Woodturning

THE WO[illegible]G MAGAZINE FOR WOODTURNERS

COLWIN WAY GUEST EDITOR

Introduces the issue

Reveals the secret of his success

Profiles turner Helen Bailey

PROJECTS Wedding goblet • Bronze-effect bowl • Laminated pendant • Burl wall plaque • Candlestick

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Guest editor's letter – Colwin Way

When I was asked if I would consider taking on the role of guest editor for an edition of *Woodturning* magazine, I was a little unsure if it was something I could consider. This was way out of my comfort zone!

PHOTOGRAPH BY COLWIN WAY

However, I'm always saying to my sons 'never say no, just give it a go', so I did. This feeling of what if it's not good enough is common, especially within craft-art-professions. I guess it's a feeling of exposure and 'what if I make a fool of myself?'. I can only speak from my own experience that if you just say yes, most of the time the experience is positive and can be very enjoyable as well.

I want you to think about this the next time your woodturning club holds a competition. If you've never entered a competition, you may get this same feeling, but I promise you that when you've entered once, there will be no stopping you. Back yourself and give it a go, you never know what may happen. When I get nervous, generally just before I go on to give a talk or demonstration, I slow down and count my footsteps and breathing. I gave this advice to someone the other day and they told me it was a mindful exercise like meditation. Well, I had no idea I was meditating at all, it is just my way of calming down.

Mindfulness is a word passed around a lot and, especially over the past few months, I think we've all needed to practise being mindful. In a way, woodturning helps with this mental exercise, which I feel is a type of mind yoga. In a conversation with my brother-in-law, who's an ex firefighter, we were talking about this very subject and how he uses early morning walks along the coast and listening to the sea to practise mindfulness and how it has helped massively with his PTSD. He also took up woodturning a few years ago and was saying how much it relaxed him, almost getting lost in a project and losing track of time. I know many of you have felt this from time to time, but I bet you never thought you were meditating or doing mind yoga.

Happy & mindful turning! *Colwin Way*

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HEALTH & 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).

Keep it in the family

ALL IMAGES BY HELEN BAILEY

Colwin Way reveals the secret of his success – his family

When I first started thinking about writing this article, I thought maybe it would be too personal and almost like having to sit through someone else's holiday snaps.

I hope it doesn't come across this way and in fact may help anyone out there thinking of embarking on any of the ventures I'm about to talk about or who has been through similar scenarios and experiences.

There's a saying that behind every great man there's a greater woman. Let's get one thing straight immediately – I'm not suggesting any greatness at all. However, for any success or recognition I've had in the turning world there's not only a great woman but an amazing and supportive family. I'm sure many of you will be nodding your heads thinking about your partners and families. It may be just a comforting 'well done' or the harshest of critiques, but what you get from family is sure to be honest and very grounding. Most of what I'm talking about in this article is centred around what's been happening to us and the rest of the world in the past couple of years, but this story wouldn't be complete unless I start it just a few years prior to 2015 when my wife had been diagnosed with breast cancer. This I know has affected a lot of people, however this was the second time she had had a form of cancer and meant, at least for the short term, that she had to stop work to go through the treatment. I made the decision to push my turning further in an effort to support us both during this time. This led me to take up Mark Baker's kind offer to start contributing articles to *Woodturning* magazine. This was the start I needed and, with Mark's help, was able to develop my writing and storytelling skills much further. After months of treatment my wife has made a full recovery and has become even stronger and is a driving force in OUR turning business.

Travels

We often travel together when I'm invited to demonstrate, which in the past has meant all the family has had a chance to see some amazing places, from the stunning Norwegian fjords on the well-known woodturning cruises to the sunshine of Spain and expanse of the US. All have their tales to tell, but the most recent was Valencia.

Valencia

Jumping Ahead to February 2020, Vicki and I are attending a woodturning show in Valencia, which, like many shows, followed a similar format – two demonstrators working to a schedule for the public and a selection of invited woodturning clubs from the region. The big difference with this one, though, was the setting – it was in a school sports hall. However, this sports hall was in one of the most picturesque parts of Spain I had ever been to, a village called Vilafamés. This time, having Vicki there to support was made even more special because of the people and the fantastic scenery and a memory that we both will have. The Spanish love family and I'm lucky to have had the opportunity to take my family to many places. They have all made friends with the people we met, including in this case the lovely Joss Naigeon, who was the other turner for the event – she and Vicki hit it off immediately. This trip was once again a spur and, at the time unknown to us, the last event either of us would attend for the next two years.

Covid-19

Shortly after this we started hearing rumours and news reports of this so-called Covid-19 and countries going into lockdown. At the time Finley was at university and called us to ask if we could come and get him before things got really bad, which we did just before the UK went into lockdown in the March of 2020.

Plan

I went to work with a colleague and close friend to see if we could continue to live stream regular demonstrations to the Axminster Tools customers, but not having any tech apart from a smart phone and dodgy WiFi made this a challenge. What choice do we have, was the conversation, so there it started, step up family again.

Monday to Friday at 4pm UK time we were streaming to a new audience on behalf of Axminster Tools under the heading Bring My Workshop to Your Home. Finley and Charlie, my two sons, were camera operators, question askers, boom operators and zoom controllers, and for the first few months they even enjoyed it.

Website

Fin had just finished university and as I said had made a dash home after handing in his final piece. His skillset was all things graphic design and he had taken an interest in coding, so what more perfect scenario for practising than the prospect of a few months stuck at home, us talking about creating a website and he needing to practise on a friendly first customer, me.

After several lengthy meetings, Fin set to work bashing computer buttons and creating a website. We first discussed content – what did we want the website to do? Would it be just for promoting or did we want to be able to sell from it? Then did we want a blog and regular updates, a diary, gallery, meet the maker and so on? Fin put hours into the creation and even after we thought it was finished it kept, and still keeps, evolving to what it is today. I'm really pleased with the outcome and the fact that Fin is creating with young, fresh eyes is really appealing to me. Other things he's constantly looking at are the internet search optimisation, or ISO, which helps to rank the website high on key word searching and means that it can usually be the first result in any search with my name in it. It's this work that's seldom seen but makes such a dramatic difference.

YouTube

YouTube was the next step and Fin set to work on creating banners and logos for our new enterprise. Not to be outdone, Charlie, who is following in his brother's creative design footsteps, asked if he could look at merchandising and create some logos for stickers, YouTube and business cards. 'Absolutely Charlie' was the obvious response, with great ideas coming from them both. I'm very keen to act on their work to show them I'm taking their ideas seriously but also just because I love the youthful looking feel they give. We ordered stickers, T-shirts, and coffee mugs straight away and made sure there was a sticker in every video and photo we've made since.

IRDs

Over this time, of course, the world was plunged into lockdown and slowly a lot of the woodturning clubs out there which hadn't already adopted remote demonstrations started too. For the UK this was something very new, but for the US this was common due to the pure scale of the land mass. I started getting requests from clubs and home and overseas to give interactive remote demonstrations IRDs) and so started the next stage in the family's learning curve. We ditched WiFi in favour of stable wired connections, installed fibre broadband and invested in the technology to be able to switch through multiple cameras and show graphics and pictures while demonstrating to clubs all over the world. Once again this was a new thing which took a lot of getting used to. However, the family rallied around and took it in turns learning about and operating these news bits of tech and software.

Plans/books

One of the major successes of the family working together has been the creation of our digital workshop plans and hard copy books. These came from my obsession with everything Christmas, which Charlie is mainly responsible for. This obsession was firmly cemented after numerous visits to Germany and the Erzgebirge region, famed for its craftsmen and women who create wonderful Christmas nutcrackers, smokers, carousels and everything seasonally oriented. These plans were truly a family project, with Charlie designing the front covers, Vicki taking the workshop photos and Finley putting it all together to create our hard copy plans. I felt these were so good that we decided to do another that wasn't based around Christmas to keep sales going outside of the festive period. We opted for one of my most popular demonstrations – wooden fruit making. Once again, Fin took charge and approached the project knowing that these were going to be more book-like than plan-like. Thinking of overlaying text on faded pictures, front and back cover designs, line drawings and layout all had to be considered. Once finished, where would we get them printed, what would the printing costs be and how would they impact on the quantities we order for the first batch?

However, once we decided and double and triple checked, we pressed the button and ordered a sample batch of 50, which were everything we had hoped for. All of this was fantastic. However, I remembered a conversation I was having with a couple of close friends about demonstrating and travelling when one of them looked up and mentioned working smarter not harder and had I thought of turning my plans and books into digital downloadable copies? I suggested this to Finley, who was keen to update the website to add a download page as well as adding it to our newly created Etsy page. I have to say that this was one of the best decisions we had made as the downloads seem to hit a note with many people and complemented the new way of doing things online, as with the remote demonstrations and YouTube streaming demos.

Family day out

Probably not the day out the family had in mind – Vicki was well up for it as it was a chance for us all to get out in the countryside as a family, do something physical and have a picnic.

Charlie was persuaded with the prospect of a bonfire and the fact that he may get a chaperoned try on the chainsaw, while Fin wanted to get some more photos and video footage for YouTube.

The location was only a mile from our house at my local trout fishery and somewhere I spend many of my days off. The ash tree was a large, forked tree that had split through the fork. One half was left standing, the problem half was lying across a stock fence and needed to be moved before cattle were let back in.

The landowner lent us his Land Rover so we could move stuff around, and after Fin set up the cameras, we were ready to start dismantling. First things to go when tackling a tree like this is to remove all the small branches and obstacles, which I started by going up each limb while the boys cleared to the bonfire. Then we removed the small log-sized






limbs, cutting them into fire-sized pieces and stacking them ready for collection. Then came the gold! As we started getting toward the big stuff the ripples started to appear, I remember Charlie looking up and saying: 'Dad, why are you getting so excited by wood?' But I'm sure you all understand what I was feeling.

We spent a couple of days on this project and, despite the weather being very cold, it was very wood profitable. We also had fun! A lovely picnic and a lot of memories.

Rough turning

We started off by cutting the trunk into lengths that equalled the diameter, then started slabbing into manageable thicknesses which could be taken home and disced on the bandsaw easily. You need to think about the size of bowls that will sell when doing this wherever you sell them. I find I can sell the odd 18-24in but most will be 12-14in bowls. But don't forget to cut a few pieces to rip down for other projects.

Once all the timber is slabbed, start marking out and cutting up on the bandsaw. I would make sure you do this when you have plenty of spare time as even a small tree will yield a lot of blanks and, unfortunately, once cut to slabs the timer starts ticking. You have to get your bowls turned soon before things start to move and split, so my advice would be to cut into slabs, get them home and turn immediately – if you can't, cover or seal them, which may buy you a week at the most.

I also recommend protecting the rest of the workshop with tarpaulins to stop the wet shavings hitting anything and creating rust issues.

Finished

After rough turning your bowls to 1¼-1½, seal with PVA and set them aside to dry, if stacking inside each other keep them separate with a couple of short lengths of stick to stop them binding.

These can now be stored in a dry, draught-free area of the workshop, preferable an area that doesn't see a big change in temperature through the day and out of any direct sunlight if possible. The drying time will depend on the timber but for my ash bowls I should be turning them to a finish in about eight to 12 months.

Similarities to German families

I hope I've given you some sort of understanding and insight into the past couple of years and what a joy it's been working with my wonderful family. I can't help drawing some similarities with that part of the world that inspires me so much and the towns of the Ore mountains in Eastern Germany, where the whole family would be involved in making their Christmas creations. In many cases the father would be responsible for the woodwork and turning, while the mother, sons and daughters would all take part in the decorating and assembly of their creations. So, I hope you enjoyed a look into my family album and that it may have given you a few ideas of you own. There are so many other things I could share but these are just a few of the highlights. I'm looking forward, however, to more working with my family. ●

Wedding goblet with trapped ball

Cedric Boyns joins together a marriage symbol and an added decorative sphere

The idea of wedding or marriage cups and goblets follows traditions stretching back centuries to medieval times. They were often turned or carved out of one piece of wood. The two captive rings on the turned version were to signify the love of the married couple, and while the rings remained unbroken, so would their love.

The making of the goblet itself is quite a standard bit of woodturning, and most turners I am sure will be familiar with it. Of course it is also possible to experiment with altering the size of the cup region relative to the other parts, as well as the diameter and thickness of the captive rings (as long as they stay in place on the piece!).

However, I wanted to add to the basic design of the goblet and make it a bit more interesting by carving a ball in situ within a swollen base to the goblet stem.

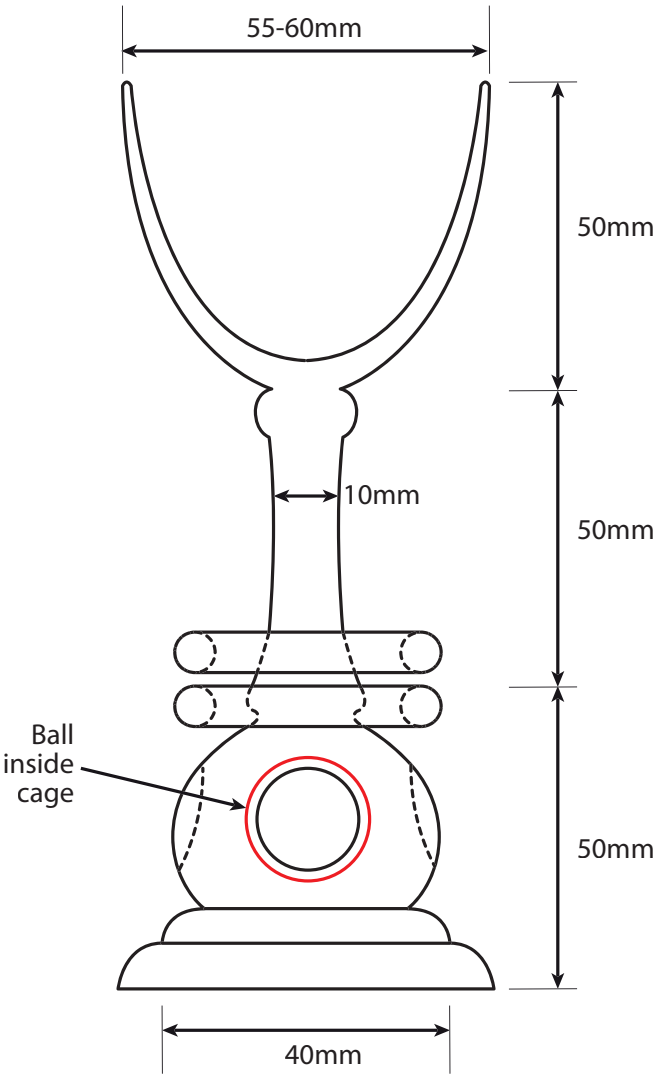
Plans & equipment

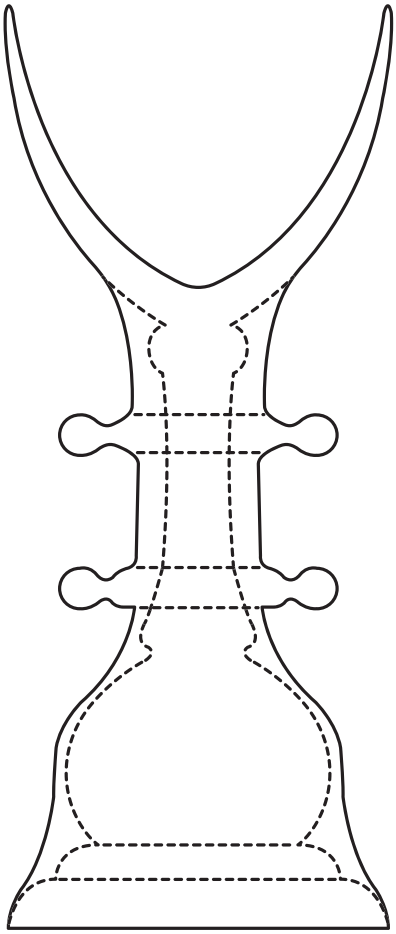
Materials

- Straight, dry, ash log, 210mm long and wide enough to round down to 60mm (or use a spindle blank of appropriate size)

Tools & equipment

- Suitable PPE and dust extraction
- Spindle roughing gouge, 25mm
- Bowl gouges, 9mm and 12mm
- Spindle gouge, 9mm
- Parting tools, 12mm, 5mm and 3mm
- Side scraper, 12mm
- Riffler 'knife and spoon' (or similar small file)
- Pillar drill or hand drill
- Twist drill, 8mm
- Forstner bit, 16mm
- Steel rule and pencil
- Depth gauge
- Carving gouges – selection of small shallow gouges: No.2 (Pfeil), 3mm and 2mm; No.3, 3mm and 6mm; No.5, 3mm
- Abrasives, 120 down to 400 grit
- Small sanding sticks (some homemade)
- Masking tape and double-sided tape
- Sanding sealer
- Suitable final finish (e.g. food-safe oil or wax polish)
- Drawings to outline the process
- Bandsaw





PHOTOGRAPHS BY CEDRIC BOYNS

Making the basic goblet

1 Square the ends of the log and cut to size on the bandsaw. I used a homemade jig to stop it from rotating on the saw table. Alternatively use a hand saw. Find the rough centre point of each end and mount the log on the lathe between centres.

2 Round the log to a cylinder using a spindle roughing gouge. I planned a fairly small goblet so rounded my log to 60mm diameter.

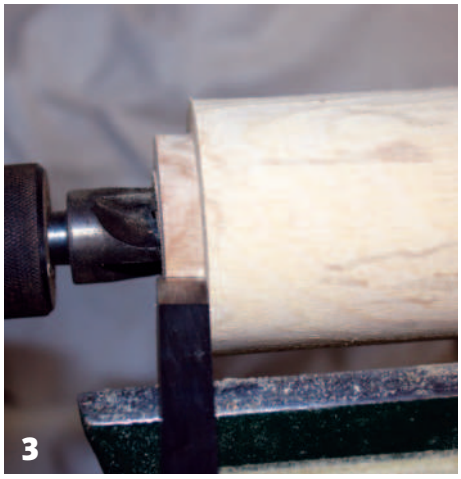
3 Create a spigot on one end using a suitable parting tool (5mm or12mm), and then transfer and secure the blank cylinder securely in the chuck. Replace the tailstock temporarily.

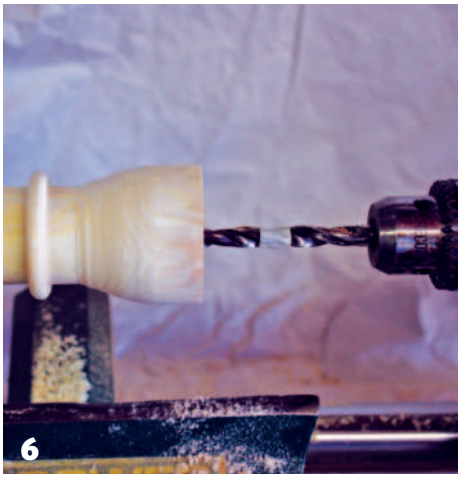
4 Mark out the basic layout of the goblet, first with a pencil, and then with a 3mm parting tool. I divided it into thirds – 50mm for the cup and 50mm for the base and the bulb in which the ball will be trapped. The two captive rings will be fashioned from the 50mm region in the middle, which will become the stem. The cylinder was a little too long so there was a short length to be removed from the cup end before hollowing could start.

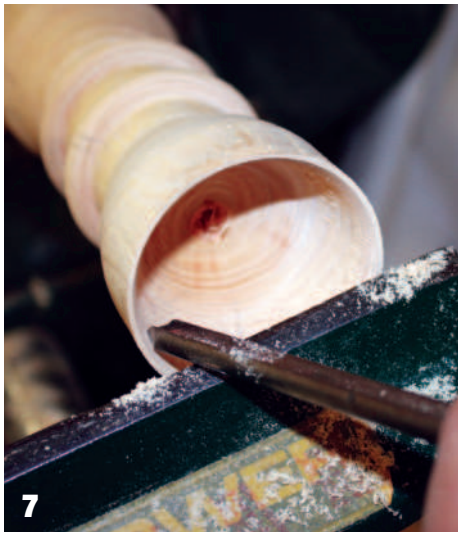
5 Start to form the outside of the cup but don't take too much wood away at this stage. Mark the position of the captive rings as shown. Begin to form the captive rings, but do not complete them and leave enough material remaining for support.

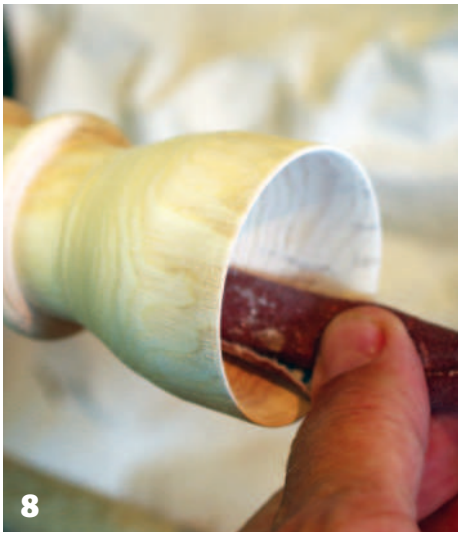
6 & 7 Hollow the cup. This can be done with a small spindle gouge, small bowl gouge or hollowing tool, whichever you prefer. I chose to drill a starter hole and marked the depth required on the drill bit with masking tape. I then hollowed with a 9mm bowl gouge and a 9mm spindle gouge before tidying up the inside with a 12mm side scraper.

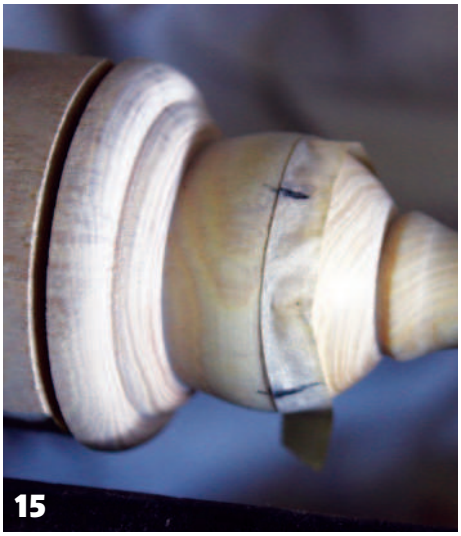
8 Once you are happy with the shape of the inside of the cup it can be sanded through the grits to 400. Abrasive attached to a dowel covered in hook and loop material is a safe option for sanding the interior of hollows.











9 The outside of the cup can now be refined to follow the contours of the inside, and the captive rings created. The size of the rings is personal choice. I decided that 6mm-wide rings, 40mm in diameter, would be a suitable size for this goblet, and would sit neatly on top of the bulb. I formed them a reasonable distance apart to ease their release from the stem (see below).

10 The rings were shaped with a spindle gouge as far round the back as possible, and as I don't have a captive ring tool, I released them using a 3mm parting tool as shown.

11 The outside of the rings should be sanded before release, but the thin flange of wood that is left on the inner surface, when released by this method, can be sanded away in the manner shown. The abrasive is cut to size and stuck to the stem with double-sided tape and the ring sanded against it as the lathe is rotated reasonably slowly.

Top tip

The photo in Step 11 is simply to illustrate the basic process involved in achieving the effective sanding of the rings, and was taken with the lathe stopped. It is wise to keep the toolrest well clear of the work when sanding with the lathe running so that fingers do not become trapped between the rest and the work.

12 & 13 The final shaping of the outside of the cup, stem and base can now be completed. It will be necessary to hold the captive rings out of the way while this is done, using masking tape as shown.

14 A final sanding through the grits should now be carried out. I did not part the goblet off at this stage, instead leaving a portion which was squared off later to enable it to be held in the carver's chops for the ball carving. See step 18.

Carving the captive ball

15 Four holes will need to be drilled in the bulb. A pencil line was first marked roughly around the centre, then a strip of masking tape was used to make sure they were evenly spaced around the bulb.

16 A 16mm, flat-bottomed hole was drilled with a Forstner bit at each of the four marked points, to a depth of about 5mm at the top part of the bulb. It is important not to drill too deep at this stage, or the ball produced could be too small to stay inside the holes when it is complete. I drilled the holes with a pillar drill with the goblet supported in a homemade jig to keep it steady and stop it rotating.

17 Many 3mm holes were then drilled around the inside perimeter of each hole with a hand drill. I did not drill too deep to start with, and also angled the drill so that it was not drilling into the central wood. This process starts to isolate this central portion of wood which will become the ball. (I put it back in the chuck for this drilling process.)

18 I then used a selection of small gouges to gradually cut between the drill holes and clear away from around the central portion of wood, so as to isolate it from the inner surface of the bulb. This process will gradually result in the rounding of this inner portion to start to form the ball.

19 Continue to clear away the wood by working through the holes, rounding over the upper part of the ball. This must be done carefully to avoid levering the gouges on the sides of the holes, which would obviously cause damage. I also tried to remove the small holes that were left on the surface of the ball by the drilling process. Free the upper surface of the ball first. Note: the ball being formed is still attached at the bottom.

20 Before releasing the ball by carving around the lower surface, it is wise to sand the sides and top surface. (Trying to sand the whole ball after it is released would be very tricky!). Sanding can be done with strips of abrasive through the holes. To stop the abrasive strips from rolling up and perhaps damaging the hole walls, I put a layer of masking tape on the back as shown. Continue to carve around under the ball, eventually freeing it. If possible, try to ensure it is as round as possible before it is actually released. More sanding of most of the lower surface should be possible before release.

21, 22 & 23 This part of the ball will need some finishing, which can prove quite tricky as it is loose and will turn around easily. I used a dowel to push the ball against the hole on the opposite side and the surface can then be cleaned up with a gouge and/or sanding stick as shown.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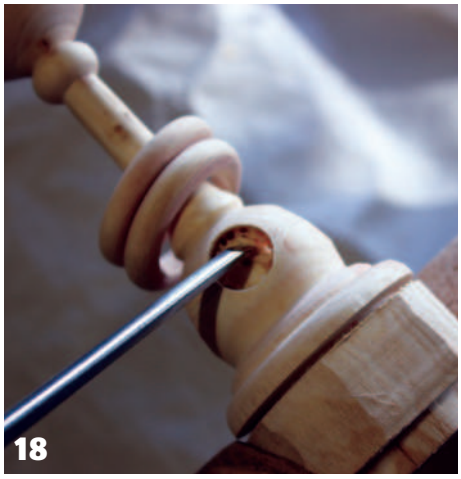
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24 I found that cleaning up the inside of the bulb/cage is best done with a spoon riffler, along with small, homemade sanding sticks – a small bit of abrasive stuck to a thin, narrow, curved stick with double-sided tape. This needs a bit of patience.

25 The goblet was then remounted on the lathe and given a final sanding down to 400 grit. (I previously marked the position of the spigot in the chuck to aid this return to the lathe.)

26 & 27 It is now ready for parting off and applying a suitable finish, first sanding the base through the grits as before.

28 I gave it two coats of wax polish, accessing the inside of the carved out 'cage' with a small paint brush. The finished wedding cup should look something like this.

Admission: My ash log was a little too green and the finished goblet has since acquired a slight lean, so chose your wood carefully! ●

A passion for turning

Colwin Way introduces award-winning turner Helen Bailey

I thought long and hard about who I wanted to introduce to the readers of *Woodturning* and my primary desire was to showcase a turner who is relatively new but has a real passion for the profession. I first met Helen at the North of England Woodworking Show around seven years ago – I happened to be demonstrating when she came to the stand and watched intently before unleashing a barrage of questions. She was obviously hooked by the woodturning bug and since then this hasn't changed. I'm proud to say that I now work beside Helen and have seen her work improve to such a standard that one of her pieces recently won the prestigious Bert Marsh award at the Wizardry in Wood event in central London. I wanted to find out a bit more about Helen and her inspirations and aspirations in woodturning.

ALL IMAGES BY HELEN BAILEY


THOMPSON
THOMPSON
THOMPSON
THOMPSON

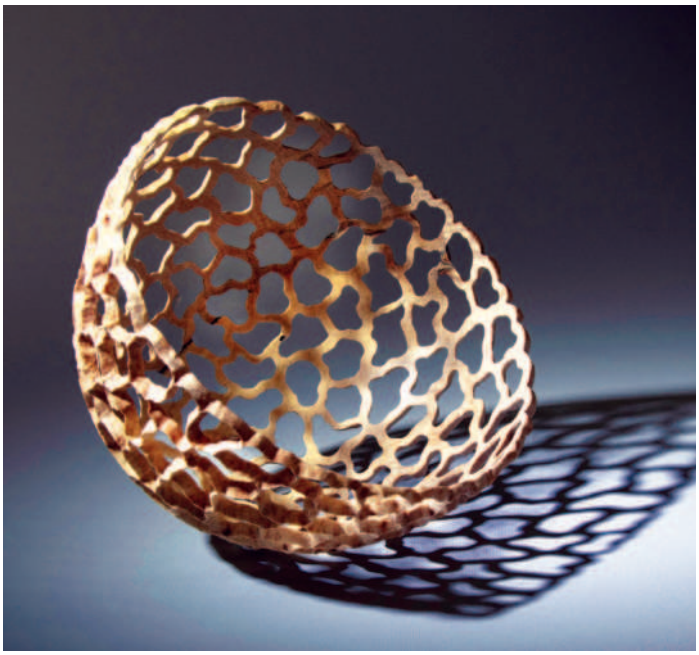
Tell us about your background and training.
I have always like to work with my hands. As a child, I loved nothing more than being in the garage with my dad, building things, fixing things or just watching and learning. I was always encouraged to have a go and try things for myself. I love the satisfaction of completing a task and knowing that I did it myself. I have had many hobbies, such as jewellery making, cake decorating and working on modified cars, to name a few, but woodturning is my passion.

What led you to woodturning?
My journey started when my dad bought a lathe. One Christmas I wanted to get him a present from my local Axminster Tools store and asked for something that would go on the wood spinning machine that my dad had. They suggested a pen mandrel. After Christmas, dad phoned me to ask if I would like to go to the woodturning club with him as they had a pen turning demonstration on. I agreed to go. The demonstration was great, and I was immediately hooked. The next day we attended another demonstration by a woodturner called Tony Wilson. When we got back from the event, I went to my dad's workshop and, under his supervision, I turned the money box made in the shape of the old red post box. Tony had demonstrated this wonderful project and I loved every second creating it. I purchased my first lathe from a member at the woodturning club the following week.

How do you like to work, what are your favourite tools and why?
I'm glad you said 'tools' as I couldn't pick just one. First, I would say my lathe as I have always wanted a Vicmarc and when the opportunity arose, I just had to have it. Next is my respirator. Safety is so important to me in the workshop, It was one of the first things I purchased, and I use it every time I turn in my workshop. The ⅜ bowl gouge is my go-to woodturning chisel. When I am turning thin wall pieces I use one with a fingernail grind for shaping and one with a micro bevel for hollowing. A Foredom Micro Motor is my go-to tool for piercing my work.

Describe your workshop – what is the set-up and how long have you been there?
My workshops are two log cabins at home in my garden. I keep my machine shop separate from my lathe workshop and I find this helps to keep things tidy and organised. I believe a tidy workshop is essential to both safety and creativity. In my lathe workshop I have my Vicmarc VL300, a Tormek sharpening system and my work bench. My tools are stored to hand on the wall and all my equipment is stored in drawers or boxed so things can be found easily and stored away safely.

How does your design process work?
I will get ideas from anywhere really. I take loads of photos on my phone, shapes, textures, patterns and colour combinations. I have a sketch book



I keep to hand. I am not the best at drawing but I sketch out any ideas as soon as they come to mind. They stay in the sketch book, sometimes never to be used and sometimes a little bit of one and a bit of another will be used in a design.

Which woods do you most like working with and why?
I use a lot of kiln-dried sycamore in my work right now. It is a tight-grained timber and is great for thin wall turning and piercing. It also takes texture really well and the pale colour is ideal for pyrography and colouring. Among other timbers I like to use is black walnut, as I just love the dark, chocolate-brown colour with the darker brown streaks running through it. It is a lovely timber to turn and finishes well with a simple Danish oil finish. Olive ash is another favourite, again for the amazing figure it has. I love turning a piece of timber that can look quite plain on the outside and seeing it come to life when worked on the lathe.

Do you work with other materials as well, and how do they compare?
I have recently started experimenting with resin casting and turning. Although, it will never replace my love of timber, it is an interesting medium and I am enjoying the casting side a lot. I find the turning rather messy but like the combinations you can get mixing it with timber, especially Australian burrs.

What sort of finishes do you prefer and why?
On my pierced and textured work I like to use a matt spray lacquer to seal the pieces. This finish will offer a coat of protection without detracting from the detail and won't build up in the texture as other finishes can. I prefer a satin look to most pieces as I feel it shows off the beauty of the timber in the best way. On non-pierced or textured work I like Danish oil for a finish, building it up with a number of coats to give a warm glow to the timber and allow the grain to pop.

What inspires you and where do you get your ideas from?
I find inspiration can come from anywhere – plants, nature, architecture – and I love the History Channel to see ancient pottery, textures on a broach. Inspiration is everywhere if we look closely enough.

What is your favourite piece you have worked on and why?
I think my most favourite piece will always be that post box I turned with my dad. I will never forget the feeling I got turning that first piece, watching the horizon line, seeing the shape appear and creating something from a plain lump of wood. I still get that same feeling now each time I turn.

What is the most challenging piece you have worked on, and why?
I look at each piece I turn as a challenge. I aim to improve and develop

my technique, skill and design with every piece. I love the challenge of learning and improving, whether a piece is a success or goes in the fire pile. I feel there is always a lesson to learn and use in the next challenge.

Tell us about the pieces you created for Wizardry in Wood and your involvement in that. Have you been nominated for/won any other awards or competitions?
I had seen pictures and articles of past Wizardry in Wood events and was thrilled to finally get to this major event on the woodturning calendar. The work has always been inspirational to me since I started woodturning, and to actually get to see this work at the show was amazing. When I knew this year's event was coming up, I decided I would enter some of my work. I have been working on a series of pierced bowls and decided the next in the series, a pierced bowl decorated with my signature blossom flowers, would be my entry. When checking the criteria, I found I was eligible to enter two categories, so I decided to also enter the bowl I had recently finished, another pierced bowl, this time with a textured and coloured ribbon pattern. I was so honoured to have my piece chosen as the winning piece in the Bert Marsh category. I also received a commendation in the Felix Levy competition. I have won club competitions and one of my first pierced pieces was selected to be part of a UK tour with other pieces, visiting many venues across the country.

How have the pandemic and lockdowns affected your work, and do you think any of the impact will be long term?
During the pandemic, I was fully isolating at home. This gave me the chance to make much-needed improvements to my workshop and garden. Once the workshop was to my liking, I took the opportunity to spend as much time as possible creating and trying out new ideas. During the first lockdown I was asked if I would participate in a trial of the woodturning diploma to be rolled out by the Worshipful Company of Turners. The time at home allowed me to concentrate on this and it was a great learning experience. The pandemic brought about new ways to communicate as all the clubs and events were cancelled. I learned how to use Zoom and watched as many demos as I could. I also helped out as a tech advisor with a Sunday night woodturning meeting called Meet the Woodturner. Woodturners from all over the world are interviewed and I really enjoyed getting to meet so many of my heroes. Now the world is slowly starting to open back up I would look back on the positives that came out of the pandemic, the time spent (virtually) with amazing people that I wouldn't have met in other circumstances. I hope to see the new normal bring back all the wonderful shows, clubs and symposiums, but I think the virtual woodturning world is also here to stay. It has made the woodturning world so much more accessible to many people.

What are your aspirations for the future?
To learn from my peers, improve my skills, demonstrate more, and travel a lot more with woodturning.

What do you do when you're not woodturning?
I am tech advisor on Meet the Woodturner. I now attend my woodturning club, which has started back. I hope to attend more shows and symposiums. Basically, my life and work revolve around woodturning.

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Burl wall piece

Andrew Potocnik safely turns a large burl effect with attractive embellishments

I often tell people that I'm not precious about my work, but I'm precious about the wood I work with. By that I mean I think carefully about making the most of every piece of wood I use, especially when it comes to highly figured timber.

Memories of turned burl wall plaques take me back to the late '90s and Ron and Anita Wornick's Expressions in Wood exhibition when I saw the work of Dennis Elliott, one-time drummer of the rock band Foreigner cum turner, who made a speciality of turning big leaf maple burls, sometimes up to about 1m in diameter. I've had a fondness for the concept since, but have never had access or the heart to turn such large treasures of nature.

Apart from the precious nature of burls, there are several other factors that make their turning a safety issue. They are irregular in shape and often have unevenly distributed density of grain, both of which can cause your lathe to rock while the wood is trimmed down to an even surface.

The shape of the burl often means that you're working with wood that is at best seen as a 'ghost', which may lead to nasty catches or injury to your supporting hand. And don't forget, the final outcome of your piece will be determined by the shape of the burl, and your skill in extracting the best possible outcome from material you have available.

This project is based on creating a large burl effect safely, while drawing the eye to your best material with minimal waste.

Having seen some fantastic wall pieces turned from irregularly shaped burls, where outer edges are textured and sometimes painted, I couldn't help but think of a few aspects of this process that, to me, are wasteful and in some ways dangerous, at least when undertaken by turners with inadequate lathes and skills.

In this project I not only make the most of highly figured jarrah burl, but look at the safety aspects of turning burls. This could make this type of project a good entry point for new turners learning how to turn burls. And if you're like me and conscious of texturing and covering up material that is too good to disguise, this method allows you to explore any type of embellishment without guilt.

Plans & equipment

Materials

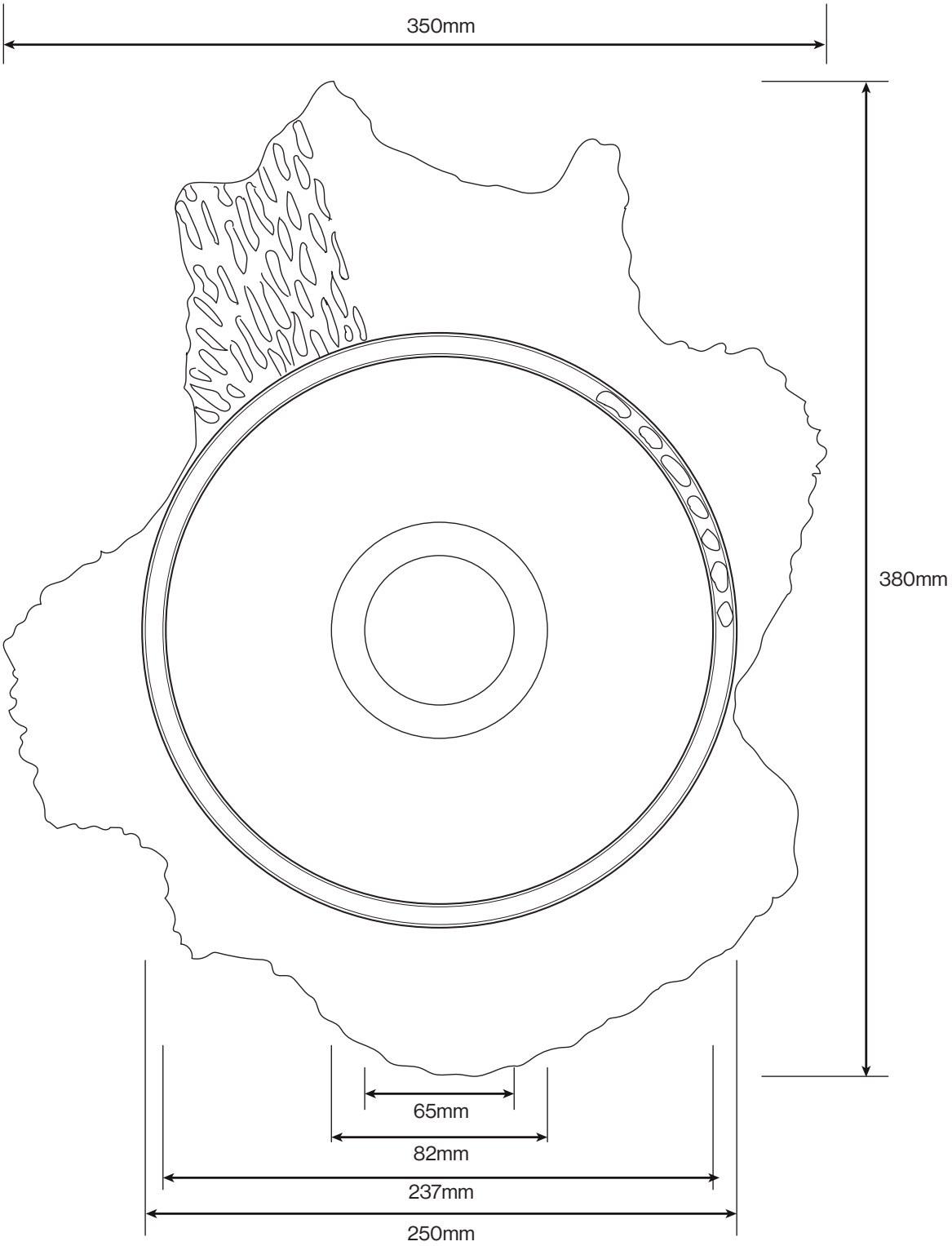
- Edge-laminated, quarter-sawn mountain ash: 400mm diameter and 40mm thick

Safety equipment

- Ear muffs
- Face shield/safety glasses
- Dust mask
- Gloves for staining

Tools & equipment

- Bandsaw
- Thicknesser
- 10mm deep fluted bowl gouge
- Flat curved scraper
- 5mm parting tool
- 2mm parting tool
- Inertia sander
- Angle grinder fitted with Arbortech mini carver
- Dremel and a variety of burrs



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW POTOCNIK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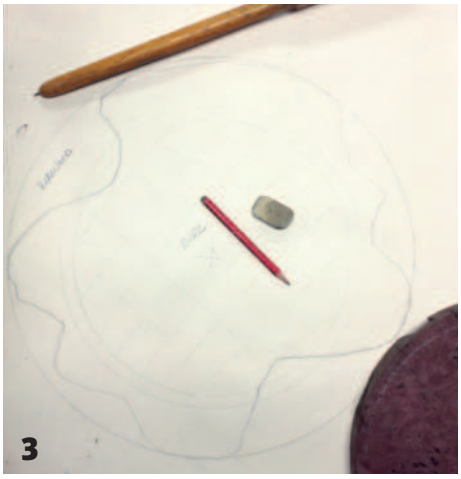
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The making

1 Beginning with the material, a search through my stash revealed some material recycled from old school science benches I'd acquired a few years ago. Edge-laminated, quarter-sawn mountain ash allowed me to cut a disc of about 400mm diameter and 40mm thick, even if there were some screw holes in the board. The beauty of this project is that you can work your way around flaws in material you have available – you just cut them out as you create your own burl design.

2 Marked out with dividers, the board was cut to a rough circle on my bandsaw and surface planed, as was a slice of my treasured jarrah burl. I have a series of discs cut from MDF to a variety of diameters, which I use to bandsaw timber to standard sizes – in this case, a size that suited the mountain ash disc.

3 With rough dimensions established, I reverted to paper to draw up a rough plan of the piece I was going to make. I must confess that I had a sneak peek back to forms I had buried in the 'cranial computer' that emerge when links in the mind connect. It's wonderful to find how long inspiration can linger before popping to the fore of your mind as a new idea evolves.

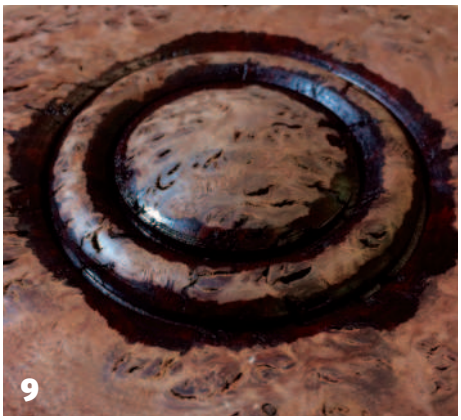
4 The mountain ash disc was fixed to a faceplate and fitted to my lathe in preparation for the two discs to be glued together. Using the tailstock centre to 'centre' the disc in place, clamps were applied around the two pieces of wood so PVA glue could cure overnight.

5 The next day, I flattened the back of the mountain ash disc...

6 ...before trimming down both timbers on the front of the piece.

7 The piece was intended to have three separate sections; a hemispherical centre bordered by a bead and a gently curved outer surface leading to the mountain ash surface.

8 & 9 Normally I'd use a neatly cut V-border between each segment, however, on this piece I cut a 2mm-wide groove instead. Into this I planned to add some Easy Inlay cultured pearl grit, but first I needed to seal the surface with cyanoacrylate glue (photo 9), which was given a quick shot of accelerator to dry it instantly.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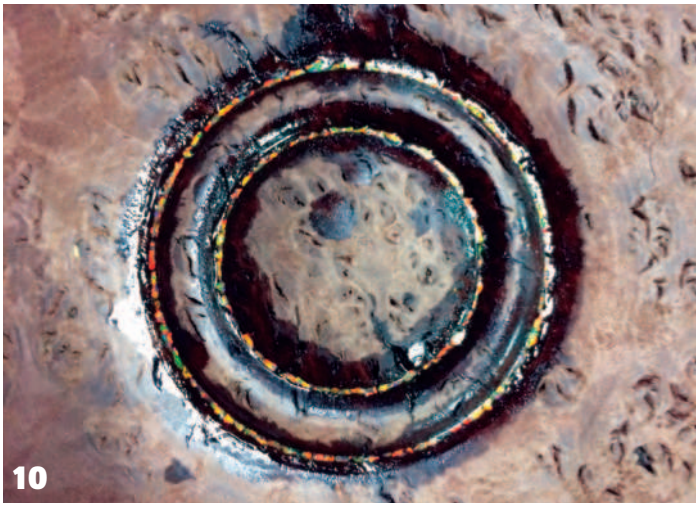


10 Adding a thin line of Sahara-coloured inlay to both grooves, I filled the spaces between with several pours of CA glue, hardened with accelerator. It's important to fill the grooves beyond the wood's surface so it can be trimmed and sanded level and smooth.

11 The entire burl surface was sanded through to 320 grit, along with the inlaid borders.

12 To texture the mountain ash portion of the piece I used an Arbortech Mini Pro disc fitted to an angle grinder. The carbide cutters keep tear-out across grain to a minimum, but I did run a circular brass wire brush over the whole surface to 'soften' edges and remove slightly torn grain.

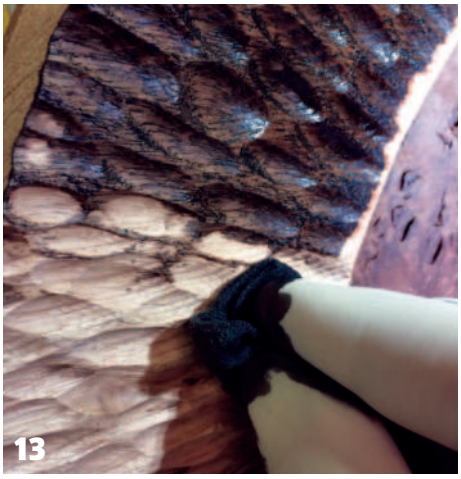
You will note a small area of missing burl just above the cutter in this photo. This was later painted black to blend in with the painted border.

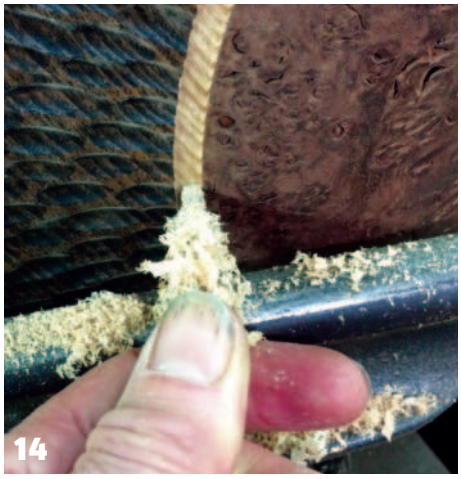
13 Stain was carefully applied to the carved surface, working up to a couple of millimetres short of the burl, allowed to dry and two more cats applied. I had hoped for a deeper black colour, but the result was fine.

14 & 15 Using a 5mm parting tool I cut a 3mm-deep border between the burl and textured surface, which was then painted with black acrylic paint (photo 15).

16 Paint was also applied to voids in the burl. Any excess was sanded off while the piece could be sanded safely on the lathe.

17 The back of the piece was trimmed to an edge thickness of about 10mm with a flat curved scraper, working into a few millimetres of the faceplate as the final lathe-based operation.



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18 Two things happened here. First, I copied my original drawing on to tracing paper and taped it on to the front of the disc with edges curled over and taped into place. Next, three blocks of scrap pine were glued to the back of the disc with heat-sensitive glue to ensure I had ample support for the next stage.

19 & 20 Following drawn lines, I cut away segments of the disc to create a profile that resembles a burl form, which was then 'worked' with a variety of burrs fitted to a Dremel (photo 20). These edges were also 'softened' with my circular brass wire brush.

21 Stain was applied to all edges with a brush and wiped back with a cloth.

22 Now to add paua shell to the painted border to create some 'bling' before oil was applied to only the jarrah. Finally a hook was fitted to the back of the piece and my 'burl' wall piece was complete!

Conclusion

Looking back, I think this piece would have been more successful and dramatic had I used a light-coloured burl; however. I didn't have one suitable, which is exactly how this idea came to be – making the most of material available.

On the positive side, small burls can be converted into pieces much larger than their initial size promised, and you create the burl profile that suits you.

I'm sure there will be many of you who will see possibilities in adapting this concept to other projects, and likewise, I already have sketches waiting on my bench. ●

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Bronze Age bowl

Pat Carroll makes a bowl with an aged bronze effect

Another piece in the Vessels of Time series, this time visiting the Bronze Age, 3300BC to 1200BC. An ancient civilization is deemed to be part of the Bronze Age because it produced bronze by smelting its own copper and alloying it with tin, arsenic, or other metals, or traded for bronze.

This piece was created to mimic a tarnished bronze bowl. There are fantastic products on the market to create these aged appearances on wood. In this article I wanted to show how to create a similar affect with acrylic paints. It is a slower process to achieve, but it's fun. Remember, if you are not successful with your painting, it can be painted over or even sanded off. I suggest using scrap pieces and recording your methods so when it comes to reproducing these finishes you will have your own step-by-step instructions. I find a good foundation is the black base colour. The black gesso covers well and adheres nicely to the wood. Multiple coats of gesso may be sanded smooth and help provide a good key for further layers of colour. This project had five colours – black, copper, bronze, green and white. As laid out in the steps to follow, you will see that it was a continuous layering and mixing of the colours. Building up colours, re-colouring areas as needed was all part of the process.

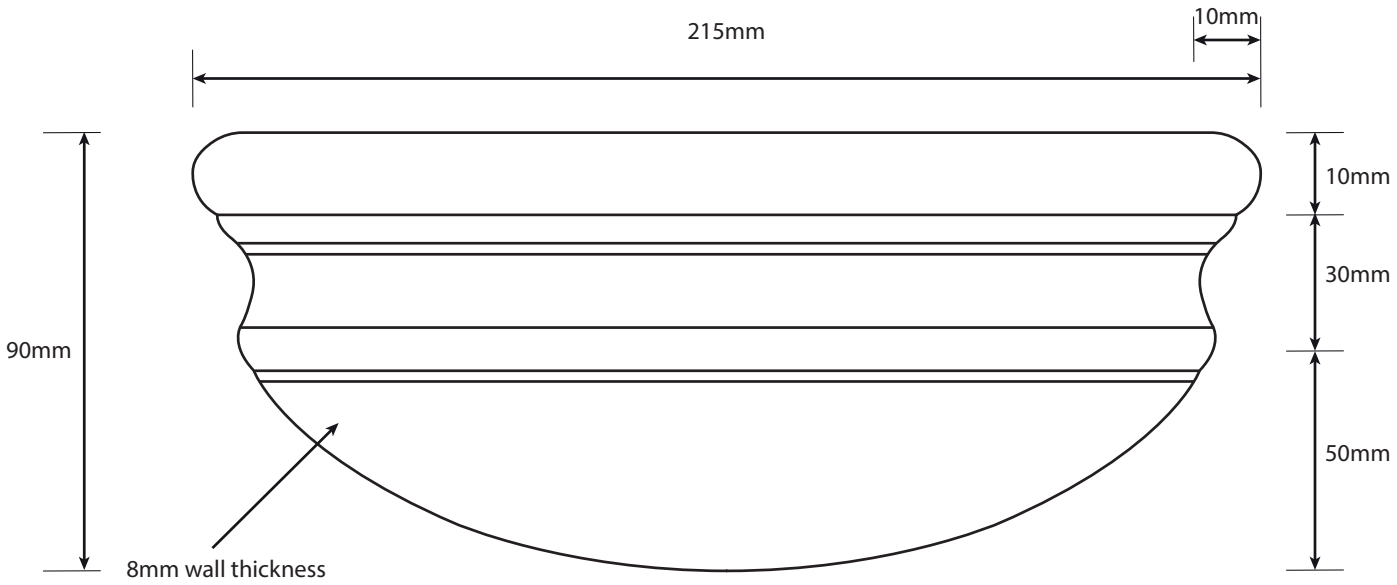
Plans & equipment

Materials

- Timber used: sycamore 250 x 100mm

Power tools & equipment

- PPE as appropriate
- 4mm parting tool
- 16mm bowl gouge
- 10mm bowl gouge
- 13mm spindle gouge
- Detail tool
- Callipers
- Sandpaper
- Acrylic paints
- Lacquer



Guideline measurements only

1 The sycamore blank was chosen for the project. It has everything I would normally not want to make a traditional bowl, but this piece of wood has character with inclusions and even some worm holes. There are some minor cracks that I will monitor carefully. As with any piece of wood we turn, we must watch for defects that may be hidden within. But in this case, it is all visible, so I proceed with caution.

2 I mounted the blank on the lathe using a faceplate. I also used tailstock support for added safety when doing most of the work. The lathe speed was set to its lowest and raised gradually to a safe working speed. This speed will vary for different machines. Using my 16mm bowl gouge, I did the bulk removal. With the angle on this tool, if I was to do a push cut and full bevel support, the tailstock would not allow the handle to go sufficiently across the bed of the lathe. I therefore used the tool with the flute slightly open in a left-hand technique.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAT CARROLL

3 I knew this piece of sycamore had some inclusions. Ordinarily I would be happy with a 50mm foot on a piece this size with tailstock support. When I marked out the 50mm foot I felt it was safer to go with my 100mm jaws. The foot will be incorporated into the finished design

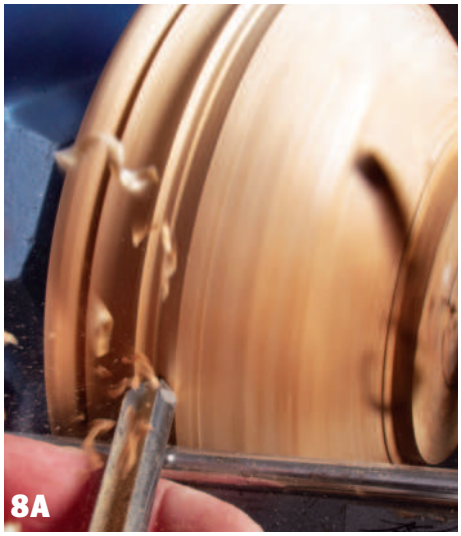
4 I removed the remainder of the bulk wood with the 16mm bowl gouge. Always a very enjoyable part of the process watching streams of shavings fly off the piece. I continued the shaping process, working from the foot towards the rim.

5 I refined the shape of the exterior with a 10mm bowl gouge. Even though I am confident in the holding power of the faceplate, I am aware of the inclusions in the piece so I prefer the support of the tailstock any time I can use it. The 10mm bowl gouge has a shorter angle than that of the 16mm tool. Therefore, I could engage bevel contact with the tailstock still in place right from the start.

6 The design I envisaged had a bead on the top with a cove and texture below it. I created the bead by using a 6mm detail tool to make a V-groove. This gave a great starting point for the gouge to create the bead. I completed the bead with a 12.5mm spindle gouge

7 While the piece was still on the faceplate, I refined the bead as much as possible where access was available.

8 The cove below the bead was created with the 10mm bowl gouge. I worked from the highest point to the lowest from both sides blending the cuts from each side until I had a pleasing shape of a cove.

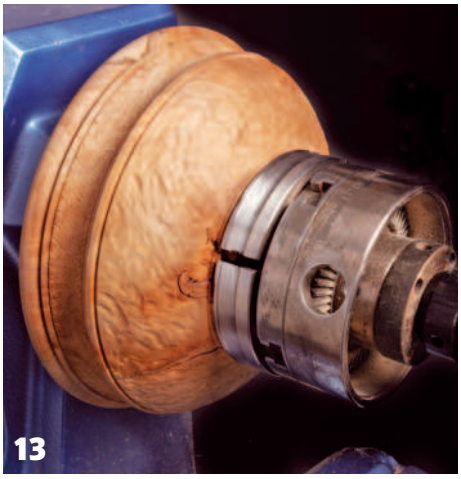


9 To add another feature, I used a texturing tool to create a textured surface on the cove. I used the pointed texturing wheel, which creates an orange peel effect. I didn't want the texture to go all the way out to the edge, so kept it back 4mm from the outside point.

10 The texture I wanted to create didn't need to be uniform. As I am trying to create an aged piece, having a perfectly uniform texture is not appropriate for the design.

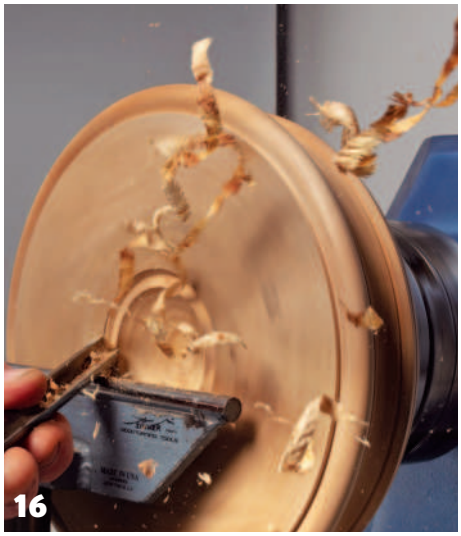
11 To frame the textured area, I used the detail tool to create V-grooves. I also added a V-groove to the top of the curved portion of the bowl. The bowl area was power sanded with 120, 180 and 240 grit sandpaper. Although I planned to texture the surface, I didn't want radial lines to be visible through the texture.

12 I created a very simple hammered texture on the bowl area by using an actual hammer. The photo shows the piece on the lathe while the texture was created, but this was just for photography purposes. Hammering items on the lathe can possibly cause damage to the equipment or the alignment of the piece on the faceplate or position in the chuck, so the bowl was removed from the lathe for texturing with the hammer. I went around the bowl multiple times until I had a texture that I was happy with. The area where the foot remains would be blended in later. The reason I did this amount of texture now, was that if I was not happy with the surface, I could recut it.



13 Before I removed the piece from the faceplate, I ensured a good fit for the chuck and good alignment. By using a cone centre in the tailstock, I can locate the chuck with tailstock support correctly. It is important if you use this method that your cone centre does not go inside the faceplate and damage the threads.

14 With the chuck still on the piece, I supported the weight of the bowl and chuck while removing it from the lathe. The chuck was fitted to the spindle and rotated by hand to ensure correct alignment. The faceplate was removed once I was happy with the piece running true.



15 I removed the centre of the bowl with the 10mm short bevel bowl gouge. As there are inclusions, I was aware of not taking heavy cuts.

16 As I progressed with the cuts, I stopped the lathe with every pass of the gouge. Tailstock support can give great piece of mind when it's possible to use it, but it's no excuse to ignore the common sense task of simply stopping the lathe to check a suspicious piece of wood.

17 Shaping the inside of the bowl I followed the profile of the outside, which gave a nice gentle inward curve to the piece. When I had the centre removed, I power sanded the surface with 120, 180 and 240 grit sandpaper. Once I completed the sanding, I vacuumed away any dust from the surface.

18 To take the foot off, I used a scrap piece of wood fitted into the chuck. This piece of wood had a convex surface similar to the interior of the bowl. The tailstock gives support for the finishing process. A piece of router mat protects the inside of the bowl and helps with the friction drive

19 I used the 10mm bowl gouge to shape the foot, giving the piece a nice continuous curve on the bottom. Once the turning was complete, the base was power sanded with 120, 180 and 240 grit sandpaper.

20 The small piece in the middle was removed and the remainder of the base was sanded. Then the hammered texture was completed, and any bits of bark inclusions were removed. Once the dust was removed it was ready for the first application of colour.

21 I use the lids of aerosols for paint pots or water pots, but they also make great platforms to elevate a piece to stop the paint sticking to the surface it is on. The minimal surface area of the lid means there is a very small area to be touched up in most cases. The piece had two coats of black gesso applied, allowing adequate drying time between coats.

22 The next coat I applied was copper acrylic paint. The paint was brushed on and then the brush was used in a stippling motion so as not to leave brush strokes. Bronze acrylic paint was the next coat and applied in the same technique, but some of the copper areas were left uncovered to give different elements to the paint effect required.

23 For the tarnished look, I used a dark green and white acrylic paint. Mixing with the brush and diluting with water, the paint was applied in a stippling motion. Water was sprayed over the paint and touched up with the brush where needed. Excess water that ran off and any areas that needed further attention were addressed when the paint dried. It took multiple layers to create the effect required.

24 Once I completed the tarnished look I went back over the bowl in areas with more bronze acrylic. Anywhere I thought there was too much green, I touched up with the bronze and the same for any areas that had too much bronze, those areas were touched up with the green and white diluted paint mix. Acrylic satin lacquer was the finish used for the surface.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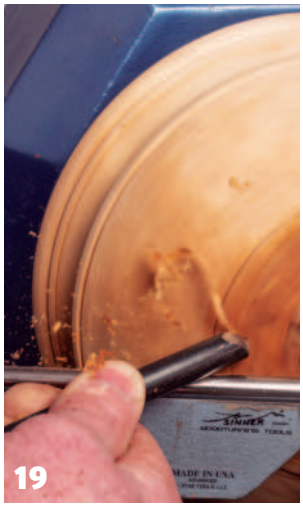
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Walking cane

Andy Coates makes a stylish country stick

I often get asked to make walking sticks, which, frankly, I always find an odd request as I am primarily a woodturner, and stick making is a distinct wood craft with any number of fine makers dotted about the country. I have lived in a rural area for over 20 years now and walking sticks are a common sight out and about, where previously, in the city, they mostly appeared to have been prescribed walking aids for the injured or infirm. Here they are as ubiquitous as wellington boots (rain, mud boot or muck boots to others!), and can be of a bewildering variety.

The most common 'country' stick is one made of hazel, with the bark remaining, and may be a simple 'thumb stick' with a V formed from a branch spur, or have a fitted head that may be carved or shaped, wood or horn/antler; so even within this single species bracket there is a world of options for the stick dresser (as they are known).

I have been told that, over the various lockdowns we have all been under during this pandemic, many small traders of dressing supplies have almost run dry due to massive demand from people wanting to try stick dressing. I imagine this is both a curse and a blessing for the poor traders, and an intense annoyance for the regular customer.

I currently have a number of sticks on the books waiting for me to be in the right mood to make them – traditional sticks require bending and fettling and I need to be in the mood for it – but one was for a slightly more cane-like stick, classy but substantial, elegant yet functional, and so I decided that this ought to be a turned cane rather than a bent stick.

I would usually make a turned stick from ash, but local supply has been hideous, so I opted for some rippled maple I had in board stock, and with a contrasting head and some spacers it turned out to be just the job and the customer was delighted with it. I actually enjoyed making the cane and thought it might be of interest as a project. So let us make a cane.

Did you know?

Stick stuff

- Some terminology is helpful so we do not get confused. The stick is referred to as the 'shank', and may be formed from a single piece of wood which includes the handle, or as it is called, the 'head', which can be bent or carved. A stick may be made of two pieces, a shank and a head, and the two may be separated by decorative spacers of a range of materials such as copper, leather, bone, antler, contrasting wood etc. The joint can be a peg formed on the shank or a steel rod or threaded bar set in both (this is not a universally preferred method). Most, if not all sticks, have a tip, and it can be of some hard-wearing material – wood, antler, bone, or rubber, where more security is required, or noise of the stick on the ground is undesirable, such as in deer stalking.
- Sticks made from hazel, ash, blackthorn etc. can be made with the bark remaining or removed, but all are seasoned fully, usually for a year or more after harvesting. The shanks are then straightened using either steam or heat; heat being the less troublesome method now commonly used, and for this a paint-stripping heat gun is the modern way of applying heat.
- The head, or handle, can be a ball type, for gripping in the palm of the hand, an off-set 'L' shape, a thumb type, usually a formed or naturally occurring V shape, or a head similar to a bicycle grip, shaped to the fingers.
- For this stick I decided to make a Lyre head from a small oak offcut.

Plans & equipment

Materials

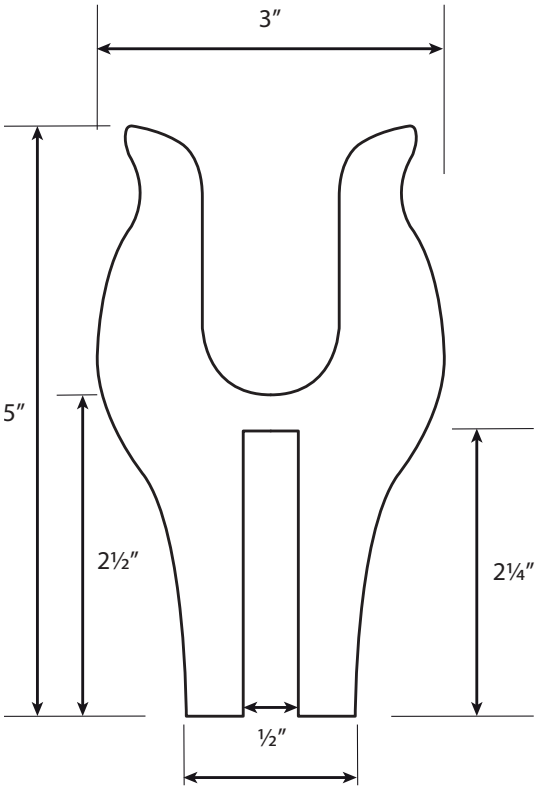
- Maple blank 1½ x 1½i x 42in*
- Oak 6 x 4 x 1in for Lyre head
- Contrasting scraps of wood for spacers/ decorative purposes
- Pewter ring**
- 1in rubber safety tip
- Some scrap wood for jam chucks and clamps

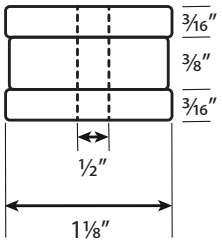
Tools & equipment

- PPE as appropriate
- 25mm spindle roughing gouge
- 25mm oval skew chisel
- 6mm parting and beading tool
- Small negative rake scraper or carbide tool
- ½in Forstner bit
- Jacobs chuck
- Abrasives 240-400 grit
- Two-part epoxy glue
- Oil or poly finish to preference
- Full-face mask for turning

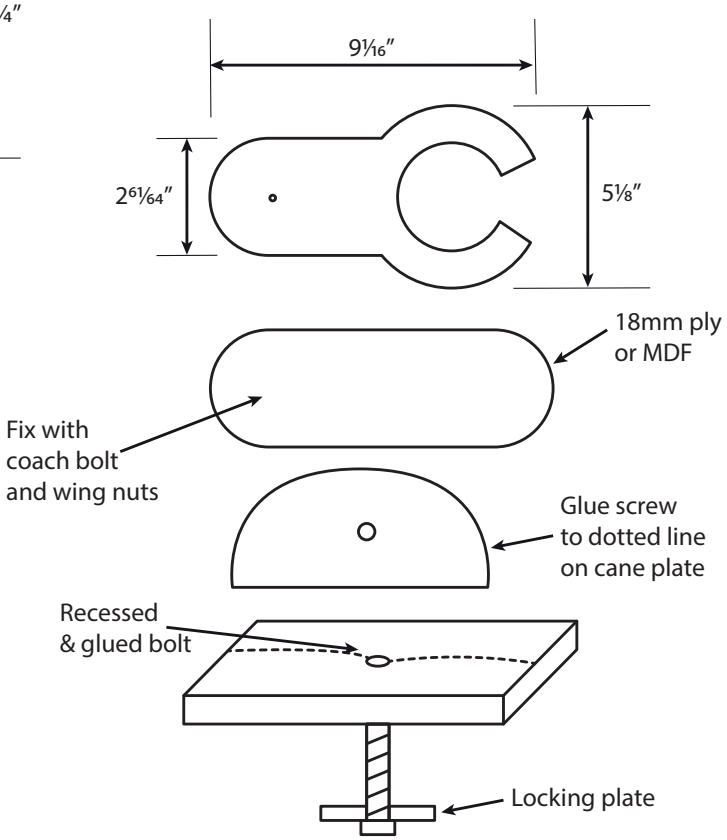
*Length can be adjusted to a specific requirement
**Optional – could be other wood species, leather, bone, antler, horn etc.

LYRE CANE TOP





STEADY



Making the cane

1 The blank for the shank needs to be of a strong and slightly flexible species. I chose maple and cut the blank from the board at its thickness, 1½in. The blank should have no splits or cracks, and knots are to be avoided. Mark the centres on the ends of the blank and use an awl to centre mark for the lathe drives. The blank is held between a steb-type centre and a revolving ring centre.

2 When mounting a long blank it is important not to overtighten the quill as this can lead to flexing a long blank. There was already a slight bow in this blank so it was vital not to accentuate it by winding in the drive too far. Set the lathe speed to around 600rpm to begin with and assess how stable the blank is in rotation. If it appears to be out of balance and a significant ghost image can be seen at the top of the blank, reduce the speed.

3 Working from the tailstock end begin to bring the blank into the round using a freshly sharpened spindle roughing gouge. Work off the edge, from left to right, not on to it, and work back incrementally, gradually removing the waste. There is always a temptation to rush this part of the process, but take your time – lighter cuts reduce vibration and make the cuts cleaner.

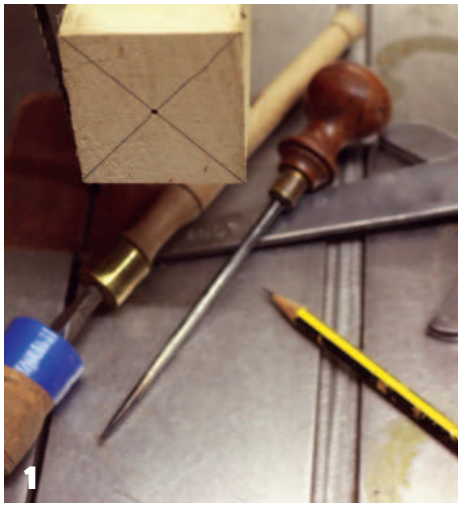
4 When the first few inches are turned to round, take a sharp 10mm parting tool and part down to a 1in diameter. This is the final diameter for the bottom of the cane. If you want to make the cane's length adjustable, the bottom 5-6in can be turned to precisely 1in diameter. This allows you to cut at least 5in from the cane to suit an individual user.

5 The final diameter at the head (headstock end) of the stick will be 1⅛in, and the stick should taper imperceptibly between the two diameters. As each section is brought to round, a skew chisel can be used to refine the taper and improve the surface finish. It makes for a good series of practice sessions with the skew.

6 As you get closer to the middle of the blank you may notice that the blank bounces against the spindle roughing gouge's bevel. This can result in a ruined blank as deep channels are inadvertently cut in the blank. A sharp spindle rouging gouge is essential, and the toolrest should be set to allow a high cut near to the top of the blank.

7 Notice the angle of the tool. This allows the high cut and serves to reduce the pressure passed through the bevel to the revolving wood. The idea is to let the wood come to the sharp edge rather than force the sharp edge into the wood. A clean, vibration-free cut should be possible.

8 If you experience bounce then a different hold may help. The left hand is lightly cupped over the revolving blank, the thumb of the left hand pushing against the side of the tool to provide stability and control. The left hand counters the pressure from the tool's bevel, and can help to reduce bounce.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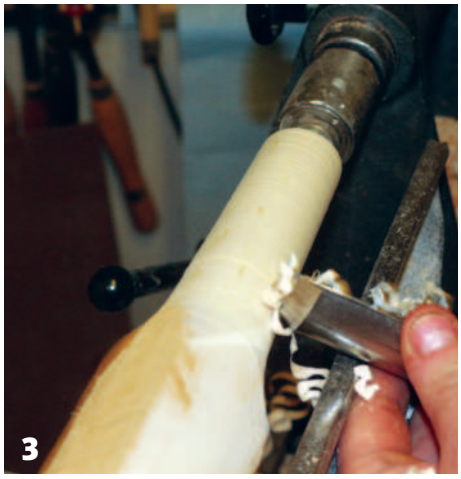
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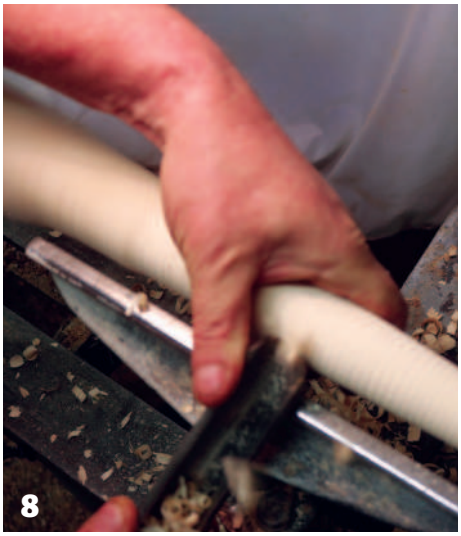
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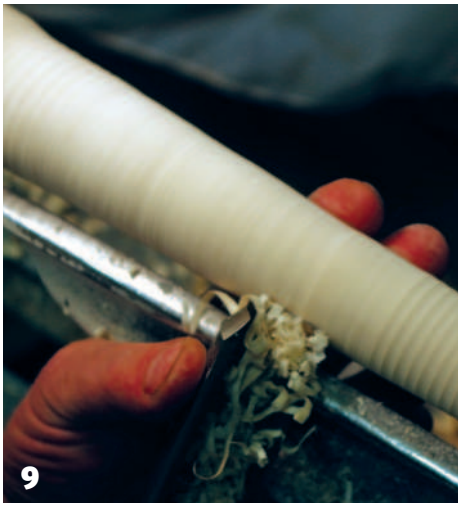
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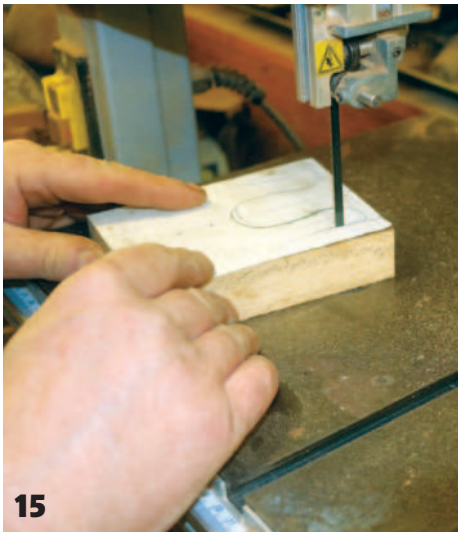
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9 An alternative hold is the under hold. The fingers pass under the toolrest, thumb used as before to improve control, and the fingers lightly push against the revolving blank. This hold can be hampered by the stem of the toolrest, and can be more difficult on the right of the toolrest than the left. But a combination of these and the standard hold may help overall.

10 If you are still experiencing bounce or are uncertain about using the over/under grip, then a steady jig may be your only option. Steady jigs are available as a commercial product, but a shop-made steady is quick and simple to make. The plan included here is for a multi-purpose string steady. The mouth gap can be adjusted to suit your needs. A section at the centre of the blank is turned to round to allow the steady to be set in place, where it is locked down to provide support while needed.

11 Continuing on with the rounding and finessing of the cane, work back towards the headstock end, refining with the skew as you go, ensuring a smooth transition towards the increased diameter at the head end.

12 As you approach the headstock end you need to reverse the direction of the cut to work off the end of the blank. The finished diameter is 1⅛in and this should be set for the last 6in to allow for the head and spacers later. Before we can continue, we need to make the spacers and the head.

Making the head

13 A small piece of 1in oak board is used for the head. A template is sketched on paper and glued to the blank with carpet tape. The head can be drawn to any size appropriate for a specific recipient, and the Lyre design is not set in stone... change it up as you see fit.

14 Mark the centre and middle of the board, carry the lines on to the edge and make a mark with an awl. Holding the board on its end in a vice, drill a ½in hole 2¼in deep. Make the hole precisely true to ensure the head sits on the shank properly later.

15 The head can now be cut out. You could use a hand scrollsaw, electric scrollsaw, or a small bandsaw if the blade is narrow enough. Take care and take it slowly.

Making the spacers

16 I chose to make a cast pewter spacer, sandwiched between two bog oak spacers. You can choose whatever you have to hand or prefer. Providing you can drill a hole in it, and preferably turn it, they can be of anything you wish. Mount the scrap in the scroll chuck and use a Forstner bit to drill a ½in hole through the scrap.

17 True the face and make sure it is absolutely flat. Turn the diameter down to just over 1⅛in to allow for a little adjustment/blending once fitted to the shank. Abrade the face with 240 grit.

18 Mark off two discs 3⁄16in wide, allowing for a 2mm parting cut between them, and carefully part the two rings off. The cut sides will not be perfectly flat, but we will deal with this shortly.

19 Next the mould holding the cast pewter disc is mounted in the scroll chuck and the face is trued flat using a small negative rake scraper. The surface is abraded using 120, 240, 320 to clean it up.

20 Now a ½in hole is drilled through the pewter with a Forstner bit. This needs to be done very slowly, withdrawing the bit frequently to remove the swarf (remembering it can be recycled). Allow the pewter to cool down – it will be hot – before removing it from the mould.

21 Now we mount a scrap block of a suitable size to turn a ½in stub ⅛in long. Mount the wooden spacer on the stub and turn the cut side perfectly flat. Abrade the surface but ensure you don't round over the edges. Do this for both wooden spacers.

22 Once the spacers are finished the stub is extended to up to 2in. Put a slight taper, increasing in diameter towards the headstock end. This is to ensure a tight fit when mounting the head.

23 Fit the head on to the stub, being careful not to force it and split the wood. A wooden tailstock fitting is brought up into the throat of the Lyre head, and gentle quill pressure applied. Check the head runs free and true and adjust as necessary until it does. Using a ⅜in spindle gouge, gently feather the headstock end of the header down to a cylinder just slightly over 1⅛in diameter, blending the cut as is rises up the wing of the lyre head.

24 Remove the head from the lathe and do some initial shaping and tidying up on a bobbin sander if you have one. Failing that, the head can be sanded by hand, or with a rotary micro tool. Keep in mind that this is the handle, and all edges should be smooth, round and safe to the touch, especially in the bottom where the thumb would naturally go.


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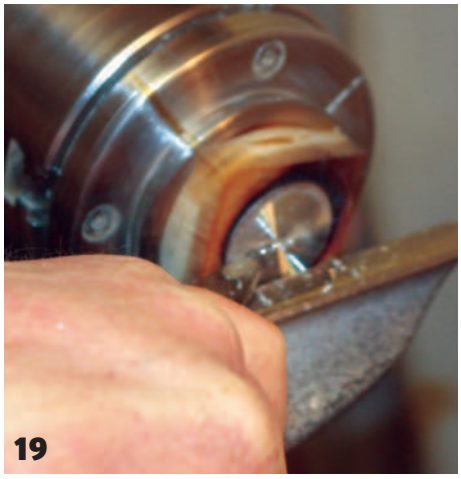
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25 Now the shank is remounted – this is where the steb and revolving centre drives prove their worth as remounting is perfect. Mark a short, ⅛in from the headstock end as waste, and then mark 2¼in in from that, and then the width of the three spacers, approx. ¾in. Now turn down this entire section to ½in diameter. This needs to be as precise as the holes drilled in the spacers – we need a tight fit.

26 Slacken the quill to release the shank and, using epoxy glue, fit the spacers to the stem. A scrap of wood is drilled through with a ½in hole to act as a clamping block. This is wrapped in cling film to prevent adhesion, and the quill is used to apply gentle pressure until fully cured.

27 Once cured, the excess material is turned away until the shank and head diameters are matched on the spacers. Take gentle cuts, turning away some of the waste block to make room to fully shape the inboard spacer.

28 Now the shank can be removed from the lathe and the head can be glued on to the remaining stem – you may need to remove the short area of waste on the stub with a saw or bandsaw. The stick can be clamped any way you have available, but a ratchet strap is a useful method while the epoxy cures. The cane can now be abraded by hand, the pewter cleaned up and polished, and either oil or spray lacquer used as the final finish. A rubber safety foot is pushed on and the cane is ready for use.

Conclusions

I will never understand quite why, but I always need to be in the mood to make sticks and canes... but every single time I do, I enjoy the process and the end result enormously. Sticks and canes are rarely used for affectation so are generally a supremely useful and well received gift, and I think that makes them special. Taking that little extra care, selecting appropriate materials and taking time to make something that isn't just a necessary aid for somebody, but something they can enjoy using and looking at, is a great thing to be able to do. And if you sell them then surely that's a great compliment? I hope you never need to use one, but I hope you enjoy making one for somebody who does. •

Kurt's clinic

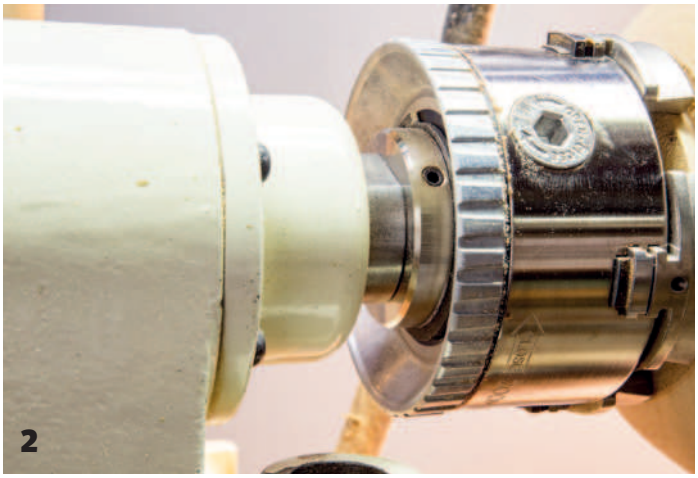
Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KURT HERTZOG

1 All my lathes, including minis (with some rewiring), have reverse capability. I find it helpful when power sanding turning. I change direction with each grit change **2** Be certain you have tightened down the grub screws on your workholding device if you have any intention of running your lathe in reverse

What is the benefit of a lathe running in reverse? Hope that isn't too foolish a question – I just can't wrap my mind around it.

There are advantages to having a lathe that will run in reverse. Caution up front! Be certain that the grub screws in your chuck collar or faceplate, if you are using one, are tightened or you risk having your workholding method unthread on power down or rapid significant speed change when running in reverse. On occasion, I enjoy using reverse when power sanding. Running the lathe in reverse will impart a different scratch pattern to the turning, as can a reversal of the drill direction. Switching from forwards to reverse when changing grits seems to help with the sanding process. While I don't use this technique, I've heard of turners, particularly left-handed turners, run the lathe in reverse while standing on the opposite side of the lathe. It presents the tool to the work properly and lets the turner be more comfortable in their hollowing or whatever. There may be other uses or advantages to reversing direction but these come to mind.



Just wondering if most people upgrade the Parker-style refills in their pens before they sell them, or do you just sell with the one that comes with the kit? Also, what is the best upgrade in your opinion? Thanks in advance.

The use or discarding of the factory-provided inkfill usually depends on the market. If you are giving away pens, selling them for virtually materials cost recovery, or are targeting the lower price end of the pen market, you usually can't or won't spend the additional money to replace the kit-provided inkfill with one of higher quality. If you are reaching for higher prices in the pen market, are giving a personal gift or special creation, or really care that the end user will enjoy the writing experience, replacing the inkfill with one of higher quality is a wise move. While you've asked about Parker style, I'd like my answer to be more general. The use of a Parker style or genuine Parker brand inkfill will rarely change the inkfill extension by much, if at all. However, in 7mm pens, the choice of inkfill will vary the inkfill extension from a little to a lot, depending on two things. First, how closely the Cross-style inkfill resembles a genuine Cross inkfill dimensionally. There are variations from a little to a lot in dimension between the various lookalikes and the genuine. Second, how you (or any other maker) set the inkfill extension based on your depth of pressing in the transmission. If you used a kit-provided inkfill to press the transmission to a depth creating a pleasing inkfill extension, any changes in brand from that no-name inkfill will likely change the extension. This can occur when the owner replaces the inkfill since they will unlikely have access to the same no-name inkfill that came with the kit. This can vary considerably, creating dramatic changes in appearance and user writing experience. Personally, I always change the inkfill in any pen I make to the best writing one I can find. That has always been the genuine Cross, Parker, Sheaffer, or other top-shelf inkfill brands. Compared to the cost of materials and how I value my time invested in creating the pen, I find the few dollars additional invested in a quality writing inkfill is a minor cost and worthwhile investment. You need to make your own decision based on your end customer, whether purchasing or gifted. As to brands, you've already seen my choices but there are a few other top-shelf makers you can choose from. Usually comparing the various choices by writing a few sentences on a quality bond paper with each, side by side, will lead you to a good choice. You only need to do that one time to determine "your brand" of inkfill for each family of pen. BTW... When I replace the inkfill from the kit, usually black ink, I replace it with a blue ink inkfill. Even in the day of colour copiers, signing anything or writing anything with blue ink makes it quickly apparent which is the original document.

3 I find that buying smart and in quantity allows me to equip all my pens with a quality inkfill at a very modest cost **4** I am careful to set my 7mm inkfill extension to my liking using the genuine inkfill. An exact replacement, available anywhere in the world, will maintain this relationship **5** Examples of the variations that can occur with mixed use of available inkfills. Using the kit inkfill makes exact replacement by the end user nearly impossible

6 The ability to put a quality cutting edge quickly and efficiently on your tools is a skill that is key to your skills growth in woodturning **7** With some additional grinding skills, you'll be able to not only grind a well cutting edge on your tools but also be able to quickly determine its state with a look and feel **8** Your cuts will be better quality and require less effort with a properly sharpened tool. With experience, you'll be able to feel the need for a touch up as you cut

Do companies typically ship new gouges sharpened? I used a new one out of the package and it didn't seem to be sharp enough. It's my first new gouge

The workers in the various tool producers' factories are not necessarily turners. Nor are they typically given time or instruction to sharpen production line tools to perfection. They put a generic edge on the tools that can range from kind of shaped to serviceably sharp, based on the tool type, available time, skills of the individual, and their ambition. Since nearly all turners will tailor their new tools right out of the package to their own liking, the 'putting on a point' at the factory is only a starting point and necessary cosmetics for the visual appearance in the retail packaging. For the most part they are just saving the end user a bit of time grinding away a lot of extra steel to get to their new owner's desired end point. That said, the higher-end (read more costly) tool makers will usually provide a very serviceable tool right out of the package. Even with that nicety, nearly all woodturners take every new tool to the grinder to shape it and sharpen it to their specific liking.

With absolutely no intention of being demeaning or derogatory, I'm wondering about your sharpening abilities. This is based on your comment about the tool not cutting well as you took it from the packaging. Opening a new tool from any manufacturer, most turners can determine if it is ground to anywhere near their desired angle/profile and if it is sharp or not. Even before putting the tool to wood, a look at the grind and a careful finger test of the edge should give you a good indication of the sharpness condition and suitability to cutting. If your current sharpening capability doesn't let you do this, perhaps you should work on your sharpening skills. Team up with a more experienced turning friend or club member to get some guidance and additional sharpening practice.

You say this is your first new gouge. How are you dealing with your other tools as you get and use them, new or used? All tools dull with use and need periodic 'refreshing', so how are you dealing with them? Are you able to get them to a sharp and functional state easily and repeatably? How do you determine that they are indeed sharp? My comments made here are geared to all. I believe that everyone can always improve in every aspect of their turning. Even the most accomplished and skilled are continually refining their craft, even if it is subconsciously. Work on your sharpening skills. I promise they will serve you well throughout your turning journey. In addition to learning from a turner with a more sharpening capabilities, you may wish to refer to *WT*260, *WT*261, and *WT*263. In those issues, my columns focused specifically on sharpening equipment, techniques, and tips. ●

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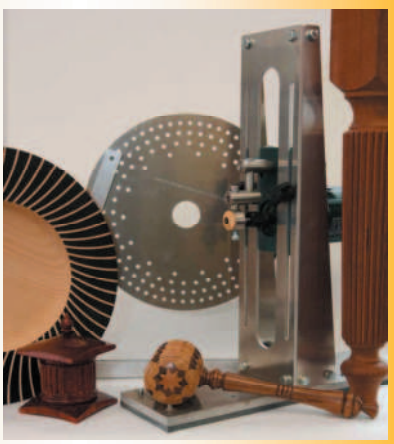

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Pendant

Sue Harker turns timber into jewellery

Several years ago, I was sent and asked to turn some 50mm diameter lengths of resin and to draft two articles – one on best practice for the turning and one showing a project made with it. I turned a lovely ginger pot from tiger-patterned resin.

This was my introduction to resin turning and I soon discovered that the resin lengths also came in 45mm and 39mm diameter. I decided this product would be ideal for making pendants, so I set about designing pendant turning jigs – one which would revolve the pendant disc on a true revolving centre and another to revolve off centre, so a hole could be cut through for decoration.

For this article I show you how to make and use a pair of the pendant jigs I designed for 45mm diameter stock, but instead of using resin I have chosen to use timber. The pendant jigs, in three sizes, are available to purchase on my website should you prefer not to make them.

I have many short lengths of segment strips from when I turn open segment projects. The strips are too small to cut segments from safely, so they have sat in a box waiting for a suitable project for them. This pendant is the perfect project – by cutting them into the appropriate length and laminating several strips together, a block can be created that is suitable for making three pendants.

The pendant pictured with the pendant jigs

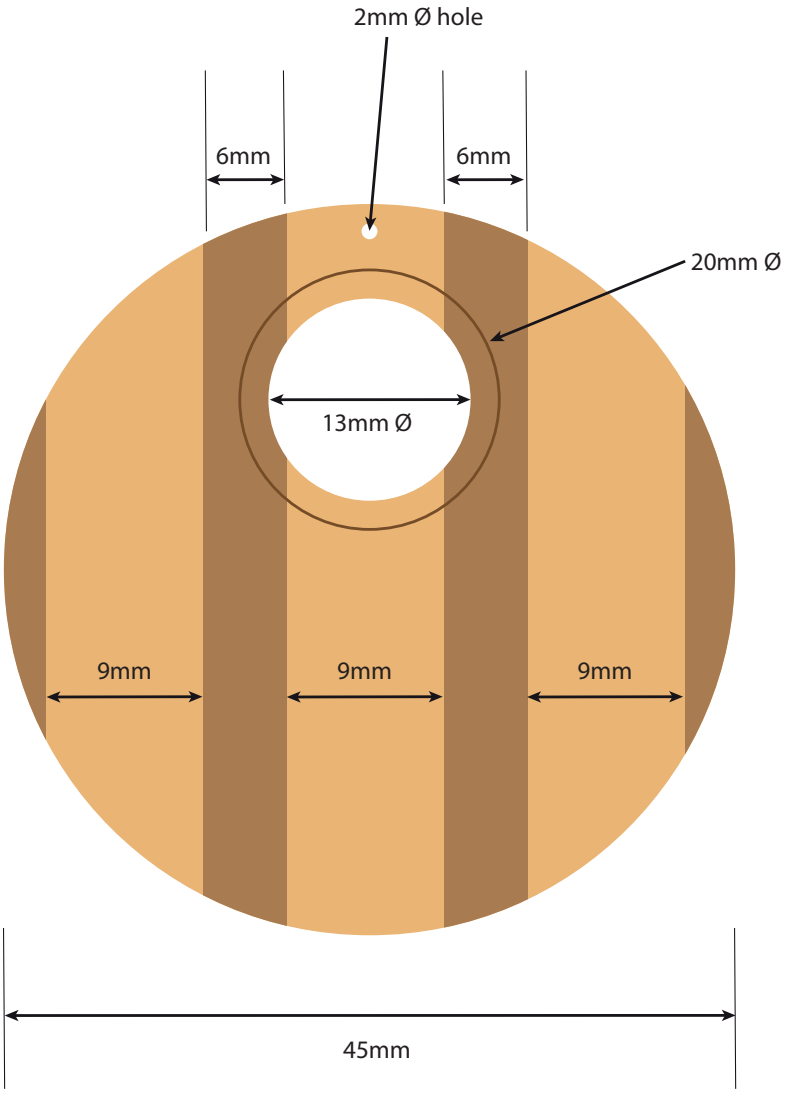
Plans & equipment

Materials

- 3 x 50mm lengths of sycamore measuring 33 x 9mm thick
- 4 x 50mm lengths of zebrano measuring 33 x 6mm thick
- Scrap of timber 50 x 50 x 50mm for chucking jig
- Piece of timber 3 x 3 x ¾in thick
- Piece of timber 4 x 4 x ¾in thick

Tools & equipment

- ⅜in fingernail profile spindle gouge
- 1/16in fluted parting tool
- Drill with 2mm drill bit fitted
- Clamping jig and two clamps
- Vernier callipers
- Medium superglue
- 45mm (1¾in) pendant turning jigs
- Double-sided tape
- Scissors
- Melamine lacquer
- Three-mop buffing system
- Tripoli compound
- White Diamond compound
- Microcrystalline Block
- 20in pendant chord
- 10mm diameter silver-plated finding
- PVA adhesive
- Pillar drill
- 1¾in Forstner bit
- 9mm drill bit
- Pyrography machine



Top tips!

- When clamping the timber strips together make sure the pieces are aligned so they create flat surfaces.
- Parted-off pieces of timber that have a chucking spigot and a small length of wood can be saved for making jam chucks or sacrificial jigs.
- The size of hole to be turned off centre will be dictated by the type of jig being used. Try to avoid turning out the area that contains the hole for the jewellery findings.
- When sanding the cut-out off-centre hole in the pendant, be careful not to slip out of the hole and scratch the front face. Should this happen, the pendant will need to put back into the true revolving jig to re-sand that face.

Making the pendant jigs

1 Cut two pieces of wood, one approx. 3 x 3 x ¾in thick for the centre revolving jig and the other approx. 4 x 4 x ¾in thick for the off-centre jig. Find the centres of both pieces of wood and drill a hole large enough to fit the jaws of your chuck. Here I am drilling a 1⅞in hole to fit my jaws.

2 Mount the 4 x 4 x ¾in piece of wood on the lathe, turn into the round and true up the front face. Sand using 120 grit and working through 180, 240, 320 and 400. Next, apply a coat of melamine lacquer then mark the centre with a pencil. This is done by resting a pencil on the toolrest and marking the centre with the lathe revolving. Remove the timber from the lathe and put to one side. Mount the second, smaller, piece of timber on the lathe, turn into the round, and mark a diameter of 1¾in. From this mark, shape the timber to form a dome, removing approx. half of the thickness at the edge, leaving the top section flat.

3 With the small piece of timber still on the lathe, drill a 1¾in diameter hole to a depth of around 3mm using a Forstner bit mounted in a Jacobs chuck. The lathe speed needs to be approx. 500rpm for this.

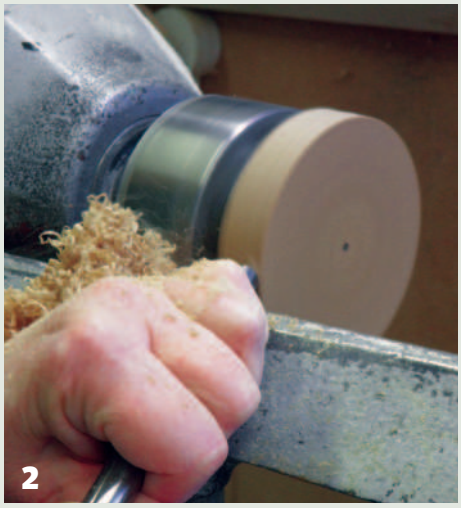
4 Next, drill a hole all the way through the centre of the timber using a drill bit measuring approx. 9mm. This hole will be used to remove the pendant disc from the jig. Sand the jig using the same grits used earlier and apply a coat of melamine lacquer.

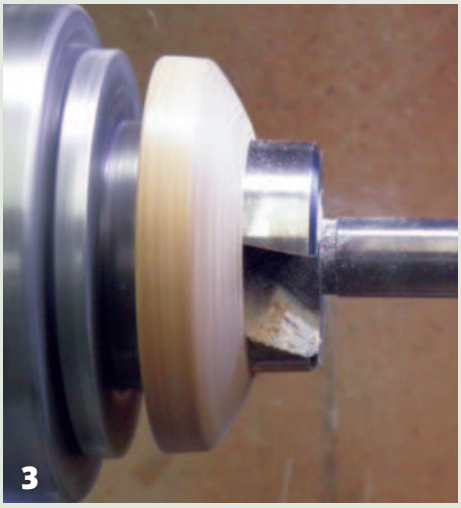
5 For the off-centre revolving jig, the 4in diameter disc prepared earlier is used. Draw a line through the centre, the full width of the jig. Next, measure 8mm from the true centre and make a hole with the point of a bradawl.

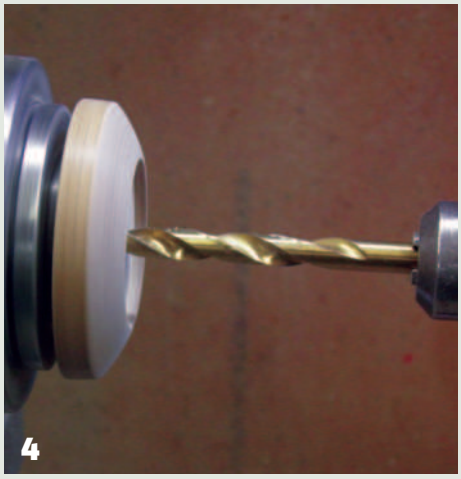
6 For drilling the recess in the larger jig, fit the jig into a clamp. Sit the clamped jig on a pillar drill and make sure the disc sits flat on the table.

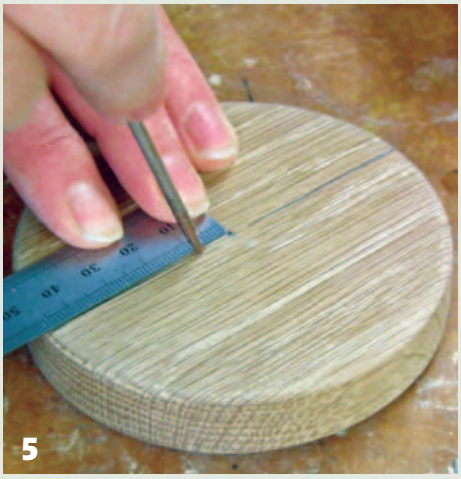
7 Line up the hole marked earlier with the bradawl point, with the centre of a 1¾in Forstner bit fitted into the pillar drill. Hold the clamp securely with both tightening handles and drill a hole to a depth of approx. 3mm.

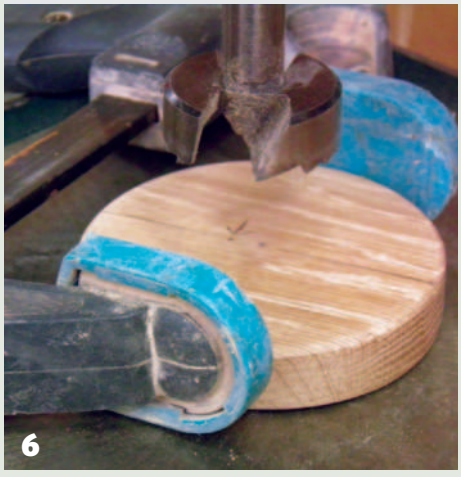
8 Remove the 1¾in drill bit and secure a 9mm drill bit into the pillar drill. Position the drill bit at the bottom of the 1¾in drill hole, towards the thin end and drill a hole through the full thickness of the timber. This hole will be used for removing the pendant disc once the offset hole has been turned through it.









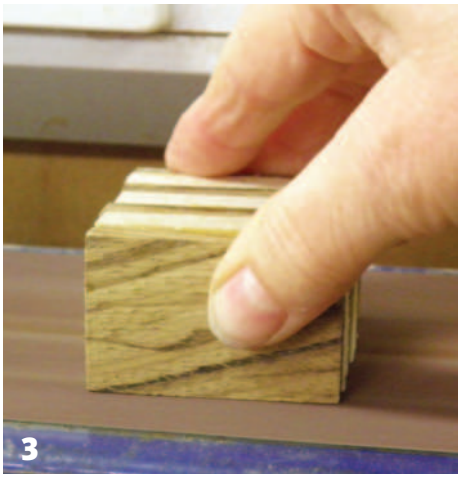


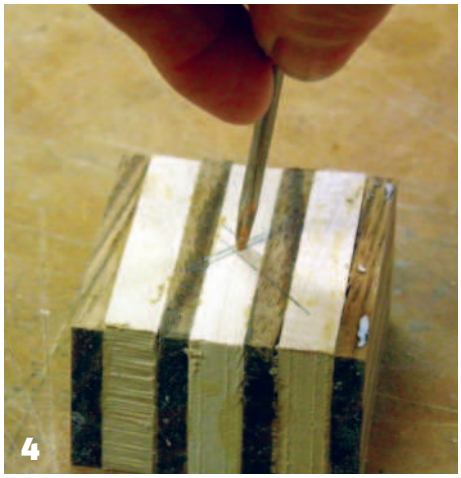
PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF SUE HARKER

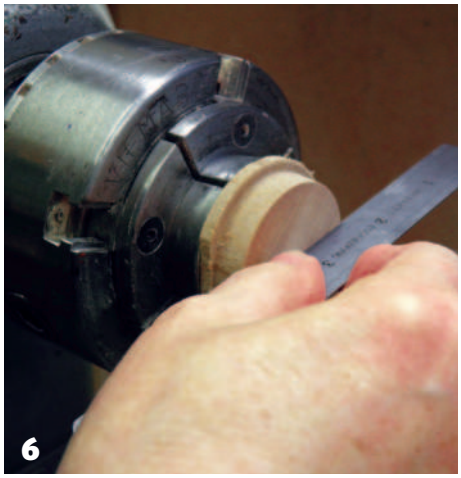
Top tip

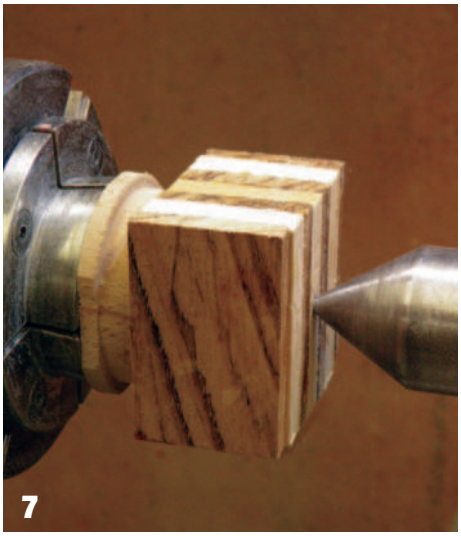
Burning the orientation line on the off-centre jig

To ensure the pendant disc is always mounted in the off-centre jig in the correct orientation, use a pyrography machine to burn along the line drawn earlier. The widest part of the jig is the top, so burn in that position.









Making the pendant

1 For this pendant you will need seven pieces of 50mm lengths of timber for laminating. Three pieces of thicknessed sycamore timber strips measuring approx. 33 x 9mm thick by 50mm long, and four pieces of zebrano measuring 33 x 6mm thick by 50mm long. You will also need two pendant-making jigs, one which will revolve a pendant jig on true centre and another one to revolve it off centre. Glue the strips together, alternating the timber species to create a striped pattern. A PVA adhesive is used for this.

2 Clamp the pieces of timber together until the glue is dry. Here I am using a gluing jig and have placed a small strip of wood along the edges to keep them in line and assist with the clamping.

3 Sand one of the surfaces measuring 50 x 50mm to ensure maximum hold when gluing to a sacrificial chucking spigot. Here I am using a belt sander to flatten the surface.

4 On the opposite face of the laminated block to the sanded side, find the exact centre and make a hole with the point of a bradawl. This will assist with centralising the block when gluing it to the sacrificial chucking jig.

5 Turn a sacrificial chucking jig for gluing to the laminated block. The main reason for using a sacrificial chucking jig is so all the laminated timber block can be used for pendants. The front face of the chucking jig needs to be completely flat to provide a better gluing surface. A ⅜in fingernail profile is used for this.

6 To assist with ensuring the front face is completely flat, lay a steel rule or something similar across the face. The ruler will show any discrepancies, which can be refined using a flat scraper or similar.

7 Apply medium density superglue to the front face of the chucking jig and spray activator on the sanded surface of the laminated block. Secure a revolving centre in the tail drive and locate its point in the hole previously made in the centre of the laminated block. Wind in the tail drive to keep the block in position so when it meets the chucking jig the laminated block will sit centrally. Tighten the tail drive and leave for a short while – the bonder should work immediately, providing a strong hold.

8 Using a ⅜in standard grind bowl gouge, turn the laminated block into the round and true up the front face. The front face will become the back of the pendant and needs to be flat, so repeat the process used for the chucking jig. Size the block to 1¾in diameter, a pair of spring callipers set to the correct diameter can be used for this. Try the laminated block in the pendant turning jig to check the fit. You are looking for a close fit but not a jam fit.

9 Drill a 2mm diameter hole to a depth of 10mm, approx. 4mm in from the edge and through the centre of the middle strip of timber. A 2mm drill bit fitted into a drill is used for this. This hole will be used to attach the jewellery findings.

10 Sand the front face and edge, starting with 120 grit and working through 180, 240, 320 and 400. Blow out the dust before applying melamine lacquer. Allow to dry before adding a second coat.

11 Part off a disc of the prepared timber measuring approx. 8mm thick. I have used a fluted parting tool for this to minimise torn fibres.

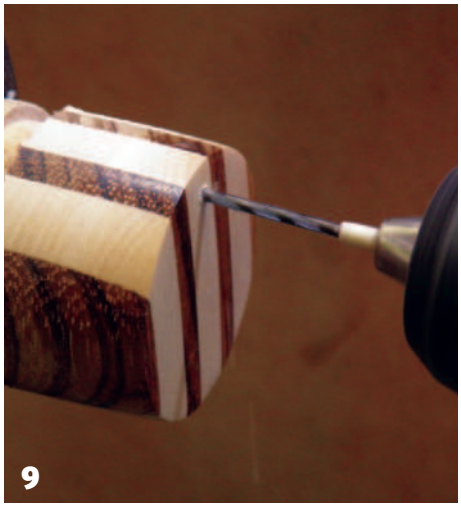
12 Apply double-sided tape to the finished surface and trim off the excess. Push the pendant disc into the centre rotating jig and take several smoothing cuts with a standard grind bowl gouge. Dome the pendant disc to create thinner edges, a skew chisel with a flat shaft can be used to refine the shape. Sand the disc using the same abrasive grits as previously used. Blow off the resulting dust and apply melamine lacquer.

13 When the melamine lacquer has dried, remove the disc from the jig. The jigs I make have a hole drilled through them to assist with this. Fit the disc in the off-centre jig, lining up the drilled hole with the burned line. The same piece of double-sided tape should be reusable, however, if it does not stick properly then replace it. Rotate the chuck by hand and draw a line on the pendant disc where the hole is to be turned. Avoid cutting through the hole drilled for the jewellery findings.

14 Using a ⅜in fingernail profile spindle gouge, turn out the centre of the pendant disc, taking care not to turn the hole wider than the drawn pencil line.

15 Sand the edges of the turned hole. To do this, roll up a piece of abrasive and sand using the thickness of the abrasive as support. Take care to ensure the abrasive does not fall out of the hole and scratch the already sanded front face. Coat with melamine lacquer and when dry buff to a shine with a three-mop buffing system. Load the first mop with Tripoli compound, the second with White Diamond and the third mop with microcrystalline. The microcrystalline will provide a water-resistant finish for longer-lasting durability.

16 Using two pairs of small pliers, open the ends of a 10mm diameter ring, wide enough to feed through the hole in the pendant and receive the cord. With this done, bend the finding back into the round, ensuring there are no gaps between the edges. The pendant is now ready to wear.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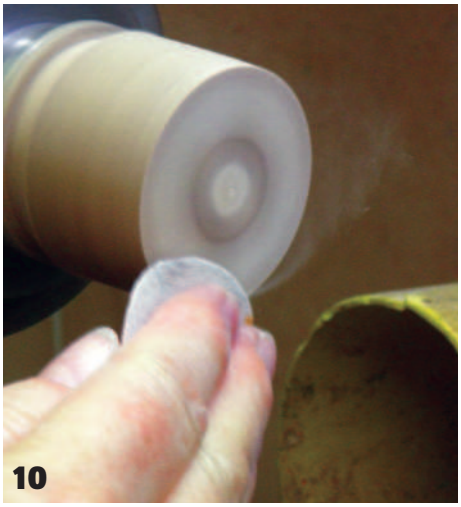
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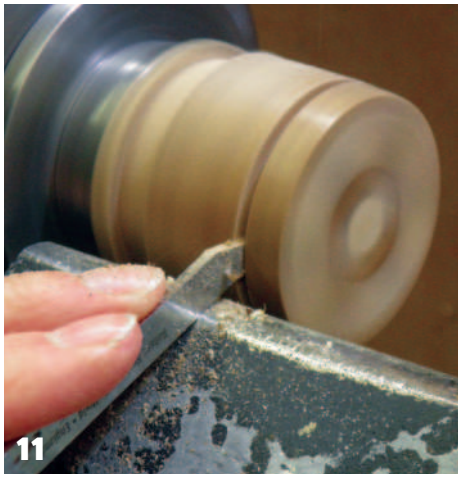
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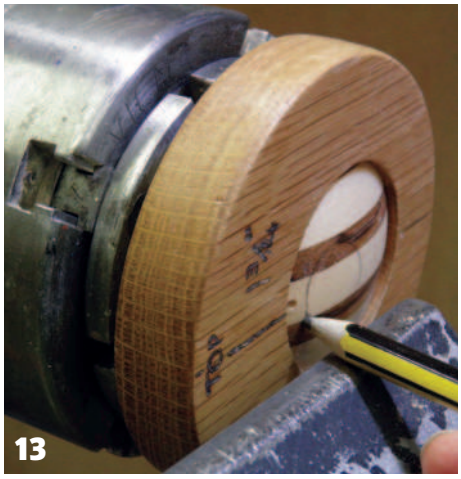
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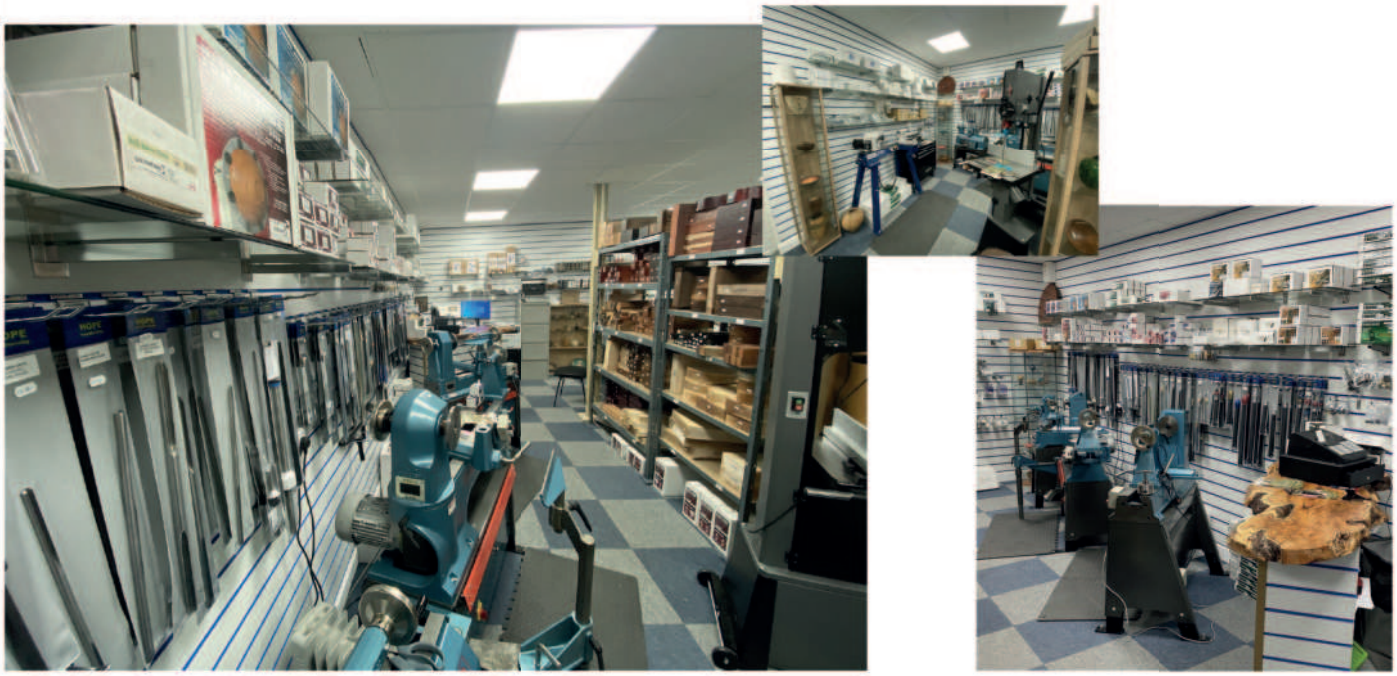

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Porcini box

You'll find there's mushroom in your life for John Hawkswell's unusual turning

Mushrooms come in all shapes and sizes, but porcini or ceps have attractive rounded tops which sit nicely in the hand. Certainly as a box lid this shape is a bit easier to grasp than the pointy mushroom variety.

The overall shape is quite pleasing to the eye and the domed top simply demands to be touched. I have noticed that people find it difficult to resist picking it up and looking inside. I have also wondered whether a lid could become a stress-busting activity. I have these three on my desk and at times of stress, such as talking to officialdom, I find that I subconsciously start popping the lids. It seems to help.

Design and choice of materials and technique

Try to get a pretty piece of wood for this project. Olive wood is a great choice if available. Spalted beech is another. Yew with a mixture of heart and sap wood is a personal favourite, although not everybody can turn yew as the dust is irritating to some woodturners.

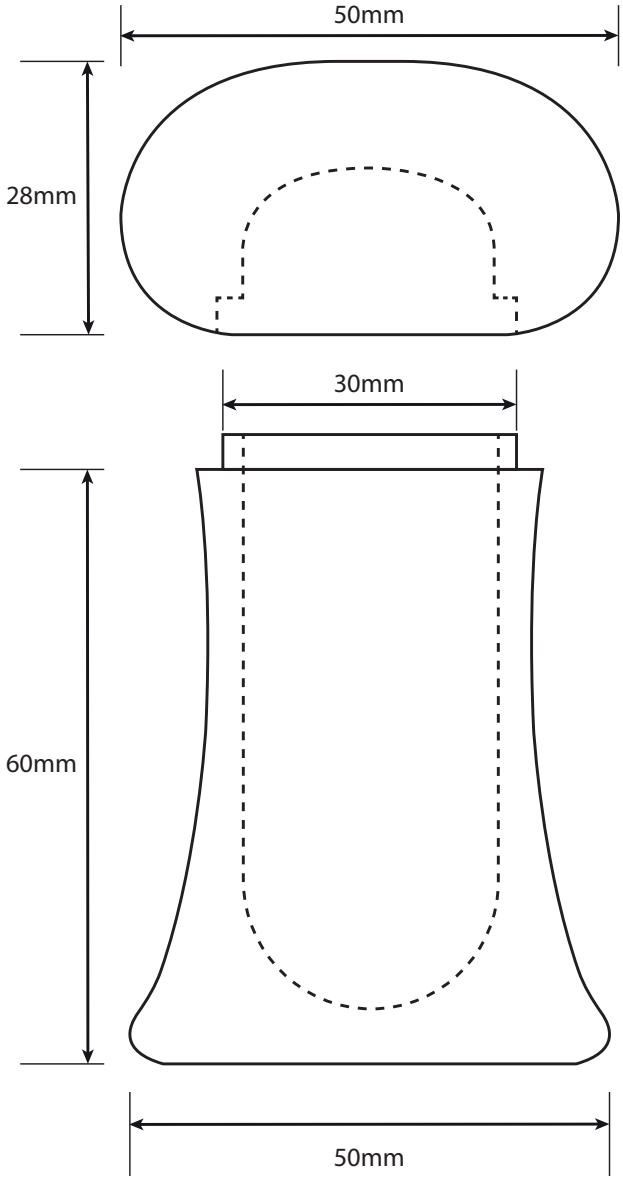
Plans & equipment

Materials

- Yew branchwood, 60 x 60 x 120mm
- Softwood, 70 x 70mm for sacrificial chucks
- Abrasives 120, 180, 240 grit
- Yorkshire grit

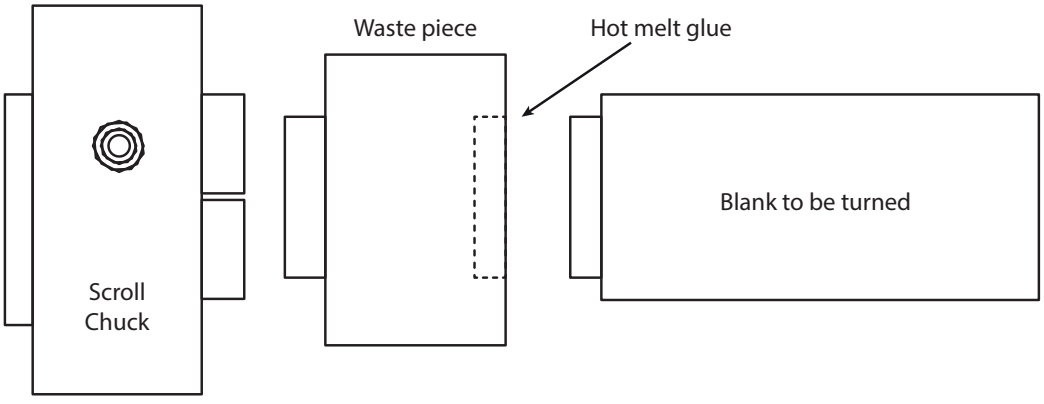
Tools & equipment

- PPE as appropriate
- Spindle roughing gouge
- ⅜in (10mm) 10mm spindle gauge
- ½in (13mm) spindle gouge
- ⅝in (15mm)continental gouge
- ½in (13mm) oval skew
- Narrow parting tool
- Diamond parting tool
- Round scraper for shear cuts
- Vernier callipers



Top tip

To make the most of a nice piece of timber, put some sacrificial waste softwood in the chuck. Turn a recess and glue the matching spigot of the blank to it using hot-melt glue. This way you can use all the selected timber and give yourself plenty of working room near the scroll chuck.



1 Mount in the chuck and turn down to a cylinder using a spindle roughing gouge. Turn a spigot to suit your chuck at both ends, make a pencil mark about 60mm along from the blank and part off. This section will form the lid and the remainder will be used for the body. The first job is to turn the lid.

2 Shape the inside of the lid. A ⅜ spindle gouge is ideal. The one used here has a longer grind on the left-hand side to facilitate this operation. While by no means essential for this project, a light attached to the toolrest clearly shows up any rough grain or tool marks. Sand and finish the inside of the lid.

3 Start shaping the exterior of the lid. The area nearest the recess is best shaped now because it will be a difficult part to access after this stage. A ½in spindle gouge makes short work of this operation. Remove tool marks by sanding and remove the lid from the chuck still attached to the waste wood. Put this to one side for the moment.

4 Mount the blank which will form the body on to the scroll chuck or on to some waste wood as shown in the photo. A recess has been formed in the waste wood to take the spigot formed at the end of the yew blank. To ensure the work is held securely, hot-melt glue has been put in the recess and around the joint between the yew and the waste.

Turning the body

5 With the blank mounted securely in the chuck, the first job is to form a spigot to match the recess in the lid. This should provide a snug fit.

6 Now to hollow out the box body. In this case, a spindle gouge with a fairly short bevel was used with the flute pointing at about 10 o'clock. To clean up the hole from the gouge it is sometimes helpful to use a shear scraper to remove the worst tool marks before sanding.

7 Sand and finish inside the box body. Everybody seems to have their own finishing technique. I like to use two coats of sander sealer and leave overnight before keying back with an abrasive paste and then applying wax. The late Ray Key told me he always left the sanding sealer overnight to harden before rubbing back. If it was good enough for Ray it is certainly good enough for me.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN HAWKSWELL

8


9

8 Start shaping the outside of body. A shallow spindle gouge takes the 'slow' curves needed here in its stride. We want to retain the support from the headstock for the next operation, so do not remove too much wood from the base of the box at this stage.

9 Leave the body mounted on the lathe and fit the lid. You are effectively using the body as a jam chuck and this facilitates blending the two parts together. You can now complete shaping the top of the lid, using the tailstock for support as long as possible and particularly while making heavy cuts. Remove the waste to get good access to the top of the lid.


10

11

10 To make the final cuts in the top of the lid, the tailstock is removed. It is often a good idea to sharpen the tool before taking the final cuts so you don't have to apply too much pressure.

11 Sand through the grits. I stopped at 240, applied two coats of sanding sealer and left it overnight to harden. Abrasive paste was applied and then it was treated to some wax as before.

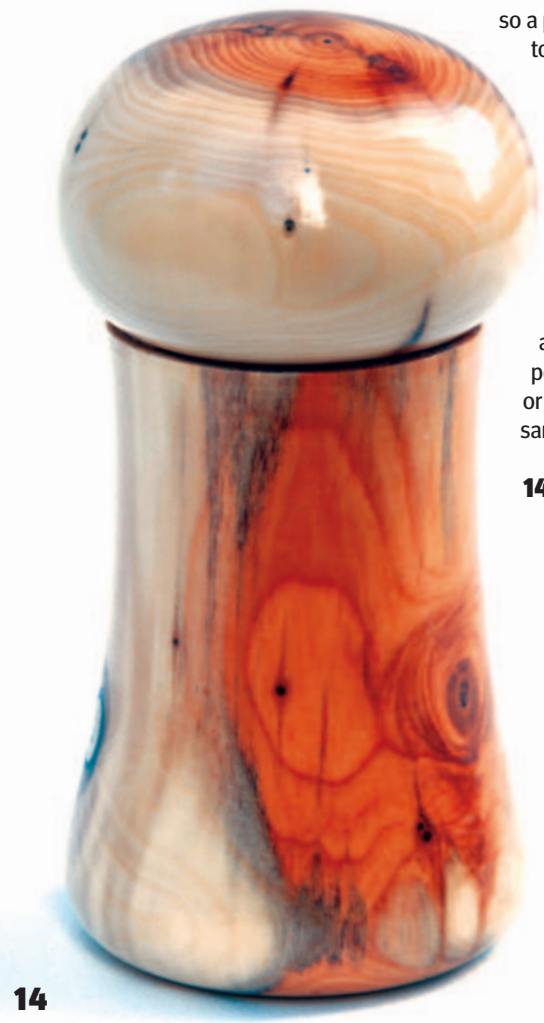
12 Make a jam chuck from some softwood and push the box into the recess you have created. Again, bring up the tailstock for support. The recess in this case was made a trifle too wide, so a piece of paper tissue was needed to provide a firmer grip.


12

13 With the main body of the box in the jam chuck, we now work on the base. First though, give yourself some room to work by removing some waste as shown. Refine the base to the point where you are able to sand. Light cuts are advisable as you get near to the parting off point. Check the base is flat or slightly concave and then sand and finish.


13

14 The finished box. ●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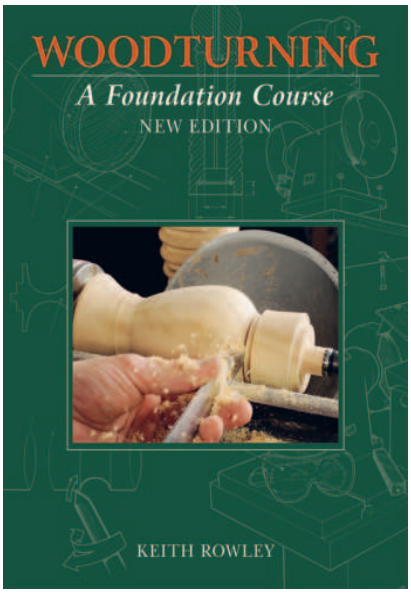

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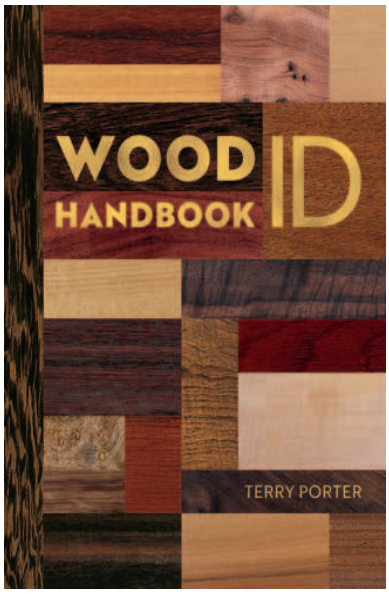

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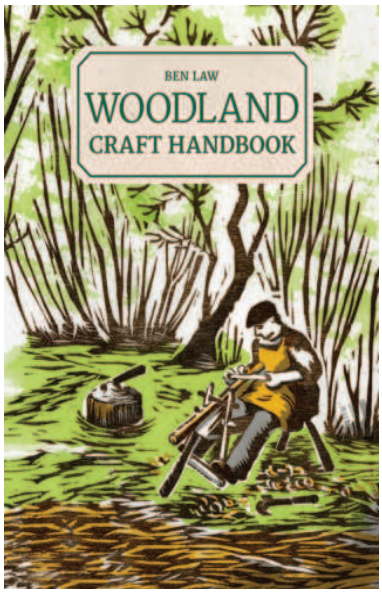

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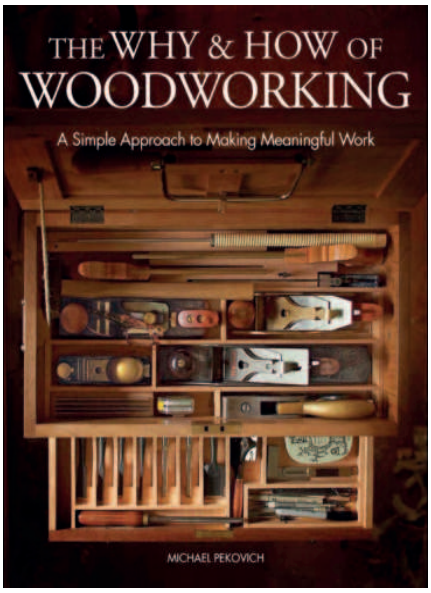

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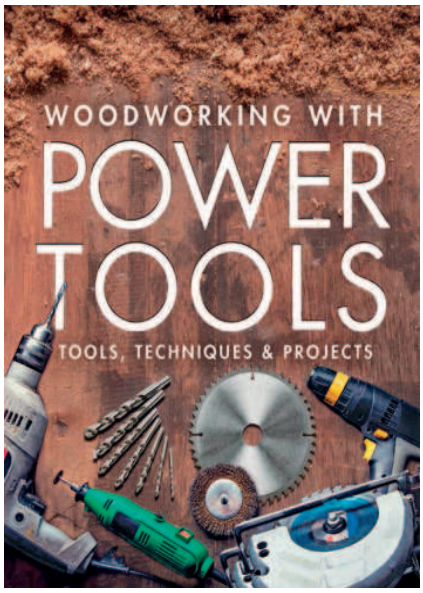

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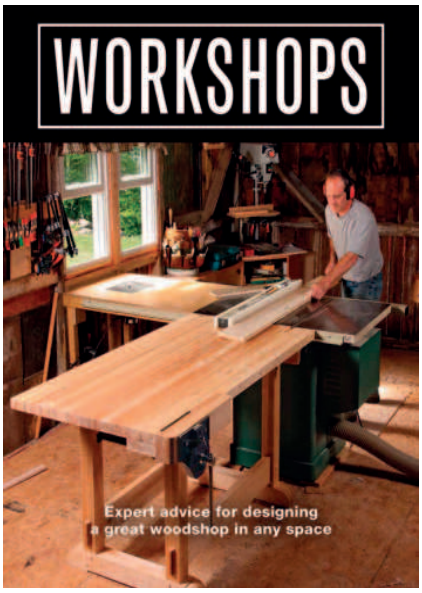

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Two Technologies Giving Unequalled Performance

‘In the beginning’

Les Symonds creates a rectangular hanging wall panel with turned components

I recall first seeing a panel such as that we are about to make as a profile picture on the social media page of a fellow woodturner, and I was both excited by it and inspired to have a go myself. That woodturner is Steve Heeley and he has kindly granted us permission to use the image of his work, and to use it as a source of inspiration to make our own panel. It is only proper to mention that Nick Agar is responsible for making this type of object popular in the early noughties.

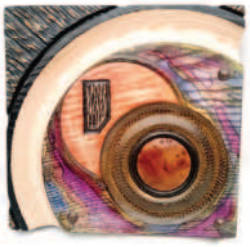


PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE HEELEY

Steve’s panel is quite complex, with numerous procedures involving cutting deep coves into the face of a revolving, off-centre workpiece, as well as texturing some of them, but we are going to simplify things. Our panel will involve the minimum of off-centre work, with many of the features being applied into pre-drilled holes, thus making this project better suited to the turner with intermediate skills. By all means copy the example shown, and if you are further inspired take a close look at the shapes and textures on Steve’s work and progress your skills to use some of them.

Taking a closer look at our own example, I aim to depict the birth of our universe – the Big Bang, as we tend to call it – and I have entitled it In the Beginning. At the centre of the Big Bang is a boxwood core-planet, surrounded by a walnut ring. The starburst is represented by shallow carvings in the darkness of space, which in turn has been represented by scorching. An emerging planet, in the lower-right corner, has been turned from a piece of stem wood of a garden shrub called mahonia, and the applied decal, in the top-right corner, uses pyrography to suggest the explosion around a yew wood planet. The frame of the decal uses copper gilding-cream to suggest the minerals being created. As is always the case with my projects, you can develop this idea and use whatever suitable materials you have to hand.

HEALTH & SAFETY

There is much to consider before embarking on this project.

- First, scorching… this has been dealt with in depth in Issues 320 and 321, but the essential points are that: 1) appropriate RPE and PPE must be used; 2) scorching should take place in a well-ventilated area outside the workshop, not within it, and on a non-combustible surface such as a concrete paving slab; 3) all flammable materials must be removed to a place at least 3m away from where the scorching takes place and a fire blanket, as well as a water bucket or fire extinguisher, should be to hand.
- Second, the use of the mini-angle grinder… the issues here are that you should: 1) never switch the grinder on at the plug/socket until you are ready to use it; 2) always keep both hands on the handle, NEVER have one hand on the workpiece; 3) use the toolrest as described and keep the lathe spindle locked, to limit the depth and the path of the cut of the grinder; 4) be aware that the on-off switch on tools of this make is easily accidentally pressed. Therefore, always check that the switch is in the off position before switching on at the socket and take care when putting the grinder down on any surface that the switch does not accidentally get pressed.
- Third, off-centre turning… we are using a fairly small workpiece, but it will be considerably out of balance, so the issues are: 1) keep the lathe speed down to a safe level; 2) always rotate the workpiece by hand before switching on, to ensure that it does not foul the lathe bed as it rotates; 3) use good lighting, placed close to the workpiece, to aid your vision of it; 4) all fingers must be kept on or behind the tool-rest at all times when turning.

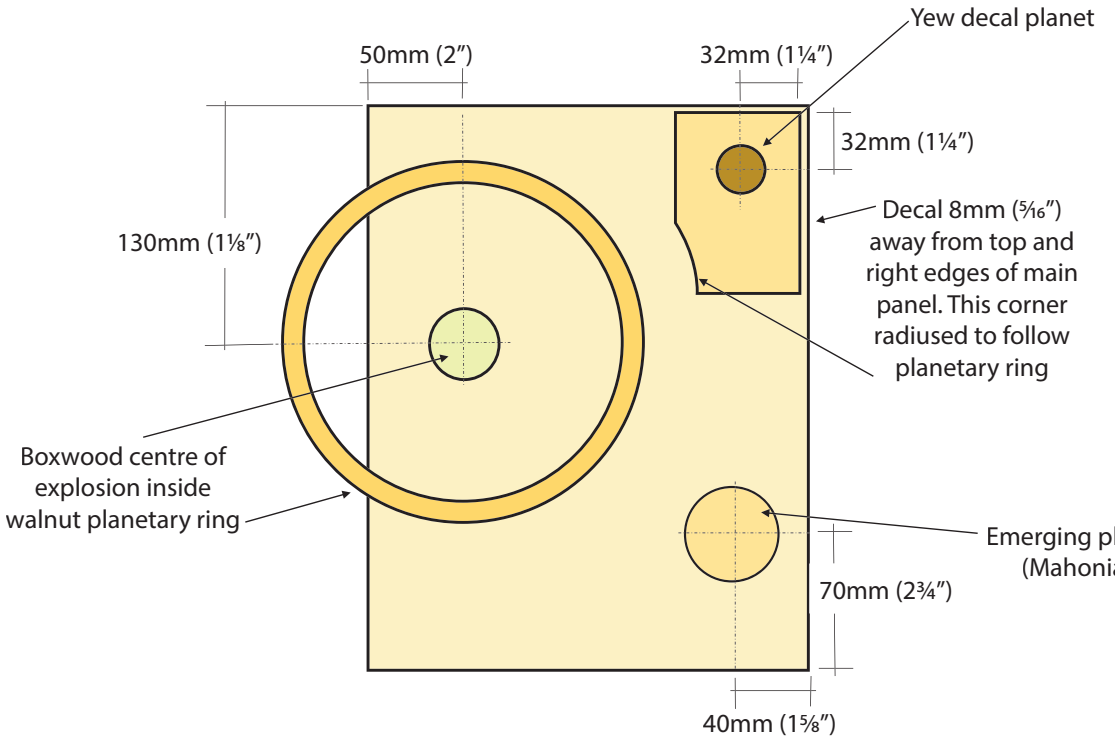
Plans & equipment

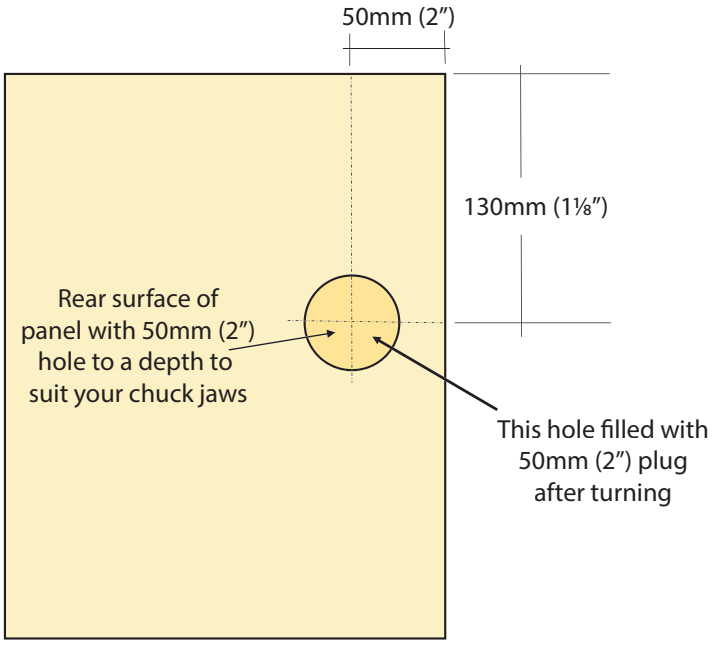
Materials

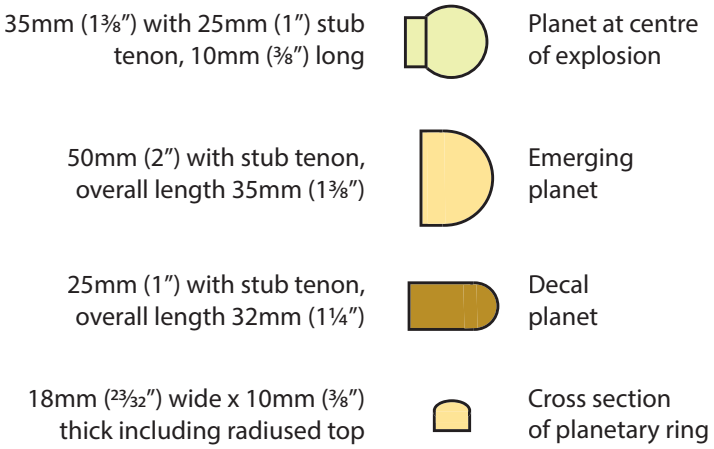
- Oak, 205 x 290 x 35mm
- Walnut, 200 x 200 x 25mm
- Boxwood, 60 x 40 x 40mm
- Mahonia, 60 x 60 x 60mm
- Yew, 80 x 30 x 30mm
- Sycamore, 92 x 64 x 10mm
- Two-part epoxy adhesive
- Abrasives to 400 grit
- Aerosol satin acrylic lacquer
- Copper gild-cream
- Masking tape

Tools & equipment

- PPE and RPE
- Lathe with indexing/spindle lock facility
- Chuck with 25mm and 40mm jaws
- Skew chisel
- Parting tool
- Spindle gouge
- Pyrography machine
- Gas blowtorch
- Wire brushes
- Fire safety – blanket/water/extinguisher
- Proxxon long-neck mini angle grinder or similar
- Wood-cutting disk for above
- Plastic scouring brush
- Forstner drills, 50mm and 25mm
- Jacobs chuck and key to fit tail-stock
- Steel rules
- Dividers
- Hand-drill and/or drill press
- Soft paintbrush (about 6mm)







1 Prepare the main workpiece and, using a 50mm diameter Forstner bit, drill a hole in its rear surface, to a depth to suit your chuck. This can be done in a bench vice, with a hand drill, or on a drill press. Use the dimensions given in the drawings to determine the centre point of this hole.

2 Moving outside the workshop, wearing appropriate RPE and PPE, and with the area prepared as noted in our Health and Safety notes, scorch each of the six surfaces of the panel to an even depth.

3 Using a wire brush such as a suede-cleaning brush or gilder's brush, scour each surface, working along the grain at all times. Use a soft hand-brush to keep sweeping the dust free from the surface and ensure that all soot and char residue is fully removed, then further rub the surface quite vigorously with rolled-up paper towel.

4 Mount the workpiece into your chuck jaws on the lathe, set your 25mm Forstner bit into a chuck in the tailstock and drill the hole for the centre of the 'explosion', to a depth of about 10mm, then remove the chuck and drill bit from the lathe.

5 Prepare the area for using the angle grinder; clear all other equipment out of the way and, without plugging the grinder in, carry out the next few steps, starting by setting the toolrest at a height so that when the grinder is rested on it and held horizontally, its cutting disc runs approximately at the height of the lathe axis.

6 Without changing the toolrest height, move it in or out until the grinder's cutting disc just cuts to a depth of barely a millimetre at an outer edge of the panel, furthest away from the panel's centre, with it still held horizontally. You will find that the body of such grinders broadens suddenly at the base of the long neck and this enables the toolrest to work well as a form of depth-stop.

7 Measure the distance that the toolrest is away from the face of the panel at the outer edge and adjust the toolrest so this measurement is retained while it reduces by 2-3mm at the centre. This will allow the tracks cut by the grinder to diminish as they travel from the centre to the outer edges.

8 With the lathe switched off, plug the grinder in (read the H&S notes about this). Lock the lathe spindle, switch the grinder on and, holding it firmly with both hands, rest the neck of the grinder on the toolrest adjacent to the 25mm hole. Move it into the wood and gently glide it to the left, along the toolrest, terminating off the wood and beyond the end of the toolrest. Repeat this procedure for each of the lathe's index-points (24, in this case). Be sure to switch the grinder off after every cut, and on again to commence subsequent cuts.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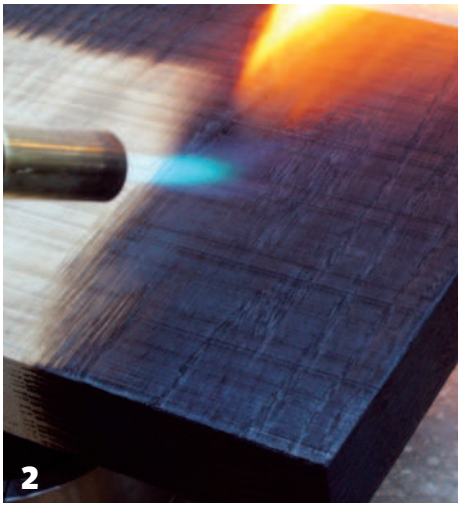
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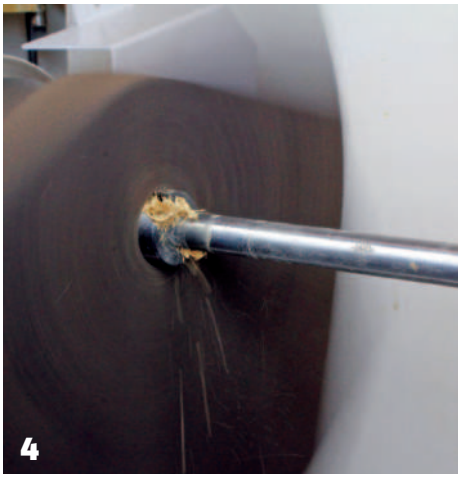
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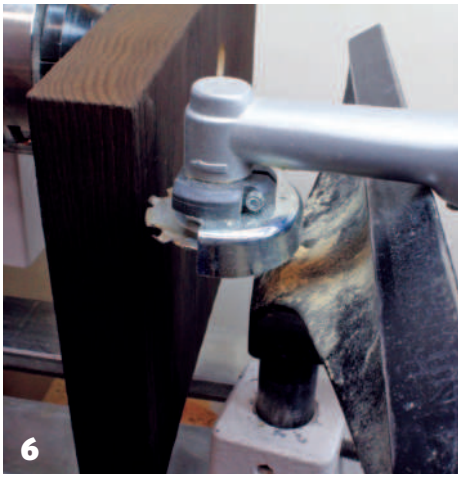
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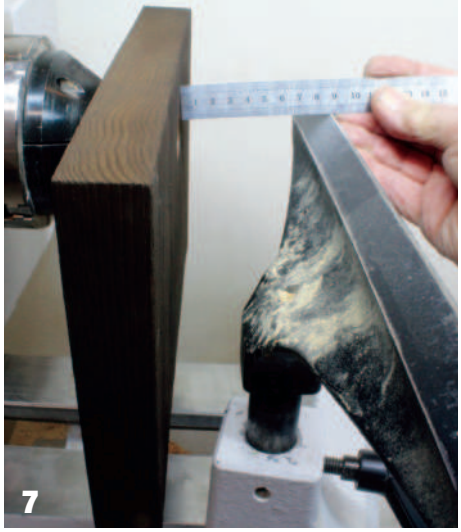
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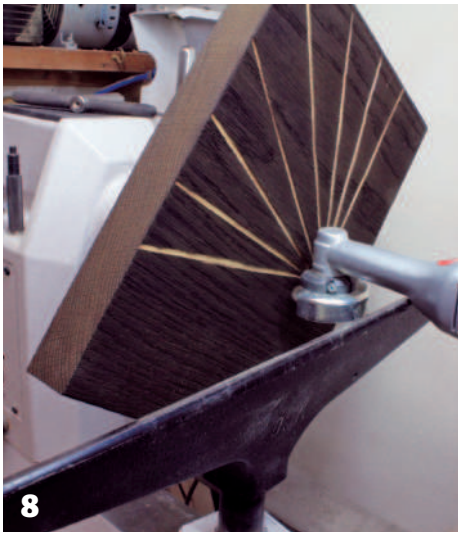
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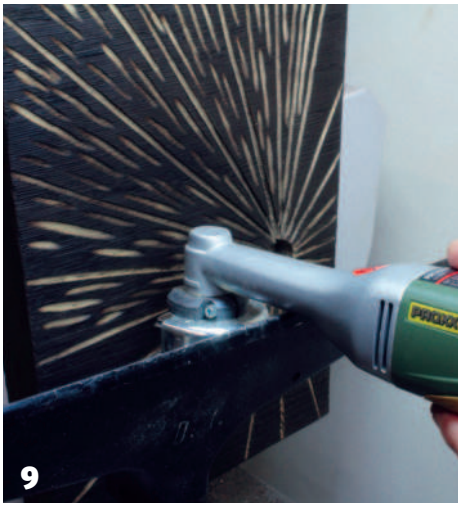
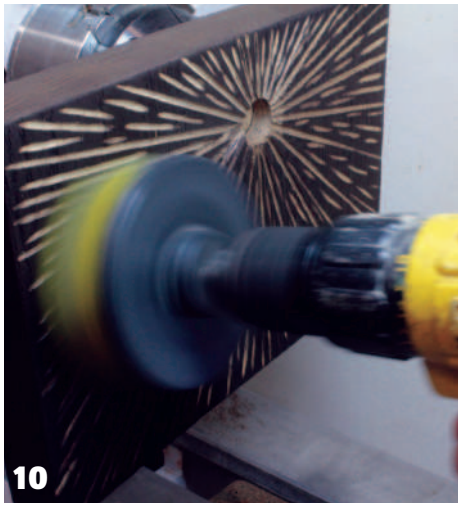
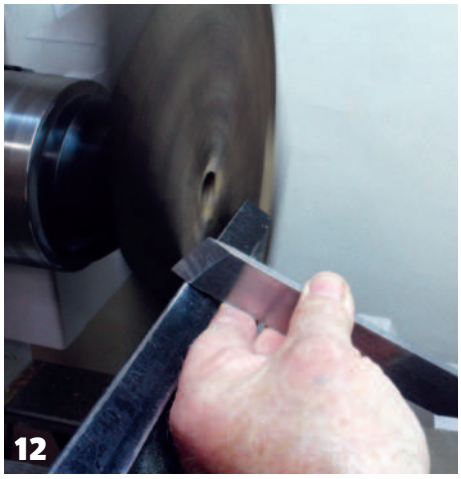
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LES SYMONDS







9 Slacken the grip of the chuck jaws and rotate the workpiece so the grinder can cut new tracks approximately central to each of the tracks already cut, then re-tighten the chuck and work all the way around the workpiece again, lifting and lowering the handle slightly to cut sufficient stop-start tracks to fill in the triangular areas between the tracks cut in Step 8.

10 Using a stiff plastic scouring brush, scrub away all the loose fibres caused in the previous two steps. Work along and across the path of all the cuts to ensure that all loose fibres are removed.

11 Using the dimensions noted on the drawing, mark out the centre point of the hole for the emerging planet in the bottom right corner of the panel. This is done with a 50mm Forstner bit as described in Step 1.

12 With the tip of a skew chisel, mark out the inner and outer edges of the planetary ring. This does not need to be done very precisely as you will make the ring to fit the groove that you are about to cut for it. The tip of the skew needs to cut through the surface fibres to reduce fibre break-out in the next step.

13 Check over the H&S notes before switching the lathe on. Use your parting tool to cut a groove between the two rings marked in the previous step, to a depth of a couple of millimetres below the bottom of the deepest tracks formerly cut by the grinder. Hold the tool firmly and progress it into the wood very gradually to reduce the effects that the rotation of the off-centre wood will cause.

14 Take the workpiece off the lathe, preferably keeping it in the chuck, but if you have only one chuck you will need to remove it fully. Lay the workpiece down horizontally and carefully measure the inner and outer diameters of the groove that you just cut. Make a note of these measurements.

15 Mount the walnut blank for the planetary ring on a screw chuck and skim its outer edge, reducing it to the diameter noted in the previous step. The finished ring will need to be about 10mm thick, so you don't have to skim the whole thickness of the blank if you wish to keep what is left of the blank for future use.

16 Using the measurement noted in Step 14, mark the diameter on the inner face of the ring on to the face of the walnut.

17 Use a parting tool to cut a groove a millimetre or two inside the ring just marked, to a depth of about 12mm. You may well have to make a second cut, a millimetre or two inside the first cut, if the parting tool starts to bind in the cut. Once done, sharpen the parting tool and refine the groove, cutting right up to the line previously marked.

18 Form a gently rounded outer surface to the ring. This does not need to be a full, semi-circular bead – a gentle rounding-over will suffice. Abrade down to 400 grit.

19 Make an initial, shallow cut with a parting tool to commence the process of parting the planetary ring off the blank. Lightly abrade away any loose fibres that this may have raised, then apply a few light coats of satin acrylic lacquer, allowing time between coats for the lacquer to dry. Once dry, part the ring off the blank, using the parting tool in one hand and supporting the ring with the other.

20 Mount the blank for the emerging planet into a chuck, square its end off and reduce its outer edge to 50mm diameter.

21 Mark a pencil line 25mm back from the end then use a spindle gouge to form a radiused end such that the end of the blank becomes hemispherical.

22 Start parting the emerging planet off the blank to an overall length of 35mm, but only to a few millimetres depth for now, then abrade the whole end of the blank down to 400 grit.

23 Apply a few light coats of lacquer, sanding lightly between coats and, when dry, part the planet fully away from the blank.

24 Set the boxwood blank into a chuck, square its end off, reduce it to 35mm diameter and make a parting cut, 23mm back from the end, down to a depth of 25mm.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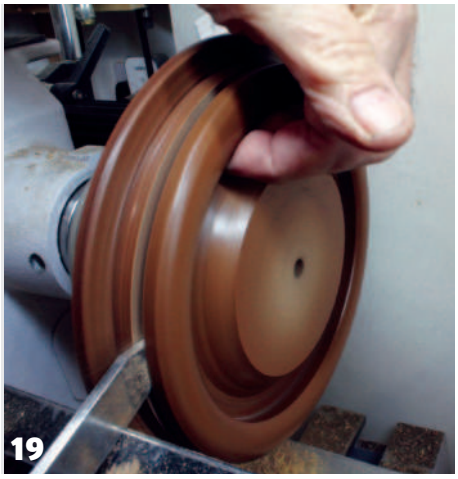
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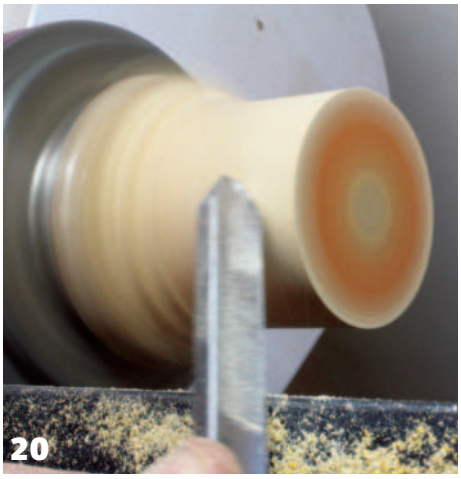
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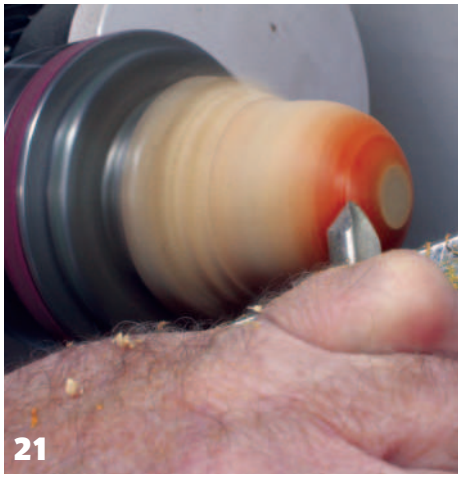
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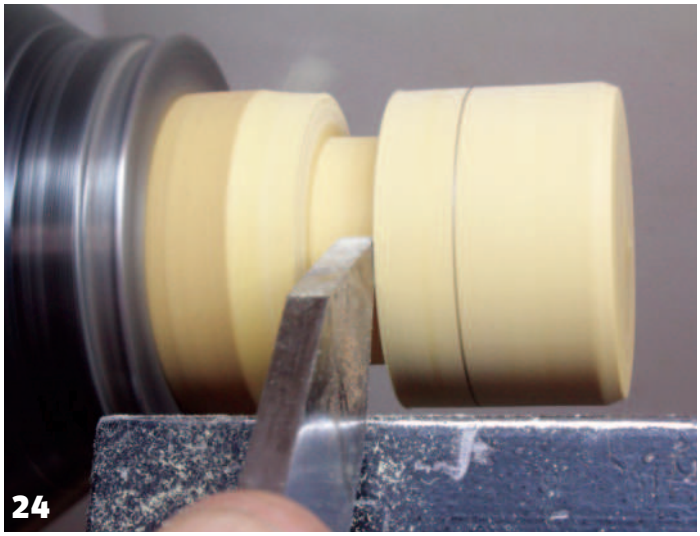
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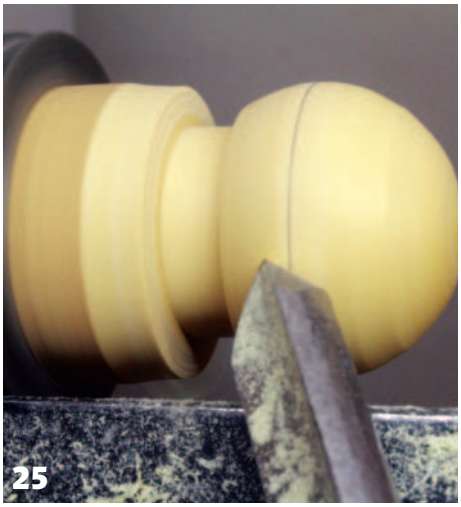
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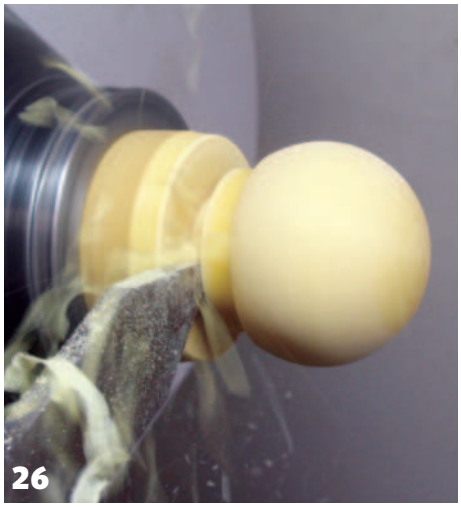
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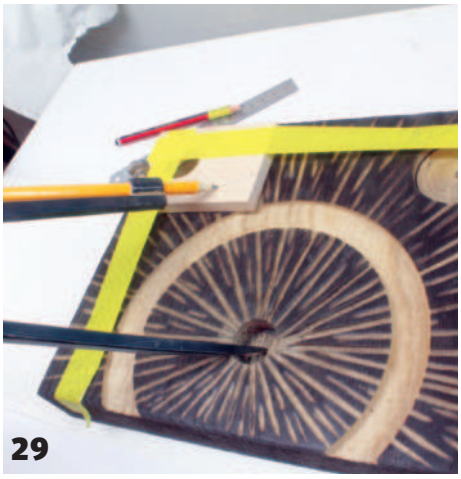
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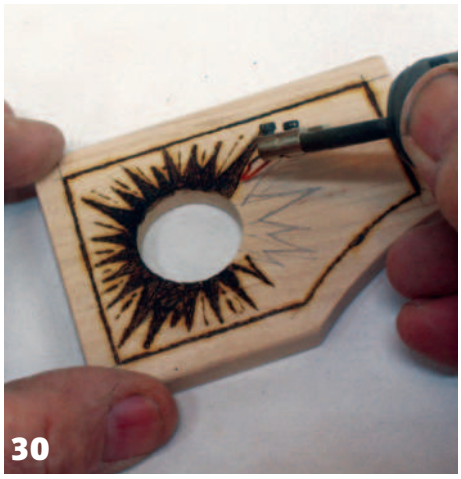
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25 Form the end of the workpiece into a partial sphere using a spindle gouge, then abrade down to 400 grit before applying a few light coats of lacquer.

26 Once the lacquer is fully dry, use your parting tool to form a tenon on the left end of the workpiece. This tenon needs to be 25mm diameter and 10mm long, plus extra for parting off. Once complete, part the planet off the blank and set it aside.

27 The final planet to cut is the one which will fit into the decal panel. Fit the yew blank for this planet into a chuck and reduce it to 25mm diameter, then radius the end over, forming a full, hemispherical end, just as you did with the emerging planet in Step 21.

28 Follow the same process as with the other planets, commencing the parting cut 32mm back from the end, then sand to 400 grit and apply lacquer before fully parting the planet off.

29 Take the piece of sycamore for the decal panel and drill the 25mm hole for its planet, also drilling the hole into the workpiece. Place the panel over the workpiece with these two holes aligned, tape the pieces together with masking tape and use a pair of dividers or compasses to mark a partial radius on the corner of the panel

30 Cut the curve on the corner off the panel, abrade all surfaces and then pyrograph on to its surface a line around its edge (about 7mm in) and the starburst pattern around the hole.

31 Mask off the centre of the panel, right up to the lines around the edges. Using the stub of the workpiece from which you just made the decal planet as a jam chuck, press the panel on to the stub to hold it securely while you apply copper gild cream to represent a frame around the panel. Once applied, smooth the surface of the copper with a soft paintbrush and remove the masking tape before the copper dries.

32 Assemble all the elements using two-part epoxy adhesive. To clean up the back of the panel, simply turn a 50mm plug and glue it into the chuck recess. Your panel will be able to stand freely without further work, but if you wish to hang it, attach a brass hanger before applying a few light coats of lacquer to all surfaces. ●

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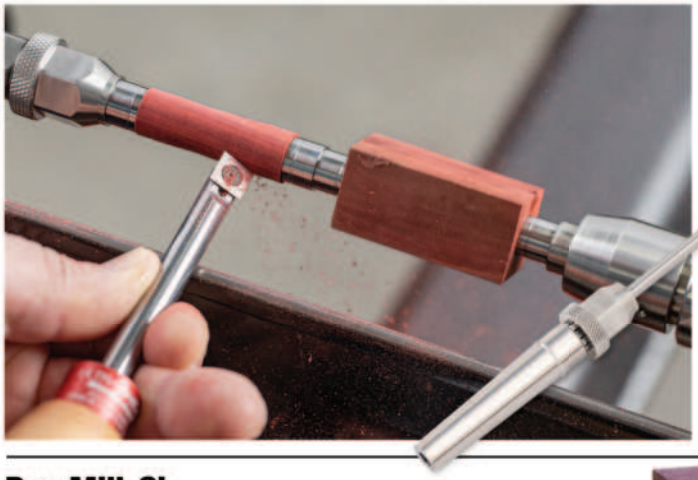

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Community news

What have you been turning? Please email your images to WTEditorial@thegmcgroup.com

Out of the box

Enclosed are a few photos of bits that I have done which may or may not be of interest. I had good-size piece of box, which inevitably was cracked, and the photo shows what I did with them. I also made coasters and the photos show how I made them. Also you will see that when I cut round on a bandsaw I always just screw any flat on the end to stop rotation.

In a previous issue I saw that someone put clamps on for doing this. Also, I have put lights in vases and bowls etc. just to try to make something different as I am only 82 years of age and still have lots to do. Hope you find these ideas of interest.

Regards Mick Webb, Ise & Nene valley Woodturning Club

New life for an oak worktop

This is my latest project. It is made from three pieces of oak worktop, 13in turned down to 12in. I stuck them together with waterproof PVA and left to dry, for two weeks, before I turned it into a bowl.

I then gave it two coats with top oil, which is food safe. This is the finished result.

Thankyou, Chris Hiscock, amateur woodturner, self taught

Learning curves

Here in SW France, I really look forward to finding *Woodturning* in my mailbox.

Being at the beginner end of the spectrum, I especially like the articles on basic techniques. I'm concentrating on making simple things well before taking on more advanced projects.

Explaining technicalities in an article is never easy, but I'd like to make two suggestions. Don't assume we all have wide knowledge of techniques or tools, such as a granny-tooth scraper. A photo identifying the tools used would be most helpful. The second idea concerns photos showing the stages of making a piece. Such illustrations need to be of sufficient dimensions so that features are clearly visible. I remember one photo a while back that appeared to show a bevel. When examined under a magnifying glass, it was actually a small tenon.

Here's a small bowl in cherry wood that I've just finished.

Best regards, Nigel Wild

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2

2 Spirit Stains can be applied by cloth, brush or spray - which includes Spray Diffusers, Airbrush or Spray Gun. Take care to mask off any areas you don't want to colour.

3

3 The stains blend extremely well regardless of application method, here the Yellow is being blended into Red, giving an orange colour in the transition.

4

4 Once you've achieved the colour and effect you require, finish as required. An aerosol sanding sealer followed by wax is a great choice.

5

5 A gloss finish will bring out the vibrancy of the colours. Experiment with the different colours and effects, add Liming Wax and Gilt Cream for extra variations.

See our YouTube channel for more tips!

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Skip to my lathe

John Holloway recounts another of his Tales from the Headstock

A sample of wood liberated from skips

I hate shopping. I think it's a pretty safe bet that most men do. It's just not in our DNA. My mantra simply states that women in general are excellent at shopping, whereas men just buy things. However, there are exceptions. Put a bloke in a field or a marketplace where stall holders are selling old tools, bits of wood or obscure mechanical bric-a-brac and it's difficult to prise them away. A box of rusty or ancient implements is like hitting the motherlode and we'll happily fiddle and poke about forever, much to the annoyance of the fairer gender.

Adopting and adapting the same principle, I have a love affair with skips, my preferred take on the equivalent of a shopping mall. Skips draw my attention and hit my radar with all the intensity of a hunter to game. I simply cannot pass a skip without a frisson of excitement as my heartbeat increases at the prospect of a 'find'.

As an enthusiastic turner, to me skips are an inexhaustible supply of wood in the never-ending quest for stock. Post-Covid, the streets in my village seem to have come alive to the sound of skips being dumped on roads and driveways as the nation vents its lockdown frustration by spending on household and garden improvements. With my wood antennae switched to 'fully focused', I scour the streets for offcuts, discarded furniture, felled trees and branches, and rarely come away disappointed.

I'm well aware, of course, that skipped items remain the property of their recent owner, so just helping yourself without permission is technically theft; if the skip is on private land, you could also be charged with trespass. Either way it's clearly not socially acceptable, so I have developed a cunning plan as a solution to this issue. A knock on the door, and a polite request is the best and most convenient way, but if there is no reply, I now carry a short letter seeking permission. Attached to the letter are two small self-adhesive stickers marked 'YES' and 'NO'. I ask the householder to stick the appropriate one on the skip so hopefully I can rummage later without bothering them again. It's never failed me.

One person's rubbish is another person's turning opportunity, and it's quite surprising just how much quality wood is thrown away. As a 'still learning' turner, scrap wood is a great way for me to practise at no cost. I've sourced oak, elm, sycamore, cherry, beech, yew, apple and the ubiquitous pine, either as manufactured items or from felled trees. In my experience asking tree surgeons if they could 'just cut me a few bits' also bears a fruitful outcome if I mention that 'I do a bit of woodturning'.

There's enormous pleasure in knowing I have played my part in upcycling and recycling a natural product as well as contributing to helping the environment. Responsible skip diving is free and there's always the element of expecting the unexpected.

My top skip experience was discovering a pile of oak, a frame tent, 50m of pristine garden hose and several reels of new electrical cable just as the owner drew up in his car. I tentatively asked whether I could take the oak. He peered into the skip, sighed and said: 'My wife's been clearing out the garage again. If I put it back, she'll only chuck it out again. Take the lot mate, if you want it.'

So, I did....

Starting turning

Holding work on the lathe

Holding work securely when turning is vital for two reasons: safety and quality – the more securely your work is held, the less likely it is to fly off the lathe and the better your cutting will be.

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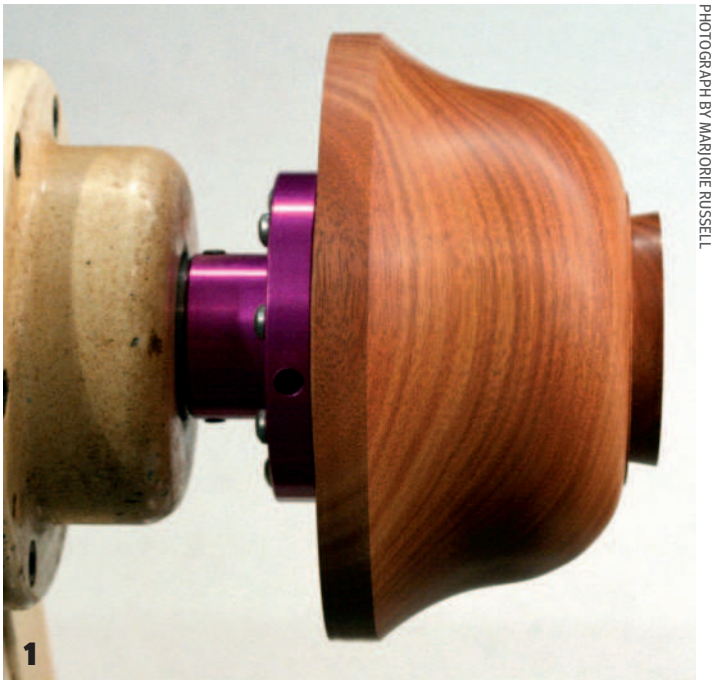


PHOTOGRAPH BY MARJORIE RUSSELL

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARJORIE RUSSELL

1 The faceplate is screwed to what will be waste from the inside of the bowl and the underside of the bowl has been turned, complete with its tenon/spigot, ready for removal from the faceplate and fitting into a scroll chuck so the bowl inside can be turned **2** This screw chuck has just been removed from the work so you can see how it attaches to the work via its screw thread **3** Work secured on a scroll chuck-based screwchuck **4** A typical screwchuck

There are numerous ways to hold work, but there are two fundamental types of turning which you are likely to tackle – faceplate and spindle turning – each of which requires a slightly different approach.

Here is a breakdown of which work holding methods can be used for the various type of turning, to help get you started.

Faceplate turning

This style of turning is usually done with the grain at 90° to the axis of the lathe, with bowls & platters being typical projects.

Here the work is usually held with a faceplate, screwchuck or scroll chuck, and these are fixed on to the threaded headstock spindle – the tailstock can be used for additional support.

Most beginners will start off buying timber blanks for this type of turning, specially prepared for turners by timber merchants.

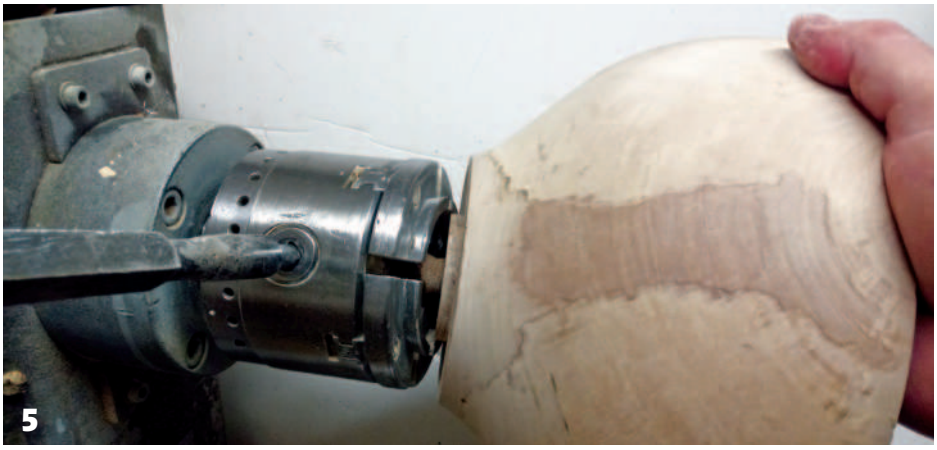
Faceplates

This is a machined piece of metal which has a threaded female section at the back, which locates on to the spindle of your lathe. The top section is a flange – available in varying widths – in which is drilled a series of holes. The faceplate is placed on the work as centrally as possible, and then screws are put in through the flange holes and tightened to secure the work.

The faceplate is usually fixed on what will be waste from the inside of the bowl. The screws should just be long enough to provide a secure hold but no longer than this or when the bowl is reversed – usually fitted to a scroll chuck – you may not be able to turn away all the screw marks when hollowing out the inside. The faceplate is best used on wood with a flat face to prevent any rocking of the chuck. The bigger the work, the wider the faceplate you need to secure it and prevent it from wobbling.

Screw chucks

There are two types of screw chuck that you are likely to encounter. One is similar to a faceplate but has a screw thread in the centre of the flange, which may also have screw holes in it. The other type fixes a screw thread into the centre of the scroll chuck (about which there is more later in this article), and the top rim of the scroll chuck jaws act like the faceplate of the screwchuck. In each case, a hole is drilled into the work to take the screw thread. This chuck is only to be used if the face of the wood is flat – if not the wood may not screw in straight, or be pressed against the faceplate evenly, which may cause it to loosen. The larger the work, the bigger the faceplate section needs to be, to provide proper support.



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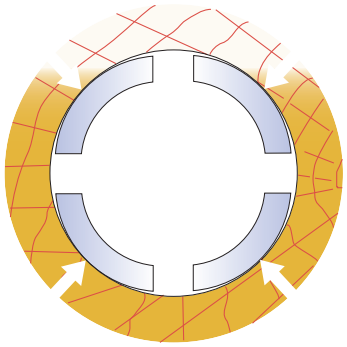

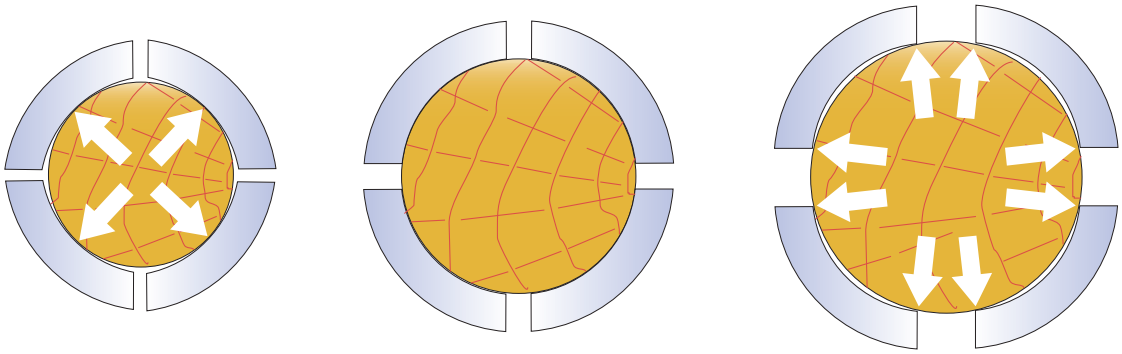

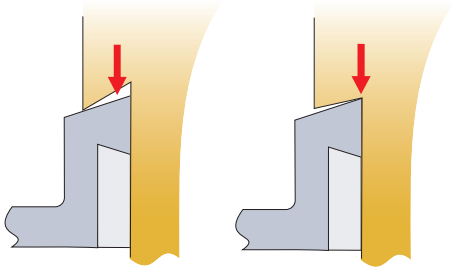

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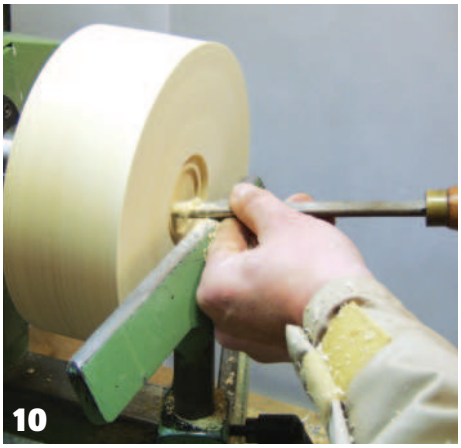


PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SANGER

5 A bowl being removed from a scroll chuck, which is tightened or loosened via the key you can see in the woodturner's hands **6** This section shows a recess that is slightly too big and how the jaws lock into it – you can clearly see how the edge of the jaws are not in full contact with the timber **7** This section shows three spigots: the first is too small, the middle one is the correct size, and the last is too big for the jaw sizes. Each indicates how the jaws will hold the wood in these situations. The middle one is the strongest hold of all **8** Some jaws have a dovetail profile on the inside and outside top section of the jaws and here we see how the profile you cut for recesses (or indeed spigots) can affect your grip on the work **9** A spigot being cut on a bowl while the bowl is held on a screw chuck **10** A recess being cut in the underside of a dish while the work is held on a faceplate

Scroll chuck

These come in various shapes and sizes but they perform the same basic function. The chuck screws into the headstock spindle and it has moveable jaws, which can be opened and closed to lock on to the work.

The jaws open to fix into a recess in the work – this type of fixing is commonly used for wide work like platters – or closed so that the jaws clamp onto a spigot: a round tenon cut on the workpiece.

It is important to ensure that the recess or spigot is of a size and shape to allow the jaws to have as much contact with the wood as possible (see diagrams above). The larger the work, the bigger the jaws you need to provide proper support.

A scroll chuck can be used to hold both faceplate and spindle work but because of grain alignment, you only ever clamp down on spigots if using the scrollchuck for spindle work.

Goblets and one-piece candlesticks are good examples of spindle work that can be made using a scroll chuck.

Spindle turning

Spindle, or between-centre, turning works with the grain of the wood running parallel to the lathe bed, and produces items such as chair and stair spindles, balusters and goblets etc.

The headstock accessories used here are called drive spurs or prong drives. At the other end, the timber needs to be supported, but allowed to turn freely. To that end, revolving centres are fitted in the tailstock. These support the wood but run on bearings to revolve freely.

Both the drive spur and the tailstock need to be located as close to the centre of your work as possible.

It is vital that the drive spur bites far enough into the wood and that the revolving centre is secure, too.

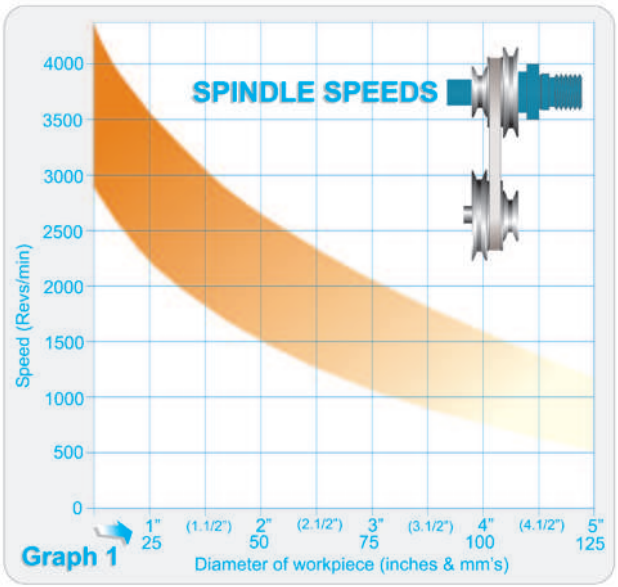
To fix the timber, present the work to the drive spur so the drive's and the work's centre line up, then push the tailstock along the lathe bed so that the revolving centre just touches the centre of the work. Lock the tailstock, then use the hand wheel to wind the centre into the workpiece to provide a bit of pressure and then lock it off. Don't apply too much pressure from the tailstock or you can cause the spindle to bend. ●

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SANGER

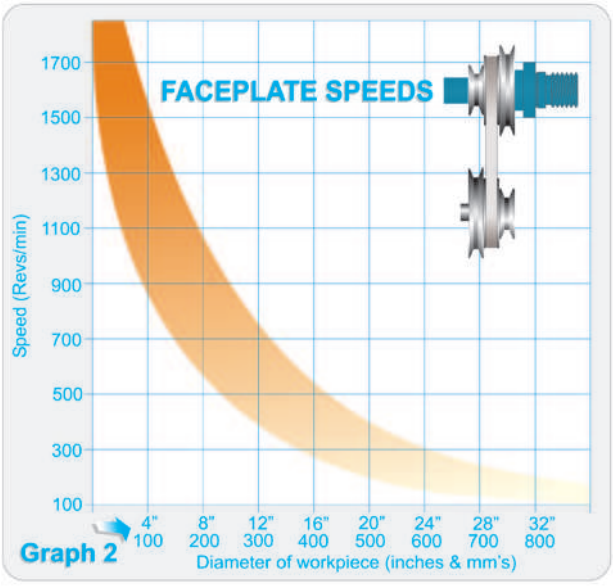
11 A spindle being turned with a spindle roughing gouge. The right-hand side of the piece is supported by a revolving centre held in the tailstock, and a drive spur is fitted in the headstock at the other end of the work **12** Here we have three sizes of four-prong drives, which fit into the lathe spindle via their morse tapers

HEALTH & SAFETY

Safe lathe speeds for spindle and faceplate turning



The curve here shows the recommended upper and lower lathe speeds for spindle turnings of various diameters



And here we have the upper and lower limits of lathe speeds for various diameters of faceplate turning work

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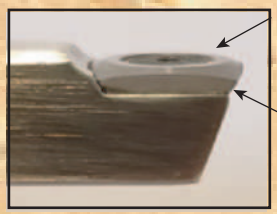

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Candlestick

Alan Holtham makes this elegant holder for you to bathe in the soft glow of candlelight

The modern trend of using candles seems to continue unabated and candlesticks of any form always make really acceptable gifts. They are also very popular at craft fairs, so consider turning a few for your next selling event. They can be big, small, fat or thin to match the huge range of candles that are currently available, making them an excellent way of using up some of those offcuts of timber that have been lurking under the bench for far too long!

This one-piece design is one of the simplest to make and you can amend the proportions to suit whatever timber you have available. Make it more detailed for the traditional look, or keep it really plain and simple for a more contemporary setting.

As candles come in a variety of shapes and sizes, you need to think about ways of holding them and the type of recess in the top of the candlestick. I have found that a ⅞in (22mm) hole suffices for most of the thinner styles, though I usually insert a standard tool ferrule to neaten up the hole. For bigger candles you can buy brass and steel cups that can be set into the end of the candlestick, or even small saucers with a central spike to accommodate the very fat candles.

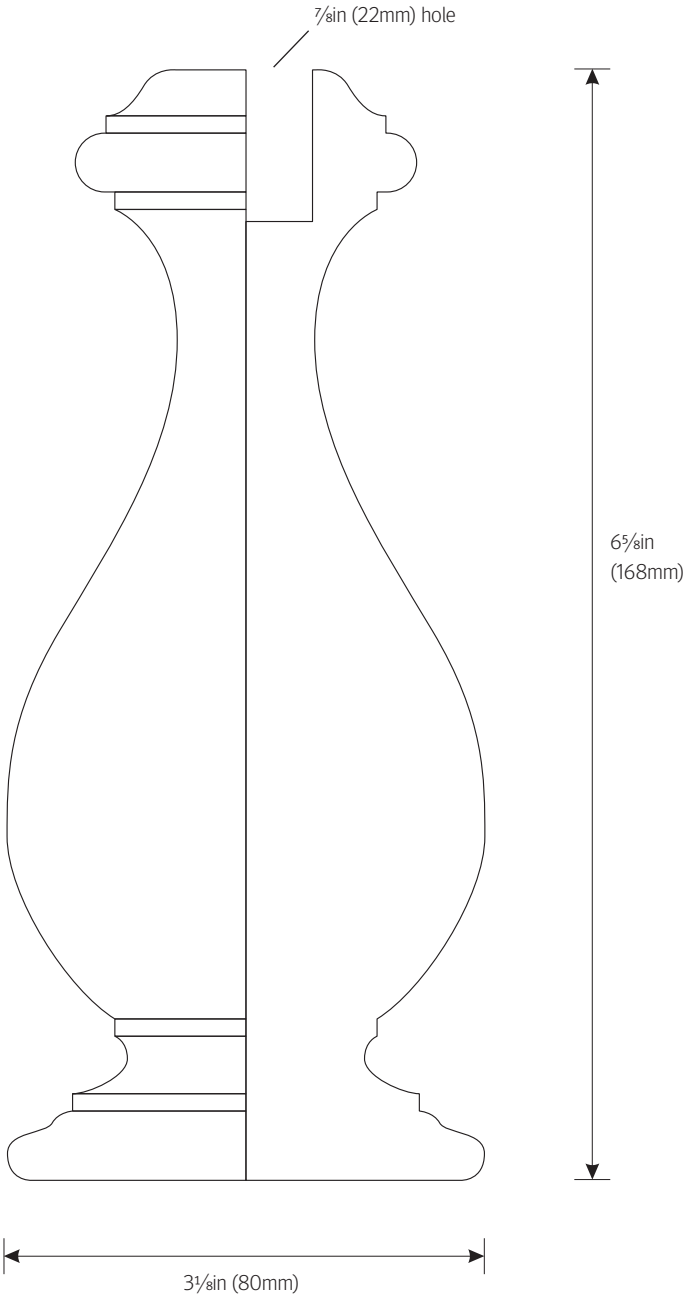
Plans & equipment

Materials

- Yew blank is 3¼ x 3¼ x 7in (82 x 82 x 178mm)

Tools & equipment

- **1** ¾in (19mm) roughing gouge
- **2** A parting tool
- **3** ¾in (19mm) skew chisel
- **4** ⅜in (10mm) spindle gouge
- **5** ¼in (6mm) spindle gouge
- **6** ⅞in (22mm) sawtooth bit
- PPE as appropriate



1 Start by marking the centres at either end of the blank by drawing in the diagonals. Do this carefully if you want to maximise the biggest diameter you can get out of the blank.

Top tip

For any piece of turning with a central hole it is essential to drill the hole first and then turn the profile with the blank centred on this hole. Turning the profile first and then trying to drill a concentric hole nearly always ends in failure, with the hole off centre. Use a drill press for maximum accuracy.

2 Don't drill the hole too deep at this stage or you will not be able to reach to the bottom with your tailstock centre; about ½in (13mm) should be deep enough for now.

3 With a wooden mallet, knock in the headstock drive centre on the intersection of the diagonals, making sure that the wings engage fully in the timber.

4 Mount the blank in the lathe, holding it between the centres by bringing the tailstock up into the pre-drilled hole.

5 Spin the blank a few times by hand to make sure that the toolrest is clear, and set the lathe speed to about 1000rpm for the roughing-out stage on a blank of this size.

6 Use the roughing gouge with the handle well down, rolled on its side and angled slightly in the direction you're going to move it, i.e. left to right.

7 Start turning away at the corners at the right-hand end of the blank. Present the tool quite tentatively at first, as you cannot always see the corners when they are revolving at speed.

8 Keep working back a little further to the left with each successive cut, maintaining the same tool angle to make sure the bevel rubs and the top corners of the gouge remain clear of the work.

9 When you get near to the left-hand end, reverse the gouge position and then work from right to left, again with the handle of the gouge well down.

10 Keep reducing the whole length of the cylinder until there are no flat areas left. Practise holding the gouge and running your finger along the toolrest as a guide, to get the cylinder as parallel as possible.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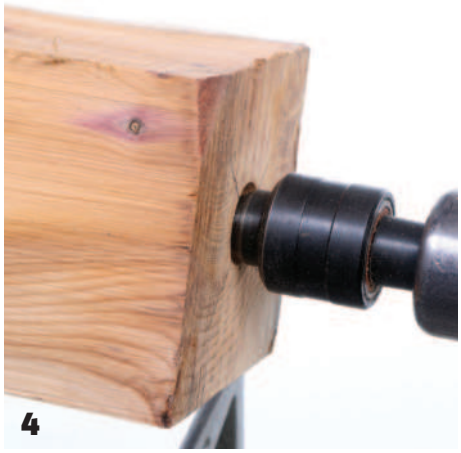
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11 Use the parting tool to true up the top end and take just enough off to square it up. Present the tool with the handle well down to start with, then gradually raise the handle as the cut nears the centre.

12 Repeat the procedure at the bottom end, but this time angle the parting tool slightly inwards to form a hollow undercut on the base, so the finished candlestick will sit firm.

13 Use the parting tool again to mark in where each change of detail will be, making the cut down to somewhere near the finished diameter to give you a guide to work to with the shaping.

14 Most of the detail can be formed using the ⅜in (10mm) spindle gouge, keeping it well on its side with the bevel rubbing and always working downhill.

15 Don't be afraid to take away plenty of timber and make cuts over a wide area of detail, so you can see how the overall proportions develop.

16 Finer detail will need a ¼in (6mm) spindle gouge, but use this in exactly the same way, rolling it down the sides on either side of the cove.

17 Beginners tend to make coves far too shallow and more 'V' shaped than 'U' shaped.

18 See how this looks much more elegant, with the sides steeper and the bottom of the candlestick more evenly rounded.

19 The main shaping of the stem is carried out very quickly and easily using the roughing gouge. I find a larger tool like this is easier to control on big areas than a spindle gouge.

20 If you hold the gouge as I have shown, to keep the bevel in contact, the resulting finish should be really smooth with very little tearing, even on the end-grain areas.

21 Shaping a top end is another job for the ⅜in (10mm) spindle gouge, working down as close as possible to the revolving centre.

22 When access becomes too awkward because of the centre, finish off with a few slicing cuts using the skew chisel to leave a polished surface. (This is why it is important not to drill the candle hole too deep to start with.)

23 Use a skew chisel on its back to incise a tiny line at each definite change. This will sharpen up the appearance of the detail and make an amazing difference.

Top tip

Reduce the speed to about 750rpm for sanding. You risk overheating the surface and generating heat cracks in fine-grained timber like this if you spin the work too fast.

24 Sand carefully to avoid spoiling the detail; fold the abrasive into rolls and flats to get into all the nooks and crannies. Start at about 240 grit and then work progressively up the grades to 400 or 600.

25 Start the finishing process by applying two or three coats of cellulose sanding sealer, flatting down each coat when dry with the finest abrasive paper you used previously.

26 Burnish the final coat with 0000 grade wire wool to remove any excess sealer and to leave a perfect, smooth surface for polishing.

27 Apply a coat of paste wax with the lathe spinning. Allow it to dry for about an hour, then buff with a soft cloth.


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28 Remove the candlestick from the lathe and re-drill the hole deep enough to accommodate a standard candle, normally about 1in (25mm) in depth.

29 If you are going to use an inserted ferrule, tap it in gently, using a rubber mallet to avoid damaging the edges.

30 Grip a small piece of scrap timber in the combination chuck, then turn it to a very slight taper that will fit in the candle hole.

31 Use this as the drive and remount the candlestick in the lathe; bring the revolving centre up to engage in the centre mark left by the four-prong drive.

32 Finish off the undercut of the base using the parting tool, cutting down as close as possible to the point of the revolving centre.

33 Give the candlestick a final polish and then, with the lathe stopped, slice off the tiny nib that is left using a skew chisel and turning the lathe by hand.

34 The finished candlestick should now sit firm and ready for action. ●

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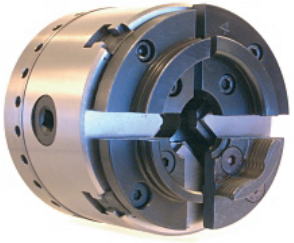

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Diary of a professional woodturner – part 7

Richard Findley discusses demos and shares some of the work he has been turning this month

1 A selection of demonstration items from past events

As I write this, the weather has turned decidedly wintery here in the UK and the countdown to Christmas is well and truly on. Because of the delay between me writing these articles and publication, it is probably mid-February as you read this and Christmas will be a distant memory, so I won't go on about it too much. It is this time of year that things often get rather chaotic, but thanks to my new diary system, I am staying largely on top of my work and I've even managed to schedule in time for my annual workshop deep clean, which is something of a throwback to my days working for my dad when we always used to tidy and reorganise the workshop once all the deadlines had been met. Starting the year with a clean workshop is always a treat, even if it doesn't stay that way for long.

Demos

This is also the time of year that I begin thinking about my demos for next year. I'm already fully booked and have a few provisional bookings for 2023. I usually avoid demos in the winter because of the unpredictable and often bleak British weather, but with remote demos becoming popular, I can now offer these in the winter months. I do, however, do a demo for my local club, Tudor Rose Woodturners, at the end of January each year. As one of the club professionals, I do this as a freebie for them, in return they look after my club and AWGB subscriptions. As such, I tend to use it as a trial run for new demos, so our members get to see most of my demos first. Some demos have only ever been seen by Tudor Rose, others have become part of my repertoire and been toured around the country.

Once again, I am booked for the January slot, which will hopefully be in-person but can be remote if it needs to be, and I need to come up with a new demo. I often find this a tricky thing to do. The subject needs to be different from previous things that I've demonstrated but still needs to be in my arc of experience and expertise. There would be no point in me demonstrating hollow forms, for example, as they're just not something I do. I have made them, but there are far better specialist turners out there to cover that subject. If someone in the audience asks a question, I need to be able to answer it in a knowledgeable and detailed way, so the drying process for bowls turned from logs is something I know the basics of, but not something I do for my day-to-day work, so again, there would be far more qualified turners to demonstrate this.

This is where my varied work is beneficial to me, as it gives me a very broad knowledge base, to which I am adding all the time, but not everything I make to commission is suitable to be made into a demo. One of my first demos was walking canes, which was based on the first major commission that started me off in business. I made several thousand canes so was able to give a demo backed up by a lot of experience. Most of my work is spindle turning and I have a couple of very good spindle turning demos that have been well toured and well received, so I need a little more variation.

PHOTOGRAPGHS BY RICHARD FINDLEY

2 Books are a valuable source of inspiration **3** Turning the bowl/base of the box **4** The three finials I made for the project **5** Fitting the drop finial **6** The finished box/lidded bowl

There are a number of different ways to present a demonstration – personally, I like to have a project which allows me to share several different techniques. The project itself needs to be a lovely object at the end of the demo, but I tend to think of the project as something of a vehicle for teaching and sharing important core techniques. My table lamp demo, for example, is just a table lamp, but it allows me to cover faceplate turning techniques, chucking, dealing with difficult grain, drilling, spindle turning, production and copy turning techniques and fitting joints. My box demo is a simple box with an insert, usually in pewter, so covers pewter casting and turning, hollowing, shear scrapers, lid fitting, wood movement and jam chucking.

Time is also a factor, sometimes a demo needs a 'Blue Peter moment', where you can skip a drying process or something particularly tedious by presenting 'one I made earlier'. I'm not a big fan of this, so try to do everything in the allotted time, which is usually two hours for an evening demo or 90 minutes for a symposium slot. I have found my early online demos had a tendency to overrun – without the club chairman pacing up and down looking at their watch, I may have occasionally gotten carried away. I do like to fully describe what I am doing and give good value for money, a point I shall come back to later.

The problem with timings is that to be able to properly describe and demonstrate everything involved in a project, I need to be able to make it in, at most, half of the allotted demo time in my own workshop. As an example, I used to be able to turn a walking cane in under 15 minutes in production, but this was an hour-long demo every time.

New topic

I am always on the lookout for new topics that I can use as a demo. I saw a rather nice box in a woodworking book that I bought in the summer which appealed to me. It is very important to credit the original maker when doing this though. My table lamp demo is based on a design from *Classic Forms*, my box with the pewter insert is very loosely based on one from Chris Stott's book *Turned Boxes – 50 Designs*. I will always change or adapt certain details either to my taste or to better share a technique.

The box I'm looking at for my new demo is a finial box originally made by American cabinetmaker Matt Kenney and is quite different from my other box. Looking at ways to make it my own, I could make the base part cross grain rather than end grain, making it more like a lidded bowl than a box. I have a bowl demo and a box demo, so a lidded bowl would work well and be an interesting talking point. The original used milk paint to colour the lid, and I did think of doing this too, but decided that I don't have the experience with milk paint to be able to demonstrate it, so I will swap that for a contrasting timber. The finial on the original isn't to my taste, so I'll change that too. I have an idea to make a little drop finial as a surprise inside the lid, which will add a personal touch and some complexity for the more experienced members of the audience. You can see that this box/lidded bowl is quickly moving away from the original inspiration. The other trick I use to ensure I'm not directly copying a piece is to not have the book open as I make it, using only the image in my mind's eye as a reference. By doing this, there will almost certainly be differences from the original.

Making the prototype

As a trial, I made one of the lidded bowls/boxes, using walnut as the base and a pale piece of beech as the lid with walnut finials. As I worked through it I made mental notes about things to discuss and point out in a demo, the tools I use and the differences between an end-grain box and a cross-grain bowl. It took about an hour, although I wasn't happy with my first, or second attempt at the finial. My third was much better but perhaps still not 100% there just yet. I am very happy with the little drop finial inside the lid, which will be a nice surprise when the lid is lifted and acts to lock the main finial in place securely.

I always try to make my projects as accessible to as many of the audience as possible. A demo that is too complex will lose the attention of the less experienced turners very quickly, but too easy and those with more experience will switch off. The beauty of this one is that it can be made quite simply, but there are added details of complexity that should appeal to more experienced members of the audience. It can also be scaled up or down depending on the wood available. The walnut bowl was a 100mm disc of 50mm thick timber and I think it would work well to hold everyday jewellery or loose change perhaps.

I oiled it with four coats of my preferred hardwax oil and buffed it to a soft satin sheen, which will stand up to being passed around the audience of my future demos.

7 Ash doughnut held in my wooden jaws **8** The finished doughnuts **9** My replacement finial **10** The butchered newel post

Value for money

I mentioned earlier that I try to give good value for money with my demos. I fully appreciate that it is not cheap to have a demonstrator travel many miles to a club night, so I aim to make sure people leave feeling like they've learned something, perhaps been inspired to make the project or something similar, or if nothing else, had a couple of hours of good woodturning-based entertainment. The fact that I get so many repeat bookings gives me confidence that I am doing something right.

I have heard some clubs grumble a little at the cost of demonstrators, but one thing I found throughout the lockdowns of the past two years is that I can make more money and be more productive by staying in my workshop and turning and not demonstrating, but I thoroughly enjoy doing it, so won't be stopping, but I have cut the number that I do each year. The problem is that club members see only the two or so hours of a demo, what isn't visible are the hours of planning, prototyping, preparation and loading and unloading gear, not to mention the time on the road. I generally expect an evening demo to be a 12-hour day, even if I do nothing else but focus on the demo. So the club isn't just paying for a two-hour demo, it's paying for my 12-hour day, which includes the 'show' as well as everything else. The aim, at the end of the day, is to make sure the club feels like they got at least what they paid for and I get paid a fair rate for my work, in which case there has been value for money and everyone is happy.

Doughnuts

One demo that I trialled at the club was turning doughnuts. While the members seemed to enjoy it, I didn't feel like it had the content in it to make it a truly successful demo. Doughnuts are something I'm asked to make to commission from time to time. One customer, a high-end cabinet maker from Herefordshire, asked me to make a large batch earlier in the year of 45 in various timbers for an artistic installation they had been commissioned to work on. The plan was to cut the rings up into sections and form a kind of totem pole sculpture. They came back to me last month for another 15 in ash as they'd been asked to make an additional sculpture.

Usually, a doughnut (properly known as a torus) needs to be as accurate as possible and feel right in the hand. As these were being cut up and the cross-section would be revealed, I had to pay special attention to the curves, so I used a couple of different templates to ensure the curve was as true as I could possibly achieve.

Funnily enough, my first ever torus was made for one of my Editor's Challenge articles, in which I used hot-melt glue to hold it to a board to access the central hole. The glue gun approach, while absolutely valid as a holding option, wouldn't have been viable to use for making this many, so I made a set of wooden chuck jaws, screwed to jaw plates on my Axminster chuck to securely hold the chunky doughnuts.

This highlights the difference between making one or two of something and a production-type batch as a glue chuck would be far too involved for this sort of quantity, but making a set of custom wooden jaws probably isn't worth doing for one or two. All of this needs taking into consideration when planning and quoting a job.

The customer supplied the timber, pre-drilled with a central hole and

11 The restored newel, complete with finial **12** Turning the ball finial **13** Sanding the end with the finial held in the chuck **14** The finished finials and caps

cut to a slightly oversized disc. This saved me a lot of work as I was able to pop them straight in the lathe without doing anything to them. Initially, I used my small 'F' jaws, which open up into a 35-40mm recess and hold them by the hole while I worked on the outsides before using my wooden jaws to hold the outsides while I turned out the centres. I'm yet to see the finished sculptures, but I'm sure they will be impressive.

Newel post finials

I've had a couple of separate newel finial commissions this month. It is quite common for people to chop off an original finial and replace it with something that they deem more suitable, only for a new homeowner to move into the house and want to restore the newel posts to their original condition, especially in a period property.

The first was a ball with a central bead, which was a popular design in Edwardian properties of the early 20th century. The handrail and newel post were 'mahogany' (in inverted commas because many red coloured hardwoods are referred to as mahogany, even though mahogany is a specific species). The finial had been butchered and my customer was keen to bring it back to its former glory. She sent me a picture of a neighbour's newel that was in the same style for me to work from along with a few measurements. I made this from laminated sapele, a red hardwood that makes a very good alternative to mahogany, which is quite rare these days. I turned it with a tenon or dowel on the base so the customer could simply drill a hole in the post and glue the new finial in place. My delighted customer kindly sent me a photo of it in place, all stained to match and I think it looked like it had always been there.

Finials with caps

A style of finial that I am asked for less often is for one with a cap. These present a little more work for me but are enjoyable to make. The customer had plain caps on her newels but wanted more of a finial, so would remove the existing caps and replace them with a new cap and finial combination. These caps are seen in various different designs and it was important for me to ensure I used a moulding on the edge that would match or at least work with the existing staircase. I decided that an elaborate moulding wouldn't look right, so opted for a simple cove-type shape top and bottom around the edges of the square caps. The caps were then drilled through the centre so I could fit the finial with a long turned dowel on its base, through the cap and into the newel.

Ball finials are bread-and-butter work for a production turner but I still like to pay close attention to them, especially for a newel post where people will be running their hands over them. A sphere is a perfect shape and fingers are very sensitive to flat areas or bumps or ripples that shouldn't be there. I've made enough that I can mostly do them by eye, but I will still cut a template from thin MDF to double check the curves. One area that can be particularly problematic is the very top of the ball where the nib is left from driving between centres. I usually nip it off on the bandsaw rather than part it off on the lathe. The nib can be carved away with a sharp chisel and sanded smooth. With a ball, this has to be perfect though because the slightest discrepancy is detectable. To ensure perfection I will often put the finial back in the lathe, held securely by its dowel in my engineering jaws and sand the top again. This isn't a secure enough hold to turn with a gouge or chisel but is fine for careful sanding.

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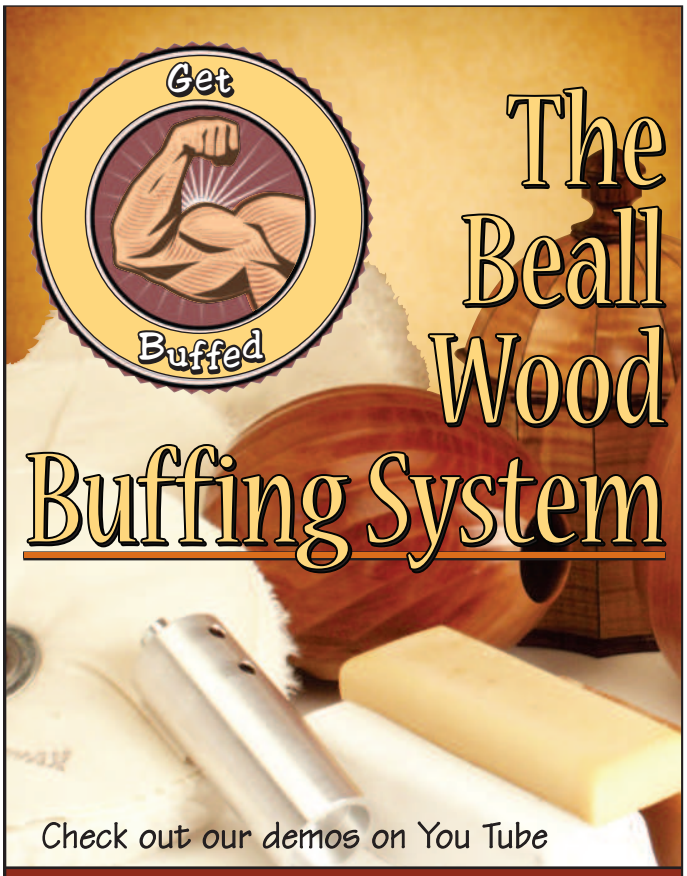

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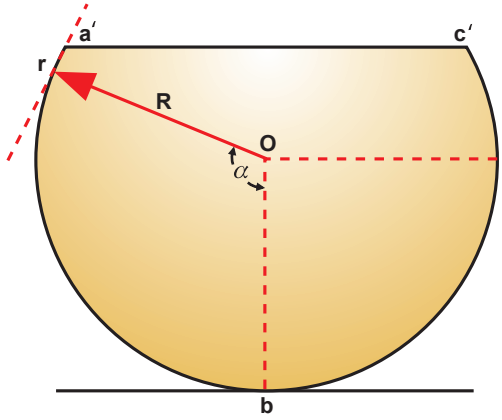
Elements of design

Derek Hayes studies the design of enclosed forms

Enclosed, or, the more usual term, closed, forms are perhaps the least frequently discussed in the texts. This is probably due to the fact that they are undoubtably the most difficult to define. It could be argued that simple bowls with rims rolling inwards could be included in this group and that the only truly closed form is the box. To highlight this problem and to attempt a definition that will help us to develop this class of turning, I will use the term 'enclosed'.

PHOTOGRAPGHS BY DEREK HAYES

Open forms are based on a hemisphere with a rim at the widest part of the form. Now look at illustration 1: if we increase the angle 'α' so that it is greater than 90 degrees, a new opening, a'c' will occur. The rim will now be smaller than before, and no longer the largest diameter of the silhouette. By our definition, it will cease to be an open form. The change will also increase the height of the form and the whole feel of the bowl. When the diameter of the rim is smaller than the bowl's widest measurement, it can be said to be 'enclosed'.



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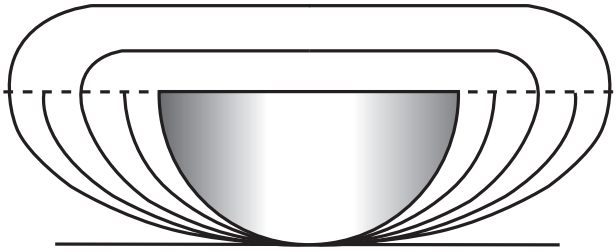

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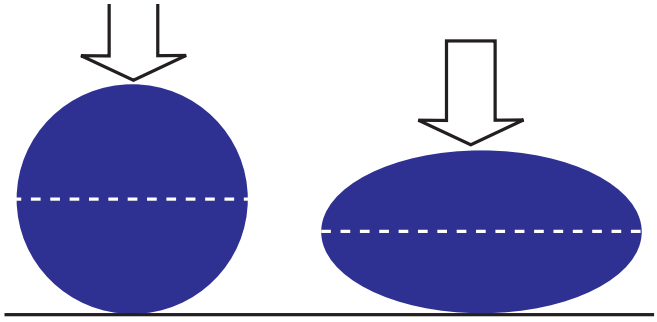

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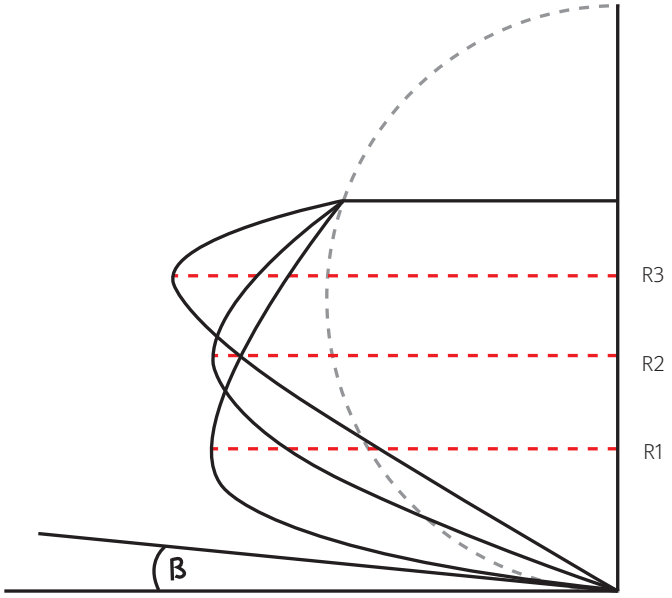

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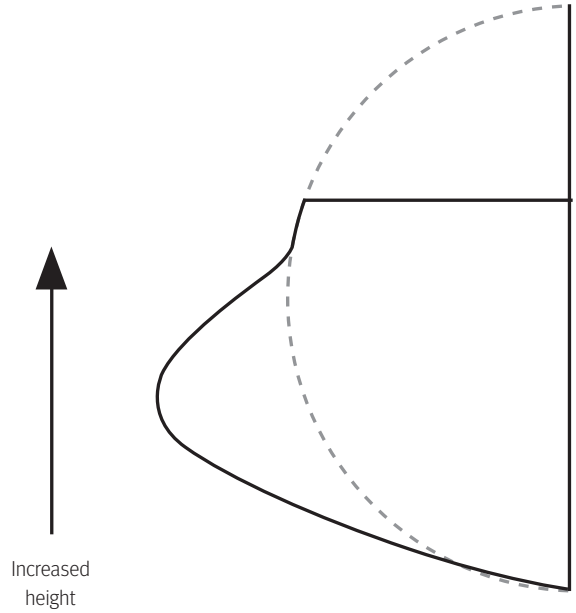

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Extending the range of curves to the catenaries previously discussed, we see that the same approach and definitions could be used (**see 2**). As the diameter of the catenary widens, so does the opening, making it ever more difficult to 'see' an enclosed form. The same situation pertains to the ellipse. Imagine a spherical balloon, resting on a surface. As pressure is applied to the top of the balloon, the shape deforms, producing an elliptical cross-section resulting in catenaries (**see 3**).

In **4** we see some examples of using the profile from illustration **1**, but now with its curve adjusted to produce the widest diameters at different heights. The smaller the height Rx, the lower the effective 'centre of gravity' of the form. R3 gives a lightness, or lift, while R1 suggests heaviness. Illustration **5** demonstrates how a compound curve can be used to lower the widest diameter of the form while still maintaining the rim size. In *Woodturning and Design*, Ray Key says 'To give life to any bowl, the fullest curve should never be central, for this gives an extremely dull look... Any major fattening or hardening of curves should take place towards the top or bottom, as this will retain balance and life within the piece if done well.'

Other forms

The examples considered move us from the simple enclosed form to a variety of other profiles popular in turning. There is, unfortunately, a confusion generated by the range of titles used by different woodturners to describe similar forms.

John Hunnex itemizes his forms thus: containers (including boxes); bottles (purely decorative); vases (tall closed forms); hollow forms (very small openings); and closed forms. The number of headings used could be said to be excessive. Certainly many of John's pieces would be equally at home in more than one of his groups.

Ray Key uses the terms 'vases and vessels' as, he says, they are both applied to enclosed pieces of hollow turned work. Vases, he says, are 'usually taller than their diameter', but seem more appropriate, as the term suggests, to ornamental objects, while 'vessel' suggests use.

Maybe we should just agree with Les Thorne, who says 'The variety of names currently used is pretentious', and quite fairly asks 'What is wrong with the word pot used by the ceramic artist?' Well, at the risk of muddying the water further, here are a few groups that I suggest could cover the field.

Hollow forms

Having suggested a definition for the enclosed form, I will now consider two of its sub-groups. If any set of shapes has earned the right to its own group, it is the hollow form. Here, as for all enclosed forms, the rim is smaller than its diameter but now there is the addition of limited access to that enclosed space. A nice definition, I heard, is that the hollow form stops the observer from inserting a hand inside, or at least prohibits removing anything with that hand.

6

Like other writers on the subject, Ray Key attributes the hollow form to David Ellsworth, Mel Lindquist and Ed Moulthrop. He mentions the thinness of Ellsworth's work, a descriptor that, due to the small opening, is not evident to the viewer until the item is lifted – and certainly not by looking at photographs. Illustration **6** shows some examples of what David Ellsworth calls his 'Spirit Forms', which are small hollow pieces.

This inability to offer 'internal inspection' suggests that the hollow form is perhaps the most inappropriate to be adopted by woodturners. The inherent, natural beauty of the wood, whilst still on show externally, is unavailable to the observer attempting to look inside. Bert Marsh says 'I do not turn hollow forms because I do not think that wood lends itself to this form of expression. It is a waste because you cannot see the beauty of the wood on the inside through that little opening. I can admire and appreciate the skills required, which can be quite considerable, and I admire many of the turners who make them... I like some of the forms, too; they can have a mystery about them. But I want the inside of my work to be finished as well as the outside.'

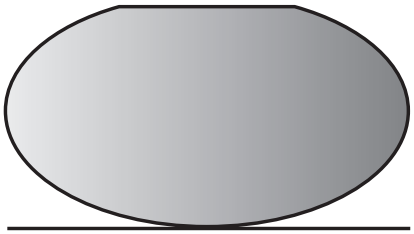
Other turners may disagree and see it as a point of honour to finish the inside of their hollow forms to a standard similar to the outside. Others will blacken the inside to add drama. Considering form only, it can certainly be said that the silhouette of a finely turned hollow form is as exciting as its ceramic counterparts.

One way of satisfying both camps is shown in David Ellsworth's piece in **7**. This allows, literally, no hiding place for poor internal finishing. That elusive search for purity of form is even more important with hollows.

Ray Key talks of this being the basis for design. 'Soft and fluid lines predominate, curves and surfaces are free of flats and undulations, and the forms should be a joy to handle: tactile, balanced, full of life and poise. Any embellishment should be restrained, used to frame an opening or highlight a change of surface direction.' He suggests some useful analogies for his various forms: the onion, the hot-air balloon and the heart profiles. Illustration **8** shows his 'Incurved' vessel in Amboyna.

7

8



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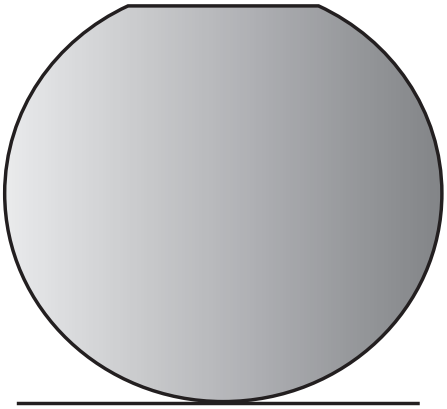

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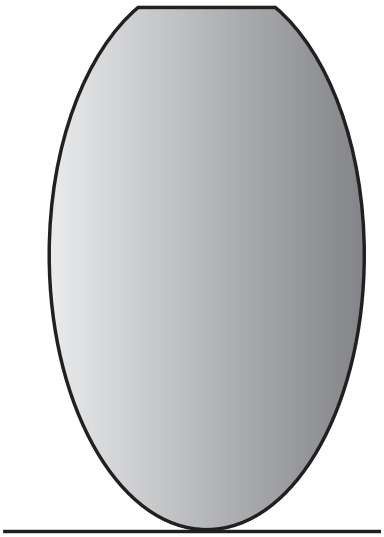

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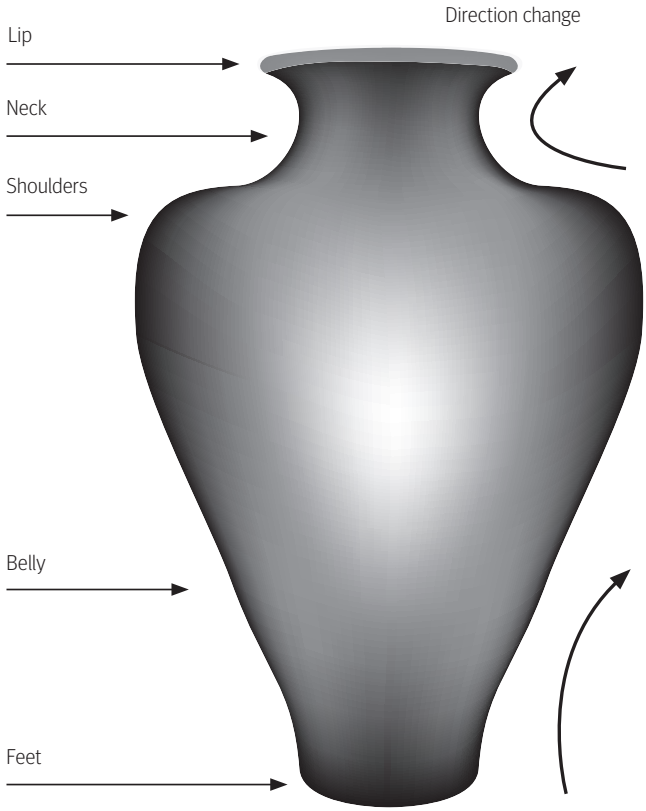
A way of considering most of the forms used is by, once again, considering the ellipse as the template. Simple hollows follow the ellipse with their major axes along either the horizontal (**see 9**) or the vertical (**see 11**). The 'special case' of the ellipse, the circle (**see 10**), is also another popular hollow form.

Interrupting the profile by introducing compound curves increases the permutations available, morphing the form into some of the examples mentioned previously such as the onion (**see 12**) or the 'squashed' ellipse (**see 13**).

As the opening becomes ever smaller, the maker may have to resort to turning a separate neck. If this is made from a different wood or if a bead or cove is included, the overall effect can look planned and attractive.

The inclusion of a 'demarcation' line, say with the addition of a neck, can affect the way the form is perceived, and so its positioning should be considered carefully. The eye will always be drawn to a point on a profile where there is a sudden change in direction. If used, a foot or rim will also affect the form. There is little literature in the woodturning world concerning design in the making of enclosed and hollow forms; luckily this is not the case with other crafts, such as ceramics. The main advantage of working in clay as opposed to working in wood is the ability to add 'extra' material by way of handles and feet and such like. With the expanding use of 'off-lathe' work in woodturning, such a consideration could also be said to be becoming more relevant to the turner.



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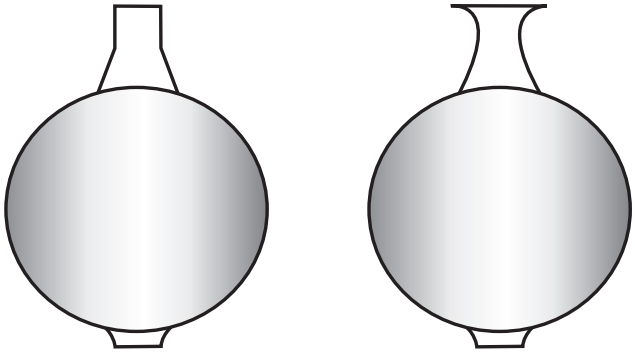

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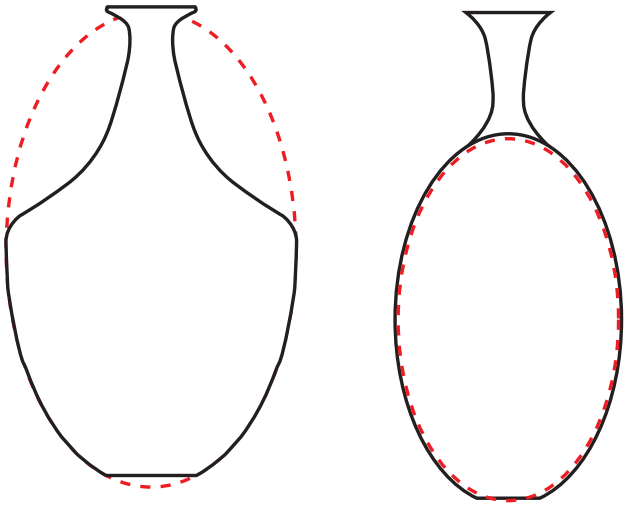

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Potters often compare their hollow forms with the human figure, making use of the same vocabulary and referencing lips, necks, shoulders, bellies and feet. Quite often, the final proportions intensify the allusion to the human body (**see 14**).

Perhaps more than the other silhouettes so far discussed, the hollow form really needs some sketching or design prior to starting work. Irregularities can noticeably interrupt the way we see the profile, more so than for the simpler forms considered thus far.

Look at pots for inspiration – bottles swelling out from small bases and restricted by narrow necks have been popular and useful objects for thousands of years. Pots are often full-blown forms with clean lines similar to those sought by the turner. With their frequent, sudden changes in direction, such as where the inward curve of the shoulder meets the neck, the eye can be 'prepared' by the use of some 'banding'. The neck then narrows further and flows up and outwards into a clearly defined lip.

This is a popular woodturning form based on the Roman/Greek style. Illustration **15** shows one of Dave Reeks' pieces with a profile having a simple and continuous natural curve. There is just a suggestion of heaviness at the base.

Surprisingly, purity of profile is usually more difficult to achieve when the form is based on a sphere (**see 16**).

Having considered quite complicated forms, Robert Chapman in ***Woodturning: A Fresh Approach*** advises us, 'When creating a hollow vessel, simplicity is the key, with graceful, flowing lines that are easy on the eye leaving an uncluttered surface. For your first attempts, the vessel should be taller than it is wide, with a fairly gentle curve up the sides – rather like a flat-ended rugby ball.' Illustration **17** shows two simple shapes, the first contained within a golden-sectioned ellipse, the second a golden-sector ellipse with an 'external' neck.

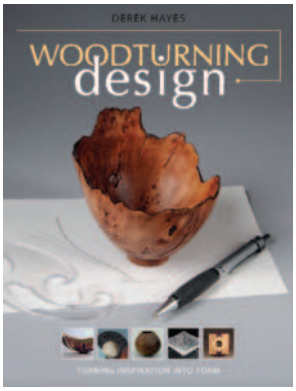
18

Boxes

Boxes are a group usually awarded the honour of having their own classification group. However, it could be argued that they are a sub-set of hollow forms, as treated here. 'Extreme' hollow forms could be the name given to completely closed pieces such as that in illustration **19**. Here, a finial or stopper in a contrasting wood has been added to restrict entry to the turning. As a box, it would be considered lacking\any practicality even if the 'lid' were removable.

Boxes are notoriously difficult to get right. Advice on their design and manufacture is not abundant, the exception being in the writings of Richard Raffan. His boxes are inspired by architectural masterpieces as well as African grain stores, European pigeon lofts and haystacks. He likes to display his boxes in groups (**see 18**) and reminds us '... how difficult it is to create truly satisfying forms, let alone a lid that comes off easily with a satisfying little sucking plop'.

Like our 'extreme hollow forms' we have the added design opportunity of decorating the lid. Raffan observes how often '...the rounded top of a box looks bare and in need of a little something to finish things off'. He refers, of course, to what is known as the finial. The inclusion of a finial, or what he calls 'more businesslike knobs', dramatically affects the scale and proportion of the box.



Woodturning Design by Derek Hayes, GMC Publications Ltd., RRP £16.99, available online and from all good bookshops.

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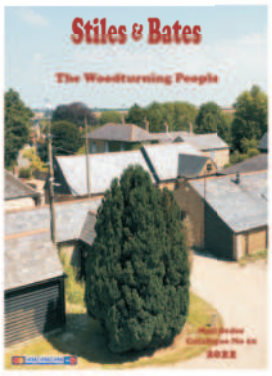

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Editorial
Karen Scott, Andy Coates, Jane Roe
T: 01273 477374
E: karensc@thegmcgroup.com
Designer Oliver Prentice
Illustrator Oliver Prentice
Advertising
Guy Bullock
E: gmcadvertising@thegmcgroup.com
Publisher Jonathan Grogan

Production Manager Jim Bulley
Subscriptions
E: pubs@thegmcgroup.com
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Distribution
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T: +44 (0) 20 7429 4000
Woodturning
(ISSN 0958-9457)
is published 13 times a year by
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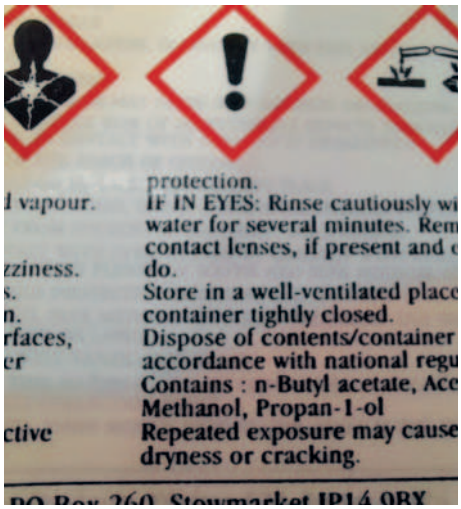
Green turning

Pete Moncrieff-Jury asks: 'How eco-friendly is your woodturning?'



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETE MONCRIEFF-JURY

With all the publicity of Cop 26 recently I started looking at my own woodturning and asked myself just how eco-friendly I was being. Most of us, I suspect, see our craft as fairly traditional, ecologically sound and to some extent it is, but I was a bit surprised when I started looking carefully at the things in my workshop and seeing just how untrue that was. This article is not intending to point the finger at anyone else, just offer a look at what I found in my own workshop and, despite my personal beliefs regarding the ecology of the planet, just how unfriendly I was in some areas.

My wood stock was a good place to start. Much of the wood I use is sourced locally and includes material from tree surgeons, gardeners, storm damage and recycled wood from old furniture etc. There are, however, also pieces that I have got from other turners who have, for one reason or another, given up the craft. Among the bits and pieces on my shelves were offcuts and recycled pieces as shown of ebony and rosewood, both CITES listed. People are probably aware of woods such as cocobolo, lignum vitae and various rosewoods and mahoganies, but others, such as monkey puzzle, various yews and cedars, are perhaps less well known.

Some woods can only be exported if they have been machined and one way that this is overcome is for the wood to be harvested and the ends turned before exporting, thereby getting around the regulations. I'll leave it to the Individuals to decide for themselves how they feel about this. Suffice to say, many of us are perhaps unaware of just how many timbers are actually in danger of extinction around the world.

Resin is something that has become increasingly popular among turners and other crafters. It can be made from fossil fuels, which basically are a non-degradable plastic, or from organic materials. How many of us actually knew this and how many take care to use the organic, bio-degradable resin? Most resins on the market are made from fossil fuels but a synthetic version was developed in 2011 that is in fact bio-degradable. You do need to search for it though.

Next, I looked at the products I use, such as finishes, and here I was amazed at just how many were based on oil ingredients. Wax polishes, lacquers, varnishes, sealers often contain oil-based ingredients, much to my surprise. I do have polishes etc. that are plant based, such as carnauba wax, but others often have bases that are dependent on the oil industry, as in the two examples here. Perhaps something to think about as there are non-oil-based products available if we look for them.

As I said at the beginning, I am looking at my own behaviour and way of working here, not pointing the finger, but perhaps it is something that all of us could do, have a look at the wood we use. Check out the wood databases online and see what is endangered, look at the products on your shelves and see what is actually eco-friendly. As craftsmen and women, we all perhaps have a need to be good examples of an eco-friendly way of working. Maybe not something we think of much... yet.

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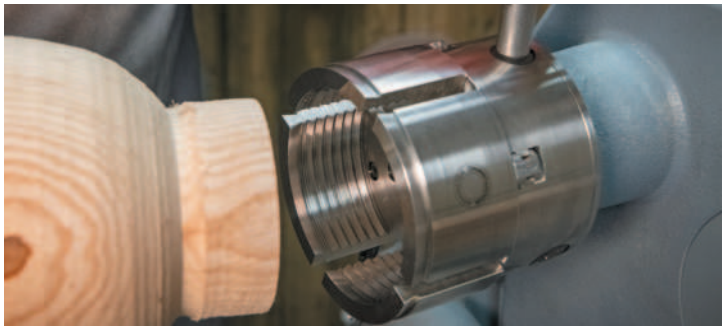

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