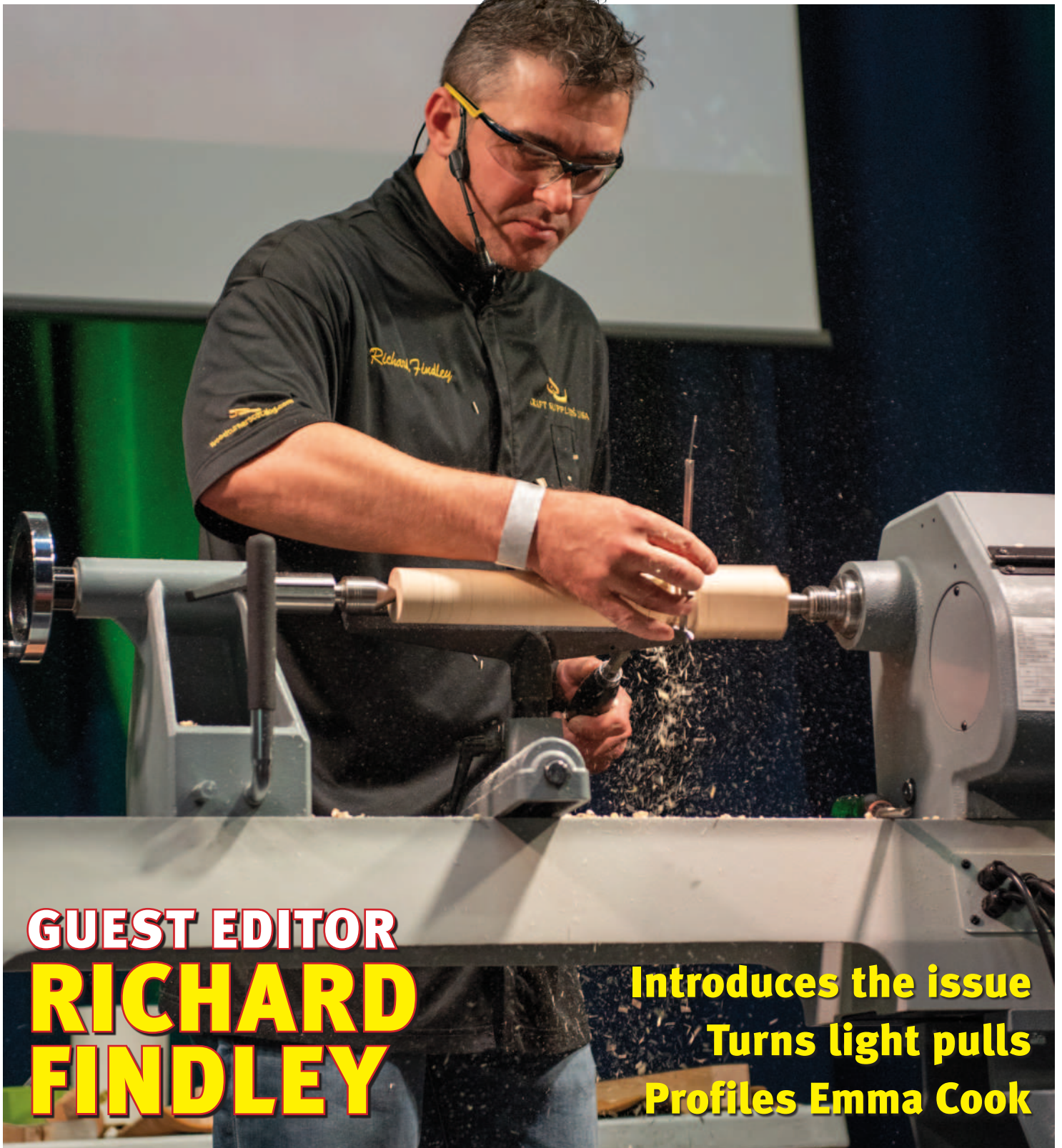


Woodturning

THE WORLD'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR WOODTURNERS



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**RICHARD
FINDLEY**

**Introduces the issue
Turns light pulls
Profiles Emma Cook**

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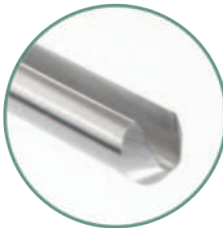
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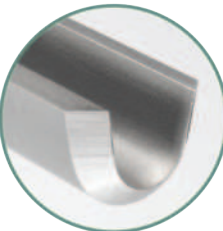
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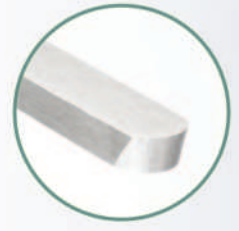
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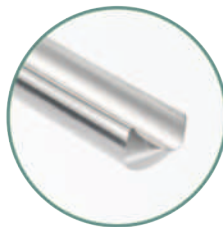
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Guest editor's letter

Richard Findley

On the skew

I was pleased to be asked to return as guest editor for the magazine, it means that I must have done something right last time, or at least it must not have been a complete disaster.

The magazine asks this letter to not only introduce the issue, but also to pose some sort of question to the readers to get them involved in the magazine (without being too controversial). I decided I would have a bit of a theme for my role in the magazine this month and, having given it some thought, I went with the skew chisel. I recently read that those who use a skew are mostly just showing off, because almost all of the cuts can be done with other tools, making it essentially obsolete and just something to exhibit how good a turner you are. As a daily user of a skew, I have to disagree with this statement.

Is the skew hard to master? Yes, it is. Can other tools be used instead of a skew? Yes, they can. Then why bother to learn to use it? The fact is, there are easier tools out there that will achieve results – the modern carbide tools claim to offer a lot with minimal effort, but I wonder if there is much satisfaction in turning if there is little or no effort? In the words of JFK when referring to the space race of the early 1960s: 'We do these things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.' There are many hobbies out there that are hard or require a lot of effort or patience before there is any reward. How many hours does a fisherman have to sit on a riverbank before he gets a bite? How many shots does a golfer have to hit into the rough before getting the ball in the hole? Even if you prefer to watch your sport rather than get physically involved, how many 0-0 draws do you have to watch before your team finally lifts a trophy? All of those setbacks make the rewards so much sweeter. Without challenge, there is little sense of achievement.

In the right hands, a skew is a wonderful tool. Every production turner I know uses a skew

as one of their main tools, not to show off how good a turner they are, but because it is such a versatile tool, able to make a wide range of cuts to achieve an end with the utmost efficiency. Do I still get catches with my skew? Absolutely, but they are much fewer and further between than they once were and I will probably get some catches with my skew until the day I hang up my tools for the last time. But will I continue to use it because it is a versatile, efficient and satisfying tool to use? I certainly will.

With this in mind, I decided to write a simple project that most people will be able to have a go at that can be done entirely with a skew, if you so choose: making light pulls. Of course, you are welcome to use whatever tool you wish; the main aim is to get readers out to their workshops making shavings, but if you want to, then you can sharpen your skews and give it a go.

I hope you enjoy the issue and, as ever, feel free to contact me or the team with your thoughts and your efforts at the light pulls and other projects from the magazine.

“

I wonder if there is much satisfaction in turning if there is little or no effort?

”



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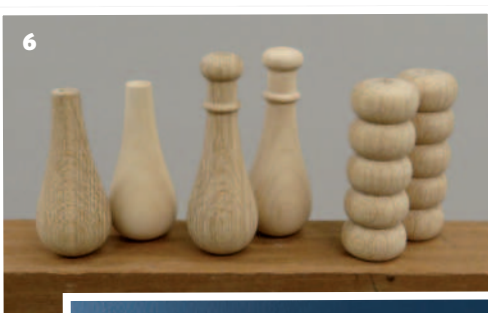
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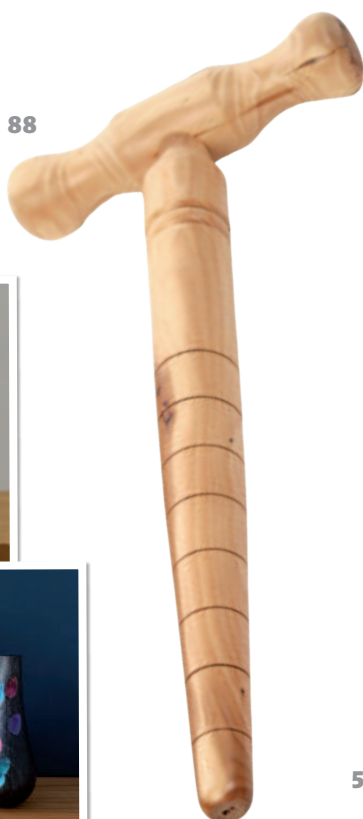
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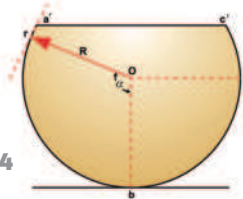
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HEALTH & SAFETY

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).

Light pulls collaboration

Richard Findley turns a series of light pulls with his skew before passing them on to Emma Cook to decorate



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD FINDLEY

I wanted to make a relatively simple project that might encourage readers to head out to their workshops and pick up a skew. After a little thought, I opted for a selection of light pulls. These are small, so need only a small amount of timber. They can be very simple or more complex and most houses in the UK are likely to have at least one pull cord light switch, extractor fan or curtain track that will benefit from a classy pull. Of course, you are welcome to use any tool you like, but these make perfect skew practice. The shapes I have turned can be simply oiled or lacquered and put straight to use, or can be decorated in some way, which Emma does in the next article. I don't need to point out that Emma is perfectly capable of turning these light pulls herself, but I thought a collaboration would be a good way to introduce her work and style to readers.

Light pulls and skews

I've opted for three designs, building the skill level needed from the first, simple teardrop, to a similar shape with more details, and finally a beaded design that calls for some repetition of shape. After chatting with Emma, I decided on a mixture of sycamore and oak to give her some options for the decoration. The designs call for a range of different skew cuts, including planing, peeling and rolling cuts, which form the basis of the tools' capabilities.

There is a wide selection of skew chisels on the market today and I feel that the skew is a very personal tool and everyone has an opinion about which is best, so your choice is entirely up to you. My personal preference is for my Signature 10mm beading and parting tool, which is a traditional hybrid of a skew and a parting tool, but whether you opt for a round skew, a wide flat skew, an oval skew or something in between, the rules and guidance I will offer throughout this article for using them are the same.

Preparation & work holding

I cut each blank and opted to drill them on my pillar drill, although you could just as easily hold the blanks in your chuck and drill them on the lathe. The main hole is 4mm diameter and the enlarged knot hole at the bottom is 8mm diameter and around 10mm deep. Notice that I hold the blanks with grips as I drill in case they try to spin, this is a great tip to protect your fingers.

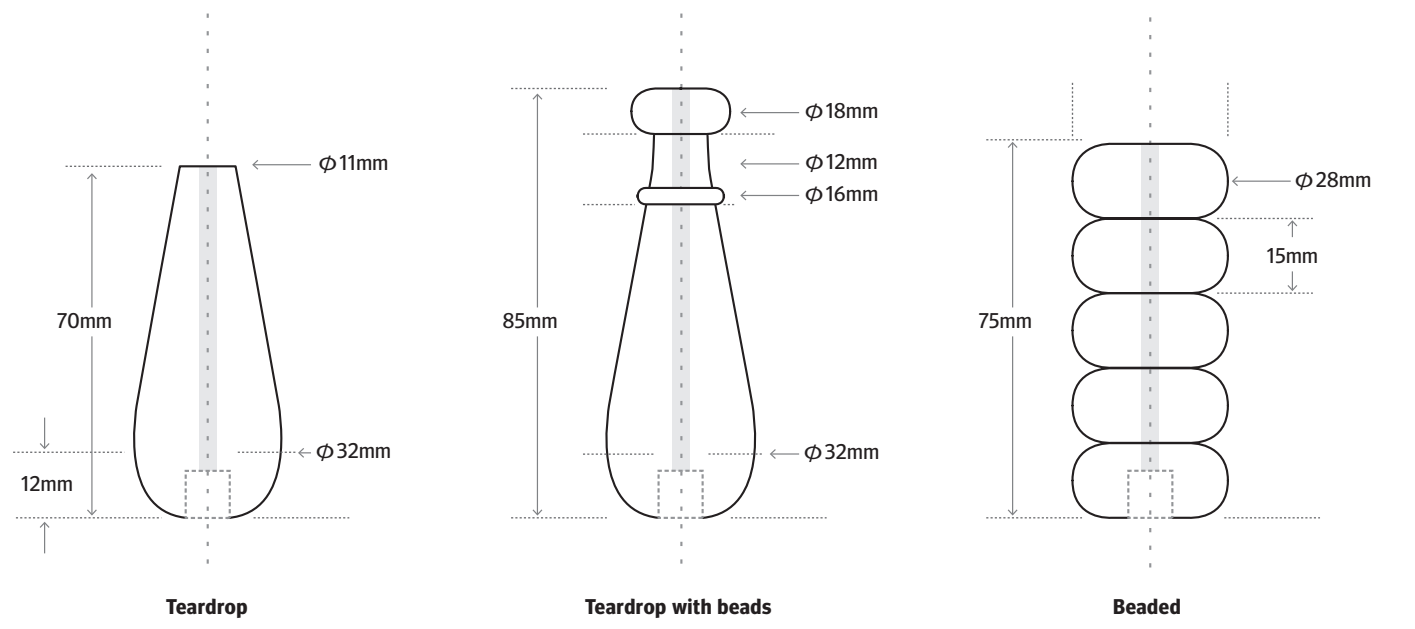
Any work that has a drilled hole like this should have its hole drilled before it is turned so the hole is dead central on the finished product. With the holes drilled through the blanks I mounted the first on the lathe. You can buy special drives for this work but I simply turned a wooden cone mounted in my chuck and used my slimline live centre to hold the pulls between centres.

Design 1: Teardrop

The classic teardrop is a good place to start. I mounted it with the bottom of the pull on the wooden drive cone and my live centre in the top. You can rough down the blanks to a cylinder with a skew but I prefer to use my spindle roughing gouge. Once they were cylindrical, I marked the widest point with a pencil, which is 12mm from the bottom.

To roll the bottom curve I use the very tip of my tool and roll to the left. My beading and parting tool is ground straight across rather than skewed, so both points are the same, but if yours is skewed I would use the long point, which gives a better line of sight in the cut. If you use the short point, the tool can obscure your view of the cut somewhat, although either tip will work fine as long as the cut remains on the tip of the tool. You can see that the tip is cutting because a groove and a fine feathered edge rises up in front of the cut as you

Plans



1 Drilling the blanks **2** Mounting on the wooden cone



3 Turning to a cylinder with my spindle roughing gouge **4** Rolling the bottom curve **5** Sizing the top of the teardrop
6 Planing the gentle curve down to the narrowest part of the teardrop **7** The difference in shavings between oak and sycamore using the same cut was interesting **8** Slicing the end grain **9** The finished teardrop pulls



move around. By cutting on the tip of the tool you have far more control and are less likely to get a catch. Remember to keep rolling the tool as you move down to the drive centre. The advantage of a wooden drive is that you can cut into it without damaging the edge of your skew.

With the bottom of the pull turned, I made a sizing cut to 11mm at the top using callipers and my beading and parting tool, this gives a target to aim for with the planing cuts that follows. It is a case then of 'joining the dots' from the high point down to the top of the pull using a planing cut. With my narrow 10mm tool I use the centre of the tool, with a wider skew you would need to use a part of the edge below the centre for best control of the cut.

I made the same pull in sycamore and oak and found the difference in the shavings interesting. The sycamore ones were much longer curls than those from the oak. This must be down to the structure of the wood, sycamore having a much tighter grain so the shavings forming into long strings.

I made a slicing cut with the tip of my tool down to the live centre, keeping my bevel in line with the cut and slightly tilting the tool away from the wood to ensure the edge didn't catch. This cut is important to ensure there is no torn grain on the end of the light pull and must be done with the very tip of the tool.

If the tip of the tool touches the hardened steel of the live centre you will need to resharpen the tool.

The teardrop pulls were sanded to 320 grit and were done.





“
I will slice chamfers first, removing some of the bulk and making the actual beading cut much easier
”

Design 2: Teardrop with beads

The second design follows on nicely from the first, repeating the same cuts with the addition of a necklace bead and a bead-shaped ‘head’. My inspiration for this comes from *Classic Forms* by Stuart Dias, a book full of design ideas for just this kind of work. The original shows a more spherical head but a sphere is a very difficult shape to get right, if it isn’t perfect it just looks wrong. So I adapted it to a bead, which is a more forgiving shape if it isn’t absolutely perfect.

As before, I roughed the blank to a cylinder and turned the curve on the bottom of the pull from the widest point, 12mm up from the base. I then made some sizing cuts at the top of the pull, marking the 18mm diameter head, the 12mm diameter neck and the 16mm diameter necklace bead.

I made a planing cut from the high spot down to the necklace bead, taking care not to cut into the small detail. Satisfied with the curve I then turn the necklace bead. These tiny beads can be more tricky than larger beads because the same movements are required but in a much smaller space. You can see from the picture that I keep the cut on the tip of the tool to maintain control.

It is important that the flow of the curve runs through the necklace bead, almost as if it wasn’t there. To cut cleanly up to the bead I cut with the tip of the tool rather than further up the edge as I had when planing.

I trimmed the top of the light pull as before with the tip of the tool before rolling the top bead. To form the bead, I will slice chamfers first, removing some of the bulk and making the actual beading cut much easier and possible to make in a single pass. With the beads cut I make sure the curve flows through and the surface is ready to sand.



10 Turning the small neck bead **11** Ensuring the curve flows through the neck bead as if it wasn’t there **12** Before fully cutting the bead I cut chamfers to rough out the shape of the bead **13** Rolling the top bead **14** The finished teardrops with beads light pulls

15



“

It takes practice to get five matching beads, but it is very satisfying once they do match

”

16



Design 3: Beaded

The two teardrop designs both incorporate beads but of different sizes, the challenge of the beaded pull is to turn five beads more or less the same.

Once turned to a cylinder, I slice each end of the blank to ensure the end grain is cleanly cut before setting dividers to 15mm and scratching the positions of each of the beads. This is safe to do as long as the dividers are pointing downwards and scratch in a trailing position. I then draw a centreline on each bead with a pencil to help visually balance out the shape of each bead.

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At each scratch line, I make a pair of V-cuts with the tip of my tool before rolling each bead as previously shown, using the tip of my tool. You can see in the picture that the bevel leaves a slightly shiny surface on the oak after rolling the beads. I turned all of one side and then the other, rather than each bead individually. You could try both ways and see which works best for you. It takes practice to get five matching beads, but it is very satisfying once they do match and the beaded light pull feels particularly pleasing in the hand. ●

15 Using dividers to mark the 15mm wide beads

16 Slicing V-cuts with the tip of the tool **17** Rolling the beads

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18 The beaded pulls **19** The finished collection of light pulls



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Turning and images by Brad Herrington & Alan Morrison

Decorating turned light pulls

Emma Cook demonstrates techniques to finish Richard Findley's turned pieces

It was a cold, dreary February morning when I was rudely disturbed from my morning cuppa by our lovely postman rapping on the door. He handed over a mysterious brown paper package, then disappeared once again into the misty morning.

Okay, it may not have been exactly a 'mystery package' but it does help set the scene, wouldn't you agree?

The package was from Richard Findley. That woodturner on Instagram with the impressive sideburns and equally impressive skew work. Here, carefully wrapped in the parcel, were six

beautifully crafted light pulls in a mixture of sycamore and oak. Richard and I had talked about collaborating on a project where he carried out the turning and I decorated the items with various embellishment techniques.

I already had a few things roughly planned out for technique, but now I needed to sort out which woods to apply them to and how. It is this process I wish to share with you via this article.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMMA A COOK

Concept

I am a strong believer in trying to incorporate different skills into my turning. I spent a good few years learning woodcarving under master carver Michael Painter, so carving is one thing I enjoy playing with as an embellishment. However, you do not need to be an expert carver to achieve similar results to those I use – there is nothing wrong with utilising burr cutters, rasps or other texturing tools to create equally interesting effects.

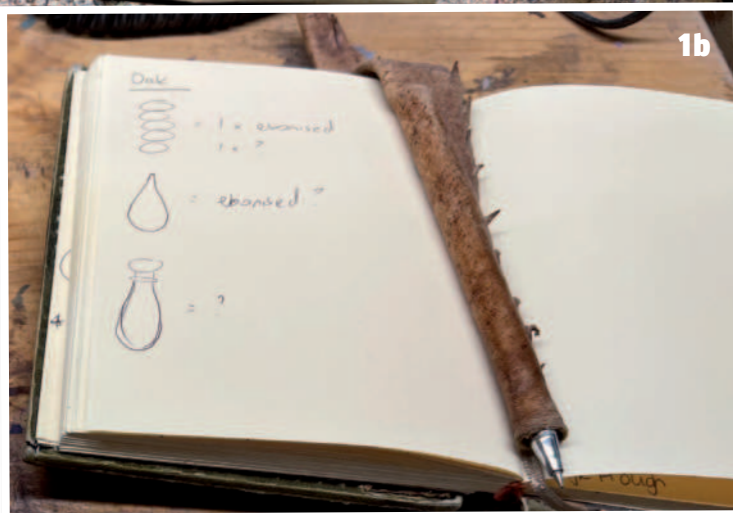
With this project, I aim to show you a very simple carving technique that provides you with a texture which can be finished simply with oil/wax/lacquer or can be further elaborated upon with various colouring possibilities.

Thought process

I grabbed a few bits and pieces which I had envisioned I might use. I have recently been playing with one particular style of texture, so I knew I needed a couple of shallow fishtail gouges (a Pfeil 3F/12 is a strong favourite for this type of work); some finishing oil (I went with Odie's Oil on this occasion); some Jo Sonja black gesso; Staffordshire Black ebonising solutions; Polyvine acrylic size; my new range of chameleon flakes and pigments... and a second (fourth?) cup of tea...

I threw down a few rough sketches in my notebook because I'm a very visual worker. Planning for me doesn't tend to go too well and I often find my work process involves me jumping back and forth as I move through a project, so the notebook is just somewhere to scribble fleeting thoughts and ideas.

I knew I wanted to do a few quite bold transformations with possible all-over colouring, but mostly I planned on only adding a subtle amount. The teardrop pulls with beads were the first to jump out at me because that little flat area at the top was the most perfect, tiny canvas to colour while leaving the rest natural-ish. The oak pulls also offered potential fun with ebonising, so these were an obvious starting point.



1a Set-up 1b Sketch book

Ebonising process

I opted to use Staffordshire Black ebonising solution because, although you can make your own ebonising solution, every time I have attempted it I end up with something that looks (and smells) like toxic waste that I dare not open ever again without first contacting the CDC.

The first coat is a tannin solution that doesn't colour the wood at all – it just supercharges any tannins already in the wood, or provides

them for those timbers which don't have much. Oak is rich in tannins so doesn't technically need it, but I'm a belt and braces kind of person so on went the tannin solution.

Once dry, the ebonising solution was applied all over and again allowed to dry. This whole process was repeated a number of times until I got the depth of ebonising I wanted. I know I could have used ebonising lacquer, but I wanted to preserve the grain in the wood as much as possible, so this was the best route to take (plus I thoroughly enjoy this method).



2a Applying the tannin solution 2b Ebonising process

◀ Oak and sycamore beaded teardrops – carved with colour

While the two oak pulls were going through the ebonising process, I moved on to the sycamore and opted to carve the neck area with a tiny carving gouge. The piece was gently clamped in a bench vice to allow me to carefully cut equally tiny scallops out all the way round. (The lollipop stick was to prevent the slim end from dropping into the vice when pressure was applied from the carving tool.)

The carved area was then sealed with cellulose sanding sealer, and painted with black gesso as a base coat. The reasoning behind using the gesso is because it can be applied accurately with a brush; it dries completely matt and provides you with a keyed surface to allow further layers of product to bond better.

Polyvine acrylic metal leaf size was then painted on top of the gesso once dry, and allowed to reach its 'tack point' – for this brand of size it takes 15 minutes to achieve this stage. As soon as the size reaches tack (it goes clear and shiny) the dry flakes can be brushed on using a soft, fluffy brush,

removing any excess flakes with the same brush once fully covered.

I didn't apply any product over the flakes because they don't need it – I opted for a simple oil finish over the bare wood and left it at that.

The matching oak beaded teardrop had me scratching my head for a while. I wanted to stick to colour on the neck area, but didn't want a repeat of the sycamore design. So I went for 'theme and variation' – always a great plan if you get stuck or lose your mojo.

The most obvious thing to do was to texture the teardrop and leave the neck flat with colour. I used the same process to carve the bulb area, only with a larger chisel (the 3F/12) to make quicker progress. For the next, I sealed it, applied gesso, size and flakes again, then oiled the bare wood. In hindsight, I wish I had done these two light pulls the opposite way round as sycamore lends itself well to being carved and creates great shadows, whereas the grain of oak can often over-complicate things and take away from the carving. Oh well.



3 Sycamore beaded teardrop being carved 4a Sycamore carved teardrop – gesso being applied 4b Sycamore beaded teardrop size coat application copy
5 Sycamore beaded teardrop – flakes applied with soft, fluffy brush 6a Oak beaded teardrop – carved 6b Oak beaded teardrop – flakes



Oak beaded, ebonised, aged and grain-filled

Once the two ebonised oak pulls were dry and at an adequate colour, I opted to work on the beaded one first. Again, the reasoning for this was I already had a plan. I have often used ebonising solution to 'age' pieces of oak by sanding part of it away to create a gradient. I felt the beads would lend themselves perfectly to this application, so over we went to the lathe and with the use of a dowel in a Jacobs chuck and a standard revolving centre in the tailstock, I was able to start the sanding.

I used 400 grit abrasive because I didn't want to start causing sanding lines, and if you go in with something too heavy it will also cause a heavy line instead of blending between the natural wood you are

exposing and the ebonised areas. It takes longer to achieve this way, but the results are far superior. On completion of the sanding process, I used a liming brush by Chestnut Products to scrub the dust out of the grain ready for the next step.

Now, ebonising solutions can sometimes leave the wood looking grey until an oil or top coat of finish is applied. It can also sit in the grain slightly if you have applied multiple coats, so in order to cover this I applied some gold gilt cream by Chestnut Products to fill the grain and lighten it a little. It only gives a subtle difference on natural white oak, but it just helped to lift it a little. I then used oil to remove the excess and buffed to a finish.

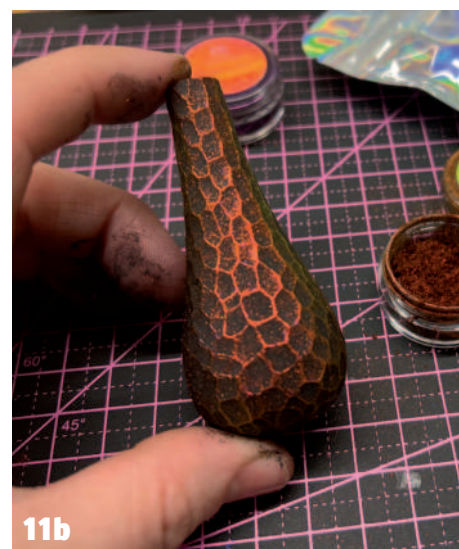


7 Oak beaded pull ready to sand in the lathe with a dowel and revolving centre for support 8 Scrubbing the grain clean with liming brush 9 Filled with gold gilt cream

Sycamore teardrop – carved with colour

The final two light pulls to tackle were the plain teardrop shapes. The oak had been ebonised, but the sycamore was completely plain at this stage, so I decided to use the sycamore for the one with most colour as it had no other design to it to make it look over complicated.

Sticking with the carving texture, I popped it into the vice and set about carving the whole way around the pull. I used an extra light source near the piece so I could see the shadows of the texture I was carving, which you can just spot in the photo.



10 Sycamore teardrop being carved all over **11a** Sycamore teardrop being dry brushed **11b** Sycamore teardrop – dry brushing complete

Oak teardrop – ebonised, carved and coloured

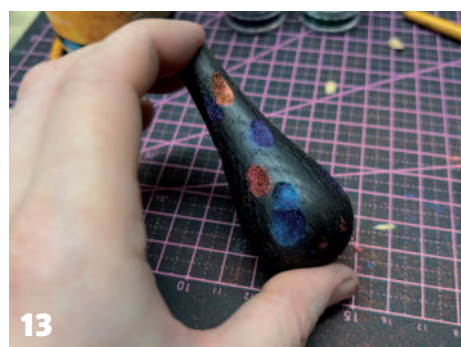
Finally, we have the ebonised oak teardrop. What to do, what to do? I wish I had just oiled it, because honestly it was beautiful as it was, simply ebonised. But no. In my wisdom, I decided to experiment with a few randomly carved facets. I'd never done isolated facets before, so I was intrigued as to whether or not it would work.

Initially my thoughts were that it might be a great way to expose some of the natural wood, but unfortunately I had the same difficulty to

overcome in that the facets weren't as clean a contrast as I had hoped for due to the depth the ebonising solution had penetrated. I was extremely underwhelmed.

In an attempt to salvage, I went for the sealer/esso/size and pigment application to colour the facets and although it was an interesting effect it wasn't as bold as I had hoped for, nor did it suit this particular project.

But that, dear readers, is why we play. ●



12 Oak teardrop with facets carved to expose natural wood **13** Oak teardrop with mica powders applied **14** Final line-up

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The Tiny Turner



1 Errol the Swamp Dragon



2 Emma the Tiny Turner

3 A carved and coloured banded bowl

Guest editor Richard Findley finds out how Emma Cook turned herself into a brand

I'd like to introduce Emma Cook, aka The Tiny Turner, although you may already be familiar with her as she is popular on the UK demonstration circuit. To help you get to know Emma, I have interviewed her about her work and background then, to add a twist to my light pull/skew chisel project I sent it over to Emma for her to decorate as a collaborative project.

Tell us about your background and how you discovered/got into turning

I have always loved crafting and making things since I was very young. Our house was full of *Blue Peter* craft makes and there was nothing I couldn't achieve (at least in my mind) with some cardboard; scissors and a pot of PVA.

Naturally, as I got older I would dabble in different crafts until one day my Uncle Maurice taught my younger brother, James, how to turn. James took to woodturning quickly leading to our parents buying him a lathe which resided in the garage. And it was then that my curiosity took over.

3



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4 Cupcake box. One of Emma's well-known demonstration pieces, turned with hand carved 'swirl' design, complete with Swarovski crystals and a kingwood cherry on top **5** Turned and hand carved pumpkin boxes in lime **6** Flower series – a handturned and carved piece of work made from sycamore, yew and African blackwood, inlaid with a quartz crystal **7** Flower series – a handturned piece of work made from ash and elm, inlaid with a quartz crystal and detailed with leather thronging stitches **8** Flower series – a hand turned, carved and pierced piece made from sycamore, yew and lime, inlaid with a dyed quartz crystal



We had a local shop where I live, in Birstall, which sold all sorts to do with woodturning. It was a wonderful little shop and James and I frequented it weekly with our pocket money to buy timber, tools and dream about all the other things in there.

It wasn't long, however, until I was offered a Saturday job at the shop (James couldn't take it because he was only 15). At 16 I began my first job working in a woodturning shop and that was the beginning of everything really.

What made you want to make woodturning your main source of income?

Not long after starting work at the woodturning shop, I was introduced to various professional turners and also began attending the North of England Woodworking & Power Tool Show in Harrogate.

My very first visit to the Harrogate Show had me spellbound. I loved turning and here were people doing it for a living.

It made perfect sense to aim towards trying to make a living from woodturning, even though everyone I spoke to said it was almost impossible to do. But the problem is, if someone tells me I can't do something it's like a red rag to a bull and I just have to try to do it.

Stubbornness fully engaged, I began to look into how I might be able to make this work and it was great to finally have a focus. I had never truly known what I wanted to do 'when I grew up' and I remember taking various quizzes during careers days which interestingly suggested I should be a train driver or perhaps some sort of manager. Neither of which really grabbed me.

Tell us about your experiences of being a woman in woodturning, good or bad

I have never had a bad experience in woodturning for being a female turner. In fact, quite the opposite – I usually find people are very encouraging.

Occasionally if I turn up for a demo and my partner, Roy, has come with me some club members assume Roy is going to demonstrate. But other than that, I've had very little negativity.

There is, of course, plenty of banter which comes with this territory but I think being a Yorkshire lass helps – as us Northerners love a bit of banter, so I will always give as good as I get.

You have developed the Tiny Turner into a bit of a brand, how important has this branding been for you in growing your business?

Developing my Tiny Turner brand has been, for me, very important. It was never meant to be a brand. In fact, the entire reason the name came about was because I needed to quickly think of an eBay username when I first started turning because I thought it might be a great place to try and sell a few bits, but it lay dormant for years.

When the time was right for me to begin my career properly, I thought it would be an amusing way to introduce myself and so it stuck. But once I began developing my own project kits to sell, it became of the utmost importance and I made it a registered trademark.

The only downside is I have to compete with Tina Turner... thankfully not at singing.

You have a strong online following on YouTube. What made you get into producing videos and does this benefit your business?

Video production became an interest a good few years ago – way before the pandemic – but incidentally it helped me out considerably when this did hit as I already had a fair bit of equipment.

The reasoning behind the videos was to provide me with another channel to share project ideas as I love demonstrating, and initially was also a platform I could use to show how to use some of the kits I sell.

However, once the pandemic hit it became a brilliant platform for live demos and having a bit of fun with other turners while we were unable to mix.

Business-wise YouTube is not an easy egg to crack and either requires a lot of work, or a little bit of luck. Recently I have not been having much luck with the internet nor time to produce videos, but I have started working on some once again and hopefully this year I will be relaunching my YouTube subscription channel, *Team Tiny*, which gives people access to a library of projects and skill-based videos that aren't publicly available.

You also do online remote demos (IRDs); these obviously became huge during the pandemic. Do you see their popularity continuing?

IRDs saved a lot of turners from losing their businesses and for that we will be eternally grateful. It brought the turning community closer together and also gave international turners access to each other that previously we never really had.

I think IRDs still have their place – especially in club situations where it means they can showcase a turner from overseas or a considerable distance away even in the UK. I am part of a couple of online clubs, Woodturning Zoom being one of them – a lovely community that I can join in with while working in my workshop. They are also much better entertainment than the majority of TV programmes – which is why I don't own a TV.

However, I still prefer being out and about and with people as much as possible, so as soon as I could get back to demonstrating 'for real' I was straight back on the road. I missed the hugs.

What other turners do you particularly respect or admire for their work? Are there any you'd like to meet who you haven't yet?

Aargh. I find this question such a difficult one to answer because I don't really know what is going on in the rest of the world most of the time. I live in my own little bubble and only really see things on social media, so I am only getting snippets. However, I will try to provide you with some sort of answer...

I have enormous respect for turners such as yourself, Steve Jones and Dave Dalby. You guys are out there in your workshops churning out the most exquisite yet often functional (or even structural) pieces every day of your lives. I absolutely could not do this, so kudos to you all for being able to and at such high skill levels.

Another woodturner whose work I very much enjoy is Scottish turner Gary Lowe (aka The Tartan Turner). Gary has made some beautiful pieces incorporating gorgeous textures, colours, raffia, string, beads

9 + 10 Aurora Discs **11** Errol the Swamp Dragon (as drawn by Paul Kidby) – based on a character created by Terry Pratchett



and even feathers. He really does have a good eye for shape and form and always seems to nail it with the appropriate amount of embellishment.

I also love Rebecca DeGroot's work. I couldn't for the life of me have come up with her concepts, but they are so 'out there' and for me are a breath of fresh air with their creativity – I always enjoy seeing what she comes up with next. She seems to be such a vibrant soul with the most incredible creative energy, so I'd love to meet her and see her work up close and personal.

How would you describe your style of work?

My work is a bit random as I don't particularly have one thing going on at any one time. I know I'm not really a technical turner making overly complex items, and I prefer to embellish in one way or another using turning as more of a base to work from. Yet I also make plenty of items where the wood is left alone because it's just so beautiful. Let's just say my style is 'eclectic'. It's a bit fancier than 'random'.

What inspires your work/where do you find inspiration?

I always find this a bit of a loaded question because it usually causes me to respond with some standard, cliché like, it's 'nature', or 'mythical creatures' or 'fantasy art' and so on.

Now all of these interests are valid, but my life-long obsession with dragons didn't inspire my lighted hanging ornaments or the recent carved, banded bowls I've been making. Does that make sense?

I do certainly have interests and they can sometimes steer my work a little, but the biggest area of inspiration for me is play. In fact, over the past few years I've found the majority of my ideas have appeared from trying to think of projects to do live on my YouTube channel; or 'fixing' something that has happened live, so you have to think on your feet to resolve it.

I also find past skills I have learned have found their way into my work. For example: I used to paint Warhammer figures. I spent years painting Warhammer figures and got quite good at techniques such as dry brushing and this is a skill I often bring into my turnings which, again, was achieved through play.

I suppose what I'm trying to say is that you have to be careful when throwing about this loaded word because it can give a false insight into how someone arrives at a finished product. Just because I love to see the morning frost on a leaf doesn't mean the same to me as to anyone else, nor does it give anyone an insight into my brain and what journey it could take me on.





14

12 Lighted hanging ornament incorporating one of the Tiny Turner kits **13** Aurora Mushroom

14 Stitched bowl from ash with leather thonging along the natural split

What is your favourite thing that you've made?

My favourite thing I have ever made would have to be Errol, the Swamp Dragon inspired (there's that word again) by Paul Kidby's drawing of the character created by Sir Terry Pratchett in his Discworld novels. I had a lot of help with him, and he took me hundreds of hours over a six-year period to complete as he is hand-carved from a single block of lime.

Turning-wise I made a large bowl from Australian red mallee burl when I was about 17 years old and this has resided on my Mum and Dad's dining table ever since. I think it is more the amazing piece of wood more than my skills, but I can remember it helped gain me a certain level of respect within my local club at the time and was quite a pivotal piece in helping me decide that I could do this for a job and I wanted to do this is a job!

I also love the 'Auroras' that I make, although they take a painstaking amount of time, so I don't often have the time to create them.

However, there are lots of other silly, little things I make that I love and right now I'm thoroughly enjoying making my turned and carved banded bowls more than anything.

What is your favourite piece by another turner, perhaps that you wish you'd made?

Again, because I live under a rock as I mentioned before, I often have little clue as to what other turners are making these days. I follow a few people and groups on social media, which is where I spot things others have made, but I can't say I've seen something I wish I had made myself.

The other part which makes this so difficult to answer is because I couldn't possibly make something the same as another person has because you put a little bit of your soul into everything you make as a craftsperson/artist and that is what helps breathe life into it. So if I had made it, it wouldn't be the same.

However, to put a name in there I can remember being enormously impressed with the work of Binh Pho when I was 16 and he was someone who also helped nudge me down the path I have ended up following toward my own career in woodturning.

Oh. Hang on. There was a piece by Michael S Gibson in 2022 with the leaves he makes from turned, carved and coloured pieces. One in particular, Dancing in the Wind, popped up on my screen in summer last year and I remember feeling so deflated because it was such a similar concept to a piece I had thought of a good while prior but done nothing about due to figuring out the mechanics of making it happen. But Michael executed it so well that I was also very excited to see this concept come to life and actually work.

What does the future hold for you and your work?

This is such an exciting question really, isn't it? Because I don't know the answer. It's just going to be the next part of my journey, and the next, and the next. Because I allow work and ideas to take me in whatever direction they want then the future is just a surprise waiting to happen. All I am sure of is that I will turn for as long as I can turn and hopefully continue to encourage others to do the same.



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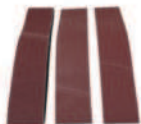
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A log three ways – Part two

Andy Coates suggests an approach for novices



In the first part of this short series a small log of ash was cut to provide three bowl blanks with different orientations and, accordingly, different aesthetic outcomes. The first was a small bowl turned from what was essentially a conventional cross-grain bowl blank. This blank was one half of a section of the log cut through the pith to provide two identical blanks – one which had a further cut made, from the bark side, to provide a flat base. This was the blank used for the first bowl.

We left the article with this bowl completed, and its opposing blank mounted on the lathe between centres. An explanation for this choice of mounting can be found in the sidebar. This bowl will be turned in the opposite orientation to the first bowl, with the bark intact. This

blank could be turned to produce a bowl of very similar appearance to the first, but it would be much smaller, and the grain would look very different. Here we will produce a bowl with a bark edge at the rim.

It is often easier to visualise a bowl within a conventional bowl blank than from half a log, and a natural-edged bowl can be even more difficult to visualise than a conventional bowl. How does the shape arise? In essence, the half log has already done some of the work for you, but seeing that can be difficult for the novice turner.

The images (below) should help you to see where the bowl comes from, and how the curved surface of the log forms the bulk of the bowl's shape.



i Bowl sited in half log – underside view – showing the material removed to form the bowl shape **ii** Bowl raised above its actual position to show turned shape **iii** Bowl sited in half log – top-down view **iv** Bowl outside half log **v** Bowl sited inside half log the blank was cut from

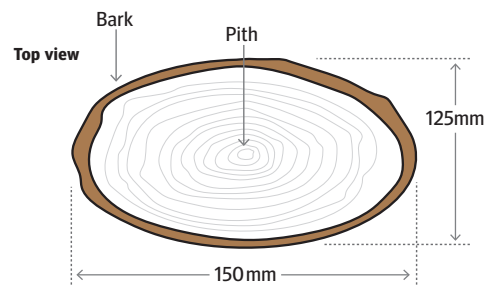
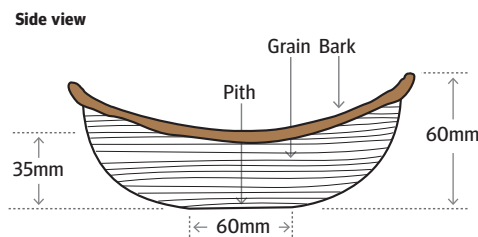
Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- 10mm long-ground bowl gouge
- 15mm straight-ground bowl gouge
- 25mm flat skew
- Negative-rake scraper
- 6mm parting and beading tool
- Dividers
- Bowl callipers

Wood

- Ash log (or what you have to hand) 11 x 6in



Some considerations

In order to make the mounting as safe as possible, the bark must be tight and secure. In the scroll chuck a Morse taper holder is fitted, and a steb-type drive inserted, the sharp teeth of the centre ensuring a solid grip into the wood. At the tailstock a revolving ring centre is used – this also ensures a solid grip on the blank.

The intention with this blank is to produce a bowl with a bark, or natural-edged rim. Because we will be cutting through an irregular, and already curved, surface to produce the rim (and bowl), cutting is very different than on a conventional blank and more care is required to ensure both safety, and a successful outcome. Keeping the bark undamaged is fundamental to this success.

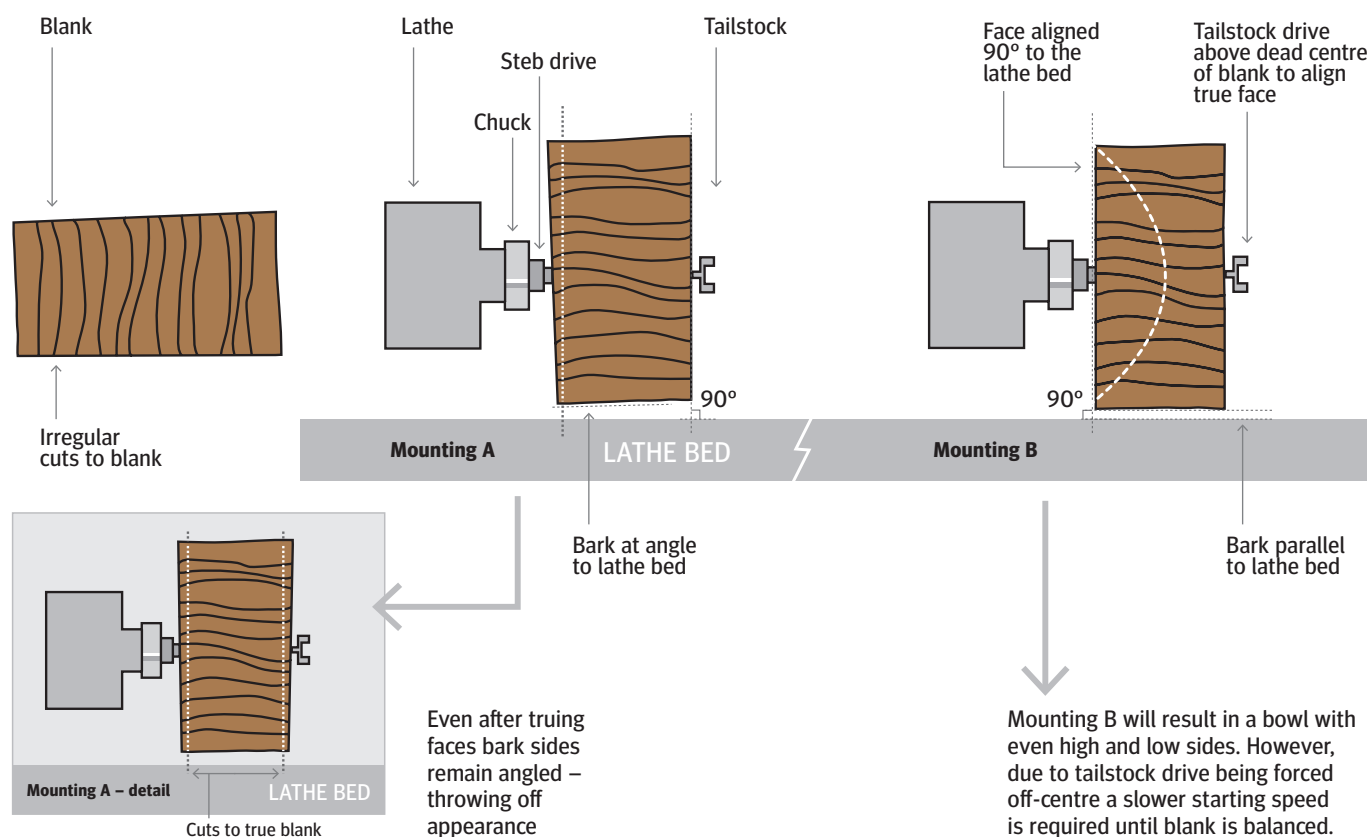
Some mention of orientation ought to be

made here. In the best scenario your log will have been as near perfectly round as possible, will contain no branches or defects, and you will have prepared the blank so it has a flat cut face which is parallel to the apex of the curved bark side. When mounted this results in both the bark side and the cut side being perfectly (as near as possible) horizontal, resulting in the high wings being at the same height, and the two low points of the edge at the same height. This is often cited as the perfect aesthetic outcome. Your aesthetic may differ, and this is fine, but we will aim for that in this first trial. But things are not often ideal, so what can you do if they are not?

Mount the blank as detailed and bring the toolrest as close as possible so the high points just miss the toolrest. Mark the toolrest with a Sharpie and rotate the blank by hand –

both edges should meet the mark. Now mark where the low edge will be, and do the same thing – once again the low edges should both align with the same point on the toolrest.

If they do not, release the quill slightly and, keeping the headstock drive fully engaged, adjust the position of the blank relative to the tailstock centre, gently nip the quill up and check alignment again. You may have to do this for the vertical and horizontal planes. Eventually you will get it as perfect as it can be for a given blank. The tailstock centre will be located away from what was the dead centre, and this has an impact on the balance of the blank, and usually requires a much slower speed to begin roughing out. The toolrest may also be required to be positioned further away than is usual until the discrepancy has been turned away.



Top tip Mounting the bark-faced blank

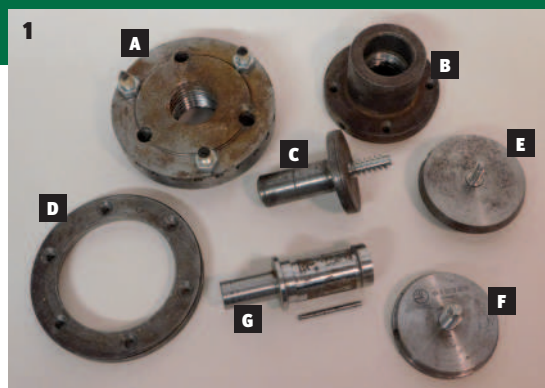
There are a few ways we could mount this blank: pin chuck, screw chuck, supported faceplate ring, between centres. Each could be used, but some present further problems, which, while not insurmountable, discount them as appropriate mounting methods, especially for the novice.

- The pin chuck, while widely considered old fashioned, is probably the most secure, but few people have, or use, one*, so I opted for my preferred method, between centres. However, pin chucks are generally a relatively cheap chuck accessory, and should not be discounted as a holding method.

- A hole of the pin chuck's diameter is drilled, usually on a pillar drill, as in the image, and the blank is mounted on the pin chuck with the pin. When the blank is rotated the pin shifts and locks the blank securely. It is a simple and efficient holding device... so long as you do not lose the pin between jobs.

* Upon checking for a price for a pin chuck I was disappointed to find that nobody appears to make/sell them now. A scroll chuck variant is available, but the price may put people off. So, between centres it is.

1 Mounting devices – **A** Shop-made spur drive plate **B** Small faceplate **C** 8mm screw chuck fitting **D** Faceplate ring **E, F** Screw chuck plates for scroll chuck **G** Pin chuck
2 Burr blank drilled with Forstner bit to take a pin chuck



Making the second bowl

1 The blank is mounted between centres, with the bark facing the headstock, on the dead centres of each face, the tailstock is locked down, and the quill advanced to ensure that the teeth and ring of the centres bite as deep as possible into the wood. If the bark is at all loose, it can be removed with a bench chisel in an area slightly larger than the head of the drive, allowing the teeth to bite directly into solid wood. Be especially careful not to damage the bark elsewhere on the blank.

2 With the blank mounted we are ready to begin roughing out the bowl. Lathe speed is initially set to around 600rpm (increasing as the roughing progresses and the blank becomes balanced). Set the toolrest to the back of the blank and, using a bowl gouge, begin to remove material, working from close to the drive centre out towards the edge.

3 Once the back surface is relatively clean, the long-ground bowl gouge can be used to take a shear pull cut, using the lower cutting edge. This can be aggressive, so take a few practice cuts to gauge the way it cuts. Shape can begin to be formed by pulling the tool handle back slowly as the cut progresses. Stop the lathe frequently and re-site the toolrest for the closest safe position.

4 Work backwards incrementally, towards the two high points of the rim. The aim is to stop cutting just as the curve reaches the rim – this ensures that you retain as much of the potential diameter as possible. Stop the lathe to check progress. It is easy to be fooled into thinking that you are done, as can be seen in the image here. The flat area at the rim has to be removed, so continue shaping until it has gone.





5 Once the shape is roughed out, you need to cut a tenon for reverse mounting. A flat skew used on its side is ideal here. Ensure that the face of the tenon is flat or slightly concave, and cut the tenon to the specified diameter and depth for your particular scroll chuck.

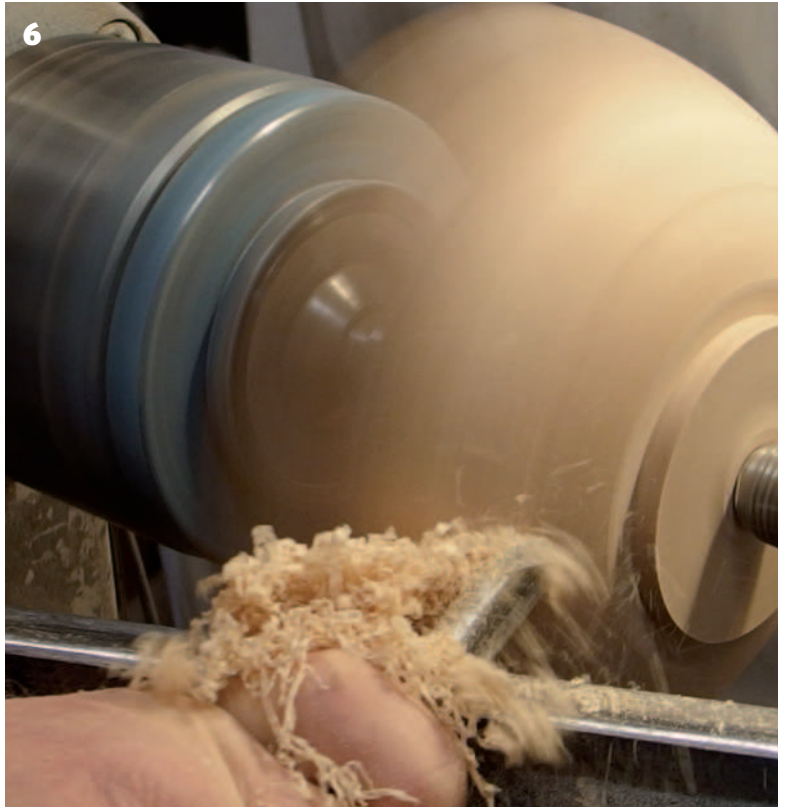
6 Return to the side of the bowl and refine the shape. The whole curve of the bowl should begin at the bark rim and end about 5mm from the intersection of the tenon with the bowl. This will form the foot of the bowl later.

7 As the curve approaches the foot, push the curve out a little by sweeping in the opposing direction. If using a pull cut this is achieved by picking up the cut on the edge at the foot and gently pushing the tool handle away from you and almost immediately pulling the handle back to the body. You are aiming for a pleasing continuous curve from bark rim to the foot.

8 No matter how sharp your tool is, there may, or probably will, be some small areas of pulled grain slightly beyond the end grain at two sides. This is usual and nothing to be overly concerned about. You can see here where the tool has pulled at the grain, leaving a rough surface.

9 The blank will be in balance now, and the lathe speed can be increased considerably. Using a pull cut from base to rim, the lower wing of the tool will shear cut an improved surface. You can cut all the way to the rim, but take the cut off the edge and do not stall at the rim. Make sure the toolrest is set such that your tool is supported beyond the end of the cut, effectively in thin air. The surface should now be of a finish appropriate for abrading.

10 If you find that the pulled grain remains, a negative-rake scraper with a curved edge can be used very effectively to finesse the surface. The edge is brought to the wood at a canted angle, and just the weight of the tool pressing on the wood. Draw the tool back and you will see super-fine shavings being taken. The surface should be devoid of tool marks and irregularities now.





11 Remove the bowl from between centres and re-mount on the tenon, ensuring the blank is seated perfectly flat before locking down the chuck jaws on to the tenon. Now you can begin to hollow the bowl. There are, as ever, a few approaches to hollowing. Using a long-ground bowl gouge, cuts can be taken from the centre outwards, the tool pivoting and increasingly extending from the toolrest, the tool handle being pushed away from you at the same time as you pivot and push the tool slightly forward.

12 Do not cut all the way to the rim. End the cut approximately 10mm from the outer bark edge of the two high points. The wall thickness is not yet set, and you need to leave enough material to be able to do this.

13 Once you have the 10mm section set, a push cut can be used to continue hollowing. Note the position of the tool – the flute is pointing to the 2 o'clock position, and the bevel points in the direction you want to cut, with the tool handle away from you. As the tip of the cutting edge engages the wood the thumb restrains the tool, stopping it skipping backwards. Push gently into the cut and pull the tool handle in, feeding more length across the toolrest as you do. This is a fluid, controlled motion, and can take some getting used to.

14 As more material is removed, and the depth increased, you will begin to see a ghost image as the lower edges leave a void and the tool can be seen through the spinning wood. This can be a useful aid, but also makes the turning more difficult as the tool tip is in air twice in every rotation, and you need to control the tool and maintain the same trajectory. Note the position of the gouge as it is brought to pick up the cut.

15 You will eventually arrive at a stage where the bark edge is revealed in its entirety. In the image above the bark edge can be seen, and a central block of waste left to support the walls to this stage. Now the wall thickness can be reduced to whatever final thickness is required – 6-8mm is fine, but if you are unnerved cutting the wall thinner, leave it thicker – this is a learning process.

16 With the long-ground bowl gouge freshly sharpened, and the lathe speed set as high as you feel safe, 1,500rpm is good, take a light and gentle pass from the rim to the base just beyond where the lower bark edge is. Repeat as required until the desired thickness is achieved. Once set, you never return to cut this section of the wall. As the central waste is removed, the wings of the bowl can flex due to centrifugal force, and cutting could result in a catch and a shattered bowl. Complete the hollowing in stages until the entire wall is the same thickness.

17 The bowl is almost complete, but the tenon needs to be removed. A small cylinder of waste wood with a sponge face can be used as a jam chuck. The revolving centre is brought up and is sited in the mark it previously left. Gently advance the quill until the bowl is securely captivated between the jam chuck and tailstock centre.



18 Using a 10mm spindle gouge, remove the tenon over a number of passes. Once the tenon is removed, take a final couple of light passes to slightly dish the base, and the bowl is completed. The stub that remains can be removed off the lathe with a sharp bench chisel, carving knife, or abrasive drum/arbor. Abrading has not been covered throughout because this is about the turning process, but if you wish to abrade, this kind of bowl is better abraded off the lathe, working along the grain. As you gain experience you will see where it is safe to abrade with the lathe running.

Making the third bowl... two ways

19 We are now left with the last blank taken from the log – the end-grain blank. Take a compass and find the best centre you can, with the bark edge as close to the circumference as possible. In an ideal world this would be centred on the pith, but this may not be the case for your log. This is not a significant problem, so do not worry about it.

20 The log is mounted between a steb drive and a revolving ring centre, the quill is extended to drive the teeth and ring into the wood, and securely locked down. Note in the image that the perfectly vertical face is at the headstock side, and the face at the tailstock is skewed. The headstock face will form the rim, so it is important that this face is true and horizontal so that the grain is as horizontal as possible on completion.

21 There are a number of design options to consider with an end-grain bowl: bark-edged, or bark-removed? We will look at both options and see which appeals most. We will look at bark-edged first, so we need to keep in mind that a strip of bark needs to be retained at the rim. The width of this strip can vary, depending on the shape of the bowl, so we will retain more than is possibly required to leave options. Begin at the tailstock end and, using a bowl gouge, begin to remove the bark, working back towards the headstock.

22 Bark can be sharp and abrasive, so a face mask is essential, and your stance should be such that you are behind the cut, thus avoiding the cascade of abrasive shavings coming off the tool. As the bark is removed the tool handle is pushed forward, driving the bevel and beginning to form a curve towards the revolving centre.

23 When picking up a cut to start a run the flute is almost at the three o'clock position. This allows a fine pick-up cut, and drives the shavings/chips away from you. As the cut progresses along the curve the tool can be slightly rotated to the left, bringing the flute up to the two o'clock position, and the tool handle slightly pushed away from you. This gives a more aggressive cut and a slightly increased width of cut.



◀ **24** If the cut becomes too aggressive for you to control, pull the tool handle back to your body slightly to reduce the depth of cut. If this results in a step, do not worry, simply return after that cut's complete, and begin again at the step. Work the curve down, allowing the tool to pass the edge at the base.



25 Move the toolrest to the headstock face of the blank. Using the long-ground bowl gouge, with the flute pointed towards the chuck, pick up a light cut at the rim, and cut towards the chuck. This cut only needs to be 15-25mm deep; all you are doing is forming a clean, flat, rim area. Stop the lathe and ensure that the periphery of the log face is cleanly cut, and no marks remain from the original saw cut.



26 Move the toolrest once again, siting it to form a tenon at the tailstock end of the blank. Form a tenon using a flat skew on its side, or a parting and beading tool. Make sure the tenon is the correct size for your scroll chuck. You will need to complete the lower section of shaping, and refine the shape using the shear pull cut last used in Step 9. You can see here how the shape, a single continuous curve from rim to base, has a direct impact on how the bark looks – and for my taste there is way too much bark on view.



27 In order to reduce the amount of bark on view you need to cut deeper into the heartwood. Here you can see the resulting change achieved by cutting a slight ogee shape – less bark, more cambium layer, and a differently shaped bowl. If either shape appeals to you, continue on* and complete the bowl as it is. Neither option particularly appeals to me, and so in the last article in the series I will change tack on the bowl one more time, and see if it can be more appealing.



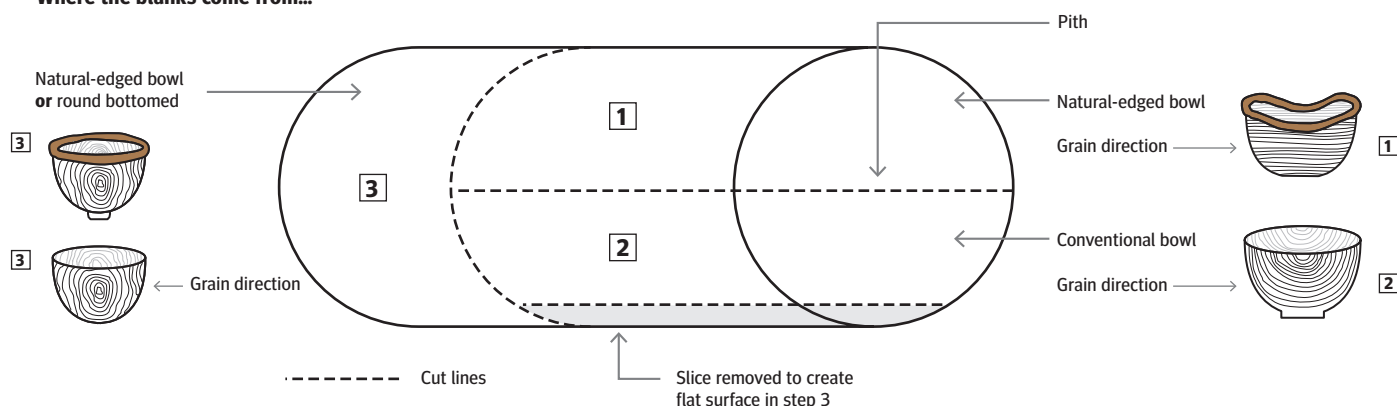
* Although you may wish to wait for the next article to hear about hollowing end grain and any associated issues and tips.

Conclusions

28 Two bowls are completed, 1 and 2 in the drawing below (although, it only now occurs to me that I turned number 2 first and number 1 second). You can see how the opposing orientation of the two blanks has dramatically altered how the grain looks. On the natural-edged bowl the grain is almost horizontal, flowing around the bowl, rising the grain up toward the rim. On the other the grain radiates outward from the pith at the rim at either side of the bowl, which forms four distinct regions on the side of the bowl. And all we did was flip the orientation. Two completely different bowls from two virtually identical blanks. I don't know about you, but I like that. We started bowl number three, and will return to it in the next article, so sharpen the gouges, and you'll be ready to continue next time. ●



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Square winged red gum box

Andrew Potocnik reveals the negatives and positives of two processes of creating winged forms



This project is an example of how to turn square or 'winged' forms with a slight variation, showing you how to turn them safely with sacrificial timber added to the outer edges, while turning a second form without the benefit of sacrificial material. My reason for going through this process is to highlight the positives and negatives of both processes. Of course, the smaller you work, the less risk there is in not adding sacrificial material, but as the scale increases, so does the danger.

Safety is paramount in any form of woodworking, especially in turning, where we are dealing with pieces of wood spinning at high speed, hence it is best to not have sharp edges of wood spinning where we can only see a 'ghost' of the edge at the best of times. Not only do we need to think about the safety of fingers potentially straying into the sharp edges unseen but, likewise, presentation of tools to the wood is equally precarious.

It's also important to point out that there are many turners who take shortcuts and don't add sacrificial timber to their work, be it square or any other 'out of circle' form, but let's leave that to the experienced or 'cowboys' in our fraternity. For the majority of us, it's best to work in a safe manner and pass on 'best practice' instruction as we aim to inspire others to engage in the craft we gain so much enjoyment from.

Best to play it safe all the time.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Using two methods to the same end

For this project I've made two near identical pieces, one showing the safe way of working: i.e. adding sacrificial timber to prevent fingers from being clipped by stray corners only seen as a 'ghost' but clearly evident once the piece is stationary and the square form revealed.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW POTOCNIK

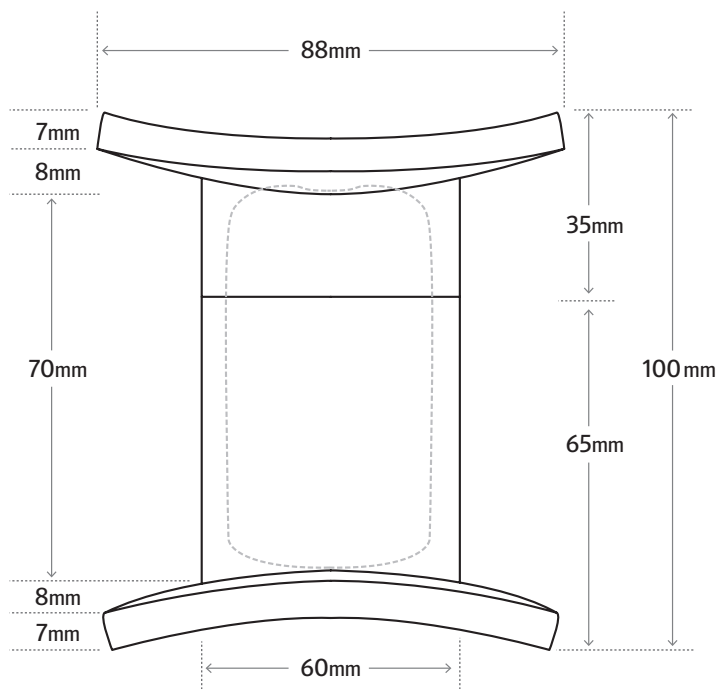
Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate, including full face protection
- 25mm spindle roughing gouge
- 2mm parting tool
- 12mm beading tool
- 12mm fingernail ground spindle gouge
- 12mm bowl gouge
- Square carbide cutter
- Flat curved scraper
- 12mm fingernail ground scraper
- Scrapers with a swept-back left-hand grind
- Diamond pointed scraper
- Round skew

Materials

- One piece, red gum about 70 x 70 x 150mm long
- Scrap radiata pine 70 x 50 x about 150mm
- PVA glue



The making

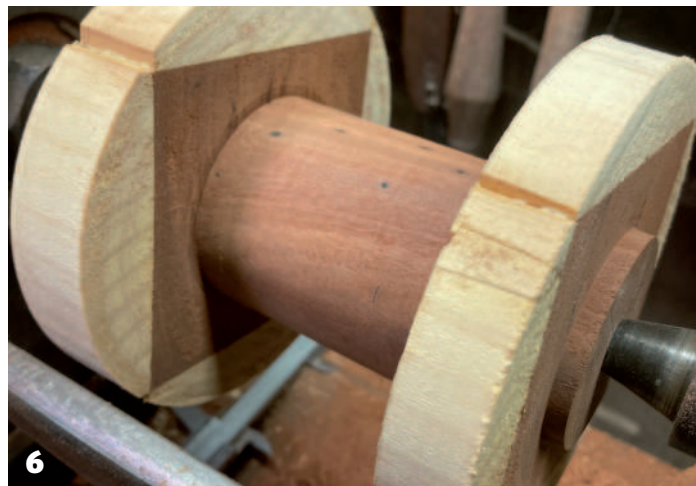
1 I prepared two blanks for this project, both of red gum roughly 70mm squared and 150mm long. One was left as a square while the other had sacrificial radiata pine glued to each of the four faces, which is the safe method of turning a square form. The key requirement in turning a square box is accuracy, so I used the age-old method of drawing diagonal lines from one corner to the next and where the two lines cross is the centre of the blank. Dividers were used to scribe the circumference around sacrificial material so excess could be cut away.

2 Standing on end, the blank was cut to a rough cylinder on my bandsaw. The red gum had been cut square and flat on a cross-cut saw, therefore the blank sat securely while being cut on the bandsaw.

3 Mounted between centres, the blank was roughed to a uniform cylinder ready for the next stage of the project.

4 A tenon was cut at each end of the cylinder to enable the top and base to be gripped in a scroll chuck, later in the process. The pencil line you can see was a guide for the next stage in roughing.





5 The magic of this technique is in exposing material you want as you cut through the unwanted stuff I've so far been referring to as 'sacrificial material'. A sharp fingernail-shaped bowl gouge and a spindle roughing gouge made removal of unwanted material quick and easy.

6 Gradual removal of waste material revealed the main shape of the box I was working toward, while still allowing ample waste material at both ends in preparation for final shaping of the winged top and bottom, and final refinement of the cylindrical body of the box.

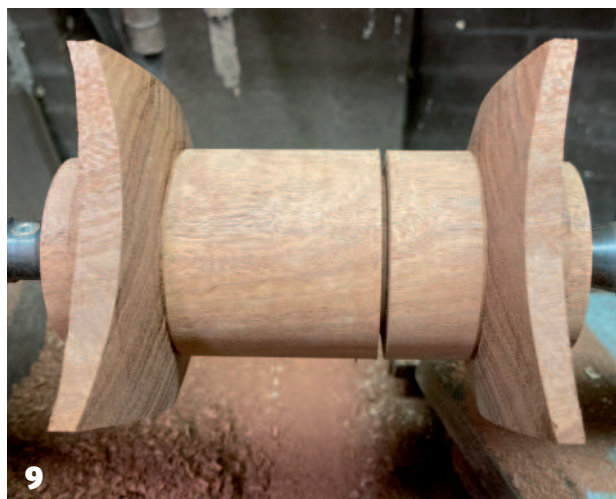
7 Time to introduce my second blank, which shows what is happening within the sacrificial pine edges of the safe turning option.



8 Continuing with the safe option, edges of the top and bottom 'wings' were trimmed to a gentle curve using a fingernail-pointed spindle gouge. The middle section of the box was trimmed to a flat surface with a 6mm-wide beading tool and then a neat V-intersection cut between both surfaces with a skew. I like to use a round skew as it allows me to 'ride' the bevel on the curved surface with ease and then cut in from the flat cylindrical area.



9 Here you can see profiles of both the top and bottom wings which are hidden within sacrificial material. Obvious is the intended slight thickening of each wing as it approaches the body of the box, however, figure eight callipers are needed to indicate this change in thickness within sacrificial material.



10 Inner areas of each wing and the body of the box were sanded to 320 grit, then the two sections cut apart through the part line using a narrow kerf pullsaw.

11 Next I mounted the lid section of the box in a scroll chuck via the tenon cut back in photo 4. The interior was hollowed first with a 12mm bowl gouge, followed by a 12mm fingernail-shaped scraper sweeping in a gentle curve from the centre, to a wall thickness of about 4mm.





12 This is the danger of turning a square-edged version of this box. I placed a small amount of white chalk on the tip of each corner, which you can see as a faint white 'ghost' as the wood spins. Apart from the risk of it catching a finger or knuckle, approaching the wood with a scraper or gouge takes a lot of guess work in knowing when contact will be made with the wood. Catches can be quite rapid and drastic.

13 Determining the depth of the hollowed interior takes an age-old method – insert a pencil into the hollowed area and eyeball across the top of the form holding your thumbnail at the depth mark and then hold the pencil up to the outside of the form.

14 Once the lid was hollowed sufficiently and sanded through to 320 grit, a rebate of about 3mm depth was cut with a square-tipped carbide cutter. In this situation I like to tilt the cutter over to the left to prevent a catch and leave a smooth surface.

15 Now to hollow the body of the box, where I used a Forstner bit held in a Jacobs chuck, fitted into the quill of my tailstock.

16 The interior was refined with a couple of scrapers that aren't part of the base turning kit. Both are rounded at the tip, the second with a swept-around edge that enables hollowing deep forms, but be sure to keep your toolrest as close to the inner part of the vessel to ensure ample support for the tool. Once thinned to about 4mm wall thickness, the interior was sanded through to 320 grit.

17 A tenon matching the inner recess in the lid was cut with a square carbide cutter, working lightly, cutting the tenon shorter than the depth of the recess cut in photo 13 so the top and base would meet without an unsightly gap.



◀ **18** A chamfer was sanded on both mating edges for two reasons – to highlight the join, and to disguise any future movement in the wood. All I used to achieve this is 180 grit sandpaper followed by 240 grit. It only takes an angled surface of about 1mm and a shadow to create definition between the top and bottom of the box.

19 Pushed into place with the tailstock, and a tight fit on the lid, I could begin work on the top surface of the lid. However, to add a layer of safety, I applied a band of plastic tape while the lid was held securely via the tailstock centre.

20 Most of the waste tenon material was removed using a fingernail-shaped bowl gouge while the tailstock centre was in place, and then a finial was shaped using a round skew to undercut its base while a scraper shaped the top section. The round skew held on its side allows it to work as a negative rake scraper, to create a slight V-intersection between surfaces so I could sand both surfaces smoothly without losing clarity between each.

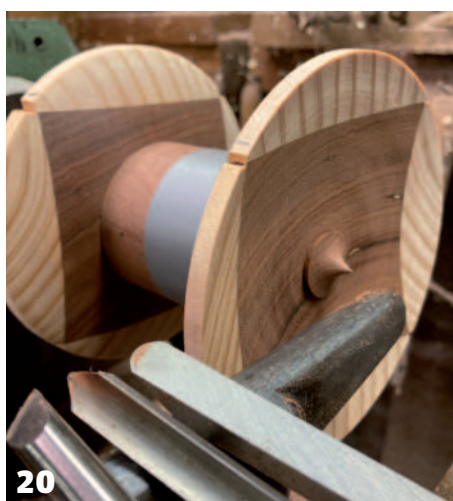
21 Here you can see that, even though I exercised as much care as possible, a couple of the corners chipped due to the lack of supporting material.

22 The upper surface of the box's lid was sanded, working up to the V-groove using my fingernails and the sharply cut edge of my sandpaper to ensure there was no roll-over where surfaces meet.

23 To complete the base, I used a carrier fitted to my scroll chuck, which accepted the tenon I had turned earlier in the project. Vernier callipers are my chosen tool for making sure measurements are accurate. I've become a convert to square carbide cutters, for cutting tenons and recesses, which is what I used to enlarge the opening of the carrier until it matched the tenon of my lid.

24 Always conscious of safety, I added support to the wood with the tailstock kept in place for as long as possible as I removed unwanted material from the base of the container.

25 Slowly, the tenon was reduced as far as possible before being parted free...

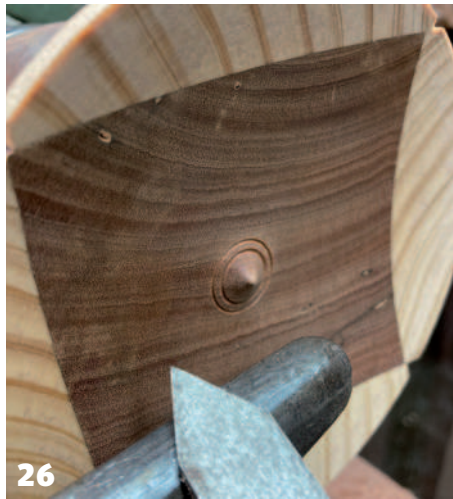


26 ...so the remainder of the base could be gently be trimmed to a neat point, highlighted with a pair of lightly cut V-lines made with a diamond pointed scraper. Detail lines serve several purposes. They 'break' the form visually and highlight features, which is what a pointed centre in this piece really is. Also, they can also create another 'break' tactically, especially if you didn't get the sweep of the form quite right.

27 With all sanding completed it was time to remove unwanted material on the bandsaw. You could use a handsaw to achieve the same result.

28 Sawn edges were sanded smooth on my wide belt sander. If you don't have one, I now see there are many people who post material on electronic media showing how to convert commonly available power tools into workstations that will enable items such as a hand-held belt sander to perform the same function as my sander, but keep in mind, the key at this point is only removing sacrificial timber.

29 To refine edges and add detail to the 'wings' I made a platform of plywood supported with a 19mm piece of hardwood, which was placed on the table of my sander, changing the angle of the winged edges to about 10°. Masking tape was attached to the wings and registration marks added in pen so I could judge how far I had sanded each edge. Each edge was then hand sanded with sandpaper wrapped around a flat sanding block, and edges eased with 320 grit sandpaper, followed with an application of wipe-on, wipe-off polyurethane.



26



27



28



29

Conclusion

Once the project was completed and it was time to take photos of the finished form, a slight twist of the lid revealed an aspect not previously considered. The box took on the look of a temple, adding intrigue to the form and drawing it back to underlying images that have been lingering in my mind since seeing the temples of China, Vietnam and Thailand in pre-Covid years. ●



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Mini stools

James N Duxbury makes some small but functional seats

Some early evidence of functional furniture was found in ancient Egyptian drawings with abundant depictions of wood furnishings ranging from tables, chests and chairs to stools. A stool is essentially a seat with no back or arms, intended for one person.

For many centuries the stool was the standard seating arrangement for the majority of people as a chair (a seat with a back) was reserved only for those of a high social class and income level. As towns and occupations started establishing themselves, adaptations of stools came to be symbolic of artisans and certain trades. A milking stool is such an example. As milk became an important resource, reliably providing protein, cheese and butter, the milking stool became a must-have tool of the trade.

Small stools are a handy household item and children love them. This three-legged version is designed so it can easily be turned on a 10in lathe. It is a fun project to make, requires a minimal amount of material, and can remain basic or be as complicated as you want to make it.

“

Small stools are a handy household item and children love them

”



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES N DUXBURY

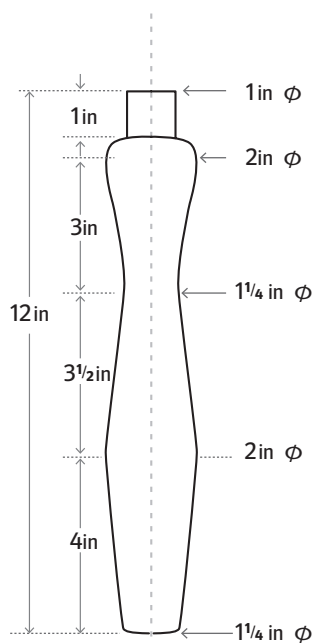
Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

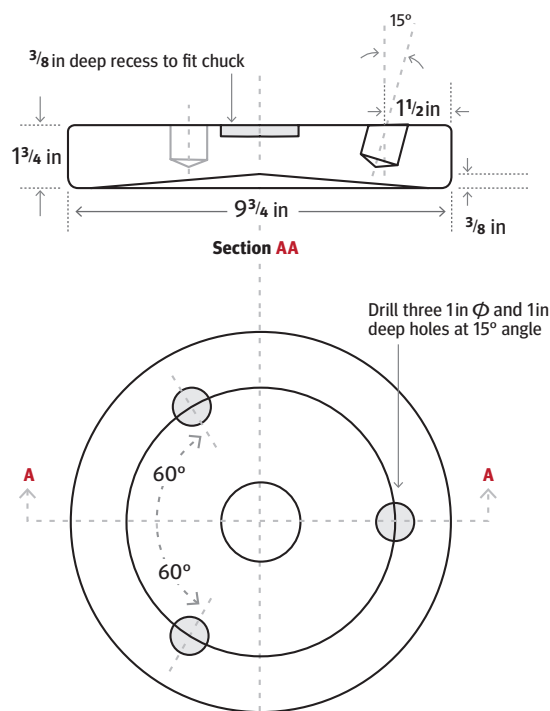
- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- Compass
- Steel ruler
- $\frac{3}{4}$ in (19mm) spindle roughing gouge
- $\frac{3}{8}$ in (10mm) spindle gouge
- $\frac{1}{4}$ in (6mm) skew chisel
- $\frac{1}{2}$ in (13mm) point scraper
- $\frac{1}{8}$ in (3mm) parting tool
- 1in (25mm) Forstner bit
- Texturing tool of choice
- A set of callipers
- Protractor
- A set or two of dividers
- Burning wire

Materials

- One piece $9\frac{3}{4}$ in diameter x $1\frac{3}{4}$ in (254 x 44mm) maple
- Three pieces 2 x 2 x 12in (51 x 51 x 305mm) sapele
- Yellow wood glue
- Finish of choice



Stool legs (three required)



Bottom view of stool seat

The making

1 The material used should be a fairly straight-grained hardwood. This stool will have a maple disc $9\frac{3}{4}$ in (246mm) diameter x $1\frac{3}{4}$ in (44mm) thick for the stool top and three 2 x 2 x 12in (51 x 51 x 305mm) pieces of contrasting sapele wood for the legs.

2 Begin by making the stool top. Since neither the top nor bottom surfaces can have mounting holes drilled in them, I use a faceplate mounted on the lathe with a large MDF disc, which is padded or covered with sandpaper on one side for the drive. Pick the surface of the maple blank to be the top, find the centre and mark it with a bradawl. Place the bottom of the blank centred against the faceplate, bring up the tailstock and add pressure.

3 Turn the lathe speed down, and with a parting tool cut a slot $\frac{3}{8}$ in (10mm) deep, of a diameter to fit your chuck jaws in expansion mode. The outer side of this slot has to be configured to fit your either straight or tapered jaws.

4 Switch tools to a $\frac{3}{8}$ in spindle gouge and remove the material to form a chuck recess, up to the nib under the tailstock centre.



◀ **5** Remove the faceplate, mount the chuck on the lathe, mount the blank on the chuck, bring up the tailstock and turn a similar recess in the blank bottom.

6 Move the toolrest to the side and true up the outside of the blank.

7 Stop the lathe and measure from the outer diameter $1\frac{1}{2}$ in (38mm) towards the centre. Turn the lathe by hand and draw a full circle. This will be the drill centreline for the legs.



8 Set the toolrest so the pencil is exactly on the centre of the piece and draw a line all the way across the drill centreline. This line will now cross the drill centreline in two places.

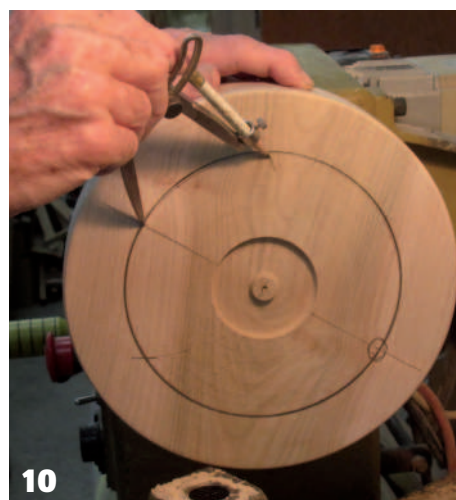
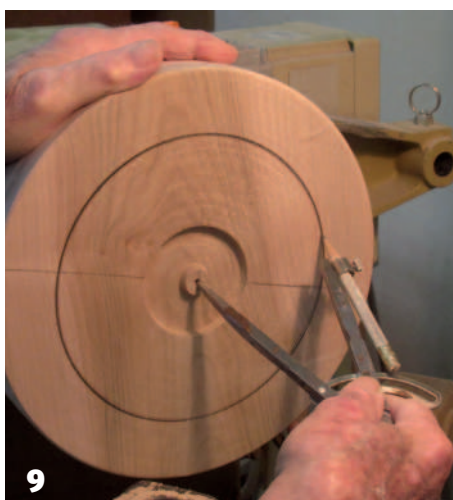
9 Set a compass from the piece centre to the drill centreline and lock it in place.

10 Bradawl one point where the line crosses the drill centreline and draw a circle around it. Then take the compass and from the point opposite this marked hole swing two short arcs.

11 Set the toolrest on centre again and draw two more lines through these newly marked centres. Mark both centres with a bradawl and put circles around them.

12 Leave the toolrest set and lock the lathe drive spindle. Loosen the chuck jaws, turn the blank so one of the lines is parallel to the toolrest and tighten the jaws.

13 Move the toolrest toward the outer edge of the blank, set a protractor to 75° and lock it in place. Hold the protractor against the flat blank, adjust the toolrest parallel to the protractor leg and lock it in place.





14 Now it is time to drill the holes for the three legs. I use a freshly sharpened 1in (25mm) Forstner drill bit that has been marked in ½in (13mm) increments to show the depth.



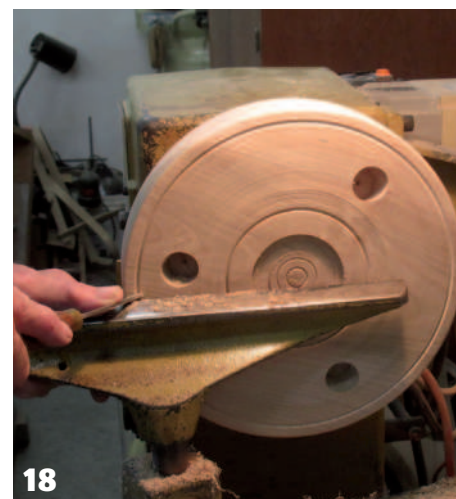
15 Start drilling by holding the drill level and at 90° to the surface. Drill in about 1/8in (3mm) deep.



16 Run the drill motor fairly fast and, with a gentle pressure inwards, swing the drill parallel to the 75°-angled toolrest. Continue drilling the hole 1in (25mm) deep. When that hole has been completed loosen the chuck jaws, rotate the blank 120° making the next line horizontal and repeat Steps 14 and 15.



17 When the three leg holes have been drilled, turn the toolrest and finish shaping the stool bottom.



18 This is a good time to add trim cuts which help to break up the plain blank surface. A ¼in (6mm) skew laid flat and pointed forward works well for this.

19 A trim ring around the outside of the blank will also add interest. This trim will be one band in the centre about 5/8in (16mm) wide. In this case, the textured band is cut with a spiral cutting tool.



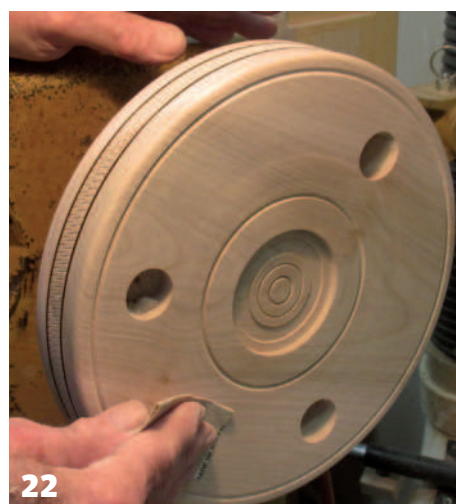
20 To highlight this textured band, cut a V-slot on both sides of it with a point scraper.



21 Turn the lathe speed up and, with a burn wire held firmly in these slots, burn a solid black ring. Note: This smoke is not good to breathe. Do this burning in a well-ventilated area and wear a respirator.



22 Sand the bottom and the side of the blank through 400 grit. Do not sand the embellished trim area and be careful when sanding over the drilled holes.



◀ **23** Adding colour to the embellished area will make the detail stand out. Turn the lathe speed way down and lightly touch the tip of a coloured marker to this area. More pressure will change the effect of this process.

24 When the bottom is completed, remove it from the chuck, turn it over and remount in the bottom recess in expansion mode. Finish turning the top surface.

25 The stool top should be contoured down about $\frac{3}{8}$ in (10mm) in the centre. This can be checked with a steel rule, or any straight edge.

26 Finish the stool top by sanding through 400 grit. Power sanding with a 3in (76mm) rotating sanding pad works well for this. This completes the stool top.

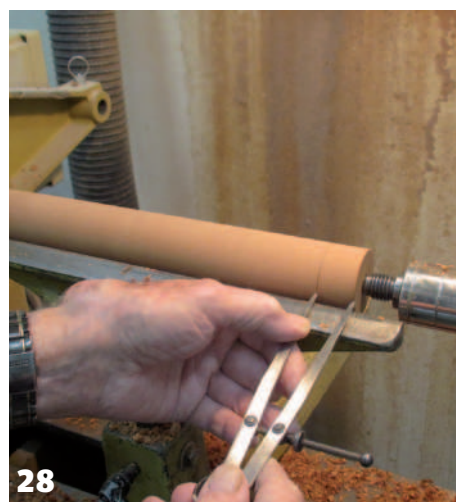
27 Turning the three legs is next. To find the spindle centre draw an X from corner to corner on both ends of each piece, bradawl the centre points and mount the first leg on the lathe between centres. Start turning in small increments from the tailstock end.

28 Rough the entire blank down to about 2in (51mm) diameter. To ensure that all three legs match, set multiple dividers for each dimension. Set the first divider at 1in and, with the lathe running, lay the dividers flat on the toolrest. Line up the first point with the blank end and swing the dividers over to make the second point scratch a groove in the cylinder. Be sure to keep the dividers flat on the toolrest.

29 Open up the dividers or, if you have another pair, set them to $3\frac{1}{2}$ in (90mm). Then place the first tip into the groove just cut and swing the dividers over to make another groove. The next detail down the leg is 4in (102mm) from the bottom and, since that is the full finished diameter, it is lightly marked with pencil or chalk.

30 Set your callipers to 1in and with a parting tool cut the 1in long, 1in diameter tenon on the end. It is optional but I like to cut about four small glue slots in the tenon with the point of a $\frac{1}{4}$ in skew.

31 It is wise to test the tenon fit in a 1in hole drilled in a piece of scrap wood just to be sure.



32 Next set your callipers to 1¼in (32mm) and with a parting tool cut a second groove down to that dimension.

33 On the leg end, use the callipers set to 1¼in (32mm) and turn an ⅛in (3mm) tenon on the very end of the leg. Note: At this point, since there are two more matching legs to make, remove the first blank from the lathe and repeat the same steps from 27 to 33 on the other two blanks. You may want to do each of the next steps one at a time on each leg to obtain uniformity.

34 With a ⅜in spindle gouge, round over the top end of the leg. Be careful and sneak up on it.

35 Switch to a ¾in (13mm) spindle roughing gouge and cut both gentle slopes down to the 1¼in groove.

36 Cut the lower slope from the high spot to the lower 1¼in dimension. These should be gentle slopes with no high spots or grooves in them – unless you want that as a detail and put it on all the legs.

37 For a quick trim, set your dividers to about ½in and, again with the lathe running, lay them flat on the toolrest and press the points into the wood.

38 Turn the lathe speed up and hold the burning wire in each slot until a nice black line is formed. Again, do this burning in a well-ventilated area and wear a respirator.

HEALTH & SAFETY

When scorching detail lines, especially with a wire held on the wood, considerable heat is generated to produce the scorching.

This can result in small embers, so ensure the lathe bed and surrounding work area is cleared of all shavings prior to commencing the task. Having an appropriate fire extinguisher or fire blanket on hand is a sensible precaution to take. It is advisable not to run a local dust extractor, as this could result in live embers being drawn into the dust collection sack, which presents an obvious danger.

It is also worth keeping in mind that the wire will be very hot after use, and will burn skin on contact. Place the wire somewhere safe to cool down.

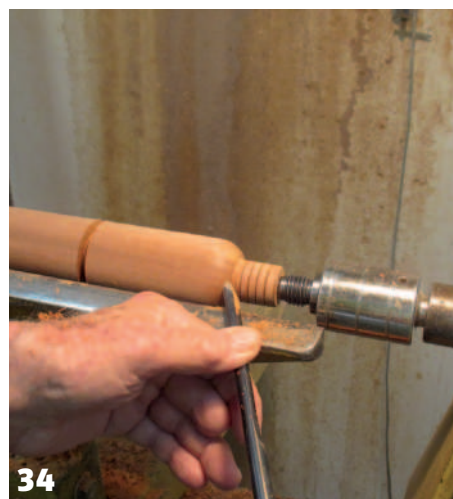
39 Once you are satisfied with the turning on all three legs, begin sanding. Start with about 120 grit and run through the grits to about 400.



32



33



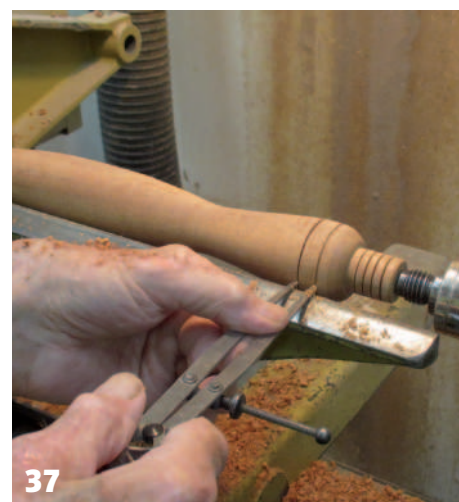
34



35



36



37



38



39

◀ **40** You are now ready to apply finish. Mask off the 1in tenon. My choice of finish for these legs will be multiple coats of tung oil applied on the lathe running at a low speed. Apply a generous amount of finish to a piece of paper towel, not a cloth rag, and saturate the wood. Turn the lathe off and let the finish soak in for a few minutes. Then turn the lathe on again and, with a fresh piece of paper towel, wipe off the entire surface. Set that leg aside to dry and apply finish to the other two legs.



41 My finish of choice for the stool top is five or six coats of lacquer lightly sanded between the first couple of coats. Short pieces of dowel or old broomstick inserted in the drilled leg holes work well to keep the finish off the glue surface. If the dowels are too loose, a wrap or two of masking tape will seal them.



42 Remove the masking tape from the leg tenons and check to be sure they all match.

43 Place a small amount of yellow wood glue in each drilled leg hole and on the leg tenon. Then insert the leg tenon in the hole, tap the end of the leg with a soft mallet, and clean up the glue with a paper towel.

44 Let the stool set upside down overnight and it should be ready for its first 'sit test'. Great job. All you need now is a cow to sit beside.

45 By gluing up the top in contrasting coloured wood and altering the leg design, many variations of this stool can be obtained. Children especially love little stools – and they are fun to make. ●



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John Jordan

1950-2023

We pay tribute to a much-loved and well-known turner

It is with the deepest regret we announce that world-renowned turner John Jordan passed away on 28 February. We send our sincere condolences to his wife Vicki, his family and the friends he leaves behind, as well as the woodturning community.

John, a woodturner from Cane Ridge, Nashville, Tennessee, was trained in electronics and computers with no formal arts education. He became interested in woodworking in the late '70s, making furniture to commission until he discovered woodturning in the early '80s. When he was interviewed for issue 118, John said: 'Once I gave it a try I was hooked. It always made sense to me, and it was clear that it was something I was good at.' A keen advocate of using local, green wood to create his distinctive hollow forms, he said: 'Green wood is easier to work and, from my point of view, much more fun.'

He has been featured in, and published, a number of articles in *Woodturning* magazine over the years and his love of texture and colour became his trademark. 'Hollow turning interested me from the first, and I feel that it is a good way to explore surfaces and textures.' Ever committed to passing on the skills he acquired, he generously shared the techniques for many of his signature pieces with our readers, as well as demonstrating and teaching around the world.

Our late editor, Mark Baker, was so impressed by him and his work that he invited him to feature in our 200th issue, carving and texturing from silver maple one of his iconic vessels, many of which are held in private collections and museums around the world.

He has been called 'an innovator, teacher, a wonderful artist', 'a guiding force in the contemporary wood art movement' and 'meticulous and precise'. John Jordan was an inspirational man, an influential woodturning artist, a husband and a father who will be missed by all who knew him.

1 & 2 WT199 – how to create the perfect hollow form article
3 WT292 – lidded black white ash pair **4** John **5** Featured Artist piece in WT222 – walnut vessel with hand carved opening detail
6 Cherry vessel – shoulder and neck detail **7** WT198 cover
8 Red maple vessel, pith in centre



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN JORDAN





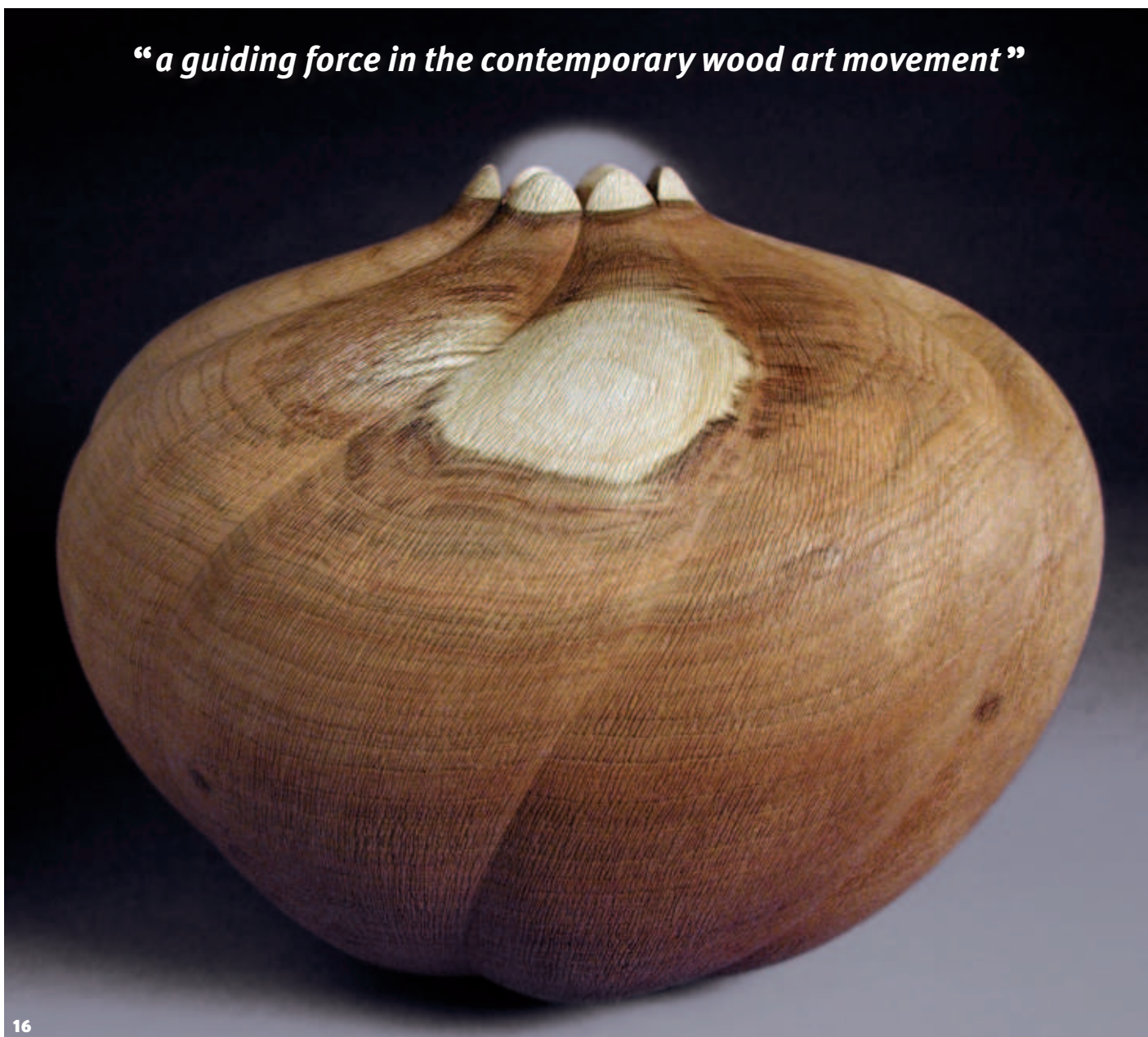
“an innovator, teacher, a wonderful artist”



14 Walnut vessel with additional carving **15** WT222 – Walnut vessel with hand carved opening **16** Cherry vessel



“a guiding force in the contemporary wood art movement”



16

Carving mallet

Kevin Alviti turns an invaluable tool for his son's carving

Every Saturday morning, while his sisters are at ballet, he comes into the workshop with wide eyes and big ideas, normally with a drawing crumpled in one hand. He slides over the beer crate he uses to stand on and starts planning his next creation.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEVIN ALVITI

My lad, Alistair, is only seven years old, but has seen me make a lot of things and has decided that he, also, can make anything. He gets to do 'show and tell' at school and rather than just taking something he's grabbed on the way to the car, he normally makes something to do with the topic. It could be a model boat from a few blocks out of the scrap bin to look like the *Endurance*, or an Indiana Jones model turned on the lathe to do with archaeology. Some of these things might not look much, but he's only seven and his friends already talk about how he can make his own toys. You wouldn't believe the sense of pride that radiates through him when they say that, and I'm not going to lie, it radiates through me as well.

I have many carving mallets in my workshop, but whenever the children come in to do some

carving they all reach for the same mallet. It's not fancy, it's a simple one-piece construction, but is light enough to be used for long periods and ideal for detail work. I made this one a little smaller at the top for my son, as his hands give out before his attention span.

I turned the mallet from some medlar, from a tree felled at a friend's house. An unusual fruit that you eat while semi-rotten or bletted (the French affectionately refer to the fruit as 'the bulldog's bottom' for its delightful looks), the wood itself is said to have some pretty great properties when seasoned, slow grown it is hard and yet with a slight flexibility to it. It was used for walking sticks but will also be perfect for a mallet. In the past, I have used fruit woods like pear or damson to make them. This tree was already dead when it was felled,

so not quite green wood but not seasoned either. There was less moisture in the wood than I thought – if I was turning one green I'd be more careful about seasoning it once turned, but this one was pretty much good to go once finished. I have left mallets in a pile of shavings before now to dry slowly.

When turned green, something round will dry slightly oval. I like my mallets to go slightly oval as it prevents them from rolling off the bench. If you want it to be round when finished, then rough turn it green, leaving it a little bigger and with the mounting points on the mallet, let it season for a time then remount it and turn it true again.

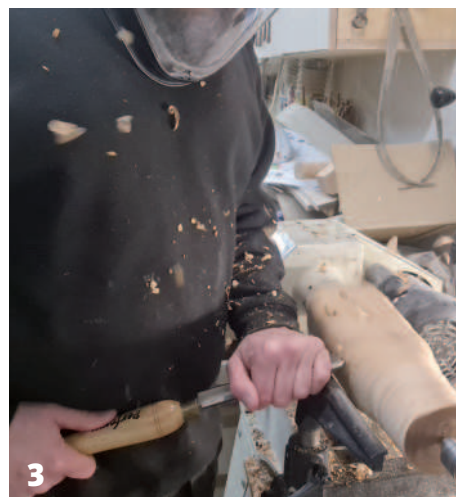
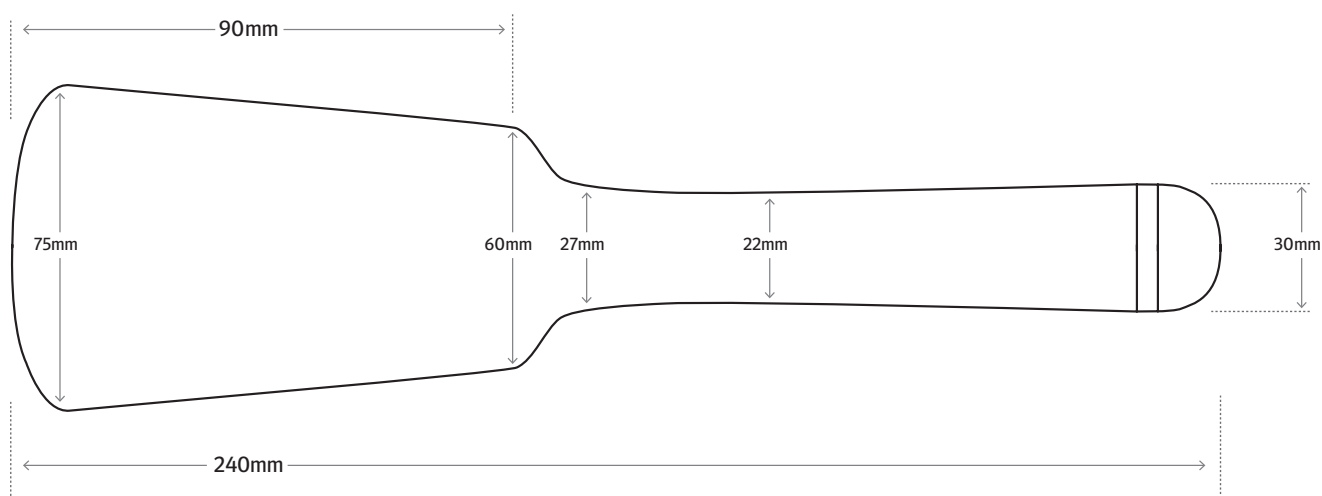
Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- Froe, axe or some way to dimension the blank if starting with a log
- Lathe
- Spindle roughing gouge
- 12mm spindle gouge
- Skew chisel
- Detail point tool
- Parting tool
- Sandpaper

Materials

- Medlar or fruit wood blank for the mallet – 280mm x 75mm



The making

1 To prevent this from splitting as it dries, it is key to not to have the pith in the piece we're working. Make sure the centre is removed and the log is big enough to accommodate that. I used a froe and a mallet to roughly split it down the log. This had not long been felled and the log showed no checking or splits in the ends. The medlar was hard to split and I could already see some of its properties in action.

2 I removed all the bark from the piece and roughed it round with an axe. Not strictly necessary, but it saves the edges of my turning tools, especially as this log had been rolled across a rocky path.

3 Check the wood all over and make sure it is sound before you mount it. I used a four-prong drive centre and a standard rotating tailstock drive. Rotate by hand first, to position the toolrest and make sure it can turn freely. Then start the wood on a very slow speed and use a spindle roughing gouge to get it balanced. Once it is round and balanced you can stop it, check to make sure it is sound and as you feel confident you can increase the speed.

◀ **4** Using a parting tool and a strong one-handed grip, with a gauge in the other hand, reduce it down to its widest diameter then rough out the rest of the blank the same.

5 You can start to rough out the shape of the mallet, just by eye to begin with, using the gauge and parting tool when you've removed some of the waste. Use the parting tool to cut where the mallet will start and finish. My piece of wood was longer than I needed, but I had used a piece that failed before this and wanted to give myself as much wood as possible to work with.

6 Use the skew chisel to shape the head of the mallet, making a single clean cut across the taper.

7 Use a spindle gouge to shape where the head meets the handle. Make sure this is a nice transition, as it is where the hand tends to sit when the mallet is in use.

8 I used a combination of the spindle gouge and skew chisel to shape the handle, getting it to the right taper, always working down the grain, from the widest to the narrowest point in the middle.

Using the tip of the skew, score in a couple of marks near the base of the handle. It only takes a couple of seconds and adds a bit of detail.



9 I didn't sand the mallet as this wood finished so nicely off the tool it was unnecessary, but if you do, work up through the grits, stopping at each one to sand with the grain to reduce scratches.

Use a narrow parting tool to reduce the wood on either end of the blank and then part the tool off. Use a strong, one-handed grip with your dominant hand and catch it with the other.

10 Use a small carving gouge or chisel to remove any evidence of how it was held on the lathe. When doing this, make sure your other hand is below where the tool will go if it slips. I didn't use any oil to finish the mallet, letting it build its own natural patina over time, but you can use boiled linseed oil if you want. ●



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Success with on-the-lathe finishes

Mark Palma shares his tips on friction finishes



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK PALMA

Sometimes you want a finish that is perfect, and you have all the time in the world to create it. At other times you want to complete a project and put on a finish quickly. Rather than waiting hours for a finish to dry, the piece can be ready for use in just minutes. Like so many turning techniques, there are some tips and suggestions that can make friction finishes better, so let's explore them.

Why use a friction finish?

On-the-lathe finishes, frequently referred to as 'friction finishes', have several advantages for turners. The biggest reason is the instant gratification that comes from completing the piece as soon as possible. The grain of the wood comes to life and the culmination of all your work to develop and turn the piece is completed right before your eyes. Second, on-the-lathe finishes allow access to the piece. Next, the ability to apply finishes to a slowly spinning work lets you apply finishes evenly to the piece and minimise drips and runs. Lastly, since the work is still mounted to the lathe you can spin the work to buff your finish to a high gloss.

Limitations of lathe finishes.

Friction finishes have some limitations we should consider. First, they could make a mess of the lathe. A spinning lathe can fling finishes far and wide and are indiscriminate in what they will coat. Bedways, face shields, walls, and ceilings can all be coated in an instant. Therefore, cover the lathe and create a temporary splash shield.

Dusty environments can also work against finishes. Dust in the air can be grabbed by finishes and deposited on the work.

However, the largest limitation of on-the-lathe finishes is long-term durability. They start off shiny and over time seem to become dull and disappear.



1 The instant gratification of friction finishes

Ask yourself why the finish is right for this application.

No one finish is right for every application. Start by asking yourself why you think a friction finish is right in this situation.

- Is the piece for display or one to be used?
- How often will the piece be handled and used? Skin oils and dirt are an enemy to friction finishes. The more a piece is handled, the more they accumulate on the surface of the work.
- Will the piece be in contact with alcohol, soap or other possible solvents? The harsher the environment, the less likely a friction finish is the right one. For example, a friction finish is a poor choice for a bowl that is intended to live in a kitchen.



2 Surface preparation **3** Building a finish in layers **4** Turn up speed and generate heat to cure the finish completely **5** Wide assortment of friction polishes



Plan before you start

Cover your lathe and the surrounding area before applying any finish. Gather all your supplies so that you are prepared before you start. Wear personal protective equipment including protective gloves if your skin is sensitive to these finishes.

Cut up some soft cloths (an old t-shirt is excellent) into 2in squares. Gather your finishes, set your lathe belt to the correct pulley to give you the fastest safe speed for your diameter of work, and put on an apron to protect your clothes.

Creating a durable finish

Every great finish starts with surface preparation. Sand your piece well and to a high level. For this sample pen, the piece was sanded to 600 grit to develop a great foundation.

The secret to a durable on-the-lathe finish is to apply several layers, allowing each to cure with the heat generated by the friction between the spinning lathe and the applicator. Start the process with the lathe off or on a very slow speed, get an even coat on the work and turn up the speed to cure the finish. With each succeeding coat you build layer after layer of finish. Your goal is to cure each finish before adding another thin coat and not to create a thick uncured layer.

What finish should you use?

Most friction finishes fall into four categories:

- Lacquer (cellulose)
- Shellac
- Wax
- Some combination of the above

There may be some friction finishes that have an oil component, however since oils generally cure slower than the above finishes, they are not as common. Also, oil finishes (that are not fully cured) may not be compatible with other finishes used in friction polishing. Lacquer is fast, as the thinner it contains dissipates quickly. Turners

often dilute lacquer to use as a sealer. Either works, the sealer cures faster, the full-strength version builds coats faster. Lacquer is very strong and durable and impervious to many solvents. It makes a great base layer for friction polishing.

Next, consider applying a few layers of shellac. Shellac is often sold as a friction polish with wax added. If you see a milky layer in the bottom of a bottle of friction polish it is in all likelihood a mix of shellac and wax. Note the bottle will say to shake well before using, and please follow these instructions to thoroughly mix the contents. Shellac is thicker than lacquer and builds into a thicker finish. The alcohol quickly evaporates and leaves behind the cured shellac. Shellac is renewable, so if this layer wears, it can be replaced without damage to the piece. Shellac has two limitations. It is a softer finish compared to others, and it dissolves in alcohol. However, when combined with wax it makes a great friction finish layer.

Wax isn't a great standalone finish for friction polishes. Wax doesn't penetrate wood and will wear. However, wax does a great job of protecting wood from skin oils. So rather than as a standalone finish, hard wax makes a great final topcoat. To apply it, just wipe the wax bar across the spinning piece, then use a clean cloth to push the coat of wax across the work from one side to the other. Rotate the cloth to a clean area and buff it to a high gloss with the same cloth.

In conclusion

I suggest that you don't choose a single finish, use all three as a combination. Start with lacquer to seal the wood, then shellac and wax mix to build a deep glossy layer, and top with a third layer of wax. This friction polish will not take much longer than a single-stage finish, but will make a finish that will last for years.



Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers
readers' questions

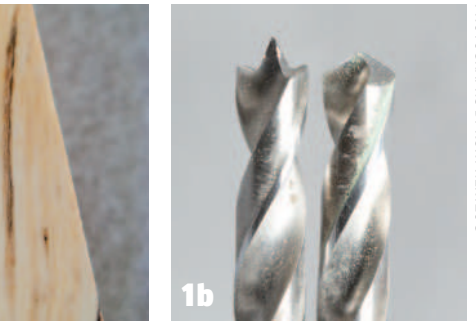
I'm having difficulty gluing my tubes into my drilled pen blanks. Sometimes, the brass tube slides in easily and other times it is very tight. I always use the same drill so how can this keep happening to me?

There are several things I can suggest to help with this situation. Let me start with good process, at least for wood. Never drill your blanks until you are ready to glue in tubes. Drilling a boat-load of blanks the day before you glue them lets them sit around for 10-18 hours. In those hours, the blanks have had a chance to stress relieve and change moisture content. Depending on your material, holes change shape and size, blanks can crook or twist, playing havoc with the drilled hole concentricity, along with any moisture changes or equalisation effects on the blank species, three different coefficients of expansion. I usually drill in batches and get my tubes all glued in within a few hours at most. Necessary? In 20-plus years, I've only had problems on the few occasions when I violated this process. Not that I expect any variation, but you may have some tube variation, especially if you mix brands. I don't ever remember seeing an issue with this, but I can see very minor fit differences now and then. You said you use the same drill, but do you use the same process? I'm certain your pistol-drilled hole speeds and feeds are far different to your drill press or lathe drilled. I doubt this would mess with hole size dramatically, but it certainly can vary hole surface finish, which can impact adhesive bonding results. Key to any well-controlled process is minimal variation. The other thought is what your actual desired clearance is. If you are down to the appropriate slip fit clearance, you should have a bit of room for variation. If you are closer to a tighter fit, you don't have any room on the downside. This can be aggravated if you use a brad point bit rather than the traditional point. Only a very well-made brad point tracks well in end grain in my opinion.

Check your drill size. Chances are that it is correct and close to the indicated size. It is still worth checking. Use a pair of Vernier or dial callipers. DON'T measure the drill tang. That doesn't do any of the drilling. Measure across the flutes at the tip of the drill end. That is where the work is being done so that is the important measurement. Comparing that to the measurement you get when you check your brass tube outer diameter should give you a feel for the 'clearance' or gap between the drilled hole and the brass tube side wall.



1 In drilling end grain, I don't favour brad point drills, unless very well (properly) made. I find a standard twist drill tracks better **2** Measuring the shank doesn't tell you what size the working end of the drill bit will drill. Measure across the flutes of the drill **3** Since they will usually drill wood in a light duty manner, even the import drill set can provide good service. I've found this to be a shop asset **4** An inexpensive drill index with letter, number, and fractional is a great tool. You can zero in on exactly what you really want **5** You may find, as I did, you get better results when you size the gap based on which adhesive you plan to use



You'll need a few thousandths per side minimum to allow for the adhesive you are using. If you don't have enough clearance per the measurements, you may need to get a different drill size. Remember, drill indexes come in fractional, letter, and number sizes so you can order sizes that will get you to the clearance you want. The best way I have found is to buy one of the full sets of drills from the discount supply houses. They will have all three of these indexes in the tin. That said, don't believe what the stamped size on the drill

(or drill matrix) says. Again, measure across the flutes of whatever size you think you need. Keep checking until you get the size you want.

Just because you measured the drill flute dimensions doesn't mean that is the size that you'll get when you drill holes. For the most part that is true, but accept the fact that every material will drill a bit differently and the resulting hole size can vary some. The absolute best way to insure you'll get the hole size you want is to test drill a hole is the same

I'm trying to follow the cutting downhill teachings, but there are times it doesn't seem to work well. If I cut the other direction, I get better results. What is going on?

Your occasional need to violate one of the 'rules' to get the best results will reoccur, I'm sure. Following the good practices that you learned during your training as best you are able will serve you well. I'm certain that most turners have experienced this cutting direction phenomenon. I can't give you a good answer as to why it does occur. I find it most often with shallower gradients and species dependent. I've found both cherry and oak to present the infrequent occurrence. Since it is surface finish with

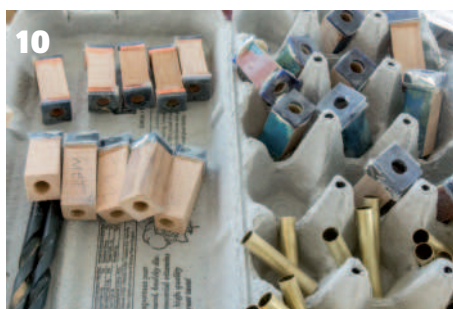


The uphill vs downhill surface finish changes I have run into on rare occasions have been with cherry or oak. They usually occur on long, gentle radius curves

those cuts being the whisper finish cut dexterity, I struggle thinking about grain tightness, actual gradient angle, sharpness and type of tool, speeds and feeds, grain bond strength, along with other potential

material characteristics that could play into this. I'm hoping my non-answer answer will spark our readers to email me their explanation. I'll look forward to sharing anything learned.

6 Unless there is a reason I can't use polyurethane adhesive, it is my go-to adhesive. I find it offers many advantages despite a bit of added work **7** Laser-cut assemblies work best with epoxy. With these kits, there are some ways to make minor changes to the adhesive gap **8** Your speeds and feeds are far different depending on whether you drill using a pistol drill, drill press, or your lathe **9** Tool sharpness, along with speeds and feeds, will have a direct impact on the inner wall surface finish. It's key that the adhesive bonds well with the inner wall **10** Whether large or small batch size, I drill just before my tube glue-in. With little time to stress relieve or twist out of size or shape, I hit no problems



species and same orientation. Obviously, a hole drilled into face grain of an oak blank drills differently to a hole drilled in end grain of the same blank. Angle of drilling with respect to grain axis can make a difference too. When I'm in doubt, I use a piece of the offcut from that blank. Nearly all of your pen blank drillings are into the end grain so drill your offcut piece in the same orientation. Rather than measuring the drilled hole, use one of the tubes to test the clearance. The ease of inserting your tube into your test-drilled hole will tell you how

that species drills with respect to the actual drill. In my experience, every species drills differently and can yield a different size. It kind of makes sense that snakewood drills far differently than mahogany. The same resulting size differences will show up between various plastics and metals. Remember, we're not talking big numbers here. The difference of a few thousands clearance or lack thereof can be a pound in, slip in, or fall though fit. Depending on your adhesive choice, you may want to tweak this a bit depending on your technique.

I have a rather bizarre polyurethane technique that serves me well.

I hope you are taking good care of your 'one drill'. Do keep it sharp so you get the most consistent results based on sharpness. I wouldn't expect you to break it based on size, but with the minimal cost of quality drills, buying a few spares just in case something happens to your one drill is a good idea. Remember, generating quality holes takes sharp cutters, proper speeds and feeds, and good drilling technique.

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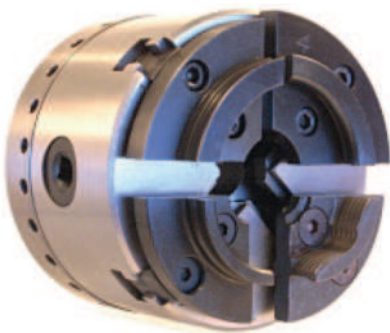
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Vortices

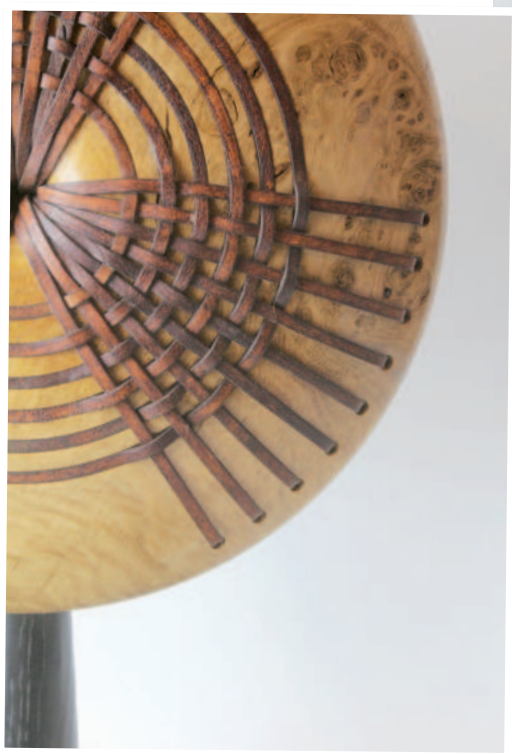
Les Symonds turns a multi-media, free-standing sculpture

I first turned a sculpture of this sort several years ago, so this is a more refined and updated version, with a development of the original idea. I have always liked the interaction of wood with some types of media which I feel work sympathetically with it, and on this occasion I will be using principally oak, but with leather for the embellishments and a piece of polished marble for the base, specifically to give the tall, upright sculpture a low centre of gravity.

In terms of the material that readers might choose, as this is a sculpture with a very strong, geometric appearance, avoid using a piece of timber which has a very clear, straight grain for its principal element (the central disc) because it would certainly clash with the lines created by the gridwork of its leather. I have used a piece of oak burr which has a very erratic grain pattern (and thus, no straight grain lines), and which also has several minor splits and cracks which might render it unsuitable for use as a functional bowl. The structural elements are made of straight-grained oak and for the base I used a black granite tile, which was a sample I bought very cheaply from a local fitted-kitchen business. The leather is 4mm wide, 1.5mm thick, flat cord, chosen for its colour, which works well with the colour of the timber.

Accuracy when marking out, and especially when cutting the six concentric grooves, will be essential, as will neatness when weaving the panels of leather, but apart from this, there are no great issues and a turner of moderate ability should be able to complete this project.

“
This is a sculpture with a very strong, geometric appearance
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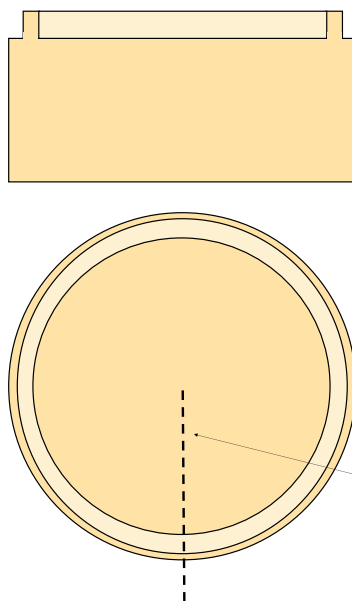
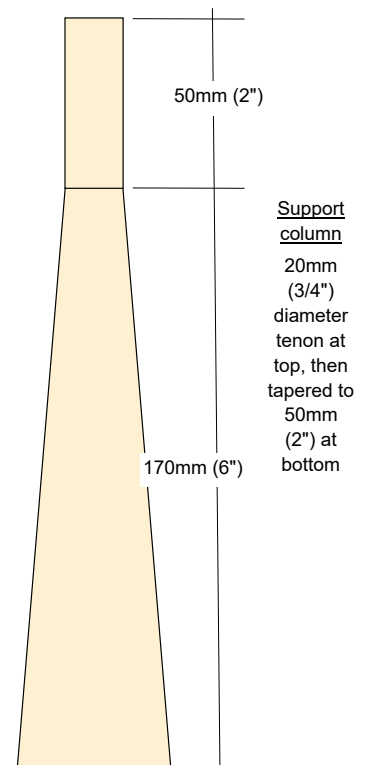
Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- Lathe with indexing facility
- Live and drive centres
- Chuck with 90mm and 110mm jaws
- Heavy screw chuck (10mm screw)
- Bowl, spindle and spindle roughing gouges
- Skew chisel
- 4mm parting tool
- 4mm, 9mm and 20mm drill bits
- Callipers and dividers
- Countersink bit
- 5mm masonry drill
- Dental picks
- Craft knife
- Basic bench tools

Materials

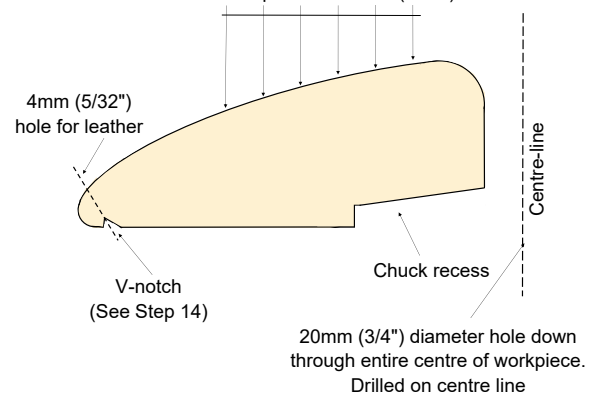
- Oak burr 1 @ 280mm diameter x 55mm thickness
- Oak 1 @ 120 diameter x 50mm thickness
- Oak 1 @ 250 x 50 x 50mm
- Black marble tile 1 @ 200 x 200 x 15mm
- Four self-adhesive felt pads (for above)
- Timber for drilling jig – 1 @ 300 x 35 x 35mm
- 12m flat leather cord 4mm x 1.5mm
- Abrasives down to 400 grit
- Aerosol satin lacquer
- Aerosol ebonising lacquer
- 1 No.70 x 4 woodscrew (brass or nickel-plated)
- CA adhesive



Central (rear) boss
102mm (>4")
overall diameter x
50mm (2") thick
with projecting
ring-detail
to fit into chuck
recess on rear
of sculpture.
3 sections of the
ring-detail cut
away to fit over
leather-cords.
(See Step 26)
20mm (3/4")
diameter hole to
accept tenon on
top of support
column

Half section through sculpture

Centres for 4mm (5/32") grooves x 1.5mm (1/16") deep.
Firstly at 32mm (1 1/4") out from centre,
then spaced at 11mm (7/16").



The making

1 Mount the main workpiece on a central screw chuck set into your chuck with the largest set of jaws you have available to support it. Skim its outer edge and the surface facing the tailstock, achieving the largest dimensions you can.

2 The surface facing the tailstock is going to be the back of the sculpture and the first process is to cut a chuck recess for a set of 90mm jaws. Commence with a plunge-cut, using a sharp parting tool, to a depth to suit your jaws. Note that in this case it has a 6mm depth – if your chuck jaws require a different depth you may also need to adjust the dimensions of the central rear boss (See Step 21).



3 Remove all the waste in the chuck recess, not making it a flat surface in the usual manner, but instead increasing the depth of the recess such that it tapers downwards to be about 10mm deeper at the centre (around the screw chuck's hole). This will ease the outward flow of all the leather cords that are going to pass through the centre of the sculpture.

4 Remove from the screw chuck, flip the workpiece over and set it into your 90mm chuck jaws. Before fully tightening the jaws, set the lathe to a slow speed, switch on and check that the workpiece is running true, making any adjustments to the chuck if necessary, then fully tighten the chuck.

5 Mark a pencilled ring on the surface, 30mm out from the centre, then cut a radius from the ring down into the central hole. This gentle radius will help the leather run gradually off the front of the sculpture, down into the central hole, giving the appearance of the vortices in the piece's title.

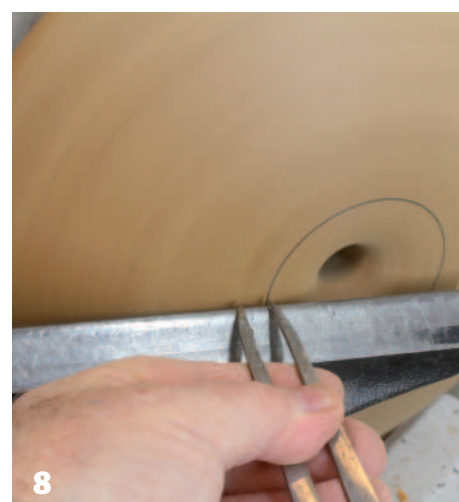
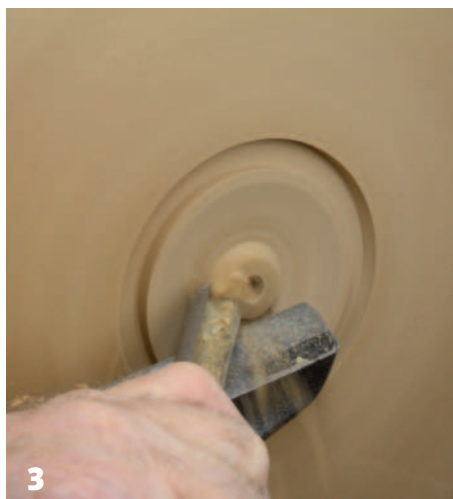
6 Form a slight convex curve on the front face, from the pencil line down to the outside edge, retaining about 10mm thickness at the very edge.

7 Set the toolrest on the headstock side of the workpiece and use a spindle gouge to form a curve of about 10mm radius between the rear surface and the edge, then form a similar curve between the edge and the front face. You should now have a continuous, flowing curve from deep down into the central hole, right around on to the rear face, just about 10mm in from the edge. Refine the surface as necessary.

8 Set a pair of dividers to 11mm. Set the toolrest against the front face and use the dividers to mark out the starting position of the six grooves which will house the six concentric rings of leather. Commence with the right-hand leg of the dividers touching the pencil line previously marked in Step 5, use it to scribe a ring, then also scribe a ring with the left-hand leg. Continue scribing until all six rings have been scribed.

9 The main surface is now going to be marked out by six sectors (resembling six pizza slices) three of which will house a woven panel of leather, and three of which will remain plain. If you have a piece of timber with similar, erratic features to that being used here, it will be helpful to mark out a pencil grid (using your indexing system) of 24 lines radiating from the centre. This will help you to envisage which three areas of the surface will be taking the three woven panels of leather.

10 Once the decision is made, highlight three equally spaced radii, each of which will be the centreline of one of the three panels. On a 24-step indexing system, these radii would typically be numbered 0, 8 and 16. Also, mark a pencil ring around the surface, just 10mm in from the outer edge.



11 Commencing at any one of the three intersections of the three lines and the pencil ring just drawn, set a pair of dividers to 16mm and place one point on to the intersection, pressing to scribe a mark, then make a further four marks each side of the centreline. Repeat for the other three panels. You should now have a total of 27 marks, forming the outer edges of the three woven panels.

12 Make a simple jig for drilling holes at each of the 27 marks just made. The jig is just a piece of 30mm diameter timber, reduced over a part of its length to fit into the hole in your lathe banjo where the toolrest normally fits, set it into the banjo then drill a 4mm hole through it at lathe-centre height such that the hole passes right through the sculpture to the back face – note the sort of angle that these holes need to be drilled from the drawings. If you use a lip-and-spur drill, it will be very convenient for centring the point of the drill on the scribed marks made in the previous step. With your drilling jig secured in position, drill all 27 holes.

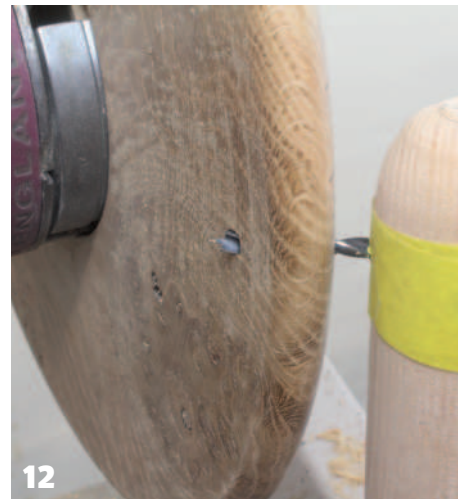
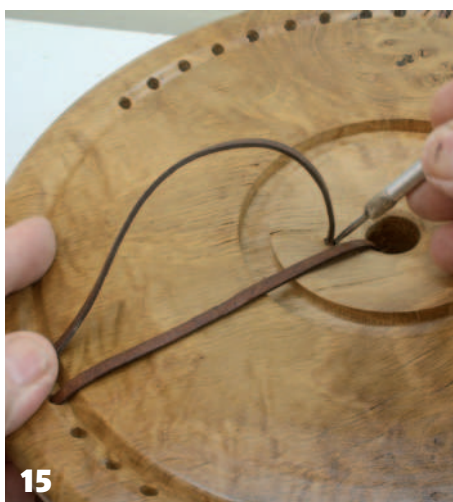
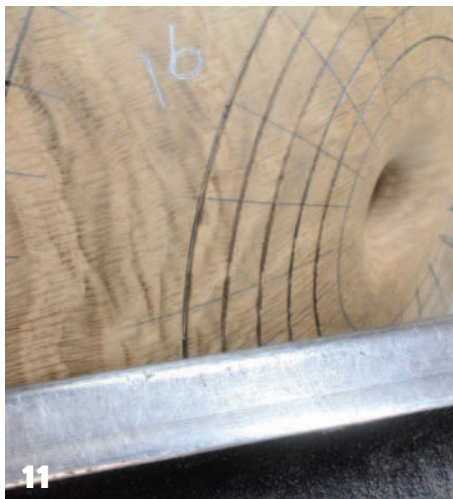
13 Cut the six concentric grooves, each of which is 4mm wide, to suit the 4mm leather being used. You may note from the drawings that the first ring (nearest to the centre) is centred at 32mm out, whereas the first line scribed in Step 8 falls 2mm short of that measurement. This will allow you to set your 4mm parting tool immediately to the left of the mark, thus cutting your first groove correctly centred at 32mm out from the centre of the sculpture. Cut all six grooves in this way, to 1.5mm depth. Note: Check that your leather fits snugly into the grooves and make adjustments if necessary.

14 Set the tool-rest against the rear face of the sculpture and, with a parting tool, cut a triangular V-groove running around the surface, directly over the point where the 27 holes emerge. This will clean away any break-through of fibres as well as helping the leather to be fed through each hole more smoothly. Finally, abrade the whole surface thoroughly and apply a few coats of aerosol satin lacquer (the inside of the chuck recess can be left unfinished).

15 Start applying all the leatherwork, commencing with the 27 radial lines. Starting with the sculpture face down, one end of the first piece is held in place by a fingertip in the chuck recess. The other end goes down through the first hole at the rim, back up through the central hole, and then back down through the second hole at the rim. The end of the leather can then be pressed into a 4mm hole (10mm deep) and held in place with CA adhesive.

16 When the adhesive is dry, pull all the slack out of the leather and continue threading it up through the centre and down through the outer ring of holes until the first panel of nine radii is complete. Ensure there is no slack or twist in the leather, then cut it off from its full length, securing the end with strong gaffer tape. Repeat for the other two panels.

Note: The gaffer tape will allow you to take up any slack which may remain, before finally gluing the ends into place in Step 20.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Examples of suitable chuck inserts for use as a screw chuck

There are no great H&S issues with this project, beyond a few words of caution when using a screw chuck to support a large piece of timber. First, use something like a 10mm, machined-thread screw chuck insert, not the smaller or homemade type which uses a woodscrew at its centre. Second, set the machined screw into the chuck along with your largest diameter set of jaws to give maximum support to the workpiece.



17 As the work in Step 16 progresses, you will need to start overlapping the strands of leather as they pass down through the central hole. The neatest way to do this for each panel is to have the even-numbered strands (2, 4, 6 and 8) lying on top of the odd-numbered strands (1, 3, 5, 7 and 9).

18 Now set a length of leather into the groove nearest to the centre, weaving over one radius, then under the next, keeping this pattern going all around the ring. This is easiest to do near the outside of the sculpture, where there is more slack in the leather, then easing the ring of leather down into the first groove. *Also, note the information in the next two steps before progressing.

19 To form a joint in each concentric ring of leather, first arrange the joint underneath the leather of any one of the radii. Taking one end of the leather first, mark the surface lightly with a sharp craft knife, forming a diagonal cut across it, cut the other to butt up to it. As the ends of the ring are pressed into place, add a few spots of CA adhesive first, using the tip of a sharply pointed implement (such as a dental pick) to apply a droplet. Repeat for each ring, choosing a different starting position around the sculpture for each.

20 When the ends of all six concentric rings are glued in place, gently tease the leather out of the grooves in between the woven panels, dribble a trace of CA adhesive into the groove and then press the leather back into place. Finally, flip the sculpture over on to its front face and secure the three taped-down ends in place, as in Step 15.

21 Take the blank for the central boss and mount it on a screw chuck (do not drill the chuck's central hole any deeper than necessary), Skim it down to about 102mm diameter and clean the surface facing the tailstock, adding a few decorative rings if you wish.

22 Reverse the workpiece, placing it in a chuck (110mm jaws), then commence cutting a ring of timber, 8mm high, which will fit comfortably into the chuck recess on the back of the sculpture. This will eventually conceal the confusion of leather strands emerging through the central hole, while also forming a part of the sculpture's support column.

23 Clean away any waste in the central area, ensuring that the surface is quite flat – there must not be any projections which could make contact with the 27 leather strands and prevent the boss from bedding down effectively into the sculpture's rear surface.

24 Set the boss into a chuck, tightening the chuck only very lightly, and mark out three holes which will be used for screws to pass through the boss into the back of the sculpture. Set the three holes such that each is 25mm out from the centre and lying centrally over the three areas of the recess on the back



17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24

of the sculpture where there aren't strands of leather. This will ensure that the securing screws do not cut into any of the leather cords. Drill and countersink these three holes.

25 Sit the boss in place on the back of the sculpture. It will not fit properly into place yet because of all the leather, so make six pencil marks on the projecting rim, one at each side of each of the three panels of leather cords.

26 Set the boss into a vice and cut away the three areas of waste material. Make six saw cuts down through the ring, then pare the areas away with a sharp bench chisel, down to the level of the flat surface inside the ring.

27 Try the boss in place on the back of the sculpture and make any minor adjustments as necessary.

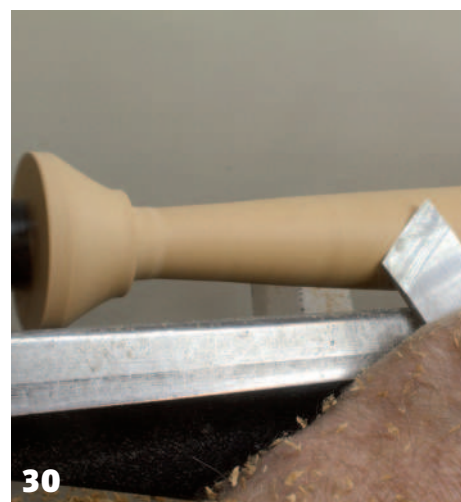
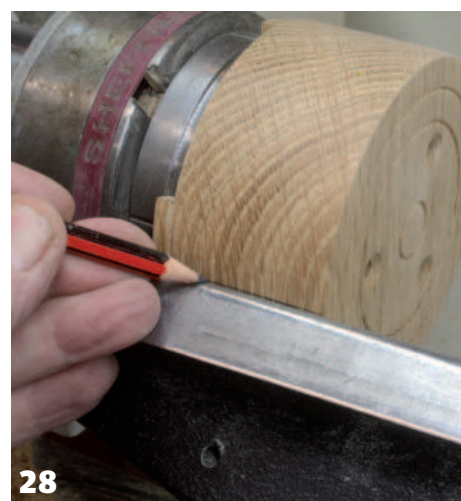
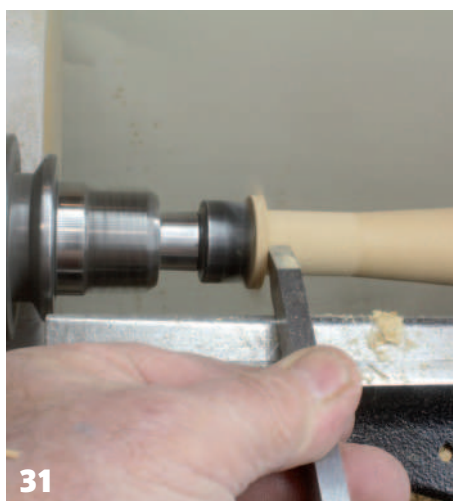
28 Mark out a single hole, 20mm diameter, for the support column to slot into; this will clearly need to be on whichever part of the boss lies at the bottom when it is applied to the sculpture. Set the centre of this hole 20mm in from the outer face and note that when the support column is inserted, one of the screws passing through the holes drilled in Step 24 will also pass through the tenon on the top of the column.

29 Take the blank for the column and set it between centres, reducing it to as large a diameter as you can achieve, then skim the end with a skew chisel, stopping just short of the live centre.

30 With a parting tool, cut down to 20mm diameter, about 50mm in from the headstock end, then taper the remainder of the length from the tailstock end down to it.

31 Form the 20mm diameter tenon on the headstock end, abrade, apply ebonising lacquer and part it off. At the end that was squared off (tailstock end), use a sharp countersink bit to clean away any residue and drill a hole to suit a 5mm screw which will be placed upwards through the base, into the bottom of the column.

32 Drill and countersink a 5mm hole in the marble support tile, 50mm in from the back edge and centrally to its width, then screw up through it, into the column, set the boss on to the top of the column then screw through the boss into the back of the sculpture. Use just one of your three securing screws to start, hold the sculpture such that it faces you and check to see that it doesn't need to be rotated at all, then insert the other two screws. ●



Staircase spindles and newels: A family story

Geoffrey Nichols explains the long history of Nichols Bros (Wood Turners)

Although Nichols Brothers began trading in 1949, the family association with the art and craft of turning goes back much further.

In the early 1920s, five brothers set up the company Nichols & Nichols. Located in the Kingsland Road, London E2, the customer-base for Nichols & Nichols was the busy east London furniture trade. The company prospered in the years between the wars and it was not until the outbreak of the Second World War, in 1939, that its fortunes changed. With the reduction in furniture production brought about by wartime austerity measures and the absence of skilled tradesmen – called up to fight for King and Country – the business saw a severe reduction in activity.

As servicemen were demobbed in late 1945 and early 1946, craftsmen turners came back into the trade and business started to pick up again. However, in 1949, two of the brothers – Stanley and Arthur Nichols – decided to form their own company, known as Nichols Brothers (Wood Turners), to differentiate it from Nichols & Nichols. This was established at premises in Milton Road, Walthamstow, London E17, from where the company still trades today.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF GEOFFREY NICHOLS



Geoff Nichols with his granddaughter on his 69th birthday last year in the factory

A large part of the fledgling company's business in the early years of the 1950s was the ubiquitous hardwood standard-lamp base, found in front rooms up and down the country. The link with the East End furniture trade was maintained and the company's reputation for quality and service continued to grow.

In 1969, Geoff Nichols joined his father Stanley and his uncle Arthur in the business at a young age of 15, already having three years' work experience within the family business as Geoff always went to the factory during school holidays, thus ensuring the family's involvement in high-quality turned products for another generation. After his father and uncle took well-earned retirement, Geoff took over the running of the business and continues to be a very hands-on businessman, in close contact with his many regular customers.



Geoff's best friend from when he was around 10 was Harry Morrow, who went to work for a shipping company when he left school. Geoff's uncle retired when Geoff was in his early twenties, and Harry came to work at Nichols Brothers, taking over the administrative side of the business. He was made a partner in the company in the early 1980s, and he and Geoff run the business together now.

Like all businesses, Nichols Bros has evolved to meet the demands of the market. With home-ownership growing steadily in the 1960s and more householders willing to spend money on refurbishment, Nichols Bros moved away from reliance on business with the furniture trade and created a niche market in stair spindles and newels.

Every component for the construction or replacement of balustrading was available – from stair spindles and newels to every part of the necessary handrailing. The company's production facilities enabled it to offer not just standard products in line with the rest of the market, but a truly bespoke service, matching exactly existing components or architects' designs. Stair spindles might be conventionally turned, square turned, barley twist, rope twist, fluted, reeded or hand carved. And the newels could be produced to match.



While a large proportion of the standard stair spindles supplied by other companies are produced in softwood, mahogany or oak, Nichols Bros can offer the additional facility of producing stair parts in any commercially available hardwood, suitable for turning. This bespoke aspect has become even more important with the increase in loft-conversions to create 'a room in the roof'.

A financially sound investment, this type of extension to the living space works best where the staircase leading up to the new space is an exact copy of the existing. This seamless transition between new and existing is both aesthetically pleasing and a valuable feature in marketing the property at some future time.



While stair parts are an important part of Nichols Bros's turnover, the company also supplies turned timber components to a wide range of other industries. Your enquiries for bespoke turned items will be appreciated and, wherever possible, will be handled by Geoff Nichols in person.

Nichols Bros's qualified craftsmen-turners are all long-serving and have a depth of experience and expertise on which customers can rely. The pride they take in their day-to-day work translates into a quality and service in which customers, both old and new, can have complete confidence. ●

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CHESTNUT

P R O D U C T S

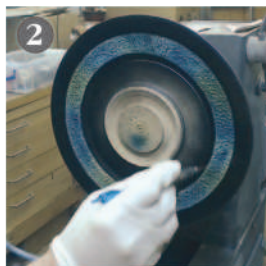
FINISHING SCHOOL

Platter with Coloured Textured Rim

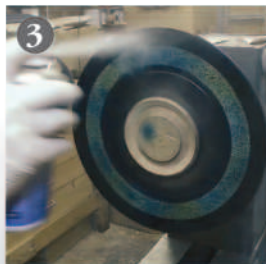
WITH STEWART FURINI



① Turn the outside of the platter and spray the rim with Ebonising Lacquer. When dry, use a burr in a rotary tool to add texture to the inner half of the rim.



② Once the texturing is complete, add colour using an airbrush or a normal brush. Any colours can be used, in this instance Green Spirit Stain has been added first, then Blue, allowing the two to overlap.



③ Allow the Spirit Stain to dry and seal with the aerosol Acrylic Sanding Sealer. Lightly cut back then add two or three coats of Acrylic Gloss Lacquer to protect the colours and make them shine.



④ Remove the centre of the platter, sand carefully and finish the inside. Use Cut'n'Polish to smooth and seal the inside; being more controllable this avoids the risk of damaging the decorated areas.



⑤ Finally, apply a coat of Microcrystalline Wax to the centre for a brighter, harder wearing finish. This platter was awarded a 'Highly Commended' prize in British Woodturner of the Year 2019. Well done, Stewart!!

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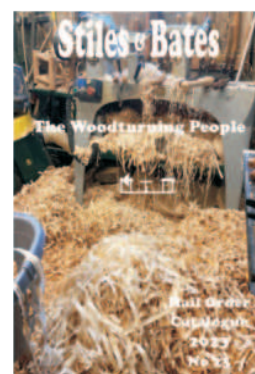
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Enclosed forms

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

In his book *Woodturning Design*, Derek Hayes studies the geometry 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 undoubtedly 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'.

Open forms are based on a hemisphere with a rim at the widest part of the form. Now look at the illustration 1 and photo 1a: if we increase the angle α so that it is greater than 90 degrees, a new opening, α' will occur. The rim will now be smaller 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'.

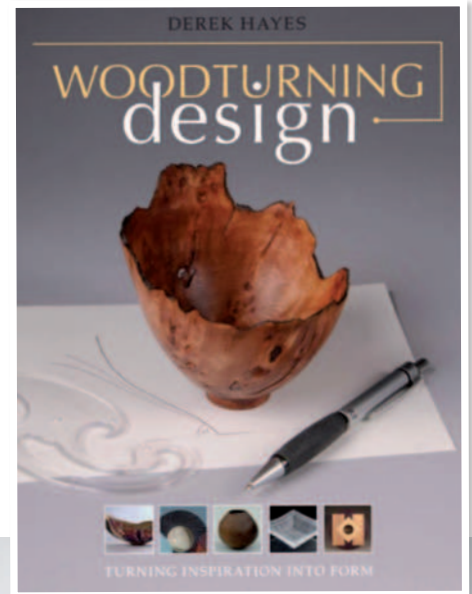
Extending the range of curves to the catenaries previously discussed, we see that the same approach and definitions could be used (illustration 2). As the diameter of the catenary widens, so does the opening, making it ever more difficult to 'see' an enclosed form. The same situation pertains to the 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 (illustration 3).

In illustration 4 we see some examples of using the profile from photo 1a, but now with its curve adjusted to produce the widest diameters at different heights. The smaller the height R_x , the lower the effective 'centre of gravity' of the form. R_3 gives a lightness, or lift, while R_1 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 & 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.



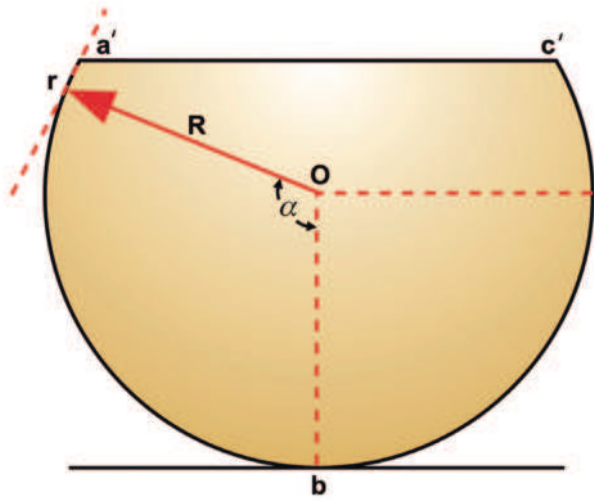


Illustration 1



Photo 1a

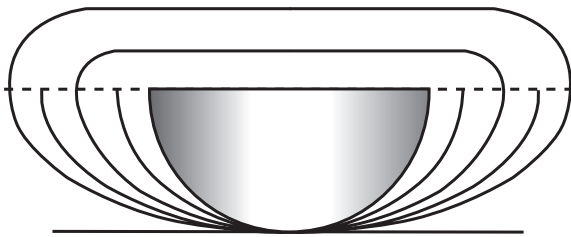


Illustration 2

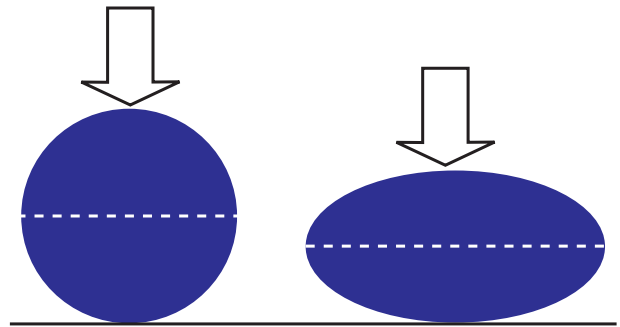


Illustration 3

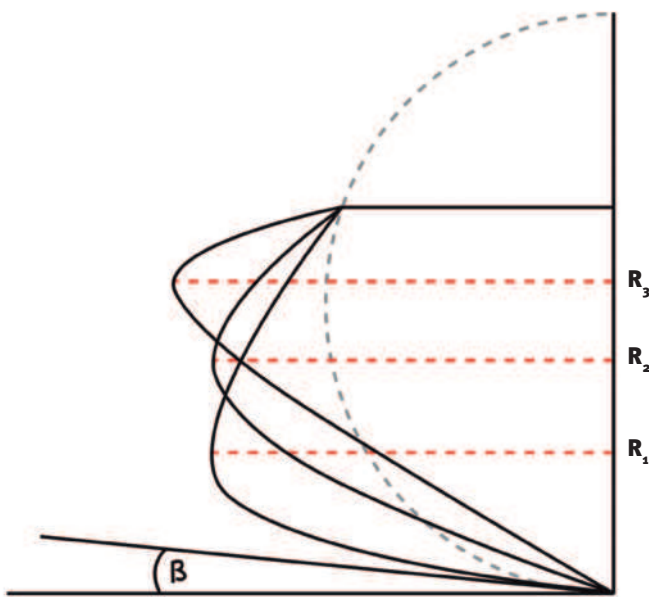


Illustration 4

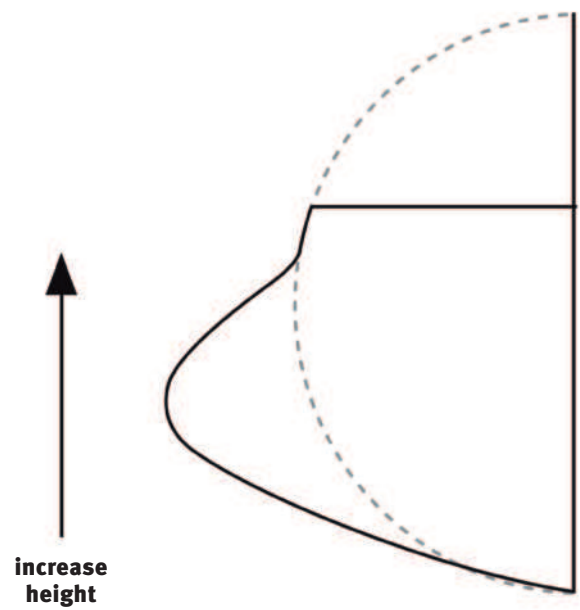


Illustration 5

John Hunnex itemises 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.

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. Photo 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.

Photo 6



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID ELLSWORTH

One way of satisfying both camps is shown in David Ellsworth's piece in photo 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. Photo 8 shows his 'Incurved' vessel in Amboyna.

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 (illustration 9) or the vertical (illustration 11). The 'special case' of the ellipse, the circle (illustration 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 (photo 12) or the 'squashed' ellipse (photo 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.

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 (illustration 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.

Photo 7

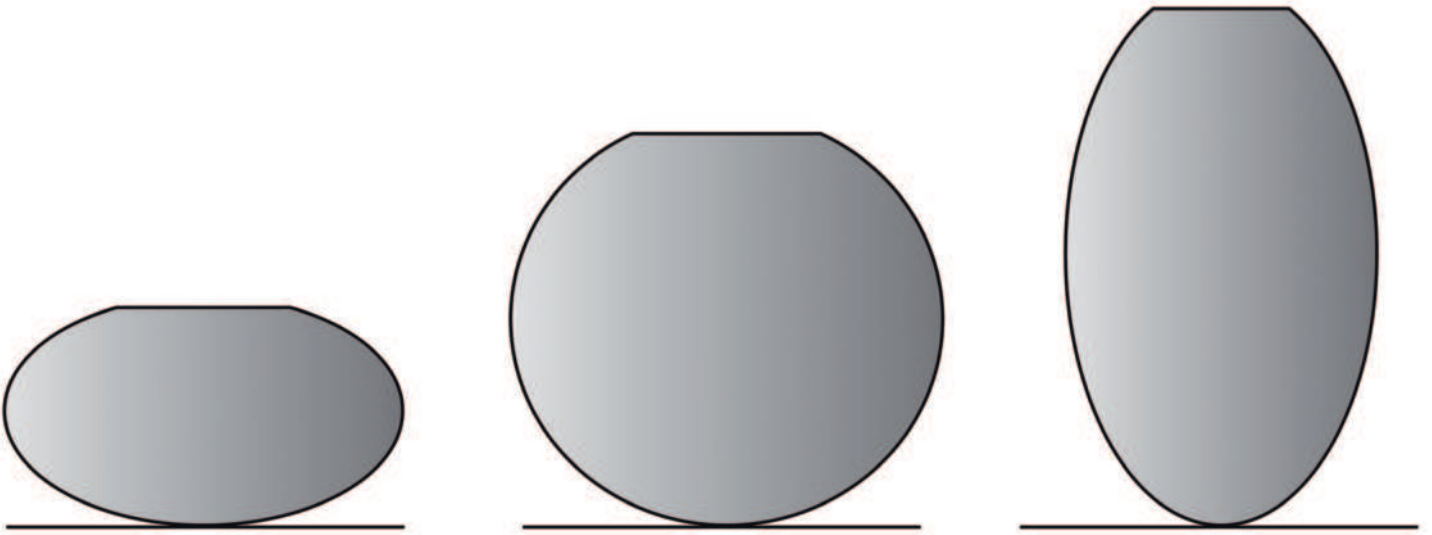


PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID ELLSWORTH

Photo 8



PHOTOGRAPH BY RAY KEY



“

A way of considering most of the forms used is by, once again, considering the ellipse as the template.

”

PDF NEWSPAPERS
and MAGAZINES:
WWW.XSAVA.XYZ



Photo 12



Photo 13

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. Photo 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 (illustration 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.

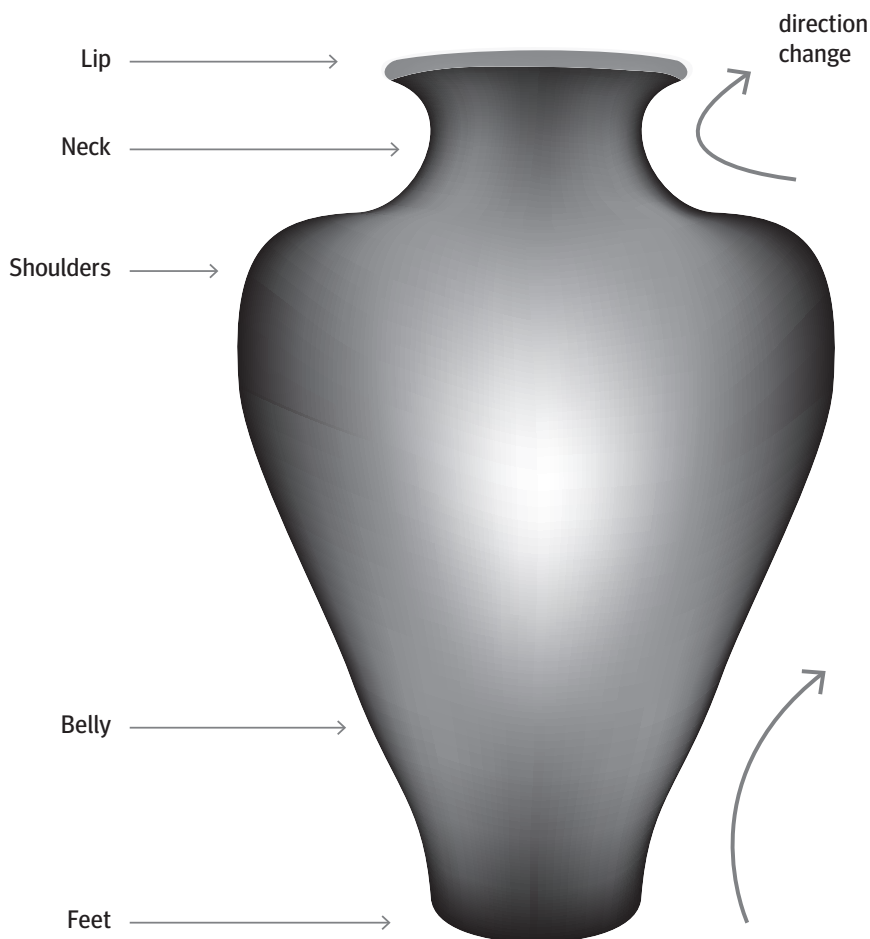


Illustration 14



Photo 15

Pots are often full-blown forms with clean lines similar to those sought by the turner

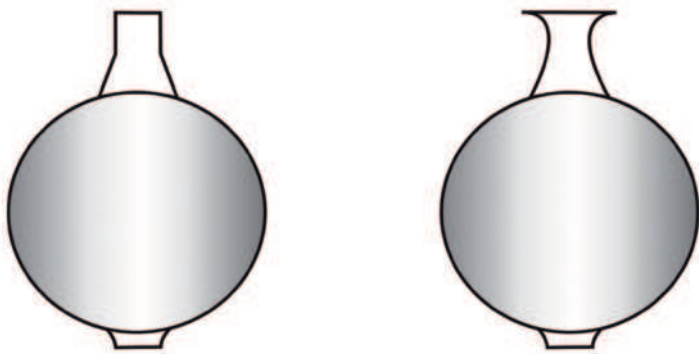


Illustration 16

Illustration 17

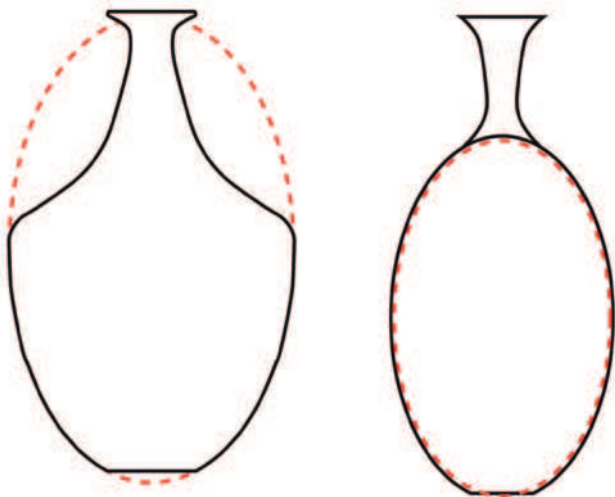


Photo 18



Boxes

Boxes are a group usually awarded the honour of having their own classification group. However, it could be argued that they are a subset of hollow forms, as treated here. 'Extreme' hollow forms could be the name given to completely closed pieces such as that in photo 18. 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 (photo 19) 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 business-like knobs', dramatically affects the scale and proportion of the box. ●

Photo 19



PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD RAFFAN

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Community news

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

Tabletop spinning wheel

In 2012 I was asked to restore a tabletop spinning wheel by the York maker John Jameson (c.1780-1802) and, thinking I might like to try making one, I took a few measurements and made a few design changes of my own. Prior to Covid-19 I had begun to turn some of the spindle work, and during the pandemic when we could not socialise, I decided to finish it. The wheel is made of English walnut, with a horizontal framework supported on four pillars set into a rectangular base. The rim on Jameson wheels were made of lead, which is needed to give them the necessary momentum. I could not work with this, and instead decided

on a brass rim. The table is of high-quality ply with walnut veneer on top and edging on the sides. I fitted an elliptic fan shaded motif in the middle. The bobbin/flyer mechanism connects to the driving wheel with a double band drive. A wood screw arrangement moves the bobbin/flyer to tighten the drive cord. The wheel is for spinning flax, and for this a distaff is needed on which to dress the fibre, and a water pot so the spinner can moisten the fibre while spinning. These are both mounted off the base with thumbscrews. The distaff is a birdcage pattern made with canework bent to shape. I have had a special



nameplate made as an example of my work. I posted a photo on the US Facebook site 'Antique spinning wheels, looms and fibre equipment'. It went viral and I had 55 comments. One said: 'Wow, just wow! I'll take 3. Do you gift wrap'. Another said: 'I'm in awe. I want to fall down on my knees and stare at every detail', another said, 'absolutely stunning'. **David Bryant**

Woodturning CONNECT 2023 Biennial exhibition & competitions



The Worshipful Company of Turners' biennial turning competitions are well established in the City and Craft calendar. Use our next one to CONNECT with a London audience and potential buyers to get your name known.

Fresh opportunities in 2023 include a new category, Master's Exhibition, which is by invitation only. Through the theme Coronation it will showcase the finest elite woodturning in the UK. Curators from the V&A museum in London will be making a 'choice' award from this collection.

Try something new by merging pewter, leather or both into your woodturning. The Master's Mixed Media Competition not only gives turners the chance to mix wood with pewter and leather, but also to work on a project and CONNECT with other skilled craftspeople. Contact Becca at assistantclerk@turnersco.com and she will make enquiries through the Livery Companies if you wish to work with a pewterer or leatherworker.

There's also the opportunity for you to sell your work to those who are passionate about shopping for beautiful, unique, handmade woodturned pieces. At the competitions, we are giving the purchaser the chance to CONNECT with you, the maker, and perhaps commission their own special piece.

Details of the 10 competitions are described at: www.turnersco.com, and online entry forms are now available. Please ensure your entry form has been submitted before Monday 18 September 2023 as forms received after this date will not be accepted. No entry will be accepted without prior registration.

When: Judging on 18 October (private view in the evening), public viewing on Thursday 19 October
Where: Pewterers' Hall, Oat Lane, London EC2V 7DE



**Call for entries.
18 September 2023
deadline**

KEY DATES

Monday 18 September

Entry forms must be received by the assistant clerk by close of business on Monday 18 September. If you submit your entry after this date, we cannot guarantee that your piece(s) will be entered into the competitions.

Monday 2 October

Items being delivered by post or courier should arrive at the Company offices in Saddlers' Hall, no later than 5pm on this date. Please refer to general conditions of entry 2023 for further details.

Wednesday 18 October

All entries must be at Pewterers' Hall by noon. Please don't bring anything in person without having previously submitted an entry form before 18 September. No pieces will be entered into the competitions without an entry form provided before 18 September. Private View and Evening Reception (invitation only).

Thursday 19 October

10am-4pm public view day and opportunity to buy.
4.30pm prize-giving ceremony.
Entries which have not been sold may be collected from Pewterers' Hall after the prize-giving ceremony.

Woodturnings are like zucchini

On virtually every woodturning forum, eventually someone will ask how everyone else either sells or otherwise disposes of their excess woodturnings. It can be far easier to turn pieces of wood into useful and decorative objects than it is to get rid of those same turnings. Every woodturner has this problem sooner or later. I equate this problem to the one a gardener has in getting rid of their excess zucchini (courgettes).

Woodturnings are like zucchini. Most years we grow more zucchini than we care to eat. So we start giving the excess away to neighbours. Initially the neighbours are glad to receive the fresh vegetables. After a few trips up and down the street, our neighbours start drawing their curtains, hiding and pretending not to be at home. They will not answer the door when they see us with the vegetable basket marching down the street. They don't even want to receive any of my wife's delicious zucchini bread.



Relatives can be a reliable venue through which you can give turnings. But even relatives have their limits. For many years I gave lots of turnings to the family at Christmas and for birthdays. One year it was decided to have a big family reunion. I took a large box of turnings to the family reunion and made an announcement that anyone who wanted a turning could have whatever was in the box. At the end of the day, I had almost as many as I started with. I got the message... and the turnings went home with me.

My wife is good about collecting some of my turnings as her favourites. She displays them in a number of places around the house. I did a count and currently there are 47 pieces on display. She has a closet devoted to her collection which she rotates in and out of the displays. I don't know how many turnings are in there but as she adds new favourite pieces to the collection, she sometimes takes older pieces out and puts them in the giveaway boxes. Even she has her limit.

It is so quick and easy to turn dozens of pens and everyone needs a pen, right? Even pens can be difficult to get rid of after you've been turning them for a while. When I was selling lots of pens, I had access to two colleges and sold many expensive pens to faculty members. But that market became saturated and my sales dried up.

I also had some reliable travelling salesmen who would buy pens from me as gifts. The tax laws changed and now these salesmen cannot write off the expense of gifts. Nowadays, no one uses a pen and I haven't turned any styluses (or is it styli?).

I usually give pieces to guests when they come to visit. Now no one wants to visit. Even the Jehovah's Witnesses stopped coming when I handed them a turning in exchange for the religious tracts they were



Same thing happens when you try to give away your wood turnings. After a few years folks do not want any more bowls, boxes, etc. It is almost like you have to move to a new neighbourhood to get rid of more turned stuff. I used to pass them out at the neighbourhood Christmas party. Initially people were excited to receive a small candy bowl, a box for paper clips, some candle stands or an ornamental bird house. Now we don't get invited to that event.

We live in an established neighbourhood. It has been a while since anyone new moved in. But it is always nice when someone new moves onto the street. Firstly, this event provides opportunities for housewarming gifts. I can unload, I mean, give the newcomers a box full of turnings and if they have children you can't believe how much stuff I can give them. And secondly, for the next few years I can add to their collection. Then like the rest of the neighbours they will draw the curtains and pretend not be at home. Sometimes they will not even acknowledge you when you see them at the grocery store where they are buying their own zucchini for fear that in accepting free zucchini, they might be obligating themselves to more turnings.



passing out. That was a great exchange because it was easy for me to file away a religious tract.

It has been years since I have seen any door-to-door encyclopaedia or magazine salesmen, but if any drop by I have something for them. I never see the woman who delivers our paper because she does it in the very early morning. I suspect she is aware that contact with me might result in woodturning gifts.

I would love to exchange a few turnings for a cheque from the Publishers Clearing House Prize Patrol. I don't see that happening any time soon. I don't enter that contest.

I don't have the heart to try to unload turnings on the Girl Scouts as their arms are usually full of boxes of delicious cookies. They will not barter for turnings either. I know, I have tried. The Boy Scouts used to hang a big bag on the front doorknob for their food drive. I started throwing in a couple of turnings along with the cans of peas and corn and dry pasta. I guess the hungry aren't as hungry as they used to be as I don't see those bags anymore.

And whatever you do don't drop any turnings in a child's Halloween pumpkin. Almost certainly the police will pay you a visit and want to know why you are giving kids wood instead of candy.

I always give a turning to my mailman for Christmas because he is kind enough to deliver my mailed wood purchases directly to my shop. But I fear that eventually he will want to move to a different route to avoid being given any more dust collectors, er, wood turnings. The UPS and FedEx folks deliver packages to the front stoop, ring the doorbell and run back to their trucks before I can give them something.

I used to sell in two galleries but I don't want to get into that rut again. Both galleries are at the beach and cater to tourists. The best part about tourists is that they represent a shifting population that changes somewhat each summer, so you have a completely new market for your work. As long as the stuff you offer is small and easily packed with the dirty laundry in their suitcase, they seem to be interested.

Larger items that have to be shipped don't seem to sell as readily. But I feel bad when items don't sell and the gallery owners have to dust them (not that bad really). At this point I am unable to produce enough work and deal with getting it to the galleries to make it worthwhile for any of us. I still believe this to be a good outlet, but I just can't deal with it anymore.

I have an ETSY shop where I sell turnings tailored to needlewomen, such as ort (waste) bowls, needle cases, laying tools, etc. I even manage to sell a few boxes, bowls and birdhouses on this site. This has been very successful because of my wife's connections and standing within the needlewoman community. But even that seems to be reaching its saturation point. I don't know how much longer I will be able to sell in that venue. Besides, another vendor on the site copied my designs and sells them cheaper.

I send pieces to my online woodturning friends as Christmas gifts. So far, I have not had any pieces returned. I did have some close calls this past Christmas when the mailman delivered some packages that were in the same boxes in which I sent my gifts. Before opening one of those packages I wrote to the person whose return address was on the box and told him that I did not accept returns of gifted items or offer cash refunds and that he was going to have to keep what I sent him. He informed me that he was reusing the box to send some of his excess turnings. I sent him one piece of work and he sent me two so that was a net gain of one to my turning inventory. The same thing happened with a couple of other turners this year so even the long-distance gifting ploy has failed. I may

have to move so they can't send me any more turnings. I cannot afford to double the number of woodturnings in my home. But at least I have some nice wood turned art to add to our collection.

While I was sick and being treated, I gave all of my doctors, radiology technicians, nurses, orderlies, receptionists and therapists pens, boxes, bowls, birdhouse ornaments etc. etc. I was able to get rid of a lot of stuff although I cannot recommend that particular avenue of distribution to anyone. I've noticed that they no longer want to see me as frequently as they did. At least two of my doctors left town. I hope it was because they are seeking better opportunities and are not just trying to avoid seeing me. I guess it could be because I am getting better but I suspect it might have something to do with all the turnings I passed out. I am not eager to acquire a new disease to open up additional medical practices where I might distribute my turnings.

One of my woodturning friends came to visit me while I was in the hospital and brought several boxes and bags full of woodturning blanks and a number of woodturnings. So, I gained in the number of turnings I have and wasn't even going to the shop. He was kind to visit... if he ever gets sick, I will repay the favour.

I donate a couple of pieces each year to the local art centre fundraiser. So far, it hasn't rejected any of my donations but it will not share its member list with me so I can gift those people with turnings and perhaps find a few new patrons.

These are my experiences with trying to get rid of my turning production. You will note that I did not say 'production turning'. I have never been a production turner. Because of my experiences with getting rid of what I do turn, I have trouble relating to those production turners who turn and sell thousands of items each year. I have never come close to turning that much stuff in one year. Even with my limited production, I have accumulated so much stuff that we no longer have closet space in which to store it. I am not going to build another wing on the house. The U-Store-It places are too expensive.

In the winter my shop stands idle as I don't turn during cold weather, but as soon as it warms up, I head out to the shop and turn something else. Perhaps some Mormon youth wanting to raise money for a mission trip by washing windows will come by and I can gift them with a few turnings. I really need my windows washed. If they do show up it would even be better if they come during zucchini season.

Mike Stafford



In the news

I have written a few articles for my club newsletter and thought you'd like to see some of the results. I've also added three of my more recent turnings.

Regards, Robin Goodman

- 1** Flame form
- 2** Turning Teapots, with this green lacquered and textured teapot
- 3** Turning Ovals, with this oval section box
- 4** Multi-axis triple boxes
- 5** Saturn Rings and Op Art, with this optical illusion art bowl
- 6** Lidded bowl
- 7** Turning Stone – this is a vase from Cornish soapstone with a segmented African blackwood rim



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

More Details - and Tickets - at
www.woodturningweekender.co.uk



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- *Thanks for a fabulous weekend. It exceeded our expectations by a country mile* – Shirley and Paul H
- *Great service, great Weekender, great company* – John



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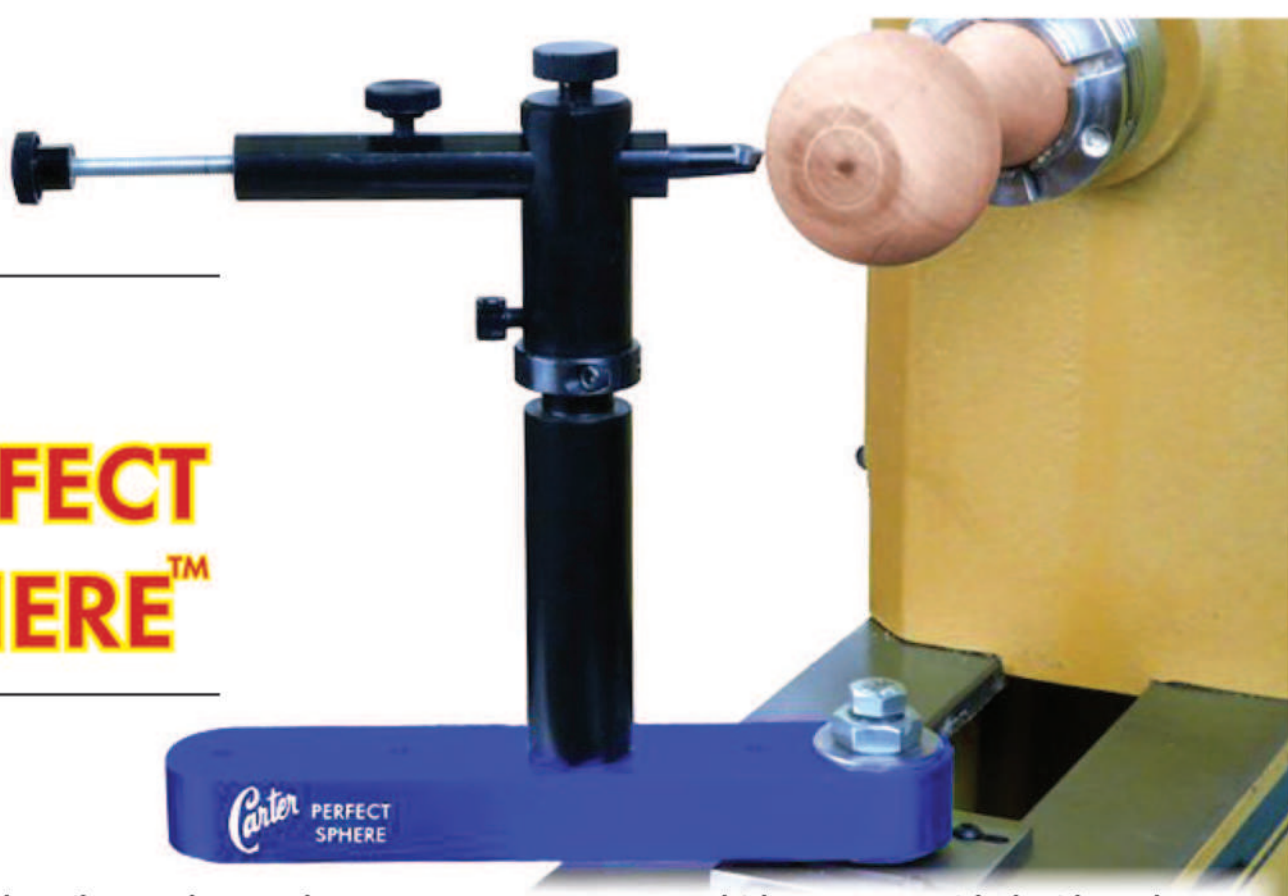
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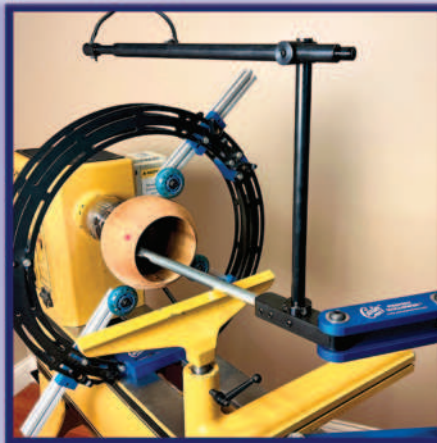
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Garden accessories

Alan Holtham brings some style to the potting shed with beautiful hand-turned garden accessories



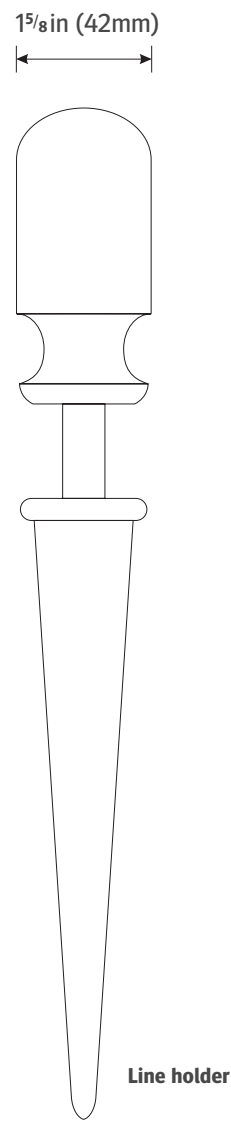
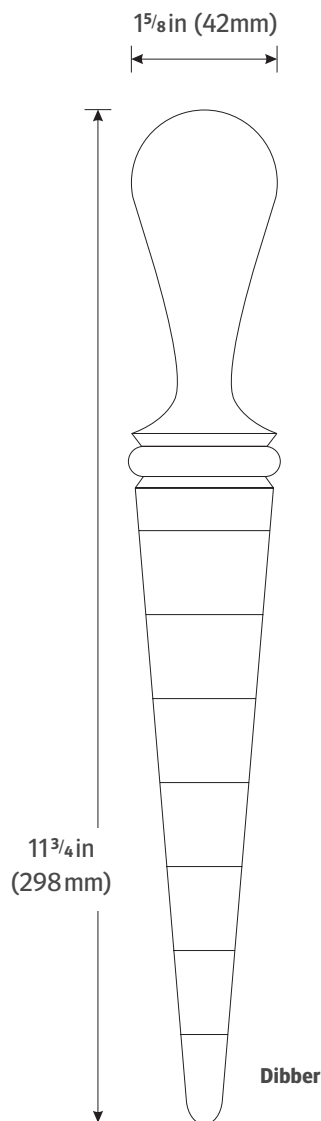
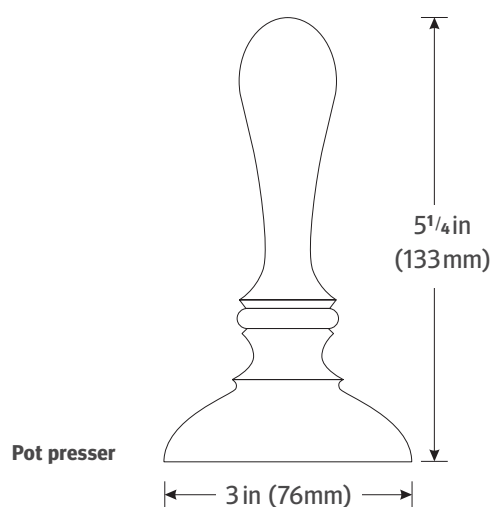
If you have friends or relatives who are keen gardeners, one or more of these simple projects will always be well received. They make fantastic presents and their finished look belies the relatively small amount of time and work needed to make them. No precise measurements are involved and you can turn them to whatever size you fancy, depending on the available timber.

There is a selection of dibbers, a pot presser and a string line holder. All of them are very quick to make and are an ideal way of using up some of those pieces of small branch wood that seem to accumulate under the workbench. Often these branches are too small in diameter for much else, but are ideal material for these projects.

Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- 1/4 in (6mm) spindle gouge
- 3/8 in (10mm) spindle gouge
- 3/4 in (19mm) roughing gouge
- 3/4 in (19mm) skew chisel
- Standard parting tool
- Wire burner
- Sand paper
- Cellulose sealer



Straight dibber

1 For this I used up some yew branches that I'd nearly thrown away, thinking they were useless. However, yew is a beautiful raw material and this project shows that it is worth keeping any odd bits.

2 Choose a suitable piece of straight branch wood and make sure the ends are cut reasonably square. With irregular shapes like this you have to guess where the centre point is, but it is usually not that critical.



3 Mount the work between centres. Before you start the lathe, turn it by hand, to make sure there are no protruding knots or branches likely to foul on the toolrest. As the branch is so irregular in shape, with varying amounts of heartwood and sapwood, it is unlikely to be very well balanced, so first set the lathe at a lower speed than normal, to see how smoothly it rotates. If all is well, try increasing the speed up to about 2000rpm for small sections like this.

4 Using a $\frac{3}{4}$ in (19mm) roughing-out gouge, approach the work carefully from the right end. Move the gouge a bit more to the left with each cut and, as you near the left end of the timber, reposition the toolrest and start working off that end.

5 Keep working away like this until you have reduced the branch to a perfect cylinder. Remember to move the rest in close to the work as the roughing out proceeds, or you'll soon end up with a lot of tool overhang.

6 The roughing gouge can be used for a lot of the basic shaping and, now that the blank is better balanced, you should be able to increase the speed to about 2500rpm. To get to a nice parallel taper for the main part of the dibber, it helps to twist the toolrest to the necessary angle and then use it as a guide to form the correct taper.

7 The long tapered section can be smoothed off using a skew chisel; practise swinging the handle up and down to vary the width of cut and quality of finish.

8 The top end of the dibber can be rounded over using the spindle gouge to leave just a small nib at the drive-centre end. This can then be cleaned off by hand as the last operation.

9 The shaping of the handle is a matter of personal preference. It doesn't need to be too ornate but a few small details are necessary to make it look attractive. I settled on a style that could be reproduced on all the other items to make them look like a set.



Top tip

As branch sections are so irregular and bent, you will often find that you are taking a lot more from one side than the other. If the discrepancy is marked, try readjusting the tailstock centre position to balance it up a bit.



10 Once you are happy with the shape, check the taper for straightness using a small steel rule or straightedge, and make any necessary adjustments with the skew chisel.

11 To give some indication of planting depths, mark out 1in (25mm) graduations along the taper.

12 Cut a small groove at each pencil line, using a skew chisel to delineate them clearly.

13 To enhance the lines, blacken them with a wire burner. Apply a lot of pressure, so it is hot enough to scorch the wood. Never wrap the wire round your fingers; ideally fit wooden handles at each end.

14 Sand well all over, but for projects like this that are soon going to get dirty, there is no point spending hours getting a perfect finish. Working down to about 320 grit is more than enough.

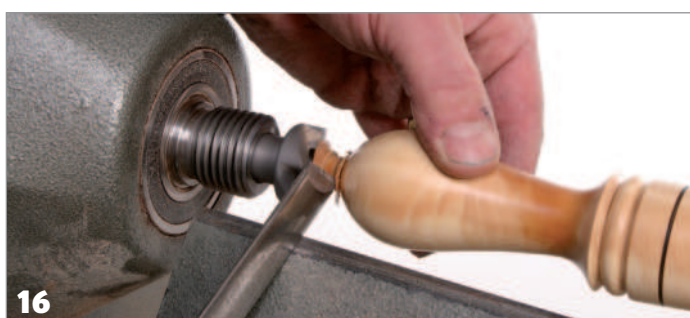
15 Leave the wood unpolished if you like, but I prefer to work in a couple of coats of cellulose sealer, flattening down well between each coat, and then to finish off with a coat of melamine lacquer. This gives a water-resistant and generally impervious finish that looks attractive but will inevitably get a little dirty with use.

16 Use the skew chisel to part through the tiny nib at the headstock end and just blend this in by hand with abrasive.



Top tip

To clean up these straight sections, wrap some fine abrasive paper around a block of wood and run this up and down the length as the work revolves. It is often better to reduce the lathe speed for sanding fine-grained timbers like yew, as they can soon overheat and develop small heat checks.





Small dibber

17 The small dibber is ideal for work with seedlings and the procedure for making it is exactly the same as for the larger one. However, it is often more difficult to hold these small sections adequately, so I just grip them between a ring centre in the headstock and a standard revolving centre.

18 The turning sequence is much the same as for the bigger version, still using the $\frac{3}{4}$ in (19mm) roughing gouge.

19 Again use the skew chisel to form the straight taper, then make the depth graduations, but for smaller dibbers space these at $\frac{1}{2}$ in (13mm) intervals.

Pot presser

20 This is an equally simple project. It could be turned from two separate pieces, but I find it much quicker and more economical to make it from one single piece, rather than worry about the waste.

21 To start with, hold the blank between centres, and rough down to a cylinder. As the large end has to be turned perfectly flat, you need to grip the blank so that this end is accessible and not supported by the tailstock.

22 To achieve this, turn a small spigot on one end of the blank that can be gripped in your combination chuck. Make sure the spigot shoulder is parallel and slightly undercut at the shoulder for a firm grip.

23 Bring the tailstock back up to give support for as long as possible, then start turning away the bulk of the waste to form the handle of the presser.





24 With the bulk of the waste removed, start adding the detail; don't overdo it, but a little simple decoration makes the finished project more appealing. Notice how the handle profile is similar to that on the dibbers.

25 Before you reduce the diameter of the handle too much, remove the tailstock and clean up the end of the presser to get it perfectly flat, using a small spindle gouge or the skew chisel.

26 Sand and polish in exactly the same way as before, but do be careful as there is only a small amount of support at the end of the handle and this is easily snapped if you press too hard.

27 With the polishing completed, part off by slicing through with the skew. Alternatively, if you are not too confident about parting a revolving workpiece, use a fine saw with the lathe stationary.



String line holders

28 These are very much like the large dibber, the only complication being that you have to produce two the same. The first one is easy to turn, so use this as a template for the second one. Provided the main dimensions are all the same the rest of the detail will look surprisingly similar, just keep holding them up against each other to check progress as the turning proceeds. Once again, the handle shape is reproduced at the top end, with a smaller-diameter section bounded by two beads to form a reservoir for the string.

Tee-handled dibber

29 This dibber is very similar to the standard version, but it is on a larger scale and has the additional handle for easier planting of crops like leeks, which require a much deeper hole. ●



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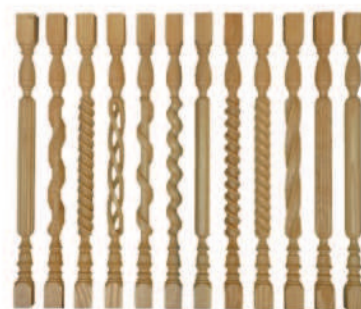
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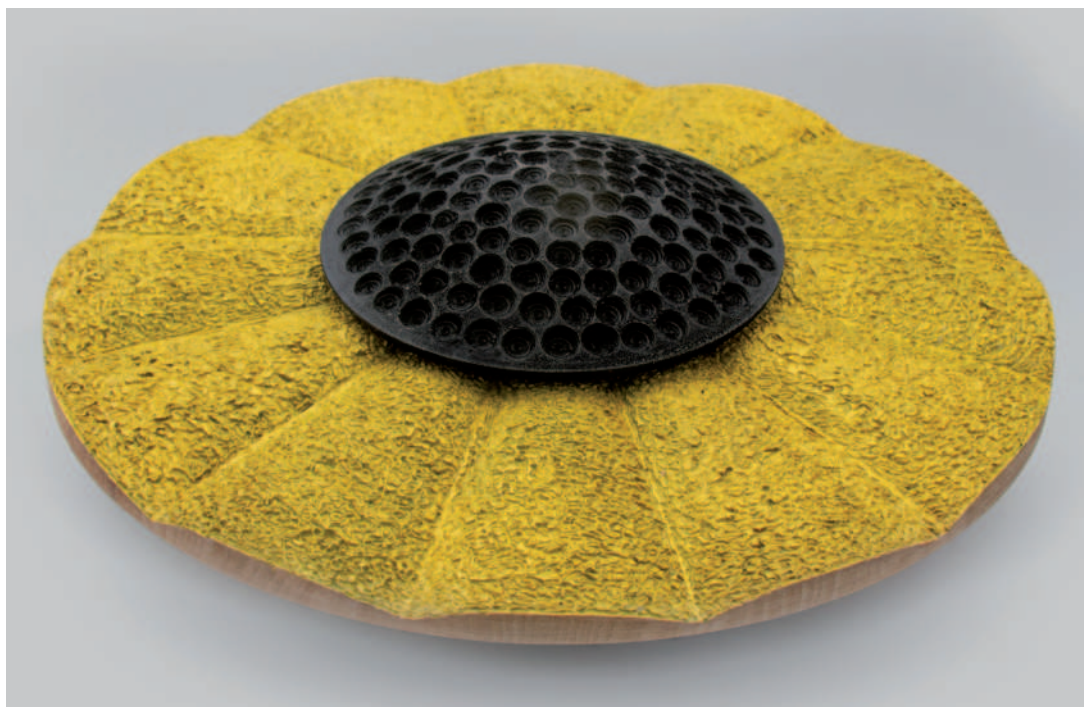


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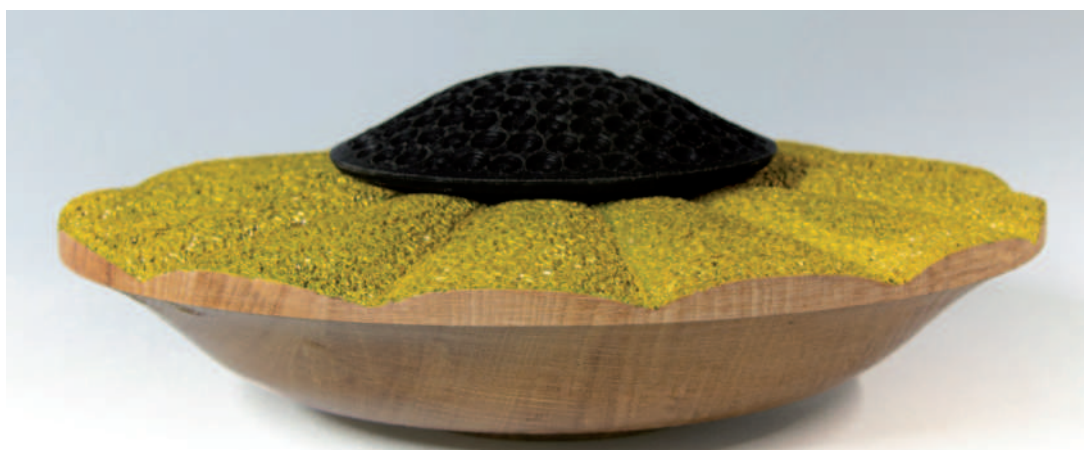
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Flower power

Pat Carroll makes a box that blossoms



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAT CARROLL



Having a sketch or a plan for a piece is really great when you know what you want to make. For this article, I started out with not a clue as to what I was going to make. I mounted a piece of beech on the lathe and set up my camera and lights, all the time thinking, what will I make? As I was checking tools, cleaning my face shield, my mind wandered to jobs that need doing in the garden.

The daffodils were making a welcome appearance and I got the idea for a flower-themed box. After some more head scratching a plan was formed. Once again, this proves that we are surrounded by inspiration if we take the time to look around and examine our surroundings. As I wanted to mimic petals in some way and use bright colours, I thought of a sunflower. Yellow exterior and dark centre. I also wanted to keep it simple. So some rotary carving created the grooves and refining with my files created a simple but pleasing affect. There is something rewarding about using a hand tool and seeing results very quickly. Don't worry, I won't be swapping to a pole lathe any time soon. The addition of a simple texture added another area of interest and the colour going from bright to dark helped create a nice contrast on the box.

The making

1 First and foremost, all PPE is checked to be in perfect working order. I ensure I have a clean visor and dust mask, the lathe working correctly with all components clean and tools sharpened. The body of the box is a piece of air-dried beech, side-grain orientation. I used a 8mm screw chuck to hold the piece on the lathe.

2 I drilled a 6mm hole for the screw chuck. If it was unseasoned wood I would use a 5 or 5.5mm drill as the wood is far softer. The screw chuck itself was more than adequate to secure the piece, but as I do a lot of my initial roughing out left handed, I bring up the tailstock for added security as it's not in my way. Using a 16mm bowl gouge I trued up the outer circumference of the piece.

Plans & equipment

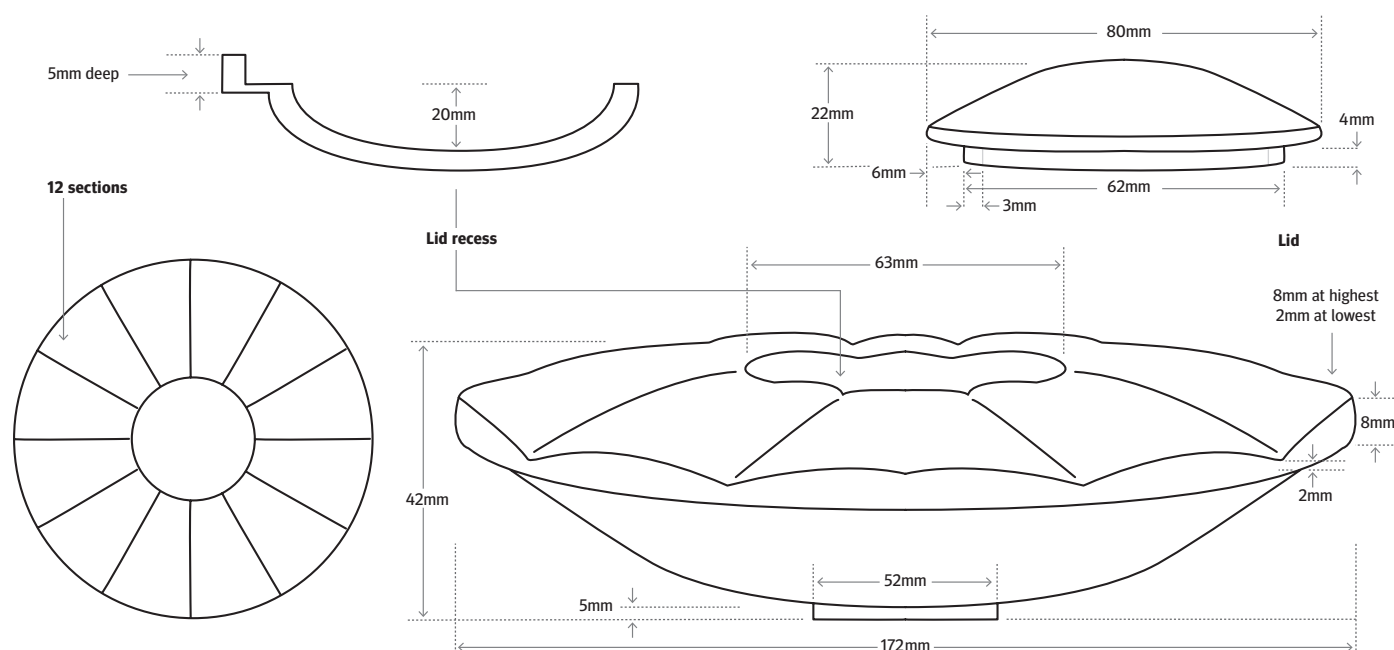
Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- 10mm steb centre
- 8mm screw chuck
- 4mm parting tool
- 16mm bowl gouge
- 10mm bowl gouge
- 6mm bowl gouge
- 25mm round-edge skew
- 25mm round-nose negative rake scraper
- 25mm flat negative rake scraper
- Rotary tool
- Files/rasps

- Brass brush
- Sandpaper
- Jam chuck
- Yellow iridescent paint
- Air brush thinner
- Air brush
- Black dye
- Satin lacquer
- Gloss lacquer
- Pencil
- Ruler

Timber used

- Beech, 190 x 60mm
- Sycamore, 100 x 75mm



3 The chuck I use for most of my projects has 50mm straight serrated jaws. I mark out a tenon of 52mm allowing for the compression of the jaws. I use the lower wing of the 16mm bowl gouge, the flute slightly open so I still have a small amount of bevel contact, working towards the tenon in small increments to remove the bulk of the wood. As this is bulk removal, cutting direction is not important at this point.

4 The serrated jaws I use call for a 90° tenon. I used a 25mm rolled edge skew with a negative rake grind on it to ensure the tenon was clean and straight. The skew has a 60° include angle ground on it.





5 To create an ogee on the base, I divided up the area from the tenon to the rim into three approximate sections. I then created a cove between the rim and the line closest to the tenon.

6 Once the cove was complete, I rounded over the corner where the line remained. I blended the arc from the tenon to the cove with the 16mm bowl gouge.

7 To further refine the shape, I used a 25mm negative rake round-nose scraper with a 60° included angle. As the piece is side-grain orientation, it's generally best to work from the smallest diameter to the largest.



8 Using respiratory protection and dust extraction, I sanded the piece with 120, 180, 240, 320 and 400 grit sandpaper. The tailstock support also left a centre point to align later when I was finishing the base.

9 I trued up the face with 16mm bowl gouge, working in small increments across the surface. I wanted the outer portion of the rim to slope outward, so I left the rim 8mm to allow for carving on the surface.



10 As this was a piece evolving as I went, I created a recess in the centre in case of a design change when the rim was completed. This would allow me to re-chuck the piece and also allowed me to experiment with the size of the centre of the piece. I used a 4mm parting tool to start the recess.

11 With the recess established, I used a 10mm bowl gouge to remove the remainder of the wood in the recess.



12 Once I was happy with the shape of the rim, I gave it a quick sanding. Even though I knew it was to be carved and textured, I didn't want to have any radial lines possibly showing through. Using the 24 index system on the lathe, I marked out the 24 sections. I put a mark on every second line to indicate the highest point.

13 Using PPE, including hearing protection, I used a rotary carver with an angled burr to follow the line, creating a trench in the wood. The top flat area of the burr is smooth and does not cut into the wood. So the first part is easier to keep straight. It was easiest to see this and work on it at the farthest side of the piece.



14 To complete the power carving I did the opposite side of the trench, working at the side nearest me. Once I had formed the 12 trenches on both sides, I refined it as much as I could with the rotary carver.



15 I then used my wood rasps to further refine the shape. The larger rasp helped straighten any discrepancies in the trenches and also refined the curve of segments.



16 A smaller, finer file was used to further refine the shape and surface. When using files or rasps on wood it is important to pay attention to grain direction as, on some woods, the tool can be more aggressive in certain directions. Start gently until you see how the wood is responding to the tool.



17 With the filing done the piece was ready for sanding. As mentioned before, even though the surface was to be textured I did not want any scratches showing through. I used a rubber block with Velcro attached to hold the sandpaper. I sanded with 120, 180 and 240 grit paper. This was sufficient for the texture.



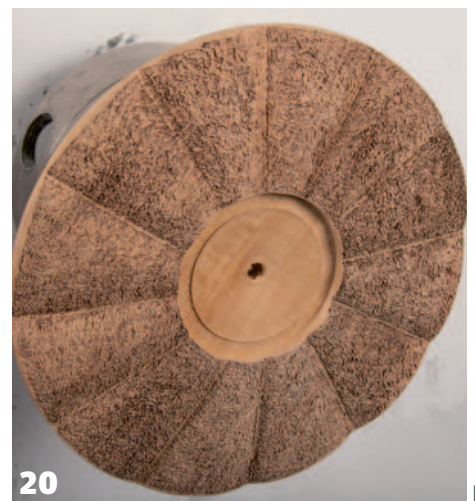
18 I wanted a subtle texture on the carved surface, so I used a texture that has worked well for me on past items. The texture was created using a dental drill. This tool works with compressed air and has a rpm of 320,000. It can burn the surface easily with such a small bit at high speeds. I created the texture by drawing small circles or swirls, always conscious of the depth. Once again the grain direction can impact the texture you will achieve



19 Once I had the texture complete, I used a brass brush to gently remove any raised fibres. Working in small circular movements cleaned the surface nicely.



20 As the surface was to be painted I didn't want any paint on the underside of the piece. I applied several light coats of lacquer to the rear of the piece while still on the chuck. I have a piece of white MDF with a hole drilled in it to fit over the headstock drive. This helps protect the lathe if I need to paint a piece still on the lathe.



21 Once the lacquer was dry I had time to think more about the centre. I had a plan for the lid and didn't require making the centre any wider. I used my 4mm parting tool to clean up the recess and establish a shoulder for the lid to sit on.

22 Using a 6mm bowl gouge with a 40° micro bevel, I created a semi-circular shape in the centre.

23 The bowl is now complete and ready for paint.

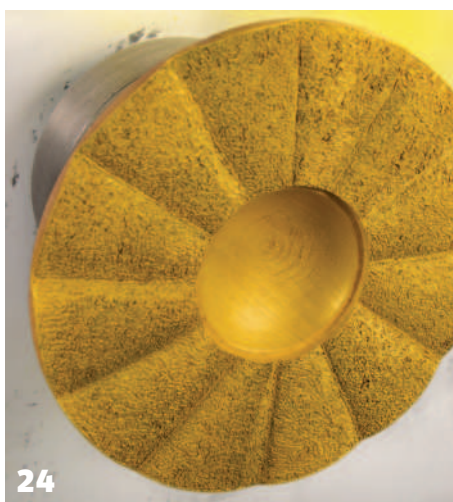
24 For colouring the piece I wanted a vibrant yellow. I had some acrylic paint but I didn't want it to fill the texture. I decided the airbrush was the best option. Using yellow iridescent paint thinned 75/25% with airbrush thinner, I applied several light coats until I achieved a colour that covered the scorching of the texture and gave a nice shimmer in the light. The centre needed a little de-nibbing with 320 as the thin fluid raised the grain.

25 For the lid I used a piece of sycamore, side-grain orientation. This was going to be a dual-purpose piece of wood. Once I secured the piece in the chuck I created a tenon to fit the centre of the bowl part of the box. I used the 10mm bowl gouge to do the initial cuts and refined the tenon with the negative rake scraper until I had a tight fit between the two pieces.

26 The tight fit allowed me to use the lid as a jam chuck so I could finish the bottom of the piece. I used the 6mm bowl gouge to gently create the shape of the foot and refined it further with the negative rake scraper. Once the turning was complete, the foot was sanded and the lacquer surface was de-nibbed with 320 grit sandpaper ready for the finishing coats.

27 After some shaping I decided upon the size I wanted the lid in proportion to the base. I didn't want the lid to overpower the box. Once the size was established I could progress with the lid.

28 The underside of the lid was then hollowed with the 6mm bowl gouge. This tool is ideal for small curves such as this.



29 Once the underside was turned it was sanded with 120, 180, 240, 320 and 400 grit sandpaper. I then parted it off with the 4mm parting tool. Care has to be taken parting off side-grain pieces as they can snap easily when the centre diameter gets small.



30 As mentioned earlier, the piece of wood for the lid was dual purpose. I got the lid from it, a jam chuck for the bowl and again it was used as a jam chuck for the lid. I created a recess with the 4mm parting tool and refined it with a flat 25mm negative rake scraper. I also lowered the outside of the jam chuck so I would be able to grip the lid to remove it from the chuck on completion.



31 The lid was then shaped, creating a dome that complemented the base of the flower-themed box. Once the turning was completed, it was sanded with 120, 180, 240, 320 and 400 grit sandpaper.



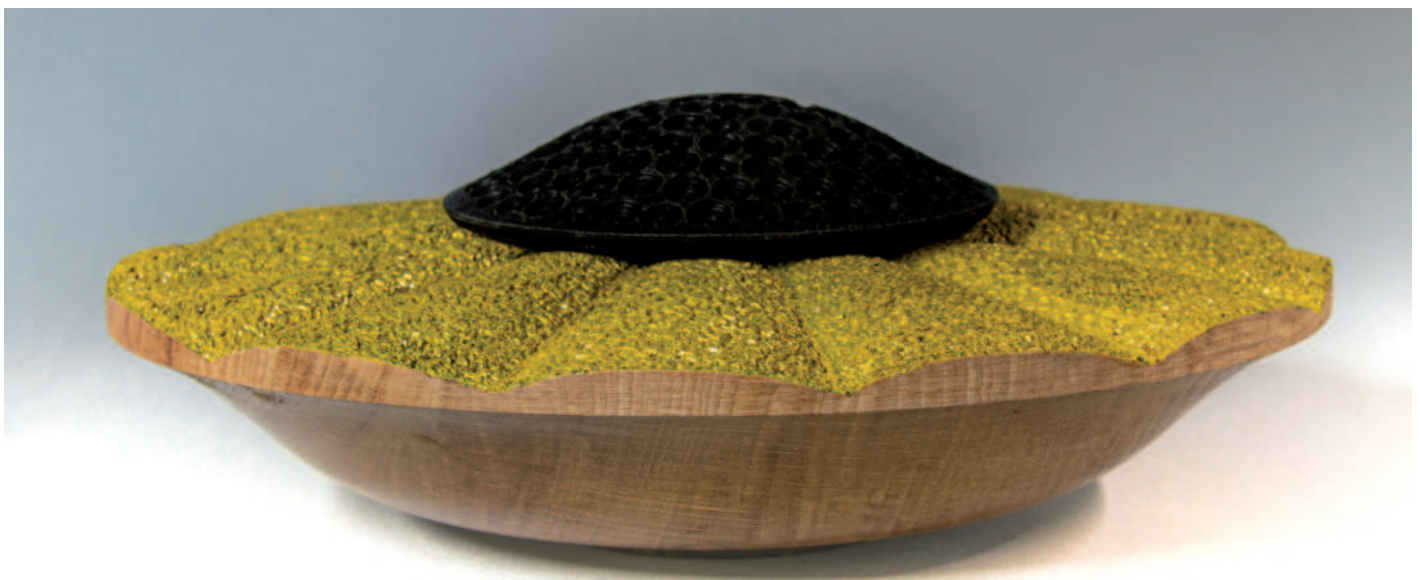
32 I drew a line close to the edge of the lid as a reference for the texture, I didn't want the texture to overshoot the rim. I used a 4mm round burr in the rotary tool to create the texture. The size of the texture is created by the depth the burr is pushed into the wood. I was not aiming for exact symmetry, but I wanted it similar.



33 The texture was quick to create and added a nice aesthetic to the overall design of the box.



34 Once the texture was complete I applied two coats of black dye to the interior and exterior of the piece. The dye raised the grain on the interior so a very light sanding was required. Several light coats of satin lacquer were applied to the lid and additional coats of gloss were applied to the base. ●





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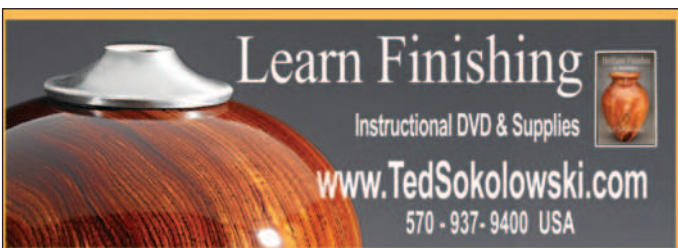
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Dave introduces professional turner Mike Dean of Barley Woodturning Specialists



Pat Carroll makes a multi-centre box in ash



James N Duxbury creates a pair of heart-shaped bowls with pyrography blackened rims

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Disabled, not disinclined

Pete Moncrieff-Jury discusses triumphs against adversities

Years ago, I belonged to a club in Cornwall and a blind turner turned up. He told us that he had lost his sight and was told that it would be good for him to take up something therapeutic, such as knitting. In true Cornish fashion, he told them that was not for him and bought himself a lathe. We used to have open house several evenings a week and he used to come in and practise with us (also teaching us a lot of useful things). Perhaps the most important point being that if we really wanted to do something we should do it, not let other people's expectations of us dictate. Since then, I have either met or come to hear of a number of people in the turning fraternity with what society deems disabilities and come to realise that I am also disabled. I suffer from both lack of confidence and listening too often and too much to people who criticise my work for one reason or another.

I have mentioned in a previous article about how criticism can be destructive and we should be ultra-careful how we advise people about their work, so won't go into that. Here I just want to perhaps inspire others to realise that we are all able to do things that some people, and often we ourselves, deem too much. There are many things I can't do, but now I admit it is because I am not interested enough to put the effort in, not because I can't. If I really want to do something I will persevere and find a way. I won't list the turners who have overcome difficulties that perhaps leave us in awe, but I am sure we can all think of them.

I remember watching a young man in Africa turning using his feet, and another carving using only the two fingers he had making really beautiful busts with an old sharpened screwdriver. Makes me wonder whether I really need all those tools and think that if I wanted to I could do much more than I do. That brings me back to the truth, which is either I am scared of failing or I simply don't want to try. We all have different types of turning that we prefer, I love spindle work but I wonder how many of us make excuses of, for example, not having a good enough lathe, not having the right tools, being too old to start a new way of doing things. How many of us have the courage or tenacity to persevere and prove to ourselves and others that we can and will do something? Applies to life, not just woodturning.

If we are honest, I am sure we all look at someone who, in our opinion, is disabled and assume that there is no way they could do something. I recently watched a little video of a man born with no arms playing the guitar with his feet. I have seen many people who are probably far more skilled than me simply because they have had to overcome adversities to accomplish something. I stopped thinking of someone as disabled personally a long time ago and think of them as different and, perhaps selfishly, wonder what I can learn from them.

A good example of what I am trying to say is Jason Lock, a professional turner in the UK. Paralysed from the waist down in an accident, he makes exquisite pieces, specialising in using resin with the wood, a complex thing in itself. Three of his pieces are shown here.

In summing up, don't say you can't – be honest and say you don't want to and don't assume those who say you can't are right. The only thing that stops you and holds you back will be you.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON LOCK

“

If we really wanted to do something we should do it, not let other people's expectations of us dictate.

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