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# The Woodworker

February 2014

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& Woodturner



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- Jewellery casket ■
- Workshop boom arm ■
- Lock joint for drawers ■

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# welcome

**A**lthough I'm the proud possessor of a Level 2 Bench Joinery NVQ certificate (and I'm pretty sure I still know where it is), I didn't achieve this qualification until fairly late on in my ongoing professional career. Like a lot of us, most of my life has been spent learning the hard way – something my earlier customers would likely confirm – and paying for those lessons learned in extra toil and missing money.



Despite being a keen advocate of the theoretical learning that can be found in books and magazines, not having the grounding of the real basics can

sometimes be a handicap. If you've learnt the fundamentals right at the start (and have adhered to them), you automatically have the facility for doing the 'right thing' almost without thinking. This is a very useful attribute for the woodworker, and marks him or her out as a true pro.

However, not all of us have been fortunate enough to have come through via this route, and we're the ones who often have to make more of a conscious effort to do everything correctly. It's all too easy to slip into casual ways when it comes to marking out or general preparation, and if one isn't careful, a slow descent into mediocrity could realistically be on the cards.

## Book is best

Although there's always more than one way to carry out many a woodworking procedure, the textbook-approved way has much to recommend it. 'Why is that?', I hear you ask. It's mainly because these are the ways that generations of skilful and enthusiastic carpenters and joiners have all found to give the best results. When you think that we as a species have been cutting up bits of wood since the first Stone-Age flint axe-head was made, it's no surprise that the tried and trusted methods can be counted on to bring home the bacon.

It's only new tools and materials that give occasion for a bit of experimentation, but again, there are sufficient basic principles in place to guide us along the familiar – and safe – pathways.

## Share your knowledge

I'd be very interested to hear how you, our readers, have developed your own woodworking skills over the years, and if you have any advice or requests on ways for the average tool wielder to improve. I'm also keen to receive any news of interesting work you may be involved in, whether in a professional situation or home workshop. Now's the time to get involved: we can all benefit from sharing our stories and experiences. In fact, we're the audience you've been waiting for!

*Mark*

You can contact Mark on [mark.cass@mytimemedia.com](mailto:mark.cass@mytimemedia.com). He'll always find the time to reply.



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& Woodturner

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# In brief...



### Workshops for heroes

Robert Sorby has launched a campaign with a group of woodworking volunteers to help change the lives of veterans and members of the Armed Forces on the road to recovery. The goal is to raise £30,000 to build and equip a woodworking facility for wounded, injured and sick servicemen, servicewomen and veterans at the Phoenix House Recovery Centre in Catterick, North Yorkshire, which is run by Help for Heroes.

As well as raising money from the public at events and shows across the country, campaign organisers are asking the woodworking industry to get involved by donating tools and equipment to kit out the workshop. With the help of Robert Sorby and the staff at

### Taking the plunge

The new TTS1400 plunge track saw from Triton is a versatile tool offering fast set-up and advanced safety features. When fitted to a track, it cuts right up to the edge of the workpiece – ideal for trimming doors and hardwood flooring. In plunge mode, the selector barrel allows quick change between plunge, scribe or blade change, and cutting width indicators show the

exact point at which the blade plunges into the wood.

The TTS1400 also features a universal adaptor and a 360° outlet for efficient dust extraction, and a non-slip rubber over-moulded grip means that the saw is easy to handle and control. It's available now from all good stockists, and is priced at £246.44.

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

Phoenix House, the Workshop for Heroes campaign was born with the ambition of making woodworking part of the range of services available to users of the centre.

Phil Proctor, Robert Sorby's managing director, said: "We hope woodturning will be a fantastic addition to the services provided at the centre, and will certainly help considerably with the rehabilitation and recovery process. We're delighted to be a part of the project, and request all our colleagues in the woodworking business to do what they can to help." [www.robert-sorby.co.uk](http://www.robert-sorby.co.uk)

### STOP PRESS

■ **Trend** has just announced two new router jigs. The router lock jig (£106.80) has fully adjustable inserts for cutting mortises and faceplate recesses. It caters for a range of lock lengths and thicknesses, and can be easily cramped to the door edge. For machining the hinge edge of the door, the skeleton hinge jig (£269.93) allows the cutting of clean and accurate recesses. [www.trend-uk.com](http://www.trend-uk.com)

### DIARY

#### JANUARY

##### Axminster Skill Centre Courses

- 21 Penmaking\*
  - 23 Fine-tuning hand tools\*
  - 27-28 Beginners woodturning
  - 29 Woodcarving\*
  - 30 Sharpening with Tormek\*
- \*Course held in Sittingbourne, Kent  
Unit 10 Weycroft Avenue, Axminster  
EX13 5PH  
0800 975 1905  
[www.axminsterskillcentre.co.uk](http://www.axminsterskillcentre.co.uk)

##### Robert Sorby demonstrations

- 20 Red Rose Woodturners, Preston  
0114 225 0700  
[www.robert-sorby.co.uk](http://www.robert-sorby.co.uk)

##### West Dean College courses

- 24-27 Introducing woodturning
  - 27-30 Picture framing
- West Dean College, Chichester PO18 0QZ  
01243 811301  
[www.westdean.org.uk](http://www.westdean.org.uk)

#### FEBRUARY

##### Axminster Skill Centre Courses

- 3-4 Beginners routing
  - 5-6 Beginners routing\*
  - 6-7 Beginners woodturning
  - 7 Sharpening
  - 8 Fine-tuning hand tools
- \*Course held in Sittingbourne, Kent  
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[www.axminsterskillcentre.co.uk](http://www.axminsterskillcentre.co.uk)

##### John Boddy's courses

- 6-7 Woodcarving: Peter Berry  
01423 322370 ext 257  
[www.john-boddys-fwts.co.uk](http://www.john-boddys-fwts.co.uk)

##### John Boddy's demonstrations

- 8 Woodcarving: Peter Berry  
Details as above

##### John Lloyd courses

- 3-7 Veneering & laminating
  - 17-21 Finishing techniques
- Bankside Farm, Ditchling Common  
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[www.johnlloydfinefurniture.co.uk](http://www.johnlloydfinefurniture.co.uk)

##### West Dean College courses

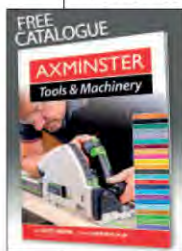
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The package also contains a set of four essential high-quality turning tools, a woodscrew chuck for mounting bowls, and a DVD presented by Alan Holtham.

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## TIME FOR TURNING

Dear Mark  
Greetings! I hope you like the photo of some of my turning work. Because I work as an engineer on shifts at a chemical plant, I must tell you that I work completely on my own, as it is for me nearly impossible to be a member of a woodworking club.

I know that there is a big club in Belgium – De Vlaamse Gilde van Houtdraaiers (The Flemish Guild of Woodturners) – with members all over the country. As I live near the border with Belgium I may become a member when I have some more spare time on regular hours.

**Henk Zuidervliet, The Netherlands**

Thanks, Henk. I'm glad to hear that woodturning is going strong in your part of the world, and if any other woodworkers from outside the UK are reading this I'd love to hear from them with details of their work or the sort of local problems they have to deal with.

Mark



## HAND-MADE HONING GUIDE

Hello Mark  
I read on [Getwoodworking.com](http://getwoodworking.com) recently about Honing guides: six of the best, and saw that mine was not included! Here is a picture, and

there's a small overview for you at [http://traditional-handplanes.com/GFTH\\_Blog/2012/07/02/the-ultimate-honing-guide/](http://traditional-handplanes.com/GFTH_Blog/2012/07/02/the-ultimate-honing-guide/)  
**Gerd Fritsche, Lake Constance**

That looks like an impressive piece of handmade kit there, Gerd. A good honing guide and sharpening system is at the heart of every productive workshop, and if you've designed it all yourself you can be pretty sure it's just what you want!  
**Mark**

## FAREWELL RON

Hi Mark  
I just got my copy of *The Woodworker*, and was so sorry to hear of Ron Fox's death. He was such a sweet man. I remember he was always so cheerful at the woodworking shows we used to do together, even when he had battled through snow and ice to get there. He was one of the great gentlemen of the woodworking world, and his passing is a sad loss.  
**Andy Standing, Norfolk**

That's very true, Andy. The *Woodworker* team went to the funeral on December 19th. Ron had designed his own coffin (he called it The 'Ron Fox Box') and it was made for him by members of his family.  
**Mark**

## BOX HINGES

Hi Mark  
I thought you might like to see a picture of my latest project. It's made from recycled mahogany, the internal fittings are sycamore and the lining is pig suede. It's the first time I've used Neat Hinges from Ian Hawthorne Crafts. They're so easy to fit, and I can highly recommend them.  
Kindest regards  
**Rob Winter**



into this category. Here at *The Woodworker* we welcome photos of readers' work, so please keep them coming!

By the way, Neat Hinges cost £27 per pair in solid brass from [www.hawthornecrafts.com](http://www.hawthornecrafts.com)  
**Mark**

Nice job, Rob. I think we all like a well-made box, and yours gives every impression of fitting

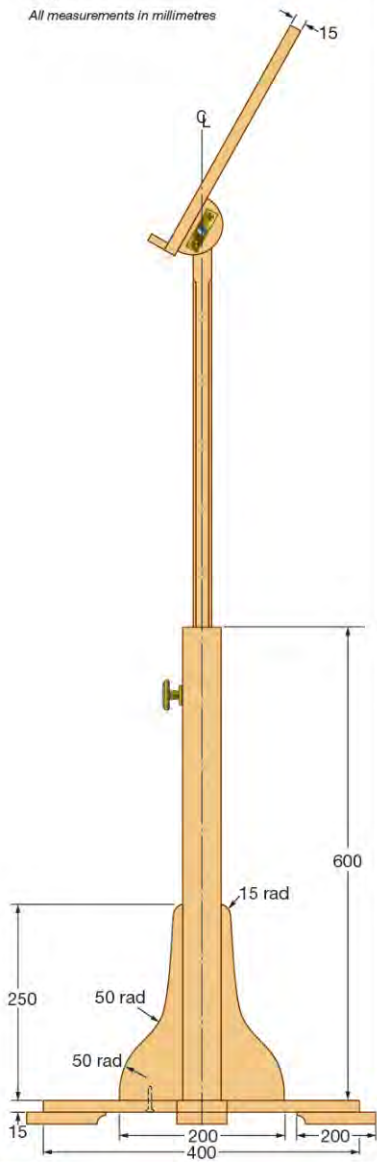


BY PETER DUNSMORE

# Stand and deliver

Fig 1

All measurements in millimetres



**This music stand came about as a result of a commission from the wife of songwriter who wanted a unique wedding anniversary present for her husband. This should stand the test of time!**

**T**he design was straightforward enough as Christine had seen some of my previous work, but the tricky part was designing a marquetry inlay for the music holder that meant something to John. After a little thought I suggested that his family crest might be suitable, and would make the stand very personal. She agreed, and I set off to the workshop with some American walnut, some maple veneer and my box of veneer offcuts.

**Trade secret**

The unusual feature of this stand is the shape of the shaft. It's octagonal, not round, and it's difficult to imagine how such an unusual shape could be cut into the length of the base. The secret is to make the base in two halves cut from the one piece of timber and, after cutting the grooves to match the profile of the shaft, to re-join the halves so the grain flows through them. If done well it's almost impossible to see the glue line.

**Making a start**

I bought a board of 50mm thick sawn walnut from the timber yard (they still work in imperial measurements!) and planed this flat on both sides to 48mm in thickness and square on the long edge.

Cut two strips off this and plane them to 24mm in thickness so that when they're joined together you end up with a piece 48mm square with the grain flowing through the join. Identify what will be the top end of both the timbers with a suitable mark.

**Grooving the base**

To cut the groove successfully requires a degree of accuracy obtained using a router fitted with a fine-height adjuster and a matching pair of router cutters. I used a Titman OC63 ovolo cutter for the groove and the matching CMC63 bearing-guided cove cutter for the shaft. The important thing is that the radius of the curves matches on both cutters.

**MUSIC STAND CUTTING LIST**

All dimensions are in millimetres

Part	Qty	L	W	T
Base	2	600	48	24
Shaft	1	600	22	22
Foot	2	400	66	15
Toe	4	200	66	15
Shoulder	2	270*	100*	15
Frame top rail	1	500	40	15
Frame stile	2	350	40	15
Frame bottom rail	1	500	75	15
Music shelf	1	500	30	12
Back panel (mdf)	1	426†	243†	6

\* Overall size allows for shaping  
 † Measure rebate to size panel accurately

Fit the ovolo cutter in the router table and set the fence so the groove will be cut centrally along the shaft. Arrange the timber so that the cutting begins at the top end of one piece and then continues with the bottom end of the corresponding piece. This method guarantees that the grooves in both pieces will match even if the fence is offset by a whisker.

The diameter of the cutter is 22mm, so the cut needs to be made to a depth of 11mm; this is achieved by gradually increasing the depth of cut, **photo 1**. The result should be a uniform groove running the length of the base, **photo 2**, with the grain flowing through the timbers.

### Making the shaft

The next stage involves profiling the shaft to fit into the base. Plane a piece of walnut to a whisker under 22mm square and 600mm in length. Test its fit by placing it into one of the two halves of the base, **photo 3**.

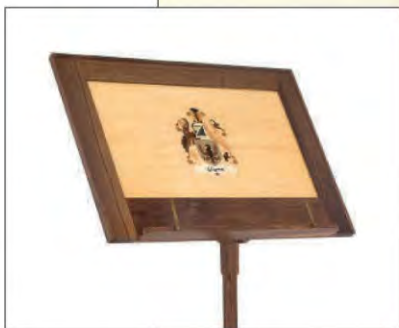
Next, fit the cove cutter in the router table and position it so the front of the bearing is either level with or just proud of the fence. Start with a shallow cut along all four edges and gradually increase the depth of cut, removing a little at a time, **photo 4**. It's easy to take too much off and end up with a sloppy fit, which defeats the whole object of the exercise, so take your time over this stage.

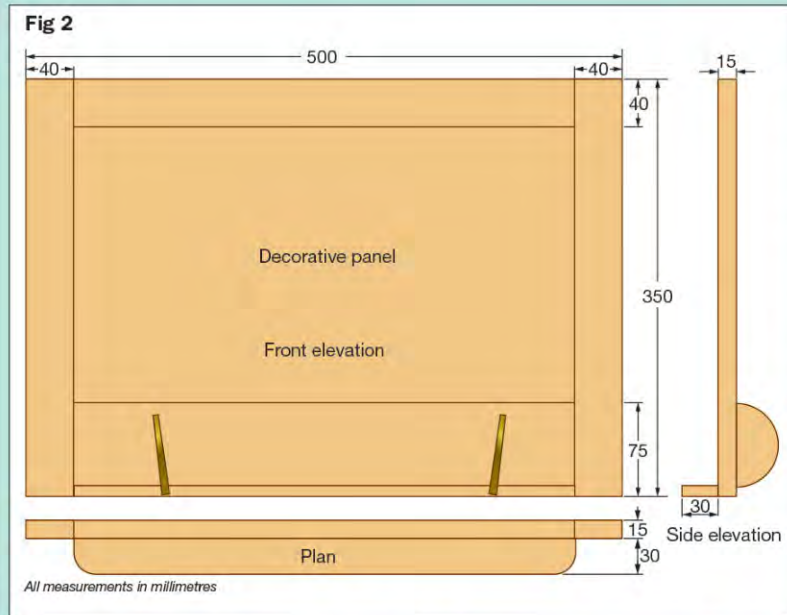
To make the swivel assembly later on, the top 100mm or so of the shaft has to be kept square. To achieve this, make a small pencil mark on the right-hand side of the fence as you look at it, about 100mm from the centre line. Stop feeding the wood along the cutter when the end of the shaft reaches this mark. The result should be a shaft that's a sliding fit into the base when the two halves are held together.

### Assembling the base

Gluing the two halves of the base together is quite straightforward. Begin by rubbing a little candle wax along two opposite faces of the shaft. Apply a little adhesive to the inner faces of the base and spread this evenly. Place the shaft in the groove with the waxed faces aligned with the glued joint and clamp the two halves together. Apply just enough pressure to hold the joint closed, and put it aside to dry after removing any squeezed-out glue with a damp rag.

The shaft is inserted at this stage to prevent the two halves of the base sliding





1 Form the grooves in the two base halves using an ovolo cutter



2 The result should be a uniform groove running the length of the base



3 Cut the shaft to size and test its fit in the grooves in the base



4 Use the cove cutter to machine the four corners of the shaft



5 Sand the groove if necessary using abrasive paper on the edge of a strip of timber



6 Decorate the corners of the base with coves stopped 100mm from the end

around as the cramps are tightened, and helps to keep everything in place. When the cramps are on, tap out the shaft carefully with a mallet. The wax would have prevented any glue from sticking it inside the base. When the base has dried, try fitting the shaft back into the slot. If there's any resistance, the slot may need a little internal sanding to remove any adhesive along the joint line. Stick a strip of 240-grit abrasive paper on the edge of a 20 x 10mm strip of timber and rub this up and down the slot, **photo 5**.

### Decorating the base

The base needs to be decorated to soften the corners, and this is created with the cutter used for profiling the shaft. Fit it in the router table and shape the four edges of the base, stopping the coves about 100mm from the top edge, **photo 6**. A slightly trickier job, but worth the effort, is to repeat this on the four top edges around the shaft, as this removes the flat-topped look of the base. Now fit an 8mm straight cutter and cut four grooves to a depth of 5mm along the centre of each face to accommodate the tongues on the shoulders, **photo 7**.

### Making the shoulders

The curved shoulders are quickly and easily made. Begin by making a full-size template from some 9mm mdf and use this to draw round and mark out the shoulders on 15mm thick walnut. Rough-cut the shape close to the pencil line and then attach the template with some double-sided tape.

Use a sharp bearing-guided trimmer to profile the edges. Try to place the template on the face of the walnut that allows the cutter to cut downhill with the grain rather than fighting against it. This will avoid any tearing out of the grain, **photo 8**.

Next, fit a bearing-guided rebate cutter such as the Trend 46/44 with a suitable bearing to cut a 5mm rebate in the router table, and cut the rebates along the rear edge of the shoulders, **photo 9**. Repeat this along the base of the shoulders as well. Remove sufficient timber to allow a sliding fit into the grooves you machined earlier in the base.

Use a sharp chisel to cut shoulders at the top of the rebate to suit the previously cut slots in the base. Finally glue the shoulders into the base, taking care that the base is level with the base line of the shoulders. Wipe away any excess adhesive that squeezes out.

### Joining the feet

The feet are simply two pieces of timber joined together at the middle with a half-lap joint to form a cross. The method I find easy and accurate uses a router fitted with a short

bearing-guided trimmer. Begin by cramping a straight piece of 9mm mdf square to one of the foot pieces where the recess is to be cut, **photo 10**. Take the other foot piece and place this against the mdf guide. Press a further straight piece of mdf hard up against the walnut, cramp it in place, **photo 11**, and remove the second foot piece.

Now set the depth of cut on the router to half the thickness of the foot piece and remove the waste wood from the first foot piece. To avoid breakout as the cutter emerges at the rear edge, cramp a scrap piece of mdf against it. Repeat the process for the other foot piece using the first one as a guide, **photo 12**. The result should be a half-lap joint with a first-class fit.

### Shaping the feet

The ends of the feet are shaped into a semicircle, and it's worth making an mdf template so the trimming can be carried out accurately, **photo 13**. The ends of the feet are supported by what I would call toes.

This makes the base a little wider and more stable. The toes are cut in the same way as the feet, using the same template to profile the curves. You can make the toes more attractive by using a cove cutter (Trend 13/3) to undercut their inner ends, **photo 14**.

### Assembling the base

Before gluing the feet components together you need to cut a groove along the centre line of both pieces to house the tongues on the bases of the shoulders. Use a straight fluted cutter for this and take care to ensure that the groove is central, **photo 15**. Drill pilot holes in the grooves so the base can be screwed to the feet, **photo 16**. The toes are then glued in place on the underside of the feet.

### Completing the shaft

The shaft, made earlier, still needs a few finishing touches. A series of 5mm holes are drilled through it at regular intervals to allow a simple form of height adjustment, **photo 17**. It's important that they line up with the hole drilled in the base, so drill this first about 70mm from the top. The locating peg is simply a suitable drawer pull found at a local hardware shop, with the screw replaced by a short length of brass rod.

The top of the shaft needs to have a gentle curve cut into its front face to allow the top to swivel back and adjust the angle slightly. The curve is sufficient to prevent the top tipping right back on itself, yet allows free movement of the frame.

### Making the music holder

The four frame components are joined using mortise and tenon joints cut with a



7 Cut the grooves to accept the shoulder tongues using a straight cutter



8 Try to cut the curves 'downhill' to prevent any tear-out in the grain of the wood



9 Use a bearing-guided rebate cutter to form the shoulder tongues



10 Make a half-lap jig by cramping an mdf guide to one foot piece



11 Use the first foot timber as a template for locating the second guide



12 Use the router and the jig to remove the waste from one foot piece

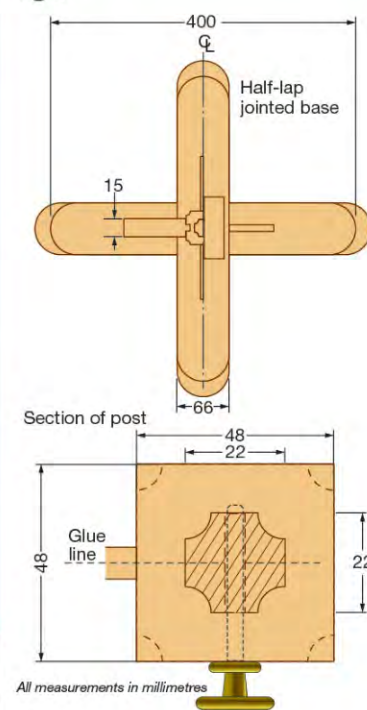


13 A curved mdf template and a sharp trimmer help to shape the feet



14 A cove cutter is used to soften the rear underside of the toe piece

Fig 3





15 Rout a slot along the centre line of the foot pieces to take the tongues on the shoulders



16 Drill pilot holes before screwing the base components together



17 A simple jig ensures that the height adjustment holes are drilled a uniform distance apart



18 Two cutters make light work of the mortise and tenon joints for the music holder



19 Hockey-stick moulding around the perimeter of the frame hides the end grain



20 Machine the moulding after sticking walnut strips to the edges of some scrap timber



21 The frame panel is retained by lengths of square beading glued into the rebates



22 The template used for the feet is also used to profile the swivel mechanism



straight cutter and a bearing-guided rebate cutter (Trend 46/390), **photo 18**. Glue these four pieces together and check that they're square by comparing the diagonals. When this has dried, use a small bearing-guided rebate cutter to form a rebate along the inside faces of the rear of the frame to a depth of 9mm, and cut a piece of 6mm thick mdf to fit this recess.

A hockey-stick moulding is glued in place around the top and both sides of the frame to hide the end grain, **photo 19**. Machine it on the router from walnut strip stuck to the edges of some scrap timber with double-sided tape, **photo 20**.

### Finishing the music holder

The decoration is a matter of choice. A suitable marquetry picture works well, but to describe the making of one is an article (or two!) in itself. An alternative is to cover both sides of the mdf insert with a complimentary or figured veneer. Maple contrasts well with walnut. The rear face must have a balancing veneer to prevent the panel from warping, but this can be a plain veneer as it's less likely to be seen.

The panel is held in its rebate with 3mm square beading glued in place. A series of cramps and strips of wood cut a little longer than needed act as springs to hold the beading in place as the glue dries, **photo 21**.

### Assembling the stand

To the rear of the lower frame rail are two semi-circular discs which are cut with the mdf template used for the ends of the feet, **photo 22**. These are glued into shallow grooves cut into the lower rail, and care should be taken in their location as the shaft needs to be a sliding fit between them. Before gluing them in place, hold them together and drill a 9mm hole through both parts to suit a 3½in x 9mm table/sash fitting screw. Drill a corresponding hole into the top of the shaft and screw the brass fittings in place. The screw is turned to tighten both discs together onto the shaft and hold the stand in place.

Cut the music shelf to size and glue it into a rebate cut along the lower edge of the frame. Then fit two brass music stays to it. Finally, apply a finish of your choice. I recommend three or four coats of Danish oil, buffed to a soft finish with good-quality wax.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

#### Music stand hardware

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BY ALAN HOLTHAM

# Drawer lock joint jig

**Deciding on the best type of joint to use on drawers is often tricky. You have to weigh up speed against strength, and the need for the four corners to be an accurate fit. Here's one way of solving the problem**

**A**t the simplest end of the scale you can use plain butt joints, but these aren't particularly strong and certainly don't look very elegant. At the other extreme you can dovetail the corners, but this requires considerable skill and time, particularly if you do it all by hand. Between these two extremes there are several different joints you could use, but many of them are equally labour-intensive or difficult to execute well.

## Repetition guaranteed

This very simple jig allows you to cut the so-called drawer lock joint using a grooving cutter with the router mounted under a table. The big advantage of this method is that once the cutter height is set, everything is machined at the same setting. The joint is cut in four separate passes, but you don't have to alter the cutter height or fence in any way, so it's incredibly quick to produce a set of neatly jointed drawers.



A



B



C



D

There are of course some limitations. The jig will only work on drawer sides with a thickness equal to the depth of cut of the grooving cutter, in this case 12.7mm. However, the thickness of the drawer front isn't critical.

I used a 4mm wide cutter, and the jig dimensions must be sized perfectly to suit it. You can vary the width of the cutter, but if you do so then all the other dimensions will need to be changed accordingly. However, this isn't difficult once you've got your head around the principle of how the thing actually works.

### A two-part assembly

There are two parts to the jig: a sliding sub-base to fit on the router table, and an

auxiliary fence to clamp over the existing fence. Both are very simple to make, and the only hardware you'll need are two bolts or thumbscrews that will allow you to clamp on the auxiliary fence.

Start by making the sliding sub-base. This is just two pieces of timber or mdf, the lower one being thickened to exactly the same size as the cutter width (4mm). Glue and screw the two pieces together, making sure that everything is perfectly square, **photo A**; this is important. Countersink the screws well in on the underside so they can't rub on the router table.

### Fixing the fence

The auxiliary fence has to be designed to fit around the existing table fence. I was able

to make mine from three separate pieces of wood arranged sandwich fashion to bridge over the metal table fence, **photo B**. The critical factor here is that the face fencing is exactly 8mm thick. To provide the cramping, sink a nut into the inside face of the rear piece and glue it in place, **photo C**. You need to position these clamping screws carefully so they have something even to bear against on the metal fence when you tighten up.

My finished fence is shown in **photo D**, though yours may be slightly different if you're using a different router table. When it's all in place, the main face of the fence must remain clear of the table by at least the thickness of the drawer front plus 4mm. This isn't critical, but it cannot be any less.

## USING THE JIG



The cutter is an arbor-mounted groover with a bearing, giving an effective cut depth of 12.7mm



Mount this in the router table and bring the fences up as close as possible for maximum support. Make sure they're securely clamped in place



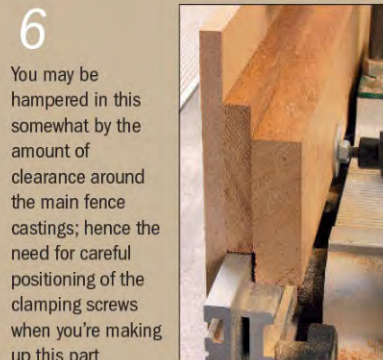
Adjust the height of the cutter so the top edge of the teeth is 12mm above the table top



Use a straightedge to line up the fences with the bearing on the cutter. These settings are critical, so make sure everything is locked up tight before you start, as even the tiniest variation will affect the quality of the joint



Clamp the auxiliary fence in position



You may be hampered in this somewhat by the amount of clearance around the main fence castings; hence the need for careful positioning of the clamping screws when you're making up this part



Make sure the sides are exactly the required thickness. You now need to make four separate passes with the jig; three of them with the drawer front and the final one with the drawer side



Pass 1: place the drawer front face side up on the table and use the end and side of the sliding sub-base as a guide to rout a slot across the end



Pass 2: turn the sub-base round, sit the drawer front on top of the 4mm thick section and make a second cut to widen the slot to 8mm



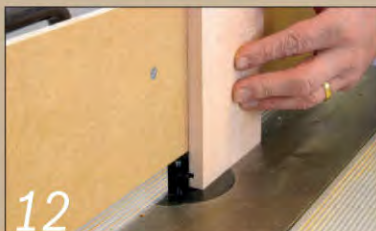
Pass 3: stand the drawer front on end on the 4mm thick section of the sub-base, face side out, and run it along the auxiliary fence to reduce the length of one wall of the slot



11 This completes all the operations on the drawer front



14 If the joint isn't quite as tight as you would like and there are a few gaps, you may need to fine-tune some of the settings. However, be aware that even minor alterations can have quite a dramatic effect as you're effectively changing several dimensions at once, so think carefully about their cumulative effect. Nevertheless, after a couple of trial attempts you should soon have the perfect drawer lock joint, a very strong and effective method of jointing



Pass 4: cut a 4mm wide slot in the drawer side by running it directly on the router table and up against the auxiliary fence



13 It takes only seconds to produce both parts of the joint, which should now interlock snugly

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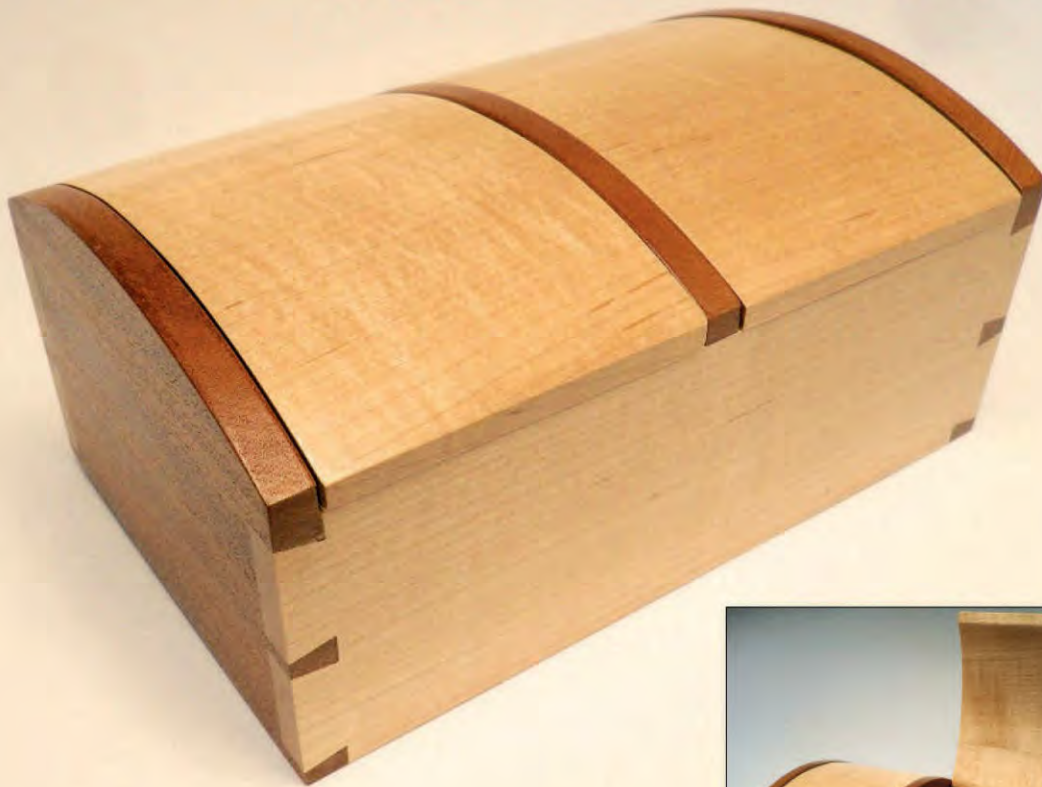
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BY MICHAEL FORSTER

# Two become one

**One of the things I'd really looked forward to about retirement was the time to experiment, to make a few mistakes, and to learn new techniques and develop fresh ideas. Here's one of them...**

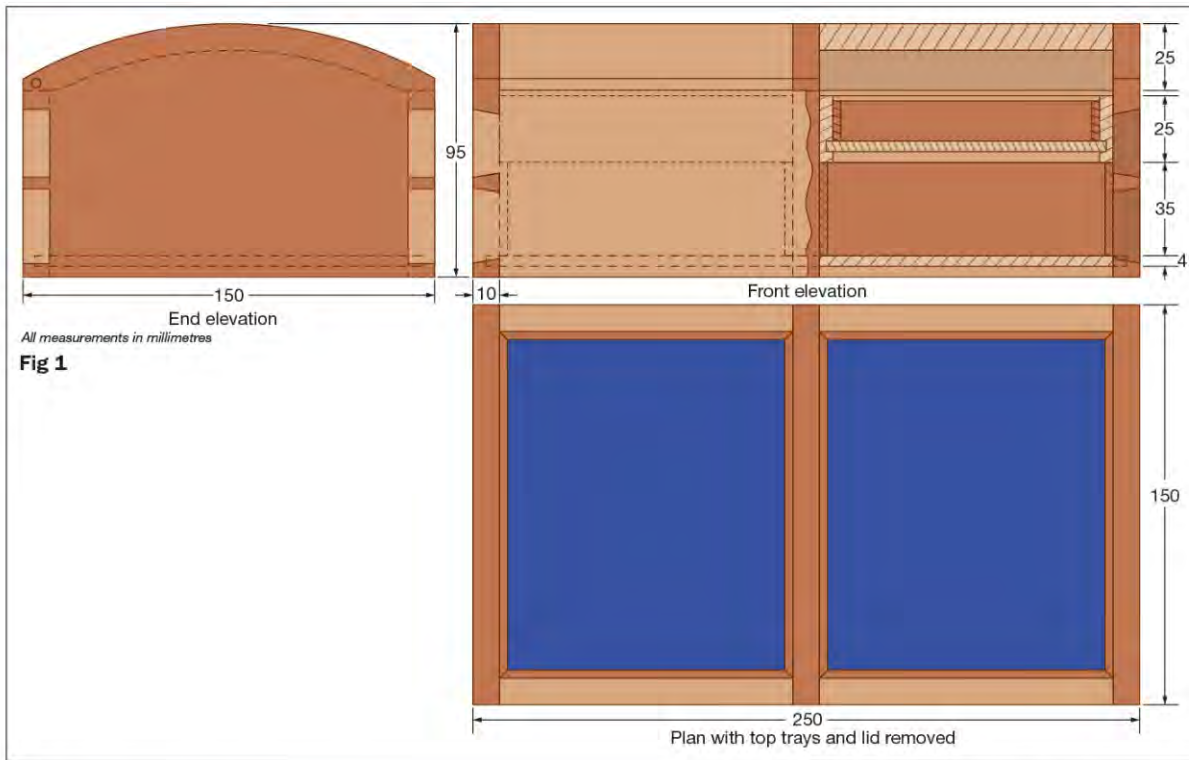
**H**aving been absorbed by some commissioned work for a while, I recently grabbed the opportunity of a friend's wedding to have a go at something different. If it went wrong I'd just go out and buy a present and no one would be any the wiser, but if it worked out I'd have broadened my skill set and had some fun along the way.

Thus was conceived the idea of a his-and-hers jewellery casket. The dual lids

presented a technical problem to solve, but the real challenge was that they were curved – something I'd not done before and was keen to try.

## The big issue

My first task was to solve the problem of hinging the lids. I wanted to use brass pivot rods, but there was an obvious problem. How would I insert the pivot for the second lid into the central divider once the first lid



**Fig 1**

## JEWELLERY CASSET CUTTING LIST

All dimensions are in millimetres

Part	Qty	L	W	T
Front/back	2	250	70	10
End	2	150	95	10
Divider	1	150	87	10
Lid (from)	2	130	170	35
Base (plywood)	1	238	138	4
Base liner	4	130	35	3
Base liner	4	110	35	3
Tray front/back	4	108	25	6
Tray side	4	128	25	6
Tray base	2	122	102	4

Measure and cut the tray liners to fit the finished trays.

was in place? Two solutions to this puzzle eventually presented themselves to me.

### What I did

My idea was to drill the centre pivot hole in the second lid deep enough to insert a small coil spring behind the pivot. This would allow me to push the pivot in flush and hold it there while I fitted the lid into place, the pivot then springing into position as soon as the holes aligned. It worked, but the unforeseen disadvantage was a tiny bit of sideways pressure on the lid that very

slightly spoiled the alignment – and of course I couldn't then get the lid off again to correct it! I could have avoided the problem by drilling the hole deeper to leave a little play on the spring, but having sprung it in I was committed.

### What I should have done

A woodworking friend came up with a much simpler approach. He suggested leaving the central divider loose until the lids went on, rather than including it in the carcass glue-up. Then the divider and the two lids

could be held together, with both central pivots (or a shared one) in place, and the assembly could be lowered into position.

After a successful trial fit, the process can then be repeated with glue, the outer pivots added and their holes plugged. This method has the advantage of allowing a complete trial fit of the lids – not fully possible with my method.

So that's something to bear in mind if you make this. My photos show the central divider fitted as part of the glue up – because that's how I did it – but now you know better!

### The making begins

Having (as I thought) solved the lid pivot issue, I cracked on with making the casket. My fall-back positions, should the curved lids be a disaster, were (a) to learn whatever lesson they presented and make some more, or (b) to cut off the curved tops of the casket ends and fit thinner, flat lids.

I prepared the timber, including a blank for the two lids. This needs to be slightly oversize in every direction, as shown in the cutting list, so it can be planed to fit later. Then I marked and cut all the dovetails, **photo 1**, used a hand-held router and a T-square jig to cut the housings for the divider, **photo 2** and cut the grooves for the bottom panel at the router table, **photo 3**.

### A pivotal moment

Before assembly, I had to position and drill the holes for the lid pivots. I used 4mm brass rod, obtainable in metre lengths from my local B&Q. I cut it into appropriate lengths and smoothed over the cut ends by spinning each pivot in an ordinary drill chuck against a fine file.

Care in drilling the pivot holes will be repaid with well-fitting and smoothly-opening lids. If the pivots aren't accurately lined up there's a danger of them binding as the lid turns. So I did this on the drill press before cutting any curves.

Next, I used a template I'd prepared earlier to mark the curves on the top edges of the ends and the divider, **photo 4**. I cut the curves on the bandsaw a little shy of the line and trimmed them back on the disc sander, **photo 5**.

### Carcass assembly

I cut the plywood bottom panel to size, glued and tapped the corner joints together, checked for square and wind, wiped off what excess glue I could, and set the carcass on a flat surface while the glue went off; cramps weren't needed.

I now had to notch the divider ready to slide into its housings, and shorten it to sit on the bottom panel. At this point I glued it in place, **photo 6**, and then turned my attention to the lids. You, of course, having read my earlier comments, will leave the divider unstuck at this point...

### The inside curves

My next task was to halve the lid blank and plane each half until it fitted snugly between the casket end and the divider, **photo 7**. I then marked and drilled the pivot holes and used pre-prepared templates to mark the curves on the ends ready for shaping.

I decided to shape the inside surfaces first so that when I came to plane the tops, the concave underside would naturally sit firmly on its front and rear edges. The lids were small enough to stand on end and pass through my bandsaw, **photo 8**.

Having sawn out the rough waste, I then used a round Microplane rasp for the clean-up. This is incredibly sharp; hence the gloved hand holding the blade in **photo 9**! I also experimented with a bench-mounted belt sander, **photo 10**, but this left serious cross-grain scratches which had to be removed by tedious hand sanding.

Whether you choose either or both of these methods, it's a matter of taking off a little at a time while frequently checking against the curved lines on the ends.

### The outside curves

These were a much easier proposition. Again, I cut them roughly to shape on the bandsaw.



1 Cut the four casket sides to size, then mark and cut all the dovetails



2 Use a hand-held router and a cramped-on T-square jig to cut the divider housings



3 Cut the grooves for the casket's bottom panel on the router table



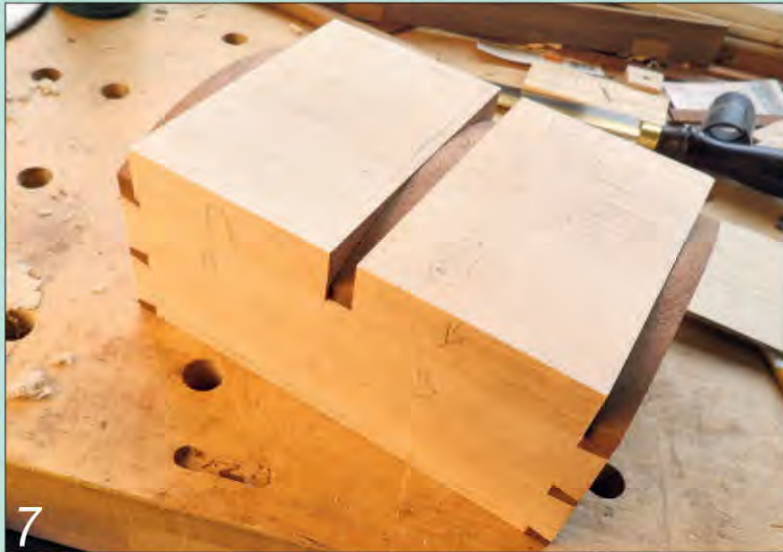
4 Mark the curves on the end panels and the divider using a template



5 Cut the curves on the bandsaw and trim them back on the disc sander



6 Assemble the carcass with its base panel, and cut the divider to fit. Don't glue it in yet, though!



7

Halve the lid blank and plane each one to fit between the end panel and the divider



8

It's best to shape the inside curves first. Start with a bandsaw trim...



9

...and then clean up the resulting curve with a Microplane rasp



10

You could also use a belt sander, but it tends to leave a lot of cross-grain scratches



11

Shape the outside curve with a plane and test the fit against the casket panels

Shaping was then a matter of planing with a jack plane, removing the corners after each light cut. Of course, every corner removed produces two more which are also planed away – again with frequent checks against the lines marked on the ends – and eventually the corners become so tiny as to be almost undetectable, at which point sanding down through the grits will leave a smooth curve, **photo 11**.

### Testing time

The lids should sit flat on the edges of the casket between the ends and the divider. Do a dry assembly one lid at a time, with the divider and the pivots fitted, **photo 12**, and then make any adjustments required to the fit at the front and rear edges.

At this point, the lids still will not open when the pivots are in place. For that you

need to round off their lower rear edges to stop them binding on the back of the casket. This is essentially the same principle as curving the lid tops. Start by chamfering the edge with a plane, and then gradually remove the corners until it's looking pleasingly quadrant-shaped. A trial fit should find it opening smoothly and standing open nicely without any support as the unrounded top edge binds on the back edge of the carcass.

### Interim finishing

I like to finish pivot lids completely before fitting them. This ensures that all surfaces which will be inaccessible after fitting are given a few coats, and means that no awkward bits (like the rear of the side edges near the pivots for example) get missed. It also protects the wood from finger marks during later handling. In the event, I did all the finishing work on the carcass as well before attaching the lids, **photo 13**.

### Putting the lid on it

Now's the time for the Plan B I mentioned earlier. I haven't tried this – as you'll have realised – but I can't see why it won't work. Insert the central pivot (with this method you can use one long pivot for both lids) through the divider and into the lids on either side. A second pair of hands might be useful here. When you're happy it's all working, brush some glue in the lower part of each divider housing and slide the divider down into position, easing the lids into place on the top of the carcass. Now you can insert the outer pivot rods through their holes in the ends of the casket.

I cut 4mm dowels from scraps of the same board used for the end panels to cover the recessed ends of the outer pivot rods. It's a good idea to mark the depth you want these to go in on the side of the dowels so that you can ensure they stop short of the pins. Leave the dowels proud until the glue goes off, and then trim them flush with a sharp block plane.

### Internal affairs

I made the trays next. The construction is a shallow box with a grooved-in base panel, **photo 14**, similar to the casket itself. While the glue in the trays is drying, you can make a start on the mitred linings and dividers. The lower compartments are very straightforward – four pieces of the darker timber mitred to a push-fit using my bird-house jig (see *The Woodworker* July 2013 pages 45-48 for full details).

Something I've learnt the hard way is that the finishing process can spoil lovely, crisp

mitres. This is because it's almost impossible to do the rubbing down between coats without slightly rounding over the inner corners. So here's what I now do instead.

### Precision mitres

Cut all the pieces for the linings and dividers and shoot the ends square by trial and error until they are just too tight to slide into place in the casket. Number them, and the corresponding carcass area behind them, to make accurate reassembly easier later. Now do the finishing work on all these pieces, rubbing down between each coat, safe in the knowledge that those little roundovers on the ends are going to be mitred away anyway.

Once the pieces are finally finished, take them back to the bench, mitre them using the birdhouse jig, **photo 15**, and cut the half-laps for the dividers. These last really need to be cut with a very fine-toothed saw. I have a 42 tpi jewellers' saw which leaves a very clean cut – but don't try to cut anything much thicker than this with it.

All the pieces are now ready, mitred to a tight push fit. However, don't be tempted to push them fully home at this stage, or adding the suede trim will be unnecessarily tricky. Just push them in a little way to test their fit and then set them aside.

### A little lining

Now it's time for the internal suede or felt trimming. This is simplicity itself, and adds significantly to the distinction of the casket. Cut a piece of card slightly smaller than each compartment so it can be easily dropped in and removed, and prepare corresponding pieces of fabric slightly oversize. Apply a couple of strips of double-sided tape to the card, one along each long edge, and stick the fabric down, trimming it back to the edge of the card with a scalpel or scissors.

The card can now be placed in its compartment and the linings finally installed to cover the cut edges, **photo 16**. Finally, line the trays in the same way, **photo 17**, and drop in the compartment dividers.

### All present and correct

I'm not unhappy with the way this jewellery casket turned out – and the learning curve was a bonus. Of course, by the time I'd done all this the wedding day had come and gone, which was a good excuse for a catch-up session with the bride and groom in a local café (right) so I could deliver their present over a celebratory coffee and a slice of wedding cake.

They liked it: it's an excellent café. I think the present went down well too...



12 Fit one lid at a time with the pivots in place, and adjust as necessary



13 I chose to apply the finish to the carcass and the lids at this stage for convenience



14 The two internal trays are simple shallow boxes with dovetailed corners



15 Cut the linings square, apply their finish and then mitre their ends using a simple jig



16 Prepare the suede trimming, drop each piece in and fit the box linings on top



17 Line the two trays in the same way and drop in the linings and dividers



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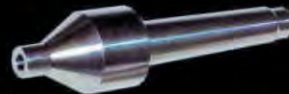
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DELIVERED WORLD WIDE





BY DUNCAN ROSE

# Fetch and carry

**Country-style kitchens never go out of fashion, and accessories in the same style are always popular. To help with the fetching and carrying of morning coffee or afternoon tea, here's a traditional maple tray for you to make**

**T**he tray is made using American maple, which is strong and hard-wearing and gives a light and elegant appearance. I softened the look with gently shaped ends and rounded edges. I used CAD software to draft designs for the best appearance. The tray's dimensions follow the aesthetically pleasing Golden Ratio of 1.618:1.

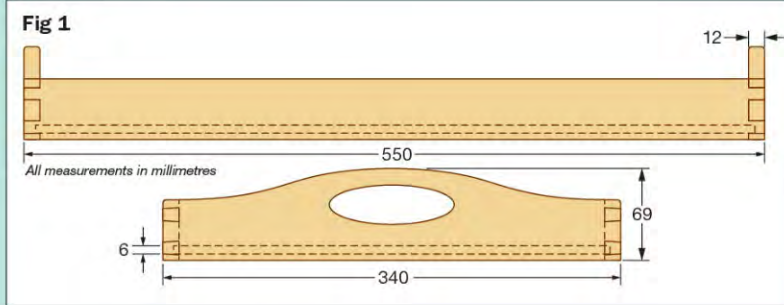
The tray is easy to carry with its elliptical handholds, which complement the shaped ends. The base is glued in position so the

joint is tight, without gaps and so more hygienic. The sides are held using through dovetails to give a strong and attractive joint.

#### Selecting the stock

Start by preparing the pairs of maple sides and ends. I selected these from a larger plank and avoided defects that could cause problems later when routing the rounded edges.

Flatten, square and thickness the four pieces of stock, **photo 1**. If you're lucky



## MAPLE TRAY CUTTING LIST

All dimensions are in millimetres

Part	Qty	L	W	T
Side	2	550	45	12
End	2	340	69	12
Base (plywood)	1	534	324	6*

\* Thickness before veneering



1 Prepare the sides and ends of the tray from selected blemish-free stock



2 Use a tensioned bow to mark out the various curves on the two end panels



3 Drill holes in the waste area and cut out the elliptical handholds on the scrollsaw



4 Then cut the external shaped edges, following the marked line closely



5 Sand the edges of the two ends to remove all the scrollsaw cut marks



6 Cut the pins on the tray sides using a router and a dovetailing jig

then some attractive birds-eye figure may be revealed! Dimension the sides to their final size, but leave the ends over-long to ease their marking out and shaping.

### Drawing the arcs

The ends are shaped with a 'frequency' curve, which is made by drawing a centre full arc with a half arc on each side, as you can see in **fig 1**. You can either mark the shape directly onto the ends or alternatively make a template and then mark each end. In either case the drawing process is the same.

Start by marking the start and finish of each arc. Then make the shape for drawing the arc. Here I made a bow using a 600mm steel ruler and a length of nylon cord. I tensioned the bow by trial and error using a tension stick until the bow arc corresponded to the marks on the template. Then I held the bow in position and marked each arc, **photo 2**. You can also use the bow method to mark the ellipse-shaped handholds.

### Shaping the ends

Cut out the handholds next. I started by drilling a pair of 16mm holes using a Forstner bit, and completed the cutout using the scrollsaw, **photo 3**. This gives remarkably clean cuts that requiring little sanding.

Now cut the external shaped edges. I used the scrollsaw again, closely following the marked line, **photo 4**. Sand the edges to remove all the cut marks, **photo 5**.

### Cutting the dovetails

The next stage is to mark out and cut the through dovetail joints. I cut them using a dovetail jig, although hand cutting would also work very well. I set the pins and tails to protrude slightly, so that after assembly they can be planed flush to leave a tidy, flat joint. After making a few test cuts using scrap wood to check the accuracy of my settings, I cut the pins, **photo 6**, and then the tails, **photo 7**.

### Veneering the base

The base panel is made from a piece of 6mm plywood with maple veneer glued on both faces. Cut the plywood slightly oversize and trim it to its final size after it's been veneered.

To cover the width of the plywood, I butt-jointed two smaller sheets of veneer

together. The adjacent pieces were 'slip-matched' with the same veneer faces exposed. This gives the panel a uniform appearance. I cut the pieces using a sharp knife and a straightedge, and temporarily joined them using low-tack masking tape.

Next, spread the adhesive evenly on both sides of the plywood panel in turn, **photo 8**, and apply the veneers. Sandwich the assembly between two flat cauls and press it flat. I used my home-made vacuum bag press, **photo 9**, described in the Winter 2009 issue of *The Woodworker*. Alternatively you could use some weights on the cauls, such as heavy books or bags of sand.

Once the adhesive is dry, peel off the masking tape, **photo 10**, sand the panel and cut it to size.

#### Cutting the base grooves

The next task is to cut grooves in the sides and ends that match the thickness of the veneered base panel. The grooves are inset by 6mm and are 4mm deep. I cut the grooves using a 4mm wide slot cutter mounted in the table router, adjusting the cutter height until the base was a snug fit. Note that the grooves are stopped at both their ends. Chisel the stopped ends square, **photo 11**.

#### Rounding the edges

Before gluing up the tray, round over the top and bottom edges along the sides and ends. Stop the roundover where the inner edge of the end meets the sides. This position is easily marked on the ends with the tray dry-assembled, **photo 12**.

I used the table router fitted with a bearing-guided 4mm radius roundover bit, making several cuts to gradually make the round profile I wanted. Then the straight edges were rounded using the mitre fence as a guide, **photo 13**.

I rounded the shaped edges using the lead-in pin to steady the work. Also, to prevent the work being snatched by the cutter at the cut start and finish, when it is unsupported by the cutter bearing, I limited the roundover to where the work was guided by the bearing, **photo 14**.

#### Assembling the tray

Sand the inner faces of the tray; this is easier to do at this stage. Now the various tray components are ready for gluing up,



7 Repeat the process to cut the tails. You can produce the joints by hand if you prefer



8 Apply adhesive evenly to the plywood base and position the maple veneers



9 Cramp the veneer flat in a vacuum press if you have one, or use weights otherwise



10 When the glue is dry, peel off the tape, sand the panel and cut it to size



11 Rout stopped grooves 4mm deep in the sides and ends, and square them off



12 Dry-assemble the tray and mark off where to start rounding over the edges



13 Round over the straight edges by running each piece against the table fence

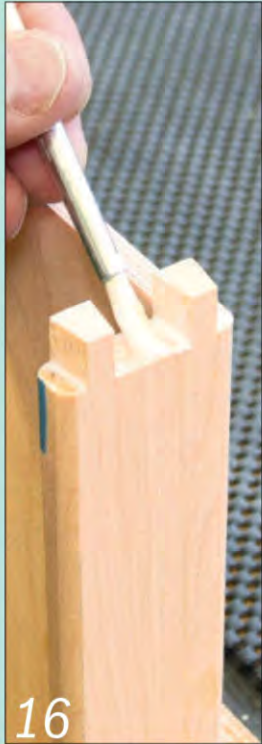


14 Use a lead-in pin to steady the work as you tackle the shaped edges



15

Sand the inner surfaces of the tray before you start to assemble it



16 Apply adhesive sparingly to the dovetail joints and the base panel grooves



17 Assemble the tray. Use clamps and protective packing pieces to secure the joints



18 Use a sharp hand plane to trim off the protruding dovetail pins and tails flush



19 Round over any remaining square edges and corners using a detail sander



20 Finish the tray with three coats of hardwax oil, cutting back between coats

**photo 15.** Apply adhesive to all the contacting surfaces on the dovetail joints and in the base grooves, **photo 16.**

Assemble the tray and clamp the joints tight, **photo 17.** Remove any squeezed-out adhesive and leave the assembly to dry.

When it is, use a hand plane to flush off the protruding pins and tails, **photo 18.**

Also round over any remaining edges and the corners, **photo 19.**

### Final touches

After checking the tray for any blemishes and pencil marks, I applied three coats of hardwax oil, cutting back between coats using wet-and-dry paper while the oil is still wet, **photo 20.** Finally, finish with wax applied with a nylon abrasive pad. Allow a couple of days for the oil to harden fully; then you can invite the neighbours round for a cake and a cup of tea!





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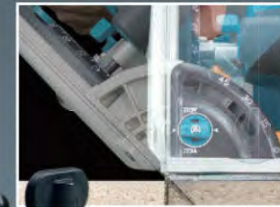
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This, and falling over the extractor which was always in the way, has for many years been the bane of my life when using power tools in the workshop... and what's really annoying is that I cured the problem so quickly and easily.

### The overhead route

I had wanted to make an overhead boom arm for years. However, I had grand plans for building a cyclone and mounting the extractor in the loft, which would have been a lot of work. Then I got a Dyson vacuum cleaner and the cyclone problem was solved. There are several advantages to using a Dyson: It doesn't use bags, the



BY KEITH SMITH



# Boom boom!

If, like me, you've been bedevilled by a power tool extractor hose that snags on the corner of your bench and makes you snatch at your work, then this project is for you

clear cylinder lets you see when it's full, and it's so easy to empty. This makes it very easy to segregate waste – wood dust goes on the compost heap, while mdf dust has to be bagged up for disposal.

Its only drawback is that, unlike many workshop extractors, it doesn't have a power-tool outlet which automatically switches the vacuum on when a power tool draws current. What's more, I don't know how long the motor will last, as it was never designed for continuous workshop use. However, on the plus side the cyclone seems to be incredibly efficient at extracting fine wood dust, as there is very little left in the filters.

### A plywood skeleton

I keep a pile of plywood offcuts which I raided to make my boom arm. It would be easier to cut the ply sides from a single sheet of 9mm ply, but if you have some offcuts this is a good project to use them up.

I started by making the L shape from two pieces of 100 x 25mm PSE softwood,

Fig 1

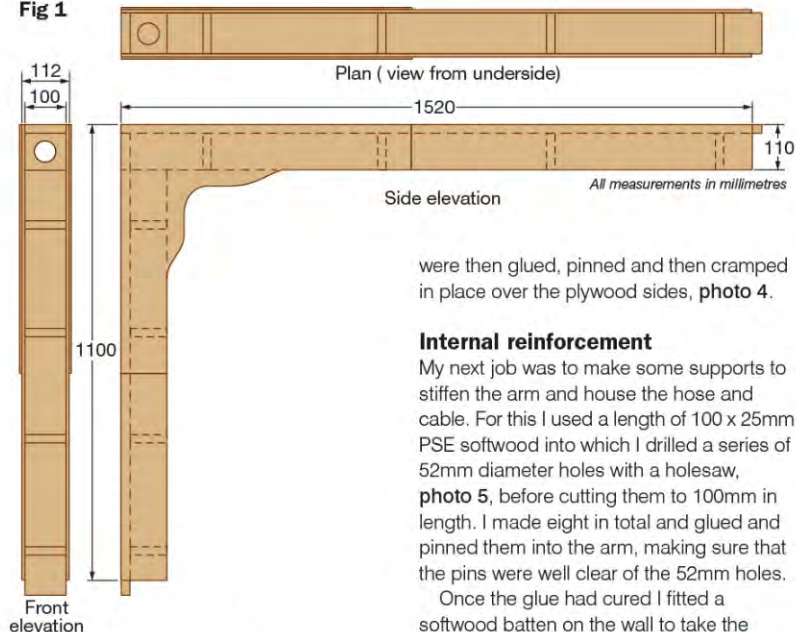


photo 1, which I simply screwed together with a couple of Confirmat screws. Next, I glued and pinned 110mm wide strips of 6mm plywood to both sides, photo 2, making sure that the frame was set at exactly 90°.

I then cut two L-shaped sections from a 700mm square sheet of 6mm ply, photo 3. As you can see in the photograph and fig 1, I shaped them to leave a wider section at the elbow for additional strength. These

were then glued, pinned and then cramped in place over the plywood sides, photo 4.

### Internal reinforcement

My next job was to make some supports to stiffen the arm and house the hose and cable. For this I used a length of 100 x 25mm PSE softwood into which I drilled a series of 52mm diameter holes with a holesaw, photo 5, before cutting them to 100mm in length. I made eight in total and glued and pinned them into the arm, making sure that the pins were well clear of the 52mm holes.

Once the glue had cured I fitted a softwood batten on the wall to take the



1 I used some planed softwood for the frame and simply screwed the two sections together



2 I glued and pinned plywood to both edges to create the open fronted box section



3 I cut two L-shaped sections of ply with thickened internal corners to strengthen the frame



4 These pieces were glued, pinned and cramped to the frame, which was then set aside to dry



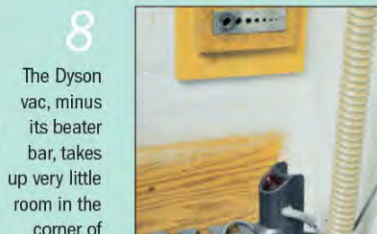
5 I cut a series of 52mm holes in a length of softwood to make the internal boom supports



6 I fitted two hinges near the top of the wall batten to help carry the boom arm's weight



7 The extract hose and power tool cable are fed through the holes in the boom supports



8

The Dyson vac, minus its beater bar, takes up very little room in the corner of the shop



9 I fitted a couple of hooks to keep the hose and power cable well out of the way when the boom isn't in use

hinges and screwed three 80mm hinges to the short leg of the boom arm. Most of the weight will be at the top of the arm, so I fitted two hinges there, **photo 6**, and one at the bottom. With a bit of assistance I then screwed the hinges to the batten and checked that the arm swung freely and cleared the ceiling-mounted lights, **photo 7**.

## Power supply options

I have quite a few Festool power tools. These come with a quick-fit power cable which they call the Plug-it system, and it seemed logical to use this for the boom arm. It's possible to buy a kit to convert other power tools to the Plug-it system, but unless you already have a number of these tools it's financially impractical to use it.

If I hadn't had this system, I'd have fitted a 13A socket at the end of the boom arm and added a hook over which to loop the excess cable from the tool.

The ideal system would use an extractor with a power tool outlet that switches the extractor on whenever a tool is used. However, as I had decided to use a Dyson vacuum for the convenience of its cyclone, I fitted a 50A cord-pull ceiling switch which provides power to a pair of socket outlets high up on the wall next to the boom arm. The Plug-it cable goes into one outlet and the vacuum into the other – see **photo 7** again. It's important to leave a good loop of cable to swing down before it goes into the boom arm to prevent stresses developing in the cable.

## Extraction hose

I had a spare power tool extraction hose which I fed through the holes in the boom arm. Unfortunately it wasn't quite long enough to provide enough slack for ease of use so I joined the Dyson hose to the power tool hose half way up the boom arm. This has worked out really well because the joint is protected and isn't subject to any stresses as it's supported by the boom arm. The Dyson sits in the corner of the room, **photo 8**, and has a very small footprint compared to most workshop vacuums.

To keep the hose well out of the way when not needed, I fitted a couple of hooks to the boom arm, **photo 9**. Finally, to prevent the hose chafing on the final support I rounded over the edges of the hole and fitted a thick piece of foam across the bottom edge.

This boom has been a real boon. It took just a few hours to make and cost very little as I was able to use mostly offcuts and bits left over from other jobs. I just wish I had made it years ago.


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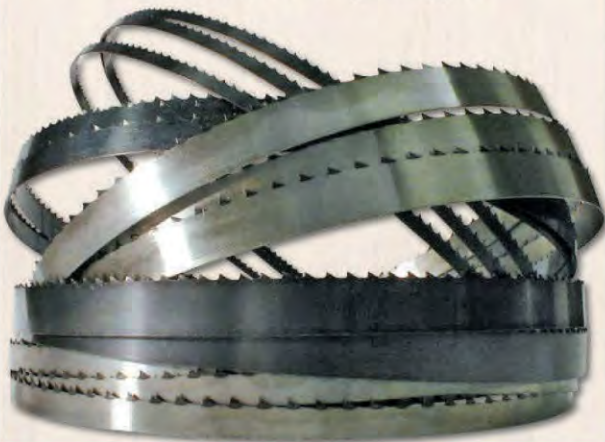
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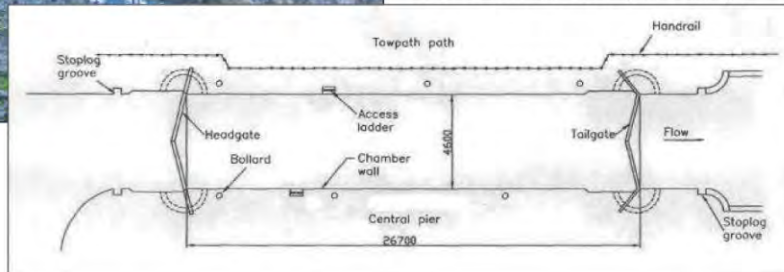
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Sam Thomas fits in another interview. The upper gates behind him are less than half the height of the lower ones



BY MARK CASS



**T**he event was hosted by the River and Canal Trust, the government-sponsored organisation which grew out of the British Waterways Board. The reason was to mark the official beginning of the Trust's latest programme of canal lock repair and restoration, a necessary and ongoing work which ensures unimpeded nationwide passage on the UK's canals.

On this particular winter's day, the sun was shining brightly and, despite a nip in the air, there was a distinct feeling of expectation crackling across the cold water of the canal.

**Keep and castle**

The meeting place was the former lock keeper's dwelling, a sizable castellated cottage – now a chain coffee shop – overlooking the unique twin locks situated in the heart of London's Camden Town. Not far from London Zoo and Regent's Park, this is a very popular spot with tourists and, I suspect, was chosen as a showpiece for that very reason.

Sam Thomas, the friendly and tireless manager of the project, rounded up the latest eager crowd of enthusiasts and canal people (not refugees or cultists), and led us over the road bridge to the works entrance.

**Behind the scenes**

Feeling enormously privileged to go beyond the metaphorical velvet rope, we carefully descended the temporary scaffolding stairs

Hampstead Road Lock is the only twin lock on the Regent's Canal, and was constructed between 1818 and 1820 by James Morgan

# Locked in

**I'm a firm believer in luck, and of late I've had a long-overdue run of the good stuff. This was typified by a recent invitation to attend an open day at the Hampstead Road lock on the Regent's Canal in London**

and found ourselves in a deep dark space a bit like an upside-down railway tunnel built in wet brick. Having spent a lot of my childhood playing down by the Grand Union Canal in west London, it was a real delight to be right inside one of the mysterious places of my earlier life, and in non-life-threatening circumstances too!

**Brand new gates**

What was immediately apparent was that the upper and lower gates were completely mismatched in size. There's a difference in

water level of 2.5 metres, and this is reflected in the relative heights of both sets of gates.

All lock gates are regularly checked for damage and wear, and repaired or replaced accordingly. Both pairs of lower gates at the Hampstead Road lock had been recently classed as failing, and so were top of the list of this latest round of replacements.

So how do you go about a job like this? As with all construction work, it pays to plan well, but here the skilled team involved have the advantage of many years of experience behind them. They also have exactly the right kit with them, and are fully prepared for any eventuality, just like the rest of us when we go on site.

### Draining board

The first step is to drain the lock. This involves closing the top gates and shutting the paddles (the small inset doors which enable water transfer). Next it's time for a spot of dam building. Always a tricky business, the lock gate team have a couple of useful tricks up their hi-vis sleeves; a floating crane and a pre-made dam, no less.

Each lock is slightly different from the next, so dams have to be custom-made each time. The dam is built up of half a dozen large baulks of Scots pine, stress-graded to C24. These are prepared in the workshop and numbered to ensure a good fit – quite useful when you're holding back tons of inky canal water.

### Joints matter

The ends have been pre-cut into bare-faced tenons which will slot into a stopping groove built into the brick sides of the lock entrance mouth. This requires some finesse (as well as a useful bit of brute force) to pull off, but at the end of the operation the new dam will be sitting flush on the cill, wedged at the top, and any slight gaps in the groove will be filled with ash shavings. Once the whole thing swells up under the water it becomes impressively watertight, but it's still inspected twice daily just to be sure!

The lock is then pumped out, the debris removed (the usual assortment of bikes, supermarket trolleys, skateboards, mobile phones, wallets and windlasses) and the work can begin in earnest.

The old gates are removed by the simple expedient of unbolting the top restraining hinge bracket, fitting temporary top rail eye bolts and then lifting each one out.

### Made in Yorkshire

Vince Moran, the jovial Operations Director on site, told me that the Camden gates had come from one of two Yorkshire factories, just one of the hundred pairs they turn out



Both locks at Camden have the original cobbled floor. The walls were rebuilt in 1915



The top hinge staple has been temporarily fixed in place with some strapping

Custom dam baulks await beneath the floating crane. These are for the replacement of the next pair of gates. Note the ash shavings



Mark Banks in front of one of the new gates. The steel brace runs from top hinge to bottom because of the paddle (sluice gate) in the lower hinge corner



each year between them. They're made from solid English oak, with substantial steel strappings to reinforce them. Each is fitted with an opening paddle in the lower hinge-side corner. A lock can function with just one of these working (as was the case here), but refill times are halved, meaning a frustrating wait for summer-time boats.

Each gate is located in a steel 'pot' – essentially the lower part of a pivot hinge, the pin being an integral part of the gate itself. These are checked and replaced where necessary. When all is ready, the new gate is lowered into position from the crane barge, and is held in place with a steel staple. This will be adjusted once the lock is refilled and the weight of the water plays its part in the final positioning.

One of the steel hinge 'pots' has worn over time into a distinct oval shape



The lock's lower mouth had to be dammed. Note the angled inner sill against which the gates close



Once fitted, both gates need shooting in to ensure a watertight closure



The old gates await removal from the site – another job for the floating crane

### Shooting to fit

Anyone who has shot a door in will know just how much work is involved in getting a good fit; imagine then the slog of shooting in a pair of solid oak lock gates – all 4.2 x 2.8 x 0.3m of them. I still think they could pre-bevel them at the factory stage, but apparently it has to be done on site. At least hard-working Mark Banks and his team have access to a power planer or two, but it can still take all day to get the gates closing snugly.

Once all is well, the lock can be refilled and the operation of the gates given a final check in proper watery conditions. The top hinge staple is permanently fixed and the dam disassembled. Then it's on to the next lock... in this case, the one next door!

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**T**he pinned, pegged or dowelled mortise-and-tenon joint is one of the earliest forms of this common and widely used joint. It has the advantage of great structural strength without the need for adhesive reinforcement. If no glue is used, the joint can be dismantled easily if required, although on re-assembly a new pin may be needed. The joint can also be used for decorative effect if a contrasting timber is chosen to make the pin.

This is a straightforward joint to make. However, care must be taken to place the pin correctly so it pulls the joint components together tightly as it's driven in, and also minimises any subsequent loosening due to timber shrinkage.

Both through and stopped mortise-and-tenon joints can be pinned, but with a stopped tenon, the mortise should be cut a little deeper than the length of the tenon to ensure a snug fit.



BY ANDY STANDING



# Pinhole surgery

**Andy Standing continues his new jointmaking series with a joint that's extremely strong, needs no glue and can be easily taken apart. The secret lies with a round peg in a square hole**



**1** Use a try square to mark out the position of the mortise on the stile in which it will be cut



**2** Hold the rail to be tenoned against the stile and mark the precise rail width on it



**3** Choose a chisel with a width close to one third the width of the stile, and use this to set your mortise marking gauge. Centralise the gauge on the edge of the stile and mark its width. Mark both sides if you're cutting a through mortise. Put the gauge aside, but don't disturb the setting



**4** Mark out the length of the tenon shoulder on the rail using the try square. Extend the line all round the rail



**5** Using the mortise marking gauge as previously set, mark the tenon outline on the edge of the rail. If the lines are very faint, run a sharp pencil along them to make them stand out more



**6** For faster waste removal on large mortises, bore some of it away with a drill. Select a bit size a little smaller than the width of the mortise and drill a hole at each end of the slot



**7** Then remove as much of the waste in between with a series of overlapping holes. The mortise is now ready for cleaning up

**8** Square up the edges of the mortise, taking fine cuts with a sharp chisel used with the bevel facing inwards



**9** Now cut the tenon on the rail. Start by cutting the shoulders. Be careful to keep to the waste side of the marked lines, and to stop before you cut into the tenon



**10** Stand the rail up vertically in a vice and saw down the tenon cheeks, again cutting on the waste side of the marked lines



**11** Mark out the position of the hole for the pin. It should be in the centre of the mortise, but as close to the rail as possible while still leaving a reasonable thickness of timber to support the pin. Bore the hole using a dowel bit, which will cut a clean hole. Place a piece of waste wood in the mortise to minimise breakout and to keep the drill running straight through



**12** Remove the waste and assemble the joint. Push the tenon in fully, insert the dowel bit into the drilled hole and tap its top end to mark the tenon with its point. Remove the tenon



**13** Note the position of the mark made by the dowel bit on the tenon, and make a second mark about 1.5mm next to it towards the tenon shoulder. Centre the drill bit on this mark and carefully bore through the tenon



**14** The two parts are now ready for assembly. Note the clean holes, clear of break-out, produced by the dowel bit



**15** You can use ready-made dowel rods for the pin, or make your own. Take a short length of square, straight-grained hardwood and round off the corners with a sharp chisel. Work round it slowly, taking care to keep it as round as possible. Taper the end so it will easily fit through the tenon

**16** Assemble the joint and drive the pin into the hole with a hammer. The offset holes will pull the joint up tight. Support the back of the joint on blocks so that the pin can pass right through the holes



**17** Flush off the pin on both sides with a flexible dowel saw or, if you prefer, leave it slightly proud for a more rustic look



**18** The assembled joint shows how tightly the tenon is pulled into the mortise by the pin. A little sanding and the job is done

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Quality from start to finish



BY JESSICA FAIRLEY

much for me financially. They offered tools and a workbench, art classes, mentoring and support – really you just had to come along with enthusiasm and a desire to learn, and I had that in abundance.”

#### Seeking inspiration

At Williams & Cleal the onus is on the individual to design. As a result the work produced by the students can be very different. But even in that context, Jessica's work stood out from the rest. Her Glacier Cabinet was the star of the show, worlds apart from her fellow graduates' pieces.

We asked Jessica what inspired her to combine steel and wood in such an original and eye-catching form. “I'm a keen climber and snowboarder,” she replied. “When I first started to think about what to build, I was particularly inspired by glaciers and the stunning crevasses within them... but how do you bring a glacier into the home? I started to think about cabinets, but it took a lot of thought to get to the right result.”

#### Developing the design

“I started by folding paper. I knew I'd have to have straight lines, and wanted to see how many facets of a shard I could create.

# The Glacier Cabinet

**This staggeringly impressive piece of furniture caught the editor's eye at the annual New Designers show in London late last year. So he decided to find out a bit more about its maker...**

**J**essica Fairley is a lawyer. In her thirties she decided to give up her profession to pursue her dream of becoming a furniture maker and designer. She recently spent eight months at the Williams & Cleal Furniture School near Taunton in Somerset, and while she was there she designed this piece – the Glacier Cabinet.

Jessica was born in England but spent much of her childhood in Germany, before choosing to finish her further education in the USA where she qualified as a lawyer. Subsequently she has lived and worked in the USA, the Isle of Man, Spain and Estonia, finally choosing to settle in England five years ago. When she was in Spain she spent four months working with a cabinet

maker – Nick Chandler – who was in Seville at the time. His belief in her ability to create and build furniture gave her the confidence to pursue her dream.

#### Taking the plunge

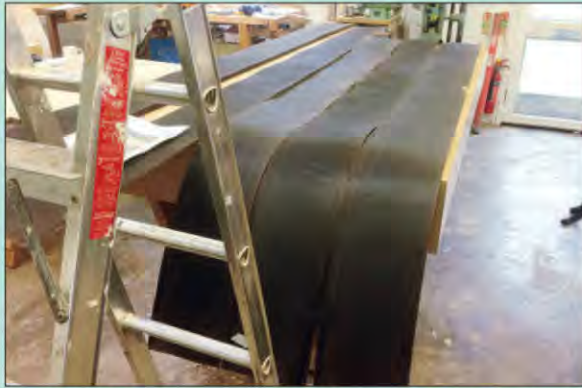
It was some time, however, before Jessica was able to take the time out to be an apprentice again. She worked as a legal temp in London while saving the money she needed to be able to give up work. Thanks to some help from relatives, she was finally able to take that huge step.

We asked Jessica why she chose Williams & Cleal. She replied: “They offered me a flexible time frame. I didn't have to commit to an entire year, which would have been too



Crevasses in a glacier provided the initial inspiration for the cabinet's centrepiece

I started off with a lot, but that was just too complex and busy. Once I'd reduced the number, I then moved on to using Google SketchUp modelling software. I created a box, took a huge gash out of it and then began to build up the crevasse within. I'd gone through the sketching process and also my research, and it was a glacier crevasse, a bit like the tip of the iceberg

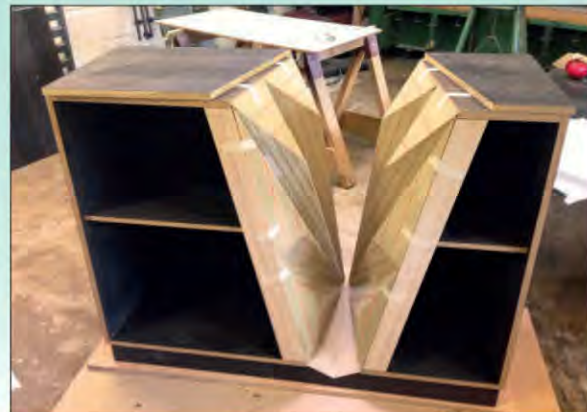


Lengths of fumed oak veneer are standing by for pressing onto boards

The carcass is a screwed slab construction reinforced with biscuits



The asymmetrical cabinets now have a pair of asymmetrical doors



The faceted mdf formers await cladding with mirror-finished steel

with all the action happening below the surface, that really appealed to me visually."

### Choosing materials

The cabinet's structure may look simple. However, as anyone who has worked with wood and steel will tell you, it takes a strong design, a good eye and real craftsmanship to pull it off. We wondered how Jessica managed to create something this complex as her first piece.

"I began by playing around with frames. That way I could test what could work without committing myself to final dimensions. After a few weeks of testing out structures, I felt I had what I was looking for."

"At this point I chose my materials. I was really taken by the look of fumed oak because of its wide-open grain, and felt it had the colour intensity to mimic the layered sediments of rock. The glacial shards were trickier. Initially I wanted to use mirrors, but they were too thick and the material was unsuited to the many meeting bevelled edges. I considered – and discounted – glass, aluminium and silver leaf, and was really struggling until Jim (one of the instructors at Williams & Cleal) suggested the idea of using mirror-finished steel."

"This gives you a highly reflective surface like a mirror, but you can get it in sheets as

thin as 0.5mm and this could be outsourced for laser cutting – which offered me the flexibility I needed for creating the shards. With this decision made, I could progress with the carcass construction."

### Creating the angles

"When you look into the shards, it's the multiple angles that provide the visual effect. You might think these angles are created entirely by the steel, but that isn't the case; these angles are also reflected within the frame. Eventually I realised that to create multiple angles within the same cut I needed to use two different settings on the table saw. It sounds like a simple solution, but it had to be very precise and was an absolute swine to get right!"

"The next challenge was constructing the plinth and rebating the sections to allow for the steel to be dropped in so it would end up with a flush surface. Again this required absolute precision and was very tricky to achieve. However, this was nothing when compared to the actual cutting and fitting of the steel shards."

"To do this I needed to create blocks of mdf, and adjusted the bed of the bandsaw to get a series of triangles that would then make up the individual shards. The next step was to smooth the surface of the mdf so it

was completely flat and would give the steel a perfect base. This process took about four weeks of long hours and hard labour to solve, and I wouldn't have been able to do so without the help of the Williams & Cleal team – Jane, Jim and Justin."

### Moving forward

The finished cabinet is, in the opinion of all at *The Woodworker*, simply stunning. We asked whether Jessica had plans to design more pieces. "I've set up a website ([www.jessicafairley.co.uk](http://www.jessicafairley.co.uk)), and I'm talking to interior designers about the Glacier Cabinet and future projects. There's been a lot of interest in the cabinet, and I'd like to take the concept into a series if possible."

Does she have any words of wisdom for readers of the magazine who may be considering taking the plunge and changing their careers as she did? "Be prepared to have no money and to struggle financially, but to be really happy and fulfilled," she replies. "The icing on the cake for me was the positive response I received at the London design show. I spent nearly a year working on this cabinet and I love it. It's deeply pleasing to know that others do too. The law can be a financially rewarding career, but it never offered me this level of personal satisfaction."

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BY IAN WILKIE

# WILKIE'S BAZAAR

**Turning is primarily for pleasure, but can be for profit too. Here are six simple projects that will make inexpensive presents, or help to raise funds at your local village fête**

**T**here will be times when you'll be asked to make some turned items to donate for school, church or village fêtes and similar fundraising events. This may be organized as a joint contribution by your woodturning club, or come as a direct plea from friends and family. In this article I've brought together some simple projects which take up very little wood and are quick and easy to turn. If the finished items are priced realistically they will sell; anything more ambitious may cost you more in time and materials than it will raise for the event.

## PREPARING BLANKS



**A** Cut a series of blanks to size and mark the centre on the ends of each one



**B** Mount the blank between matching Steb centres and turn it to round



**C** Form a spigot at one end of the blank to suit the chuck jaws you're using



**D** Continue until you run out of blanks...

You'll save yourself a lot of time if you sort through your offcut box, put any suitable wood to one side and then cut the timber into turning blanks. Most of the projects featured here start with a blank turned to a cylinder, with a spigot at one end to suit the chuck jaws you're going to use.

By standardising on one set of jaws, you can quickly produce a batch of blanks ready to be turned into goods for the bazaar.

## USEFUL CYLINDERS

Several of the projects are based on a straightforward drilled cylinder, and I'm sure you'll come up with some other uses for this basic shape. The quality of the wood, the standard of turning and the finish are all important, and attention should always be given to these points.

### The basic technique

Hold the blank securely in the headstock by its spigot. Fit a drill chuck in the tailstock and insert a 35mm saw-toothed Forstner bit. It pays to standardize wherever possible with drills and bits. This size is useful and will be used frequently. The better the quality of the bit, the smoother the cut will be. Drill to the depth required, **photo 1**, backing the bit out from time to time to allow the shavings to clear.



**1** Drill a hole in the end of the blank to the depth required



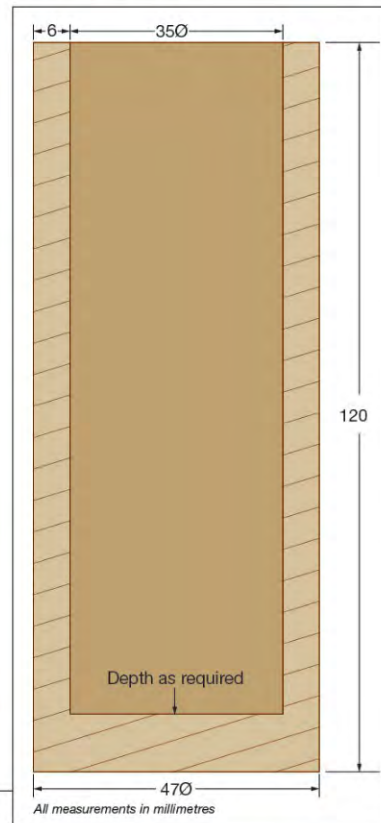
**2** Use the cylinder to display some dried or artificial flowers...



**3** ...or to store a collection of colouring pencils or felt-tip pens



**4** You can even turn a decorative foot at the base of the cylinder



Next, turn the outside to a good finish and sand it thoroughly to produce a silky smooth surface. Apply a finish such as Record Power's 'Speed an eez' friction polish which, as its name implies, brings up a good shine very quickly with the minimum of effort. Then part off the spigot and sand the base smooth.

### Variations on a theme

This simple design can become a parallel-sided bud vase for dried or artificial flowers, **photo 2**, or a pencil pot which will hold plenty of coloured pencils or felt pens, **photo 3**. If you leave enough solid wood at the base of the cylinder, you can even turn a decorative foot on it for a more elegant look, **photo 4**.

Another idea is to add a contrasting domed walnut top and make a money box to hold £1 coins, **photo 5**. The top is designed with a spigot which fits tightly into the top of the cylinder, **photo 6**, but can be pulled off easily to empty out the money. After turning the top to shape I cut out the slot on the scrollsaw. Drill each corner first for a neat shape.



**5** Add a domed top in a different wood to make a simple money box



**6** The top has a spigot to guarantee a tight fit inside the neck of the box



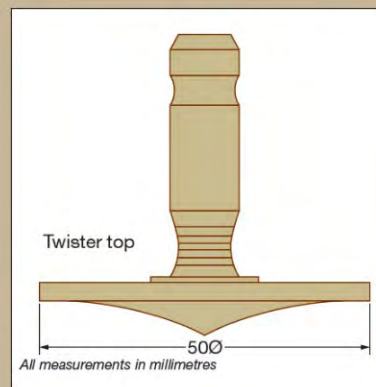
**7** The easiest way to cut the coin slot is on the scrollsaw, after drilling a hole at each end

**1** Boxwood is ideal for making tops



## SPINNING TOPS

These little tops are always popular with children. Display them on a flat tray so you can demonstrate how easy they are to spin. I've always found that any indulgent grandparent is sure to buy one if they're sensibly priced! Boxwood is the best timber to use, but you can experiment with anything that's hard and close-grained.



**2** Mount the blank in the chuck jaws



**3** Turn it to a diameter of 50mm



**4** Turn a small pimple in the centre



**5** Remove the wood to form the stem



**6** Give it a twirl to make sure it spins!



**1** A sinuous curve and a gloss finish make an eye-catching piece



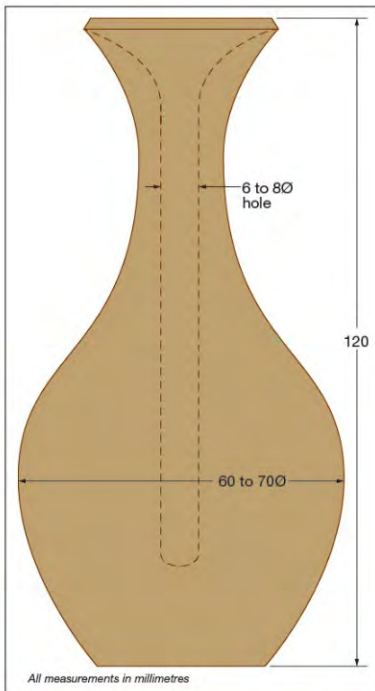
**2** Drill an 8mm diameter hole to the depth required for the neck



**3** Shape the vase. A conventional pear shape is usually the most pleasing

## BUD VASES

This is a good way to use up those offcuts which are too attractive to toss in the log burner but realistically too small to use for most projects. Pop in some artificial or dried flowers and they will look good on the stall. You can adapt the measurements and design to suit the wood you have available, but these photos will give you some guidance.



**4** Apply polish to bring the piece to life; this wood is walnut



**5** When parting off, cut through the remaining wood with a fine saw



**1** Two small blanks of contrasting wood make an attractive pencil holder

## PENCIL DOME

This unusual project shows how you can combine two small offcuts to make a turning blank with good effect – in this case, sycamore and walnut, **photo 1**. Prepare the two halves, join them with a spigot and glue them together. Then turn the top part to create the dome shape.

Drill holes just big enough to take the pencils. Use a drill stand and prop the base so the holes are drilled at a slight angle, **photo 2**. Check that the pencils slide in and out of their holes easily.



**2** Mark six equally spaced holes and a central one, and drill them out at an angle

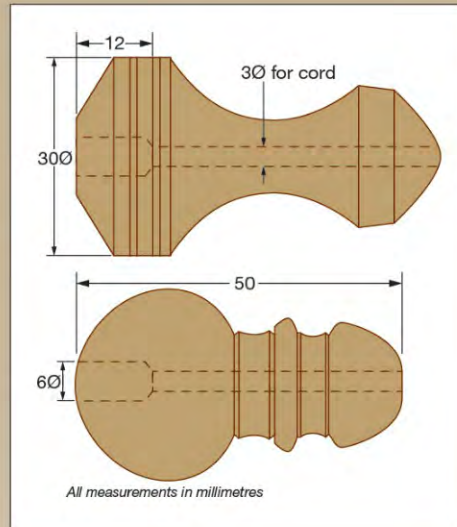


**1** You can make light pulls in a variety of different woods and shapes

## LIGHT PULLS

These are perennial fundraising favourites, **photo 1**, but do keep the price down. After all, they take very little time or material to make. I've seen them offered on stalls at greatly inflated prices. People enjoy selecting a pull made with wood that attracts them, so use a variety of different woods and shapes; then there's bound to be one that will appeal!

You can use very small blanks. A light-pull drive together with a revolving centre for the tailstock is the best combination, **photo 2**. The drive is safe to use and enables the tool to get right up to the cord hole, **photo 3**. Sand and polish each one on the lathe before parting it off, **photo 4**.



**2** You need only very small blanks: 50 x 30mm is often enough



**3** A light-pull drive allows you to work right up to the cord hole



**4** Sand and polish the finished light pull on the lathe, then part it off



**1** Basic tea lights cost pence, but posh scented ones like these are much dearer

## CANDLE HOLDERS

This simple doughnut-shaped holder is designed to take standard tea lights. The most basic type can be purchased for as little as £1.75 for a pack of 100 (at [www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com), for example). The glass tea light shown in **photo 1** is more expensive and holds a scented candle. It has very slightly tapered sides and a diameter of 40mm.

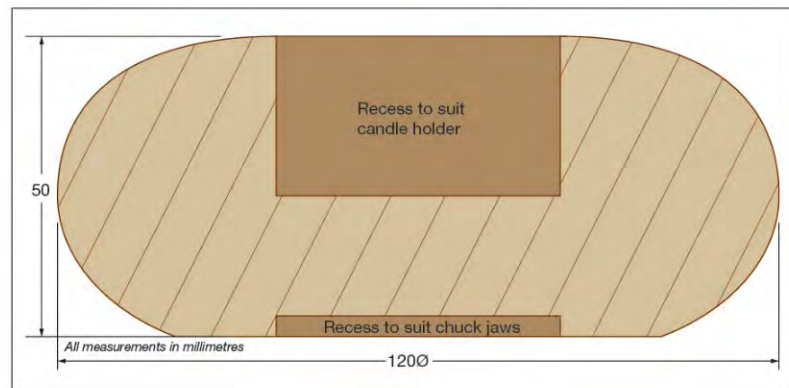
Hollow out the centre of the blank to suit the diameter of the candle holder you want to fit into it, **photo 2**. Then turn the outer



**2** Hollow out the centre of the blank to the right depth and diameter



**3** Check the fit; if it's too tight the tea light holder will get jammed in the hole



face and the underside to a bun shape, and apply some wax polish.

Check that you have the diameter and depth right, **photo 3**. Allow a little extra

manoeuvring room so the holder slides in and out with ease and won't jam. After parting off, sand the bottom of the holder and polish it.

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BY CHARLES MAK

# The rustic look

**These little log bowls combine the beauty of a tree in its natural form with a colourful finish. They are easy to turn and decorate, and add a natural rustic touch to any decor**

**T**he thought of turning a bowl from a log can be intimidating, even to seasoned woodturner... but not this kind of log bowl, which can be created with seasoned or green wood. If you haven't tried green woodturning, this bowl would be an easy place to start. If you can find some tree logs, fallen or not, and can spare an hour or two, why not turn your own? First, let me share a few words about turning green wood.

## Green is good

Many woodturners harvest their own wood. One approach is to reduce a blank to its rough shape and thickness and then to let it

season for several months or more, before turning it to its final form once any warping and shrinkage has taken place. Another approach is to turn a blank while it's green and, after sanding, to set it aside in a draught-free spot to season for several months before putting on the finish of your choice. Some warping will of course take place, transforming the finished stock into a unique piece. Either of these approaches is suitable for turning log bowls.

When working with green wood, use a jaw chuck or faceplate instead of glue or double-sided tape for mounting the blank to the lathe. Be prepared for the fact that

# TURNING *Natural log bowls*



**1** Choose a trunk of the desired size and cut the blank to length



**2** Mount the log in a jaw chuck if it's fairly round and evenly shaped



**3** For log sections with branch collars, allow an extra inch to fit a jaw chuck



**4** Roughly mark out the extent of the core to guide the hollowing out



**5** Follow all safety precautions and use a bowl gouge to turn the inside



**6** Decrease the speed and sand the interior down to 220 grit abrasive



**7** After a week's drying, coat the interior with paint of the desired colour



**8** Apply an aerosol varnish as a top coat if you prefer a glossy look



**9** An epoxy resin coating applied over the paint makes the bowl a waterproof container



green wood can sling off lots of moisture. Finally, use sharp tools and turn a uniform wall thickness to allow an even moisture loss that will help to reduce cracking.

## Selecting your log

As you'll see, the woodturning is simplest with a round trunk, but I will also show you how to handle blanks that have branch collars.

Choose a log with a trunk that roughly matches the size of the bowl you want to make, **photo 1**. Use a section of the trunk that has firm bark and is as round as possible. Unless you are familiar with turning eccentric blanks, avoid sections that have branch collars on them. After picking the log, use a bandsaw to cut out the blanks in the desired length.

## Mounting the blank

If you choose a round, evenly shaped blank, you may be able to mount it on the lathe with a jaw chuck, **photo 2**. If the trunk has a branch collar near the bottom, this may get in the way. In this case, either use a faceplate to mount it, or start with a log section that has an extra inch or so below the collar for the jaw chuck, **photo 3**. After the log has been turned and sanded, you can cut away the excess.

Rotate the blank by hand and adjust the mounting if necessary to get it as true as possible. For the final check, keep out of the line of fire and switch on the lathe to ensure the rotation is even. I then mark out the core to be hollowed with a colour marker as a rough visual guide, **photo 4**.

## Turning the bowl

The actual turning is no different from regular bowl turning using a bowl gouge, **photo 5**. You can turn an oval bottom or a flat bottom for a small diameter bowl, as was done here for this article. Sand the interior of the bowl at a lower speed, **photo 6**. If the freshly turned bowl is wet in its core, leave it to dry for another week before moving to the finishing step.

## Paint and varnish

I use acrylic paints for my log bowls, and the colour choices are abundant. Choose the colour of your choice, bright or otherwise, and apply two or three coats for a smooth, even look, **photo 7**. Let the paint dry for 12 hours. For a glossy look and increased durability, you can apply a water-based aerosol varnish or lacquer as the top coat, **photo 8**. For some bowls, I put a coat of clear epoxy resin over the acrylic paint, **photo 9**, making the interior waterproof. And that's all there is to it!

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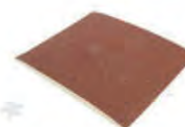
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BY BOB CHAPMAN

# HAT TRICK

**I first came across these little hats when I did a demonstration for Suffolk Mid-Coastal Woodturners a few years ago. I think they're a great idea and make very elegant small gifts. Here's how to turn them**

**P**eter Taylor, one of the SMCW members and now their President, kindly gave my wife one of these hats as a memento. In the conversation that followed, I found out that he makes them – and other turned items – to raise money for charity. In fact, he's worked so hard for his charitable enterprises that he's raised somewhere in the region of £100,000. In recognition of his work, he was awarded the British Empire Medal in the 2013 New Year's Honours List and was a guest at a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

#### Charity begins at home

When I asked Peter if he would mind me copying them – also for charity – he readily

agreed. The charity I support is Cancer Research, and my hats are for sale at £10 each... or as a hat trick of three for £20! Contact me ([bob@bobchapman.co.uk](mailto:bob@bobchapman.co.uk)) if you would like some. Alternatively you can make your own, but I'd like to think that you could also find time to make a few for your chosen charity. Peter says he also gives the odd one or two away as St Valentine's Day gifts... not bad considering he's 88!

#### Sorting out materials

The hat brims are approximately 50mm in diameter, so I began by searching out scraps of timber that would fit the bill, **photo 1**. Refer to **fig 1** for sizes, but treat them as approximate. I did try to ring the changes in terms of colour and grain pattern, using some spalted beech, a bit of elm, some ash and a piece of sycamore. The sycamore hats looked rather plain, so I stained some of them with coloured wood stains. If you have children I bet you've got some felt-tip pens around somewhere, and



these will colour the wood surface quite well on a small-scale project like this.

### Mounting matters

For no particular reason I chose to begin with a piece of ash about 150mm long which I mounted in my four-jaw chuck, **photo 2**. So long as the cross-section is square it can be held quite safely in this way, but check that all four jaws are engaged with the timber. If it's not square, only two opposite jaws will actually make contact and this gives a much poorer grip. If this is the case, mount the blank between centres instead.

### The shaping begins

Turn the blank to round at the exposed end and use a skew chisel to cut a dovetail spigot, **photo 3**. The piece can then be reversed in the chuck and the other end also turned to round and trued up.

The opening in the hat is approximately 25mm in both diameter and depth. This can



1  
Any bits of wood that will give a 50mm diameter are suitable for making hats



2  
You can mount a square section such as this quite safely in a four-jaw chuck



3  
Form a spigot and then reverse it in the chuck so you can get at the other end



4  
Mark a semicircle on the blade of an old flat wood bit and grind it to shape



5  
This nick in the edge of the blade will act as a depth-of-cut indicator



6  
Keep the blade vertical as the lathe turns so the waste drops out of the hole



7  
Shape the underside of the brim with a small bowl gouge

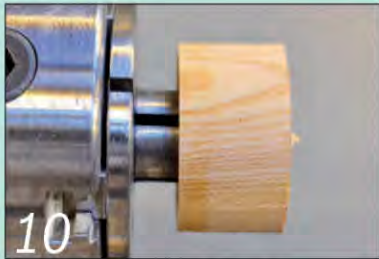
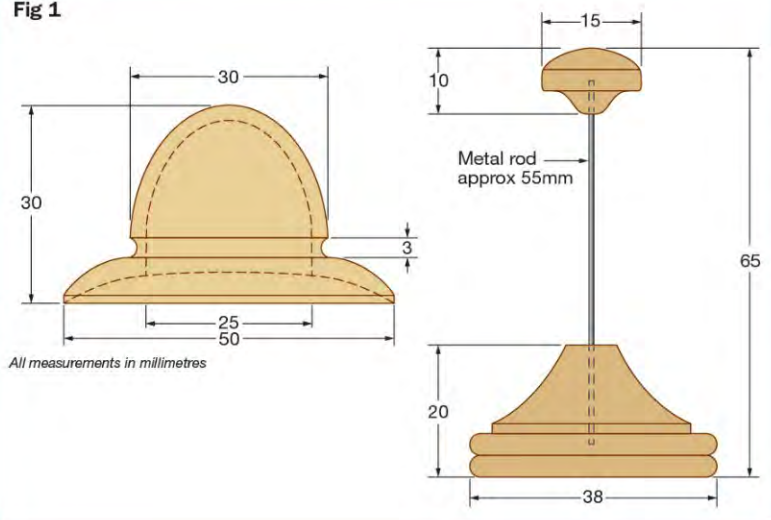


8  
Mark an allowance for the thickness of the wood at the top of the hat



9  
Seal the inside and the brim, then polish these surfaces with a premixed wax block

**Fig 1**



Reverse the hat onto some small pin jaws or a home-made jam chuck



Turn the crown down to size, using callipers set at 32mm as a guide to the diameter

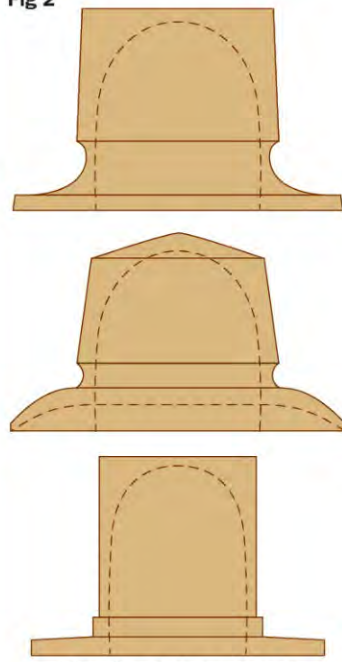


Use a 6mm bowl gouge to start shaping the outside surface of the hat



I chose to create a simple rounded dome shape for this example

**Fig 2**



Alternative designs within the same basic proportions

be formed with a spindle gouge in the same way that a box might be hollowed out. However, as I wanted to make several of these hats I thought that some way of speeding up the process might be beneficial.

### The Chapman Special

With this in mind I decided to re-grind a 25mm flat bit to form a semi-circular cutter, something like a scraper. I drew a semicircle on it after painting on some Tippex typing correction fluid to make the line visible, **photo 4**, and ground the bit to shape on the bench grinder. Take care to form a small clearance angle on the cutting edges and try to get these to meet in the middle of the bit. I also ground a small groove 25mm from the end to act as a depth gauge, **photo 5**.

### The hole and the brim

The bit performed very well, cutting the round-bottomed hole very quickly and accurately. Bear in mind that you will be taking a very wide cut, and slow the lathe down while the bit is wound in slowly and smoothly from the tailstock. If you keep the bit vertical while the lathe spins the blank, **photo 6**, the waste drops out of the hole without any clogging.

With the hole done, you can then shape the underside of the brim with a small bowl gouge, **photo 7**. This project allows plenty of scope for individual whimsy, and the shape of the brim you create will no doubt vary from hat to hat.

### Crowning glory

Knowing that the hole was drilled 25mm deep, mark where the hat will be parted off, **photo 8**, allowing 3mm or so for the thickness of the crown. If you intend to stain the hat, now is the time to do so, before sealing the wood. Seal the inside and the brim with sanding sealer and polish it with a wax stick, **photo 9**, before buffing it up to a shine with a soft cloth. I use a premixed stick of beeswax and carnauba wax.



Sand, seal and polish the hat and fit an elastic hair band in its shallow groove

Part off the part-formed hat next. At this point I adopted a production line technique and repeated the process to make another, working along the piece of wood until I reached the chuck and had to stop.

### Finishing the hat

I have a set of pin jaws for my chuck which are small enough to expand inside a 25mm diameter hole, and I used them to grip the hat internally for finishing, **photo 10**. If you don't have jaws like these, make a jam chuck tapering from just under 25mm to just above, over a length of 15mm or so. You can then jam each hat securely on this to complete it.

With callipers set at 32mm, **photo 11**, turn the crown down to size. This allows a wall thickness of about 3mm, which is plenty. Use a 6mm bowl gouge to start shaping the hat, **photo 12**, taking it down to its final diameter using the sizing cut as a guide.

### Different styles

Of course, you can make the hat in whatever shape takes your fancy, and it wouldn't do for them all to be the same. I chose a simple rounded dome shape for this example, **photo 13**. Form a slight groove just above the rim to accommodate a small elasticated hair band, which will act as the hat band, **photo 14**. When I buy these bands, I invariably get some odd looks as I spend time choosing the right size and colours. Do I care? It all adds to life's rich tapestry!

### Making a stand

The hatstand is made from two wooden pieces linked by a metal rod. The diameter of the metal rod is not at all critical, and I tend to use what I can find, cutting it to length with a pair of pliers. Metal coat hangers are a good source, and I've also used thin brazing rod. I scrounge things like this unmercifully from friends and, so far, I've not had to resort to actually buying any!

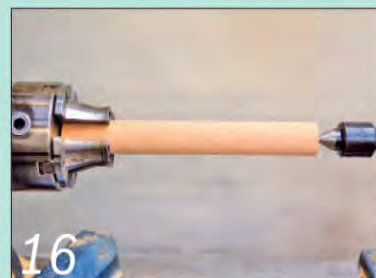
Whatever rod you use, measure the diameter and use the closest drill size you have that's smaller than this diameter to make the holes. If you happen to have one exactly right, then obviously use that.

### Stock for the feet

For the stand feet I found a suitable offcut of beech and mounted it between centres so I could turn it down to about 30mm using a spindle roughing gouge, **photo 15**. This diameter isn't critical; I reduced it until it looked about right and then measured it. It just happened to be 30mm. As is so often the case in woodworking, if it looks right it is right.



15 Mount the foot blank between centres and reduce it to 30mm in diameter



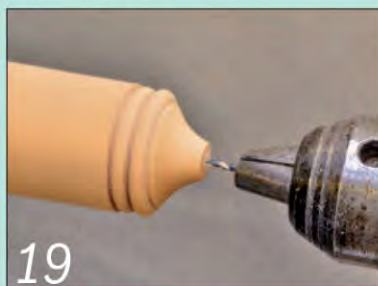
16 A chuck with a set of long-nosed jaws will hold the piece securely...



17 ...but it will need bracing with your free hand as you work on the unsupported end



18 I added two small beads to the foot with a 3mm bead-forming tool



19 Drill a hole for the wire in the centre of the foot before parting it off



20 Part off the foot at a slight angle to give it a concave underside



21 Tap in the metal rod after adding a drop of superglue to hold it firm



22 Repeat the foot-turning process until you've exhausted the blank



The slimmer blank for the tops will benefit from tailstock support



Tap the top of the stand onto the metal rod and finish it with sealer



The completed stand is now ready to display its chosen hat



I then held one end of this in the chuck using a set of long-nosed jaws to help keep it steady. The tailstock centre was used to centre the wood before tightening the chuck jaws, **photo 16**. With the wood turning true, the tailstock was removed.

### Manual support

The free end of this piece of wood is quite a long way from the support of the chuck and to work on it, you need to support it with the fingers of the left hand, **photo 17**. I shaped the end with the rounded tip of a 25mm scraper, although I could have done it just as easily with a spindle gouge. Note how my fingers curl around the wood while my thumb is used to brace the tool against the pressure of my right hand (out of shot). I then added two small beads with a 3mm bead-forming tool, **photo 18**, using the same technique to support the workpiece and brace the tool.

### Don't spare the rod

The metal rod used here requires a 1.5mm hole, and I drilled this into the end to a depth of about 6mm or so, **photo 19**. The piece was then given a gentle sanding with 240 grit paper, before being sealed and waxed as before.

I parted off the first foot at a slight angle to ensure that the underside was concave and would sit properly on a flat surface, **photo 20**. The tiny central stub was trimmed with a craft knife and no attempt was made to sand or polish the underside. I then added a tiny drop of superglue to the hole and tapped the metal rod in with a pin hammer, **photo 21**.

You can now repeat this whole process several times with the piece of wood in the chuck, the only difference being that as it got shorter after each foot was cut off, it required less additional hand support. Get as many feet as possible from each piece, **photo 22**.

### Matching tops

The hatstand tops were made in much the same way from a piece of beech turned to about 15mm in diameter, but in this case I found it easier to drill the hole first and then advance the tailstock centre into it to support it during the turning, **photo 23**. This same technique could have been used for the hatstand bases too, but the downside is having to move the tailstock backwards and forwards as you work.

With the shaping done, the piece is parted off and glued onto the top of the metal rod, **photo 24**, before being finished off with a dab of sanding sealer, **photo 25**.



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Good to know: We share our customers' enthusiasm for their hobby – regularly posting pictures of their projects online on our company blog. Quite simply, it's something we enjoy!

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**Power Carving has in recent years rocketed in popularity. It is true that in these so-called austere times, a skill and hobby like this is a very cost effective skill or hobby!**

**More and more manufacturers are seizing this opportunity and are developing a whole range of new tools for the carving enthusiast.**

**Kaizen Bonsai which as its name suggests is actually a company specialising in Bonsai, but in recent years they have arguably become a market leader with their comprehensive range of carving tools.**

Having spent over twenty years using carving tools to create Bonsai, Graham Potter the owner of Kaizen Bonsai then spent two years researching and developing his own tools after experiences with other tools which were just ok, reasonable or even dangerous!

His idea was to make a tool that was versatile for working both large and small projects. The cut rate needed to be exceptional but with a very long cutting tip life and above all the tool needed to be safe.



**And so Terrier™ and Little Terrier™ were born!**

Their Terrier™ and Little Terrier™ ranges are receiving much acclaim the world over being CNC machined from 3032 high carbon stainless steel from a solid Billet with

tips which are replaceable. They are created from polished Tungsten carbide which allows a much faster cutting rate, a shortened loading time and an enhanced lifetime of the tools themselves (which are not to be confused with cheaper less effective imitations that are made in parts).

Behind the cutting edge of both the Terrier™ and Little Terrier™ is a groove which serves to present it at a positive rake to the project making it a faster and cleaner cut. Conveniently, once the cutting face becomes dull, you simply loosen the retaining screw and rotate the tip to a sharper new section. It is reckoned by the manufacturer that the tip should last for a continuous 20 hour drilling session, so these pieces really are at the cutting edge!

The 27g Terrier™ is the larger of the two Overall with a length of just 65mm and designed with a 1/4" (6.35mm) shaft primarily for the tools safety. This allows use in an array of die grinders and flexible shaft machines. It really does remove wood effortlessly and cleanly and its 25mm head removes wood efficiently at higher speeds. A chip limiter prevents the tool from 'digging in' to the work.



Unlike some larger tools the Terrier™ has a responsive cutting action that is very pressure sensitive. A light action by the user produces a fast delicate cut but with a little more pressure the tool bites harder without fear of it 'grabbing' or kicking back like some other tools.

For more confined areas the 15mm Little Terrier™ which weighs just 23g just seems to get in anywhere with much greater control and is as solid and robust as its brother and delivers an equally clean job. It's not difficult to see why this tenacious, robust piece of kit which works well at both high and low speeds gets its name!

**Both cutters work well at most speeds but the manufacturers recommend best results are achieved at between 1500 & 2000 rpm.**

Economically priced at just £44.95 inc VAT and p&p, the Little Terrier™ is a great little investment which should, when used correctly last a good few years and its big brother the Terrier™ at just £54.95 inc VAT and p&p represents equally good value.



**Replacement cutting tips and screws are available separately.**

All can be purchased from:  
**www.kaizenbonsai.com**  
or by telephoning them on:  
**0800 4580 672**



**Exceptional tools for exceptional woodworkers. See our web site for details. Fast worldwide delivery.**

**www.kaizenbonsai.com**

Digital angle rules that can calculate internal and external angles quickly and accurately are all the rage nowadays among the gadget-loving fraternity. But are they worth the money?

## Trend DAR 200 digital angle rule

Although this won't replace a sliding bevel for general work, it works well in conjunction with any tool that cuts at angles as part of its remit. Table saws and mitre saws in particular are machines that will benefit from it.

With a metric and imperial scale it doubles up as a ruler, opening out to 400mm in length once extended in a horizontal plane. Turning the centre boss locks the angle setting, whether for measuring or holding an angle. It's rather stiff to lock a setting and doesn't hold it very rigidly. This shouldn't matter if it's used for its primary purpose of checking or setting an angle, but for sliding bevel type work where you need a solidly locked blade, it may be too slack to do repeat marks without constantly checking to ensure it remains at the chosen angle.

### Handy for saws

Despite this quibble, the rule is in fact very useful. Anyone with a mitre saw would find it handy for checking an angle such as a stair pitch for spindles and then setting up the



**£19.20**

saw from the angle indicated by the rule.

Compound bevel cuts can be worked in the same way if you need to replicate an existing piece, taking the two angles with the rule and setting the saw to the angles indicated accordingly.

Likewise the table saw can benefit, with the rule being used to set the blade or mitre fence to a desired angle by pre-setting the rule and adjusting the saw to the setting.

### Mighty accurate

The rule operates to an accuracy of 0.1°, so it should be good enough for most tasks. As a further string to its bow, it could prove useful for anyone working inlays as there's no stock, only the thickness of the blade of the rule to register against. The veneer is butted up to one blade and the opposing blade is used as the cutting face at the angle required.

It's certainly useful and, at this price, is an investment that won't break the bank. **AK**



The tiny 3V lithium battery has a 200-hour life and is easy to replace



This button allows you to zero the setting with the blades at any angle



Compound angles can be checked and replicated by taking one angle...



...and then the other, and transferring them to the saw settings

### SPECIFICATION

<b>BLADE LENGTH</b>	200mm
<b>ANGLE RANGE</b>	0-360°
<b>SCALE MARKINGS</b>	1mm and 1/32in
<b>BATTERY</b>	3V lithium
<b>BATTERY LIFE</b>	200 hours

### VERDICT

This is a well-made tool that has plenty of applications, both in the workshop and out on site.

- PROS**
- Easy to set and adjust
  - Clear readout
  - Auto shutdown after 6 minutes

- CONS**
- Locking knob not very secure

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Trend
- 01923 249911
- [www.trend-uk.com](http://www.trend-uk.com)

Power planers usually use blades 82mm long. This Triton planer is powered by a huge 1500W motor and has blades that are 180mm long, so it can do a lot more than just plane door edges

## Triton TPL 180 power planer

Until now, portable planers have all used standard 82mm long blades, which can generally do an excellent job. So when this massive Triton machine appeared we were intrigued. Firstly, why would anyone want such a large machine? And secondly, how easy is it to use?

### Different design

The Triton is an impressive looking machine with a heavy alloy body and bright plastic fittings. At the front of the tool is the depth of cut control, with a maximum setting of 2mm. There is also a P position for retracting the cutterblock into the base, so it doesn't damage the workbench surface or get damaged itself when the tool is set down.

**£259**

The large horizontal front handle can be adjusted to suit the user. At the rear of the machine is the main handle with a power trigger and safety button. A machine of this size will produce a considerable amount of waste, and there's a dust outlet on the side for connecting it up to a workshop extractor.

### Cutter and fence

The cutterblock is fitted with three reversible blades which are held in position with five clamping screws. These blades are not re-sharpenable and so must be replaced as necessary. A spanner is provided for this.

A side fence is supplied which bolts onto the edge of the baseplate and can be angled for planing bevels. It can be fitted to either side of the machine.



The depth-of-cut knob offers 10 settings ranging from 0.5 to 2mm

The wide cast alloy sole plate is smooth and extremely well-finished





We set the planer to work on a large sawn board of sweet chestnut...



...which it cleaned up very well after a series of parallel passes

### Using the planer

For such a large machine, the Triton is surprisingly user-friendly. You might expect a raucous and violent tool, but it's actually a bit of a pussycat! The motor is smooth and quiet, and the baseplate is wide and supportive, with a well-finished surface. The weight of the machine is a bonus, as it sits firmly on the workpiece and simply needs to be guided along. We tried it on a large sawn board of sweet chestnut and it made a very good job of it. Of course, using a planer on a board wider than the tool itself can lead to problems if you're not careful. You can leave deep grooves, so you need to take shallow cuts and work carefully.

This is really a bit of a specialist tool. It would be ideal for preparing wide beams that are too large to go over a surface planer. It also would be useful for preparing floorboards, either reclaimed or made from sawn timber. There are no doubt many more possible applications for it, especially on site.

### Summing up

This is an impressive machine with considerable capabilities. It has a powerful motor, and its three-cutter block leaves an excellent finish. It is well-constructed and satisfying to use. While its appeal to the home user may be limited, professionals will welcome it with open arms. **AS**

### SPECIFICATION


<b>MOTOR</b>	1500W
<b>NO-LOAD SPEED</b>	15,000rpm
<b>CUTTER WIDTH</b>	180mm
<b>MAX DEPTH OF CUT</b>	2mm
<b>WEIGHT</b>	8.5kg
<b>ACCESSORIES</b>	spare blades, wrench, fence, dust connector


### VERDICT

This is a large and powerful machine which is surprisingly easy to use, and can produce an excellent finish.

- PROS**
- Powerful motor
  - Huge planing capacity
  - Blades reversible for extra life

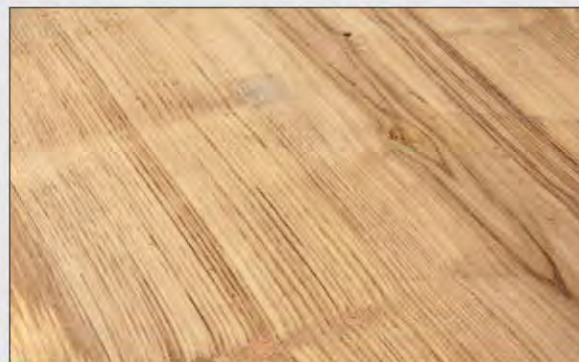
- CONS**
- The price

**VALUE FOR MONEY** 

**PERFORMANCE** 

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Triton
- 0844 5760266
- [www.tritontools.com](http://www.tritontools.com)



The planed sweet chestnut board was very smooth and ready for finishing



The fully adjustable front handle provides additional control and safety



The solid fence can be angled and fitted to either side of the body



The planer makes a lot of waste, so workshop extraction is essential

Trying new tools and techniques can be a challenge. Pullsaws are a case in point. With their flimsy blades, strange handles and odd teeth, they hardly look a match for the solid tenon saw. But they do work...

# Axcaliber FineLine Bahco PC 11-PS



**£14.40**



**£19.53**

The Japanese have always had an intimate relationship with timber, and have developed their own ways of using and working it. Many of their tools and techniques are unfamiliar to us, but one tool that has made the transition is the pullsaw. This type of saw has a thin blade and razor-sharp teeth. Unlike Western saws the teeth have no set: they don't extend beyond the thickness of the blade. This means that

they can make cuts flush with an adjacent surface without causing any damage, which is something that would not be possible with a standard Western-style saw blade.

wafer-thin kerf, perfect for delicate jointing and dovetail work. It must be used with care as it is a delicate tool and can be easily damaged by rough use. It has a comfortable rubber padded handle that's satisfyingly thick.

### The saws compared

The Axcaliber has a 0.6mm thick blade, which is reasonably stiff for a pullsaw. With 14 teeth per inch, it makes an excellent crosscut saw, producing a fine quality of cut combined with rapid cutting speed. The handle has a rubber insert, but is perhaps a little on the thin side. This is an easy saw to use once you've mastered the technique, and it produces very satisfying results.

The blade on the Bahco is only 0.3mm thick and so is very flexible. For that reason it has a plastic stiffening strip to provide added support for the blade. Its 18tpi pattern produces an extra fine quality of cut and a

### Summing up

It's easy to become a fan of pullsaws, and to prefer them to standard backsaws for their lightness and versatility. Though they are fragile and can't be resharpened, their hardened teeth hold their edge well and have a long service life. These two saws are both excellent examples.

Incidentally, three other Axcaliber FineLine models are available as well as this one; 300mm x 10tpi, 300mm x 14tpi and 240mm x 17tpi. The Bahco range also features the PC-12-PS saw, a 305mm x 13tpi model with a 0.6mm thick blade. **AS**

### SPECIFICATION

	AXCALIBER	BAHCO
<b>BLADE LENGTH</b>	270mm	270mm
<b>BLADE THICKNESS</b>	0.6mm	0.3mm
<b>TEETH</b>	14tpi	18tpi

### VERDICT

This is an excellent pair of saws. The Axcaliber will do the work of a fine-toothed tenon saw, and the Bahco makes an ideal dovetail saw.

- PROS**
- Clean cutting
  - Versatile
  - Thin kerf

- CONS**
- May take a little getting used to

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Axminster
- 03332 406406
- [www.axminster.co.uk](http://www.axminster.co.uk)
- SNAEurope
- 01709 731731
- [www.bahco.com](http://www.bahco.com)



The Axcaliber saw's diamond-ground teeth have three cutting edges



Its stiffish blade and 14 teeth per inch make it ideal for crosscutting



The Bahco blade has finer teeth and a wafer-thin kerf of only 0.3mm



This produces a very fine cut, ideal for any delicate joint-cutting work

*It's very rare these days for a new product idea to be introduced into a manufacturer's catalogue, but Scheppach have managed to do just that with this unusual new workshop extractor*

**£62.95**

# Scheppach HD2p extractor vac



The HD2p is so different from anything already available that it really can be called new. It's a small dust collector which can be connected directly to many power tools, and a blower enabling machines and equipment to be kept clean. It also has many other uses outside the workshop, such as inflating airbeds and paddling pools.

### A clever package

The dust collector and its sundry parts all fit into a self contained plastic box. In use, the hose locates into the right hand outer end of the box, within which the dust bag lives. This clips into place, allowing ready removal for emptying. The bag isn't large; this vac is intended for collecting dust rather than shavings. A filter is incorporated to improve performance.

Another clever but simple feature of this product is the on-off switch. This can be operated when the lid of the box is open or closed, because the design allows the switch to protrude through a hole in the lid.

### A clever accessory

The free end of the hose has an outer diameter of 40mm for easy connection to power tools, along with the three accessories included. These are a nozzle for cleaning, a nozzle for blowing, and a clever device for use when drilling into a wall. This creates sufficient suction to grip the wall surface, and the hole in the upper part of the device allows the wall to be drilled while the dust generated is immediately sucked away.

### From suck to blow

The hose can also be relocated to the opposite end by simply switching over the two caps in the body. It then converts from vacuum operation to blower mode, allowing dust to be blown away from, say, a machine when access with the suction nozzle is difficult.

### Using the extractor

While some power tools have a dust collection bag, many simply have a circular

dust port. We connected the end of the hose up to a couple of jigsaws and three circular saws, and the dust extraction proved to be very efficient in each case.

Even with a lightly textured wallpaper, the suction from the wall drilling attachment was sufficient to hold it in place quite firmly and to collect all the drill dust.

Switching from one mode of use to the other is quick and simple, with everything being self-contained in the box. Although the dust collection bag is small, it's quickly removed, emptied and replaced. **GW**



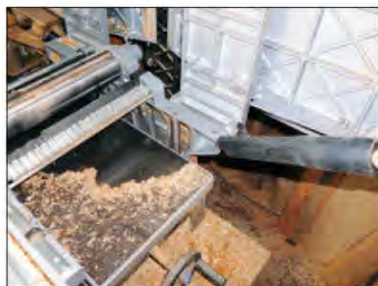
The lower part of the body contains the motor, the dust bag and a filter



The hose connects to the right-hand side of the body in extractor mode



The wall drilling attachment stays put and collects all the drill dust



In blower mode the vac quickly clears the dust... or inflates an airbed!

### SPECIFICATION

<b>MOTOR</b>	1200W
<b>AIRFLOW</b>	120cu m/hr
<b>CAPACITY</b>	5 litres
<b>HOSE</b>	2m x 40mm
<b>WEIGHT</b>	5.5kg

### VERDICT

A nifty new extractor-cum-vac that works extremely well.

- PROS**
- Self-contained package
  - Dual modes of operation
  - Clever wall drilling attachment

- CONS**
- The dust bag is fairly small

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- NMA Agencies
- 01484 400488
- [www.nmatools.co.uk](http://www.nmatools.co.uk)

*The hand fretsaw was historically an essential tool for the modelmaker, enabling intricate cuts to be made on a small scale. Now powered versions – miniature scrollsaws – are available to do the hard work*

## Proxxon DS230/E scrollsaw

This is a hobby-rated fretsaw/scrollsaw powered by a variable-speed motor which is totally enclosed in a reinforced polyamide cover. The saw is designed to cut softwood up to 40mm thick, plywood and hardwood up to 10mm thick and non-ferrous metals up to 2mm.

The table is constructed in precision ground aluminium, and an adjustable mitre fence slides into a slot on the right-hand side. A groove on the underside of the front edge of the table takes a parallel fence.

The arm is made of die-cast ribbed aluminium and is machined to take the head, which has a spring-loaded blade holding device and a tensioning knob.

The on/off switch and variable speed knob are positioned on the front of the casing, together with a calibrated scale for the fence.

### Blower and extractor

The arm also contains an adjustable plastic tube which is secured to a combined hold-down/blade support and blower nozzle. The air supply for the blower comes from a piston linked to the upper blade holding device, and

feeds through the pipe down the tube and out through the underside of the blade support block. There is a dust extraction outlet at the side of the machine which fits standard vacuums.

### Blade adjustment

The lower end of the blade is held in a blade holder under the table and is accessed by removing the right-hand panel, which holds a neat hex key for use with all the socket heads. The whole head can be set in one of three positions so that the minimum blade length can be selected to reduce flexing. Once the position has been set, the blade is snipped off to shorten it.

### Preparing the saw

This saw needs to be assembled when it arrives, but this is quite straightforward and is well explained in the instructions. It's a good idea to secure the machine to a baseboard which can

**£130**



The head has a spring-loaded blade holder and a large tensioning knob



You can access the lower blade holder by removing the right-hand panel



The head can be set in one of three positions to alter the blade length



The mitre fence works on small sections, but isn't very accurate

then be clamped to a table to give stability.

This is a rigid-arm saw; the upper end of the blade is held in a spring-loaded holder which moves up and down when the machine is running. The blade tension isn't constant as it is with parallel-arm saws, and you need to bear in mind that it's designed for light hobby work in relatively thin materials. However, the quality of engineering is really impressive and the design is good

### Using the saw

The blade hold-down doesn't obstruct the operator's view, and can be adjusted so it's close to the work. The blower system works very well, and when the saw is linked to a dust extractor very little wood dust escapes.

Despite its webbed construction, the arm isn't very rigid. If the depth of throat were reduced this could be improved; 300mm is probably over-generous for such a small machine. The variable speed is fine, but the slowest speed could be even slower. This machine doesn't have a tilting table, which might be seen as a disadvantage for some types of work.

Not many scrollsaws come with a fence because the thin blades invariably wander from one side to the other. This fence does work reasonably well, although some truing-up will be necessary after the cut. The mitre fence works on small sections, but again a little touch-up on a disc sander may be needed.

The idea of three positions for blade length is interesting, and the minimum blade length option is useful for cutting very thin plywood. All makes of blade seem to work well, and it's easy to change blades after a little practice.

### Summing up

When looking at value, you can argue that for £130 you can buy a standard parallel-arm scrollsaw. However, these are heavy and bulky machines. The biggest advantage of the Proxxon machine is undoubtedly its weight and size, which means it can be put away when not in use. It also performs extremely well. *IW*

## SPECIFICATION

<b>MOTOR</b>	85W
<b>TABLE SIZE</b>	160 x 160mm
<b>CUTTING SPEED</b>	150-2,500spm
<b>THROAT</b>	300mm
<b>MAX DEPTH OF CUT</b>	40mm
<b>WEIGHT</b>	3kg

## VERDICT

This is a well-designed machine that's ideal for a range of model-making tasks.

**PROS**

- German engineering
- Adjustable blade length
- Good blower and extraction

**CONS**

- Needs assembling
- No tilting table

**VALUE FOR MONEY** 

**PERFORMANCE** 

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Brimarc
- 03332 406967
- [www.brimarc.com](http://www.brimarc.com)



Internal cutting isn't a problem so long as you're prepared to be patient and work slowly



Once the position has been set, the blade is snipped off to shorten it



The blade hold-down doesn't obstruct your view of the workpiece



The guide fence works fairly well. The clearly calibrated scale aids positioning

*A router with two bases – one fixed and one plunging – sounds like the best of both worlds. Bosch first tried this with their GMF 1400 model some years ago. Now here comes another dual-base machine*

## Bosch GMF 1600 CE dual-base router

Compared with the old GMF 1400 model, Bosch has certainly come up trumps with this particular router. It's exceptionally well thought out, and covers pretty much every area of hand-held and inverted heavy-duty routing you will encounter, along with the usual Bosch attention to detail.

### Power switches

The biggest change is that both bases now have integral trigger-operated power switches with lock-on buttons, even though the body is still completely removable. This is certainly a more intuitive way of using a router, allowing control of both the power and the plunge (in plunge-base mode) without having to take your hand off one of the grips. To achieve this, both bases have integral contact points that link with the motor housing once it is fitted in place.

### Motor characteristics

The motor has an aluminium lower body that slides into each base, with a plastic top shell that houses the speed control dial. This has a range of speeds to cover the usual different materials and bit diameters. A chart within the manual indicates a 40mm optimum bit diameter, so bigger panel raisers may be outside its remit unless you work in smaller steps than you might take with a more powerful model.

It can certainly deliver the regular bench work of the ½in router. Using jigs for stair housings and worktop joints are a favoured area for such machines, as well as rebating the bottom of an external door for the weather bar.

Both bases use identical toggle-type clamps, so it's a quick

and smooth operation to switch between them. Bit swaps are standard fare via the usual collet lock button and single spanner, and the router comes with a ¼in and ½in collet and nut assembly as standard.

### A look at the bases

Both bases have basic height adjustment. The plunge base has the standard plunge lever to allow fast adjustment, and this is a self-tightening type; therefore you push against a spring so it locks itself once released – an excellent feature. The fixed base has a

**£420**



The motor slots into each base very quickly and is locked in place by toggles



Bit swaps are done with the aid of the usual spanner/spindle lock combination



You can fine-tune the cutting depth from above with this knob



The 1600W motor is man enough for most heavy-duty applications such as worktop routing

three-step adjustment, with notches in the motor housing locking into the base to give a rough position before fine adjustment to the desired projection.

The fine adjustment on both bases is done from above with a large knob, with micro adjustments to make precise settings. A hex recess in both adjusters can be used with the adjustment knob to gain more control and alter the settings more easily.

For table work the fixed base comes into its own, as it has a further option to adjust the height through the base. This allows any alterations to height to be made from above the table.

### The guide bush system

Alongside the fast base swap, Bosch has included the equally quick and useful guide bush system. This is a tool-free operation, with each bush locked in by a rotating collar on the base. This collar is independent of the bases so it can be fitted to either as needed. The bushes are unique to the Bosch system, and are really quick and of great benefit if you do a lot of template and jig work.

### More features

Each base has its own dust extraction kit, fitting directly to the base with small thumbscrews. These, along with the scratch bases themselves, are clear to help give good views to the working area, although static can still cause occasional dust build-ups.

The LED lights around the collet are an additional and very useful function, lighting up the base area once the trigger is engaged. Completing the kit is the fine adjusting fence, which was lacking in its predecessor.

### Summing up

This is an all-encompassing router that has power enough for heavier work and can easily be put into table mode in seconds while retaining the same ease of adjustment as the plunge base in hand-held mode.

It's certainly a winning combination, and while the wattage is rather low in comparison to many workhorse routers, take a pass or two more than usual on bigger work and you still have a router that does any job with ease. **AK**

## SPECIFICATION

<b>MOTOR</b>	1600W
<b>NO-LOAD SPEED</b>	10,000-25,000rpm
<b>COLLETS SUPPLIED</b>	¼ and ½in
<b>PLUNGE DEPTH</b>	76mm
<b>WEIGHT</b>	fixed base 4.3kg plunge base 5.8kg

## VERDICT

Bosch has certainly come up trumps with this router. It's a great machine to use.

**PROS**

- Interchangeable bases
- Fast swap bushes
- Excellent plunge lock
- LED worklights

**CONS**

- May lose out to others because of lower powered motor

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Bosch
- 01895 838743
- [www.boschpowertools.co.uk](http://www.boschpowertools.co.uk)



The fine adjusting fence that's supplied with this model is great for rebating work



The guide bush system allows bushes to be swapped without tools



Separate dust adaptors and guards are supplied for each base



Although the router is quite large, it's very easy to use freehand

Instead of wrapping abrasive round a wood block to do your hand sanding, how about using a dedicated tool instead? These Japanese sanding plates have shaped metal bodies and replaceable abrasive bases

# Brimarc NT sanding plates

**£13.10**



These rather sleek metallic grey objects are a set of sanding plates, made by the NT Cutter Co in Japan and being marketed by Brimarc. They're available in three sizes – two rectangles and a V-shaped detail sander.

They're all fitted with specially embossed steel abrasive sheets which screw onto their bases. On the largest model the abrasive sheet is curved up at the edges, making it ideal to use on larger surfaces. On the other two, the abrasive is flat across the base and finishes flush with the edge, making them perfect for use up against adjacent vertical surfaces.

### Abrasive choices

The abrasive sheets are available in three grades: coarse, medium and fine. The plates are supplied fitted with the medium grade as standard. The sheets are durable and are easily fitted to their holders with one or two countersunk crosshead screws. If

the abrasive becomes clogged with sawdust, it only needs a quick rub with a wire brush to clean it and restore it to normal. A small shoe brush, used for suede shoes, seems to do the job perfectly.

### Using the sanding plates

At first these feel quite strange to use – rather more like a file than abrasive paper. However, they do work rather well, cutting in all directions as you move them. The medium grade is the most useful, though both the coarse and fine grits also do their job.

All the sanders are well designed and comfortable to use. The two smaller models with their flat bases and flush abrasive are especially useful for intricate jobs such as smoothing joints, adjusting tenons and generally cleaning up your work.

### Summing up

These are very effective sanders, and save lots of messing about with tiny bits of abrasive paper and scraps of wood. After some use, the abrasive seems as sharp as ever, so in the long run they may well save you money. **AS**

### THE RANGE

<b>DETAIL SANDER</b>	80 x 30mm	£13.10
<b>SANDER</b>	150 x 24mm	£16.00
<b>SANDER</b>	150 x 50mm	£21.16
Replacement abrasives		from £5.80

### VERDICT

These take a little getting used to, but are actually very effective.

- PROS**
- Comfortable to use
  - Long-lasting abrasive

- CONS**
- Perhaps a little pricey

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Brimarc
- 03332 406967
- [www.brimarc.com](http://www.brimarc.com)



Simply undo the countersunk screws to release and replace the plate



The largest sanding plate has the abrasive sheet curved up at the edges



The specially embossed steel abrasive surface cuts in all directions



If the surface becomes clogged, a wire brush soon restores it

The best professional cordless tools are expensive, but if you don't use yours everyday you could probably manage with something a little more modest and cost-effective. This Draper drill is a perfect example

# Draper CD180VA 18V cordless drill

A cordless drill must be high on anyone's tool list. It's so useful both for drilling holes and driving screws. However, choosing one can be difficult as there is such a wide range of both sizes and prices. Whilst the largest and most powerful can do any job, they tend to be heavy and tiring to use and, of course, expensive. The smallest, on the other hand, can be wonderfully convenient and easy to use, but are often limited in their capabilities. This Draper drill is a good compromise. It's a comfortable tool to use, and not too heavy. It also has a powerful motor, so can cope with most of the tasks that a home user would tackle.

### Design features

This is a neatly designed tool with a bright blue body and soft rubber inserts around the grip. It has a single-speed motor with a variable speed trigger, a 15-position torque ring and a 10mm chuck. On the base of the handle is a small LED worklight, and behind the handle is a clip housing a double-ended screwdriver bit. The battery, being a NiCd type, is on the large side and plugs directly into the base of the handle.

The drill is supplied with only one battery. Charging is slow, taking between 3 and 5 hours, and the charger is not automatic, so you must remember to disconnect it or risk overcharging. A second battery might be a wise investment.

### Using the drill

While this is realistically rated as a DIY tool, it's still a good performer. Only having one speed means that it drills fairly slowly, but this is perfectly adequate, and the lower gearing means that large bits are less of a challenge. It's a good screwdriver too, with a sensitive and effective torque range ensuring consistent screw depths. The Draper sits comfortably in the hand, is well balanced and is generally a very pleasant tool to use.

All in all, it does everything you could expect of it and for an extremely attractive price. It's just a pity that it doesn't charge a little faster. **AS**



£40

### SPECIFICATION

<b>BATTERY</b>	18V 1.3Ah NiCd
<b>CHUCK</b>	10mm keyless
<b>NO-LOAD SPEED</b>	0-550rpm
<b>MAX DRILLING CAPACITY</b>	
	wood 25mm
	steel 10mm
<b>WEIGHT</b>	2kg
<b>ACCESSORIES</b>	battery, charger, screwdriver bit

### VERDICT

You wouldn't use this drill every day on the building site, but it's just the job for occasional use at home.

**PROS**

- Good drilling and screwdriving
- Comfortable to hold and use
- Bargain price

**CONS**

- Dated NiCd batteries
- Slow charging

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Draper
- 02380 494333
- [www.draper.co.uk](http://www.draper.co.uk)



The drill has a 10mm keyless chuck and a 15-position torque ring



The large, old-fashioned NiCd battery plugs into the base of the handle



A bright and useful LED worklight is handily positioned on the front of the base

The drill packs plenty of punch, whether you're drilling holes or driving screws



A holdfast is a traditional hand-forged steel bar with a crooked top that is used to hold work on the bench without the need for any adjustable cramping mechanism. It sits in a hole in the benchtop

# Tomes bench holdfasts

**£45**  
a pair



While a bench holdfast won't always be the best option for some tasks where the surface or edges need good all-round access, the speed at which these can be set, along with the fast tensioning resulting from a few adroit taps, makes them a great accessory on any bench.

Getting hold of a traditional hand-forged holdfast has been difficult in recent times

unless you knew a local blacksmith, but after a lot of interest buzzing around recently on the UK Workshop

forum ([www.ukworkshop.co.uk](http://www.ukworkshop.co.uk)), one brave member decided to spark up the forge, get the iron back in the fire and make a few sets for members. Such was their success that he now makes them commercially.

### Using a holdfast

You need a 19mm diameter hole in your benchtop for the post to drop through, and

enough room below the bench to accommodate it, so clear the clutter from underneath. Although the maker recommends a bench thickness of between 50 and 100mm, the holdfast appears to work well in benchtops as thin as 40mm.

To set the holdfast you need to position it over the workpiece and deliver a sharp blow on the crook. This beds it down on the work and makes the angled shaft bind in the hole. A few deft taps on the crook will increase the pressure if needed. To release it, give the neck or the back of the post another blow.

The splayed foot helps to spread the load on the work and prevent marring the surface with pressure marks, but it's always a shrewd move to use a scrap of wood as packing to ensure that the surface remains blemish-free.

You aren't just restricted to holding work on the benchtop. If you have an apron or a chunky leg frame, you can also use holdfasts to secure work vertically for edge planing, and to apply downward cramping pressure to a caul when gluing up veneers or laminating components. **AK**

### SPECIFICATION

<b>BENCH THICKNESS</b>	50 to 100mm
<b>HOLE DIAMETER</b>	19mm

### VERDICT

A holdfast does exactly what it says, and these do the job brilliantly.

**PROS** ■ Very fast to set and release

**CONS** ■ Fine control needed to tweak the pressure

**VALUE FOR MONEY** ■■■■■  
**PERFORMANCE** ■■■■■

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Tomes Holdfasts
- [r.tomes@virgin.net](mailto:r.tomes@virgin.net)
- [www.theenglishwoodworker.com](http://www.theenglishwoodworker.com)



The holdfast is set in place by a sharp blow delivered to the top of the crook



Once set it holds the work firmly, ideal especially for paring work



A sharp blow to the back of the holdfast releases the tension



Another great use is applying pressure to a caul during glue-ups

*Sanding is a tedious job, and anything that makes it less of a chore is to be welcomed. This cordless sander from Bosch has a large delta-shaped pad and is powered by a Li-ion battery. It's light, convenient and efficient*

# Bosch PSM 10.8Li cordless sander

The Bosch PSM 10.8Li is a neat and attractive little tool. It has a comfortably shaped plastic body with soft rubber inserts along the top and around the grip. There is a sliding power switch on the top and an indicator light in front of it. The battery plugs securely into the rear of the grip.

### Sanding in sections

The sanding pad is a large delta-shaped design that is split into two sections. The front part is the standard size for a detail sander and so can use standard abrasive sheets. The rear part needs its own specific abrasive. Both parts of the pad are fixed to the sanding plate with Velcro, so the front one can be removed and revolved when the tip gets worn, as it inevitably will.

The abrasive sheets are all perforated, as is the sanding pad. On the rear of the tool is a small plug which can be removed to allow the dust extraction adapter to be fitted. When attached to a workshop vacuum, sanding is virtually dust-free.

### Useful indicators

The two-colour LED light mounted in front of the switch serves more than one function. It

shows the condition of the battery; green for go, red for charging. It also indicates the load level on the tool. Lithium ion batteries have to be treated with a certain amount of care to avoid damage. Overloading them is not a good idea, so there's a mechanism to protect against that. Under heavy load the LED will flash green, but the machine will keep going. If the load becomes excessive the LED will flash red and the power will cut out, as it will if the battery becomes too hot. So this sander should be safe in even the most careless hands.

### Using the sander

This is a surprisingly effective tool. It's light, easy to handle and comfortable to hold. It runs very smoothly, with an almost complete absence of vibration. It's ideal for working on vertical surfaces, or above your head. Its delta shape means that it can easily fit into corners, and it's powerful enough to produce a good finish. However, the two-part abrasive is a bit of a gimmick. **AS**

**£75**  
(web price)



### SPECIFICATION

<b>BATTERY</b>	10.8V 1.5Ah Li-ion
<b>NO-LOAD SPEED</b>	22,000rpm
<b>ORBIT DIAMETER</b>	1.2mm
<b>WEIGHT</b>	700g
<b>ACCESSORIES</b>	storage case, battery, fast charger, extraction adapter, abrasive sheets

### VERDICT

This is a useful and attractive tool with some very sophisticated features.

- PROS**
- Light
  - Efficient
  - Good protection mechanisms

- CONS**
- Only one battery supplied
  - A bit pricey

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Bosch
- 01895 838743
- [www.boschpowertools.co.uk](http://www.boschpowertools.co.uk)



The slim-line battery clips neatly into the end of the hand grip



The sanding pad requires two separate sizes of abrasive sheet



The dust extraction adapter is inserted just below the hand grip



The sander is light and easy to manoeuvre, and virtually dust-free in use

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# Seeing eye to eye...

BY MARK CASS

She first came by the workshop one sunny day walking her dog (small, white Scots terrier, pink bow). "Do you do kitchens?" she asked.

As it happens, I have been known to do kitchens, and used to make little else a few years back, working mainly for upmarket designers and swanky interior companies. These days I'm on my own but always up for a challenge and, let's face it, work is work.

## Listen with mother

"I've always wanted a bespoke kitchen," she went on. "We'll need it soon. It's for my mother's house but we're organising everything. I live just down the road, so perhaps you could drop by?"

Later that week I did indeed 'drop by' at her well-appointed mansion flat, said hello again, reacquainted myself with yon doggie, and met the boyfriend as well. After being shown some photos in a top-of-the-range kitchen maker's lavish brochure, I looked at a few of their own pencil sketches as they both endeavoured to outline the job.

There was a bit of disagreement between them, but nothing too bad. The job didn't seem too problematic and as I prepared to go, we all agreed that a weekend site meeting at the house would be the next sensible thing to do.

## Site for sore eyes

The place was out of town and in a state of some disrepair – walls back to brick, floors up, no ceilings, that sort of thing. However, I've seen it all before, and proceeded as normal with a spot of measuring up and danger avoidance. The boyfriend was working there with a pal, and looked to be doing a fair job of the building work. It soon became clear that he was fixing the place up in his spare time, so I instinctively set the time schedule back a month or three.

## The best-laid plans...

Over the next couple of weeks I drew up some plans along the lines requested. Although I always try to give the customer exactly what they want, I felt that this was a case where considerable ergonomic improvements could be easily made with a slight change of floor plan, and I presented my case as such at our next get-together.



Mildly surprised by client inflexibility, there was then a close-to-heated exchange between the partners on trivial kitchen details. I'm not a big fan of the inter-spousal public argument, so made my excuses and left, but not before arranging a date for the next round.

## Champagne tastes

A spot of redesigning and pricing later, we all convened at my workshop for a further meeting. It had been a few weeks since the last one, and I sensed that something had changed in the interim. Drawings were shown, dimensions discussed... all the usual stuff that you might expect from such a meeting. Although I'd given them a competitive ball-park figure earlier on, it was slowly becoming apparent that she wanted something very similar indeed to the brochure kitchen, but at the sort of price they charge at Wickes and places like that.

## A job too far

Despite this raging parsimony and the effect it would have on yours truly, she relished telling me that she was considering having the same handles as those in the lavish brochure. As these were handmade and solid silver – and approximately two dozen in number – I started to feel that this might not be the job for me.

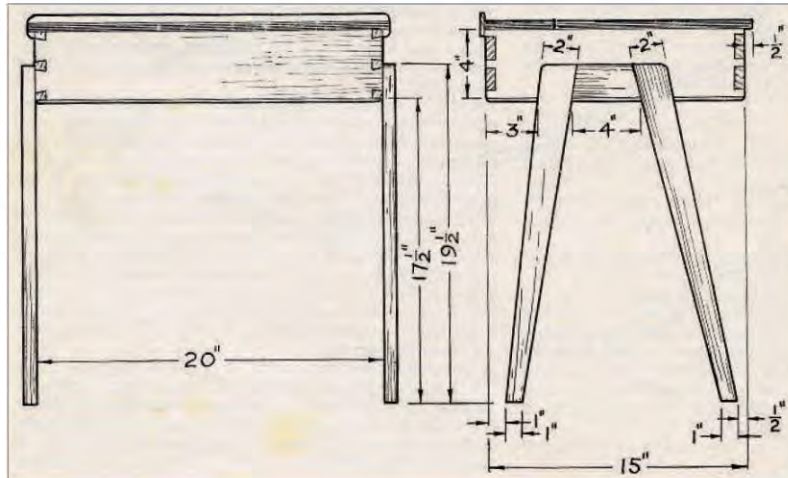
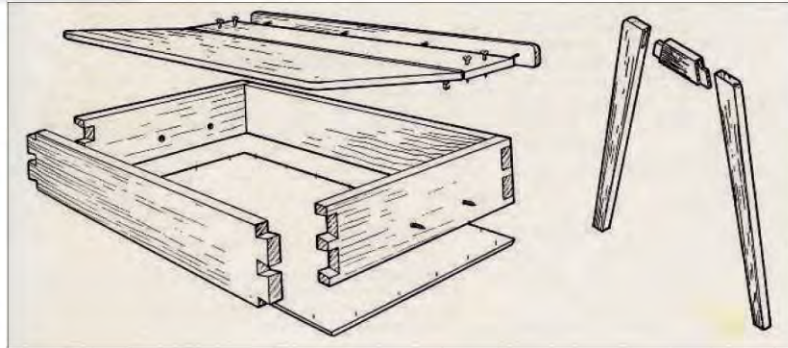
It was at this point that the simmering relationship atmosphere threatened to boil over, and both girlfriend and boyfriend raised their voices to each other to a level I found extremely uncomfortable.

The dog came to the rescue here, and headed for the door with her owner letting herself be dragged along and eventually off the premises, followed by his nibs. I bade my usual pleasant farewells to their departing selves, and spent the next few days praying they wouldn't come back. They didn't.

Handicraft Teachers' Page

CHILD'S DESK

designed by D. A. KAY



This is a neat little project dating from June 1965, and one which will be both enjoyable to make and very useful to have around

# A lesson from teacher

With the current trend for 'vintage' furniture, and a resurgence of interest in designs of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, this small desk could be instantly trendy and will be welcomed into the family home of any young couple with small children. This is the sort of thing a lot of us may have made at school, but it's a far cry from some of the things youngsters bring home from practical lessons these days.

**Joint practice**

This is quite a straightforward job to make. As well as being a useful and good-looking piece of furniture, it provides an excellent opportunity for some basic dovetailing and

mortise-and-tenon work, and I'd recommend it to anyone looking for something a bit different to make.

The handicraft teacher here suggests the use of beech for the carcass, ash for the legs and plywood for the top and bottom. You could probably get away with softwood for the carcass, but it would be best to employ a hardwood for the legs.

My suggested improvement would be the use of domed-head machine screws (with washers and nuts inside) for attaching the legs to the carcass sides. With the vigorous sort of use that kids dish out, the facility to be able to tighten things up at a later date is a very useful one.

**A gentle slope**

A further enhancement would be to slope the writing surface down from the hinge joint by 5 to 10°, and to rout a pencil groove in the fixed part of the top. The next thing you know you'll be making a small chair to match (if you're anything like me), but perhaps this is something you'll be lucky enough to find at a local junk shop or market. Happy hunting!

*Mark*

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