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- BEGINNERS' GUIDE: THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ROUTERS & ROUTER TABLES

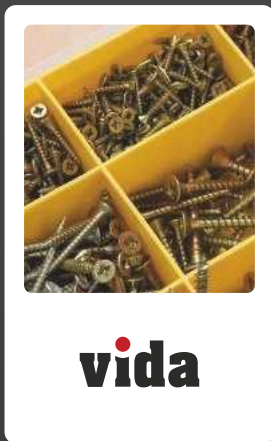
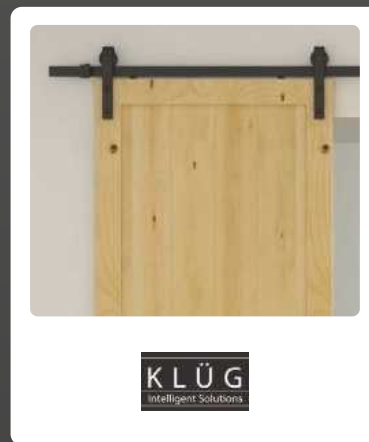
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Welcome

Welcome to our first issue of 2023, and having recently returned from the hugely successful 2022 North of England Woodworking & Power Tool Show, this seems a very positive point from which to start the year.

Now that ticket sales have been tallied up, we're pleased to announce that visitor numbers over the three days totalled some 8,500, which is a huge success and fantastic to see given the uncertainty of the last few years, not to mention continued fears regarding rising cost of living. Despite this, the atmosphere at the show was one of excitement, positivity and an undeniable appetite to get back out there, invest in new kit and tools, watch demonstrations, socialise with like-minded people, and continue to develop a passion for woodworking.

A mix of visitors

It was also reassuring to see and hear that despite the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people actually used this period of isolation to discover woodworking, some by accident – i.e. through their local Men's Shed – and others who embraced new hobbies and used these as a way of filling time and increasing well-being, etc.

The photos above show various sights over the weekend, including the high number of visitors who attended the event and filled the hall corridors along their length and breadth with those wishing to see, do, learn, try and buy. It was reassuring to see a mix of people and a noticeable increase in females as well as youngsters, many of whom enthused about their love of pen turning, pyrography, and told stories of how they'd been introduced to the craft by practising family members. There was also a good selection of female demonstrators at the show, many of whom drew in sizeable crowds, such as Emma Cook – 'The Tiny Turner', Margaret Garrard, Kez Halliday, among others.

A range of exhibitors

In terms of exhibitors, there were many new names, including Felder Group UK Ltd with the popular Hammer

range of machines. Staff happily reported a high number of sales as well as being pleased to meet and talk to many serious machine investors in both the hobby and small business sector. "The entire show was well organised and we're already looking forward to 2023," commented Felder Group UK Ltd Chief Executive, Matthew Applegarth.

There was also Rubio Monocoat UK, Shenton Woodcraft, House of Resin and Metal Clay Ltd as well as the leading favourites, including Axminster Tools, Classic Hand Tools, Robert Sorby, Turners Retreat, Record Power, among around 70 others.

Positive feedback & praise

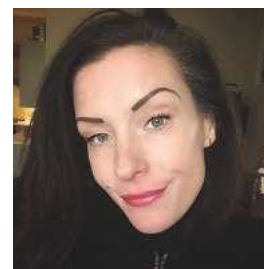
While manning the stand, it was fantastic to see and meet various *WW* readers who stopped by to say hello. Many passed on their positive feedback regarding the magazine and told us what a great job we're doing – which is always nice to hear! Several authors were also in attendance including Geoff Ryan, Ken Moore, Tony 'Bodger' Scott and Roger Berwick. Many new subscribers were enlisted and some people even attended the show on all three days – now that's what we call dedication!

Overall, the 2022 'Harrogate' show was an enormous success and a big thank you to all who came along. The good news is that the 2023 event has now been confirmed and will be held over the weekend of 10–12 November. Announcements regarding exhibitors, demonstrators and advance tickets will be made over the coming months – see www.harrogatewoodworkingshow.co.uk for further information.

We hope you enjoy our January issue and that it inspires you to get creative. Don't forget to keep in touch and share your stories, tell us what you've been making, and let us know what you'd like to see in terms of magazine content. A very Happy New Year to you all!

Tegan

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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



54 FURNITURE THAT PUSHES THE LIMITS

Designer, artist and master craftsman Scott E. Armstrong has had an intimate relationship with wood for more than 30 years – we discover more about him

CHISEL RATING

PROJECT DIFFICULTY 1-5

Each project in this issue includes a difficulty rating from 1-5, so you can readily see whether or not a particular one is suited to you. While it's good to try and push yourself and develop skills, workshop safety should always be a main consideration and we urge you not to attempt a project/use specified tools or machinery, if you're unsure how to do so in a safe manner. A wide range of safety information is available online and a good place to start is www.hse.gov.uk

- 1 Very easy;** only requires basic tools
- 2 Simple to make;** only a few tools required
- 3 Aimed at beginners-intermediate;** some specific equipment/tools required
- 4 Aimed at intermediate-advanced;** sound woodworking knowledge required in addition to a wide range of hand/power tools
- 5 Advanced skills/knowledge required;** a wide range of specialist equipment is needed to complete the project

veritas

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 – see page 67 for details



WIN!



1 of 3 SBS Triple Diamond Stone Sharpening Stations worth £195.95 each – see page 17 for details

1 of 2 Robert Sorby Micro Resin Pen Turning Sets



worth £75.60 each – see page 28 for details

Good Luck!

PROJECTS & TURNING

ON THE COVER 42 Router-made blanket box

Peter Bishop shares a router project designed for the intermediate woodworker – an elegant and functional blanket box – which is made using kiln-dried English oak

49 Turn & turn about

Here's something different for anyone with a lathe – a collection of little boxes by Gordon Warr, made from a variety of hardwood offcuts in a range of unusual shapes – and importantly, they're all fun to turn



70 Maximum impact

Sean Healy made this simply-designed table to demonstrate his new joint-making skills

77 In the frame

Making your own picture frames allows you to experiment with various woods and profiles, so they become more individual, as Phil Davy shows

80 Burry nice vases

Deciding to utilise some of the offcuts in his timber pile, Les Thorne uses various pieces of burr oak to create two different vase shapes: one with and one without detailing

86 Show-off shelving

These simple bookshelf units are a perfect example of the past revisited

TECHNICAL



36 Routers & router tables

Routers are great tools for shaping edges in furniture making, but they also have a number of other uses, as John Bullar discovers in the next part of this series

62 Tormek T-8 Original

Continuing with our in-depth analysis of each of Tormek's main machine models, we move on to looking at the T-8 Original, which is described as a powerful and versatile water-cooled sharpening system

ON TEST

14 MPOWER SBS Triple Diamond Stone Sharpening Station

18 Veritas plunge router base

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Robin Gates wanders distractedly through the September 1926 issue of *The Woodworker*



30 45 years at the top – & counting: D&M Tools' recipe for success

Established in 1978 and proudly remaining an independent family business to this day, D&M Tools not only boasts a Twickenham tool empire but also the industry's No.1 hand, power tools and machinery event, which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. One hard working man is at the centre of it all – MD Paul Dowding – who shares some of the secrets behind the company's longevity and success

68 The Sails of Hope

A dream to start a project rebuilding and re-floating pre-war wooden sailing ships to aid a local maritime community is now thriving in its 25th year, and at its heart? Carpenters! Barrie Scott reports here

98 Take 5

Featuring two-award winning pieces – Anna Dugard's 'Nahas' console table, which was recently awarded Bespoke Guild Mark No.480 – and Clare Ng's 'Gemini' drinks cabinet – recipient of the Young Furniture Makers Bespoke Award – this month's selection is certainly show-stopping

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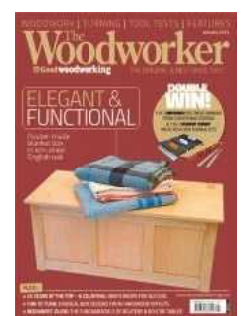
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CG81216	4.9 x 3.7 x 2.5m	£359.00	£430.80
CG81020	6.1 x 3.7 x 2.4m	£389.00	£466.80
CG81220	6.1 x 3.7 x 2.5m	£429.00	£514.80
CG81224	7.3 x 3.7 x 2.5m	£539.00	£646.80
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Makita 9911	650W	75-270	£104.99	£125.99

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GDP152B	450/12	12	£209.98	£251.98
GDP202B	450/16	16	£269.00	£322.80
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CVAC20SS*	1400W	17/13 ltr	£77.99	£93.99
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CSS400C	90W	550-1600	£157.99	£189.59

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A revolution in table saws: FESTOOL presents new CSC SYS 50 cordless model

Extremely compact and versatile, with a modern and sophisticated design – including digital technologies – Festool's new CSC SYS 50 cordless table saw redefines industry standards. What's more, the new cordless table saw is so compact that it perfectly fits into a Systainer. This means the new CSC SYS 50 delivers the same cutting precision on construction sites as a mains-powered panel saw does in a workshop. It performs excellently in every discipline, with parallel cuts up to 280mm, cross cut width of up to 450mm and angled cuts of -2° to 47° . Precise cuts at the press of a button, compact dimensions and a state-of-the-art operating concept – these are the ingredients that make up the new CSC SYS 50 cordless table saw. These features make it an indispensable aid for interior finishing, as well as for carpenters and floor layers. Its centrally positioned and easy-to-read display allows you to adjust the height and angle with absolute precision, in next to no time. This allows 100% repetition accuracy, cut after cut. In practice, it's more precise than with any yardstick. Even the most demanding cuts can be made with

maximum precision owing to the robust stop system, which is made up of a parallel side fence, angle stop and sliding table.

State-of-the-art operating concept

The CSC SYS 50's key feature is the centrally positioned display, with its non-slip dial and two buttons at the side. This allows you to effortlessly save up to four saw blade positions in just a few steps. Another clever detail is that linking the table saw to the Festool Work App enables additional saw blade positions to be saved. You can use the display to electrically adjust the height and angle at the press of a button, which is accurate to a tenth of a millimetre. Height and angle – available in millimetres and inches – are set parallax-free via the digital display and are therefore more accurate than any visual judgement. In addition, speeds appropriate to the material can be pre-selected via the digital display.

Mobile sawing applications just like in the workshop

In addition to its state-of-the-art operating concept, the new Festool CSC SYS 50 typically

impresses customers with extremely precise sawing results, which are in no way inferior to a mains-powered saw when it comes to precision and quality. This is thanks to, among other features, the high-precision parallel side fence with double clamping – via a single lever. Moreover, it has a highly precise angle stop, which can be optimally aligned and centrally clamped via a groove on the slide and enables mitre angles of between -70° and $+70^\circ$. The ball bearing-mounted slide can be moved completely smoothly and ensures parallel and angled cuts with maximum precision. Another practical detail is that, in the limited range of a 35mm cutting height, it's even possible to make angled cuts of up to -10° . This is ideal for undercutting infill panels because the field of vision for cutting the workpiece is located at the top. You can saw long workpieces exactly, safely and easily in combination with a slide, preset profile setting rail and additional underframe support. A groove can also be used in the slide to safely clamp workpieces together with the Festool FSZ clamp clips, which are available as an optional extra.

As powerful as a mains-powered tool

When it comes to power, the CSC SYS 50 is in no way inferior to a mains-powered tool. The table saw is powered by a brushless EC-TEC motor and dual battery system with two 18V battery packs – from 4.0Ah.

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This combination ensures a long runtime. For example, the brushless EC-TEC motor is long-lasting, maintenance-free and, on top of that, powerful. With high speeds of 6,800rpm, it enables fast sawing progress and perfect cutting results in equal measure. Even for rip cuts in solid wood, you won't notice any difference compared with mains-powered machines. The dust collection bag allows you to work with low levels of dust, even without a mobile dust extractor. Nevertheless, the table saw is still an ideal partner for the new Festool CTC SYS, CTC MINI and MIDI cordless dust extractors.

Incredibly convenient & surprising versatile

The CSC SYS 50 cordless table saw is so compact that it fits into a Systainer. The table saw is as surprisingly versatile as it is convenient due to its size and cutting capacities, with parallel cuts up to 280mm, a cross cut width of up to 450mm, and angled cuts of 2° to 47°. The simple space wedge changes for hidden cuts and rebates is another feature that extends the saw's range of applications. Moreover, reinstalling the spacer wedge with the guard is incredibly easy.

Precise sawing on the go

Work is made even more convenient with the UG-CSC-SYS underframe specially developed for the CSC SYS 50. You can use this folding underframe to set the cordless table saw to the ideal working height in an instant. At the same time, it also serves as the ideal solution for transport from vehicle to construction site. In addition, the hand truck's shovel can be used



as a workpiece support, allowing for the safe machining of long workpieces. The CSC SYS 50, packed in a Systainer, is compatible with both vehicle equipment. However, even when away from the vehicle and placed in a Systainer, the CSC SYS 50 can also be transported easily in one hand. Another practical detail is that saw blades, spacer wedge and dust collection bag are securely stowed in the Systainer's lid. After use, you can easily place the Systainer hood over the cordless table saw, which allows for easy transport and protection. There's even

space for a preset profile setting rail and parallel side fence. In short, the CSC SYS 50 offers precise sawing on the go. Another unique aspect is the three-year warranty, which also covers battery packs and chargers. The new CSC SYS 50 cordless table saw will be available through selected retailers from March 2023.

TECHNICAL DATA

Motor voltage: 36V
Cutting height: 0-48mm*
Cross cut width at 90°: 450mm
Parallel cut width: 280mm
No load speed: 6,800rpm

Battery: 2 × 18V from 4Ah
Saw blade diameter: 168mm
Bevel angle: -10° to -47°
Mitre angle: 0° to 70°
Transport dimensions: 512 × 396 × 296mm
Total weight without battery packs: 20.2kg

* Higher cuts are also possible due to the manufacturing tolerances of the saw blade

Festool's battery-powered universe: There's more to it than 'just' power

"Battery technology and battery-powered devices are an extremely significant trend on the tools market. We've tailored our strategy to reflect this and are continuously expanding our portfolio accordingly. We're not blindly pursuing a strategy of using battery technology just for the sake of it – we want to take a more purposeful approach to ascertain how battery technology might best serve the application in question. We want to optimise the results so that the products are perfect for their applications, and we want to make work easier, safer and better for tradespeople," says Sascha Menges, CEO of Festool GmbH.

This commitment is embodied in exemplary fashion by the latest additions to the Festool 18V system, in particular, the new CSC SYS 50 cordless table saw, TSC 55 KEB plunge cut saw, the QUADRIVE TPC 18 cordless impact screwdriver, and the ExoActive exoskeleton, which will be released during the course of 2023. For further information, see www.festool.co.uk.



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GREENWOOD DAYS: 2023 course dates

Greenwood Days returns this year with its usual range of popular courses as well as some new offerings. Spaces are available but limited, so book now to avoid disappointment. Some great options include Paul Adamson's bird-shaped bowl carving day on 1 April or 3 June and Steve Tomlin's one-day spoon carving course on 27 April. If you have any questions relating to the courses, call **07946 163 860** or email peter@greenwooddays.co.uk.

March

25 Willow hurdle making – £100pp
25 Green woodworking experience – £100pp

April

1 Carve a bird-shaped bowl – £100pp
1 Hazel hurdle making – £100pp
2 Shrink pot workshop – £100pp
2, 22 & 23 Green woodworking experience – £100pp
8–9 Stool making – £200pp
22–23 Frame basketry – £200pp
27 Sharpening day – £100pp
27 Spoon carving – £100pp

May

13–14 Bark foraging basket – £200pp
13–14 Axe handling/sheath making – £310pp

18–19 Plate turning on a pole-lathe – £200pp
27–2 Windsor chairmaking – £695pp

June

2 Forging – hook tools – £100pp
3 Carve a bird-shaped bowl – £100pp
3–4 Rush basket making – £200pp
4 Shrink pot workshop – £100pp
27, 28 & 29 Willow plant climbers – £100pp

July

11 & 12 Willow basketry – £100pp
12, 13 & 14 Bowl turning on a pole-lathe – £100pp
13 & 14 Weaving a willow hare – £100pp
24–30 Windsor chairmaking – £695pp
26–27 Ash splint basketry – £200pp
28 Scything – £100pp
29 Fan bird carving – £100pp
30 Spoon carving – £100pp

August

9 Cawl spoon carving – £100pp
10–11 Turning end-grain cups on a pole-lathe – £200pp
14–15 Coracle making – £250pp
14–20 Windsor chairmaking – £695pp
17–18 Plate turning on a pole-lathe – £200pp
22–23 Square basketry – £200pp



24–25 Willow oval shopper – £200pp
24 & 25 Willow basketry – £100pp

September

19–24 Garden bench – £700pp
19, 20 & 21 Bowl turning on a pole-lathe – £100pp
23–24 Axe handling/sheath making – £310pp
30–1 Spoon carving weekend – £200pp
30–1 Stool making – £200pp

October

2–8 Windsor chairmaking – £695pp
7–8 Kusa carving – £200pp
11 Willow hurdle making – £100pp
14 Hazel hurdle making – £100pp
14–15 Split hazel basketry – £100pp

CHIPPENDALE SCHOOL expands courses offered for 2023



Molly Johnson sitting at her first project

The Chippendale International School of Furniture has seen a surge in demand for its woodworking courses since the pandemic – and despite the rising cost of living, there's no signs of applications slowing.

The East Lothian-based not-for-profit school reports that, since 2019, places on both the professional furniture-making course and shorter complementary courses have continuously sold out as more people ditch corporate jobs in pursuit of creative careers.

On 10 October, Chippendale's flagship Professional Course 2022/23 welcomed a new cohort of students from around the world to study fine furniture making in the school's idyllic rural location over the next nine months.

Tom Fraser, School Principal, says the demand from people seeking to change careers is unrelenting, with many incoming students having swapped professional roles to carve a

new path this year: "In recent years we've seen a spike in applications from people rethinking their priorities and seeking fulfilment from alternative career paths. The pandemic was a real catalyst for this, but the enduring demand for courses proves that the Great Resignation is still ongoing.

"Our courses appeal to those seeking the flexibility of a career that fits around their lifestyle, and which allows them to take control of their income. We're also still seeing after-effects of the pandemic, with some students mentioning burn-out as a driver for change."

Liz Murray, owner of Cook+Live+Dream, a specialist cookshop in Berwick-Upon-Tweed, took the Chippendale School's four-week-long intermediate course in 2022, a year on from UK lockdowns. Of the experience, Liz says: "I signed up for the four-week-long Intermediate Course in a carpe diem moment, needing a therapeutic break from post-COVID career doldrums. It was the most fulfilling and energising experience – such a beautiful setting, surrounded by talented and inspiring craftspeople.

"In practical terms, the course exceeded every expectation. I came with the goal of upping my furniture restoration game and finished with the courage and confidence to design and create my own pieces. I'll definitely be back for a top-up!"

Tom Fraser adds: "For those thinking about making a major career move, our shorter courses

provide a taster of what a furniture-making career can offer. Our month-long Intermediate Course gives students a chance to experience life as a woodworker before they take the leap. The week-long and weekend courses are great tasters of the Professional Course."

To cater to the increased demand for furniture-making knowledge, this year the Chippendale School has expanded its teaching team and added more places on its courses, as well as increasing the number of courses run annually. Applications for remaining places on the intensive nine-month-long Professional Course 2023/24 can be made online at www.chippendaleschool.co.uk.

Short courses take place throughout the year and include weekend, week-long and four-week courses – see www.chippendaleschool.com/furniture-making-courses.



Liz Murray, Intermediate Course graduate



One of Liz's projects

MAKITA launches new 40VMax XGT brushless router trimmer

Makita continues to deliver great power and precision with its new RT001G 40VMax XGT brushless router trimmer. With a 35% increase in work speed – compared to the predecessor model – this tool is a must-have for woodworkers who demand the highest standards. The new model, with a standard trimmer base, has been designed to achieve an even greater trimming speed than previous models – up to 35% faster, at 10,000–31,000rpm.

The RT001G benefits from Makita's innovative Auto-start Wireless System (AWS), which connects the tool to a compatible dust extractor via Bluetooth, keeping dust to a minimum and protecting the user when the tool is in use. Moreover, it's equipped with a number of features to provide precision and prevent the work materials from damage, including soft-start function to minimise start-up shock so that the tool starts smoothly; soft brake and variable speed control, to match cutting speed to the application, and lastly, constant speed control maintains consistent speed under load.

Other benefits include a flat top for stability, lock-on function to reduce hand fatigue in long continuous operation, plus Twin LED job lights, which illuminate the cutting edge and increase visibility.

What's more, the RT001G has been designed to match the needs

of multiple projects. For this reason, the trimmer base can be quickly removed to install alternative base options: plunge, tilt and offset. These are equipped with a precision cutting depth adjustment, simple and efficient base lock system, as well as a replaceable, non-marring plastic base, which protects the tool from scratching and provides a smooth sliding on the work surface. The offset base offers highly stable trimming, for applications where the offset position is required, allowing users to cut as close as 18.5mm to walls or corners.

The tilt base's ergonomic body grip is easy-to-grasp with one hand and benefits from a tilting capacity of -30° to 45°. Additionally, the base assembly's enlarged opening offers excellent bit visibility.

The plunge base offers a three-stage precision cutting depth adjustment with a plunge capacity of 0–35mm, as well as an easy-to-operate lever and optional fine adjusting straight guide. It also features ergonomically contoured knob-style handles for stable control.

To find out more about the new RT001G 40VMax XGT brushless router trimmer, base options and assorted accessories, visit Makita UK's website: www.makita.com.



Two nature-inspired designs awarded BESPOKE GUILD MARK

Two pieces of exceptional bespoke furniture, both inspired by the shapes and patterns of nature, have been awarded the Bespoke Guild Mark by The Furniture Makers' Company.

The 'Nahas' console table (BGM 480) by Anna Dugard and 'Mille-feuille' (BGM 481) by Ian Milnes have both been awarded the Bespoke Guild Mark, which recognises excellence in design, materials, craftsmanship and function for exquisite pieces of furniture made as single items or a limited run of up to 12. Awarded to beautifully crafted pieces of bespoke furniture, since its launch in 1958 the Bespoke Guild Mark has been the apex of distinctions for UK designer-makers.

'Nahas' console table

Inspired by the growth of natural forms, the fluted legs seen on 'Nahas' echo flower stems and the textured trumpets resemble long-necked flowers. The piece has been ingeniously made using 3D printing technology, then coated with a liquid brass finish, which will age over time, thus adding character. It also provides the piece with its name, meaning brass in Arabic.



Anna Dugard's 'Nahas' console table was awarded Bespoke Guild Mark No.480

The piece was printed layer by layer in a 0.8mm bead of biodegradable polylactide from a CAD file created in Fusion360. The form was printed in 10 components – two per leg – with interlocking fittings, allowing easy fabrication and cavities for stainless steel reinforcement rods.

'Mille-feuille'

Meanwhile, 'Mille-feuille' comprises 16 laminated panels laid to mimic leaves piled on a forest floor. The surface of each leaf is marquetry of European walnut burr, hand-cut in a naturalistic style, with subtle variations in thickness creating relief. These changes in depth combine

'Mille-feuille' by Ian Milnes was awarded Bespoke Guild Mark No.481



with a lightly worked surface to create something invitingly tactile. The highly organic aesthetic is held within the traditional rectilinear form of a mille-feuille pastry.

Commenting on being awarded a Bespoke Guild Mark, Anna said: "The 'Nahas' console was ambitious as my first piece of furniture, but I couldn't be happier with the result. Receiving a Bespoke Guild Mark is an honour. The judging process has also provided me with the opportunity to gain invaluable expertise from industry leaders."

On his award, Ian commented: "I never know how to feel about my work when I finish a piece. The acknowledgement from the Bespoke Guild Mark panel brings some welcome relief from that doubt, for which I'm very grateful."

Items of quality & distinction

Pieces awarded a Bespoke Guild Mark are recognisably items of quality and distinction, and to substantiate and promote this accolade, Bespoke Guild Mark holders receive a certificate of authentication, PR opportunities, permission to use the Bespoke Guild Mark branding in communication materials and automatic consideration for the annual Claxton Stevens Prize – a £1,000 prize given to the best Bespoke Guild Mark awarded piece of the year.

In addition to celebrating the creativity, skilled craftsmanship and technical ability of Britain's established designer-makers recognised by the award, the Bespoke Guild Mark provides invaluable expertise and insight to unsuccessful applicants to further improve their craft for the future. For further information on The Furniture Makers' Company, see www.furnituremakers.org.uk.

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS' Certificate in Woodturning

The Certificate in Woodturning course is designed to provide training, which develops the basic turning skills necessary to become competent in this discipline. The Certificate is aimed at candidates with either some woodturning experience, or those more experienced but with no formal training. The Certificate is therefore a training programme of basic skills with assessment criteria.

The qualification comprises:

- Training units
- Multiple choice question unit end tests
- Practical assessment

Training units

- **Unit C 101** – Workshop Safe Working Practices
- **Unit C 102** – Tools and Equipment – Maintenance
- **Unit C 103** – Wood Technology
- **Unit C 104** – Spindle Work
- **Unit C 105** – Faceplate Work
- **Unit C 106** – Finishing

The 'Training and Assessment Logbook' is issued to candidates on commencement of the course to record training and assessment. When complete, this will be verified by The Worshipful Company of Turners, and on successful completion, candidates will be awarded the 'Certificate in Woodturning'. For further information, visit <https://turnersco.com/turning-qualifications/>.



Eight day Certificate in Woodturning course

Tutor: Darren Crisp

Venue: Shawsbarn Woodturning Studio, Scotland MR9 3RG

2023 dates: 29 January; 12 & 26 February; 12 & 26 March; 23 April; 7 & 21 May

It's essential that candidates have some woodturning experience in spindle and faceplate work before commencing the course. An additional induction day prior to starting the course may be required.

A limited number of AWGB sponsored places are available. If you're an AWGB member before the course begins, you should be eligible for a £250 grant. The course venue will be able to provide details on how you can apply. To find out more and receive an application form, email tutor Darren Crisp: info@darrencrisp.com.

ROBERT SORBY TRAC – Tool Rest Adjustment Collar



When it comes to requiring a new toolrest height position during turning, a common problem often experienced is that when the locking handle is released, the toolrest drops and the position is therefore lost.

The new Robert Sorby TRAC allows the toolrest height to be easily adjusted up or down, by up to 13mm, simply by turning the outer adjustment ring.

To allow for easy adjustment up and down, simply adjust the outer ring so that around 6mm of inner ring protrudes.

The TRAC ensures the toolrest stays at the personally set height, even when the locking handle is released; this allows it to be moved to a new position without having to reset the height prior to locking into place.

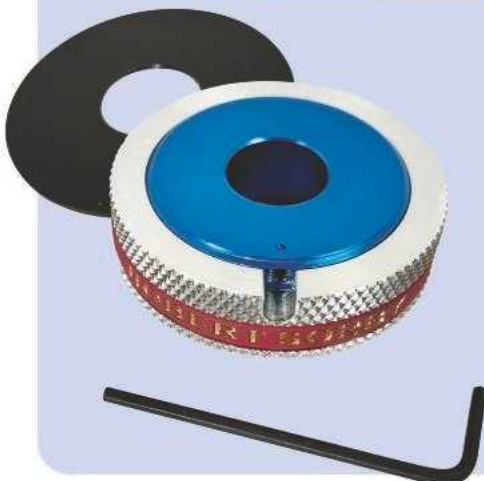
The Acetal seating disc allows the TRAC to operate smoothly and easily. Available in nine sizes, to suit the standard toolrest stem of virtually every lathe available worldwide, as well as the full range of stems within the Robert Sorby modular tool rest system. The inner rings are colour-coded for ease of recognition to fit the stem diameter required.



Code / Description / Colours / EAN

- LRSTRAC13 TOOL REST ADJUSTMENT COLLAR 13mm (½in) – GREEN 5013035104136
- LRSTRAC16 TOOL REST ADJUSTMENT COLLAR 16mm (⅝in) – BLUE 5013035103993
- LRSTRAC19 TOOL REST ADJUSTMENT COLLAR 19mm (¾in) – GOLD 5013035104143
- LRSTRAC20 TOOL REST ADJUSTMENT COLLAR 20mm – ORANGE 5013035104150
- LRSTRAC22 TOOL REST ADJUSTMENT COLLAR 22mm (⅞in) – PINK 5013035104167
- LRSTRAC24 TOOL REST ADJUSTMENT COLLAR 24mm (1in) – RED 5013035103986
- LRSTRAC25 TOOL REST ADJUSTMENT COLLAR 25mm – PURPLE 5013035104174
- LRSTRAC28 TOOL REST ADJUSTMENT COLLAR 28mm – GREY 5013035104181
- LRSTRAC30 TOOL REST ADJUSTMENT COLLAR 30mm – SILVER 5013035104198

Reasonably priced at £25.99 (inc VAT), this affordable little set is a perfect addition to any woodturner's toolbox; visit www.robert-sorby.co.uk for more information.





CLARKE CCS12B table saw with sliding carriage

Machine Mart has added a new table saw to its product range – the Clarke CCS12B 315mm Contractor sliding table saw with sliding carriage. This sturdy, powerful saw features a durable steel body with tough powder-coated finish. It offers accurate wood cutting for builders, contractors, tradesmen and DIY enthusiasts in addition to being suitable for general workshop use.

The Contractor table saw includes an 80 x 40cm extending table for supporting longer planks and larger timber sheets. The extension table and guide can be fitted to different sides of the saw table allowing support for cross, rip and mitre cutting.

The long-life TCT blade measures 315mm in diameter with a 30mm bore. There's full blade safety guarding to allow for safe usage; the blade tilts up to 45° for mitre cutting, while the CCS12B offers a maximum depth of cut of 83mm at 90°.

A 2kW 230V induction motor makes this a powerful unit, providing a no-load speed of 2,800rpm. The CCS12B includes guide rail; 2 x brackets for the guide; sliding table; folding stop block; saw guard; 1.6m dust extraction hose and push-stick.

Priced at £430.80, see the Machine Mart website for further information: www.machinemart.co.uk.

TREND'S new 2022 Routing & Woodworking digital catalogue

Trend's largest, most product-packed catalogue is now available, featuring over 270 pages of their best time-saving solutions, including 250 new product launches and over 2,900 product lines. Inside the catalogue you'll find the new T12 and T14 routers; T18S cordless range; router cutter ranges; power tools; tool storage; routing jigs and accessories; saw blades; Yeti CNC SmartBench and mini machines; the Snappy drill bit system; diamond sharpening; clamping products, and much more.

Order your free printed copy now or download a digital version from Trend's website: www.trend-uk.com.



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SBS TRIPLE DIAMOND STONE SHARPENING STATION

With so many tool-sharpening diamond 'stones' on sale, can the **MPOWER Side By Side** offer anything different? **Jonathan Salisbury** takes a closer look



... in one small case

Stone Sharpening Station, on the other hand, has been created to provide everything you need to go from dull edge to mirror finish in one compact unit. But will it compete with my preferred method? Let's find out.

Everything you need...

I'm not new to hand sharpening, having been an enthusiastic user of Japanese water stones for many years; however, they're more suited to Japanese tools, which have a very thin piece of hard steel for the cutting edge and a much bulkier soft steel back. Western tools are entirely hard steel,

which means they wear the surface of water stones very quickly. Once uneven, the surface needs to be flattened; my Japanese stones require constant attention. One alternative is to use diamond plates to grind and sharpen before using Japanese stones to finish.

MPOWER Tools' Side By Side Diamond

In detail

MPOWER's 'stones' exist in three grades: a coarse 300 for initial grinding; a medium 600 for sharpening; and a fine 1,200 for honing. The Side By Side has all three diamond plates fixed to a wide, extruded aluminium base, each with a leather-topped plastic cover. The carrying bag also contains three sticks of wax, cleaning block, and a spray bottle full of lapping fluid. The booklet gives basic guidance in six pictures, which show the sequence of events: sharpen using the diamond plates in order; finish on the leather strops, in order – 1,800, 2,500 and finally 5,000. The wax is coloured and the relevant colour is written on the sides of the covers to ensure you don't mix them up. It couldn't be simpler, and there are plenty of instructional videos online if you need any help.

Diamond plates in use

I use a Veritas honing guide to maintain bevel angles, especially for initial regrinding. The roller and frame move the chisel edge



Three grades of monocrystalline diamonds



Non-linear cloud patterns clear paste



'Before'



A quick spray of the non-hazardous lapping fluid



Beginning to flatten the back

forwards, so depending on the angle, only two-thirds to three-quarters of the plate can be used. It's essential to rotate the plate regularly to ensure more even wear.

My test chisel was one that I'd left much longer than usual before regrinding. A quick spray of the stones with lapping fluid, and flattening the back was straightforward; the coarse 300 grit plate quickly cut through the surface leaving a dull finish and clearly visible damage at the edge – shame on me! – and moving on to the next plate revealed a problem. I prefer to use stones from the side when flattening the backs of cutting tools, but I couldn't use the middle plate this way as it has the 300 and 1,200 either side of it. Using the ends took slightly longer, but once the scratches were gone I moved to the 1,200, from the side, which brought up a reasonably shiny finish.

Lapping fluid

One of my concerns is the chemical content of fluids that my hands come into contact with. MPOWER makes a point of mentioning that their lapping fluid is safe enough to use without gloves, but the contents aren't printed on the bottle. On the website, they list 1% Tween 20 – a detergent – around 1.5% orange and lemon grass oil – to make it smell nice – and the remaining listed ingredients make up less than 0.22%. These include amine carboxylate mixture – a corrosion inhibitor – glycerine and propylene glycol. The latter is used in cosmetics as a moisturiser, although rubbing the lapping fluid into your skin isn't advisable! The remaining 97.28% is water.

Cleaning the plates

It's really important to clean the plates as soon as possible. Leaving moisture leads to deterioration; if the base metal is steel, this means rust. The metal particles also need to be removed in order for the plate to continue working. The supplied cleaning block is, as far as I can tell, a plastic eraser – used for rubbing pencil from paper. It works very well when the surface is dry, leaving behind a clean surface without the need to rinse or dry the unit. Check that the surrounding surface is also dry before proceeding.

Stropping

Once the plates are clean, the covers can go back on and polishing can commence. The leather on top of the 5,000 cover is smooth, but 'crust up' on the others. Each cover has a sticker with the



MPOWER have created the perfect combination of unique high quality sharpening equipment in one comprehensive 'Big Boss' sharpening station



An almost mirror finish



After use

grit number and colour of the wax used on each. It's best to go through each stage to ensure an excellent result, however tempting it might be to skip to the last one. Stropping has to be done from the 'top' with the sharpened edge trailing, otherwise it'll cut into the leather. I left the chisel in the honing guide for initial stropping and it worked fine with the orange wax, but the white wax started to stick to the roller and I had to go freehand. The bevel became beautifully shiny very quickly and a few more passes produced a secondary bevel, removing all remnants of the wire-edge. A paper cut test proved that the edge was frighteningly sharp and ready to use. ▶



Cleaned up well



Three grades of wax...



... and no mistaking which one to use



Initial grinding was fast



An excellent result in just a few minutes



Stropping with the guide seemed possible...



... but the white wax clogged the roller



The rubber feet don't always grip

I also sharpened a block plane iron and spokeshave blade, with the same results.

Conclusion

I find sharpening tools very therapeutic and anything that makes the job easier, quicker and more pleasurable is OK by me. Having three separate surfaces in-line and ready to use is, above all, convenient; the leather-topped covers have magnets inside them to keep all in place, and offer a great space-saving idea, and when not in use the carry case keeps

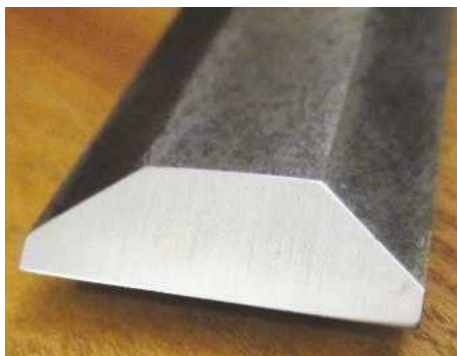
everything together and out of the dust. It would also make a good starter set or additional portable sharpening station.

However, using the intermediate plate to sharpen knives isn't easy owing to the adjacent surfaces, so if you particularly need this feature, I'd advise opting for either the double-sided models – 300/600 and 2,500 strop – or 300/1,200 and 5,000 strop – or the single-sided models, which have the same combination of plate and strop as those in this test – i.e. 300/1,800, 600/2,500, 1,200/5,000 – but can be arranged any way you choose. The lapping fluid is a little pricey, but doesn't contain naphtha, other petrochemicals, or anything else that's best kept away from the skin.

The only negative in the test was that the nitrile rubber feet didn't grip very well on my bench and I had to set up a stop to prevent the unit sliding around: it definitely needs a non-slip, dust-free surface. One of the feet also came out of its dovetail slot during honing, but luckily no damage was done. The single- and double-sided models are supplied with mounting clips and if the SBS had something similar, it could be fixed to the workbench when required.



Dovetail slots could be used for fixing in place



'After'



The paper cut test: looking good!



Superbly sharp again

If damage occurs, the surfaces can be replaced; there's a 10-year guarantee to cover almost everything else. The SBS is a similar price to other manufacturers' products, but they aren't all held together, nor do they come with the leather strop covers, wax sticks, lapping fluid and carry case. I found the MPOWER Side By Side to be excellent; the high quality plates are easy and pleasant to use and the all-in-one system provides a good value, convenient workstation. ✂

SPECIFICATION

- Large anodised aluminium base offers improved stability
- Interconnected non-linear diamond recess pattern for excellent swarf removal
- Three grades of monocrystalline diamond: 300, 600 & 1,200 grit
- Replaceable, inexpensive diamond surfaces
- +/- 0.00175in CNC-machined base surfaces for incredibly flat sharpening
- 'On board' click-on, click-off, magnetic leather strop covers
- Three grades of polishing wax: 1,800, 2,500 & 5,000 grit
- Bespoke tough carry and storage case
- 30ml fully synthetic lapping fluid
- Industry leading 10-year guarantee
- Made in the UK

Typical prices: SBS Triple Diamond Stone Sharpening Station – £195; lapping fluid – 30ml – from £8.95; wax blocks – £4.95 each
Web: www.mpower-tools.co.uk

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Compact all-in-one unit, from grinding to polishing; everything required supplied in the box; diamond plates are perfectly flat and replaceable; carry bag for convenient storage when not in use

CONS

- Middle plate is less accessible for knife sharpening and flattening the backs of chisels; nitrile feet don't fit tightly; no supplied method of fixing to a bench top; lapping fluid is a little pricey

RATING – VALUE: 5 OUT OF 5
PERFORMANCE: 4.75 OUT OF 5

WIN!

1 of 3 SBS Triple Diamond Stone Sharpening Stations – worth £195.95 each

Offering a complete sharpening solution in one convenient platform that can be easily stowed away when not in use, in conjunction with MPOWER Tools, we have three to give away

Make your workshop the home of the sharpest tools on the block. Create the perfect edge on the most comprehensive freehand diamond sharpening station ever created.

A six-stage sharpening journey across three grades of super durable monocrystalline diamond, finished on three real leather strops with three grades of polishing wax – all backed up by a 10-year guarantee.

A lifetime of sharpening

MPOWER's revolutionary Side By Side (SBS) sharpening station means this diamond stone really will last forever, rather than having to throw away an expensive tool due to a small part of it being worn.

Owing to the unique manufacturing process



The sharpening station features three grades of super durable monocrystalline diamond



used, a damaged diamond surface can be inexpensively and easily replaced.

Complete sharpening package

The Side by Side (SBS) has been in development for over four years and is the most complete sharpening package available. The process of correctly sharpening a tool, be it a 6mm bevel-edge chisel or plane iron, involves a number of essential elements, all of which are cunningly stored in the SBS canvas carry/storage case.

Easier to use – plain & simple

Compared to using a traditional double-sided 8in diamond stone, where you set up to use one side/grade, mount it in the stone holder, use it, clean it off, reset it to the other grade, place it back into the stone holder and start again, the SBS is on your bench ready to go, instantly offering three grades of diamond to sharpen on.

The SBS is also the first diamond stone that's fitted with three leather-topped magnetic protective covers with two different grades of leather: firm and soft. Three grade sharpening is followed by three strop finishing, all without moving from the job.

Manufacturing process

MPOWER has developed a unique process in manufacturing diamond stones. Six years ago, they pioneered the use of high tolerance aluminium extruded cores with 3M adhesive bonded electro plating diamond plates as the surface, resulting in the flattest diamond stones available with a tolerance of +/- 0.00175in. Each Side by Side is made in MPOWER's factory in Salisbury, Wiltshire, UK.

During manufacture every stone undergoes 11 different QA tests to ensure that each one meets the very highest standards possible.

Contents

A high tolerance machined single platform mounted with three grades of diamond stone: 300, 600 and 1,200 grit; three 'on board' click-on,

click-off, magnetic leather strop covers in two different leathers – firm and soft; three uniquely formulated grades of polishing wax – 1,800, 2,500 and 5,000; 30ml fully synthetic diamond lapping fluid and diamond stone cleaning block, all supplied in a bespoke tough canvas storage case.

Dimensions

- Overall size: 8 x 12in
- Diamond surface: 3 x 8 x 2.75in
- Total diamond surface: 66sq.in
- Weight not including ancillaries: 1.8kg
- Gross weight: 2.5kg
- 10-year bench stone guarantee – MPOWER's new SBS Bench Stone Plates are so tough they're covered by a 'no quibble' 10-year guarantee – double the industry standard. Even if the damage is down to years and years of regular sharpening, MPOWER will supply free replacement diamond plates and free shipping

For more information on MPOWER Tools, visit www.mpower-tools.co.uk.

HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning 1 of 3 SBS Triple Diamond Stone Sharpening Stations, visit www.thewoodworkermag.com/category/win and answer the multiple choice question below:

QUESTION: How many leather strops does the SBS Triple Diamond Stone Sharpening Station contain?

A: Five

B: Three

C: Four

The winners will be randomly drawn from all correct entries. The closing date for the competition is **20 January 2023**. Only one entry per person; multiple entries will be discarded. Employees of David Hall Publishing Ltd and MPOWER Tools are not eligible to enter this competition

VERITAS PLUNGE ROUTER BASE

As you'd expect from **Veritas**, this router base is beautifully made and a real precision tool, and although buying both base and fence kit isn't a cheap option, for those looking to achieve precision routing on a small scale, **Phil Davy** doubts you'll regret the decision



to reveal its threaded collar and screw the tool into the housing. A couple of shims are included to allow the on/off switch position on the tool to be centralised, if necessary.

The base itself is made of cast aluminium and has a really solid feel. Fitted with a pair of stainless steel posts, a bridge spanning these two supports the rotary tool. Two external plunge springs will attract dust and ideally need to be cleaned after use, a problem with any router where these are exposed. Plunge action was initially stiff, though a squirt of dry lubricant quickly sorted this out. There's no side-handles as such, although grooves machined into the shaped aluminium provide a firm grip when grasping the base below the posts. An opening on one side of the base gives a clear view of the cutting action.

There's no doubt that rotary multi-tools – such as those from Dremel and Proxxon – are ideal for many small-scale jobs such as grinding, sanding, cutting, polishing, etc. The compact size makes them suitable for box- and modelmaking, musical instrument building, plus fine cabinetmaking and general hobby use. For woodworkers, scope can be increased by turning them into mini routers with the addition of a plunge base or shaper table, thus allowing the tool to be used inverted. This is all well and good, except that Dremel's router base is mostly made of rigid plastic and pretty lightweight. Although this keeps the price down, the plunge action can lead to slight play when the tool's working at maximum depth. Perhaps not a problem for occasional freehand routing, but when using a fence for inlay work or circle cutting, the cut may not be quite as precise as you'd hoped for. Proxxon's router base is cast aluminium and sturdier, though as far as I'm aware it won't fit Dremel tools.

Solid feel

Canadian manufacturer Veritas has solved the problem by introducing a plunge router base, which allows any rotary tool with a compatible $\frac{1}{8}$ in \times 12tpi threaded collar to be inserted. In the case of Dremel, you remove the nose end cap



The Veritas plunge router base...



... which allows any rotary tool with a compatible $\frac{1}{8}$ in \times 12tpi threaded collar to be inserted



In the case of Dremel, you remove the nose end cap to reveal its threaded collar and screw the tool into the housing

To set plunge action there's a steel depth stop located in the bridge, with thumbscrew locking and built-in fine adjuster. This gives very precise control of cutting depth, which is essential for detailed work. Beneath the depth stop is a steel insert set into the base, so the rod doesn't mark the aluminium. Threaded holes each side of the base allow the optional fence or centre guide to be fitted. The only plastic you'll find



Fitted with a pair of stainless steel posts, a bridge spanning these two supports the rotary tool

here is the red plunge locking lever, which takes some getting used to as you flip it up – rather than down – to lock cutting depth.

Maximum plunge depth is a respectable 35mm. I used the base with a 10.8V cordless Dremel 8200, plus a 230V Dremel 4000. Both were rock-solid when fitted and made precise routing that much easier and consistent. Cutter changing is easy enough without removing



An opening on one side of the base gives a clear view of the cutting action

the tool from the base, though you'll need to use the Dremel wrench rather than its quick-change end cap.

Conclusion

As you'd expect from Veritas, this router base is beautifully made and a real precision tool. If there was some way of attaching an air hose for clearing away debris, it'd be the icing on the cake.



To set the plunge action there's a steel depth stop located in the bridge, with thumbscrew locking



Beneath the depth stop is a steel insert set into the base, so the rod doesn't mark the aluminium



The red plunge locking lever is flipped up – rather than down – to lock the cutting depth

VERITAS FENCE & CENTRE KIT FOR PLUNGE BASE

To get the most from the router base you really need to add the comprehensive fence kit. Not only does this allow you to make cuts parallel to an edge, but it



To get the most from the router base, you really need to add the comprehensive fence kit

also increases the scope for curved work. Included are a pair of substantial fence rods, aluminium guide body and arm, two 150mm fences, curve and circle guides, plus various mounting points for radius routing.

Fences are made from torrefied maple, a heat treatment that increases timber stability. Two sizes suit shallow and deeper material and are secured with a couple of screws. Knurled screws attach fence assembly to router base and these only need to be finger tight. Maximum distance from fence to cutter is 115mm.

For routing against a curved edge,



you remove the fence and substitute a couple of domed screws. These work well enough and mean you don't need to insert a bearing-guided router bit for profiling.



Knurled screws attach the fence assembly to the router base and these only need to be finger tight

Mounting options

When it comes to routing an arc or circle, there's three mounting options. You first need to fit the triangular-shaped circle arm to the guide body. A hole at the end allows you to insert either a point or steel post – to fit a $\frac{1}{8}$ in drilled hole in the workpiece. A steel disc is also included and allows the trammel arm to rotate easily. This disc can be temporarily attached to the timber with double-sided tape. For small diameter cutting, you simply reverse the circle arm to point inwards.



The fence assembly helps to create accurate grooves and profiles, however it's set up



For routing against a curved edge, remove the fence and substitute a couple of domed screws

In use

The fence assembly helps to create accurate grooves and profiles, however it's set up. Although all adjuster screws are slotted, I found a screwdriver unnecessary when locking them in position.

THE VERDICT

RATING – VALUE: 5 OUT OF 5
PERFORMANCE: 5 OUT OF 5



You first need to fit the triangular-shaped circle arm to the guide body

SPECIFICATION

- Fits any tool with a $\frac{3}{16}$ in \times 12tpi threaded collar, as standard on Dremel and others
- Converts almost any rotary multi-tool into a miniature plunge router
- Lock lever for continuous cuts
- Micro-adjustable depth stop affords precise control
- 100 \times 75mm footprint – easy to position and manoeuvre
- Aluminium with stainless steel rods and knobs
- Made in Canada

Typical price: £67.98

Web: www.axminstertools.com



A steel disc allows the trammel arm to rotate easily



For small diameter cutting, reverse the circle arm to point inwards

VERITAS PRECISION ADJUSTER FOR PLUNGE BASE

If you need to rout grooves an exact width for inlay or stringing, it's worth adding the Veritas precision adjuster. This simply slides over the end of the fence rods, a threaded screw locating in the guide body. With two locking screws, the knurled thumbwheel adjuster affords you incredibly precise control. Notches 180° apart allow you to fine-tune the fence setting, a full rotation creating less than 1mm of lateral travel.

Conclusion

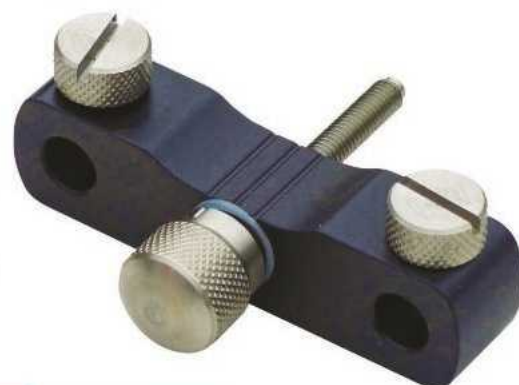
Buying both base and fence kit isn't a cheap option, actually costing more than a decent quality rotary tool alone; however, if you're

looking for precision routing on a small scale, then I doubt you'll regret the decision.

Using a cordless rotary tool for routing isn't ideal as the battery will drain surprisingly quickly, so a second power pack is essential. That said, cordless tools are popular and this shouldn't put you off buying the Veritas router base if that's what you have already. It's a superb accessory, which will transform any suitable rotary tool. ✂

THE VERDICT

RATING – VALUE: 5 OUT OF 5
PERFORMANCE: 5 OUT OF 5



SPECIFICATION

Typical prices: Fence & centre kit – £68.78; precision adjuster – £24.68

Web: www.axminstertools.com

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Cedar, spirits & handscrews

Robin Gates wanders distractedly through the September 1926 issue of *The Woodworker*

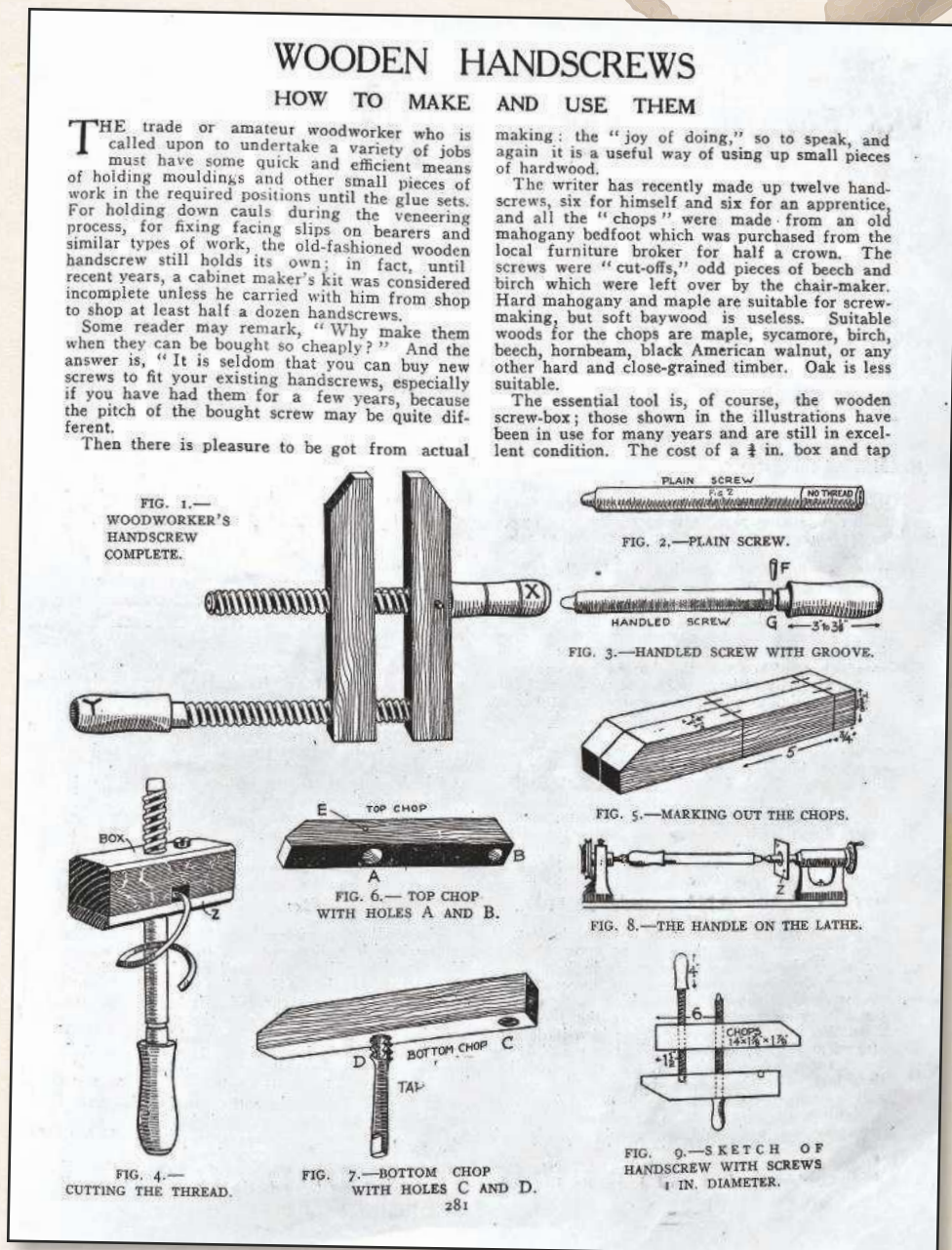
My maternal grandfather was a champion pigeon fancier, which may explain why the first piece to catch my eye in the September 1926 issue of *The Woodworker* was a pigeon cote. Shaped like a Swiss chalet perched on a 10ft pole, perhaps this handsome residence would tempt a passing flight to pause awhile in the garden. If collectable crocks are more your thing, however, there's an elegant William and Mary china cabinet which, if you know your vintage telephone boxes, bears passing resemblance to a K1 kiosk circa 1921. Or, if you've ever smiled at all and sundry about town only to belatedly discover shreds of spinach lodged in your front teeth, I'd recommend the hall rack with mirror, which is invaluable for that last-minute dental check before greeting the world at large.

Praise for cedar

Turning to technical matters, there's the making of a rule joint hinge for a drop-leaf table, and a plea for British furniture makers to embrace more fully the East African cedar than being used mostly for making pencils. Writing of this 'commonest timber tree in Kenya' the author reminds us of its 'beautiful red colour, the delightful fragrance and durability, combined with great ease of working' It does sound more appetising than the anonymous 'white wood' dominating the racks of my local DIY store. 'It seasons readily and never warps... absolutely durable both in and out of the ground and entirely immune from attack by white ants and borers.' It appears *Juniperus procera* can do no wrong, and I suspected that by now it would've been exploited to near extinction, yet the International Union for Conservation of Nature records it as a species of 'least concern.' That said, the population of mature individuals is indeed decreasing and I noted that a Kenyan taskforce has been seeking a total ban on logging cedar trees so that forests might recover.

Spiriting-out

With apologies for resurrecting yet another family member for the story, my great aunt Pat was a spiritualist and such is the way my mind works that an article on the laborious ways of French polishing drew me in with a mention of 'spiriting-out.' On reading that 'the last bodying-in process merges into the spiriting,' I began to hear voices. Was someone trying to get in touch? 'For your first attempt at spiriting-out make your new spiriting-out rubber overnight; charge it with



spirits; squeeze out the surplus spirits and place it on a plate and cover with an inverted basin and allow it to stand. Is this French polishing or exorcism? The piece ends with a warning: 'Difficulties in spiriting-out will occur.'

A versatile clamp

My mind remained adrift while scanning a piece on the 'Old Days of Craftsmanship,' which mentioned the joiners' ritual of signalling the 'transgression' of an apprentice by the beating of mallets on iron holdfasts while 'ringing him out.' For a moment I imagined I was that poor apprentice; the humiliation had me shrinking in my chair.

It was the traditional handscrew that

making: the "joy of doing," so to speak, and again it is a useful way of using up small pieces of hardwood.

The writer has recently made up twelve handscrews, six for himself and six for an apprentice, and all the "chops" were made from an old mahogany bedfoot which was purchased from the local furniture broker for half a crown. The screws were "cut-offs," odd pieces of beech and birch which were left over by the chair-maker. Hard mahogany and maple are suitable for screw-making, but soft baywood is useless. Suitable woods for the chops are maple, sycamore, birch, beech, hornbeam, black American walnut, or any other hard and close-grained timber. Oak is less suitable.

The essential tool is, of course, the wooden screw-box; those shown in the illustrations have been in use for many years and are still in excellent condition. The cost of a 3/4 in. box and tap

brought me back to the present, as I'm a great admirer of this very versatile clamp, even if I invariably turn the screws the wrong way to open or close it! Here we see how the original all-wood handscrew was made using a screw-box to cut threads on hardwood screws and a tap to cut their complementary threads in the chops. In use, the trick is to adjust the front screw for a loose fit on whatever is to be clamped, then tighten the rear screw, which imparts a slight tilt on the chops to grip more firmly. The more handy version made today – for example, by Dubuque or Jorgensen – uses rotating barrel nuts in the chops, which also have elongated slots for screws allowing the chops to be severely angled for gripping non-parallel sided work. ✕



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On the odd occasion tools fail. D&M Tools Staff have a great knowledge of the products they sell. offer unbiased advice and above all else exemplary service, especially when there is an issue. A well run business which will keep me coming back for all my tool needs."

★★★★★

"Super helpful team, phoned in late in the afternoon and said he'd get my order dispatched the same afternoon and like a flash my product turned up super fast! Will be using again very soon!"

★★★★★

"Brilliant service friendly staff lots of knowledge of the tool trade. Like the loyalty points. My number 1 tool supplier."

★★★★★

"D&M tools have gone the extra mile with there outstanding support, Nothing is to small for there team, sorted out my order, Really quick, will happily buy more gear from them."

★★★★★

"Service support was excellent with a prompt and helpful response to my query. Item was as described and keenly priced."

★★★★★

"Quality products, great price and quick delivery well done again."

★★★★★

"Excellent deal best price around. Dispatch and delivery quicker than expected and exactly as promised. Will absolutely use again."



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What's new from



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RECORD POWER CORONET HAWK SPRUNG POINT MULTI-TOOTH DRIVE CENTRES – 2 MORSE TAPER

MANUFACTURER: Record Power
D&M GUIDE PRICE: From £36.99 (inc VAT)

Made in Sheffield from high-quality alloyed steel, these new Record Power drive centres are over three times stronger than ordinary stainless steel, giving a much more durable edge and improved performance.

The drive centre's central locating pin retracts into its body when pressure is applied from the lathe tailstock, meaning the ring of teeth around the circumference is able to hold the workpiece extremely securely, with clamping pressure spread evenly across the teeth. The retraction of the locating pin is such that it's not able to split the timber, making it ideal for use with smaller and more delicate work.

The locating pin tension is adjustable, allowing for lower tension to be set for small, delicate workpieces and higher tension for use with hardwoods and large-scale timbers.

Another key benefit of this design is that the workpiece can be removed from the lathe if required and easily repositioned, using the indentations created by the locating pin and ring of teeth as an accurate guide.

These new drive centres are available in the following sizes: 10mm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in); 16mm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in); 22mm ($\frac{7}{8}$ in); 32mm (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ in).

**RECORD
POWER**
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NEW



DEWALT DCS512P2 12V BRUSHLESS XR CIRCULAR SAW

MANUFACTURER: DeWalt
D&M GUIDE PRICE: See website

The new DeWalt DCS512 Brushless XR circular saw has an extremely durable tool design, including a cast aluminium base for repetitive, accurate cuts. The bevel angle is adjustable up to 50°, and a lock-off switch and electronic motor brake provide additional control and promote work safety.

Fitted with an additional handle for safe two-handed work, the balanced design allows safe, fatigue-free operation. Other features include a dust blower, which clears dust and debris from the cut line, a built-in rafter hook and an LED worklight for improved cut line visibility.

Compatible with the DeWalt AirLock system for easy, secure connection to an extraction hose. Available as a kit with 2 x 5.0Ah batteries and charger, supplied in a case, or as a body-only unit.

DEWALT

XR
BRUSHLESS

NEW



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WIN! 1 of 2 Robert Sorby Micro Resin Pen Turning Sets – worth £75.60 each!

To celebrate the launch of their exciting new pen turning set, we've teamed up with **Robert Sorby** to give two lucky readers the chance to win this great prize, which is certainly a perfect addition to any pen turner's toolbox

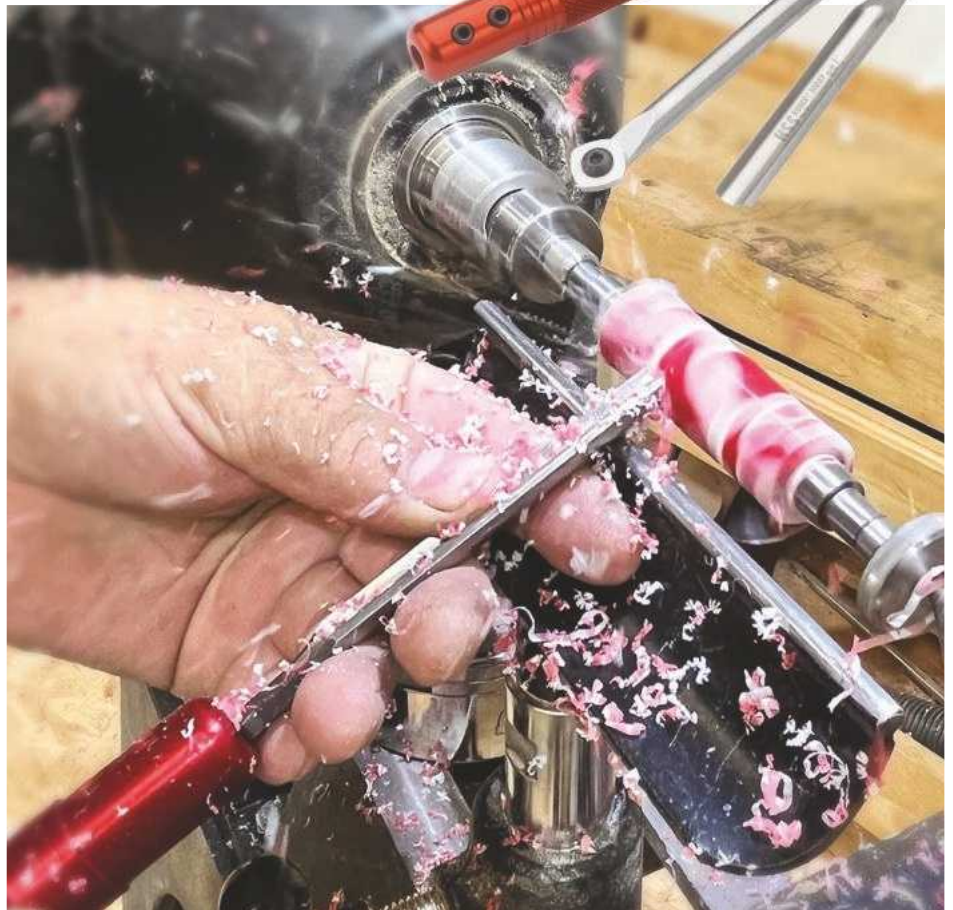
Robert Sorby's newly launched Micro Resin Pen Turning Set is an excellent addition to its existing Modular Micro Woodturning Tool Sets.

Pen turning has always attracted woodworkers with a taste for highly finished, eye-catching work, and this new offering will ensure the user has an improved experience and ability to produce quality finished pens with ease. The choice of available materials is wide and varied and while timber species remain popular, there's an ever-increasing variety of manmade acrylic and resin blanks, which can also be used.

The set consists of two blades – a spindle roughing gouge and tipped HSS cutter (827C) tool – along with the longer aluminium handle, which forms part of the Robert Sorby Modular Micro Tool System. Supplied with two Allen keys and instruction leaflet, this new set will prove the perfect addition to any pen turner's toolbox.

The world's premier manufacturer

Robert Sorby is the world's premier manufacturer of specialist woodworking tools with a heritage dating back more than 200 years. During that time, the company has developed a



global reputation for manufacturing the finest edge tools available.

Robert Sorby proudly continue this manufacturing tradition from their base in Sheffield, England, where today, the company is widely renowned as one of the city's oldest hand tool manufacturers.

To find out more, visit www.robert-sorby.co.uk.



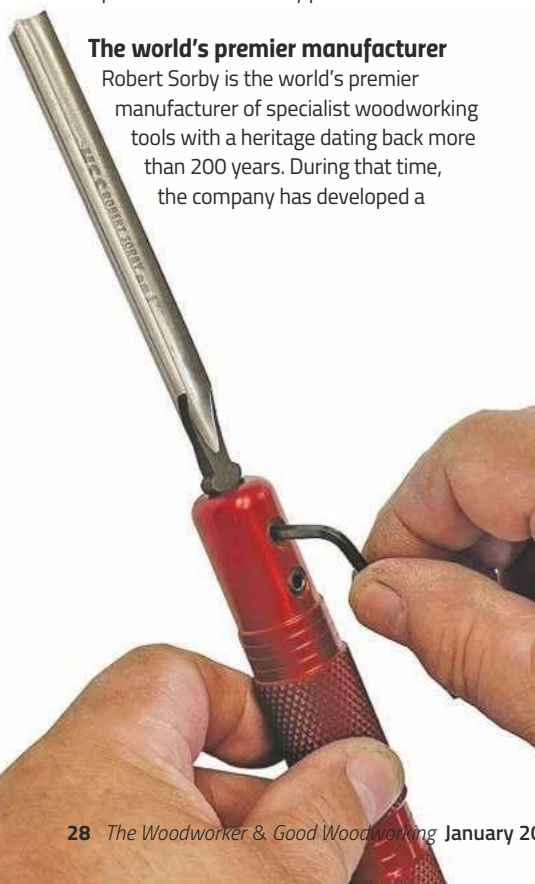
HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning **1 of 2 Robert Sorby Micro Resin Pen Turning Sets**, visit www.thewoodworkermag.com/category/win and answer the multiple choice question below:

QUESTION: What type of turning are these new tools designed for?

- A: Hollowing**
- B: Faceplate turning**
- C: Pen turning**

The winners will be randomly drawn from all correct entries. The closing date for the competition is **20 January 2023**. Only one entry per person; multiple entries will be discarded. Employees of David Hall Publishing Ltd and Robert Sorby are not eligible to enter this competition



Robert Sorby

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THE UK'S No.1 BRAND, POWER TOOLS & MACHINERY EVENT



From left to right:
MD Paul Dowding with
wife Jenny; Paul's sister
Liz Richards-Dowding;
and Paul's father and
company founder,
David Dowding



Established in 1978 and proudly remaining an independent family business to this day, D&M Tools not only boasts a Twickenham tool empire but also the industry's No.1 hand, power tools and machinery event. One hard working man is at the centre of it all – MD Paul Dowding – who shares some of the secrets behind the company's longevity and success

Anyone with a passion for woodworking tools – whether hobbyist or tradesman – will be familiar with the impressive niche that D&M Tools has carved for itself within the industry, over a period of some 45 years. Specialists in hand, power tools and woodworking machinery, this independent family-run business, headed by MD Paul Dowding, is undeniably in a league of its own.

Boasting an impressive Twickenham-based tool emporium that houses a huge range of tools and equipment from all the major brands, the superstore continues to expand. However, in addition to this, the company has another string to its bow in the form of the UK's No.1 dedicated hand, power tools and woodworking machinery event – 'The' Tool Show – which following a two-year hiatus, returned to Kempton Park Racecourse to mark the 20th show in 22 years. Event planning and coordination is handled, pretty much single-handedly, by Paul and having had the opportunity to sit down and talk to him at the recently held show, we were given an insight into the countless hours of preparation and hard work involved leading up to, during, and after the event. His passion and dedication is clear to see, and according to Paul, it was "amazing" to be back at Kempton Park, having not been able to do so since 2019.

Old-fashioned values; modern ideas

Starting life as a simple Twickenham-based double-fronted ironmongers and DIY shop, which also sold tools, D&M Tools was established in 1978 by David and Mary Dowding. Despite the extent to which D&M has grown over the years, and taking into account the numerous achievements – in terms of both the business and show – to this day, they still trade from the same Twickenham location, albeit on a much larger scale. Having built a wealth of industry experience over some 45 years as a result of stocking and supplying the biggest brand names, D&M Tools is best described as a modern, proactive company with old-fashioned ideas and values, as far as customer service and after-sales is concerned, and above all, a name that everyone knows and trusts.

Exceptional customer service underpins everything they do, and a desire to make life

easier for those looking to buy tools and equipment. Importantly, D&M Tools hasn't rested on its laurels, which is evidenced by a continual expansion, but as Paul is eager to highlight, an awareness of the latest industry trends, utilising and investing in new technology – providing this is of benefit to them and the customer – and moving with the times, is also critical to their success.

D&M certainly have a finger on the pulse as well as being leaders in their field, choosing to embrace new developments in a bid to remain at the forefront. Such examples include the launch of D&M's first mail order catalogue in 1996, followed by the website in 2000. Just three years later, in 2003, this was utilised to sell products, which at the time was incredibly cutting edge. Today, the website is a 24/7 fully secure online ordering facility, with customer support on hand, which allows a customer to place an order whenever convenient. The website – which at time of writing is due to be newly relaunched before Christmas – is constantly updated to include newly released tools as well as offering special and weekly deals to customers. This attention to detail helps to ensure repeat business and

further builds brand loyalty and trust.

Similarly, at the other end, in the distribution centre, state-of-the-art machinery and barcode technology is utilised to make the ordering process as seamless as possible. Barcodes are scanned and double-checked to ensure that no mistakes are made and the customer receives exactly what they've ordered. Also, when it comes to packing the orders, no plastic is used – only paper – which further attests to D&M's forward-thinking ethos.

Of course, a deep-rooted passion for the tools and equipment they sell is crucial to success as well as an understanding of this. Although Paul himself isn't a practising woodworker, he still knows the product portfolio inside out, is competent enough to be able to use anything he sells, and also knows when something isn't up to scratch. Over the years, the company has built and developed key working relationships and partnerships with leading industry brands, including Festool, Makita, Bosch, DeWalt and Trend, to name a few, all of which are renowned for their top quality branded kit and tools.

Every item that's stocked both in the shop and on the website is bought and sourced by Paul, and if it doesn't meet his high standards, it doesn't make the grade. As well as knowing what sells, Paul and the team benefit from having many years' of expertise and a big part of the service they offer is advising and helping customers choose the best product to meet their needs. All of this, again, comes down to excellent customer service, understanding



The early beginnings of the tool show in the late '80s, when it was held at the shop's rear



Scheppach at the tool show back in the late 1980s

what the customer wants, and ultimately being able to meet and even exceed these individual requirements.

Added value for visitors

Returning to 'The' Tool Show and looking back at how this began, its success has been built and subsequently nurtured over a period of some 30 years. Starting small and originally being held at the back of the shop, the show today attracts more than 10,000 visitors over three days, which is a fantastic achievement but one that's undoubtedly a labour of love. From the very first event held at Kempton Park, its success has continued to grow, and according to Paul, so many people turned up that they were forced to close the Twickenham shop and send extra staff to help at the show.

Unlike many others, 'The' Tool Show has always been a free event, which is something it prides itself on, and according to Paul, this won't change. As he rightly says, in this day and age anything free is a rarity, so they like to offer as much added value to the visitor experience as possible, which includes free entry, free parking and a free prize draw. This was especially relevant this year given the rise in fuel costs and cost of living, which meant that for some, getting to the event was made more difficult, therefore placing a greater emphasis on them feeling the trip was beneficial.

Over three days in October, Paul and the team transform the racecourse into a big tool shop,



Alan Holtham demoing for Record Power at the D&M tool show in the early 2000s



Stuart Pickering demonstrating on a Record Power lathe in the late 1980s

and it's hoped that the money people save on entry and parking is instead used to buy tools and machinery at the event. As Paul says: "Why would people pay to shop in Tesco?" And it's this uniqueness that keeps people coming back.

Precision & planning

Talking of the military precision and minute planning the show demands, even though it's very much a team effort and all family members are involved, to some extent this is a solo mission for Paul, who knows everything inside out. No one else can do what he does, and as a result, he's able to utilise this logistical knowledge, which is invaluable. In fact, leading up to and during the show, he invests in excess of 100 hours per week. Organising such an event comes naturally to Paul and here, his skills and leadership abilities are brought to the fore, and this is where he truly excels and thrives.

The show is undeniably a huge commitment for Paul and his family, all of whom are part of

the business, which is now in its third generation. In Paul's words, he has an "emotional connection" to the event, not only because he cares, but the ultimate aim is to deliver a great product to their customers. Describing the show as "a comfy pair of old slippers," Paul recognises that people need the familiarity and to know what they're getting, as well as being able to rest assured that they'll leave feeling it's been a worthwhile visit.

Despite the fact the show's success has grown year-on-year, Paul is a realist, and rather than getting greedy and going bigger – and potentially jeopardising what they've worked so hard to create – he says that he's happy with the size of the event as it is now. Importantly, he's made the decision to keep the same venue and develop it rather than moving to a bigger setting and having to manage the extra stress that entails. Dealing with the logistics such as they are is already an enormous task, which is made even greater given that Paul coordinates the whole operation. As with everything in life,



DeWalt at Kempton Park Racecourse c. early 2000s



Signage for the 2003 show



D&M Tools' Twickenham superstore

peaks and troughs are felt over the years, but Paul always looks at the bigger picture. In the words of Ian Styles when talking of the Axminster show and similar woodworking events, "it's a rollercoaster you can't get off," which is a sentiment very much echoed by Paul.

Bringing the team back together

Given the impressive visitor numbers typically seen over the three days, the show offers a great opportunity for brands to launch new products and product ranges, which was also evidenced at this year's event with the DeWalt 5Ah POWERSTAK battery and Festool's new range of cordless tools. The industry knows that the show is always held on the second weekend in October, which allows them to synchronise product launches accordingly. This is a great investment for tool companies to make and also a fantastic showcase for new products, although there's a lot of work that needs to be done behind the scenes and some complicated

logistics – as Paul points out: "Timing is crucial."

Another factor that sets the show apart is the racecourse setting, which is quite an intimate venue, over two floors, which therefore makes it cosy and interactive. Visitors are also given the opportunity to see the biggest, widest and most diverse range of tools – not just the most popular or bestsellers – which is something you won't see anywhere else. Paul also makes it affordable for the companies exhibiting, which means it's not just big names and premium brands that attend but smaller ones too, which ensures there's a variation and cross-section for the customer.

Speaking on the current climate and returning to Kempton Park following a two-year break, Paul comments on how the world is a difficult place at present and there's a lot going on: "First it was COVID, then a global recession, followed by an energy crisis, so deciding to go ahead and put on the show was a difficult decision." Seeing the 2022 event as a "good opportunity

to bring the team back together," Paul goes by the mantra: "If you build it, they will come," and early signs proved to be positive. Testing the water revealed that demand still exists and people want to come, especially after not being able to for such a long time. People's enthusiasm hasn't dampened and they still want to see the tools for themselves, enjoy a day out as well as being able to take advantage of various show deals. Simply put, people in the industry are passionate about woodworking, whether as a profession or hobby, and the show offers a special opportunity for them. Also, due to the hiatus, visitors have 1-2 years' worth of new products to see and buy, which is another reason for people to visit and brands to invest.

The devil's in the detail

In terms of pitching the show to brands that sell their tools through D&M, Paul offers a package that's unlike any other. For him, the devil's in the detail – it's not just about selling



The Dowding family, pictured at 'The' Tool Show in 2018, following the company's 40th anniversary



DeWalt's new 5Ah POWERSTAK battery was unveiled at the 2022 event



The show gives visitors the chance to see and try the latest tools and receive advice from industry experts

exhibition space, but the personal touches and ensuring nothing is missed. For example, Paul looks after people – visitors and exhibitors – and recognises the importance of having good security, so they can rest assured knowing stock is safe overnight and that extra precautions have been taken. As the show is a potential target for thieves, there's dog patrols as well as plain clothes security guards operating during the event, which helps to protect against lost stock.

Talking to Paul, you get a true sense of just how passionate he is; the importance placed on people feeling looked after, and that for them, the show has been a valuable experience.

Prestige, knowledge & background

In terms of marketing the event, Paul explains how this has changed, and although they still rely on the traditional methods of advertising in magazines and on billboards and buses leading up to the show, the clientele today is undoubtedly younger and more tradesperson-based. This is very different to many other woodworking shows, which typically attract an older demographic, and in order to reach and appeal to them, D&M have



Pictured centre, Paul Dowding at the 2022 event with Rhona Bolger, Group Advertising Manager (left), and Tegan Foley, Group Editor (right)

diversified their advertising methods accordingly. This includes social media avenues such as TikTok, which allows them to access different and younger markets through targeted video content.

The most important method, however, and one that's pivotal to the show's success is word of mouth. This has been the case for some 20 years, before the internet and social media even existed. For many, the show represents a day out and people tend to come in groups, visitors tell their friends about the experience, who then go on to tell others, and so the awareness develops. Don't be fooled into thinking that technology has taken over, however, as Paul is still an avid fan of the tried and tested methods. For example, all invoices at the show are written by hand due to potential connectivity issues with the PDQ and EPOS systems, which are prone to failure and as such, sales opportunities can be missed. "You can't beat a pen and paper," says Paul, "if you rely on age-old methods, you know they'll work – technology can work against you and ultimately let you down."

Prestige, knowledge and background are three key tenets that underpin the D&M ethos, but the show in particular, and these are vital to success. Each year, things are fine-tuned and improved to ensure they're the best they can be, and as Paul says: "80% is right and doesn't need adjusting, but 20% requires tweaking to ensure we're keeping up with the times and striving to be the best we can be." While the decision could have been made to stop the show after the last one held in 2019, despite the difficulties experienced during the past few years, Paul felt there was still a place for the show, which really is unlike any other.

The future's bright

Having had the chance to assess and evaluate the overall outcome of the 20th show, and to some extent return to normality, we spoke to Paul a month or so later, eager to discover what



Promotional methods for 'The' Tool Show include advertising on buses leading up to the event

had been decided, and most importantly, whether or not they'd be back next year. Hearing that the event was so well received and surpassed many expectations is fantastic news, and as with previous years, Paul and the team stuck to and applied the same winning formula to deliver a top line-up of the biggest power tool and hand tool brands in the business. "There were lots of great show deals and freebies on offer, along with new products and show debuts on many of the stands," he explains.

In terms of visitor numbers, these didn't disappoint with many travelling long distances and feeling positive about the show's return. In fact, two particular visitors arrived at 9am on Sunday morning, an hour before opening, having travelled from the other side of Stansted, setting off especially early as they were so excited about the show!

In terms of notable highlights, Paul confirms that, for them, the best part was "feeling like we'd never been away, and that all the hard work involved in organising and running the show wasn't in vain."

So, the burning question on all of our lips is whether there'll be a next time... Thankfully, the answer is yes, and we're pleased to announce that, owing to its continued success, **'The Tool Show'** will return to **Kempton Park Racecourse** from **Friday 6 to Sunday 8 October 2023**.

We're thrilled to hear that the legacy continues under Paul's watchful eye, and while we can't quite fathom how such a feat is possible, it's safe to say that with Paul at the helm, D&M Tools' future is most definitely in safe and capable hands. ✂

FURTHER INFORMATION

As well as their spacious Twickenham showroom, D&M Tools also has a fantastic website, which includes a huge range of hand tools, power tools and machinery, all of which is available to purchase online: www.dm-tools.co.uk

For more details on the UK's No.1 branded hand, power tools and woodworking machinery event – 'The' Tool Show – visit the dedicated event website: www.thetoolshow.com



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Weight:	2.9kg



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ROUTERS & ROUTER TABLES

Routers are great tools for shaping edges in furniture making, but they also have a number of other uses, as **John Bullar** discovers in the next part of this series



2 The router used by old-time furniture makers – for routing out channels – was a simple wooden block plane with narrow blade protruding below the middle



3 Modern routers can, with small cutters, be used freehand such as for producing swirling patterns. However, great caution is needed to ensure you don't cut too deeply as the tool easily runs out of control

Routers are great for shaping edges – turning a plain square-edged board into a friendly round-edged tabletop, for example (**photo 1**) – but they also have a multitude of other uses. While this article is a general introduction to using the hand-held router and router table in furniture making, being such a versatile tool, router applications also crop up in other parts of this series.

Simple origins

The first type of furniture maker's router was a humble block plane with narrow blade protruding beneath it, which was intended for routing out deep channels or rebates (**photo 2**). Early makers would also own a set of moulding planes, often running into dozens, for shaping the edges of panels and cabinet tops.



4 Router cutters can be made from high speed steel (HSS) – pictured left – or tungsten carbide (TC) – pictured right



5 Router cutters can be honed to a fine edge on diamond grit but this is a slow task, especially with carbide tips

1 The furniture maker's most common use for a router is shaping edges of boards, such as the simple bull-nose rim on this tabletop







6 The router has a screw-adjusted stop to limit maximum depth of cut. A rotating turret beneath the screw facilitates three-stage plunging

We'll look further into this below, but first a word on cutters.

Cutting bits

Routers come in two main sizes with $\frac{1}{2}$ in chucks for small trimming jobs or $\frac{3}{4}$ in chucks for heavy-duty routing. Cutters or 'bits' in both sizes are made from high speed steel (HSS) or tungsten carbide (TC). Steel-edged cutters tend to have more complex shapes while carbide edges last much longer (**photo 4**).

The router turns extremely fast, around 20,000rpm, and the cutter should slice off a minute shaving with each turn. This requires the edge to be razor-sharp otherwise the tool tip heats up and scorches the wood. To avoid blunting, router cutters should never be forced into the wood, nor allowed to remain in the same spot; they must be gently fed forward in a slow, controlled manner. With care, old router cutters can be sharpened although many makers regard them as disposable once the edge is dulled (**photo 5**).

Depth & direction

Avoid making deep cuts with a router as this is when it'll try to veer off on a path of its own, damaging the work and possibly the tool as well. Instead make a series of



7 Alongside the router – bottom left – is a fence or guide to steer it when cutting slots. With the fence on the left, as shown, the router must be pulled towards the user so the cutting force will try to push the router to the right

shallow cuts, thus increasing the overall depth at each stage. To help with this, the mechanism on a plunge router has a rotating turret stop, which guides the user to cut in three stages (**photo 6**).

Looking down on a hand-held router, the spindle rotates clockwise (**photo 7**); this means that as the tool is pulled towards you, the cutting edge moves from right to left, pushing the router rightwards. To prevent it moving that way when making a straight channel, we either need a rigid edge or 'fence' fixed to the bench on the router's right-hand side, or a sliding fence fixed to the left-hand side. Conversely, if you were pushing the router away, then the fences would be on the opposite side. It's not only heavy-duty cutting that requires firm guidance to prevent the router drifting off course; for delicate work we also need to stop the groove juddering and weaving about (**photo 8**).



8 Here, the router is used to cut a channel for fitting inlay around a jewellery box's panelled lid



9 The router can be swung to cut an arc or circle when attached to a piece of wood of suitable length – this is known as a trammel arm

Cutting curves

Cutting curves is an easy task for the router, but again, it needs to be restrained for accurate work. The trammel arm (**photo 9**) works like a compass used in school geometry; it tethers the router to move in a precise arc or circle (**photo 10**). It can be made from a simple board or batten with one end fixed to the router and the other swivelling on a bolt or wood screw. If you don't want a screw hole visible in the centre, then either cut from the underside or else glue a temporary block to hold the screw, sawing and planing it away afterwards.



10 Circles smaller than the router base can be routed without a trammel arm by pivoting through a hole in the router's sole



11 Some router cutters have guide bushes bolted onto the far end; these allow them to follow existing straight or curved edges and re-shape these



12 Here, a matched pair of router cutters with guide bushes are used to shape a table flap's rule joint edges



13 A small router with guide bush is used to chamfer edges inside a frame

Guide bushes

Router cutters with guide bushes built in follow the shape of an existing edge, cutting away wood alongside the bush. The bush itself is a roller bearing bolted onto the end of the cutter so the bearing turns slowly as it runs along an edge while the cutter whizzes round (**photo 11**).

Guide bush cutters, some with different sizes of bearing, come in a vast range of profiles, ideal for rebating, re-shaping edges or producing mouldings. It's important that the bush runs along a smooth edge as any



16 The router motor is fixed below the table, in this case on a rise and fall lift



14 The hand-held router can be top-heavy, which isn't ideal when working on small details or joints

roughness transmits through the cutter and into the finished profile.

Balancing act

A weakness of the plunge router's design is that it's top heavy, so therefore needs support in order to avoid wobble, especially when working on small parts (**photo 14**). Sometimes a steady pair of hands will suffice, but often the maker needs to put together support blocks when using the router on small edges. This is the reason why many makers prefer to use a router table.

Router table

The router table takes the same tool and turns it upside down for a totally different approach – the cutter sticks up through a hole in a flat tabletop (**photo 15**). The router is fixed to the underside of the table and wood, laid flat on the table, slides across it.

While it's possible to use the plunge mechanism of a normal router upside down, this is very awkward and further hindered by



17 A large parallel-sided cutter, similar to the type used for fitting kitchen worktops, is ideal for use with a router table



15 Router tables secure the cutter while providing a large, stable surface on which to move wood across. They still produce a lot of stray wood chips that need to be swept up, however

the springs pushing down. For this reason, many large router tables come with a lift mechanism to raise and lower the router while keeping the router's plunge mechanism locked (**photo 16**).

Template cutting

As with a hand-held router, there's a risk of the cutter biting into the wood, but this time it's the wood that's likely to shoot off rather than the router itself, which is luckily firmly fixed to the table. Larger cutters can be more safely used on a router table and guide bush cutters provide one way of limiting depth of cut. By fixing a template to the wood, it can be steered to cut precisely to the template's outline (**photos 17 & 18**).

Because the router table leaves both hands free, there's different hazards to consider. At all times hands must be kept at a safe distance from the cutter, which could inflict serious injury, and



18 A template fixed above the wood runs along the guide bearing as it's slid across the router table; this cuts the wood to exactly match the template



19 The router table fence is adjusted to sit either side of a cutter. Cutters this large are unsuitable for use in a hand-held router



20 Large diameter cutters can be used to shape wide moulded edges in a setup similar to that of a spindle moulder

push-sticks used when it's necessary to hold the wood close to the cutter. Router tables should be equipped with a No Volt Release (NVR) switch, to facilitate safe turning on and off from above.

Coving & moulding

Router tables are usually fitted with a movable fence; this has a gap in the middle where the cutter sits so that wood can be slid across the cutter (photo 19). Because the router is now upside down, the cutter therefore rotates anti-clockwise. Wood must be slid along the fence from right to left, so that the leading cutting edges push the wood against the fence. The cutter spindle must always be behind the fence otherwise wood may be dragged between cutter and fence with disastrous consequences.

Router extensions

Router cutters are purposely designed to have short shanks so they can't project too far out of the router. It's also important that the cutter's shank is fully inserted and clamped in the router collet. This reduces the risk of vibration; however, mounting a router below the table decreases its useful length, which prevents certain cutters being used.

A router extension collet used in a router table – these shouldn't be used hand-held – increases cutter height, allowing a greater variety of cutters to be used with a router table (photo 23).

NEXT TIME

In the March issue, John will look at fixtures and fittings, hinges, locks, etc. and how these are used by furniture makers



24 A sliding carriage on this router table is used to move wood over the cutter at right angles to the fixed fence



21 Some cutters can be assembled together in different combinations and sequences in order to produce more complex shapes

Sliding carriages

As well as having a fixed fence clamped either side of the cutter for edges to be slid along, some router tables offer the option of a sliding carriage at right angles to the fence so a board end can be passed over the cutter in a controlled manner (photo 24). This is useful for moulding ends or shaping narrow end joints on a router table.

Noise & dust

Routers produce a high-pitched whine and throw off a lot of chippings and dust. For all its virtues, this isn't a tool to be used when others are trying to sleep!

Manufacturers provide clear shields to reduce the spread of dust and prevent accidental cutter contact. These aren't shown here because they're not compatible with flash photography, but should be used in accordance with the supplied instructions.

A router table, if sturdy enough, will cut down some of the noise but prevents standard shields being fitted, so there's still a big dust problem. By boxing in the table with heavy gauge plywood or MDF, you can contain the dust and considerably reduce noise levels (photos 25 & 26).

Conclusions

The router is undoubtedly the most versatile hand-held power tool in a furniture maker's workshop. To be fair, this is a modest claim



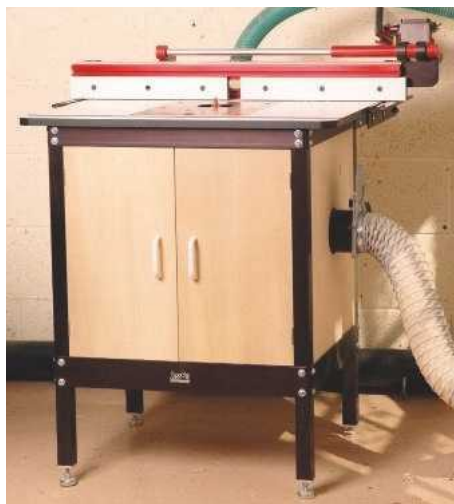
22 A door frame being shaped on a router table using a combination cutter

because furniture makers tend to use hand tools and electrically powered machines rather than hand-held power tools. Even so, a router, in skilled hands, can perform great work.

The router table turns a tool designed for hand-held use into a miniature spindle moulder. Spindle moulders – which we'll look at in a future article – have a reputation for being tricky machines, which require care in order to use safely. To a lesser extent, the same is true of router tables, so it's important to follow a manufacturer's instructions. We'll look at the router's more specialised uses, such as the cutting of dovetail joints, in future articles. ✂



23 A router extension collet is used to increase a cutter's height



25 Boxing in a router table allows wood dust and chippings to be contained and the noise level therefore reduced



26 The boxed-in router table is connected to a workshop extraction system with a blast gate to shut off the vacuum when the table's not in use

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ROUTER-MADE BLANKET BOX

Peter Bishop shares a router project designed for the intermediate woodworker – an elegant and functional blanket box – which is made using kiln-dried English oak

CHISEL RATING

I recently bought an expensive router cutter for a jointing job that didn't come off and wanted to see how it worked.

So, with that excuse, I was able to design this project in a slightly different way.

Please note that although many of these images show machines unguarded for clarity, you should **ALWAYS** ensure that when



1 In order to avoid knots and splits, care must be taken when marking out

operating equipment, the appropriate guards are in place.

Making nominal components

I had some thick planks of wane-edged, kiln-dried English oak to hand, from which I chopped out the nominal components. These were all end-sealed and stashed in the house for at least a couple of weeks. I didn't have enough solid oak for the panels, so decided to try another new technique. I had plenty of 4mm-thick oak-faced MDF offcuts kicking around, and with oak on only one of the faces, I set about sticking two together to make 8mm flat panels. Over a period of a few days, I spread lots of PVA glue onto the face of one panel, then 'rubbed' the other into it. Each panel was then weighed down with heavy loads. As only limited weights were available, this meant that just a few panels could be glued up at any one time.

Planing to size

Once all the framing and top stuff was ready to work, it went back in the workshop to be planed to size. The router cutter is a jointer that creates mirrored-edge profiles. To joint

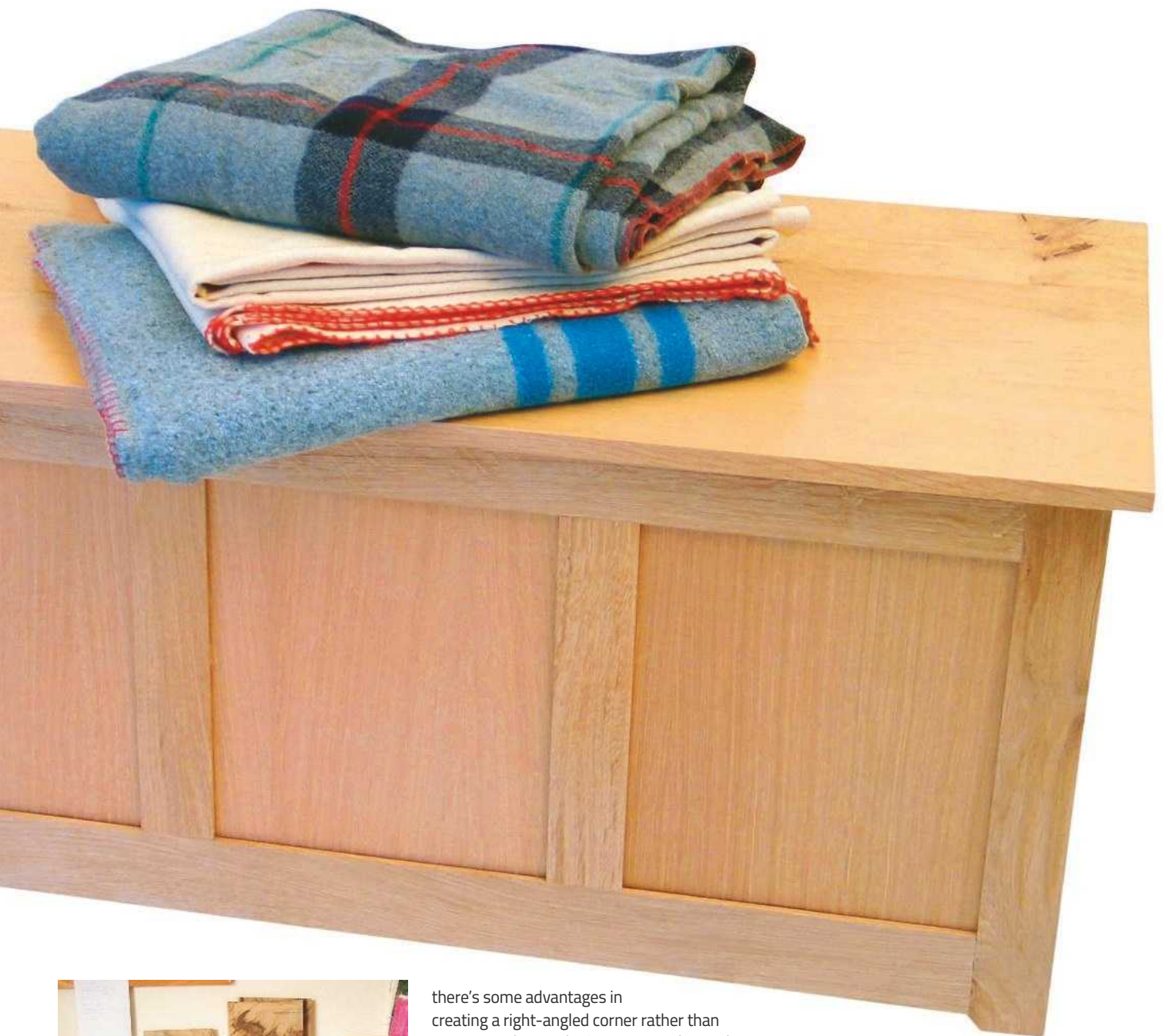
in the flat, you simply mould edges, turn alternate pieces over, and the joint is made.

For corner jointing, a slightly different technique is required: one piece is passed flat to the bed past the cutter and the other flat to the fence. A little trial and error with some gash stock of the same thickness eventually produced a good joint. As long as the joint is strong enough,



CUTTING LIST

COMPONENT	PIECES	NOMINAL LENGTH	FINISHED WIDTH	FINISHED THICKNESS
Top	1	1.2m	510mm +	21mm
Top rails	2	1.2m	61mm	21mm
	2	600mm	61mm	21mm
Bottom rails	2	1.2m	76mm	21mm
	2	600mm	76mm	21mm
Intermediate rails	4	460mm	61mm	21mm
Legs	8	600mm	61mm	21mm
Panels to make	6	460mm	305mm	8mm
	2	460mm	405mm	8mm
Bottom brace	1	600mm	38mm	21mm
– plus a few lengths of softwood batten				
Bottom panel	1	1.2m	510mm nominal	6mm



2 Store boards inside to bring them into equilibrium with the coffer's eventual climate

there's some advantages in creating a right-angled corner rather than a post. Firstly, you don't use so much wood and, secondly, the bottom panel is a rectangle without having to be notched to go around the corner posts.

Making the corners

Once the joints were cut, the corners could be made by applying some PVA glue to abutting



3 'Hit and miss' is OK at the facing stage; this can be removed later on

faces and clamping up. The critical things here are to make sure all the excess glue is squeezed out and that, once a corner is clamped up, it's set at a right angle on the faces. I'd finished the width of the eight corner components slightly wider and



4 The edges can then be squared

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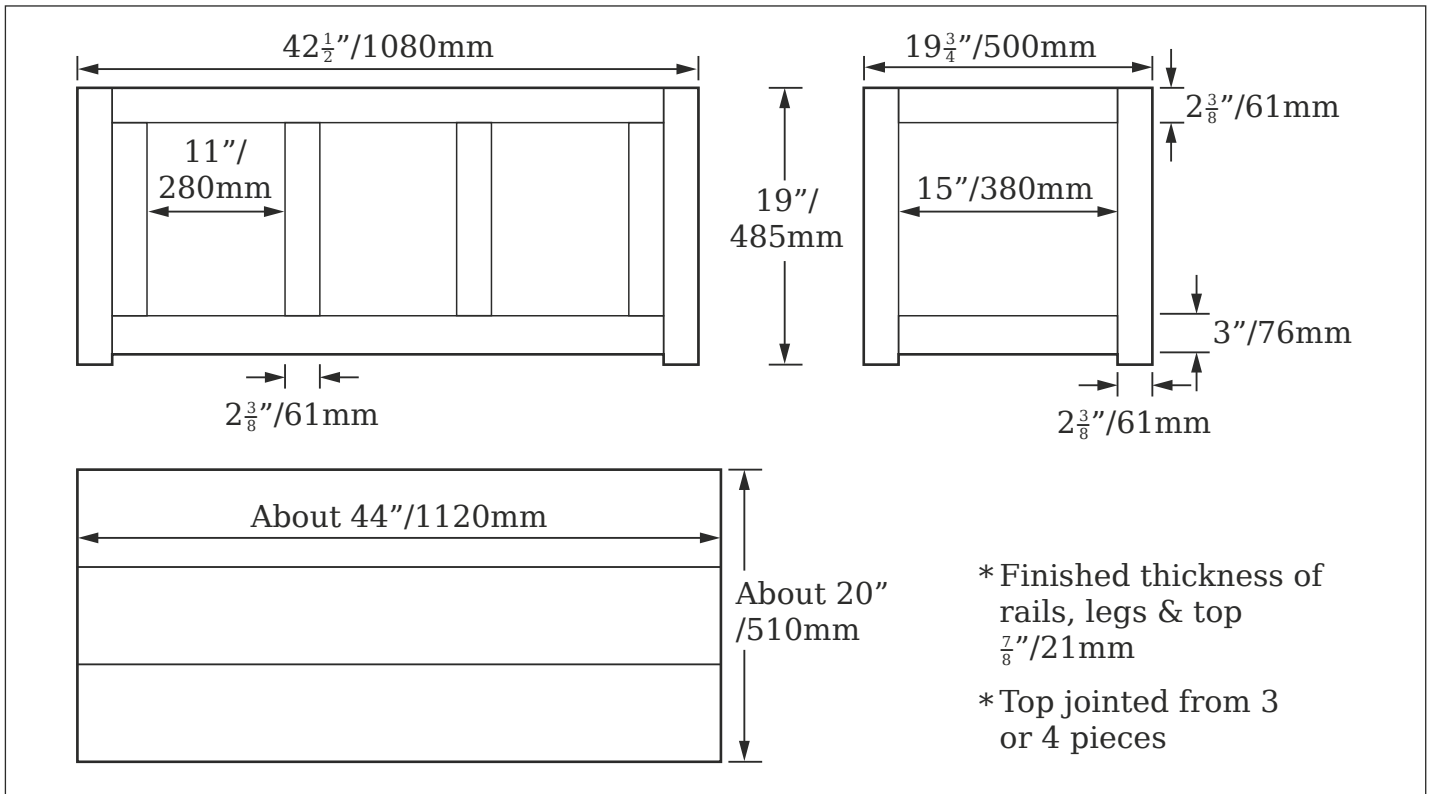


Fig.1 Blanket chest

longer than required. Once the glue had set, I then planed each corner to its finished width, to match the top rails, and trimmed to dead lengths. Now the corner posts were ready to mark out. The width of the mortise holes were then set to match the panels' thickness.

This meant that when the grooves for the panels were cut, it'd automatically form the recess for a haunch on the tenons. Care while

mortising needs to be taken. Each hole must be cut parallel to the outside face so, in a machine, the clamping action forces this face against the back fence.

Tenoning the top & bottom rails

With legs mortised, the eight top and bottom rails were then tenoned, trimmed to fit and this lot dry assembled. I could now work out

exact positions of the front and back intermediate, vertical rails. I also marked out and determined the length of the central, lower support, which the bottom would go on. This done, the mortise holes on top and bottom rails were cut and the intermediates tenoned to fit along with a support piece. Another dry assembly, just to check, also revealed the size of the six and two panels, which were then cut to size. Grooves for the panels



5 A multi-form router jointing cutter is used to make the leg joints



6 The two-part leg assembly is glued and cramped up – ensure the faces are square



7 The legs are planed to finished size along with remaining components



8 Marking mortise holes on the legs



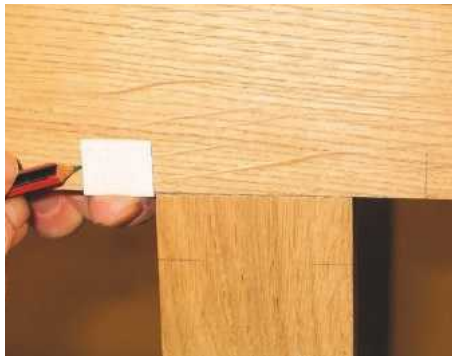
9 Pack out and chop the mortise holes



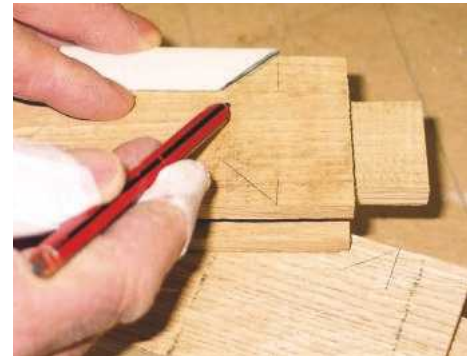
10 A straight cutter mounted in the router table is used to cut grooves for the panels



11 The two-part panels are prepared and glued



12 If you fancy doing some bevelling on the frame, mark the stop ends



13 A plastic template can be used to mark out the ends of bevels



14 A bearing-guided bevel cutter routs chamfers



15 Begin by jointing the front and back panels...



16 ... then joint front to back

were then cut on my router table using an 8mm cutter to match their thickness, then everything was cleaned up ready for gluing.

Gluing up

I started by gluing up the front and rear panel assemblies. The joints went up sweetly, without too much pressure, and I checked the frame was square overall. The other important thing

to check is that the corners haven't gone out of square. Some adjustment to the sash cramps' packing might be necessary to ensure this doesn't occur. Later, these two panels were cleaned up, then joined up with the ends in place. Later again, the whole lot was cleaned up ready for finishing. Some odd bits of softwood batten were fitted around the inside of the bottom rails to take the bottom panel. I used a piece of 6mm MDF

here, fitting it from underneath. With plenty of glue applied to support battens, the bottom was dropped in place and weighed down for a few hours to secure.

Making the top

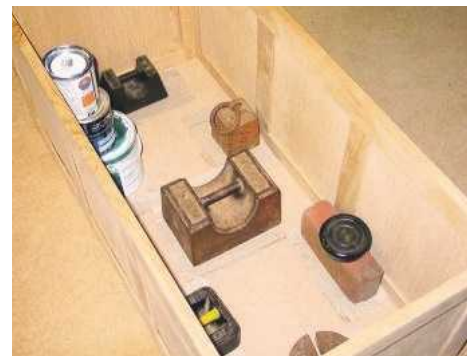
While all this had been going on, I'd made the top out of three pieces. These were planed with square edges, biscuit jointed, glued and rubbed



17 A few softwood battens are fixed in place to accept the bottom



18 Working underneath, measure and finish the bottom to size



19 Apply plenty of glue to the battens, then drop the bottom in and weigh it down



20 Jointing the top from a number of pieces using biscuits



21 Rub the joints and clamp the top up from both sides to keep it flat



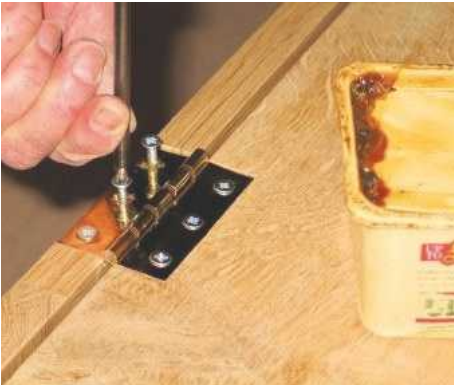
22 A long straightedge is handy for marking the top's finished size



23 Cutting the top to width freehand on a bench saw

together, then cramped up. I later cleaned off all the excess glue, applied filler, and finished flush where appropriate. With the main coffer completed, I knew the top's finished size. I sliced a strip off one edge and planed that square. At this stage, the top wasn't parallel. I marked the width and used a long sash cramp as a straightedge, before cutting this line freehand on a bench saw. Care needs to be taken while doing this. The edge was finished and the whole thing trimmed off to length. I left the top with square edges but these can also be chamfered.

I used an acrylic, non-yellowing, satin finish. This is great stuff but unfortunately always raises the grain more than oil or a polyurethane-based finish. Therefore, each coat had to be sanded well back in between. On the top, I applied four coats before I was satisfied; however, three were OK on the main chest below.



26 A little grease on each screw helps to ease them in and out



24 Mark hinge positions and cut the ends

Fitting the hinges & chain

I started by fitting the three hinges to the top. Having marked their positions, I set a straight cutter in the router and, at about 3mm deep, routed out the bulk of the waste. The rest was cut by hand and each hinge fitted and fixed. I put the top onto the chest's main body, so it was free, not fixed, and positioned it according to my requirements. I marked the extremities of each hinge on



27 Fit the eyes and chain to one or both sides of the top



25 Rout out most of the waste and finish by hand

the back rail and removed the top. The ends of the hinge recesses were cut, using a fine saw and square, and the waste chopped off with the router as before. Once the recesses were finished, the top was placed safely on some supports so that I could attach it. Pilot holes and a little grease on each screw ensure they go in smoothly. The chain, about 500mm long, and the eyes were used in order to prevent the top going too far over the back and placing strain on the hinges. Both eyes were opened and the chain fitted to one, which was then squeezed closed again. This was the eye that'd go in the top.

I worked out the position and screwed it in, making sure that it was clear of the side rail when the lid was closed. The second eye was attached, the chain hooked on and the eye closed to finish. Job done! ✂



28 If desired, cut a chamfer around the top



29 The completed blanket chest, opened...



30 ... and closed

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TURN & TURN ABOUT

Here's something different for anyone with a lathe – a collection of little boxes by **Gordon Warr**, made from a variety of hardwood offcuts in a range of unusual shapes – and importantly, they're all fun to turn

CHISEL RATING

As with many turning projects, box sizes aren't critical and there's plenty of scope for making variations. I used a number of hardwoods for the ones shown, and you can choose different timbers for the lids, handles and box bodies. This is a good opportunity to use up any small offcuts. I suggest not using oak for any of these projects, as it contains a lot of tannic acid, which can tarnish the box contents.

Starting work

The first stage is to prepare your wood to size. With designs A, B and C, this also means sawing to length so that the blank is exactly square. This is then screwed to a plywood backing piece, using a screw in opposite corners. Once the boxes are finished, the undersides will be completely free of any screw holes.

BOX DESIGN A

I started this group of projects with box design A, which is reminiscent of an old-fashioned car wheel nut. The first step is to prepare a piece of ply around 12mm thick and about the size of a small faceplate, then screw the blank to this. Use just a couple of screws, in opposite corners of the blank. Next, mount the ply and blank onto a faceplate. It's essential they're accurately positioned to ensure they run true when the lathe is switched on. With the work revolving slowly, use a pencil to mark the hollow's outline.

Forming the recess

The hollowing is fairly basic turning. For the majority of this stage, I used a 10mm wide

standard square-ended scraper (**photo 1**), and one which is similar but that cuts both on its end and for a short distance along the left-hand edge. Avoid using too wide a scraper here, as it'll tend to catch.

To improve surface quality of the wall's recess, you can use a small bowl gouge, held well over on its side. The aim should be to leave a thickness of about 10mm for both the wall and base. Although a wide scraper shouldn't be used for removing the bulk of the waste, one can be employed for final trimming of the box's underside. I rested mine on a Robert Sorby platform support to minimise catching (**photo 2**). Check the final base thickness with a rule (**photo 3**). ▶

BOX DESIGN A



1 Hollowing out is mostly completed using a square-ended scraper



2 The Robert Sorby platform support is a useful part of their toolrest system



3 Check the recess' depth by comparing the inside measurement with that of the outside



4 Sand the box interior using a small drum sanding pad mounted in a power drill



5 Remove the lathe's faceplate and apply lacquer to the recess



6 I used a circular plywood template to mark the curved corner lines



Sanding & sealing

I have a collection of small pad and drum sanders, which are designed for use in a power drill, and I used several for sanding the inside surfaces (**photo 4**). I also sanded the box's top edge using sheet abrasive on a sanding block. At this point I decided to apply a finish to the recess (**photo 5**), putting on three coats of pre-catalysed lacquer, then lightly polishing the surface. This means that burnishing can take place later while the wood is still mounted on the lathe.

Getting curvy

The workpiece can now be removed from its mounting and the curve to two corners marked. I used an existing plywood template for this task (**photo 6**) and the size was perfect. When bandsawing off the corners (**photo 7**), ensure you remove the two with screw holes in them! A disc sander is the ideal tool for smoothing away remaining waste down to the pencil line (**photo 8**), followed by plenty of hand sanding to get it ready for polishing.

Shaping the lid

The disc for the box lid was mounted on the ply backing, still attached to the faceplate using double-sided tape. I trimmed it down

to the overall diameter required, then formed the edge's rebate, which would provide the box body's location (**photo 9**). This piece can now be reversed and secured to the ply backing, with double-sided tape as before.

Next, I turned the top of the lid to give an overall dome shape, then formed a recess round a central knob to provide a finger grip (**photo 10**). I used a scraper specially designed for forming the undercutting to mushrooms; this provided a gentle concave curve to what had effectively become a knob.

This part of the project could then be sanded and lacquered while still on the lathe. I used my favourite finish for small projects – pre-catalysed lacquer – applied with a polisher's

mop (**photo 11**). The box body was also finished with the same lacquer.

What lies beneath

There have been many debates among turners over recent years concerning how the underside of projects such as bowls and boxes should be treated. Should they be polished or not? If not, should they be covered with felt, or maybe cork? I decided on a compromise. I'd just add small circular pads of felt so that if the box was placed on a well-polished dressing table, for example, there'd be no danger of the box marking the surface. I cut the felt discs with a punch and as the felt was self-adhesive, these were quickly stuck to the box's base (**photo 12**).



7 Remove any waste using a bandsaw, cutting just outside the marked lines



8 A disc sander is ideal for final shaping of the blank down to the lines



9 Stick the lid blank onto the ply and form a shallow rebate all round the edge



10 Reverse the lid, turn it to a dome shape, then form the finger grip



11 After finishing, prise the lid off the tape by inserting a knife blade and tapping it down



12 Punch out four self-adhesive felt discs and stick to four corners on the box's underside

BOX DESIGN B & C

My second box – design B – simply has a different lid to that of design A. The box's lower portion is therefore turned, sanded and polished exactly as before. To create a strong contrast with the very dark wood used for the body, I chose sycamore for the lid. As before, I used double-sided tape to hold the sycamore disc onto the plywood backing. This piece had already been planed to thickness to match the rebate's depth prepared for it to sit in, so the turning was simply confined to trimming the edge to the diameter required.

The handle was made using the same dark

wood as for the box. I planed it down to thickness and proceeded to mark out the desired shape. The outline was then sawn on the bandsaw and sanded smooth by hand. Two shallow hollows formed on opposite faces using a small drum sander provide good finger grips. I then lacquered the piece, stuck the finished handle to the lid, and polished it up.

Another variation

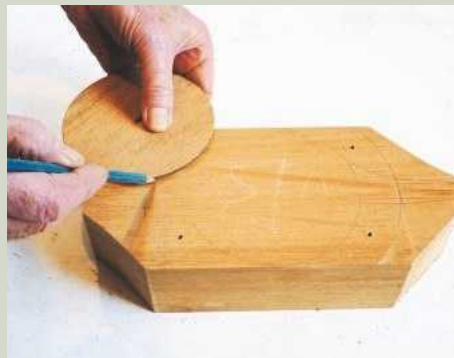
Box design C features a further slight variation. After hollowing out the box recess as before, I formed a dome on the blank's face using a

bowl gouge and sanded it smooth on the lathe, taking care to keep my fingers away from spinning corners. As with box design B, a rebate around 6mm deep was required around the recess' inner edge.

The matching lid was mounted on the lathe using double-sided tape and turned as before to give a diameter that provided a snug fit in the rebate. The handle's darker wood allowed for some individuality when it came to shaping. Shallow recesses for gripping were formed as before, and after sanding, it was simply held in place with adhesive.



1 After trimming the blank roughly to shape, hollow out the central recess



2 Use a circular plywood template to mark out the wings' curved shape



3 Using a drill press, bore finger holes through the blank, working from both sides



4 Trim wings to shape, then enlarge the finger holes into a cone profile



5 Round off the finger holes, then sand the wings to final shape



6 Turn the lid with splayed edges and slightly dish the central area





7 Finish shaping the dished lid using a large drum sander



8 Hand sanding is the only practical way to complete the required lid shaping



9 Lacquer and polish the box and lid, then add baize to the base

BOX DESIGN D

The design for box D is quite distinct compared to the first three. I found a larger block of wood, which I used to make it; this allowed the main recess to be both deeper and wider. Because I wanted the two wings to be as long as the block – and my lathe – would allow, I cut it to length with square ends, then cut off the corners to ensure it'd clear the bed bars. I mounted it for turning as before.

The following (photo 1) procedure used was exactly the same as for the other three designs. I then used a round template to mark the shape of the two wings (photo 2).

Boring the holes

The hole through each of the wings serves partly as a decorative feature, and also to assist in gripping the box when it's picked up; a finger can be slipped through the hole as if using a cup. Before beginning to shape the blank's exterior,

I bored two holes on the bench drill, working from both sides (photo 3).

Shaping the wings

I could now focus on the outside shaping, starting with bandsawing off most of the waste. As before, I used a variety of sanding drums – some mounted in the bench drill, others used in a hand-held drill. A lot of hand sanding was also required to achieve the final shape.

Enlarging the holes

I wanted the finger holes to be rounded rather than straight-sided. The first step in achieving this was using a conical hole enlarger from both sides, to create holes that sloped rather than curved (photo 4). The final rounded profile was achieved with a small drum sander used freehand in a cordless drill, followed by narrow strips of abrasive threaded through

the holes. The outer rim of each hole was also well rounded, with a flap wheel sander used to blend these with the outside curve (photo 5).

Making the lid

I started by turning the lid blank to a disc shape, but with the edges splayed and this surface slightly hollow, as it'd form the gripping area for removing the lid (photo 6). Next, I hollowed the upper surface and finished shaping using my sanding drums (photo 7), followed by some hand sanding (photo 8). My aim here was to reduce the disc's raised rim on opposite edges in order to make two high parts and two lower ones.

The final polishing of both lid and base was carried out with these pieces removed from the lathe. This time, I added a piece of self-adhesive green baize to the underside, which completed my fourth and final box (photo 9). ✂

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FURNITURE THAT PUSHES THE LIMITS

One of Scott's favourite pieces – 'Antelope' – a demi lune table that's contemporary in feel with traditional elements: the sabre leg, dentil inlay and sunburst veneer lay up. Made using figured cherry veneer, cherry and ebonised maple: 1,016mm wide × 762mm high × 432mm diameter

Front view of
'Antelope' table

Designer, artist and master craftsman **Scott E. Armstrong** has had an intimate relationship with wood for more than 30 years – we discover more about him here

Clearly a craftsman who strives for excellence in the design and execution of each piece he makes, Scott E. Armstrong is a studio furniture maker whose background lies in illustration and fine arts. Upon discovering a love of making things in 3D, Scott soon realised that his place was actually in the workshop as opposed to the studio, drawing and coming up with ideas. Fast forward some 35 years and here we have a furniture maker who pushes the limits; whose love of natural materials is truly evident and whose contemporary pieces capture his personality and demonstrate wonderful skill, in the use of traditional and modern materials in addition to techniques.

Nature & raw materials

Born and raised in northern Wyoming, during his childhood years Scott spent a lot of time in the great outdoors, which has clearly shaped a love of nature and the raw materials it offers. Always interested in art and building things, Scott's favourite indoor pastimes were

drawing, colouring, assembling and solving puzzles: "My high school art teacher was friends with my parents, so I got to spend some time in his home studio. He even invented various advanced art classes for my senior year after I'd taken everything on offer," Scott explains.

Upon finishing high school, Scott undertook a two-year stint working on oil rigs until he could afford to go, and got accepted to, the Kansas City Art Institute in Kansas City, Missouri, where he majored in illustration and graphic design. Part of the design department's curriculum had Scott taking industrial design courses, which involved building models and prototypes of designs in the school workshop. "I knew almost immediately that I'd found my home and went on to switch my major from 2D to 3D design," he comments. Furniture design classes were the most fun and offered Scott what he thought was the best opportunity to be able to live and work wherever he wanted, to comfortably support a family, and have the artistic freedom he needed.

After graduating, Scott spent the first year employed in the workshop of his furniture

design instructor, John Noel, who on quite a few occasions with more than a hint of warning, asked him: "Are you SURE you want to do this for a living?!"

With this advice falling on deaf ears, starting a family was the deciding factor behind moving out of the city and back to the west, where in Utah, Scott worked for two years as a technical illustrator for an aerospace company, which made space shuttle rocket engines. During this time and while looking for work in the furniture industry, Scott continued to build furniture in his garage with just a few hand tools, and through an adult education programme, help of the local university workshop. A move to Indiana was next on the cards, where Scott was offered a job as a designer/model maker for a large office furniture company in the area. Here he spent the next eight years learning advanced woodworking, design and engineering for production, as well as the history of furniture styles and periods.

After learning as much as he thought possible there, and given the fact he was no longer able to build his own prototypes, Scott felt compelled



'Chief Joseph' bedroom suite, including bed, dresser and night stands. "I think these are a good representation of my efforts to design clearly contemporary forms that have a sense of the west," says Scott. Made from vertical grain – quartersawn – Douglas fir solids and veneers with walnut burl, figured cherry and reconstituted bird's-eye veneer inlay. The image on the bed's headboard is a local landmark, Heart Mountain, which can be seen from the bedroom window of the home where the set will live. This has a historical connection with Chief Joseph and his famous fight for the freedom of his tribe in the late 1800s



1/4th scale models for Scott's 'Chief Joseph' bedroom suite shown above. These allow Scott to quickly adjust basic proportions, overall form, and also point out any problem areas before committing to the final build

to move back to Wyoming, where he proceeded to set up shop, and there he's been for nearly 30 years.

Designing furniture

In terms of how his style of furniture making has changed, Scott tells me that this went from a focus on straight lines to accent the grain and colour of the wood, to an appreciation of historic

styles, which were instrumental in opening his eyes to the value of ornamentation. "The pieces I'm making are still contemporary," he says, "but the forms are demonstrating more historical influences, such as a cabriole leg with exaggerated curves and no carving on the knee or foot, or an inlay on a table apron to represent dentil moulding"

Hugely influenced by the studio furniture movement that started in the late 1940s as well as the Art Deco period of the 1920s and '30s, Scott's favourite work was produced during the Biedermeier period of the early 1800s in Austria and Germany, a direct example of which can be seen in his 'Antelope' table, which carries strong similarities while still exhibiting Scott's unique flair.

Today, Scott works mostly to commission although these are varied. "Most years, kitchen cabinets have paid the bills with the occasional gallery piece selling and a few furniture jobs helping," he confirms, "then there's always the broken chair rocker, or the shift knob for a restored '60s Mustang, or a one-time commission to turn 300 candlesticks for QVC

that comes along to make life more interesting."

When asked to explain his design process, Scott comments that this varies according to what he's making – e.g. depending on whether the piece is for a specific client or if it's a studio piece, which often involves challenging himself to build something he hasn't made before or trying a new technique.

"Once I have a starting point, I sketch lots of thumbnails to generate ideas and put them on paper, which makes it easier to sort the good ones from the not so good ones. Then, when I've chosen a general direction, I move to three dimensions in the workshop and build sketch models, usually 1/4th scale, sometimes larger." These help him to work through basic proportion and scale issues and get closer to the overall form. It's then on to working with full-size drawings, often doing so on an MDF sheet for more complex pieces. "The design process never really ends," says Scott, "as even after a piece is delivered, I still think of things I'd do differently if given the chance to build it again."

Clearly a perfectionist in his craft, each of Scott's pieces seem to have an individual character and I asked him whether this was accidental or intentional. He comments that despite having to produce pieces that sell, he ultimately considers himself an artist and believes the best art comes from exploration and playfulness: "I don't feel the need to try to make a form that I designed to be one thing, which I worked hard to perfect the details and form of, and try to stretch and pull it into something else."

Scott acknowledges the fact that his designs should be functional and beautiful, that they should illicit a smile in the viewer and beg to be explored: "I think they should have a character and presence of their own; be individuals that fit into their environment; be confident but never loud. I want my designs to challenge what you expect furniture to look like, while still feeling familiar. Lately, I've started to think that they also need a sense of history and place."



'Brandi Desk and Credenza' – commission set for a home office, which needed to be compact while making a big statement. "The pure modern lines are technically tough to build," says Scott. Made using cherry and ash. Desk: 762mm high x 1,829mm wide x 914mm diameter

Working smart

A huge fan of wood as a natural medium, Scott says that for him, it's very important to



be able to complement the figure of whichever material he's using, as all of these factors have a huge visual impact on the end result. "A lot of the time with contemporary design, the only fine detail or visual texture comes from the wood's figure, so it's critical," he explains. "In all cases, the figure or grain direction is important to the form's continuity."

In terms of incorporating other materials into his work, Scott says that he's used some metal and stone in pieces but not very much, purely because it's just one of those design avenues he hasn't yet explored at any great length: "I guess it comes down to the fact that I'm a woodworker first, and my initial impulse when faced with a problem, design or structural, is to use the medium I know best."

Currently working on a large set of kitchen and bathroom cabinets that his employees are building for a client's new house, in addition to a king size bed and 14ft dining table, Scott comments that kitchens are what feed their families, but furniture feeds his spirit. "While the guys are building 80% of a cabinet job, I'm working on a commission or gallery spec piece," he says. At the time of writing, this happened to be the bedroom suite commission pictured above, made in a contemporary western style; one he's been trying to develop for a number of years now.

In terms of the making time frame, Scott

says that large studio furniture pieces typically take upwards of 200 hours of design and build time, and that's usually spread over several months – sometimes a year or more – whereas commissions with a budget always take up whatever's estimated plus an 'ego' factor: "That time in a job when you're no longer working for the client, but instead working for your ego," he explains.

To make his pieces, Scott uses a mixture of both hand and power tool techniques, usually preferring power tools as they're faster and more accurate, and when time is money, expediency has to trump the romance of hand tools. "I still cut dovetails by hand and chop mortises for my studio work, but I'd be foolish to use a brace and bit when I have a drill press for daily production," he says. "I'm a firm believer that if Thomas Chippendale had a plunge router, then he'd have thrown out his moulding planes!"

Although not a self-confessed tool junkie or wood worshipper, this maker's favourite tool is the one that gets the job done fastest and most accurately. "I do have a vacuum pump for pressing veneer that my son and I built, and really enjoy using my Dowelmax dowelling jig," he admits, "that's one of the best engineered and built fixtures I've ever used."

When all of these techniques and practices come together perfectly, Scott is left with a stunning piece such as the 'Sideshow' table



Various views of Scott's workshop

and 'Rockabilly' sideboard, both of which he's equally proud of in their own right. Scott is especially pleased with the spiral veneer layout achieved on the table, as well as the fact the sideboard was bought by the Buffalo Bill Historical Center for their permanent collection. In terms of the piece he has the most admiration for, however, this would be the knockdown crib that he built together with his then eight-year-old son, to mark his daughter's birth.

Working space

Moving on to discovering more about Scott's working space, the photos shown above reveal this to be a huge area filled with many industrial machines and various pieces



'Rockabilly' sideboard – "I had this piece sketched as a way to juxtapose curves and angles; to give a feel of asymmetrical symmetry," Scott says. Winner of the Cody High Style: Exhibitors Choice and The Switchback Ranch purchase award. Now in the permanent collection of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. Made using quartered sapele and mottled makore veneers: 991mm high x 1,829mm wide x 483mm diameter



'Deadfall Table' – walnut and poplar solids with figured cherry, walnut, sapele, makore and quartered ash veneers: 660mm wide x 1,626mm long x 864mm high. Inspired by off trail hikes with his grandfather through the Cloud Peak Wilderness in northern Wyoming. "I'm trying to give a contemporary interpretation to the wild random beauty of the forest I've spent so much time in"

TRADE SECRETS FOR ASPIRING FURNITURE MAKERS

"I think it's important to keep in mind that if you're in this business to make a living, then you have to separate the practical from the romantic. It may be thoroughly enjoyable to use a well-tuned jack plane to flatten boards, to watch that perfect shaving curl out of the plane, but unless you're able to sell that romance to a customer, or are willing to work for pennies per hour, then you and they are better off if you use a stationary jointer to do the job quicker and more accurately. It comes down to whether or not you can find enough customers who share your feelings for the history and romance of the craft, and are willing to pay you for their vicarious enjoyment.

In my experience, in the USA at least, you have to produce work at various levels of quality: what those are is up to you and your paying clients. One customer I've worked with for more than 20 years on a dozen projects has at times asked for all out top quality pieces with no set budget, whereas there are other times when price is an important consideration. Most of the time, my customers trust me to make them the absolute best piece they can afford, but most couldn't care less if there's blind tenon joints or dowel joints, shop-cut or store bought veneer, so long as the piece they're buying is, and will be, sound and beautiful for a long time to come"



Scott uses his Dowelmax jig extensively while in the workshop

of professional equipment. Originally a 1930s chicken and egg processing plant spanning some 1,200sq.ft, over the years, this has since been increased to create a working area of around 1,500sq.ft. "It's a funky old amalgam of all the different tenants who used it through the years," Scott says. "There's mostly 8ft ceilings with large windows on the east and west, a modern finish area and lots of lighting."

Workshop equipment includes Scott's favourite for sentimental reasons: the veneer

vacuum pump built from old parts, and as for the piece of equipment that's most greatly changed the way he works, that'd be his Performax 37in double drum sander: "It's an essential machine for sanding a set of cabinet doors, but I also use it to bring bandsawn veneer to a nice smooth thickness. "In all the time I've owned it, there's not one job that gets completed without some part of it going through this machine," he comments.

The future

So, given that the future of furniture making will inevitably involve the use of CNC machining and more computer-orientated techniques, Scott isn't worried by this and believes that traditional woodworking will always have its place: "I'm already seeing younger exhibitors at shows proudly displaying pieces that feature extensive machine carving. That just means it'll be even harder for someone with hand skills to compete for the limited amount of work in this field. I believe there'll always be a place for good old-fashioned woodworking craftsmanship, and the role and lifestyle of the artisan will still have the same romantic pull on others that it had on me," he says.

In terms of the future of his furniture making, however, Scott intends to continue treading the same path, even if this does mean adapting in



'Hootch Cabinet' – quartersawn fir, walnut and walnut veneers: 864mm wide x 1,575mm high x 457mm diameter. Designed and built for the first Cody High Style show at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming. Designed with western roots but not in a western style. Exhibitors Choice award winner

various ways and moving with the times as necessary. His pieces have a timeless quality and despite appearing contemporary, are items of beauty that will always have a welcome place in many a client's home. With the allowance of more time, Scott says that he'd like to explore some purely speculative work as well as various design channels that he's glimpsed along the way, but has yet to follow.

Giving something back is also important to this maker, who's previously worked with his local community adult education programme to deliver basic woodwork teaching, as well as presenting at colleges and museums. Teaching personalised woodworking and furniture design courses is also a pathway he'd like to explore, along with a group of fellow furniture makers. And while no one truly knows what the future holds, it's clear that Scott E. Armstrong is a man with not just one but several plans, and although luck seems to shine on him already, we wish him the very best. ✂

FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about Scott and see other pieces he's made, visit the website:

www.scottearmstrong.com



'Some Dreams Won't Die' – red oak and cherry: 610mm wide x 432mm diameter x 1,499mm high



'#33' table – red oak: 381 x 381 x 914mm



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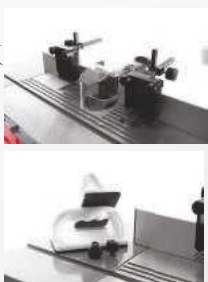
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TORMEK

T-8 ORIGINAL



Continuing with our in-depth analysis of each of Tormek's main machine models, we move on to looking at the **T-8 Original**, which is described as a powerful and versatile water-cooled sharpening system



The Tormek T-8 Original is a powerful and versatile water-cooled sharpening system, which has everything required to take your sharpening to the next level. Its advanced design and user-friendliness provides the best possible conditions for successful sharpening with top results. The T-8 Original is ideal for both quality conscious, enthusiastic amateurs and professionals.

Why the T-8 Original?

- The original and still the best wetstone sharpening system;
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- Micro adjustable for complete control of sharpening angle;
- Screw lift rise and fall mechanism for water trough;
- Sharpens all types of steel, including high speed steel (HSS);
- Includes SE-77 jig for precise 90° edges;

- Exact repeatability – sharpen your tools with unbeatable precision;
- Efficient grindstone with adjustable properties equivalent to 220-1,000 grit;
- Solid zinc frame with integrated mounts for controllable and accurate sharpening;
- Powerful industrial AC motor for continuous use;
- Eight year warranty – five + three years – when registering your new machine online at www.tormek.com

Sharpen with unbeatable precision

The advanced design ensures unbeatable precision for the Universal Support, which is the foundation of the Tormek sharpening system since it guides all grinding jigs and accessories. The Universal Support's patented precision mounts are integrated in this model's fully cast machine housing, which affords the user full control and maximum accuracy when sharpening.

The highest quality made in Sweden

The Tormek T-8 Original is supplied with the SG-250 Original Grindstone. It has adjustable sharpening properties equivalent to 220-1,000 grit and sharpens all types of steel grades, including HSS. Tormek's efficient drive system guarantees many years of quiet and reliable use. The system is built to maintain optimal speed for water-cooled sharpening, even under full load, thanks to its unique drive wheel.





SPECIFICATION & DETAILS

Machine dimensions: 270mm wide × 270mm deep × 330mm high

Net weight: 14.8kg

Voltage: 230V

Wheel speed: 90rpm

Wheel width: 50mm

Torque: 14.7Nm

Colour: Blue/grey

Cord length: 1.7m

Material: Precision-cast zinc stand, powder-coated – sides made of impact-resistant blue ABS plastic

Grinding wheel: SG-250 Original Grindstone – aluminium oxide – \varnothing 250 * 50mm

Grinding wheel diameter: 250mm

Grit: 220

Honing wheel: LA-220 Leather Honing Wheel – cowhide from Tärnsjö Garveri, ABS plastic – \varnothing 220 * 31mm

Drive system: Unique drive system with RKX18 rubber – self-adjusting for load

Main shaft: MSK-250 stainless steel shaft with EzyLock

Shaft diameter: 12mm

Motor: Industrial motor, single phase, AC – 200W (input), 230V, 50Hz/115 V, 60Hz – continuous operation; maintenance-free; quiet running: 54dB – 25,000 hours' operating time

Motor power: 200W

Warranty: Eight-year warranty – five + three years when registered online at www.tormek.com – also valid for professional use

Documents: Parts breakdown T-8 ENPdf, 339.7kB; material safety data sheet PA-70 ENPdf, 84.4kB; material Safety Data Sheet – Oil for Honing Wheel ENPdf, 111.6 kB.

Patents: To see all patents, visit www.tormek.com/patents



TECHNICAL Tormek machine models in detail: T-8 Original



The industrial AC motor is maintenance-free and designed to run the full-size grinding wheel for continuous use. The motor is tested for 25,000 hours' service life.

Water trough with screw lift & magnetic scraper

The T-8 Original is equipped with a whole host of smart features to make sharpening easier – for example,

the water trough has a convenient screw lift to easily raise and lower the water trough. It also has a double function magnetic scraper: during sharpening, the magnet collects steel particles, and after sharpening, the scraper makes it easy to clean the water trough. For long tools that may drip water outside the water trough – such as planer blades – you can easily fit the enclosed water chute onto the water trough's edge.

SELECTED FEATURES



- **Universal Support** – the base and support for all jigs. Gives unbeatable precision when sharpening



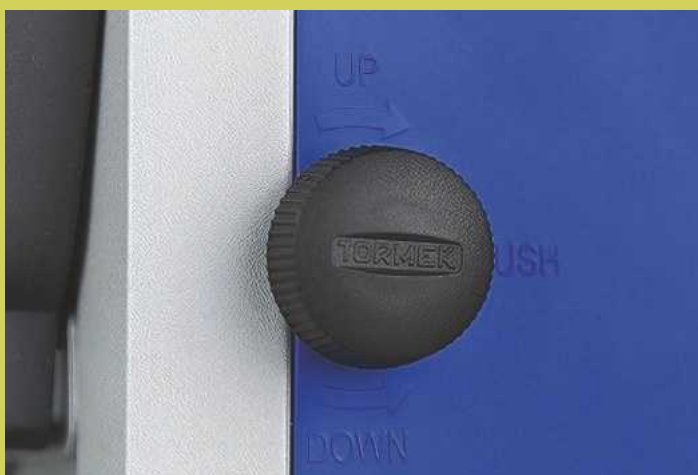
- **Patented precision mounts** – guarantees controllable and accurate sharpening



- **MicroAdjust** – with ACME thread and scale for precise angle setting



- **Magnetic scraper** – efficiently collects steel particles and makes it easy to clean the water trough



- **Screw lift** – easily raises and lowers the water trough



- **EzyLock** – convenient, tool-free locking and unlocking of the grinding wheel

EzyLock – quick & easy switching of grinding wheels

Another worked-through detail is the stainless steel main shaft with Tormek's unique EzyLock nut, which allows tool-free locking and unlocking of the grinding wheel. The EzyLock also makes it easy to change grinding wheels if you work with any of the special grindstones – SB-250 Blackstone Silicon or SJ-250 Japanese Waterstone – or even one of the diamond grinding wheels.



■ **Industrial AC motor** – maintenance-free – minimal rpm loss under heavy pressure. Tested for 25,000-hours' service life

■ **Efficient drive** – RX18 rubber ensures years of silent and reliable operation

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- **LA-220 Leather Honing Wheel** – for de-burring and polishing
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LETTERS

★ LETTER OF THE MONTH

HORIZONTAL ROUTER LIFT SUGGESTIONS

Hello Tegan,

Having recently read Alan Holtham's article in the August 2022 issue on making a horizontal router lift, I thought I'd add my own suggestions. Basically, over the last 30 odd years, I've accumulated a number of – mainly budget quality – routers and around 20 years ago, I made a cupboard to store them in and for a router table to sit on top (**photo 1**). The cupboard has a drawer for storing cutters and spanners, etc.

For versatility, I made two interchangeable tops for the table – one with a $\frac{1}{4}$ in and the other a $\frac{1}{2}$ in router – both permanently fixed in router table inserts. Obviously the fence and mitre guide are interchangeable and the top, not in use, hangs on the wall.

I then dedicated another router to a drill press and made a vertical routing unit with an adjustable fence (**photo 2**) and lately, used my last router to make a horizontal router table (**photo 3**), similar to the one shown in the article. They all fit in the cupboard with my other hand-held routers. The router table can be removed and the vertical unit or horizontal one sited there instead, but I usually just put them on the bench.

**1** Cupboard for storing routers along with a router table that sits on top**2** Vertical routing unit with adjustable fence

Apart from the original cupboard and table, made from new MDF, I've just used whatever spare material I had available. It all works, is functional, although not necessarily pretty!

My suggestion was to set the horizontal router top on hinges, which allows the router cutter to be used at an angle. I did this and also made a crude, adjustable bracket to set it at whatever angle is required, up to 45° (**photo 4**). I only thought of this after the box was finished, so had to make it with the top sloping upwards. It'd probably be more convenient to have a deeper unit with the top able to slope down.

EDGAR BAYANI'S LATTICE ART

Dear Tegan,

I'd like to raise readers' awareness of Edgar Bayani, a semi-retired Filipino advertising photographer, who began experimenting with lattice images in 1998, using illustration boards as prototypes. He was searching for new ways to display his photos, and the results, while quite striking, didn't really leap to the eye to command attention until these were converted to wood. It was an eminently difficult process, which involved deconstructing, then reassembling images on 6mm plywood slats before gluing them into a solid base. The effect he achieved from the translated picture, however, was so unique and emotionally evocative that he continued to produce them. Even pedestrian snap-shots became portrayals of uncommon beauty. It takes three weeks of painstaking, almost uninterrupted labour, to produce a 762 x 1,016mm lattice picture, so Edgar has to charge accordingly; this limits commissions, although he's content to work from his own pictures. These pieces came to public



Applying a thin coat of carpenter's glue to each of the plywood slats



The picture is reconstructed by inserting slats into predetermined tracks

attention when former classmates from Edgar's fine arts school asked him to submit a few pictures for a group exhibit. He sent two lattice panels, which stood out among conventional paintings submitted by contemporaries. Deconstructed, then reassembled photographs from 160 separate slats proved to be hypnotic visual magnets.

The process

"In focus. Well composed. Properly exposed. On time," is how Edgar explains his success. Meeting deadlines was crucial for this chosen field and his art training was never neglected.

Not only was it evident in his photography, but he continued to draw and paint in his spare time, as well as practising woodworking for relaxation. The fact he could combine this hobby with his occupation was fortuitous. Edgar begins with a sheet of plywood, carving tracks with a mechanical tool. He then gathers 6mm slats, measuring 1,016mm long, planing each one smooth, then shaving connective slots by hand. Finally, he prints 762 x 1,016mm pictures on his computer, numbering the edges as guides so these can be later reconstructed. Next, he cuts the print into 6mm strips, laying them aside with number tags. He pastes each strip carefully in numerical sequence, making certain they're correctly aligned. Finally, he reconstructs the picture by inserting slats into the predetermined tracks, after applying a thin coating of carpenter's glue. He inserts each one into its assigned track, ensuring they're firmly attached.

Although the wood glue is supposed to set in three minutes, Edgar takes the precaution of laying it flat for several hours until certain the wooden components are affixed. Climate differences and humidity may cause aberrations



The process begins with a sheet of plywood, carving tracks with a mechanical tool



762 x 1,016mm pictures are printed and the edges numbered as guides, so this can be later reconstructed



Edgar Bayani with one of his lattice art pieces



3 Horizontal router table similar to that shown in a recent article

I'd also advise on using a smaller, lighter router, as the one I had left was a big, heavy-duty ½in one, which makes the unit too deep and unbalanced. To counter this, I fitted an adjustable support to the top of the router (photo 5). As I said, all functional albeit a bit Heath Robinson! I hope this might be of interest. All the best, **Alan Hughes**

Hi Alan, thanks for writing in and sharing your thoughts on the horizontal router lift. These suggestions are very valid and the important point is, you're adapting a design to make it work for you. We enjoy planting ideas and for readers to run with them! It looks like you've got just about every workshop routing task covered – keep up the great work! Best wishes, **Tegan**



4 The horizontal router top is set on hinges and includes an adjustable bracket to set it at whichever angle is required, up to 45°



5 An adjustable support fitted to the router top aids balance

in the adhesive's reaction. It's more prudent to let it set than to have the slats fall apart in his hands, although luckily, as yet, that's never happened. Next, the lattice is prepared for viewing, a conventional journeyman's photograph that's become a vibrant piece of art. The technique is a derivative of Puertra, Islamic rectilinear interlaced geometric and Tibetan Kundalini diagrammatic art, as well as designs on ancient Japanese Kusode kimonos and current Shoji panels used as room dividers.

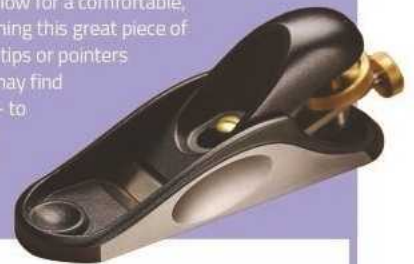
Edgar is currently experimenting with aluminium prints, commencing with small ones until he's tamed the medium. Best regards, **Carl Kuntze**

Hi Carl, many thanks for sharing your knowledge regarding Edgar Bayani's amazing work. This isn't something I've ever seen before, but one must marvel at the sheer skill and ingenuity of this most talented craftsman. The process for creating such a piece is clearly painstaking and the end result a thing to behold. Best wishes, **Tegan**

READERS' HINTS & TIPS

For the next 11 issues, in conjunction with Veritas and Axminster Tools, 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@dhp.co.uk, along with a photo(s) illustrating your tip in action. To find out more about Veritas tools, see www.axminstertools.com

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FROM COAT HANGER TO PUSH-STICK

To make long, comfortable push-sticks in minutes, break apart a wooden coat hanger and cut notches in the various parts. The curved end fits the hand beautifully. This type of push-stick works well on several machines, but the shark-fin type with a long lower edge is better suited to the table saw.

Gerard Gilboe

WOODWORKING JOKE OF THE MONTH

Do you have a workshop-based or woodworking-related funny you'd like to share? A comical offering that'll give us all a much-deserved laugh? If so, please email yours to tegan.foley@dhp.co.uk with 'Woodworking Joke of the Month' as the subject title.

This month's joke has been sent in courtesy of **James Dickson**:

I asked a carpenter if he'd give me a discount... he said he wood knot!

Thanks to James for supplying another wood-themed joke and remember to keep sending yours in – you never know, it may even appear in the next issue!

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 Trend ½in 30-piece Router Cutter Set, worth over £100. Simply email tegan.foley@dhp.co.uk for a chance to get your hands on this fantastic prize – good luck!



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THE SAILS OF HOPE



A dream to start a project rebuilding and re-floating pre-war wooden sailing ships to aid a local maritime community is now thriving in its 25th year, and at its heart? Carpenters! **Barrie Scott** reports

Normandy's Alabaster Coast is boat enthusiasts' country and always has been. From shellfish harvesting, yacht racing and pirate legends, right up to the ferries that keep us in the UK supplied with cheese and wine, all was historically founded upon the work of the region's boatbuilders.

Rescue & restore

The early 1990s saw an upsurge of interesting pre World War II wooden sailing ships that once worked the Normandy coast. These are the last generation of old-style boats, many ending their days half sunk in creeks along the French seashore. François Charbonnier, director of 'Les Voiles d'Espoir' – The Sails Of Hope – and a team of volunteers, founded a movement to rescue and restore such a vessel in the town of Fécampe. The idea was to involve some local young people whose lives had become directionless, in a community that perhaps the modern world had left behind. Many had been in care, had little education, and their horizons therefore limited. The group were introduced to boatbuilding skills that connected them with the history of their coastline by working among people who enthuse about the subject.



How to secure a mast: strutted, braced and bracketed. Note the octagonal shape at the fixing point to restrain it from twisting

'School of the Second Chance'

To take a once robust seagoing vessel, faithfully restore it to a state where it can be re-registered for use, then take them to sea, offered the youngsters a journey that Charbonnier describes as the 'School of the Second Chance', seeing how things are made and can also be repaired: "Being three days from land, under sail, they learn to co-operate, check their pride and it brings out their human qualities."

After 25 years, the group have achieved the restoration of five such vessels. The task is now backed by the local Round Table, the Chamber of commerce and various government agencies. The small fleet of old-fashioned working sail-boats brings in tourists from across France and beyond for pleasure cruises, adventure holidays, etc. The youths come out the other end with certificates of competence and good attitudes. Also, if they want it, a solid foundation to become master boatbuilders.

In short, the dreams and philosophical talk have paid dividends. The group is now known as ASDAM – 'Association Fécampoise Pour le



The bowsprit where the foresail is secured



It's a long way down when the boat's hoisted above the keel



Développement des Activités de Mer' – and there's translatable websites under this title.

Carpentry expertise

Large wooden boats involve specialised carpentry, which necessitated the employing of carpenters with the right backgrounds to oversee the project. Sandrine Tannec was one. She spent a few years providing carpentry expertise as part of the ASDAM crew. Now she has her own business as part of a three-person cooperative running a boatyard situated along the coast in Dieppe. However, she greatly valued her experiences at Fécampe. The cause was a positive one and the work itself gave her the opportunity for involvement in challenging projects seeing major reconstruction through from design stage to finish. The earliest assessments would talk in terms of how many thousands of working hours were predicted.

Sandrine is from a seagoing family on the Caribbean island of Martinique. Like many 'yachties', sailing and boatbuilding was in her blood from an early age and the bulk of her adult career has been in teaching her skills. Currently, her boatyard provides a repair and maintenance service to wooden yachts as well as the local fishing fleet.



Something more modern undergoing a refit

Work was underway securing the iron keel of a sporting wooden yacht. They were replacing timber washers of about 50 x 50 x 200mm with a 20mm hole to take the steel rod. Simple enough but the base of each had to be individually angled to fit tidily against the shape of the deck.

The biggest job on hand was fibreglassing the hull of another handsome old sailboat. Sandrine half joked that I shouldn't look. It'll serve to stiffen and seal the timbers but the boat, she says, was "doomed to destruction." Due to a shortage of money, the client had elected to have a cheap repair that was sealing in the worst problems rather than cutting out perished timbers and caulking them in a manner that'll move with the expansion and contraction of a ship. In addition, she was covered head to toe in protective clothing as the dust of the resin mixtures is highly toxic. "Traditional woodwork is a noble food for the spirit; being coated in industrial chemicals is the opposite." Many in the woodworking industry face such dilemmas. The type of work you have to take on is dictated by the market. Who couldn't sympathise – especially with one who worked with 'The Sails of Hope.' ✂

Functional VS fine finish

The woodworking in boatbuilding lacks some of the precise complexities of joinery. Much is bolted and rove-nailed together rather than jointed; appearances are mostly functional rather than fine-finish as with furniture making. Steam-bending of hull timbers is possibly the most complex operation but the know-how in the structure and weathering of a boat is extensive. ASDAM has saved some of these Normande traditions from extinction – along with the boats.

Back in the Dieppe workshop, some basic refurbishment work was under way.

Getting the boat in position and secure before any work even begins, especially those with keels, is a major operation requiring the relevant experience.

The boathouse has a long history in the small vessel trade. It has a slipway, heavy winching gear and can accommodate and take on sizeable boats. I even spotted some old kit inherited from a previous owner. Very few now use wooden-jawed vices but they're tough and several are still used daily. The machinery is on a large scale; for example, the sanding bobbin had a 3m bed for shaping the hefty hull ribs.



The Japanese saw demonstrated: rip saw on one cutting edge; cross-cut on the other



This old craft was in for a cheap fibreglassing refurb. Sandrine was ashamed at the cost-cutting exercise, which will only superficially extend its life



Wooden washers to bolt on the iron keel – a basic device but note the shaping, which follows that of the hull



A selection of yachtwright's tools

MAXIMUM IMPACT



CHISEL
RATING



Sean Healy made this simply-designed table to demonstrate his new joint-making skills



1 This project involved a strong emphasis on hand tools

I wanted to make something that was simple in design, and yet simultaneously showed off the skills that I'd learned in my first year at college. Minimalist-styled tables with straight, angular lines interested me, so I decided on a chunky coffee table that would last for many years – making it an ideal gift for my parents.

The idea of using a box-like structure with no defined legs appealed to me as an exciting starting point. Having drawn several sketches of open-sided boxes, I developed a real feel for what I wanted, and began sketching out similar designs with really thick tops and sides. I eventually included a shelf – mainly for practical reasons – which allows magazines to be stored away very easily.

The simple design meant that I could show off the joint-making skills I'd acquired to date,

so the only two prerequisites for my project actually went hand in hand. I like the idea of very visible, exposed joints, which function literally and aesthetically as an integral feature in furniture; if they're not comprised of screws and fittings, why hide them away?

Finally, so as to balance out the table's chunkiness, I incorporated a concave curve at the bottom of the two ends, which I thought would reduce the angular look just a little.

Decisions, dimensions

Having designed the general shape of my table, I had to decide on the best joints to use to hold it all together. It seemed sensible – considering that I was trying to show off my skills – to use joints that I was reasonably competent in making, but this narrowed my selection down to dovetails, and mortise & tenons. So, fancying

a bit of a challenge, I went for a wedged mortise & tenon, as I hadn't made one before.

Chunky doesn't necessarily mean heavy, of course, so adding substance by using solid timber all the way through seemed like a good idea. I knew that timber up to 100mm-thick was readily available so, allowing plenty of room for planing and thickening, I used 80mm-thick wood for each section, with the shelf being 40mm. The footprint proportions were taken from my parents' previous coffee table, and I also looked at other designs to get an average feel for how big a coffee table should be. I settled on a size of 1,200 × 600 × 500mm.

Timber selection came down to economics, as well as how best to complement the room's other oak furniture. I decided to use ash, as it's open-grained like oak. For the shelf, I wanted a darker timber so as to create an interesting contrast, and walnut seemed a good option – until I saw the price! I opted for iroko instead, which would offer me the chance to gain some experience of working with interlocked timber. To add further contrast, wedges for the mortise & tenons would be made from purpleheart.

When my timber arrived, I was somewhat surprised by the size of the boards, and a little worried about the logistics of actually chopping



2 My college training has equipped me with the skills required to make finely-cut joints



3 It wasn't possible for me to dry fit the dovetails...

them up. Working out how to do this took quite a while, but I basically decided that the top and both sides would each be made from four pieces, and I'd try and match the grain round the three



4 ... but the well-fitting mortise & tenons buoyed my confidence

sides. I needed a few helping hands to manoeuvre the timber when cross-cutting it to length, then ripping down the sections, but the Wadkin dimension saw handled it with ease.

With all parts now sawn to rough size, I planed and thickened these down, leaving them slightly larger than the finished sizes. I used PVA and 10 sash cramps for the glue-up, and four G-cramps, as well as a couple of battens each end, to align the boards. I did think about using biscuits for alignment, but this seemed like an unnecessary complication, as the glue would be strong enough anyway. When dry, the speed-sander was used to bring everything down to the final thicknesses.

Before starting any joints, I began to shape



5 Purpleheart was chosen for the wedges to heighten contrast between the timbers

the bottoms of the two table ends. I used a trammel to mark out the curves and a bandsaw to cut out the waste, finally smoothing over with a compass plane. To remove the sharp edges, I used a block plane and convex spokeshave.

Creating the joints

I cut the tenons for my shelf over-size, as they're through-tenons, and used a Japanese Kataba saw to cut out the waste, as well as large chisels to clean the joint. I chose the Japanese saw as it doesn't have a back to restrict depth of cut, which makes for a very fine and fast cut. I also used a Japanese saw for the wedge mortises, drilling a hole at the bottom of the wedges to prevent them bottoming out.

Cutting all the dovetails by hand was quite a challenge due to their size, but my Japanese saw made short work of removing most of the waste. During cutting, I thought about how the tails would come together at glue-up stage, and remembered reading about undercutting them to ease assembly. This seemed like an extremely good idea as it'd stop the bigger surface area of the tails from rubbing too much. I pared the tails away to ensure that just 10-15mm around the joint's edges would touch, meaning that the joints would smoothly ease together when it came to glue up – or so I hoped!

For the pins, I put one side into the vice



6 Tenons were left over-size...

vertically and, resting the table top on this, traced the tails. Getting it level and perfectly positioned was quite a difficult task, but after a few nervous minutes of constantly looking and checking with a square, I just had to go for it and set about marking out.

I tried to use a bandsaw to remove most of the waste, but the blade broke in the process. Switching to using a jigsaw worked to a certain extent, but the blade wasn't long enough and didn't reach right to the other side. In the end, I resorted to drilling out the waste with a Forstner bit from both sides, and cleaning up with chisels; this prevented any damage to the shoulder line and was the best approach I could find. I cleared the shelf's mortises in the same way.

Dry fitting & gluing up

With all jointing complete, it was time for a dry fit. Because my table was so thick, it seemed impossible to dry fit the dovetails, so there was only one chance for those – the final glue-up – which was therefore destined to be the most nerve-racking part of the entire project. However, at least I could dry fit my mortise & tenon joints, which bolstered my confidence

by going together very well – so well, in fact, that it was difficult to pull them apart! Two big mallets and 10 minutes of bashing later, I had the ends free of the shelf. Consequently, I put the shelf through the wide belt speed-sander and took off 0.5mm, which allowed the tenons to slide more easily. To make the purpleheart wedges, I knocked up a simple MDF jig and used the bandsaw to cut them.

I was now ready to carry out the final fit and glue-up, which turned out to be a bit stressful. If I'd got my joints slightly out, there wouldn't be much I could do to remedy the problem. I knew my mortise & tenons were good and tight; I just hoped the dovetails would do their job. I used Cascamite glue in a fairly weak mixture to allow a longer glue-up time and reduce 'creep', and clamped the shelf to the sides with big T-bar sash cramps, before putting the whole thing on a bench and attaching the top. To do this, I dropped it onto the sides – a little bashing here and there registered it with the pins – and it began to drop down. Once I'd added the sash cramps and started to pull down the top, it was pretty much a case of turning the cramps in unison,



9 The completed coffee table



7 ... and cut flush with a Japanese saw



8 The bottoms of the ends were curved to soften angular lines

so as to get the right amount of pressure from each of them. This worked very well, and at last I breathed a big sigh of relief.

Now it was time to trim the excess from my tenons and wedges. As I said, the tenons were made over-size so that I could get a nice flush finish, and here my Japanese saw came into its own, allowing me to bend the saw as I cut and removing vast amounts of waste. A sharp block plane removed the last few end-grain shavings and my trusty old Record No.5½ worked a treat for truing up the sides, creating some lovely wispy shavings in the process.

Final touches

At this stage the table was looking terrific and I couldn't wait to get a finish on it to really bring out the grain. First, however, I picked up a power sander, starting at 100 grit to remove some

tear-out, then through the following grits – 120, 180 and 240 – finishing with a hand sand at 320. This produced a superbly smooth surface, ready for the finish. Sanding highlighted some of the errors in my table, mainly with the dovetails, which didn't quite all meet up, but as the gaps were only about 0.5mm, I was able to successfully fill them using coloured wax crayons.

I think it would be unrealistic of me to have expected to get every joint perfectly tight, as they're huge, and I didn't have the benefit of dry fitting to finesse them. For the finish, I considered using a spray lacquer, but it would've been hard to get in between the shelf and top. In the end, I decided to use Danish oil, as it's quick and easy to apply, and easy to recoat if necessary. ✂

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AROUND THE HOUSE WITH PHIL DAVY



Last month I mentioned my imminent house and workshop move. Sadly we won't be moved in by Christmas – it's now looking more like Easter, but that's another story...

Once we've upped sticks, I intend to get involved with the local Men's Shed initiative – www.menssheds.org.uk. Some readers will be familiar with this national network, which actually began in Australia back in 1999. Aimed at helping blokes to connect, create, share skills and knowledge, anyone's eligible to join, while women are also welcome. Addressing loneliness and mental health issues are major reasons why these sheds are becoming so popular, with fun an important element, too.

Although individuals are free to work on their own projects, many sheds build projects for their community. For example, this particular unit – a converted cowshed in East Anglia – has supplied various nesting boxes and equipment for Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Anyway, I've already paid my sub, so as a Shedder I'll keep you updated!



A plunge saw and rail system is highly accurate, easy to use and arguably safer than a conventional circular saw

Q&A PANEL CUTTING

Q I need to cut up 8 x 4ft sheets of plywood and MDF on a fairly regular basis but have quite a small workshop, with no space for a table saw. Can you suggest the best way to do this accurately, please?

A Beckett, Newcastle

A With no table saw, the most efficient way is to use a portable circular saw. You'll need a guide clamp across the panel, available in lengths up to 1,270mm. For cutting lengthwise, secure a timber straightedge – or offcut from a board – to guide the saw.

If you're feeling flush, a plunge saw and rail system is highly accurate, easy to use and arguably safer than a conventional circular saw as the blade retracts when you finish cutting. Rails can be connected together so there's no need to cramp a straightedge.

If you're able to cut materials outdoors this will help, though you're obviously restricted by weather conditions. Don't forget to wear a face mask and preferably use extraction on the saw, especially if cutting inside the workshop.

It's worth checking with your timber supplier or builder's merchant as they may have a wall saw. These cut very accurately – within about 1mm – and will save you a lot of work. You're normally charged per cut, though cost is minimal

NEAT WORKSHOP GADGET AXMINSTER WORKSHOP DOVETAIL MARKER

Whether you cut dovetails by hand or only rarely, a specific marker is a handy tool. It means you don't need to bother about setting a sliding bevel each time you set out a joint. This little device is compact and won't take up much space in the toolbox. Made from anodised aluminium, it has a matt black finish with white etched graduations – 1/2in increments – along each slope. I've never seen graduations on a dovetail marker before, though I guess some woodworkers will find them useful.

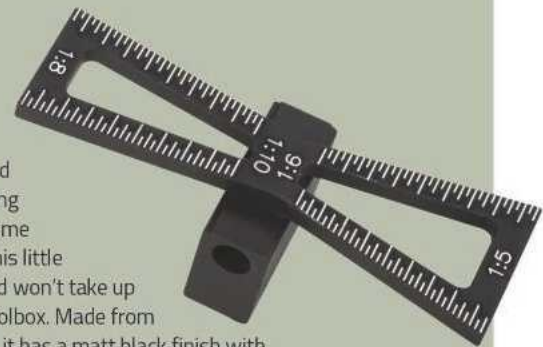
Like most markers, twin blades provide a choice of angles for your dovetails: 1:5 for softwoods and 1:8 for hardwoods. Underneath, engineer's corners mean the stock will still sit tightly against the timber even if there's a slight whisker remaining along the edge. On the downside, the stock is a bit short – just 23mm – so it can rock slightly when holding it to mark the outer dovetail slopes on a board. Apart from that, this is a neat gadget priced at just over £10.

Key features

- Quick, accurate marking of dovetail slopes in one handy tool
- Graduated measurement scales
- Aluminium with a black anodised finish and white markings
- Bottom corners and underside relieved to ensure accuracy
- Size: 63 x 22mm

Typical price: £10.68

Web: www.axminstertools.com



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WINTER PROJECT: PICTURE FRAMES IN THE PICTURE



Making your own picture frames allows you to experiment with various woods and profiles, so they become more individual, as **Phil Davy** shows

Takes:
A weekend

Tools you'll need:
Mitre saw – powered
or hand; circular
or table saw; router;
hand tools

Although you can buy decent enough picture frames for just a few pounds at your local supermarket or online, they're often quite similar to one another. Making your own means you can experiment with various woods and profiles, so they become more individual. They also make great presents, particularly when framing a favourite family photo or picture. They're cheap enough to produce if you have a few offcuts of the correct length, too. Assuming you have a suitable saw for cutting mitres accurately, all you need is glass and hardboard or MDF backing to complete. Contrasting vivid timber such as padauk with pale sycamore veneer looks quite dramatic and is easy enough to achieve.

Mitre accuracy

To ensure good, tight joints it's essential that opposite sides of a square or rectangular frame are identical in length. If not, there's no way that mitres will close up without a gap somewhere. If using a powered mitre saw, this is relatively easy as you just need to cramp a stop in the correct position along the fence. If the frame sides are longer than the rear fence of the saw, plane up a long, straight backing board that can be cramped to this. You plunge the blade down through this board on the first cut.

Don't assume that the 45° mitre settings on your saw's protractor base are spot-on. With the machine unplugged, check the angle

between the blade and rear fence with a rigid plastic set square or digital angle finder. For greatest accuracy, it's better to leave the blade position set up once you're happy with the accuracy of cut. You can saw both left- and right-hand mitres simply by flipping the moulding over.

Always rout rebates plus moulded profiles before sawing mitres. It's more accurate to do this on a router table, though a small hand-held palm router is fine for minor profiling. Make sure you assemble the frame on a completely flat surface, too. Don't assume a bench top is dead flat without first checking it with a straightedge. ▶



1 Plane the timber slightly thicker than the finished frame size. Saw the board to give narrow lengths, then plane their sawn edges



2 Cut several veneer strips with a craft knife and straightedge. These should be slightly wider than the finished timber size



3 Check the grain matches on each length and mark with a crayon. Spread PVA glue liberally onto each piece of wood



4 Cramp the three lengths together, with veneer strips sandwiched in between. Adjust, as the timber will slide when tightening the cramps



5 Once the glue has dried, plane the face side, then thickness the timber so it finishes at 20mm



6 Cut a 10 x 7mm rebate on the timber's underside. It's easiest to do this on a router table with a straight bit mounted



7 Add decorative chamfers on both inside and outside edges. Use a bearing-guided chamfer bit in a palm router or table mounted



8 Mark the frame pieces to approximate length and saw one end at 45°. Do this on each component



9 Mark the first side to exact length and position against the mitre saw fence. Cramp a stop to the fence and cut two matching pieces



10 Check that the frame is square. If not, trim with a finely-set bench plane and mitre shooting board



11 Set out a Veritas clamp ready for the frame. Apply PVA glue to the mitres and position the pieces. Firmly tighten each corner adjuster



12 Clean up the surfaces with a finely-set block plane, but if timber has interlocking grain, use a cabinet scraper for final smoothing



13 Brush on finishing oil and wipe off any excess after a few minutes. Alternatively, simply apply a clear wax polish and buff



14 Cut 2mm glass to size or order this from a glazier. A piece of 3mm hardboard or MDF is ideal for use as backing



15 Insert glass followed by the photo. Either pin or clip the backing board into the rebate and attach hooks or a flap



VERITAS FOUR-WAY SPEED CLAMP



The rods and coupling nuts on the Veritas four-way speed clamp have a black-oxide finish

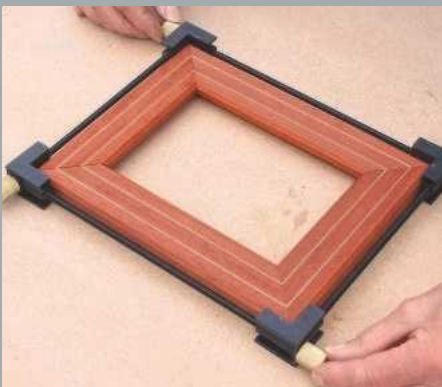
This is quite an expensive clamp, but capacity is pretty impressive and it works a treat. Consisting of four steel rods, each length is screwed into a sturdy, glass-filled nylon corner block. These in turn enable the adjacent rod to slide through it at 90°. Brass speed clamping nuts are tightened against the corners to provide pressure when assembling a frame. Because the knurled nuts have offset threads, you can slide them along the rods rapidly, threads only biting when they reach a solid corner.

It's only possible to clamp up square or rectangular frames, but the Veritas system does this particularly well. In standard format it will accommodate a frame up to 585mm square. Four extension rods are included, which increases the already sizeable capacity to 1,115mm square, or a rectangle 585 x 1,650mm. When not in use, the kit is quick to dismantle and store, while cramping is fast and solid.

RATING: 4.5 OUT OF 5

Typical price: £36.58

Web: www.axminstertools.com

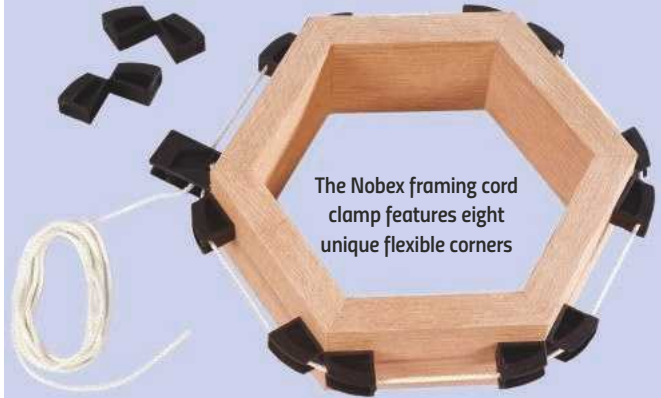


Consisting of four steel rods, each length is screwed into a sturdy, glass-filled nylon corner block



Brass speed clamping nuts can be tightened against the corners to provide pressure when assembling a frame

NOBEX FRAMING CORD CLAMP



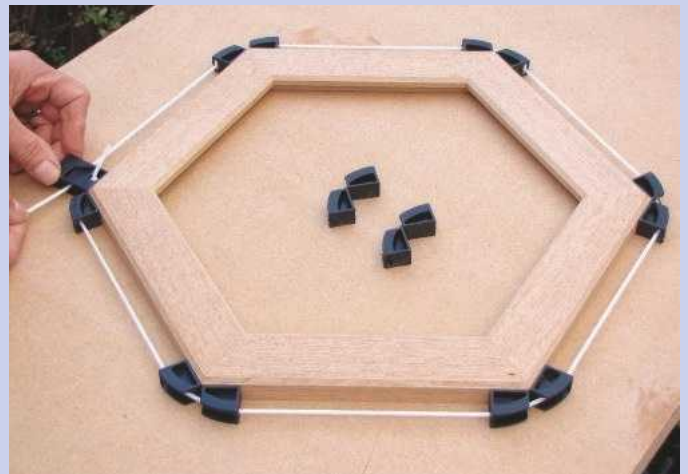
The Nobex framing cord clamp features eight unique flexible corners

For occasional framing work this clamp from Nobex is cheap enough and easy to use. It consists of 2.5m of nylon cord, which is threaded through a series of flexible plastic corners. Tensioning is achieved by pulling the cord taut and locking it off through a specific grooved block. With eight corners included, you can clamp pentagons, hexagons and octagons, as well as squares and rectangles. I'm not sure how long these corners will last, however, as they're thinly hinged, which allows them to flex to different angles, depending on the number of sides to the frame. A simple, budget cramping system for occasional use, then.

RATING: 3.5 OUT OF 5

Typical price: £10.48

Web: www.axminstertools.com



It consists of 2.5m of nylon cord, which is threaded through a series of flexible plastic corners



Tensioning is achieved by pulling the cord taut and locking it off through a specific grooved block



BURRY NICE VASES

CHISEL
RATING 

Deciding to utilise some of the offcuts in his timber pile, **Les Thorne** uses various pieces of burr oak to create two different vase shapes: one with and one without detailing

Once you've been working with wood for a while, you'll find yourself having amassed a collection of timber that "might come in handy one day."

My personal favourite timber is burr oak and I've been working with it for many years. When I cut blanks for larger bowls and vessels, I'll always end up with lots of odd shapes. These may not be perfect pippy burrs, and the grain may not be going in the desired direction, but I can't seem to get rid of them.

This month's article addresses the stock pile, and I decided to cut up one of these odd blocks and use it to make a couple of different projects. When cutting up uneven blocks, be careful when using the bandsaw and always ensure that the

timber is held firmly; this will prevent it wobbling or jumping while being cut.

I've found that a 3tpi blade is ideal for this type of wood, especially if there's any moisture present. Watch out for any grit or stones in the oak's rough bark as these can instantly blunt your bandsaw. I tend not to worry about what direction the grain's going in; I just fit my project to the blanks that are cut out. The bark on the oak will normally stay intact during the drying process, but on other species, you may need to be extra careful during the cutting process to ensure that the natural bark edge doesn't become loose or detach itself completely. I advise wearing eye protection and the appropriate PPE throughout.

NATURAL-EDGE VASE
WITH BEAD DETAILING



1 This is what I was left with after cutting up a misshapen piece of burr oak: blocks from 75mm square up to 200 x 80mm. The grain direction on these should make for some interesting turnings – let's find out!



2 To begin, mount your first block between centres. Driving off bark is never effective, so I recommend drilling a hole in the bark top, which will allow the drive centre to locate onto the solid wood



3 At the tailstock end, mark a circle, which will end up as your diameter; this will give you an idea as to the maximum you can get from the piece of wood you're using



4 The grain on this piece is running perpendicular to the lathe bed, so a bowl gouge will be more effective in roughing it down than any other tool. Working from left to right will allow you to keep the bark intact



5 As expected, I discovered some cracks in the wood; this isn't unusual on burr oak and unless the turning becomes dangerous, I'd suggest ignoring the splits towards the bottom



6 Holding one end on the chuck will allow you to hollow out the inside. You want to have the smallest spigot your chuck will allow, as this will give you a better curve at the bottom of the piece



7 Even though it's against the grain, I found that a push cut with the bevel in contact with the timber makes for a good cut. The strength of the 10mm bowl gouge allows me to work easily up to 50mm off the toolrest



8 You might find it easier to refine the shape with a shear cut. To do this, roll the gouge over so that the flute is pointing towards 3 o'clock. Use the tool's bottom wing and pull it towards you to create a super-fine shaving



9 Once mounted in the chuck, begin to shape the top of the piece. Use a 13mm spindle gouge to create a simple flowing curve from the bark edge downwards



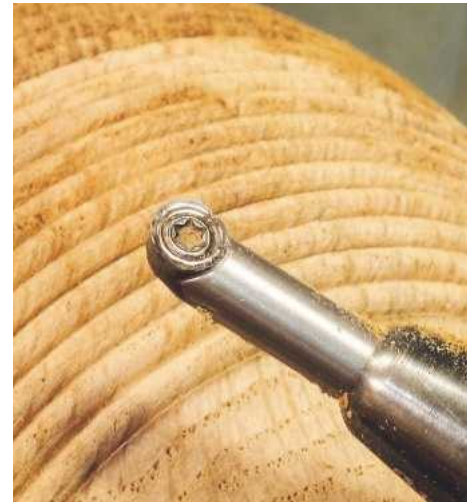
10 To add some interest to the vessel and distract the eye from splits, try adding a bead to the bottom section. The Ashley Iles beading-forming tool will cut accurate beads all the way around the work



11 The problem with a bead scraper is that if the timber is a bit 'carroty', they can break out, as shown here. If you experience this, work on it later; see it as a texture rather than a problem



12 Whenever you're working blind inside a piece, I recommend drilling a depth hole; this will allow the tool to work from the centre outwards without having to worry about removing slow timber in the middle



13 The Simon Hope hollowing tool is the best tool that I've found for completing this type of work. The small diameter cutter combined with its thick shaft makes the tool an absolute dream to use



14 Your stance is very important when using a hollowing tool. Swivelling the lathe head means you haven't got to lean over the bed, which could make the whole process rather uncomfortable



15 Trying to work out the cutter position while you're inside the work is never easy. The markings on top show the cutter pointing at 12 o'clock – dotted line – and the optimum cutting position – solid line



16 The tool should be worked sideways into the piece – try to establish a rhythm. Be very careful when bringing the tool in and out of the piece as you don't want to catch the fragile bark edge at this stage



17 I've seen many ways of removing the shavings/dust from inside a piece, including methods such as spoons, vacuum cleaners and even straws. Compressed air works best – just watch your eyes as it ejects from the opening



18 I feared this might happen: as I wanted to turn the piece thin, the bark's depth was likely to cause a problem. A split has appeared and will need to be repaired if I want to keep the top intact



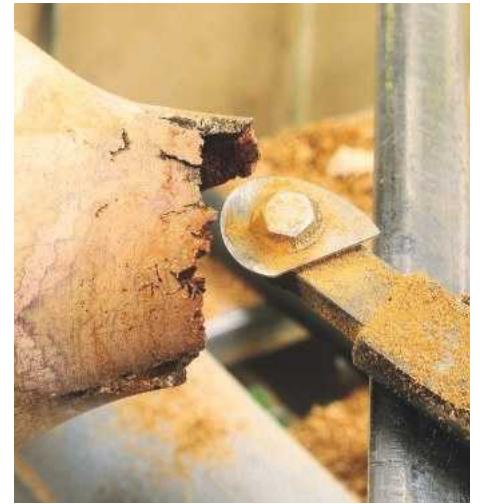
19 Even though it's the best product for repairing cracks, I don't often use CA adhesive in the workshop as I tend to glue myself together rather than the project! I use the thin version for small cracks and the medium one for larger cracks



20 It's time to clean up the beads before I go too thin. The soft brass brush mounted in a power drill will smooth up the rough areas. Don't worry if you knock off some of the wood; this just adds texture



21 Measuring the wall thickness will require some specialist callipers once you go past finger depth. The spring-loaded ones from Veritas are fantastic, albeit expensive



22 The inside ought to be finished to the best of your ability, and a small teardrop scraper is perfect for this. Speed up the lathe and take light smoothing cuts, being careful not to catch the top edge as you work



23 This little hook-and-loop sanding ball is fantastic for working on the inside. The abrasive needs to be cut like a flower petal, then just wrapped around the ball



24 When sanding the interior of a piece like this, the important thing is to not let go of the shaft. I also like to put the ball inside before starting the lathe and stopping the machine before removing it



25 The chucking point is best removed between centres. As I've swivelled the lathe head for hollowing, I need to ensure they're now perfectly aligned



26 The bark edge dictates that I can't drive the piece off the top. This stem that locates in the bottom will allow me to mount up the work. A piece of abrasive on the end will prevent it from marking the inside

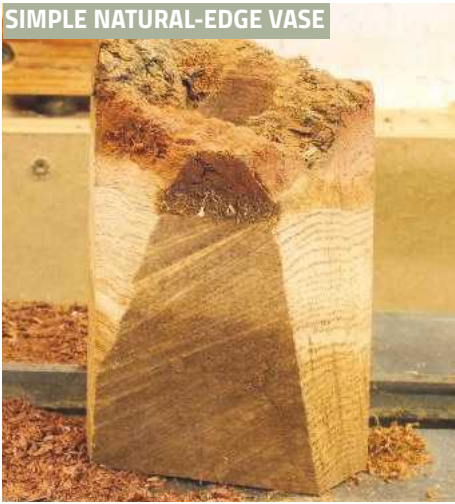


27 A small tool and small cuts are the order of the day here. What you don't want to do at this stage is experience a dig-in. There'll be short-grain in the foot so don't go too thin. The last bit can be easily finished by hand



28 The completed natural-edge vase with bead detailing should look something like this

SIMPLE NATURAL-EDGE VASE



1 This is probably the easier of the two pieces. The blank I used had a large flat, which will be turned away during the shaping process. As before, make a hole at the top to accept the drive



2 The first job is to make the top round; this is where the largest diameter is on this shape. I have a small hole left just underneath the bark, but I think I'll get away with that



3 Once the diameter is fixed, it's a matter of turning the wood away until the flat disappears. You're looking for a simple shallow curve from bottom to top, and the final shaping will be completed when the hollowing is completed



4 With a chucking spigot turned, remount the piece in the chuck and drill your depth hole as before. These steps are the same as for turning the inside of a vessel; they'll provide a guide as to your location inside the piece. This is great practice for when you can't see what you're doing



5 This mark on the outside shows the position of the cutter inside the work. Until you can visualise this, it'll be impossible for you to make hollowed vessels consistently



6 Once you're happy with the inside shape, remount it between centres and bring the outside down to your required shape. I find it easier to match the outside to the inside rather than the other way round



7 A simple curve like this is best sanded with the abrasive held on a wooden block; this stops your fingers from putting undesired dips in the surface. It'll also stop you from rounding over the bark edge



8 After sanding and applying a coat of lacquer, it's a nice idea to sign your work. A good quality pyrography machine is ideal for this: adjust the wire's temperature to suit your size of writing



9 The completed simple natural-edge vase should look something like this ✕



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SHOW OFF SHELVING

**CHISEL
RATING**


These simple bookshelf units are a perfect example of the past revisited

I was recently commissioned to construct a pair of bookshelf units designed by Gerald Summers for Makers of Simple Furniture in the early 1930s. Extremely versatile owing to their size and shape, these shelves are, in my opinion, a bit of an underrated classic.

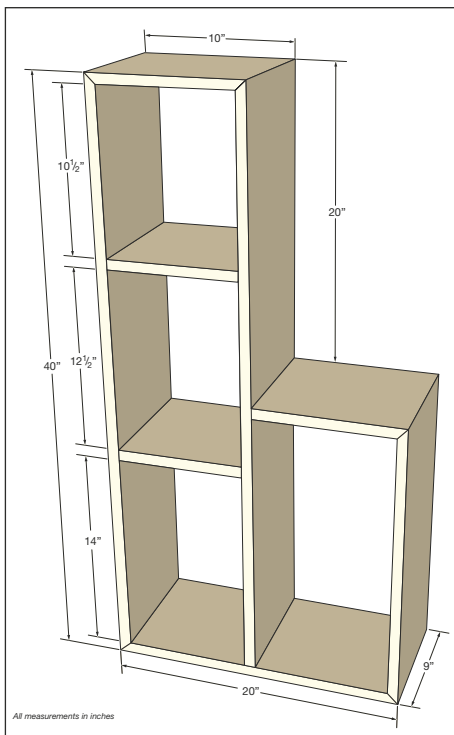


Fig.1 Bookshelf unit dimensions

The original ones, like this new pair, were made of a top-quality $\frac{3}{4}$ in plywood – the closest equivalent today is 18mm – and edge-veneered on both sides. It's very possible that there may have been some solid hardwood versions produced as well.

They were joined with lapped dovetails and stub tenons. I've gone for the modern method of biscuit jointing, but mitred the corners for a contemporary reinterpretation. To be fair, there's a lot to be said for dovetails as a decorative detail, but these days it's as much about economics as anything else, and few of my customers are Premiership footballers or full-bonus bankers.

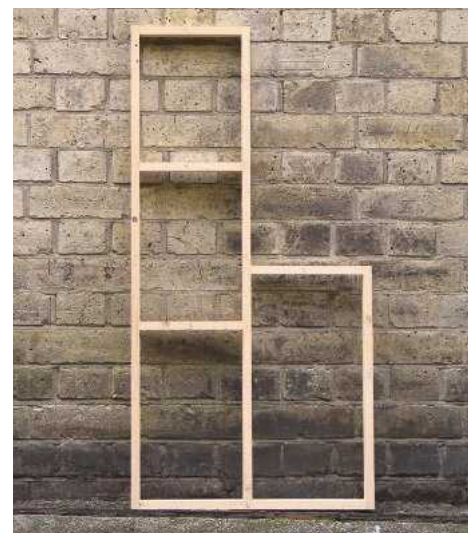
Spare the rod

With little actual information to go on, apart from two or three photos and basic dimensions – 40 × 20 × 9in – it was down to me to make the replica shelves resemble the originals as closely as possible. While one can always pencil or PC a scale drawing, I find that really the best way is to make a full-scale rod.

I chose to construct an outline unit with some scraps of 20 × 20mm softwood that I had lying around (photo 1). It took a couple of attempts, but I'm sure the spacings between the shelves themselves are pretty near bang on. Obviously it would be great to refer to one of the sets from the 1930s, but I've yet to have the chance.

Staying on track

Following my recent acquisition of a plunge saw and track system, I've been looking for opportunities to use it wherever possible in preference to struggling single-handedly to manoeuvre full-size sheets of ply over my table saw. It's not only easier – I just have to lift the sheet once and clunk it on to some trestles – but I suspect it's more accurate too. Certainly the cuts I've been achieving have been as clean as a whistle to date.



1 It's always a good idea to make a full-sized rod in order to better gauge proportions

CUTTING LIST

All dimensions in millimetres; all components cut from 18mm-thick plywood

Part	Qty	L	W	Notes
Long side	1	1,016	229	mitre both ends
Centre upright	1	998	229	mitre one end
Short side	1	508	229	mitre both ends
Top	1	254	229	mitre both ends
Half-top	1	254	229	mitre one end
Shelf	2	218	229	square ends
Base	1	508	229	mitre both ends





2 Plunge saw + track = easy work + top results = one very happy woodworker!

After connecting the two parts of the track together, it's straightforward enough to mark the face of the board to the desired width, lay the track on the work and stroll the plunge saw along the cut (**photo 2**). The track's rubber edge ensures no breakout and possibly the cleanest cut you'll see outside of a pro furniture factory. Repeat a couple of times and you've got three or four lengths at the precise widths you want, ready for conversion into all shelf components.

Lengthy options

It's a degree or so easier to cut the pieces to length on a sliding table saw. However, unless you have a pre-cut scribing blade, the track saw will make a better job of it when it comes to avoiding breakout. Of course, if you're not in any particular hurry, a panel saw and a spot of shooting with a jack plane will do the job just as well. It's easy to forget that most work of this sort was done entirely by hand until fairly recently...



5 The eight components are soon cut to size and mitred as required



3 Setting up for square cuts with the angle guide

It always pays to cut out slightly more material than you need, and I was glad I had the fourth length of ply as it enabled me to be a bit more choosy about the grain. I've seen these shelves painted, and have to say they look so much better in a natural timber finish; it's definitely worth taking the time to select the best bits if you can.

The right angle

As these shelf units can be fitted together in a variety of different configurations, as shown here and in the sidebar opposite, it's essential that they're accurately made. So long as you check that all your cuts are perfectly square and right on the line marks, you should be fine.

I was helped in this stead by an optional angle guide (**photo 3**). This is a short length of track, which can be set and locked to any degree required, hooked over a board's edge and joined up to another piece of track if a longer cut is required. It's well made and can be relied upon to retain its set throughout the sawing operation.

It was with a degree of satisfaction that I discovered my track saw had no difficulties in achieving the level of accuracy I wanted, even on the mitre cuts (**photo 4**) – a notorious area for pitfalls and problems generally.



4 The plunge saw is tilted to 45° for cutting board-end mitres

I now had eight panels cut to size, mitred as required, and ready to put together (**photo 5**).

Own-brand biscuits

OK, it's time for some biscuits, and my latest cheapskate confession. We all know there are times when you have to make do with what's available, and the first time I bought basic biscuits at Toolstation, I was slightly disappointed to see that they were stamped out of ply and not the usual solid beech of the branded varieties.

Obviously I used them regardless, and soon came to appreciate the stable nature of the ply biscuits – especially in winter when my workshop gets a bit damp in the corners and things like biscuits have a tendency to swell up unwanted. The only downside I've noticed is that the thickness can be a bit more variable from the packet, and if they're too tight, it can make for an even more stressful glue-up.

Standard pattern

Standardisation can help make every batch production task easier, safer and less prone to error, and on a job like this it makes perfect sense to set all biscuits in an easily repeatable pattern. I started by making a biscuit stick – a mini marking rod, really – with which to mark all pieces to be joined (**photo 6**). It definitely pays to keep everything symmetrical so that there's no danger of getting your marks mixed up and slots misaligned.

Once everything's marked – and it's very sensible to clearly identify each component and the orientation – it's time to get the biscuiter out. Regardless of your biscuiting equipment, you'll be needing to change a setting or two for the



6 A plywood offcut makes a mini rod for marking the biscuit positions

ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE



Here are just a few of the orientations you can achieve with a pair of these shelf units. Clearly some arrangements will be more stable than others...



7 I applied my Rule of Jeopardy when biscuiting in mitre mode

three different operations used here. As long as everything is clearly marked and sorted into a machining order, you should be fine. So, which ones first? I generally work to my Rule of Jeopardy, which is to get the trickiest stuff – or the bits with the highest risk of failure – out of the way first. So I set my biscuiter to mitre mode, made a test cutting in a piece of scrap, and boldly went to work (**photo 7**). As for the other slots, a steady hand and non-slip biscuit face produced accurate slots all round (**photo 8**).

Ready for action

Although on the face of it these shelves are fairly straightforward, it's essential to put them together in a dry assembly. As well as checking



10 Assembling the unit in two separate stages makes for simplicity...



11 ... and helps to ensure that all the components come together perfectly square



8 A steady hand and a non-slip biscuit face produce accurate slots

that all your biscuiting is correct, a dry assembly will give you a chance to assess the viability of every joint and provide an opportunity for any adjustments if necessary. It also makes you think about cramping and the order in which it should all proceed.

Steady as she goes

So, are we ready to go? No, not quite yet. Anyone who's tried to paint a set of cubbyholes or small shelves will know that it's a very tricky job indeed, and also nigh on impossible to get a top-class result. The only solution here is to apply your finish before you glue it all up. This is a straightforward enough job in this instance, and you only need to do the inside faces, so it shouldn't take too long either, especially with the quick-drying acrylic varnish many of us favour these days for interior woodwork. You can further enhance the job by masking the biscuit slots (**photo 9**) and thus ensure maximum adhesion between component edges.

Spring into action

Ever the optimist, I set about gluing up the first unit in one go – a decision I came to regret fairly soon afterwards. Once you're committed it can be very tricky to change direction, so all I could do was grit my teeth and just think of the benefit the lessons learned from such a strategical



9 Varnish the inside faces before gluing up. Note the masking tape over the biscuit slots

error would afford the good readers of this magazine.

The next day I employed a bit more sense, and as a result, shelf unit No.2 was a much simpler affair. By gluing and cramping it up in stages (**photos 10 & 11**), all manner of anxieties were thereby avoided and the normal pleasant calm of the workshop remained peacefully undisturbed.

Splint finish

All that remained now was to clean up the edges with a sharp plane (**photo 12**), and to sand all faces and edges down to at least 180 grit or more. As much as I'm a big fan of birch ply, it does have a drawback or two, and one of the most irritating is a tendency to splinter easily along the cut edges. With care – and a bit of judicious glue and masking tape repair – it's possible to keep most of the edges neat and square – something I think is important for a professional looking result.

The last stage is the application of a pleasing finish – some kind of polish or varnish of your choice. It's worth making a sample or two early on in the proceedings, especially if there's other interested parties involved. I personally like the clear acrylic varnish; it adds barely any colour to the job and allows the timber to darken naturally as time goes by. ✘



12 A clean-up of the edges with a sharp bench plane completes the job

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February 2023 edition
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TURNING IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Discovering woodturning as a way of channelling his creativity and alleviating anxiety, Chris Fisher – otherwise known as the Blind Woodturner – is the UK's only completely blind professional turner and the first to be accepted by the RPT. We learn more about Chris' incredible journey and how, for him, blindness really presents no barrier



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1

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2

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In detail: Tormek T-8 Custom ▪ Freed veneers feature ▪ Single bed for a tight space
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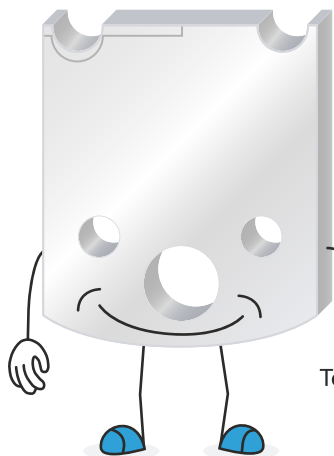
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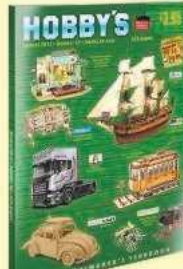
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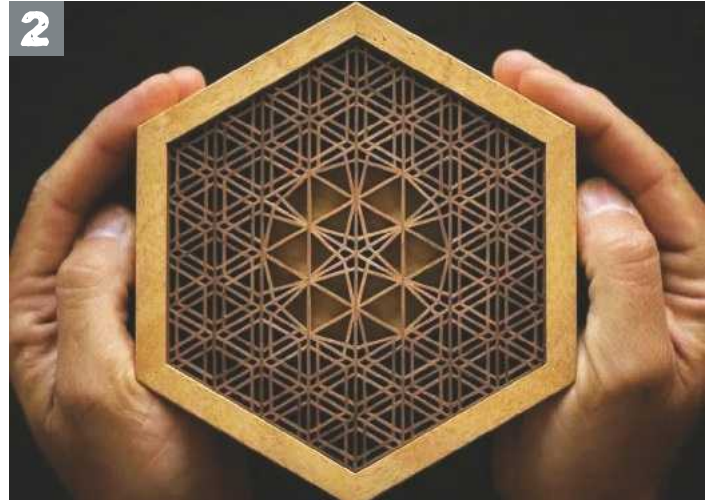
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Featuring two-award winning pieces – Anna Dugard’s ‘Nahas’ console table, which was recently awarded Bespoke Guild Mark No.480, and Clare Ng’s ‘Gemini’ drinks cabinet – recipient of the Young Furniture Makers Bespoke Award – this month’s selection is certainly show-stopping

1



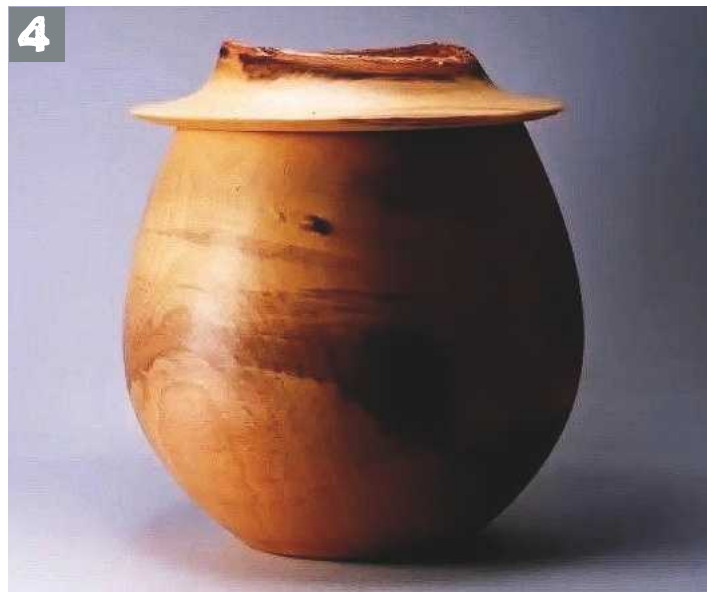
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3



4



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1

‘Gemini’ drinks cabinet by Clare Ng – [@clarewoodworks](#) – winner of the recent Young Furniture Makers Bespoke Award – symmetrical in design and nature, the Gemini identical twins mirror one another, donning different personalities and changing from quiet and thoughtful to scintillating wit. “The more you interact with it, the more subtle surprises you’ll discover”

2

Hexagon jewellery box by Pavel Dibrov – [@pavel.dibrov.woodworking](#) – tamarix wood body and kumiko design in walnut; kumiko pattern made using 1mm stock – the main pitch is about 16mm. Goma gara and Kasane rindo patterns comprise about 260 infill pieces

3

‘Nahas’ console table by ANNA DUGARD – [@annadugard](#) – recently awarded Bespoke Guild Mark No.480 by The Furniture Makers Company – the piece is 3D printed and coated with a liquid brass finish, and the design inspired by the growth of natural forms. The fluted legs echo flower stems and the textured trumpets resemble long-necked flowers. The brass finish will age over time, adding character. It also provides the piece with its name – ‘Nahas’ – meaning brass in Arabic

4

‘Eggy-Box’ in boxwood, 10cm in diameter, by [@wood.you.like.it.factory](#)

5

Salad set by [@jackmauch](#) – hand-carved walnut and milk paint – photo credit: [@penlandgallery](#)



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