

Woodturning

THE WORLD'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR WOODTURNERS



PROFILE

Gabriel River Clark

“Don’t give up! For me every accident and mistake has been a chance to learn”

PROJECTS Macaroon boxes • Salt & pepper mills
• Spalted beech bowl • Banksia goblet • Napkin holder
TECHNICAL Turning Easter eggs • Epoxy resin inlays

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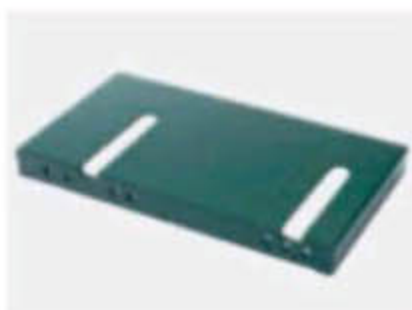
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The Woodworker and Good Woodworking, June 2024



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Mike Holton of Mike Holton Handmade Crafts



This machine punches well above its weight, with many high-end features previously only found on industrial grade machines. For power and precision in a compact machine I think it would be very hard to beat the SABRE-300 from Record Power."

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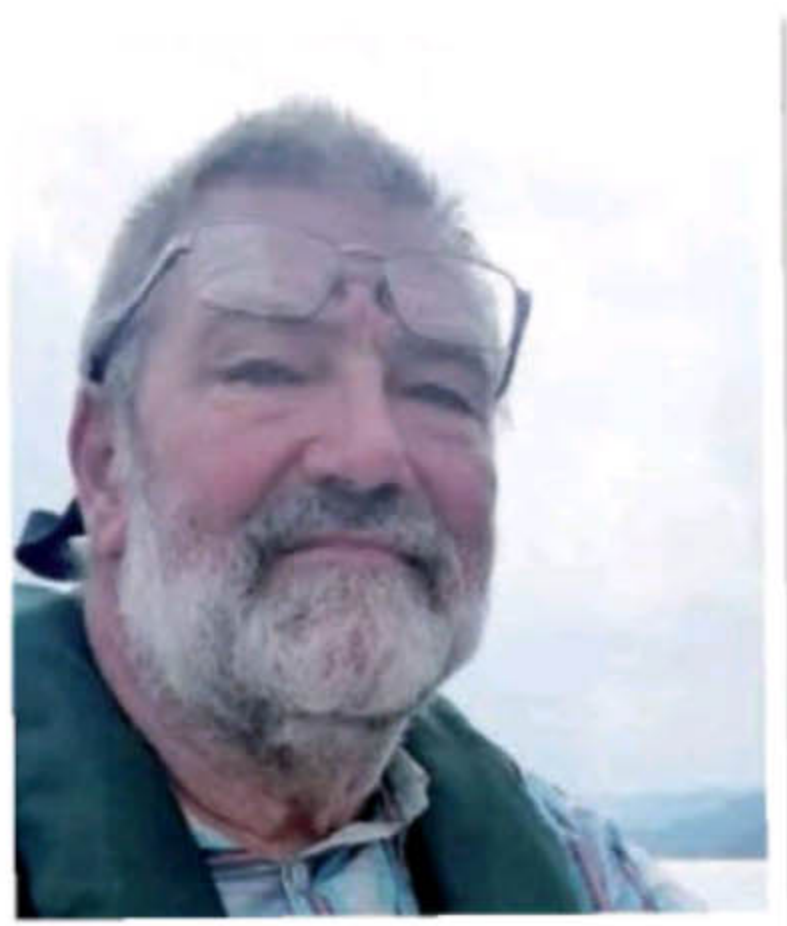
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Guest editor's letter

Les Symonds

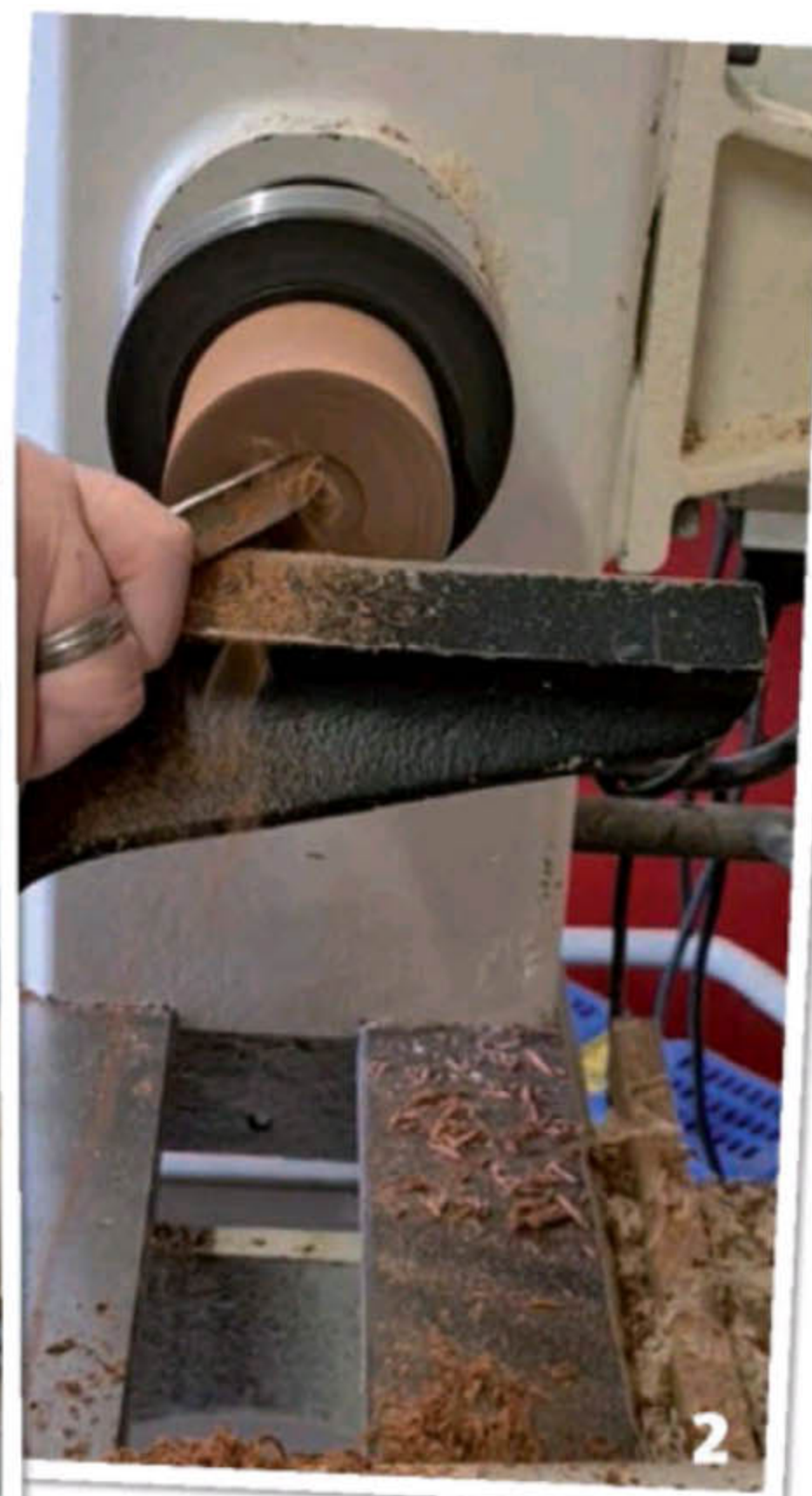
Lifelong learning

At the relatively ripe age of 72, I might well have retired several years ago, had I been employed in a regular job in the UK. Had I retired, then I suspect that I would have spent my days involved in my hobbies, with woodturning being at the top of the hobby list. So therein lies a dilemma for a woodturner. When one's profession develops out of one's hobby, is retirement possible?

For myself, I suspect that there will be the advantage of making what I need to, alongside making what I want to make. Using what skills I have developed over my years as a professional woodturner, alongside the learning of new skills is, for me, the essence of a productive and meaningful life and something that I indulged in a few weeks ago when I took a weekend out of my schedule to learn new skills.

Many potential clients over the years have asked me to make primarily carved pieces of work for them, and I have always declined such commissions as I am not a woodcarver and do not possess sufficient skills to be confident enough to accept such commissions. However, as I enter into semi-retirement, the thought of being able to chip away at a low-relief carving or an in-the-round piece, appeals to me, so I booked a one-day tuition session with a renowned rocking horse carver and thoroughly enjoyed the day.

As if that hadn't been adventurous enough for one weekend, on the following day I met up on a pre-arranged social and skill-share event, organised by the Register of Professional Turners (RPT), hosted at a most impressive venue owned by Trent Valley Woodturners, which rather conveniently was just a few miles down the road from where I'd been carving. Apart from the inevitable good chat with friends I hadn't met for a year or two, there was also the chance to indulge in a little bit of woodturning and bring personal skills to the attention of fellow turners. Emma Cook, RPT chair, was experimenting with



making glass cabochons as embellishments for her work. On a lathe nearby, Dave James RPT was amazing us all with his extreme miniatures of segmented work, which involved the making of his own tools, jigs and associated systems. Steven Gordon RPT was demonstrating his mind-boggling technique of 'back-hollowing', a process in which the ends of small objects (think egg-cups or hollow eggs) can be hollowed out rapidly by a process in which a spindle gouge is used with its flute starting off facing upwards, but then rolled such that it faced

away from the turner, while the tool handle dropped significantly. This wasn't for the inexperienced turner, but in the right hands it was remarkably efficient. Then, across the workshop, there was Carlyn Lindsay, Fraser Burchill and our very own Richard Findley (all RPT members) experiencing a wide range of gouge types and grinds for the simple process of hollowing a bowl. One is never too old to learn!

Les Symonds, BA RPT

1 My first attempt at woodcarving – happy with that **2** Back hollowing gets under way **3** A gathering of RPT registrants

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS: **1** LES SYMONDS **2** STEVE GORDON **3** FRASER BURCHILL (COURTESY OF EMMA COOK)



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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).

Nuts about goldfish

Les Symonds adorns the classic goldfish-bowl shape with cabochons of coconut shell



PHOTOGRAPHY BY LES SYMONDS

Sometimes things just don't go to plan. I normally produce these articles as instructions on how each reader might produce a finished piece, but on this occasion it will be a little different, more a blog of how I made mine. Having set my mind on making this project piece, I selected a large lump of what I believed to be lightly spalted beech and started to round-it off on the lathe, and that was where the problems started. Once the rough, dirty outer skin of a piece of timber that had been in stock for over a decade was cleaned away, I realised what lay beneath. A little bit of worm, a minor crack or two, one entire side of the lump comprised dense, sound timber while the other side was spalted, in some parts to the point of being soft and fibrous. It was so out of balance that on my first attempt to run the lathe at more than 200rpm, excessive vibration set in, so the pace was slow.

Perhaps I should have stopped there. Perhaps I should have sourced a better piece of timber, but no, I can be a little dogmatic about getting the best out of every lump of timber I have, just so long as it can be done safely. I see beauty in the grain and the spalting, and if that means a little more work to achieve my goal, then so be it. The main problem that I foresaw was to be at the point at which, with a more typical bowl, the outside would be shaped and finished while still attached to a faceplate, from which it is removed then placed into a



chuck. I wanted to shape the whole bowl, outside and inside, in one go, being achieved fully while in its chuck, so the step-by-step progress of this project was to be a bit different to the norm. Having said that, it worked and I'm quite pleased with it, so perhaps it stands as an example of how to safely achieve one's goal when the tried and tested normal procedures aren't the best, or safest, procedures to follow at the time.

Needless to say, if you plan to make a bowl of this nature, you might do well to find a less troublesome piece of timber.

Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- Lathe with indexing head
- Faceplate
- Chuck with range of jaws
- Jacobs chuck for tailstock
- Bowl gouge
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Spindle gouge
- Parting tool
- Skew chisel
- 6mm beading tool
- 18mm and 25mm Forstner bits
- Regular bench tools
- Steel rules
- Dividers and calliper
- Pyrography machine
- Scorch-wire or similar
- Wire brush (soft wire)

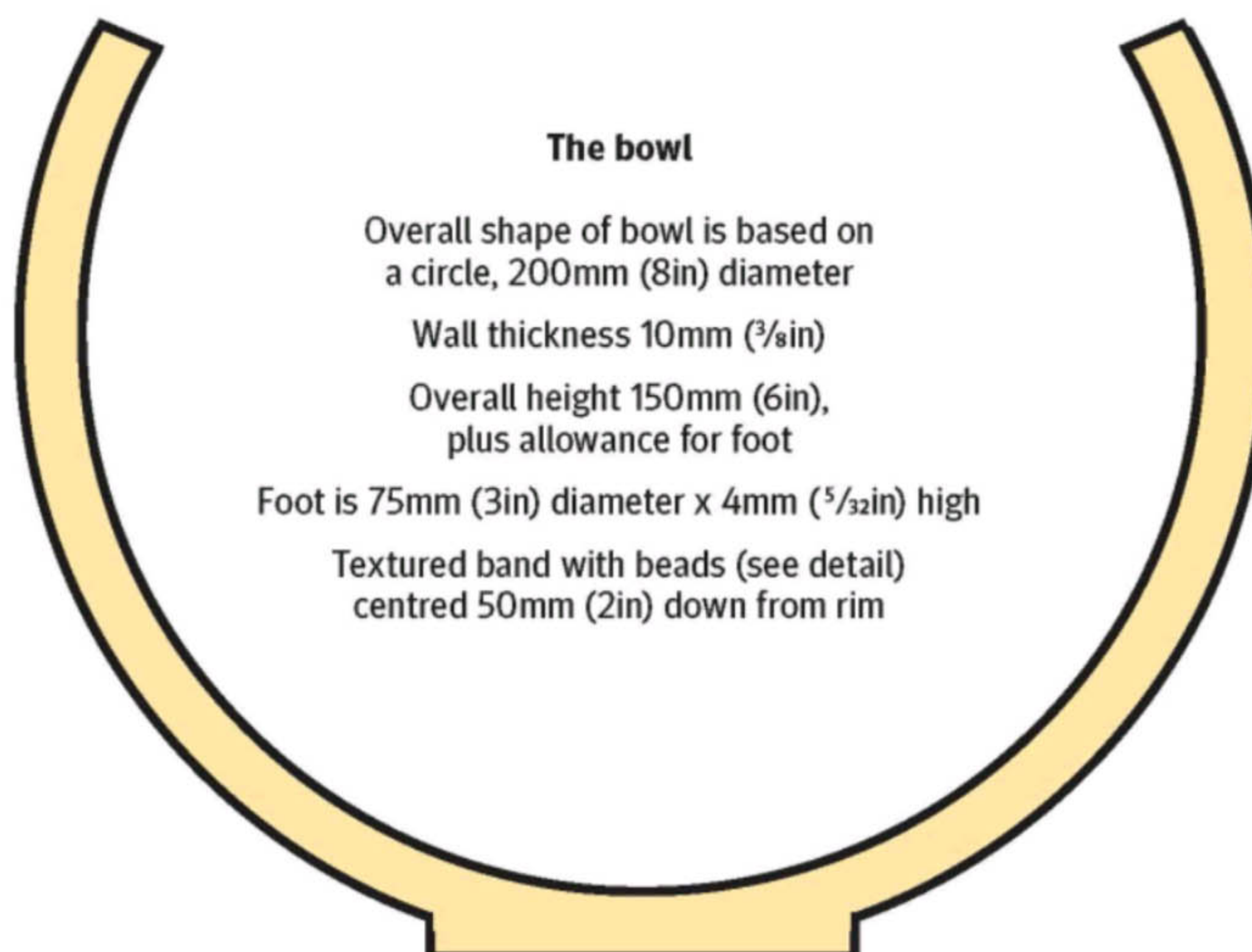
Materials

- Spalted beech, 220 x 220 x 220mm
- Boxwood, 1 piece, 120 x 30 x 30mm
- Softwood, 1 piece, 350 x 20 x 20mm
- Coconut shell, 6 pieces, 25 x 25mm
- Abrasives to 400 grit
- Cellulose sanding sealer
- Aerosol acrylic satin lacquer
- Ebonising lacquer
- 2-Part epoxy adhesive
- CA adhesive

The making

1 To commence, I screwed a 6in faceplate onto the timber, using six 50mm x 6mm hex-head screws, then the workpiece was skimmed with a bowl gouge to achieve a cylinder of about 220mm diameter. Traditional roughing cuts were used to start, but I soon changed to a shearing cut to reduce tear-out of the soft areas of timber.

2 The end facing the tailstock was skimmed clean and a chuck tenon cut to suit an 80mm set of jaws. It was at this point that I began to realise that following traditional procedures for bowl-turning might be a problem, especially when it came to turning the outside with the faceplate attached, then swapping over to the chuck for hollowing the inside. I decided to get the work piece into a chuck as soon as possible so that if the chuck jaws tightened unevenly, digging into the soft areas more than the sound timber, at least the whole bowl could be shaped under reasonably constant conditions.



The bowl

Overall shape of bowl is based on a circle, 200mm (8in) diameter

Wall thickness 10mm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in)

Overall height 150mm (6in), plus allowance for foot

Foot is 75mm (3in) diameter x 4mm ($\frac{5}{32}$ in) high

Textured band with beads (see detail) centred 50mm (2in) down from rim

Textured band detail

Centre-line of detail set 50mm (2in) down from rim of bowl

Overall detail comprised of a 25mm (1in) wide band with 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) bead either side, plus 4 scorch-lines, 1 cut and scorched to each side of each bead

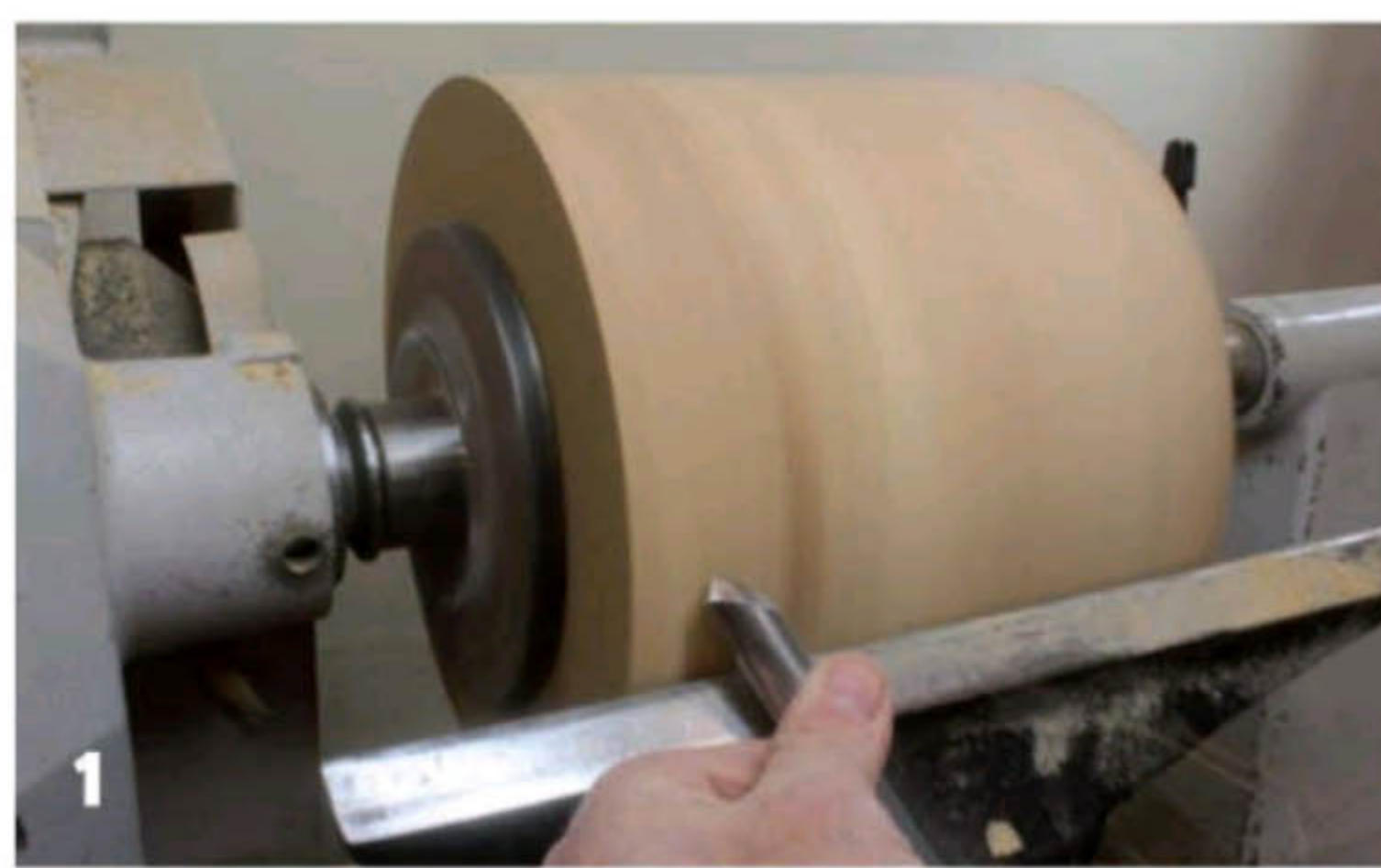
Flat surface between beads pyro-engraved with random pattern of ball-stylus scorches. Whole band and beads ebonised



Cabochon and mount (make 6)

Boxwood mount, overall diameter 25mm (1in)

Overall length 10mm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) with 18mm ($2\frac{3}{32}$ in) diameter recess to house coconut shell cabochon, 18mm ($2\frac{3}{32}$ in) diameter x 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) overall thickness with rounded front surface.



3 With the workpiece now set into its chuck, it was cut to an overall length of 175mm. I planned to form a dropped rim, so I made this surface quite concave straight away to discover whether or not there were any further troublesome areas of worm or soft timber – fortunately, there were not.

4 The area which was to be textured and beaded was now marked out. Firstly, a centre-line was drawn, 50mm in from the right hand end, then a second and third line drawn, each 12.5mm away from the central line.

5 A 6mm beading tool was used to form two beads, one bead set immediately to the left of the left-hand line, one set immediately to the right of the right-hand line, thus making an overall feature of 37mm width (6+25+6mm). The soft areas of timber were problematic, so the beads were cut to about 75% depth before being coated with CA adhesive, then finished once the adhesive had hardened.

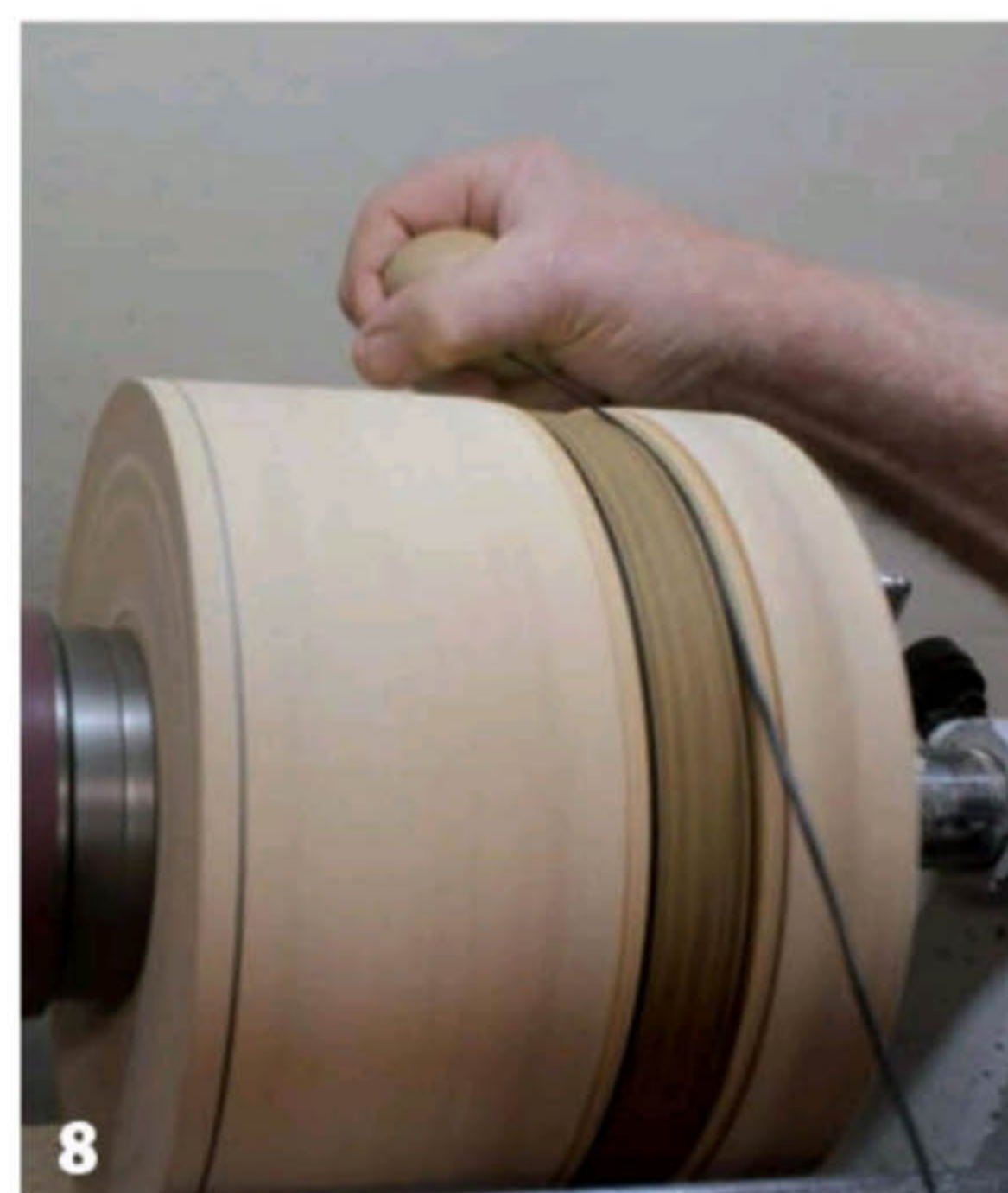
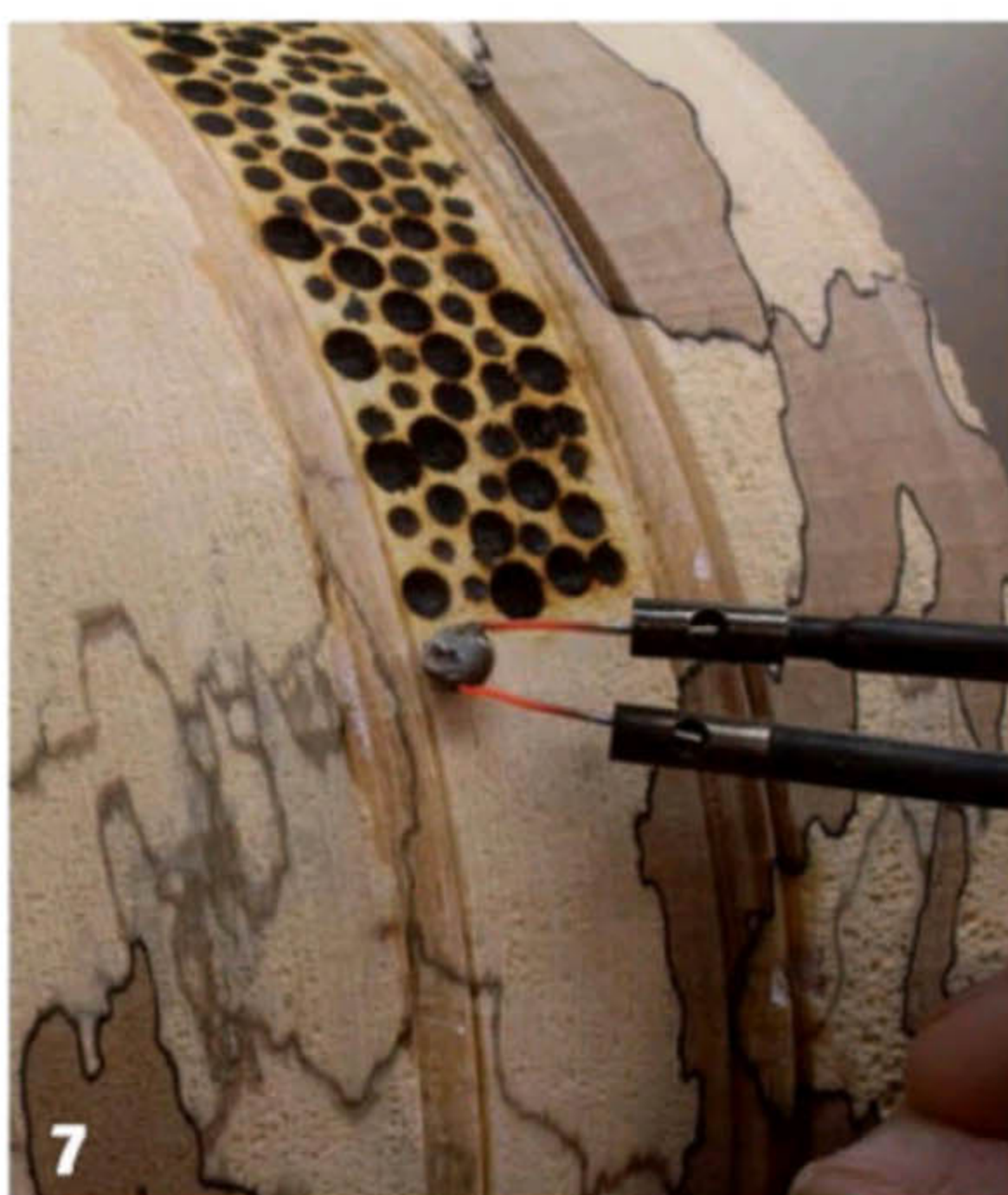
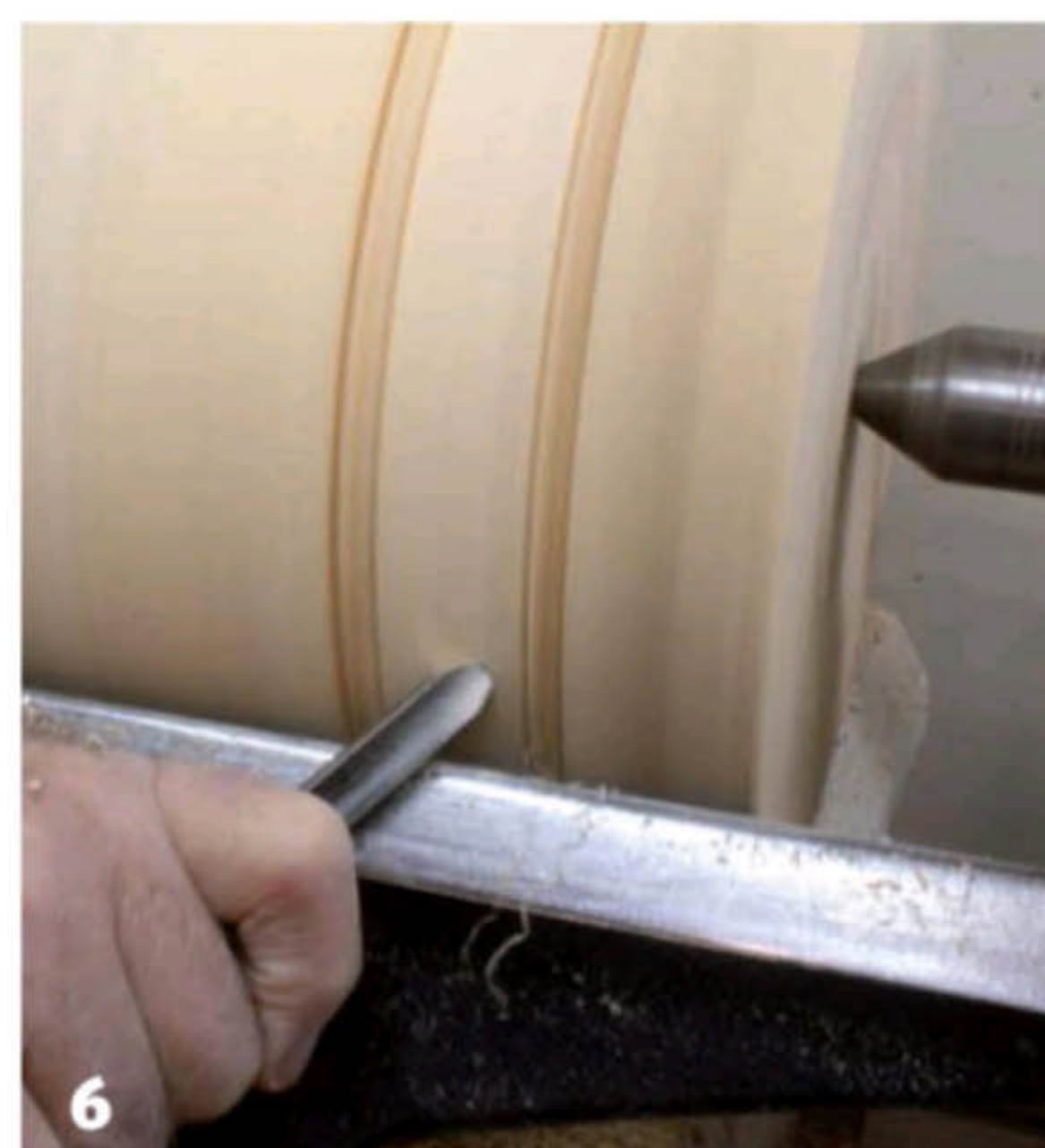
6 The area between the two beads was then cut to a flat surface, about 4mm below the tops of the beads. A parting tool would not suffice for this, no matter how sharp, so a spindle gouge was used, very slowly, to achieve a clean surface.

7 The texturing was then completed using a pyro-stylus which incorporated a 4mm ball on the wire. It was used with random pressure and placement to achieve a random texture.

8 The deep lines formed by the spurs of the beading tool were to be scorched into place, commencing with those immediately adjacent to the textured band.

9 Next, the deep lines on the outside of each bead were scorched, but to avoid the scorch-wire binding too much, a skew chisel was used to open up the lines. This would also help in Step 11 to ebonise the textured band, allowing the ebonising lacquer to reach down into the scorch-line.

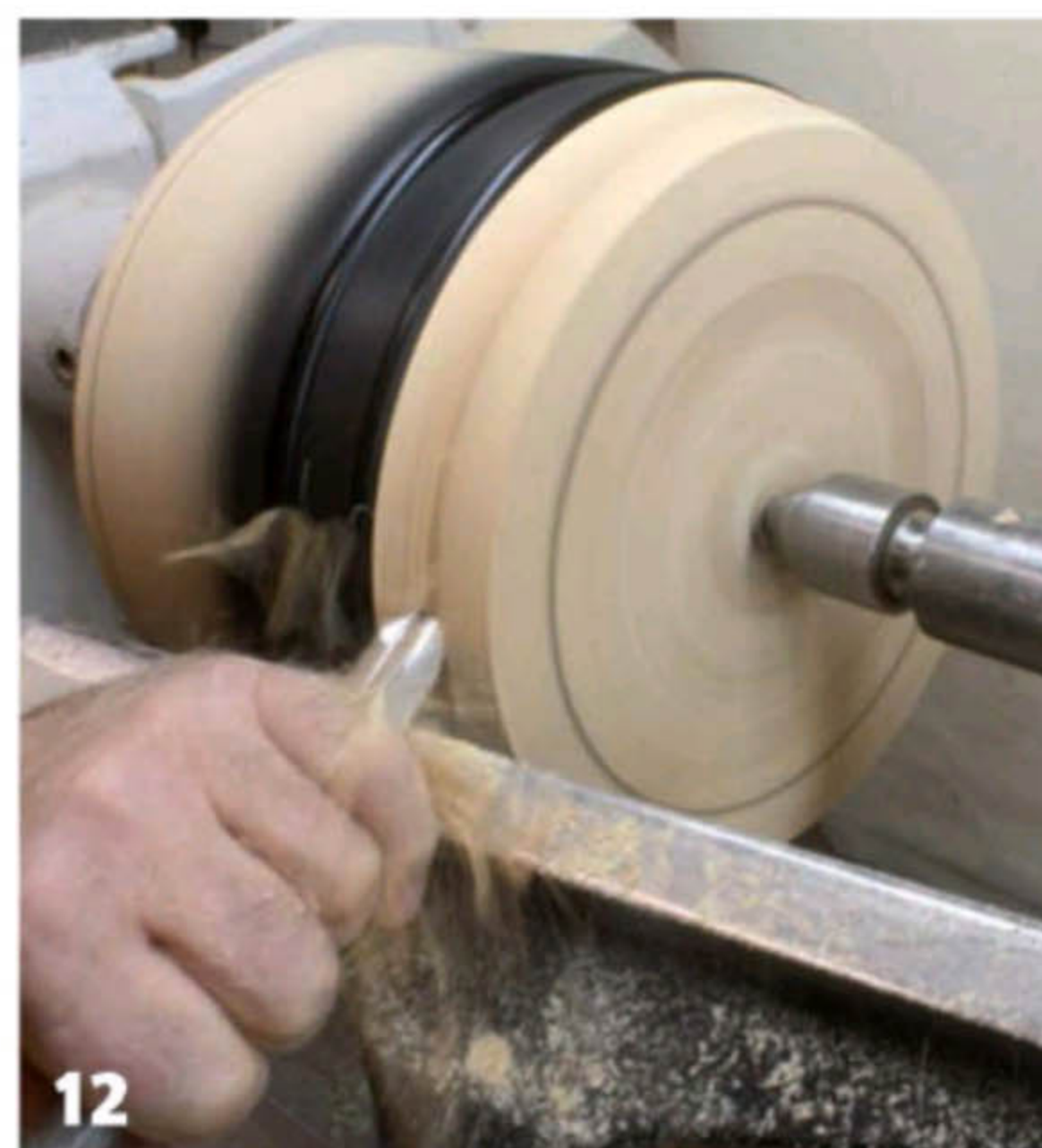
10 The outer lines were then scorched and the whole of the textured panel was then lightly brushed with a gilder's wire brush to clean away any loose scorched fibres and soot.



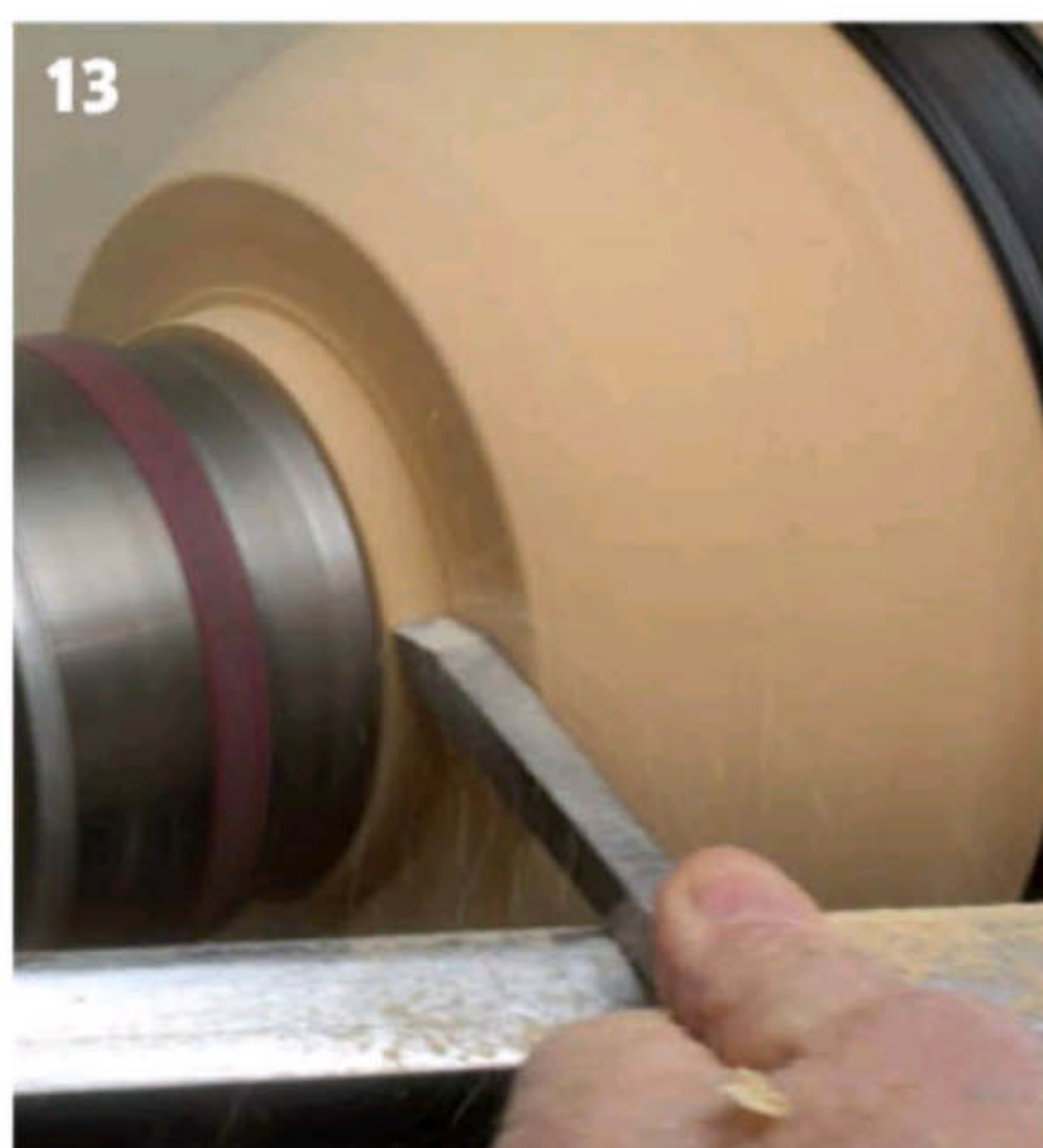
11 The bed of the lathe was then masked off with paper towel and aerosol ebonising lacquer applied. Three coats were needed to achieve an acceptable finish and a hot air gun was used (at a safe distance) to keep the surface warm and to speed up drying.



12 The upper-outer area of the bowl wall, from the textured panel up to the rim, was then cut to shape with a freshly sharpened bowl gouge. Note from the drawings that the finished diameter at the rim is 147mm, so a circle of this diameter was drawn on the end of the workpiece to help with this procedure. At the point where this surface abuts the bead, it was cut to a depth of 4mm below the top of the bead.



13 Work then commenced on the lower area of the wall, from the textured band down to the foot. With the bulk of the waste removed, I then cut the foot to shape, leaving it several millimetres oversized to avoid cutting too close to the chuck. The foot was initially cut to about 10mm height, allowing it to be trimmed back to a more pleasing size during the reversing process.



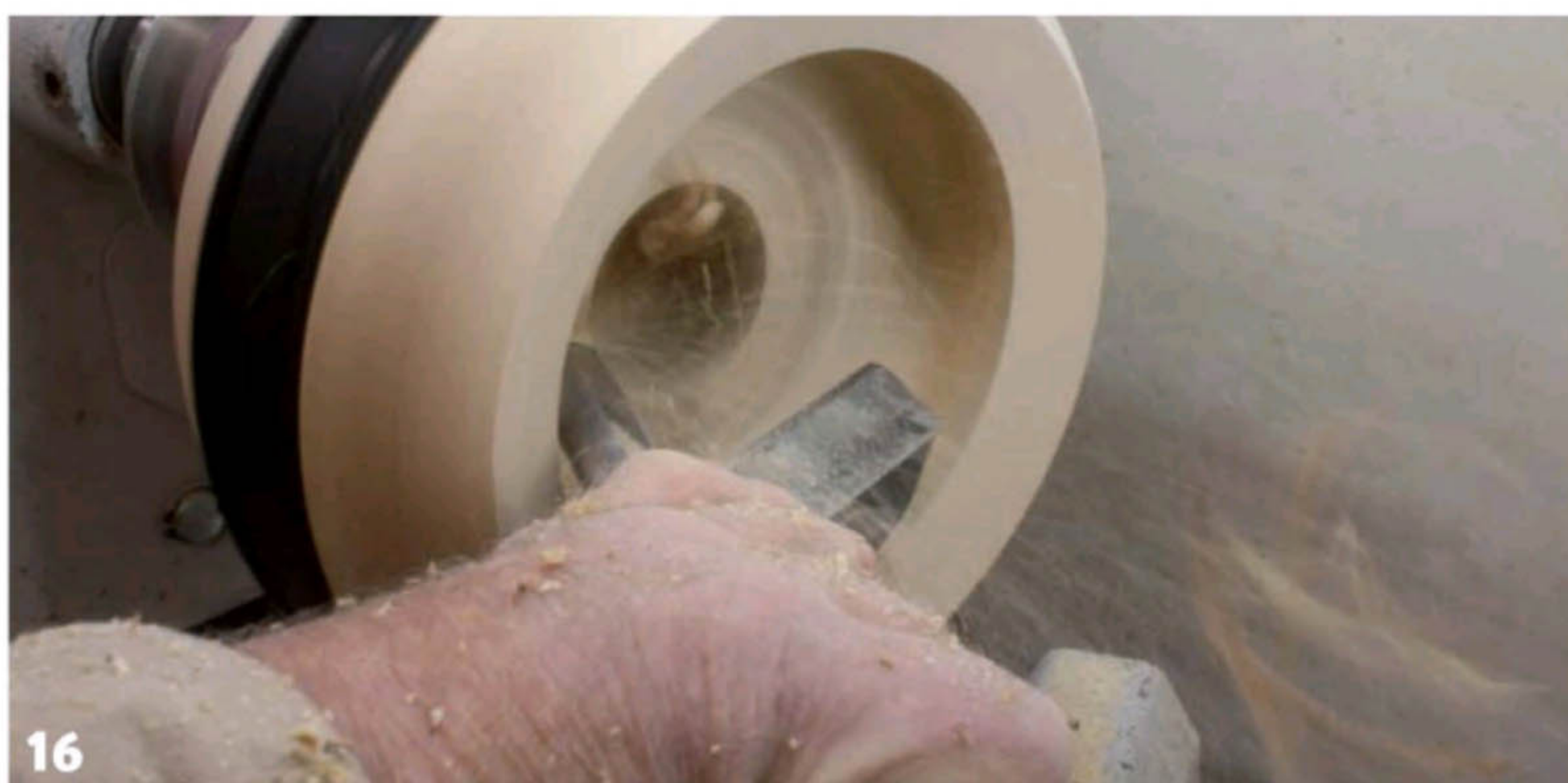
14 With the foot pre-cut, the shaping of the lower wall area was then completed, using a spindle gouge to cut close-in to the bead. As with the upper area, it was cut to about 4mm below the top of the bead. The whole of this area had troublesome, soft timber in places, so when there was still a millimetre or two of material to remove, it was given a couple of coats of cellulose sanding sealer, which stiffened the fibres and allowed better quality finishing cuts to be made.



15 When forming the concave surface noted in Step 3, I realised that there was a very tricky area of soft/hard grain close to the centre, so I decided to bore-out the centre of the bowl with a 50mm Forstner bit. This was done down to a depth of 125mm from the level of the rim.



16 Hollowing then took place and was quite rapid, as I progressed I was able to gradually increase the lathe speed, although still to only about 500rpm. Note that there is a specific problem with this type of shape, in that it is not possible to maintain bevel-rub throughout the cut, so this needs consideration when cutting in the very bottom of the bowl. I chose to continue to use the gouge, effectively scraping away, taking very, very light cuts each time. An alternative could have been to swap to a hollowing tool and should be considered if you make a shape like this and are not used to working with a bowl gouge cutting off-the-bevel.



17 One point worth noting here is that in a shape like this, with such an in-turned rim, to commence each cut with the bowl gouge, with its bevel rubbing effectively, the handle of the gouge needs to be swung away, across the lathe bed, much further than would be the case for a more traditional bowl shape. At this point the whole of the outer walls and inside of the bowl was abraded down to 400 grit. Further coats of sanding sealer were applied in a few places to help to achieve an acceptable finish.

18 Using the indexing head, the location of each of the six cabochon mounts was marked on short strips of masking tape. I made a quick decision at this point, regarding exactly where I wanted to be the front of the bowl, marked this position first, and then set the other five positions around it.

19 A centre-mark was made on one of the strips of masking tape, then the lathe rotated slowly to make a similar mark on each of the other five strips of masking tape. Thus the centres of the six cabochon mounts were now marked.

20 With the lathe spindle locked in position such that one of the centre marks was facing outwards, at lathe-centre height, a 25mm hole was drilled to a depth of 5mm. Before drilling, I made a physical mark with a centre punch, just to help the 25mm drill keep on-position as it started to drill. This was repeated for the other five positions. The bowl was then set aside while work commenced on the cabochon mounts.

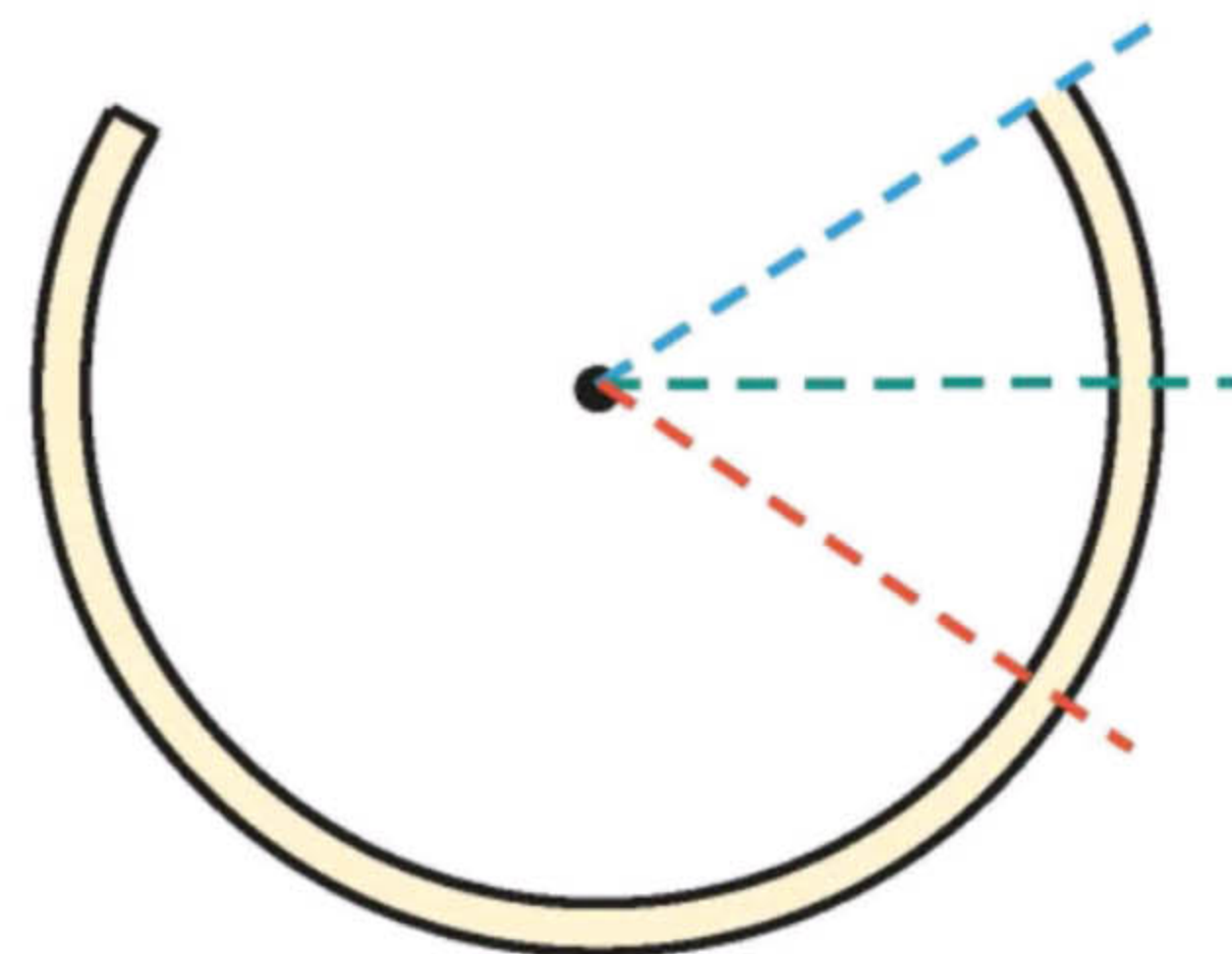
21 A piece of boxwood was put between centres and cut to a cylinder of about 28mm diameter, then mounted into a chuck and reduced to its finished size of 25mm.

22 The end facing the tailstock was then lightly skimmed to provide a clean, squared-off surface, this would help in the next step of accurately drilling a hole into it.

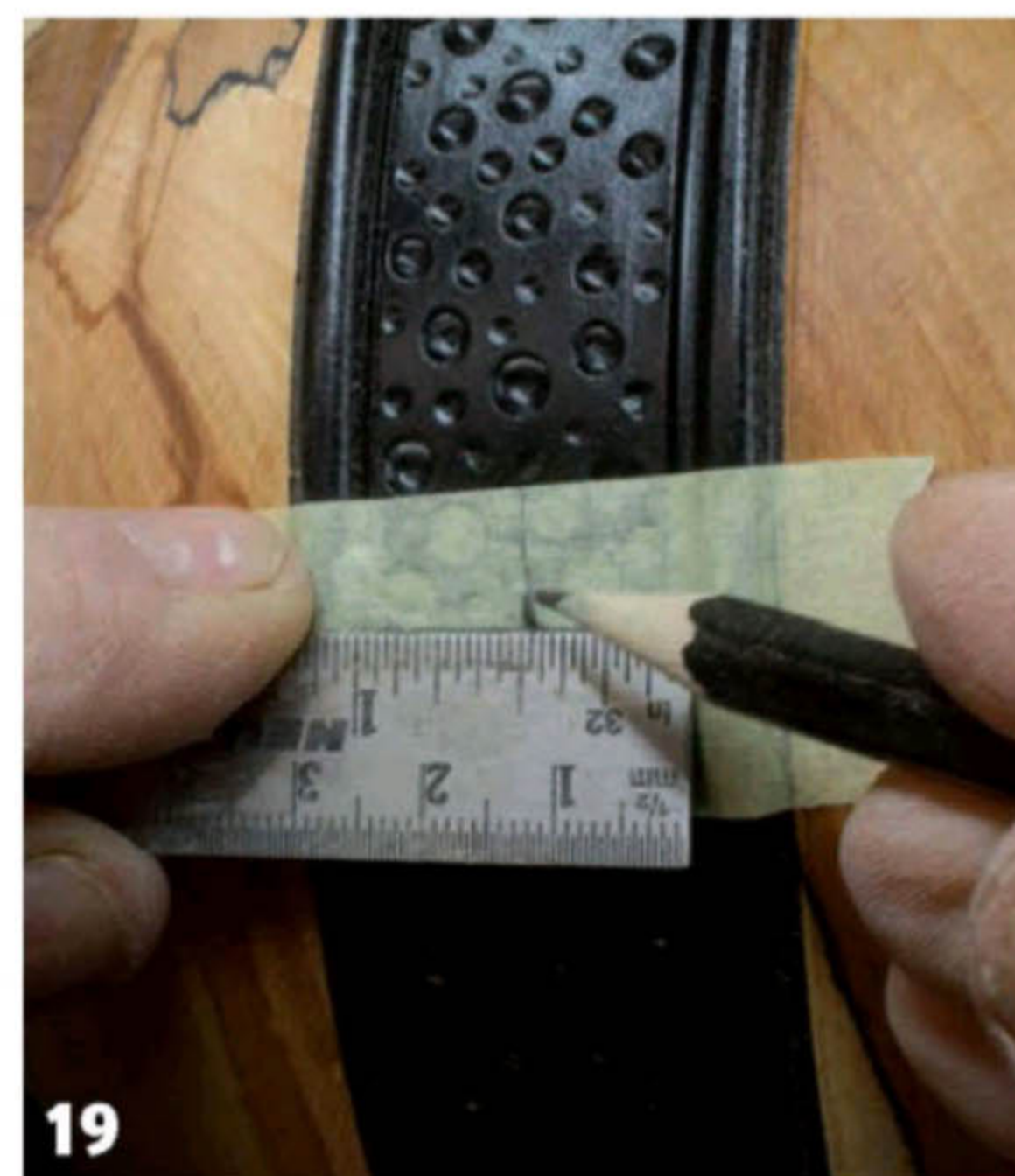
TOP TIP – Bowl Rims

One often-overlooked feature of bowls is the angle between the rim and the wall of the bowl.

I like to imagine where the central point of the bowl is and extend a line outwards to the rim. If the bowl wall terminates pointing straight upwards (green line), then the rim is flat, if it points outwards (red line) then the rim lifts upwards. If the bowl wall returns inwards (blue line), then the rim drops into the bowl.



Essentially, the rim is effectively at 90 degrees to the bowl wall! This isn't a hard and fast rule, but it can give a very pleasing appearance.





23 An 18mm diameter hole was then drilled to a depth of 5mm; this hole is for a cabochon to later be glued into, and so the depth is important otherwise the cabochons would each be at different depths.



24 The sharp corners between the on the end of the workpiece were then lightly chamfered using a skew chisel held flat on the toolrest. With such a small workpiece, these chamfers were then easily rounded over to produce a pleasant shape to the end of the mount. The whole of the mount was abraded down to 400 grit and sanding sealer applied.

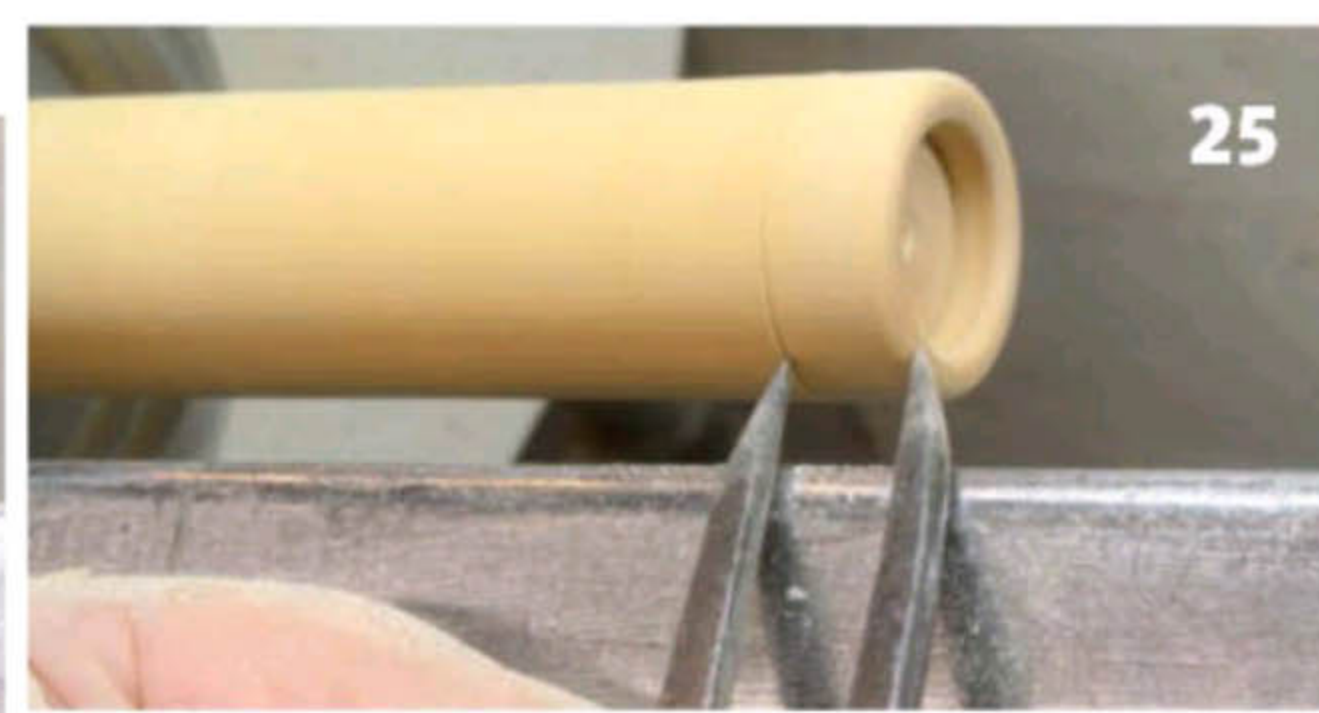
25 With a pair of dividers set to 10mm, I then placed one leg onto the end of the workpiece and used the other to make a mark on it, precisely 10mm in from the end. This is an excellent way of marking the length of any pieces which are being replicated, as it relies on a pre-set pair of dividers, rather than free-hand measuring each time. The end can then be parted off and the process repeated to make the total of 6 mounts.

26 The mounts were then glued into the bowl and allowed to dry before mounting the bowl against a large backing-pad to reverse-turn the chuck tenon away and to shape the foot.

27 I started the reversing process by reducing the tenon to a diameter of 75mm. This was the diameter which I felt looked best for its purpose as a foot and was, incidentally, about one-third of the bowl's overall diameter. The underside of the bowl and its original foot, as made in Step 2, was then carefully cut down to this diameter in such a way that the curve of the bowl-wall continued to flow attractively.

28 The bulk of the tenon was then cut away until I achieved a foot of a pleasing height (this was 4mm). With the diameter and height of the foot established, I then cut away the remainder of the tenon, leaving a fairly substantial cone of timber at the centre. This cone was rather larger than I normally leave, due to the soft nature of the timber near to the centre.

29 At this point, I decided to undercut the foot, giving it a distinct foot-rim. This is a shape that I like to use and shows, to anyone who looks underneath the bowl, that care has been taken to achieve a pleasing shape, even where it is not normally visible. All surfaces cut in the reversing process were then abraded and sealed before the central cone was cut a little smaller. The bowl was then removed from the lathe, the cone cut away and the remaining surface abraded and sealed.



30 My attention then turned to the coconut shell cabochons, firstly cutting a set of six arbours. These were simply six wooden cylindrical shapes, 50mm long and 18mm diameter, cut from a piece of old broom-stick.

31 The coconut shell was cut on a reciprocating saw, but a hack saw could easily be used. Each piece was held in a vice while its inner surface was scoured clean of any loose fibres or flakes. I used a rotary burr, but coarse abrasive paper would work just as well.

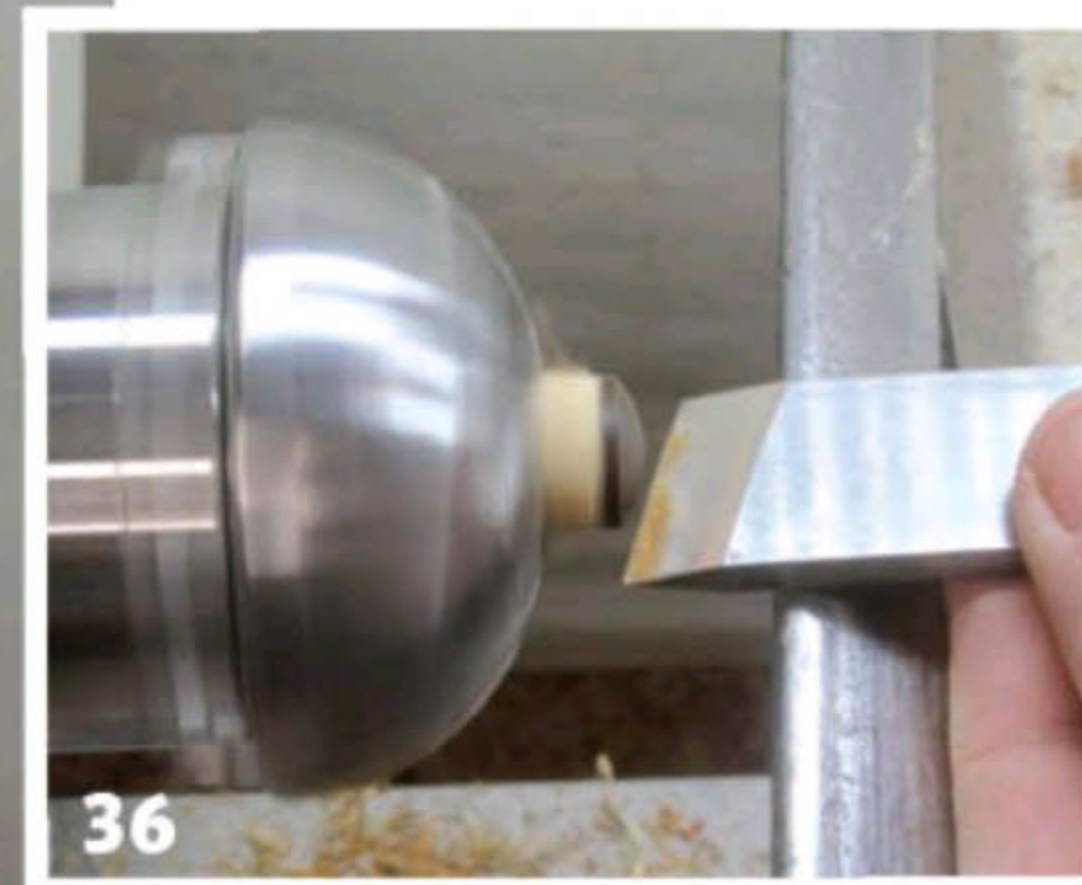
32 2-part epoxy adhesive was liberally applied into the slightly concave surface in each of the six pieces of shell, then the 50mm arbours were pressed into place and left to dry with the arbours uppermost so that the adhesive remained puddled in the concave shape of the shells.

33 Once dry, one of the six arbours was set into a chuck. I decided to use dome-jaws as this would give a great area of contact between the jaws and the arbour, helping the arbour to run true to centre. The tool-rest was then set across the workpiece, just a couple of millimetres below centre and a couple of centimetres away from the shell.

34 I soon discovered that a skew chisel, used flat on the tool-rest such that it worked as a scraper, gave an excellent finish. To turn the square of shell down into a circle, I simply made a plunge cut, using the very tip of the skew to slowly and gently cut into the shell and then right through it. By proceeding with care there was virtually no break-through of fibres at the end of the cut. The cut was made such that it reduced the 25mm square of shell down to a circle of about 20mm.

35 At the end of the cut, the skew chisel can then be rotated clockwise by a few degrees, allowing the long-edge of the bevel to act as a scraper on the edge of the shell. This removed a remarkably fine shaving and with gentle sideways pressure I was soon able to reduce the diameter to the 18mm required.





36 The end of the skew chisel was then used to scrape the end of the shell, removing all traces of the very coarse fibres that exist and then to form a pleasing curve around the end, leaving a flat shoulder of about 3 to 4mm around its edge. The curved surface was then abraded with 400 grit and sealed with sanding sealer.

37 The tool-rest was then swung around and the cabochon of shell was parted off. Caution was needed, especially as the first cabochon disappeared into the sea of shavings beneath the lathe. Steps 33 through to 37 were then repeated to produce the set of six cabochons.

38 2-part epoxy was then mixed up and applied into the centre of each of the six mounts. The adhesive was applied with a dental pick such that it formed a little peak in the centre of the mount, then a cabochon gently placed onto the peak and held down with masking tape. Fast setting adhesive was used in a heated workshop and after about 10 minutes it was sufficiently set to remove the masking tape and vigorously wipe away and seepage of adhesive with paper towel and white spirit. All that then remained was to apply a few coats of acrylic lacquer. ●



HEALTH & SAFETY

This was a very tricky piece of timber to work with, so there were a few safety issues to consider.

Firstly came the matter of it being out of balance due to varying densities within it, thus lathe speed was kept to a minimum.

Secondly, because of the presence of some areas of soft tissue, a large set of chuck jaws and therefore a large chuck tenon was used. Furthermore, the whole bowl was cut in one operation to avoid the problem that can sometimes occur when such a piece of timber is shaped externally, then taken off its faceplate and set into a chuck, the jaws of which then dig-in to soft tissues on one side of the chuck tenon, shifting the whole workpiece a millimetre or more off-centre.

Thirdly was the issue of using a bowl gouge to cut the shape required in a bowl which had such a pronounced return to its upper wall. This resulted, in Step 16, in it being impossible to maintain bevel contact. If you are not proficient at using a bowl gouge in such a way, swap to your own preferred type of hollowing tool.

1



2



3



Meet Gabriel River Clark, a plucky young woodturner from Cumbria. You may have heard of him already as he's no stranger to the spotlight. In response to the conflict in Ukraine, Gabriel set out to raise money for the victims by turning a bowl for auction.

What began as a local appeal quickly gained traction, and before long his story was circulating the news rounds across the world. As a measure of the campaign's success, he raised an incredible £250,000 for Save the Children's Ukraine Appeal, gaining international recognition for his altruistic work.

He has since continued his woodturning alongside school commitments, choosing to teach himself, and is now sponsored by Axminster Tools. Tenacious, dedicated and innovative, Gabriel's youthful perspective brings a fresh approach to the world of woodturning.

Tell us about your background and training

Until very recently it's just been me teaching myself. I've had small amounts of guidance from Axminster Tools and I was lucky enough to spend a few weeks at Waters & Acland, a prestigious furniture school in Cumbria, but, in terms of woodturning, I'm entirely self-taught.

I've been making things with my hands for as long as I can remember. For years I made every birthday and Christmas present for my family from balsa wood, but I got a model-making lathe when I was about eight years old. I started turning small spindles before being given my current table-top lathe when I turned 12. It has served me well, but I've now very much outgrown it.

How did your fundraising begin?

In the spring of 2022, I decided to carve a bowl to try to raise money for Save the Children's Ukraine Appeal. My target was £5,000 but in the two weeks leading up to Easter I managed to raise over £250,000 and my story travelled the world.

There was huge social media interest, which was a little overwhelming, with JK Rowling, Stephen Fry, Nick Offerman and Cher all expressing their personal support.

And the attention didn't stop there. Both the national and global press picked up on the story and I did countless interviews with newspapers and TV broadcasters from across the world, including Korean TV. I was even featured on *The Drew Barrymore Show*.

As a result of my efforts I was awarded the prime minister's Points of Light Award by the Ukrainian ambassador and presented at the Children's BAFTAs alongside Jason Isaacs. I travelled to Poland with Save The Children to visit one of the three schools for Ukrainian child refugees that the money I had raised had funded.

In 2023, I was also thrilled to be awarded JustGiving's Teen Fundraiser of the Year.

Are you making a business out of woodturning?

It's a bit of a stretch to call what I do a 'business'. To me it feels more like I'm making money by extending a branch of myself out to other people, if that makes sense. I don't know what my future holds but I find it hard to imagine that it won't be creating and making things with my hands.

How do you like to work?

What are your favourite tools and why?

For me there's nothing better than starting the day putting on some grubby clothes, ideally still stained with the previous day's finishes, and then just stepping into my workshop and seeing how I feel. I kind of need to hear something inside me that then guides what I do. My Axminster Revolution bowl gouge is my favourite tool. Of all my gouges it's the one that feels most playful and versatile.

1 Oak, wood burned and oiled, 174 x 42mm **2** The Hope Bowl for Ukraine
3 Randerside, yew, oiled, 110 x 32mm



**Alexander Thomson
introduces Gabriel
River Clark, the
young turner who
has become famous
around the world for
his charity work**

The Teen Fundraiser

◀ **Describe your workshop – what is the set-up and how long have you been there?**

My workshop is really just a small plasterboard box inside what used to be a barn that's open to the elements. Dad built it for me three years ago, but I've definitely outgrown it. We're hoping to be able to try to make a slightly bigger workshop some time this year.

Which woods do you most like working with and why? Do you work with other materials as well and how do they compare?

I am increasingly drawn to green turning and using found wood, or wood that has an emotional value or significance. I really love working with holly, but I have to confess that I've always had a real soft spot for cocobolo as I just adore its fiery grain.

More recently I've been working with silver. At this stage it's more about experimentation but I'm excited by its potential and combining it with my work with wood.

What sort of finishes do you prefer and why?

I don't know whether you would regard it as a finish, but lately I've really been enjoying 'charring' the exterior of my bowls. I then use either beeswax or Danish oil, partly for ease but mainly because I love the smell.

What inspires you and where do you get your ideas from?

Most of my inspiration comes from nature. I live on the edge of both the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District National Parks, so I walk in the hills a lot. I love the changing seasons although it's the grey skies and rains in winter that I respond to best. It's this weather, and nature more generally, which effects how I feel and guides how I then respond to the wood that I'm working with.

Your brand is beautiful. Did this aesthetic develop naturally?

The simple answer is yes. I tend to work very intuitively, guided by how I feel that day and in that moment. But I'm slowly teaching myself to consider my designs a little more carefully and to build a clearer idea of where I'm going and what I'm trying to achieve.

Are your pieces functional, aesthetic, or a mix of both?

I see them mainly as aesthetic pieces, but I like the idea that people find their own functions for them.

Do you incorporate any signature details across your work?

I designed my own logo from my initials and had a branding iron made, which I use to burn my mark into the base of each of my works.

How does your design process work?

As I've mentioned above, I've always tended to work very intuitively. However, I'm starting to get a better feel for design, or rather picturing the end result in my mind then working towards it. I find that it's often the materials themselves that guide me. For example, at the moment I'm working a lot with silver. I'm just playing around but I know that at some point I'm going to incorporate it into my woodturning, I just don't yet know how.

What is your favourite piece you have worked on and why?

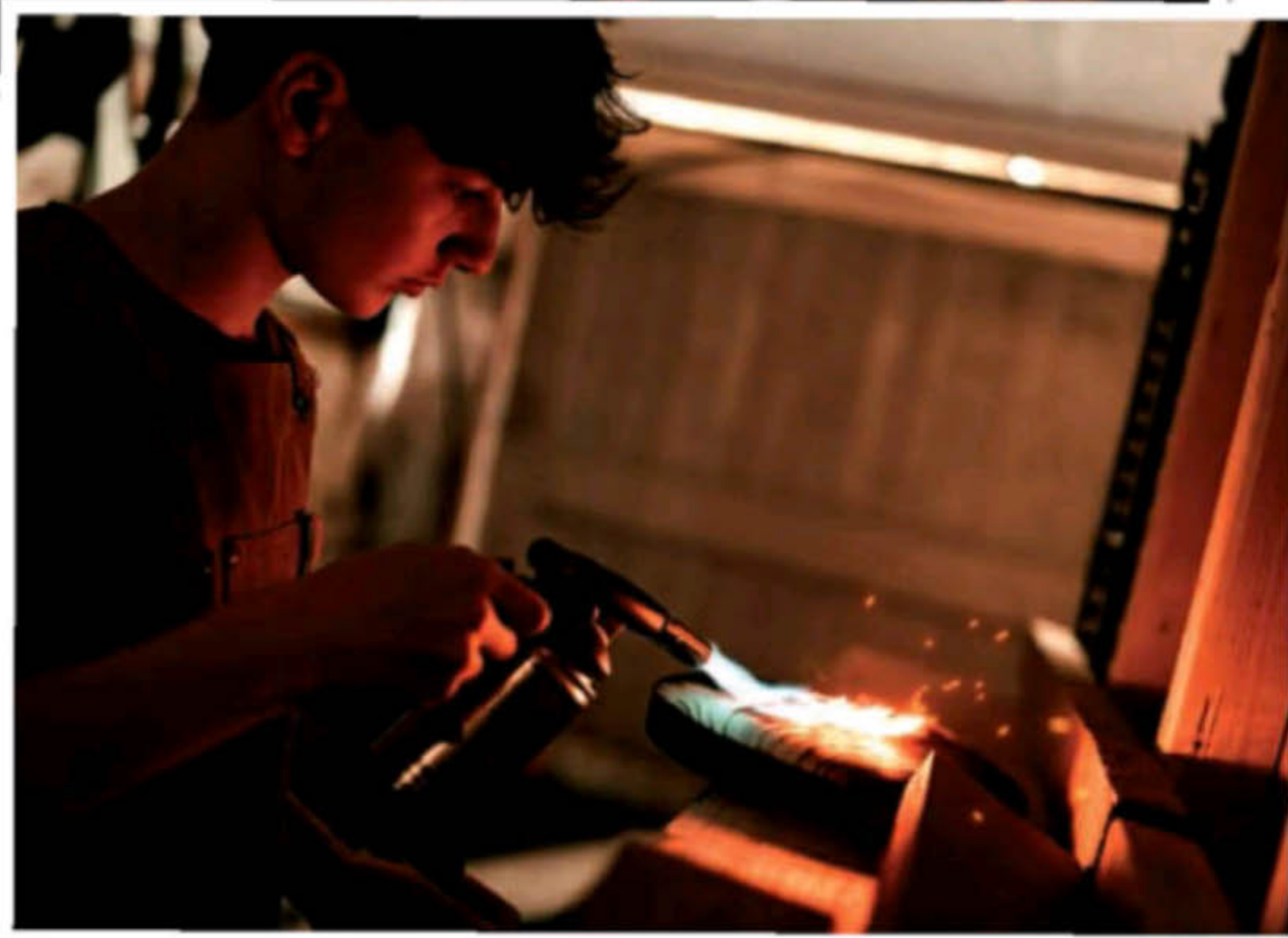
My favourite piece is a small green wooden vase I turned from a section of holly. I found it in the park in Darwen where my mum used to go with her sisters when they were kids in the 1970s. The branch was just abandoned at the side of the path, so me and my dad took it home. I love that this object holds so many memories for my mum.



4 A beautiful selection of Gabriel's work

5 Green-turned vase

6 A mix of sapele, ash & zebrano



◀ **What is the most challenging piece you have worked on, and why?**

The Hope Bowl that I turned to raise money for Save The Children's Emergency Fund was easily my most challenging piece to date. I combined three different woods – zebrano, sapele and ash – and it took me over 11 hours straight to turn it. It wasn't just the physical effort but there was a lot at stake, which only added to the pressure.

What are your aspirations for the future?

I really think that creativity is important in all our lives, so this summer I am spearheading a major nationwide campaign and fundraiser called Create:Make:Donate. It's a huge undertaking but I've got a lot of famous names backing me and I'm already thinking about the piece of work that I want to create as the centrepiece of the campaign.

What would be your best tip for a young turner?

Well, I still think of myself as a beginner, but if I was to offer any advice I would simply say to not give up. For me every accident and mistake has been a chance to learn which has actually influenced my style.



7



8

What do you do when you're not woodturning?

School. But I also really enjoy making jewellery, hiking, climbing and fly fishing.

<https://www.gabrielclarkwoodwork.com/>
Instagram @clarkie_woodwork

7 Hiking... 8 ...the local hills 9 Sowerby, tulipwood and maple, oiled, 188 x 26mm
10 Stylarrow, tulip, oiled, 48 x 124mm 11 A simple charred oak bowl

9



10



11





“
*Don't give up!
For me every
accident and
mistake has
been a chance
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”

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Two Technologies Giving Unequalled Performance

A plate of macaroons

Andrew Potocnik is inspired by the shape of a popular sweet treat



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW POTOCNIK



Why hadn't my brain made the connection between such a wonderful sweet as the humble macaroon and a turning project before? It's quite probable that many before me have, but once I'd seen the connection, my mind set off on a journey of complementary timbers based on colour, and then it was just a case of working out how to make these wonderfully delicious morsels in wood.

It would be simple enough to make each macaroon from three solid pieces of turned wood, but I wanted this project to be a bit

more advanced and decided to make each 'bickie', as we call them here in Australia, into a lidded container. After a bit of thinking, I realised the process wouldn't be too difficult, as long as I planned carefully and worked to close measurements.

I rarely draw fully resolved plans for my projects, but rely on quick sketches and written notes to remind me of where my mind wandered before being distracted, and of how I planned the project to evolve.

Once I went to work, I realised that a single

macaroon would be a boring item to present to anyone, even more so as a *Woodturning* magazine project, so I decided to make a few, but then, how to present them? They needed a plate, so this is where you could break this project into two that might appeal to you – a macaroon box or a textured plate – or just take the plunge and create what became a gift for my wife.

Isn't it interesting how a simple idea can grow into a project well beyond the initial inspiration? And in my case, put me in the 'good books' with my wife, fingers crossed!

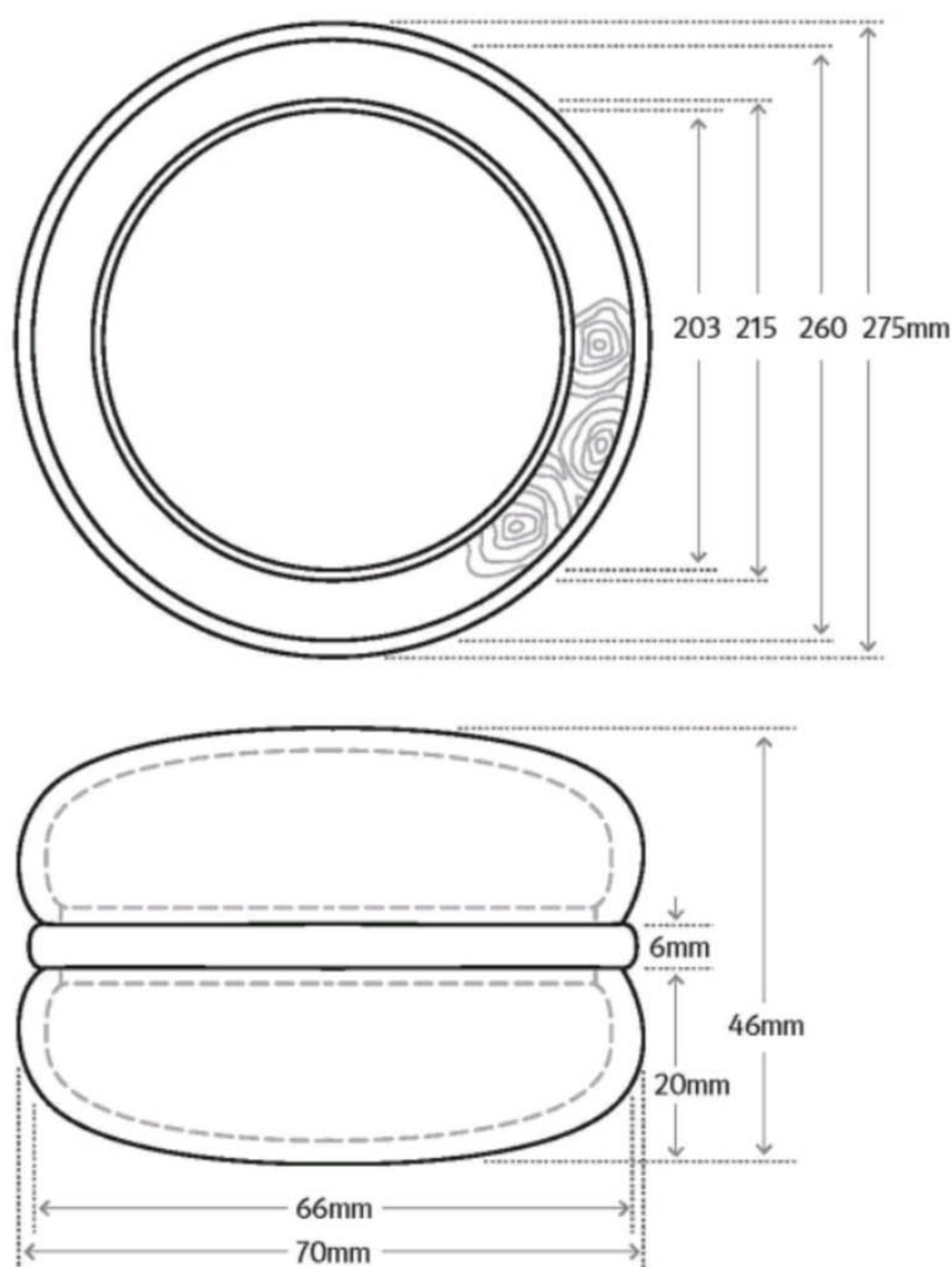
Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- 12mm bowl gouge
- 12mm fingernail ground spindle gouge
- Square carbide tipped scraper
- Round carbide tipped scraper
- 10mm beading tool
- 25mm round nosed scraper
- 10mm round skew
- 19mm flat curved scraper
- Vernier callipers

Materials

- Walnut 70 x 70 x 30mm
- Maple 70 x 70 x 15mm
- Pin oak, 280mm diameter x 30mm thick



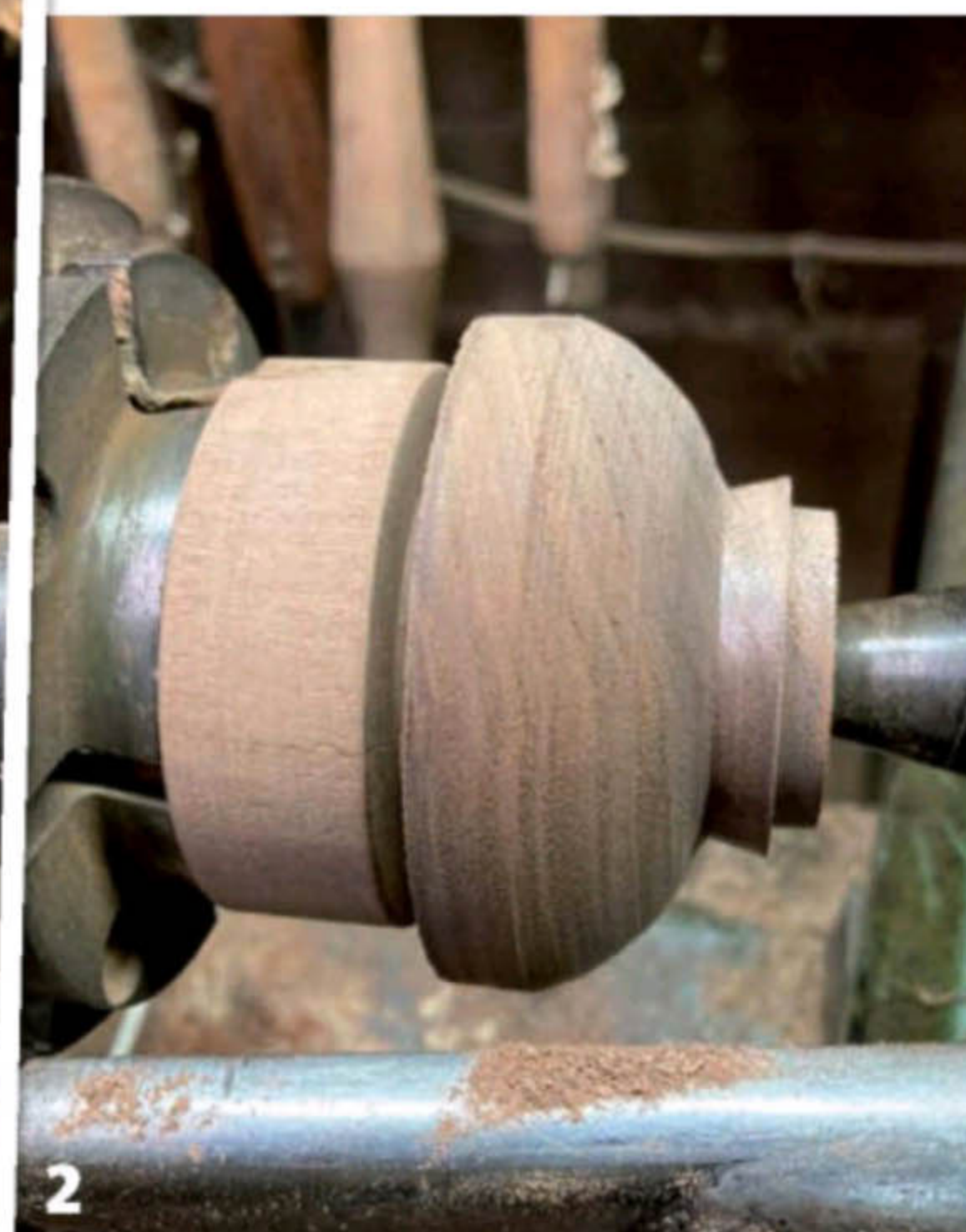
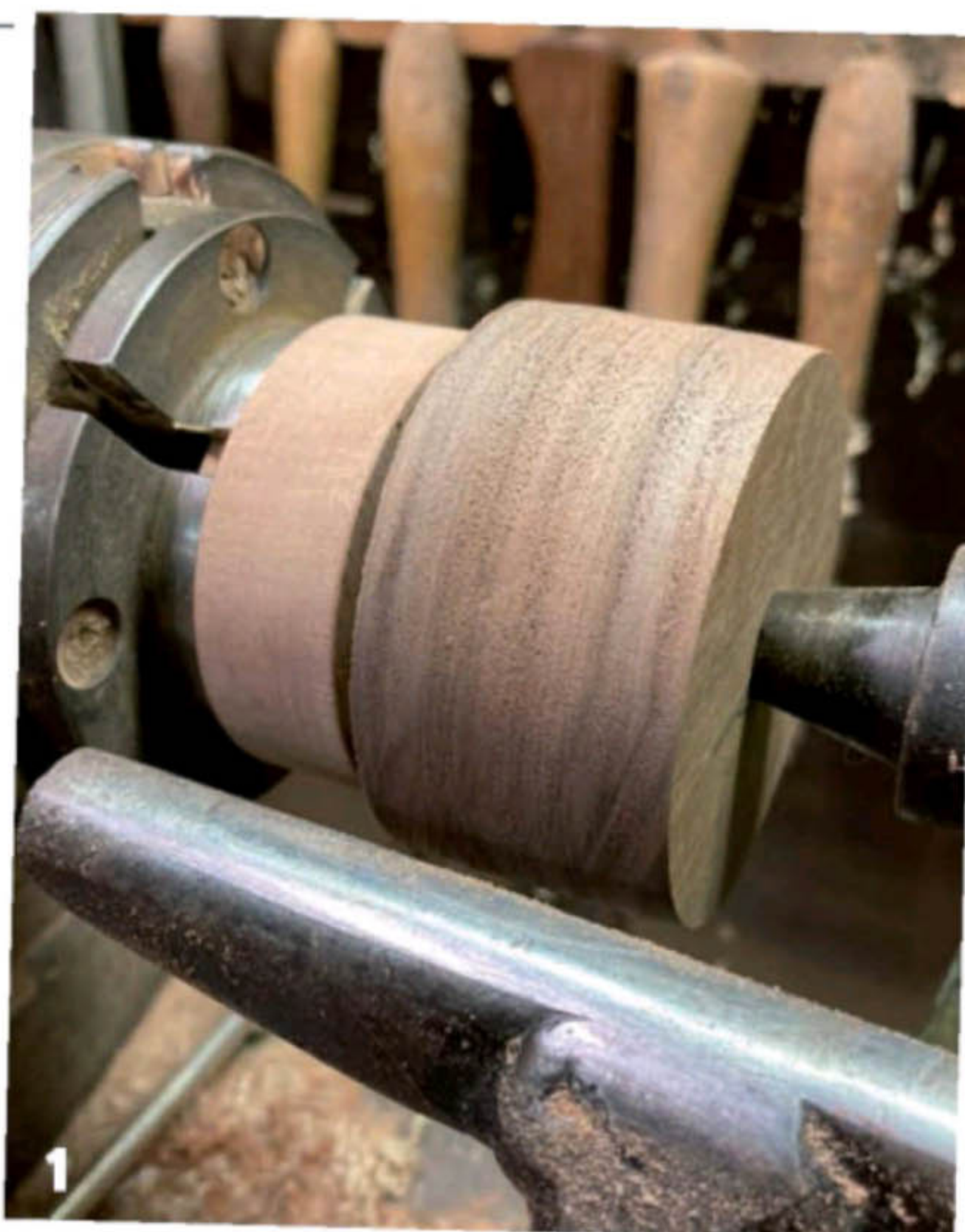
Part 1: The macaroon box

1 I began by gluing a piece of US walnut to a carrier I still had fitted to a chuck from a previous project. The tailstock was used to align the blank and to clamp it into place. It was left for the glue to dry before being trimmed down to a true circle.

2 Still keeping the tailstock in place, a tenon was formed so the blank could be reversed into a chuck, while the overall form of one half of the macaroon box was roughed out. The tenon was cut with a 10mm beading tool while a 12mm bowl gouge was used in various cutting modes to rough the body of the box.

3 Separated from the carrier and mounted directly into another scroll chuck, the shape of what would become the bottom half of the box could now begin to be refined. It was then sanded through to 320 grit using a combination of hand-held sandpaper and inertia sanders. You don't need to follow my example, but just make sure the resulting surface is free of tears or blemishes, and don't forget to use appropriate PPE to protect yourself from inhaling dust generated in the process.

4 Next I turned my attention to hollowing the interior section of the box, beginning with a small bowl gouge and refining it with a round-nosed scraper. I did also use a round carbide-tipped scraper and my 'finger gauge' and figure eight callipers to ensure the wall thickness was about 4mm. The surface was then sanded through to 320 grit following appropriate sanding procedures to prevent inhalation of dust.





5 A rebate was cut using a square carbide-tipped scraper. You could also use a beading tool, a parting tool or a 'granny tooth' scraper. The key point is that the sides of the tenon are parallel to the ways of your lathe bed and don't taper, either in or out. You can check this with the inside legs of your Vernier callipers. Just a light touch on the sharp edges of the rebate with 320grit abrasive softens or eases them.

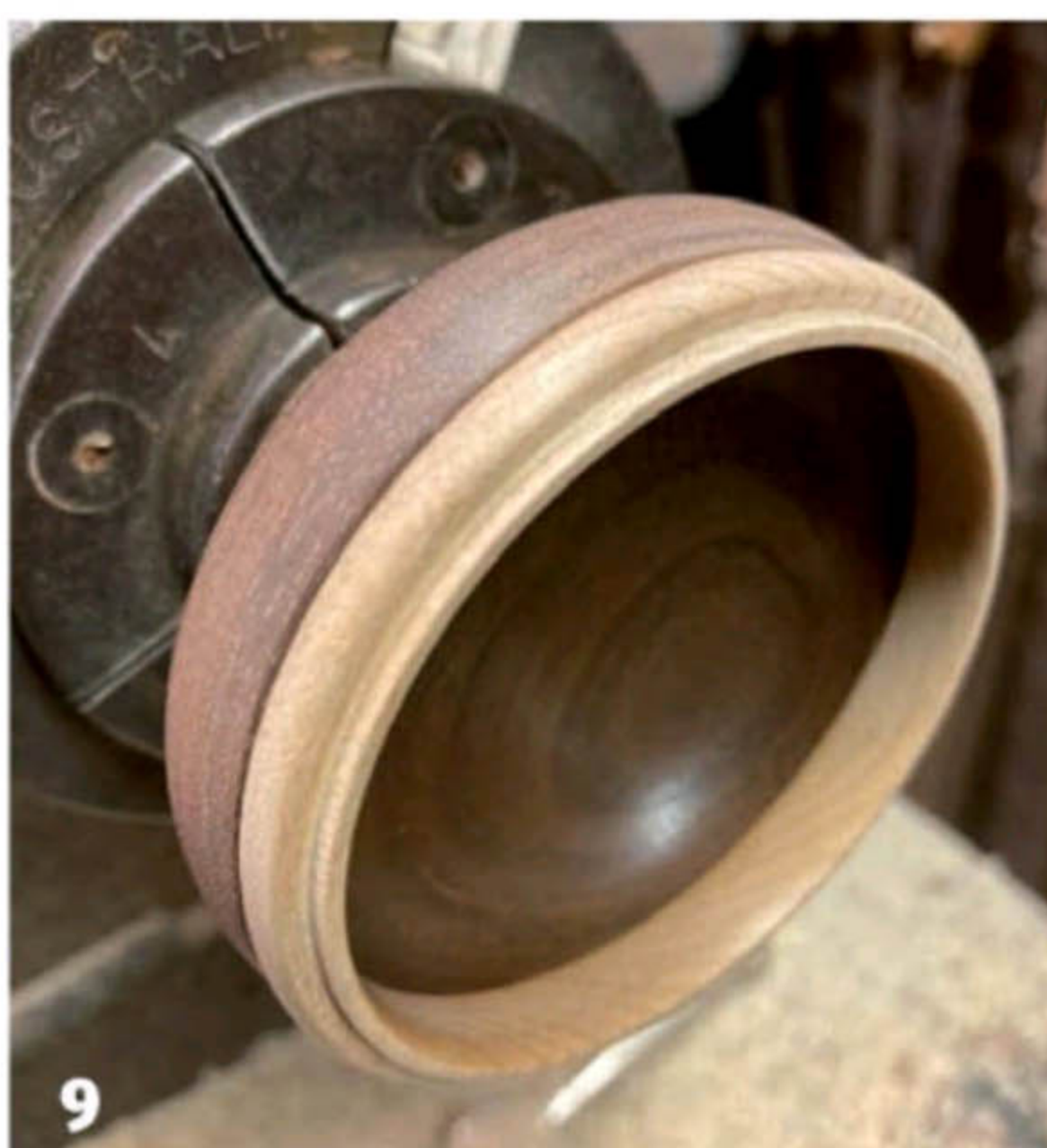
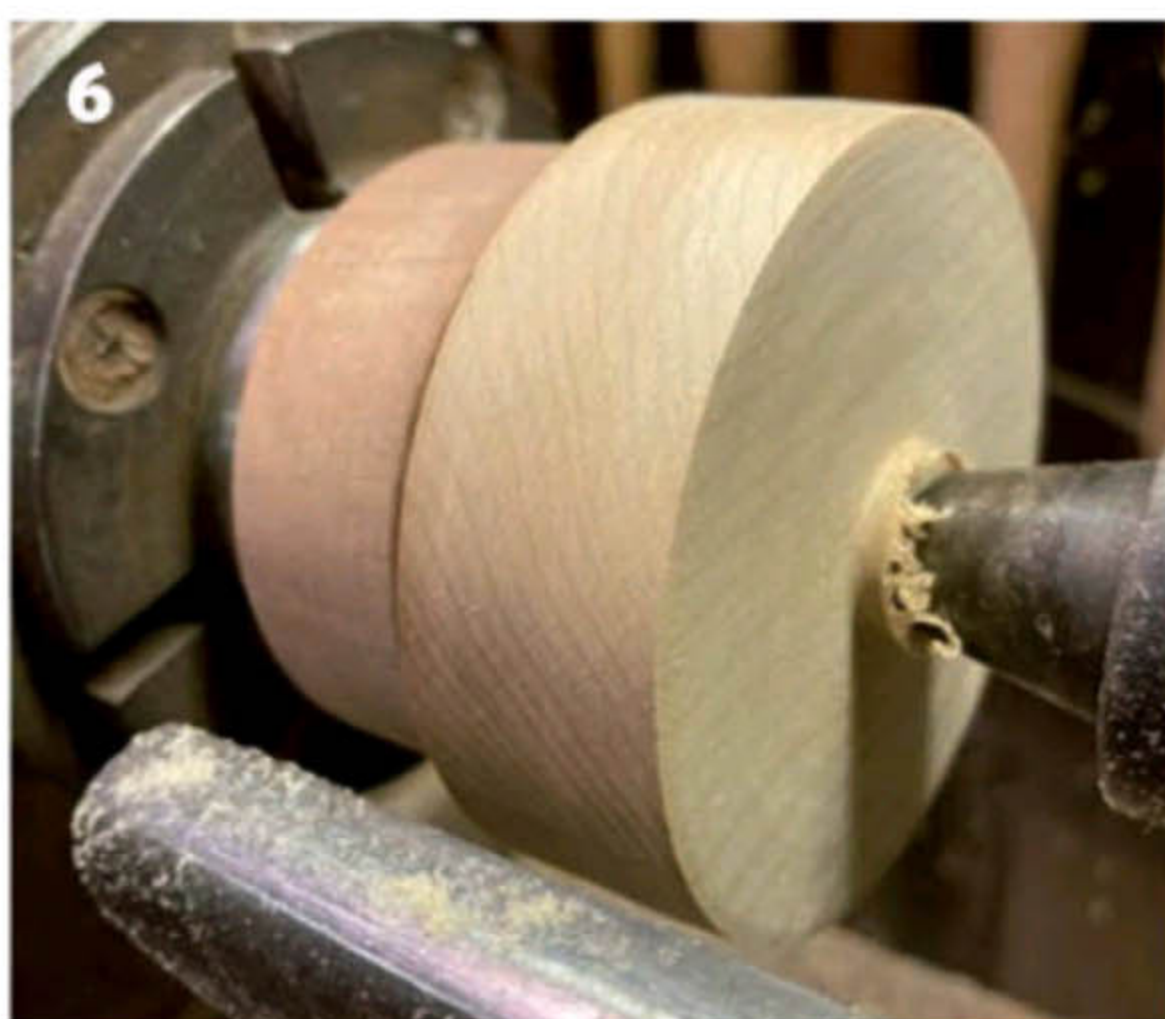
6 To begin the maple section that fits between the two walnut halves, I re-used the carrier block used earlier, gluing my maple in place and holding it in position with the tailstock centre. Once dry, it was trimmed to size and the face flattened.

7 A half bead was fashioned, leaving enough wood for a tenon of about 2mm length to be formed with a square carbide-tipped scraper. The inner section of what is, in effect, a sleeve was trimmed to about 6mm thick at its broadest and only about 2mm at the tenon. The curved sections of the bead and the inner surface of the sleeve were sanded through to 320 grit, making sure no part of the tenon was sanded. This area needs to be left perfectly straight and at right angles to ensure it fits neatly into the rebate cut in photo 5.

8 Cyanoacrylate glue was carefully applied to the tenon using a small piece of veneer sharpened to a fine point. It's imperative not to apply too much glue or to get it on to the bead, because there's nothing worse than trying to clean off excess that has squeezed out. Carefully pushed into position, it was held in place with the tailstock, to which I had fitted a homemade live centre that has a flat centre area.

9 Once the glue had dried, excess maple was parted free, working very gently as the wood became thinner. You could play it safe and saw the wood off before you trim the sleeve to size and cut another tenon which will fit into the lid of the box. This stage requires concentration, a steady hand and frequent checks with Vernier callipers to ensure just the right amount of wood is removed.

10 The lid was made in exactly the same way as the base of the box; however, once the interior was sanded a couple of V-lines were cut with a diamond pointed scraper to add a bit of visual and tactile interest to its inner surface.



11 This time I used a beading tool to cut a small rebate into the lid to accept the tenon formed on the base section of the box. Treading slowly and checking frequently with Vernier callipers and then the base of the box, I crept up on the correct size. Sharp edges were eased as before.

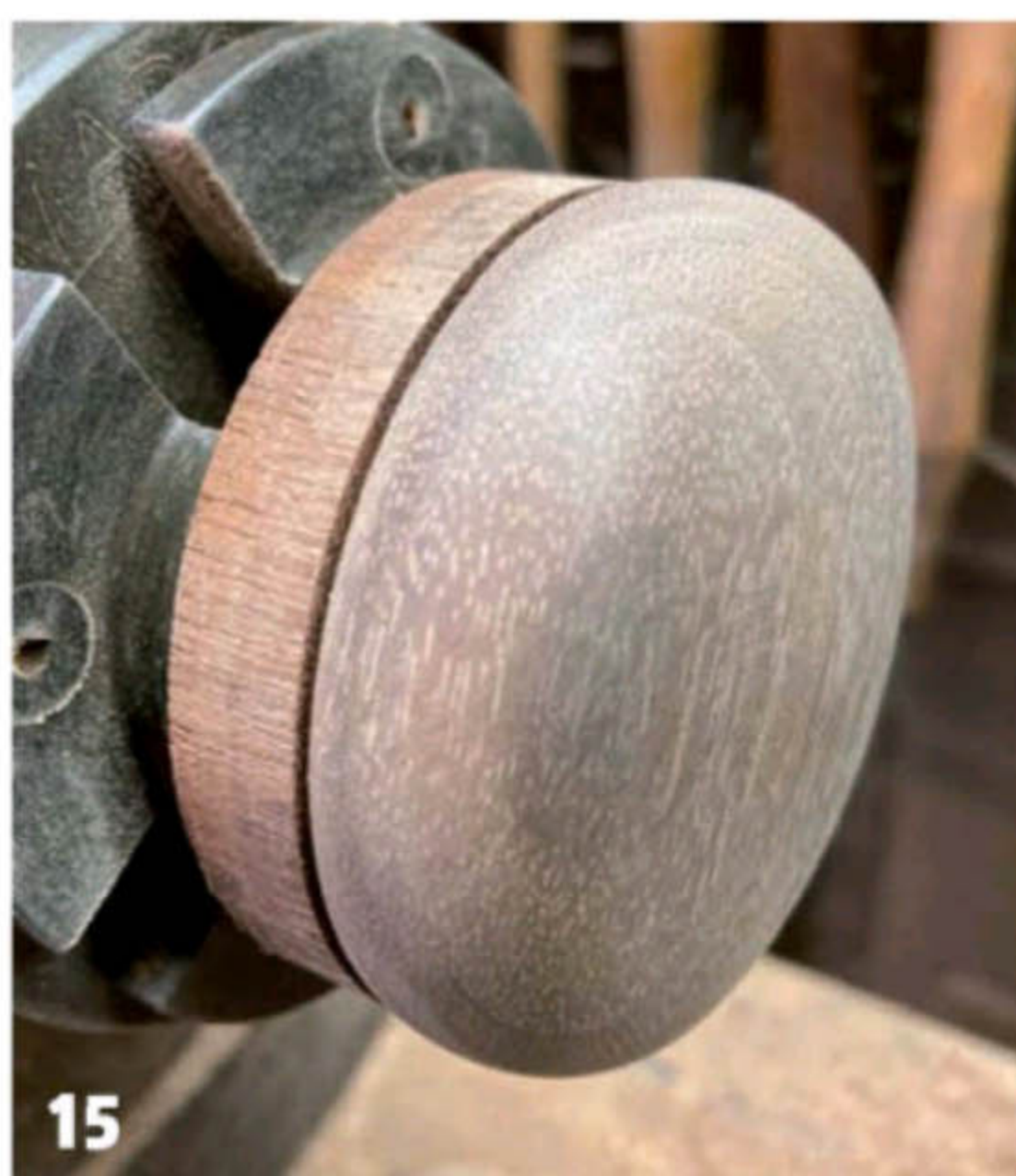
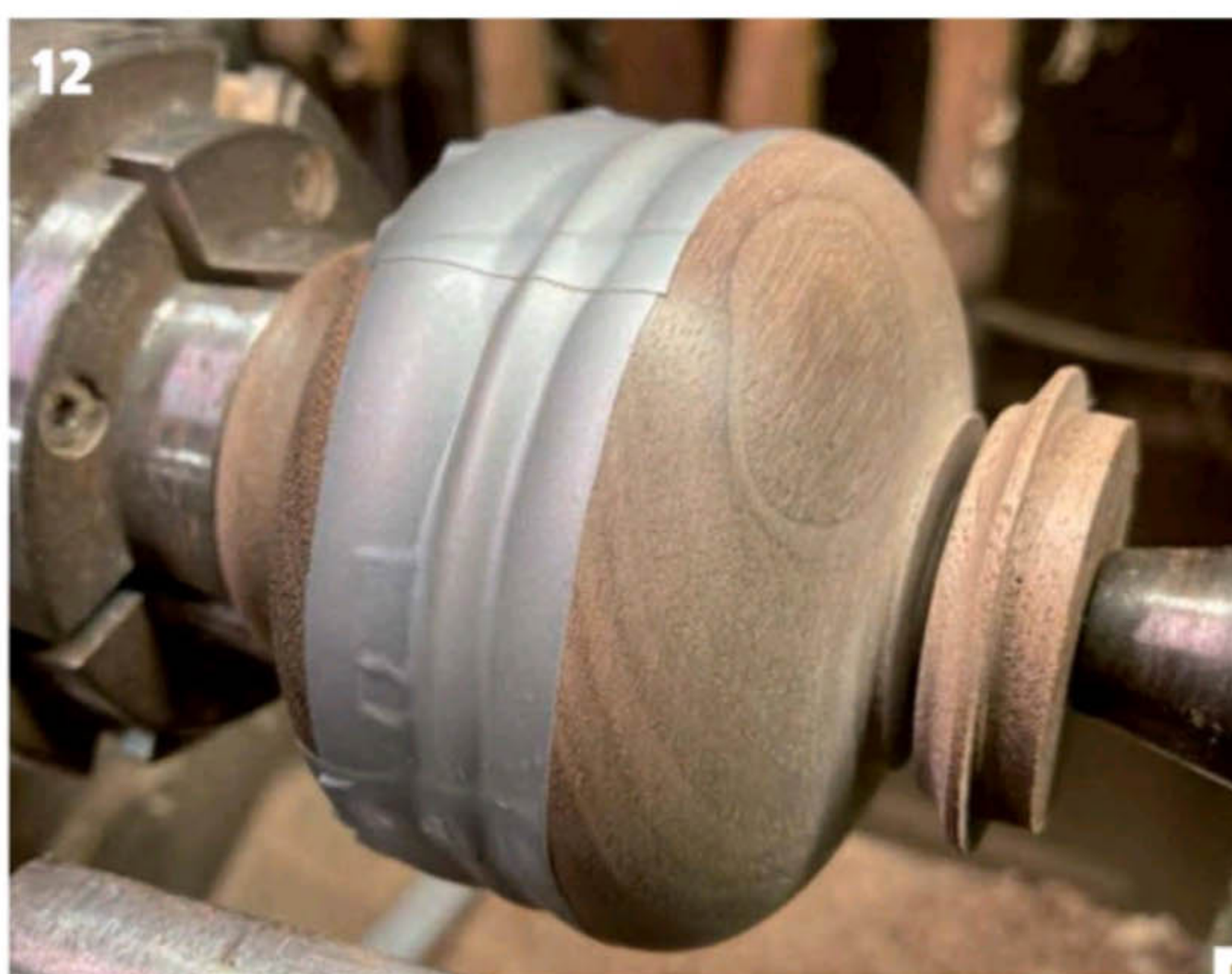
12 The base of the box was pushed into position and taped, just to be sure, followed by support from the tailstock to add even more sureness.

13 The tenon was parted free, the surface shaped and sanded through to 320 grit.

14 To complete the lid, I turned a jam fit carrier, but you could just as easily mount the lid on a scroll chuck in expansion mode. You'd need to be sure not too much pressure was applied as you'd run the risk of breaking the narrow edge on the outside of the rebate.

15 It may look like I've made a boo-boo and repeated photo 13, but I haven't. In fact, the similarity in the completed forms is intentional as the shape of the lid needed to mimic that of the base to achieve the desired appearance of a macaroon.

16 All I needed to do was apply a polyurethane finish using my favourite method, wiping on a generous amount of the product and then rubbing off excess material after a few minutes. In case the surface becomes tacky, re-apply some finish and wipe it off again. I use a lint-free cloth for both application and wiping off, but don't forget to follow safe work practices. Set yourself up in a well-ventilated area and use rubber gloves to protect your hands. In today's world of hyper vigilance, it would also be appropriate to advise the wearing of safety glasses.



Part Two: The macaroon plate

You can't just lay macaroons on anything; they need a special plate, so off I went searching for just the right piece of wood to complete this project.

17 Searching high and low through too many options, I settled on a piece of figured pin oak which had distorted as it dried, so I decided to attach a large faceplate ring which would be fitted into one of my scroll chucks in expansion mode. Using a large faceplate levels out the undulations of the twisted board to some extent, allowing the disc to run as evenly as possible.

18 After trimming down what would be the bottom of the plate, I began to trim the top of the disc down to a uniform surface. I had decided that there would be a raised band of textured timber with a narrow strip of sanded wood on either side, so I needed to work out rough proportions, which were pencilled in.

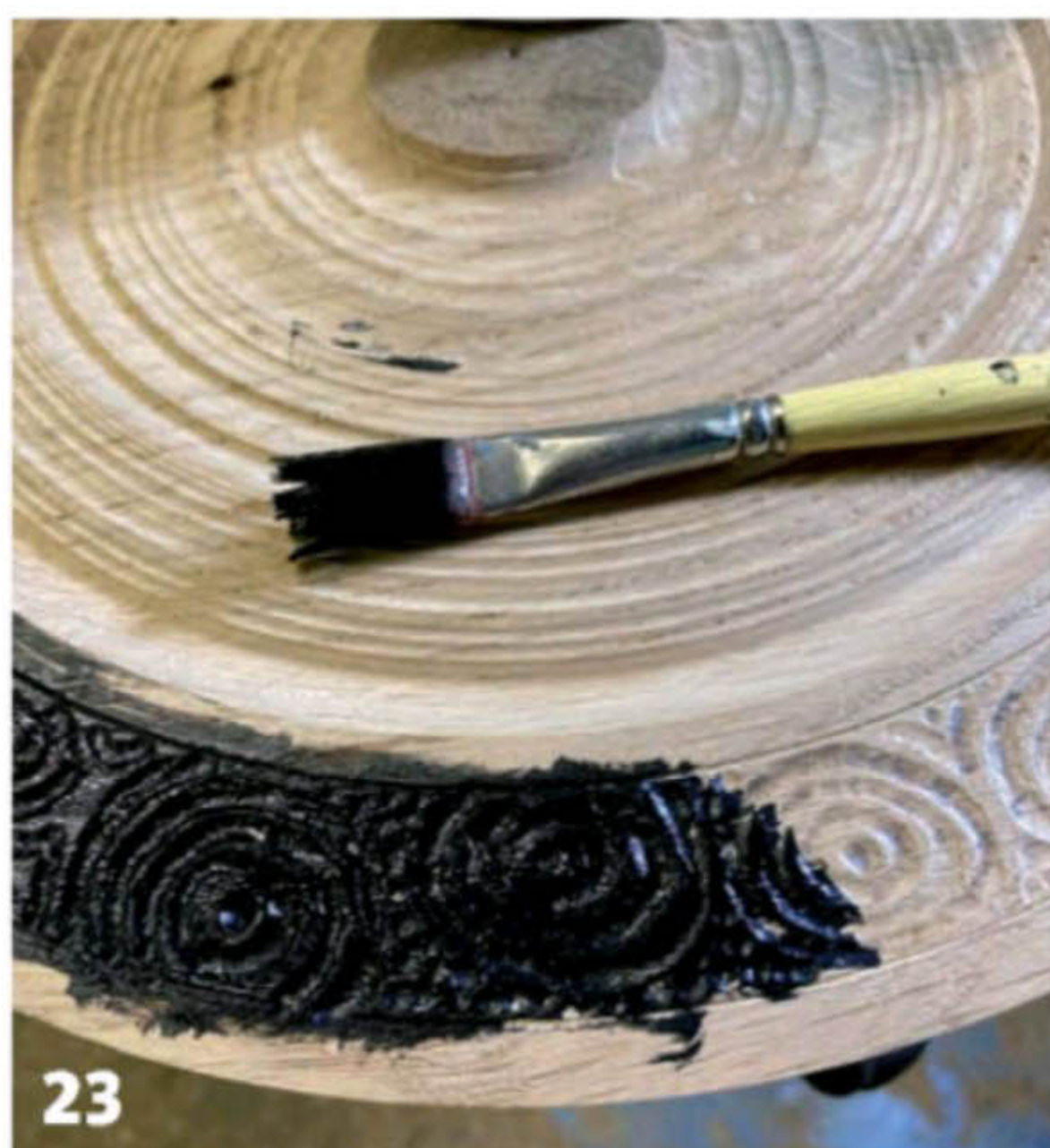
19 Rather than go through the fundamental phases of trimming a blank to size, which have been covered by many other writers and turners, I'll skip ahead to details of how I shaped the underside of the plate. With some highly figured grain and a few cracks to deal with, I opted for a 25mm round-nosed scraper to refine the underside, followed by the creation of a recess, first with a 12mm bowl gouge followed by a 19mm flat curved scraper to flatten the interior of the recess. The sides were sharpened with a square-tipped scraper, and the bottom of the recess was neatened with a fine V-groove cut with a round skew held flat on its side to act as a scraper.

20 All surfaces were sanded through to 320 grit. However, the side of the rebate wasn't sanded so the plate would run true once reversed into another chuck. A couple of V-lines were cut with a diamond-shaped scraper to allow a band where I could write my name and that of the timbers used.

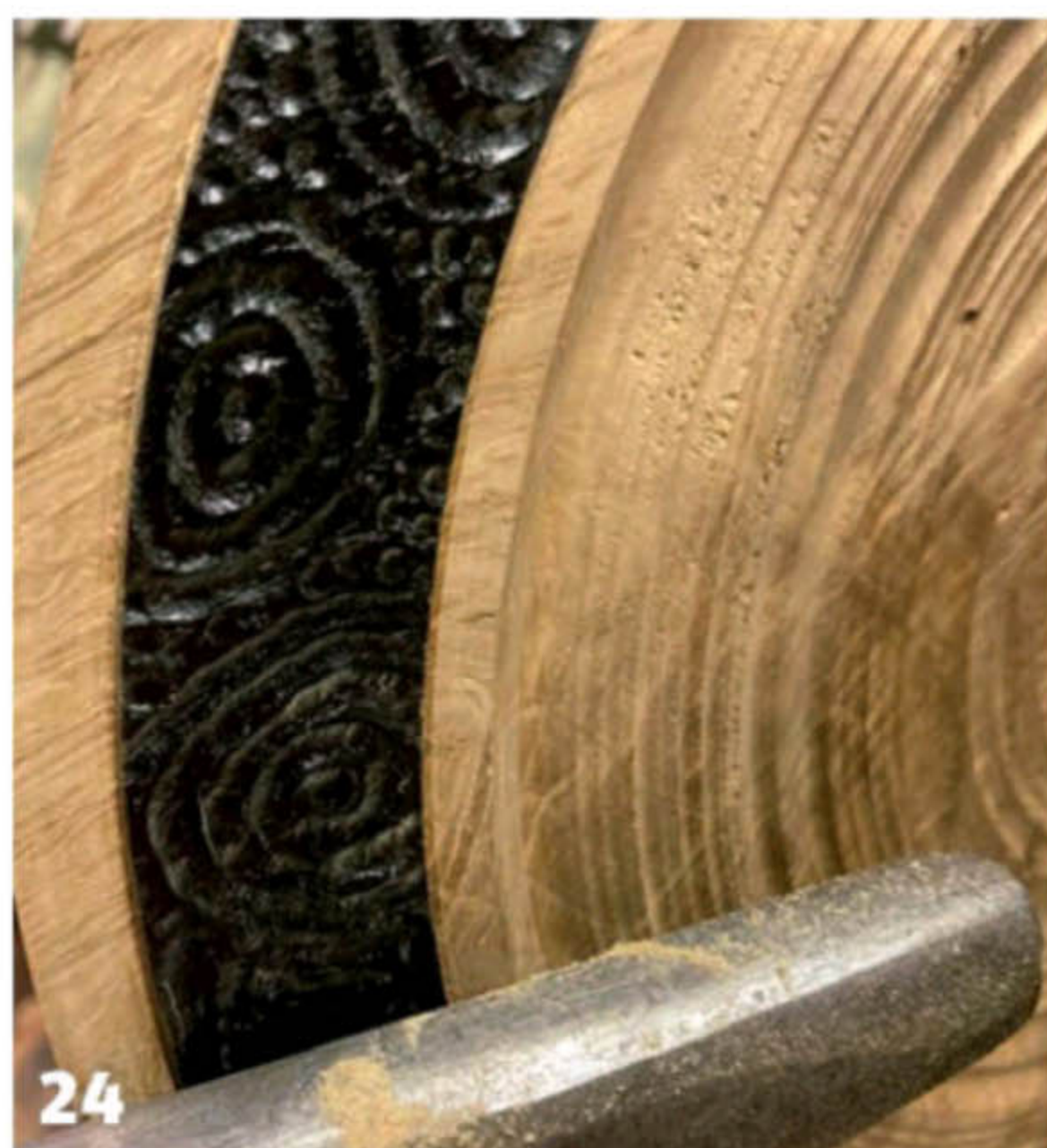
21 With the workpiece reversed on to a scroll chuck held in position in expansion mode. I brought the tailstock into position to add support. No matter how dry your timber is, once you begin to turn it there will be internal stresses that will be released and the wood will distort, sometimes by the smallest margin, at other times it may be quite a large movement. For this reason I refined just the border area of the plate and cut a couple of V-grooves while keeping the remainder of the plate thick.

22 Next I removed the chuck and plate from my lathe and fitted both to a carving clamp which fits into the saddle of my lathe. This fixture allows me to work on the turned surface on a horizontal plane so I can 'carve' a textured surface with a micromotor fitted with a 3mm burr.





23 Once the whole band was 'carved' and rubbed back with a wire brush to remove any stray fibres raised by the burr working against the grain of the wood, I applied black acrylic paint to the surface, without regard for any stray brush marks as I planned to trim down surrounding surfaces so the band would stand proud of the plate.



24 The edges of the band were neatened with a skew, which was also used to cut a neat V-border where it intersected with the surrounding timber. I used a flat curved scraper to refine the areas on either side; however. You need to be careful of chatter and potential dig ins, so I anchored the heel of my left hand on my toolrest and wrapped my fingers around the back of the plate to dampen any potential chatter.



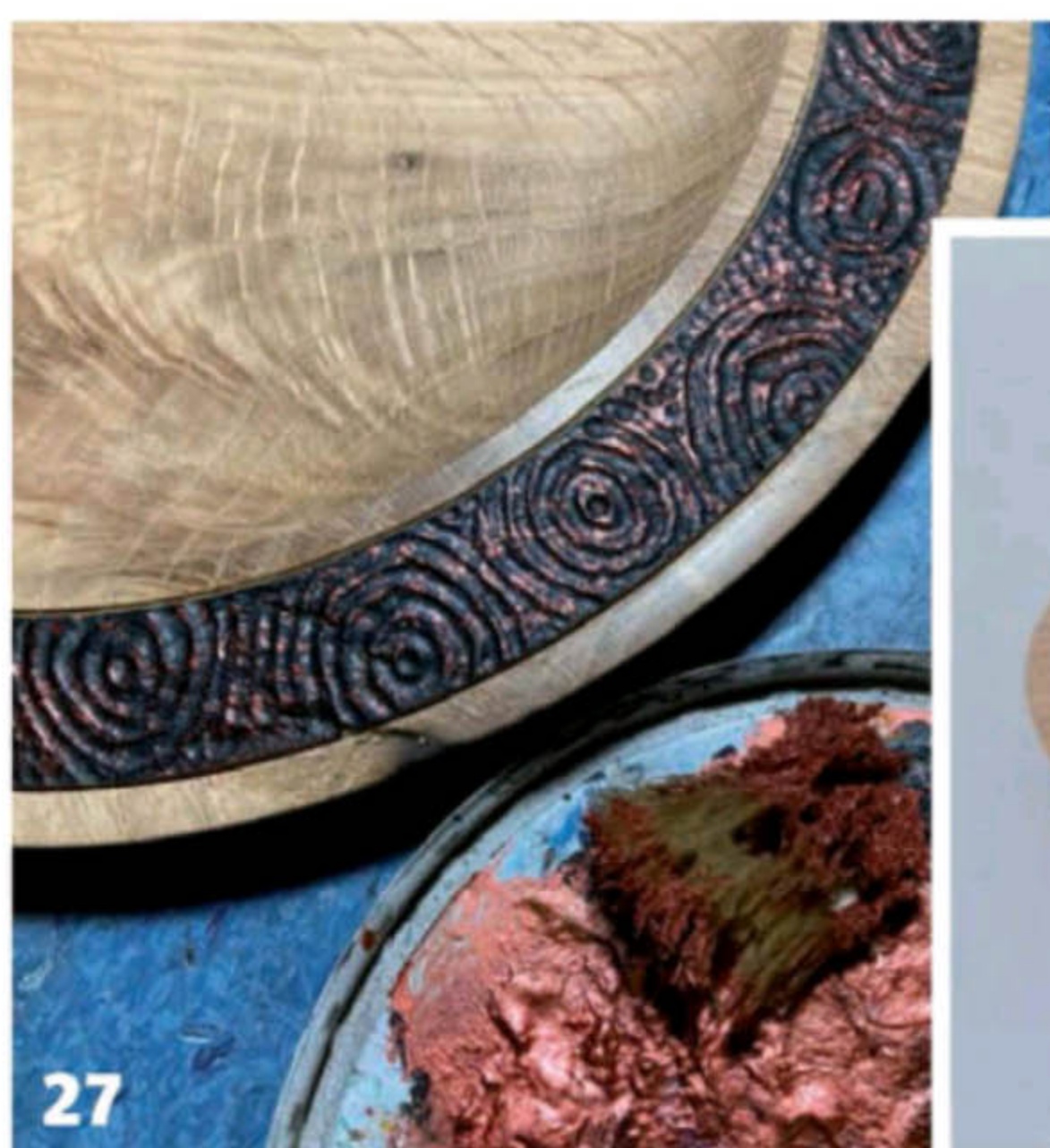
25 With a couple of cracks in need of attention, I burnt them lightly with a gas torch and then continued with shaping the interior of the plate, keeping the tailstock in place as long as possible for maximum support of the workpiece.

26 With the tailstock and stub removed, I refined the interior of the plate, sanding it and the areas on either side of the textured band through to 320 grit. As usual, I used a face mask, dust extractor and a couple of exhaust fans fitted behind my lathe to draw dust away from my lungs and protect my respiratory system.



27 To add highlights to the textured band of the plate, I used some sea sponge to dabble on a bit of bronze colour. Once it had dried, I applied several coats of Scandinavian oil and buffed the surface ready to present my macaroon, but nobody can stop at one, so I had to make a few more.

Ask any baker and they'll tell you, they need to be made in batches, and then, presentation is everything, so why argue with those who know better? ●



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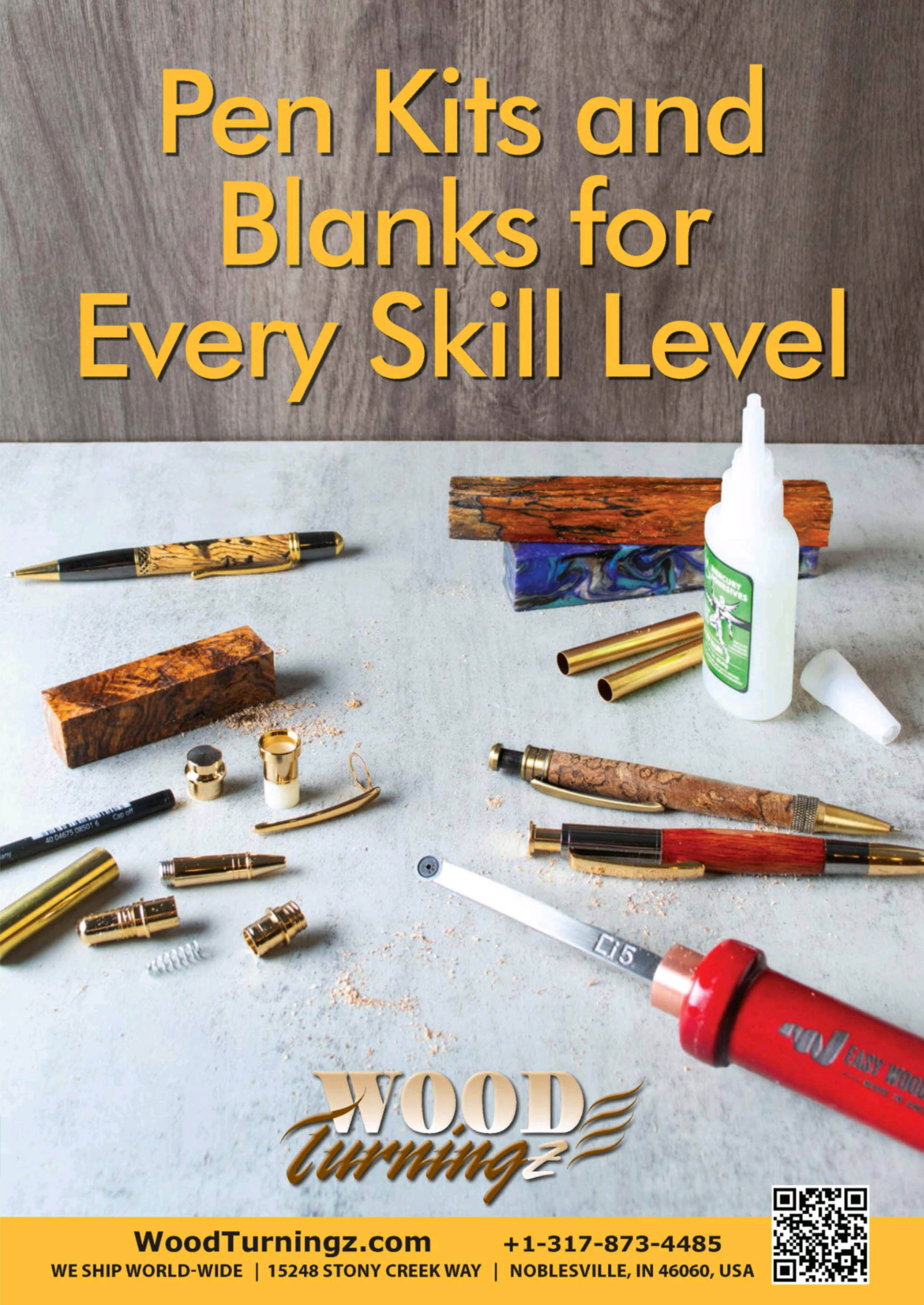
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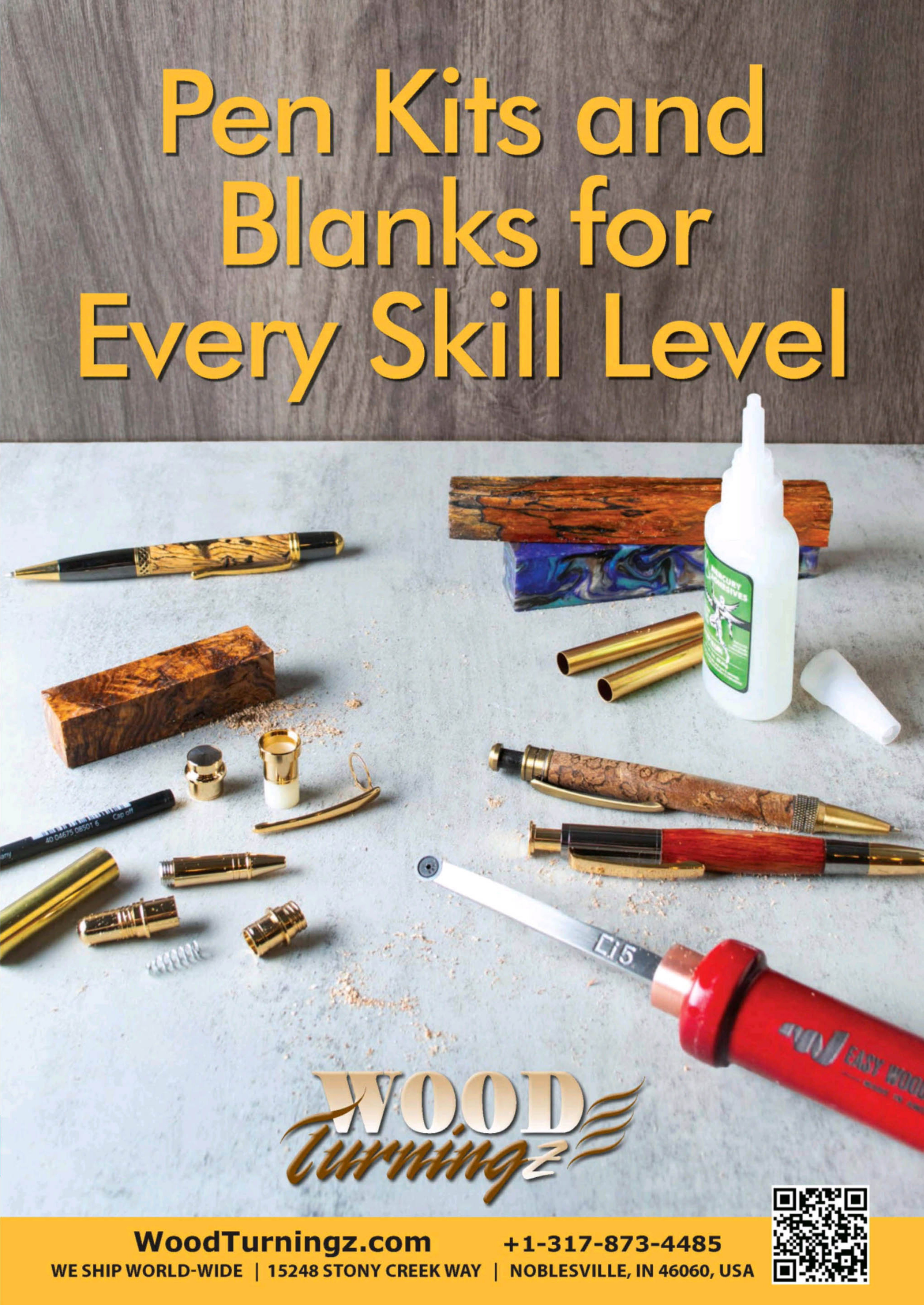


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[illegible]

Door knocker

Andy Coates looks back through the *Woodturning Annual*, issues 1-5 of the magazine, and revisits some of the articles



Aside from woodturning, my other, longer-held passion is reading – mostly non-fiction, but I always have three or four books on the go. When I began woodturning one of the first things I did was to begin reading *Woodturning* magazine. I also bought what were then considered the bibles of woodturning: Keith Rowley's *Woodturning: A Foundation Course* (which I was later very honoured to update); Dale Nish's books; Peter Child's *The Craftsman Woodturner*, Dave Register's books, Ray Key's books, Tony Boase's books, and the book I still consider the most complete woodturning book published, Mike Darlow's *The Practice of Woodturning*.

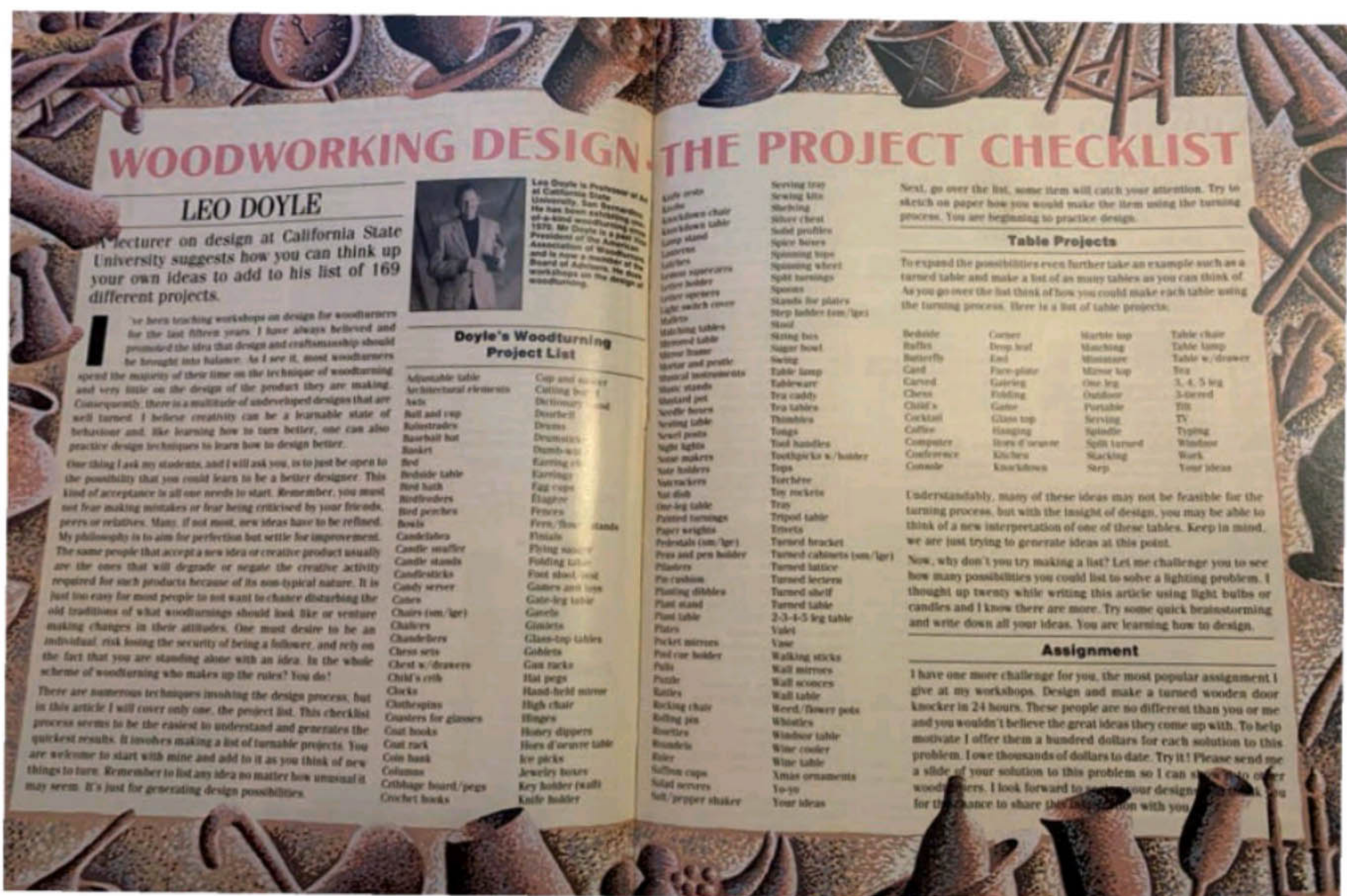
Over subsequent years I sourced, and bought, every book on woodturning I could find, and I think I have just about every one ever published, going back over 100 years and more. But I also did something else – I began buying back issues of *Woodturning* magazine. This may be the completist in me, but it became an obsession. I had searches set and would snap them up gleefully when alerted. Then one day, in a secondhand bookshop in the middle of nowhere in the Norfolk countryside, I found a bound copy of the *Woodturning Annual*, a collection of the first five issues. I already had issues 1-5, but was thrilled to find this book.

Occasionally, I flick through old issues and it's never a dull read. One of the great things about doing this is seeing how things have changed, progressed, and how many aspects of woodturning that pop up today as 'new ideas' are, in fact, old ideas, rehashed for the 21st century. And that got me thinking. I set upon re-reading the first issues, looking



for something I could revisit and see how I would approach a given project today. Would it be different? If so, why?

I was intrigued by an article in issue 4 from summer 1991, by the late Leo Doyle, Professor of Art at California State University. He set an assignment at the end, to design and turn a wooden door knocker. This seemed doomed to failure and uselessness. So, obviously, I had to give it a go.



Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- 15mm long-ground bowl gouge
- 10mm spindle gouge
- 10mm parting tool
- 5mm parting tool
- 2mm parting tool
- Jacobs chuck
- 1in Forster bit
- Cole jaws, or similar reverse mounting rig

Materials

- Mahogany
- Disc 6 x 1 3/4in
- Two discs of 3 x 2in
- Disc 3 3/8 x 1 1/2in
- Scrap for jam chucks
- Wood screws
- White glue
- Double-sided adhesive pads

Making the pot

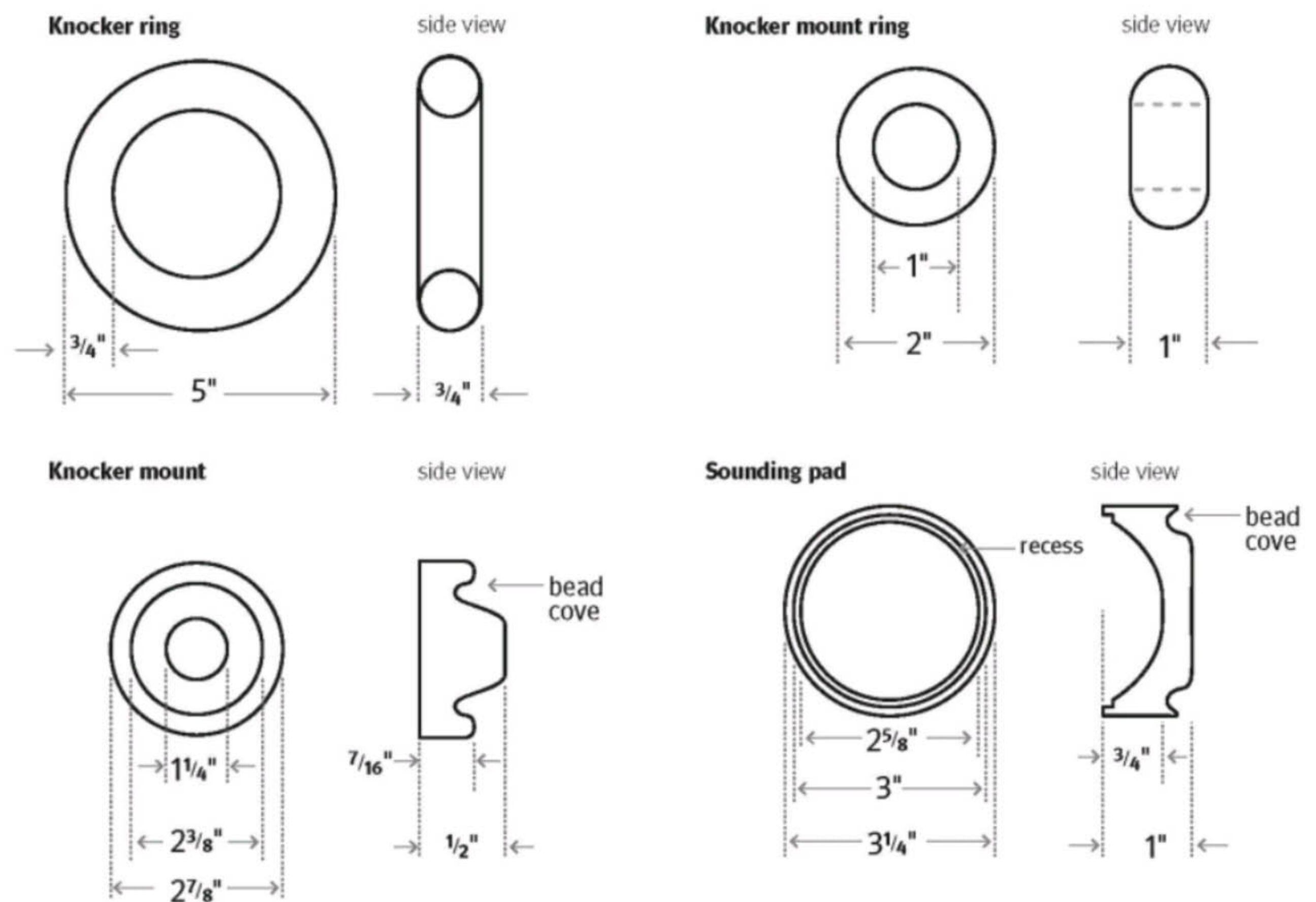
1 The wood used needs to be hardwood and, fortunately, the previous week I had gone through all my crates of 'it'll-come-in-handy-one-day' stock, so I knew there were some odds and ends of mahogany that would probably be hard and strong enough for the job. I had done a few sketches of what I thought would work but, as ever, I was kind of winging it. I knew I needed four blanks, one at least 5in diameter and 1in thick, and three smaller discs.

2 With some blocks of scrap mahogany selected I cut the largest discs I could from each block to provide the smaller discs, and found a pre-cut disc at 6 x 1 3/4in that would suit my needs. The door knocker would be made in four parts (later to become five parts): the knocker mount, the knocker hanger, the knocker, and the sounding pad. The hanger would be cut into two then re-assembled around the knocker, and glued back together.

The knocker

3 The knocker ring would be the most difficult component to make, so that would be the first task. The 6in blank is mounted between centres and trued up, edge and front and rear faces.

4 Using dividers the diameter is marked at 5in. Note that only the front leg contacts the wood, and the scribed line is eyeballed on the point of the back leg. If the back leg touches the revolving wood, the dividers will get up close and personal with your face. So avoid that at all costs.



NB: back plate 3in disc, 1/8in thick (no diagram)



5 Using a long-ground bowl gouge, reduce the diameter of the blank down to the scribed line, making it 5in in diameter. Use this process to practise cutting a parallel surface. A push cut from the tailstock edge towards the headstock is the primary cut, but a pull cut using the wing, in the opposite direction, is useful for refining the surface. You will only use the first $\frac{3}{4}$ in of the blank from the tailstock side, but any opportunity to practise a cut is worth taking.

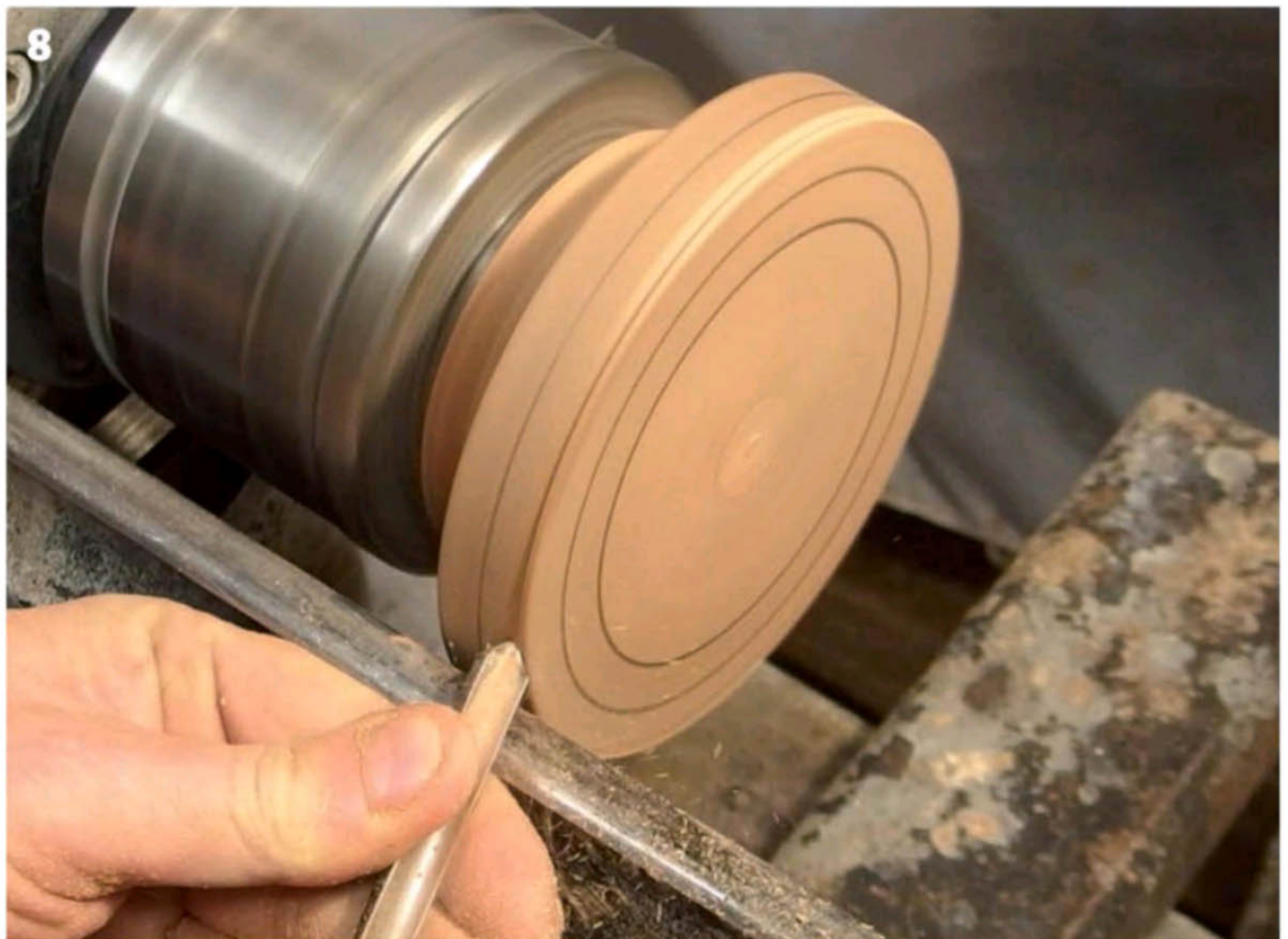
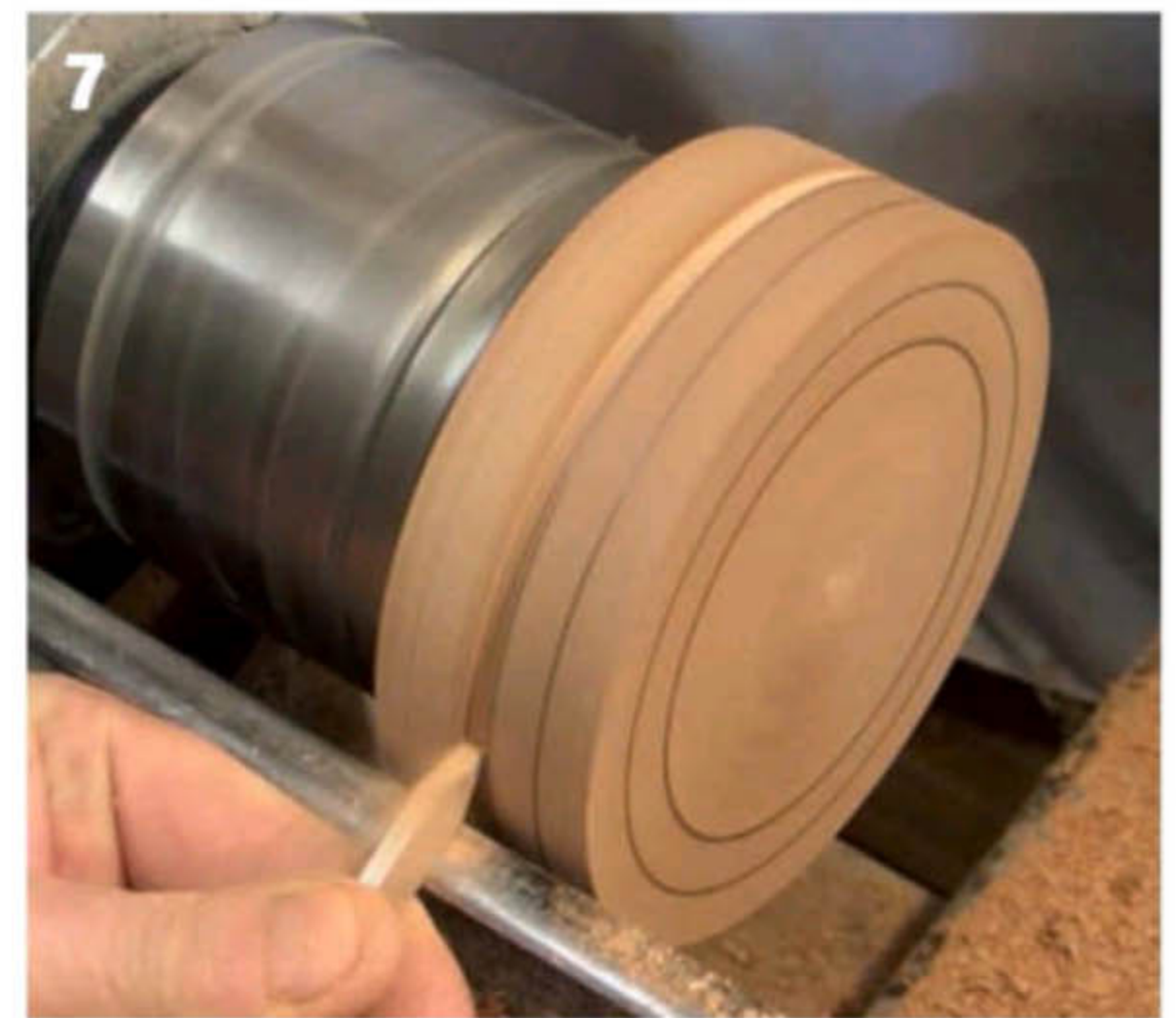
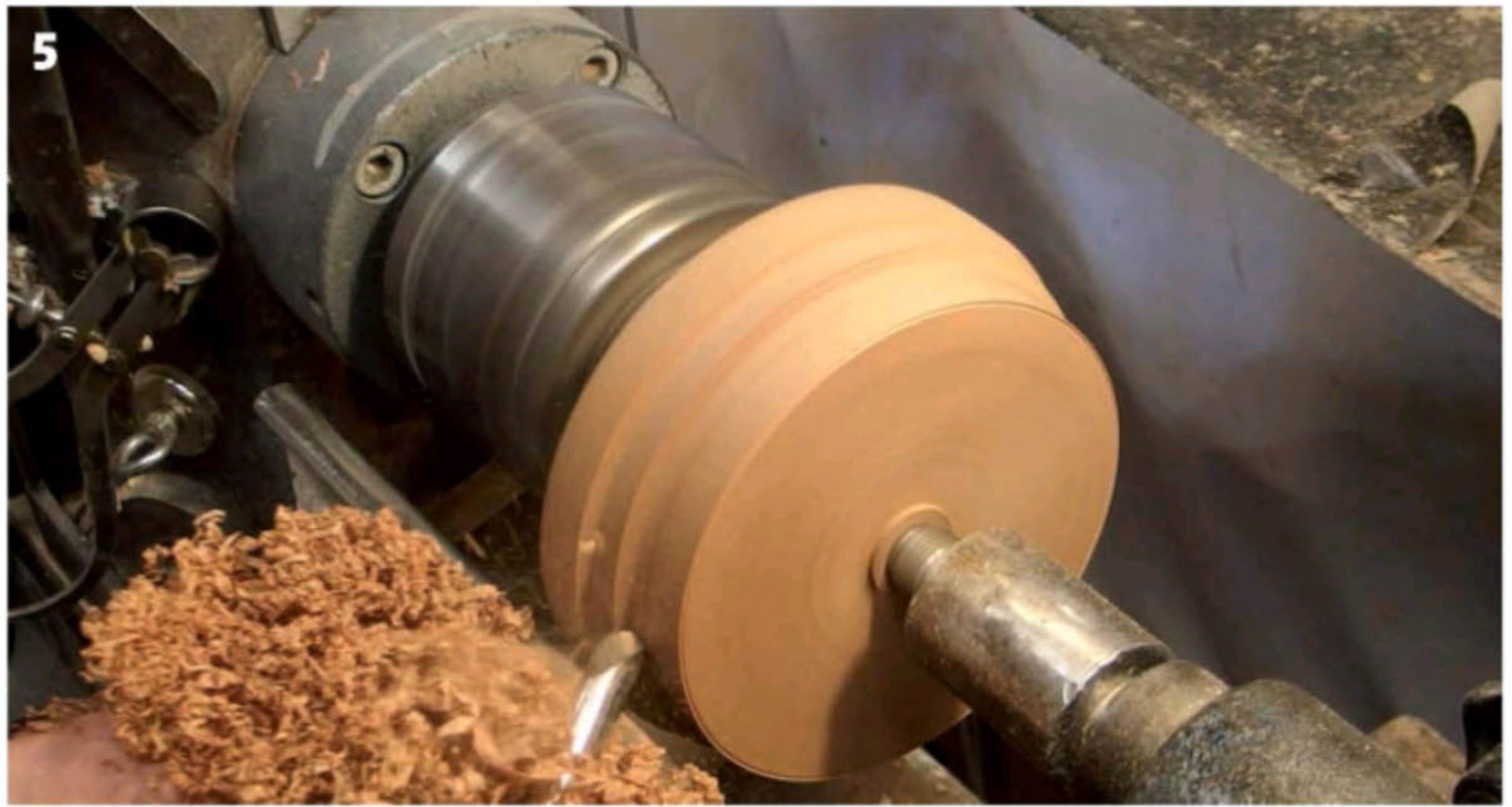
6 A tenon is cut on the tailstock side of the blank, then the workpiece is remounted in the chuck jaws. I used the new Record Power dovetail gouge which, almost against my inclinations, I am beginning to actually like. The workpiece is now remounted on the tenon, in the chuck.

7 At the tailstock side of the workpiece, mark $\frac{3}{4}$ in in, then mark the middle at $\frac{3}{8}$ in. Do the same on the face of the workpiece. These marks will aid you in forming a $\frac{3}{4}$ in ring bead. Using a parting tool, cut a relief behind the $\frac{3}{4}$ in mark. Cut a depth of at least 1in.

8 Using a 10mm spindle gouge, begin to form the bead (that will become a ring) by removing the corner of the blank. There can be a temptation to start cutting at the $\frac{3}{8}$ in on the edge of the blank, but you must resist this – start at the edge and make the cuts there. The cut is a push cut with the bevel rubbing, the tool is pushed forward and the handle gently, and progressively, pushed away from the body, forcing the bevel around a curve, beginning to form the bead.

9 Continue in this manner and each cut will begin further back, eventually resulting in the last cut being from the $\frac{3}{8}$ in mid-point mark, and ending at the corresponding $\frac{3}{8}$ in mid-point mark on the face of the workpiece. Do not cut the pencil mark away as this will result in a flat spot on the bead. Note the shine on the cut surface, produced by the bevel rubbing and burnishing the surface of the wood.

10 Once this first quadrant of the bead is formed you need to stop the lathe and resite the toolrest to the front of the workpiece. Before you can begin to cut the second quadrant you need to make some room to work in. Remove waste material to the inner side of the $\frac{3}{4}$ in mark. Use a parting tool to cut into the wood, just to the right of the $\frac{3}{4}$ in mark. Make this cut slightly deeper than $\frac{3}{4}$ in, then from the flat face of the workpiece, at the pencil mark, measure and mark $\frac{3}{4}$ in down that inside edge. In the central waste, form a tenon to suit your smallest jaws. I formed a 10mm deep, 25mm tenon to suit engineering jaws, but you could use any jaw set that will fit in the space.



11 Now you have room to work in, and two reference points to work between, begin to form the second quadrant of the bead. Once again, the corner is the first portion of waste to be removed. Do not rush – take your time and work progressively. As the 10mm spindle gouge is pushed into the wood, the handle is pushed away, over the lathe bed.



12 With the second quadrant complete, reverse the workpiece on the chuck. Mine is mounted here on the engineering jaws. Turn the third quadrant of the bead, at the corner, in exactly the same way as before. Do not turn the pencil marks away, work up to them and stop. Doing so will result in flats on the ring bead. Then turn the fourth, inner quadrant. Make the same parting cut to the inner of the $\frac{3}{4}$ in pencil mark on the face, but make it only $\frac{1}{2}$ in deep, to avoid parting the ring early. Turn as much of the bead as possible.

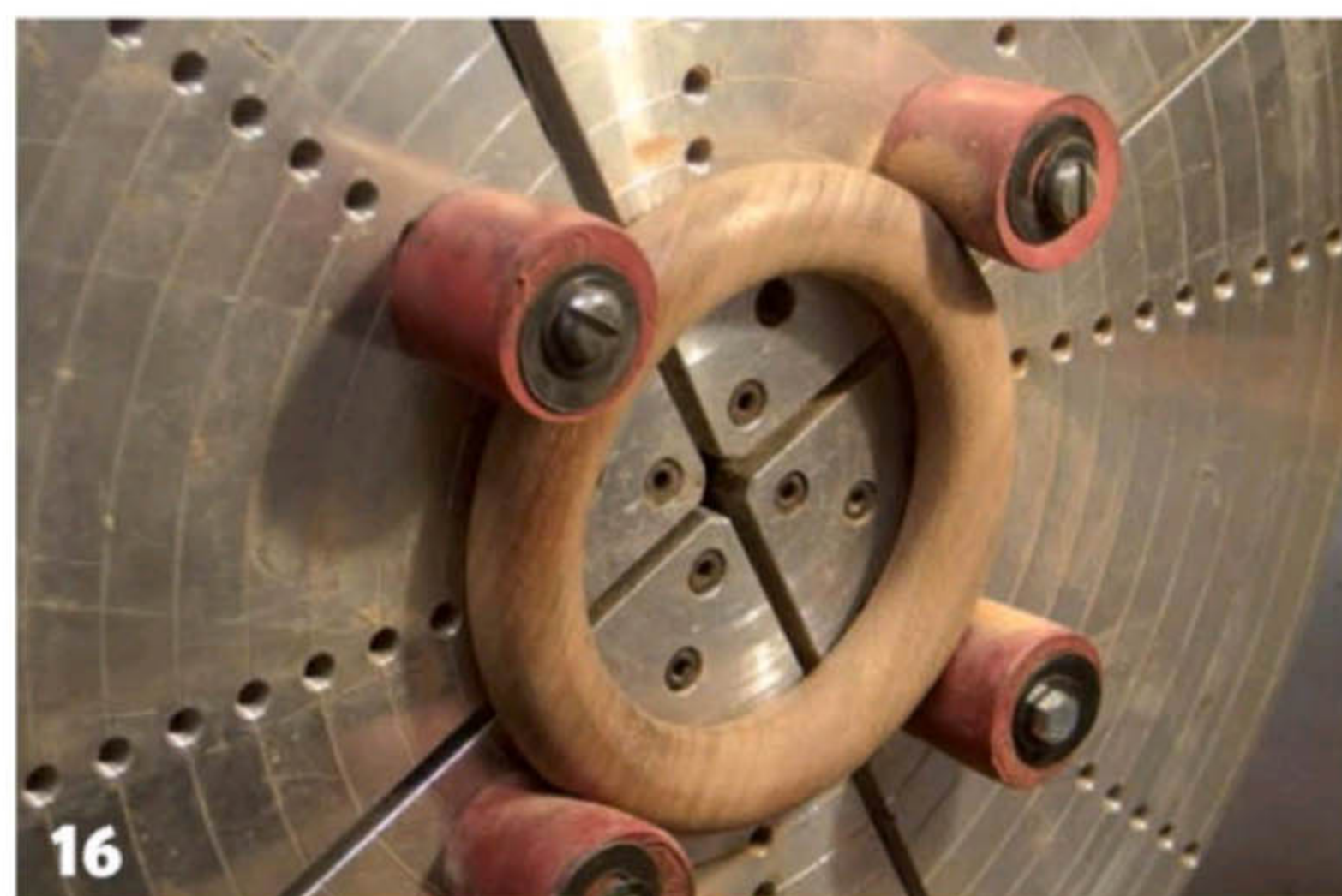


13 Abrade the ring as far as possible, working through the grades from 120 to 400 grit. The pencil marks can be abraded away now, but avoid abrading in one spot for too long, to maintain the curves.

14 Using a depth gauge set to $\frac{3}{4}$ in, make a pencil mark on the last remaining section of waste wood. This gives you a perfect reference to work to. The ring will part off as you take these last cuts, so make the cuts light and gentle. If you need to remove more of the central waste, do so.

15 Taking the last cuts can be tricky with the spindle gouge, so I use a modified old tool. It is simply a miniature scraper, ground into a curved and slightly pointed tool, relieved at the tip by grinding into an arc. You can use this tool to nibble the very last fibres away, until the ring parts company with the central mass, safely falls back, and you can stop the lathe and pull it over the waste block.

16 The inner surface of the ring needs to be finish abraded. You could easily do this by hand, but if you have a set of Cole jaws, they will allow you to finish the ring. Be careful not to clamp down too hard on the ring, and be very aware of the spinning rubber stops when abrading the interior of the ring. The ring is sealed off the lathe, buffed and then waxed or oiled.



◀ The knocker hanger

17 Mount one of the 3 x 2in blanks between centres and, using a long-ground bowl gouge, rough the blank down to a cylinder. You can cut in either direction, but remember to cut off the blank at the ends to avoid a catch and chipping out at the corner. Do not worry about the diameter at this point. Cut a tenon on the tailstock end.

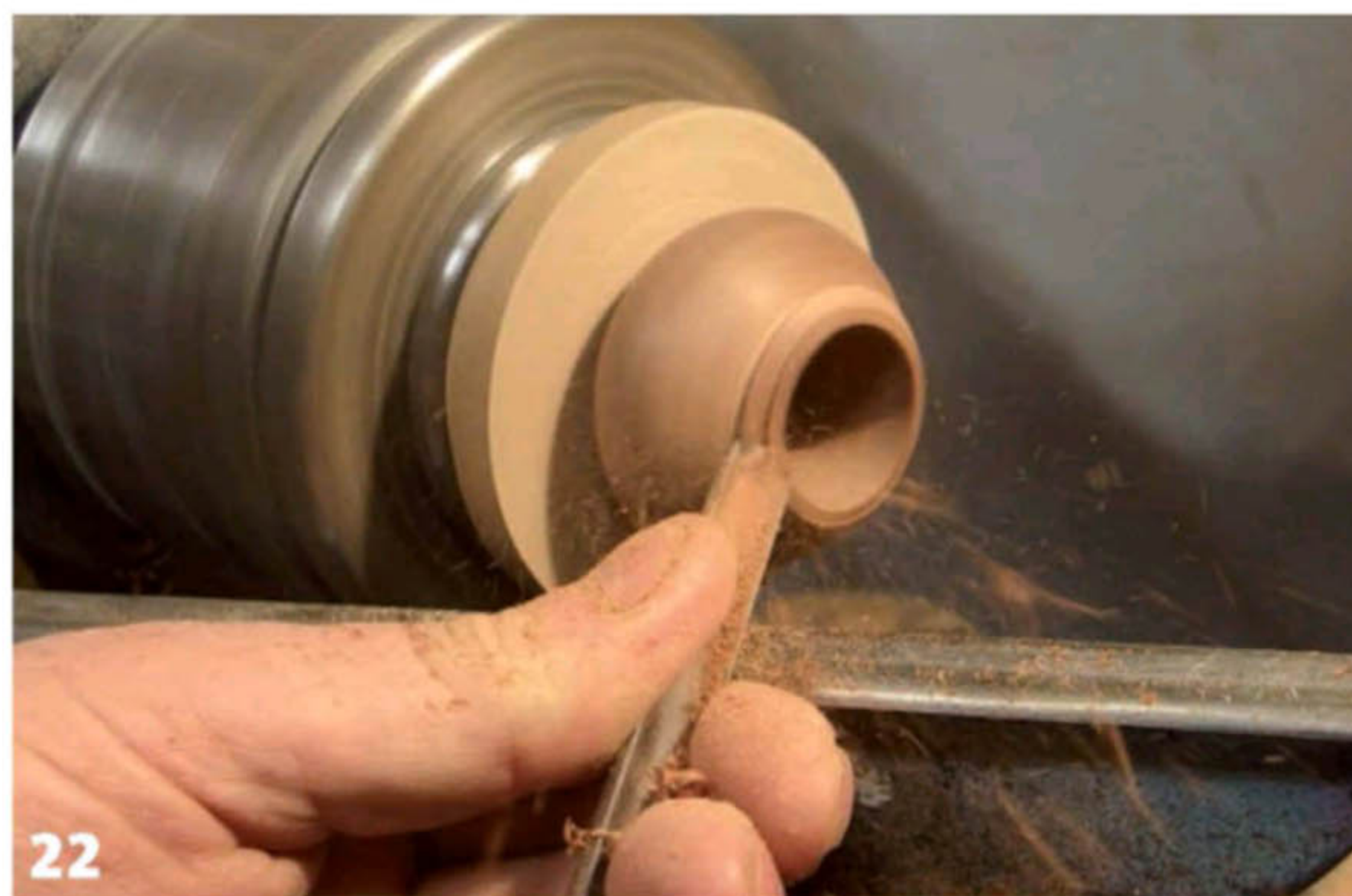
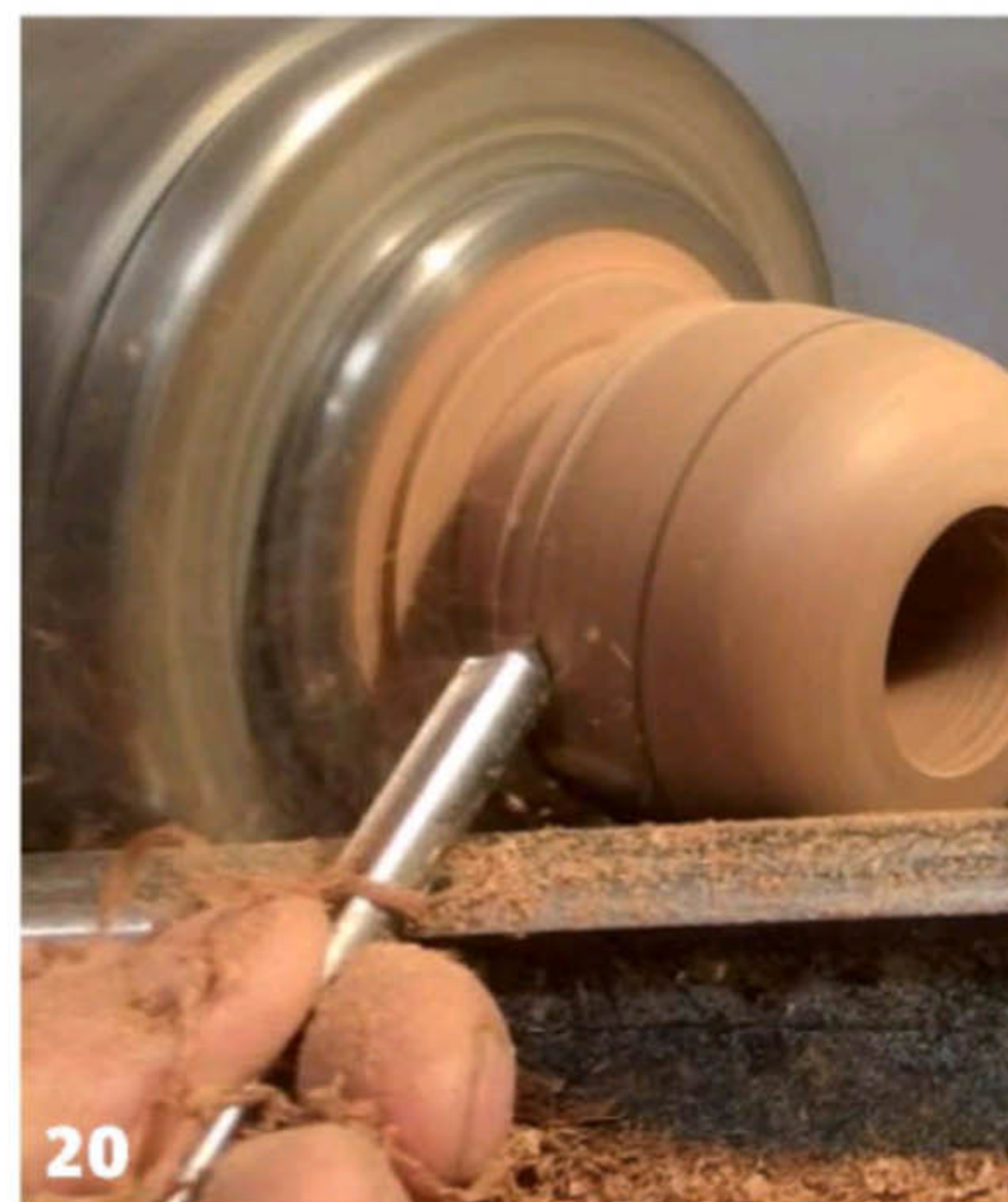
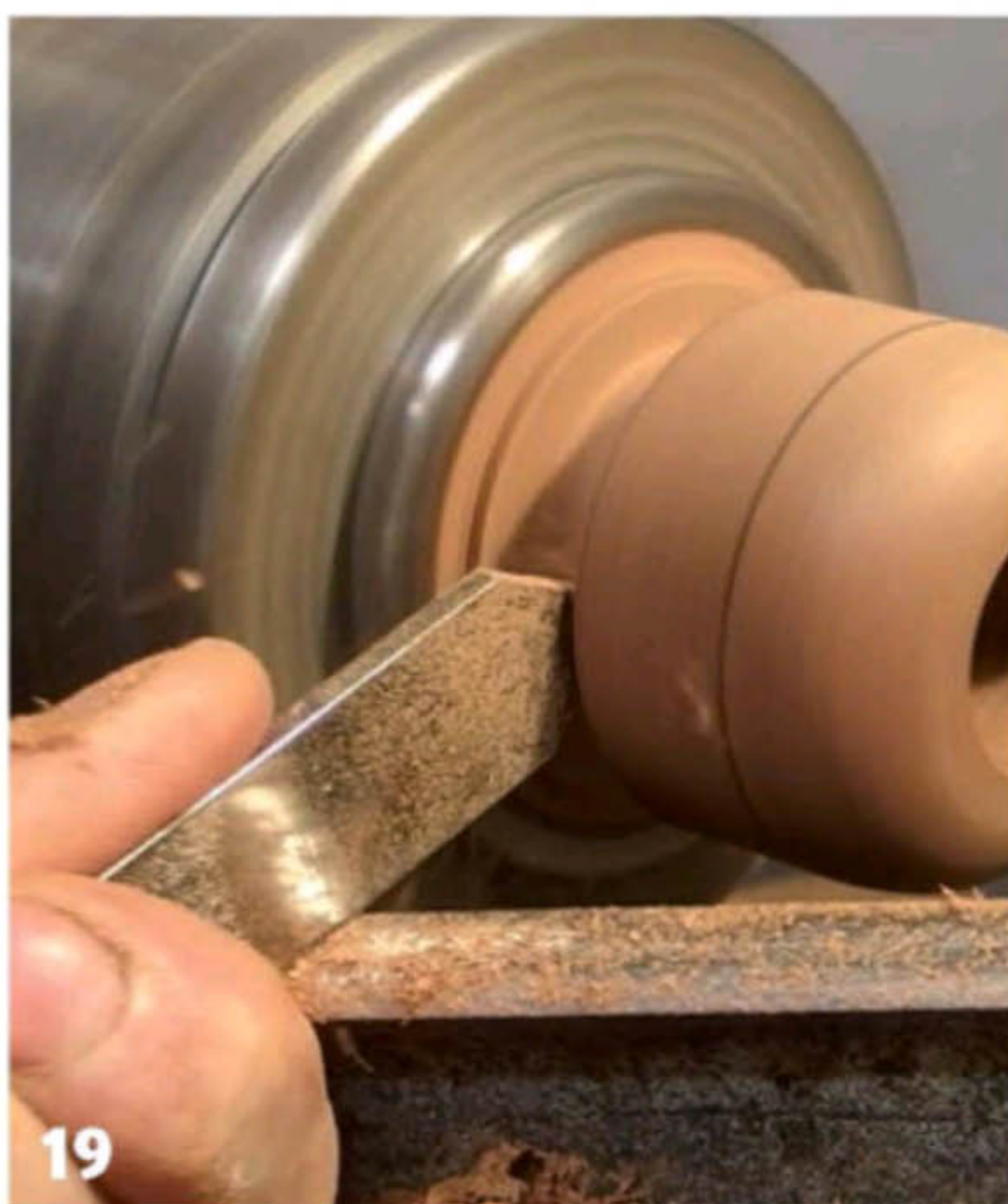
18 Remount in the chuck on the tenon. Using a Jacobs chuck and a 1in Forstner bit, bore a hole completely through the workpiece, taking care to stop the quill's progression as soon as it breaches the blank. Withdraw the bit a number of times during the boring process, to avoid overheating and expanding the bit, which can cause the bit to bind in the hole.

19 Reduce the diameter of the workpiece to 2in, ensuring that the face is clean and flat. Make a pencil mark 1in in from the tailstock end, then mark the 1/2in mid-point. Turn the right-hand side of the workpiece to a half bead, in exactly the same way that you turned the previous beads, but this time, the edge of the bored hole is your target. Set the rear marker by parting in 1/2in to the left of the 1in pencil mark.

20 Now turn the other half of the bead. Begin with removing the corner as previously and incrementally work backwards, until you reach the pencil mark at the mid-point.

21 The rear bead half is incomplete, because you are unable to complete it without parting off the workpiece too early, so now we need to deal with that. Part off the workpiece 1/4in or so longer than the 1in depth of the hanger.

22 Mount a scrap of wood in the chuck and turn a slightly tapered stub which ends at the face of the scrap at 1in diameter. The knocker hanger should now be mounted on to the stub. Take great care not to force it on or you risk breaking the hanger. Gentle taps with a soft-face hammer can be used to ensure that the hanger is seated perfectly on the jam chuck stub. This will ensure that it runs true. Now you can complete the bead, abrade, seal, and wax the hanger. You can reverse it on the stub to get to the rear.



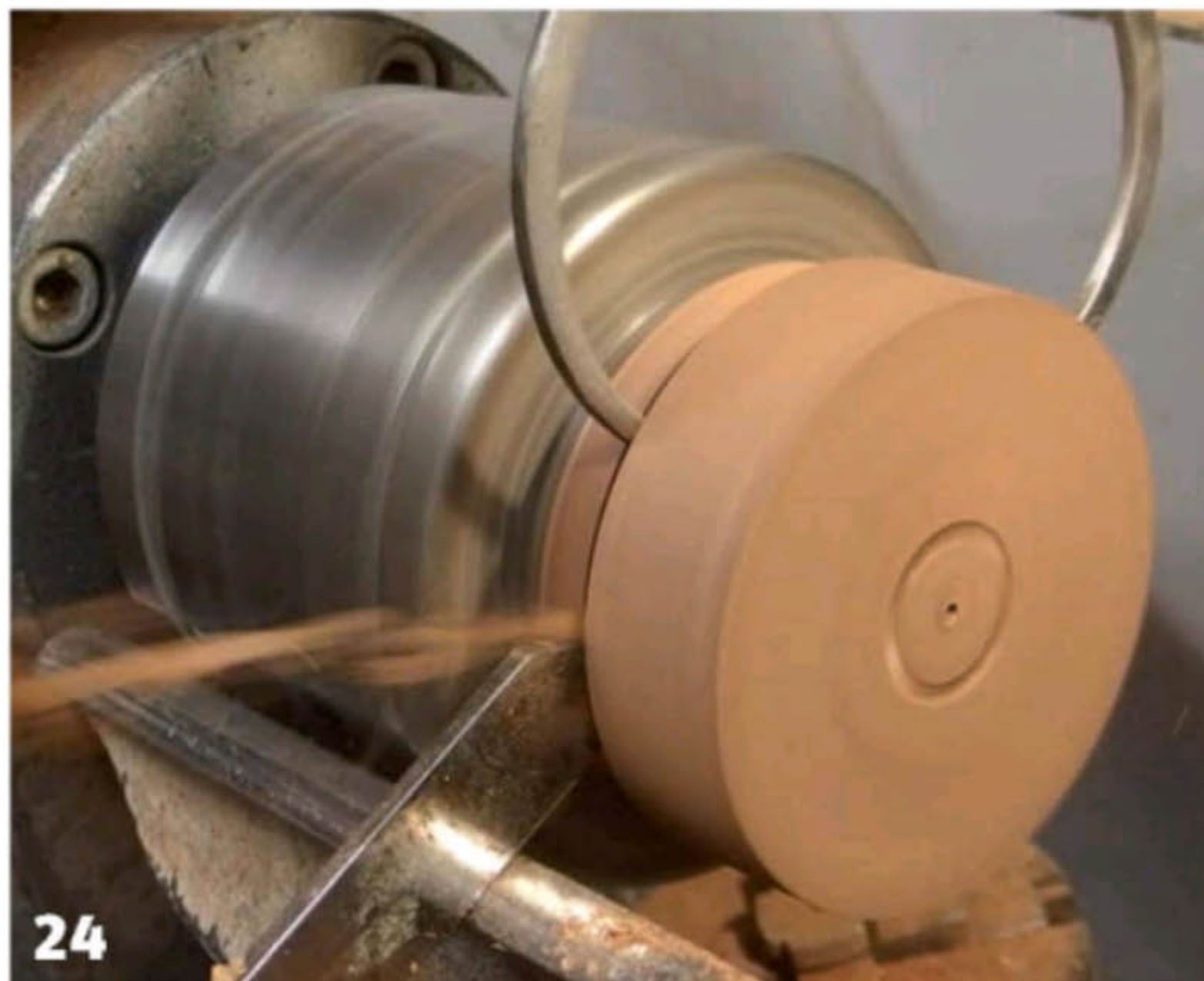
The knocker mount

23 Mount the $3\frac{3}{8}$ in blank between centres, rough down, and cut a tenon. Remount the workpiece in the chuck and clean up the tailstock face. From the face, mark $\frac{3}{4}$ in back on the edge, and $\frac{1}{4}$ in. On the face, mark a 1in diameter circle in the centre. Reduce the $\frac{1}{4}$ in section down to the 1in circle, effectively making the 1in centre a raised boss. Mark $\frac{3}{8}$ in inwards at the new outer edge of the face. Turn a partial bead, and that flows into a shallow cove over and towards the central boss, and turn the edge over into a half bead. All of this is purely decorative, so you could shape it as you see fit. Abrade, seal, and wax, but leave the centre untouched after abrading. Part off at the left of the $\frac{3}{4}$ in mark.

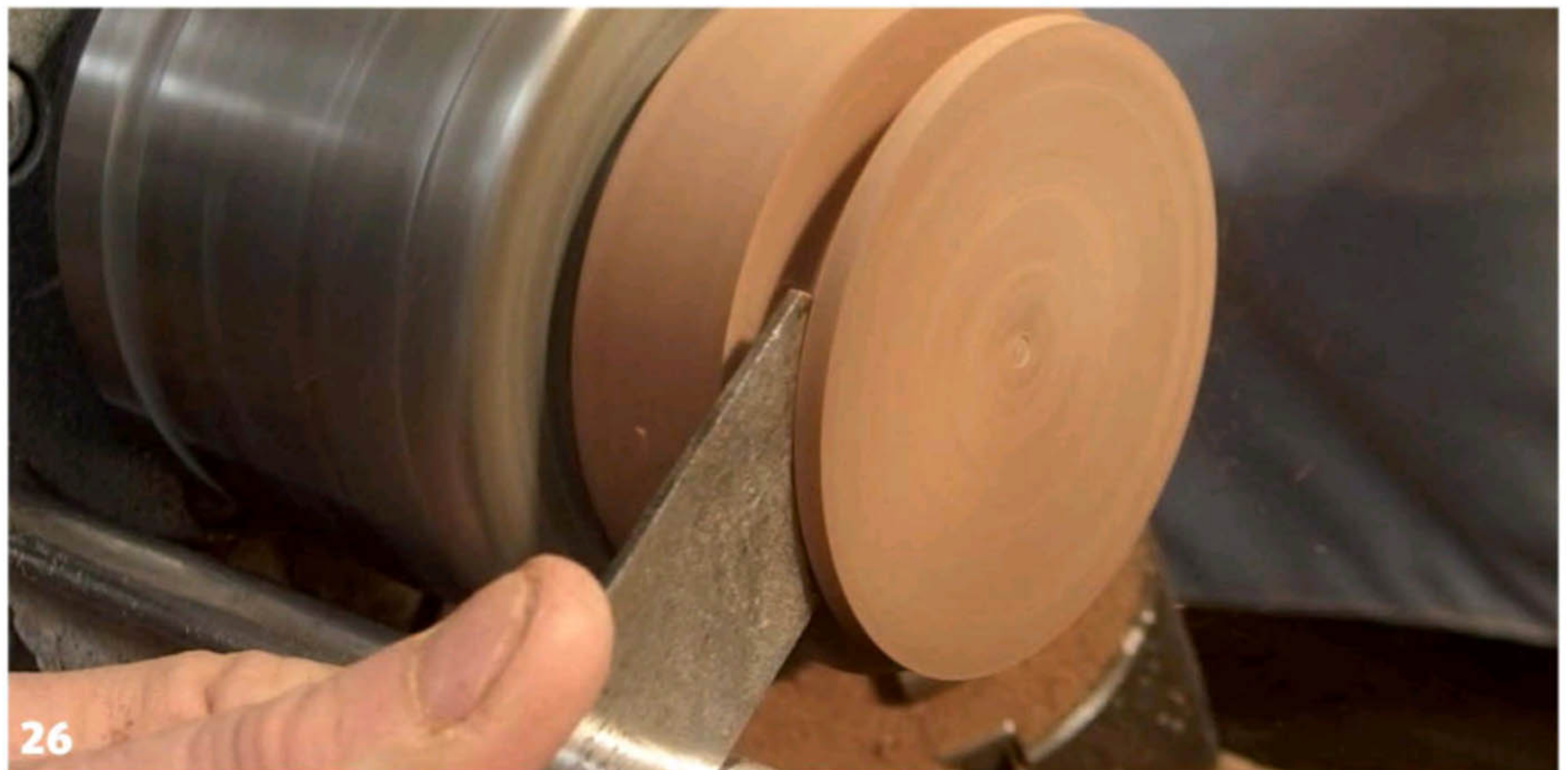


The sounding pad

24 Mount the remaining blank between centres, rough down and clean up as previously. Reduce the diameter to $3\frac{1}{4}$ in and cut a tenon. Remount on the tenon. Clean the new rear face and mark $\frac{1}{4}$ in in on the face. Mark the edge at 1in back from the tailstock face, then mark $\frac{3}{8}$ in in the tailstock direction. Using a 5mm parting tool, reduce this $\frac{3}{8}$ in section down to $2\frac{1}{4}$ in.



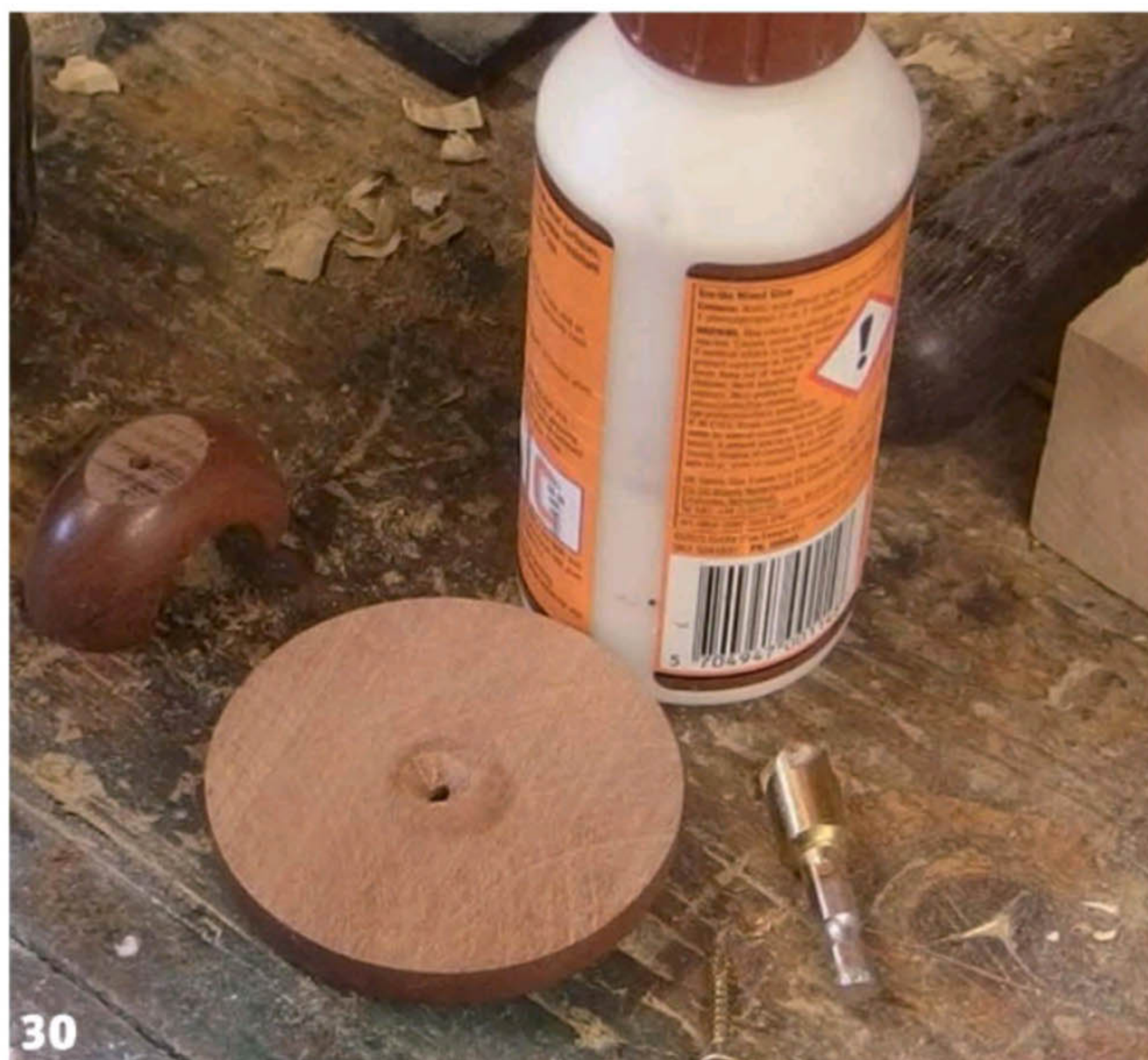
25 Now bring the toolrest to the rear face. Mark a 3in-diameter circle on the rear face. To the right of this mark, cut a recess $\frac{1}{8}$ in deep. Hollow the inside of the blank in the same manner you would a bowl, ensuring that the depth does not exceed $\frac{3}{4}$ in. This will be hidden from view, and there is no need abrade it.



26 Reverse on to the chuck and, using expansion mode on the chuck, hold the blank by the recess. Do not overtighten/expand the jaws. From the waste, form a disc $\frac{1}{8}$ in thick, ensuring the outer face is clean and flat, and part off as parallel as possible. Now shape the outer face of the sounding pad to mirror the previous component. The inner 'bowl' will have resulted in plenty of wood from which the shaping can be achieved. Abrade, seal and wax.

27 Abrade, seal and wax the sounding pad. The $\frac{1}{8} \times 3$ in disc you cut from waste earlier on, is the backboard for the sounding pad. A self-adhesive pad is fitted to one side of the backboard, to be fixed to the door. The sounding pad fits, very tightly, on to the back board. This should be enough to hold the sounding board securely to a door.





Marrying the hanger and the knocker

28 The hanger now needs to be cut into two equal parts. I used the small table-top bandsaw and a clamp for support for this, but you could just as easily cut it by hand. A Japanese-style pullsaw would be ideal for this. I cut the ring roughly in line with the grain.

29 One side of the hanger needs a flat abraded on to it, to sit flat on the mount. A bench disc sander quickly provides this. Make sure that the flat surface produced is no wider than 1in at the widest part.

30 The mount is drilled through at the centre, and the drill hole countersunk. A wood screw is used, in tandem with wood glue, to secure the half hanger to the mount.

31 The hanger halves can now be glued back together and clamped until the glue cures. For mounting in situ on a door, double-sided adhesive pads can be used.



Conclusions

32 And that's the wooden door knocker challenge completed. It was actually a lot of fun to make. Its utility, of course, is questionable, but it could be used as a fun item for a workshop door. Or, having completed the challenge, repurposed as a towel holder by the hand basin. Having completed it I now, of course, think of improvements that could be made – a nugget of lead in the knocker, for instance – but I'll leave it at that, and thank the late Professor Leo Doyle for a pleasant afternoon's faffing about on the lathe, and issue 4 of *Woodturning* magazine for continuing to provide entertainment, 34 years on. Try it. It may not be much use, but it's genuinely a fun project. Maybe, even ignore everything I've said here, and take the challenge unscripted. Results in the postbag, please! ●



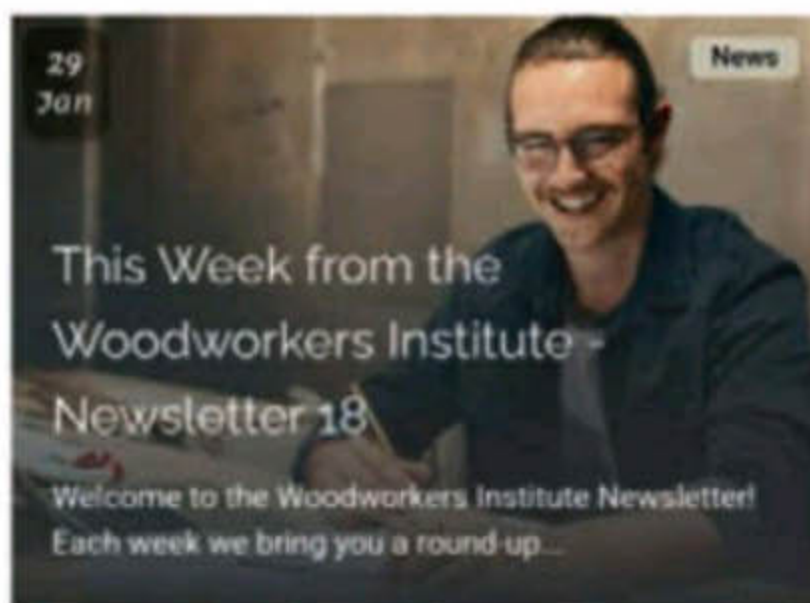
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Decorative napkin holder and weight

James Duxbury turns a plate for napkins and the weight essential for every barbecue and picnic

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES DUXBURY



“

The design of the napkin holder is simple and can be tailored to fit the occasion

”

Quite acceptable in early Greek and Roman times, eating with one's fingers was the practice since utensils had not yet been invented. The first napkins were edible as the Spartans of ancient Greece commonly used soft dough called apomagdalie to clean off fingers. Later, the Romans draped a large cloth over themselves while eating, but in the Far East the Chinese had invented paper and began serving food with small paper pieces to clean fingers.

Napkins have now become an indispensable accompaniment to dining and a number of interesting holding devices have evolved. The design of the napkin holder in this project is simple and can be tailored to fit the occasion, whether informal or luxurious.



Tools & materials

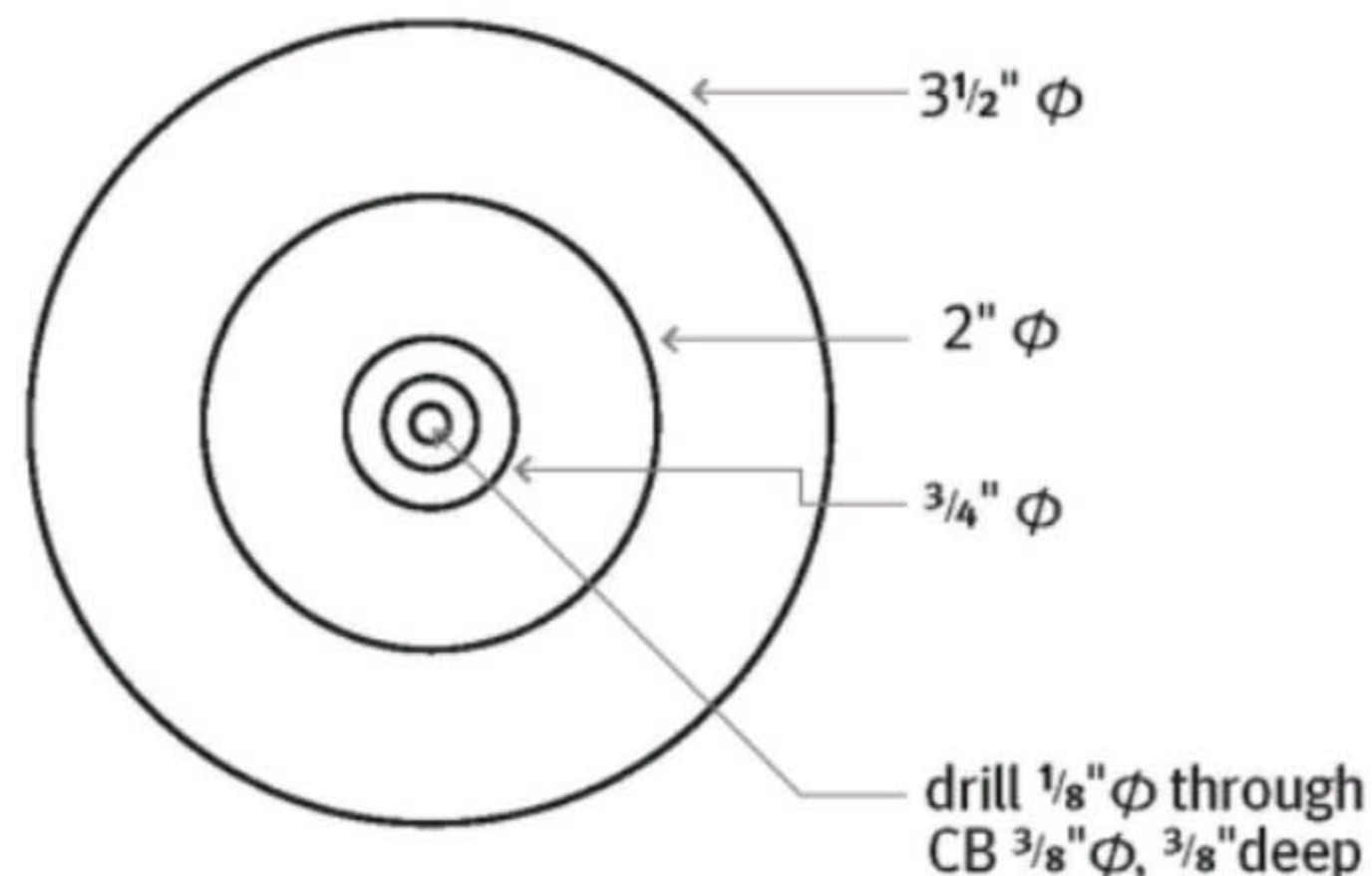
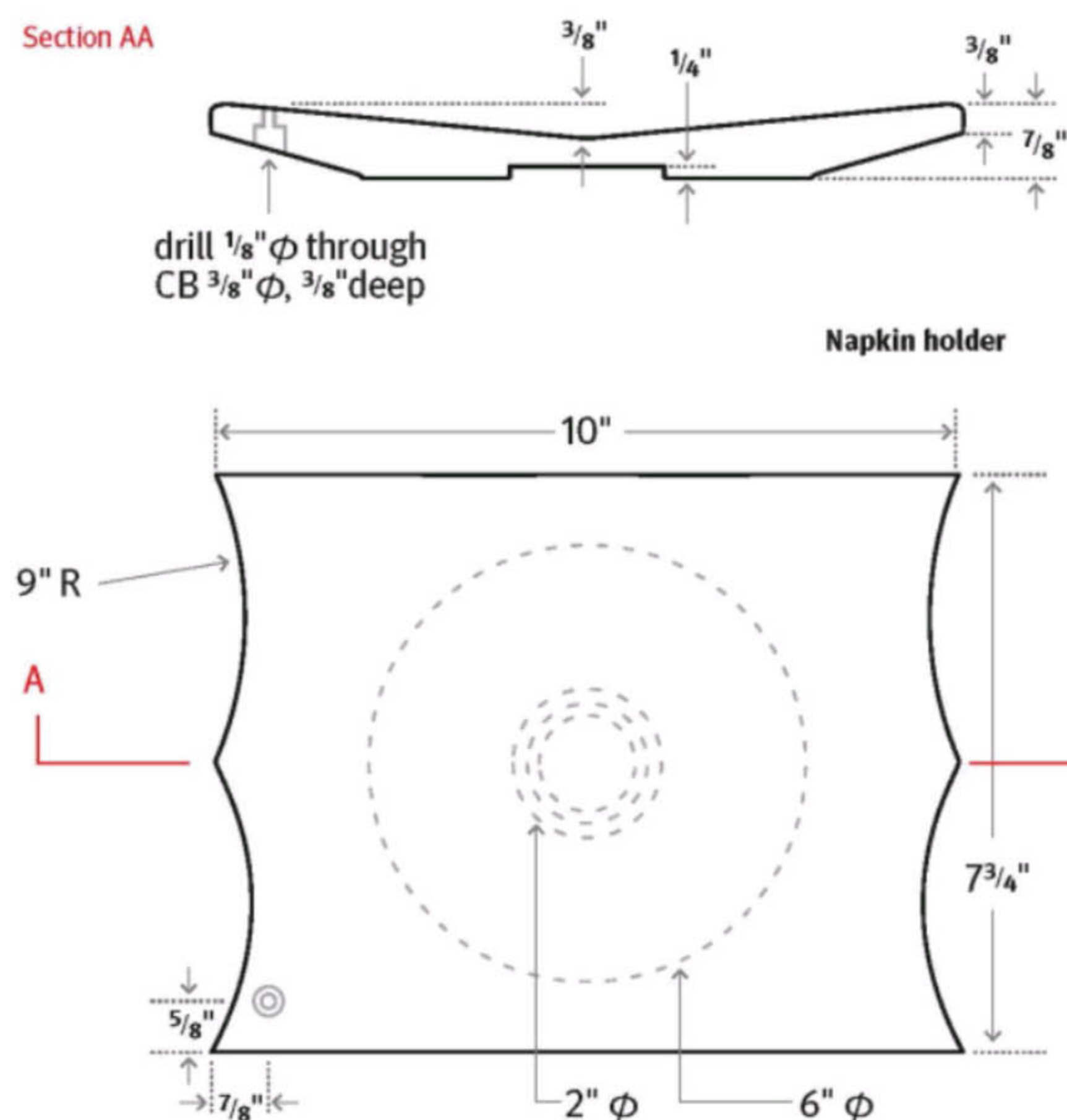
Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- $\frac{3}{8}$ in (10mm) & $\frac{1}{2}$ in (13mm) spindle gouges
- $\frac{1}{8}$ in (3mm) parting tool
- $\frac{1}{16}$ in (2mm) parting tool
- $\frac{1}{4}$ in (6mm) point tool
- $\frac{1}{8}$ in (3mm) drill bit
- $\frac{3}{8}$ in (10mm) drill bit
- Callipers
- Steel rule

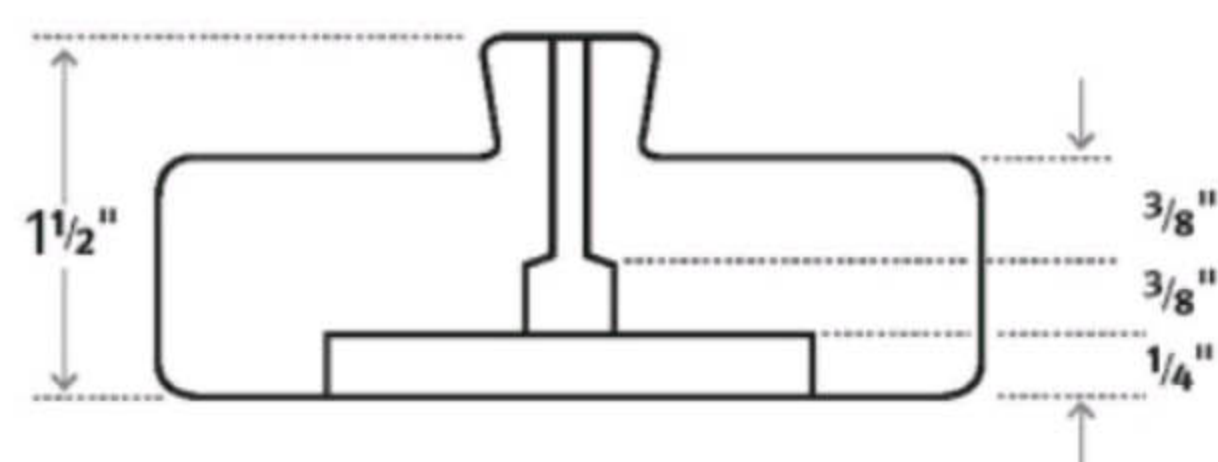
Materials

- One piece hardwood, 10 x $7\frac{3}{4}$ x $\frac{7}{8}$ in (254 x 197 x 22mm)
- One piece contrasting hardwood, $3\frac{1}{2}$ x $3\frac{1}{2}$ x $1\frac{1}{2}$ in (90 x 90 x 38mm)
- One piece of leather thong, 10in (254mm) long
- Spray lacquer or finish of choice

Section AA



Weight

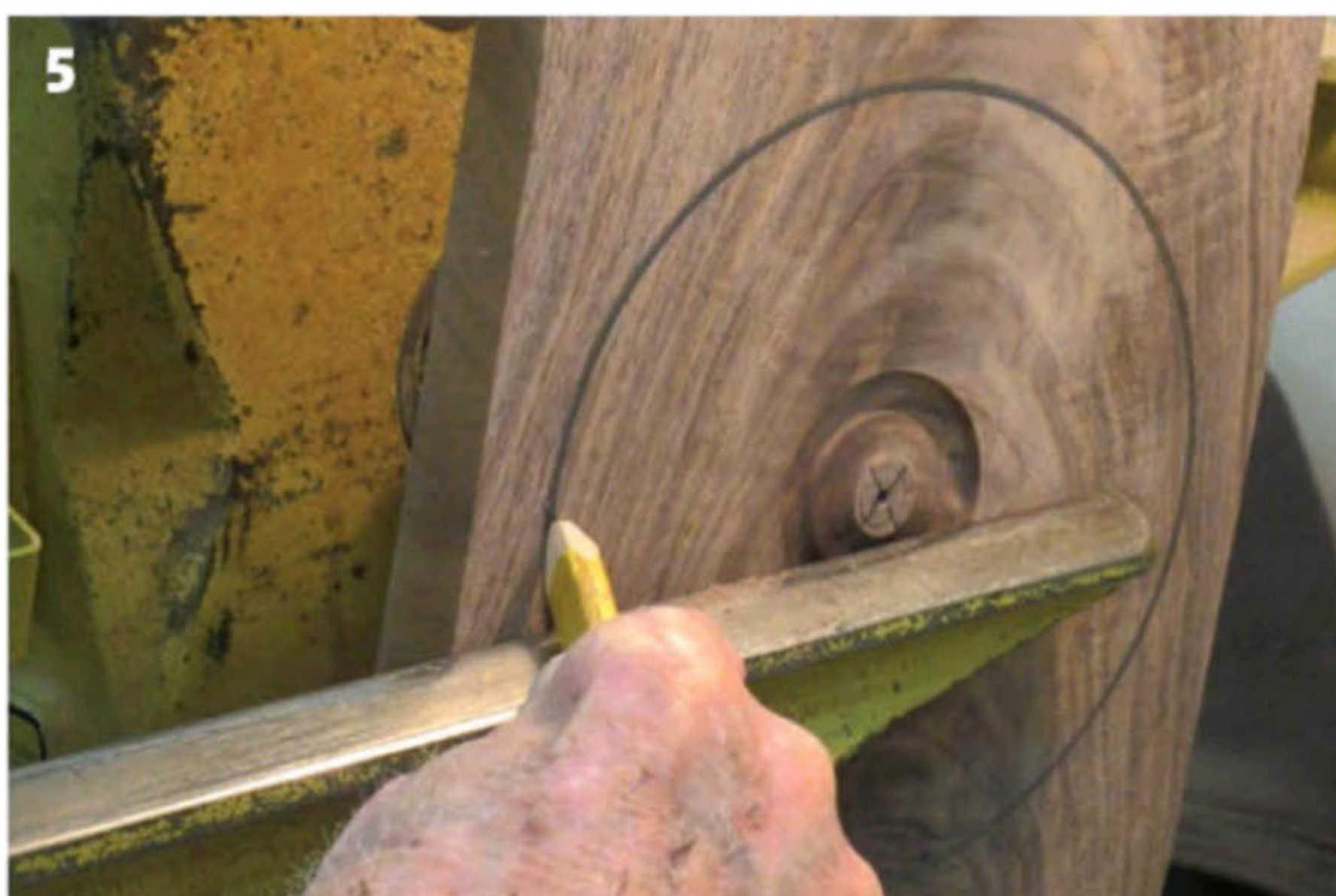
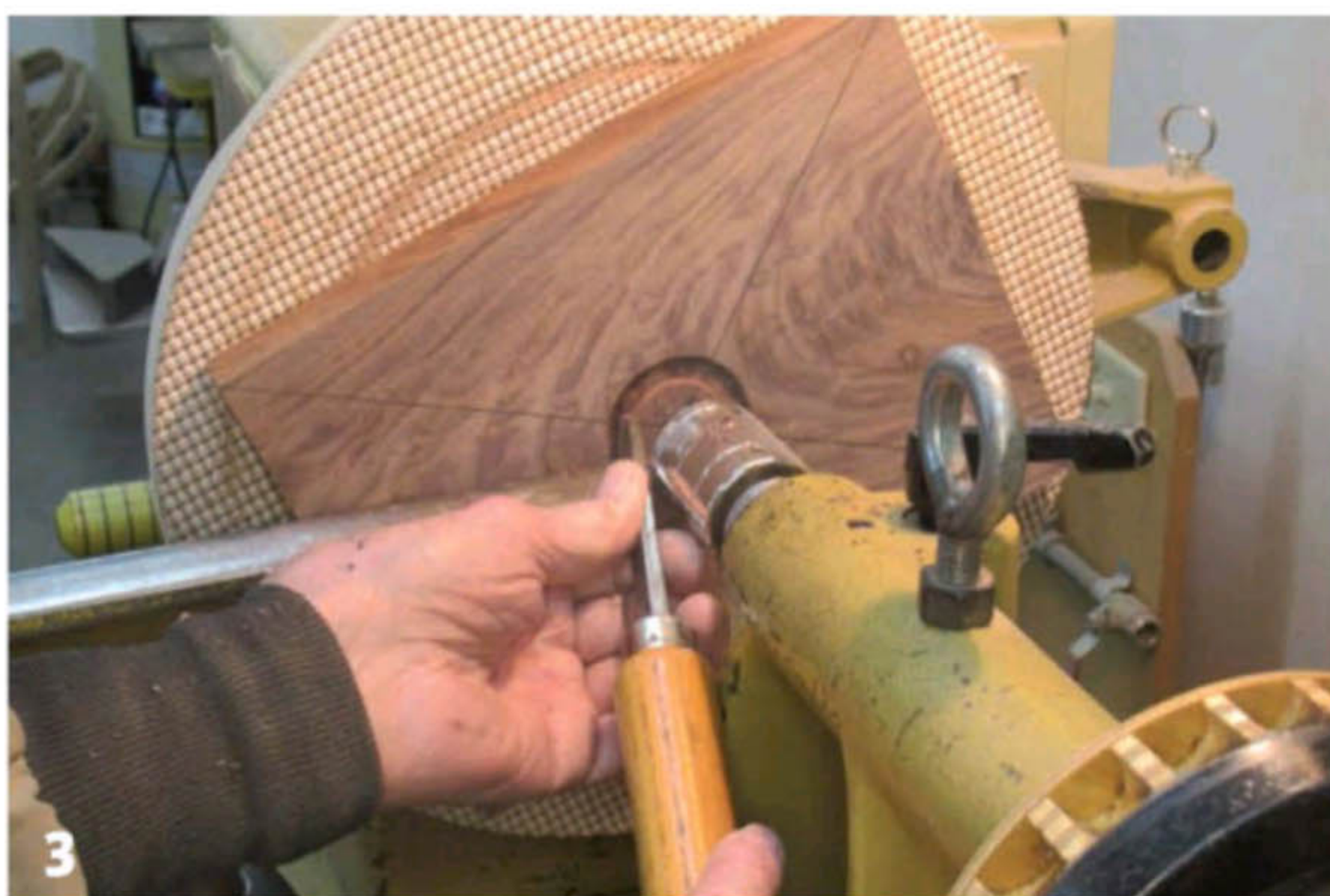


The making

1 Begin this project with one piece 10 x $7\frac{3}{4}$ x $\frac{7}{8}$ in (254 x 197 x 22mm) of hardwood and one piece $3\frac{1}{2}$ x $3\frac{1}{2}$ x $1\frac{1}{2}$ in (90 x 90 x 38mm) of a contrasting hardwood. In this case the large piece is a highly figured walnut crotch blank and the smaller one is a glue-up of contrasting pieces to form a design.

2 Draw lines corner to corner to make an X locating the centre of the blank. Bradawl the centre point.





3 Place the blank against a padded faceplate and secure it in place on centre with pressure from the tailstock. Set the lathe speed down and, with a $\frac{1}{16}$ in (2mm) parting tool, cut a $\frac{1}{4}$ in (6mm) deep slot large enough to fit your chuck in expansion mode.

4 Turn the blank over, mount it on the chuck and cut a similar recess in this side, which will be the bottom of the piece.

5 Turning the piece by hand, mark out about a 6in (152mm) diameter circle which will designate the flat bottom base perimeter.

6 With a $\frac{1}{2}$ in (13mm) spindle gouge or a scraper, begin to taper the bottom from the line just drawn to about $\frac{3}{8}$ in (10mm) thick at the corners. Be careful, make light pull cuts, and take your time. Stop the lathe often and check this surface for uniformity.

7 Start to form the bottom by removing the centre recessed area, making it flat.

8 With a $\frac{1}{4}$ in (6mm) skew laid flat on the toolrest, cut a signing ring and some trim design rings in the recess centre.

9 Using a $\frac{1}{16}$ in (2mm) parting tool, cut a slot about $\frac{1}{8}$ in (3mm) deep on the 6in diameter circle.



10 With a 1/2in (13mm) spindle gouge, complete the final bottom taper cuts from the 6in-diameter base circle to the outer corners. The corners should end up about 1/4in (6mm) thick.

11 Once the bottom is formed, cut a small bead on the 6in circle with a 1/4in (6mm) point tool to trim the flat surface.

12 With the lathe set on low speed, power sand the flat bottom base – only. All sanding starts with 100 grit and progresses through the grits to 350 grit.

13 Turn the lathe off, lock the spindle and power sand the four tapered corner surfaces.

14 Once the power sanding has been completed, final sand all surfaces. Sand by hand with the grain using 400 grit.

15 Turn the piece over and mount it on the chuck in expansion mode. Taper the top surface from the corners to about a 3/8in (10mm) thick centre.

16 Stop the lathe often and check the bottom thickness.





17 The depth of the concaved top surface can be checked by holding a straightedge or, in this case, a steel ruler across the top.



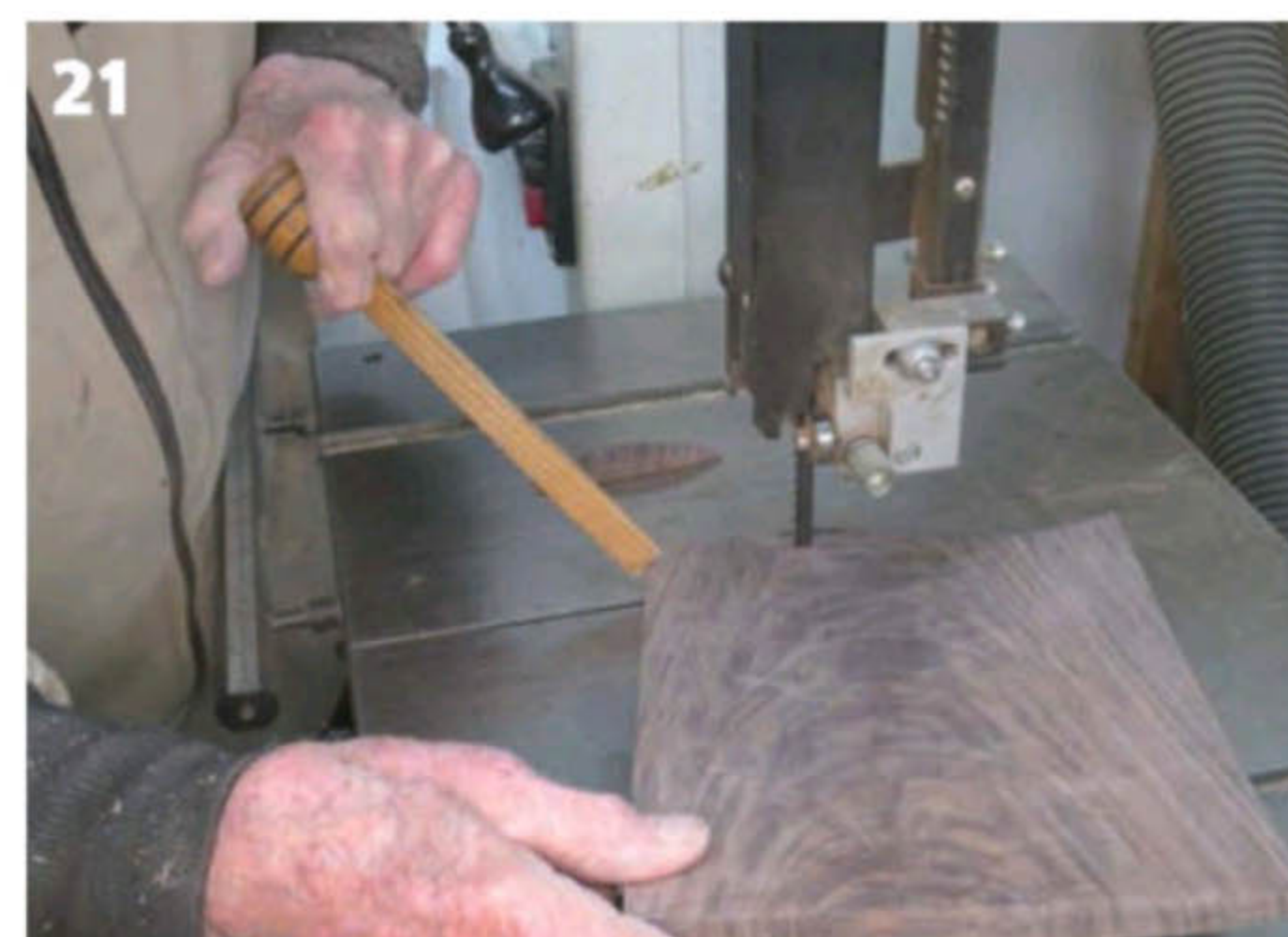
18 When the surface has been completed, with the lathe off, power sand the entire surface as in Step 12.



19 Once the power sanding is complete, final sand by hand. This is done with the grain using 400 grit abrasive, removing all the sanding scratches.



20 To add some unique trim design, cut some scallops in the straight plain ends. Compasses are usually used to draw large circles, however if there is no place to anchor the centre a circular disc really works well. Divide both of the short ends in half, mark these centre points, and draw 9in (229mm) diameter segments of circles from these marks to the outside corners.



21 On the bandsaw, using a push stick, tilt the piece slightly so the bottom is on the saw table and cut the four circular segments out. Take your time and follow the line closely.



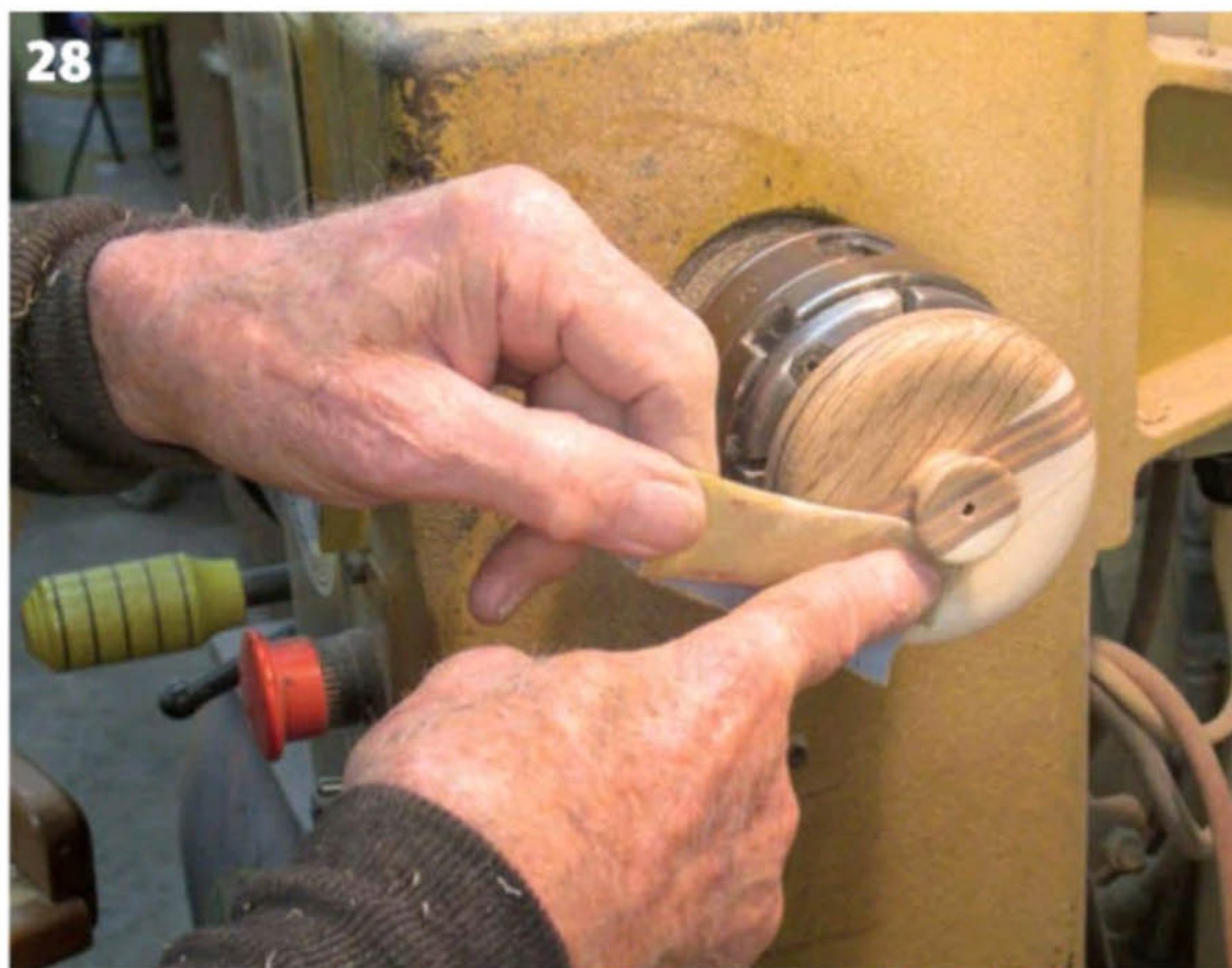
22 Sand all four cut surfaces with the end of a belt sander or by hand to remove saw marks. Again, I like to do all final sanding by hand.

23 Mount the 3½ x 3½ x 1½in (90 x 90 x 38mm) piece against a padded faceplate and secure it in place with pressure from the tailstock. Then with a ¾in (10mm) spindle gouge, turn a tenon about ¼in (6mm) long, large enough to fit your chuck jaws.



24 Remove the faceplate and mount the piece in a chuck using the tenon just cut. Face off this bottom side and use a narrow parting tool to cut a ¼in (6mm) deep recess in this surface, large enough to fit the chuck jaws in expansion mode.





25 Slightly round over the outside corners and with a $\frac{1}{4}$ in (6mm) point tool add a couple of trim rings to form the bottom surface of the weight. Sand the bottom surfaces through 400 grit.

26 Turn the piece over and mount it on the chuck. Then with a $\frac{3}{8}$ in (10mm) spindle gouge, shape the top surface leaving about a $\frac{3}{4}$ in (19mm) knob in the centre. True up the side and round over the top. Add a decorative trim burn line if so desired.

27 When the top surface is complete, drill a $\frac{1}{8}$ in (3mm) hole through the centre of it. This is accomplished using a $\frac{1}{8}$ in (3mm) drill bit held in a Jacobs chuck mounted in the tailstock. Remember to always hold the chuck, applying pressure towards the tailstock to secure the Morse taper in its socket.

28 Sand all surfaces through 400 grit.

29 With a drill motor, drill a $\frac{1}{8}$ in (3mm) hole through the corner of the napkin holder. Insert a $\frac{3}{8}$ in (10mm) drill bit in the drill motor and drill about a $\frac{3}{8}$ in deep counter bore in the bottom of both the napkin holder and the weight.

30 With the holes drilled, final sand all surfaces and apply your finish of choice. In this case it is multiple coats of gloss lacquer. Once cured, thread the leather thong into the $\frac{1}{8}$ in (3mm) holes of both pieces, tie a knot in the ends and pull the thong back to recess the knots into the $\frac{3}{8}$ in (10mm) counter bore.

31 Trim off the thong ends, add some special napkins and your napkin holder is ready to be enjoyed. ●



Community news

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

Clubbing together

I'm pretty new to turning having only tried it once at school in a woodworking class and then a couple of times with my dad in his shed about 30 years ago. I moved to Scotland for work and didn't think anything more of it.

Dad was in bad health for many years so reluctantly 'hung up' his turning tools and, when he passed away, my dear old mum didn't have the heart or the necessity to empty his beloved shed.

Last year she decided to downsize and by then I had moved nearer to home. She asked if I could help with the removals, and I discovered that the passing years had made me generally interested in woodworking and nostalgic for my dad in his hobby.

Only remembering about 5% of what he'd showed me, I felt safer with those (now blunt) tools to take some instruction. I thought, take a course or join a club? I'm so glad I chose the latter and Googled 'woodturning clubs near me' – the closest was only 10 miles away.

Having no idea what to expect, I nervously arrived at the next regular meeting, hanging back near the door. I was instantly ushered in, introduced, welcomed, advised and instructed with a great demo... and even the coffee and biscuits were good.

This is my very first finished piece. Obviously, I've a lot to learn and as I'm a few years from retirement, I have limited time. But I feel like I've set up a new hobby and friend network for when I'm there. With a number of members' help and advice, dad's lathe is now in my shed, has been restored and the tools sharpened to the perfection I can only hope to do justice.

I like to think he would find it funny, given my complete lack of interest in my youth and inability to comprehend his love of whizzing wood and flying shavings.

So, to round this up, mum bought me a subscription to *Woodturning* for my birthday, as she used to for my dad before he gave it up, and I've a folder of projects I'm going to start working through.

John Elder





Teeing off

I enjoy experimenting with resin and have created a golf trophy with hundreds of plastic golf tees cast in resin, with a wood base. Here are photos of the process and the final piece.

Adrian Jacobs



Woodworks 2025

Tudor Rose Woodturners are running a two day event in Daventry...

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The Worshipful Company of Turners

News from the Craft Committee

Woodturning accredited delivery centre opens at St Andrew's Healthcare Workbridge

Workbridge, a vocational education service located in Northampton, has recently been approved as a Certificate in Woodturning accredited delivery centre. Workbridge is part of St Andrew's Healthcare, a leading complex mental health charity in the UK.

Workbridge has a woodturning studio which offers bespoke workshops to patients, adult education pathways, youth offenders, charities and the general public.

The Worshipful Company of Turners donated a wheelchair access lathe to facilitate a fully inclusive workshop for people across the charity and community who live with mobility impairment.

The master, Christopher Scott, presented the wheelchair access lathe on his visit to Workbridge, accompanied by upper warden Andy Ewens and members of the Craft Committee Training Portfolio Peter Bradwick and Steven Gordon.

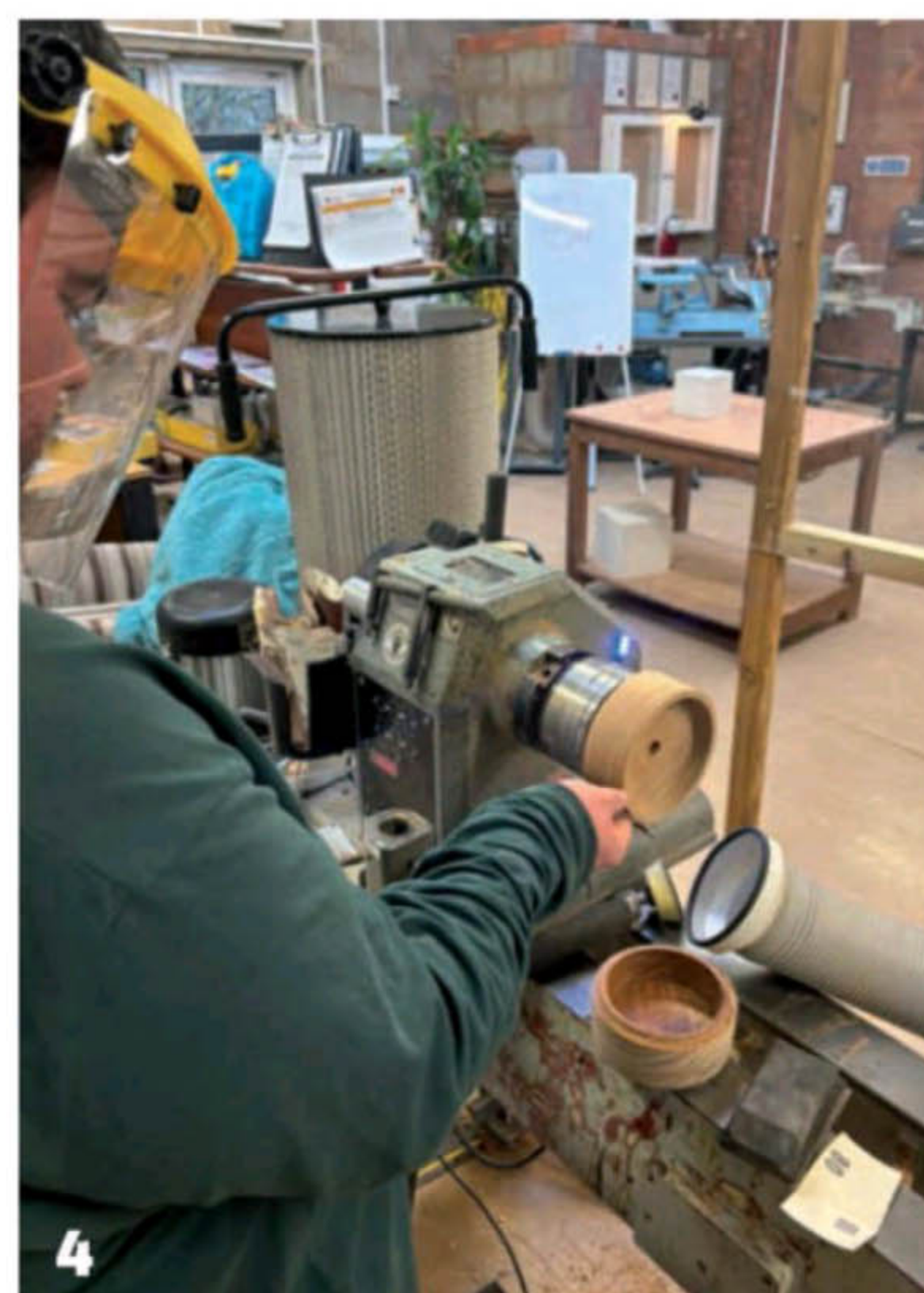
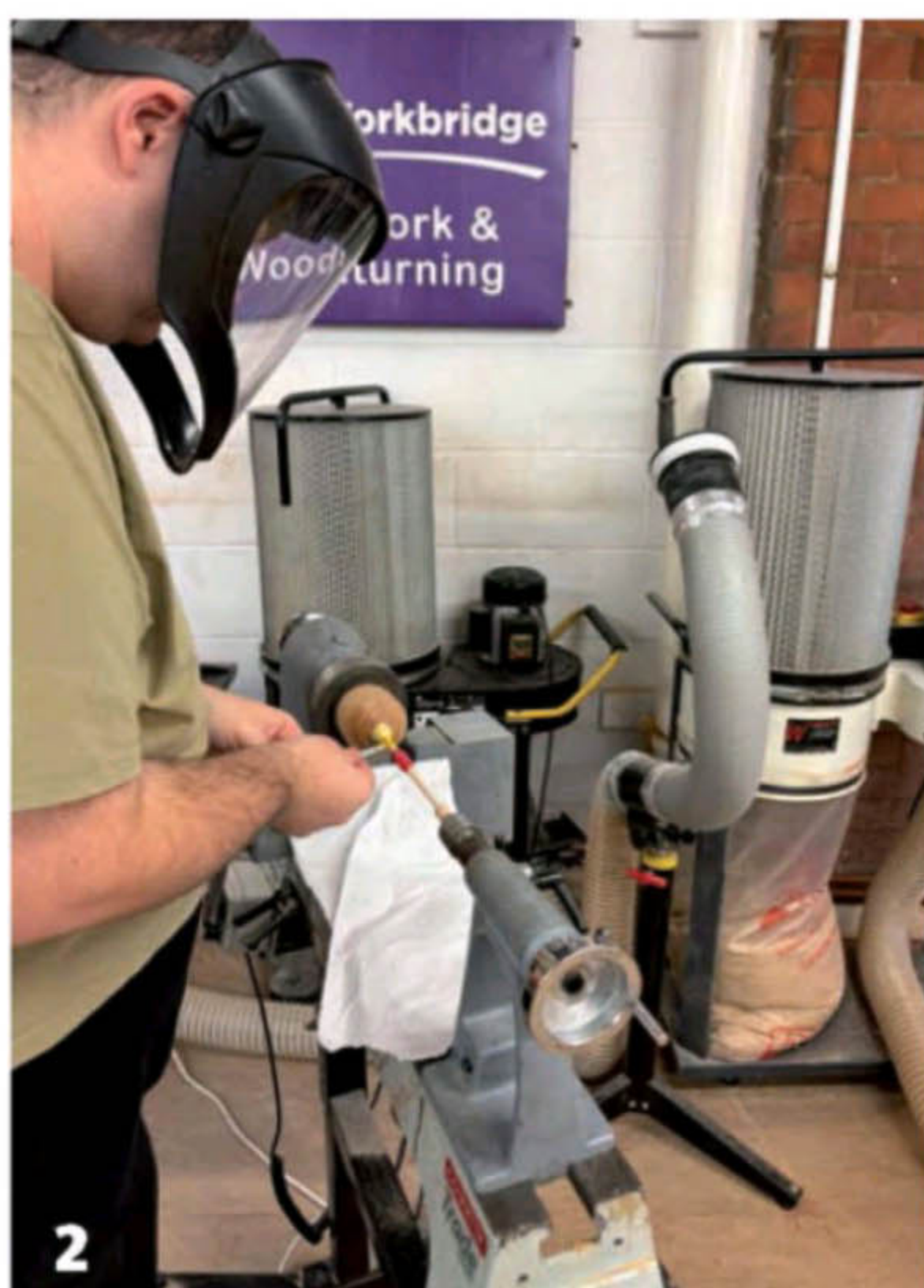
How the joy of woodturning is benefiting people with complex mental health needs

"I feel I belong as a deaf man, and that I've found something I'm actually good at."

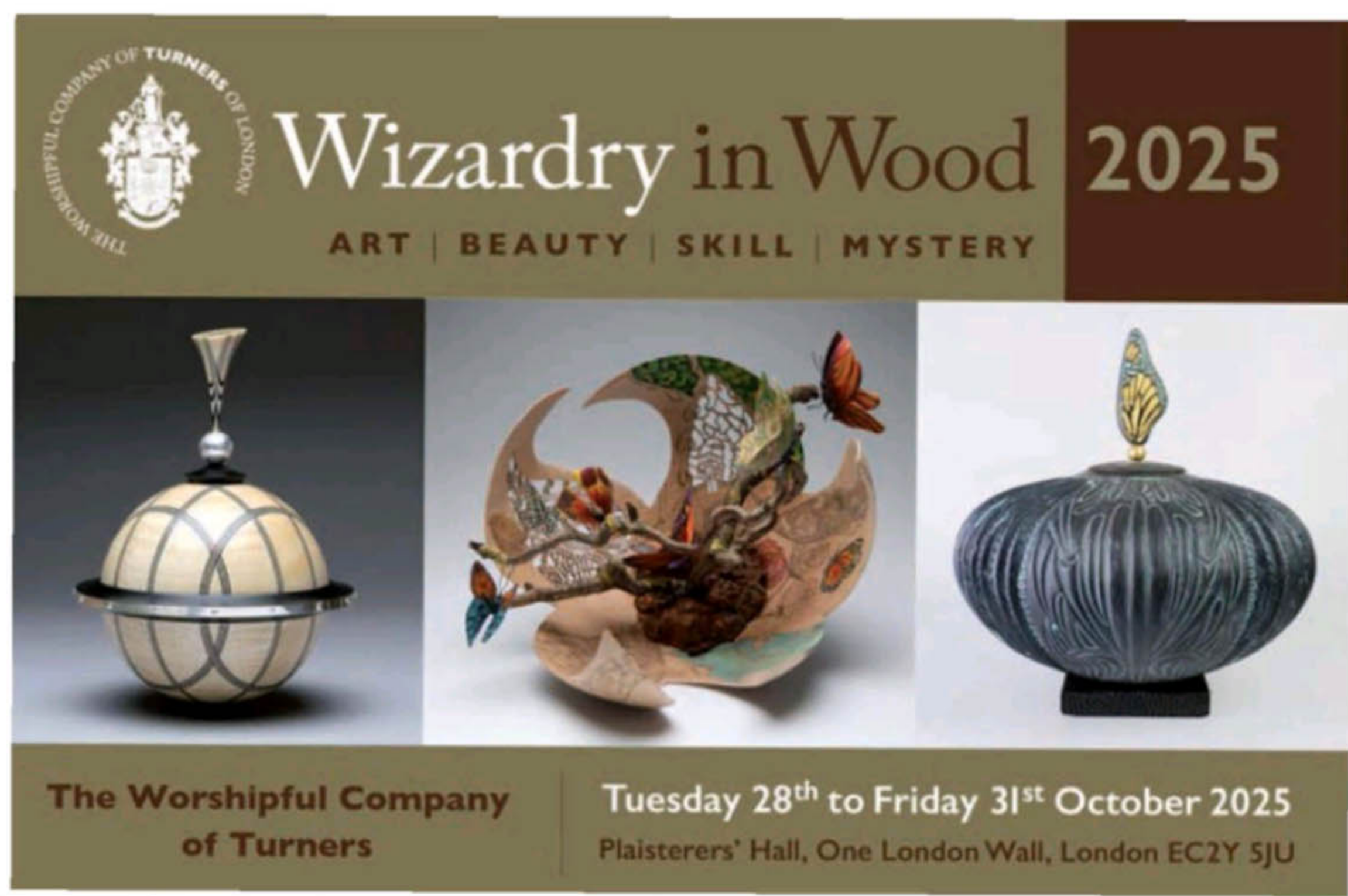
These positive words are from a man who is currently residing at St Andrew's Healthcare as a patient.



The 'something' he has discovered is woodturning, a historic craft which is now on offer to patients as part of their therapeutic package. The sessions are held at Workbridge. The sessions have been developed by woodturning expert Stuart Whitney, who has devoted a lot of his spare time to honing the craft and ensuring the sessions are accessible to as many people as possible.



1 Wheelchair access lathe presented by the master **2-4** Community service users at the lathe
5 Presentation of the Certificate in Woodturning to Stuart Whitney by the master **6** Students' work at Workbridge **7** The workshop at Workbridge



Stuart said: 'Now, the woodturning workshops are part of the adult vocational pathways and wellbeing programmes on offer to people being supported by St Andrew's, and also as part of a community referral pathway, which is open to the general public.'

'Regardless of the route being followed, the aim is to make all our course attendees feel safe, valued, and part of a team when they walk through the workshop door.'

'The primary motivation is to support those that want to experience woodturning and to guide them along their woodturning journey, whether it be a one-day workshop, a certificate course, a half-day course or as part of a referred wellbeing therapeutic programme.'

The Worshipful Company of Turners, giving participants the opportunity to gain an official woodturning accreditation as they learn the craft, is also supporting the team.

For many patients, the art of woodturning has given them purpose, with one person saying: 'I've never done anything like this before and although I was a bit frightened of the machines at first, I got over my fears. I believe woodturning has given me confidence in many other areas in life. I feel capable.'

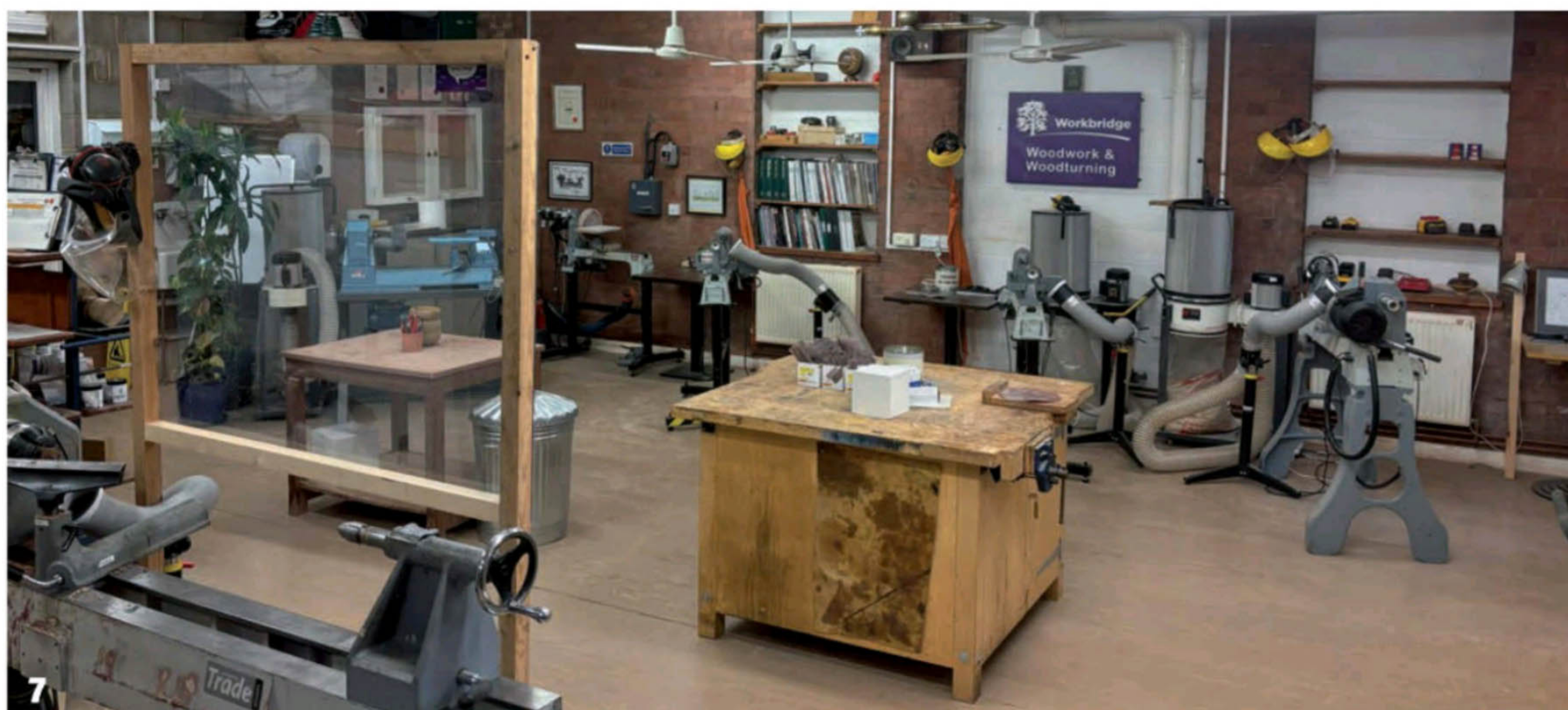
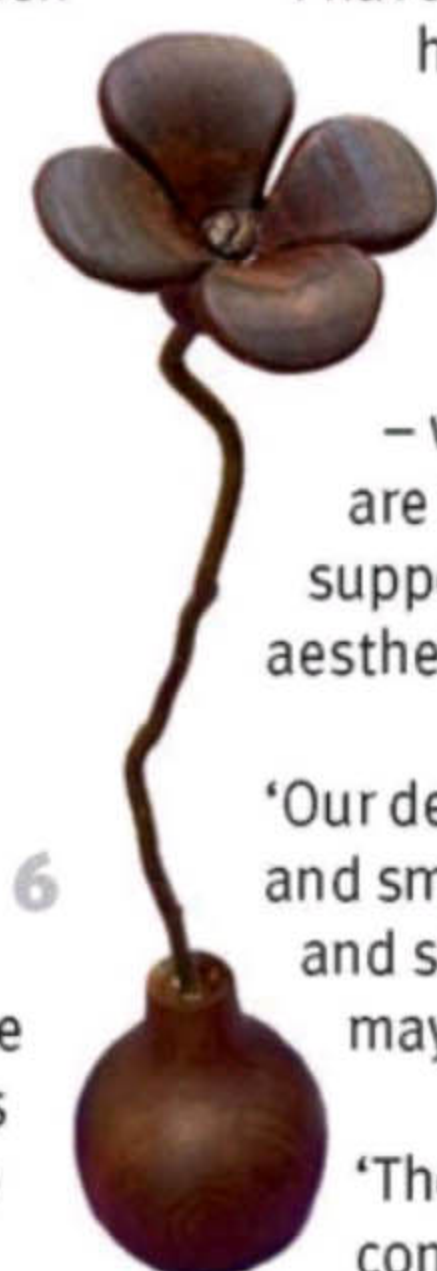
Another patient said that taking part in the sessions has been a 'life saver'.

They added: 'I know that I can just walk into the studio on a bad day and forget all of my worries. I have learnt so much already and will gladly keep learning. I have enjoyed working with everybody and I have felt that my confidence has grown immensely. Woodturning has literally become my safe space.'

Senior occupational therapist at St Andrew's, Dominic Carlisle has acknowledged the therapeutic benefits of the woodturning sessions. He said: 'Patients enter the workshop – which has become their place of calm and creativity – and are introduced to an un-crafted rough piece of wood. They are supported to transform it into a functional, artistic, practical and aesthetic piece of craft.'

'Our deaf patients not only see the wood, they feel it, touch it and smell it. This process has no pressure, but the accomplishment and skill they benefit from can give them meaning which they may never have experienced before.'

'The sense of achievement intrinsically gives both hope and connection to others and the community.'



For more information about the woodturning workshops please contact Stuart Whitney, Workbridge Creative Specialist: swhitney@stah.org

GET A GRIP



Mark Palma suggests ways to aid tool handling

An annoying development in my life is that my body appears to be ageing without my express consent. Things that came easily in the past seem to create more aches and pains than I certainly would like. Some days at the lathe I seem to do fine and other days I get sore. One of my problem areas is that my hands appear to have developed arthritis (and I am far too young for such an affliction). So in addition to hand exercises and stretching, I have rethought how I hold my turning tools and the handles I use.



1 My hands do not like cold. One small suggestion I will make is that keeping a hand warmer around my shop and picking it up between turning sessions seems to really help my hands stay more limber

I am not an expert on hand exercises or other ways to physically help our grip as we age, so I will defer to others to advise us all on that topic. I will focus on ways I have found to make my tools more comfortable to hold and use. These little adjustments, along with taking breaks to stretch my hands, have let me keep turning and enjoying my time at the lathe without being in pain. I hope one or more of these suggestions may help others.

Pick tool handles that fit your hands

We often pick tools for the wrong reasons: the brand, the grind on the edge of the tool or because some demonstrator said it was 'the' tool to use. Most manufacturers are trying to balance a series of competing factors in marketing a tool. Hand size, grip strength and how we hold the tools in our hands vary widely from one turner to another. They are also trying to keep tools affordable, so there is only so much money allocated to tool handle design.

The odds that you get the tool steel you want, the flute design you desire and a handle that fits your hand perfectly are about the same as winning a lottery. So now I either modify handles to make them more comfortable or purchase tools without handles. When I make or choose a handle, I try to match the handle to how I plan to use the tool and how I like to hold it for more comfort in use. By that I mean some tools I hold right behind the ferrule where with others my grip falls to the back of the handle – it depends on the tool and the application.

Think about how you hold your tools and try adjusting your grip slightly up and down the shaft to see if you get a more comfortable and controllable result. Borrow tools from friends and try turning with them for an hour or so and see if they feel the same, better or worse in your hands.



2

2 Here are a few examples of the types of commercial handles available for purchase. Multi-sided tools do not roll around and seem to feel good in my hands for extended turning sessions. The tools with vinyl grips are used daily in my shop

3 One of the benefits of being a woodturner is being able to make handles that fit our tools, our hands and our use. Take the time to make handles you like to hold or use timber that has meaning to you. Enjoy their feel in your hands every time you reach for them



3

Sometimes a small difference in diameter can greatly change how the tool feels in my hand. I have found some tools work better with large-diameter handles (this seems to work well for tools where I need to have a finesse and precision that is only used for small, but important, intervals. I have no idea why that matters to me). For tools that I use for extended periods of time, such as a bowl or spindle gouge, I find that spending the time to find the right handle really helps me. I believe all of my gouges now either have a commercially made replacement handle, or a handle I have made specifically for that tool. Tools that have cushion grips or multi-sided handles have become my favourite for extended turning sessions.

You are a woodturner so do not hesitate to make custom handles for your tools. I have removed many handles from tools or saved money by purchasing unhandled tools and turning my own. I suggest you do not turn matching handles, but instead think about the individual tool and its use in your hands. Then turn a handle to fit you, depending on how you use that specific tool. Some of my tools have very short handles for fine, small-detail work, some thick handles and some in between. When one of my apple trees died, part of a branch became a favourite tool handle. It's a good continuation of that tree in my lifetime as I originally planted it decades ago. My tool handles have an oil finish, but do what you like.

Almost all turning tools that come from the factory with a handle allow you to remove the tool steel from the handle. Some require a little heat to be applied to the shank by the ferrule (do this in small increments as you do not want to change the temper of the steel or start a fire). Just getting the steel a little warm (under 200°F) is usually sufficient if the steel was glued into the handle. Many handles are just press-fit and will come off. I put the tool shank in the wood jaws of my bench vice and can usually twist the handle back and forth to break the press-fit bond. If all else fails, you can cut the ferrule in half carefully with a rotary tool then saw or chisel away wood to release the tool from the handle.

You can choose to purchase replacement handles and several styles exist. Some are round, others multi sided. Some of these commercial replacement handles have hollow handles that allow adding lead shot to either dampen vibration or add weight. Some turners like a heavier handle, particularly for roughing out large blanks on the lathe. If that is a feature that may help you in the type of turning you do, consider trying one in your shop.

Before you consider purchasing a replacement handle, measure the actual shaft diameter of the tool you want to rehandle to make sure it will fit. Just because it is marketed as a 1/2in bowl gouge does not ensure the shaft really measures 1/2in. I have been surprised more than once when you take a calliper to the tool shaft. If the handle has an aluminium or mild steel insert you may be able to carefully enlarge it with a drill bit to make additional clearance. If the shaft is undersized, some handles have long enough set screws to create a tight grip on the shaft, but if the tool is way off it may be a problem. In those settings, just buy a new unhandled tool and put it into the replacement handle. Don't sacrifice your safety to use the wrong size tool in a replacement handle.



4 As the old adage goes – measure twice, buy once. Not all tools labelled as having a particular diameter actually measure as advertised. Take the time to get the right size replacement handle for your tool

Square shanked tools present their own challenges when looking for replacement handles. You need to measure from corner to corner to determine the correct diameter hole in the handle. If you are using a handle, you made you will need to epoxy the square shank into the round hole. If you are using a commercial handle, you need long enough set screws to reach down and tighten on the shaft, while having sufficient number of threads in the handle to safely hold the tool. In a perfect world with any of these handles when the set screws are tight on the shaft the top of the set screw should be level with the top of the handle and not protruding. I frequently change the set screw in the handle to achieve full thread engagement and not create a hazard with a protruding screw by keeping extra set screws on hand in different lengths.



5 Many turners use some form of tape to wrap tool handles. Others use some rope, or a combination of both products. The blue tape in the photo is a tape originally developed for veterinarians and often sold as a wound-care product. The black tape is a silicone product that sticks to itself. Neither leaves a residue on a handle and both work well

Ways to enhance your handle's grip

People in their workshops come up with ingenious ways to solve problems. Ways to make a handle on a tool more comfortable to the user is a longstanding and frequent project. I will just touch on a few of the possibilities, although in my research I came up with ideas that went from brilliant to absurd. You can make your own decision about where you choose to fall on the spectrum.

It seems that every sport where a handle is involved has developed its own 'grip tape' to enhance a player's success. If you like those products or have one laying around from your prior sporting endeavours, use it. Some people spiral a thin cord underneath the tape to create a varied raised surface. Feel free to try that as well if you think it helps your circumstance. I prefer the silicone tape that sticks to itself when wrapped. It comes with a cellophane layer on the roll to keep the tape apart until applied. I have had good luck with that tape through the years. It is meant to be stretched as applied to create a tight hold. Another tape that is quite popular is a wrap originally designed for veterinarians and horse enthusiasts. It is now sold as a medical product. It has an open weave, comes in bright colours, and sticks well without leaving any residue. It does get dirty with use but is very comfortable in the hand.

For small-diameter tools I often apply a sleeve of electrical shrink-wrap tubing. This product is great, although it only comes in small sizes. If you lose the caps on the T handle from your chuck key, make a replacement from this product and it will last for years.

There are several 'grip in a can' products on the market. They seem to either be designed to brush on to the tool to create a grip, or you dip the handle into the can to coat the handle. I confess mixed results with this product category in my shop. It has worked on small projects, such as screwdriver and pliers handles, when I opened the can and dipped the product right away. Unfortunately, the shelf life of the product seemed limited and after sitting on the shelf it wasn't suitable to use when I tried to do another batch. The brush-on type seemed to either be too watery to build a thick coat, or so thick it wouldn't flow to brush. Maybe you will have better luck – it could just be operator error on my part.

Unique products that have worked well in my shop are 'cold shrink wrap handles'. I have found them sold under various names, although they suspiciously look like they all come from the same factory. The premise of the grip is a thick rubber sleeve that is held open with an inner core of plastic. You slide the tool into the sleeve, position it carefully (you only get one shot at getting it right) and then you pull the plastic 'thread' on the inner sleeve. As you pull the thread the core is pulled from the far side of the sleeve towards you and the handle starts grabbing the tool handle. You just keep pulling this long thread and the grip forms tightly along the handle as you pull. If everything goes right, you end up with a perfectly formed grip (and a pile of plastic to recycle). They come in different lengths and diameters and seem to sell from between \$15-22 in my area. I have had some on tools for over a decade and they look the same now as when I installed them. I find they help me a lot, but everyone is different in their tastes.



6 Heat-shrink tubing, sold for electrical applications, works well for small-diameter auxiliary grips. You can see here how it makes this centre punch easier to identify and grab



7 These cold shrink-wrap grips have worked out well in my shop. The grip formed perfectly to both the round and octagon shaped tool in the picture. Both have been on these two tools for over 10 years and they remain like new. They have a thick cushion to them and seem to make a big difference for me during extended turning sessions

Better Allen wrenches

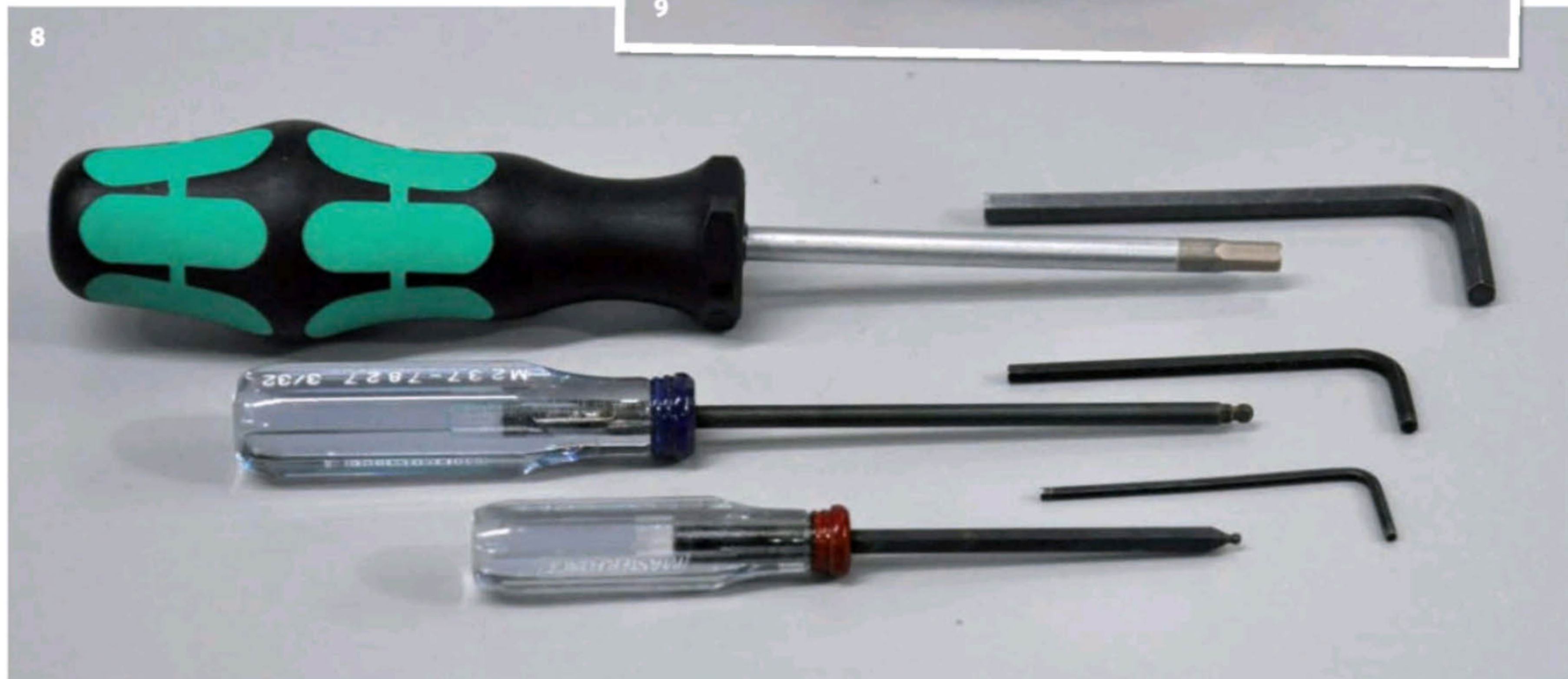
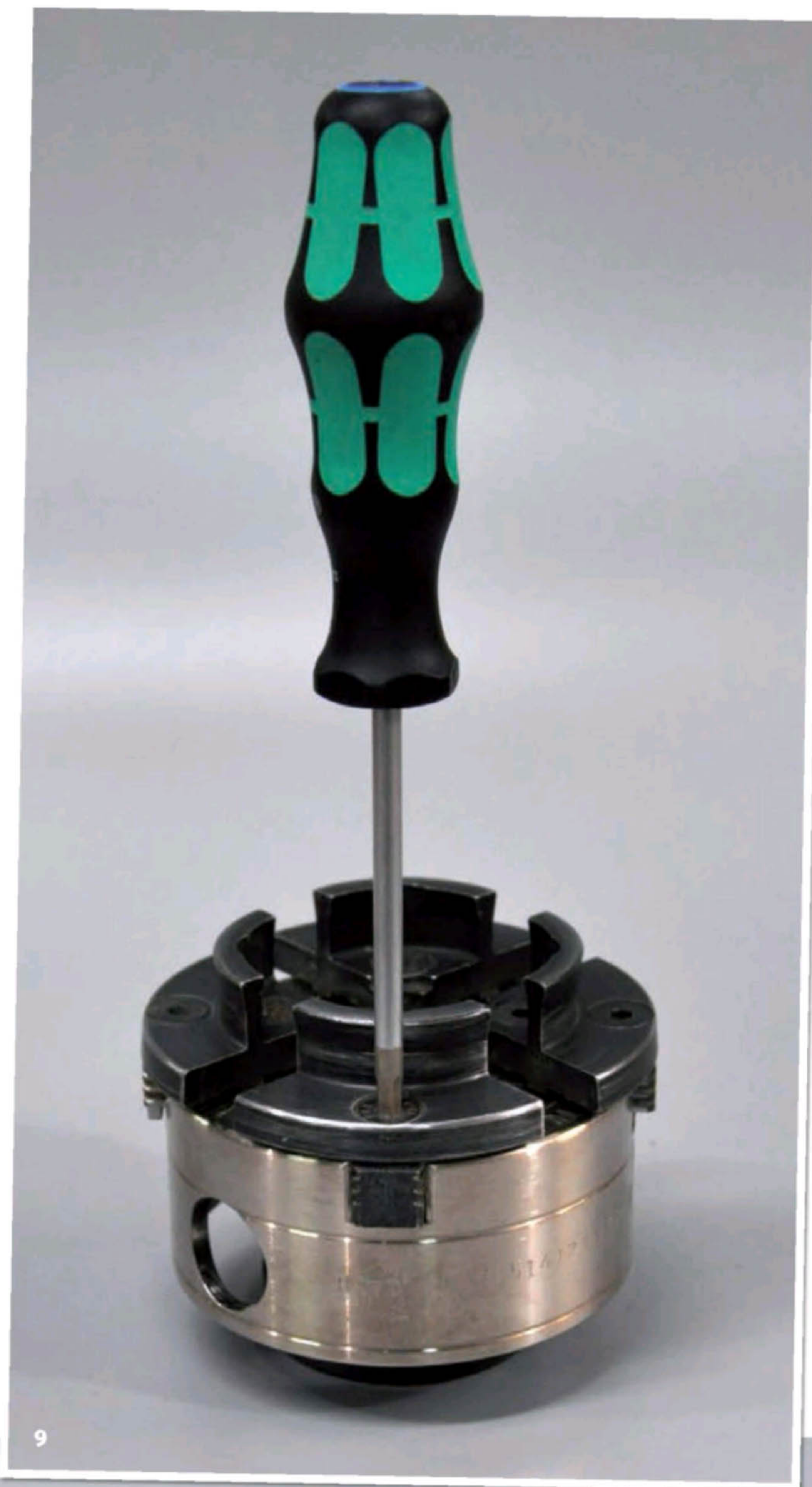
The Allen screw is used in many applications in woodturning equipment. The screws hold well, keep screw heads from hurting us and stay in tight. The wrenches supplied with Allen screws are a different story. The little L-shaped wrenches seem harder to hold all the time. There are big T-handled wrenches, but they can be bulky and result in overtightening for many applications. I have purchased several Allen wrenches with screwdriver-style handles and love them. They are easy to find, pick up and hold. If your fingers lack some dexterity, they seem to help position Allen screws into the threaded holes and allow easier torque control. I find that, for the little screws in the centre of carbide insert tools, these screwdriver-style tools make rotating or changing a bit easier. On my chucks I do not hesitate to change jaws now that I can just use a screwdriver-style Allen wrench. I do not buy sets, just the few used in my tools, with the 4mm being the most common.

Replacement knobs

Some tools and jigs seem to have these knobs that are not very user friendly. I am sure they were cheap to acquire, but my mature fingers just do not seem to grip them well. If you resort to grabbing them with pliers, then the cheap plastic will probably either shatter or cut you if you grab them with your hand. I buy replacement knobs for tools. The lever style and the big star knobs are far more user friendly to my hands. If you struggle with a knob on some tool, look at the thread size and consider purchasing replacements. I found an affordable kit online with a lifetime's supply.

8 The screwdriver-handled Allen wrenches on the left are far easier on the hands than their cousins on the right. The familiar screwdriver grip makes tool control and threading the screw into the tapped threads more precise. They are also easier to find if dropped on the floor, so I am told!

9 You will not have an excuse to avoid changing chuck jaws with these tools. The 4mm Allen screwdriver fits my chucks perfectly and helps me change jaws without applying too much or little torque



Better wrenches and spanners

I am sometimes frustrated by the lack of compatibility of lathe wrench sizes. A lathe may use a certain size large wrench or spanner to lock the headstock. A chuck may use another, a faceplate yet another and soon you have a pile of cheap stamped wrenches that work, but are less than optimal, and certainly not comfortable.

I recently found these Japanese adjustable wrenches online and love them. They have a short handle, thin jaw profiles and can open to handle a large range of adjustability. The combination makes them work great for all the situations when you need a wrench at the lathe. The comfortable handle is far more welcome in the hand compared to a piece of stamped steel.



10 Here are a few styles of replacement knobs you would find in use in my shop. If a tool or jig has a knob that is hard for you to turn, look at options. The larger-diameter round knobs with finger grooves and lever-style knobs are easier on the hands



11 This Japanese-style adjustable wrench can replace all those stamped spanners that come with lathe accessories. They are far easier on the hand and work well in my shop



12 The little Allen screws on carbide insert tools are far easier to change with a screwdriver-style wrench. This one has a ball end to find the tiny screw hole even at an angle



13 On any replacement handle that uses set screws, you want full engagement of the threads in the handle, yet the screws should be slightly flush or below the surface of the handle to prevent injury. This may require you to replace the factory set screws with longer or shorter ones depending on the situation

“
Think about how you hold your tools and try adjusting your grip slightly up and down the shaft to see if you get a more comfortable and controllable result
”



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Candlestick

Sue Harker shows how to turn a candle holder from yew logs

This article shows how I made my interpretation of another candle holder I came across made from glass. A lot of my inspiration comes from glass items, however wooden versions are more solid than the glass versions, which are often hollow.

This difference can impact on the shape that can be produced successfully. Here the half-bead and extended cove shapes taper in size from top to bottom, which can have an impact on the centre of gravity. To overcome the bulk of the weight being at the top of the candle holder, I have reduced the height of the stem and increased the weight of the base. There is a lot of measuring and sizing involved in this turning so several pairs of spring callipers would be useful.

I would suggest sketching the shape of the candle holder stem with all the crucial measurements written at the side of each shape. This will help greatly when turning the piece, and it will also help if you want to turn a pair of matching candle holders. If turning a matching pair, turn the shapes for both stems before sanding and parting off. This will allow you the freedom to put the first turned stem back on to the lathe for altering should the second stem not turn out as planned. When happy with both stems, they can be sanded, finished and parted off.



The making

1 Secure a steb centre into the headstock and a revolving steb centre into the tailstock. Mount a yew log measuring approx. 55mm diameter x 170mm long on the lathe between the two centres. Remove any loose bark from the log and turn to a cylinder. A spindle roughing gouge is used for this.

2 At one end, cut a chucking tenon the correct size for your chuck using a $\frac{1}{8}$ in parting tool. To help size the tenon, mark the required diameter on the end of the timber and cut to that mark.

3 Remove the timber from the lathe and mount in the chuck using the chucking tenon. Replace the revolving steb centre with a standard revolving centre and pull the tail drive up for support, locating with the hole already in the timber. Measure and mark approx. 140mm along the length of timber from the tail drive end. Cut two widths of the tool to the left of that mark. This will define the bottom of the candle holder. The surplus timber will be used to cut a tenon for securing the stem to the base and for parting off.



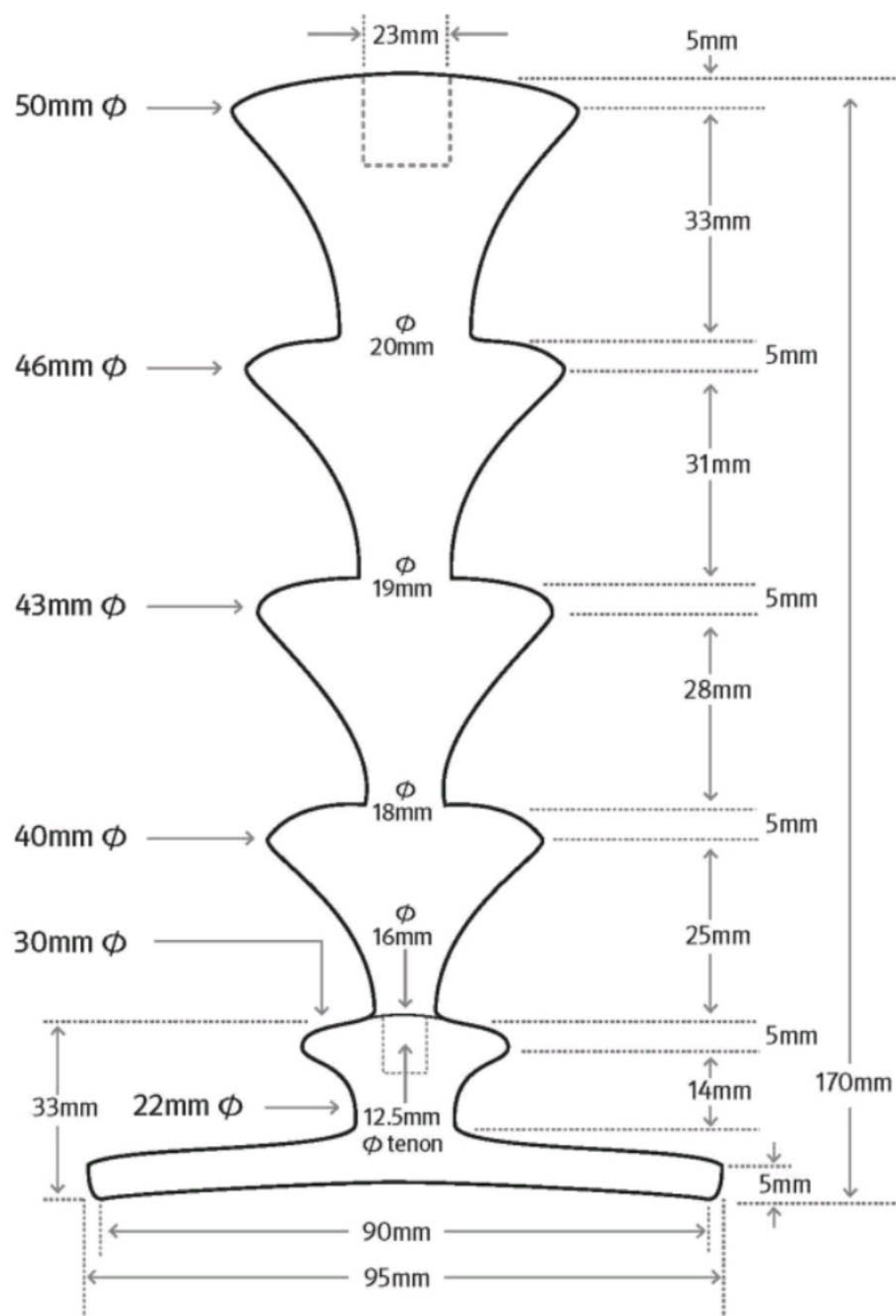
Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- Spindle roughing gouge
- 1/8in parting tool
- 3/8in fingernail profile spindle gouge
- 3/8in standard grind bowl gouge
- 3/8in long grind bowl gouge
- 1/4in standard grind bowl gouge
- Spring callipers
- Steel ruler
- Jacobs chuck with 7/8in and 1/2in Forstner bits
- Steb centre, revolving steb centre and revolving centre
- Drill press with 1 7/8in (or the correct size for your chuck) Forstner bit fitted

Materials

- Yew log measuring approx. 55mm diameter x 170mm long
- Piece of yew measuring 100 x 100 x 35mm thick for the base
- Scrap piece of timber approx. 50 x 50 x 50mm long for the jam chuck
- Brass candle cup insert
- Superglue
- Chestnut cellulose sanding sealer
- Chestnut cut and polish
- Chestnut wood wax 22

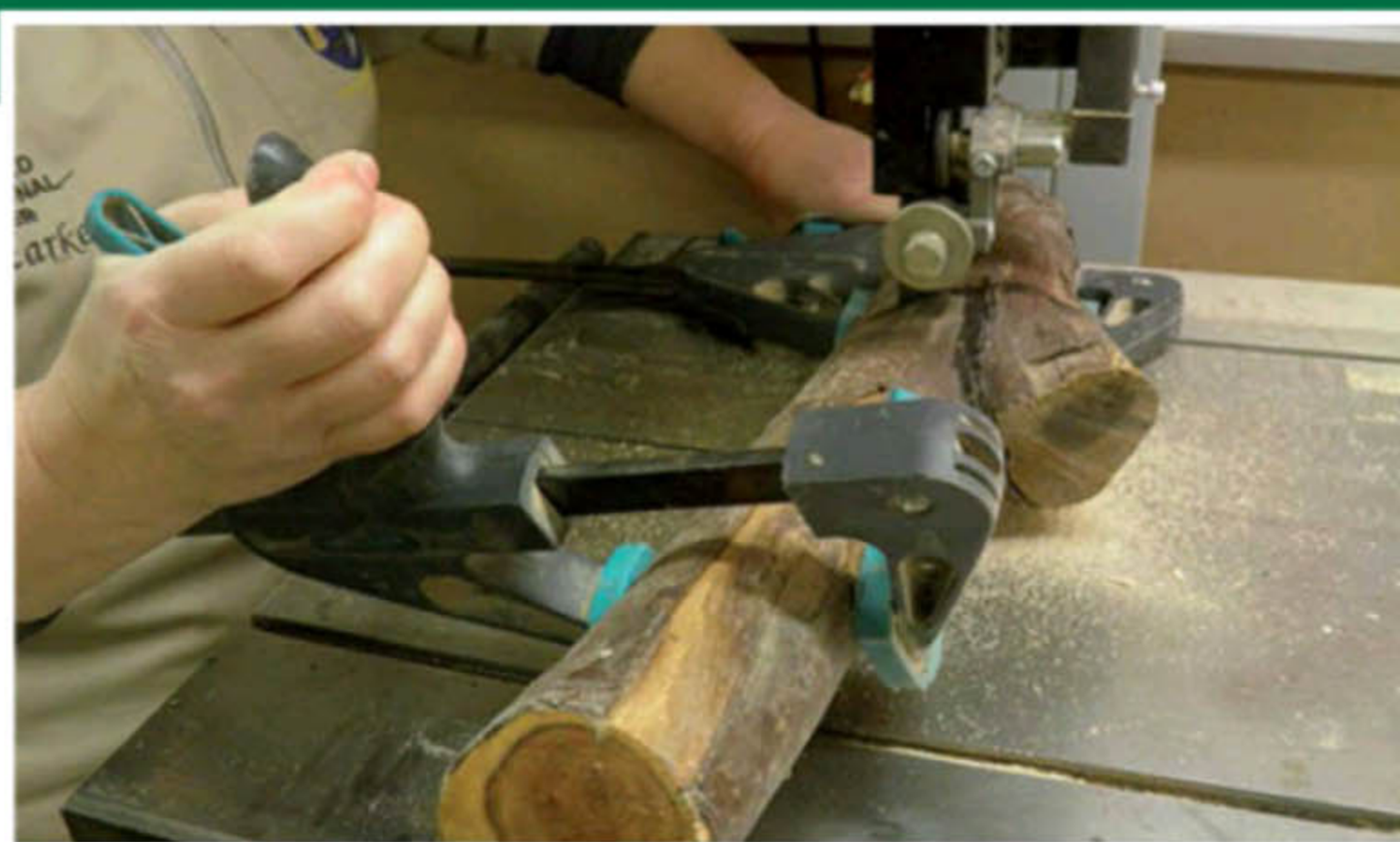


HANDY HINTS

When cutting logs on a bandsaw always make sure that the timber is securely held. Here I am using clamps to hold the log.

Note: For the base I have used the wider piece of timber cut off from the main log. Stand the timber on the cut edge and push through the blade using a push stick, while using your other hand to keep the timber running against the rip fence.

The timber for the base has been prepared as a bowl blank, so only bowl turning gouges should be used.



Cutting the log to length



Cutting timber for the base

SIZING THE CANDLE HOLDER STEM TAPER

When sizing the stem for cutting the taper, the measurements given are approximate. These dimensions may change slightly when the turning is done

SANDING YEW

Heat should be avoided when sanding any timber, but it is more important with yew. If too much heat is generated the surface will produce heat shakes, which is unsightly. If the abrasive you are using begins to feel warm, stop sanding that area and sand another section. Once the timber has cooled, sanding can resume.

REFINING DRILLED HOLES

If the holes drilled for the candle cup insert and base are a bit on the tight side, roll a piece of abrasive into a tube and sand the inside of the hole. Check the fit and repeat if required.

4 Mark the timber for the positions of each shape. Measure from the tailstock end and draw reference marks 40mm, 75mm, 105mm along its length. Using a pair of spring callipers set to 50mm, cut the correct diameter at the top edge, the 40mm measurement mark needs to be cut to approx. 48mm diameter, the 75mm mark to approx. 45mm diameter, and the 105mm mark to approx. 40mm diameter.

5 Using a spindle roughing gouge, join the depths of all the sizing diameters – this should produce a taper from top to bottom. Check the taper is straight by sitting a steel ruler along its length. Refine if necessary.

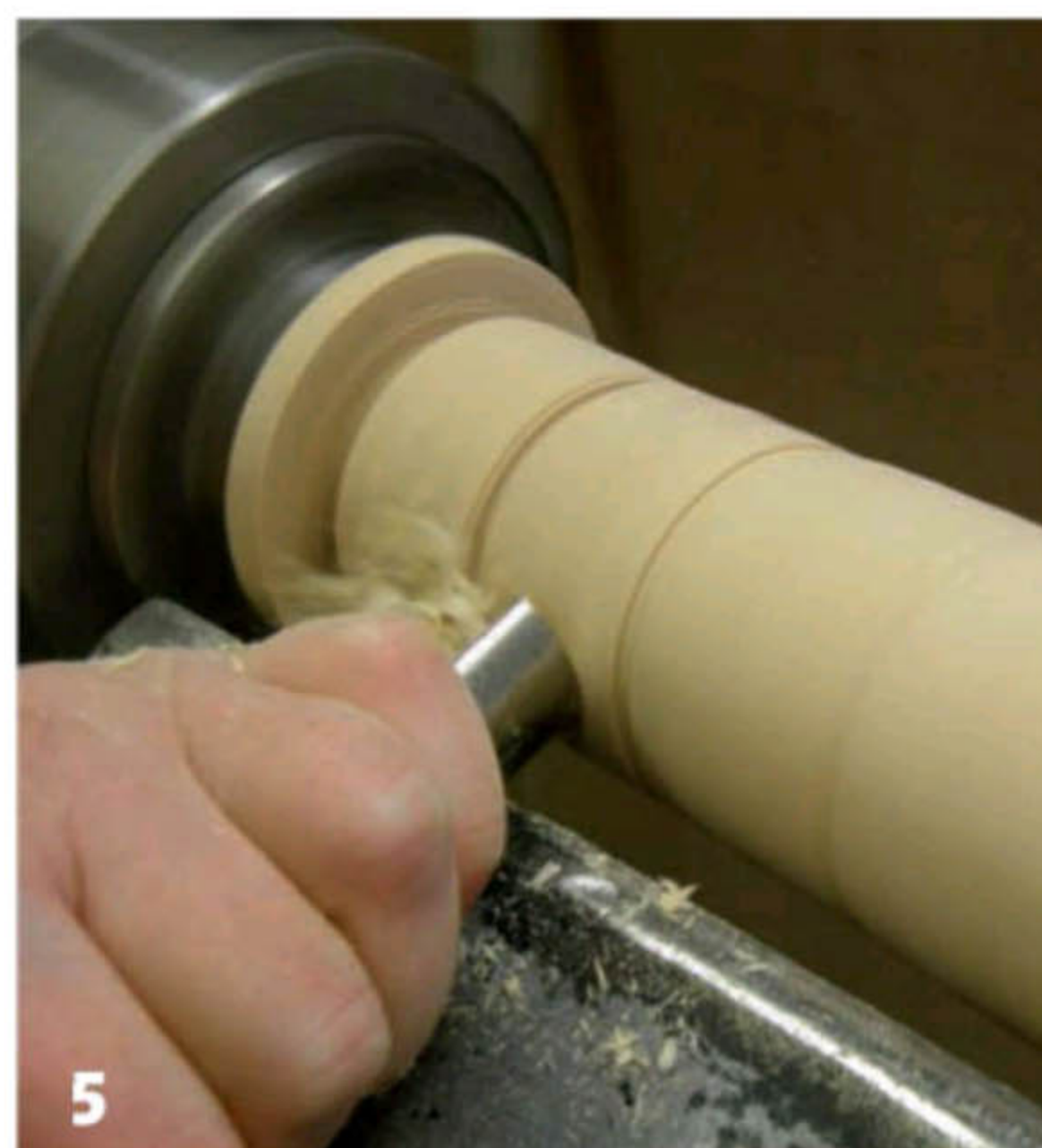
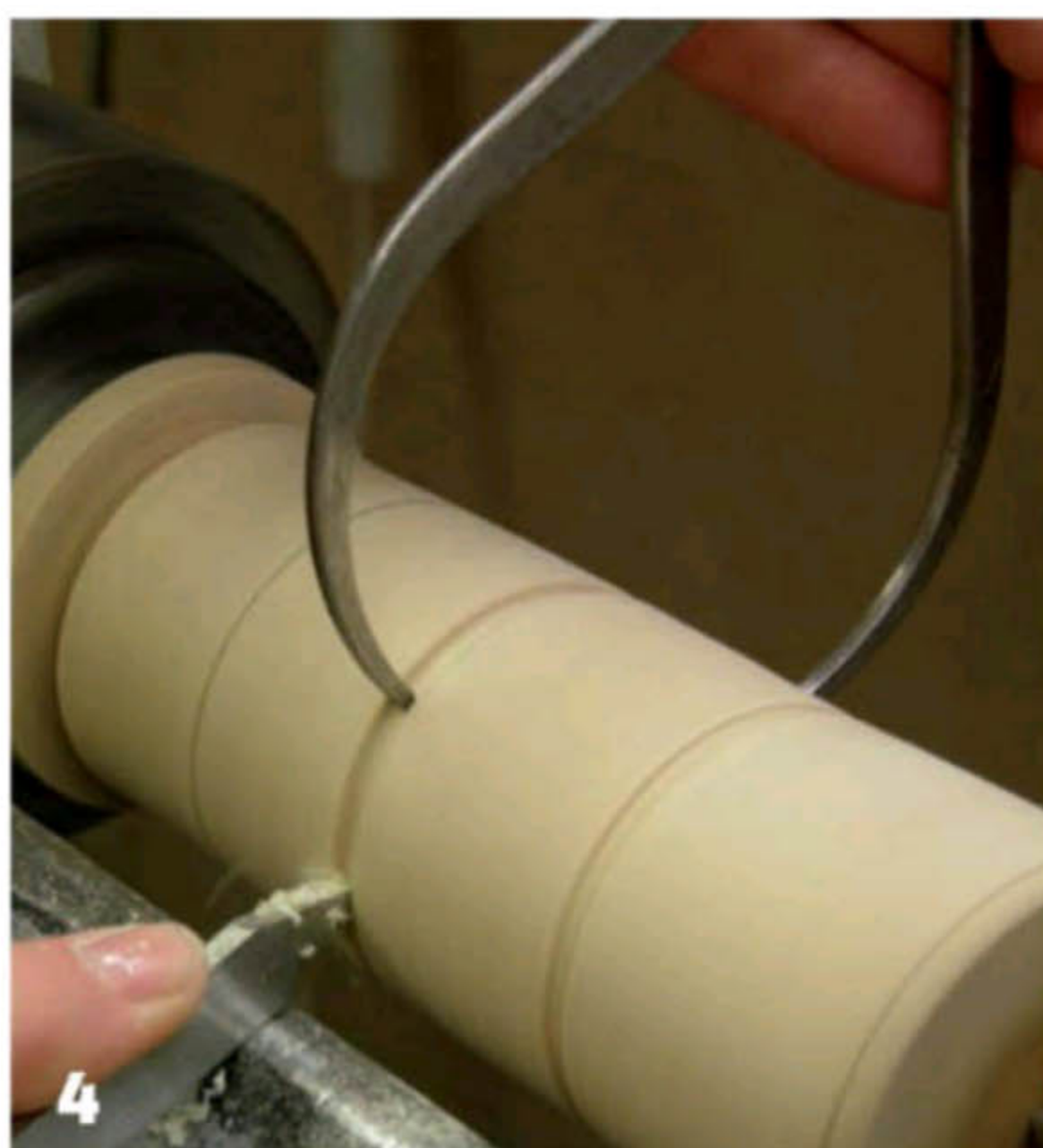
6 Re-draw the reference marks as shown in Step 4. Next, draw reference lines 5mm to the left of the re-drawn markings. This second reference mark is to signify where the top of each shape starts. Starting at the tailstock end and starting at the second reference mark, round over the timber towards the tail drive. Next, cut a cove shape to the left of the rounded-over section. Extend the cove towards the next reference mark. Repeat this process until all the shapes have been cut.

7 With all the shapes turned, start to refine them. The top extended cove needs to narrow down to approx. 20mm diameter, the second shape approx. 19mm diameter, the third shape approx. 18mm, and the bottom one approx. 16mm. Use callipers and a parting tool to refine the depths and blend in using a $\frac{3}{8}$ in fingernail profile spindle gouge.

8 Secure a Jacobs chuck, with a $\frac{7}{8}$ in Forstner bit fitted, into the tail drive. Reduce the lathe speed to approx. 500rpm and drill a hole the correct depth to receive a brass candle insert. Here a piece of masking tape has been placed at the required depth. Try the insert for fit and refine if necessary.

9 For added support, secure the tail drive into the drilled hole. Hand sand the candle stem starting with 120 grit abrasive, working through grits 180, 240, 320 and finishing with 400. Avoid generating too much heat while sanding as this will cause heat shakes. Apply two coats of cellulose sanding sealer allowing the first coat to dry before applying the second. When dry, apply some cut and polish with the lathe off. Turn on the lathe and buff to a sheen removing all the grit, changing to a clean piece of kitchen roll with each pass. Apply some paste wax and buff to a shine.

10 Set a pair of spring callipers to 12.5mm diameter and, using a $\frac{1}{8}$ in parting tool, cut the tenon for securing the stem to the base. Check the tenon has been cut exactly to 12.5mm before parting off. Remove the surplus timber from the chuck.



HEALTH & SAFETY – TOXIC!

Yew wood is toxic and can cause a mild to severe reaction in some people, so should never be used by anybody without care. Respiratory protection should be used at all times when turning, and especially abrading. Yew is a sensitiser, so intolerance can build up over time, even if you are not initially troubled by it. If you experience any of the following symptoms, stop working and remove the wood and any shavings or dust created from the workshop.

Type of reaction: irritant, direct toxin, nausea

Affected area: skin, eyes, cardiac

Frequency and strength of reaction: common

Source: dust, wood, leaves, aril (but not the fleshy part)

So what are the signs we need to look for that might indicate potential problems?

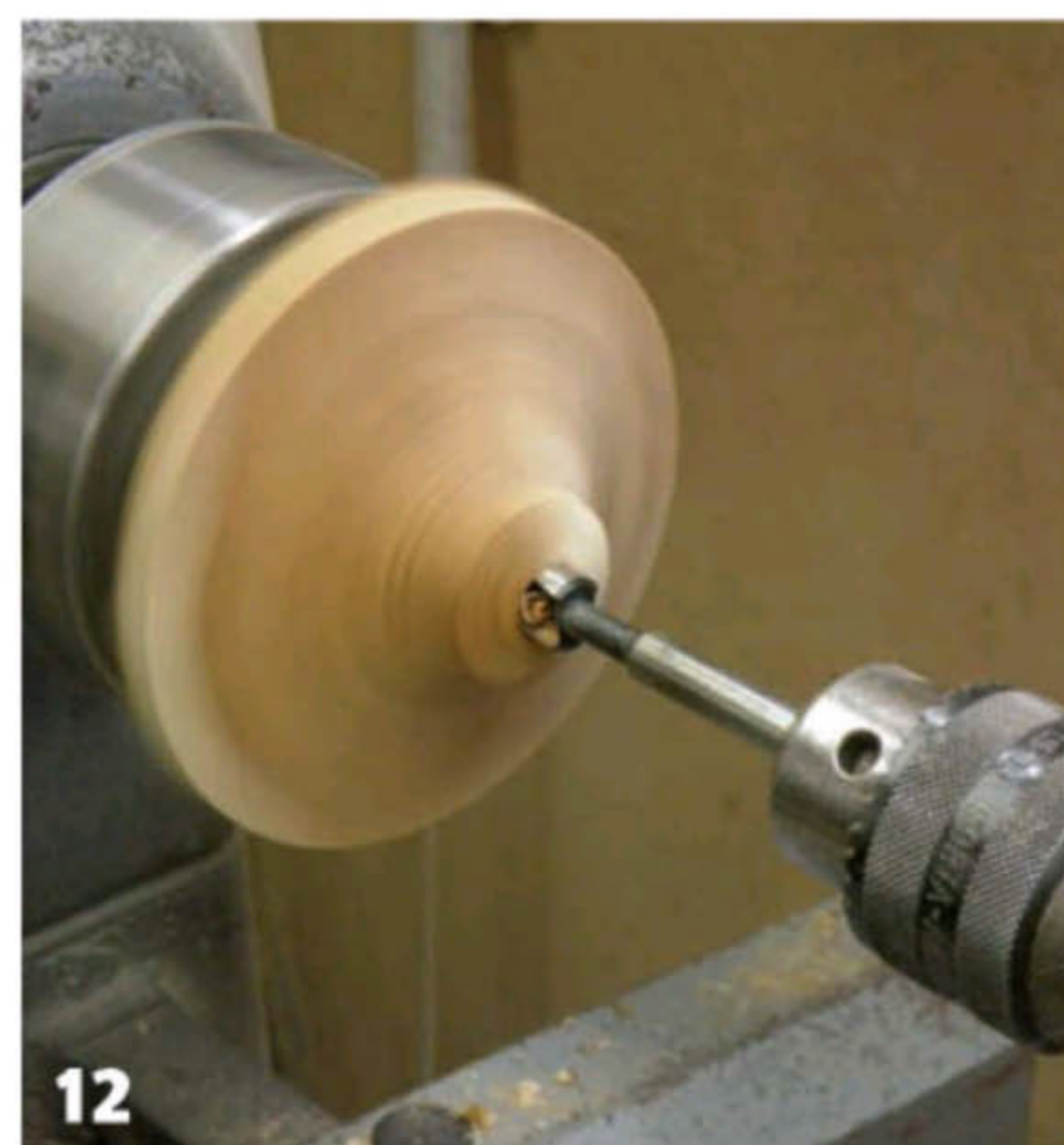
- Sneezing and an itchy, runny or blocked nose (allergic rhinitis)
- Itchy, red, watering eyes (conjunctivitis)
- Wheezing, tightness in the chest, shortness of breath, coughing
- A raised, itchy, red rash (hives)
- Swollen lips, tongue, eyes or face
- Stomach pain, feeling sick, vomiting, diarrhoea
- Dry, red and cracked skin

For a more complete understanding of the potential dangers, please see the article *Is Wood Dangerous* in *Woodturning* issue 357

11 Next, drill a shallow recess, the correct size for your chuck, into a piece of yew measuring approx. 100 x 100 x 35mm thick. Mount on the lathe using this recess and, using a $\frac{3}{8}$ in standard grind bowl gouge, true up the outer edge. Secure the toolrest across the front of the timber and turn a cove shape approx. 30mm from the centre to the outer edge.



12 Secure a Jacobs chuck, with a 12.5mm drill bit fitted, into the tailstock. Reduce the lathe speed to approx. 500rpm and drill a hole the same depth as the tenon cut on the candle stem. Try the stem for fit and adjust if required.



13 Shape the base creating a rounded over top of approx. 30mm diameter leading into the cove shape and widening out towards the outer edge. Use a $\frac{3}{8}$ in long grind bowl gouge to turn the cove and refine the base.



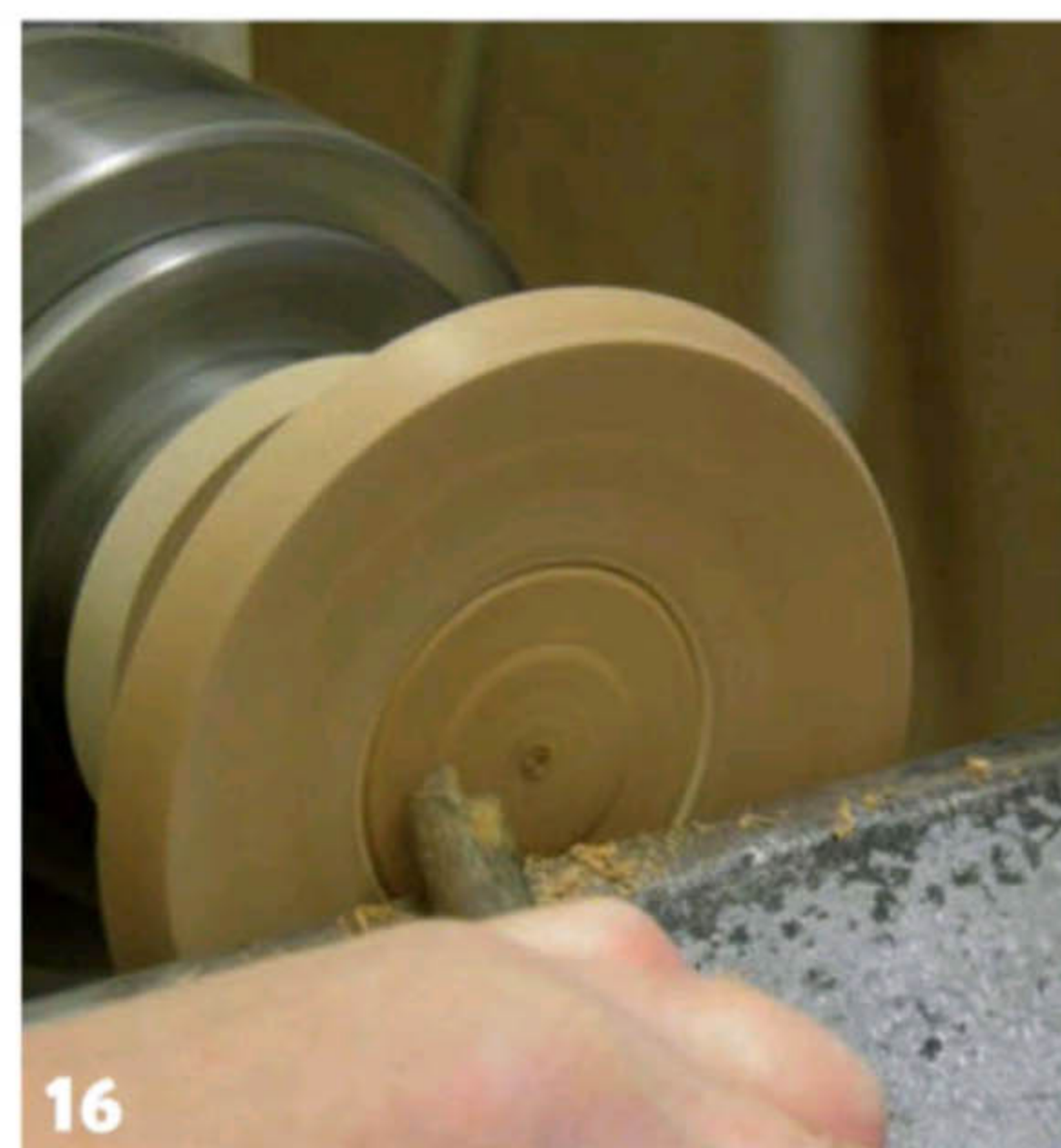
14 Reduce the diameter of the base to approx. 95mm. Here I have tapered the rim of the base to approx. 90mm. Sand the base and finish with the same products as used for the stem.



15 Next, mount a scrap piece of timber measuring approx. 50 x 50mm between centres and turn into the round. Mount into the chuck and cut a tenon 12.5mm diameter to fit into the base. A pair of spring callipers set to the correct diameter and a $\frac{1}{8}$ in parting tool are used for this.



16 Leaving the jam chuck on the lathe, mount the base onto the tenon and bring up the tail drive for support. Using a $\frac{1}{4}$ in standard grind bowl gouge, remove as much of the chucking recess as possible with the tail drive still in place. Here you can see I have cut two V-grooves for decoration. Sand this area of the base using the same grits as previously used. Next, remove the tail stock and gently turn away the centre hole made by the revolving centre. Sand the centre section and finish the base using the same products as previously used. Glue the two components together and glue the brass candle holder insert in place. ●



Record Power Victory chuck and Versalock system

Mark Palma puts this new chuck and quick-change jaw system through its paces

Record Power has just released its newest innovation – a new chuck and integrated quick-changing jaw system. Let's take a closer look at why this new tool represents a 'clean sheet' look at jaw design and builds on Record's solid line of chucks

Victory chuck

The Victory chuck shares the same heft and dimensions as the SC4 chuck. It can handle effectively any project on your lathe as all the jaws developed for the prior SC3 and SC4 chucks fully interchange with this new chuck. That is a great feature of the Record Power line – you only need one set of jaws and can put them on any of its chuck bodies. One thing that I noticed when unpacking this chuck was the incredible fit and finish on each and every part. In this modern world we seem to accept compromised quality, but everything in the box was machined to the highest standards. It was a pleasure to hold such a well-made tool.

Like all Record chucks it has a closed back with integrated indexing holes. It also has a rubber ring that covers the jaw carriers to further protect your knuckles. It is also covered by a five-year warranty.

The Victory comes with all the needed accessories: an insert to fit my lathe, the chuck body, a worm screw, a faceplate ring (a very nice touch that you rarely see and a very handy accessory) as well as the needed wrench, a ball end chuck key which is handy for limited access to the chuck, and the torx wrench to change jaws. Also included was the 'secret sauce' – a new modular 50mm jaw set (#62690). This jaw set is not only a great dovetail jaw set (both internal and external dovetails) but also has new patented slots integrated into the jaws to accept the Versalock accessory jaws.

The Victory chuck was predictable and intuitive in use. The jaw carriers and jaws are laser engraved to remind you where each goes. The adjustment screw has a reminder label, so you turn the Allen wrench the right way to loosen or tighten the jaws. Everything fits



1 Victory chuck 2 Victory jaws 3 Test bowl

very precisely and the jaws scroll effortlessly with no binding or hesitation (something you run into with inexpensive chucks).

The modular jaws were an interesting surprise. They protrude about 35mm up from the chuck body and give nice knuckle room between the chuck and the work. By comparison, Record's standard 50mm jaws (62313) extend about 12mm and its long-nose jaws (62323) extend 60mm, so the new modular jaws are a nice balance between the two extremes.

Also, the integrated slots for the accessory jaws allow you to sneak a measuring tool into the gaps even when the jaws are almost closed. Now there is no excuse not to measure the thickness at the bottom of a bowl.

To test the chuck I put a very small tenon (1 x 46mm) on a 6in butternut (a very soft hardwood) bowl and put it to the test. The chuck held well securely and even with so little grabbing the wood that the bowl emerged without the jaws marring the tenon. This high-quality chuck would be a welcome addition to any lathe. I found nothing to call out as needing improvement.



“
This is a brand new design that represents a fresh look at how to attach jaws to a chuck body
”



4 Jaw inserts 5 Jaw sets

Versalock jaw inserts

As nice as the Victory chuck is as a standalone tool, it was designed as part of a new modular tool jaw system. Every other chuck I have ever seen requires changing all four jaws to change from one jaw set to another. The Versalock system builds off the 50mm #62690 jaws. These jaws have integrated slots and countersunk locations for retaining screws. Jaw inserts slide into the slots (they are numbered for each jaw) and are then tightened into the countersinks with torx screws that are included.

In under two minutes you can slide in any of three inserts. Each insert has a different shape, purpose and grip range. The Versalock system holds them secure and there is no end play, run out or wobble in the jaws once installed. The internal dovetails in the modular jaws hold both parts together as though they were one. This is a brand new design that represents a fresh look at how to attach jaws to a chuck body.

To change from one insert to another you only need to partially back out the screws from the inserts (no need to fully remove) and slide them in and out of the modular jaws. It is as fast as a Formula 1 tyre change.

The three sets of Versalock jaws are each designed for different situations, although there is clearly overlap in coverage. The 35mm

external dovetail jaws (#62696) have a smooth interior. They allow grabbing smaller objects in expansion mode (33-57mm), spindles in compression mode (7-27mm) and square work from 6-19mm.

The second set is a 28mm short dovetail jaw set (#62697). Like the prior set it has external dovetails for expansion (25-45mm), smooth jaws for compression (10-30mm) and square work from 7-21mm. There is notable overlap between these two sets of jaws. Either works well for turning finials, small knobs and precision small parts.

The third set of jaws is the dome jaws (#62698). These compress from 0-18mm and are completely smooth on the outside. I found these jaws to be a great addition to any turner's work-holding strategy. You can grab effectively any small part with these jaws. The curved ball gives access all around the work without having a tool accidentally contact the work. A unique feature of the ball jaws is that they would allow you to use them with some padding as a jam chuck for small openings in vessels and small bowls. I really fell in love with this set.

The Versalock jaws are less expensive than freestanding jaw sets and faster to swap in and out. They are all intended for smaller work. They are simple to change out and even the most lazy woodturner now has no excuse not to change jaws anymore.



6 Changing jaws 7 Holding a finial 8 Dome jaws



Seam ripper

Rick Rich turns this needlework essential



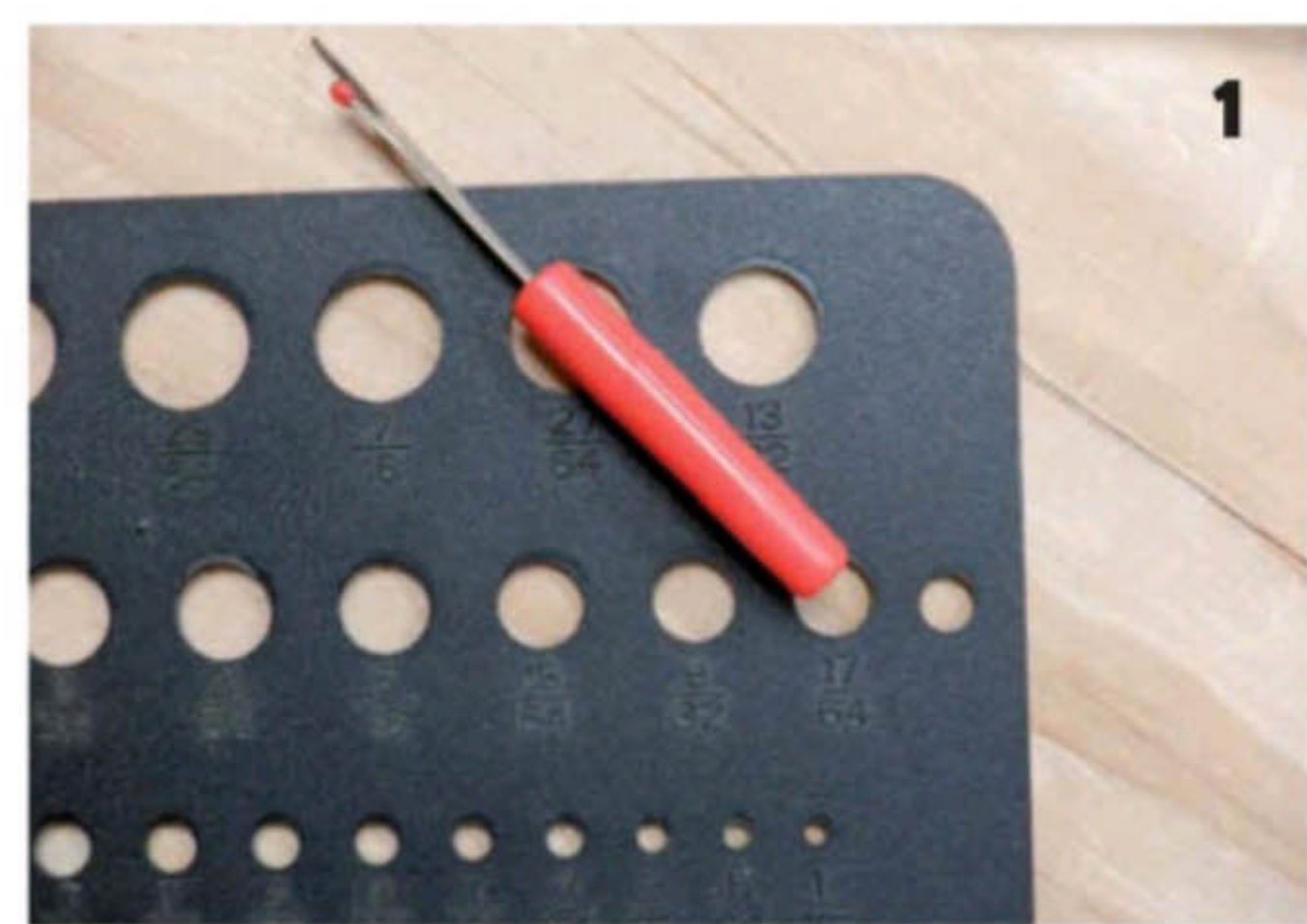
One gauge of an item's usefulness is how much it's actually used. As far as useful turned items go, the venerable seam ripper is a winner in the Rich house. This modest little tool, paired with a nicely turned wooden handle, resides in a place of honour – at the top of the kitchen junk drawer.

A seam ripper makes a great gift or, for those in business, it's a nice price point item to sell at craft shows and boutique stores. Either way, making a dozen handles for a dozen seam rippers is simplicity itself. It involves first getting some seam rippers. A quick search on the internet for seam rippers will produce more than enough results to sift through. Whatever the type of seam ripper you get, it should have a round shank to fit neatly into a drilled hole and include a plastic cap to cover the sharp tip.

The seam rippers I ordered are multi-coloured round plastic, have a small diameter and clear plastic caps. They are good quality and were relatively inexpensive. Because the wooden handles are small, I was able to use pieces of wood that normally go into the burn pile. I used scrap alder, maple, cherry, oak, locust and ash pieces that were cut 5in long and ranged from $\frac{7}{8}$ in to $1\frac{1}{8}$ in square.

The tools you use are up to you, of course, but I prefer my trusty skew chisel. Not only do I get good practice with the tool, it does everything necessary to completely turn the simple design of these wooden handles.

Here is how to make turned wooden handles for these seam rippers.



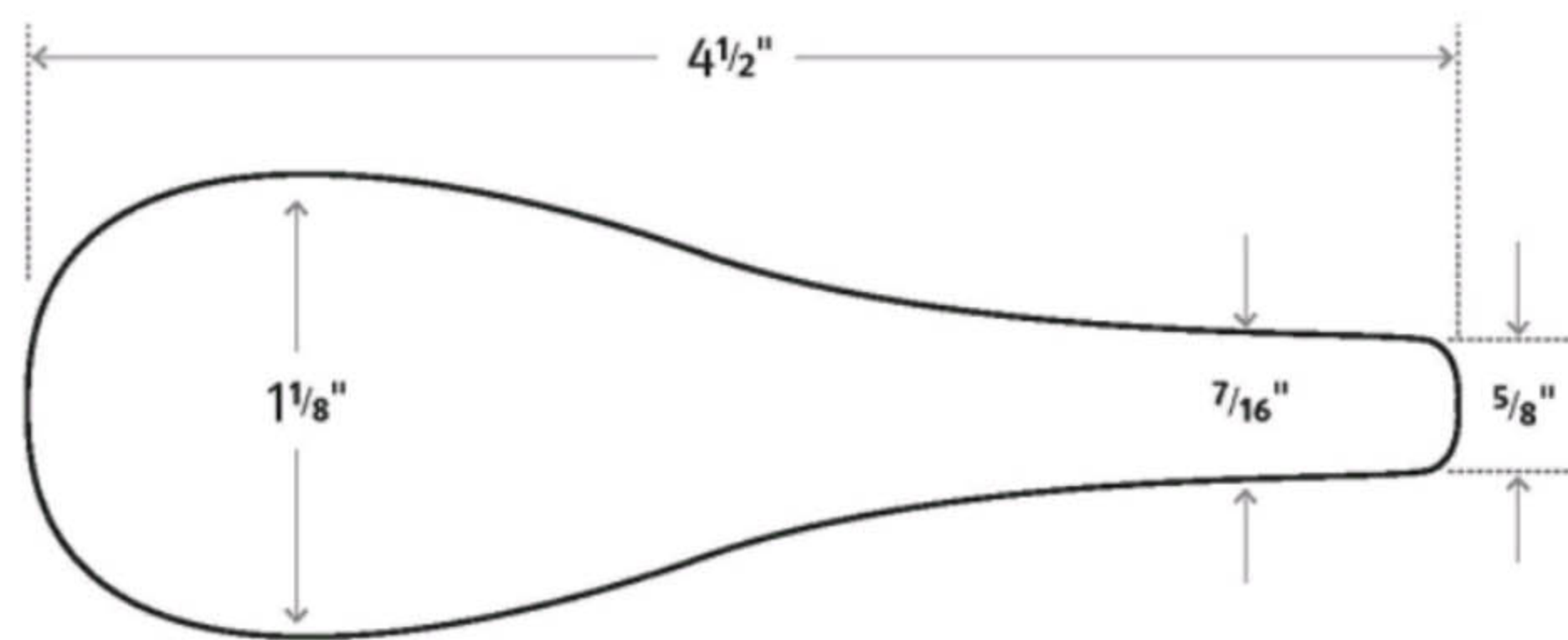
Tools & materials

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- $\frac{3}{4}$ in skew chisel

Materials

- **Blank size:** $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{8} \times 5$ in
- **Timber:** oak, maple, cherry, walnut, alder, locust



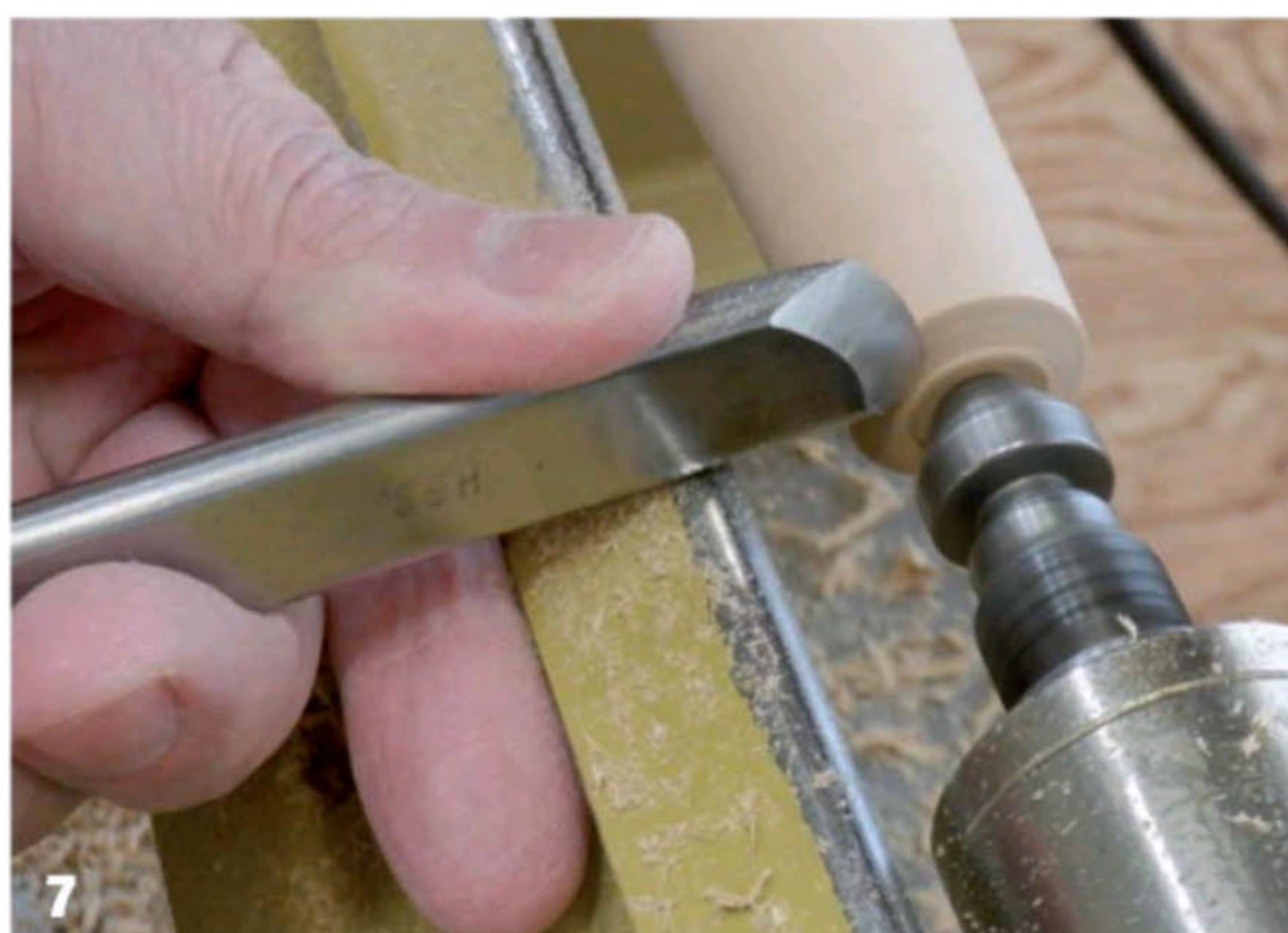
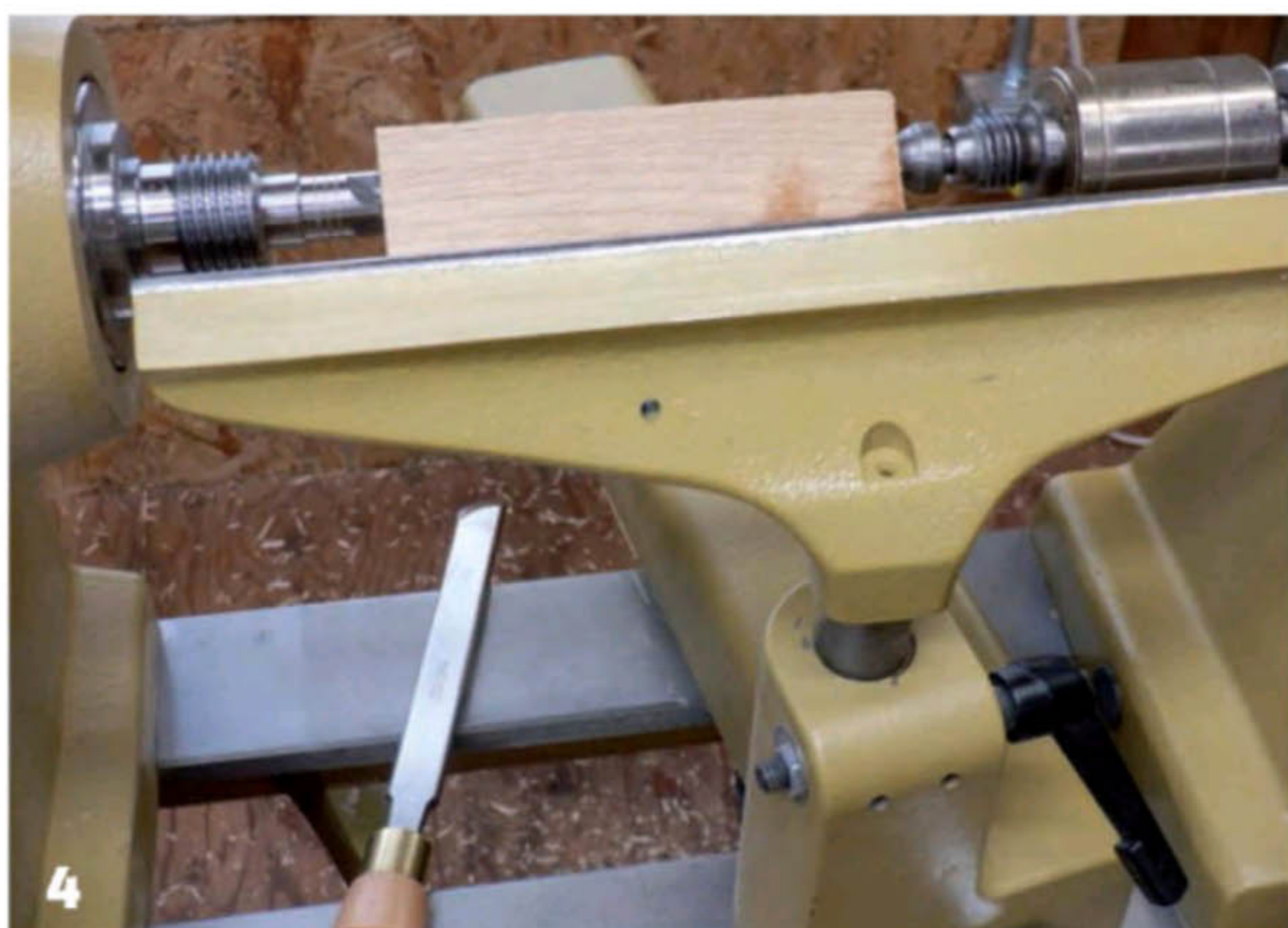
The making

1 Measure the diameter of the shank of the seam ripper that will go into the handle to find a corresponding drill bit size. These seam rippers fit neatly into a $\frac{17}{64}$ in hole. I tried to use a $\frac{1}{4}$ in hole, but the fit was just a bit too tight.

2 Mark and punch the centres on both ends of the blank. One end will be drilled, so choose which one.

3 Because I want a straight and true drilled hole, I set up a small drill press on my bench for the drilling. To keep the blank straight up and down, use a hand screw clamp to hold it while drilling. This also affords a measure of safety as it's always best to hold wood in a clamp for any power tool cutting or drilling operations. For these seam rippers, a hole drilled about 1in deep is perfect.





4 Next the handle is mounted to be turned between centres. Place the drilled end on a cone-shaped revolving tailstock centre and the other end on a spur drive. Tighten securely but don't crank down on it or use a cheater bar. Tighten just enough so the piece will not slip when taking light-to-medium cuts. Too tight could split the wood as the cone will act as a wedge in the drilled hole.

5 Rough cut the blank round. Since the wood is scrap and I don't have a lot of time invested in the blank, I like to practise roughing the corners off with a skew. Try using the skew, long point down, for a roughing cut that leaves a relatively smooth surface.

6 Try both directions, to the left and right. It is a quick cutting method once learned.

7 Make sure to clean the end grain along the tailstock end right up to the revolving centre's cone. If you do nick the cone with your tool, take a moment to go and sharpen. I like to leave a 64th or so of rough wood that will easily sand off later.

8 Now turn the handle to a pleasing shape. Either have a design in mind or think of one beforehand. I like to turn a simple design based on an old English pad saw handle. Simple, yet elegant.



9 Turn the end of the handle down in a half bead shape to a small nub of wood on the spur centre end. It will be later removed with a cut-off saw.



10 Sand the piece and apply friction polish if desired (I don't – I apply just a wax finish after gluing). Remove from the lathe.



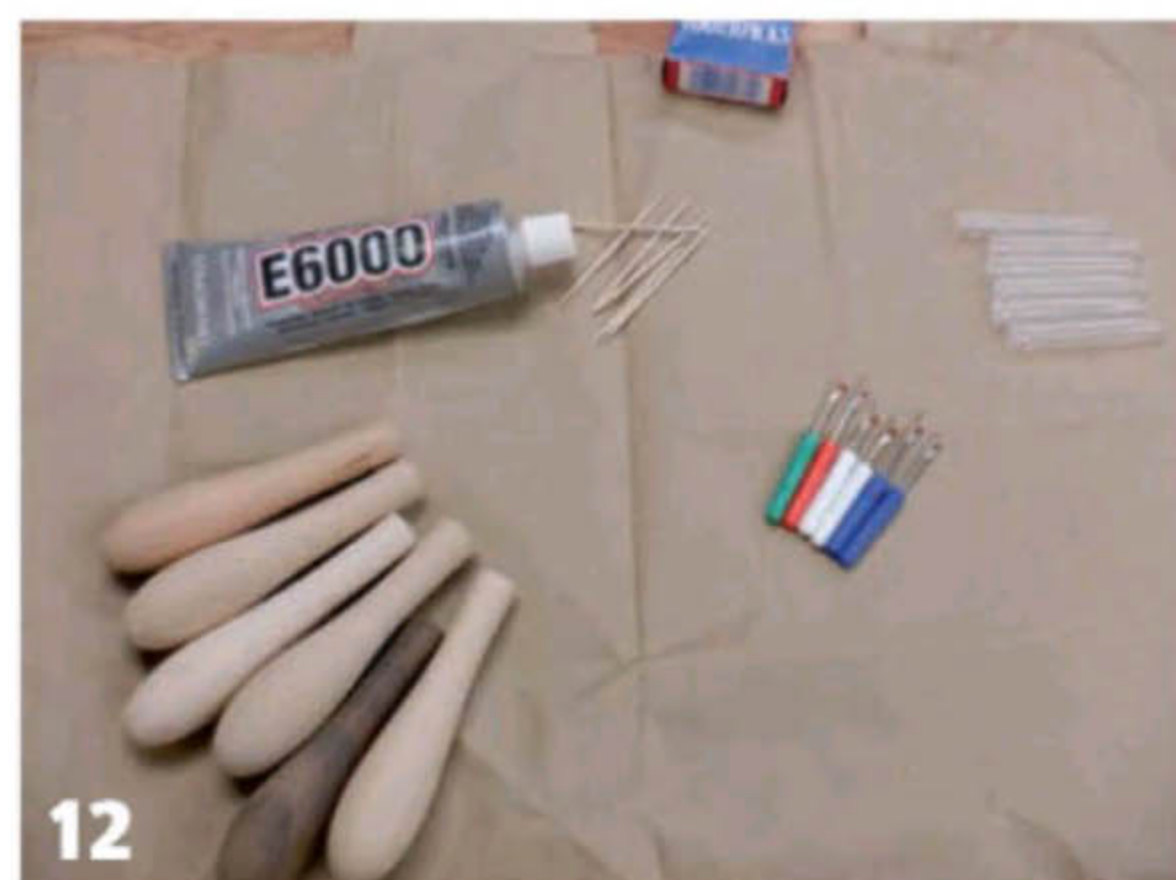
11 Remove the nub with a small pullsaw. Sand (and finish if necessary) the base of the handle to match the rest of it.

10

12 Next is gluing the seam ripper into the handle. Most glues that advertise adhesion with plastic should work well. I use a tube of stuff called E6000. It's clear, waterproof, works on plastic and wood, and has a flexible bond. It is also widely available; I purchased mine from a local hardware store. I like to get everything ready by putting it on a piece of brown paper bag laid out to protect the workbench.

13 Put a small dab of glue into the drilled hole and use a toothpick to make sure the glue is spread around somewhat evenly inside.

14 Place the seam ripper in the hole, making sure to wipe away any glue that is displaced from the hole when pushing it in. I find it best to rotate the seam ripper when pushing it in. Once the seam ripper is in place, let the glue set before putting the plastic cap on it. Different glues will have different set times, of course.



15-16 Once the glue has cured, apply a wax finish. Your bespoke seam ripper should look something like this. ●

16





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LAYERS OF TIME

For more about the artists and the exhibition, visit: botanicaltales.nl

Marisa Klaster tells us about her contribution to an exhibition at Soestdijk Palace in the Netherlands

Layers of Time is the latest exhibition to be organised by Botanical Tales, an artist collective whose members work across a range of different disciplines and media. The venue of the exhibition is Soestdijk Palace, a former royal palace in the Dutch town of Baarn. From 1937 to 2004 it was the residence of Crown Princess and later Queen Juliana of the Netherlands. The palace, with its centuries-old history, is currently in a state of transition, and owned by the MeyerBergman Heritage Group. A start is being made on the restoration of the building while temporary exhibitions and walking tours are taking place. This change of use, along with the palace grounds, made it the perfect inspiration and venue for the exhibition.

As the artists explored the estate, they found that nature is desperately seeking a new balance. The theme of *Layers of Time* is that necessary changes can be exciting and beautiful. With their new work created for the exhibition – made with unique natural materials from or inspired by the estate's gardens and forests – the artists explored a new relationship between humans and nature.

Marisa Klaster

In essence, designer/maker Marisa Klaster is a storyteller. After a long career as an art director, she now designs and creates wooden objects, often incorporating materials such as glass, clay or leather into the narrative. The combination of playful and serious considerations in her work sparks the curiosity of the viewer. Her layered objects seek a balance between the abstract and the functional. Marisa's work is an interplay of form, function and meaning, in which the past and future are inextricably connected.



Interglacial Objects

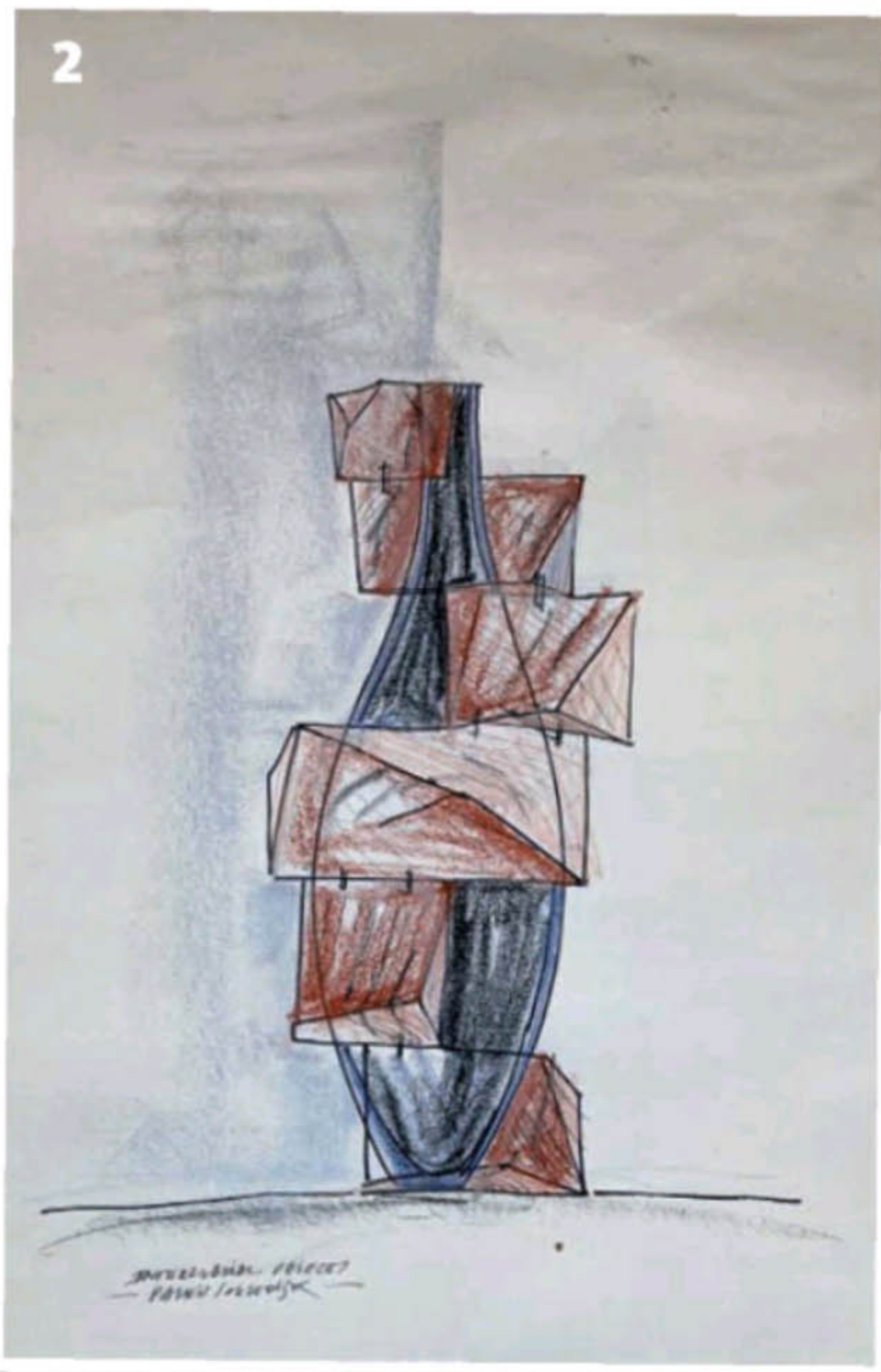
For the exhibition *Layers of Time* at Soestdijk Palace, Marisa was given the unique opportunity to work for a year with fallen trees from the royal forest. She views the estate as a special place with a rich, layered history that reaches underground back to the Ice Age, around 15,000 years ago. The forest is quiet, pure and very few people have walked the grounds, but unfortunately, it is clear to her that nature here is out of balance. Beech, oak and spruce are struggling due to fluctuating water levels, long periods of drought and increasing easterly winds. And if we don't start listening to what nature is trying to tell us, we will be hurtling towards perhaps another ice age at breakneck speed during the 'in-between time' in which we now live.

For her contribution to *Layers of Time*, Klaster created a series of objects to show that we shouldn't cling to the past too desperately, but we can preserve it forever by integrating it into the now and the future. A message that, in her eyes, is clear: you have to change to remain. These 'interglacial objects' are made from wood and glass. From an old, fallen beech – still strong on the outside, but hollow and fragile on the inside – Klaster made three large hand-turned wooden moulds; she also worked with Gert Bullée, a master glassblower from Leerdam, to create unique glass vases. The once-lost beech is now forever connected with, and serves as a valuable foundation for, renewal.

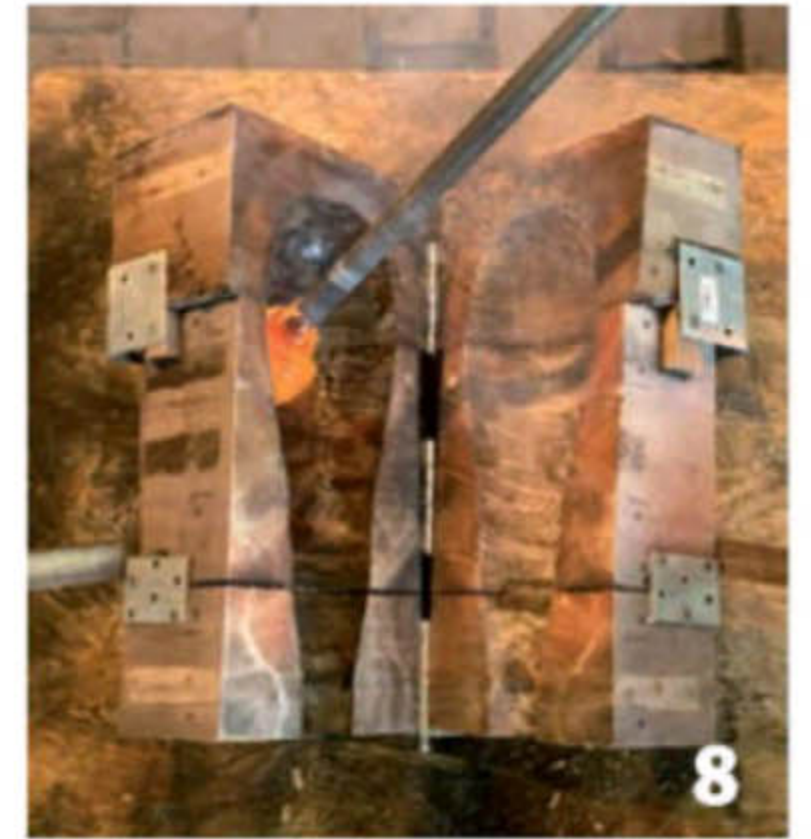


PHOTOGRAPH BY RARA PHOTOGRAPHY

1 Marisa Klaster



2 Design for the Interglacial Objects exhibits **3-5** Timber and inspiration came from the palace grounds **6-8** Beech was used to make wooden moulds



9 Marisa worked with master glassblower Gert Bullée on the project **10-11** Finished exhibit from the Interglacial Objects range



Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

What is a good brand of bowl gouge to buy?

I don't think I can single out just one brand since there are many that are 'good' brands. The size, shape and style offered by most of the manufacturers should give you more than you need to pick from. My suggestion is to buy good value, i.e. a brand that provides the answer to your needs now at a fair price. There are many established brands that have proven themselves over time, but don't overlook the newcomers and startups. Avoid those companies that are racing to the bottom based solely on price. Over time, you will likely own many bowl gouges based on your type and size of turnings. You may also want to have the same size and style with different grinds based on the functionality you need from the tool.

You'll find that different sizes and different lengths are in order based on what and the size of your turning. Be aware that, with so many quality brands currently in the marketplace with a host of different tool steels, you may wind up with many different manufacturers' products. There is no need to always select the same maker for all your tools or a particular steel unless there is a special reason. While the bulk of my tools are from one maker based on my early satisfaction and the availability from my local supplier, I have never had any reservations about buying a different brand provided it solved my needs and was good value.

One of the best pieces of advice I can give you is don't succumb to just buying the cheapest one (or brand) that you can find. Your tools will be there for you for your turning lifetime and then live on with a new owner. Figure the amortisation of your tools over the many years you'll use them and then recoup about 50% of the cost providing you treat them properly.



1 Different gullet shapes and your chosen grind will perform different tasks. Ultimately, you'll have several (many?) bowl gouges **2** Here are a few of my many bowl gouges. The different sizes, shapes, and grinds do the different tasks well



I'm new to turning and am trying to understand how to decide whether to use a tenon or a mortise on a bowl. Are there any rules on which to use?

I'd like to expand your term of mortise to include any expansion gripping of a blank whether a bowl or other turning. I am not aware of any special rules regarding which to use when your turning offers a choice, other than perhaps some common sense. Either technique will work if properly implemented. That said, you may opt for one or the other based on some design and process techniques you are planning.

My first question when picking one or the other is will the outer wall of my mortise provide sufficient strength for the needs of the rest of my turning? If the wall will be too thin or a whacky (read potentially fragile) grain orientation, I avoid that method, although whacky grain orientation can also cause problems with a tenon.

My suggestion is to pick one or the other based on what your final design will be. If you intend on having



3 Whether you have an overhead dust extraction system or not, using proper PPE up close and personal is a wise idea

You often talk about PPE in the shop. Is an overhead dust collection system PPE? Should I be buying one for my shop?

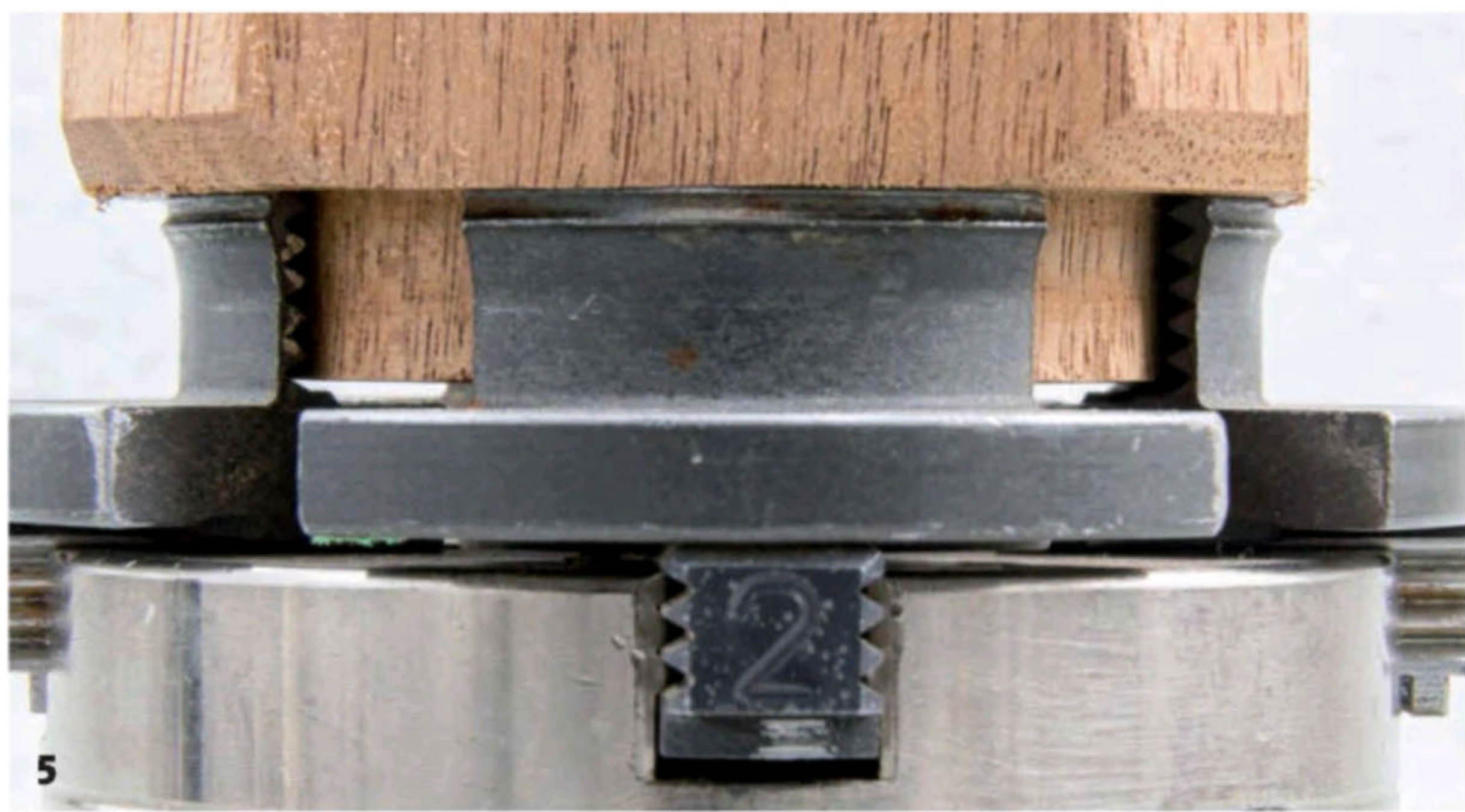
I have two overhead dust collectors in my main shop. One is located right at the tailstock end of my most-used lathe and the other is immediately overhead of my large bandsaw. There are several caveats

to overhead dust collectors. First, they filter shop air after you have been breathing it. They certainly help reduce your exposure to airborne dust particles but remember they are not preventing your exposure. Always helpful, but from a PPE perspective a bit too late. All the overhead dust collectors I'm familiar with have an outer filter that is much like a furnace filter. While differently shaped, it is a pleated filter of a certain particle

filtration size that captures the 'boulders'. Behind that filter is a finer billowing-type filter that collects the finer airborne particles as the air is drawn through the unit. The second issue is that, to be effective, both filters need to be maintained. I find that tying a length of lightweight string to the outlet air mesh helps me know when the filters need attention. With strong airflow, the string flows out straight.

a foot on your bowl, a tenon lends itself nicely. Upon completion of the inner surface of your bowl, you can reverse mount your bowl to remove any jaw marks and properly shape and finish the bowl's foot. You can also do this with a mortise mounting technique, but that lends itself to a hollowed-out foot design. Many newcomers to turning use a mortise technique and only clean up the jaw marks. The result usually indicates a newcomer and, in my opinion, leaves a clunky turning.

As time and skills progress, most use the mortise less. For more in-depth information on workholding methods and best practices, refer to my series in WT238 through 250. The column in WT242 focuses on chucking using tenons.



4 Some different examples of clamping and expanding grip features for the students. Properly done, both can work safely **5** My 'go-to' mounting method is clamping down on a tenon. Notice the referencing on the cut shoulder and the clearance underneath

◀ **I ruin too many blanks using a barrel trimmer. Can you help with brand selection and the best way to use one?**

You haven't indicated what you have done to ruin your blanks. There may be other issues that are compounding those with your trimming process. I have used barrel trimmers for all my pen kits, except laser cut kits, for 20+ years without major issues. Two keys to success are sharp trimmer blades and proper speeds and feeds. Much of the difficulty that people have is trying to work with a dull trimmer.

They dull the trimmer by trimming off too much material too fast. Once dull, it is nearly impossible for the end user to sharpen it. The result is higher rpm and more downward force only accelerating the degradation of the cutting edges. I always suggest touching up the trimmer with a diamond hone well before it gets dull. It is far easier to keep any tool cutting edge sharp than sharpening it from a poor cutting condition. As far as brands go, I buy mine from one of the online pen kit suppliers. I get the inexpensive model of the four-face, non-carbide version.

Since nearly all the sellers' products seem close to identical, I am guessing but I think most of the sellers get their products from the same overseas source. The carbide-tipped offerings will obviously have a longer life than the lower-end pot metal versions, but I really like the results from the four-cutter trimmers. Some techniques to get better results would include the following. Keep the amount of wood or other material to be trimmed to a minimum. That requires the blanks to be very slightly longer than the tube rather than a large overhang of wood. Trimming off a $\frac{1}{16}$ in or $\frac{1}{8}$ in from each end will provide far longer trimmer sharpness life than trimming away excessive amounts of material.

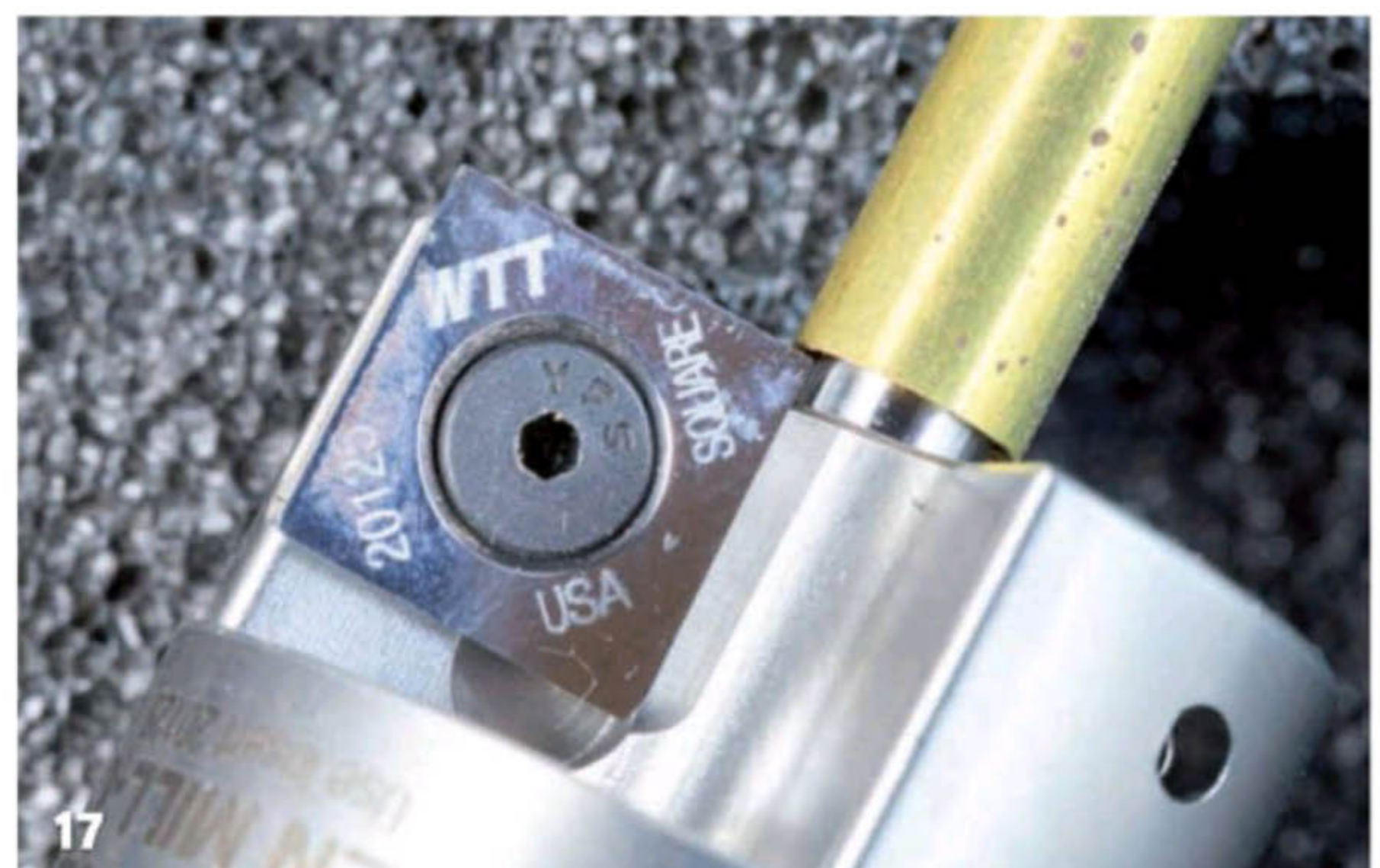
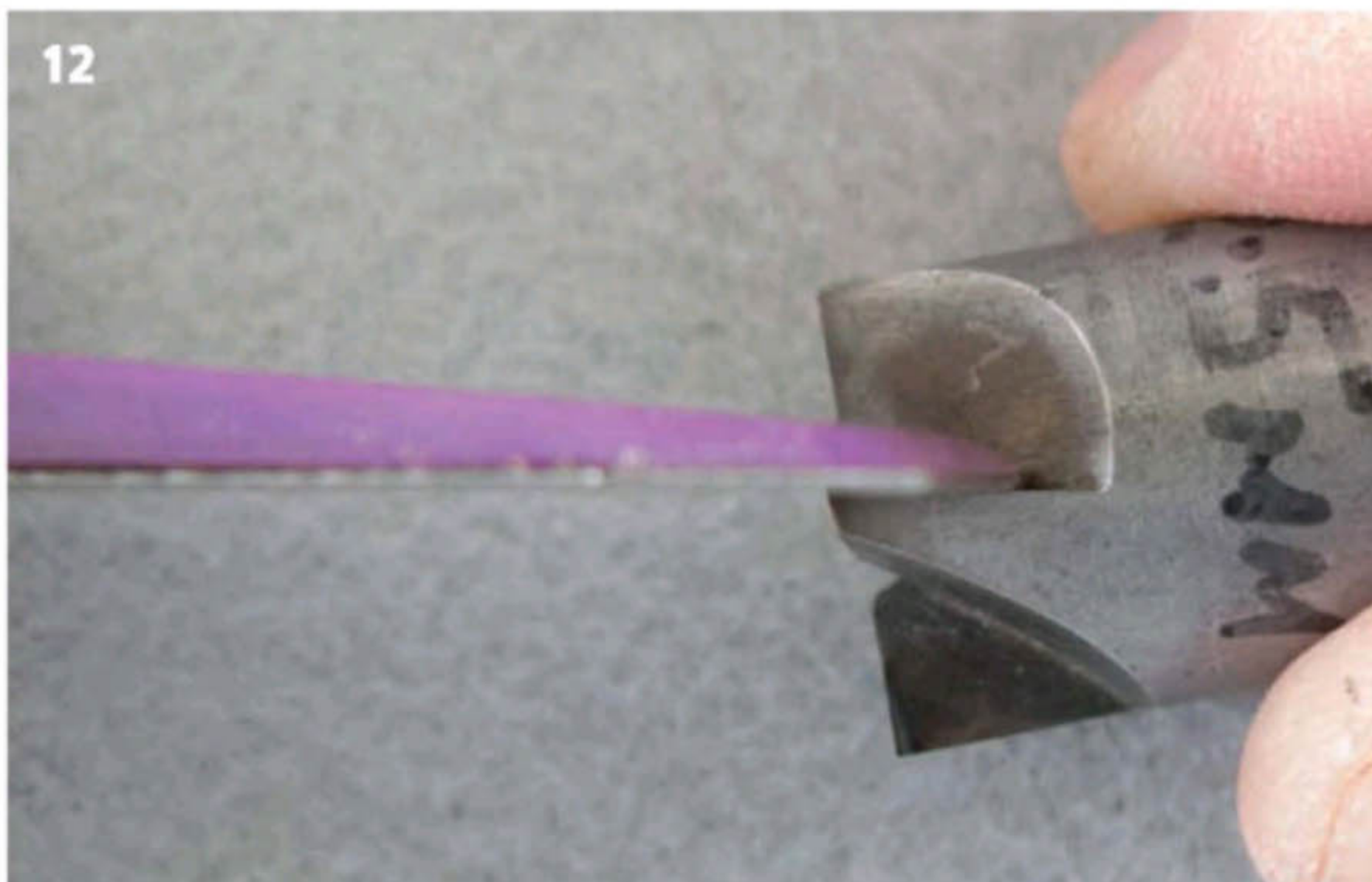
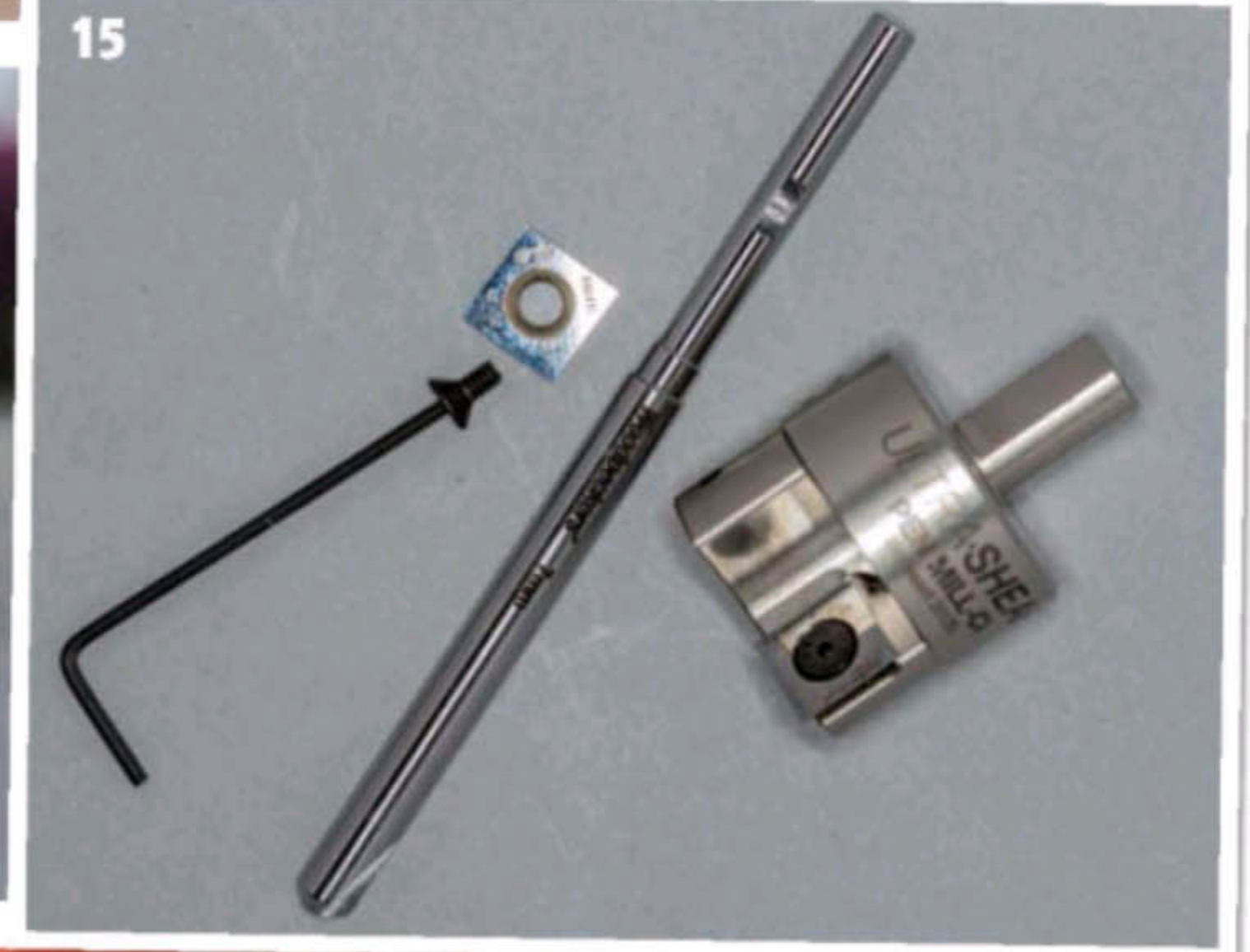
If you can't cut and glue tubes to closer tolerances, cut excess stock away on your bandsaw before trimming. Your trimmer is designed to face the end of the wood flush with the tube and have that trimmed face be perpendicular to the axis of the tube. I find that using my trimmers in a drill press provides far better results than using a pistol drill. The ability to control the speeds and feeds with more resolution yields better results.

My avoidance of the two-winged carbide barrel trimmer is just a personal preference. I have had success with the four-bladed standard trimmer and use carbide cutting tools more for abrasive materials based on their durability rather than keenness. There may be others by now, but I do have and use the carbide barrel trimmers created by Woodpeckers. Pricy but exceptional quality and design. They have a two-cutter design that uses rotatable and replaceable carbide cutters along with interchangeable pilot sizes.

If you are curious about that trimmer, you can find a product review at http://www.kurthertzog.com/articles/ultra_shear_pen_mill.html. All of that said, there are alternatives to using a barrel trimmer. Many folks have success using a disc or belt sander as well as mounting sanding discs in a lathe. All will work, but since the goal is flush with the tube and, most importantly, perpendicular to the tube axis, piloting or guiding based on the tube I.D. will give the best results.



6 Kept sharp and using the proper speeds and feeds will provide a fully functional barrel trimming. The key is sharp and allows it to cut **7** I almost always trim my blanks using a drill press. Better control of speeds and feeds. A pistol drill or lathe will also work **8** I recommend a set of diamond hones for every woodturner's kit. Versatile, low cost, and very useful for touching up nearly all cutting edges **9** One of the keys to long barrel trimmer life is minimising the amount of work it needs to do. Close blank sizing minimises trimming



10 Most barrel trimmers can be disassembled. I find it handy to mark the side with the correct Allen key size in magic marker **11** Never, never, never try to touch up an edge in this manner. It is impossible to stay in contact with the angle with the hone **12** Use the hone in contact and flat against the long face of the cutter edge. This will touch up the edge without ruining the coplanarity **13** Accept that barrel trimmers are 'perishable' tools. There comes a time when they can no longer be useful by touching them up. Now dispose of them

14 A new design recently created and sold by Woodpeckers. If you pop for the full monty, you get the cutter head and every conceivable pilot **15** The cutter head has two carbide cutters. Each is rotatable to provide a fresh edge as needed and replaceable when all faces are spent **16** By design, the cutter head cuts a wide swathe, eliminating the need for barrel trimmers of various diameters **17** The pilots are relieved near the very top, allowing for the cutter edge to extend over the brass tube. No brass creep under the cutter face

Salt and pepper mills

Ian Woodford adds a little flavour and spice to the dinner table

Over the past few months, I've made quite a few salt and pepper mills and mainly stuck with two styles. There are many ways to signify which mill is for salt or pepper, but I recently redesigned one of my styles and made the salt one from a white wood and pepper from a brown wood.

I prefer to use woods that don't have a pronounced grain as, in my opinion, this detracts from the clarity and style of the mills' shape. The salt mill is made from maple (white) and the pepper mill from chamfuta (dark brown).

I am using a Craft Supplies USA mechanism that has an excellent reputation. Choose a mechanism longer than needed and the shortening process is explained later.



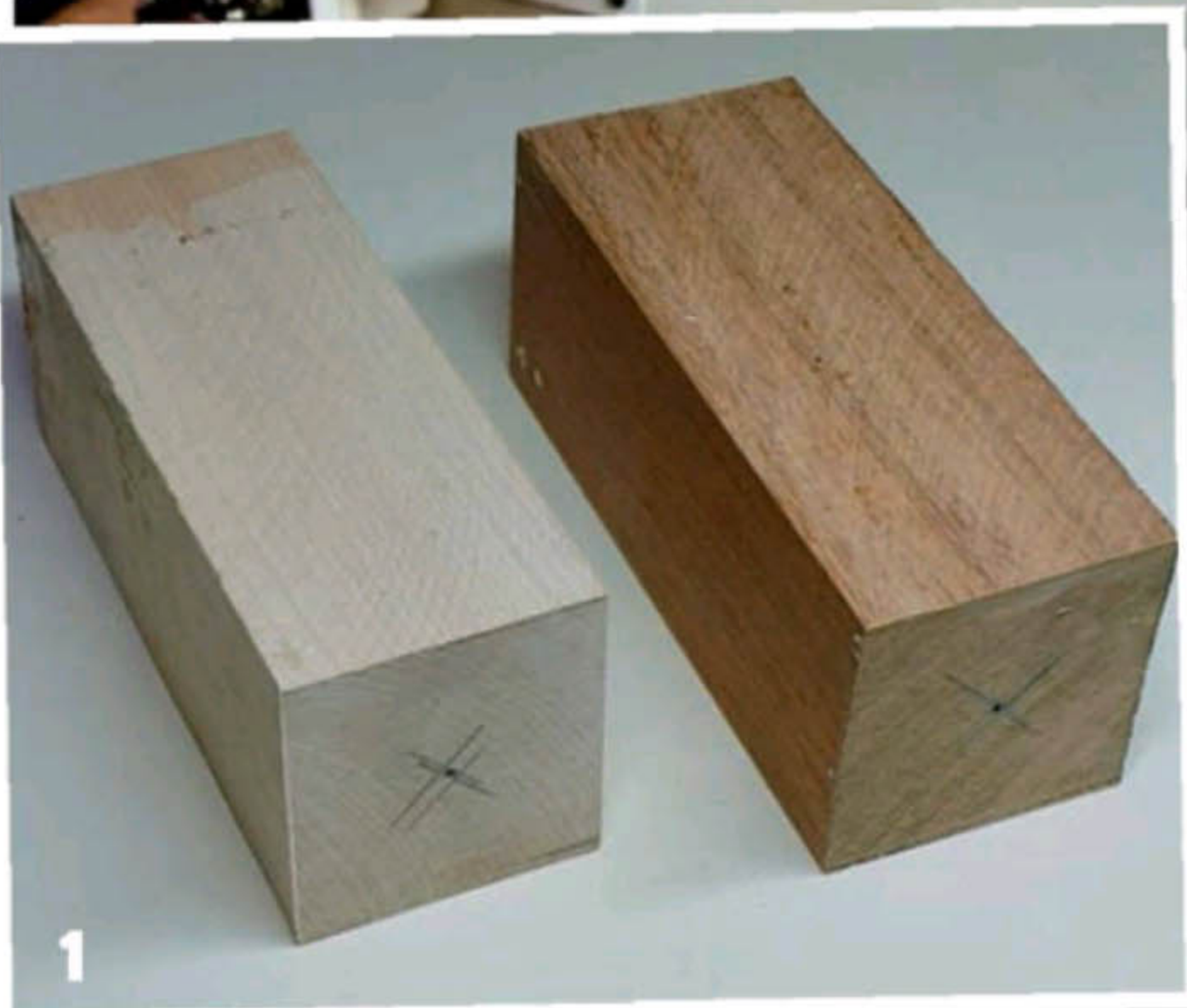
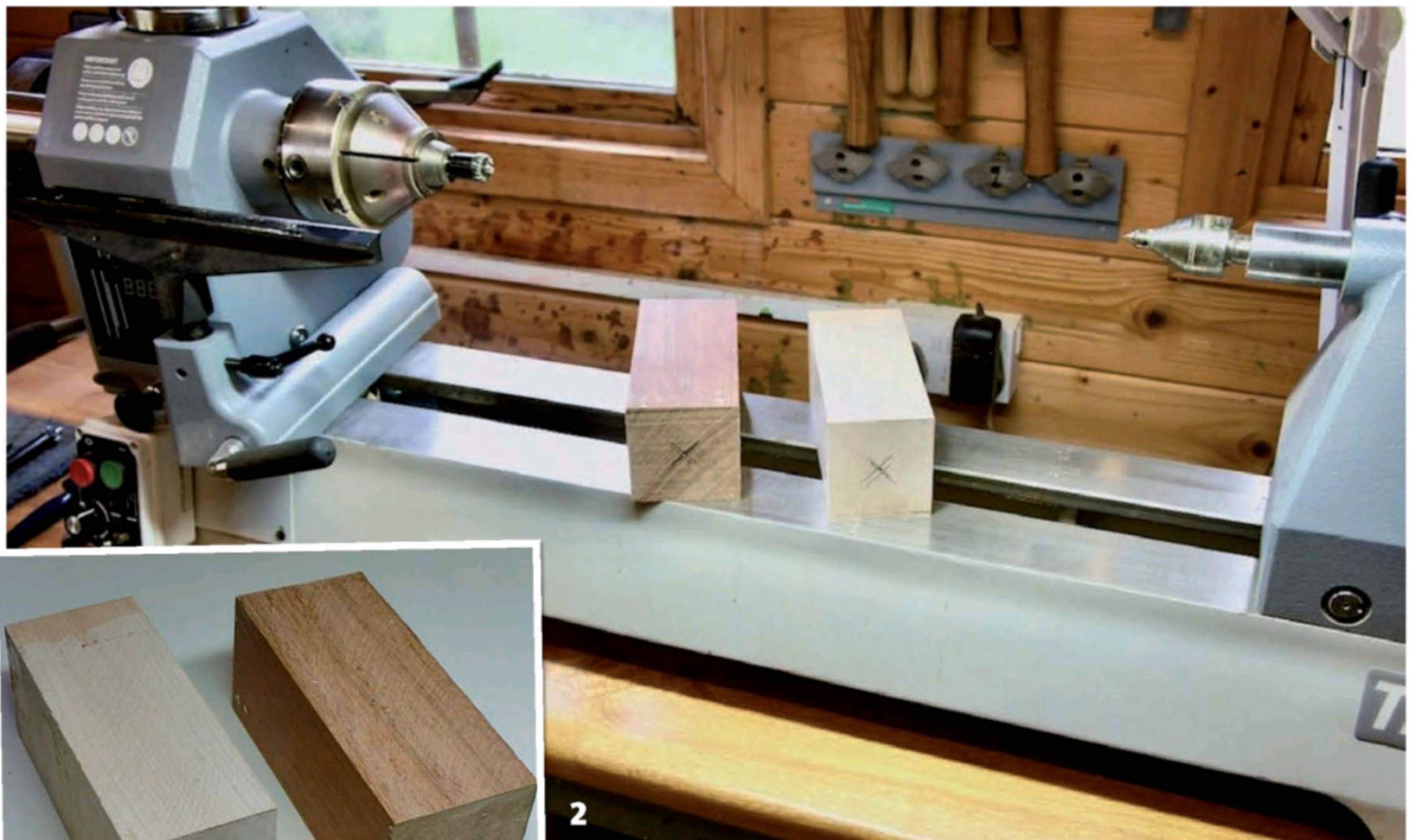
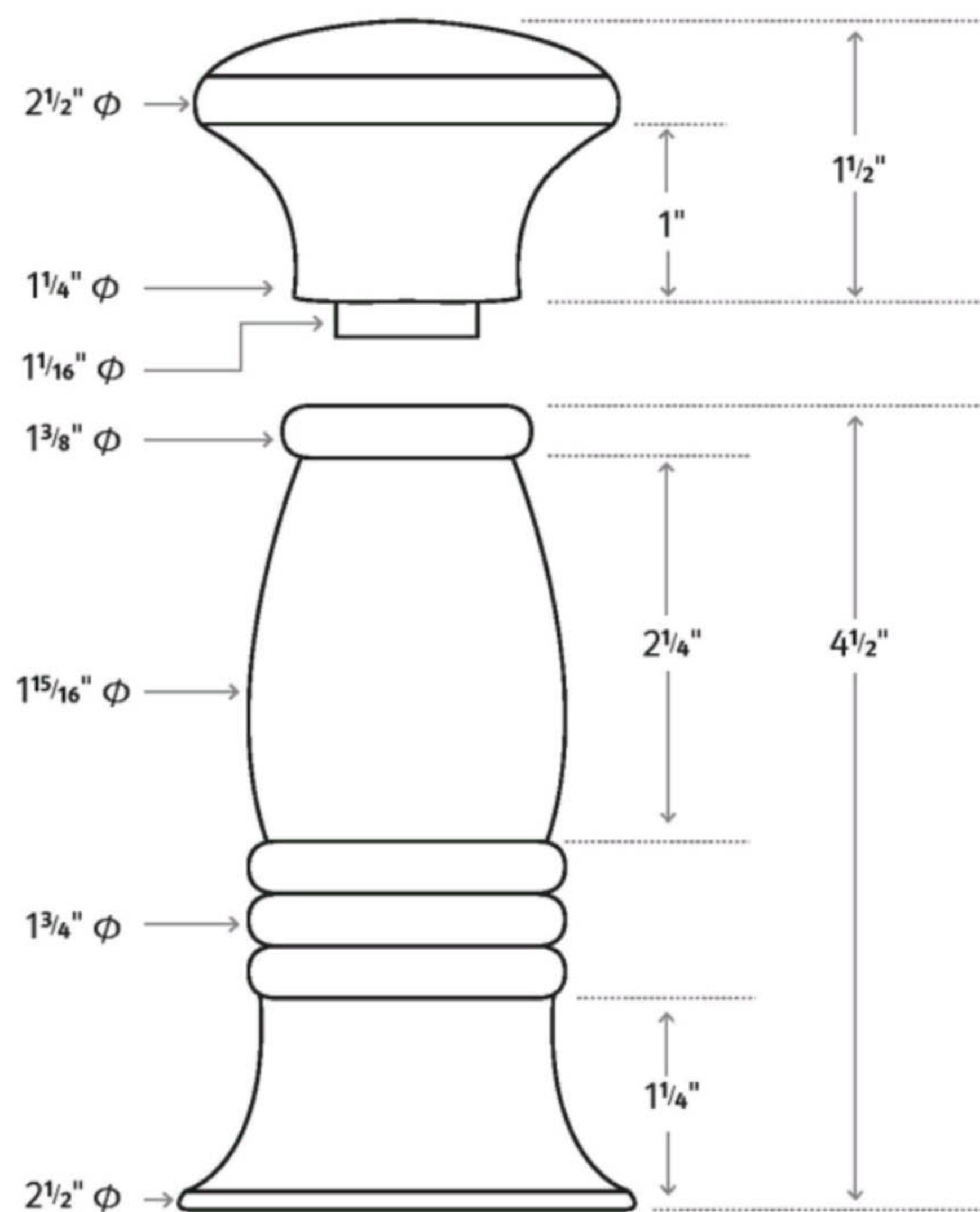
Tools & materials

Tools & equipment

- PPE & RPE as appropriate
- Spindle roughing gouge
- Spindle gouge
- Small skew chisel
- Thin parting tool
- Bead-forming tool
- Coping saw
- Burning wire
- Axminster chuck
- O'Donnell jaws
- Robert Sorby steb centre
- Workshop callipers
- Lathe drill chuck
- Sanding grits 120 through 600
- Buffing drum
- Sanding sealer
- Satin lacquer
- Carnauba wax

Materials

- Maple spindle blank, 7in long by 3in square
- Chamfuta blank, 7in long by 3in square



2

The making

1 Mark the centres of the two blanks.

2 The lathe is ready to turn the blanks to round between centres. You can see the steb centre mounted in the chuck at the headstock end.

3-4 The maple blank is mounted and being turned to round with a spindle roughing gouge.

5 Once round, both ends have a spigot turned to suit your chuck jaws using a beading tool.

6 From the headstock end, draw a line about 5in and start to part the remaining smaller section off. I sometimes tend to do this by taking the blank off the lathe and use my bandsaw as I find it quicker and cleaner.

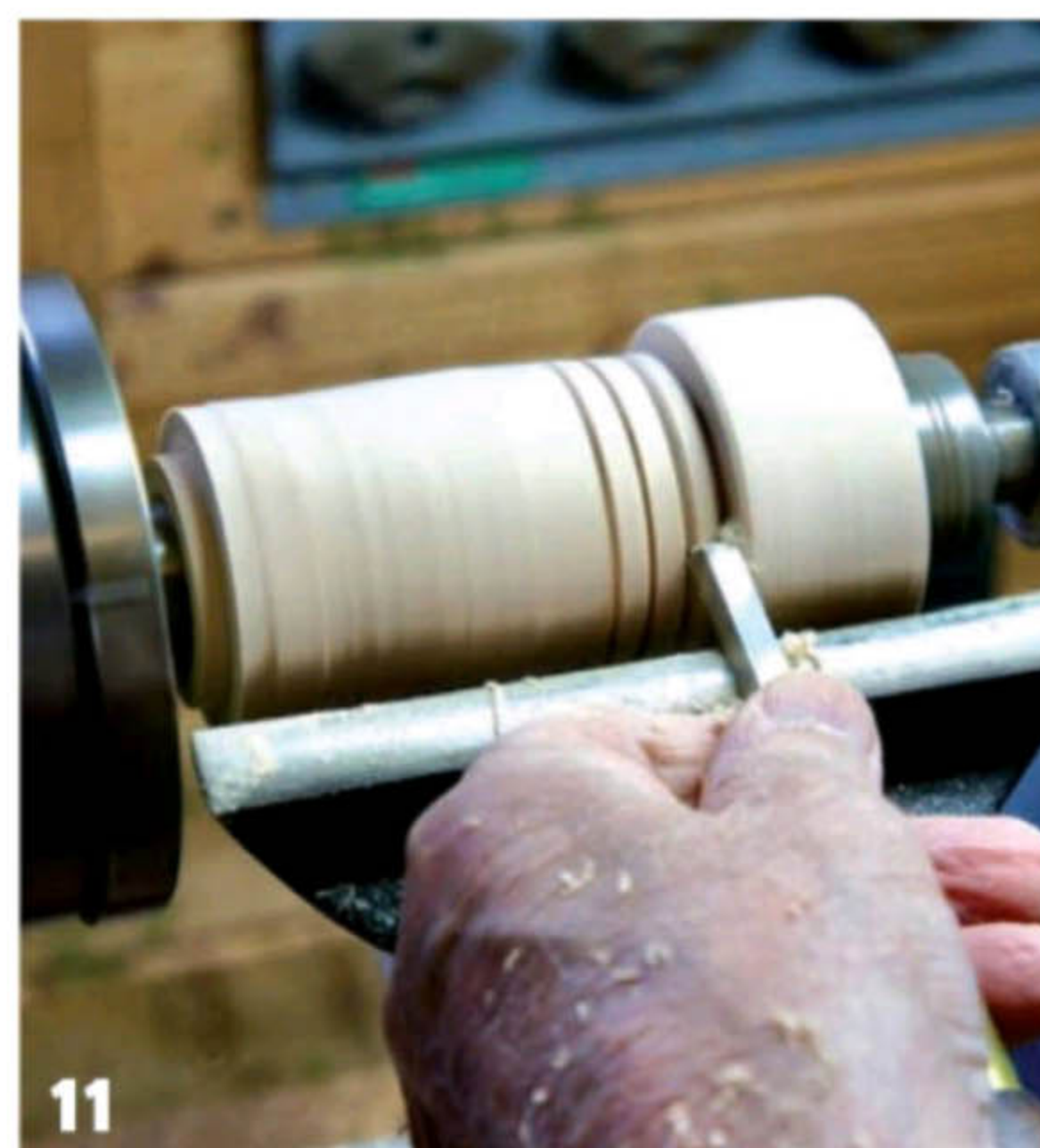
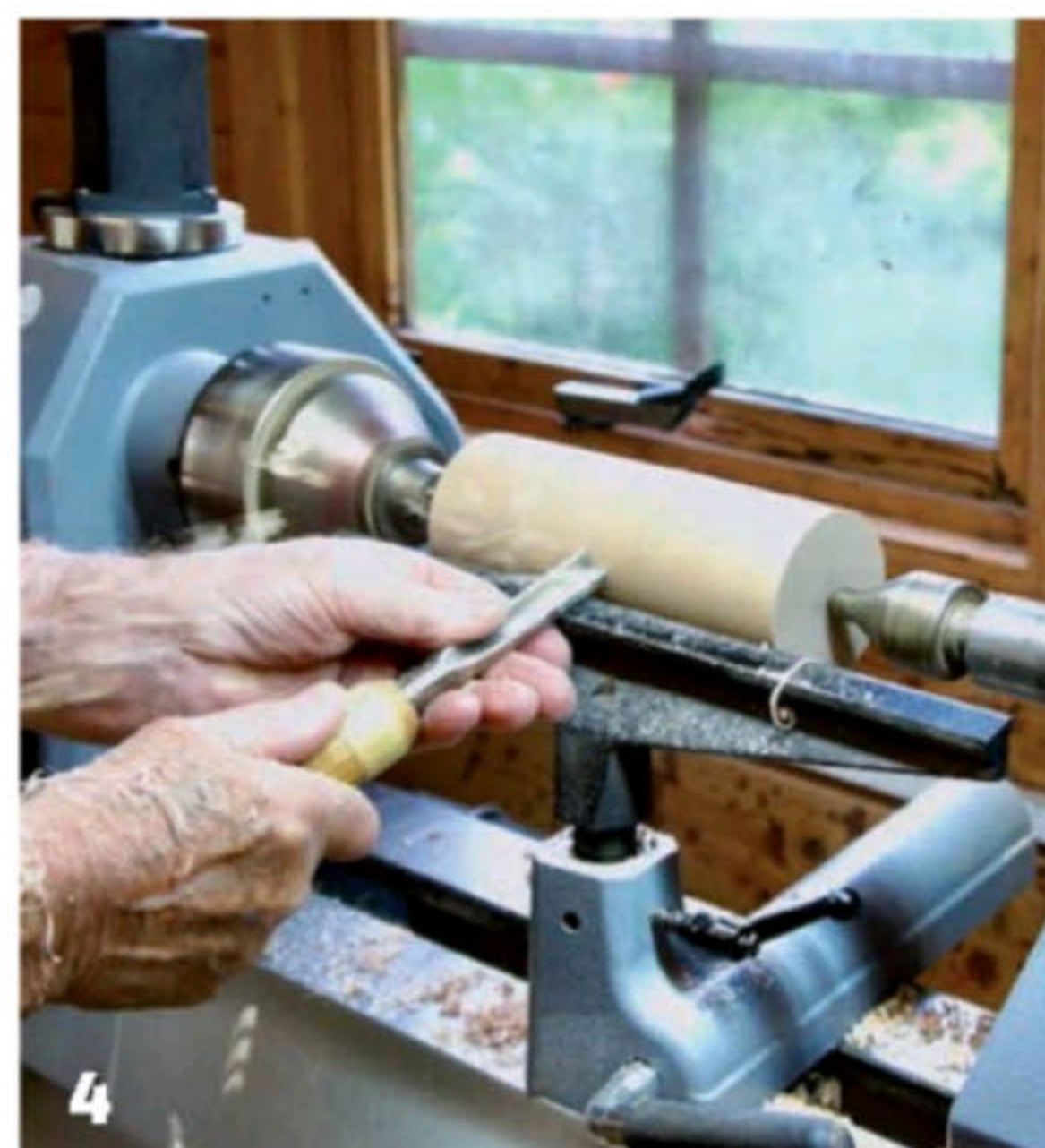
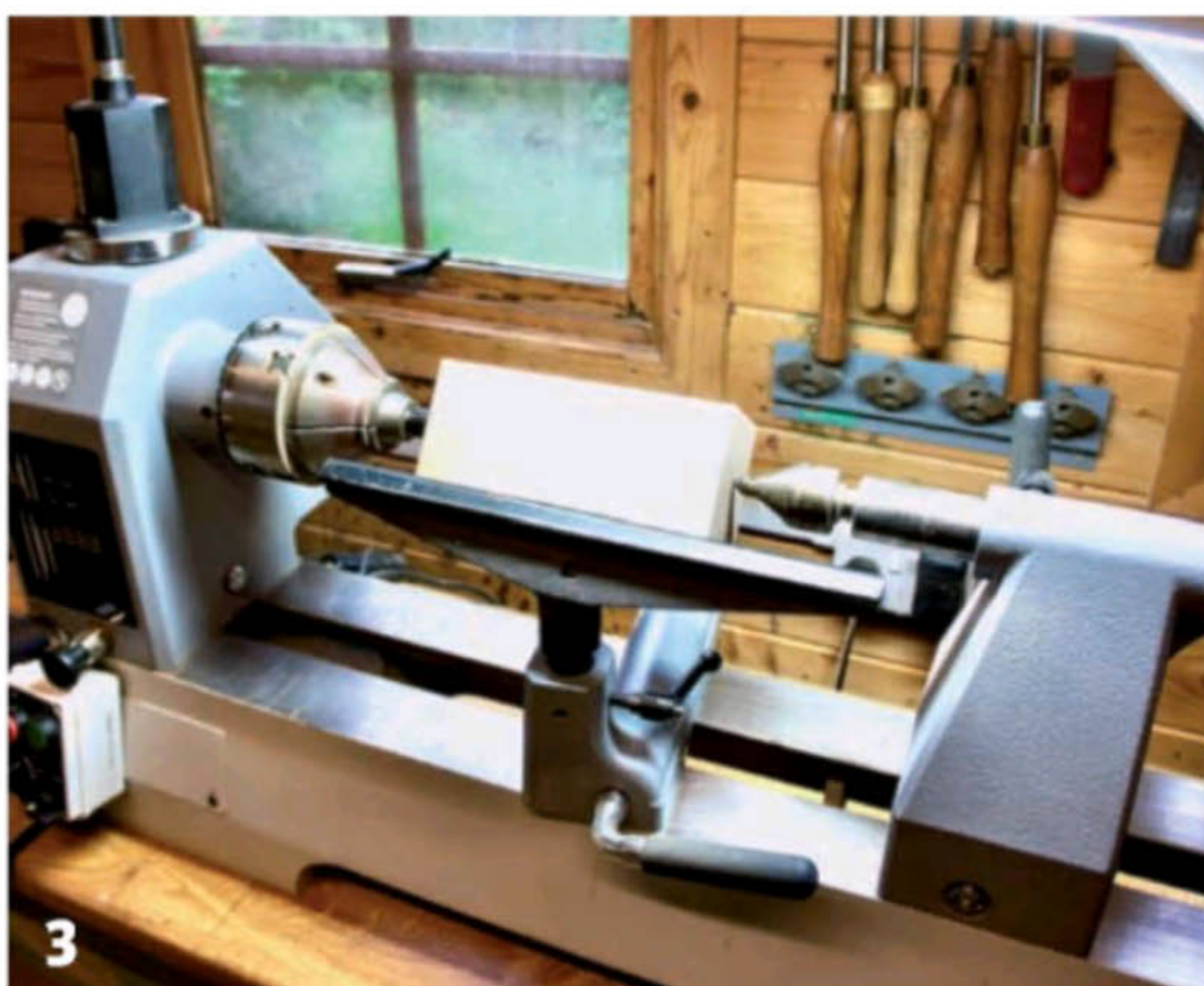
7 Mount the main blank on to the chuck jaws using the spigot that was initially turned. You can now start to drill the centre hole using a Jacobs chuck mounted in the tailstock. Use a drill bit corresponding to the mechanism being used – in this case $1\frac{1}{16}$ in.

8 Drill in about halfway, removing shavings every inch or so as this stops any clogging.

9 Reverse the blank on your chuck to drill from the bottom end. Start this by initially using the $1\frac{5}{8}$ in drill bit and drill in $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Replace the drill bit with the $1\frac{1}{16}$ in bit and complete drilling the centre hole. Sand the large, drilled area down to 400 grit and apply two coats of sanding sealer.

10 Now turn the blank nearly down to the final diameter. Use the measurements from the detailed plan drawing. The larger diameter area up to the start of the first bead is $2\frac{1}{2}$ in whilst the rest is down to $1\frac{5}{16}$ in.

11 Using the beading tool, turn the three beads then, with a spindle gouge, turn the cove from the mill bottom down to the first bead.



12 Draw a line from the mill bottom for the length of the main body. This is $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.

13 Reverse the blank using jaws that can grip internally in the mill bottom. Using a parting tool, start to form a spigot at the top end of the body. This needs to be $1\frac{3}{8}$ in in diameter and is where the top bead is formed. Use a spindle gouge to turn the delicate body shape. Form the top bead.

14 Sand the whole area down to 600 grit then burn the base of each bead with your burning wire. Be very careful when doing this as you don't want to get your fingers or clothing caught in the wire.

15 This shows the main body turned and sanded. No finish is yet applied as this will all be done when the top section is complete.

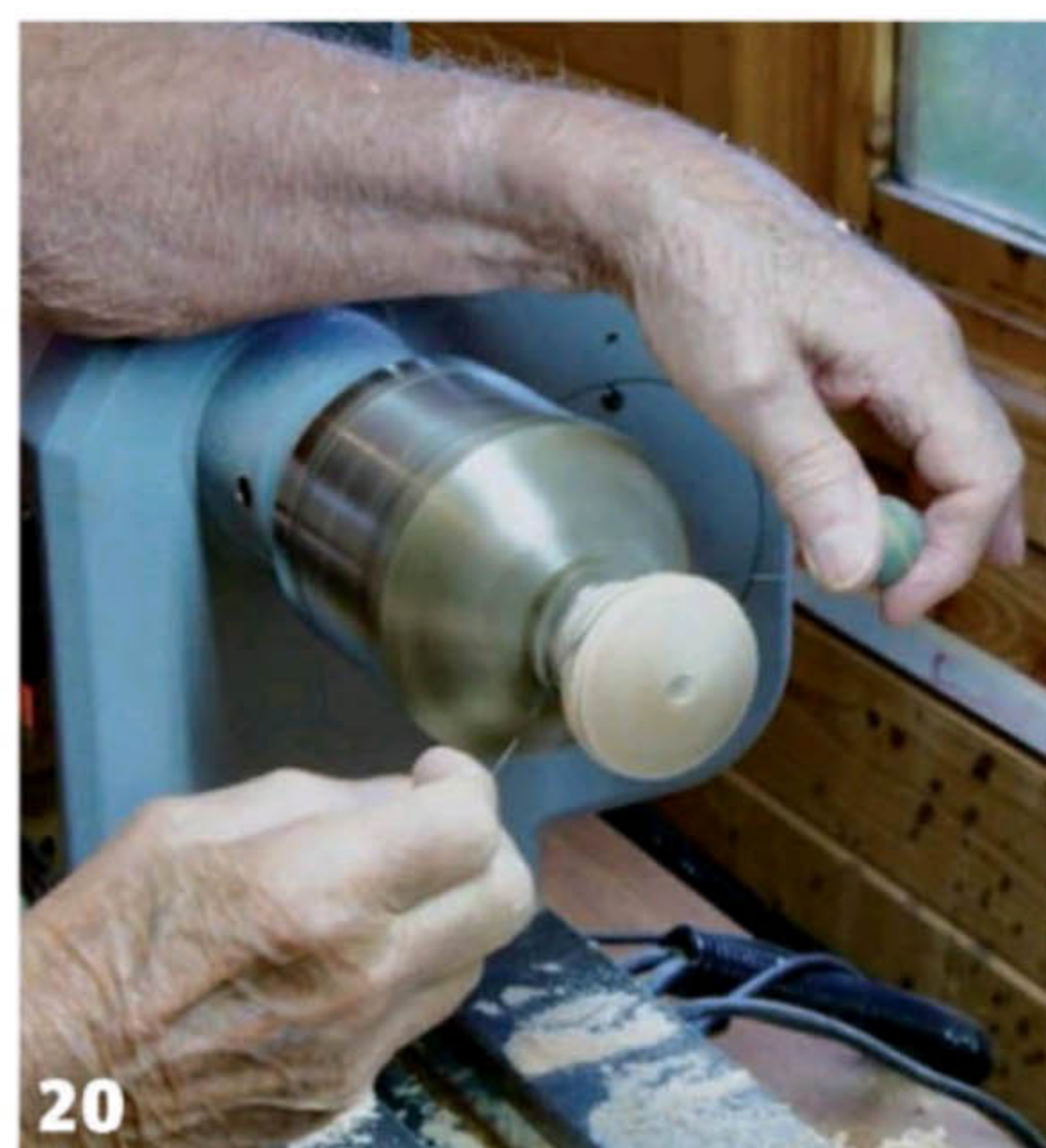
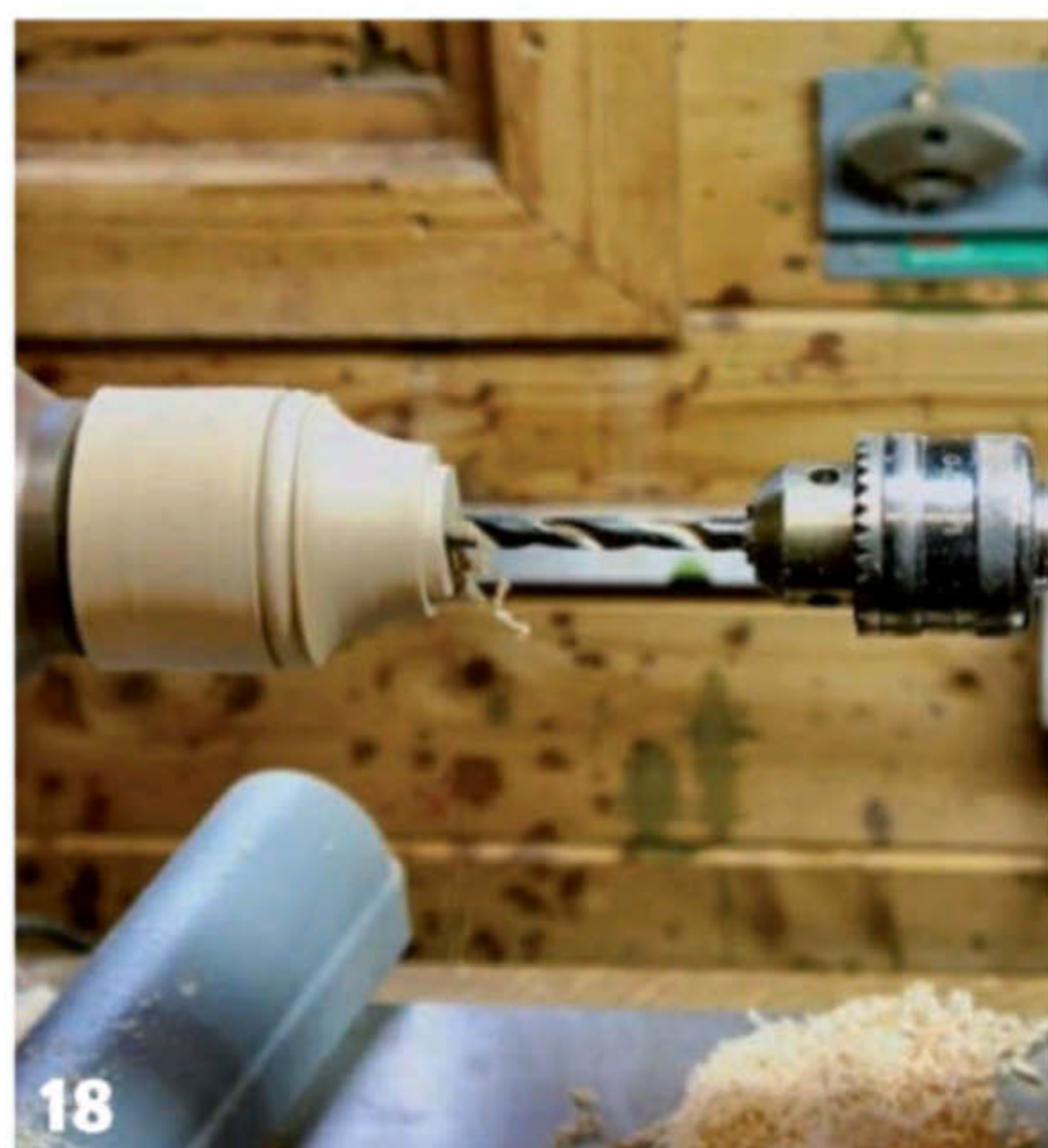
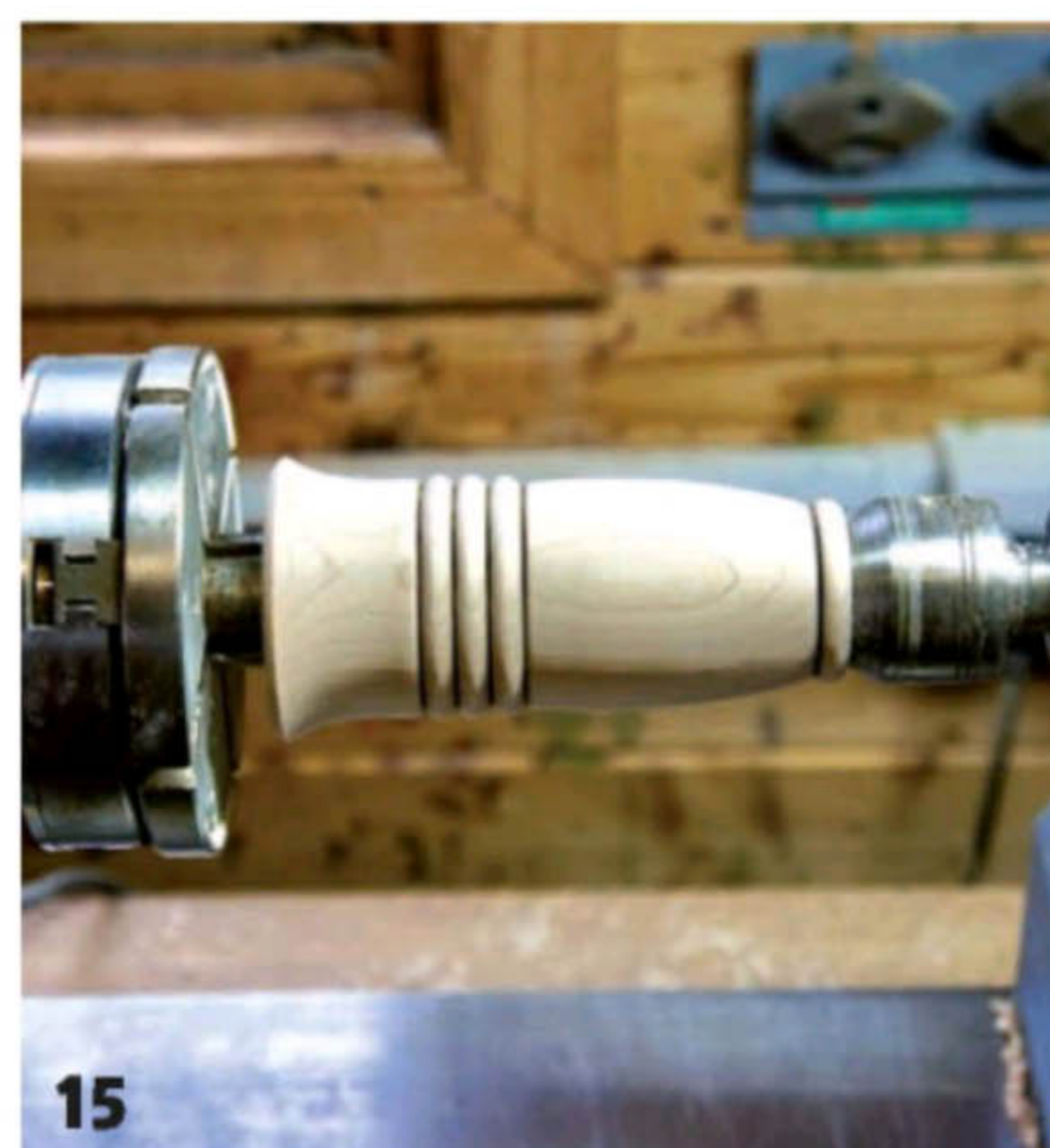
16 The top section blank is now attached to the chuck via the spigot and trued up to a diameter of $2\frac{5}{8}$ in. The end is also trued up and a spigot turned. This spigot is the section that sits inside the main body and it needs to be $1\frac{1}{8}$ in in diameter. A line is then drawn 1in from the bottom.

17 From this line, turn a curve down to where the top sits on the main mill body. This can be checked by holding the main mill body to it as in this picture. A bead can also be made at the top of this curve.

18 Drill a hole through using a $\frac{9}{32}$ in drill fitted in the tailstock.

19 Reverse the blank and finish the top with a gentle curve as in the photo.

20 Use the burning wire on either side of the bead then sand the top down to 600 grit.

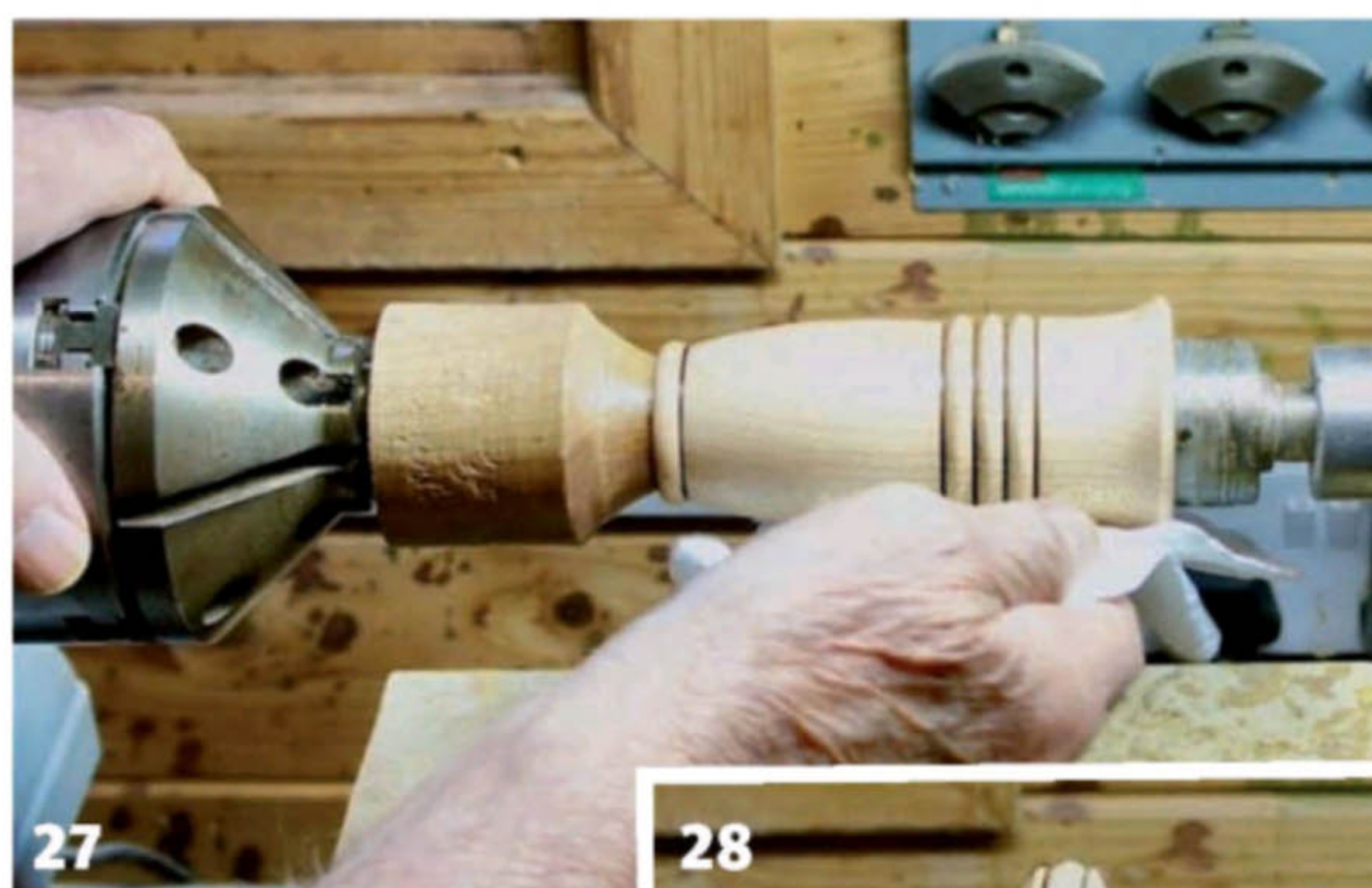
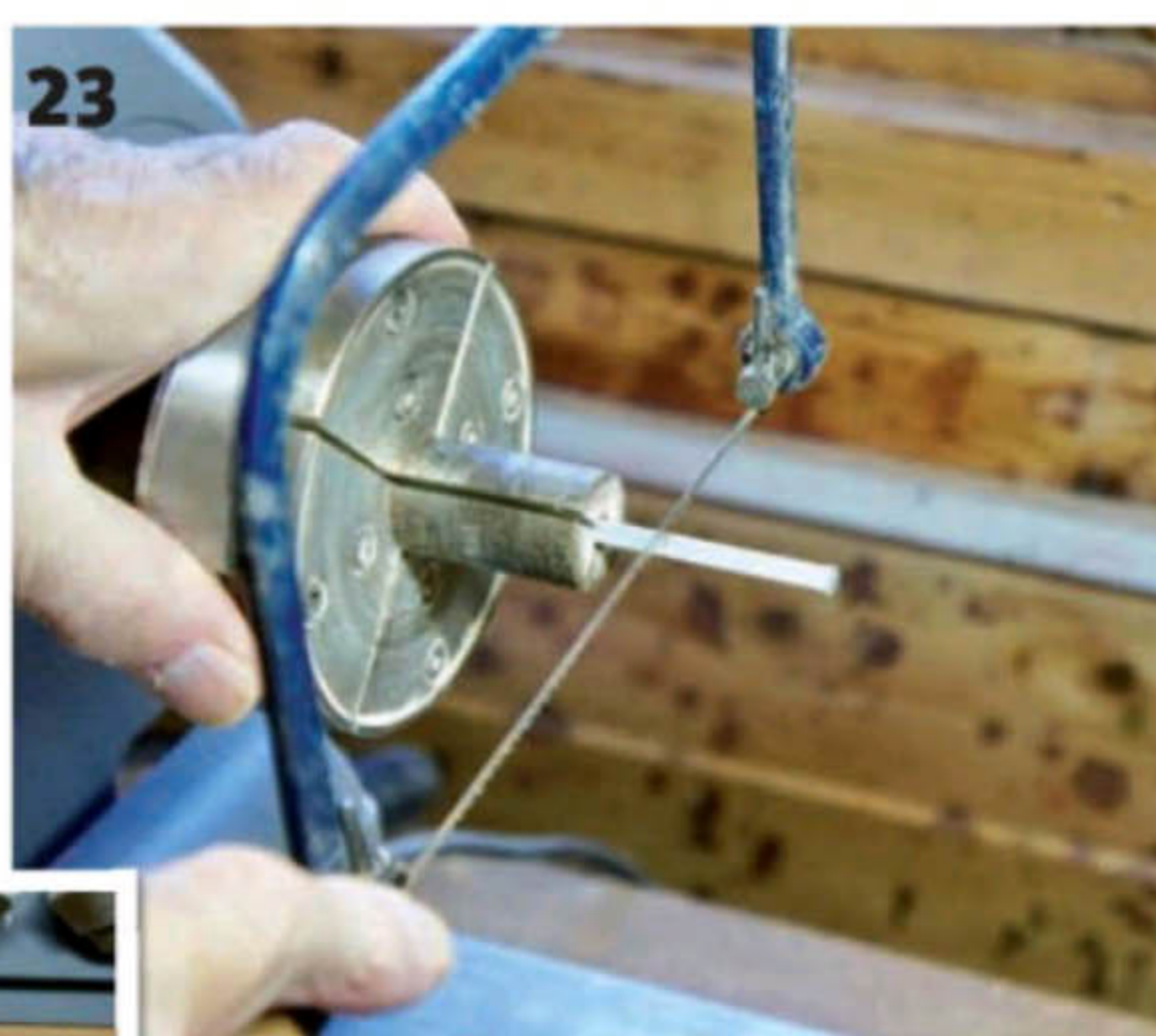
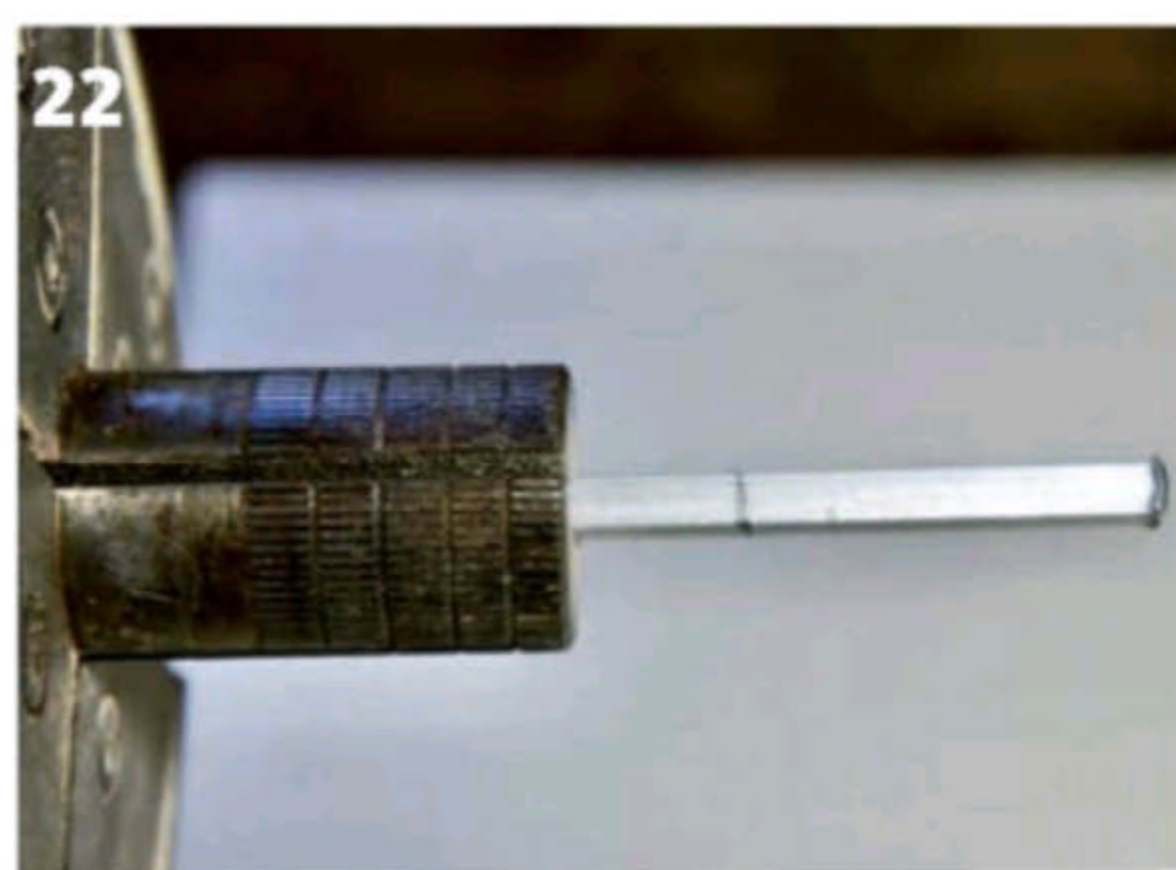


21 Insert the mechanism and fit the top. Now measure the distance from the mill top to the start of the screw thread.

22 Remove the mechanism and secure the stem in an appropriate chuck or a bench vice. Draw a line on the stem.

23 Saw this section off with a coping saw.

24 Take a small hammer and gently roll over the cut edges. This enables the shaft to be secured in the mechanism.



25-26 Take some waste wood and turn and secure in the chuck.

27-28 Apply two coats of sanding sealer, allowing it to dry between coats. The same is done with the top section, but secure the top using a pen mandrel or a very narrow turned piece of wood. Then apply two coats of sealer and, when dry, two coats of lacquer.

29 Buff using a buffing wheel with a coat of crystalline wax.

Completing your project

Secure the mechanism by following the mill's instructions and the salt mill is complete and finished.

All that has to be done now is to repeat the entire process, but use your darker choice of wood for the pepper mill. ●



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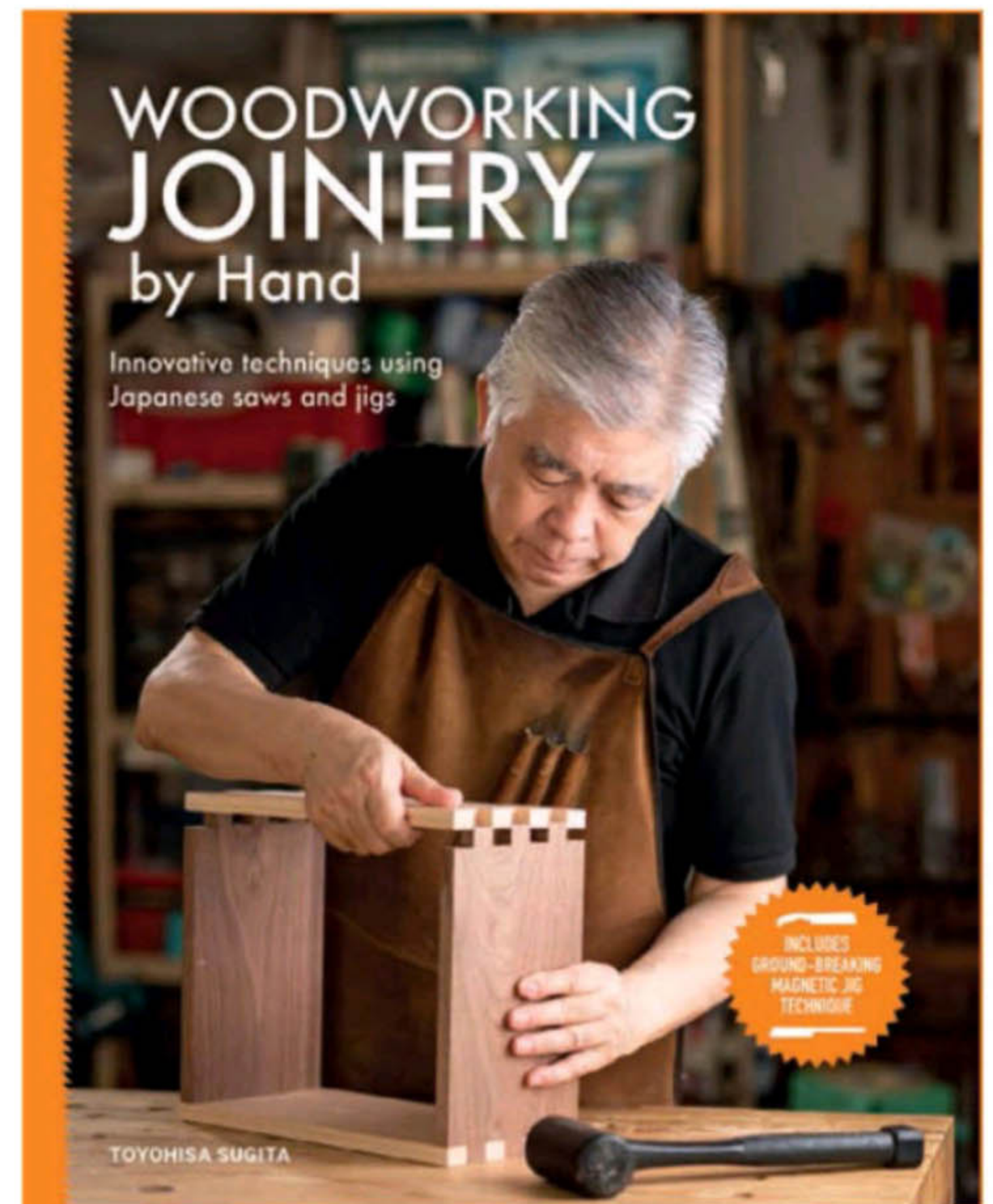
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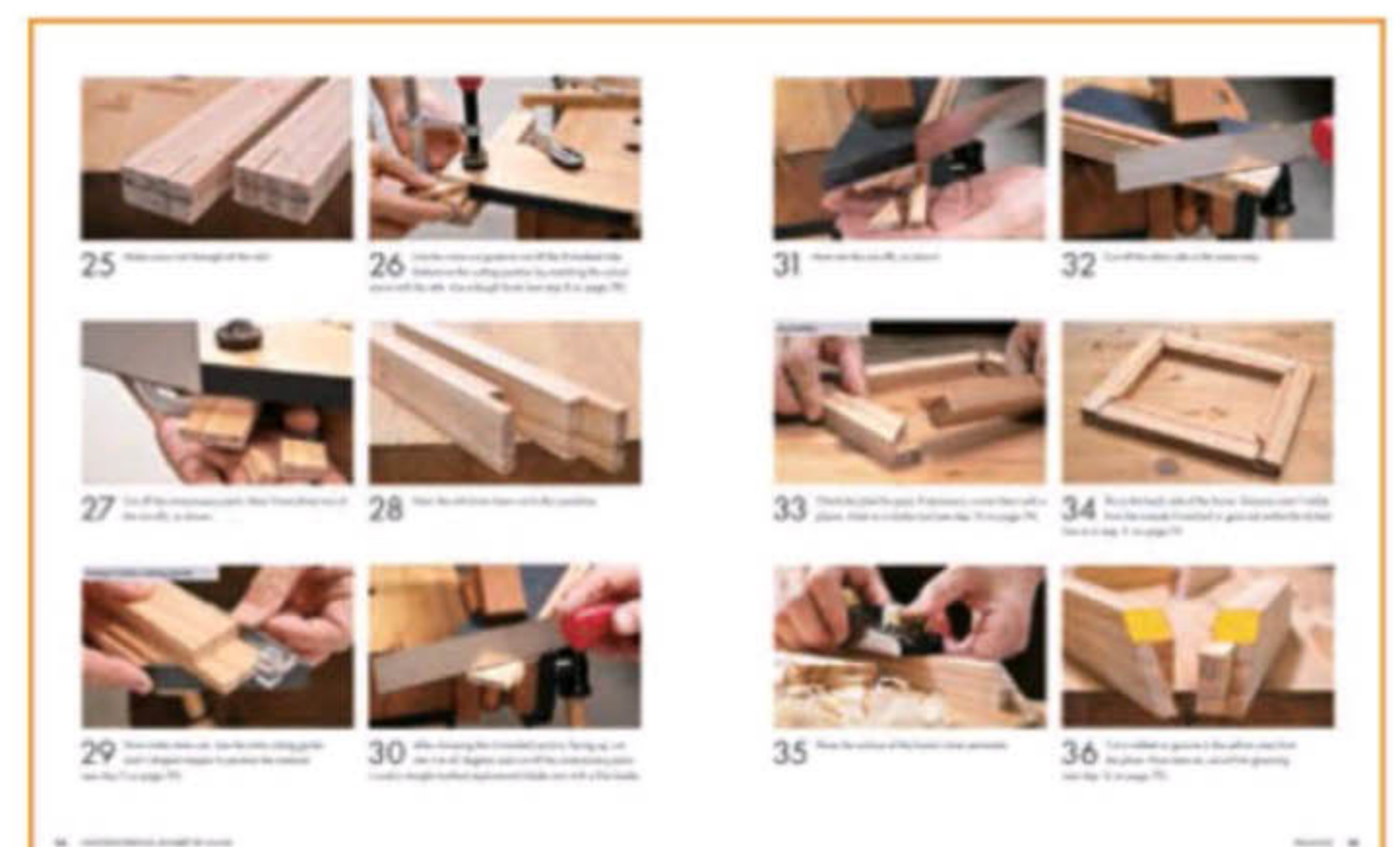
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Banksia goblet

John Hawkswell incorporates a fibrous banksia nut into his chalice design

Banksia nuts are the fruit from the banksia tree, which is found in Australia. They are named after Sir Joseph Banks, who sailed with Captain Cook on the *Endeavour* in 1768. The nuts are hard and have seed pods from the outside to the central core. They are best finished with an oil as waxes and other finishes can get stuck in the seed pods.

“
*It doesn't always
provide the turner with
the most comfortable
turning experience*
”

I know woodturners who have vowed never to turn a banksia nut. It is composed of fibrous material and it does have seeds that can become airborne during the turning process, so it doesn't always provide the most comfortable turning experience. However, if you are prepared to accept this challenge the results can be rewarding. Proper protection against the fibrous dust and seeds during the turning process is essential.

I was given some banksia nuts many years ago and they have lain near the bottom of the wood store awaiting a suitable project. I thought this goblet would fit the bill.

Before starting it is a good idea to check for cracks in the surface. As a first step, both ends of the banksia nut were sawn off to assist mounting on the lathe. If you are cutting any round stock on the bandsaw or tablesaw it is as well to take a few precautions to eliminate the danger of the blank being snatched from your hand by the motion of the blade. I usually hot-glue some square section to the blank so that it remains stable throughout the cut.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN HAWKSWELL

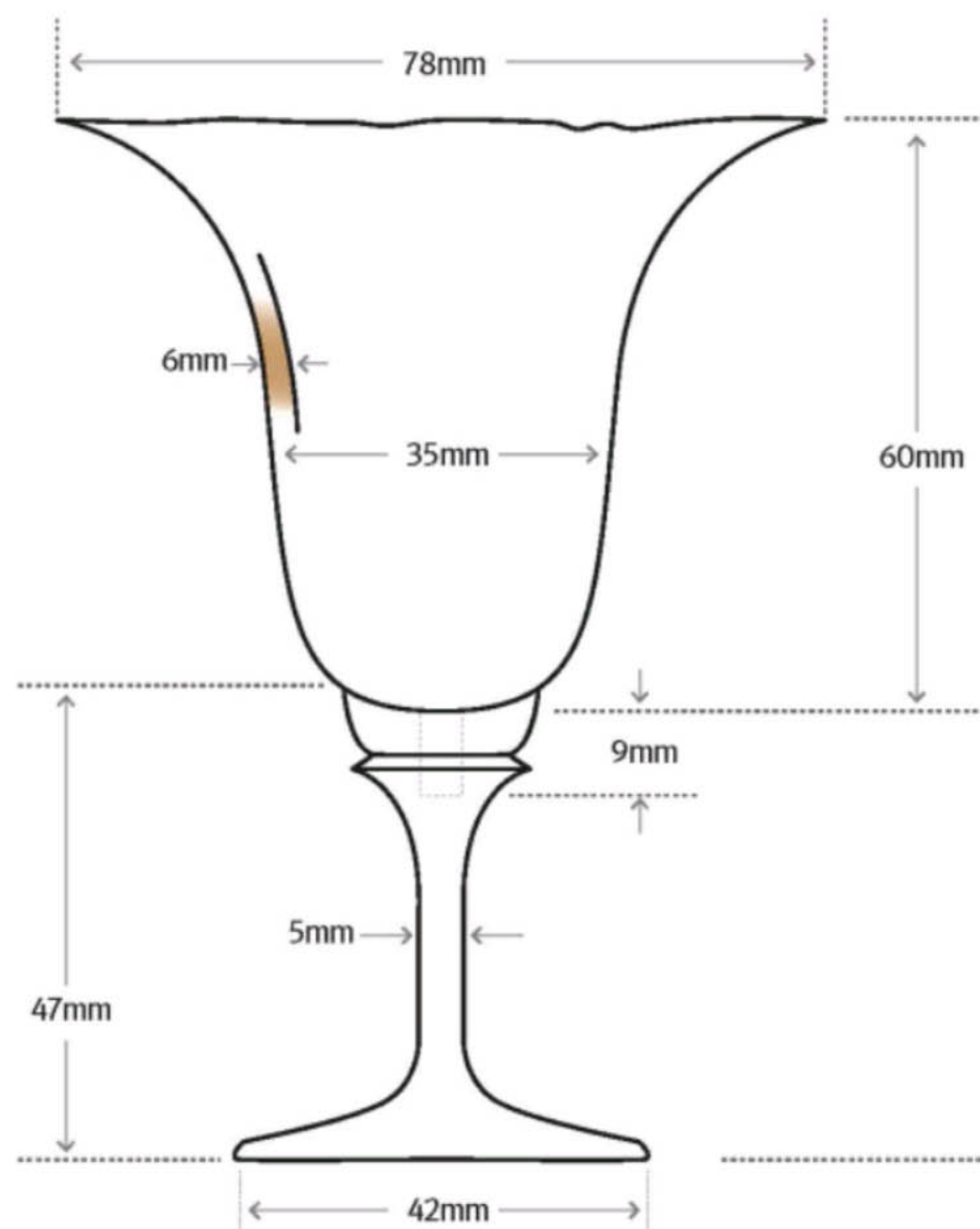
Plans & equipment

Tools & equipment

- PPE as appropriate
(a powered respirator was used throughout this project)
- Abrasives, 120 grit down to 400 grit
- Reg Sherwin spindle roughing gouge
- 6mm spindle gouge
- 13mm spindle gouge
- 13mm round skew
- Diamond parting tool
- Thin parting tool
- 12mm continental gouge
- 25mm round-nose scraper
- Callipers

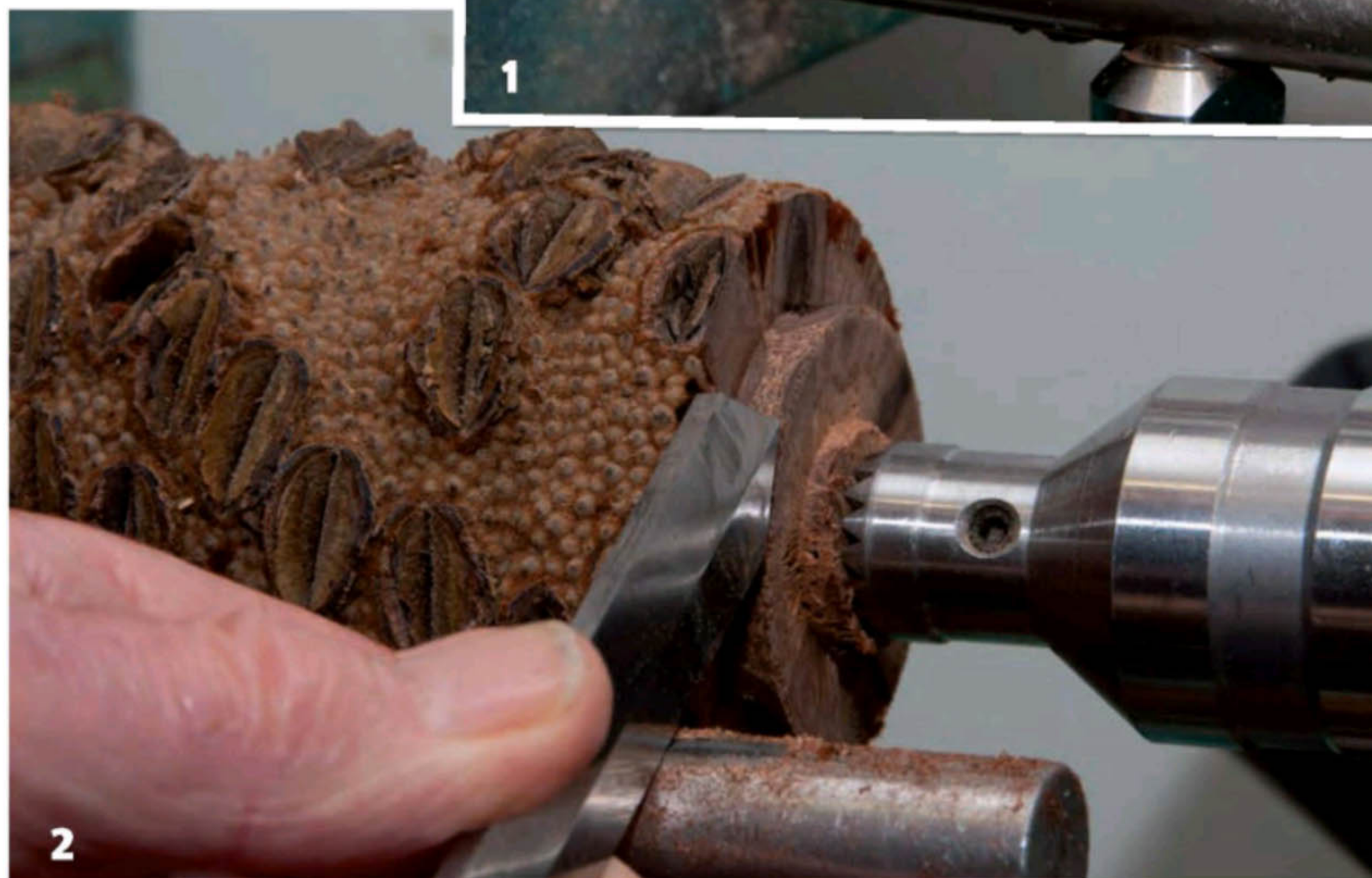
Materials

- Banksia nut that will yield 90 x 90 x 100mm
- Box blank, 50 x 50 x 70mm



The making

1 Mount a suitable banksia blank between centres. To ensure a firm grip it is best to first cut the ends. Due to the fibrous nature of the material, steb centres are used at both the headstock and the tailstock ends. These multi-pronged centres grip the material better and are more forgiving in the event of a catch thanks to the spring-loaded centre pin.



2 Select the best end for the top of the vessel and at the other end form a spigot to fit your scroll chuck. Be generous with the depth of the spigot because of the fibrous nature of the material and the capacity of the chuck. Avoid a spigot so wide that it bottoms out in the chuck and leaves the base of the blank unsupported.



3 Mount the banksia blank in the chuck and start to hollow the centre. Drill a hole in the centre to offer good purchase for the hollowing tool to start the cut from the centre. Sharp tools and light cuts are the order of the day, especially as the tool approaches the rim. A spindle gouge with a short bevel accomplished the bulk of the hollowing.

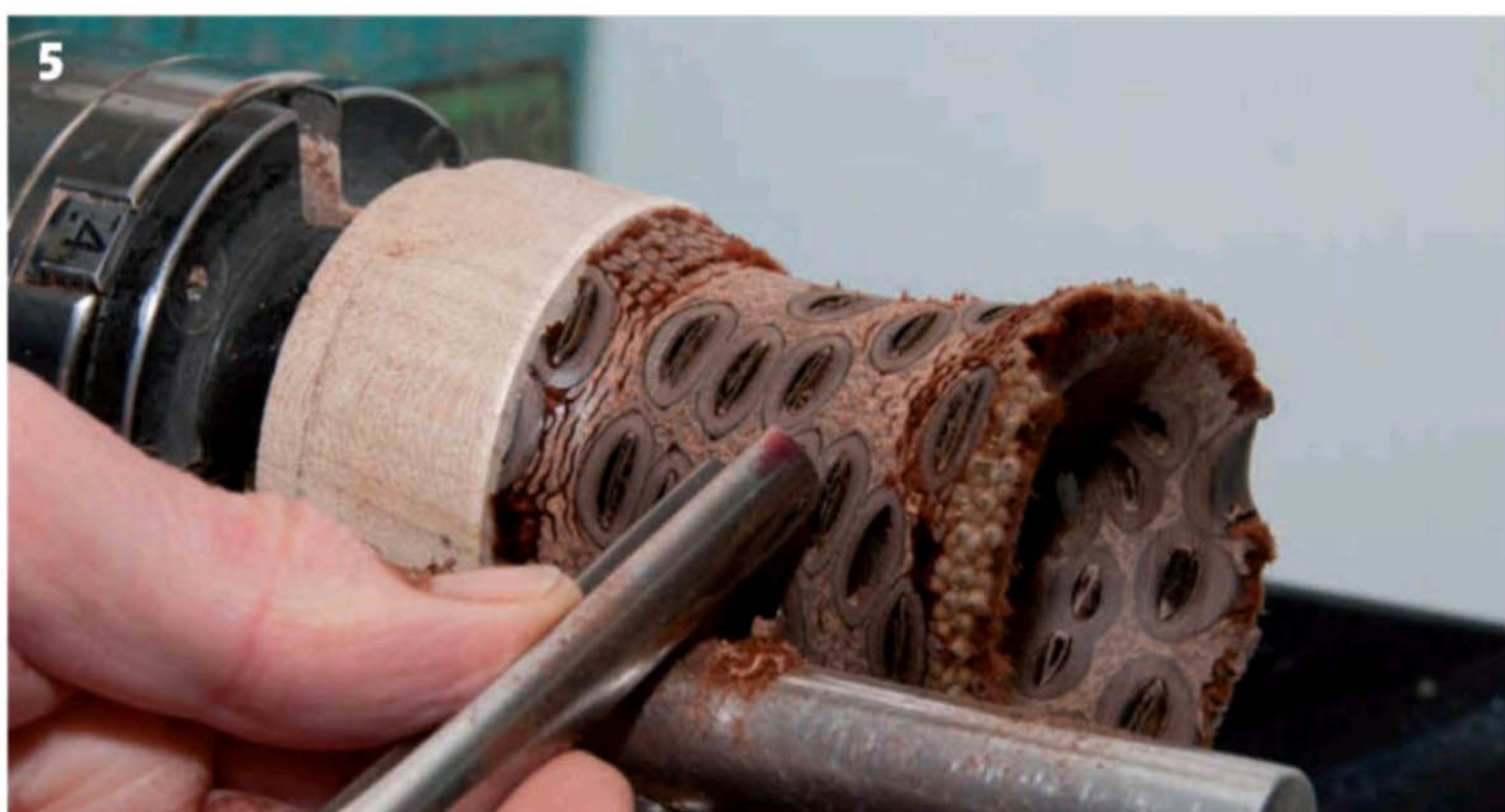
4 Having achieved the required depth and interior shape with the spindle gouge it is now a question of refining the cut. A round-nose scraper with the left-hand edge ground to produce a cutting edge soon removes unwanted tool marks. For the last two or three passes it is used in sheer scraping mode.

5 With a spindle roughing gouge, start to shape the outside surface, ensuring that you do not weaken the support before you have achieved the required shape at the end nearest the tailstock. The photo shows the Reg Sherwin spindle roughing gouge in use. With a short bevel it is a solid tool and ideal for producing a slow curve.

6 Before continuing to shape the outside of the vessel remove some of the waste at the headstock end with a parting tool so the spindle gouge has more working room. This will reduce the risk of having a catch with the unsupported wing of the gouge as you form the bottom curve of the vase.

7 It is a good idea to sand and finish the inside before parting off. The uneven contours of this vessel means that hand sanding is best avoided and I offer a low-tech alternative that is both safe and effective. A wire coat hanger and a strip of Velcro to anchor the piece of Abranet is all that is necessary. Reduce the speed of the lathe before sanding.

Sanding sealer would collect in the seed holes and other irregularities so instead finishing oil is used making sure any excess oil is wiped away.



Top tip

If you want the rim of the goblet to be even and not ragged, try spreading some superglue around it.

8 As more of the material at the headstock end is turned away there is less material to support the vessel. It is therefore prudent to bring up the tailstock to reduce the chance of mishap. A dome-shaped piece of polystyrene is hot-glued to a piece of wood which is attached to the tailstock via a live centre, as shown in the photo.



9 Using another dome of polystyrene glued to a jam chuck, the goblet is reversed in the chuck and, using a parting tool, a 6mm-diameter spigot is formed as shown. The curved base of the vessel is refined with a spindle gouge. The bottom is sanded and finished.



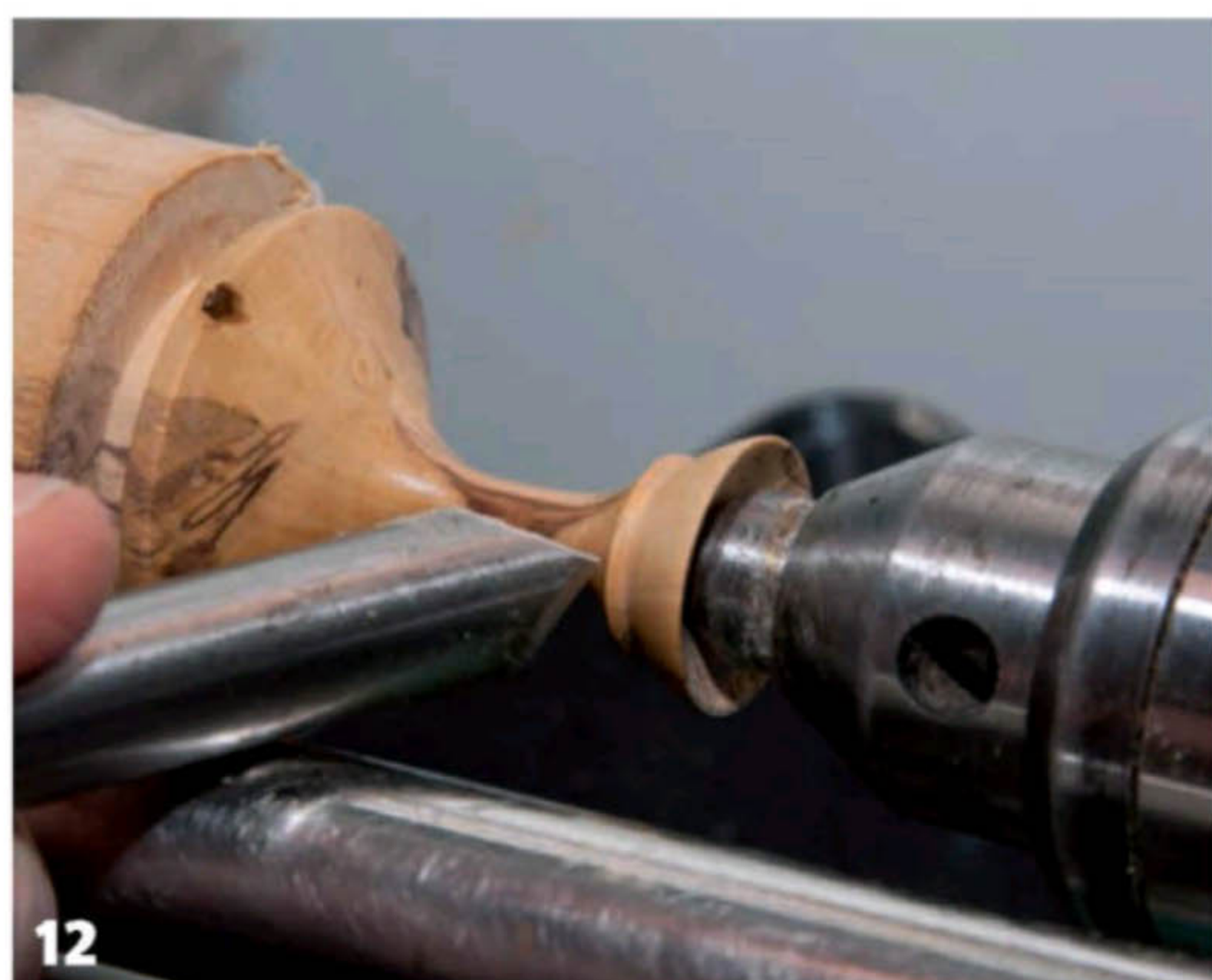
10 Mount a piece of boxwood in the chuck to make the stem of the vessel. True up the end and drill a 6mm-diameter hole some 9mm long. Use a spindle gouge to open up this hole so that the curved base of the goblet fits the stem snugly without gaps.

11 Reduce the surplus material with a roughing out gouge and then shape the stem with a spindle gouge. A small continental gouge is difficult to beat when you seek to form a gentle curve. Box is a very rewarding wood to turn as you can see from the fine shavings produced.

12 Sand carefully and finish. If you lose some fine detail during this operation it may be necessary to redefine it. It is a good idea to bring the tailstock up for support before reworking a detail. The photo shows a round skew chisel which was used to ensure the details remain crisp.

13 Here is the finished stem ready to fit the top section. The spigot that was formed in the base of the banksia nut is glued into the hole in the stem and the job is finished.

14 The boxwood provides a nice contrast, in both texture and colour, to the banksia nut. ●



Epoxy resin inlays

Adrian Jacobs continues his exploration into materials for resin inlays

Long-term readers of the magazine may remember that some years ago I wrote an article on how to make homemade inlays for turning projects. Over the past few weeks, I have come across some new materials that can be used to make some unusual inlays. This article covers the use of these inlays and focuses on the materials rather than the process of making the boxes and bowls for which they are used.

Basic materials

The process of making up the inlays is not difficult, but it does require some attention to detail. The materials I used were as follows:

Epoxy resin

I used three types of epoxy resin. The first of these was a two-part epoxy crystal clear resin. The two parts are mixed together to form the base liquid which, with this product, takes many hours to solidify. The long curing time helps bubbles to disperse which otherwise might spoil the finished effect. A 16 ounce kit costs around £13 and is available online.



1 Two-part epoxy crystal clear resin



The second type of resin was Isopon Fastglas. This resin has an amber colour and is mixed with a pink hardener that further alters the colour. This resin 'goes off' very quickly and can be worked within an hour, although it will continue to harden for another four or five hours. 500ml of Fastglas with hardener is available at car spares stores, at a cost of around £24.

The third type of resin is UV resin that hardens when exposed to UV light. This resin is crystal clear and is similar to the resin used in windscreen repairs. The resin cures quickly with exposure to UV light and can be worked on within 30 minutes after 30 minutes under a UV light source. 100g of resin is available online for around £8.00.

Mica flakes, powders and colouring

Mica flakes are very glittery and the ones that I used are transparent but can also take on the colour of any colourant added to your mixture. Mica flakes are supplied in small pots or packages and they are available online for around £8.00.

Mica powder can be added to give a lustrous pearlescent colouring to the mixture and only very small quantities are needed. The Rolio pack in the picture has 15 colours and costs around £8.00.

These are multi-coloured glittery mica flakes that change colour when tilted in the light. Again, only small quantities need to be added to your pigmented mixture to get quite spectacular effects. A pack of five different colours cost around £17.00 online.

Liquid polyester resin colouring is very concentrated and only a few drops are needed for each project. This is a pack that I purchased online at a cost of £8.50. These colourings are transparent and can be used with UV resin.



2 Isopon Fastglas 3 UV resin 4 A small jar of mica flakes 5 Mica powder
6 Chameleon mica flakes 7 Liquid resin colouring

Other materials and equipment that you will need include:

- An ultraviolet (UV) lamp at a cost of anything between £10 and £30. The one I use cost £25 online
- Blow lamp – This is not essential but does help disperse bubbles
- Paper mixing cups
- A tiny spoon to measure pigment or mica flakes. Rolio supplies one with its mica powder
- Wooden spatulas to mix the resin
- Cellulose sanding sealer or cellulose spray
- Super-fine polishing compound

If you want to keep costs to a minimum, I would recommend starting with Fastglas, mica flakes, chameleon flakes and liquid colouring.

Method

When I started this project, I was aiming to get a finish with the appearance of natural opal. You must judge from the photos whether you think that I have been successful but, in any event, I was very pleased with the outcomes.



1 The first step is to prepare the piece to take the inlay. Cut an 8mm wide and 2mm deep groove in a small Exeter elm bowl. The bowl has been roughed out to its approximate final thickness but not yet finished. Once the groove had been cut, I removed the bowl and chuck from the lathe and stood it in on my workbench ready to take the resin mixture.

2 For this piece, the inlay that I used was the two-part, crystal clear epoxy with some dark blue liquid colour, three small spoonfuls of chameleon flakes and one of plain mica flakes. I add the chameleon flakes with my tiny spoon prior to a final mixing before pouring.

3 Next, protect your work surface with some kind of non-permeable membrane (here I am using an old shower curtain) and when the mixture has been thoroughly stirred, pour it into the groove. Ideally fill the groove to level with the top of the wood, but if it overflows, it is easy enough to turn away the excess when the resin has dried.

When the groove is filled, in a fire-safe environment (a fire blanket, or fire bricks, sheets of metal) lightly wave and wave a hot-air gun over it to help disperse any bubbles in the resin. This helps to lower the surface tension of the mixture and let any trapped bubbles pop.

4 Once the groove is filled, place the bowl in a warm place to allow the resin to set. Using this two-part resin, it is best to wait for at least 24 hours before trying to work the resin. When the resin has fully cured, remount the bowl on the lathe, turn away any excess resin and then complete the bowl and sand and polish.

5 I use super-fine polishing compound on the resin surface after it has been sanded down to 1000 grit followed by 0000 wire wool. Finally, I give it a coat of cellulose sanding sealer before inverting the bowl on to my homemade vacuum chuck to finish and seal the foot.

6 The finished bowl, before a coat of high gloss lacquer.

The finished bowl

After I had finished the bowl, I decided that the inlay might benefit from a coat of high gloss lacquer and gave it a coat of cellulose spray. This made the inlay stand out better but also made the bowl a bit too shiny. So, to get around this problem, I used cellulose thinners on a soft rag to gently remove the shiny finish from the inside of the bowl.

HEALTH & SAFETY

AIR GUN SAFETY

- Wear appropriate protective gloves and eye protection.
- Keep the work area clean, uncluttered and well lit.
- Use the hot-air gun only in a well-ventilated area.
- Allow the hot-air gun to cool before storing (only store when cold).



A-B The cellulose finish on the inlay
C Here's more detail of the opalescent finish before the cellulose spray
D After a coat of high gloss lacquer

What I have learned

I am not the most patient of people and I suspect that is a trait shared with many other turners. The curing process can be speeded up considerably by using Isocon Fastglas as the base resin. This cures in about 30 minutes and will allow you to work the inlay within an hour or two. It is then feasible to achieve a highly polished finish within three hours. The main problem with using this is that the base colour of the resin is a deep amber and you have to take this into account when making up your colours. I found that by adding dark blue pigment to the Fastglas, I ended up with a very nice turquoise colour.

The second way to speed up the process is to use the UV epoxy resin. This works very well but you will need a small UV lamp shine on the work to cure the resin.

When using the UV resin, you have to be careful not to use too much pigment or make the inlay too thick. The UV light has to be able to shine through the resin to the base of the inlay in order to fully cure it.



E UV lamp **F** Uncured resin leaking on to the timber. This shows a small test piece where the top of the inlay cured but the bottom did not because I had used too much pigment. When I tried to finish it on the lathe, the resin leaked out from under the hard surface into the surrounding wood. Sometimes the finished inlay can be a bit dull and I have found the best way to deal with this is to leave the piece for another 24 hours and repolish it. Small pieces might benefit from a shiny cellulose spray finish **G-H** Walnut bowl (and underside). I have also used epoxy resin with mica powder pigment to fill large faults. This bowl made from walnut had huge rotten areas that I filled with leftover walnut and Fastglas resin. These pictures demonstrate how the base colour of the Fastglas changed the colouring of the inlay from dark blue to turquoise.

TOP TIPS

A few tips on resin inlays

- Mix resin well before adding any mica or colouring. Make sure that you scrape any resin off the sides of the mixing vessel and incorporate that into the mixture.
- Don't be tempted to rush. The longer that you leave the resin to cure, the easier it will be to achieve a highly polished finish.
- Experiment with test pieces – it only takes a small amount of inlay, and you will build up some experience using the products.
- Wear protective gloves when dealing with the sticky liquid. It is surprising how it seems to get everywhere. Some people can be very sensitive to resin-based products.
- These inlays work well with small pieces. If using them on a large piece, I suspect that multiple narrow bands would look better than one wide one.
- Very wide inlays are harder to polish than narrow ones.



- Decant surplus resin into a small pot that can be mounted on the lathe. This can then be turned and polished to make inlays into the top of boxes.

Some examples of other finished pieces

I A small yew box with UV cellulose, dark blue liquid pigment, mica powder and chameleon powder
J A small applewood box with Fastglas, dark blue liquid pigment, and mica powder. The inlay here is 4mm deep and applied in three sessions. In the first session I applied a base coat of coloured resin and mica powder and when this had dried, I applied a thin coat of clear UV resin. Finally, because it all looked a bit bland, I then added two thin rings of black resin
K This is a test piece with UV resin, a heavier dose of chameleon flakes and dark blue liquid pigment
L A test piece with two-part crystal clear resin, mica flakes and light blue mica powder. A final coat of cellulose lacquer has been applied to give it extra lustre.



Skew chisel – Skill builder – Part 12

EGGS

Richard Findley gets us ready for Easter by turning some eggs with just a skew chisel

Turning eggs is a classic skew exercise and with Easter on the horizon, it seemed like a perfect time to turn some. If you have followed the series so far, this should be quite simple for you, but it will give a good refresher or introduction for those only just joining in the skew chisel journey.

Traditionally, eggs have been turned in all sorts of native and exotic timbers for collectors of wood and woodturning as they can be turned from relatively small samples of timber but show side and end grain well. They also have a wonderful tactile quality and look great displayed in a bowl or on a rack, but eggs can be a deceptively tricky shape to get right.

The 'perfect' egg

When it comes to recognition, the human brain is like an incredibly powerful computer; it takes in all of the information available and tells us the thing we're looking at is an egg. When it comes to an actual egg it might consider such things as:

- They're in an egg box
- They came out of the fridge/supermarket/chicken coop
- The shape
- The colour
- The texture
- The surface finish – eggshell paint is called that for a reason!
- They might have the odd feather stuck to them

The brain takes all of this information in and, within a fraction of a second, identifies the thing in front of you as an egg. Wooden eggs don't have many of those triggers though. They could be presented in an egg box but, more likely in a bowl; they come from a workshop and not a chicken; they will be a weird colour, possibly being made from an exotic timber; they will probably be highly polished so the texture and surface will be wrong and they certainly won't have feathers stuck to them. That only leaves one distinguishing feature – the shape, so you have to get this absolutely spot on for people to immediately identify them as eggs.

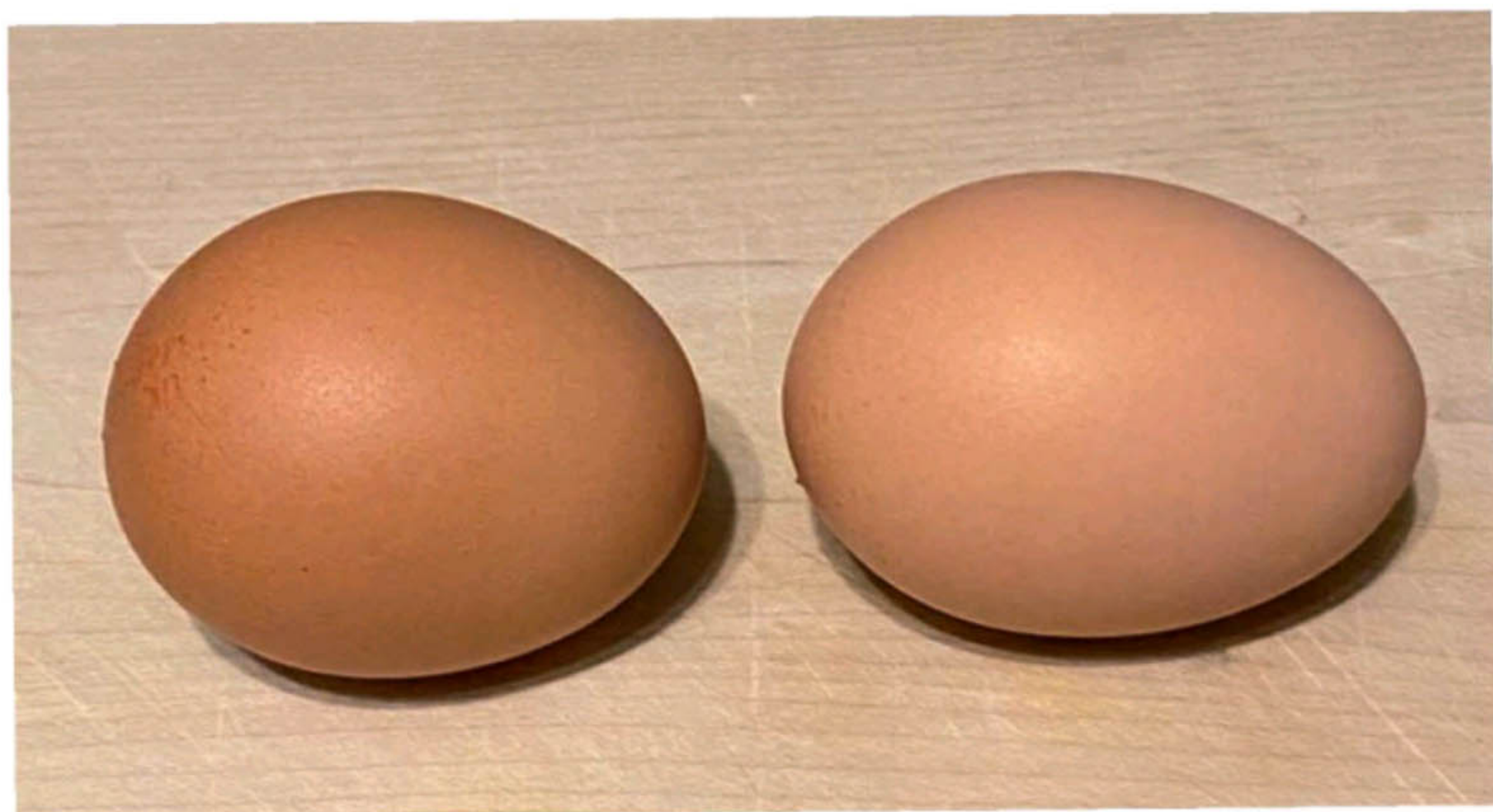
Have you ever looked at a real egg? I mean really looked at it? They often aren't as



PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD FINDLEY

'egg-shaped' as you might expect, but because we have all of the other triggers listed above, there is little doubt the thing in front of you is an egg. Often, real eggs are an odd shape – I've seen eggs that range from almost spherical to quite elongated and torpedo-like. So the first port of call for this project is to source a good egg to pin down the shape. I suggest you head for the chocolate aisle in the supermarket rather than the baking section, because chocolate manufacturers understand the

issue of shape recognition very well indeed and have already done the leg work for you in terms of research. Chocolate eggs, just like our wooden eggs, only have the shape (and the fact they say 'chocolate egg' on the packaging) to convince us that the thing they've made is a representation of an egg. Rather than spending hours carefully checking every egg box in the shop for the 'perfect egg', or trying to convince your hens to lay one, go and buy yourself a chocolate egg and let's work with that.



Two eggs from my fridge show a very rounded egg (left) and a more stretched torpedo egg (right)

Observations and ratios

I bought a Kinder Surprise egg as my example as they're available in the shops all year round and not just at Easter, but any chocolate egg works here. This egg is roughly 65mm high and 45mm in diameter, so the ratio between the two is about 1.4 (there is some more decimal places in this case, but it's close enough for simplicity). So if you take the diameter and multiply it by 1.4 it will give you the height, and if you take the height of 65mm and divide it by 1.4 you will get the diameter. You can use this ratio for your wooden egg too, so if you have a piece of 50mm-diameter timber, multiply it by 1.4 and the height of your egg will need to be about 70mm long, to look in proportion.

The other thing that screams 'egg' when you look at an egg is the position of the widest diameter. If it were in the middle it would look more like a rugby ball, the 'centre' or high point on the egg needs to be around 5mm below the actual centre of the egg.

Shape is of course important here. The ratio and the position of the widest part will get you most of the way to our egg, but it is worth noticing the shape of the ends. The pointy end is not that pointy, just slightly more elongated than the rounded bottom of the egg. I recommend keeping your chocolate egg close by while you turn your first few eggs as a guide.

Egg No. 1

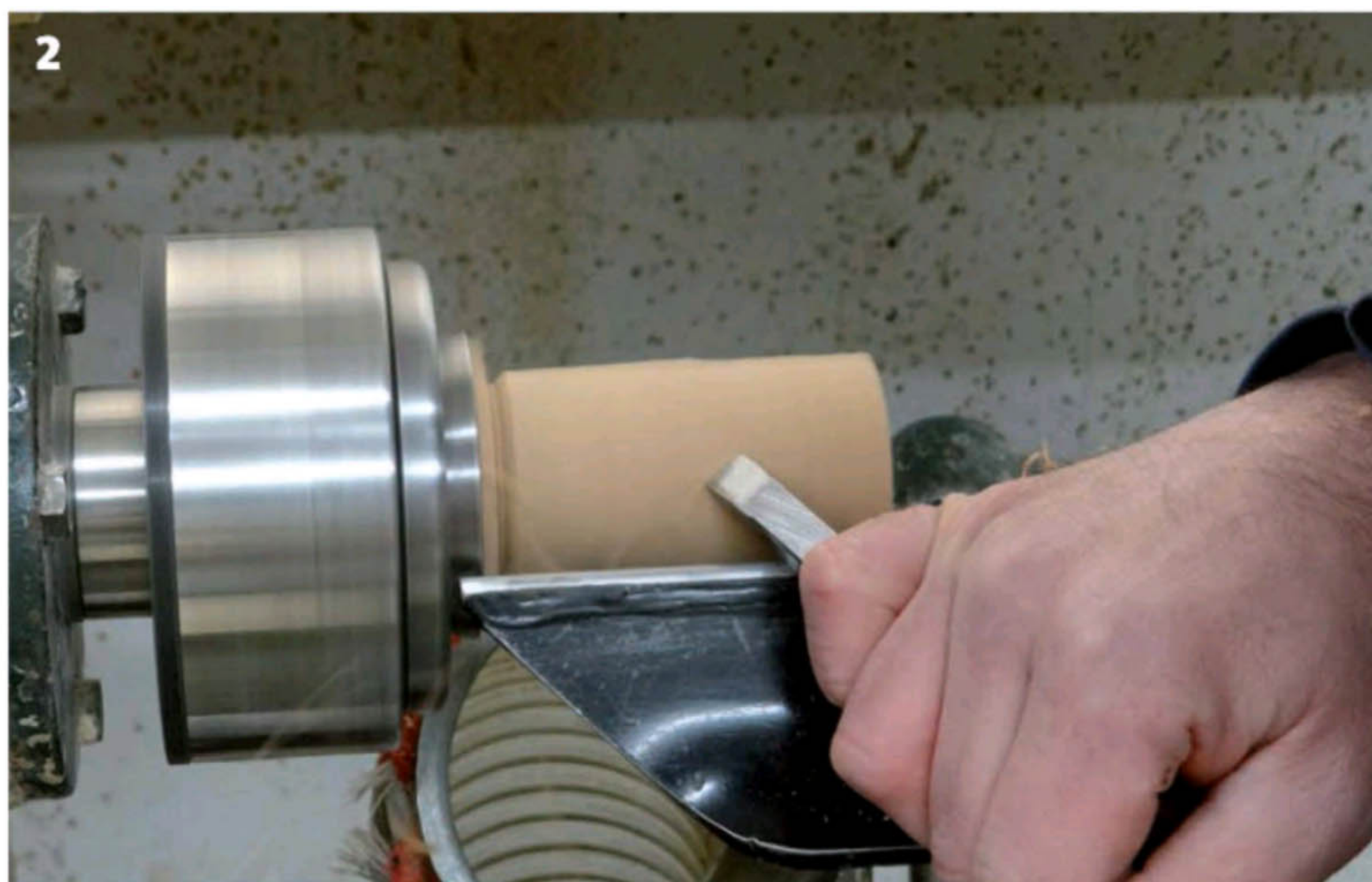
For the first egg, I rummaged through one of my timber piles and found a piece of 45mm beech, so my first egg can be the same size as my chocolate eggs-ample (I wasn't going to get through an entire article without an egg pun, was I?).

There is the option to hold the blank either between centres, which will require less timber but needs parting and tidying up at both ends, or holding in the chuck, which will require a longer piece of timber to give working room between the egg and the chuck but gives free access to the bottom of the egg and only needs parting off and tidying at one end. I opted to hold it in my chuck so I cut the blank 90mm long, which gave me plenty of space to work between the egg and the chuck.

My standard jaws grip a 56mm tenon so the safest way to grip this 45mm blank was to leave it square. I made a series of V-cuts with the tip of the tool near the chuck to provide a safe working space near the chuck and then made a series of planing cuts along the blank toward the chuck to make it into a cylinder.



1 Chocolate eggs are the best shape to work with **2** Roughing to a cylinder with my Signature tool **3** The major parts of the egg marked out on the blank



I marked out the 65mm of the egg, then marked the centre and made a second mark 5mm lower to identify the widest part of the egg. You could choose to turn the egg either way around but I felt that the rounded bottom of the egg would be easiest at the tailstock end with full access and the more pointy top of the egg would be easier to part off at the headstock end.

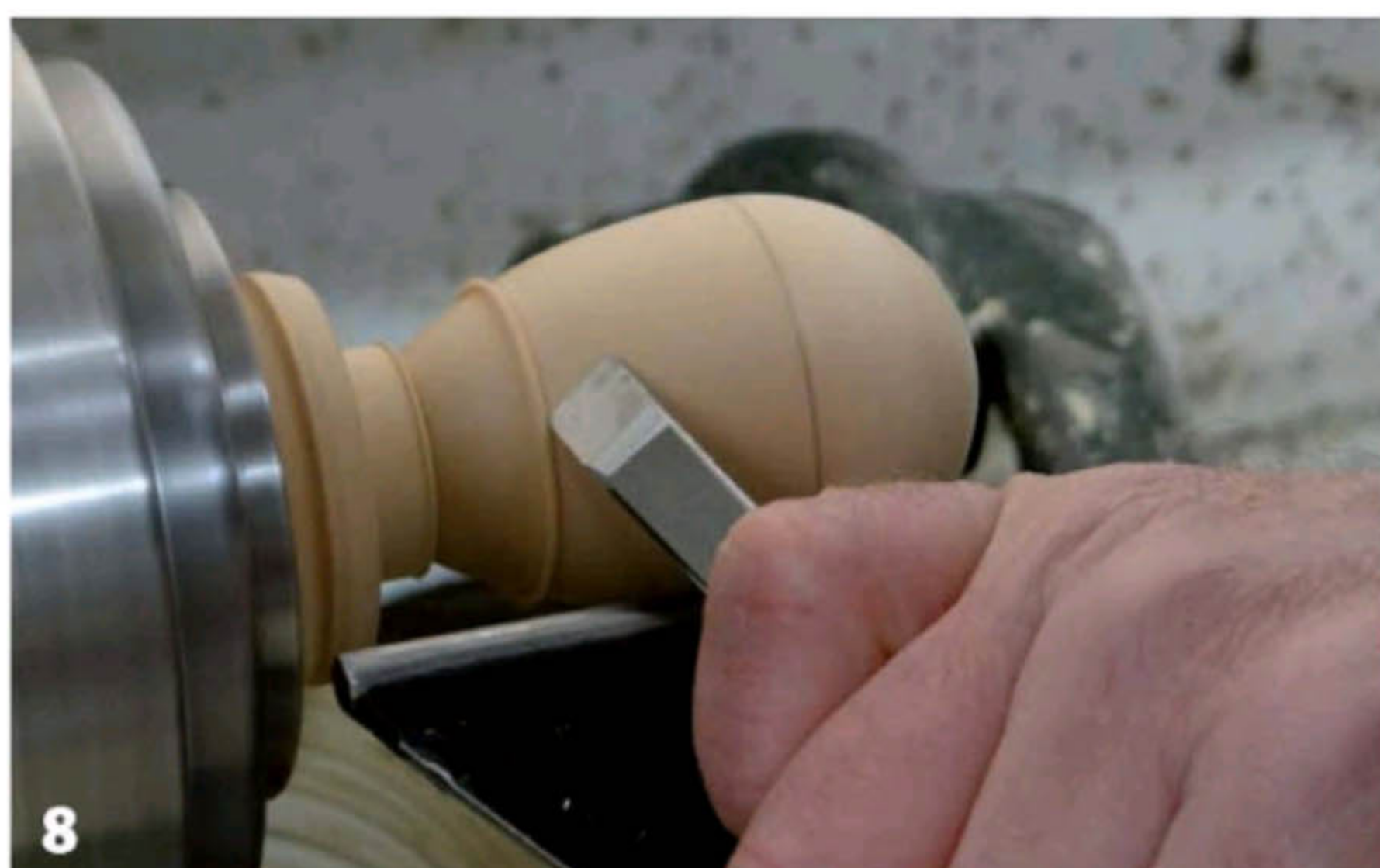
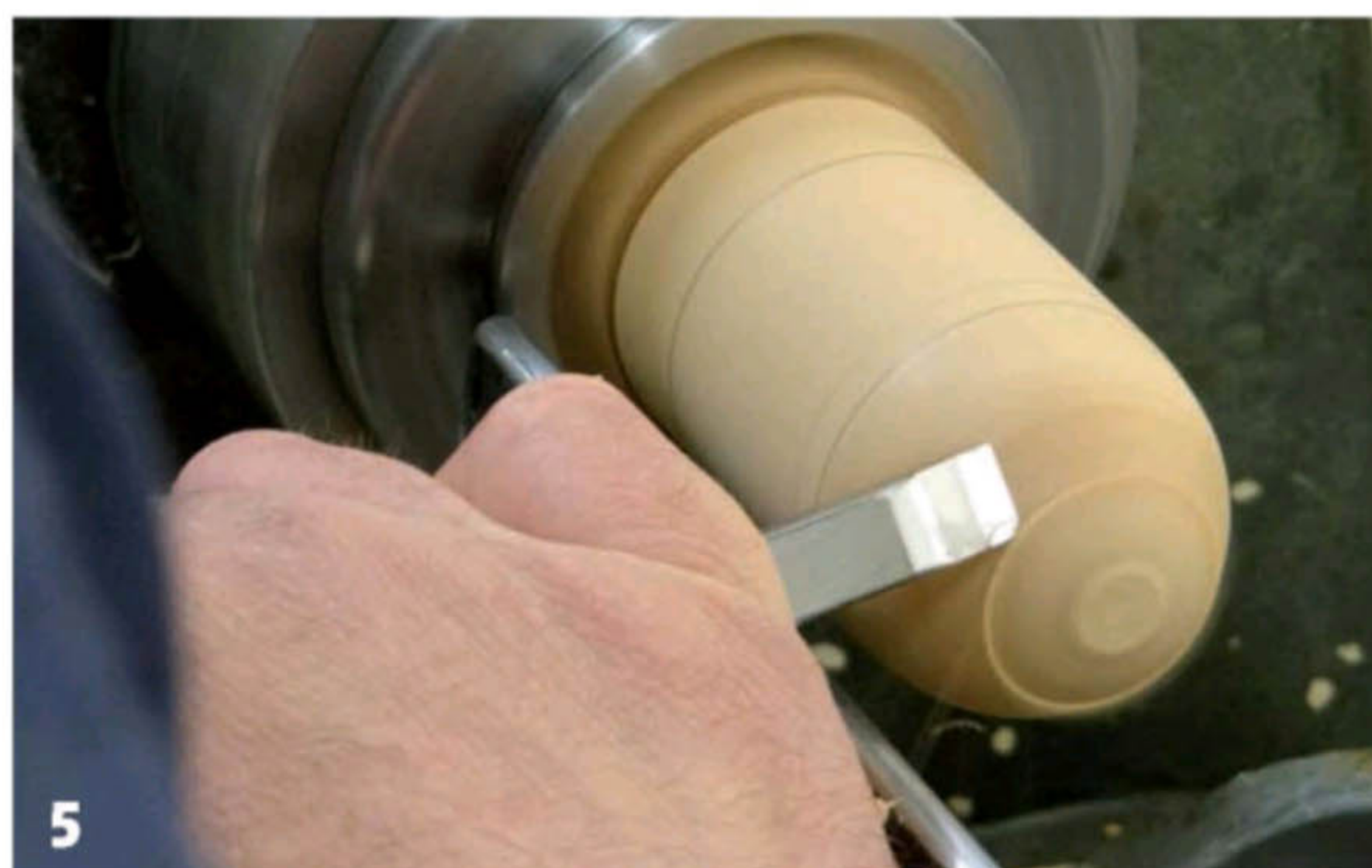
I opted to use my Signature beading and parting tool as usual and started by taking several slicing cuts to form a chamfer at the bottom corner of the egg and then progressed to rolling this into a half bead. All of these cuts were with the very tip of the tool for best control. If I was using a more conventional skew, I would probably use the long point, but either works, the long point giving better

visibility, the short point offering a little more bevel contact. The main thing is that the tool is sharp and your movements are smooth and controlled. By keeping the cut on the tip of the tool, you can see a V-groove and feathered edge rise up in front of the cut and the bevel naturally falls into place, lightly rubbing on the wood behind the cut.

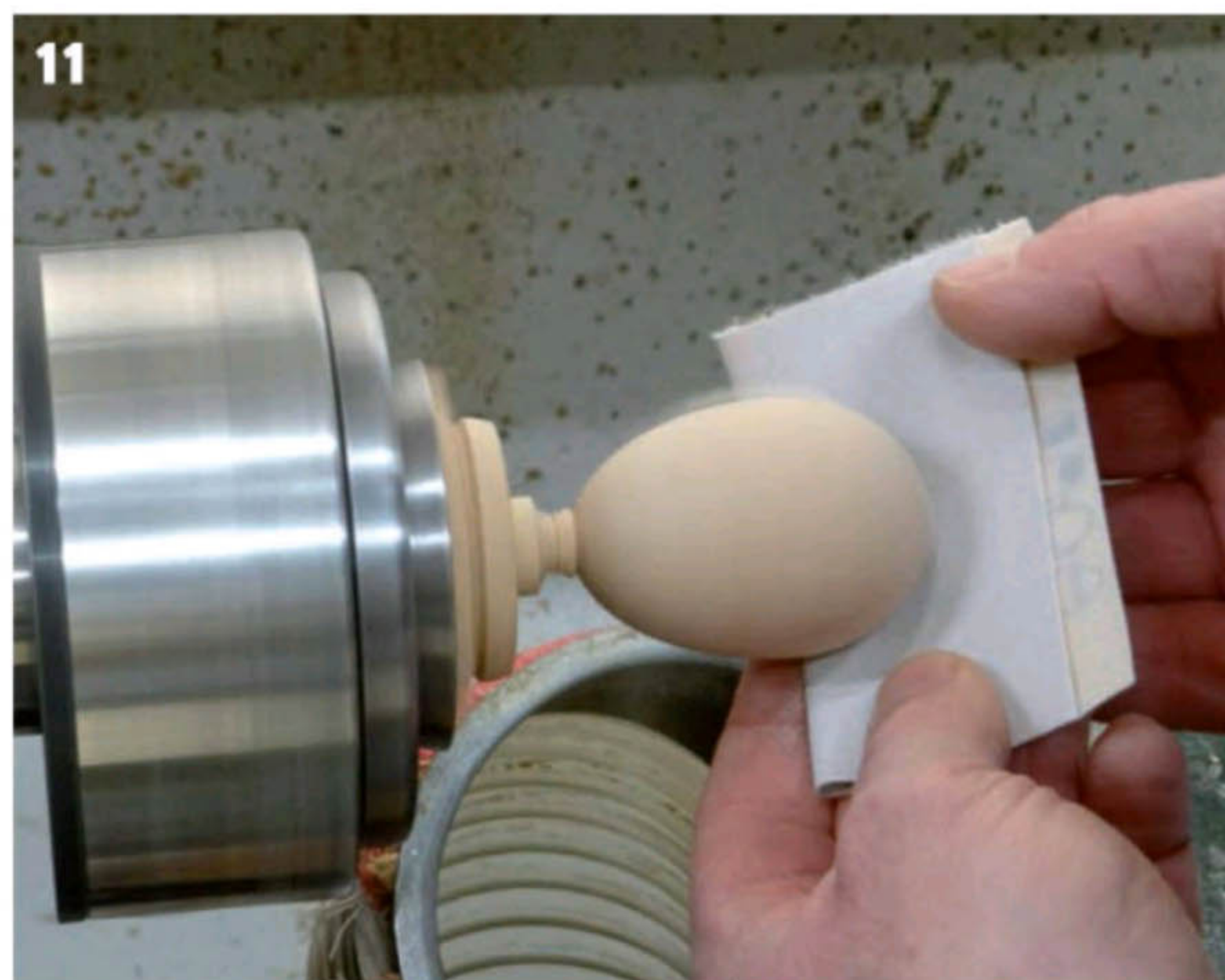
It took several cuts to form the curve on the base of the egg, right to the very centre of the bottom so there is no evidence of saw marks left from the original blank and the curve should flow from the pencil line to the bottom. I used the chocolate egg to check the shape.

Satisfied with the bottom of the egg, I took a peeling cut at the top on the waste side of

the line to about half thickness. This gave me space to work and develop the curve without reducing the holding strength and causing chatter, although as it became thinner I did need to offer a little front hand support. Initially, I began with a planing cut to form the top of the egg. You can see in picture 7 that the tip is not engaged and there is dust on the bevel of the tool. I aimed to plane using the bottom half of the skew. As the shape progressed and the presentation angle of the skew became steeper, I began to engage the tip of the tool, technically changing the cut from a planing cut to a slicing cut, but by using the very tip, I have more control of the cut and the tool doesn't want to run back up the egg, leaving its tell-tale spiral track.



4 Slicing a chamfer on the bottom corner of the egg **5** Rolling the half-bead on the base of the egg **6** Checking the curve against the chocolate egg **7** Using a planing cut to shape the top of the egg **8** As the shape becomes steeper I engage the tip of the tool for extra control **9** Checking the profile using the shadowing technique. You can see it needs a little refining



10 I used my front hand to offer support to the egg as I neared completion **11** Sanding the egg **12** Parting the egg from the waste **13** Paring off the small nib with a sharp chisel **14** The finished egg with its chocolate counterpart

As a shape develops, it is important to look at the profile that is forming. It is all too easy to focus only on the tool, making certain the cut is coming from the correct part of the edge. The problem with doing this is that when the cut has finished, you look up at the shape you've made and it's a surprise to you – sometimes good and sometimes a bad surprise, but a surprise nonetheless. As you cut, you need to look at both the tool and the shape that you are making. As you become more confident, you can focus less on the tool and more on the shape, but in the early stages of learning the tool, you need to do both so you have control over both the tool and the shapes you are making with it. I once again brought in the chocolate egg and held it in front of my wooden egg, shadowing the shape to ensure I was somewhere near what I was aiming for. I then took a few more cuts to refine it further.

As the top of the egg got closer to completion, a small amount of chatter started so I changed my front hand grip, using my thumb to stabilise the tool on the rest and using my index and middle

fingers to support the back of the egg. Remember, the movement of the tool comes from your back hand and your body – your front hand only offers support to the tool. If you tend to over-use your front hand, you will find this difficult.

Before the connection between the egg and the wood in the chuck got too thin, I sanded the egg. How you intend to use the egg will affect the level to which you sand. If you plan to give it to your kids or grandkids to paint and decorate for Easter, 180 or 240 grit will be plenty. If you want to produce a high-gloss finish for presentation or a collection, then sand it to 600 or more before applying a finish and/or buffing.

The final few cuts are to part off the egg. The top

of the egg was now the right shape, so a series of small V-cuts with the tip of the tool reduced the connecting timber to almost nothing. My front hand lightly cradled the egg and as the last fibres were cut through, the egg just dropped into my hand. I used a sharp chisel to pare away the tiny nib left on the top of the egg, hand sanded it to blend it in and my first egg was finished and matched the chocolate egg well.





15 Turning the base of the large egg **16** Turning the top of the large egg

17-18 (below) Turning the black palm egg (another challenge)

A further challenge

Throughout this series, I have kept the diameters of the projects fairly slim – the thickest have been the mallet head and the pear. Skews are far easier to control on more slender work – as the diameter of the work increases, so do the forces involved. This means that a cut that was close to a catch on a small diameter piece would have been a certain catch on a bigger piece. However, as your skills increase with the skew through following these projects, you might feel like you can take on a bigger challenge. I suggest you make a few of the more ‘standard’-sized eggs before jumping to a very large egg, perhaps work up to it, increasing the diameter of your eggs 10mm or so at a time, learn how the tool feels different as you turn larger-diameter work, and find how important it is to cut with the correct part of the edge. To increase the challenge, I used a piece of the 95mm beech I had in stock and repeated the exercise. At 95mm diameter, the length of the egg was 133mm long, plus some working room, so I cut the blank 180mm and mounted it between centres.

I turned it to a cylinder with my Signature tool and, with a peeling cut and Vernier callipers, I turned a tenon on one end and fitted the blank into the chuck. I marked it up for the egg, 133mm long, the centre being at 66.5mm. On the smaller egg, the 5mm drop from the centre to the eggs widest part was $\frac{1}{13}$ th of the length ($13 \times 5 = 65$), $\frac{1}{13}$ th of 133 is a touch over 10mm, so I dropped the centre by 10mm to find the widest point. After this, it was very much the same as turning the smaller egg. I turned the smaller egg at 1850rpm and this larger egg at 1440rpm, although you

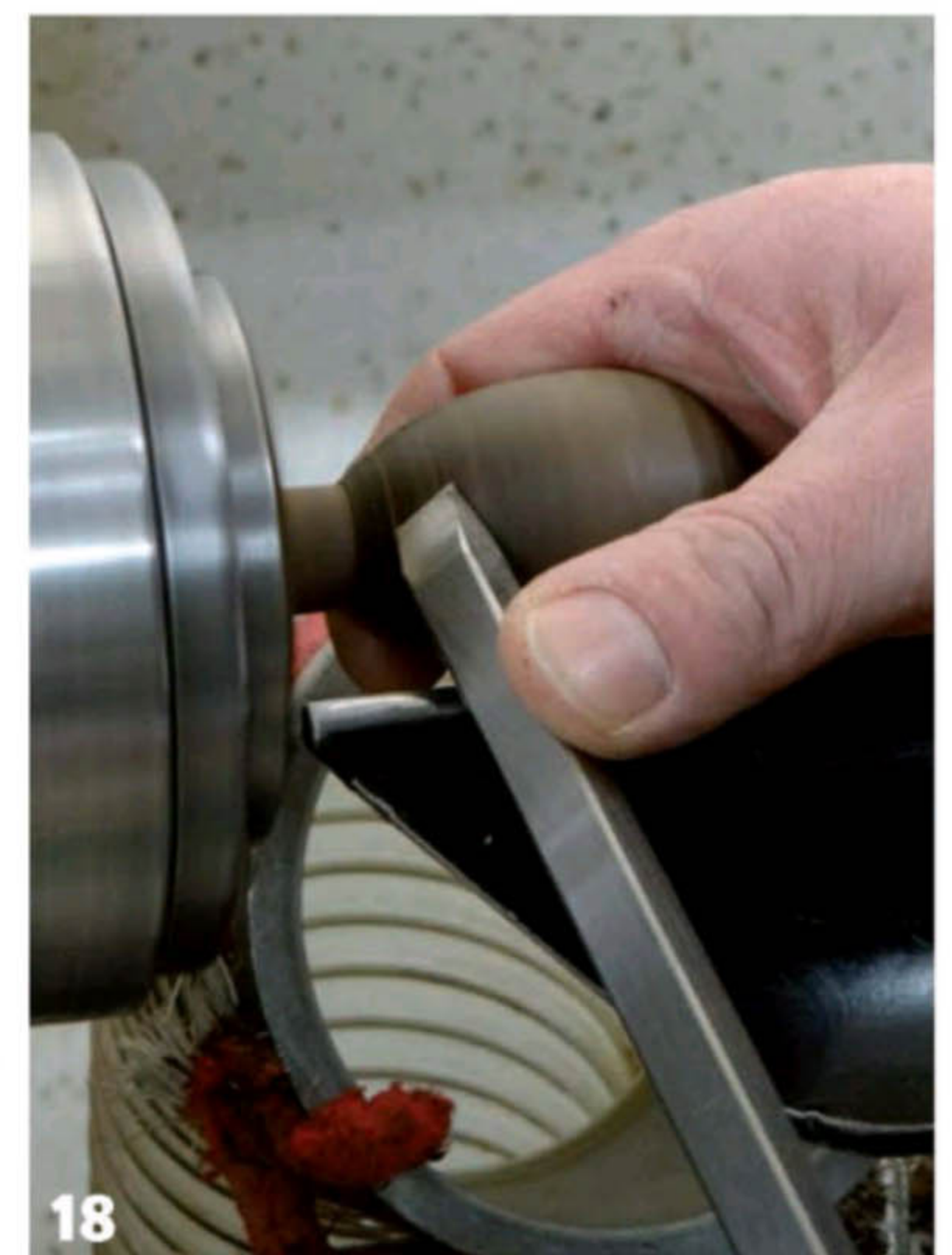
might find a different speed more suitable on your lathe. As before, I turned a chamfer on the bottom corner and increased it to a half-bead. I compared it to the chocolate egg using the shadowing technique and made adjustments as necessary. The top was just the same, a peeling cut to give working room and then planing cuts which developed into slicing cuts with the tip of the tool as the slope became steeper.

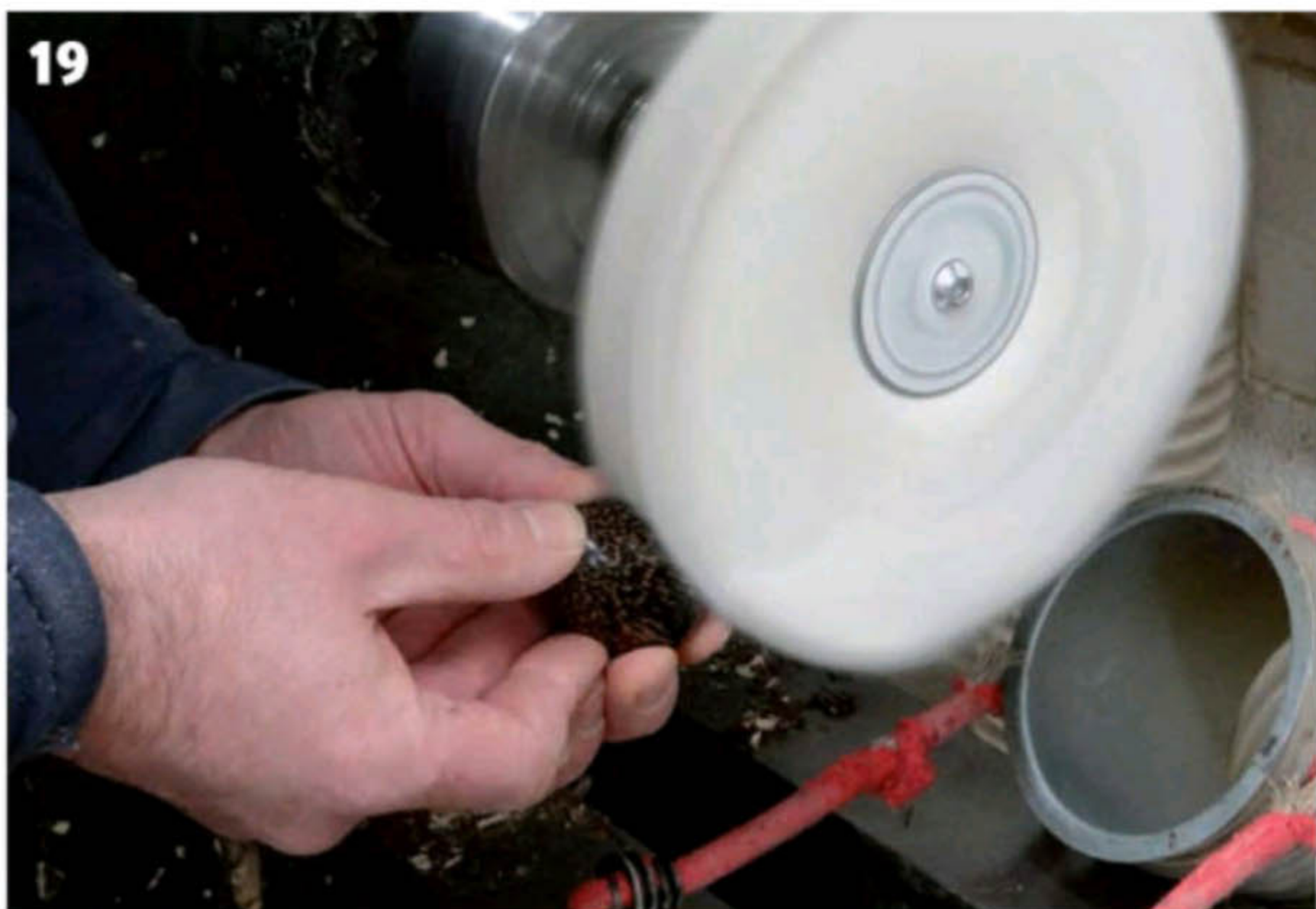
Some people will tell you that you need a large skew for large work and a small skew for small work but, honestly, I’ve found that once you are comfortable with a particular skew, whether it be wide or narrow or round, square or oval, once you master it, you can use it on whatever project you choose without a problem. That said, many skews are available in different widths and if you feel more comfortable using a different skew on different types of work then that is fine too – as I’ve said before, the skew is a very personal tool, so use the one you feel most comfortable with. My main aim with these

articles is to encourage you to use a skew, whatever type it is.

The main difference in my approach to the larger egg came at the end, after sanding, when I was ready to part off. For the smaller eggs there was no problem leaving the toolrest straight across the face of the work but the overhang of the tool would have made it unnecessarily difficult to control, so I adjusted the rest and angled it along the curve of the egg to give me better support at the business end. Long tool overhangs that come hand-in-hand with larger diameter work further increase the forces on the tool, so while I rarely adjust a toolrest on 50mm-diameter work, 100mm+ diameter work will need much more toolrest adjustment.

Parting was much the same as for the smaller egg, but ensure you are supporting the egg because if it starts to wobble, the increased weight compared to the little egg will make it separate from the waste quite rapidly, making catching it more exciting than it needs to be!





19 Buffing the black palm egg **20** The finished black palm egg – notice the strange texture and 'grain' pattern **21** The finished eggs

20

Another challenge

The other thing you might have noticed is that, throughout the series I haven't been particularly adventurous with timber species, sticking mostly to commonly found timbers that don't make any of these projects harder than they need to be. I mentioned earlier that eggs used to be used a lot as samples for collectors and often exotic timbers can be more difficult to turn, often being much more dense and sometimes with interlocking grain. I had a rifle through my exotic timber shelf and came across a couple of blanks of black palm (sometimes known as black palmyra) that a friend from the US had given to me. Palm is technically not wood, but belongs to a family of plants called monocots which includes bamboo, grass and banana among others, so rather than the familiar growth rings found in wood, palm is made up of a series of strands of black fibres with lighter brown 'wood' in between. I have turned it a few times before but never with a skew and it has always been quite dense and heavy. The long black fibres can be splintery, poor presentation and blunt tools can tear it, and I remember it being quite hard on tool edges. I decided this would make for a more challenging turn to prove that a sharp skew can handle almost any wood that is thrown at it.

As with the first egg, I gripped the square stock in the chuck and turned as I normally would. I didn't find it to be much more difficult to turn than any other wood. It is almost unfair to compare a material like black palm with a wood like pine, but the technicalities of turning both materials are exactly

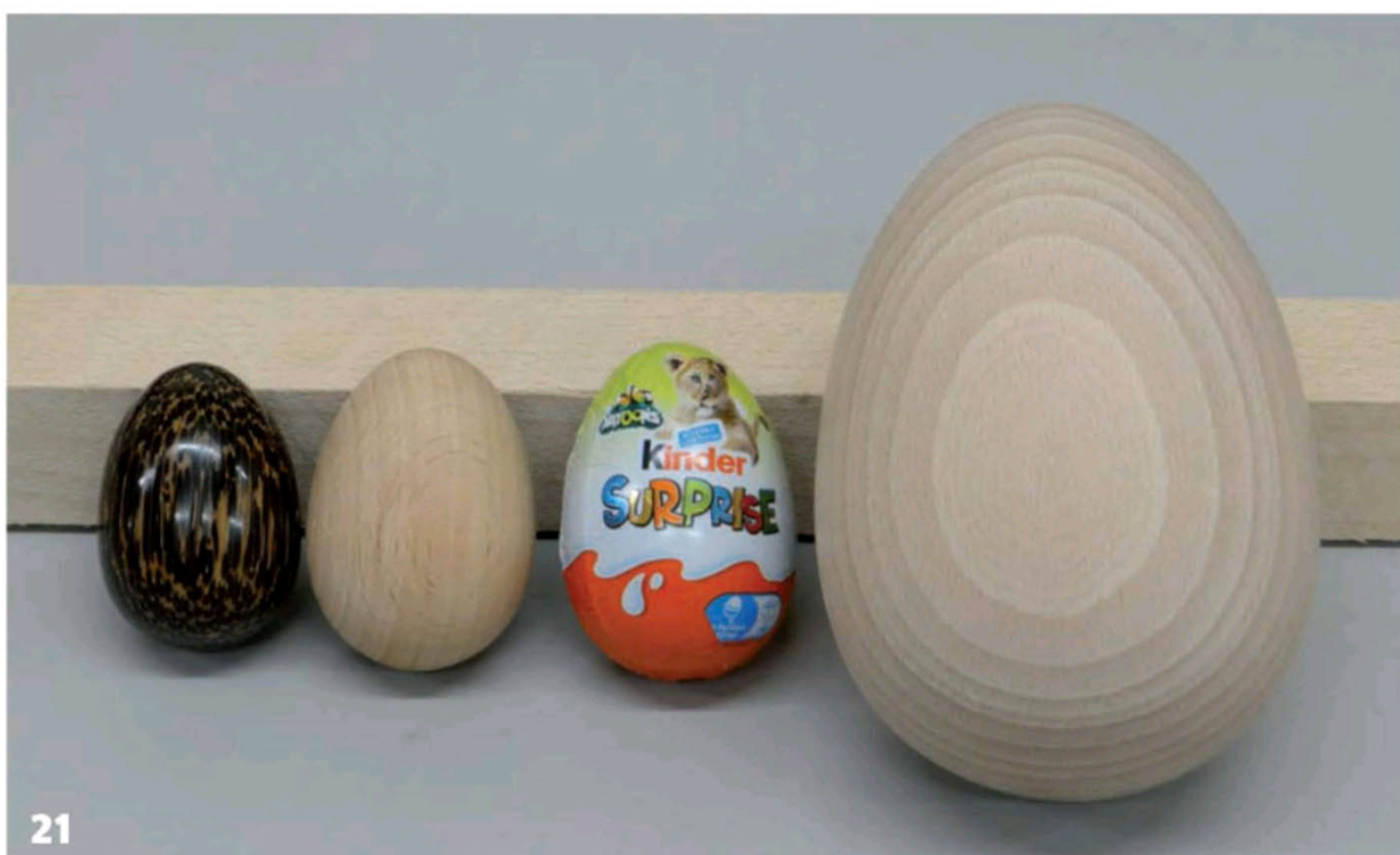
the same, the only real difference is the feel of it under the tool. A softwood will peel away from the edge very freely, putting up barely any resistance, but this black palm was very dense in comparison so my cuts had to be lighter and less aggressive, while still being sure and positive, but where I would use the edge or tip of the skew on pine or beech, so I would on black palm. The rules for using the tool, once mastered, can be applied no matter what type of wood you use, but keep the tool sharp, don't force it through the wood and it will work. Having a sense of 'feel' is very important with a skew. Bullish, heavy-handed tactics will not get you that far when it comes to a skew – you have to work with the tool and the wood, not against it.

While I wouldn't claim black palm is fun to turn – it is hard, splintery and dusty – the egg turned out very well. I sanded it to 600 grit then buffed it with a fine abrasive

compound before buffing with carnauba wax to leave a high-gloss finish that really showed off the weird, fibrous grain.

Conclusion

Eggs are a great project to refine your skew skills, can be scaled up and down in size and almost any type of wood used for them to increase the level of challenge. A box of plain beech or softwood eggs makes a great gift for children to decorate without the mess of real eggs, and a bowl of highly polished exotic eggs makes for a great talking point on a table at home or at a craft fair. If you have an urge to do some painting and texturing after all this 'proper' turning, you could always get creative and turn a large dragon's egg which, once the shape is right so people can easily identify it as an egg, could have almost any form of decoration. I hope you will enjoy turning some eggs this Easter.



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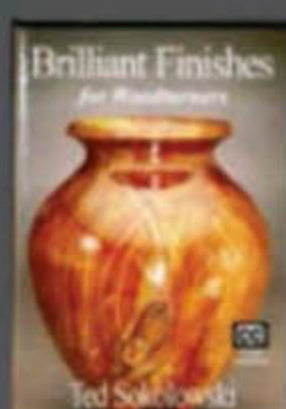
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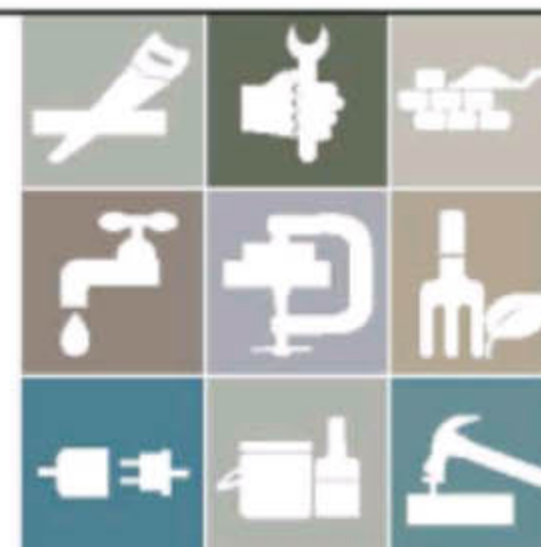
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Am I a hoarder?

Pete Moncrieff-Jury questions the motivations behind his timber collection

I often acquire wood for a specific purpose and it gets used quite quickly. I do keep offcuts, as do many of us, and these come in handy for all sorts of small jobs. There is, however, a certain type of wood that for some reason gets left on the shelf because it is too good to use.

This gets 'hoarded' and though I often look at it I am wary of cutting into it and wasting it. A classic example is the burr that I was given over five years ago – a gorgeous piece of oak burr (right) that I initially went over with brass infill and it pops.

Occasionally I look at it and try to think of something I could do with it. When I was fully professional, I worked out that I could make about 100 brooches from it. Selling at about £20 each that worked out at £2,000-worth of items from it. But, and it is a big but in my head, it seems a waste to use it for brooches. It is very thin, about 10mm in places, so no good for a bowl or even a platter really, so what about an ornamental item?

The wood shouts out for that sort of treatment but, being practical and financially sensible, I would never get the return from a decorative item that I would from the brooches. So, what about a small coffee table? Again, the amount of work involved and the market would seem to dictate that it is not financially viable. So, it has stayed there propped up by the lathe looking at me with disdain over my lack of decision making.

Another piece is the spalted hornbeam I bought at a National Trust site. Again, it is a lovely piece of wood and having had it for a number of years it is definitely seasoned, but what do I do with it? There is one small part in the middle that would be thick enough for a bowl but only a small one and the rest maybe a couple of small platters. In this case the return would easily cover the cost of the wood but it seems a waste of a special piece of wood to make something mundane with it.

I doubt that I am the only person who 'hoards' wood like this. I have a box of offcuts from rosewood, purpleheart, ebony and other beautiful timbers just lying there waiting for inspiration.

I know several people who do a lot of sewing and they seem to have the same difficulty. The collection of material seems to overcome the actual sewing, I could make this but then again maybe not. It would be a waste to make such-and-such a thing with such a gorgeous fabric.

Maybe it is a condition that is more for people involved in crafts than just woodworkers. When we acquire wood for a specific reason then no problem, but when we get that gorgeous lump of timber, we end up just admiring it but never actually deciding what to do with it.

Then again, maybe it is just me and a few people I know, but I suspect it is a much wider problem (if it is in fact a problem) within the turning world.

“
...beautiful timbers just lying there waiting for inspiration
”



PHOTOGRAPH BY PETE MONCRIEFF-JURY

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