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June 2015

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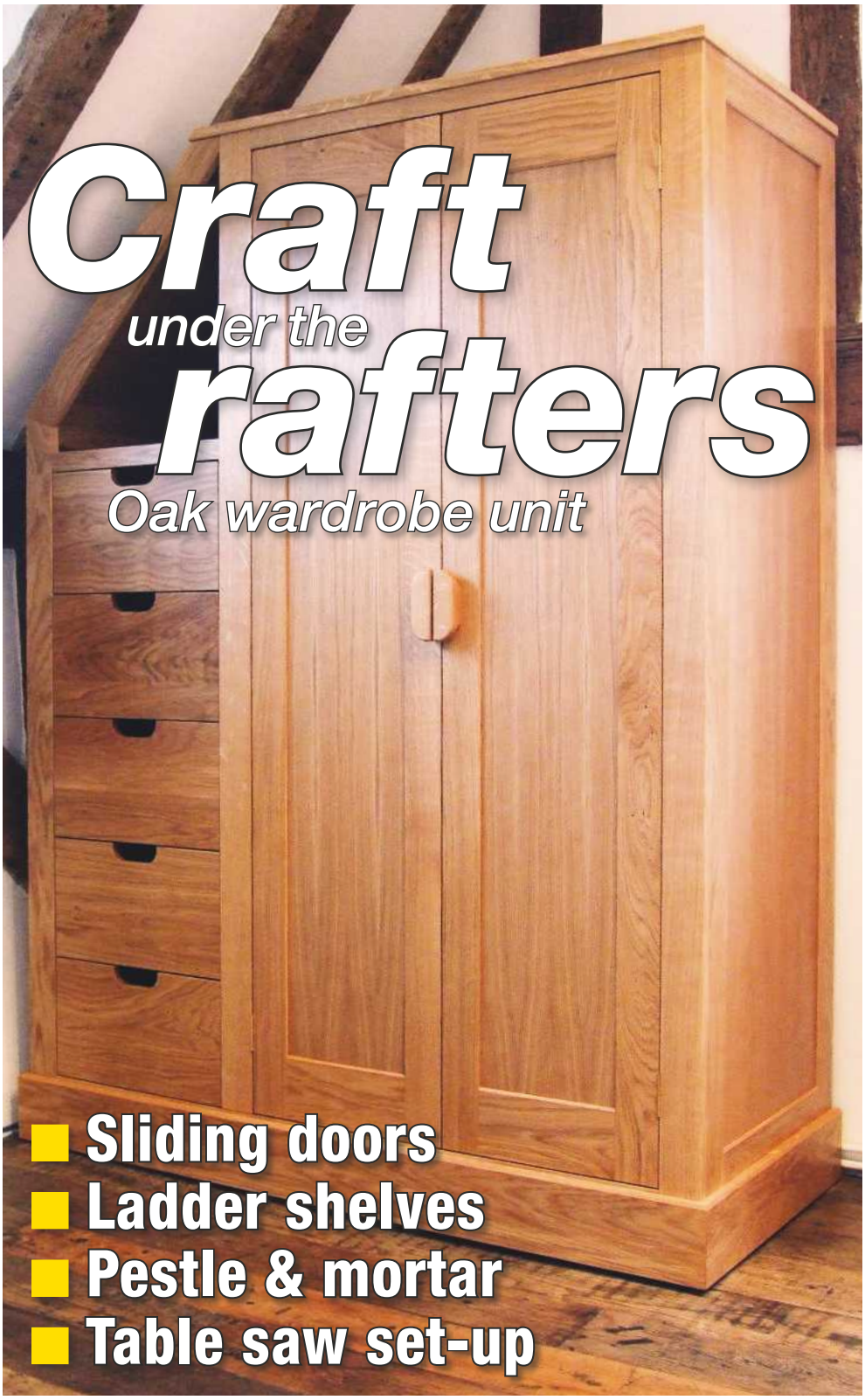

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Welcome

Listen

Don't just stand there, sharpen something! This is a phrase I find myself using most weeks in my Level 1 Carpentry class to anyone who is just mooning around or generally giving the impression of being a work-shy idler. Now I'm all for tea and lunch breaks, but when you're in the workshop I think you should be doing something; dreamtime can be fitted in to just about any other moment in the day. And let's face it, we all know that time spent in concept and design is time well spent; it's a critical component in the creative process after all, and far too often skimped or omitted entirely in the eagerness of the new woodworker to make a start. I've lost count of the number of times I've asked students - when canvassed for my opinion on an intended project – where's your drawing? Invariably there isn't one, not even a back of envelope sketch, and all I can do is watch them acquire unusable timber and struggle towards an unsatisfactory finish, usually via a downward spiral of diminishing aspirations.

Learn

I guess we all have to find out for ourselves – the hard way – just which mistakes can't be repeated, and which will be the best way to go. Speaking to a colleague yesterday, I learned of college students who have been known to refuse the advice of time-served joiners and the like in favour of a shaky YouTube video. All that can be done in this case is to let them get on with it and to stand by for intervention when things don't work out exactly as planned. Often the only advice that can be proffered in these situations is to learn from your mistakes and to start again. Making use of the workshop bin is the last part of a tough lesson, but I think a necessary – and sadly inevitable – one.

Do

Just in case anyone thinks I may not practise what I preach, I'm often to be found at my workshop's movable sharpening station when a lull in the proceedings presents itself, and it's time very well spent as I'm sure you'll all agree. I'm familiar with the temptation of just letting things slide, and trying to kid oneself that the bench plane is actually much sharper than it is, but there's no hiding place when you need a sharp edge. Much better to have one ready and waiting than to be ready and wanting. And then, when the materials arrive, it's out with the drawings and cutting list and full speed ahead.

Write

By the way, I'm still very keen to hear from readers with an interesting story to share, so if you have a tale to tell (and ideally a photo or two to accompany it) I'd love to hear about it. Who knows, we may even be able to resurrect the classic 'Chips from the Chisel' column, or possibly a modern day equivalent. As ever, I welcome your thoughts and comments.

mark

You can contact Mark on mark.cass@mytimemedia.com

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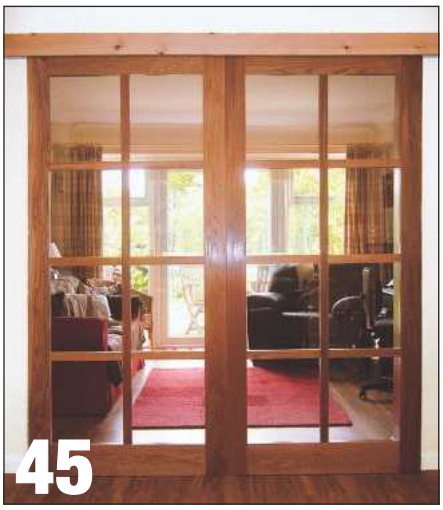

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TURNING

ON TEST

The Woodworker & Woodturner

June 2015

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In brief...

SWEDISH CHILL

Kebony is the name given to timber that has been chemically treated to enhance its durability and hardness (see *The Woodworker* January 2014 for more details). Now it's been used for the first time in an ecclesiastical façade for a new chapel which opened recently in Mölndal, Sweden. European churches have tended to use traditional building materials for permanence and durability, but the use of Kebony's Scots pine in this project allows the chapel a fusion of contemporary style with traditional durability.

The non-denominational chapel sits within a forest, from where peaks of grey exposed rock are visible through the trees. The building's geometry is unusual, as its rounded corners and asymmetrical shape meant the choice of material was a challenge. The Kebony cladding, formed to give a soft curved edge to the structure, will allow the church to blend with its surroundings as the grey patina of the wood develops over time.

Christer Malmström, the project architect, said: "We looked hard for a wood that could be ready for use from day one without requiring treatment or ongoing maintenance. We decided on Kebony as it aptly fulfilled all our requirements for shape, looks and durability".

www.kebony.com

A FASTER SANDER

3M has integrated its innovative PSG (precision shaped grain) technology into a brand new sanding disc which can last up to six times longer than conventional 80-grit aluminium oxide discs. In tests the new Cubitron II sanding disc has also been shown to remove twice as much material as conventional abrasives. The new discs are an addition to 3M's Hookit range, and can be used on a variety of surfaces, including wood, paint, metal and composites.

PSG is an innovative technology that's designed to cut faster and last longer than traditional abrasives. As the triangular-shaped grain abrades, it continually fractures to form new sharp points that slice through the substrate and wear evenly. Conventional grains are irregularly shaped, which means they plough through the surface and cause a build-up of heat, resulting in a slower cutting rate. This can also directly affect product durability, potentially resulting in shorter disc life.

For more information about the range of Hookit Discs by 3M, call 0870 608 0090 or visit

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60 YEARS YOUNG

The brand new Trend Routing Technology 2015 Routing and Woodworking Catalogue is now available. It's packed with products such as the company's comprehensive router cutter ranges, power tools and tables, routing jigs and accessories, saw blades, sharpening and cramping products and the Trend Snappy drill system.

Trend's Head of Marketing, Luke Hulley, adds: "2015 is a very special year for Trend as we celebrate our 60th year in the business. I'm always pleased to hear how important the Trend catalogue is to our loyal customers, and this year's edition is extra special as we're launching some very exciting new products."

To get your hands on the brand new catalogue, visit your local Trend Routing Centre or download/request a copy online. If you don't have internet access, simply give Trend a call on 01923 249911 to request your copy.

www.trend-uk.com

NON-STICK GLUE

In the adhesives market, consumers talk about 'Araldite' in the same way they use the terms 'biro' and 'hoover'. The current Araldite range has been increased over the years to include one-part adhesives, superglues and fillers, but it's still the classic two-part resin and hardener formulation that defines the brand.

The company has now redesigned its two-part syringe pack to make it easier than ever to dispense and store the adhesive without getting into a sticky mess. The syringe simply slides out of its blister pack ready for use, and the snap-off factory closure is replaced after use with a resealable cap contained within the syringe handle. This cap is cleverly designed so it can be fitted to the nozzles only one way round, so avoiding any contamination between the nozzles. The pack also includes a plastic spatula for mixing and applying the adhesive.

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The drill has a balanced low-noise DC motor with a maximum speed of 21,500rpm which can be continuously reduced to 6,500rpm through full-wave electronics. This tool offers nearly the same level of torque in the lower speed range.

The tool has a ground ball-bearing spindle and comes with high-quality steel collets so that even the smallest shafts are accurately clamped. The spindle can be locked at the push of a button for tool exchange, and there is a 20mm collar for use in Micromot drill stands and horizontal stands. The price is £72.96. For more information, please call 0333 240 6967 or visit **www.brimarc.com**.

WOOD SHOW 2015

Wood Show 2015 will be held on the weekend of June 20th and 21st at the Weald and Downland Museum in Singleton near Chichester in West Sussex (PO18 0EU).

Visitors to the show will be able to enjoy a range of woodcraft demonstrations, a working wood yard, a traditional charcoal burn, teams of heavy horses carrying out forestry tasks, plus many other exhibitors and displays. From viewing the Museum's own timber-framed buildings to crafted bowls, furniture, tools, toys and other wood products, there will be plenty to see, do and buy.

"The Wood Show will be a wonderful event for all of the family and will make a perfect day out – particularly for Father's Day on the Sunday," says Museum Director Richard Pailthorpe. "It offers a fantastic opportunity to discover the journey that wood takes, the wonderful woodland in which it grows, the skills, tools and crafts used to work with wood and the end products which we have in our homes and gardens". **www.wealddown.co.uk**

WONDER PLUG

A former kitchen fitter, who came up with an idea which aims to revolutionise the way kitchens are installed, has received the prestigious FIRA Innovation award for his invention.

Manufactured in the UK, Space-Plug is a new type of fixing designed and patented by Cliff Petit, and is an alternative to traditional methods of fixing kitchen base units to a wall.

Consisting of a small lightweight plastic spacer with a threaded telescopic body, Space-Plug allows a fixing to be made through the solid back of a kitchen unit. This replaces the need for wall-mounting brackets

and enables a good fit even when working with uneven walls.

Cliff Petit explains: "The Space-Plug is easily adjustable to meet the exact size of the service cavity at the back of the base unit, giving support to the cross-brace anywhere you choose to locate it and then enabling you to fix straight through it."

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Trend's Luke Hulley adds: "The Trend Diamond Cross range is a fantastic piece of kit. Diamond Cross technology provides the perfect balance between diamond and recess, maximizing abrasion rates and clearance of debris".

To find out more about the Trend Diamond Cross range, please visit Trend's website, YouTube channel or Facebook group for videos of the Diamond Cross range in action.

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Panasonic

Panasonic has just introduced the eagerly anticipated EY37A2 Bluetooth portable FM/AM radio/speaker system. To achieve a clear, dynamic sound, the EY37A2 features front-located high-quality speakers for the best audio performance in a compact body. This, combined with over 80 years of experience in audio technology development, allows optimum tuning giving perfect sound from low to high notes. You can connect your smartphone or other device to it via USB or Bluetooth.

Working outside? That's no problem thanks to the tough IP64-rated body. Panasonic have combined their experience of building tough power tools and audio equipment to achieve a distinctive, robust body design that can be used safely outdoors.

The EY37A2 can be powered either by a 14.4V or 18V battery, or via a mains adaptor. It features five sound settings – flat, heavy, soft, clear and vocal – to allow you to choose the best tone for the type of music being played. You can even select your own preferred sound levels with bass and treble settings ranging from -5 to +3

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MANUFACTURER: Festool
D&M GUIDE PRICE: £249.95

Festool has just launched the first mobile dust extractor in Systainer format. Measuring 396mm long and 270mm wide, the CLEANTEC CTL SYS is small and compact, and with the hose holder removed, it's just 162mm high.

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Thanks to the shoulder strap supplied with it, and weighing just 6.9kg, the CTL SYS is easy to carry, leaving your hands free for any other tools or materials you may need. When combined with the optional SYS-Cart, it gets a set of wheels so it can follow you around.

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BY ALAN HOLTHAM

Lean-to storage

Some projects are simple to design and to build. Others pose challenges that require a modicum of lateral thinking, and this commission is a perfect example of that. Solving the problems at the design stage led to a neat solution that delivered good looks and practical performance without breaching the budget

1

This is the first ladder unit I made. The boxed-in pipes prevent a traditional cabinet from fitting back against the wall

This project started life when I was asked to make a small storage unit to fit into one corner of a small pantry. The job seemed straightforward enough, until I discovered that there was a socket directly in line with the side panel of the unit. It wasn't going to be practical to move the socket, so the cupboard had to accommodate it. However, it wasn't going to be a neat job if I cut a hole in the unit for the plug and socket, especially as the hole would need to be big enough for the plug to be removed.

This ruled out a conventional box-sided unit; what I needed was a design with open sides and back. I had made a ladder-style unit some months earlier for a customer who wanted some shelving to fit over some boxed-in pipework, **photo 1**, and this seemed to offer the best solution.

Design elements

The pantry is small, and to make the unit less obtrusive, it was to have a deep shelf at the bottom and the rest of the shelves reducing in depth towards the top. I designed the unit similarly to a staircase or ladder so the back and part of the sides could remain open.

It has sloping sides supporting open shelves which are made more practical (and stronger) by fitting an upstand to the sides and back of each shelf. The sides and shelves are made from 18mm moisture-resistant mdf, and the upstands from similar 12mm material.

Awkward angles

Construction of a unit like this is relatively easy, but working out the required angles can be tricky. Rather than attempting to calculate the sizes and angles, I drew the unit out using TurboCad on my computer and took my measurements directly from the drawings.

For the two uprights I took measurements from the drawings to work out the offsets. This is a lot easier, and more accurate, than trying to mark out a 4.1° cutting angle!

Direct marking

From the drawing I made a cutting list for all the parts. There are computer programmes such as Cutlist (at www.cutlistplus.com) which will work out the most effective layout to get the most from sheet material, but I usually just draw them out on the board.

With the board marked out, remembering to leave at least 3-4mm between adjacent pieces for the saw kerf, I cut out the various parts using a circular saw and guide rail. It's important that all the shelves have an identical width and are perfectly square; I actually cut all the parts slightly oversize and then trimmed them on the table saw to make sure.

Cutting corners

Preparing the two 150mm wide uprights was more awkward, and involved quite a few steps. First I cut them square to length at 1914mm. For the bottom angle I marked 11mm up from one corner and marked off

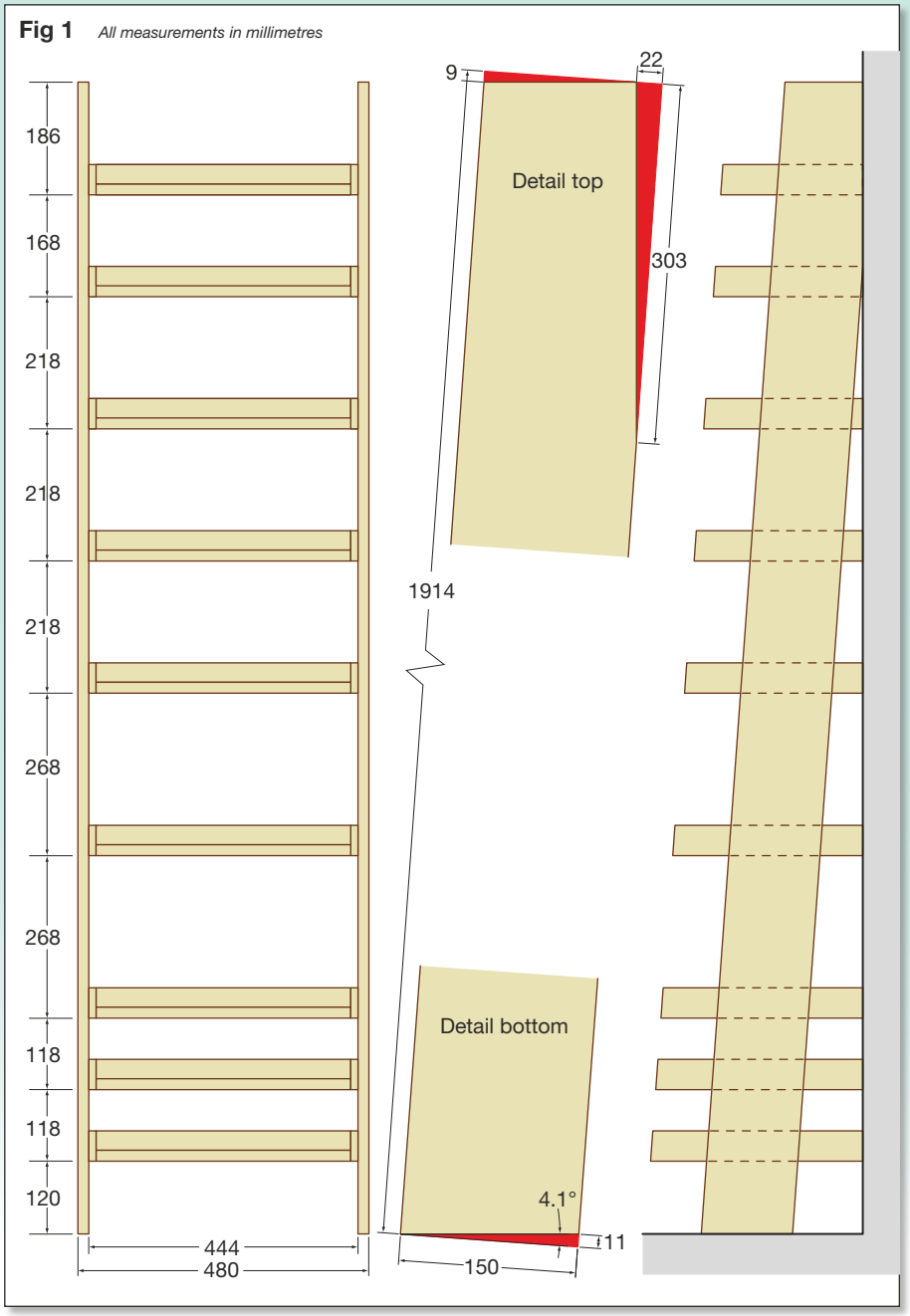

Peach

The uprights have a 4.1° angle at the bottom. It is easier to mark 11mm up from the corner

It's the same at the back edge; use measurements taken directly from an accurate drawing

I cut the tops and bottoms with a mitre saw; this ensures that all the cut angles are the same

Fig 1 *All measurements in millimetres*



the angled cutting line, **photo 2**. For the top angle, I marked 9mm down from the top corner, 22mm in from the opposite corner and joined these together to give the horizontal cutting line. I made a mark 303mm down the length and joined that to the mark at 22mm in from the edge to give me my vertical cutting line, **photo 3**. I then set the mitre saw to the correct angle and cut along the marked lines, **photo 4**; the longer cuts I had to do by hand.

Preparing the shelves

Next I cut a number of 50mm wide strips of 12mm mdf to form the upstands; as these are short lengths I managed to cut them from some mdf offcuts I had in stock.

All the edges on the unit will be rounded over. This looks better than a square edge, and a rounded edge will also take paint very much better. I set a 4.75mm radius roundover cutter in the table-mounted router and rounded over both sides of one long edge on each shelf, **photo 5**.

I cut nine lengths of the upstand to the width of the shelf, **photo 6**, to form the rear upstands, and then rounded over both sides of one long edge of each piece, **photo 7**.

Assembling the shelves

I applied PVA adhesive to the long square edge of each shelf, **photo 8**, and pinned the rear upstand in place, **photo 9**. I used an 18g brad nailer here for speed.

The side upstands vary in size and need to be cut in pairs. I wanted their front edges to be rounded over slightly, so I fitted a 12.7mm radius roundover cutter in the table-mounted router and used a cross-cut fence to round them over, **photo 10**.

I then refitted the smaller round-over cutter and rounded over the two edges adjacent to the rounded edge. I stopped the cutter short at both ends because a square edge is needed where the upstand abuts the shelf and rear upstand, **photo 11**. These are then glued and pinned in place. Avoid placing pins where they will coincide

with the positions of the biscuits that will fix the shelves to the sides later.

Coping with hiccups

I managed to round over too close to the corners in a couple of places, **photo 12**; these will need filling later. I also managed to split the mdf despite using the gun, **photo 13**; mdf can split so easily. To fix it, I put a generous amount of PVA along the crack and worked it well into the joint before cramping it overnight, **photo 14**.

Cleaning up

The shelves now needed a good clean-up before they were fitted into the frame. I used the small roundover cutter in a table-mounted router to round over the remaining accessible edges, and then it was out with the random orbit sander and an hour of dusty sanding to produce a stack of finished shelves, **photo 15**. The effort was well worth it, however; the final finish is so important with any mdf work.

Marking out the uprights

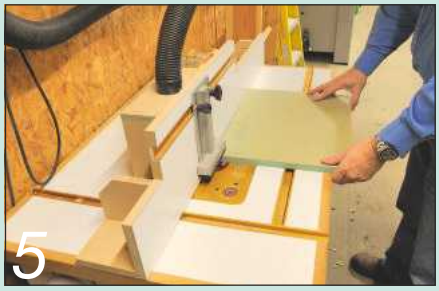
The sides now needed rounding over and cleaning up before I could mark out the biscuit locations and cut the slots. The biscuits are fitted along the centre line of the sides, following the angle of the bottom edge; I used a sliding bevel to mark the angle accurately, **photo 16**.

Measuring along an angled board can be difficult; you need to decide if you are going to measure along the 'virtual' vertical line or along the 'actual' edge. Marking along the edge is easier, but the measurements are slightly longer than the vertical distance between the shelves.

To mark a vertical line down the sides, I used a combination square set to half the width, **photo 17**, and marked a pencil line. I couldn't use a marking gauge because it would have left a scored line down the board.

Positioning the biscuits

Cutting the biscuit slots in the sides meant aligning the biscuit jointer with the centre lines, **photo 18**, and checking that it didn't move as it was plunged. I took accurate measurements off the diagram to work out exactly where the centre of each biscuit was for each shelf, and marked the centre line from the back edge of each shelf. I set the biscuit jointer to cut the joint 9mm from the edge and cut the slots. The centre line needs to project onto the top of the upstand, **photo 19**, so that the shelf can be accurately aligned with the sides, as biscuits do allow quite a bit of longitudinal movement.



I rounded over both the front edges of the shelves on the router table

I used the table saw to cut the rear upstands to identical lengths

To round over the edges I used scrap and a push stick to keep my fingers well away from the cutter

I applied glue to the edge of the mdf, let it soak in, then applied more to the now sealed edge

I pinned the upstands in place. They could be screwed, but there will be a lot of filling to do

I could have sanded the edges over, but using a round-over cutter gave a consistent profile

The stopped roundovers; unfortunately I went a little to far with a few and…

…you can see there's a gap in the joint at the front which will need filling later

MDF GRADES

Even though it should never be exposed to any moisture, there's a good reason why I've used moisture-resistant mdf for the unit. It's generally much denser and easier to finish than standard mdf, especially when compared to mdf from some of the large DIY stores, which can be frankly awful.

If you're in any in doubt, look at the edges of the boards. They should have a crisp edge, and the core should be dense and hard. Always reject any boards which have a soft yet rough edge; it will be almost impossible to machine a clean edge on such boards.

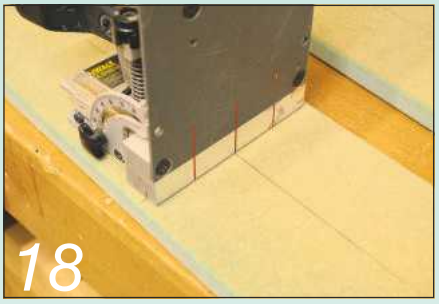
It's all too easy to split the mdf when you're power-nailing

I worked PVA into the open crack and cramped it overnight

I rounded over all the remaining edges and sanded them smooth

I used a sliding bevel to mark the horizontals on the sides…

…and a combination square to mark the centre line

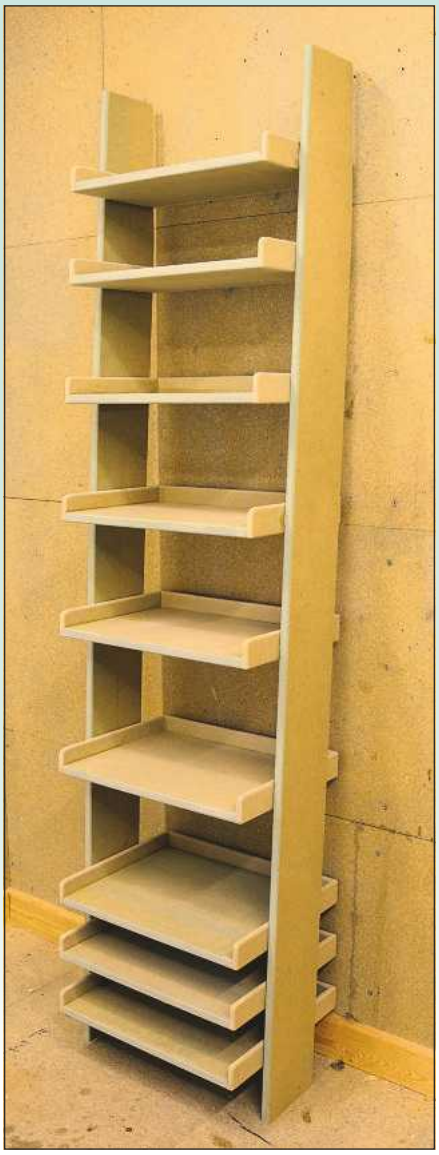


The biscuit jointer has marks to show the biscuit centre; these are aligned with the pencil lines

The centre line of the biscuit needs to align with the centre line on the uprights

I applied plenty of glue to the ladder sides to glue the upstands for extra strength

I cramped the completed assembly and left it overnight to allow the glue to cure



Assembling the ladder

I applied plenty of glue to the biscuits and the slots, and also enough glue to fix the upstands to the sides for extra strength, **photo 20**. This all needed careful alignment and rigorous cramping while the glue cured, **photo 21**. Once the glue was dry, I gave the unit a final sanding and dusting, ready for finishing.

Painting mdf

I previously used a small foam roller to paint mdf, but I've now invested in a spray gun, which does make painting easier, especially on a relatively awkward-to-paint item like this. I gave it a coat of International's mdf primer, then a coat of water-based primer, and finished it with two coats of quick-drying eggshell paint.

Although the unit is stable when it's set to lean against the wall, especially when the shelves are loaded, I fitted a pair of metal brackets at the top and screwed it to the pantry wall for extra security.

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BY MARK CASS

Down in the woods...

Situated in the shelter of the South Downs close to Goodwood racecourse, English Woodlands Timber is for me a newly-discovered gem. I feel I really ought to have been aware of it long before now!

Following a chance and pleasant meeting with their web editor Sarah Farmer at nearby West Dean College, I invited myself to EWT to see at first hand just how a small timber yard can pull itself up by its bootstraps and embrace today's world of modern commerce.

Finding my way

Relying, as many of us do these days, on the vagaries of an out-of-date satnav system (the type that seems to have only rutted tracks and barely passable country lanes programmed into it as a default setting), I always experience a huge sense of relief when the final destination shows up on the screen. Fortunately the last leg to EWT from the road nearby is as easy as could be; apart from the sheds and stacks of timber visibly apparent, the road concerned is clearly signed with the company's instantly recognisable logo – a stylised quartered log section.

Early history

Still on its original site, the yard was first established by Canadian engineering troops in 1942 and was soon a production centre for Lee Enfield rifle stocks, made using mainly native beech. After the war, business at Cocking Sawmills quickly took off with a large and increasing demand for post-war reconstruction timber, helped by the increasing availability of machinery and mechanised transport. After a period of local mergers and acquisitions, English Woodlands Timber was born in 1986.

Warm reception

On entering the cosy reception and shop area (woodburner at full blast), I was struck by just how welcoming the place seemed to be, a feeling which was instantly reinforced by a fulsome greeting from Julie Kelly who frankly didn't know me from Adam.

I do like a business which demonstrates its confidence in its own product, and I was immediately treated to a display of furniture

Philip Matthews operates the straight-line edger, essentially a huge saw with integrated power feed

Offcuts await a fiery fate, but it's for a noble and sustainable cause

'The Rack' is a very popular feature; form an orderly queue, please!

Stock manager Peter Hall's shed; slightly bigger than most of ours

Native and foreign species sit neatly side by side in Peter's shed

Yardman Wayne Racey selects a cheerful-looking board of English oak for a customer

and fittings formed from just about every home-grown timber you could think of. All the workforce I met were wearing what amounted to the company badge: a cheerful smile. Director Ian McNally laughingly assured me it was an entirely voluntary choice.

Wood on line

Following a behind-the-scenes tour of the offices and administrative centre, Ian showed me their website on a large screen on the front counter. A lot more than just a shop window, the site allows the customer to sort through various virtual racks of timber, to select a few boards and then to inspect them close up (courtesy of hi-res digital photography and the 'zoom-in' tool on a web browser screen) before purchasing there and then for collection or delivery soon afterwards.

I have to say it was very impressive, and it's an ongoing job for the team to continue the extension of this facility throughout the entire yard and its healthy stock.

Oak in demand

As we strolled round the yard, a reassuringly ordered place, Ian pointed out an area of sawn structural oak timbers primarily used by local builders and landscapers. I was slightly surprised to learn that it was all French oak, imported weekly from the continent to supply a keen demand here.

It was all seasoned for three years – an absolute minimum, I'd have thought, considering that much of it was in the heavy beam category. When it comes to air-drying timber, it's an accepted rule of thumb that most timber requires one summer per inch of thickness to become fully seasoned, and exceptionally thick oak is notoriously difficult to get fully dry.

Takeaway timber

The last decade or two has seen a decline in the number of fully self-sufficient timber yards, and EWT have found it increasingly cost-effective to send their logs to a specialist sawmill in Northampton. The required conversion takes place there and the sawn planks – still in correct order – are returned to Cocking for air-drying in the yard, or seasoning in their own kilns.

Whatever their destination, the seasoned boards are then 'sticked' ie neatly stacked with sticks between each board providing an essential air gap. These stacks are either left to their own devices in the yard or brought into one of the sheds, depending on requirements.

This particularly large log is booked in for the next trip to the Northampton sawmill

Fresh from t'mill, these sawn boards await sticking and seasoning

A prize pair of Cedar of Lebanon boules; their aromatic scent was extraordinarily strong

Large French oak sawn constructional timbers are very popular

Yard manager Graham Oliver prepares another customer order

Tom Compton poses with Alfie the Wheaten terrier, a somewhat reluctant canine model

Under cover

The storage sheds house as much timber as possible, and contain a good selection of bought-in species as well as local indigenous stuff. Bearing in mind that I was visiting *English* Woodland Timbers, the sight of imported timbers such as American walnut, Croatian oak and German beech (to name but a few), all neatly stacked and ready for sale, came as a mild surprise to me. However, it makes very good sense to keep the species that most customers want to buy. There's definitely a strong case for maximum variety to please all tastes.

Speaking to Peter Hall, the stock manager now in his 38th year at EWT, it was clear that there's a smart turnover of the most popular timbers, thanks to both commercial and private customers. Peter showed me 'The Rack', a large section in his shed favoured by the keen amateur. This is dedicated to storing a huge selection of timbers in all shapes and sizes, and offers a mouth-watering choice of all manner of species, and at sensible prices too.

Machine time

As well as providing a wide range of woods – all backed up with a huge wealth of useful technical knowledge – EWT undertake machining too. Executed in-house, it's mostly of a dimensional nature plus simple mouldings and profiles for domestic usage. I saw some lovely tongued-and-grooved oak flooring while I was there, and I would imagine that the six-head in-line moulder could cope with most requests.

All the offcuts go into one of two industrial woodburning stoves which heat water for the 7,500 litre accumulator tanks. These distribute heat throughout the shed complex, and ensure that the various buildings are kept at something approaching a constant humidity through the changing seasons.

Woodland watch

Although the primary function of the business is providing a wealth of timber for local businesses and craftspeople, EWT also look after 10,000 acres of assorted woodland in the south-east of England. Working under the auspices of the Forestry Commission, the company manages both small and large woods, providing welcome support for woodland owners, and offers a natural market for any trees adjudged to be ripe for removal.

I met managing director Tom Compton soon after he'd parked his car by the office building and plugged it into a nearby charging socket. "We've got the solar panels to thank for that," he told me as he pointed them out on a large roof nearby. I soon learnt that EWT are striving to increase sustainabilty all the time, and, judging by what I had already seen, it looks as though they're making a decent job of it.

Tom has been in the timber business all his life, and was first bitten by the woodlands bug when he helped out at a similar yard during school holidays. He still has the passion, and his days are full with a mixture of woodland management, selection of the best trees he can find, and developing long-term commercial relationships with customers big and small.

Happy days

To a person, everyone I met at EWT was a happy soul – customers included! – and there was a palpable feeling of community there. It certainly felt like a family business, and Ian told me that this was further enhanced by two husband-and-wife teams of employees currently on the books.

If there was a prize for the most cheerful employee, then Graham Oliver – the yard manager for 12 years – would surely be a candidate. A natural countryman, Graham enjoys everything about the job, not to mention the opportunity it provides to be out and about in the beauty of nature in this lovely corner of West Sussex. Giving him a close run for his money would be Julie Kelly on reception, who effortlessly manages to put everyone who walks through the front door completely at their ease. Oh, and let's not forget a biscuit for Alfie, the Wheaten terrier and Tom's right-hand hound. Billed on the company website as Director of Meeting & Greeting, he's the final part of a happy 'family' firm.

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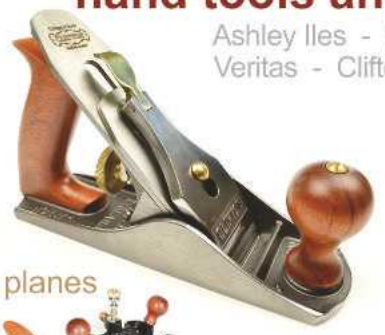

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BY DUNCAN ROSE

Eavesdropping!

I recently received a commission for a free-standing wardrobe in oak for a historic farmhouse. The location presented some real challenges, and solving these dictated how the unit was designed, delivered and built

Access was via a particularly narrow spiral staircase, very much as you would find in an old Scottish castle. And to make life more difficult, the bedroom had an uneven floor, randomly sloping walls and a section of sloping ceiling.

The design emphasis was for a wardrobe with a balanced appearance that made good use of the space. After lots of measurements and head scratching, I used masking tape to mark out the best overall dimensions on the wall. Then I used CAD software to experiment with the layout until my client was happy with its appearance.

Design features

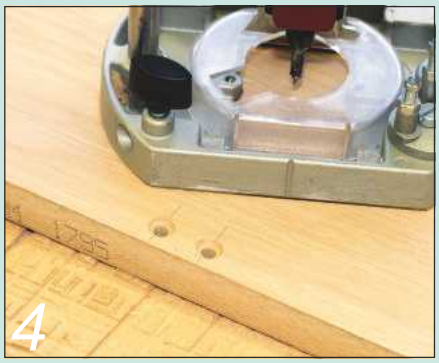
The doors and drawers divide the wardrobe into thirds, and the drawer section makes efficient use of the space beneath the sloping ceiling. The pull-out drawers slide quietly using hidden Blum Movento runners (catalogue no 760H5000B). These enable fine adjustment of the drawer positions in three dimensions – perfect for aligning the five drawer fronts. A separate base unit provides a level platform for the main carcass and helps reduce the lengths of the vertical panels.

The challenging access required the wardrobe to be assembled on site, so I built

Attach the metal plates to the bearer with screws and insert the feet into them

Cut a mitre along the left-hand edge of the top for jointing the angled roof panel

Mark the position of the divider panel on the base and top panels and rout the housings



Bore holes in the top and base for the screws that will pull the housing and rebate joints tight

Form decorative chamfers along the inside of the carcass rails on the router table

Assemble the four carcass panels and cramp up their frames, checking for square

Cut rebates on both ends of the right-hand side panel and the lower end of the left-hand one

Cut the shelf housings 7mm deep so they are flush with the carcass panel

it in the workshop using panels that could be dismantled easily for transport and reassembly. Rebates and housing joints are used to positively locate the panels and are pulled tight with screws.

A solid foundation

The base unit consists of a plywood top with softwood bearers positioned at loadbearing points. Eight adjustable feet underneath the bearers provide 25mm of height adjustment. There's no front bearer, to allow access to all the feet when the unit is in position.

I started work by cutting the top and bearers to size and then screwed them together. The end bearers were located flush to the sides of the plywood section, as later this would assist with attaching the plinth. Then I positioned the steel plates for the feet and drilled clearance holes so the feet could be fully retracted. I attached the plates with screws and inserted the feet, **photo 1**.

Building up the carcass

Next, I cut the carcass base and top panels from 19mm oak veneered mdf. The dimensions allowed for the thickness of the face frame, and the rebates in the carcass sides and back.

I cut a mitre along the left-hand edge of the top for jointing the angled roof panel, using my rail saw tilted at half the overall joint angle, **photo 2**. I then marked the position of the divider panel on the base and top panels, and routed the pair of housings, 20mm wide and 5mm deep. I cut these using my Trend Varijig clamp guide and hand-held router, **photo 3**.

To ease access, the wardrobe back was made using three smaller panels, requiring a jointing strip where two of the panels meet inside the main section of the wardrobe. I marked the position of the strip on the base and top panels, and then drilled clearance holes with countersinks to attach it later. I also bored holes in the top and base for the screws that will pull the housing and rebate joints tight, **photo 4**.

Making the carcass sides

The carcass side and divider panels were made using solid oak frames and glued 6mm oak veneered mdf panels. I jointed the frames using floating tenons, cutting the

mortises with a proprietary hand-held machine. Otherwise I would have used dowels or conventional mortise and tenon joints. I made the roof panel a little oversize so it could be trimmed later for an exact fit.

Next, I grooved the inside of the stiles and rails to accept the veneered panels. I cut these 5mm deep using a router table and a 6.35mm slot cutter. I then routed decorative chamfers along the inside of the rails, **photo 5**.

With this done, I cut the veneered panel to fit the frame grooves, and lightly sanded the panel and groove edges to ease insertion at glue-up. I then applied glue, assembled the four panels and cramped up their frames, checking they were flat and square. After removing any squeezed-out glue, I left them to dry, **photo 6**.

Forming the joints

Next, I cut rebates along both ends of the right-hand side panel and the lower end of the left-hand side panel. I marked out the joints using an offcut of 19mm veneered oak before routing them, 16mm deep, with several light passes, **photo 7**.

This was a convenient time to mark out and cut the shelf housings in the divider and left-hand side panel. Again, I cut these using the clamp guide and router. I cut the housings 7mm deep so they were flush with the carcass panel, **photo 8**. Finally, I cut a pair of mitres to form the joint between the left-hand side and roof panel.

The face-frame muntins

As well as being decorative, the face-frame muntins considerably stiffen the carcass panels. I prepared and attached the muntins to the carcass divider and sides. I used floating tenons to maintain alignment while the glue dried, **photo 9**. I only dry-fitted the left-hand side and roof muntins, leaving them until the roof was fully fitted.

While at the workbench, I routed rebates for the back panels along the rear edge of the sides and the roof panel. I cut the rebates 8mm wide and 16mm deep using the hand-held router fitted with a guide fence, **photo 10**.

Assembling the carcass panels

I started the carcass assembly with the base, divider and sides, and then the top. To assist the assembly I cramped plywood webs to hold the joints square, and then drilled pilot

Prepare and attach the muntins to the carcass divider, cramping them securely

Rout rebates for the back panels along the rear edge of the sides and the roof panel

To assist the carcass assembly, I cramped plywood webs to hold the joints square

Fit the shelf and add a pair of support battens, screwed on underneath the shelf

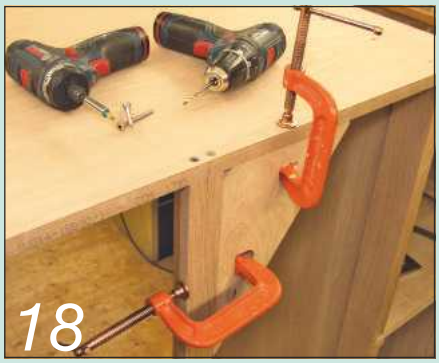
Make and attach a widening strip to the back edge of the divider for jointing the back panels

Attach the roof to the carcass using screws and a pair of reinforcing strips

Fit the remaining face-frame pieces to the carcass and complete the left-hand side

Follow this stage by adding the shelf, top and base pieces to the carcass

Fit the wardrobe hanging rail using side extensions screwed to the carcass frames



Prepare and attach the back jointing strip to the base and top. Plywood webs ensure squareness

Tack the backs in position, then drill pilot holes to stop the fixing screws snapping in the hard oak

At this stage I generally hang the doors with a single screw in each leaf

The door catches feature two pairs of magnets inserted into the stop block and door stiles

The two-piece door handles consist of a main front piece and a smaller inner spacer

holes and pulled the joints tight using 5 x 50mm stainless steel screws, **photo 11**.

Next, I measured and cut the shelf to fit the pre-cut housings using 19mm oak-veneered mdf. I then prepared a pair of support battens and screwed these underneath the shelf to hold it in position, **photo 12**.

I then made and attached a widening strip to the back edge of the divider. This provided sufficient width for a pair of back panels to be jointed there using screws, **photo 13**.

Adding the sloping panel

Next, I checked the assembly for squareness and offered up the roof panel to the carcass so I could mark the roof length and then cut its final mitre. I attached the roof using screws and a pair of reinforcing strips, then covered the visible screw heads with oak plugs, **photo 14**. I shaped the reinforcing strips to match the joint angle using two pieces of mitred oak that were glued and pocket-screwed together.

I then fitted the remaining face-frame pieces to the carcass and completed the left-hand side and roof pieces, **photo 15**, followed by the shelf, top and base pieces, **photo 16**.

Fitting the hanging rail

Now I could fit the wardrobe hanging rail using a pair of side extensions screwed to the solid carcass frames. I made the extensions from oak, routing a rebate so each fits flush to the carcass frame and panel, with curved ends that follow the shape of the tube flanges, **photo 17**.

Attaching the back

I prepared and attached the back jointing strip to the base and top, **photo 18**. I then measured and cut the backs to fit the carcass rebates and attached them. First I tacked the backs in position, **photo 19**, checking the assembly for squareness, before drilling pilot holes to prevent the remaining fixing screws snapping in the hard oak.

Making the doors

I constructed the doors with the same frame-and-panel method used for the carcass. As these doors were relatively long, I made sure their frames were free of twist before glue-up.

I hung the doors using brass butt hinges and screws. I cut the leaf recesses using a

home-made cramp-on jig and a hand-held router fitted with a straight cutter and guide bush. At this stage I generally hang the doors with a single screw in each leaf, **photo 20**, adding the remaining screws after any adjustments necessary during installation on site. I then trimmed the doors to give a consistent gap to the face frame.

Next, I made and attached a wooden stop block to the top face frame. I then made the door catches, using two pairs of rare-earth magnets inserted into the stop block and door stiles. I cut the magnet slots using the hand-held router fitted with a 4.8mm straight cutter and a home-made jig, **photo 21**. These catches give the doors a gentle soft closing action.

Handle matters

The handles were a two-piece construction, with a main front piece and a smaller inner spacer. The front was 20mm thick, 100mm long and 30mm wide, with a 30mm radius at the outer corners. I drew out their shapes, then rough-cut them out and sanded the cut edges until smooth. I then rounded over the edges on the front pieces, **photo 22**, and glued the spacers to the fronts.

With the doors hung, I positioned the handles and screwed them to the doors, adding some glue for extra strength. I counter-bored the holes to recess the screw heads and fitted oak plugs, **photo 23**, trimmed flush when the glue dried.

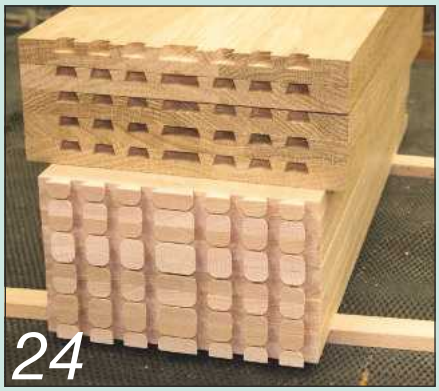
Making the drawers

I started by making up the beech and oak panels for the drawer boxes. I marked out and cut the joints, with lap dovetails at the front and through dovetails at the back, ensuring that the tails were positioned where the drawer base locates. I cut all the joints using a dovetail jig with adjustable fingers that allow the pin and tail spacing to be varied, **photo 24**.

Next, I cut grooves along the drawer front and sides to house the base, **photo 25**. I cut the slots 5mm deep using the router table, adjusting the cutter height for the fronts and sides.

Now it was time to cut out the hand-pulls on the drawer fronts. To ensure they were exactly the same shape, I made and cramped a home-made template to each front, and then cut out the pulls using a

Counterbore the holes to recess the handle screw heads and fit oak plugs in the holes



I cut all the joints for the drawer box components using a dovetail jig with adjustable fingers

Rout grooves along the drawer fronts and sides to house the base panels

Cramp a home-made template to each drawer front, and use a hand-held router to cut out the pulls

Soften the top edges of the drawer sides and backs with a 6mm roundover cutter

Assemble the drawer boxes. Low-tack tape along the joints aids clean-up of squeezed-out glue

Drill stopped holes in the drawer backs to take the runner locating pins

Fit the runner locking clips underneath the front of each drawer base

To set the correct runner spacing, mount the runners on spacers made from plywood

Locate the runners at the correct height and level, and screw them to the spacers

The top of the wardrobe was finished with a single panel of 18mm mdf, lipped with oak

The plinth front was attached using plastic clips screwed to the plinth and the bearers

hand-held router fitted with a guide bush and straight cutter, **photo 26**. I then softened the top edges of the sides and backs with a 6mm roundover cutter in the router table, **photo 27**.

Assembling the drawers

I gave the panels a light sanding and glued up the drawer boxes, cramping them and checking for squareness. I applied pieces of low-tack tape along the inside of the joint edges for easier clean up of squeezed-out glue, **photo 28**.

Next, I cut the bases to size and slid them into the drawer boxes, securing them with screws into the drawer back.

Finally, I drilled stopped holes in the drawer backs for the runner locating pins, **photo 29**, and fitted the runner locking clips underneath the front of the drawer base, **photo 30**.

Fitting the runners

Now I was able to attach the runners to the wardrobe carcass. To set the correct runner spacing to match the drawer width, I mounted the runners on spacers made from plywood, **photo 31**.

I located the runners at the correct height for each drawer and screwed them to the spacers, **photo 32**. I then clipped the drawers onto the runners and used the fine adjusters to align the drawer fronts with even clearance gaps.

Finishing touches

The top of the wardrobe was finished with a small moulding. I made this as a single panel from 18mm mdf and lipped the edges with oak, dimensioned to overhang the carcass front and sides by 6mm. I also cut a mitre along the left-hand edge to match the roof angle, and attached the cornice in place with screws, **photo 33**.

Next, I prepared the plinth sides and front, and attached the sides to the bearers using screws from inside the base. I then fitted the plinth front using plastic KeKu clips screwed to the plinth and the bearers, **photo 34**.

Finally, the wardrobe was ready for a finish. I dismantled all the panels and applied several coats of hardwax oil, using wet and dry paper between coats, finishing with a coat of liquid wax.

It was now time to dismantle the wardrobe, load up the van and head for the farmhouse…

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Precisa 4.0 P-1	Professional	Inc 1.4m STC + TLE (ditto)	3.5 / 5.2	87 mm x 800 mm	£1775.00	£2130.00
Precisa 4.0 P-2	Professional	Inc 1.4m STC + TWE + TLE (ditto)	3.5 / 5.2	87 mm x 800 mm	£1980.00	£2376.00
Precisa 6.0 P-1	Professional	Inc 2m STC + TLE (ditto)	4.0 / 6.5	110 mm x 1400 mm	£2416.67	£2900.00
Precisa 6.0 P-2	Professional	Inc 2m STC + TWE + TLE (ditto)	4.0 / 6.5	110 mm x 1400 mm	£2590.00	£3108.00
Precisa 6.0 VR P-1	Professional	Inc 2m STC + TWE + TLE + scrorer (ditto)	4.0 / 6.5 + HP scorer	110 mm x 1400 mm	£2890.00	£3468.00

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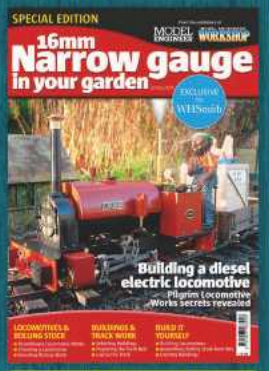

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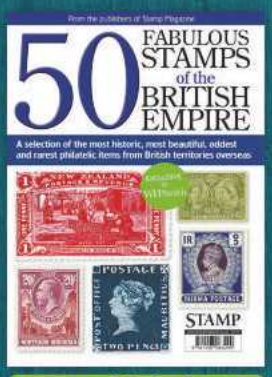

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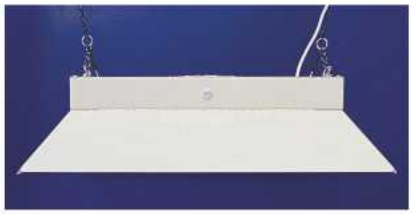

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The education of a craftsman

BY MARK CASS

***Why We Make Things and Why It Matters*, by Peter Korn**

Like many a craftsperson or artist, I often just feel the need or desire to make a particular thing; sometimes there's simply no other reason behind it. True, necessity often has a hand in things, but I'm sure most of us primarily make things mostly for the pleasure of it. In his enterprising book, years in the writing and formed from a lifetime of making, Peter Korn has tried to answer the basic questions of why we do what we do, and why it should be taken seriously.

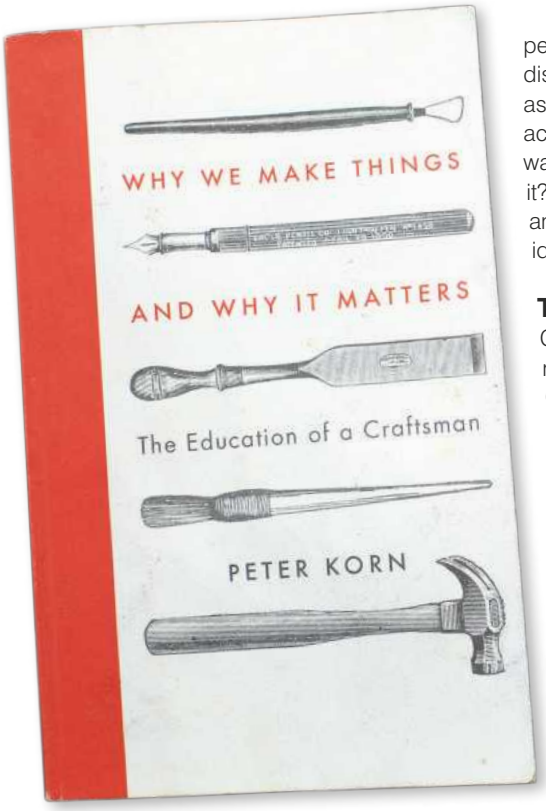
The search for an idea

Not far into the book, it put me in mind of the peerless 1970s classic Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert Pirsig. They both combine a simple narrative with a developing philosophical discussion which becomes a search for an idea as the book progresses. But whereas Zen is a tale of a man and his teenage son on a lengthy road trip, Peter's book is a frank depiction of his developing life as first a carpenter, then as a furniture maker as he strove to carve out a living for himself.

Peter all but severed his family ties after college and set out into the world in a search for 'real life'. Coming from an academic background with little experience of manual toil, he stumbled into a carpentry job in Nantucket, and was soon immersed in a world of tools and 2 x 4s. As he settled in this new and sometimes alien world, he realised he should learn not just how to fix up houses but how to live his life in a way that would benefit others as well as himself.

A romantic dream

Unconsciously inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement at the turn of the 20th century, Peter carried an impression of the real craftsman as a skilled tradesman



'secure in the knowledge of his hands, calm at his workbench, pursuing a simple peaceful life in idyllic surroundings'. This romantic portrait of the woodworker is common to many people, and provides a strong inspiration for a large number of desk-bound office staff and many of those who yearn for a simpler existence.

Until John Ruskin and William Morris mapped out the social and political theories that went arm in arm with a new style of art and design, the applied arts had long been considered slightly inferior to the highbrow 'fine arts' (exclusively painters and sculptors) – a situation that had come about with the cultural rebirth of the Renaissance period. Before that, there had been no distinctions, and all the artistic trades such as potters, stonemasons and gilders were accorded relatively equal merit. But where was society now and a craftsman's place in it? Could a young person stick to decent and basic values, remaining true to an ideal and still earn a living wage?

Truth and reason

Currently running the internationally renowned Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport, Maine, Peter's story is a good one and unflinchingly deals with many of the hurdles he had to face, including life-threatening illness and an often apathetic society. I found his account of a search for truth and reason a fascinating one, and was very pleased to learn that, when he first tried his hand at furniture making in 1974, his guidebook was *Woodwork Joints* by that woodworking colossus Charles Hayward.

It's true that much has changed in the commercial world since then, but new makers are still faced with the same problems as Peter was; not just creating work that will appeal to many, but managing to get paid a commensurate sum into the bargain. I believe things are getting better, and I'd like to think that there is a growing appreciation of skilled craft in society today, but there are still very few woodworkers I know of with premises on Easy Street.

Peter Korn was born in 1951 and grew up in Philadelphia, where he attended Germantown Friends School, a Quaker establishment. He majored in history at the University of Philadelphia

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The Rotunda Serotina

The annual interiors exhibition, the Salone del Mobile in Milan, features a huge array of work from around the world, covering just about every craft and trade you could think of

Photos: Petr Krejci Photography

For the past five years, internationally popular design and style magazine *Wallpaper** has organized a number of innovative events and displays at their week-long 'Handmade' exhibition. This year the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) has joined up with designers Kolman Boye and UK furniture-makers Benchmark to create a towering structure of food plates called the *Rotunda Serotina*.

Over the top

The Scandinavian architects were influenced by the old-fashioned general store, and particularly by apothecary shelving. "Something really strong was needed for the huge venue," says Victor Boye Julebäk, who leads the architecture practice with Erik Kolman Janouch. "Maybe we went a little over the top."

English furniture-makers Benchmark worked alongside the designers from day one. Sharing Kolman Boye's respect and enthusiasm for traditional Japanese joinery techniques, Benchmark – the UK's leading company of craftspeople and designers – made 3,084 separate pieces connected by 1,008 joints to make up the skeleton of the Rotunda, together with 528 trays for the surface layer, all assembled without the use of nails, screws or glue. "It's a wonderful piece of cabinet making, and a tribute to the skills of craftsmen who have used their fine techniques on such a grand scale," says Sean Sutcliffe, co- founder of Benchmark.

Standing the test

At over 3.7m in diameter and the same in height, this isn't really a piece of furniture but a substantial yet lightweight structure. With this in mind, AHEC turned to engineers Arup, central to a number of previous AHEC projects including *The Timber Wave* and *Endless Stair*, to carry out a full structural appraisal and prototype tests.

It seems unlikely to any woodworker familiar with American cherry that many people are still ignorant of its mere existence. AHEC believes that the contemporary porous appearance of the wood fits in beautifully with the current vogue for raw, rugged timber, and a new appraisal of this surprisingly overlooked timber could be on the cards.

There's no denying it's a terrific job, and I bet I'm not alone in wishing that I could see the *Rotunda Serotina* live, in person, and in exciting Milano.MC

Just some of the thousands of components – and hundreds of square peg holes – prepared for the final build

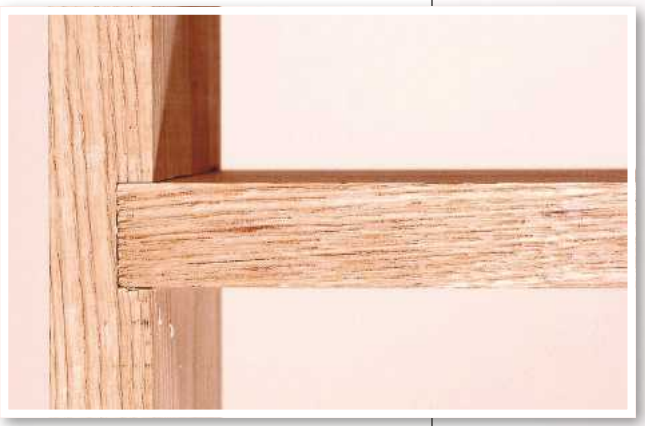
Unpacking the 528 American cherry snack trays that will adorn the shelves of the structure

Photo: John Cardwell Photography

The first two sides go up and the structure starts to take shape, thanks to a veritable forest of cramps

Keeping a close eye on progress, the designers monitor the constructional quality closely

This close-up reveals the joint details and the beauty of the American cherry used throughout the project



The finished through housing is clearly visible at both ends of the joint

BY ANDY STANDING

Housing benefit

The housing joint is a structural joint that's widely used in cabinets and shelving units. It's sometimes also called a dado joint. It's made by cutting a trench across the width of one component, into which the end of the other component is inserted

The difference between a groove and a housing is that a groove always runs along the grain, whereas a housing runs across it. A well-made housing is a strong, reliable joint that's simple to make. It can be cut by hand, but using a router is far faster and also more accurate.

Like all woodworking joints, there are several variations that have evolved to suit different situations. The simplest is the through housing, where the housing runs the full width of the workpiece and is clearly visible at both ends. A more refined version is the stopped housing, where the front edge of the joint is concealed, resulting in a neater appearance. Where maximum mechanical strength is needed, the dovetail housing is employed. This is the most demanding of the housings to make, as accuracy is critical to its strength.

These steps describe how to make a stopped housing joint. For a through housing joint, as shown in the inset image above, simply cut right across the first component and don't notch the second one.

Before you begin, make sure you have a router cutter to match the timber thickness. The easiest way to do this is to make a trial cut in a piece of scrap wood, and then thickness your workpiece until it's a snug fit in the housing. Alternatively, you may have to take several passes with your cutter to achieve the desired width, but if you do this be careful to ensure that your housings line up.

1 Use a try square to mark out the position of the housing on your workpiece. You need to mark only one side of the joint

2 Mark the position of the stopped end of the housing. It should be set about 8 to 12mm in from the front edge

3 The marked-out housing couldn't be simpler, consisting of just two intersecting pencil lines

4 Cramp a batten at right angles across the workpiece to guide the router. Cramp both ends on a wide board. If you're cutting joints on two identical uprights, cramp them side by side so the joints will mirror each other

5 Set the depth of cut on the router and cut the housing with several shallow passes. The depth should never be more than a third of the thickness of the workpiece

6 The routed housing has a rounded end. Be careful not to overshoot the end pencil mark

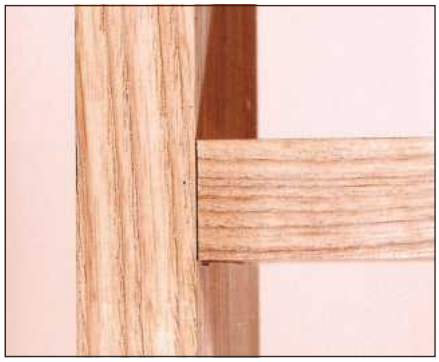
7 Square off the rounded end of the housing with a sharp chisel

8 The completed housing is a crisply-cut trench, ready to receive the other joint component

9 Hold the end of the other component alongside the housing and mark off the width of the notch to be removed

10 Then fit the component into the housing so you can mark off its depth

11 Simply cut out the notch with a bandsaw if you have one; alternatively, use a handsaw



12 Assemble the joint, which resembles a butt joint with the housing completely concealed

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BY DOUG BARRATT

The great divide

I was recently asked by a customer if I would make a pair of sliding doors to replace an existing room divider. He had tried to source off-the-peg ones, but as the originals measured 1970 x 930mm – an oddball size – he'd been unable to find any. So I set to work...

I was apprehensive at first about taking on this commission. For a start, I don't have the traditional machinery – such as a spindle moulder – that's associated with making doors. Also, because I have only a small single-garage workshop, the doors would take up a considerable amount of space as they were being assembled, and I was afraid that this would make physically getting around the shop a real problem.

A cunning plan

Having recently bought a Domino jointer and been very impressed with how quick and easy it made frame construction, I started to think about using loose tenons for the door construction.

The doors were going to be made from American white oak and would each have eight glass panels, so strong joints were essential. The Domino didn't give me large enough loose tenons for the frames, but I figured that a simple jig for the router was all I needed to cut my own mortises and make what would be a very substantial loose-tenon joint. Coming to this conclusion eased my worries considerably!

Designing the jig

The mortising jig I devised was very straightforward, **photo 1**. It consisted of a rectangular 30mm wide slot cut in a piece of 9mm mdf, with two 3mm slots cut at right angles to the main slot, through which an adjustable stop block could then be secured. Luckily a slip into the corner when cutting the main slot with a 6mm router bit didn't affect the operation of the 30mm guide bush.

My mortising jig is a slot 30mm wide cut in a piece of mdf, fitted with an adjustable stop block

I dimensioned all the components from sawn timber sourced as close to the finished size as I dared

I clamped the four stiles together and marked the positions of all the rail mortises

I then cut the top and bottom rails to length. Note the stop block at the end of the fence

After centralising the jig over the rail end, I added two extra screws to secure the stop block

I repeated the mortising process on all the rails and stiles, using a 30mm guide bush

The mortises in the stiles for the bottom rails need to be wider. Cut one end first…

…before moving the jig a short way along the rails and cutting the other end

The next job was to head for the router table to cut all the glazing rebates on the stiles and rails

Dimensioning the stock

Once the jig was finished, it was time to dimension the oak. This was planed from sawn timber that was sourced as close to the finished sizes as I dared, **photo 2**. In the past, American white oak has given me a lot of trouble with excessive movement, especially when cutting large sections into smaller components.

I took all the sizes from the original doors and rounded them up. The stiles and top rail are 110mm wide, the bottom rail 160mm deep and the glazing bars 34mm square. The finished door will be 34mm thick.

Starting work

I clamped the four stiles together and marked the positions of the mortises, **photo 3**. This ensured that when the doors were hung the rails would all line up exactly. By the way, I cut the stiles over-long to leave traditional protective horns on each door – a useful precaution against accidental damage in my cramped workshop!

I then cut the top and bottom rails to length on the chop saw, **photo 4**, allowing 12mm at each end for the rebates. These would be cut later, as I wanted to cut the mortises in all the components while the ends and sides were still square.

Cutting mortises

The jig was then centralised using the screws in the slots, and for added security I added two further screws to secure the mdf to the stop block, to prevent any movement. I then clamped the jig to the rail, **photo 5**, and cut the mortise with a long 12mm router bit.

I repeated this process on all the rails and stiles, **photo 6**. The bottom rails had a wider mortise because of their extra depth; this was achieved simply by positioning the jig to start the cut, **photo 7**, and then moving it a short way along the rail, **photo 8**.

Cutting rebates

With all the mortises cut, it was time to move to the router table. I began by cutting the rebates on the stiles and rails 22mm deep and 12mm wide. The endgrain cuts were long enough to cut against the fence, with a scrap square block for added support and to prevent tearout, **photo 9**.

I then took the opportunity to cut the rebates on all the glazing bars

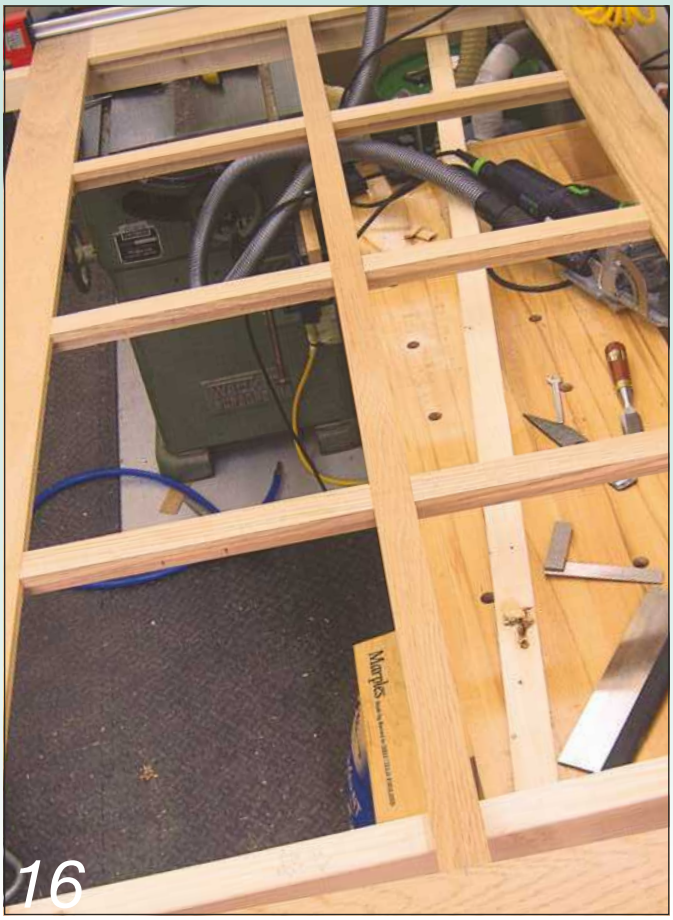
I cut and planed the tenons from 12mm thick oak, then rounded over their edges

…so I could test-fit them in their mortises. Everything was coming together rather well!

I was then able to cut all the horizontal glazing bars to length using my chop saw…

…and to form their end rebates on the mitre saw using the trenching facility and a stop block

Because of their small cross-section, I was able to use Dominos to join them to the stiles



It was now time to carry out a dry assembly of each door to check that all the joints fitted squarely

I was then able to glue and cramp up the two doors, and to cut a batch of glazing beads to size

Before cutting the rebates in the meeting stiles, I scored each cutting line with a marking gauge…

…and formed the rebates to half the door's thickness with a bearing-guided cutter

Each door needed a groove routed in its bottom edge to locate over the nylon floor guide

I formed the grooves with a guided slot cutter and cleaned up the ends with a sharp chisel

I used a high-angle scraper plane to remove any layout lines and machine marks from the surfaces

The glass panes were stuck in place with double-sided glazing tape – far better than putty!

While the router table was set up, I also rebated all the glazing bars, **photo 10**.

Making tenons

The next job was to make the loose tenons. These were cut and planed from oak 12mm thick and the same height as the mortises. All that was left to do was round over the edges, **photo 11**, and then to check that they all fitted in their mortises, **photo 12**.

Building up the frame

With the main frame coming together, I cut all the vertical glazing bars to length and marked the positions of the horizontal glazing bars on them and on the stiles.

I was then able to cut the horizontal glazing bars to length, **photo 13**, and to form their end rebates on the mitre saw using the trenching facility and a stop block, **photo 14**. After a little fettling, all the glazing bars were Dominoed, **photo 15**, and I was able to assemble each door dry to check the fit, **photo 16**.

Assembly time

It was now time to glue and cramp up the two doors – a job that required some careful juggling of the space available – and to cut some lengths of 12mm square glazing bead to size, **photo 17**. This photo also demonstrates the lack of space in my workshop, which is why I decided the final preparations would be done on site. The rest of the work could be done on trestles, and the customer had a large empty garage.

The 12mm square glazing beads were mitred and fixed in place using a headless pinner

Working on site

Once I'd relocated to the customer's garage, my first job was to cut the rebates where the two doors would come together. Without the sacrificial fence on the router table, I was worried about tear-out. To overcome this, I ran a sharpened marking gauge along both lines of the cut, **photo 18**, and formed the rebate with a bearing-guided cutter, **photo 19**.

I also needed a groove in the bottom rail of each door to accommodate the floor-mounted nylon guide blocks. I cut these with a guided slot cutter, **photo 20**, and squared off the ends of the slots by hand with a chisel, **photo 21**.

Finishing touches

All that was left to do was to clean up the doors to remove layout lines and any machine marks. Because of the difficult graining in this oak, I used a high-angle scraper plane, **photo 22**, and cleaned up the internal corners with a card scraper.

The customer wanted me to reuse the existing door gear so, with the old mechanism fitted, the doors were hung and ready to be glazed. Never glaze doors before you hang them: it just condemns you to lifting a lot of extra weight! I stuck the glass in with 1mm thick double-sided foam glazing tape, **photo 23**. I then cut the glazing beads to length and fixed them in place with a headless pinner, **photo 24**.

The finish on the doors is a new hard oil from Chestnut, which dries to a gloss finish rather reminiscent of solvent-based varnish. The end result looks highly satisfactory, and I have to say the customer is well pleased. Me? I'm just relieved it all worked out…

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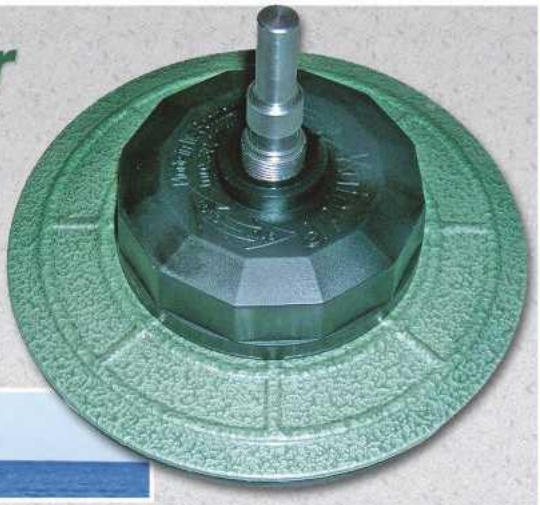

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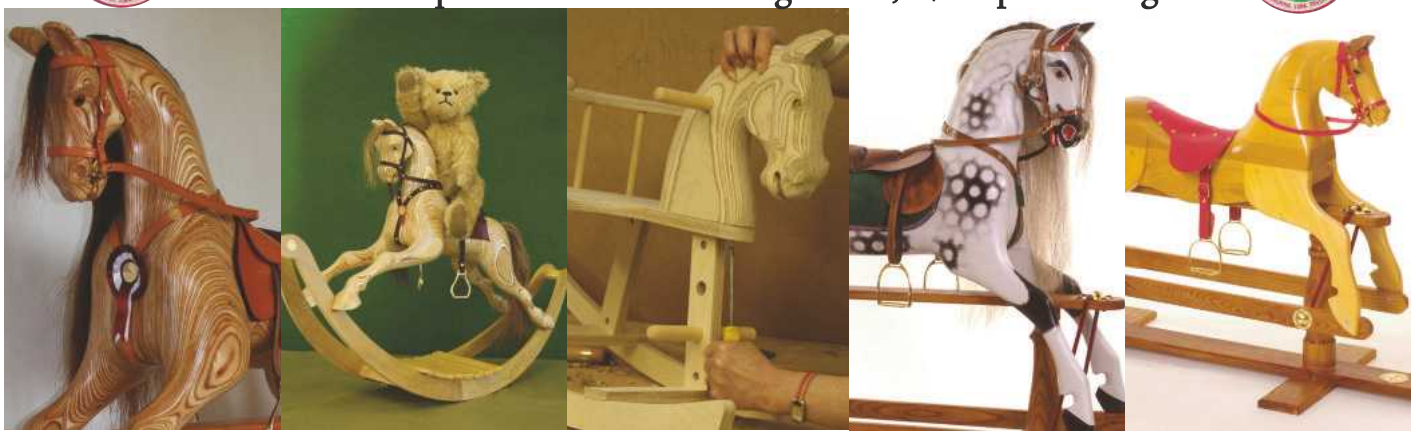

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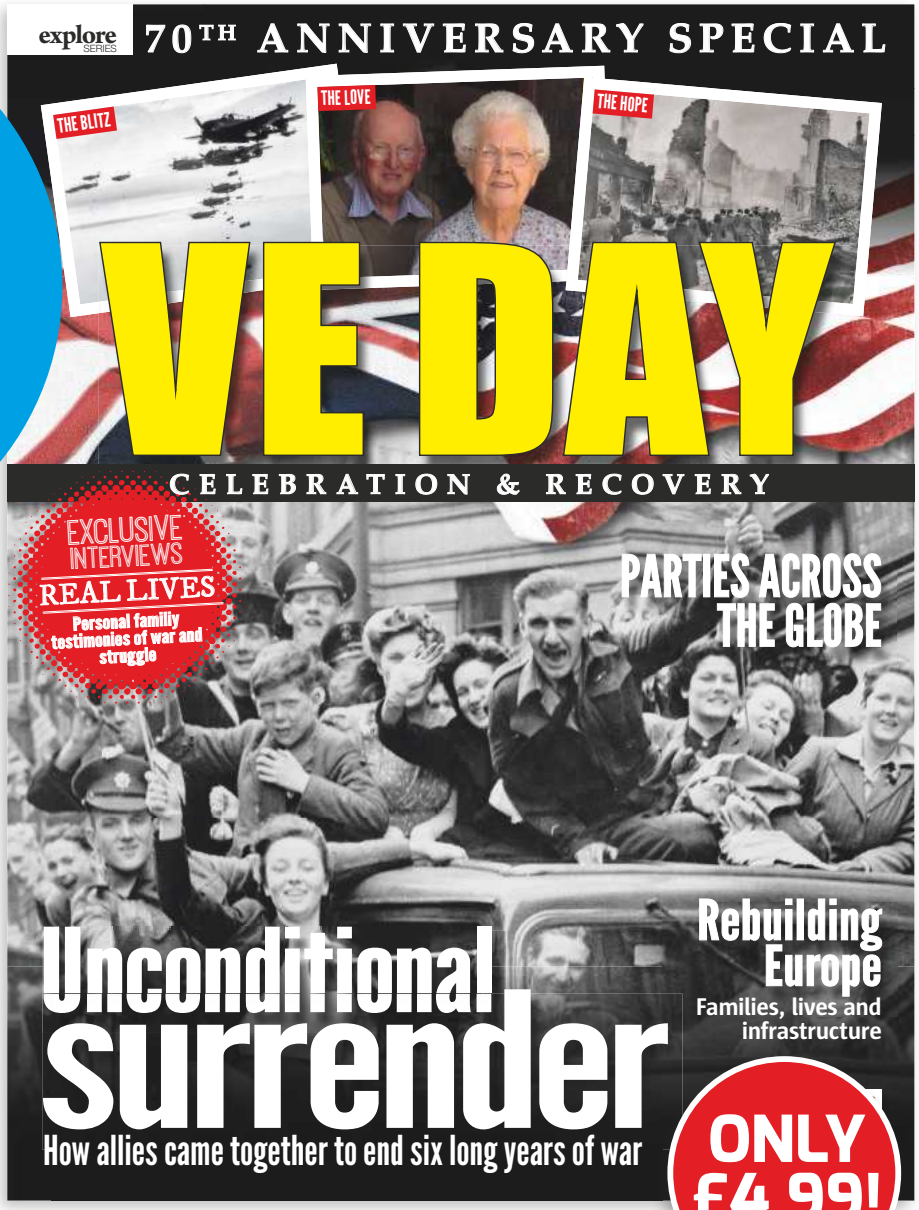

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Table saw set-up

This new series takes an in-depth look at what's involved in setting up and fine-tuning a range of standard woodworking machines and power tools. This month we're looking at the table saw

The table saw is a versatile piece of equipment that will perform well if it's set up properly. In a small workspace the choice of saw is also very important. If it's used as a panel saw, even a small machine will require a lot of space to handle the material, both on the infeed and outfeed side of the table. But if you won't be cutting sheet material on it, lack of space won't be such a problem.

Fifty years ago, woodworking machines were only for the professionals. This trend meandered on until the early 1990s, when cable and satellite television introduced the ill-prepared British woodworker to television programmes such as *This Old House* and *Norm Abram's New Yankee Workshop*. All of a sudden there were workshops full of kit being portrayed as the stuff every self-respecting woodworker should own.

The market responded, slowly at first, but now virtually every tool that Norm used in the New Yankee Workshop is available in the UK – with one noticeable exception; the stacked dado cutter that American woodworkers use in their table saws to produce dados (housings). Over here they're banned on health and safety grounds.

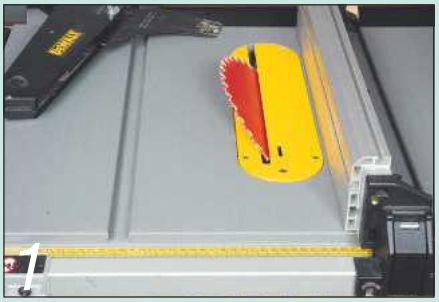
We're not going to get into the rights and wrongs of that debate, on which thousands of words have been published in recent years. Instead, let's look at the various ways in which a table saw can be set up and used to get the most out of this versatile machine.

The right machine

A full-blown table saw is a wonderful thing, but few have the space to accommodate one. It's not so much the size of the machine that's the problem as the space required around it. If you have the space, then the table saw is a worthwhile investment. For the rest of us, where space is at a premium, the contractor's saw – also called a site saw – is a credible alternative.

These machines vary immensely in price and quality. If you go down this route, buy the best machine you can afford and look for one with a mechanism that tilts the blade away from the fence (left tilt).

A disadvantage with most of the cheaper machines is their noise level. Sawing timber



The Dewalt has a left-tilt arbor; the blade tilts away from the fence

Fitting a good blade to a cheaper saw will improve its performance

A cross-cutting blade gives a better result when cutting solid timber or sheet material

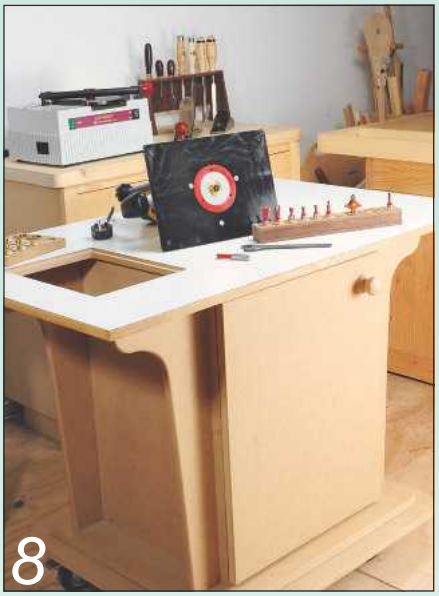
Removing the riving knife will leave the blade upguarded

Fit a custom guard when the supplied guard cannot be installed

Work supports are either supplied with the machine or available as optional extras


DEWALT
DEWALT
DEWALT

7
This support roller from Axminster also features ball bearings



8
An out-feed table is a good idea if you have space. This one also doubles as a router table

9
Always use a push stick to move the timber between the blade and the fence

is never going to be a quiet experience at the best of times, but some saws just make too much noise. A good move on any saw is to purchase a replacement blade. With cheaper saws, the blades tend to be thinner and sport inferior teeth, and no effort is made to dull the shrill piercing sound that some blades broadcast.

Enough power?

The other disadvantage with a contractor's or site saw is the lack of power compared with the larger, heavier floor-standing cabinet saws. This is no bad thing in the home workshop. There is very little that cannot be achieved using a lightweight saw mounted on its own purpose-made wheeled cabinet.

Adequate extraction

Good extraction will make your machine last longer and work more efficiently. A small can extractor such as the Axmnster RDC100H is all you'll need to cater for a small table saw. More sophisticated systems can be used, but when the same extractor has to be used for several portable machines, in various locations, this simple method works perfectly well.

Apart from the extraction of sawdust, any remaining fine dust should be vacuumed out of the saw casing at the end of each session. If you''re working with woods that contain a high sap content, then the blade may well need cleaning too. This is best done off the machine using one of the proprietary resin cleaners.

Which blade?

To simplify a complex subject for this article, blades can be categorised into three types: rip, cross-cut, and combination. Most machines are supplied with a combination blade. This will have enough teeth to cross-cut effectively as well as being able to rip-cut at a reasonable speed. As with any compromise, sacrifices are made by using these blades. Having said that, the convenience of not having to change the blade constantly is a great advantage.

A finer cross-cutting blade is a good investment, enabling cross-cutting to be carried out to a finer finish – ideal for mitring and the like. It can also be used for cutting part sheets of man-made materials such as mdf, where it will produce a cleaner cut.

Unless you're intent on ripping down vast quantities of material, don't bother to invest in a rip blade. The combination blade will work fine for most applications, even if it does cut a little slower.

Rive safely

Without question, the riving knife and blade guard should *always* be used when ripping. The riving knife will prevent the kerf closing onto the blade. This can happen as the wood is ripped due to the internal stresses in the wood being released.

On low-powered saws this will normally cause the blade to stall or just burn the wood. However, with a more powerful saw the piece of wood can be thrown back off the blade straight at the operator. It's the menace of kick-back.

On your guard

The riving knife can get in the way of some sawing operations, but most of the time it supports the blade guard and removing it will leave the blade unguarded. For operations such as grooving or nibbling out tenons, alternative arrangements must be made, as shown in **photo 5**. *Never* work without an effective blade guard in place.

Set-up basics

Make sure that the saw is set up correctly for use. The manufacturer's instructions should help here, although some of the cheaper saws have very basic instructions on assembling the machine out of the box, and not much else. To improve the performance of any table saw, portable or otherwise, there are some basic steps that must be taken to get good results.

Square and parallel

After fitting the correct blade, ensure that it is precisely perpendicular to the face of the table when it's locked in the upright position. Also check that it's parallel with the mitre slot. The yoke that holds the motor in place will normally be fitted to the table in such a way that it can be adjusted to align the blade correctly.

Next, check that the fence is square to the table and parallel to the mitre slot. All these adjustments are critical to the saw's performance and should be fully detailed in the instructions if they're not obvious.

NEXT MONTH This ongoing series will take a look at setting up and using the drill press

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BY IAN WILKIE

Bear essentials

This is a tried and tested project, originally made for my granddaughters. The chair and table have now been passed on to a younger member of the family

This design has proved very durable and robust. A doll or teddy bear sits more securely on a chair with arms, reducing the tendency for the toy to flop to one side or the other.

I used some poplar to make the two pieces. This wood is both light in weight and colour so I painted the finished pieces, but if I'd used a more attractive wood to make them I would probably have left it in its natural state, with just a coat of clear varnish for protection. However, a similar chair I once made in beech was very strong but rather heavy, and this was a distinct disadvantagefor its play value.

DOWEL JOINTS

For a child's toy this form of jointing is ideal, with no sharp screws or nails as a potential hazard. Wolfcraft dowels and dowelling points, together with matching lip-and-spur drills fitted with adjustable depth stops, are to be found separately or in sets in most woodworking retail outlets, and they're not expensive.

The metal dowel points make accurate alignment of the dowels as simple as possible. The metal point is temporarily inserted into a hole drilled in the first piece of the wood to the correct size and depth to match the dowel to be used. The point is then tapped against the wood to which it is to be joined so a small indentation is made. This indicates where the second hole is to be drilled. The dowel is then glued and inserted, and the two pieces of wood are tapped tightly together with a soft-faced hammer.

Accurate drilling is essential to achieve a good tight joint, and the use of a bench drill is strongly recommended.

MAKING THE CHAIR

I started the job by thicknessing all the wood and cutting it to length, **photo 1**. Next, I marked the ends of all the spindle blanks with a Veritas centre finder. Hold the blank upright in the finder and give it a gentle tap with a soft-faced hammer. Then rotate it through 90° and tap it again to produce an indented X, **photo 2**.

Tackling the front legs

Mount the first front leg blank between centres. Make a turning guide (see **fig 1**) and use it to mark off the positions for the V cuts at A, B, C, D and E, **photo 3**.

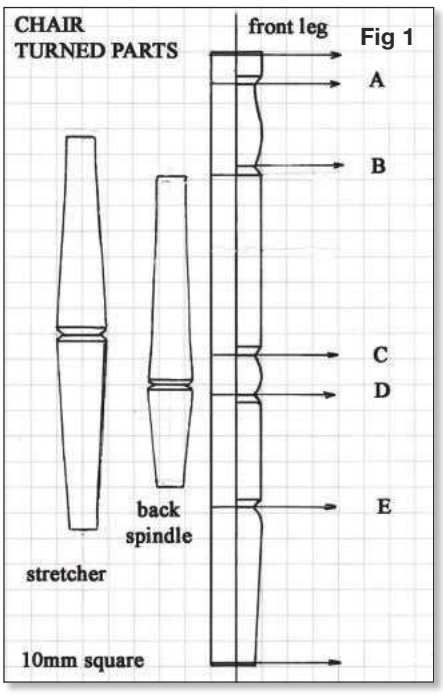


Fig 1

Note that the areas above A, between B and C and between D and E all remain square. Make all the marked V cuts using the long point of a small skew chisel, **photo 4**. Then use the same tool to turn the leg to shape, commencing at the bottom and working up to the top, **photo 5**. Check the diameter from time to time, **photo 6**.

Repeat the process to form the identical second leg. Then drill a 6mm diameter hole in the square section of each leg to take the stretcher, **photo 7**. Now you can turn your attention to producing the stretchers and the back spindles

Stretchers and spindles

Mount the first stretcher blank between centres and turn it to a slim cylinder 16mm in diameter. Find the halfway point and cut a V there; then turn a gentle taper from the V out to each end of the stretcher to leave a minimum diameter of 10mm at each end. Sand it smooth, **photo 8**. Repeat the process for the other stretcher.

Next, mount the first spindle blank between centres and turn it to a diameter of 16mm. Make a V cut 38mm from the tailstock end, and turn a taper from this point in each direction down to a minimum end diameter of 10mm. These spigot ends will fit into matching holes drilled in the upper and lower back rails.

Now cut and sand the remaining pieces for the arms, the back legs, the back cross rails and the seat rails.

Making up the side frames

Mark the exact position on the back leg for the stretcher hole, **photo 9**. Use a dowel point to mark the positions for the seat rails to join the legs. Put the dowel points in one end of a seat rail, **photo 10**, and mark the correct position for the corresponding hole needed in the back leg; drill a 6mm diameter hole 10mm deep at that point. Repeat the process and drill the matching holes in the front leg, **photo 11**.

Drill a 10mm hole 10mm deep in the front leg to take the stretcher. Then mark and drill a matching hole in the back leg for the other end of the stretcher.

Dowel and glue all the pieces – the back leg, the side seat rail, the stretcher and the front leg. Then assemble them and cramp them up.

Fitting the arms

Round off the front ends of the arm pieces and drill a 6mm hole at the rear end to take the dowel which will join the arm to the back leg. Drill a 6mm hole on the underside at the front to take a dowel to join the arm to the top of the front leg. After a dry run to check that everything fits well, glue and cramp up the completed frame, **photo 12**.

Assembling the back

Mark the centre on each end of the two back rails and drill a 6mm diameter hole there to a depth of 20mm for the dowels. Decide the position of the centre spindle first, then the positions of the other two, and mark the back rails accordingly. Drill 10mm diameter holes 10mm deep at these positions, **photo 13**. Glue in the three spindles to form a ladder arrangement and cramp it up.

Joining the frames

Drill a 6mm hole in the ends of each of the four seat rails to a depth of 20mm. Using the same dowelling technique as before, mark the positions of the holes needed to join the back assembly and the two seat rails to the side frames. Remember that holes drilled into the front and back legs should only be to a depth of 10mm. Glue in the dowels, **photo 14**, bring the assemblies together and cramp them up. You should now have a recognisable basic chair!

Adding the seat

Cut five seat slats and two supports. Position the seat supports on the bench with a gap between them which will ensure that they fit flush inside the seat rails, and place the slats across them at equally spaced intervals. Glue the slats to the supports and cramp them up. When the glue is dry, cut out the front corners so the seat fits neatly round the front legs, **photo 15**. Push the seat down into position and glue and cramp it to the rails.

MINIATURE CHAIR CUTTING LIST

All dimensions are in millimetres

Part	Qty	L	W	T
Front leg *	2	240	20	20
Back leg	2	360	20	20
Back rails	2	135	20	20
Back spindles *	3	120	20	20
Seat rails	4	135	20	20
Stretchers *	2	155	20	20
Arms	2	165	25	12
Seat slats	5	175	25	10
Seat supports	2	175	25	10

* These parts are turned: see the text for final dimensions. You will also need some 6mm diameter dowels.

1 Start the job by thicknessing all the wood and cutting the various components to length

2 Find the end centres on the turning blanks and punch a small hole where the lines cross

3 Make a turning guide and use it to mark off the positions for the V cuts

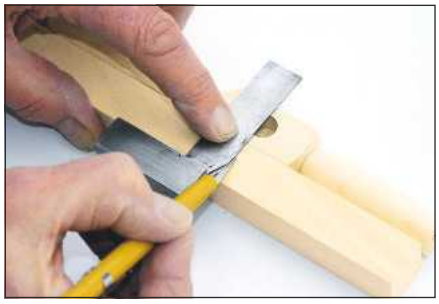
4 Cut all the marked Vs using the long point of a small skew chisel

5 Use the same tool to turn the leg to shape, working from the bottom to the top

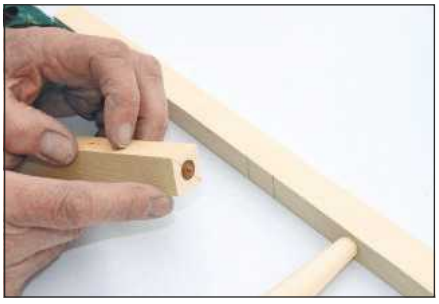
6 Check the diameter from time to time – *always* with the lathe stationary!

7 Drill a 6mm hole in the square section of each leg to take the stretcher

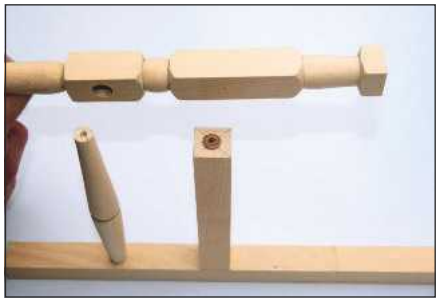
8 Turn a taper from the V out to each end of the stretcher and sand it smooth



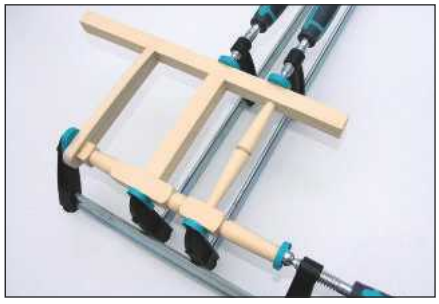
9 Mark the exact position on the back leg for the stretcher hole to be drilled



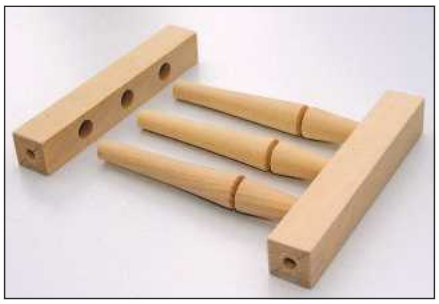
10 Put a dowel point in one end of a seat rail, and mark the hole position on the back leg



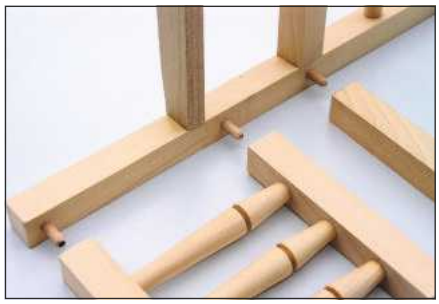
11 Repeat the process and drill the matching dowel holes in the front leg



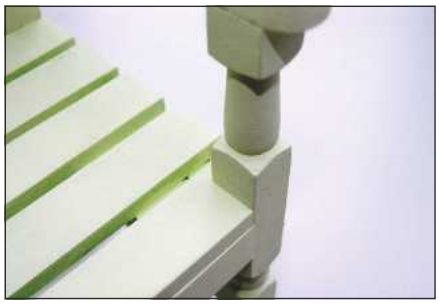
12 After a dry run to check the fit, glue and cramp up the completed side frame



13 Glue in the three spindles to form a ladder arrangement and cramp it up



14 Glue in the dowels, bring the side frame assemblies together and cramp them up



15 Cut out the front corners of the seat so it fits neatly round the front legs

MAKING THE TABLE

This little table is a replica of a typical Victorian kitchen table. Make a turning guide (see **fig 2**) to help you produce four identical legs. Mark the centre at each end of the blanks and punch a small indentation there. Mount the blank between centres on the lathe with a ring centre in the headstock and a revolving centre in the tailstock.

MINIATURE TABLE CUTTING LIST

All dimensions are in millimetres

Part	Qty	L	W	T
Top	1	300	200	12
Leg *	4	240	28	28
Side rail	2	200	40	20
End rail	2	110	40	20
Glue block	6	38	19	19

* These parts are turned: see the text for final dimensions.
You will also need some 6mm diameter dowels

Turning the legs

Note that the first 60mm of the blank at the headstock end remains square. Using the turning guide, mark off the position at A and make the first V cut there with a sharp skew chisel, **photo 16**.

Turn the blank to a cylinder from this cut to the bottom of the leg. Accurately mark the lines at B, C and D in pencil, **photo 17**, and make these V cuts.

Form the shapes between the V cuts to match the turning guide; then shape the bottom section of the leg. Repeat for the other three legs. Check that each leg you matches the first one, **photo 18**.

Preparing the frame

Cut the four pieces that make up the frame. Gently round off their lower arrises. Drill the holes for the dowels so they don't interfere with one another. The two short rails have one hole drilled in each end, and the two long ones have two holes in each end. Use the dowelling points to mark the matching hole positions on the legs and drill them, **photo 19**. All the holes are 6mm in diameter and 15mm deep.

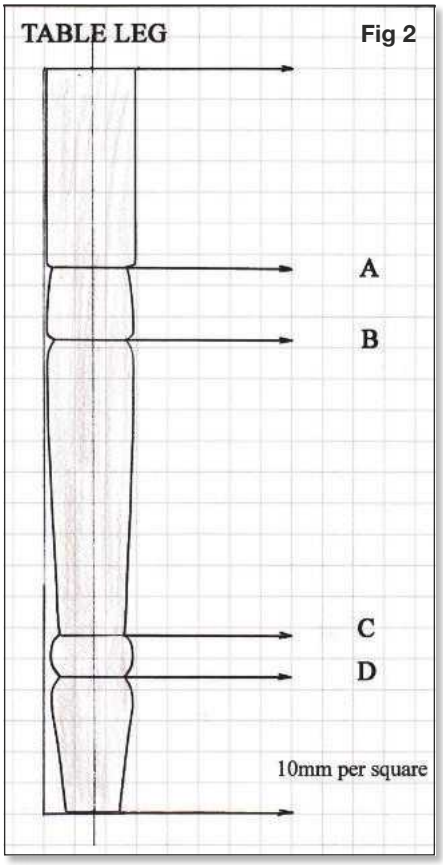
Assembly time

Sand the piece for the top smooth. If you have a router you can mould the edges. If not, plane a slight chamfer all round to remove any sharp edges.

Insert the dowels and join up two legs with a short end rail, **photo 20**. Glue and cramp up the assembly. Repeat with the other two legs. Then insert the dowels and join the end frames to the long rails.

Mark the position for the frame on the underside of the table top. Spread glue on the top surface of the frame, stick it in place and cramp up the assembly.

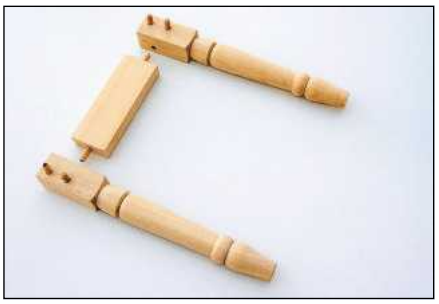
To complete the table, make six small triangular reinforcing blocks and glue them in position as shown in **photo 21**.



16 Mark off the position of the first V cut on the leg blank and make it with a small skew chisel

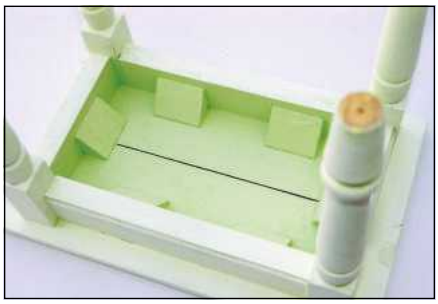
17 Use the turning guide to mark the V-cut positions at B, C and D in pencil

18 Check that each leg you have just turned matches the first one



19 Mark the hole positions on the legs and drill them. Then glue the dowels into place

20 Join up two legs with an end rail. Then make up the other end frame and fit the long rails



21 Glue the frame to the top and add triangular reinforcing blocks to the underside as shown

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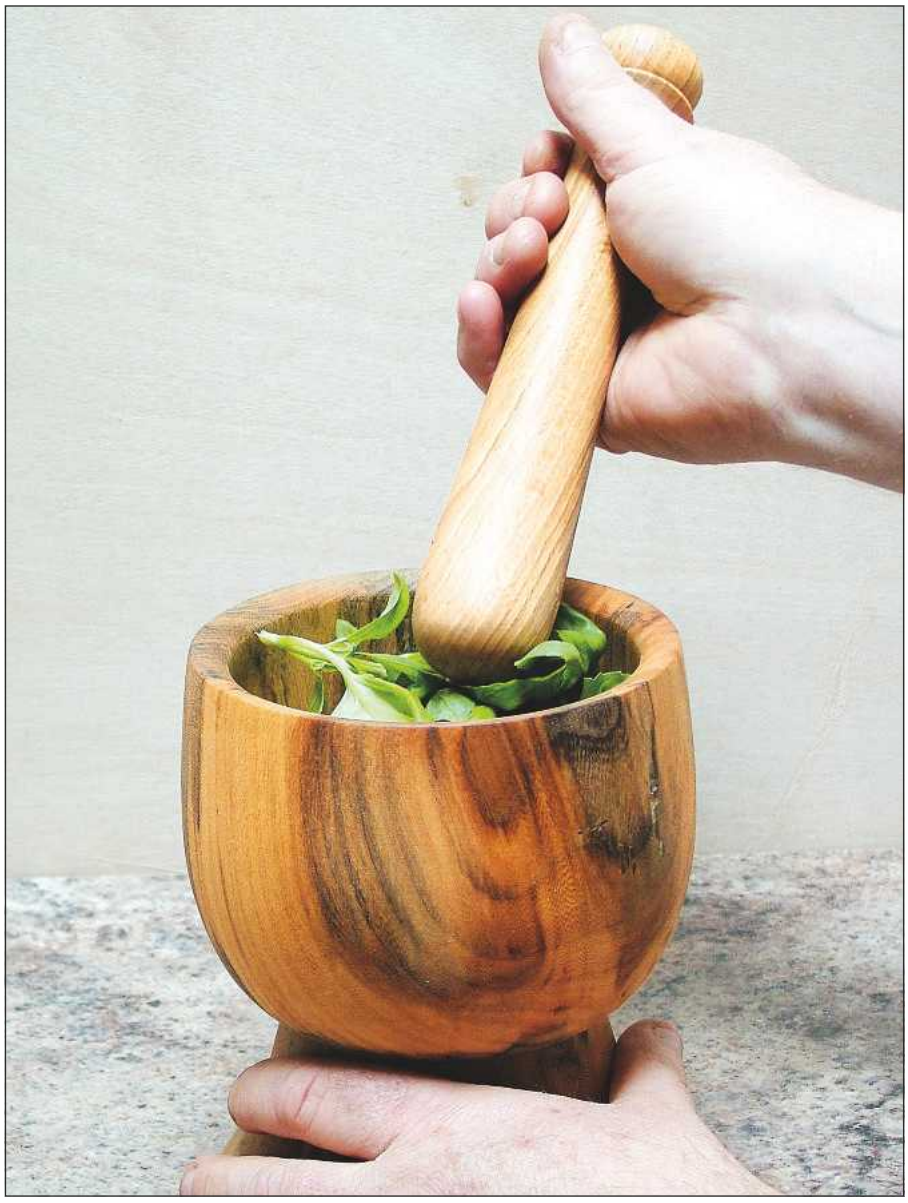


BY COLIN SIMPSON

Crush hour

In this second article about making kitchen treen, I'm going to show you how to make a pestle and mortar. Again, I'm aiming this article at beginners, so I'll spend some time describing the cuts involved

This project will include the technique I use for hollowing end grain. The mortar – the bowl part – is designed to be bashed by the pestle – the club part – and therefore, from a design point of view, the mortar must be solid and sturdy. Its base also needs to be fairly wide to provide stability. I've deliberately flared the base on mine so one hand can hold it on the worktop while the other wields the pestle.

My mortar has been made with the grain running parallel with the lathe's spindle rather than at right angles to it – the usual convention when turning a bowl blank. This means that I'll be hollowing end grain – a process that requires a different technique from that used for hollowing a bowl.

TURNING A MORTAR

1 Keep your fingers clear of the blade when pushing work through the bandsaw

2 If your bandsaw table tilts, set it to 45° and cut the octagon using the fence

3 Mount the reduced blank between centres and rough it down to a cylinder

4 Use a peeling cut with a skew chisel to square off both ends of the blank

5 The same peeling cut is used to create the spigot. Check its diameter with callipers

6 Start shaping the curves with a spindle gouge. Here's the cove…

7 …and here's a half bead that will form the outside of the bowl part

8 Continue to shape the outside until you've created an overall shape something like this

9 Then use the spindle gouge to clean up the top edge of the work

10 Make the same cut to form a small indentation in the very centre of the top

I began by cutting about 180mm off an elm block on the bandsaw, **photo 1**. I found the centres of both ends using the corner to corner method, and then used a pair of compasses to draw a large circle on one end.

The blank was quite large to mount between centres and turn the corners away, so I used my bandsaw again to cut these off and create an octagon, **photo 2**. This makes step 4 much easier.

Next, knock a four-prong drive into one end of the blank. I prefer to do this with the blank off the lathe because tightening the wood onto the drive centre on the lathe puts unnecessary pressure on the headstock bearings.

Preparing to turn

Mount the blank between centres, check that the tailstock and toolrest are secure and set the lathe speed to around 800rpm. Switch the lathe on and use a spindle roughing gouge to convert the octagon to a cylinder. Start with the tool on the toolrest and the handle held down low. Gently raise the handle until you get a shaving and then move the tool along the toolrest, **photo 3**.

The first cuts

Square off both ends using a skew chisel and a peeling cut, **photo 4**. Place the chisel flat on the toolrest, again with the handle held low. Place the bevel onto the revolving wood and raise the handle to allow the cutting edge to start making a cut above the centre. Continue to raise the handle at the same time as moving the tool forward so the cutting edge moves in an arc.

The same peeling cut is used to create the spigot, **photo 5**. Here I'm using the tool in one hand and my callipers in the other, but you might feel more comfortable making the cut with both hands on the tool and then checking the size of the spigot with the callipers at regular intervals.

Taking shape

Next, start shaping the outside of the mortar. I used a ⅜in spindle gouge to cut a half cove at the base of the piece, **photo 6**, and a half bead to form the outside of the bowl part, **photo 7**. Don't try to take too large a shaving at one time – it's better to take small repetitive cuts. Continue to shape the outside until you have

something like that shown in **photo 8**.

Now replace the four-prong drive with your chuck and mount the mortar's spigot in the chuck. Move the tailstock out of the way or remove it completely from the lathe. Use the ⅜in spindle gouge again to clean up the top surface, **photo 9**. This is a bevel-supported cut. The flute is pointing away from the wood and it's the tip of the tool that makes the cut.

Centring the hollow

The same cut is used to make a small indentation in the very centre of the top, **photo 10**. I'll be using the spindle gouge to drill a hole down into the centre of the wood, and this indentation helps to locate the tool at the hole's entrance. You can also drill this hole using a drill bit mounted in a Jacobs chuck held in the tailstock, but it's very often quicker to do it with the spindle gouge.

Position the spindle gouge on the toolrest with the flute facing up and the handle low. Gently raise the handle until the tip of the cutting edge touches the very centre of the work, or the indentation. Bring the handle to the horizontal and push the tool towards the headstock. It should start to bore the hole, **photo 11**.

Note the masking tape on the shaft of the gouge. This is my depth stop. Don't attempt to bore a deep hole in one go. Keep removing the gouge from the hole to release the shavings; otherwise these may bind round the tool, making it twist in your hand and possibly causing injury.

Cutting deeper

Once you've drilled your hole, use the spindle gouge again for the hollowing. Start with the gouge about 2mm inside the hole with the flute pointing towards 10 o'clock. Swing the handle away from you in an arc, **photo 12**.

Repeat this action, using the bottom wing of the gouge, going a little deeper and wider with each successive cut, **photo 13**. As the side wall of the hollow gets larger, you'll need to rotate the tool more onto its side so the flute points towards 9 o'clock. I'm using a larger gouge here to help reduce chatter.

Photo 14 shows the mortar with the hollowing almost complete. Note that I have had to angle the toolrest inside the bowl to reduce the amount of tool overhanging the rest. **(continued overleaf)**

11 Push the tool towards the headstock. It should start to bore the hole

12 Start hollowing from just inside the hole and swing the handle away from you

13 Hollowing continues. I've changed to a larger spindle gouge to prevent chatter

14 Here I've also angled to toolrest inside the bowl to reduce the tool overhang

15 Take light cuts with a round-nosed scraper to smooth out the bowl

16 I chamfered the rim slightly using a spindle gouge and a pull cut

17 Reverse the piece onto a padded mushroom dolly and bring up the tailstock

18 Remove the chucking spigot and dish the bottom slightly so it will stand level

19 Support the work on a bag of shavings and remove the stub with a sharp chisel

Scrape and sand

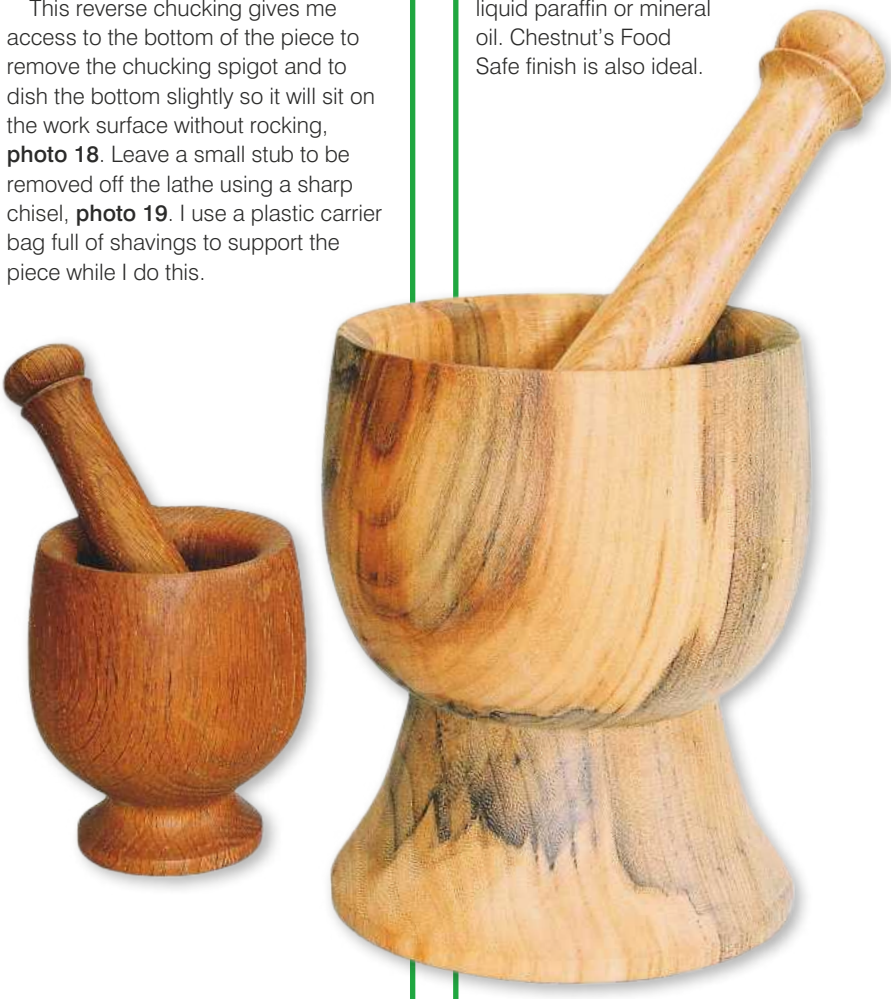
After carrying out the hollowing with the spindle gouge, use a round-nosed scraper to clean up the inside shape of the bowl, **photo 15**. Use the tool with the handle held slightly higher than the cutting edge and take very light cuts, particularly on end grain as here.

I completed this stage of the project by cutting a small inward curve all round the rim of the piece with the spindle gouge, **photo 16**, before sanding the surface smooth.

Finishing the job

I reversed the piece onto a mushroom-shaped dolly covered with a thin piece of leather to protect the sanded surface of the mortar. Bring the tailstock up to the centre of the spigot and apply as much pressure as needed to hold the workpiece securely on the dolly, **photo 17**.

This reverse chucking gives me access to the bottom of the piece to remove the chucking spigot and to dish the bottom slightly so it will sit on the work surface without rocking, **photo 18**. Leave a small stub to be removed off the lathe using a sharp chisel, **photo 19**. I use a plastic carrier bag full of shavings to support the piece while I do this.



TURNING A PESTLE

Turning the pestle is simple spindle work, using the techniques I described in detail in last month's project.

To make the pestle, mount a blank measuring 250 x 45mm between centres and turn it down to a cylinder using a spindle roughing gouge, **photo 1**. The same gouge can also be used to taper the cylinder, making it thinner towards the headstock. Use the ⅜in spindle gouge to round over the end of the pestle, **photo 2**, and to shape the top, **photo 3**. Next, I used a skew chisel to make a V cut and add a little decoration, **photo 4**. I then sanded the piece to a finish.

Use a spindle gouge to reduce the waste wood at both ends of the pestle to leave two small stubs. These can be removed by hand, or with the use of a sanding arbor in a Jacobs chuck in the headstock, **photo 5**.

I like to finish culinary pieces like these with liquid paraffin or mineral oil. Chestnut's Food Safe finish is also ideal.

1 Convert the pestle blank to a cylinder with a spindle roughing gouge

2 Shape the business end of the pestle to round with a spindle gouge

3 Use the same gouge to clean up the top at the headstock end

4 Use the skew to make a shallow V cut and add a little decoration

5 Sand off the small stubs by hand, or use a sanding arbor in a Jacobs chuck

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BY BOB CHAPMAN

The name of the rose

'I have a large piece of rosewood cluttering up the garage. Are you interested?' Well, I'm a turner so of course I was interested, but I have to say that the outcome wasn't quite what I expected...

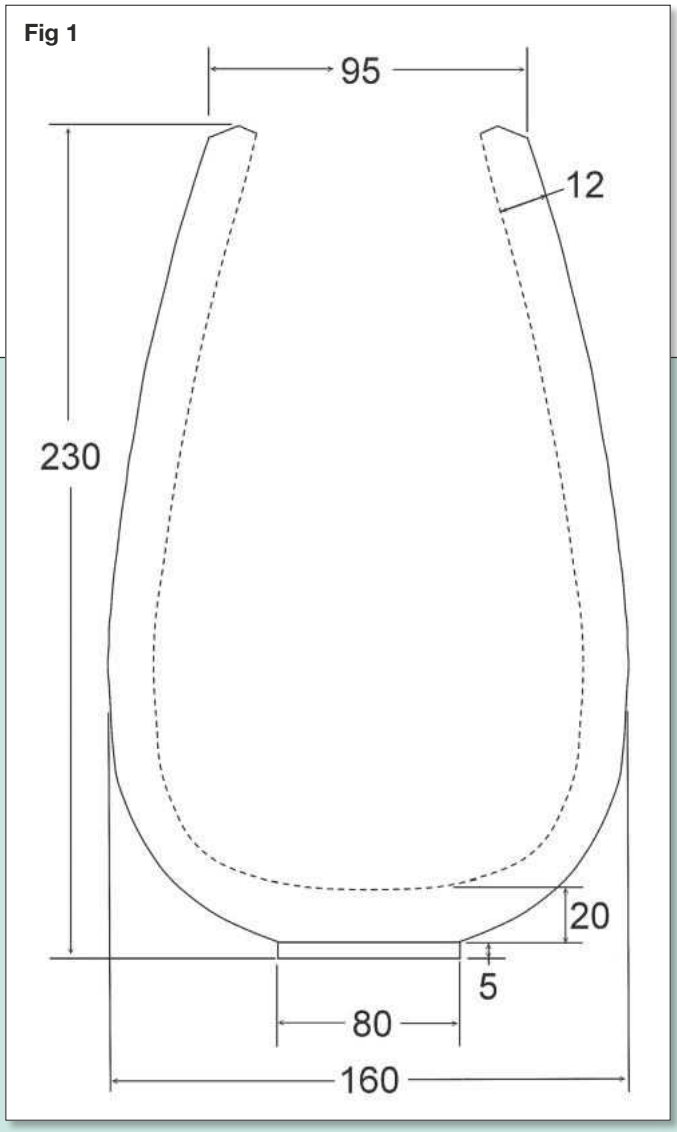
As the conversation progressed, it became clear that the lady was talking about a piece of a standard rose bush (*Rosaceae* species), rather than the beautiful Indian hardwood usually referred to as rosewood (*Dalbergia latifolia*). However, from her description it sounded like an unusually large piece of wood and, as I've never turned this sort of rose wood before, I arranged to go and collect it.

Meet the monster

The piece was large and very heavy, with a misshapen lump in the middle which I assume was where the scion was grafted onto the rootstock. When I placed it on the bed of the lathe to have a better look, **photo 1**, I couldn't help thinking of the Loch Ness Monster! Monster it certainly was: I've never seen a rose this big before.

The graft, the region I was most interested in, was a good 300mm long with a maximum diameter of around 200mm, **photo 2**. I trimmed the neck and tail off the monster, but before embarking on any serious work on the graft I wanted to find out what the wood was like to turn. A moisture meter revealed that it had a water content between 18 per cent at best and an incredible 47 per cent at worst. Clearly it had been cut down fairly recently.

Fig 1



1 The Monster looked rather impressive sitting on the bed of my Vicmarc lathe

2 The graft on this rose bush was unusually large – some 200mm in diameter

The timber has an interlocking grain pattern, and cuts very cleanly

Three separate stems emerged from the upper end of the graft

I attached the beech block with a long screw driven into each stump

The graft was turned at about 800rpm, using a ½in bowl gouge

The irregular area on the side of the blank was too deep to turn away

I trued up the end with the beech block still screwed in place

Power sanding with a 75mm diameter disc helped to span the irregularities

The Ashley Iles bead-forming tool is ideal for creating identical beads

A test cut

Undeterred, I cut a short section from the offcuts and mounted it between centres. Although it was harder than I expected, it cut very cleanly leaving a good finish straight from the tool, **photo 3**. The wood has a very tight mesh-like grain structure that makes it look almost as if it's been knitted.

As it was growing, the upper end of the graft had divided into three stems, and I'd had to leave short sections of these when trimming it, **photo 4**. To help stabilise these three stumps during turning, and to give somewhere secure to place a tailstock centre, I screwed a small beech block onto the end, locating a screw in each of the stumps, **photo 5**.

Taking shape

After some trial and error to find the best positions, I mounted the graft between centres and began the shaping with a ½in bowl gouge, **photo 6**. The piece was soon reduced to the shape I wanted, but only if I was willing to accept a large irregularity, **photo 7**. Reluctantly I decided that I had to. To cut through it would have reduced the lump to a very much smaller and less significant size.

The next job was to tidy up the tailstock end, ready for creating the open end of the vase. Taking care not to hit the screws, I used the bowl gouge to clean up the end of the graft while preserving the beech end block by which it was supported, **photo 8**.

Adding beads

Working from 120 to 180 grit, I power-sanded the outside of the vase smooth, **photo 9**, before starting to bead the exterior with a 6mm bead-forming tool, **photo 10**. This beading was continued down the vase and around the curve to the bottom. When using the bead-forming tool on a curve like this, take care to adjust the rest so that the tool is always used at right angles to the curved surface, **photo 11**.

When the beading was finished, I sanded the individual beads carefully with 240 grit paper, folded to get into the crevices between the beads. Take care not to flatten the surface of the beads by over-sanding them.

Sealing the surface

Next, I applied cellulose sanding sealer with a small brush to get right into the crevices, **photo 12**. Use the sealer sparingly and brush it out well to avoid filling the spaces between the beads with it.

When the sealer had dried thoroughly, I sprayed the whole vase with three coats of Mylands acrylic gloss, **photo 13**. Allow each

coat to dry very thoroughly; then rub it down gently with 0000-grade steel wool and blow away any dust before applying the next one.

It was now time to tackle the tricky part: hollowing out the interior.

Safety first

I started by forming a dovetail spigot at the bottom of the vase, **photo 14**, allowing a small amount for what will eventually become the foot. I made this spigot as large as possible so the vase would be held securely during hollowing.

I then removed the vase from the centres and gripped the spigot in my VM120 chuck using its standard dovetail jaws. I now had to remove the beech block and, still concerned that the three stumps might fly apart owing to the stresses imposed during hollowing, I decided to wrap the vase in masking tape as a precaution, **photo 15**.

A starter hole

The first step in any type of deep hollowing is to bore a hole as deep as you can to give yourself a good start. I used a 35mm Forstner bit (the largest I had), fitted into an extension to get as near to the final depth as I could. When boring deep holes like this, **photo 16**, avoid letting too much waste build up inside the vase. It can cause the bit to bind in the hole and makes it difficult to withdraw. I always hold the drill chuck with one hand when withdrawing the bit to prevent it coming loose in the tailstock taper.

The cut begins

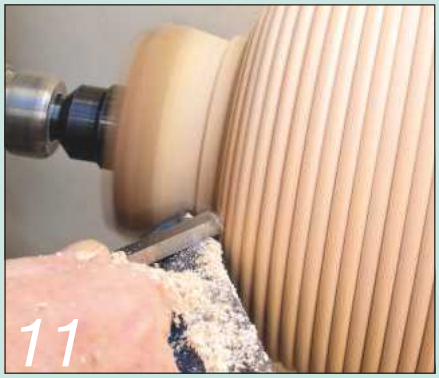
I started the hollowing using a small Rolly Munro hollowing tool, **photo 17**. This removes waste quickly and efficiently, but as work progressed I was conscious of the strain being imposed on the workpiece and decided to bring up my four-point lathe steady to support the vase more effectively. To protect the finish, I wound some more tape round the vase where the steady's wheels made contact, **photo 18**.

To improve the cut and reduce tool vibration still further, I set up my home-made deep hollowing rig, **photo 19**; this takes a 19mm round bar with the cutter on the end.

I continued the hollowing with a 10mm Ashley Iles fixed-angle ring tool cutter, **photo 20**, which removes wood very efficiently and never clogs. I finished the job with a broad scraper tip to span any irregularities and leave a smooth surface on the interior, **photo 21**.

The sealing question

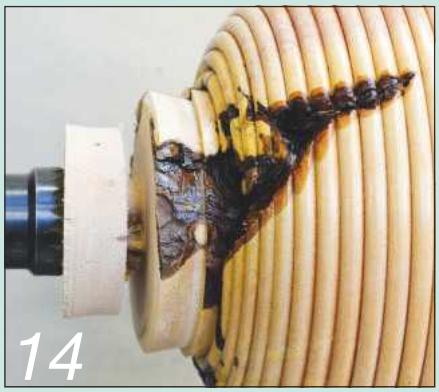
Sanding inside hollow forms is never easy, but this home-made sanding stick is very effective, **photo 22**. It's a length of dowel



Take care to keep it at right angles to the work around curves

Apply the finish sparingly with a small stiff brush to get between the beads

I then applied three coats of acrylic spray, sanding between coats



Cut the most substantial dovetail spigot your chuck can accommodate

With the end block removed, I used masking tape to ensure that nothing came apart

Hold the Jacobs chuck while withdrawing the bit from the work to stop it working loose

Begin the hollowing with a small cutter to get the feel of things

A lathe steady will help to counteract the extra sideways leverage of the tool

My home-made deep hollower takes all the strain out of controlling the cut…

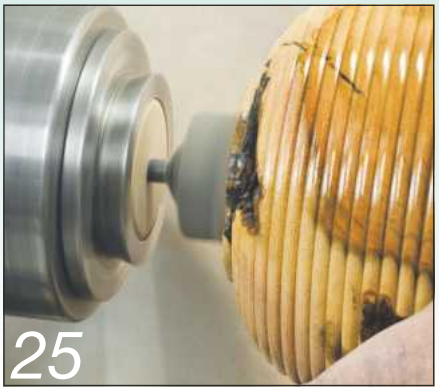
…from these two cutters, which are mounted on sturdy round bars

The final light cuts from the scraper tip leave a very good finish on the interior

This little sanding stick is very useful and takes only a few minutes to make

Take care to make the jam chuck a tight fit in the vase opening…

…and apply pressure from the tailstock to hold it securely while tidying the foot



Remove the central stub by sanding it on a small disc held in the lathe chuck

Finally, I chose to buff up the finish on the vase further on a buffing wheel

with one end covered in plastic foam with some hook-and-loop Velcro tape attached. A piece of Velcro-backed abrasive completes the sanding stick, which can then be used to reach down inside the vase quite safely.

I decided to leave the inside bare to allow the wood to dry out. I wondered whether to seal it to slow moisture loss and avoid cracking, but reasoned that the interior would become saturated with water vapour which would escape only slowly through the mouth of the vase, so evaporation would be slow anyway. Time will tell, although the wood was so wet that I think some cracking is inevitable.

Finishing touches

I removed the vase from the chuck and replaced it with a piece of scrap beech. I turned this to form a slightly tapered jam chuck which was a tight fit in the mouth of the vase, **photo 23**. I then reversed the vase onto this and supported it with the tailstock centre while I removed the dovetailed spigot on its base with a small ¼in bowl gouge, **photo 24**.

A small amount of wood has to remain in the centre of the base, and I removed this by holding the vase and sanding the base on a sanding disc held in the chuck, **photo 25**. I then polished the exterior of the vase to its final finish on a buffing wheel, **photo 26**, and took a step back to admire what The Monster had become, **photo 27**. It was quite a transformation…

The finished vase was a swan compared with its original ugly duckling graft

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To find out more about the Trend Diamond Cross range please visit Trend's website: **www.trend-uk.com** or Trends YouTube channel and Facebook group for videos of the Diamond Cross range in action.

For more information contact:

Luke Hulley, Head of Marketing, Trend Machinery & Cutting Tools Ltd., Odhams Trading Estate, St Albans Road, Watford WD24 7TR

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Author's Choice – BEST OVERALL / Author's Choice – BEST VALUE

Few woodworkers like sanding. However, how would you feel if you could reduce the dust to a negligible amount? This sander from Mirka promises to do just that, thanks to its Abranet abrasive discs

Mirka Deros 5650CV sander

£360

When I first heard of Abranet, Mirka's patented mesh abrasive product, it had just won Silver in the Hand Tools category at the DIY Week 2008 Industry awards. It seemed to represent very good value as it retains its abrasive cut for longer than a comparable paper- or cloth-based abrasive.

An abrasive breakthrough

Developed in Finland, Abranet – and the sanders that use it – are just some of the many innovative products which have kept this Helsinki-based company at the top of the abrasives market. Abranet is a patented net abrasive that allows super-efficient dust extraction through many thousands of minuscule holes; it's essentially a wire mesh. Arguably the most important development in the history of abrasives, it can be used with a modified and extracted hand sanding block. Abranet is at its most efficient, however, when used on one of the purpose-built sanders that Mirka manufacture themselves.

Direct to user

The Deros sander is a direct-drive machine which eliminates any unecessary gearing and results in a smaller, lighter and compact power tool, without sacrificing any performance. While the top-mounted paddle control makes this a sander which can be readily used in either hand, there's an additional on/off switch which is mildly confusing at first (and confounded most of my students who tried it on a recent woodworking course).

However, once you know it's there you should be fine, but I've still got mixed feelings about the switch and its close companions, the speed controls. The rationale behind sealed press switches is clear and understandable; no one wants their tools made inoperable with surplus paint or debris. And if you consider the ease with which the sander can be started accidentally when picking it up, an additional power control makes a bit more sense.

The Abranet mesh abrasive discs are clear winners in the sanding stakes

The top-mounted paddle switch suits left- or right-handed users

The slim spanner supplied with the sander enables easy disc head changes

The head fits

These are small issues, however. The most important thing for our purposes is the performance of the sander, and here things were very pleasing indeed. Most bi-headed sanders seem to work best and look right with the larger 150mm sanding head fitted. Not so the Mirka Deros; both small (125mm) and large heads fit right, feel right and sand right too.

When it came to changing the heads, I have to admit to being stumped for a while as my test sample came without instructions. Thanks to the wonders of the internet I was able to track down a relevant image and things became immediately clear. The slim spanner supplied wasn't just slim for cheapness of manufacture; it has to be a minimal thickness so it can slip down between the rigid base of the sander and the disc head itself.

Any loose tool or component can always be viewed as a potential weakness – it doesn't take much to lose a spanner in most workshops after all – but with a bit of care, not to mention an excellent carry case, things should be fine.

High standards

And now I've mentioned it, I have to admit to an extra pleasure bonus when I first received the Mirka package. The case is a Festool pattern Systainer model – but in Mirka yellow, of course – and it stacks perfectly onto most of my other kit. As someone who does a lot of work on site, this compatibility is a definite bonus. I hope that other manufacturers will eventually go down this route to standardisation too. Makita and Mafell have already taken the Systainer road.

The standardisation effect gets better with this Mirka sander. The extraction outlet has an external diameter of 26mm, making it a natural fit for a Festool extraction hose (and increasingly those of other brands). Most purchasers in this enormous and lucrative market tend to experience annoyance and irritation with mis-matched extraction hoses and outlets. Thank goodness for Gaffer tape… but it really would be easier if everyone stuck to a couple of common sizes, as fixed machinery makers mostly do.

Summing up

Even with my 'state of the past' vacuum extractor, I've been enjoying sanding a lot more of late… so much so that I ended up buying this sample sander. If you're in the market for some new sanding equipment, you could do a lot worse than to plump for this Scandinavian classic. ***MC***

SPECIFICATION

MOTOR	350W
HEAD DIAMETER	125 and 150mm
NO-LOAD SPEED	4000-10,000rpm
ORBIT DIAMETER	5 and 8mm
EXTRACTION OUTLET	26mm diameter
WEIGHT	1kg

ACCESSORIES extract hose, Abranet discs, Systainer case

VERDICT

This really is a quality piece of kit, offering superb dust-free sanding.

PROS
- Lightweight and compact
- Suits left-or right-handed users
- The Systainer carry case

CONS
- Initially confusing controls

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■□

PERFORMANCE ■■■■■■

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Mirka
- 01908 866100
- www.mirka.comuk

The case is also compatibile with other brands such as Festool

The multi-perforated sanding head makes for maximum extraction efficiency

Grub screws enable adjustment for use with heavier sanding heads

The Systainer-style carry case has room for lots of essential accessories

One of the problems of a woodworking workshop is the debris generated, whether in the form of chippings or dust. Life without some form of workshop extractor would be unthinkable nowadays. Here's a potential solution

Numatic NVD750 vacuum extractor

This Numatic extractor from the Axminster Trade Series is designed for collecting both chippings and dust, and can be connected to workshop machines and power tools.

£399.96

The twin motors are extremely powerful, and two hoses are supplied to cater for its dual use. The larger hose is intended for machines, and for planers in particular. A reducer allows the smaller hose to be connected to the main inlet where it screws in place.

Making connections

The opposite end of the small hose can be connected directly to a small machine or power tool, or the separate connector can be used which fits on the end and thus links the hose to the machine. This connector has stepped diameters of varying sizes and can be cut down to suit the dust outlet of the machine.

The end of the smaller hose has a large thread, allowing it to be connected directly to the side of the vacuum, or alternatively to the larger 100mm inlet by the use of a reducer.

Filter options

A system of filters ensures that all the chippings, and particularly all the dust, are collected efficiently. The chippings drop into the extractor's drum, while the dust is collected in a disposable bag. This bag connects to the inside of the dust inlet port, and is provided with a seal to operate when the bag is removed.

The drum lid fits tightly in place and is held firmly with a couple of toggle clips. Spent air is exhausted via a port on the top of the body, for which a cap is removed and replaced with a vented alternative.

The extractor isn't fitted with castors, so

SPECIFICATION

MOTOR	2 x 1200W
DRUM CAPACITY	35 litres
EXTRACTION RATE	300cu m/h
HOSE DIAMETERS	100 and 32mm
FLEX LENGTH	10m
WEIGHT	12.8kg

ACCESSORIES 4m x 100mm & 2.9m x 32mm hoses, step-down adapter, filter options

VERDICT

This excellent extractor earns its place in any small workshop.

PROS
- Powerful motors
- Choice of extract options
- Easy to empty and change filters

CONS
- No castors fitted

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■□

PERFORMANCE ■■■■■□

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Axminster
- 03332 406406
- www.axminster.co.uk

The NVD750 comes with a large-diameter hose for connection to workshop machines

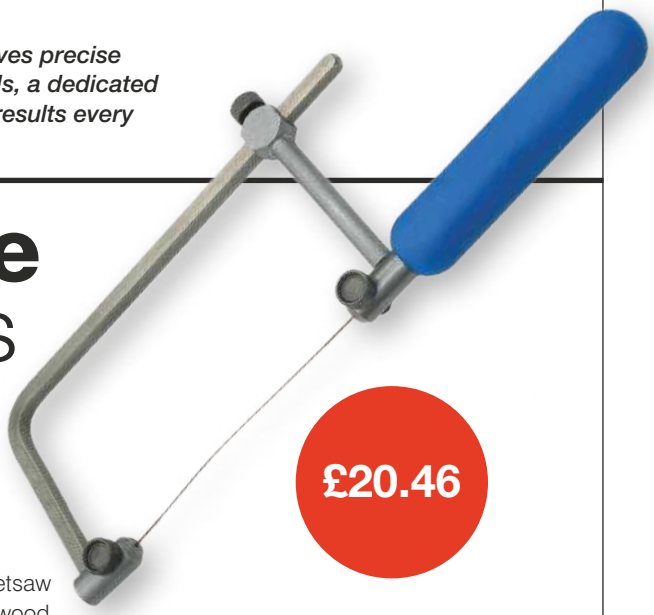
The smaller hose is connected to the 51mm outlet when using Hepaflo filter bags

The large hose is easily connected to the planer thicknesser, shown here in surfacing mode

The smaller hose is designed for use with power tools such as a hand-held saw

If you do any work that involves precise detail cutting of thin materials, a dedicated saw will guarantee the best results every time… at a price

Vallorbe jeweller's saw



£20.46

has to be lifted when moved. However, a separate wheeled chassis which clips in place is available; it costs £89.95. Alternatively, a simple base fitted with castors would not be difficult to make.

Using the extractor

My first use of this machine was with my planer thicknesser. Hardly a chipping escaped, with all the debris neatly sucked from the machine to the body of the extractor. Next I connected the smaller hose to a small dual-function belt and disc sander, which although small can create a lot of dust very quickly. As this is very fine dust, it's essential that it doesn't get into every corner of the workshop… or the air.

A jigsaw doesn't usually cause too much of a problem when in use, but nevertheless the sawdust is best kept under control. The small hose was fitted to the exhaust port at the rear of the body, and again the extractor did its job very thoroughly. The same applied with this hose connected to a large hand-held circular saw.

My final trial with the NVD750 was again with the small hose, connected to the rear of my router table. When I made this, I included a debris port at the rear of the fence, and found I got a very good fit when I connected the hose. Without it, debris was sprayed far and wide around the workshop, with the chippings shooting out everywhere. With my table connected to the extractor, I hardly needed a duster to make it look spotless.

Up to scratch

This extractor is made to an advanced standard, both in electrical terms and the way it caters for both chippings and dust. It conforms to the latest requirements of the Health & Safety Executive for woodworking machinery. Various extras are available, including a floor-cleaning kit, the mobility chassis mentioned earlier, and a range of replacement filter bags.

This extractor had passed all my trials, with my workshop looking as if I had spent days carrying out a spring clean. It's the power of this machine which is so impressive. This, combined with its efficiency to cater for chipping and dust collection, makes it more than earn its place in any small workshop. ***GW***

The Vallorbe jewellers' saw is 260mm long and has a 70mm wide throat. The saw takes standard 125mm plain-ended fretsaw blades, and can be used to cut wood, ferrous and non-ferrous metals when fitted with the appropriate blade.

The blue plastic handle is moulded onto the steel frame by means of a steel tang. The length of the frame is adjustable so that shorter (or even broken) blades can be used, and a knob locks the frame in position.

The blade is held in steel precision collets and the tension can be adjusted by releasing the top screw and pulling the frame back after the blade has been inserted in the collets.

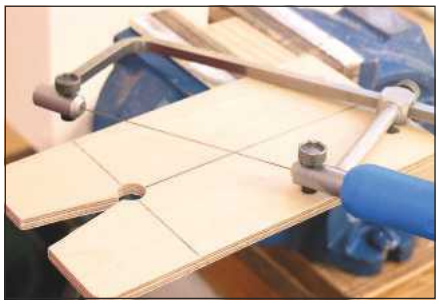
Using the saw

These saws are usually used in the vertical position to make really accurate and precise cuts. It's a simple matter to make a plywood work table with a V-cut and a hole, as shown in the photo. A batten underneath holds the table firmly in a vice.

The work is placed on the table and the saw is used vertically with the saw teeth pointing downwards so cuts are made on the downstroke. The workpiece is rotated with the other hand to achieve the desired cutting shape.

Although classed as a jeweller's saw, this is better described as a small hand fretsaw. It's ideal for modelling jobs and for small woodwork projects wherever a thin, fine blade is required. ***IW***

The fine blade is particularly suitable for cutting through spigots on turned work



The saw works best in conjunction with a homemade plywood work table

Fit the blade with the teeth pointing downwards and make the cut on the downstroke

VERDICT

This is the best jeweller's saw I've ever used. It's well balanced and very easy to use.

PROS ■ Well designed and made
■ Excellent blade clamping

CONS ■ None

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■

PERFORMANCE ■■■■■

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ Axminster
■ 03332 406406
■ www.axminster.co.uk

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The Varijig system from Trend allows the quick and accurate guiding of tools, such as routers, saws and drills, in a straight line. Based around a clamp guide rail, the system has a wide range of accessories. The items tested here were selected with the use of a hand-held router in mind

Trend Varijig system

Varijig clamp guide

£29

The Varijig clamp guide tested has jaws that open to 610mm wide. Other versions are available that span 915mm, 1270mm and an impressive 2440mm. The clamp body is made from extruded aluminium with a tough black finish. The extrusion has three T-slots along the top and a pair of plain slots underneath, for use by the various accessories. A metric-imperial scale slides into the central T-slot.

The hand lever on the clamp guide has four indent positions that control the amount of force applied between the fixed and sliding jaw. The jaw faces are made from a hard plastic and are dimpled to enhance their grip. The jaws also have pairs of holes for use when fitting accessories.

Using the guide

Hold the protruding side tabs to slide the jaw smoothly against the work. The jaw ingeniously locks in position when gentle pressure is applied to its face and releases when this pressure is removed. When it's aligned in position, move the lever between indents and the guide securely grips the work. The lever produces a large movement of the jaws during its first stage of travel – a neat touch! There was no discernible deflection of the clamp body when it was tightened.

The scale is supplied unfitted. I zeroed the scale relative to the fixed jaw and fastened it in position using 20mm of its self-adhesive backing. The scale is well protected by its slot and feels durable. I found the scale most useful when adjusting the position of the 'stop block' accessory.

The jaw faces are 14mm tall (and 36mm wide) so the clamp guide easily grips panels 15mm thick or greater and will also rest flat on the workbench. The dimpled jaws could mark finished work, so use some buffer material or the wide jaws accessory kit (see overleaf).

Summing up

This clamp guide is very effective. The sliding jaw moves freely, locking and releasing consistently. The lever works quickly and the dimpled jaws have the strong grip, essential for precise routed work. ***DR***

The clamp guide's sliding jaw moves freely and locks and releases consistently

VERDICT

This clamp guide is very effective and easy to use.

PROS ■ Good design and build quality
■ Excellent grip

CONS ■ Jaw dimples could mark work

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ Trend
■ 01923 249911
■ www.trend-uk.com

Varijig router base plate

The router base plate and clamp guide allow accurate joints to be routed

£18

The Varijig router base plate fits the router to the clamp guide and aids routing cuts in a perfect straight line. It has a clear plastic base with a black plastic head that hooks over a slot on the clamp guide. The base has pre-drilled holes spaced to mount a standard mid-size plunge router, such as the Trend T5 model. Spaced equally along the edge of the head are eight adjustable grub screws for removal of backlash when fitted to the clamp guide.

Using the base plate

The router is fixed to the base plate using a pair of screws and can be speedily detached for a change of use. Removal of backlash was straightforward by careful adjustment of the grub screws using the supplied Allen key. I found it easiest to adjust the two outer screws first, followed by the others. This needs to be done only once and is very effective. Afterwards the router base plate still easily engages and disengages in the slot on the clamp guide.

When the base plate is engaged with the clamp guide, the underside of the clear plastic base slides flush over the work and gives the router excellent stability.

Alignment of the router cutter to the cutting line requires small adjustments of the clamp guide position, by checking the router location at each end of the required cut before clamping it tight. While cutting, the clear base gives a good view of progress and where the cut will proceed – handy for stopped cuts.

Of course, vacuum extraction is needed; otherwise the view becomes obscured. When cutting a rebate I found it useful to support the overhanging base plate using some material of similar thickness to the work.

VERDICT

I expect to use the router plate and clamp guide combination a lot in my workshop.

PROS ■ Clever design
■ Excellent build quality

CONS ■ None

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ See panel on page 81

Summing up

The router base plate is probably the most useful accessory for the clamp guide. It provides a great way to rout straight grooves and rebates quickly and accurately. It's well designed and easy to use. ***DR***

Varijig wide jaw kit

£7

The wide jaw prevents damage to the workpiece while cutting a broad housing joint

This is a pair of large smooth-faced jaws, supplied with screws to attach them to the clamp guide. To avoid clamping marks on the work being held, each jaw has six pre-drilled holes for attaching additional spreaders to increase the contact area. The jaw faces are 105mm wide and 32mm tall.

Using the jaws

The wide jaws slip over the standard jaws on the Trend clamp guide. They are moulded from a tough plastic and are well engineered, with plenty of thick reinforcing webs. When clamped, the jaws still have a very firm grip on the work. Their 32mm height works well for gripping thicker work that can rest flat on the workbench. However, they do reduce the maximum clamping span by 26mm.

Summing up

This is a useful, easy to use and well designed accessory for your clamp guide. It's worth having on hand for when clamp marks on the workpiece would be a concern. The option of adding additional spreaders is a neat feature. ***DR***

VERDICT

This is a well-designed accessory for the clamp guide.

PROS ■ Ideal for larger and finished work
■ Unlikely to mark wood

CONS ■ None

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ See panel on page 81

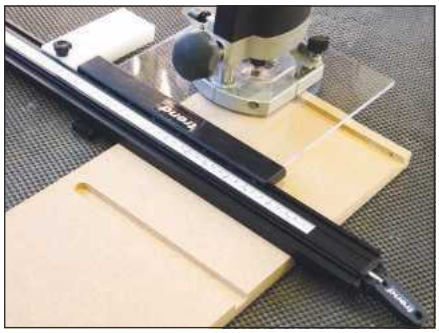
Varijig end stop block

£9

The Varijig end stop block is a simple accessory designed to limit the travel of the tool along the clamp guide. It's made from a piece of solid white plastic that has been carefully machined to engage with the T-slot on the clamp guide. A knob and T-bolt locks the stop block into position.

Using the block

The stop block fits onto the clamp guide with no discernible flex. The block slides smoothly and fine adjustments in position are easily made. The scale on the clamp guide is useful when making adjustments to the stop position. I found the block worked well whilst routing multiple stopped grooves.



Multiple stopped housing joints like these are easily cut using the slop block

Summing up

This is a simple, well-designed accessory that does exactly what it promises. ***DR***

VERDICT

This is a simple, well-designed accessory.

PROS ■ Well engineered
■ Easy to use

CONS ■ Quite expensive for what it is

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ See panel on page 81

Varijig squaring attachment

£9

The Varijig squaring attachment is designed to help square up the clamp guide against the work. The attachment is effectively an extra-wide jaw made from tough plastic, with a dimpled face measuring 13mm tall and 178mm wide. It fits over the standard fixed jaw and also engages into the slots underneath the clamp guide, and is secured to the guide with two screws.

Using the attachment

Before use, the attachment requires a pair of holes to be drilled in the underside of the clamp guide. When fitting it, hold the attachment tight against the standard jaw face, and screw it to the clamp guide. The attachment also has some moulded protrusions that engage into both slots underneath the clamp guide. These provide additional mechanical support that will help it withstand knocks and bumps in the workshop.

With the attachment fitted the guide rail is quicker to align. For fine work you would still need to check alignment and make any small adjustments in position before tensioning the clamp guide.

The squaring attachment is fitted to the base of the clamp guide

Summing up

This is a good idea and helps initial alignment on the work, but an alignment check is still beneficial if carrying out precise work. ***DR***

VERDICT

This is another clever addition to the Varijiig range, but us hardly essential.

PROS ■ Quicker initial alignment on work

CONS ■ The need to drill two holes in your clamp guide

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ See panel on page 81

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Stanley ratchet brace, 8in swing two-jaw model in excellent condition, with selection of auger and flat bits; £35.
01189 712472 (West Berkshire)

Stanley Bailey No 4 smoothing plane in excellent condition; £20.
01189 712472 (West Berkshire)

Black & Decker sander, 1/3-sheet orbital finishing model, 135W, in good boxed condition with dust extraction kit; £10.
01189 712472 (West Berkshire)

Makita table saw, model MLT100, 1500W motor, with folding floor stand, used only once so in excellent condition; £199. Buyer collects.
01455 843668 (Leicestershire)

Proxxon angle grinder, LHW long-neck model with case, used once so as new; £80 plus £5 p&p.
07775 510724 (Essex)

Milescraft router 3D pantograph, new, boxed and unused; £50 plus £7 p&p.
07775 510724 (Essex)

Walnut boards, air-dried, seven straight-edged pieces measuring approx 2100 x 380 x 32mm; £75 each or £450 the lot.
07771 663964 (Warwickshire)

Shopsmith Mark V plus bandsaw and planer, little used so in very good condition, can be dismantled for transport; £750.
01536 771455 (Leics/Northants)

WANTED

Leigh dovetail jig, D4 24in model.
0141 943 0406 (Glasgow)

Manual/instruction booklet, original or photocopy, for Kity 413 bandsaw. Please email knowlesam123@outlook.com or phone
0161 220 8511 (Manchester)

Woodworker magazines, pre-1951 plus 1984-1986. Grandfather collecting for cabinetmaker grandson.
01493 368180 (Norfolk)

Spiers / Norris / Henley planes wanted by private collector; any quote beaten. Ring Ron Lowe on
01530 834581 (Leics)

Woodworking hand tools, especially old wood and metal planes, wanted by collector. Write to Mr B Jackson, 10 Ayr Close, Stamford PE9 2TS or call
01780 751768 (Lincs)

Woodworking tools: planes by Norris, Spiers, Mathieson, Preston, Slater etc, brass braces, interesting rules and spirit levels; top prices paid, auction prices beaten.
01647 432841 (Devon)

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The Woodworker MARKETPLACE

- This space is available only to private individuals wishing to buy or sell woodworking machinery and tools.
- The maximum value of any item for sale must not exceed £500. A small fee is payable for items offered at over £500; please ring 01689 869852 for details.
- Each coupon is valid for one free insertion in the next available issue.
- The publisher accepts no responsibility for errors or omissions in this section.

Please publish this advertisement in the next available edition of *The Woodworker*. I am a private advertiser and have no trade connections.

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My advertisement (max 20 words please) reads as follows:

Name _____

Address _____

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Postcode_____ Daytime tel no._____

Signature _____

Please write your advertisement in BLOCK CAPITALS and send it to: *The Woodworker* Marketplace, MyTime Media Ltd, Enterprise House, Enterprise Way, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 6HF. You can also email your free ad to: thewoodworker@mytimemedia.com Send/email a photograph of your item and we'll include it with your ad for FREE

In your own write...

Here are just a few of the latest letters we've received since the last issue. Drop us a line on paper or via screen and keyboard to add your voice to the woodworking crowd; you might be one of the lucky few who will manage to get their hands on a coveted *Woodworker* badge!

SNAIL MAIL OR EMAIL?

You can write to us at *The Woodworker*, MyTime Media Ltd, Enterprise House, Enterprise Way, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6HF or send an email to mark.cass@mytimemedia.com

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hi Mark

I know that you must always be looking for ideas to fill your excellent magazine, and I wondered if this might be of interest.

As you are no doubt aware, there were almost 900,000 ceramic poppies produced for the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* remembrance installation at the Tower of London last November.

All were sold to members of the public to help support six service charities, and one was bought to be displayed in our local scout hut. As my daughter is the scout leader there, I was 'volunteered' to make a small cabinet for it so it could be put on show. It occurred to me that there might others looking for a similar idea.

As you can see, the cabinet is made of English oak, with the poppy held to a false back with a turned centre button. The poppy came with a hole in its centre, and was held on its steel rod with what looked like a couple of rubber tap washers!

I don't think that I have the skills to write an article about making this, but I'm happy to supply sizes and other details for anyone who wants to produce it.

Roy Barwell, a subscriber

What a fine job, Roy! If any other readers would to make one, please get in touch. And if you have any other ideas for displaying historical artefacts like this, I'd love to hear about them.

Mark

BERMUDA BONUS

Hello Mark

I had a stroke of luck recently when a friend of the family was having work done on her cottage. She was taking out some shelves from the alcoves in her living room, and asked if I wanted them. I said yes, expecting they might be pine. But no, they're a hardwood – probably mahogany.

I've wanted to make a Bermuda chest for some time, having seen Norm Abrams make one in his New Yankee Workshop. My version is half scale, but I think it works well.

Kindest regards

Rob Winter

That was a very handy little windfall, Rob. It's hard to tell from the photo exactly what timber it is, but free hardwood is never a bad thing.

I like the way the chest sits inside the frame of the stand, and I'm also very pleased to see that you gave the top proper breadboard ends. These will really help to keep it flat in all that Bermudan heat and humidity, and it gives the piece a professional appearance too. Tidy dovetails, a neat lock job… and I like the little slide tray inside; all in all that's a very good result.

Mark

CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

Dear Mark

When I was an apprentice carpenter and joiner in 1955-1960, *The Woodworker* wasn't as glossy and full of pictures as it is today. I remember that the articles dealt mainly with very basic stuff such as how to cut tenons and dovetails. However, there was one article I always loved reading that we don't see anymore.

It was called *Chips from the Chisel*, and often featured characters in the trade – real colourful craftsmen who had a wealth of experience, with their own anecdotes about the people in their lives. We all knew a few of those back then.

I would love to see articles written by these old craftsmen – retired now, but still full of life and tales and escapades of when they were strong and healthy and working hard to make a living. Keep up the good work. We need your input to keep the old crafts alive.

John

Hi John,

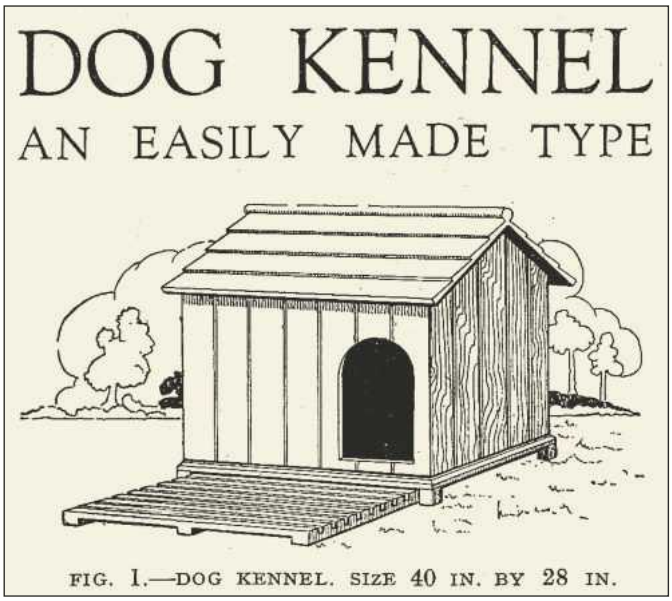
As current editor and custodian of the Woodworker archives, I too have become a big fan of this particular feature. It ran for a long time (I'm not sure exactly how long, but I will investigate) and, as well as providing a journal of woodworking life, it touched on many related subjects, and all in an accessibly philosophical way.

I always try to continue the dialogue that Chips successfully started, and I'm inviting readers to contribute their own stories or anecdotes from their working lives, then and now. Hopefully we'll get enough of a response to run an updated version of this popular column.

Mark

Give a dog a home

Before the days of widespread central heating, and the advent of the domestic house as fortress, it wasn't uncommon for family pets to spend the night out in the open


DOG KENNEL

AN EASILY MADE TYPE

FIG. 1.—DOG KENNEL. SIZE 40 IN. BY 28 IN.

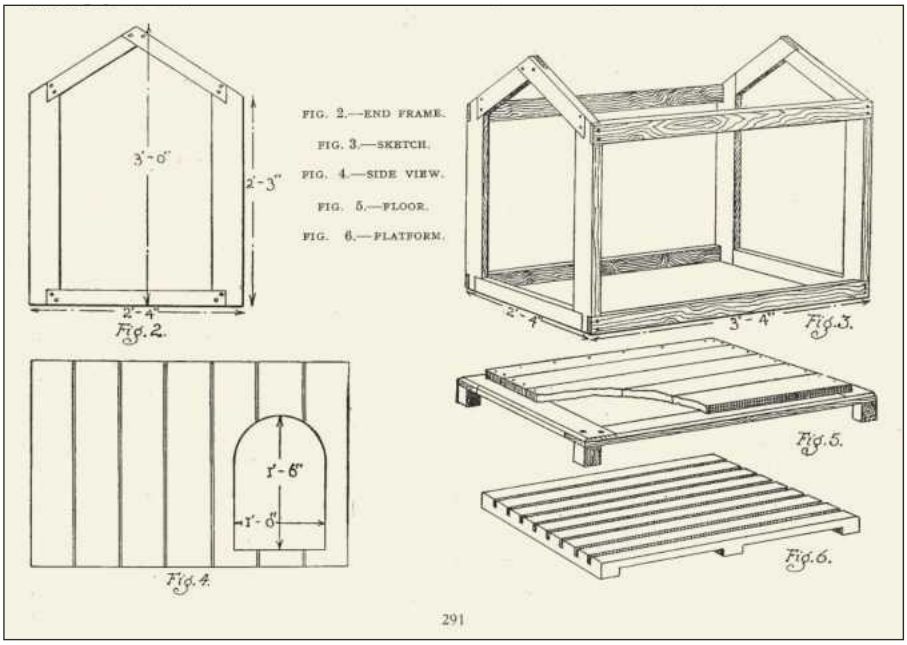
Most cats can generally fend for themselves, but dogs have traditionally been provided with some kind of makeshift shelter in which to while away the night-watch hours. Here's the *Woodworker* version from September 1934.

Going soft

Some may say that we as a society are gradually becoming softer and more pampered, and much less immune to unpleasantness and discomfort. I'm sure I'm not alone in thinking that, while it might seem all very easy with our modern conveniences and comforting technologies, there could well be a future price to pay. Excessive cleanliness and a growing intolerance of anything even remotely dirty… don't get me started!

Hardy animals

Anyway, as it is with us humans, so it is fast becoming with our pets. As well as our children, I suspect we're passing on our new values and anxieties to our pets too. When was the last time you saw a dog in a kennel in the UK? Anyone who lives on a farm or somewhere out in the country may have this type of accommodation for a dog, but I suspect that any townies who choose to house their pooch outside these days would be risking reproof and possible online censure from a large part of the population. I hope I'm wrong there, but I think we sometimes forget that animals are much hardier than we are.



Home is where the heart is

Any reader who used this simple design from *The Woodworker* to build a dog house would probably have earned his canine companion's undying love. The placement of the door to one side, quite different from clichéd versions portrayed in cartoons (I'm thinking Butch's kennel in Tom and Jerry) strikes me as being a great idea, and the pull-out duckboard (stored under the raised floor) gives a dog somewhere dry and comfortable to rest, regardless of local ground conditions. The construction, while basic, is nonetheless considered and, if followed, would undoubtedly result in a sturdy abode and a long-lasting one too.

If anyone reading this does keep their dog(s) in a kennel, I'd love to hear about it and will cheerfully print any photos of same that are emailed in to me on my usual address (mark.cass@mytimemedia.com).

More from The Woodworker archive next month…

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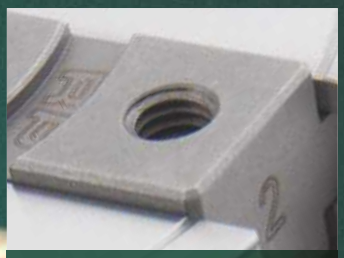
Introducing the Brand New Range of Woodturning Chucks and Jaws

We are extremely proud to introduce the brand new range of Record Power woodturning chucks and jaws. This exclusive new range has been developed using Record Power's extensive experience and knowledge of woodturning in conjunction with a group of highly experienced professional and hobby woodturners, to bring you the ultimate in quality, versatility and value.

Precision Engineered Gears
Super Geared True-Lock™ technology ensures high levels of accuracy to provide smooth and solid operation.

Jaw Fixing System
The SC3 and SC4 feature a jaw fixing which will not only fit the Record Power series of Jaws but is also fully compatible with Nova and Robert Sorby brand jaws.



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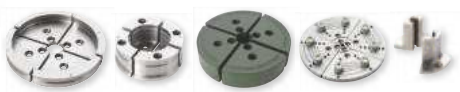
The SC4 features a strong backing plate to protect the gear mechanism from dust and 72-point indexing around the full circumference.

Brand New Exclusive Jaw Range
Fully compatible with Nova brand chucks



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