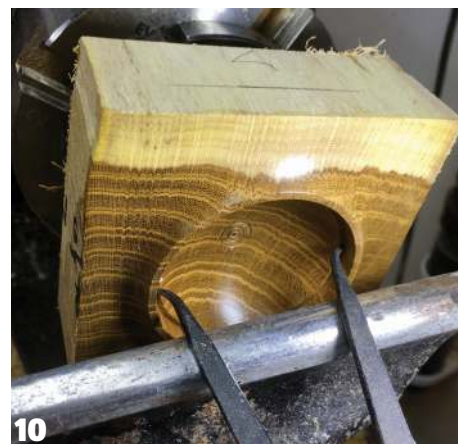
11 Remove the lid from the chuck and replace with the base section. Lower the lathe speed and set the toolrest parallel to the lathe bed, checking that the work clears. Using a bowl gouge and starting at the tailstock end, rough down to a cylinder with a gouge, remembering to leave the last 25mm at the chuck end square to create the feet at the lower end. Shape the top of the feet base using a bowl gouge and taking light cuts. Stop regularly and check how the shape is forming. I like to aim for a ogee shape and create a V cut between the foot and the body of the box.

12 & 13 Measure the diameter of the opening of the internal recess of the lid, half the measurement. Transfer this to the dividers and mark it out on the base as a guideline to the lid and base joining diameter. Now, cut the spigot on the base using a 10mm beading tool. The divider line is a guide. Be patient when doing this – light adjustment cuts and regular checks will ensure that the lid fits tightly. This spigot needs to be parallel. Check the length of the spigot, as the lid and base need to meet together.

14 With the lid fit completed, finish shaping the external profile of the base, using a bowl gouge and working from larger to smaller. Shaping the base at this stage allows good access to pull the lid on and off.

15 Shape the lid in two repetitive cuts. The first removes the bulk and shapes the corners, which creates a convex shape. Push the lid on to the base and ensure this runs true and fits tightly. You can bring up the tailstock support for security. Now, using a bowl gouge with the flute at 2 o'clock, take light cuts to remove the bulk. Ensure that the bevel is in contact before the tip of the gouge is engaged. Stop and check how the shape is progressing. Aim to create an even thickness of the square corners. Continue to refine the shape of the lid and reduce the bulk at the top. This material creates the finial. Now shape the concave dome shape of the lid. The aim is to join the convex and concave cut seamlessly together. With the lathe stopped the square edge will show how the thickness varies. Use fingertips to measure the thickness of the interior hollowed section, and try to aim for an even thickness.

16 The finial section should be no more than 12mm in diameter. Use a fluted parting tool, as beading forming tools tear the grain or even give the impression of using a square beading and parting tool, which this is not. When complete, remove the lid and put it somewhere safe. Do not sand this yet.





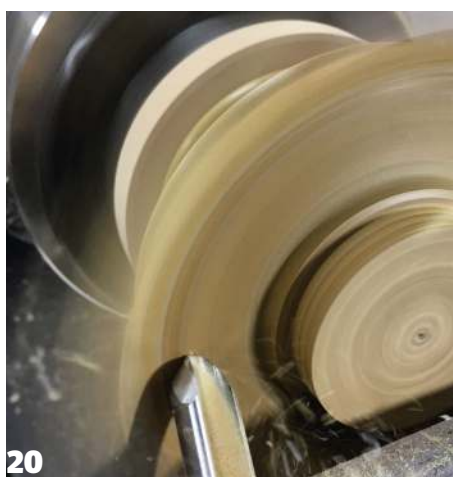
17



18



19



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22



23



24

17 Hollow out the base by setting up a depth gauge and drilling a depth hole in the same way as the lid. Hollow out the base with a gouge and then clean up using a square-ended and scraper working down the side and across the bottom. Do not remove the spigot that connects the lid and base section. When done, sand the inside of the base and outside of the lid and base. Seal all and wax the inside.

18 To reverse the base, use a scrap block of wood to make a jam chuck, cut a spigot on one end and hold in the chuck. Measure the diameter of the spigot, halve the measurement, transfer to a set of dividers. Level the face end of this, cut a V in the centre and use the dividers to transfer the measure. Remove the bulk with a bowl gouge, working from the centre out with the flute at about the 9.30 position. Create a parallel side wall with the point of a skew laid on its side in scraping mode, creating a nice, tight fit to hold the base section.

19 Wiping the inner edge of the Jam chuck with a damp cloth will help to hold the base firmly, bring up the tailstock for the bulk of the shaping. You will need to remove the tailstock support when you finish the very inner section. With a sharp bowl gouge level the base of the feet as these will be an uneven thickness due to the bandsaw cut. Use the tip of the gouge, taking light cuts and working from outside towards the centre.

20 Using a low lathe speed, hollow and shape the underside of the base with the bowl gouge. Cut using the tip, ensuring that the bevel makes contact before the tip – light cuts are very important. The tailstock cannot now be used as it blocks the position of where the gouge handle will need to be. Care needs to be taken at this stage.

21 I like to add some detail to this – a few beads and coves create interest on what is the underside and not often seen. When done, carefully sand using a hard foam block to hold the abrasive against the work. Keep fingers away from the spinning corners. Seal the underside.

22 To clean up the outer edges, line up the grain on something flat and use a simple, homemade sanding board. Bond the abrasive down with spray mount and hand sand the outer square section. Work cross grain as the corners are weak due to the short grain section. Work around the four edges checking the shape, and then use 400 grit to soften the sharp edges. The exterior can then be then polished.

23 & 24 Here are the finished lid and base ready to fit together and an image of the decorated base of the bottom. ●

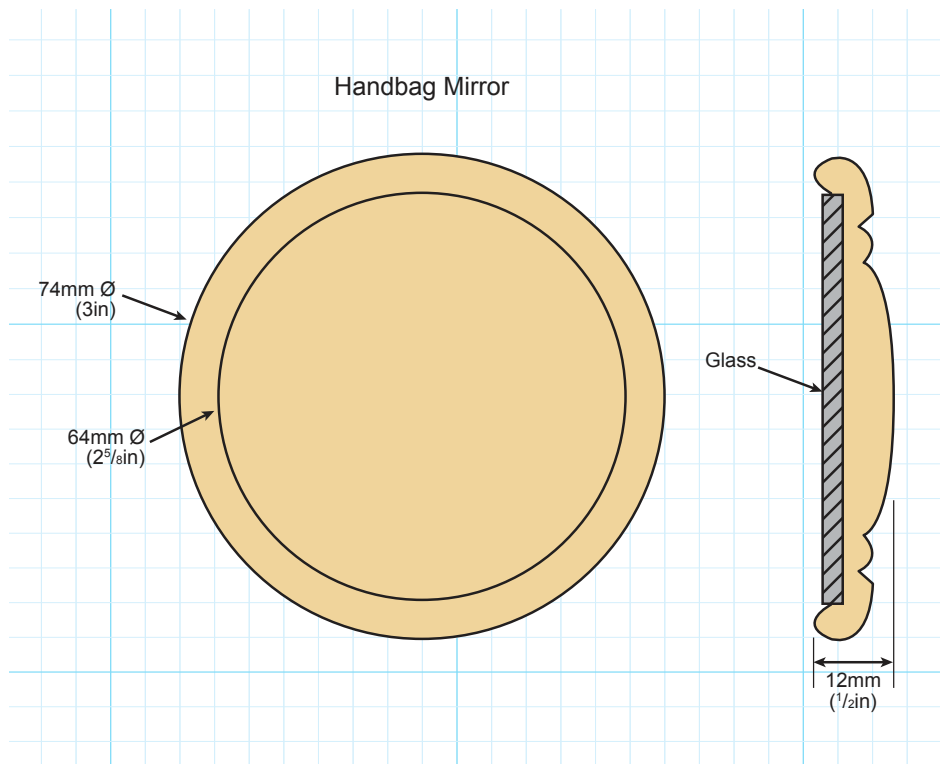
Handbag mirror

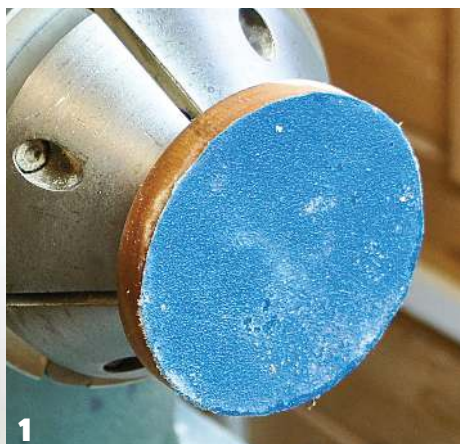
Ian Woodford shows how to make a small, hand-held mirror



Continuing my thoughts on experiences at craft events, another of my good sellers is the handbag mirror. It is best to make these from close-grained woods and I choose mainly English hardwoods such as laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*), yew (*Taxus baccata*) and maple (*Acer spp.*). I also prefer to cut my blanks so there is very little waste wood, because this way you can get more mirrors from the original blank. The round, faceplate-oriented grain blank is 80mm diameter by 20mm thick. The finished product is 74mm by 12mm. Glass mirrors can be purchased from most good craft sites and the one used here measures 64mm in diameter and is 3mm thick. You can buy other sizes and make a mirror to suit your requirements.

I usually make 10 at a time. I like to turn a spigot without losing too much of the original blank, so I have made a small friction drive from some waste wood and stuck 60 grit abrasive to the front surface. This, in conjunction with the revolving tailstock centre support, keeps the blank in place while I form a thin spigot.





TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal & respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- Bowl gouge
- Skew
- Chuck
- Tailstock revolving centre
- Callipers
- Abrasives down to 400 grit

MATERIALS

- Faceplate-oriented grain close-grained timber 80mm x 20mm
- Glass mirror 64mm x 3 mm
- Abrasives down to 400 grit

- Sanding sealer
- Lacquer
- Silicone sealant as an adhesive

1 Here is the friction drive I mentioned earlier, mounted in the chuck with 60 grit glued to the face. Mark the centre of each blank.

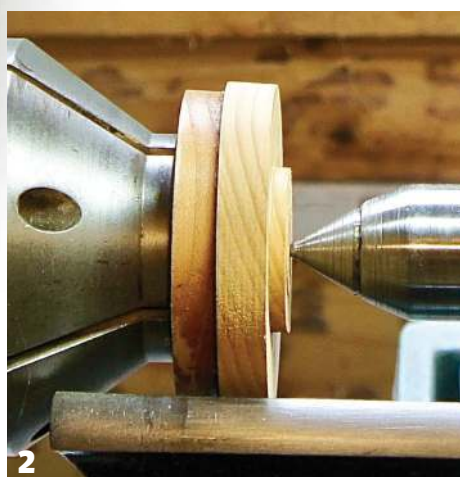
2 Bring up the revolving tailstock centre support and press the timber against the friction drive. Once secure, you can cut a spigot to suit your chuck jaws without fear of the blank slipping. Turn the spigot with a parting tool and, at the same time, the blank edge can be trued up with a bowl gouge.

3 Once that's done, remove the timber and mount the spigot on the chuck jaws. When it's secure, turn the face flat, measure the mirror diameter and transfer the measurement to the blank. Start turning the recess for the mirror but be careful not to make it any wider in diameter than the mirror. Turn the recess just a little deeper than the thickness of the glass. Then use the tip of the skew, laid on its side in scraping mode, to make the diameter of the recess a tiny fraction wider than the mirror. Once done, test the glass for size and adjust accordingly for width and depth.

4 Once the mirror fits, clean up and shape the front outer edge using a bowl or a hybrid gouge. The hybrid gouge has a deeper flute than a spindle gouge, but not quite as deep as a bowl gouge. In the image you can see another shallow recess in the middle of the mirror recess. This is there so my chuck jaws can hold the blank when reversed. Using this smaller recess reduces the risk of the wood splitting, which is a possibility if you use the outer recess for reverse chucking. Sand this edge down to 400 grit and seal but leave the inside of the recess rough so glue has a surface to adhere to.

5 Reverse the blank. You now have to decide on the shape of the back area. It is a small piece, but if you are worried about the security of the hold you can use tailstock support for most of the shaping and just remove it for the final centre area and sanding. I often turn a shallow bead, which adds to the attraction. During this final shaping remove the blank from the chuck to measure or gauge the thickness at the centre with your fingertips. I usually find that 3-5mm is fine.

6 Once the piece is shaped sand down to 400 grit, seal and add a finish of your choice. Keep in mind that the mirror will be handled so use an appropriate finish to deal with this. I glue the mirror in place with a small amount of clear silicone sealer about a third of the way in from the edge of the recess. Place the mirror on top and rotate it to spread the sealer, making sure it doesn't show between the glass and the edge of the recess. Once glued in place, let it set. All my mirrors are placed in small, black bags, which protects them. Such items can be bought online. ●



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Poolewood Machinery
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David Biven Machinery
Unit 30 Sycamore Trading Estate
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Interhire Tools
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Derbyshire, DE7 5DA
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Turners Retreat
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Harworth, Doncaster, DN11 8SU
Website: www.turners-retreat.co.uk

IRELAND

Joe McKenna (Limerick) Ltd
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Be bright with light

Geoffrey Laycock discusses workshop lighting



PHOTOGRAPH BY GEOFFREY LAYCOCK

The two photos show how easily task lighting can be added to specific tasks. In both cases the light came from a well-known Swedish store and cost very little

Whenever the weather is good and the work allows, I prefer being outdoors. Of course, not all projects can be done al fresco and it can be impractical. My aim for this summer is to have finished my stables workshop and relocated one of my two lathes so it can be wheeled outside. The concrete apron of the stables faces north, long recognised as the best natural light direction. Sanding projects will take on a new pleasure – provided any wind is in the right direction.

Much of the time though, like everyone else, I will be indoors and often reliant on artificial light sources. Natural light through a window is preferable but rarely sufficient for our activities. Lighting is usually discussed as three types: general – which provides a uniform level of light across the whole area; localised – where higher levels are provided around machines, walkway, doors; and local or task lighting – where specific light sources are provided for the individual worker.

When I built my new barn workshop I opted for LED downlighters set out in a grid pattern. I had thought about the workshop layout and hoped I would only need task lighting at a number of machines and my precision work table. I almost got it right but found that the LED downlighter beam spread/cut-off does mean I can find myself with annoying shadows interfering with activities at my two benches and the simple answer will be to add an LED strip light above each.

LED strip lights can be simple designs looking like the now rapidly-disappearing-from-use fluorescent tubes, or flat panels with an almost uniform light output. I have both types already in use and cannot recommend them strongly enough. Old fluorescent fittings can be converted to run LED tubes but this should be done by a competent person.

LED sources can now be obtained in bright, natural white which means colour rendering, or how the light affects the perceived object colour, is no longer a problem. Flicker should not be a problem – they use far less power, produce little or no heat and therefore reduce fire risk and last much longer than older types of luminaire.

Recommended lighting levels vary but here are a few typical values. For workshops a suitable general level would be 300-750 Lux. Storage areas could be lower at 100-200 Lux. Basically, the finer the work you are doing, aim for a higher level. Fine tasks often benefit from local, or task, lighting and I have one such light that is 3000 Lux and typically used about 400mm from the work I do. That is bright and you might think too much. It isn't and seriously helps my ageing eyes to recognise detail in my work. To put that into perspective, lights used in operating theatres can be 150,000 Lux or more – wouldn't you be pleased to know the surgeon can see exactly what they are doing?

It is easy to get confused by numbers when looking for lighting. Illuminance is the amount of light hitting a surface. Luminance is the amount of light emitted from a light source. Years ago we used a standard candle – yes really – and this would emit light with a luminous intensity of one Candela. If we measure that level of light at a distance of one foot spread over one square foot, that used to be called a Foot-Candle. Now we use posh terms of Lux for the amount of light emitted by a source, and Lumen to measure the amount hitting a surface. One Lux is typically a full moon night, which is equal to the illumination on a surface area of one square metre at a distance of one metre from a standard candle. Direct sunlight can be 30,000 to 100,000 Lux. I have seriously oversimplified all this.

As an example of how to consider new lights, online I found a 1200 x 300mm LED panel quoted as 40W and equivalent to two 36W T8 fluorescent tubes. The light output was 3600 Lumen and cost under £30. Now 1 Lux at your work surface is equivalent to 1 Lumen per square metre. My workshop ceiling height is 2.6m and this unit has a light spread or beam angle of 120°. The higher a light fitting, the lower the illuminance at the work surface as the total emitted light is spread over a greater area. Without a calculator I estimate the 3600 Lumen spreads over an area of the bench that results in about 1200 Lux, which is a good level of even light. That is probably not very accurate but gives an idea of what one light fitting could do. Once I am absolutely certain of workbench location – I'm still moving things around even after 18 months – I will install a panel above each bench.

FURTHER INFORMATION
www.hse.gov.uk

HSG38 Lighting at Work – Free to download – (note, this is out of date with no information on LED lighting but does explain general lighting requirements)

Various websites publish parts of CIBSE guides to lighting. Search 'lighting levels' and look for references to the Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers



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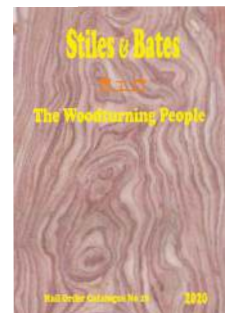
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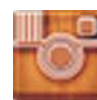
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Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog supplies answers to some readers' questions

What type of blade?

Question: When people cut and trim their pen blanks with a tablesaw, do they use a finishing blade or all-purpose blade?



Bandsawn pen blanks ready for tube insertion



Pen blanks with a tube glued in and faced ready for turning

Answer: The best answer is that it really doesn't matter. Since the cutting and trimming on pen blank material is to shape the blank square and to remove excess stock, the surface finish isn't terribly important. You will be drilling and gluing in a tube, then facing the blank flush to the tube on both ends. Whether you use a pen mill or sander for that process, you'll wind up with that surface finish on the end and the rest turned round for the pen body. Personally, I have little use for my tablesaw for woodturning stock prep, favouring my bandsaw. On the

bandsaw, any blade in decent sharpness works great. You are going to turn away any other cut edges so they really don't matter. If you must use your tablesaw, I recommend a sharp, narrow kerf, high tooth count blade. On my tablesaw, a general purpose 48-tooth Forrest Woodworker 2 blade is fine for nearly all of my cuts, including what you term finishing cuts. You can pick the manufacturer of your choice but a quality, sharp, carbide tooth blade of 48 teeth or more is probably a great choice.

Stabilising wood

Question: I am getting into stabilising wood and wonder how to know which species need to be stabilised. Is there a list of species to use? Any to avoid? What about recommendations for stabilising resins?



Dense woods require no stabilisation. Porous or punky woods do. If you can't tell visually, a thumbnail pressed into the timber will tell you

Answer: Rather than naming species, I recommend that you focus on woods that need stabilisation. Woods of any species that is punky, soft, porous, or otherwise crumbly are candidates for stabilisation. The process is to fill all the voids with liquid plastic by evacuating the air, replacing the voids with plastic, and then curing the plastic. With the voids filled with cured plastic, the material is denser, turnable, and far stronger. Another advantage of stabilisation is the colouring that can be done concurrently. Various dyes and colourants can be introduced to alter the original material. You can also use these stabilising resins to cast other materials, from flower pods to rice to coffee beans. When you select your stabilising candidates, you'll pick them based on their porosity and need to be made harder and denser. There are

some species that are naturally open grained that stabilise well. Other species that are already dense don't need stabilisation and don't fare well if you try. Often the 'thumb test' will answer your question. If your thumbnail will easily press into the wood, it will usually benefit from stabilisation. There are only a few stabilising resins that are offered to the home user. I have experience with the two most popular retail offerings. I've used both Cactus Juice and Stickfast stabilising resins with success. The prices are similar from the various sales sources and in use they work the same. I've recently purchased a third brand to try but I have no results to report so I'll leave them out here. There are potentially other available brands but these two offerings have nearly all of the market in the US.

Carbide-tip tools for pen turners

Question: I bought a set of carbide tools to use on acrylic blanks. The sales guy said carbide works better on acrylic than HSS. I was tired of having to resharpen my roughing gouge twice for every pen. I tried using the square cutter to turn the blank round and it was a mess. It was super-rough and full of chips. I went back to my HSS tools, but I'd like to know if I was just doing something wrong?



A properly sharpened and presented HS tool will cut any acrylic I've encountered. Carbides work as well with high speed and light touch

Answer: I'm not certain why you had those problems but I can suggest a couple of things based on your note. First, you shouldn't need to be sharpening your spindle roughing gouge twice for every pen blank turning, whether wood or plastic. My guess is that your sharpening technique isn't effective. A properly sharpened HSS edge should last much longer than that. Next, acrylic is such a generic term that I'm not exactly sure what you are turning. Depending on the material, cast or extruded, and its actual composition, acrylic plastics are all over the map for turning characteristics. Brittle, chippy, stringy, soft, hard, or whatever you want to call the cutting results vary based on the actual acrylic material you are turning. Remember, each piece of acrylic you buy to turn can be totally different from another acrylic blank unless they are from the same original

material batch. That is, you cut them from the same parent block rather than pluck them from a bag of plastic blanks or in bubble packs at the merchant. On to the carbide cutter tools. They should work for turning plastic if the speeds and feeds are correct. Banging the corners off with any tool, HSS or carbide, doesn't need to be brutal. High rotational speed and light touch are good words to live by when turning small spindle stock such as pen blanks. I have experienced soft and stringy to hard and chippy in blanks called acrylic. For solutions, you can try improved sharpening techniques of the HSS tools, high-speed and light-touch turning with either family of tools, and potential change in the actual style or type of cutter. Any or all of these may be needed to solve the problem. Also, you certainly should try different plastic blanks as your raw material.

Send in your questions to Kurt's email: kurt@kurthertzog.com



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OUR CONTRIBUTORS



ANDY COATES

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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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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turnery.co.uk**



GEOFFREY LAYCOCK

Geoffrey Laycock was a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Chartered Member of the Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors and Fellow of the Royal Society for the Protection of Health.

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IAN WOODFORD

Since retiring from the pharmaceutical industry Ian has enjoyed concentrating on his love of woodturning. As well as belonging to two Hampshire clubs he has written articles for both *Woodturning* and an American magazine.



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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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.

**www.facebook.com/
pren.bala**



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.

**www.marksanger.
co.uk**



RICHARD FINDLEY

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

richardfindley.uk



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

Feb issue 342 on sale 20th Feb

Andy Coates delves into tried and true chucking methods

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDY COATES

Richard Findley continues his
exploration of piercing work

Walter Hall makes an
Art Deco-style skeleton clock

Pat Carroll shows how to create
a wave-form bowl

Jason Breach explores making
his orbital arc box

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It's a scoop

Les Symonds makes a simple kitchen utensil



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LES SYMONDS

In this project, which is the second instalment of a three-part series, we will be making an open-ended scoop suitable for dispensing ground coffee or similar ingredients. European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) has been used, but any close-grained, food-safe timber would suffice, and given the thin-walled business end of the scoop, a straight-grained timber would be the best option.

In part one of the series we made a long-handled spoon, which involved a special jig and some careful turning of a

propeller-like workpiece, but this is a much simpler project, being of a single component and generally completed in one process. There's an option to use a simple jam-chuck for reverse turning the scoop to clean off the stub remaining once the scoop is parted off, rather than simply hand-sanding the stub away.

The health and safety implications involved in the project are minimal, and are mentioned below, so enjoy making your scoop and try scaling the dimensions upwards to make larger versions, perhaps suitable for dispensing flour, sugar or cereals.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

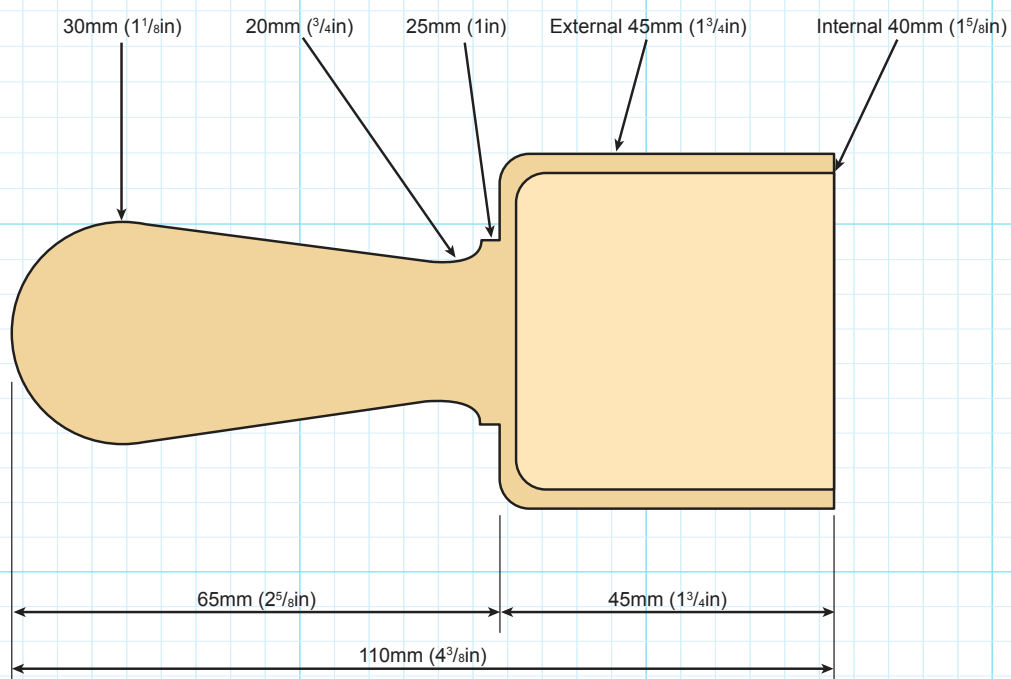
There are few issues to be especially aware of with this project and the depth-to-diameter ratio of the scoop is such that it can safely be abraded by hand with just a finger or two inside the bowl. However, if you choose to scale the project up to make a flour/sugar scoop, then hand sanding inside the bowl might well become an issue, in which case use a sanding pommel/stick. Also, bear in mind the information in step 12 about food-safe finishes.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal & respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Skew chisel
- Parting tool
- 12mm spindle gouge
- Hollowing tool and scraper
- Drive spur
- Revolving tailstock centre
- Chuck with 38mm jaws
- Jacobs chuck to fit tailstock
- 40mm Forstner bit (or smaller size)
- Fine-toothed saw
- Disc or belt sander

MATERIALS

- European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) 110 x 50 x 50mm
- Abrasives down to 320 grit
- Scrap timber for jam chuck
- Food-safe oil finish



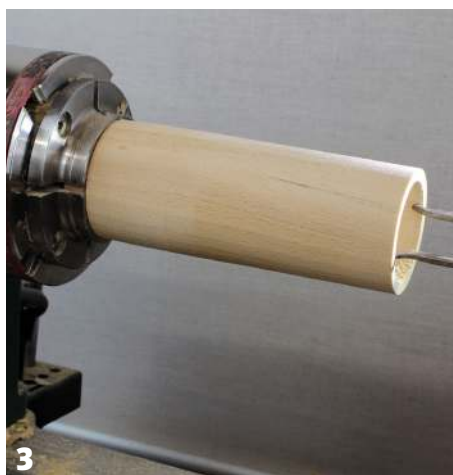
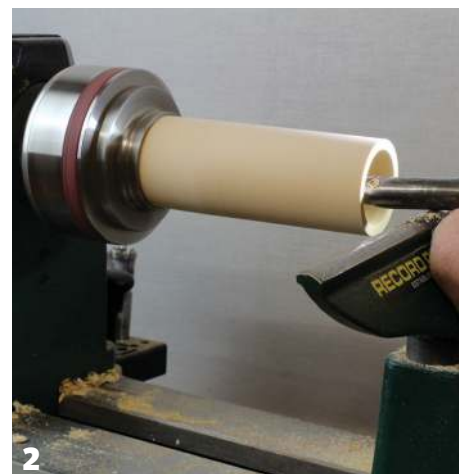
After turning the scoop to shape, profile the outer edge to a shape of your own taste. Both concave and convex shapes can look attractive.

1 Mark the centres on the end of your timber and mount it between centres. Using a spindle roughing gouge or a skew chisel, reduce it to a 48mm cylinder, then cut a chucking tenon on one end to suit your chuck. Once done, mount the workpiece into the chuck using the tailstock live centre to ensure true alignment before tightening the chuck. Then use a sharp skew chisel to commence cleaning the end off. You need only clean off the first few millimetres of the end, leaving the centre mark intact.

2 Using a 40mm Forstner bit in a tailstock drill chuck, and with the lathe speed reduced to about 300-400rpm, drill out the core of the scoop to a depth of about 40mm. Retract the drill occasionally to clear waste. Use your preferred hollowing tool to clean up the internal hole.

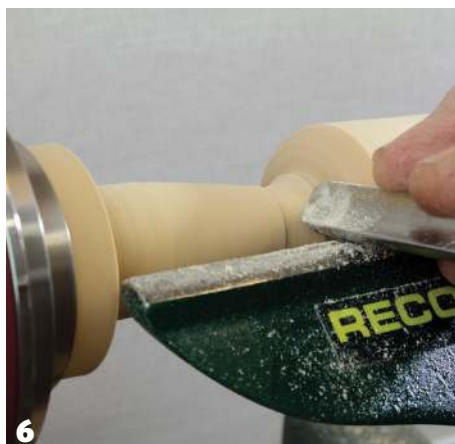
3 Now, clean up the bottom and sides of the hole with a scraper. Check the internal diameter of the hole very carefully to ensure that its sides are parallel, then abrade down to 400 grit. Use a skew or gouge to refine the outside of the scoop's bowl, reducing its wall thickness to about 3mm.

4 Mark three pencil lines around the workpiece. Line 1 indicates the internal depth of the scoop, so stop the lathe, measure the depth and then mark it on the workpiece. Line 2 indicates the thickness of the bottom of the scoop, so mark it 5mm to the left of line 1. Line 3 indicates the overall length of the scoop, which is 110mm.





5



6



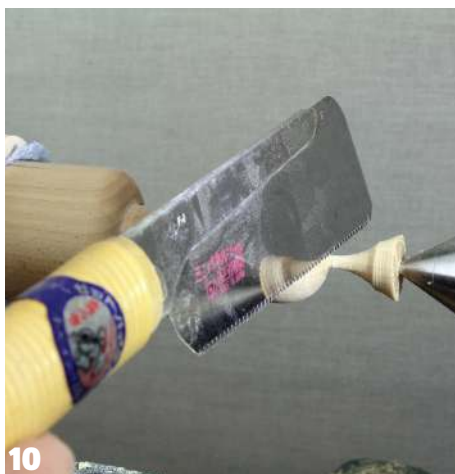
7



8



9



10



11



12

5 Use a parting tool to cut a groove to the left of line 2 to 25mm diameter, and another to the left of line 3 to 30mm diameter. These indicate the diameter of key elements of the handle.

6 Now remove the bulk of the waste from the handle area. Your spindle roughing gouge may well be too large to work in this small space, so you may find a 12mm spindle gouge an easier option. With the shape roughed out, refine it to the shape indicated in the main drawing.

7 Part off to the left of the handle, leaving a stem of about 12mm intact, then abrade through the grits to 400. At this stage, do not part-off completely.

8 Take a piece of scrap wood about 60 x 60 x 60mm, set it into a chuck and reduce it to a cylinder, then cut a recess in the end to make a jam chuck which is a close fit for the scoop when a piece of tissue paper is used to reduce abrasion marks.

9 Set the workpiece into the jam chuck, advance the tailstock and centre the workpiece firmly into place. Use sufficient pressure from the tailstock to hold the scoop securely, but not so much that you risk splitting the block of waste wood between the end of the handle and the live centre. Tear off any excess tissue paper to avoid having it flapping about when the lathe is running.

10 Using a spindle gouge, gently turn the waste wood away, leaving a waste cone which is about 6mm diameter at the handle end, but somewhat larger at the tailstock end. This will help to avoid splitting of the remaining cone. Abrade to 400 grit, as much of the end of the handle as you can, then cut the waste cone away, using a fine-toothed saw.

11 Now shape the open end of the bowl of the scoop. This is best done on a disc sander, but if you don't have one, it can always be done by hand – just avoid using excessive pressure or squeezing on the open end. Abrade the newly cut edge to soften all the sharp edges, down to 400 grit.

12 Finally, apply a couple of coats of a food-safe finish. A proprietary food safe finish is ideal, although oils such as boiled linseed, walnut oil etc. can be used. However, always check the product's H&S spec sheet to ensure that it is genuinely food safe (some brands of linseed oil are not) and bear in mind that the recipient of the scoop may have a nut allergy.

A COFFEE TAMPER

If you've made your scoop for dispensing ground coffee, why not make a matching coffee tamper to press the grinds into the filter pod of your coffee maker? ●

Community letters

Here are some readers letters the Editor has received

Surrey Association of Woodturners Open Day



Open Day club competition table

Dear Mark,

The Surrey Association of Woodturners (SAW) 25th Annual Open Day took place on 27 October. Principal demonstrator this year was regular *Woodturning* contributor Colwin Way, who delivered a series of excellent demonstrations to a consistently packed room and enthralled audience.

In the main hall, away from Colwin, further demonstrations were presented throughout the day by Simon Hope, Paul Howard and people from four visiting Clubs.

The centrepiece of the day's events, apart from Colwin, was the club's competition room, where the Inter-Club Table Top Competition was keenly contested by six clubs: SAW, Orchard Woodturners, Berkshire Woodturners, East Surrey Woodturners, Middlesex Woodturners and the Forest of Bere Woodturners, each of which supplied 10 pieces by 10 individual club turners

to compete for the coveted President's Gavel. Winners this year, for their first time, were Berkshire Woodturners.

The Open Day also sees SAW's main club competition, with prizes awarded in two categories, Spindle and Faceplate, over five levels, from the very experienced Premier Class to the club's newest members, those turning for less than two years, who competed for the Beginners' awards. In all close to 100 pieces were on display for this competition.

Colwin and Ed Oliver, of Olivers Woodturning, having agreed to act as unbiased judges, spent more than an hour reviewing, assessing and ranking the numerous entries, for which the club is extremely grateful.

Also present, and providing the tools, gadgets and consumables that all woodturners crave, were Axminster Tools, Hope Woodturning, Paul Howard,

Olivers Woodturning and Jo Sonja.

The club, in acknowledging that many of the visitors will have interest beyond just woodturning, was also pleased to have representatives from the Southern Fellowship of Woodworkers, the Guildford Model Engineering Society and representative from the AWGB, to talk with the visitors and answer their questions.

Throughout the day close to 400 people attended the event.

Preparations for next year's event are already well underway and SAW will be delighted to welcome back Les Thorne as the principal demonstrator.

If you came and enjoyed this year or if you would like to join us next, then put Sunday 25 October 2020 in your diary and we shall be very pleased to see you.

Mike Spaven, chairman,
Surrey Association of Woodturners

A constant source of inspiration

Dear Mark,
I recently had the pleasure of watching Colwin Way demonstrate at the Surrey Association of Woodturners Open Day and between his demos I stole a few moments of his time to discuss work he has inspired.

I should note that when I took up woodturning, in 2012, the best advice offered to me was to seek some professional tuition. Having looked at what was available I picked, entirely at random, a two-day course at the Axminster Skill Centre in Axminster. Not having turned anything since leaving school, some 42 years earlier, I was not entirely convinced that this was a hobby I was actually going to pursue. I was delighted to learn that I was not alone in that position, as many of the other course members recorded similar experiences.

Tutor for the course was Colwin Way. Well, 20 minutes in, I and most of my fellow students were totally hooked and I for one have never looked back.

As an avid reader of *Woodturning* I regularly look out for articles from Colwin and many of your other contributors who I have had the good fortune to meet, and by tackling these projects have endeavoured to improve my own performance.

One common feature in many of the complicated-looking pieces is just how easy they are once you break them down



Carousel

into their component parts, an observation repeatedly made by the demonstrators.

Two of Colwin's projects that have appeared in recent years have given me particular pleasure to attempt – the Christmas Carousel from issues 311 (Nov 2017) & 312 (Dec 2017) and the Mantle Clock from issue 320 (Jul 2018). My attempts at these were entered into my club's 2018 Open Day competition and, against some quality opposition, achieved a first place for the Carousel



Mantle Clock

and a Second for the Mantle Clock. So, the inspiration started by Colwin on a course in 2012 continues still and is aided by many of the other contributors to your excellent publication.

David Stratton
Surrey Association of Woodturners

From the forum

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

TOOTHPICK HOLDERS

<https://tinyurl.com/smgohvc>

CHJ posted: Following a request during the local village hall craft sales fundraising event for some additional items, I have managed to season some blanks and to get my act together. Hopefully that will be enough, there's not enough time for me to stage the turning to meet the dimension control this side of Christmas for any more. Oak and walnut, cellulose sanding sealer and three-mop buffed with carnauba wax.

Kiwi posted: Very nice work Chas. The oak ones look real good, these will make wonderful gifts indeed.



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Hedgehogs

Children love toy animals, and turning them is always an enjoyable challenge. The Editor wanted to make a one-piece project, and started looking at examples of toys that might not require joints. He discovered some wonderful little hedgehogs, turned by his friend Lesley Churton. With Lesley's blessing, and inspired by her animals, he created his own hedgehogs



I didn't know the exact process Lesley used until after making these hedgehogs and a few others. It is always nice to have a starting point and then experiment, ending up with different takes on a theme.

These hedgehogs are created from end-grain, or spindle-grain, oriented timber. They use simple offset techniques, also known as eccentric or multi-axis turning. Such turning is exciting, but having a non-centralised piece running on a lathe scares some people. With a few guidelines, there really is nothing to worry about.

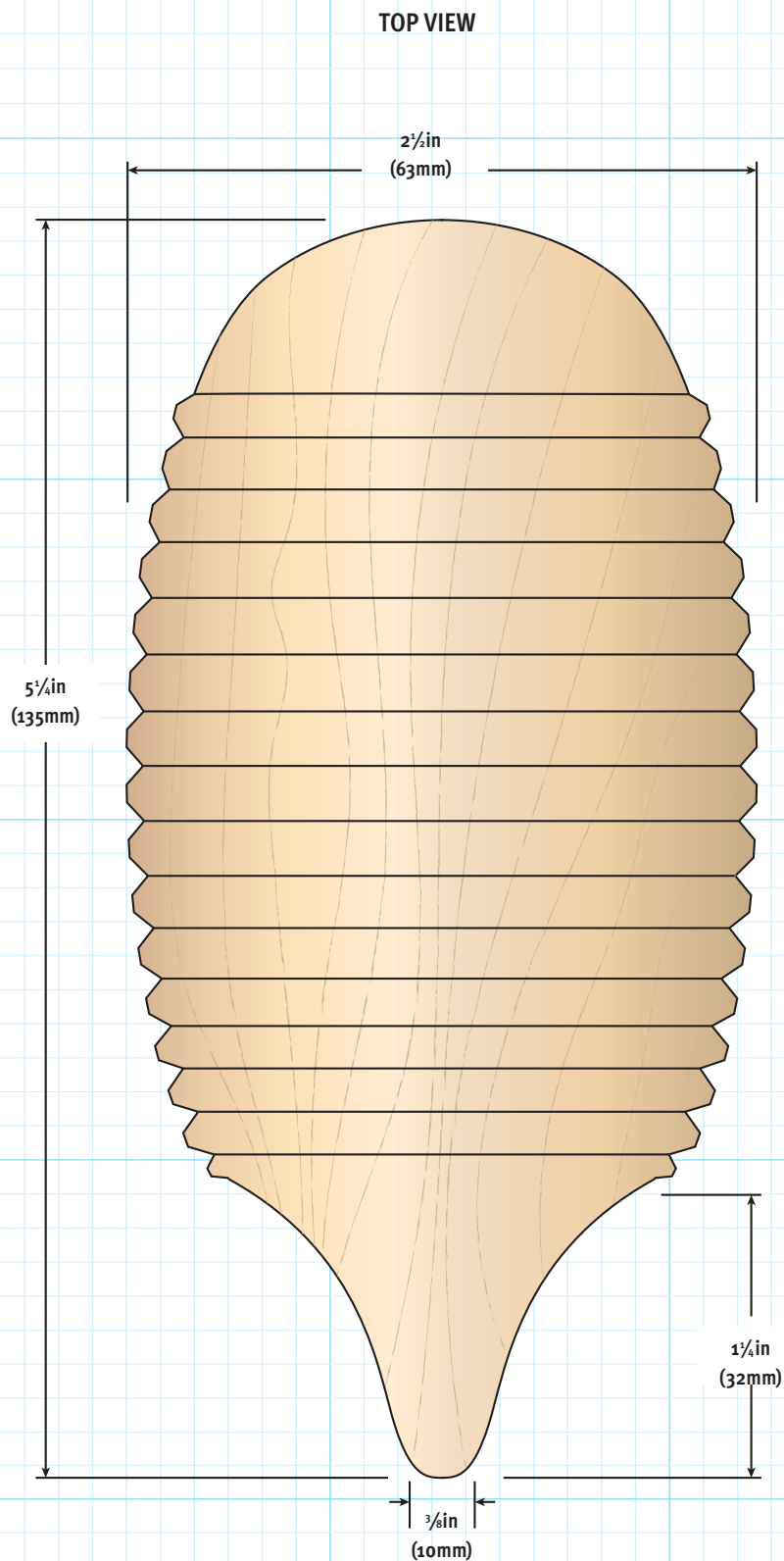
I decided to use two offset turning positions, as a gentle introduction to offset turning. You can use more off-centre positions and more radical offsets, and experimentation is the key to success. I used brown oak (*Quercus* sp.) for my hedgehogs, but ash (*Fraxinus* spp.), maple (*Acer* spp.), walnut (*Juglans* spp.) and fruitwood will all work beautifully, too.



Lesley's hedgehogs, the inspiration for this project

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal & respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- Drive spur and revolving tailstock centre
- Chuck
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Spindle gouge
- Skew chisel
- Thin parting tool
- Saw
- Abrasives, 120-400 grit
- Finishing oil
- Paints, toy-safe pens or pyrography machine



Note that metric conversions have been rounded up. Use either imperial or metric measurements, and do not mix the two.



1 For offset turning, you need to make sure that there is as good a hold on the wood as possible. I used a revolving ring centre and a toothed steb drive centre for this, as this combination works well on dry wood. However, a standard two- or four-prong drive and point revolving centre will work too.

2 Mark the central line on both ends of the timber (the horizontal line shown here), $1\frac{1}{4}$ in (45mm) in from one side. On what will be the head of the hedgehog (the tailstock end when mounted between centres), draw the lower line (A) so that it strikes across the central line 1in (25mm) up from the bottom edge. On both ends of the timber, draw the second line (B) $1\frac{1}{4}$ in (32mm) up from the bottom edge.

3 Now mount the wood between centres on the (B) positions.

4 Use a spindle roughing gouge to turn the wood so that you have three-quarters of the wood rounded, leaving a flat bottom.

5 With the spindle gouge, block in the shape. Create a sloping nose, and shape the body to suggest the form of a hedgehog.

6 Note the flat on the bottom. You can turn this piece straight between centres and sand off a flat bottom if you like, but the technique we are using is more fun. The back end of the hedgehog is partially shaped, but enough thickness is left to support the piece when off-aligned later. The tailstock end is still quite wide, so the centre will fit wholly at point A later on.

7 Once you have the overall form shaped, reposition your revolving centre on point A.

8 Working only on the head end, use a spindle gouge to create a tighter, flatter face. Blend it into the nose end, but be careful not to make the tip of the nose too narrow at this stage. Otherwise, you will be unable to reposition the revolving centre on point B. Once you have the shape you want, remount the revolving centre on point B.

9 Use the spindle gouge to remove more waste in the area of the hedgehog's bottom, leaving about $1\frac{1}{4}$ in (32mm) of thickness to make sure of stability. Clean up the rest of the waste to create a spigot to fit your chuck.





10 To represent the spines on the hedgehog, I cut grooves with the point of a skew chisel held in horizontal scraping mode. This technique minimises the risk of catches if you are unfamiliar with using a skew chisel. That said, the finish in the grooves is not quite as good as when you cut them conventionally using the slicing cut, working from either side to create the groove.



11 Once the grooves are cut, sand all the available areas to a fine finish. Don't round the grooves over too far, just soften the edges slightly so that there are no splinters.



12 You should now have a nicely shaped hedgehog.



13 With delicate cuts of the spindle gouge, refine the shape of the snout, but stop short of the revolving centre.



14 Sand the snout area.

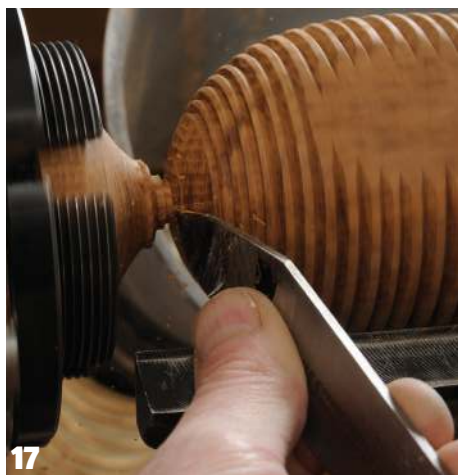
15 Remove the hedgehog from the lathe, and mount it in the chuck on the spigot that you formed in step 9.



16 When the piece is secure, and with the lathe switched off, saw off the end of the snout.



17 With a very low lathe speed, use a thin parting tool to cut part of the way through the waste at the headstock end, before stopping the lathe and sawing it off. Once off the lathe, sand this end round and smooth.



18 Use paints, toy-safe pens or a pyrography machine to add the eyes. I finished this hedgehog with finishing oil.



Top tip

You can make bigger and smaller hedgehogs, and vary their shapes, materials and the expressions on their faces. Experiment until you have created a whole family of these irresistible wooden creatures. ●

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A turning journey

Mike Macey talks to Mark Baker about his turning ventures



My place of work is now Grampy's Workshop and has been since I took early retirement five years ago. I'm 64, married and have two daughters and two wonderful grandchildren. I live in Bishop's Cleeve, Cheltenham, where in Grampy's Workshop I make things I want to make, but not necessarily to sell.

All my working life has been spent in engineering – 43 years with one company. Brief work history: craft apprenticeship, toolmaker, jig & tool designer both on the board and CAD, then finally production engineer. I have always liked wood but when at school I couldn't get on with woodwork and turned my attention to metalwork – it didn't break so easily.

BEGINNINGS IN TURNING

When I was still working five years ago I asked my daughter for a woodturning lesson as a Christmas present but then changed my mind, deciding it wasn't

such a good idea while I was still working. So instead she bought me a year's membership for Gloucestershire Association of Woodturners (GAW) and I have never looked back.

I have always liked wood, even as a small child. In fact, I still have small pieces of coloured wood (spalted) from that era. Living in Wiltshire at the time gave me access to trees, fields, and farmers' harvest times. A boy's true adventure.

Moving on, the opportunity arose to purchase an entire workshop, which I installed in my garage, the loft of which I insulated and doors of which I replaced with new, insulated ones. I was ready to turn with my new workshop. My daughters bought me a rustic wood sign saying Grampy's Workshop and every time my grandson, Samuel, comes to visit he has his toolbelt and toolbox with him ready to make a project of his liking. He has also made some shavings on the lathe.

The first piece I made was a pine bud vase for a novice challenge competition for GAW. I attended novice training sessions with GAW, using experienced turners as tutors and during this time I made a dibber and a small bowl. How pleased was I to take these items home and how surprised were the family to see what I had achieved in one day?

INFLUENCES AND DEVELOPMENT

I must admit I prefer the natural look of wood, to see its grain, colour, texture and features rather than it being coloured. I do admire Richard Kennedy's work and have tried making his tree bowls. Also my past history in engineering allows me to do more technical projects in wood.

Turning is a learning curve and my biggest mistake in the workshop is probably a 350mm platter that was virtually done apart from some final finishing and polishing. Cracks were

apparent and I started the lathe. There was little vibration so I thought I would just increase the speed through the vibration. Wrong – the platter shattered. Lesson learned.

In order to learn more I continue taking full advantage of the professional demonstrators we have at our GAW monthly meetings. There is always something new to take in and digest from them. As and when I do have a problem I usually seek out answers from the more experienced turners in the club. I also now feel competent enough to give others advice when asked.

My next step in my woodturning development is to become an approved AWGB tutor. I already do tutoring with GAW so it would be nice to have the seal of approval from AWGB.

Quick-fire questions

WHAT WAS YOUR ODDEST EXPERIENCE?

I had a tree root that looked very interesting and I thought I could turn it into something unusual. After machining 50% of it the trouble started. Everything I touched it with, was ruined/blunted – turning tools, bowsaw blade and bandsaw band. I think there must have been something very hard in the surrounding soil that impregnated the root wood. I won't be trying that again.

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR MOST SATISFYING PROJECTS TO DATE?

Successful completion of major projects such as the clock, closely followed by the cryptex, egg and, of course, the tree bowl. Each of these has given me great satisfaction.

WHAT'S THE BEST BIT OF TURNING ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?

I'm not sure I can name one – it's more of a case of learning properly, understanding what you are being told and ensuring you try to put it into practice.

HAVE YOU EVER GIVEN UP ON A PROJECT?

No I don't recall that I have, although I may have put the project to one side in order to think a problem over. I have a mechanical clock that I have planned to put into a new turned housing and this project has come unstuck and has been put to one side. I will get back to it in time.

Quite often before starting a project I give it a great deal of thought regarding the method of manufacture etc. That comes from my background and in some cases it causes additional work in order to make the project easier to create.



Bowl within a bowl

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE TYPE OF WOODTURNING ?

If anything I prefer bowl-style turning over spindle but both have their merits. I do enjoy technical pieces such as the egg, the cryptex etc. Planning is the key here, always thinking one step ahead, in particular to workholding.

My favourite wood is probably yew and basically any spalted wood. The surprise is uncovering the grain and its secrets.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCES IN TURNING/CARVING NOW TO WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED?

I've only been in the hobby for five years so not too much has changed on the lathe area from what I have seen. Probably the biggest change has been the advancement in the advertising of carbide tools. Although I have a couple of carbide tools my preference is for HSS.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT?

That's a difficult question as each piece of equipment has its own merits. I suppose it has to be my Axminster lathe with its swivel headstock and large capacity. As well as turning large items you can still turn pens and smaller items. This was an upgrade from a midi Axminster lathe, which I still use on training days at the club. It's closely followed by the micro milling machine and bandsaw.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE?

I would like to see more youngsters getting involved – at shows the interest shown by them is amazing.

WHAT ARE YOUR LIKES AND DISLIKES REGARDING THE WORLD OF TURNING?

My main dislike is the dust. It gets everywhere and, although I have a wall-mounted filtration system, it still covers the workshop. You only have to look at the front filter to see what is airborne.

I like most things regarding turning, particularly uncovering the grain and features in the various woods and then the finishing process which can turn your work into a finely tuned piece of 'art'.

WHAT HELPFUL ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHER TURNERS?

Join a club and learn to turn first hand with experienced turners rather than relying on social media. Your experience at the club will put you in a better position to understand the pros and cons of all turning equipment. The last thing you want to do is buy machines and tools, only to find they're unsuitable at a later date when you are more knowledgeable.

TOP TIP/HINT FOR FELLOW TURNERS ?

Join a club, if only for the demonstrations. You learn so much and it opens your eyes to what can be done.



Peter Rabbit's Easter egg



Little people in matching cups



Wooden mechanical clock made by hand



Cryptex made from boxwood

Decorative hand mirror

Chris West shows how to craft a mirror with an offset decorative pattern



Mirror inlay

There is a key difference between this project and that in the previous issue, the glass jar lid. While the method of holding the inlay may be the same as before – double-sided tape on a round scrap block – the positions of the inlays are such that the three overlap each other.

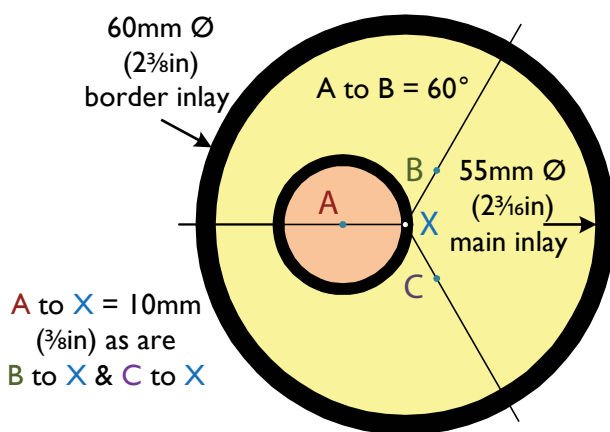
The mirror inlay consists of a 60mm Ø border inlay, within which the main inlay sits. Used here, the border is ebony and the main inlay is yellowheart (*Pau amarelo*).

Refer to the photograph above to see how the inner inlays will look.

Use either three different woods or burr inlays as shown in the project – it is your choice.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal & respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE)
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Spindle gouge
- Flat skew
- Miniature skew chisel
- Slim 2mm parting tool
- 3mm end scraper (homemade)
- 6mm end scraper (homemade)
- 1in masking tape
- Good quality 51mm (2in) double-sided tape



Before and after



Turning the three smaller internal inlays

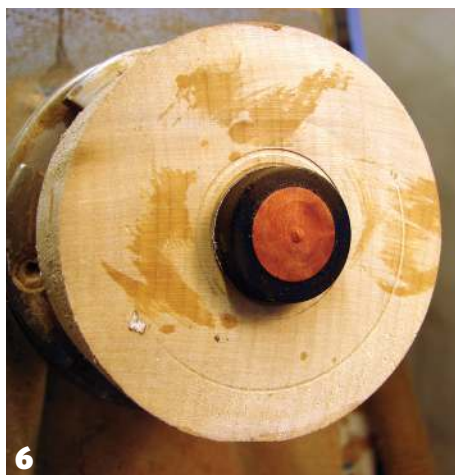
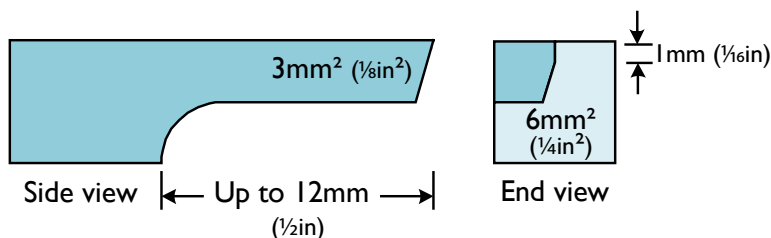
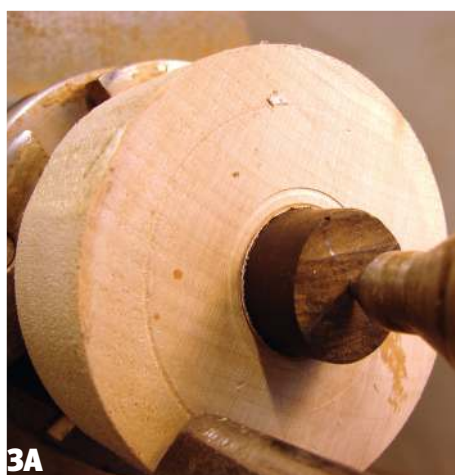
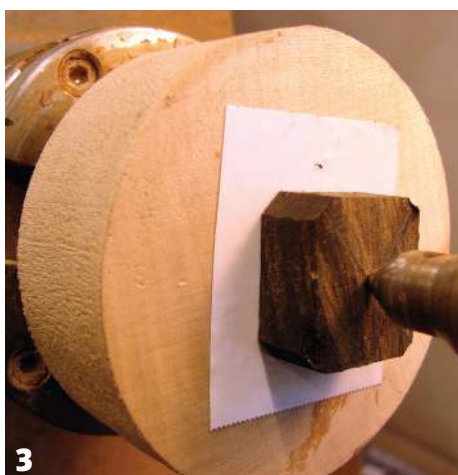
The first task is to turn the smallest inlays. These have been turned using different burr scraps I had laying around.

1 The burrs started out as 25mm x 25mm x 38mm long. A spigot is turned which is subsequently held in compression jaws. The lengths of the burrs allowed several inlays to be cut off. It is recommended that at least three are turned.

2 The diameter was turned down to 17mm. Actual diameters were between 16.90 and 17.10mm. This was repeated for the three different burrs. Each inlay was faced off. The length is 6mm. Repeat for all three different woods or burrs. As you remove each turned inlay from the lathe, lay them out in order of diameter size and the type of wood/burr.

3 The small 20mm Ø ebony border inlay is shown attached to the scrap block and double-sided tape. It is now ready to be turned to its maximum diameter at this time, over 20mm.

4 To hollow out to any circle less than 20mm Ø, which is necessary in the next step, I use a homemade 3mm end scraper made from 6mm square HSS steel. I would like to acknowledge Dick Sing for the shape of this and the ball bearing centre too, used later on, which work brilliantly. The 1mm relief on the side of the 3mm end scraper stops any wood removal by the side of the tool as it end scrapes.

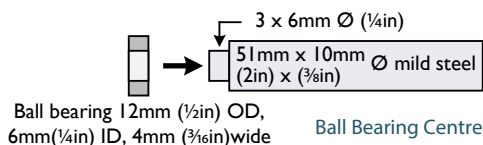


5 Choose the smallest diameter burr inlay. Hollowing out the border inlay begins at the centre. Turn to a depth of 4mm. The diameter is opened up to allow the chosen 17mm diameter inlay to be fitted. If you make the internal diameter too large you will see why you originally turned several of the 17mm burr inlays. Try the next size burr and get that to fit.

6 The burr inlay now fits. Remove the chuck from the lathe and glue the burr into the border inlay. Use medium CA on the base of the border inlay and, when pushed in a thin CA can be drizzled around the circumference of the inner inlay. When dry, return the chuck to the lathe.

7 The outside diameter of the ebony border is now turned down to 20mm. Shown is the inlay being supported by a ball bearing centre held in a Jacobs chuck. The purpose of this type of support is that no serious indentation will appear on the inner burr. In step 3 a live centre was used. The centre of the border inlay is removed so any indentation will be removed.

Ideally you know someone who uses a metal lathe. The centre is then turned from a solid piece of 10mm $\varnothing$ x 75mm rod. The one shown is made from a piece of 10mm tube and 6mm bar. A small piece of softwood placed between a live centre and the inlay is an alternative to the ball bearing centre.



7

8 Shown are the three different burr inlays ready to be inserted into the main inlay. Note the circular marks on them. This is the extent of the marks created by the ball bearing centre being held against them while the border is turned down to 20mm $\varnothing$. These will be easily removed when faced off as seen in step 5.

9 & 10 The main inlay with the first 20mm $\varnothing$ circle drawn with a compass and pencil. The masking tape over the inlay is my insurance in the event of the inlay trying to 'leave' the lathe. Right: the same view seen with the lathe running.

11 & 12 The second inlay ready to accept the next burr inlay and the second inlay glued in and ready to be faced off as with the first. Repeat steps 9-12 for the third inlay.

Turning the mirror

13 If your mirror is a different diameter then adjust the dimensions accordingly. The mirror blank is rough turned and a dovetail formed as shown in the diagram. Hold by the dovetail, face off and initially form a 58mm $\varnothing$ x 6mm hole in the blank. Drill a 10mm hole all the way through the blank.

Make sure the bottom of the recess is level. Keep opening the recess diameter until the inlay fits snugly. If it gets stuck, knock a dowel through the 10mm hole to remove the inlay.

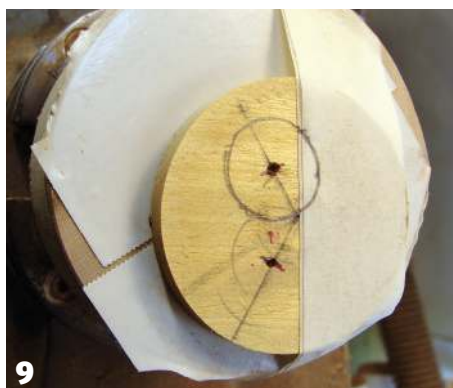
With the inlay removed, reverse hold the 60mm $\varnothing$ recess on a jam chuck for a depth of 6mm. The scrap block would be fine for this. When running true, mark 10mm from the top and face off, removing the dovetail in the process. This leaves 1mm for cleaning up and any errors that may occur. Shape the outside to a diameter of 72mm.

Form a 63mm $\varnothing$ x 3mm recess for the 2mm-thick mirror.

Keep opening the mirror recess until the mirror fits easily. If it gets stuck, gently knock a dowel through the 10mm hole to remove it. Glue the inlay in and when dry shape the outside further, leaving a slight oval shape. Sand, seal and add a hard-wearing and waterproof finish. Buff as required before gluing the mirror in using a silicone fixative. ●



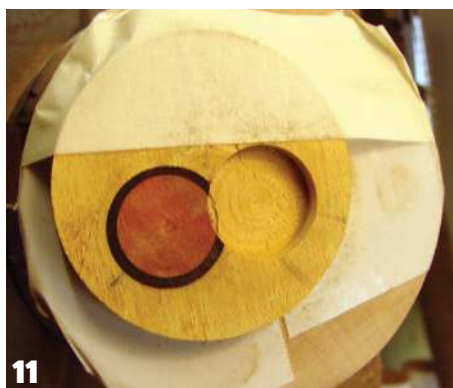
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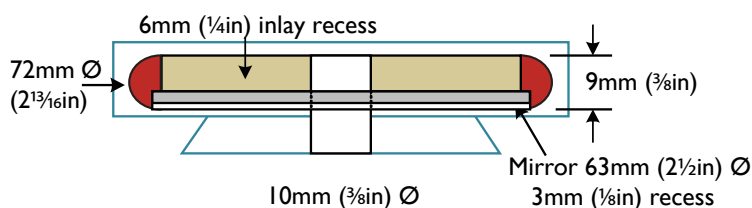
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Kit & Tools

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

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

Mark Baker tries out the new Crown Carbide Pro turning tools

ON TEST

While back I mentioned that Crown Hand Tools has introduced a new range of three carbide-tipped tools called Crown Carbide Pro and since then I have had the chance to try them out.

Each tool is handled with an overall length of 570mm and a blade length of 215mm. The tool shafts are 20mm wide x 13mm thick with radiused edges and are made from chrome-vanadium steel. The shaft is straight down the left-hand side of the blade but the left-hand side has a taper near the tip end to allow the carbide cutter to sit just over the edge of the left-hand side of the tool shaft.

There are three tip options for these tools. They are: a radiused 15mm square cutter for roughing work to shape, a 15mm round cutter for hollowing out and a diamond point for detailing. Crown Hand Tools comments: 'The tips are made from the finest nano-particle carbide that is hardened to 93HRC; this makes them ultra long-lasting.' Each tool comes with a hex key and spare machine screws.

In use

When I unpacked and picked up the tools, they felt nice and solid with a lot of mass, but not so heavy that they are cumbersome. The blacked tool shafts are certainly substantial and the handle fits nicely in the hand and complements the black blade shaft, which terminates with a nice, shiny cutter, which is affixed to the end of the shaft with a machine screw.

Laying the tool on the toolrest it felt right when I decided just to move it along the rest to get the feel of it. The radiused edges allow it to glide easily along the clean rest with no drag whatsoever.

I tried them on spindle-oriented timber and also faceplate-oriented grain and set about shaping a box or two of various



The Crown carbide tools



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK BAKER

shapes and also some bowls, as well as trying them on some acrylic and cast resin blanks.

Timber

The initial go-to tip used is the radius square. It is the primary shaping/profiling tool to get things to shape. The round cutter is used to refine curves and the point tool is used to cut V-grooves, beads and such like. The tools were

presented to work so the handle was slightly higher than the tip when shaping the outside and inside where possible, but when it came to cut the inside of the parallel-sided box, the tool was presented horizontally so the cutter cut dead on centre. At no stage did I encounter any problems with the tool. Inside the boxes I loved that you can run the cutter down the sidewall with no fouling. Granted, this cut occurs with the tool horizontal and



The Crown carbide tips

the cutter cutting just above centre, but the cut was clean and easy. The radiused edges of the tool shaft and slightly offset tip made this easy. The rounded edges on the tool shaft also allow you to tilt the blade and shear cut a surface. Of course, you have to select the right tip and presentation angle for the shape of work being tackled, but again, the tools performed without fault.

During tests and after considerable use,

the tip section used of the cutter loses its edge a little – nothing unusual here as that happens with all turning tools. So, you can turn the blade round to access a fresh cutting edge and, when all the edge is dull, replacement tips are available to buy separately.

That said, I found these cutters can be honed with CBN, diamond or ceramic hones, and the edge was close but never quite as good as the factory-sharp tips.

So do not discard without honing them.

When it came to using cast resin or acrylic blanks I encountered no problem. The cuts were clean and easy, resulted in ribbons of shavings coming off the blanks and I was able to shape the work easily.

Conclusion

At just under £100 each, these are not inexpensive, but they do the job intended of them incredibly well. As I have said in other tipped tool tests before, they do not have the versatility or permutations of approach to the work of conventional turning tools, but they certainly work well and allow people to shape work in an easy manner with the minimum of fuss.

These are very worthy additions to the tipped tool market and if you are looking at this type of tool they are very much worth trying for yourself.

Price from £95.95 each

For the UK contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery

Web: www.axminster.co.uk

PYROGRAPHY PEN SPLITTER



Craft Supplies has introduced a pyrography pen splitter to fit the Peter Child pyrography kit. The splitter unit plugs into the main Peter Child pyrography unit and means two pyrography pens can be used at the same time and users don't need to wait for tips to cool before changing nibs when they want to use a new shape or size of tip.

The splitter is available with or without a pyrography pen. A range of tips and a coil of SWG wire are available so users can make their own nibs.

Prices: pen splitter £32.99

Pen splitter and pen £55.99

Contact: Craft Supplies

Web: www.turners-retreat.co.uk

CARTER & SON DOUBLE-ENDED THREAD CHASER



For those interested in thread chasing, Carter & Son Toolworks has introduced a M42 high-speed steel double-ended thread chaser for the sharpest, strongest edge and features a comfortable spherical handle. Carter & Son comments that it has created a unique negative rake angle above the teeth for the sharpest cutting edge, introduced a 'whale tail' design which provides added clearance and has included a comfortable aluminium handle that doesn't get in the way of your threading, but allows for control and manoeuvrability.

Available only in 16TPI, the blade measures 225mm long and a patent is pending.

Price: \$94.99

Contact: Carter & Son Toolworks

For stockists visit: www.carterandsontoolworks.com

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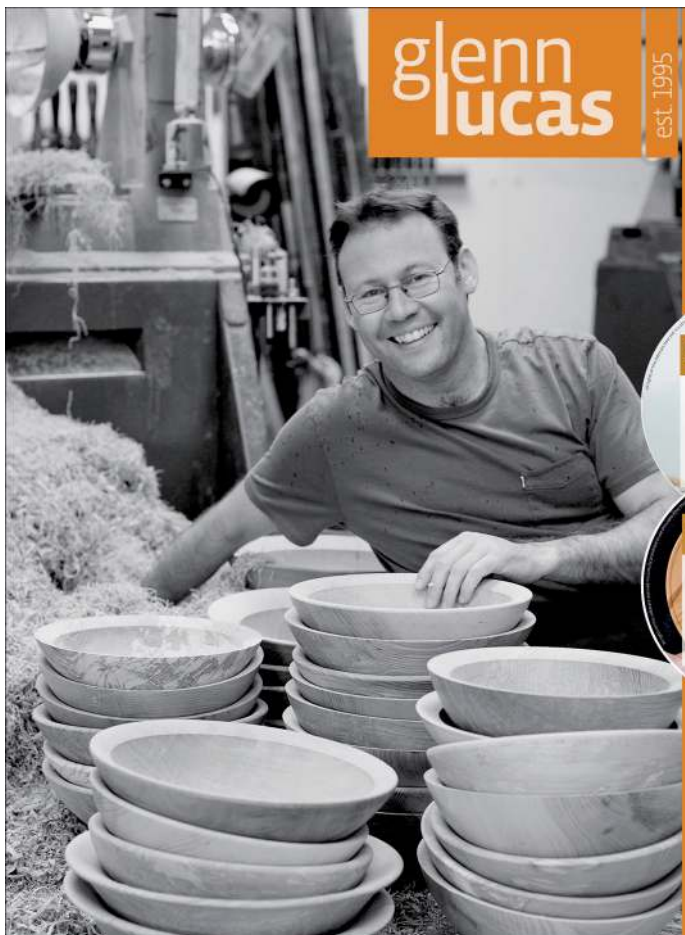


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Is it wood?

Pete Moncrieff-Jury analyses some of the comments from the public about turned work at shows and events

At a show recently a woman pointed to a decorated vase and asked if she could pick it up. We encourage this so I told her to go ahead. She lifted it off the shelf and exclaimed in surprise: 'It's wood.' I politely pointed up to the 5ft banner behind us proclaiming 'Practical and artistic woodturning' and said that everything we made was in wood. 'Oh, I thought it was porcelain,' she replied. We have come across this sort of thing before, where people seem to think that anything made in wood is inferior to any other medium. Fortunately, not everyone thinks that way or we would have trouble putting food on the table. It did, however, make me think back to some comments that I have heard over the years from other turners and woodworkers. Should wood always be left 'au naturelle'? Is it wrong to use it as a vehicle for other artistic works?

The piece shown here is a classic example of this. By well-known turner Mark Sanger, who specialises in this sort of work, it would be easy to assume that it is, in fact, in some material other than wood. The other piece shown is the one the woman thought was porcelain. Made from sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), it has little visible grain so her mistake is understandable. The question remains though: is it acceptable to completely hide the wood either by colouring or texturing, or both?

Some say that it is not the traditional way and yet, historically, wood has always been subject to colouring or texturing, often to the point where it is totally disguised. As in most forms of artistic or crafting fields there is an element of snobbery on both sides and we who are woodturners perhaps forget that the artistic side of our art/craft is very young.

Until perhaps the mid-20th century the idea of it being purely artistic was rarely considered and woodturning was a method of making treen or parts for furniture. I have long been an advocate for incorporating wood into other fields of artistic expression and, as such, have no problem with colouring and texturing a piece to the extent that the wood is itself not seen. If you have an amazing piece with beautiful figuring or graining then perhaps it is best left to Mother Nature to provide the decoration, but to use

wood as a means to an end for a decorative piece seems eminently sensible. Like so many things it all comes down to personal choice.

Whether you are decorating a bowl, an oriental-style piece or simply making a dibber, whether you decorate it, hide all the visible wood, or leave it natural is purely up to you. As I have said before, the only hard and fast rule in woodturning is: 'Is it safe?' If the answer is yes then anything goes.

It has been a long time coming, but slowly wood is being seen as an acceptable medium for artistic works and whether or not it looks like wood is irrelevant. Pottery often looks like bronze or, ironically enough, wood. Metals are used to emulate other materials. It isn't always to my personal taste but then nor are some of the things I see where the wood is totally visible. Whatever your preference, do it well and enjoy. And keep safe.



Hollow form with pyrography and painted detail



Hollow form by Mark Sanger

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETE MONCRIEFF-JURY



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