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SPIN OFF:

Let your competitive juices flow with Martin Saban-Smith's turned spinning top arena design



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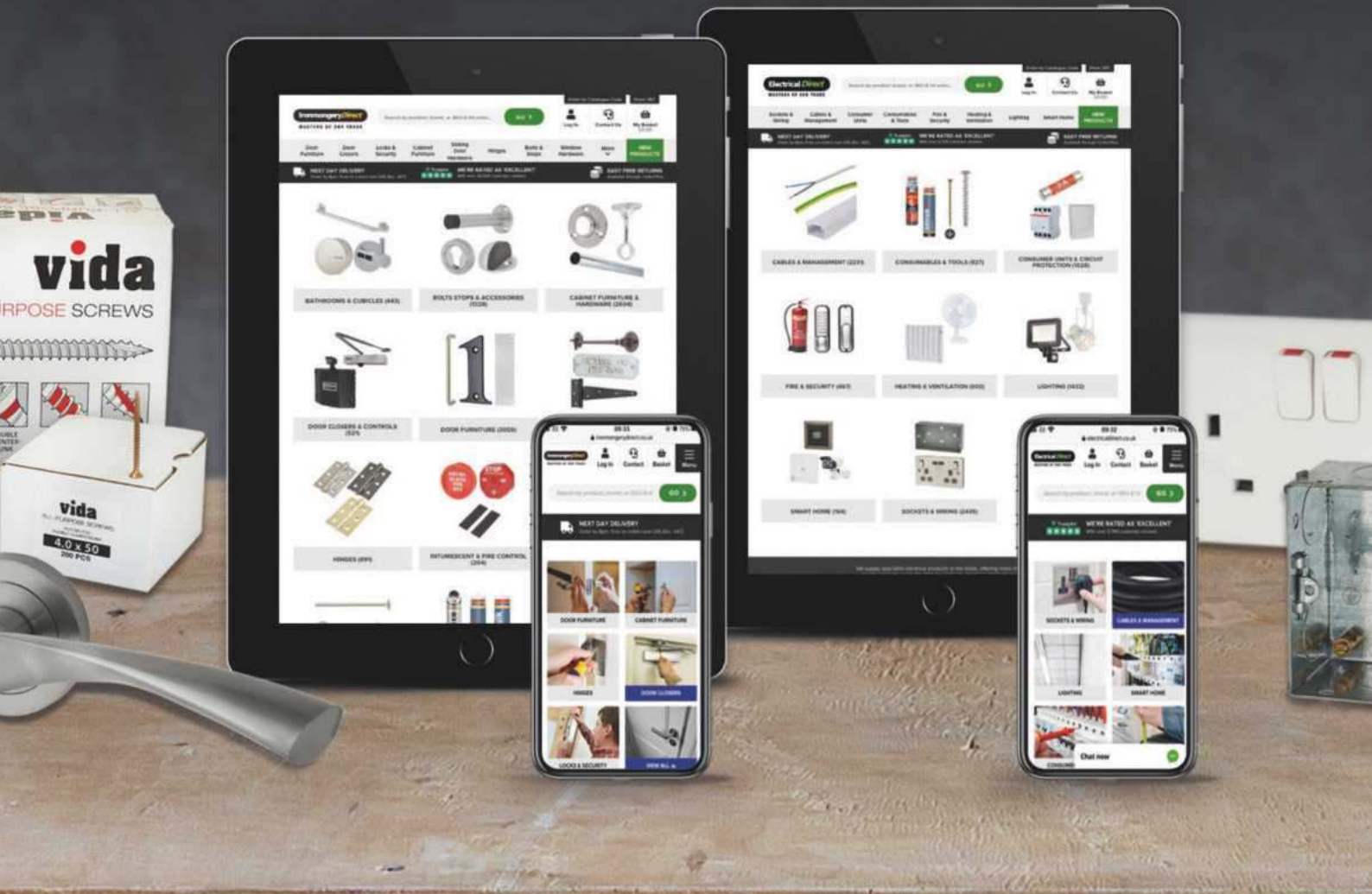
- ON TEST EXCLUSIVE: NOVA SATURN DVR XP LATHE
- PAUL GREER EXPLORES THE ART OF CHAINSAW SCULPTING
- MARTIN PIM-KEIRLE SHARES HIS DUST EXTRACTION BOX DESIGN

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Welcome

As we head into March, not only are the days becoming longer, the air warmer and the workshop more hospitable, but I see it as a time of change and transition. This couldn't be more accurate as we head into our spring issues, which see us welcoming a whole array of exciting new authors and content.

New authors, ahoy!

Most of you, especially if you happen to be a woodturner, will be familiar with the ever-popular Martin Saban-Smith, who's email signature certainly takes some beating in terms of links and accolades! Yes, this man is undoubtedly busy, not to mention in demand, but there's a reason for that. When I met Martin at last year's 'Harrogate' show, I was thrilled when he mentioned writing for the magazine and bringing his wealth of expertise in not only turning, but also journalism and photography to enrich his already very exciting and competent projects – how could I possibly say no?! With a YouTube following of some 30,000, Martin's content is hugely popular, then there's the fact he developed the Hampshire Sheen range of finishing products, which really are going from strength to strength. Martin will be contributing to the magazine each month, as well as testing new turning kit – see his exclusive review of the new NOVA Saturn DVR XP lathe on page 16. So welcome aboard, Martin and if you have any questions, or if there's anything about his spinning top arena you'd like to learn, just let us know and we'll be sure to put you in touch.

Next on the list is woodworking journalist turned budding furniture maker, Simon Frost. I'm pleased to say I've known Simon for a fair few years now, meeting him when we worked together for a competitor publishing company many moons ago. I was very sad to see him go, but during that time he moved to London and really developed his writing skills, before realising that woodworking was his ultimate passion. Taking the leap and using his savings to facilitate enrolment on Marc Fish's course, over a recent lunch, Simon commented

how he's never looked back, and since then, he's been able to build his own garden workshop, not to mention setting up his own part-time business, focusing on French polishing and restoration. Simon has a whole host of hand tool kit on his bench, so check out his first test on Rowdens Fine Furniture Maker tools in the next issue.

Hand versus machine

Jeremy Broun also brings us another lead-up article as we count down to the entry deadline of the hugely exciting Alan Peters Furniture Award 2020. This month he explores the nature of woodworking skill and the evolution of tools, but we want to know what you think. As Jeremy states: "The Award emphasises 'hand' skill, yet realistically, furniture making today involves machining. The Award also encourages design and innovation and to exclude digital technology would seem Luddite in this day and age. So the Award guidelines include 'limited CNC input' but with the emphasis clearly on hand making."

With only a few months to go until the deadline approaches (30 May), how have the guidelines shaped your entry and what are your views on the 'is CNC craft' debate? We're also very much enjoying seeing your submissions come in as we put the finishing touches in place for the upcoming judging ceremony on 29 June, plus the accompanying exhibitions that will follow.

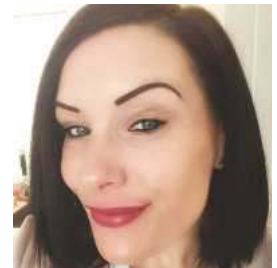
Woodworking stories

Before you go, we'd like to encourage you to keep sharing the stories of how your woodworking journey is developing, plus photos of the projects you're making – indeed anything that enriches our woodworking community. We love to receive your letters and emails, so do keep them coming!

Enjoy!

Tegan

Email tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com



Tegan Foley

Group Editor



Phil Davy

Technical & Consultant Editor

We endeavour to ensure all techniques shown in this issue are safe, but take no responsibility for readers' actions. Take care when woodworking and always use guards, goggles, masks, hold-down devices and ear protection, and above all, plenty of common sense. Do remember to enjoy yourself, though

WIN!



A set of 4 Triton AutoJaws™ clamps

In conjunction with Triton Tools, we're giving away a set of 4 clamps from their brand-new AutoJaws™ range – see page 24 for details



SEND IN YOUR TOP WORKSHOP HINT/TIP/ POINTER OR PIECE OF ADVICE & YOU COULD BE IN WITH A CHANCE OF WINNING A **VERITAS APRON PLANE FITTED WITH PM-V11 BLADE** – see page 59 for details



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Edward Hopkins wonders

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Don't miss out on the opportunity of be part of this fantastic new award, which champions UK furniture making talent while celebrating the life and work of the late Alan Peters OBE

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(Keep the engine running)

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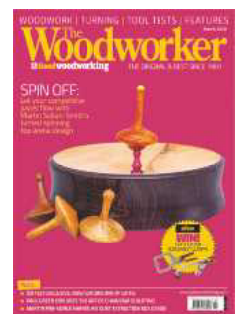
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HAMPSHIRE SHEEN SHINES INTO 2020



Popularity of the finishing and colouring products by Hampshire Sheen has grown hugely in the last five years. As a result, in 2020, this dynamic company is to outsource its manufacturing while bringing food contact and toy safe compliance to the products.

After making over 14,000 pots of wax by hand in 2019, demand for the finishing products by UK-based Hampshire Sheen has grown so much that developer Martin Saban-Smith has invited a specialist wax blending company to take on manufacture of the range of products.

Since the products first became available in 2015, the finishes have been labelled 'for decorative use only' but now, with the experience and expertise of a specialist blender, the flagship High Gloss and Microcrystalline Wax products comply to food contact and toy safe regulations in the UK, Europe, USA, Canada, Australia and South Africa.

"I'm so excited about this move," says Martin, "the food and toy safety compliance will encourage more people to pick up a tin, give it a go and enjoy it as much as the thousands of existing users. This also means I should have extra time to reach more people through social and traditional media, while teaching and demonstrating more."

Disheartened by the quality of finishes he was using when he first started woodturning, Martin wanted a finish that met simple criteria: it should keep its shine with regular handling for

considerably longer than other available waxes, while also being fingerprint and splash resistant. Hampshire Sheen was then developed through the summer of 2015 with a special blend using carnauba and microcrystalline waxes. Sales grew rapidly, and within a few months of the launch, it became clear that the Hampshire Sheen wax blend was on course for rapid growth.

Since then, the company has gone from strength to strength with retailers in the UK, Europe, America, Canada, Australia and South

Africa. The company produces a simple, highly effective and long lasting finishing system for woodturners that includes finishing and embellishing waxes, cellulose sealer, food and toy safe oil and an acrylic spray lacquer. The company also produces a range of 12 atmospheric water-based dyes in the 'Intrinsic Colour Collection'.

"The products I developed work brilliantly and it was important for me to ensure that Hampshire Sheen

users receive the same quality product as when I was making them myself," says Martin. "The samples from the new manufacturer have not disappointed and I'm thrilled that Hampshire Sheen users will now be able to use the new products on a wider range of projects."

Starting at the end of January, the new food contact and toy safe High Gloss and Microcrystalline waxes will start to be sent out to retailers. For more information, see www.hampshiresheen.com.



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- 16–20 Five-day woodturning
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- 31–2 Adirondack chair
- * Course held in Sittingbourne, Kent

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- 6–8 Shaker box making
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- 14–15 Sussex trug making workshop
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- 29 Horse logging

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- 14 & 28 DIY in a day – drills
- 15 Intro to woodturning
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The event showcases over 100 of the very best designer-makers from across the UK, selling their work directly to the public, including the finest ceramics, wood, silver, jewellery, glass, textiles and more.

Visitors to Craft Festival Cheltenham will have the unique opportunity to meet award-winning makers and discover the stories behind their carefully curated work. Attendees can watch live demonstrations in jewellery, ceramics, printing, textiles and more, with the opportunity to ask questions about their techniques and inspirations. You can also visit the inspiring Start Up area, which is dedicated to designer-makers in the first two years of business. Craft Festival strongly believes in nurturing new talent, encouraging budding new business and giving them a supportive platform to grow.

In a world that is increasingly more conscious about our shopping habits, buying handmade has never been more important. Buying directly from the maker, who is mindful about sustainable materials and production techniques, ensures that the pieces are ethical, produced in small batches, often one-offs, as well as being beautifully made.

For advance tickets and more information, see www.craftfestival.co.uk/cheltenham.



DICKIES EXPANDS POPULAR BOOT STYLE

Global workwear brand Dickies has launched a new colour for its popular Cameron boot.

Now available in Honey – as well as Black and Brown – the Cameron is comfortable and durable and is easy to coordinate with either smart or casual looks.

The Cameron features Dickies' innovative DTI outsole, which is designed to offer optimum underfoot comfort. The sole is also SRC slip resistant compliant and fuel and oil resistant, making the boots ideal for a range of working environments.

An S3 safety boot, the Cameron is fully waterproof and benefits from a composite toe-cap and non-metallic midsole anti-penetration protection.

"Whether you need to look smart and professional or favour a more casual image while working, the Cameron boot has an appealing style that's proving popular among tradespeople," said James Whitaker, Marketing Director.

"However, the fashion-led design doesn't compromise on the comfort and durability needed by those who spend most of their day on their feet. We test each and every footwear product above and beyond safety regulation to ensure they are fully fit for purpose, providing protection and comfort to those who rely on them."

The Cameron boot, including the new Honey colour, is available at: www.dickiesworkwear.com.



NEW SHOKUNIN JAPANESE SAWS FROM AXMINSTER

Japanese woodworking tools have long been regarded as some of the most finely crafted in the world. Made using the best quality steels, Shokunin is a carefully selected collection of Japanese artisan hand tools. Unlike their western counterparts, these saws cut on the pull stroke. With the blade working under tension, this allows it to be both harder and thinner. As a result, they require less effort when in use and remain sharper for longer, giving a much cleaner cut.

The Shokunin Kataba crosscut saw is the equivalent of a western rip or panel saw. There is nothing to limit the depth of cut, allowing the saw to cut across wide boards or sheet material as well as trimming batten to length. The Kataba has a 240mm long blade.

The Ryoba double-edged saw is the ultimate tenon saw with one edge for ripping down the cheeks and the other to cleanly crosscut the shoulders. The teeth leave an incredibly clean finish, which has the added benefit of saving time. This saw comes in three lengths: 210mm, 240mm and 270mm.

The Dozuki tenon saw cuts smoothly and with ease. Special nickel plating on the blade protects it from corrosion and resin build-up. The plating is highly reflective; by observing the reflection of the timber on the side of the blade and keeping the reflection aligned and level with the timber, the cut will automatically be vertical. It is surprising how accurate this method can be.

The Tatebiki dovetail saw features an extremely thin blade and fine rip cutting teeth. It is the perfect saw for cutting dovetails and other fine joints. Performance is exceptional, requiring very little effort with the weight of the saw and the sharp teeth doing all the work.

The Atsuba crosscut saw has a curved tip with teeth, which allows cutting to begin in the centre of the board or panel. A gentle back and forth motion gradually deepens the cut until the saw breaks through and the full cutting edge is put to use.

The Jushi tenon saw has a stiff back spine supporting a blade only 0.3mm thick with fine rip cutting teeth. The ultra thin, fine-toothed saw blade allows precise, tear-free cuts with maximum control when doing detail work. The tooth profile and impulse hardening make this saw perfect for cutting a variety of plastics from hard acrylic to PVC pipes.

The Flushcut saw is for the flush trimming of protruding tenons or dowels without marring the surrounding surface. The thin and incredibly flexible blade has two edges: a fine tooth pitch on one side for hardwoods and a slightly coarser pitch on the other for softwood.

Prices start at £17.75 (inc VAT); for more information, see www.axminster.co.uk.





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MORE EFFICIENCY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: BOSCH PROFESSIONAL POWER TOOLS PUT THE FINISHING TOUCH ON SUSTAINABLE SURFBOARDS MADE IN PORTUGAL

Portugal's wild Atlantic coast has become a hotspot for surfers from all over the world thanks to its 'super tubes' – large, tube-shaped waves. One of the best-known surf spots is the Peniche peninsula, located 90km north of Lisbon. Here, a constant stream of high waves all-year-round beckons courageous surfers to test their mettle against the forces of nature.

For one such surfer – José Antunes, also known as Zé, the founder of Yoni Surfboards – it is particularly important that the ever-expanding surf culture does not lose sight of sustainability and environmental protection. The passionate wave rider intends to take a stand against the increasing use of non-recyclable materials in surfboard construction. He has dedicated himself to manufacturing sustainable boards made from wood.

His approach goes back to the origins of surfing. 3,000 years ago, Polynesians were using wooden planks to ride the waves. Zé combines the primordial characteristics of these early surfboards with the innovative technology of today, to create an end product that's particularly flexible. "To make a very light surfboard, I would use agave wood, which I then combine with paulownia wood to ensure it remains sufficiently robust. The entire development process is environmentally friendly. Any excess wood I end up with is used for the fins of the boards or composted. With these sustainable boards, I'm hoping to bring the sport in harmony with nature. At Yoni Surfboards, we have also pledged to plant a new tree for every board that's sold," explains Zé.

Flexible & independent working with cordless tools

The different types of wood that Zé uses to build his surfboards originate exclusively from Portugal. "From one poplar, I can make up to 30 surfboards," he remarks. He also uses cordless tools in addition to manual ones for more accuracy in his work. "Sanding down a surfboard by hand can be very tiring, so, I use power tools to help with this quite a lot. I finish the outer edges of the surfboards, or rails as they are called, using the GKF 12V-8 Professional, the first 12V cordless edge router from Bosch, as well as the GHO 12V-20 Professional cordless planer. These help with the precision of the work."

Both tools are equipped with powerful EC motors and are powered by high-performance lithium-ion batteries. When carrying out this task, the surfboard manufacturer can choose between different 12V batteries ranging from 2-6Ah. The Bosch Professional 12V and 18V system



guarantee compatibility with new and existing power tools and chargers of the respective voltage class.

For example, the 18V system also incorporates high-performance batteries from the ProCORE18V series. Zé uses these to power cordless tools, which allow him to work independently and free of any interruptions, even when it comes to the most power-intensive applications. The ProCORE18V batteries are also the most compact high-performance

batteries with 18V of power on the market, due to the combination of a new cell generation with higher capacity and a battery design with improved CoolPack technology. This means that the batteries provide a higher current output while remaining compact. With a choice of 4, 8 and 12Ah, Zé also has the ideal battery size and runtime for any application, such as when he uses them with the GKF 18V-57 G Professional hand-held circular saw. Together with guide rails, he can use this saw to precisely cut the wooden slats for the top – also known as the 'deck' – and bottom of the surfboards.

Dust extraction

Besides the fact that work progresses quickly, Zé also benefits from another important aspect. "When working with wood, large amounts of sawdust are released. An effective dust extraction system makes working cleaner and less detrimental to my health. The high-performance batteries support me with this," he explains, as he connects the GAS 18V-10 L Professional cordless wet/dry extractor to his hand-held circular saw with an adaptor. He has also equipped the extractor with the ProCORE18V battery, meaning that he can benefit from a longer runtime. "Cordless tools are important assistants when it comes to making perfectly crafted boards. The high-performance batteries are very efficient. They help us to work sustainably," explains the surfboard manufacturer when summarising the benefits of the Bosch Professional 18V system.

"Surfing is far more than just a sport; it's akin to meditation in natural surroundings. And when I can do that with an environmentally friendly surfboard that I've made with my own hands, that's something quite special. I not only feel good about it, but I'm also very proud."

To find out more about Bosch Professional power tools, see www.bosch-professional.co.uk.



NEW POWER PLANERS & SANDERS FROM MACHINE MART

Clarke CEP 450 60mm 450W planer (230V)

This versatile, lightweight planer features a 450W, 230V motor. With a 60mm width of cut it is ideal for hanging doors and a safety lock switch prevents accidental starting. Two sizes of V-groove are ideal for chamfering corners on workpieces – £41.99.

Clarke CEP720 82mm planer

This high performance planer features a powerful 720W, 230V motor. It has a V-groove base for chamfering and a park rest to avoid unintentional damage to the workpiece and blades. For added safety there is also a lock-off button that prevents accidental operation and an easy empty zipped dust bag can be attached to either side with left or right chip/dust extraction – £53.99.

Clarke Contractor CON950 110mm planer

This high performance professional grade planer features a powerful 950W, 230V motor. Two V-groove depths on the base allow for chamfering and a park rest avoids unintentional damage to the workpiece and blades. A lock-off button prevents accidental operation and a dust bag or vacuum extraction hose can be attached to either side with selectable left or right chip/dust extraction – £81.59.

Clarke CPS125 125W palm sander

This compact sander has a triangular-shaped base, making it ideal for detail sanding of corners or other difficult-to-access areas – £23.98.

Clarke COS210 1/2 sheet sander

A compact, lightweight sander with variable speed, which is ideal for smaller sanding jobs. The ergonomic design allows for ease of use and optimal user comfort – £28.79.

Clarke Contractor CON320 Professional 1/2 sheet sander

A large rugged sander with variable speed, ideal for both trade and DIY users. It features an ergonomic design and comfort grip for ease of use and is perfect for smoothing floors around edges prior to using a floor sander – £41.99.

Please note prices include VAT – to find out more, see www.machinemart.co.uk.



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FESTOOL SYSTAINER³ STORAGE BOXES & ORGANISERS

MANUFACTURER: Festool
D&M GUIDE PRICE: See our website for current offers

New from Festool the new Systainer³ generation of toolboxes and organisers enables you to be more mobile than ever before. Festool, TANOS and Bott have collaboratively developed a mobility system that brings the workshop and the construction site closer together. It is perfectly integrated into Bott vario3 vehicle equipment, allowing you to safely deploy the familiar arrangement and simple handling that you are used to from the Systainer³ system in your vehicle as well.

Machines, accessories and consumables are optimally protected, clearly stored and easy to transport in the Systainer³. Thanks to the established T-LOC operating element, it can be closed, opened and connected in a single movement.

Systainer³ products are compatible with one another and can be connected to all previous Systainer³ generations, mobile dust extractors and many other system accessories.



MAKITA DKP181Z 18V BRUSHLESS CORDLESS PLANER

MANUFACTURER: Makita
D&M GUIDE PRICE: See our website for current offers

The new DKP181Z cordless planer from Makita delivers heavy-duty cutting performance thanks to a high-powered brushless motor, allowing a massive 3mm maximum cutting depth and a no load speed of 12,000rpm. This is combined with Automatic torque Drive Technology (ADT), which automatically adjusts speed and torque depending on the load conditions for optimal cutting. The new plane also features an electric brake and a foot on the baseplate, increasing safety and protecting workpieces from any possible damage.

Another new feature of the DKP181Z is Auto-start Wireless System (AWS) – available separately – enabling wireless connection to a compatible Bluetooth vacuum for on demand dust extraction, providing a cleaner and safer work environment. The DKP181 is available as a body only with or without the AWS receiver unit, or as a kit with 2 x 5Ah batteries, charger and case.



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NOVA SATURN DVR XP LATHE

Martin Saban-Smith takes a look at this good looking middle weight lathe, which works to its strengths and offers a variety of options to the tech-savvy turner

I'm no stranger to NOVA products in my workshop. I have a small collection of Comet lathes and the big brother to the Saturn, the Galaxi. I was excited to give this new offering the once over after it arrived well packed into two large boxes.

Lifting any part of this machine to put it together is certainly a two (or more) man job. The legs are OK for a one-man lift, but the bed and headstock (at around 85kg) are mighty heavy. Make sure you have a good think about the easiest way you can assemble it before doing so. Once bolted together (it is a very simple build, just heavy), I could then have a good look round the machine and read through the instructions.

Lathe features

The power switch is located on the back of the headstock directly below the power lead and the cable for the emergency stop button. Once

pressed, the lathe sings a digital ditty to you while it boots up. This is not a normal lathe with gears and belts and stuff – it is the latest in DVR technology featuring a slew of features built into the headstock, so it needs a few seconds to come to life.

Before I mounted anything on the lathe, I was initially concerned about the strength of the bed. The rails look narrow and light weight for the size of the machine, but in practice, the construction feels pleasantly rigid – the cross ribs under the rails certainly do their job well.

Mounted to the side of the headstock is the control panel. You can choose from 10 preset speeds or set your own favourites using the menu functions. There are three ways to change the spindle speed: use the 'F' buttons

to select the pre-set speeds; the yellow 'UP RPM'/'DOWN RPM' buttons; or the knob mounted beneath the main panel. Simply turn it to increase the speed in increments of 5, or press and turn to up (or down) in 20s. Current lathe speed, information and menu settings are presented on a two-line LCD screen.

The power-assisted braking is an interesting feature for large pieces. It helps to slow them down quicker than just letting gravity do the work. You need to be careful, however, and make sure you use the chuck grub screw to lock the piece on the lathe to prevent the chuck unscrewing itself. The vibration sensor is also very handy – it will shut the lathe down if any vibration exceeds the limit you set.

The emergency stop button can be moved to different positions easily as it is held in place by magnets. On the right-hand side of the lathe is best so you can use it without having to reach round a potentially dangerous piece in order to engage the red 'off' button.

In use

Using the lathe is great. It is a capable machine with a relatively small footprint. The overall length of 1,100mm gives a handy 600mm between centres but will necessitate the removal of the tailstock for bowl turning with a long-handled gouge. At 300mm long, the toolrest is more than sufficient, but could do with a bit of beefing up along most of its length. It really needs to have the black paint sanded off the top edge (or not painted at all) before use to ensure smooth movement of



On first inspection, the rails look narrow and light weight for the size of the lathe



The power switch is located on the back of the headstock directly below the power lead and the cable for the emergency stop button



Mounted to the side of the headstock is the control panel



The emergency stop button can be moved to different positions easily as it is held in place by magnets



The overall length of 1,100mm gives a handy 600mm between centres but will necessitate the removal of the tailstock for bowl turning



Turning a 300mm figured sycamore bowl was a treat

tools over it, but for this review, I left the paint intact as I was mindful of having to return it.

Being a direct drive machine, in use the Saturn is very quiet indeed, leaving you to easily hear what is happening at the business end of the gouge. This may also be of interest to those turners who have sensitive neighbours as some lathes can be rather noisy in use.

Turning a 300mm figured sycamore bowl was a treat and I encountered very little vibration (I did my best to level the machine when putting it together). I tried hard to slow the lathe down with aggressive cuts, but the power output automatically adjusts to keep the revs up to where they are set, which is a great touch, but I didn't try to trip any of the safety features... for safety reasons!

Next, I turned the headstock round to its 22.5° position to finish turning an olive bowl. You need to loosen the headstock lockpin with the included knock-out bar and pull the spring-loaded release handle before you can swivel the headstock and lock it back down in the position you want.

With the headstock in this position, bowl turning is made a little easier as you are not leaning over the lathe bed at the start of the cut. As before, there was very little vibration experienced while cutting and the power through the spindle was constant.

When the green 'on' button is pressed, the spindle reaches the set rpm through controlled steady (but rapid) acceleration. There's no pause, no slow rotation first then straight to operating speed – it just gets there quickly and without any fuss. A really good soft start.

To finish the bowl, I mounted it into a set of NOVA Cole jaws and remounted the tailstock with a live centre for support. I did notice a bit of vibration here, but I'll put that down to the



To finish the bowl, I mounted it into a set of NOVA Cole jaws and remounted the tailstock with a live centre for support



You need to loosen the headstock lockpin with the included knock-out bar and pull the spring-loaded release handle before you can swivel the headstock and lock it back down in the position you want

lathe not being perfectly set-up. Now, the tailstock is fine: it's weighty and everything locks in place nicely; my only quibble is the fact the quill thread pokes out the back and accessories do not auto-eject when the quill is retracted fully, which is common with other lathes in this price bracket.

I don't do a lot of spindle turning, so only carried out a little to experiment with the higher end of the Saturn's speed range. If you've moved the headstock at all, check the alignment with the tailstock when you reset the lathe for spindles. Even at the maximum 3,500rpm, the lathe is a lot quieter than most others at this speed, and in the menu settings, there is an option to increase this to a whopping 5,000rpm.

Conclusion

A capable machine that I would be happy to have in my workshop. Its low operating noise would make it suitable as a lathe to teach on to avoid speaking too loudly to a student in action. As a hobby lathe, at circa £2,000 it is a significant investment, so perhaps best as an upgrade rather than a first purchase, unless you're absolutely sure you want to take up turning. The featured tech, such as the vibration sensor and adaptive control, are a nice touch from a safety perspective, but the rest of the tech is (to my mind), a nice-to-have-but-rarely-used rather than a must-have.

For a keen bowl turner, the 400mm swing, teamed up with the powerful motor, gives plenty of options for challenging, sizeable pieces over the bed, but add the optional outrigger and you'll get a terrific 790mm swing. The avid spindle turner will enjoy the 600mm between centres suitable for most projects, the high revs for smooth cuts



I don't do a lot of spindle turning, so only carried out a little bit to experiment with the higher end of the Saturn's speed range



With the headstock in this position, bowl turning is made a little easier as you are not leaning over the lathe bed at the start of the cut

and the 300mm toolrest. Add one or more bed extensions, however and you'll have almost limitless opportunities. ✕

SPECIFICATION

Motor: 2HP single phase DVR high torque motor with electronic variable speed
Swing: 400mm over the bed; 740mm with optional outrigger
Between centres: 600mm (extendable with 510mm extensions)
Swivel: Headstock swivels 360°
Spindle thread: M33 x 3.5mm
Tailstock quill travel: 85mm
Toolrest: 300mm
Speed: 100-3,500rpm (can increase to 5,000 in settings)

What's in the boxes:

- Lathe bed with headstock, tailstock, tool slide (banjo) and emergency stop already mounted
- Two cast-iron legs
- Toolrest, headstock swivel pin, handwheel, knocking bar, locking handles, spur & live centres
- Power cable
- Instruction manual and USB cable for updating DVR firmware

Typical price: £2,099.99

Web: www.turners-retreat.co.uk

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Good looking, capable lathe with excellent power output; rotatable headstock; wonderfully quiet, even at high speeds; built-in electronic safety features; strong, stable construction despite its sleek appearance

CONS

- Overcooked on the tech front for many turners – too many options and warnings; control panel buttons need to be 'accurately' pressed – 'proper' buttons would be beneficial here; toolrest locking handle and tool slide handle catch together

RATING: 4.5 out of 5

SKIL 3460 CA CORDLESS RECIPROCATING SAW

An ideal tool for a wide variety of sawing applications, Phil Davy puts this cordless reciprocating saw with variable speed through its paces



Unlike portable power tools such as jigsaws or sanders, the recip saw is probably not high on the wish list of many woodworkers. Understandably so, as it's not exactly a creative, precision tool, but for certain tasks it can't really be beaten. We're talking here mainly of demolition and renovation work, or perhaps cutting up recycled timber before giving it a new lease of life. Fitted with the appropriate blade it will cut timber, non-ferrous metals, plastics, plasterboard and other sheet materials.

This recip saw from SKIL is the first product we've tested from their relatively new 20V Max cordless range. And in case you were wondering, 18V and 20V Max power tools are essentially the same. The difference is whether a manufacturer

chooses to state the nominal or maximum voltage rating of each cell within a battery. But that's another story...

Batteries & charger

Like most SKIL cordless tools (apart from their drills), this saw comes bare without battery or charger. A 2.0Ah Li-ion battery costs £30, while the larger 4.0Ah version is £50. A suitable charger will set you back £30, so altogether not too pricey compared with some brands. Charge times are 60 minutes for the smaller battery and about 100 minutes for the larger pack.

Like most newer lithium batteries, each features a row of green LEDs when you depress the button, indicating remaining level. I tested the saw fitted with both batteries and have to

say there's plenty of cutting potential even with just the 2.0Ah pack.

Brushed motor

The saw itself is 390mm overall including the blade shoe, the plastic body shrouded in textured rubber around the front grip and rear handle. Weighing 2.1kg with a 2.0Ah battery fitted, it's comfortable to hold, the barrel grip offering several options for your hand. You slide the battery into place at the base of the tool.

For safety there's a push-through lock-off button above the hefty trigger, enabling you to carry the saw with the blade fitted – handy if climbing a ladder, for example. Featuring variable speed, this runs from 0-3,000spm, the tool easy enough to control at slower rates



Charge times are 60 minutes for the smaller battery and about 100 minutes for the larger pack



You slide the battery into place at the base of the tool



For safety there's a push-through lock-off button above the hefty trigger, enabling you to carry the saw with the blade fitted



Tool-free fitting makes blade changing a cinch: you twist the sturdy, spring-loaded ribbed collar, insert the blade end and release to clamp



You can fit the blade upside down, so the tool can then be used for plunge cuts



A sturdy tilting steel shoe is fitted in front of the collar, so the saw can be used at limited angles while staying firmly in contact with the material



The shoe can be adjusted by slackening off a pair of hex screws underneath the grip



The key is stored to the side of the rear handle, though I found it tended to fall out a bit too easily



I tried the saw out by slicing through every tread of an entire flight of stairs which was being demolished

by gently squeezing the trigger. Stroke length is 25mm, which is fairly standard on recip saws. Equipped with a brushed motor, the SKIL isn't too noisy when running at full speed.

Only one 130mm wood cutting blade is provided, though fortunately recip saws have a universal clamping system, similar to jigsaws. This means that replacement blades are relatively cheap with various teeth patterns to choose from. Tool-free fitting makes this a cinch: you twist the sturdy, spring-loaded ribbed collar, insert the blade end and release to clamp. You can fit the blade upside down, so the tool can then be used for plunge cuts. Cutting capacities quoted are impressive, with 200mm in timber and 20mm in steel.

A sturdy tilting steel shoe is fitted in front of the collar, so the saw can be used at limited angles while staying firmly in contact with the material. You can adjust this by slackening off a pair of hex screws underneath the grip. This gives up to 17mm of travel by sliding the shoe outwards. The key is stored to the side of the rear handle, though I found it tended to fall out a bit too easily.

In use

Although I didn't keep track of the number of cuts made with the saw, performance was certainly impressive using just the 2.0Ah battery. This included slicing through every tread of an entire flight of stairs which was being demolished. Made from 35mm parana pine, this traditional stair timber was denser and harder to cut than normal redwood or whitewood.

For sawing up a few short branches for firewood the SKIL was just the job, although it's important to make sure the shoe is tight up against the work. You're obviously restricted by blade length and vibration can be a problem, but it coped well enough. Similarly, cutting



For sawing up a few short branches for firewood the SKIL was just the job, although it's important to make sure the shoe is tight up against the work

through 50mm reclaimed softwood joists was no problem. Wearing work gloves is recommended if you're sawing a quantity of material as you'll notice the vibration level.

Conclusion

A cordless recip saw is obviously safer than a 230V in use, particularly important for renovation work where there may be hidden cables or pipes. And outdoors it's handy for that odd pruning job in the garden, too. You'll need to buy into the SKIL platform if you choose this saw, but for a budget system it's pretty good. Although this model may not have the anti-vibration features offered by

pricier power tools, for occasional jobs it should be absolutely fine. Warranty is three years on saw and charger, two years on batteries. ✖

SPECIFICATION

Voltage: 18V

Voltage: 20 'V Max'

Sawing capacity in aluminium: 24mm

Cutting capacity: 200mm

Blade speed: 0-3,000spm

Stroke length: 25mm

Typical price: £50 (bare)

Web: www.skil.com; www.diy.com



Similarly, cutting through 50mm reclaimed softwood joists was no problem



You're obviously restricted by blade length and vibration can be a problem, but it coped well enough

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Respectable cutting performance; ideal for renovation work

CONS

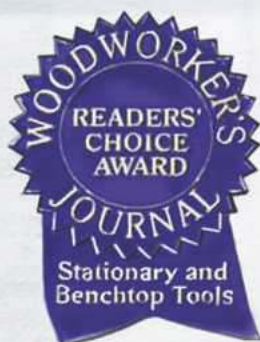
- Tendency for hex key to fall out

RATING: 4 out of 5

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TRITON AUTOJAWS™ CLAMPS RANGE

Available in two formats, Phil Davy takes a look at these new Triton clamps

As well as power tools Triton produce a growing range of hand tools. Latest of these are their AutoJaws™ clamps, available in two formats. The first is designed for face frame work – ideal for use when assembling butt joints with pocket hole jigs, mitres or any job involving two equal thicknesses of timber. Arguably more versatile is the drill clamp, used to hold a workpiece down to a machine table while drilling or milling. This could also be used effectively on a bench as a hold-down, though you'd have to drill appropriate mounting holes.

Both clamps are of similar construction, with steel handles and screw threads. Handles are covered in plastic with soft-grip rubber inserts, with sturdy springs and pivoting components. Cam locking action means that once you've rotated a small thumbscrew until there's sufficient locking action, that's it. As you squeeze the locking handle the clamp then adjusts automatically to suit workpiece thickness, up to its maximum capacity.



The first clamp is ideal for face frame work



Once you've rotated a small thumbscrew until there's sufficient locking action, that's it



You have a choice of mounting methods for the drill clamp, which has a slide-on plastic facing for the shoe



Face clamps

The face clamp has a sturdy pivoting steel shoe fitted at the end of each arm. This pivot motion means they sit flat against the timber, irrespective of thickness. Shoes are 45 and 38mm in diameter, so you could use the smaller disc uppermost to suit tighter pocket hole screw spacings, for example. Alternatively, this clamp would be effective securing a workpiece down close to the edge of a board or thin worktop.

Available in two sizes, clamps are identical apart from capacity. The smaller one has a reach of 75mm, with depth capacity of about 80mm. For larger components, the 150mm clamp has a depth capacity of around 125mm.

Drill clamps

You have a choice of mounting methods for the drill clamp, which has a slide-on plastic facing for the shoe. It comes with a hefty threaded ring attached beneath the lower jaw, making it easier to tighten up in a confined surface. This bolt



The drill clamp is used to hold a workpiece down to a machine table while drilling or milling



As you squeeze the locking handle the clamp then adjusts automatically to suit workpiece thickness



The drill clamp comes with a hefty threaded ring attached beneath the lower jaw, making it easier to tighten up in a confined surface



was too big for the table slots on my Startrite pillar drill, though, which are about 11mm wide. Fortunately, unscrewing the ring reveals a smaller bolt, which will then fit the table slot. A threaded square nut is provided to use as an anchor underneath the table instead of the ring.

Set the small adjuster screw so the upper handle snaps down nicely when locking, though not too fiercely. You then don't need to reset this screw, no matter what the workpiece thickness.

For woodworking, it's usual to have a sacrificial board underneath a workpiece when drilling. You could easily cut slots in such a board to accommodate the AutoJaws™, without affecting its performance, though obviously capacity will be reduced. The smaller clamp (75mm reach) has a material depth capacity of about 65mm. With a reach of 150mm, the larger clamp's depth capacity increases to 90mm.

Conclusion

Perfect for pocket hole joinery, the AutoJaws™ face clamp could be used in a variety of situations, though the larger one probably gives more scope when clamping from the edge of a worktop. Equally, the drill clamp adjusts automatically for thickness, which is clever. Both AutoJaws™ drill clamps are a similar price, though it's worth checking your table size before buying. ✂

SPECIFICATION

Face clamp

Clamping force: 11-181kg
L x W x H: 134 x 40 x 340mm
Weight: 0.575kg

Drill clamp

Clamping force: 11-181kg
L x W x H: 153 x 40 x 320mm
Weight: 0.725kg

Typical prices: Face clamp – £27.67 (75mm), £33.74 (150mm); drill clamps – £35.27 (75mm), £36.07 (150mm)

Web: www.tritontools.com

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Versatile, for machine bed or bench use

CONS

- None

RATING: 5 out of 5

TREND FAST TRACK MK2 SHARPENER

Phil Davy gets to grips with this simple to use sharpener guide from Trend, which produces consistent edges on chisels and plane irons

Trend's Fast Track sharpening system has been around for a while, but has recently been updated with this Mk2 version. It's a unique design for honing edge tools, where the chisel or plane iron remains stationary and a diamond stone is passed across the face of the tool. The upgrade features two extra sharpening angles, a blade centring device and improved grips, compared with the original product.

The base is heavy section solid aluminium, with rubber feet so it can be used directly on a bench top. Build quality here is substantial, with even the thinnest section of metal 9mm thick. A small mesh non-slip mat is supplied if you want greater stability, though a mounting hole and screw are included for more permanent fixing.

How it works

Twin raised rails run across the centre of the base, with dovetailed edges enabling an upper carriage (with similar profile) to slide along them. Nylon glides underneath help this action.

The blade is held on the base at 90° to the transverse movement of the carriage. A flared wing at either side of the carriage supports a small diamond stone, secured with a magnet.



It's a unique design for honing edge tools, where the chisel or plane iron remains stationary and a diamond stone is passed across the face of the tool



The steps relate to the angle of the stone presented to the blade: 25, 27.5, 30 and 32.5°

plastic backing plate is tapered in section. This means you can reverse them, so creating a different honing angle relative to the edge tool. Instead of just two honing angles (25 and 30° on the old model), there's now four, given that each stone is reversible.

To avoid confusion when setting up, the carriage is clearly labelled from 1-4. These steps relate to the angle of stone presented to the blade: 25, 27.5, 30 and 32.5°. With two angles per side, you rotate the carriage as necessary to suit the bevel required.

There's scope to get stones the wrong way round during honing (inadvertently altering the angle), though icons next to each numbered step show correct taper position for a chosen angle.

In use

The Fast Track accommodates blades as slim as 3mm, up to a maximum width of 65mm, so most plane irons can be honed. A clip-on plastic stop keeps narrow blades centred, though I found it tricky gripping a 3mm bevel edge chisel securely without slight rocking.

Two diamond stones are included: 220 and 450 grit, with coloured backing for identification. You can use these dry, though they work better with lapping fluid. Also included is a cleaning



A flared wing at either side of the carriage supports a small diamond stone, secured with a magnet



The Fast Track accommodates blades as slim as 3mm, up to a maximum width of 65mm, so most plane irons can be honed



block for the stones. You also need to keep the dovetailed carriage clean and lightly oiled to maintain a good sliding movement.

To reach Fast Track's maximum potential you'll need to use each sharpening angle in turn, though Trend claim each position can be used up to six times. That's 24 sharpens in total before regrinding is necessary. If you do this you need to remember to swap the stones around, otherwise you could get the 220 and 450 grades mixed up.

Conclusion

It's possible to get primary and secondary bevels fairly rapidly, with the coarser stone good for taking out nicks. If you have several chisels to sharpen it's easy to lose track of their respective angles, so you need to be methodical.

While it may not give as precise results as a dedicated system of diamond or wetstones, the Fast Track is faster and more convenient. For maintaining edge tools it's a clever little device for the toolbox, probably less so for the workshop.

If you want a greater range of abrasives you'll need to buy the FTS set, which includes extra 100, 600 and 1,000 grit roughing and finishing stones. Costing £119.94, this also includes a storage case, deburring plate and stop. Replacement stones are also available. ✕

SPECIFICATION

1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th angles: 25, 27.5, 30 & 32.5°
Grit size: 220 & 450
Stone colour: Black & white
Tool width: 3-65mm
Stone size: 76 × 24 × 4mm

Typical price: £89.94

Web: www.trend-uk.com

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Great for sharpening edge tools quickly; choice of four angles

CONS

- Possible to get stones/angles mixed up

RATING: 4 out of 5

TRITON AUTOJAWS™ CLAMPS RANGE

WIN! A SET OF 4 TRITON AUTOJAWS™ CLAMPS



AUTOJAWS

In conjunction with Triton Tools, we're giving away a set of clamps from their brand-new AutoJaws™ range

Triton Tools has recently developed the AutoJaws™, a new range of face and bench/drill press clamps that automatically adjust to clamp different workpiece thicknesses. The new AutoJaws™ range features cam-lock technology, which eliminates fiddly and time-consuming set-up when compared to using traditional wedge-lock clamps – simply set your desired clamping pressure and go.

AutoJaws™ complement Triton's pocket-hole joinery products, but are also ideal for fastening, glue-ups, and general work support on a wide variety of projects. The new range includes face clamps for general woodworking, as well as bench/drill press clamps that can be mounted using either of the included T-bolt or D-ring options. The clamps are available in 75mm (3in) or 150mm (6in) clamping capacities with adjustable clamping forces of either 10-180kg (75mm option) or 10-110kg (150mm option).

All AutoJaws™ clamps feature ergonomic soft-grip handles for clamping comfort, and circular face pads to spread force evenly, which prevents marring of the workpiece.

To find your nearest dealer for these brand-new durable, all-steel clamps, visit www.tritontools.com.



THE PRIZE AT A GLANCE

TRAAFC6 AutoJaws Face Clamp 6in (150mm)

This clamp features a durable all-steel construction and two-tone softgrip handles for enhanced grip and user comfort. AutoJaws™ technology self adjusts to material thickness and allows for one-handed clamping. A patented cam-lock mechanism maintains consistent clamping pressure at any material thickness, without re-adjustment. This multi-purpose clamping system is ideal for use with the Triton Pocket Hole Joinery range and delivers a clamping force of 10-110kg.

TRAADPBC6 AutoJaws Drill Press/Bench Clamp 6in (150mm)

As before, this clamp features a durable all-steel construction and two-tone soft-grip handles for enhanced grip and user comfort. The clamp self-adjusts to material thickness, allowing for one-handed clamping, and the patented cam-lock mechanism maintains consistent clamping pressure at any material thickness, without readjustment. The TRAADPBC6 mounts to slotted drill press tables and T-tracks and delivers a clamping force of 10-110kg. Supplied with drill press mount and 5/16in x 18 button head T-bolt.



HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning a set of 4 Triton AutoJaws™ clamps – 2 x TRAAFC6 AutoJaws Face Clamp 6in (150mm) and 2 x TRAADPBC6 AutoJaws Drill Press/Bench Clamp 6in (150mm) – just visit www.getwoodworking.com/competitions and answer this simple question:

QUESTION: What is the clamping force of the TRAAFC6 and TRAADPBC6 clamps?

The winner will be randomly drawn from all correct entries. The closing date for the competition is **20 March 2020**

Only one entry per person; multiple entries will be discarded. Employees of MyTimeMedia Ltd and Triton Tools are not eligible to enter this competition



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GETTING INTO A SPIN!



In his debut article, **Martin Saban-Smith** shows us a project that is simple to turn with lots of creative possibilities. Everyone loves a spinning top, and this arena takes them to the dizzy heights of competitive gameplay

This spinning top arena features two playing surfaces – one easy side, and a more difficult one with a removable column where the tops are spun. It's not as easy as it looks! For the arena, I used a 10×3in blank of beech and some offcuts of purpleheart (1×4in for the column), and mango, maple and sapele (at various sizes) for the spinning tops. For more interesting and challenging gameplay, turn the tops at different sizes so each one requires a slightly different technique to spin. A project like this is a lot of fun to turn, and even more fun to play with your friends and family.

To finish the pieces, I used my usual high gloss wax finish: it's effective, easy to apply and simple to repair when the playing surface needs a revamp. A lacquer would be a good option too but will take time and care to apply as well as to keep in tip-top condition.

If you'd like to see a video of this project being made, visit my YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/c/msabansmithwoodturning. ✂



1 Start by mounting a 10×3in beech blank to a faceplate, and with the tailstock brought up for support, turn it round using a 10mm bowl gouge to balance it on the lathe



2 To profile the side of the arena, I chose a deep cove. Use the bowl gouge to cut the cove downhill in both directions, adding a chamfer to each side



3 After sanding the profile down to 400 grit, colour it a rich plum using water-based dyes to echo the purpleheart column that will be turned later. Remember to wear protective gloves – dyes and stains are so called for good reason!



4 Finishing the profile now will save you a tricky job later. A few coats of thinned cellulose sanding sealer applied after the colour is dry will prepare the surface nicely for your finish. Allow it to dry fully before moving on to the next step



5 After de-nibbing the sanding sealer, apply your finish. My choice is generally a gloss wax. It's easy to apply and produces a pleasing surface quickly. Lightly buff the wax between coats



6 To finish the profile, give the wax a nice buffing to bring it up to a gorgeous smooth gloss. Always take pride in your finishing; it will be looked at for years to come



7 Using the bowl gouge again, begin to turn the first playing surface of the arena. This side is the more difficult version of the game, and the shape here is similar to a 'gravity well'



8 Using a round skew or a diamond tip parting tool, flatten off the very centre of the piece to a diameter of around 20mm. The exact dimension doesn't matter; this is where the spinning top column will sit



9 Sand this playing surface down to 400 grit being careful not to slip onto the nice clean edge of colour around the chamfer. Next, apply a couple of coats of sanding sealer



10 While the sealer is drying off, use a 5mm drill bit in a Jacobs chuck to drill down around 12mm into the centre. This hole is for the spigot on the bottom of the column



11 This playing surface is virtually completed; all you need to do now is apply your finish. As with the side, I used a gloss wax here



12 Use a set of Cole jaws or a Longworth chuck to reverse mount the arena on the lathe. Use a couple of sheets of kitchen towel behind the piece, which will protect the finished surface



13 With the tailstock and live centre brought up for support, begin to turn a shallower profile than previously. This will be the easier side of the arena. Be careful not to exceed the maximum recommended speed of your mounting method



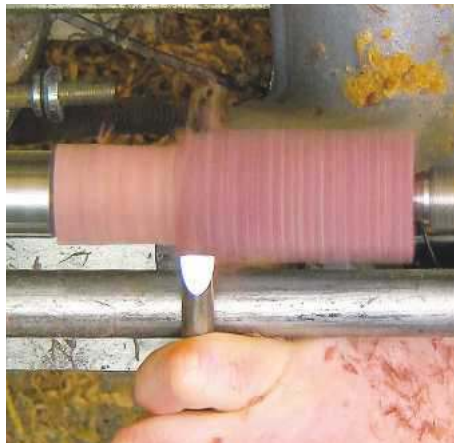
14 Just like when removing a tenon from the bottom of a bowl, slide the tailstock back to enable you to complete the centre of the piece. When you're done, sand and finish the surface as previously



15 To 'hide' the holes left over from the faceplate, use some machine screws. Measure the depth to drill by marking off the length of the screw with some masking tape wrapped around the shaft of a suitable drill bit. Next, drill the holes



16 Using a screwdriver, carefully drive the machine screws into the holes. Be careful not to slip onto the surface and scratch it. This side is now complete



17 Mount your column blank between centres, round it down and turn a suitable tenon for mounting into a small set of chuck jaws. I used a piece of purpleheart measuring 100 x 25 x 25mm



18 With the piece mounted into a chuck, use a sharp spindle gouge to turn a shallow dish in the end. This is where your spinning tops will spin



19 Support the end of the column with something soft, so as not to damage the dish turned in the previous step. I used a piece of tightly folded kitchen towel. Then, turn your column with your spindle gouge. The length doesn't matter, nor does the shape



20 Sand and finish your column then turn a 10mm long spigot to fit the hole drilled in step 10. Cut it off with a small saw



21 Place the column into the piece, but don't glue it in! The fit should be tight enough to securely hold the column in place during play



22 Between centres, round down your spinning top blanks. Remember to make them different diameters and from various woods, which will make for a more challenging game



23 Start turning your tops with a spindle gouge and the bottom of the tops towards the end of the piece. Keep good bevel contact to ensure the best possible cut. By turning tops in this orientation, as you turn one, the bottom of the next one begins to form



24 Sand and finish as bright and shiny as you like. Perhaps finish it off with a carnauba wax stick, then part off the top



25 With your other tops, colour, decorate and embellish them as much as you wish. This long one is maple coloured with Honey, Ruby and Flame shades



26 For an extra flourish on the coloured maple, dip the top in some acrylic gold paint to cover the bare wood from where it was parted off and hand-sanded



27 When you've turned all of your tops, you're ready to play the game with your friends and family – see sidebar below for gameplay instructions

WELCOME TO THE MESMERISING WORLD OF SPINNING TOPS!

This game is fun for all the family as they try to spin each of the tops for as long as possible in the arena. Whoever spins the tops for longest, wins!

Your game features a two-sided solid wooden arena and a handful of wooden spinning tops. Each top is different and needs a slightly different technique to get it to spin for a long time. You will need the arena, two or more players, the wooden spinning tops, a timer, some note paper and a pencil.

Playing the game

- Decide which side you will play on. The shallow side is easier to use than the coloured side, so best start there. If you are playing the difficult side, insert the column into the hole in the difficult side of the arena.
- Take a vote on who goes first.
- The winner of the vote is player 1. They select a top from the bag, then the person on their left (player 2) selects and so on until each player has selected a top.
- One player is the designated timekeeper. The timing is started once the spinning top is freely set in motion in the arena. Timing stops when it has completely come to a rest.

- Play begins when player 1 spins their top in the arena by using their thumb and one finger only.

The length of time the top spins scores points as below:

- 1-19 seconds – 1 point
- 20-39 seconds – 3 points
- 40-49 seconds – 5 points
- 50-59 seconds – 7 points
- 60-69 seconds – 10 points
- 70-79 seconds – 15 points
- 80-85 seconds – 20 points
- 86-89 seconds – 25 points
- 90-95 seconds – 30 points
- 96-100 seconds – 35 points
- 101-105 seconds – 40 points
- 106-110 seconds – 45 points
- 111 seconds – and over – 50 points
- If the top exits the arena or falls off the column (if playing the difficult version), the turn ends, and no points are scored.
- Once player 1's spin has ended, make a note of the points and player 2 has a go with their top.
- Once all players have had a turn, the tops are

moved one place to the left, so player 2 receives player 1's top, etc.

- Round two starts with player 1 and their new top, then player 2, etc.
- The game ends when each player has played with every top from all the other players.
- The winner is decided by the player with the highest score!
- In the event of a draw, the players on the same score spin a random choice of top once more. The highest score wins. Or, if there is a further draw, spins continue until one remains who will then be declared the winner.

Variations

- Alternate each round between the plain and coloured sides of the arena.
- For a quicker game, each player chooses one top and the group plays only three rounds.
- Play only three (or more) rounds with each player choosing the first top they touch when they 'shuffle' the bag.
- Score 10 bonus points for the top 'dancing' or moving around the arena before stopping. Discuss or vote on whether the bonus should be awarded

WHERE TRADITION MEETS TECHNOLOGY

At the Chippendale School, Principal Tom Fraser and colleagues regard woodworking as a fine traditional craft and work hard to preserve and share time-tested skills and techniques, as we discover here

Over the centuries, woodworkers have developed a wealth of traditional techniques, many of which we still borrow from today. At the Chippendale School, for example, we are constantly finding new sources of inspiration from the 18th century methods of Thomas Chippendale, the eminent furniture maker and our school's namesake. However, as our culture modernises, so too must our crafts. There are now huge amounts of modern technologies at woodworkers' disposal, allowing us all the opportunity for innovation and boundary-pushing.

While innovation is something we should all strive for in our designs, we do need to be mindful not to forget our industry's heritage, and the tried and tested techniques that give our craft its status today. For many woodworkers, finding that sweet spot between tradition and technology is key, so that we can offer truly unique designs.

Master the basics

There is something incredibly rewarding about making an item entirely by hand. Hand-crafted pieces are often beautiful in their imperfection, even if just by a fraction. That hand-finished feel is what excites many consumers searching for pieces that feel bespoke and have a back-story,



Newer technologies, such as CNC machines, also have their place within woodworking



versus anonymous, mass-produced designs. For up and coming woodworkers, learning the basics of woodworking by hand-crafting before getting to grips with machinery provides a grounding in the tradition of woodworking and an appreciation for the nuances of the craft.

Traditional methods, which encourage slower styles of work, can also help makers tune into how small changes in the wood impact the overall feel of the piece. It takes knowledge and attention to bring out the best in every design, and this awareness can only be developed through applying those traditional methods.

Restore with pride

You may have noticed a new zero waste shop on your high street. Sustainable practices are blossoming in the UK, and that's driving change across every industry.

Far from being embarrassed by our tattered homeware, as consumers, we are now taking greater pride in older pieces and are willing to part with our pennies to have them restored.

Traditionally, scrapping instead of repairing a scuffed piece of furniture would have raised plenty of eyebrows. As we return to sustainable practices, traditional restoration skills are coming back to the fore. Restoring woodwork takes an appreciation of the original design, as well as a human insight into each individual piece's damage and wear, something which cannot be achieved by machine alone.

Tech for precision

That's not to say that newer technologies don't have their place within woodworking – quite the opposite. We encourage our students to get to grips with developments in technology, so that they can push the envelope with their designs. They are often surprised by what is possible using new technologies to support their approach.

When it comes to delivering projects that require higher precision or faster completion, CNC machines bring undeniable benefits. They allow for high-concept technical pieces where

the margin for error is very small. 3D printers also have a place in bespoke furniture design, as they can be used for modelling, which allows woodworkers time to test and experiment with a design and present the concept to their client before producing it to scale.

There have been massive strides made in the field of virtual reality over the past few years. The Chippendale School now has a set of goggles that allow students to view their digital designs in 3D, testing out the functionality of their furniture before they even get started on production.

Plan for less waste

Mistakes in woodworking waste valuable time and precious materials. Our motto is 'measure twice, cut once' for good reason – precision is vital in making high quality pieces of furniture.

When we have just one chance to get it right, and this is where technology can add value, helping us to deliver every time and keep waste to a minimum.

AutoCAD helps furniture makers to visualise our designs before we make a single cut. We can plan out the fine details of every project, giving us the capacity to push our creativity even further. This is how we learn to become fearless innovators out in the world.

At the Chippendale School, we regard woodworking as a fine traditional craft and work hard to preserve and share time-tested skills and techniques, as well as embracing cutting-edge technology. It is this marriage of old and new that will help to keep centuries' old artisan skills alive and future-proof our industry, by producing the best-equipped makers and craftspeople. ✂

FURTHER INFORMATION

Scotland's only woodworking and furniture school, the **Chippendale International School of Furniture**, offers a range of courses, including the nine-month Professional course – to find out more, visit www.chippendaleschool.com

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IS CNC CRAFT?

Jeremy Broun explores the nature of woodworking skill and the evolution of tools

The Alan Peters Furniture Award emphasises 'hand' skill, yet realistically, furniture making today involves machining. The award also encourages design and innovation and to exclude digital technology would seem Luddite in this day and age. So the award guidelines include 'limited CNC input' but with the emphasis clearly on hand making.

'CNC is not craft' was a comment added to a video I recently uploaded to YouTube on the award application guidelines. A perfectly understandable response from a traditional woodworker and in this article, I shall attempt to explore what lies in between the notion that CNC is craft or that CNC is not craft! I suggest it is probably both.

The earliest form of mechanised woodworking tool

Where do we begin? Perhaps by looking at the earliest form of mechanised woodworking tool – the adze. Nobody would accuse the canoe builders of Papua New Guinea of not being proper craftsmen when they used this early form of jig, which guides the path of the cutter.

Fast forward to the British Furniture Craft Revival of the 1970s, and the term handmade was loosely banded about with sweet smelling shavings sprinkled over the workshop floor



The adze was a major crafting tool for many centuries and is an example of one of the earliest wood fashioning jigs

against the background whine of a machine planer. Except the sound of the planer could not be heard in the Sunday colour supplements. I jest but there was a notable designer-maker in the late 1970s who proudly told the world how he hand-adzed his table tops while forgetting to mention the slabs of wood had first been machine thickened, probably on a Wadkin that

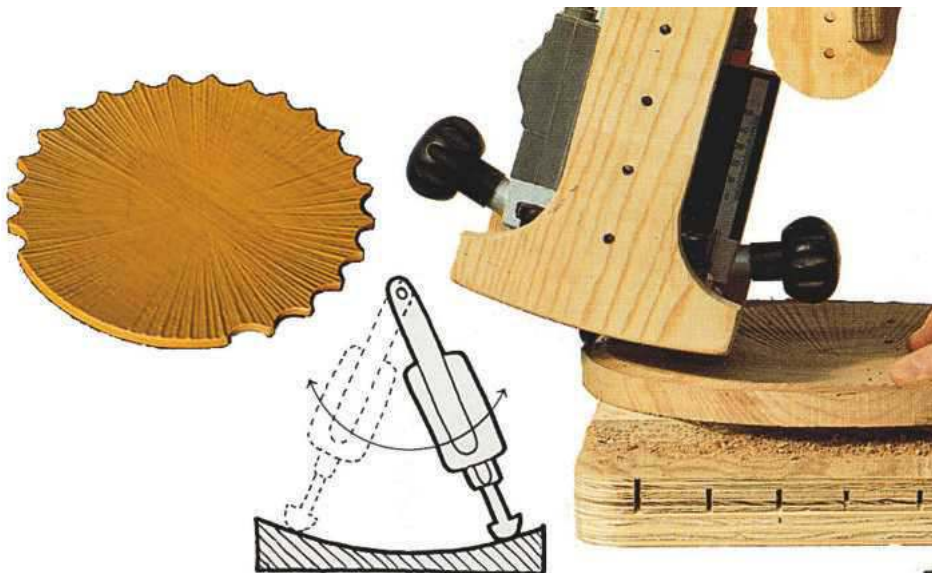
was built in the early 20th century.

There has always been an uncomfortable relationship between hand and machine skill among some woodworkers and where, in many ways, CNC is just an evolution of the early adze, it does differ in one fundamental way: the operator is not in contact with the material; he/she is not feeling the cutter engage in the wood as you would with a handheld router, but then a dimension saw often uses a push stick, so how far removed are we from the raw skill of the hand?

The late professor David Pye at the Royal College of Art (who I met at an interview there in 1976) wrote a couple of philosophical books, one being *The Nature of Workmanship*. He argued that there is a skill of certainty and one of risk. Using a chisel is the skill of risk, whereas when you place that chisel into a jig and call it a hand plane, it becomes the skill of certainty.

What is craft?

For Alan Peters' legacy to survive we have to embrace what is going on today and we live in a digital age. Indeed Alan himself said to me back in the early 1990s that we tend to get stuck in tradition and we need to move tradition on. I think the word that comes to mind is balance. He also told me during the making of the documentary in 2005, about his life and work (*The Makers' Maker* – see 'further information' sidebar),



The author's pendulum routing jig (1989) that 'crafts' an 'adzed' dish



Alan Peters' iconic fluted fan table

that he couldn't exist without machines: "If you are a creative person you can get far more out of machines." A good example is his famous fluted fan table, which utilised a spindle moulder.

Hand versus machine is really not a new debate and the fear of CNC taking over is likely to evoke the kind of reaction the Luddites expressed when cotton mills were mechanised in the early 19th century. But we are amid a revolution in which cars and houses are being built by 3D printers (CNC machines) and actually what triggered my own interest in CNC (computer numerical control) woodworking is from a tiny 3D printer I acquired with the interest of making my own tool handles and other jigs. Arguably the new technology is yet another creative tool taking the craft to another level. But what is craft?

Having devoted over half a century to the craft of woodworking, I have never really felt a need to question what is 'craft' while critics of my chair designs may have mused 'is it a plane or a bird'. If anything, I have squirmed at the misuse of the word 'craft' in television advertising and at some 'craft' fairs. It is not just the handmade element; in some instances deliberate slips of the chisel and treacle-like finishes to emphasise it is handmade, but the element of personal involvement does makes it craft.



My new 'Caterpillar' rocker

Crafting or making is a motor skill involving sensory perception translated through the hands to send messages to the brain, which are translated into motor skill messages sent back to the hands. So when you are hand planing a piece of wood you could close your eyes and still relay important information to your brain through nerve endings and sound – the zip of the plane blade. When you are using a handheld router, if the cutter lingers too long then you will experience the smell of burnt wood, so all the senses are used and when a motor skill is practised, the perceptual circuit becomes automatic (see my essay on the perceptual nature of skill).

CNC here to stay

CNC woodworking is not craft in so far as the operator has no involvement with the cutting action of the router (spindle) cutter and therefore cannot feel the resistance of the material against the cutter. In fact this is of great appeal to me as it means I can go and make myself a cup of tea and doodle sketches for the next part of the design I am creating! I half jest, but for some of us who have spent over half a century toiling at the bench, working through blisters to meet deadlines, there is an appeal to watching the action and to any precision woodworker to program a task using, say, oak, you can play around with what couldn't be more involved and creative – adjusting cutting depths, feed rate, spindle speed – and then save it as a file.

Grayson Perry echoes this and doesn't think computers are killing off craft as he wrote in the *Guardian* newspaper, but then potters are more familiar with repeat designs than furniture makers who are, by and large, locked into the one-off market.

Perry defines craft as something that can be taught, while art requires inspiration. "Many artists are extremely poor craftsmen while many great craftspeople are rubbish artists. I see many beautifully made things that I find pig ugly."

Mr Perry needs to look at the work of our furniture designer-makers over the past three decades as there has been a golden age of contemporary design and craftsmanship.

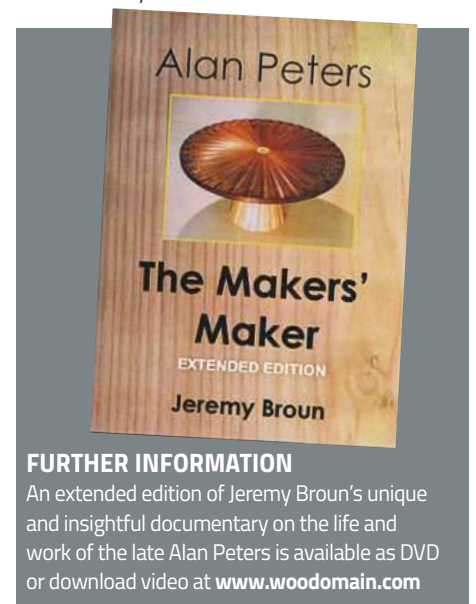
"Digital technology offers the craftsman and the artist creative opportunities that were previously too expensive for an individual, too time-consuming or just plain impossible. This technology is coming down in price all the time – it won't be long before 3D printers are as common as kilns. To become skilful with these newer technologies is to be just as much of a craftsman as a traditional weaver or potter. The results of digital production often have a lifeless feeling: "That is because the machine will do exactly what is asked of it and no more," he commented.

I am excited to be immersed in this amazing new world of craft and art using computers in various ways and in combination with the old techniques we know and love, while embracing hand skills where necessary.

Craft can mean a closed mind and actually, since the advent of CNC woodworking, much of what is produced mimics hand skills of the past – highly ornate Grinling Gibbons style carving or mock frame and panel constructions made out of one piece of MDF. Why not stand back and see what the machine wants to do and shape the future? To me, part of craft is the expression of the tool and the material – an example is my use of everyday Brazilian pine plywood in my 'Caterpillar' rocking chair (Mk2). The repeat sections are hugely laborious to cut out on a bandsaw and finish on a bobbin sander. It's much easier to use a CNC machine to cut out the profiles interlocking them and to minimise material wastage in the interlocking profiles on the sheet material.

Of course, CNC input can involve just designing (CAD) or include the whole process from initial concept, using software as simple as SketchUp, to the final cutting authorised by G-code.

CNC is here to stay and warrants some discussion. However, regarding the Alan Peters Furniture Award 2020, our aim as judges is to encourage the celebration of hand skill primarily and so for this specific award, the CNC input should be very limited. ✕



FURTHER INFORMATION

An extended edition of Jeremy Broun's unique and insightful documentary on the life and work of the late Alan Peters is available as DVD or download video at www.woodomain.com

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THE ALAN PETERS FURNITURE AWARD 2020

Don't miss out on the opportunity to be part of this prestigious annual award, which champions UK furniture designing and making talent while celebrating the life and work of the late Alan Peters OBE



Alan Peters' 'Fan table'

This newly evolved annual award celebrates the legacy of one of Britain's most prominent furniture designer-makers of the late 20th century – Alan Peters OBE – while aiming to encourage emerging talent in the craft of furniture design and making.

Any woodworker who is a resident UK citizen over the age of 18, and who has a passion and talent for designing and making contemporary furniture, is invited to submit up to two items of furniture that echo the philosophy of Alan Peters. Judging is based on the appropriate use of wood, the quality of workmanship, functionality and originality of design. Both one-off designs and potential batch-produced designs are encouraged.

Applicants should be familiar with the work of Alan Peters prior to applying and are encouraged to read Jeremy Broun's 64-page video-integrated online e-book, which is offered free-of-charge (via the website link opposite).

The man behind the award

Alan Peters OBE (1933–2009) was one of Britain's most prominent furniture designer-makers of the latter part of the 20th century. He was apprenticed to Edward Barnsley and had a direct link to the English Arts and Crafts Movement. He was hugely influential internationally in his practice, teaching and publications. Above all, his respect and understanding of how wood behaves and the value of hand skill, yet moving tradition forward, resulted in the creation of many timeless pieces. He created affordable functional furniture, which was made to last, making an art of his craft in some of his subtle innovations.

History of the award

The original award was called 'The Alan Peters Award For Excellence' and was initiated by Jason Heap in 2010. The prize was offered to three winners, each of whom were given free exhibition space alongside the professionals at his annual furniture exhibition in Cheltenham. The award ran for eight years, and some of the past winning pieces are shown here. The judges were Jason Heap, Keith Newton and Jeremy Broun.



Alan Peters chest with silver inlay



Anais Dancet's '10 Degrees' stackable stool – a 2012 winner of The Alan Peters Award For Excellence

Award judges

Jeremy Broun (organiser) – designer-maker and co-exhibitor with Alan Peters 1978–2002;
Andrew Lawton – designer-maker who worked with Alan Peters and on his last commission;
Keith Newton – early apprentice and employee of Alan Peters for 21 years.



Chris Wiseman's 'Oak Within' sideboard – 2016 winner of The Alan Peters Award For Excellence



Alan Peters and Jeremy Broun in 2005

PRIZES OFFERED

1st prize

£1,000 Axminster Tools & Machinery voucher

2nd prize

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3rd prize

£300 Judges' prize

Winning pieces will be exhibited at Axminster's Nuneaton store and then at The Wilson Gallery (Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum).

Award deadline is **30 May 2020**. Entries can be submitted any time up to this date. A £20 entry fee applies and a maximum of two entries can be made (£20 per entry).

The judging ceremony will be held at Axminster's Nuneaton store on 29 June 2020, and an exhibition at the store will run from 1–13 July 2020.

Following this, the pieces will then be exhibited at The Wilson Gallery – dates to be confirmed.

To download an application form and the 64-page e-book, please visit www.woodomain.com/alanpetersaward. The form can be found at the right of the page. Payment for entry can also be made securely via the website.

For further information, please contact either Group Editor, Tegan Foley (tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com), Organiser, Jeremy Broun (jb@woodomain.com)



Alan Peters chest

DUST BE GONE

If you use sanding drums in your pillar drill regularly, **Martin Pim-Keirle** highly recommends having a go at making his dust extraction box to hook up to your dust extractor or vacuum cleaner

For those of us who can't afford (or simply don't have the space for) a bobbin sander, a set of drum sanding drill attachments can be invaluable. They take up minimal space, and they make it easy to quickly and accurately sand all manner

of shapes. The big problem for me is dust: they not only create a lot of it, but the rotation of the drums and the drill chuck seem to generate just the right kind of turbulence to carry most of it into the air. Having come over all sensible since hitting my 40s, I thought I would have a go at making a suitable worktable/dust extractor to save my lungs.

The design is essentially a sealed box with an attachment point for a dust extraction hose, plus a set of table inserts that allow me to vary the size of the hole immediately beneath the sanding drum. My rudimentary understanding of the physics involved is that the smaller the gap around the sanding drum, the greater the air speed around it as air is sucked into the box by the dust extractor, and therefore the more effectively it will carry dust away. For this reason, I wanted a design that would allow me to change the inlet hole in the table to match the size of the sanding drum being used.



1 Start by measuring the drill table



2 The base is just a couple of millimetres larger



3 Pine for the base, MDF for the sides



4 Holes are drilled and countersunk



5 A spacer gives a consistent overhang

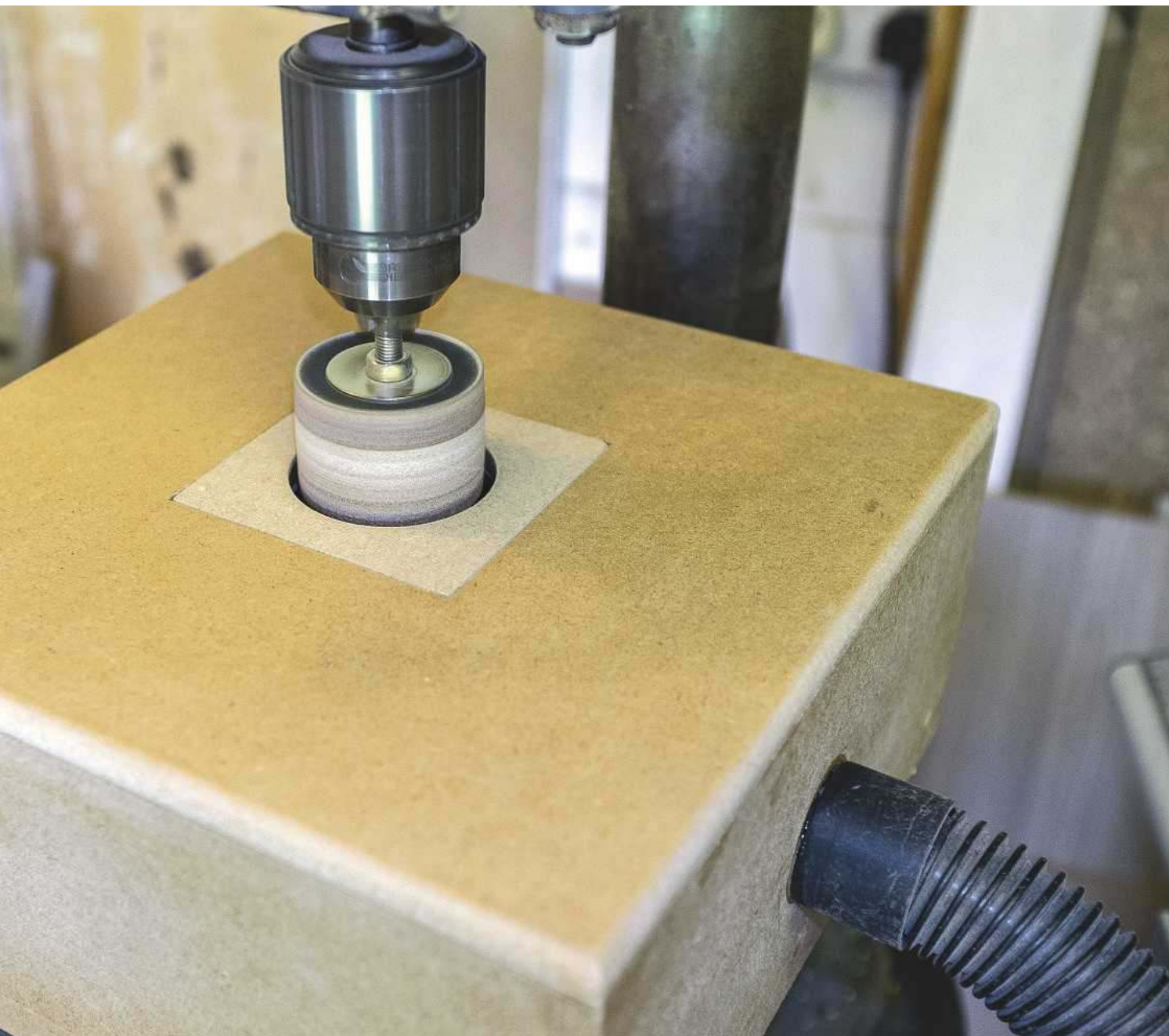


Measuring up & building the box

The first step was to carefully measure the drill table on which the box is to sit (**photo 1**). My table is square, but the same design should also work with a round table. In either case it is necessary to make a thickish square or rectangular base out of softwood. I used 18mm pine (possibly



6 Clearance is needed for the support arm



part of a long-dead coffee table), and cut it to be 1-2mm larger than my drill table in each direction (**photo 2**).

Next, some 9mm MDF offcuts were 'ripped' to a consistent width on the table saw (**photo 3**). The specific size isn't particularly important, it just needs to be wide enough to accommodate

a hole for the dust extractor without losing too much strength. I cut mine to around 120mm wide, and then began to cut lengths to match my base. Front and back sides were cut and planed to fit, and attached to the base using screws and glue (**photo 4**). The important thing is that they overhang the base a little: I just used some

scrap MDF to act as the spacer, overhanging the sides until they sat flush with a piece of MDF held against the underside of the base, thus giving a consistent 9mm overhang (**photo 5**).

My pillar drill table is supported by a large arm that joins the back of it (**photo 6**), and sits at almost the work height of the table. With the



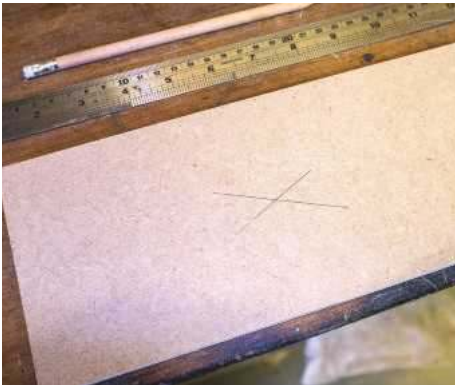
7 The partial base rested on the table...



8 ... and marked for clearance around the arm...



9 ... before trimming flush with a router



10 The centre is marked on one side...

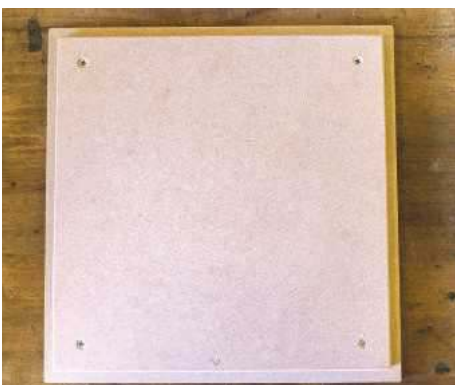
front and back attached, it was at this point I decided to make the cutout for the drill table arm, though, with hindsight, it might have been better to do this once all four sides were attached. I positioned the wooden base onto the drill table, ensuring it was centred (photo 7), and marked where the table arm was interfering with the overhang (photo 8). It was then a simple matter



13 The box is tested in position



14 The final sides are glued in place



17 The lid is temporarily assembled using screws



11 ... and a hole cut for the dust extractor hose...

of using a flush-cut router bit to trim back this section, thus removing the unwanted overhang (photo 9).

The final two sides were now cut and planed to fit, and one of them marked to find the centre (photo 10). A hole was cut using a hole saw (photo 11) around this point to match the nozzle on my dust extractor hose (photo 12). The final sides were at first attached using just screws in order to double-check that the whole arrangement would sit down nice and neatly over the drill table, the 9mm overhang holding it firmly in place (photo 13). Once I was happy with the fit, the sides were removed and re-fixed, this time using glue on all mating surfaces. I had originally intended to add some square-section softwood into the corners to give me something to screw the MDF to, but this particular MDF seems to glue very well, so I decided that gluing and clamping the meeting edges would suffice (photo 14).

The last step in making the box carcass was to clean up the extractor hole and carefully paint it with a little clear silicone sealant (photo 15).



15 A little silicon helps to seal the dust port



18 A long drill bit helps to centre the table



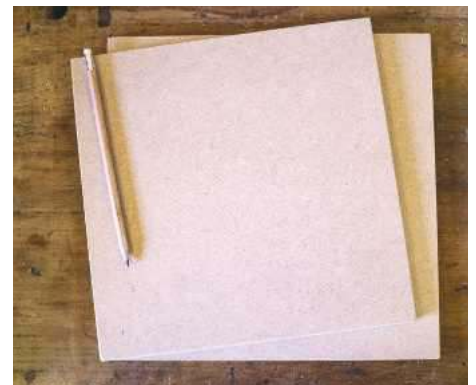
12 ... which needs to be a close fit

This was necessary because the hole cut by my hole saw was fractionally larger than my dust extractor nozzle, giving a rather loose fit. A thin skim of silicon created a tight fit and a good seal.

Making the lid

I began by cutting two squares of 9mm MDF: one sized to match the outside of the box top, and one for the inside (photo 16). The latter was carefully planed for a snug fit, and then placed into the top of the box, friction being enough to hold it up. The upper section of the lid was set accurately on top, and then, by pressing up through the hole in the side, both pieces could be carefully removed without losing their position relative to each other, and temporarily fixed together with four short screws (photo 17).

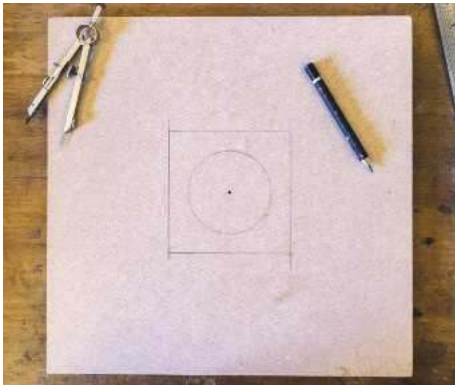
The next task was to centre the drill table and mark the position of the chuck centre on the lid. By fitting a long drill bit as a guide (photo 18) I could adjust the table until the drill bit sat centrally within the table centre hole. I then swapped to a 2mm bit, put the box and lid in



16 Two pieces of MDF are needed for the lid



19 A smaller bit marks the centre on the lid...



20 ...giving a reference point for the cutout

place, and used the drill to make a shallow mark in the top of the lid (photo 19). I could now plan the lid design around this accurate centre point.

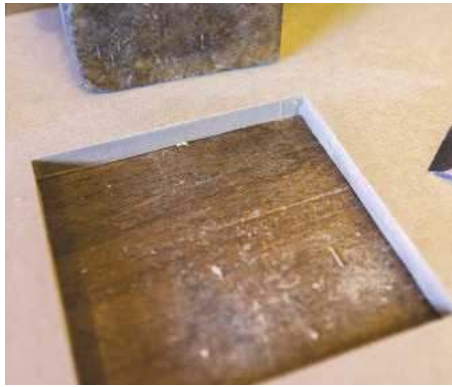
By matching my sanding sleeves to my hole saw set I was able to settle on a set of four hole saws that would give me the range of inlet sizes I needed. Adding about 30mm to the diameter of the largest hole saw, a square was marked out on the upper layer of the lid, centred around the point just made (photo 20). This was cut out and the edge cleaned up with a sharp chisel (photo 21). It's important to note here that the inner edge needs to be absolutely square. With the lower lid reattached the dimensions of the cutout were transferred across, and a new square marked out, inset 10mm from the edge. This too was cut out and cleaned up with a chisel (photo 22). Now the two halves of the lid could be reunited for the final time, and joined permanently with glue (photo 23). The result is a lid with an inner lip to hold it in place, and a stepped hole to take square inserts (photo 24).

Lid inserts

Creating the inserts was simply a matter of cutting four pieces of MDF to fit the hole in the lid (photo 25), marking across diagonals to find the centre of each (photo 26), and using the chosen four hole saws to create four inserts with four different sized holes. I was lucky that the cheap Lidl hole saws I had were all just a few millimetres larger than my sanding drums (photo 27). If you don't have matching sizes of hole saw and sanding drum, I would recommend you mark the desired size with a compass, cut out a smaller hole with whatever hole saw you have available, and then use the largest sanding drum that will fit through the hole to enlarge it out to the line.



27 ... and holes drilled to match sanding drum sizes



21 The cutout edges must be square to the sides



22 A smaller square is cut out of the inner lid



23 A woodworker can never have too many clamps!

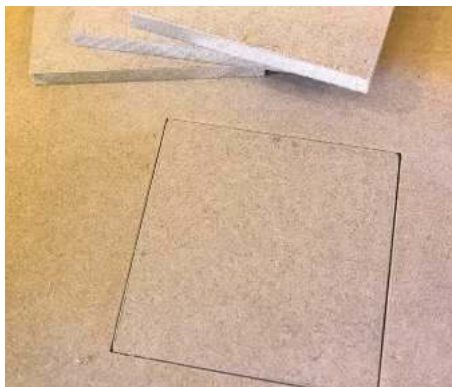


24 The finished stepped opening in the lid

Finishing

To finish, I rounded over the edges of the lid using a router, gave them a light sanding, and finally brushed on a little sanding sealer to make it all a bit more hard-wearing. The box is heavy enough to stay securely in place without any additional fixings, making it quick to set up (photo 28).

This is a really quick project to complete, and could be adapted to suit whatever scrap wood is available. If you use sanding drums in your pillar drill regularly, I highly recommend building one of these to hook up to your dust extractor or vacuum cleaner – the result is that my sanding drums are far more pleasant to use, with the dust ending up in the bin rather than in my lungs! ✖



25 Four inserts are made to fit the lid



26 Centres are marked...



28 Efficient dust removal and a nice flat work surface, all in one!

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A-Z

WOODWORKER'S ENCYCLOPAEDIA PART 14

Moving on through the Es to our Fs, Peter Bishop covers a range of defects, moisture-related stuff, some tools and measurements – an eclectic mix as per usual!

End check or split

Checking refers to the smaller splits that you find on the ends of wood; splits are the much bigger ones. All are a result of the drying process when the moisture has vacated the end cells quicker than the rest of the wood. The way to help alleviate the problem is to seal the end-grain before drying starts. Any sort of paint, waxy stuff, glue or sealer will do as long as it fills the cell structure. It may not completely stop the checking but will certainly reduce it.



End checks in wood

Enclosed knots

These are knots that aren't seen on the surface but are found when the wood is cut. They're branches that have died or been broken off and the tree has grown round them.

End matched flooring

End matching refers to the practice of squaring off the ends of flooring boards, and similar surface coverings, where the ends meet so that the joint is tight and clean. The matching bit is making



End matched flooring

sure that the adjoining boards make a good joint and are of the same width. For example, you can use variable width end matched flooring but you must have enough pieces in each 'run' of the same width. End match joints are usually a tongue one end and a groove the other; the same found on edges. If you're using standard T&G boards, or reusing stuff, a loose tongue can be employed. In this case, a very useful way in which to do this is with a biscuit joint.

Equilibrium moisture content (EMC)

Due to wood's cellular structure it has the ability to give off and take up moisture, just like a sponge. If a plank of wood is left in a fairly moisture stable environment it will, eventually, come into EMC. This generally means, to us who make projects from wood, that if the moisture level is too high, then the timber will give off moisture and shrink. Think of old, oak-framed houses where there are lots of gaps. The wood has shrunk since it was installed. New green oak house buildings will have a shrinkage factor built into their design to counter this. When it comes to furniture, our houses are most often much dryer than the wood we use. There are ways in which you can design your project to make sure the shrinkage is not obvious. I usually put my rough-sawn components into an end location environment for a while to bring it into EMC. Wood science is a fascinating subject. Boning up on it will help you no end when it comes to understanding the best way to build things from wood.



A modern escutcheon plate...



... and a Victorian version

Escutcheon

An escutcheon is used to protect the wood surrounding a key hole. It can be a simple, push-in metal, pre-formed shape or a really fancy bit of brass work. These fancy ones are usually used as more of a statement and can reflect the period in which a piece of furniture is made.

Evergreen

Most conifers – softwoods – are evergreen but not all and, conversely, some hardwoods are. It's fairly obvious that evergreen refers to trees that retain their leaves throughout the year.



Damage left by wood-boring beetles

Exit holes

We have and will continue to write about wood-boring beetles and the damage they cause. In their life cycles the exit hole is where the fully grown beetle breaks out of its host piece of wood onto the surface. The size and shape of the exit hole can help us to determine which beetle has made the attack. Some will be nearly round, they come straight out, and others will be oval because the beetles exit at an angle.

Exotic timbers

We tend to think of exotic timbers as those which have come from tropical countries. However, they are any that are not indigenous, which are found in our home country. Trees not normally found here in the UK, even if they able to grow and thrive, will also be called exotic.



Irwin drill press expansion bits

Expansion bit

If you're boring a variety of wide holes, then a useful addition to the workshop is an expansion bit. Designed so that the outer wing of the drill bit can be adjusted they'll allow you to cut a range of hole sizes. Normally used in a brace but do take care if you mount one in a powered tool as it's likely to break.



Using horse power for forestry



Numatic NVD750 workshop vacuum extractor from Axminster



Dust extraction system on a more industrial scale

Extraction

In our world this word applies to two different things: the first is the removal of felled logs from a forest or woodland, which can be achieved in a

variety of ways, some of which are not as environmentally friendly as others; and the second type of extraction is waste removal. When we suck waste away from a woodworking machine we will be extracting it using some sort of system. These systems can be a simple workshop vacuum right through to a huge enclosed cyclone. You pay your money and take your choice depending on the amount of waste you produce!

Face sides & edges

When we are planing a piece of wood, by hand or machine, we'll start on one of the wider faces. Once it is flat and true we'll mark it so that we know this is the face side; the one from which we'll true the others. Traditionally this face side is marked, in pencil, with a loop and trailing end that goes towards the edge to be squared first. With the face prepared we'll then plane that first edge true and square to it 90°. We then mark this finished edge with a 'V' that, at its point, joins the training line of the face mark. All other measurements and finished sizes can now be taken from these two marks. They should remain in place until we decide to clean up at the end. If you follow this practice, then you should have the confidence that any further jointing will also be good and true.



After checking the wider face is flat, apply the face mark leading to the edge



Marking and checking the edge for square off the face side

Face measure

These days, most lumber is bought in cubic imperial or metric measure. However, there are a host of other face measures that have been and are still used. Most are based on the superficial surface area and the relationship of this area to the thickness of the plank. It's unlikely that we, as small project woodworkers, will come across too many of these. But, if you do, ask whoever is using it to explain what they actually mean!

Facings & facing up

Facings, and the act of facing up, are those thin coverings over something hidden below. We might do this to cover an old beam or a steel RSJ to make them look more acceptable. The facings can be a simple box or a fancy moulded structure.



Hazel faggots

Faggot

Any uniform bundle of thin wood or branches might be called a faggot. Willow, when cut from coppiced growth, will usually be bundled together in a faggot. It is then easier to handle through the weaving processes. You might find a faggot of kindling wood or it may form the basis of a besom, the brush of a witch's broom stick!



Feather edged boarding from Kebur Garden Materials

Feather edged boarding

We use feather edged boarding for fencing and protective sidings on buildings. It's both efficient and economical. Most feather edged boards will be cut diagonally from a rectangular cross-sectioned plank. The cut, from corner to corner, makes best use of the wood by producing two pieces from one. When mounted correctly on a wall or fence these boards will very efficiently act to shed rain, etc. You can usually find standard sized, treated softwood feather edged boarding in most builders or timber merchant yards. You can also commission your own sizes and different species of timber if you so wish.



Directional tree felling, as demonstrated here by a Husqvarna professional

Feet run or metre run

This is a measurement related phrase and can also be called running feet or metres. As a rough guide you might work out that a project needs a total, lineal measurement of 'x' feet or metres of a standard cross-section size of wood. You may say to your supplier I need, for example, 200ft run of 2x4in, or the metric equivalent. They will then supply you with at least 200ft run of this section. The amount of feet run supplied, in relation to the cross-section, can be used to calculate the cubic quantity.



Nobex 505 magnetic saw guide from Axminster Tools & Machinery



Kreg rip-cut saw guide

Felling

Felling, in our world, refers to the simple act, or art if you wish, of cutting down a tree.

Fence or guide

Most powered tools will have a fence of some description be they a handheld router or saw, all the way through to a big industrial beast. The fence is used so that you can make a regular cut of some form or other. They'll be both adjustable and removable in order to afford the user an increased level of flexibility.



A selection of brass ferrules for chisel handles

Ferrule

Most ferrules in our workshops will be associated with hand tools, such as chisels. They're the metal ring that holds the handle together to stop it splitting when the blade is mounted in it. ✂

NEXT MONTH

In part 15 of this series, Peter continues to look at the Fs, from fibreboard, figure, fillet, and finger plates, all the way through to fissile

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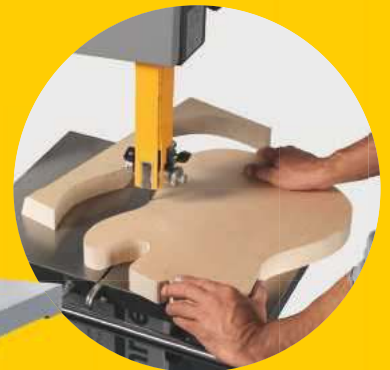
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MARKET TRADING PART 2

Continuing with his tale of selling items on local open markets, Gareth Jones describes what happened next

Here I continue my recollections of running a jobbing joinery business on the England/Wales border after giving up a career in journalism. Last month I described how an ancient by-law helped me to jump the queue for spaces on open markets, and in this issue, I'll describe what happened next.

Story

My market stalls selling wooden toys, both in towns within easy travelling distance of our home on the England/Wales border, gave my fledgling jobbing joinery business a much needed boost. A national manufacturer of staircases had a plant near the town, and I was able to cadge copious quantities of offcuts in sapele, ramin, hemlock and beech, along with rejected part-turned beech banister rails. You see, no offcut is wasted when making toys.

Any piece that did not run for the full length of a rail without the tiniest of flaws thus ended up in my boot as a true cylinder – ideal raw material for the boilers of toy locomotives and steam engines I started to turn out in quantity. Making rolling pins led me into kitchen utensils. I was moving away from on-site work and ever more into bench joinery, which really suited me a lot better than work like fitting kitchens and bathrooms, with all their attendant problems

involving plumbing and electrics. At the risk of overcrowding the workshop with machinery, I invested in a quality table saw – a Kity I believe it was – to take care of cross-cutting, leaving the Coronet Major universal woodworker free for ripping, a roller take-off enabling me to convert quite heavy stock single-handed. The Coronet, for instance, will rip a 6 x 4in plank so as to produce wide boards for shelving units (after gluing) always leaving the Kity in adjustment for cross-cutting, which had previously been done a little precariously using a homemade fence assembly bolted to the Coronet mortiser.

Heart of the shop

The radial arm saw was banished to where it belonged, in a far corner to be used only for cutting up offcuts of firewood. The Coronet remains the heart of my workshop, incorporating, in my opinion, one of the finest lathes money can buy. Mine has an extended bed, nearly 6ft, though I would never dream of mounting anything that long. What on earth would be the point, especially with a lowest speed of 1,000rpm? It has its original Brooks Gryphon motor, still running like a Swiss watch, and that phosphor-bronzed tapered bearing in the headstock is a true work of art still with many years of take-up left in it. I love my Major as if a member of my own family, and I believe it loves me back.

As I have already explained, an ancient by-law giving priority to craftsmen selling their own wares had already leapfrogged me into regular stalls, whereas other traders could spend fruitless months awaiting spaces. This situation had been greatly aggravated in the 1970s by Ugandan

dictator Idi Amin's crazy expulsion of Asians as he tightened his tyranny over this once prosperous African country. Thousands of these refugees entered Britain, where the Asian work ethic kicked in at once and they were determined to pay their way.

Accusations of racism

Many of them sought a living as casual traders on this country's street markets, these being mostly controlled by local government officials who, then as now, went out of their way to avoid being accused of racism as they allocated the sought after spaces on the tarmac.

Sensible officials just stuck to the clear-cut rules under which casual traders built up points for attendance, whether or not they had been allocated a stall. But others started to see avoiding the slur of racism as more important than playing fair, and when traders were tied on points or for any other reason, it was always the one of colour that got the pitch. As a newspaper leader writer, I had always argued that legislating for racial equality can often be counter productive, a view I still hold today.

On markets with a bent Toby – Toby being the universal term for Markets Superintendent – bribery reared its head as British (mostly white) manufacturers – all of them making denim – sought preferential treatment for the traders (mostly of colour) they were supplying with goods on sale or return. An awful lot of this went on. Along with bribery came blackmail. And more often than not the perpetrator was a white man using another's fear of an accusation of racism as a shield for their activities.

A rumpus on the market

Whatever, there was quite a rumpus when I turned up on the Beast Market in Wrexham, a white trader moving straight onto a regular pitch right in the heart of the market, sweeping past a long queue of mostly black traders who would shortly be going home without a penny to show for turning up and making the often long journey home.

Within the hour I was visited by the Toby accompanied by a representative of the Asian traders – let's call him Dilip – who had lodged a protest at what they saw as my preferential treatment. We all shook hands and the Toby opened the batting with what sounded like an apology for my presence there, blaming it all on the by-law of which Dilip was already clutching a copy. The purpose of the visit was to clear the air and assure all concerned that no laws or ethical considerations had been breached, and that I posed no threat to existing traders. Dilip cast his eye over my small display of toy



A Coronet Universal similar to the one in Gareth's workshop



An example of a stall selling a variety of turned craft items, similar to those made by Gareth – courtesy of George King

trains, loo roll holders, jewellery boxes in exotic hardwoods and small reproduction Victorian spinning tops and readily agreed I was unlikely to affect the market's turnover in jeans, trainers and pottery seconds. Then as now, ethnic minorities tended to be far more sensible about these things than the elite leftie liberals.

I am sorry if some readers find this long description of market trading a little tedious, but I do have a good reason for setting out this background in some detail. Although the street market has suffered quite a decline in recent years, I believe it still represents the best possible way for a craftsman with little capital – or indeed one with plenty – to dip a toe in the water and get a sound idea of how to retail his or her product. There is little he or she can lose, and a lot to be gained.

Have a go!

Queueing up as a casual trader has become virtually a thing of the past, so if in your workshop you can turn out a useful product, let's say a nice looking bird table (which would make it markedly different from all the ones I have seen lately) or a selection of wooden toys, say, then get along to your local street market and have a go. Provided you have a few low-priced items on sale, you will almost certainly cover the day's rent. And if one of you succeeds, then any boredom I have inflicted on the rest of you poor readers will have been very worthwhile. So there.

To return to the story, back in Wrexham there the matter rested. The sabre rattling was over.

However, I was already thinking in terms of a hat-trick and wondered if there was another market in the vicinity with the same by-law that had got me started as a market trader.

And it turned out they were everywhere. This by-law, I soon discovered, is a rule which intelligent Tobies everywhere use as a device to keep their markets as interesting as possible. Even where the by-law does not apply, a good Toby will invoke it to give preference to a craftsman trader over one whose stock is all bought in and probably in evidence on several stalls. The problem became one of choosing the best market to be honoured by my presence. Inquiries among fellow traders all pointed in one direction – to the prosperous Cheshire market town of Sandbach.

A lovely market hall

The market there consisted of an open street market surrounding an ancient and very lovely market hall, full of ancient and beautifully carpentered* stalls all with raked display areas. Recruitment of a new trader seeking a stall under the craftsman rule was not quite as straightforward as that at Wrexham, where a brief telephone call had settled everything. I would be required to attend, with my stock, set up a stall and then be inspected by the Toby and a member of the Sandbach Town Council Markets Committee. I wondered if I should perhaps bring a bulging brown envelope with me, but the interview turned out to be a corruption-free affair with an affable Toby and very pleasant lady councillor.

Both seemed to like my work, and lo and behold, I was offered a newly-vacated double stall on the indoor market, starting the following Thursday. The only problem was, with most of my products already selling quite well in both my home town and in Wrexham, I was running short of stock.

Back in the workshop, and enlisting my son Jonjo's help, I set about turning out rolling stock, blessing the fact that for wagon sides and undercarriages we now had decent ripping and cross-cutting facilities that could be in use simultaneously.

Something missing?

I was already yearning for a dedicated planer/thicknesser, but for now the Coronet attachment to the 3½in jointer would have to do. Later, however, a 12in thicknesser would become one of the best investments I ever made, and I highly recommend it to everybody. Get a Makita if you can afford it.

It was Wednesday night before we stopped work, reasonably confident we had enough stock to cover our pair of Sandbach stalls the following day. And something, I felt sure, was missing from our range of turned goods.

Our first customer, the next morning, answered this very question but at the same time posed a mystery, which I will ask you to solve in next month's instalment. ❖

* The word 'carpentered' did not exist until I used it just now. How much nicer than the awful 'crafted'. You saw it here first



Salvador Dali
of Sidmouth

WHAT IS IT ABOUT NICK HANNAN?

Edward Hopkins wonders

I said the other day (January issue, 'End-grain', page 98) that three out of four dyslexics are conspicuously brilliant. Make that four out of five. You don't need labels to see that Nick Hannan is extraordinary. His front garden alerts you with its arrangement of trunks and chunks of timber going their own way in the Devon weather. His cottage quietly asserts the same: it is immediately comfortable and charming, but it is more than that. Every space is considered, characterful, casually yet artfully arranged. There is no pretence, just aesthetic sensitivity, and an ability that is impossible to fake. It's not all him. His wife makes fine jewellery. He shows me examples of her enamelled silver and gold, and is clearly proud. "Her work is phenomenal; it's ridiculous; it's crazy!" They must be quite a team.

Nick is an ex-professional bass player, a sound engineer, a woodworker and sculptor. Running through all he does is music. "There are two sorts of music," he says: with soul, and without soul (we're not talking Marvin Gaye). "One track is laid down and is dead. The same track played again can make the hairs on your neck stand on end." How do you move from the dull to the divine? With feeling. "It's like hunting, fishing; it's capturing that soul. You work wood until it feels right. You change a line, change a curve until it feels good. You use your instinct."

'Frozen music' is a term coined to describe Islamic architecture. It fits his work, which swirls and skates with the grain. Even the more regular cabinets in the studio are treated to softening, organic lines. "Do you think that the design of a studio has a direct impact on the music made

there?" "Without doubt," speaks the one who knows. Nick is not a man who switches from one unrelated job to another: his house, his work, his life are integrated. Heartfelt. The button badge on his waistcoat unashamedly reads 'Love'.



Throne. The customer had been told he had a short time to live, and wanted to leave behind something significant. Happily the prognosis was wrong and he's still with us. Maybe the devilish horns and flames persuaded him to stay



The view from the workshop. Idyllic or what?



A relatively low-tech workshop. One Makita chop saw; one 12 × 9in planer/thicknesser; a chain mortiser (hiding); a table saw ("pathetic, but I did put a larger motor in it"); a pulpit (for the sound system); plenty of hand tools, and rather too much ventilation to make it comfortable in winter. One of the rules of marketing is to give yourself a memorable name

Inspiration

One customer commissioning a kitchen pulled back the covers on a dusty stack of timber in a barn and Nick saw it to be English walnut. "It's the sort of thing that happens once in a lifetime: I felt a group of angels behind me



An offcut from an oak beam, shaped, scorched with a blowtorch and finished with Fiddes clear wax to make a seat, half fossil half chocolate, an 18th birthday present for his daughter. "Now she'll have to carry it around with her everywhere," he laughs as he manhandles it



A seat around a tree. Thinking of it would be beyond most people. Making it, beyond almost all. But to make it this well – how many?

going 'Aaaarh' and there in front of me was the Holy Grail!" He might meet customers in a timber yard to join in selection, and for them to see the material in its roughest state at the start of the story. For individual pieces he uses individual timber. Some has been struck by lightning: it is fissured now but still heavy and strong. Other pieces are lumps of burr. Offcuts from massive beams. Reprieves from bonfires. Boards with rotten holes. "Cranky bits of timber that no one else would use" because these have immense character, albeit hidden from ordinary eyes. He won't always know their fate and he (like many of us) has too many of them in store, but when their time comes, they'll be that bit drier and ready for action. Nick is presently in between workshops. "I've just cleared out a couple of thousand bits of wood, and though I have a bad memory, I remembered every one of them."

Construction

He does not make drawings for his work. He couldn't if he wanted to because he does not impose a design on the timber; he enters a conversation. He arranges blanks on the bench until the shapes emerge. Jointing is done before moulding, and much is done by hand, his equipment being rudimentary (though he does have a chain mortiser). With such a free-spirited approach to form, it is impressive that his joinery is excellent even when the components are irregular. "Doing joints on bent bits of wood is difficult!"

Shaping is done with a variety of hand and power tools ending up with an oscillating sander using progressively fine abrasive to 320 or even 500 grit. 'What do you do?' he is sometimes asked. "I make dust," he replies. He finishes with Devon Wood Oil, (high-spec, eco-aware, used by the



Spalted beech – "is such a joy to uncover." Fungi are territorial: where one takes up residence, it excludes others causing fantastic zonal patterns. This is partnership between maker and maker: this is art. The plinth is oak, charred and oiled

Royal Household: www.wilsonspaints.co.uk), which he finds superior to, and more durable than, its competitors: "Fantastic stuff – smells beautiful, goes off quickly." Renaissance wax for smaller pieces.

Commission

He used to make what he wanted to see, and sell it through galleries. He aimed high-end (some customers like an item to be expensive) and so covered the mark-up. With recession, that market shrank. Now he only works to commission. He favours heavy and large pieces. A coffee table is a central, focal point to a room, useful for everything from playing games, eating supper to resting your feet. His earlier versions were very curvilinear but he has moved away from these 'glass breakers'. Kitchens are a favourite not just for cooking ("the flow of a kitchen is important: everything should be visible and to hand") but for meeting and talking. One softly moulded slab of Devon oak took four people to lift, and can fit 12 around it; it is a hub, a magnet drawing people to it by its very presence.



A picnic table, so massive it had to be built on site. It belongs in its environment



Instead of a shop-bought laminated worktop above some white goods, which would add nothing but functionality, Nick joins up a slab of oak and makes the leading edge dance. Thereby he makes something in the user dance too

Horns

Nick shows me more work. More horned thrones. A balcony with horns. A staircase with horns. A dresser with horns. "You're into horns" I say, perceptively. "Well, why not?" he replies. 'Because people find them devilish,' I answer, 'it's hard-wired into us: angels don't have horns – goats do.' "I sort of call it my moustache filter," he says. "If someone looks at my moustache and goes 'that's a bit weird', then I don't really want to talk to them anyway, so I filter them out of my life. It's the same with horns."

Nick had a fairly conventional childhood. At his grandparents' house he loved making things with wood. He was not tested for dyslexia but "at a flush-your-head-down-the-toilet comprehensive school, I was put in the stupid bin. I was the only kid interested in doing O' level woodwork but they wouldn't let me, and I had to do CSE instead, which got me nowhere." Did it teach you anything? "Yes. It taught me that I loved the workshop"

For 17 years he played in a band, and had one radio hit in the '80s, but otherwise failed to break through. His brother, meanwhile, was in a band that toured the world and sold millions. He isn't envious. "I think we probably had a better time.



Pippy oak and burr oak. None of the timber that Nick uses is ordinary. Why would he waste his time on that?

Money and sales aren't the only value: we had a fantastic time"

Nick renovated a cottage incorporating his first recording studio. He built his second studio with a record advance but, with their own facility the band went their own way, producing an



"I got bored with building coffee tables with four legs." One of several 'Monopod' tables, and a blasted mirror frame. The setting (not his) gives a flavour of Nick's aesthetic sensibilities – what I saw of his cottage was similarly considered and appealing. "I love making things out of three elements – that's perfect for me"



Holes and bowls. Most woodworkers would dismiss any rot as a serious and disqualifying defect. Nick finds it inspiring. He can turn, but prefers to hew – first with a chainsaw, a chop saw, then an Arbortech, an angle grinder with flat pad, finishing with a Hitachi sander, only hand sanding at the end



"This kitchen is appalling. I keep it to remind myself how crap I used to be. I look at it and think, 'well you got a bit better!' I really hate kitchen cupboards. Cupboards get full of junk and you never know what you've got." This old apple drying rack is especially successful with its many shallow drawers



Only a sound engineer can design a recording studio. There used to be a fashion for plain grey studios, but Nick repudiates that sterility. "I want to go into a Bohemian playground with different colours and textures"



Studio kitchen in walnut



Porch. He is more than capable of conventional carpentry, though a job this size requires another pair of hands. "With angles and things I need a second brain"

indulgent experimental opus that scared the record company off. That was 20 years ago. The music has stood the test of time so Nick is going to remaster it. 'You'll still have to promote it,' I say. "No. We'll just give it out to friends," he replies.

Then laptops invaded, and around the year 2000, recording studios went out of business. Nick came away with nothing. "It kicked the stuffing out of me for a couple of years. I came down here (Sidmouth) to lick my wounds. That's when my woodwork started properly. I was down here by the seaside, broke, having a lovely time. I did odd jobs, trained as a massage therapist...

the standard sort of thing, until my daughter was eight. Then my brother, who is a tour manager, asked me for help. There I was setting up microphones on stage, and I thought 'I can do this'. It's a different business, engineering live sound. Because I was a studio engineer I have different values to a live engineer." I comment that live sound is often awful. He agrees: "If I'm at a show and I like the band but the sound is terrible, I have to leave."

Now he's a tour manager for American bands. His dyslexia confounds him with travel timetables, but he has to overcome it as he's always booking flights and arranging itineraries. He balances

touring with (what he modestly calls) carpentry. It's a good mix, but in a profound way it's not a mix at all. In both worlds he does the same thing. He sums himself up: "I make environments." I think he does more than that; he makes them sing. ✂

FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about Nick Hannan, see links below:

Instagram: @hkwoodworks

Email: nicotouring@icloud.com

Website: www.helluvakinkywoodworks.com (currently moving to a new website)



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Verschoyle's hand-driven lathe

Robin Gates marvels at a table-top machine for turning wood in the October 1924 issue of *The Woodworker*

As an inveterate fan of the hand-driven grinding wheel, I was bound to marvel at this Verschoyle hand-driven lathe featured in the October 1924 issue of *The Woodworker*. My Black Knight wheel made by The Carborundum Co. is a near contemporary of this machine, and operates on the same principle. With one hand the worker supplies the motive power, meanwhile moving an edge tool against a rapidly spinning surface with the other. The only real difference is that, on the lathe the tool shapes the spinning surface, while on the grinding wheel the opposite applies.

The inventor was one William Denham Verschoyle of Sligo, Ireland, evidently a man of wide-ranging scientific interests. I imagine he found this intensely physical machine a pleasantly grounded contrast to the more cerebral ponderings of his published works addressing 'The Soul of an Atom' and 'God and the universe'.

"Clamped to the edge of a workbench or ordinary table in thirty seconds" the lathe consisted of the headstock or mandrel, the tailstock and the toolrest connected by the round bar of the bed, supported by the clamps. The handle was extended for greater power or retracted for higher speeds, with one turn of the handle causing eight turns of the spindle. The faceplate, with screw-adjusted jaws, added some mass to help keep the work in motion, but even so the driving arm must have tired.

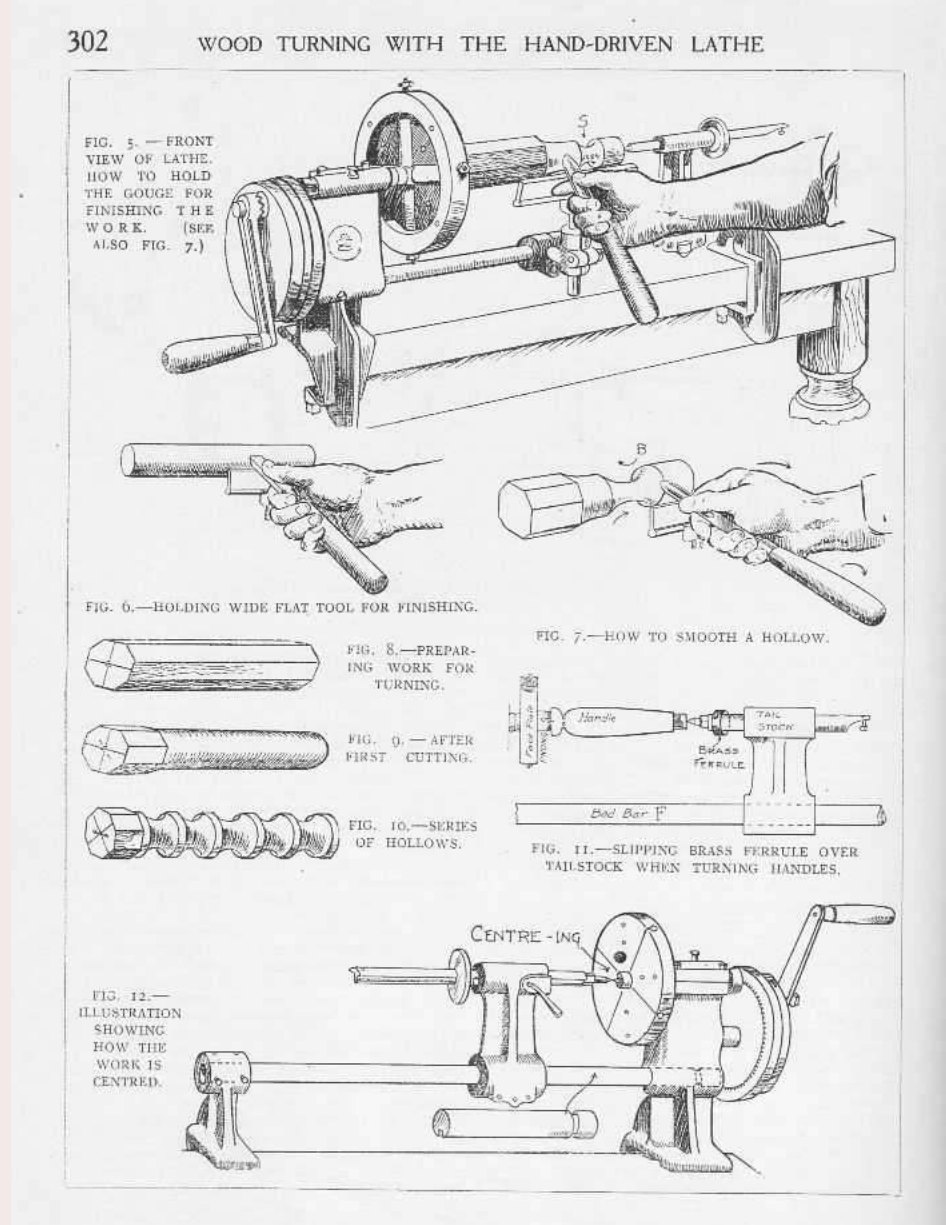
A new era in lathe construction

The Verschoyle was said to mark "a new era in lathe construction, having no treadle, no heavy driving wheel, no cumbersome framework, and the consequent annoyance of troubles, such as belt slip," but the machine seems not to have caught on, and is a rarity today. Apparently there is one at the National Trust's Snowhill Manor and Garden in Gloucestershire, but sadly not on display.

Although watchmakers had been using hand-driven mandrels for generations, the forces involved in turning larger stock would seem to have weighed against the Verschoyle. Merely grinding a chisel manually can be physically tiring, so how much harder must it be to maintain momentum and accuracy while turning, say, a chair leg?

"What is required is a certain amount of practice so as to attain the desired dexterity," we're advised. For one toiling at the carborundum face of the grinding wheel that seems doable, since the technique for controlling the lathe's gouge appears identical.

"The first joint of the first finger of the right



hand should be in contact with the face of the tee rest, and it will thus form a gauge or stop, which will prevent the worker pushing the tool too deeply into the wood." That (Fig.5) is precisely as for grinding a chisel. The writer continues "the worker should move his hand along to the right and to the left, still keeping his first finger joint against the tee rest, which will act as a guide." Again, this is the technique for moving a wide blade across a narrow grinding wheel. The alternative of pivoting the blade from a fixed point applies equally for the Verschoyle lathe. Talk of "money-earning possibilities in the hands of either the amateur or the professional"

seems credible, especially today when a range of shapely handles under an environmentally-friendly 'Hand-Cranked' brand would surely pull in the punters at a craft fair. Our 21st century choice of materials might differ from those of 1924, however. Wood, bone, brass, ivory and horn were mentioned, and also vulcanite, erinoid and lactalith. These three sounding like Tolkien characters are, respectively, a hard vulcanised rubber, the trade name for plastic made from a milk protein, and – I don't know! Neither my dictionary nor the mighty Google has heard of 'lactalith', although the context suggests another material made from milk. Can a reader help? ✂

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LETTERS

★ LETTER OF THE MONTH

NEDDY RIDES AGAIN

Hi Tegan,

I wondered if you'd be interested in running an article on a project I have just completed for my granddaughter Evelyn's Christmas present. While I was at college back in 2005, I found a copy of *The Woodworker* from November 1960. The front cover showed a project featured inside of a small rocking horse called 'Neddy'. I thought this was really sweet and somehow kept the magazine. After all these years I found it and decided to make it for my granddaughter.

I have attached a couple of photos but have a complete album of making shots from start to finish, if you're interested? I think it's amazing that after nearly 60 years, this project has been reborn and a complete hit! Many thanks, **Rachel Wadey**

Hi Rachel, thanks so much for getting in touch. It's so funny as one of our authors, Robin Gates, featured an archive instalment on this very piece back in the February 2018 edition. I'd also love to feature your version, however. You say you have a full set of step-by-step photos of the build – have you written the project up? I'd very much like to see it if that's OK? Thanks so much again for your email and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best wishes, Tegan



Rachel's completed rocking toy, which she made for her granddaughter Evelyn's Christmas present

The original rocking toy from the November 1960 issue of *The Woodworker*

'THE BRUTE FORCE METHOD'

Hi Tegan,

Glancing back through the November 2019 issue, my interest was caught by Anselm Fraser's reference to the 'brute force method'. It sounds very much like the approach that led to probably the most satisfying piece I have made (photos attached).

Coming back into woodworking after about 20 years out, and needing to recover my skills, I made a few knockabout projects and then looked for something more interesting.

A tangled pendant chain a few months before our 35th wedding anniversary provided the '1% inspiration' for a jewellery chest that would allow chains to hang so that they did not tangle. After much trial and error with a pencil and A3 pad, the mass of lines almost magically formed themselves into a pleasing and unexpected design. Then, even more experiment followed to work out how to make the thing work! The end result was a rotating octagonal tower, mounted on a lazy Susan bearing, with opposed drawers front and back and four hanging compartments on the corners, each with a five-branch carousel for necklaces. Ash and American black walnut made a pleasing contrast for added interest.

A last-minute crisis arose when, with the unit almost finished, I realised I couldn't use butt hinges on the angled edges of the doors as the screws would come through the face! Solution: decorative hinges of the 'if you can't hide it, emphasise it' principle.

The tower later provided an interesting centre-piece for my craft fair stall, producing several enquiries as to the cost of commissioning it. On hearing my reply, none of the enquirers pursued it any further! Best regards as ever, **Michael Forster**



Michael's wonderful jewellery tower, the height of which is just 390mm

Hi Michael, thanks for sharing these photos of your lovely jewellery tower – how delightful! It's great to hear that other content in the magazine is providing inspiration too. We love the novel design, and what a clever idea to suspend the necklaces rather than laying them flat, where they can easily tangle. The lazy Susan bearing is another brilliant addition, so who knows, a commission could well be on the horizon after all!
Best wishes, **Tegan**

READERS' HINTS & TIPS

For the next 10 issues, in conjunction with Veritas and BriMarc Tools & Machinery, we're giving one lucky reader per month the chance to get their hands on a fantastic **Veritas apron plane with PM-V11 blade**. Ideal for trim carpentry and featuring a ductile cast-iron body, its unique side wings allow for a comfortable, firm grip. To be in with a chance of winning this great piece of kit, just send your top workshop hints, tips or pointers – indeed anything that other readers may find useful in their woodworking journeys – to tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com, along with a photo(s) illustrating your tip in action. To find out more about Veritas tools, see www.brimarc.com



SIMPLE REPLACEMENT FOR A ZERO CLEARANCE TABLESAW THROAT PLATE

I bought my Fusion 3 tablesaw at the beginning of last year and now need to replace the throat plate to have a complete zero clearance for a new blade I recently bought. I went to my local Laguna store to purchase one and decided that the £50 charge was a little too expensive to justify. I had thought about making some myself, but looking at the profile apertures on the underside, decided against that option, so instead came up with the idea of not replacing it at all, but rather, leaving it in situ in the table saw. Most mouths on an average saw bench are too wide to obtain a really fine finish, particularly on difficult wood, so obtaining this was done by making a false table out of 1/4in thick plywood with a batten piece attached along the front edge of the false table.



The screwed and glued cross strip under the front edge of the false table is butted up to the table saw table, then clamped in place to stop it from moving side to side while in use



The blade cutting through the false table



A view of the 1/4in thick plywood in situ with the table saw directly over the throat plate, after cutting through the false plywood table

Once this was on the table over the blade, I slowly raised the saw blade up gently, cutting through the false plywood table and the cut was made with zero clearance. It can be used many times over and has the facility of changing the false plywood sheet for new ones to accommodate a variety of saw blade kerf thicknesses. **Kered Winder**

JAPANESE TOOLS

Hi Tegan,

After nearly 60 years of playing with wood in all sorts of ways, I'm surprised that I never found out about Japanese saws and planes until this moment. But now that I have I cannot live without them for anything that demands some degree of finesse.

In a way, mimicking Japanese martial arts where you use the opponent's strength and attack in coming forward to beat him, as opposed to the Western method of push and punch, so Japanese saws and planes with their cut on the pull stroke allows the saw blade to be so much thinner and more flexible compared to Western saws, and the plane to be so much better controlled. There may be other magazine readers who have not experienced Japanese woodworking tools – perhaps an article in the magazine might stop other people from waiting 60 years before discovery!

I've also come across Japanese Hakone marquetry (which I intend to try), although with not so thin veneers as the Japanese master creates in the video here (www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxvOMHoLRBY).

Best regards, **Dr Colin R. Lloyd**

Hi Colin, thanks for your continued input; it's much appreciated. As you say, Japanese tools provide the woodworker with infinite precision, control, flexibility and strength, which attests to their popularity. I will see if any of our authors would be willing to pen an article on the subject, so watch this space, but in the meantime, a search on the www.getwoodworking.com archive could prove fruitful, as I know we've covered this subject before. The Japanese Hakone marquetry looks incredibly precise and those paper-thin veneers are things of wonder – absolutely stunning! Thanks again. Best wishes, **Tegan**



WRITE & WIN!

We always love hearing about your projects, ideas, hints and tips, and/or like to receive feedback about the magazine's features, so do drop us a line – you never know, you might win our great 'Letter of the Month' prize, currently the new Trend 1/4in 30-piece Router Cutter Set, worth over £100.

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ME AND MY WORKSHOP



Peter in his workshop, working on his latest project

Peter Sings

62-year-old furniture maker **Peter Sings** gives **Rick Wheaton** a sneak peek inside his Devon workshop

1. What is it – and where is it?

It's a 1,000sq.ft commercial wood shop in South Brent, Devon.

2. What's the best thing about it?

I've got plenty of room, and everything is in its place.

3. And what's the worst?

It's a big space to heat, so I'm often cold in the winter.

4. How important is it to you?

100%. It's my business, my life and my hobby. I've always worked with wood, even as a kid.

5. What do you make in it?

Bespoke furniture and joinery.

6. What is your favourite workshop tip?

Double check everything!

7. What's your best piece of kit?

My Felder planer/thicknesser.

8. If your workshop caught fire, what one thing would you rescue?

My box of hand tools, especially my collection of Lie-Nielsen planes.

9. What's your biggest workshop mistake?

I once made a beautiful cabinet with multiple drawers and special fittings, but I misread my measurements and it didn't fit the alcove.

10. What's the nicest thing you've ever made?

Easily my cherry wood Jupe table (a circular dining table with expanding leaves. Highly technical).

11. And what's the worst?

Not much comes to mind, but very occasionally I'm asked to make something I don't particularly like, but the customer does.

12. What's the best lesson you've learned?

I've been a joiner 40 years, and I'm still learning!

13. If you won the lottery, what would you buy for your workshop?

Probably a drum sander, or – depending on the win – a whole new workshop. ✕

NEXT MONTH

In the next issue, Rick Wheaton looks around the workshop of former broadcaster, scientist, author and photographer, Adam Hart-Davis. We'd love to hear about your workshops too, so do feel free to send in a photo of your beloved workspace, and please answer the same questions as shown here – just email tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com



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LIVE, LOVE, Camper

Jolien Brebels' fun project recreates a Volkswagen camper van in miniature, complete with all the added extras

In this article, I'll show how you can make a wooden toy Volkswagen camper. It's a great gift for a friend/relative, or why not make one for yourself?

CAMPER VAN COMPONENTS



1 Start by rough cutting your timber and planing it down to the correct thickness – see Fig.1 for individual dimensions

TOOLS & MATERIALS USED

TOOLS

- Jointer/planer
- Tablesaw
- Bandsaw
- Scrollsaw
- Sander
- Drill press

MATERIALS

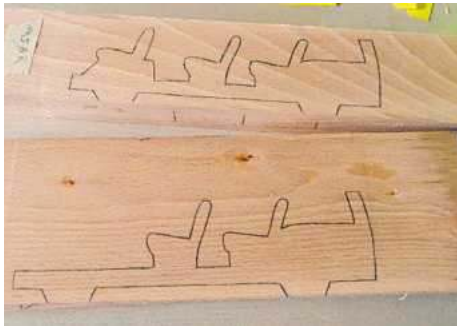
- Wood glue
- CA adhesive
- Clamps





Peace

Love



2 Transfer all patterns onto the wood. Cut out all pieces on the bandsaw, or using a scrollsaw if you prefer. I used double-sided tape to ensure I could cut identical pieces at the same time



3 Next, cut away the middle seat piece on one of these two templates



4 You can then sand all curves smooth using a Dremel multi-tool or similar

GLUING UP THE BODY



5 Glue the five middle pieces together. Here I'm using a combination of wood glue and CA adhesive



6 In this photo you can see that the glue-up is pretty uneven, but don't worry, as everything will be evened out on the bandsaw



7 Clean up all marks left by the bandsaw, then proceed to sand everything smooth, especially the seats



8 I made a design error here, so therefore needed to cut the front piece off. If I didn't do this, there would be nowhere for the driver to place their legs



9 The project requires four x 30mm wheels. I added some shape to mine using a belt sander and sanded them smooth using abrasive with each mounted on a combi drill



10 After you've glued the wheels in place with 6mm dowel used as an axle, you can glue on the sides of the body, using a combination of wood glue, CA adhesive and you may also want to add some clamps to make everything secure. When the glue has dried, round over the edges at the back of the vehicle

DIAGRAMS

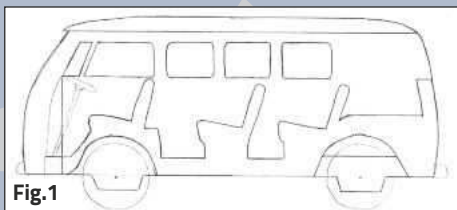


Fig.1

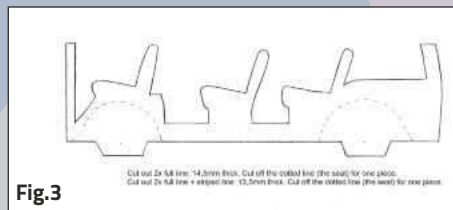


Fig.3

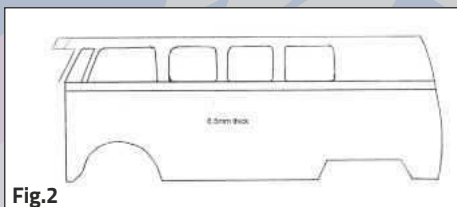


Fig.2

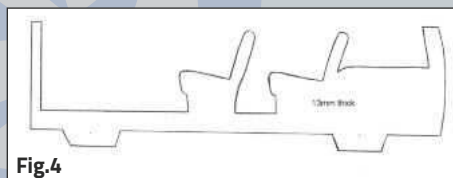


Fig.4



Fig.5

SHAPING THE BODY



11 Shape the sides of the van a little more on a belt sander; you want to add curves just like on a real Volkswagen camper



12 Next, at an angle, or straight if you so wish, start to cut out the bottom and top of the windows



13 For the window trim, you'll need three pieces of 7 x 8mm timber. For the sides of the van, cut two of the pieces to length. Glue the windows and trims together, then, using wood glue and CA adhesive, glue the windows onto the body. The third piece of window trim is for the back – see step 14



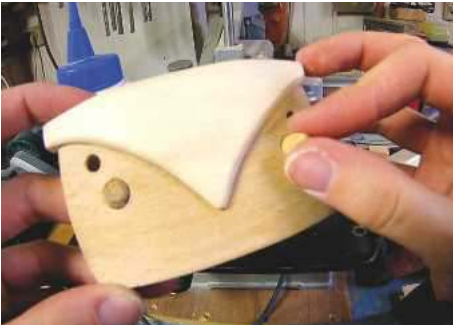
14 Next, drill a 3mm hole for the steering wheel



MAKING THE FRONT OF THE CAMPER VAN

15 For the front of the project, you need to use two contrasting pieces to give definition. First, cut out the

bottom piece on the bandsaw, sand the inside smooth, then transfer the shape of the inside onto a lighter piece of wood – this will be the top piece of the grill. Cut this out using a bandsaw. Adjust the shape of the top piece on the belt sander, so it aligns perfectly with the bottom. Next, using a bandsaw and belt sander, begin to round the bottom piece a little bit. You can now transfer the shape onto the top piece and draw a new line beside it (so the top piece is a little thicker than the bottom). Cut it out using a bandsaw and glue the two pieces together



16 Drill 2 x 8mm holes and 2 x 5mm holes for the headlights. You can use 8mm and 5mm dowels for these components



17 Glue on the front piece using wood glue and CA adhesive. Sand the sides so they are flush with the body



BUMPERS & ROOF

18 Transfer the shape of the front of the bus onto 7mm thick wood, outline the shape, as shown, and you'll have your bumper. Cut it out on the bandsaw. Do the same for the back of the bus. Sand these components smooth and then you're ready to glue them into position. Before you glue on the roof, oil the inside of the van using your preferred finish

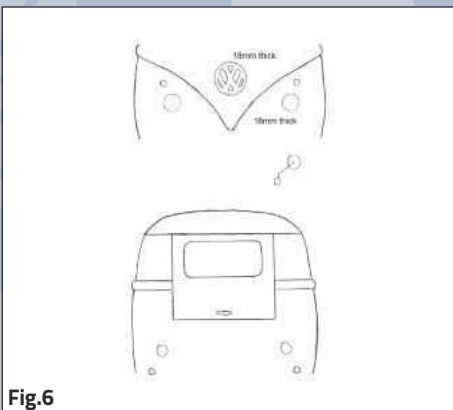


Fig.6

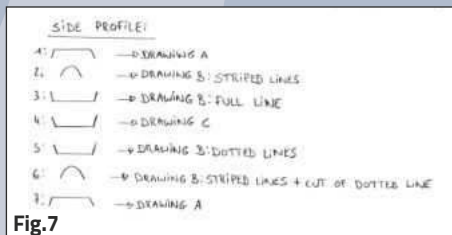


Fig.7

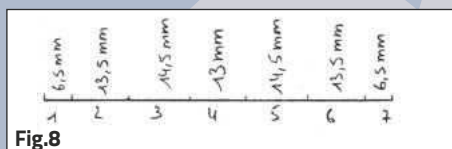


Fig.8

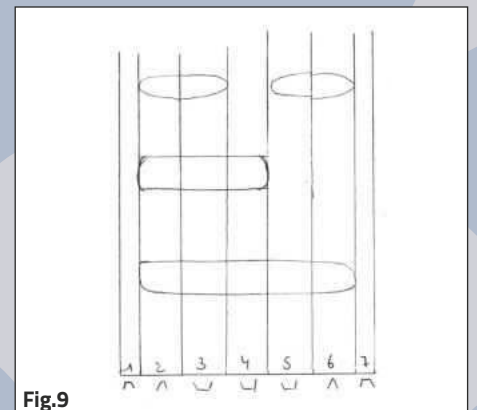


Fig.9

BUMPERS & ROOF



19 Transfer the shape of the front of the bus onto 7mm thick wood, outline the shape, as shown, and you'll have your bumper. Cut it out on the bandsaw, then do the same for the back. Sand these components smooth and then you're ready to glue them into position. Before you glue on the roof, oil the inside of the van using your preferred finish



20 For the roof, you need some 10mm thick timber. Transfer the shape onto the wood and cut it out on the bandsaw

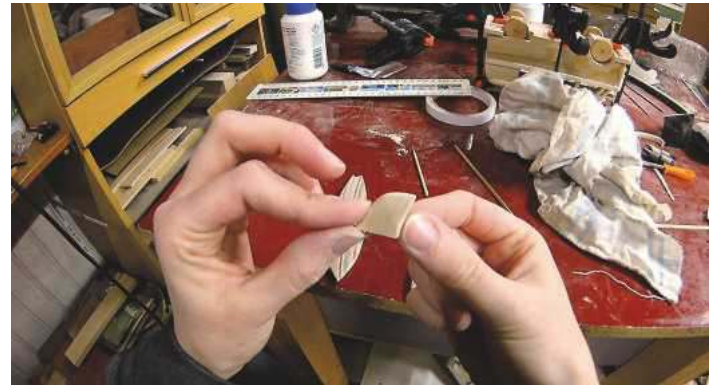


21 You can now shape the roof on a belt sander. This can take a while to achieve the necessary curves, so be patient! Cut off a small section of the window trim (7 x 8mm); this will serve as a partition for the window at the front of the vehicle. Glue this in place and you can then attach the roof

FINISHING TOUCHES



22 On my design, I made two rear lights using two contrasting pieces of wood



23 For the wing mirrors, I made 12mm plugs using 4mm plywood. I added shape to them using a sanding drum mounted in a Dremel multi-tool and also added a toothpick as a support. Next, drill 3mm holes in the body for the wing mirrors and you can then glue them into position. As an extra touch, I also made a luggage rack complete with miniature surfboards, which were repurposed using old skateboards. To see how to make these extra additions, watch the accompanying YouTube video – see details in the 'further information' sidebar

FURTHER INFORMATION

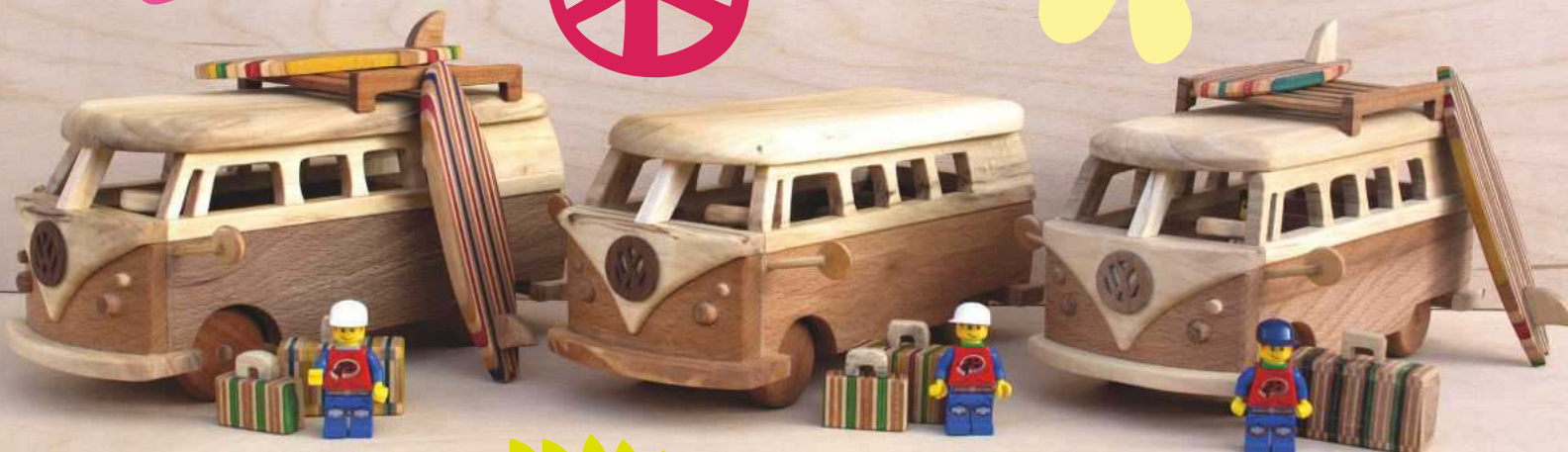
To see the full video of this project being made, visit Jolien's YouTube channel – see www.youtube.com and search for 'Jolien Brebels – how to make a toy Volkswagen bus'

Love

Peace



24 Your replica Volkswagen camper van is now completed! Here's a few other ones I've made ✂



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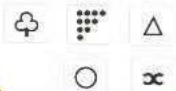
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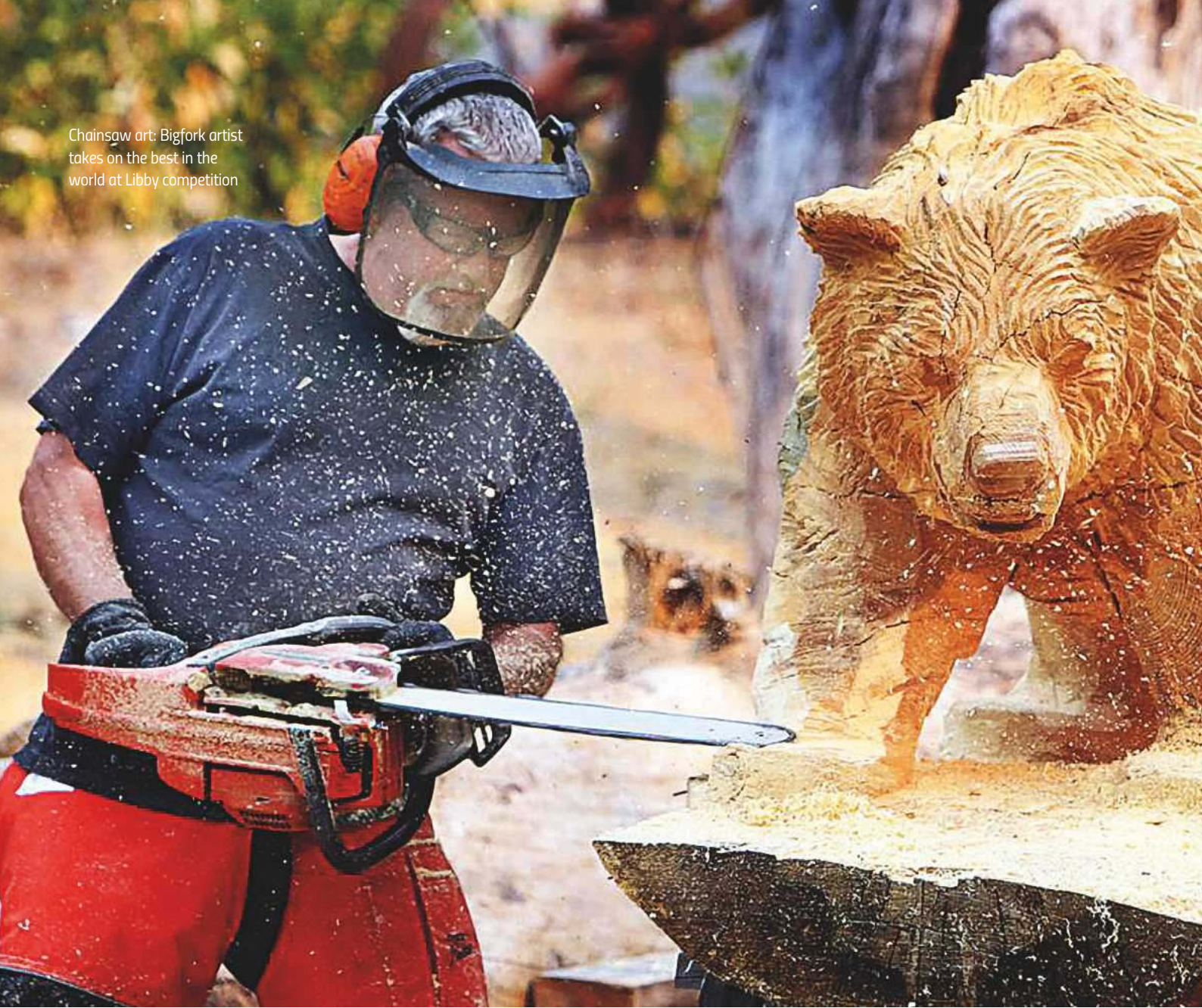
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Chainsaw art: Bigfork artist takes on the best in the world at Libby competition



The art of the **CHAINSAW SCULPTOR**

Chainsaw sculpting (or carving) had been established in the USA for several decades before its introduction to Britain in the late 1960s, as **Paul Greer** discovers here

The chainsaw has been succinctly defined as 'a portable, mechanical saw, which cuts with teeth attached to a rotating chain that runs along a guide bar'. Rudimentary chainsaws were used as early as the late 18th century for cutting bone in a medical context. A more sophisticated version called the osteotome was developed by a German, Bernhard Heine, in 1830, and chainsaws played a role in surgery throughout the 19th century.

In 1905, a patent was granted to Samuel J. Bens, of San Francisco, for a chainsaw to fell giant redwoods. The first portable saw followed in 1918, an electrical one in 1926, and a petrol-powered one in 1929.

Safety aspects

Chainsaw sculpting (or carving) had been established in the USA for several decades before its introduction to Britain in the late 1960s. Its popularity here in the 50 years since is explained partly by conventional chainsaw operatives in forestry and tree surgery needing extra income, especially during dips in timber prices. However, established wood artists were also quick to discover how useful a chainsaw could be in removing large quantities of surplus material, letting them begin their finer shaping and patterning work much sooner.

Chainsaws have the potential to cause very serious injury, and it's vital to know how to employ

them safely. There are two initial aspects to this: protective clothing, and the saw itself. Clothing includes a helmet, ear defenders, goggles, gloves, leg guards, boots, and chest protection. Some of these may seem redundant to someone bent only on small-scale carving; however, everyone must normally complete approved training with a conventional saw before graduating to one suited to the creative side.

The saw has several built-in safeguards, including the front hand guard, chain brake, safety throttle, anti-vibration mounts, guide bar and chain, and chain cover. Extra precautions, though, are also essential to avoid undue wear, or even damage, to the instrument.



Bernhard Heines Osteotom, Würzburg 1830

Wood from a timber dealer should be usable immediately, but before cutting any you find yourself, examine it carefully. The bark should be removed, and the timber itself may need pressure washing to remove dirt or insects. Next, examine a cross-section, and beware of any splits, especially near the centre. If possible, halving wood vertically before carving will help avoid unpleasant surprises.

Old wood from buildings often contains metal nails or screws, a black streak being the tell-tale sign, and some carvers run a detector over it to minimise this risk. The age of timber matters as well – most hardwoods carve fairly easily if felled recently, but even a softwood, if very dry, can be resistant. Though the saw suffers no damage, it will probably need re-sharpening sooner. Cedar, fir, oak, and alder are among the most yielding varieties, and basswood and butternut are also popular with novices.

Competitive sculpting

Sculptures are usually created by working from the top down. Most beginners need to draw guide lines or shade the areas for removal, but many

experienced cutters are adept enough to make every incision in the right order unrehearsed. Good sculptors can wield a saw surprisingly delicately, using the end, in particular, to make fine cuts or create textured surfaces, which you'd think would require other tools. But when working on a large scale, even celebrated practitioners may use a penknife to make a small model (or maquette) from soap or clay, reproducing its features to scale on the wood reserved for the sculpture.

In 1986, the Cascade Chainsaw Sculptors Guild was formed in the USA, the first World Championships being held there the following year. In Britain, a 'Carve Carrbridge' event has been a fixture in Scotland since 2003, and since 2005, Tatton Park in Cheshire has played host to the English Open Chainsaw Carving Competition.

One Tatton Park event is a speed test, requiring contestants to produce a carving from a log not exceeding 2ft in diameter, within 30 minutes. Even in this short time, surprisingly imaginative (and amusing) pieces are turned out.

The most spectacular effects, however, are achieved when using logs up to 4ft wide. In this



Phil Dunford – professional logger and chainsaw trainer



Artist Harry Thomas from Kinnerton with his 'Bear in a Log' wooden sculpture



Woodcarver and sculptor Dave King-Rare with his 'Dilwyn the Dragon' sculpture



Alistair and Jonathan Brownlee with Shane Green's chainsaw-carved 'Triathlon' sculpture



Chainsaw sculptor Christopher transforms the stump of a felled cedar into a fantasy castle at the Royal Victoria Country Park near Southampton, Hampshire



'Mary's Tree' by Shane Green, at Tropical World, Leeds – 45ft tall in beech and one of the largest single piece totem poles in the UK

event, carvers are granted 25 hours of work over three days, and, while employing mainly a chainsaw, may use any tools they wish to achieve a desired finish. The largest pieces may be as much as 20ft high, and are auctioned at the end of the competition.

Meeting the sculptors

Mick Burns has been using a chainsaw for decades, and for some years sculpture has been his principal source of income. He's done commissions for local authorities, community groups, schools, theme parks, and galleries, besides 'household name' organisations

such as the National Trust and the Woodland Trust. He travels a good deal, and has clients abroad. For some years, Mick ran the only chainsaw carving course in the UK, and besides being a 'regular' at events where he demonstrates carving, has appeared on TV programmes like *Countryfile* and *Grand Designs*. He's won numerous competitions, including the prestigious English Open Chainsaw Competition on two occasions.

Mindful of his environmental responsibilities, Mick chooses to use wood chiefly from UK plantations managed for timber production specifically. Carefully regulated by the Forestry

Commission, these are wholly sustainable. His alternative source is timber already removed from trees, which are dangerously unstable, diseased, or dead – effectively recycling it.

Phil Dunford runs a range of chainsaw training courses for both professionals and others. One, entitled Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross Cutting, and billed as 'an invaluable introduction to chainsaws for the first-time user', is popular, and good value at around £200 per person. Phil commenced chainsaw carving about 20 years ago, beginning with fairly straightforward objects, like mushrooms, before progressing to complex animal shapes.



Shane Green with carvings he made for a National Trust wooden sculpture trail, near Ripon



Shane Green working on the 'Calverley Angel'



A competitor at the 2018 Carve Carrbridge Scottish Open Chainsaw Carving Competition

Two of his (fairly recent) large pieces are a 12ft crocodile and a 6ft teddy bear.

Christopher Bain has over 30 years' experience operating chainsaws. His general artistic flair led him to carve wood, and he now offers instruction, too. His Chainsaw Carving Course is 'designed to give you a starting platform into carving wood with a chainsaw'. Participants must hold appropriate insurance, and have successfully completed the NPTC CS30 chainsaw training. Saws and any additional tools needed for the course can be hired, but the timber used is free, and you can take away whatever you make. Like Phil's, the course lasts two days,

and costs in the region of £400.

Based in Otley, near Leeds, Shane Green was attracted to chainsaw sculpting while in the USA in 1997. At the European Chainsaw Championships in 2012, inspired by the Brownlee brothers (Alistair and Jonathan's) success at the then just-ended London Olympics, he carved a piece entitled 'Triathlon', from which figures enacting its three disciplines (swimming, cycling and running) emerge. Shane was responsible too for the nine shapes constituting the hillside Otley Chevin Sculpture Trail, each of which represents a stage in the Chevin's history.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Cascade Chainsaw Sculptors Guild
– www.theccsg.com

Mick Burns Chainsaw Sculpture
– www.chainsawsulpture.co.uk

Chainsaw Training with Phil Dunford
– www.chainsawtraining.com

Christopher Bain Chainsaw Sculptor
– www.thechainsawsulptor.co.uk

Do your homework

To become a chainsaw sculptor, you must undertake the initial training as described here. The instructors you meet may express preferences (or even strong opinions) on the best saws to use. However, this must be a personal choice, preferably based on several considerations, including expense.

The likely scale and number of your carvings are important, as are the teeth on the saw's chain being the fittest for purpose. Not least, the saw itself must be comfortable to hold, and certainly not too heavy. An online search will locate chainsaw retailers, but visit more than one to compare both the equipment and the expertise of the sales staff.

Doing some 'homework' will help you get the most from professional advice. You'll find an array of online videos (typically of between 5 and 15 minutes) which demonstrate clearly and interestingly how to make decorative or functional items on a small-medium scale. One is for a birdhouse, for which (besides a chainsaw) you'll need to employ a chisel, drill, sander, blowtorch, and to apply protective varnish, so being generally practical will certainly come in handy. ✂



Artist Griffon Ramsey uses chainsaws and various other woodworking tools to carve intricate sculptures from wood



Abbie Berg uses her chainsaw to shape the arms on a carving of a bear

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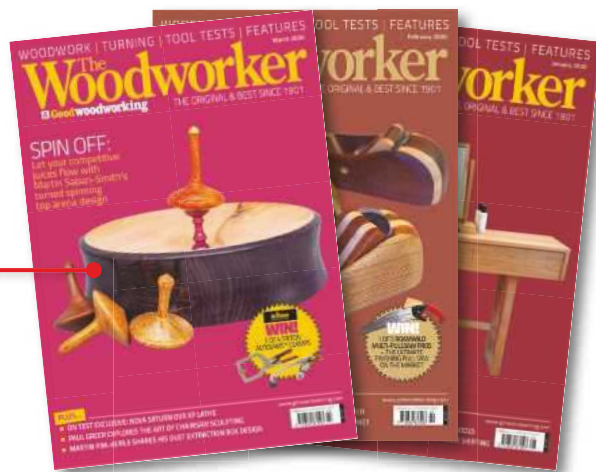
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AROUND THE HOUSE WITH PHIL DAVY



Have you ever reached a situation when working on a project around the house when you wondered what on earth you're doing? You've arrived at a stage where there's no turning back, but can't help thinking you've bitten off more than you can chew. This happened to me a few weeks ago when removing a flight of stairs. It was vintage 1970s, with open risers and dreadful ranch-style balustrade, not to mention failing to comply with current Building Regulations.

After I'd thought long and hard about how I could improve them aesthetically and safely, the only solution was to replace the entire stairs.

Once I'd sawn through a few treads, I realised that was the point of no return. It was a relief once all the timber had been removed and the stairwell was empty, though, and using a ladder to get upstairs for a couple of weeks was fun!

SHED WATCH CHISEL CHALLENGE

Normally I would never give a cheap chisel the time of day, but on this occasion it was a bit of an emergency. Staying with family over New Year, I was informed that the lock on the back door was playing up. No problem, except that it was 1 January by the time I'd taken a look and was travelling home the next day. A replacement lock was needed, but with only a few screwdrivers plus a hammer I found in the garage, the task would be a challenge. No square, steel rule or drill, either.

No problem, as the local branch of Screwfix would be open, or so I thought. Nope, it seems as though they do occasionally shut their doors. Fortunately, Homebase was just down the road and happily ignoring the Bank Holiday shut-down. I was in luck as they had the correct size mortise lock in stock. To be on the safe side, I reckoned it would be worth buying a couple of chisels, as lock mechanisms tend to vary in thickness. It was bound to be too tight in the existing recess...

With my own chisels at home, I bought two really cheap tools in store, rather than spend good money on mid-range duplicates. Under the HomeBuild brand, at £2.50 a time they wouldn't break the bank. I could always return them for a refund if unused. With steel end caps, they're designed to be used with a hammer, rather than a mallet.

As it turned out, I needed to widen the lock recess slightly. Finding some 180 grit glasspaper in a drawer, I managed to put an edge on both

chisels fairly easily. Not exactly finely ground, the chrome vanadium blades were fairly straight, though not completely in line with their plastic handles. Never mind, they actually worked surprisingly well and did the job.

Since then, I've used one chisel to chop out the ends of treads when installing new stairs. You can belt these with a hammer with no fear of damaging the handles. And should the blades snap I've probably had my money's worth. In fact, I may even buy a couple more at that price!



With steel end caps, these chisels are designed to be used with a hammer, rather than a mallet

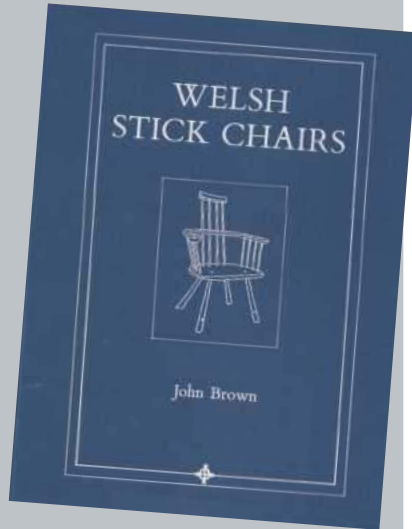


Since then, I've used one chisel to chop out the ends of treads when installing new stairs

BOOK REVIEW

WELSH STICK CHAIRS

First published 30 years ago, this book is something of a classic among woodworkers. For *Good Woodworking* readers, John Brown's regular column back in the 1990s was often controversial but essential reading. He frequently bared his soul, on life, woodwork and chairmaking generally. This book is part history, autobiography, advice, philosophy...



Tractor-powered bandsaw

Originally a boatbuilder, he talks of redundancy and the horrors of working with plastics had he stayed. Later, living simply in west Wales, he saw the lack of electricity as a positive factor in his work. Making chairs entirely with hand tools, John had little time for machinery, though I do remember him having an old bandsaw, which was powered by a tractor. Apparently, the owner of his local sawmill allowed John to regularly use a big Wadkin bandsaw to slice up the freshly sawn ash he needed for chair parts. You can just imagine that happening nowadays with all the implications involved!

Reintroducing Chairman Brown

Fortunately, there's no list of tools required or cutting lists here for making a chair. There's no contents page either, though you do get an index and bibliography. John never used a drawing, he explains in the foreword, describing each chair as 'a new canvas and an adventure.' As you'd expect, there are plenty of gems scattered throughout the pages. 'Unless you have too much money, never buy new tools,' amused me.

Don't buy this book if you're expecting step-by-step instruction on how to actually build a stick chair, though there's sufficient guidance on making a steamer for the arms and combs (plus one of the few drawings, too). But if you want inspiration, John shares how he does it his way, cigarette in mouth. Atmospheric black and white photos document the progress of constructing what he describes as a Cardigan chair in his workshop.

It's good to see that Lost Art Press have revived this wonderful softback book, so introducing new readers to the unique world of Chairman Brown. I'm sure he would have been chuffed.

THE VERDICT

Written by John Brown,
published by Lost Art Press

Price: £26

Web: www.classichandtools.com;
www.lostartpress.com

Rating: 5 out of 5

USEFUL KIT/PRODUCT

FIRSTLIGHTWORKS ENGLISH CURVE



Even if we've never needed or used one, most of us have come across a French curve. But what about an English curve? Apart from size, I'm not sure there's much difference, as both feature sweeping curves rather than complete circles. This English Curve from FirstLightWorks is influenced by the work of late furniture designer and maker David Savage. Famous for his curvy/pointy chairs and tables, straight lines were a rare thing in his world!

Made from 3mm cast acrylic, this is a big template, measuring 455mm in length – French curves are generally smaller. Slightly flexible, the English Curve is strong enough for regular use in the workshop, though like any accurate tool you'll need to treat it with respect. Its orange tint makes it easy to spot and being transparent means you can see any drawing beneath. It includes four circles (5, 10, 15 and 20mm diameter) plus a small ellipse, which does seem to set it apart from regular French curves.

Conclusion

The English Curve is probably of limited appeal to most woodworkers, though for anyone designing contemporary furniture it could be perfect. It works well with a sharp pencil or pen, depending on your preference. One of the simplest of lay-out tools, but extremely useful if your design work includes irregular curves.



The set includes four circles (5, 10, 15 and 20mm diameter) plus a small ellipse, which does seem to set it apart from regular French curves

It works well with a sharp pencil or pen, depending on your preference

SPECIFICATION

- A draughting curve for furniture designers and makers
- Laser cut from 3mm cast acrylic in a translucent orange finish
- 455mm long x 175mm wide

Typical price: £33.60

Web: www.firstlightworks.co.uk; www.classichandtools.com

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Replaceable blade; two rows of teeth; ideal for manual drawing and design work

CONS

- Quite pricey

RATING: 4.5 out of 5

SPRING PROJECT: NEST BOX

Takes: Half a day

Tools you'll need: Hand tools, jigsaw, sander, cordless drill, drillstand – optional: router, mitre saw

TWO FOR THE BIRDS

Phil Davy's simple tit and sparrow boxes are win-win all round: the birds will love them and they are very easy to construct

With several species of our native bird population in decline, most of us will want to do what we can to help reverse the situation. A simple nesting box is probably the most basic woodworking project but will be appreciated by anyone who has a soft spot for our feathered friends. It's a good way to use up softwood offcuts, but do avoid using pressure-treated timber. Alternatively you could use exterior plywood, though obviously not MDF or any material intended for interior use.

This is a real hammer and nails job, with a spot of PVA here and there. You don't really need any power tools, apart from a drill. A jigsaw is handy for shaping the corners and if you plan to make several nest boxes, then a mitre saw will save you loads of time. Although it may be tempting, don't add a perch; birds don't actually need them. For easier access you could hinge the lid, though you should only need to remove this once a year to clean out the box. A couple of narrow strips of wood glued inside will help young to reach the entrance/exit hole on their first expedition into the new world.

Terraced housing & box positioning

Sparrows are a lot more sociable than most garden birds and like to nest in colonies. Terraced boxes with space for several residents are popular

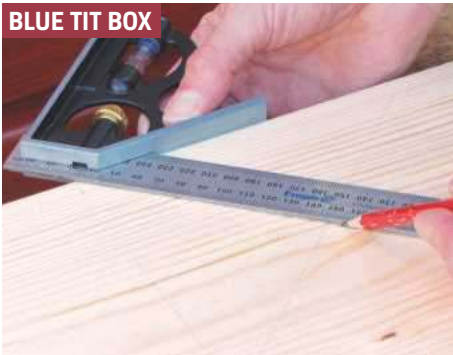


and easy to make, with internal dividers creating individual nest spaces with separate entrance holes. Don't worry too much about grain direction on adjacent pieces here, though if this were furniture it would be a different matter. Nest boxes will be at the mercy of the elements, so occasional splits are inevitable. This sparrow box measures 520mm long and is 245mm high at the back (before adding the roof), which is angled at 70°. Like the blue tit box, all softwood is 20mm thick.

With the seasons becoming less predictable than ever, it's hard to know exactly when's the

best time to position a nest box, although the RSPB suggests autumn. Birds tend to check out potential homes in autumn and winter, while blue tits choose February or even March for raising their young. It is unlikely potential visitors will take to a new box immediately, so fixing one in place now will give birds a chance to get used to it. Don't expect it to have residents in the first few months, or even a year. The nest box I originally built remained empty for nine months or more and had its first tentative visitors in early January. For more information on hole sizes and positioning, visit www.rspb.org.

BLUE TIT BOX



1 Mark out the front and back sections using a combination square; the roof is pitched at 45°



2 Cut front, rear and side pieces to size with a fine-toothed hand saw or mitre saw



3 Front and back are tapered towards the bottom; mark and cut with a jigsaw, cleaning up with a plane



4 Cramp the front and back together and trim upper edges with a bench plane, checking for square



5 For the blue tit box, the entrance hole should be 25mm diameter; mark the centre and drill with flatbit



6 Glue and pin front to side pieces, followed by the back; pre-drill nail holes to prevent wood splitting

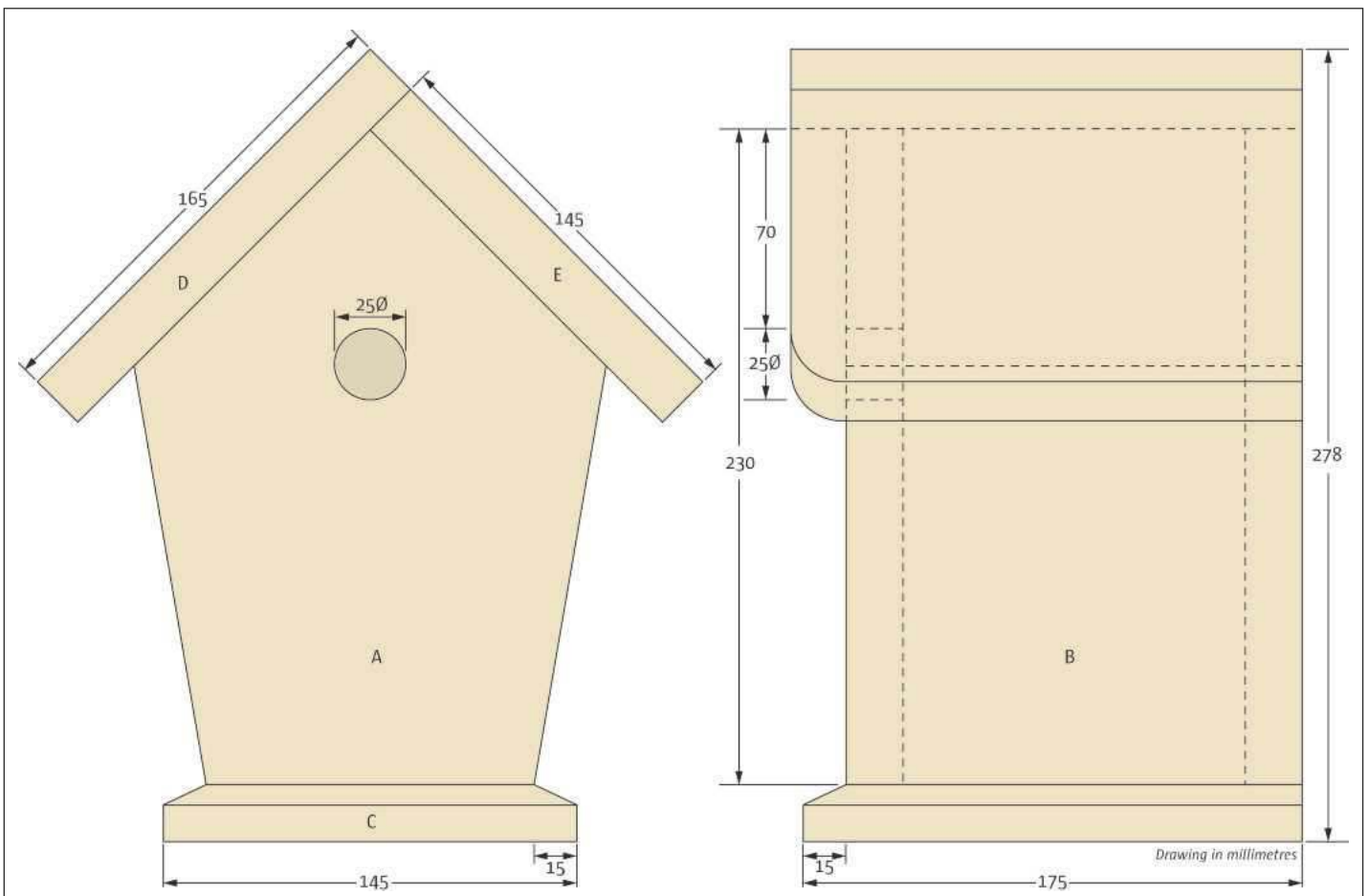


Fig.1 Nest box dimensions



7 Trim lower edges flush with a plane, working in from ends towards the middle to avoid breakout



8 Draw around a coin to form curved corners on roof sections; carefully cut with a jigsaw



9 Clean up curves with a sanding drum in a drillstand or abrasive block. Repeat for front corners of the base



10 Glue and pin roof sections together at 90°; make joint slightly proud and plane flush when dry



11 Chamfer upper edges of the base at 30°; mark with a gauge and plane to the lines



12 Form a keyhole slot for the screw in the back by drilling 10mm and 5mm holes, 10mm apart; join up with a jigsaw



13 Profile front vertical edges of the box with a router fitted with a bearing-guided rounding-over cutter



14 Punch all nail holes below the surface and apply exterior filler; drill a couple of drainage holes in base



15 Glue and nail base to box, checking the overhang on each side is identical; rear edges should be flush



16 Sand box and roof section and remove arrises; add internal strips before fixing the roof in place



17 Drill holes in roof and fix to the box with 40mm screws; the rear edge should be flush with the back of the box



18 Brush on two coats of suitable exterior water-based finish, but leave the inside surfaces bare

SPARROW BOX



1 Cut ends and internal dividers to length on a mitre saw; top edges are angled at 70°



2 Saw front and rear panels to size; bevel the top edge of both pieces with a bench plane to match ends



3 Glue front, rear and end sections together and clamp; add nails, pre-drilling holes to stop splits



4 Check internal dividers slide into the box; these can be glued and pinned at any stage



5 Cut bottom to size for snug fit inside the box; glue and pin, punching nails below the surface



6 Mark centres and bore 32mm holes with a flatbit, remembering to clamp offcut underneath



7 When glue has dried trim ends flush with a plane; note one entry hole is at the end of the box



8 To soften edges, rout with a rounding over or chamfer bit; fill nail holes and then sand the box



9 Drill holes in back and saw to form keyhole slots; you'll need 5mm screws as the box is weighty



10 Check top edges are flush, trimming with a finely-set plane if necessary; tidy up internal arrises



11 Cut top to size and round front corners; drill and screw to box, checking that overhang is equal



12 Choose location and fix sparrow box high up on a wall, preferably under the eaves

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I rarely make a pair of candlesticks the same, preferring to explore new design possibilities

TOOLS YOU'LL NEED

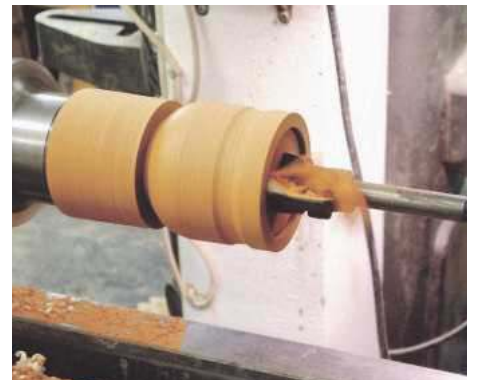
- Jacobs chuck
- 7mm & 12mm drills
- Combination chuck
- 25mm, 32mm & 38mm Forstner bits
- Junior hack saw
- Parting tool
- Spindle roughing gouge
- 6mm & 9mm gouges



Sycamore and mahogany provide an attractive contrast



1 Hold the timber in a combination chuck while you turn it to a cylinder



2 Put the lathe on a low speed and drill the hole for the column

BLOOMIN' MARVELLOUS

Spring is on its way, and in **Dave Roberts'** workshop everything is coming up, well, tulip-shaped

I always strive to create something different with my turning, and when it comes to candlesticks the design possibilities are endless. This means that I never have to make two pairs the same, unless that's what the customer wants.

The inspiration for this pair, then, comes from the tulip, which offers a stylised design worked up in two timbers – mahogany and sycamore – which in turn provide an attractive contrast. The mahogany that I used was very light in colour and would have taken years to darken down, so to get the look that I wanted the turned tulips were stained to give that rich colour typical of mahogany.

Turning the tulips

The blank for the tulips is held in an Axminster four-jaw chuck with cylinder jaws. The inside holding capacity is 50mm, and will hold the blank firmly while you turn it. But before you can fit it in the jaws, you'll need to put the blank between centres, balance it up with a spindle roughing gouge, and turn a spigot on one end.

Once fitted in the jaws, you can hollow out the blank, either by turning or drilling. I used an expandable drill bit for this job, and set it to drill a 62mm-diameter hole. This was quicker than turning it out, and guaranteed that the sides were parallel. If you decide to use an expandable bit, mount it in a Jacobs chuck fitted in the tailstock,

put the lathe on a low speed, and slowly wind in the tailstock. As long as the drill is sharp it won't take too long to drill the hole to a depth of 55mm, so remember to keep checking the depth so that you don't drill too far. When you're done, you'll have to drill a second hole 32mm in diameter and 25mm deep to receive the spigot on the column that attaches it to the tulip. ▶



3 Drill the second hole for the spigot; be careful you don't drill too deep



4 Turn the tulip to shape with the 6mm gouge and a parting tool



5 Carefully mark off five equidistant points for the cut lines

With these holes drilled, you can turn the outside, taking care to keep the wall thickness uniform. Judicious use of a 6mm gouge here will leave the surface with a good finish into which you can work the fillet using a parting tool. The rest of the turning is best done when the tulip is cut to shape.

Cut flowers

To draw the cut lines that will create the individual petals, strike a line around the tulip and then walk a pair of callipers around it, marking out five equidistant points, which you can then use to draw the five longitudinal lines.

Remove the turning and combination chuck

from the lathe; the chuck will help to support the workpiece while you cut out the petals. The easiest way to do this is to start by drilling a 7mm hole at the bottom of the line, and make the cuts with a junior hacksaw, which has a fine blade that isn't too aggressive. Cut down the vertical line first, and then cut off the corners of the petals; you'll find this easier if you've pencilled in the shape of the petals first. You can now put the workpiece back on the lathe and use 180 grit abrasive to finish profiling the petals.

Tear the abrasive into strips so that you can work in between the slots, but be careful not to open them up too far. When you've finished

shaping the petals, sand the whole piece, working up the grades to at least 400 grit. To finish turning the tulip, shape the bead with a 6mm gouge, and use the parting tool to turn the spigot that will connect the tulip to the base. This spigot is 38mm in diameter and 40mm long; check it with your callipers to make certain that it is right.

If, like me, you're going to stain the flower, this is the time to do it. The easiest way to apply the stain is with a brush as this will get it into all the nooks and crannies. Once dry, apply a coat of sanding sealer, and rub back with '0000' gauge wire wool, which will leave the surface



6 Drill a 7mm hole in the bottom of each line



7 Use a Junior hacksaw to cut the shape of the tulip petals...



8 ... and abrasives to clean up the slots

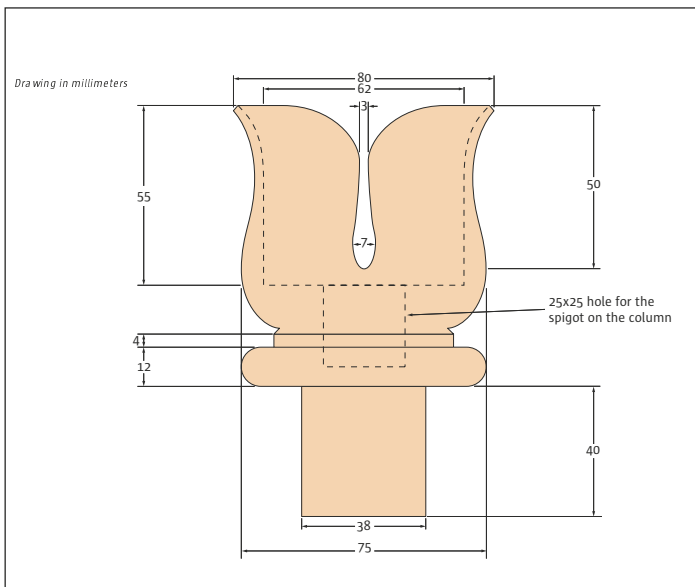


Fig.1 Tulip

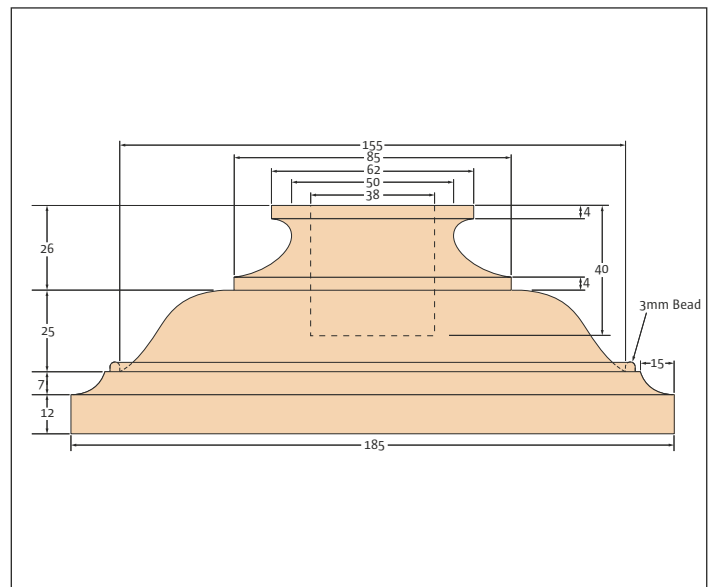


Fig.2 Base



9 The final turning on the tulip is the spigot; check the size with callipers

ready for the polish. Now that you know how it's done, turning the second tulip should be a little easier!

The column

Generally, sycamore has grey stains in it, which makes it quite unattractive. It's worth making the effort, then, to find a piece that is a clean, creamy white and big enough to make both of the columns.

Cut the columns to length, not forgetting the 40mm spigot. Put the blanks between centres and turn to a cylinder, leaving them a little over-size. In one end you will need to make a 12mm diameter hole that's 25mm deep to receive the spigot on the sconce. To do this, mount the Jacobs chuck into the headstock and fit a 12mm drill. Then put one end of the column onto the drill and support the other end with the tailstock. Run the lathe on a low speed and slowly wind in the tailstock while holding the column, and drill down to the required depth.

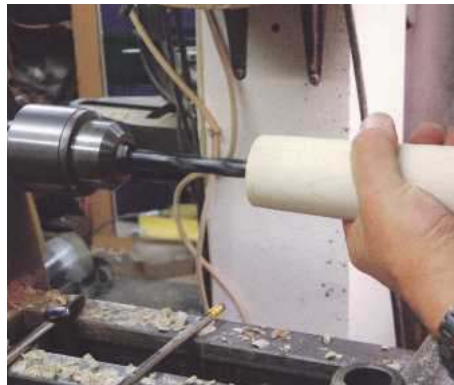
You can now turn the columns. In the photos, you'll see that I'm using a Steb centre to drive



10 Use a paintbrush to apply the stain then leave it to dry

the column and a revolving centre fitted into the drilled hole. Doing it this way guarantees that the hole is in the dead centre of the column when the turning is completed.

Mark off the length of the column and then turn a spigot with the parting tool. The spindle roughing gouge will soon turn it to shape, so keep a close eye on the taper. The trick is to stop the



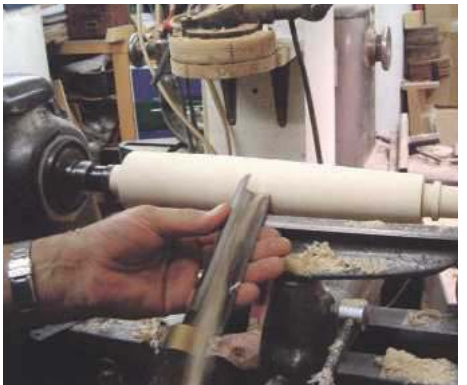
11 Slowly drill a 12mm hole in the end of the column

COPYING: TWICE THE CHALLENGE

If you have just started out in the wonderful world of woodturning, turning two items the same may seem a daunting task. The thing is to simply give it a go. Don't try anything difficult at first: pick a simple project without too many bumps and curves and see how you get on. The more you practice, the easier it becomes. The more involved the project, the more you'll find yourself relying on your Vernier callipers to measure every single detail, as well as your eye to tell you what looks right

lathe from time to time and to check the taper with a steel rule; this will reveal the highs and lows, allowing you to tweak it to get it entirely flat. With all that completed, you can finish off the column by turning the fine detail, which should be crisp and sharp.

Sanding the columns is just as important as the turning, working your way through the



12 A spindle roughing gouge will quickly remove the unwanted timber

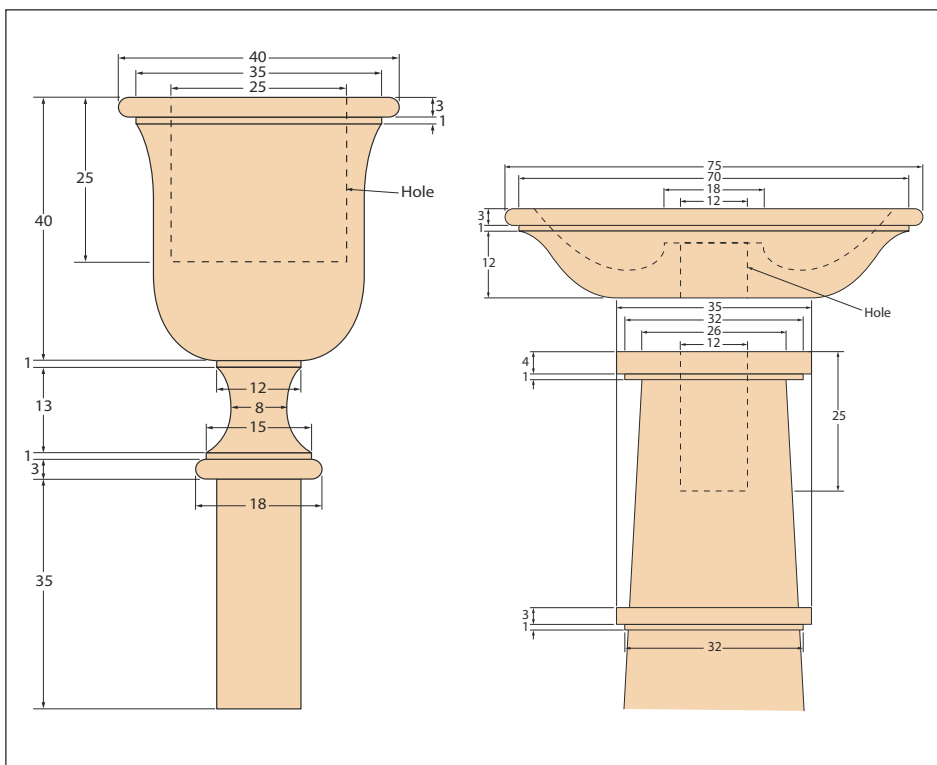


Fig.3 Sconce

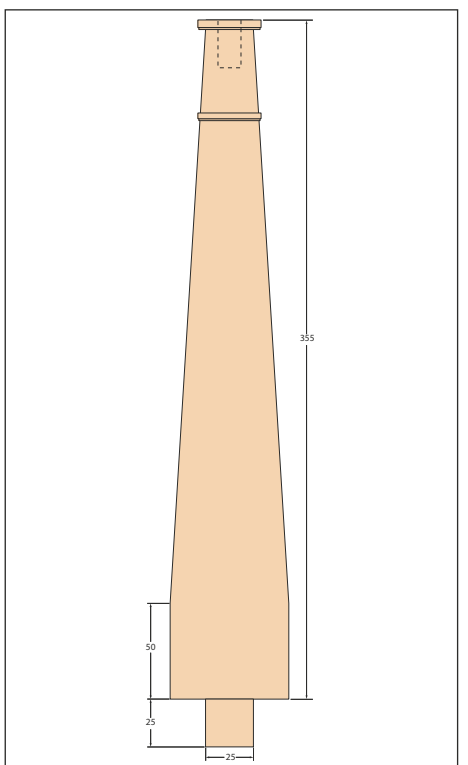
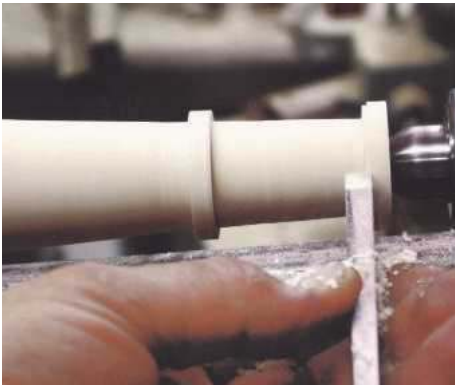


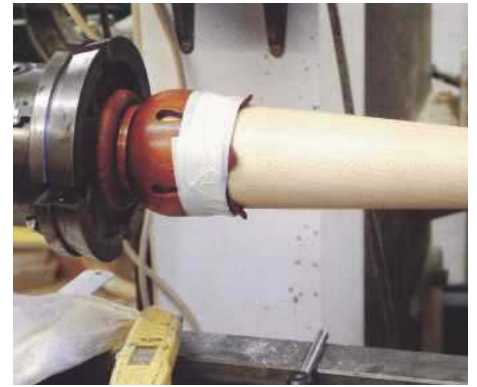
Fig.4 Column



13 A parting tool is the ideal tool to turn the fillets; try to keep them crisp



14 Put a little glue on the spigot and the inside of the petals; push the column into place



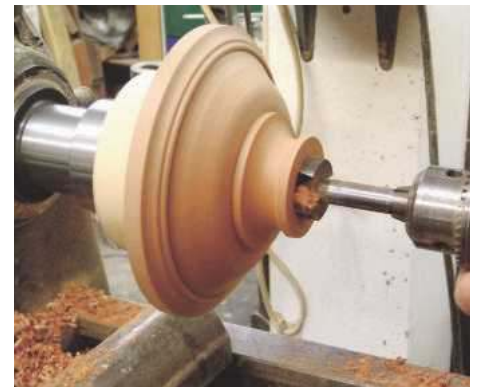
15 Wrap masking tape around the tulip while the glue sets



16 Use the parting tool to turn the fillets and the bead



17 A 6mm gouge will turn the concave; again, don't turn it too deep



18 While it's on the lathe, slowly drill the hole for the column

different grades to achieve a good finish.

As before, I started with 180 grit and worked down to 400 grit. The final sanding is done with the lathe stopped when you can rub the abrasive up and down to eliminate any sanding marks. Be very careful when sanding the detail that you don't blunt it. Now you can glue the column into the tulip using a little PVA on the spigot and on the petals, and some masking tape to hold them together while you clamp them between centres until the glue has set.

Making the base...

So as not to leave any chuck marks or screw holes in the underside of the base, I decided to mount the blank by hot-gluing it onto a piece of scrap wood. To prepare the blanks for gluing, I put them over my planer, which left the undersides flat and only needing a quick sanding by hand. If you haven't got a planer, you'll have to turn them flat. The scrap wood, meanwhile, needs to be big enough to support the base, and turned so that it's flat. Apply a ring of hot

glue to the scrap, press the base into place – you only have seconds to join them, so don't hang about – and bring up the tailstock to hold them in place while the glue sets.

The first job is to turn the base to the finished diameter. I used three tools for this: the 6 and 9mm gouges, and a parting tool. The 9mm gouge got rid of most of the unwanted timber, while the smaller gouge turned the concaves. The parting tool – whose name rather undersells this versatile tool – was used to cut the fillets and roll the beads.

The top turning is the large concave. Don't turn this too deep because you have to drill a 38mm hole for the spigot on the tulip – a job that's best done while it's still on the lathe. Finally, sand and stain the base.

... & the sconce

The sconce, meanwhile, is made up of two pieces: the candle holder and the drip tray. The drip tray can be held on a screw chuck while you turn it. If you use a small screw chuck you'll be able to turn the bottom with ease. On the top there is a bead and a fillet, which call for a steady hand while you're turning them.

Once again, you can use the parting tool to turn the fillet round over the bead. The rest of the turning can be done with a 6mm gouge, which will leave a good finish to boot. You can then sand and finish the sconce before drilling a 12mm hole all the way through ready to receive the spigot on the candle holder. This is one hole you won't be able to drill on the lathe because of the screw chuck. The best method, then, is to remove the workpiece from the lathe and



The name for the tulip flower derives from tulipan, the Turkish word for turban

TURBANS, TULIPS & TULIPWOOD

The tulip originated in the East and was worshipped by the Turks [writes Dave Not The Real Percy Thrower Roberts] who admired the gorgeous hues of gold, purple, lilac, violet, crimson and pink. The flower's name derives from tulipan, the Turkish word for 'turban' whose shape is reflected in the goblet formed by the six petals.

It was also believed that tulips would protect anyone who cultivated them. True or not, the flowers certainly brought prosperity to 17th-century Holland, where tulip mania meant that tulip bulbs fetched huge sums of money. For those of a less venal nature, the tulip was also a powerful token of love: when a man presented a red tulip to his beloved it declared that she was so beautiful that if he saw her only for a moment his face would be as fire and his heart reduced to a coal. Crikey.

Dalbergia frutescens, which is commonly called blonde rosewood, is also known as tulipwood because its colouring resembles that of old tulips. Like all rosewoods it grows very slowly and needs centuries for the heartwood to develop top quality colour.

When worked it gives off a fragrant scent similar to that of roses. *Liriodendron tulipifera*, meanwhile – the tulip tree of North America – is a beautiful tree named for the peculiar tulip-shaped flowers that appear on mature trees in June and July, and are yellow-green banded with orange at the base



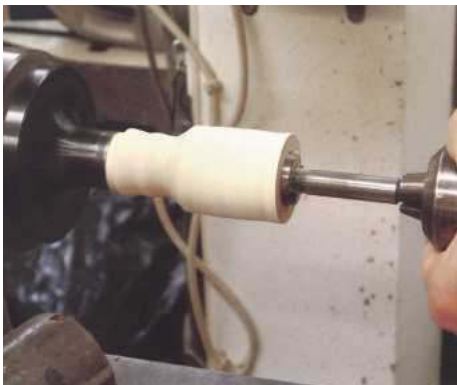
19 Hold the drip tray on a screw chuck while you turn it



20 Carefully turn the inside and constantly check the wall thickness



21 Drill a 12mm hole in the tray on the pillar drill



22 Mount the holder in a combination chuck while you drill the hole for the brass insert



23 Take your time and keep the detail crisp and sharp



24 Turn the spigot with a parting tool and check it with callipers



25 Put a little PVA glue onto the spigot and assemble the candlestick

drill it on a pillar drill. The candle holder itself was held in a combination chuck while I turned and drilled it.

Like the tulips, this meant putting the timber between centres and turning a spigot to fit the jaws on the chuck. Once in the chuck, I then drilled the 25 x 25mm hole for the brass insert before turning the holder to shape. For me, turning two delicate items and getting them both the same is something like heaven, as it requires a lot of concentration and a light touch. I only used two turning tools for the job, a 6mm gouge and a parting tool, and they did the job very well. The 6mm gouge turned it to shape, and the parting tool turned the fillets and spigot. The spigot, by the way, has to be long enough to go through the drip tray and into the column. Use your Vernier callipers to get a good fit in the column so that assembling the parts calls for nothing more than a little PVA. ✂



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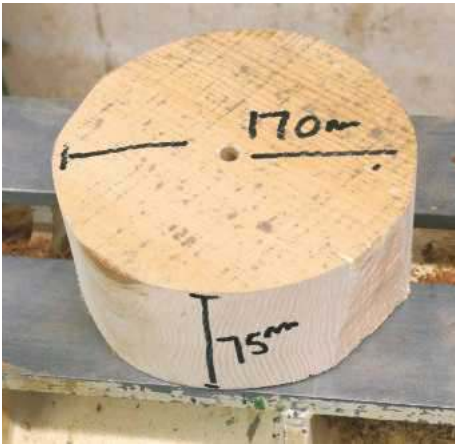


TEARING A STRIP OFF

Drawing on the lessons he learnt while working with Nick Agar, **Les Thorne** uses pieces of masking tape to create an interesting effect on this hollow vessel

In 2007 I was lucky enough to be awarded a bursary from the Worshipful Company of Turners, which allowed me to purchase some equipment and spend time with other turners in order to further my expertise, especially in the use of colour and texture. So, armed with my lovely new airbrush system, I headed to Nick Agar's workshop in Devon for a week of inspiration and exploration. This technique of masking badly came about at the end of the day after lots of trying to be very clinical and spraying straight lines using masking tape. We found that cheap masking tape didn't really do the job when spraying acrylic colours, so I decided to use a can of ebonising lacquer, which is more of a car paint type product. The paint tended to not creep under the tape, thus giving much more of a precise edge between the colours. An added bonus was the thickness of paint, which gave the surface an unexpected but welcome texture. I have gone for the black option on this particular piece, but over the years have made many others in a variety of different colours, with some of the combinations working well and some of them just looking awful! ✂





1 I tried to find a suitable sycamore blank in the wood store but without success, so instead settled on a piece of white ash. I could have done with it being a little thicker, but beggars can't be choosers!



2 The bowl gouge is the best tool to use for truing up the blank. I prefer to use a push cut working from left to right. You can see how the tool is tucked into my side as I transfer my weight to the right



3 One of the questions I get asked is how to size a spigot accurately. The best way of transferring the size of the jaws to the work is to measure the diameter needed with a pair of dividers, then mark this size on the bottom using the left-hand point to cut a groove that lines up with the other point



4 I use the smallest spigot that I can get away with, which means I can achieve a really nice curve around to the base. Here, I've added two pencil marks, which denote the area that will be the largest diameter of the bowl



5 Shape the bowl in the way that you feel the most confident. I use a combination of pull and push cuts with the 10mm bowl gouge. The wood will tell me which one is going to give the best finish



6 I like to try and get as much of the shape completed from this first fixing. When working on the top surface, it's advisable to move the toolrest right around the top; this gives the cutting edge sufficient support, which means less chance of you experiencing a dig in



7 Because I wanted a small spigot, I made sure I had the right size by trying the chuck on the spigot before taking the blank off the screw chuck. This is one of the advantages of having more than one chuck



8 The centre section of a vessel like this is best drilled out – it will also act as a depth hole. This is often completed with a Forstner bit, but I prefer to use a large twist drill, with the masking tape acting as a depth gauge



9 The 6mm Simon Hope carbide hollower is going to do the bulk of the inside work. The small diameter cutter removes wood quickly and safely, which is important when you're working blind



10 I have a piece of masking tape stuck to the top of the tool with a couple of pen lines on it. The dotted line shows when the cutter is horizontal and the solid line denotes the optimum angle of attack



11 I have collected a lot of hollowing tools over the years, and some of them work better than others. I use the large tools for working on big hollow forms and when I am working a long way off the toolrest



12 The shape of the top shoulder means that I have to change to the cranked head on the tool. You don't sharpen these cutters, but you can rotate them to give a new cutting edge



13 The large Oneway doesn't have a headstock that swivels, so to gain access to the inside shape I sit astride the lathe bed. This is best done in summer as it can be a bit chilly on the bottom!



14 These hollowing tools are a victim of their own success and the bowl fills up with shavings very quickly. Compressed air is a benefit when working on these types of turnings



15 The only real downside to using the small cutter is that you don't always get a great finish on the inside. The cranked scraper won't remove wood as efficiently, but will leave a better finish if you use light cuts



16 I have a number of pairs of callipers of all different shapes and sizes, which I use to measure different forms. The basic figure-of-eight style will work in a lot of cases



17 I do like to try and see inside the vessel and a small hand torch is perfect for this task. The part in the centre of the inside is often a problem to tool effectively as it's revolving so slowly, but with practice, you can flatten it off perfectly



18 The top hole needs to be trued up and the 10mm multi-purpose skew can be used for this. At this stage, the wall thickness is around 5mm so there is no vibration



19 I have many shop-built devices and gizmos, which I use for sanding the inside of pieces such as this. A pair of forceps gripping some hook-and-loop covered foam is a good option to start with



20 You need to present the forceps inside the piece at around the 8 o'clock position; this stops the work grabbing the forceps but you will have to hold them quite firmly



21 If you intend to stain the surface it's really important to sand the work perfectly. I start at 120 and work through to 400 grit. Any imperfections will be accentuated by the addition of colour



22 I couldn't quite gain access to the whole shape when it was on the chuck, so I turned a tapered peg and this allowed me to remount the vessel the other way round



23 I decided to use the Acrylic Intrinsic Colours from Hampshire Sheen for the initial colouring. Using a rag, I randomly applied a series of colours to the surface



24 From the pile of rags shown here you can see that I pretty much used every colour in the range. This was pretty artistic in its own right – maybe when I'm famous this will be worth some money!



25 Once coloured, give the surface a coat of acrylic sanding sealer before cutting back with some artificial '0000' grade wire wool



26 Standard masking tape is perfect for this. I found it easier to tear a few pieces and then apply them to the surface rather than apply them one at a time



27 Once the whole surface has some tape applied, mount it back up on the lathe. I used Chestnut Products' ebonising lacquer to spray the piece black and gave it two coats, waiting a couple of hours between each application



28 I removed the tape using a sharpened piece of wire as I didn't want to break out or mark the black while I was taking the tape off, which could have ruined the overall effect



29 I like to put a cap on vessels like this, so I mounted a piece of sycamore by trapping it between centres. This is a perfectly safe way of mounting small pieces of wood on the lathe



30 The measurement of the hole needs to be transferred to the piece of sycamore. Using a pair of Vernier callipers is the best way of ensuring the fit is really tight



31 The inside and underneath needs to be finished at this stage as you will not be able to get at it once it's glued on. The cap acts as a friction drive to remove the chucking point off the main piece



32 Sharp tools are a major factor when trying to achieve the most efficient cuts and the Tormek will give a better edge than anything else I've ever sharpened with



33 With the work set up between centres, use the freshly sharpened spindle gouge to remove the chucking spigot. The bevel of the tool needs to be presented in the direction of cut otherwise you risk the tool catching



34 Remove the last bit with a wood chisel before sanding. I tend not to bother colouring the plain wood at the bottom as it gives the customer an idea of what you started with



35 When the top of the sycamore cap is turned you can fit it, but at this stage I didn't know whether I was going to leave it natural, stain it, or spray it black. When I asked the guys next door I got three different answers, so in the end I went for black



36 The completed textured hollow form in white ash should look something like this

NEXT MONTH

Coming up in the next issue...

The Woodworker & Good Woodworking
April issue – on sale 20 March

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WHEN ART MEETS ENGINEERING

Undoubtedly a singularly gifted and knowledgeable individual, it is reassuring to know that someone like Theo Cook is instructing and inspiring the next generation of furniture makers in their craft, says Martin Pim-Kierle

ON TEST EXCLUSIVE

Rowdens Fine Furniture Maker tools



Simon Frost gets to grips with this David Savage-designed set



THE GIFT OF WINE

Usually made using a router jig, inlaid dovetails enhance any piece with a distinct sense of craftsmanship. Here, Charles Mak shows you how to cut the decorative joinery – by hand



ME AND MY WORKSHOP – ADAM HART-DAVIS

Rick Wheaton looks around the workshop of former broadcaster, scientist, author and photographer, Adam Hart-Davis

PLUS ■ Watch my dust tech ■ Merchant's table ■ Joinery tales ■ Tom Fraser's 'modern woodworking' Church altar table ■ Woodworker's encyclopaedia ■ Door reversal ■ Win Maker's Central tickets

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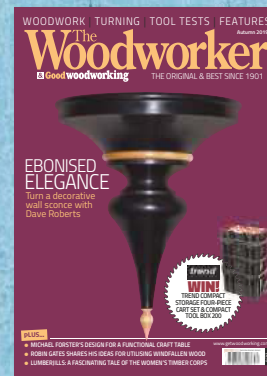
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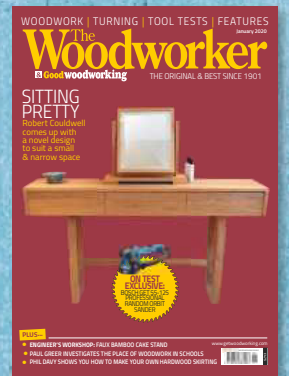
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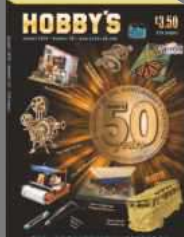
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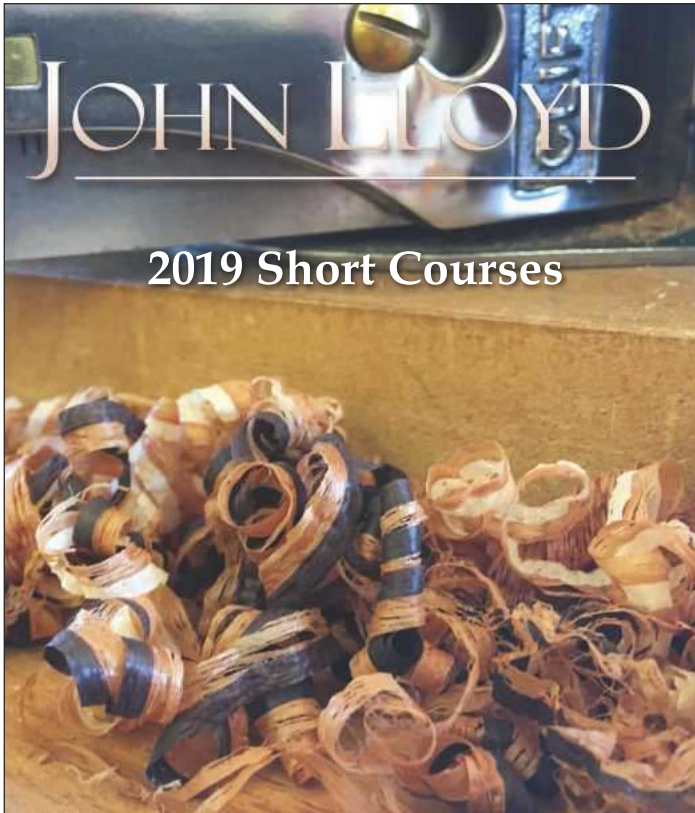
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If you think I'm being hard/jealous/just plain nasty, ask yourself: How do you react on the M25 when a flash car with a personalised number plate whizzes past? Don't you think 'Smug git'? 'Pompous arse'? Why doesn't he have an ordinary number plate like the rest of us, and give the money to Barnardo's? How did he get the money in the first place? Why does he think he's important? Why doesn't he get over himself? Or herself. Her in her nice new car resprayed pink and annotated JUL33 or TR1XY, though I suspect she didn't sort this out herself. I shouldn't be sexist but I think women are generally less egocentric than men. Nevertheless, if Julie pulled down my drive to quote for interior design work or landscaping or almost anything, I'd have the same reaction: Goodbye. A personalised number plate is a bumper-sticker, but instead of a possibly helpful suggestion like 'Practice random acts of kindness', it shouts out, as George Harrison put it so succinctly, 'I, I, Me, Me, Mine!' We all know how attractive that is in another person.

I expect most of you are sensibly unconcerned about other people's number plates, but I know that some of you feel as I do. If a lot of people feel as we do, it is possible that personalised number plates have the opposite effect to the one their owners intend. A neighbour in my village had a Porsche (with an ordinary number plate). Never having driven one, I asked if I could have a go, and to my surprise Ivan consented. He drove us out of the village, then I practised on some



This is different: it doesn't raise the price of eggs

lanes (it was a lovely machine: solid, definite and direct) and took us home along the by-pass. 'Come out of the roundabout in second' he said, 'and put your foot down. You can do 90 in a second!' I did as I was told. I roared off that roundabout like a Thunderbird, though I chickened out before 90. The acceleration and speed were suddenly scary, but it was more than that. I could hear comments from the cars that I flew past, 'Prat', 'Prat', 'What a prat!' PRT100.

Welcome

I also have trouble with livery. Do I need the chimney-sweep to have his white van beautifully painted with semi-comic characters and quips? What did that cost? I was pleased to see that Stuart, plucked not entirely at random from the web, turned up in an unassuming dusty red van. It had his details on the side – that only makes sense; a van is a travelling billboard – but it was not an extension of his ego either privately or professionally. It was just a vehicle, a workhorse; it was an, um, van.

Stuart is more interested in chimneys. He is actually very interested in chimneys, inside and out. We talked about crows and brickwork

and of course we discussed my flue. This was his passion. That's what you want in a tradesman – not flummery but real feeling. You want it in Everyman. I think I paid a fiver over the odds but I didn't mind. I'd left messages with two other sweeps. One was slow to respond. The other didn't reply at all. Stuart was welcome.

Once upon a time – and for a short while – I knew a millionaire. She owned several miles of London shops and lots of other things besides. She wasn't a happy millionaire. We stayed up all night talking about her troubles – exactly what, I can't remember now, it was years ago; but at the time I owned one shop, and by dawn, I thought that one was enough. She might have been happier if she'd sold her miles of London shops and given all that money to Barnardo's, but it probably wouldn't have been that simple.

Her car was high-end. She changed it every year, but she kept the same number plate. It wasn't personalised; it was an old and ordinary one. She kept it because, having had it for so long, it was easy for her to remember. I liked her. ✕

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