

**NEW SERIES:** Beginner's guide to woodturning

# The Woodworker

November 2013

www.getwoodworking.com

& Woodturner



**END-GRAIN BLOCK**



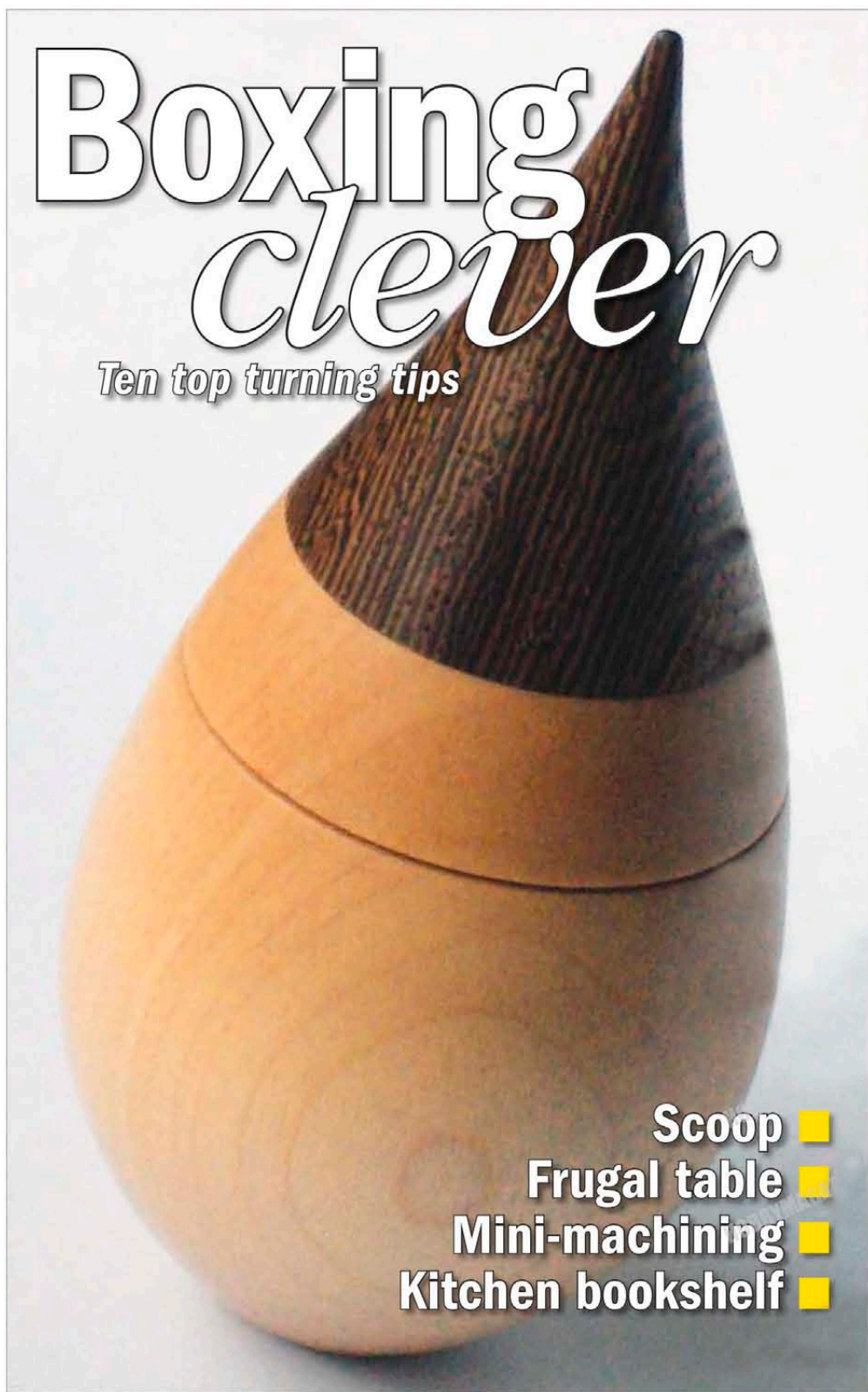
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## Boxing *clever*

*Ten top turning tips*



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**Steven White**

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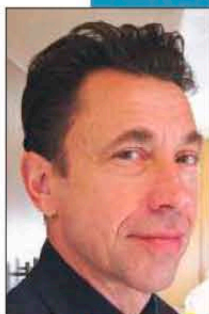
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# welcome

It's not just painters who insist that it's 'all in the preparation'. The average carpentry job will always come out better if a bit of thought and planning has gone into it first. In an ongoing effort to reach closer to that unattainable goal of the perfect job, I recently spent quite a bit of time on the preliminaries, preparing timber and tools and generally getting things ready. Having finished loading up the van on the day, I happened to notice a couple of useful looking lengths of timber lying around (er, I mean 'carefully stored') as I walked

out of the door. I've found it's always handy to have a selection of spare material on board and guess what? Yes, my carefully prepared repair piece turned out to be unsuitable but the random spare bit fitted the bill exactly.



## Getting in touch

I don't normally make a point of highlighting the content of the mag (I figure you'll probably find out for yourself soon enough), but I'm pleased to be able to bring you the first part in a definitive guide to turning in this very issue. Let me know what you think of it... and while we're on this subject, I'd like to thank everyone who has written in recently, either by letter or email. I'm pretty sure I've managed to reply to everyone, but if you feel you've been left out, forgotten or ignored (and let's face it, with my memory it's always a possibility), just give me a gee-up and I'll get right back to you.

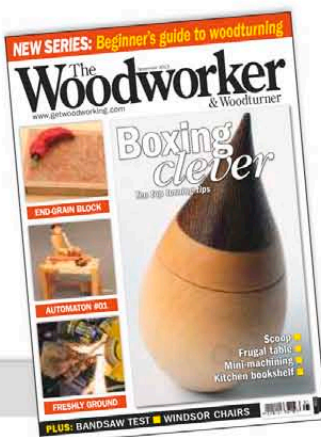
## Coming back

It's been suggested to me quite a few times, and so, after a bit of wavering, I've decided to bring back the Readers' Letters page. So stand by with your tales of derring-do at the workbench, successfully (or otherwise) completed projects, or puzzling problems that have perplexed you for too long. Don't forget that we're here not only to help but also to share... and hopefully to have a laugh or two along the way. It goes without saying that a much sought after and elusive *Woodworker* badge could well be coming the way of those lucky few who finally see their missives in print. Just be patient: that's all.

*Mark*

## Switching to plan B

So it often is. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Plan A comes a cropper and we have to turn instead to a new plan, usually B (I don't think I've got past D yet, and to be honest I hope I never do). So what can we learn from all this? That the world of woodwork can often be totally unpredictable, and even the best-laid plans can crumble in a second. Someone once said that you should expect the unexpected; as long as you're not too specific about it, you'll be fine. Just always make sure you've got a few bits of kit with you that you don't think you'll need.



If you can't always find a copy of the magazine, help is at hand! Complete this form and hand it in at your local store, and they'll ensure that a copy of each issue is reserved for you. Some stores may even be able to arrange for it to be delivered to your home. Just ask!

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**If you don't want to miss an issue**





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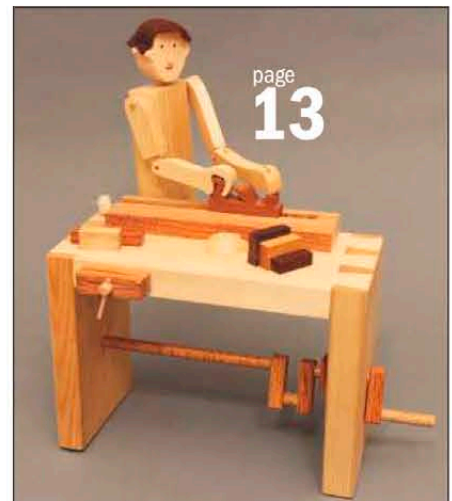
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# The Woodworker & Woodturner

November 2013

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# In brief...



## Veritas on tour

Bridgwater College in Somerset recently welcomed Wally Wilson and Vic Tesolin from Veritas Tools in Ontario, Canada, who visited the College to show staff and students on the Joinery, Carpentry and Furniture programmes some of their innovative range of premium-quality hand tools. Veritas are moving traditional tool design on to the next level, and are touring Europe to demonstrate their latest innovations to potential future customers.

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



## Winter warmer

The Relax range of woodburning stoves are ideal for keeping the workshop warm while at the same time reducing waste by burning sawdust and wood offcuts. All the stoves are fitted with safety guards, and easy refuelling is achieved through a convenient top access plate, whilst ash removal is via a hatch at the bottom of the stove. Outputs start at 4kW, and the range complies with the latest EU regulations on smoke emissions and burn rates.

[www.thehotspot.co.uk](http://www.thehotspot.co.uk)

## Self-centring chuck

Two unique features make the American Easy Wood Chuck System stand out from the competition. A patent-pending design holds the jaws securely in the chuck body without the need for retaining screws, and the zoom ring on the back allows for fingertip tightening of the jaws when positioning the work in the chuck. The Easy Wood chuck costs £369.95, and a full range



of jaw sets is available at prices from £69.95.

[www.rutlands.co.uk](http://www.rutlands.co.uk)



## Then there were six...

Axminster Tools & Machinery is opening a new store in Basingstoke, and will be holding its launch event on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th October. The new store is situated on Winchester Road (RG22 6HN), and will be the first of the Axminster stores to open seven days a week in line with most other retail outlets in the area. It will also be the first store to display the new company signage and to trade under the name of Axminster Tools & Machinery.

[www.axminster.co.uk](http://www.axminster.co.uk)

## Christmas boxes

Dremel has announced two new tool kits for Christmas this year. Woodworkers will want the



Dremel 3000 Multitool Project Kit, which consists of a Dremel 3000 multitool, 45 accessories, four attachments including the Flexshaft, the shaping platform, the detailer's grip and the comfort guard, plus all the materials required to make a wooden car with the kids over Christmas. The kit is packed in a reusable tin storage case, and retails at £89.99.

[www.dremel-direct.com](http://www.dremel-direct.com)

## DIARY

### OCTOBER

#### Axminster Skill Centre Courses

**21-22** Beginners routing  
**23** Fruitmaking with wooden chucks  
**28-29** Carving spoons  
**30-Nov 1** Relief carving  
 Unit 10 Weycroft Avenue, Axminster  
 EX13 5PH  
 0800 975 1905  
[www.axminsterskillcentre.co.uk](http://www.axminsterskillcentre.co.uk)

#### John Lloyd courses

**28-Nov 1** Finishing  
 Bankside Farm, Ditchling Common  
 RH15 0SJ  
 01444 480388  
[www.johnlloydfinefurniture.co.uk](http://www.johnlloydfinefurniture.co.uk)

#### Scotland's National Woodworking & Power Tool Show

**25-26** Royal Highland Centre,  
 Edinburgh EH28 8NB  
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[www.nelton.co.uk](http://www.nelton.co.uk)

#### West Dean College courses

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 PO18 0QZ  
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[www.westdean.org.uk](http://www.westdean.org.uk)

### NOVEMBER

#### Axminster Skill Centre Courses

**4-5** Kitchen routing  
**7-8** Beginners woodturning  
**7-8** Beginners woodturning\*  
**14-15** Woodcarving  
**18-19** Beginners routing  
**18-19** Natural-edge bowls  
**20** Taster session  
**21** Pyrography\*  
**25** Pyrography  
**27** Christmas decorations  
**28-29** Beginners routing\*  
**28-29** Christmas decorations  
 \*Course held in Sittingbourne, Kent  
 Details as for October (above)

#### John Boddy's courses

**14-15** French polishing: Ted Vickerman  
**21-22** Woodcarving: Peter Berry  
**28-29** Woodturning: Simon Whitehead  
 Details as for October (above)

#### John Boddy's demonstrations

**16** Repairs & finishing: Ted Vickerman  
**30** Woodturning: Simon Whitehead  
 Details as above

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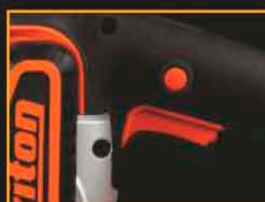
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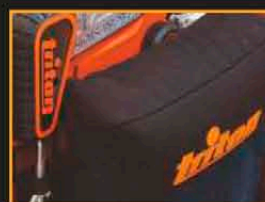
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by Peter E Judge



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**View a selection of pages from the book at website:**

**[www.makingwindsorchairs.co.uk](http://www.makingwindsorchairs.co.uk)**

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**D&M PRICE:** DWE315KT with TSTAK case & accessories: TBC

The eagerly anticipated 240V oscillating multi-tool has arrived from DeWalt. It features a quick-change universal fitment accessory system that allows blades and accessories to be changed without tools. The dual-grip variable-speed trigger provides the user with multiple options for gripping the tool, depending on the application, and the powerful 300W motor and an LED light give you the flexibility to do many jobs using one tool.

See our website [www.dm-tools.co.uk](http://www.dm-tools.co.uk) for more details.



## NEW 4.2Ah CORDLESS RANGE

**MANUFACTURER:** Festool

**D&M PRICES:** See website for details

In September Festool launched a new range of 18V 4.2Ah Li-ion-powered drill drivers and screwdrivers. The **DRC 18/4 Li 4.2** cordless drill (below left) has a brushless EC motor and a four-speed gearbox delivering speeds of up to 3800rpm and a maximum torque of 60Nm, and comes with a keyless FastFix chuck as well as a CENTROTEC chuck and bit holder. The **PDC 18/4 Li 4.2** cordless combi drill

(centre) also has an axial impact feature (PDC) that can be deactivated for drilling in brickwork. Both come with two batteries, a charger, a side handle and a SYSTAINER case, and there's an optional angle attachment that allows work in confined areas.

Also introduced are two new cordless 4.2Ah screwdrivers – the **DWC 18-4500** and **DWC 18-2500** (below) – with no-load speeds of 0-4500 and 0-2500rpm respectively. They both come with removable magazines for rapid repetitive screwdriving, plus energy-saving start/stop and electronic switch-off functions.



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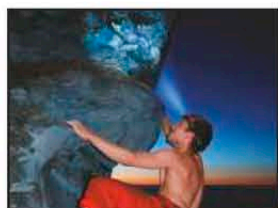
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BY CHARLES MAK



# The animated woodworker

**Automata – mechanical sculptures – are a kinetic form of art requiring a combination of technical skills and mechanical knowledge. Here's how to make a simple one that will showcase what you're good at: woodworking**

**M**aking automata underwent a renaissance in the UK back in the 1960s, and today many of the world's best-known mechanical sculpture makers are based here. This animated sculpture is for beginners, and is intended as an introduction to the craft. It features the life-like movement of a woodworker planing at his bench, and is operated by a length of nylon fishing line attached to a rotating cranked shaft. It consists of four parts: the workbench, the crank mechanism, the plane and its accessories, and the woodworker. Construct this kinetic piece, crank it and turn some heads!

## Before you start...

I recommend reviewing the various drawings and the cutting list to familiarize yourself with the project and the terminology used. Check out the panel below for some small-scale woodworking advice. Then cut out all the components and label each part clearly.

## Building the bench

You can use a simple butt or rebate joint to hold the sides to the bench top. Since I already had the router and jig set up from a previous job, I decided to cut some decorative dovetail joints, **photo 1**. Before gluing up the joints, drill an 8mm diameter hole in the centre of each side piece for the rotating shaft and crank handle, **photo 2**.

There are three small operations to carry out before you set the bench aside. Drill a 2mm diameter hole down through the benchtop at position A in **fig 1**; the fishing line that connects the plane to the crank mechanism will pass down through this. Next, drive a small pin into the benchtop at position B; one end of the rubber band that pulls the plane back after each forward stroke will be looped over this. Lastly, drill a hole 3mm in diameter and 20mm deep at an angle of 10° into the rear edge of the

## WORKING WITH SMALL PARTS

Small-scale projects present some challenges you don't get with larger projects. Here are some suggestions to help you get good results.

- Start with oversized blanks and cut them to their final shape and size after carrying out any necessary operations such as drilling holes.
- If you're cutting small parts using a table saw, always use a zero-clearance insert or a cross-cut sled. Jigs offer both safety and efficiency when handling small objects.
- Hand tools such as a sharp chisel or a block plane are often better and safer to use than power tools for fine tuning and precision work on small objects.
- Make extras as spares when you cut out the components, as some small parts tend to break or get lost easily.
- Always dry fit your assemblies and test the mechanism before gluing up any mechanical set-up.



Orthographic projection of a rectangular plate. The front view shows a rectangle with dimensions 190 mm by 85 mm. A hole of diameter 20 mm is located at point A, 45 mm from the left edge and 10 mm from the bottom edge. The top view shows a hole of diameter 30 mm at point B, 30 mm from the right edge and 10 mm from the bottom edge. The hole at B is inclined at 10° to the vertical. All measurements are in millimeters.

*All measurements in millimetres*



Prepare the joints to link the sides and the bench top. I decided to use dovetails

Technical drawing of a crank assembly. The drawing shows a side view of the assembly with the following dimensions and labels:

- Dimensions:**
  - 135: Length of the long shaft.
  - 8: Distance between the two cranks.
  - 56: Distance from the end of the long shaft to the center of the crank pin.
  - 6: Thickness of the crank pin.
  - 40: Length of the crank handle.
  - 34: Total height of the assembly.
- Labels:**
  - Long shaft
  - Short shaft
  - Crank collar
  - Washer
  - Crank
  - Crank handle
  - Cranks
  - Crank pin
- Note:** All measurements in millimetres. Note: All dowels 8Ø.

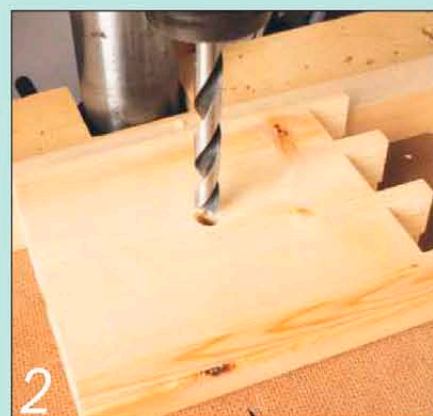
*All measurements in millimetres*

Note: All dowels 80

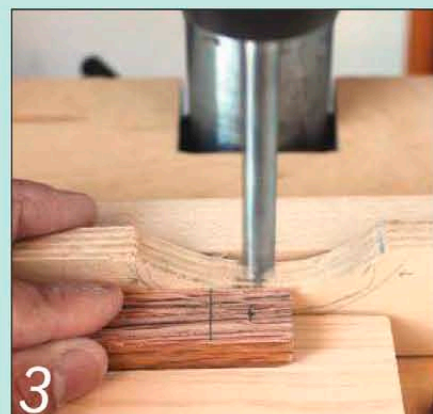
All dimensions are in millimetres

| Part               | Qty | L   | W     | T  |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-------|----|
| Bench top          | 1   | 190 | 85    | 19 |
| Bench side         | 2   | 135 | 85    | 19 |
| Crank handle       | 1   | 40  | 8 dia |    |
| Crank              | 3   | 34  | 10    | 10 |
| Crank collar       | 1   | 20  | 20    | 10 |
| Crankshaft (short) | 1   | 56  | 8 dia |    |
| Crank pin          | 1   | 130 | 8 dia |    |
| Crankshaft (long)  | 1   | 135 | 8 dia |    |
| Plane blank        | 1   | 60  | 40    | 12 |
| Plane guide        | 1   | 140 | 35    | 12 |
| Vice jaw           | 2   | 40  | 12    | 6  |
| Vice shaft         | 1   | 30  | 6 dia |    |
| Vice handle        | 1   | 25  | 3 dia |    |
| Body (blank)       | 1   | 100 | 50    | 20 |
| Body mounting rod  | 1   | 70  | 3 dia |    |
| Neck rod           | 1   | 25  | 6 dia |    |
| Head/arms (blank)  | 1   | 220 | 50    | 10 |
| Joint pins (from)  | 1   | 100 | 3 dia |    |

You will also need a short rubber band, two very small screw-in hooks, a fibre washer and a short length of nylon fishing line.



Stack the two sides and drill the holes for the crankshaft through both



Cut the cranks and the crank collar to size and drill holes in them



bench at position C; this will take a 3mm diameter dowel on which the woodworker's body will be mounted.

### Making the crank shaft

The mechanical device is made up of a crank handle, two rotating shafts (long and short), three cranks, one crank pin, one collar and one washer, **fig 2**.

Drill holes in the collar and the cranks as shown in **fig 2** and **photo 3**. Glue the crank handle and the short rotating shaft into opposite sides of one of the cranks, **photo 4**. Then glue the crank pin and the long rotating shaft to the remaining two cranks, **photo 5**. Use PVA glue rather than a superglue, to give you extra setting time for aligning or adjusting parts.

### Making the plane

Attach the plane pattern, **fig 3**, to the blank using a low-tack aerosol adhesive such as SprayMount. Cut it out using a fretsaw (or a scrollsaw if you have one) and sand it smooth. Then drill a 3mm hole on the front handle and attach a small screw-in hook at each end. Attach the rubber band and the fishing line to the hooks, **photo 6**.

### The bench accessories

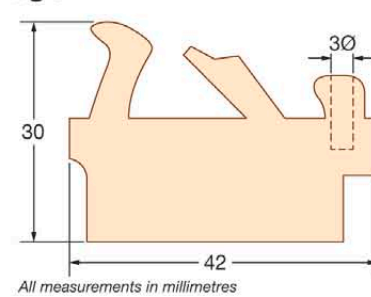
I've featured three accessories for this piece; you may, of course, add more as you wish. They are the notched planing block, which also provides a guide for the plane to slide back and forth, the bench vice, and some scrap blocks. Cut out an off-centre notch 13mm wide in the block, **fig 4**, and glue it to the bench top flush with its back edge, **photo 7**.

The bench vice consists of two jaws, the vice shaft and the handle. Drill a 6mm hole in the jaws, **photo 8**, and a 3mm hole in the vice shaft, and glue the vice handle rod into the shaft. Glue one of the jaws to the front edge of the bench at the desired position and drill a 6mm diameter hole 10mm deep into the bench, **photo 9**. Align the front jaw with the rear one and insert and glue the vice shaft into the bench. Finally, glue a few scrap blocks of wood randomly on the bench.

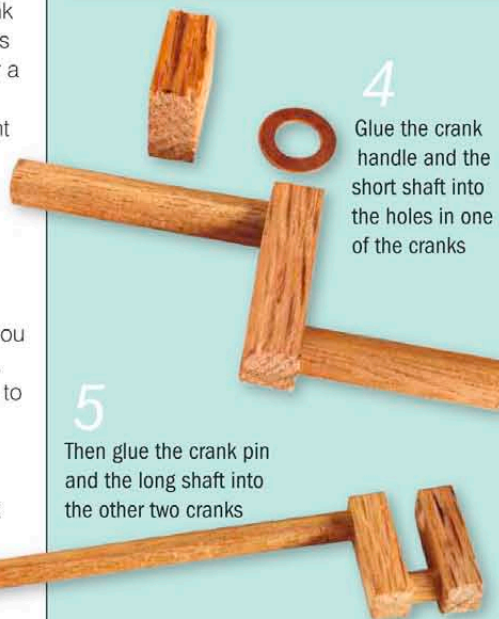
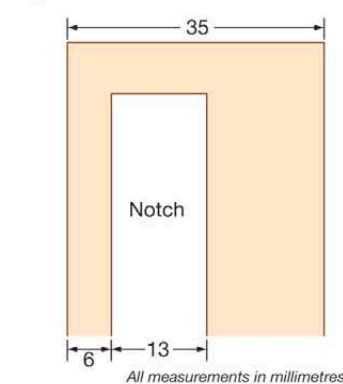
### Making the woodworker

The woodworker consists of a head, a neck rod, a body and two articulated arms. Stick the head and arms patterns, **fig 5**, on the head and hands blank. Cut out the head and the upper and lower arms, **photo 10**, and sand them smooth. Mark out and cut the elbow joints. Then drill the hole under the chin into the head as well as all the

**Fig 3**



**Fig 4**



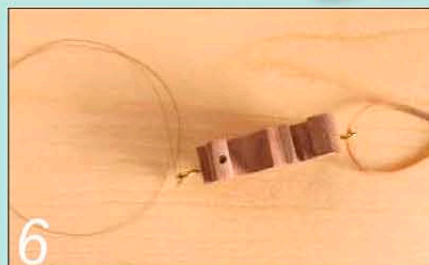
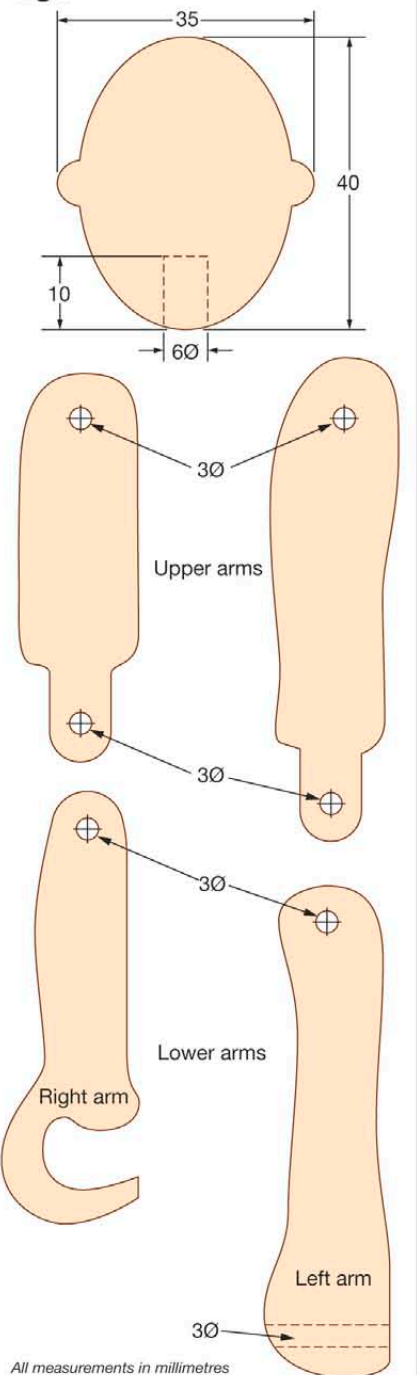
4

Glue the crank handle and the short shaft into the holes in one of the cranks

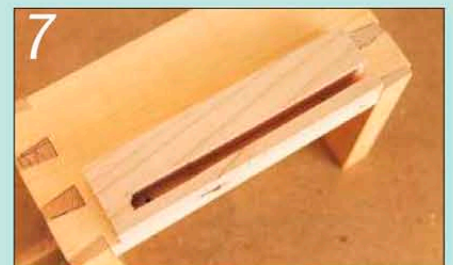
5

Then glue the crank pin and the long shaft into the other two cranks

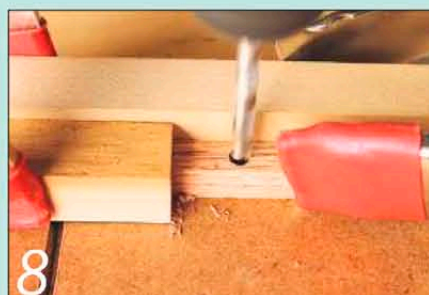
**Fig 5**



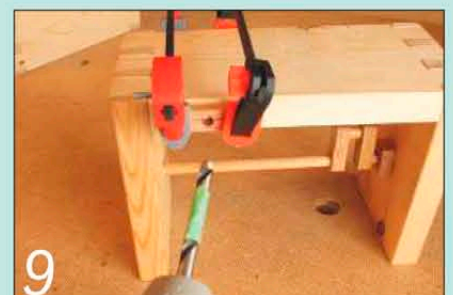
Fit the hooks to the plane and attach the rubber band and fishing line



Prepare the notched planing block and glue it on flush with the rear edge of the bench



Stack the two vice jaws and drill a 6mm diameter hole through both pieces



Cramp one vice jaw in place and drill a hole through it into the edge of the bench



10

Cut out the upper and lower arms and pencil in the joint areas



12

Use abrasive paper or a small block plane to round over the bevels



13

Drill the various dowel holes required in the woodworker's body



11

Cut the arm joints, sand and assemble the four parts and test their movement



holes on the upper and lower arms. Connect the upper and lower arms with 3mm diameter joint pins cut to length, **photo 11**.

Carve out the desired facial features on the head, using a tool of your choice such as a gouge or a rotary tool, and glue the neck rod into the head.

On the body blank, cut a bevel down the length on each side, one at about 10° on the right-hand side and the other at 50° or so, **fig 6**. Drill all the holes in the body, **photo 12**, and round over the edges with a small plane or abrasive paper, **photo 13**.

Lastly, insert the neck rod into the body and attach the arms to the shoulders with 3mm diameter joint pins. Leave the pins overlong at this stage.

### Assembling the automaton

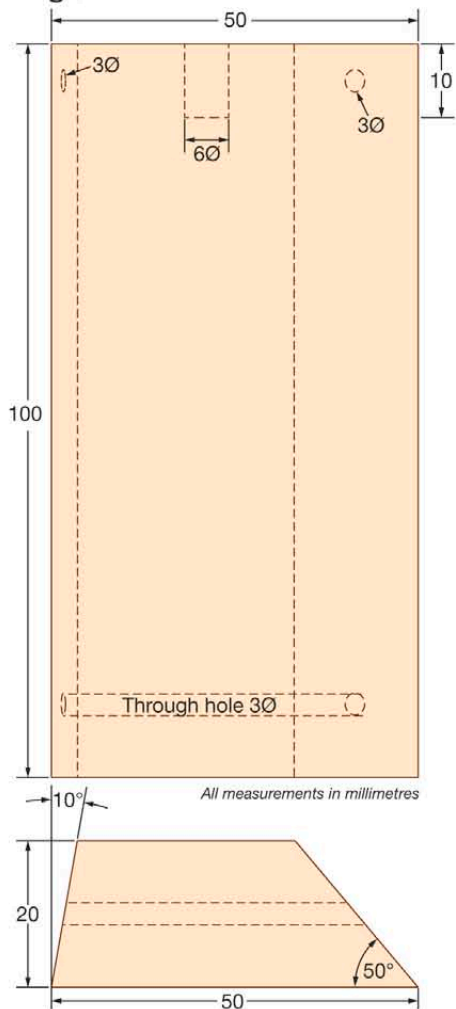
Install the crank mechanism between the two bench side panels, with the crank handle and washer on the outside, **photo 14**. Then attach the woodworker to the bench by inserting the mounting rod through the lower body into the edge of the bench, **photo 15**. Use a small square to check that it's vertical, **photo 16**.

After connecting the hands to the plane, position it in the notch just in front of the fishing line hole. Thread the fishing line down through the hole and tie a tight knot around the crank pin, **photo 17**. Note that the pin should be in its lowest position.

Hook the rubber band over the nail and turn the crank handle to test the movement, **photo 18**. Adjust the tension of the rubber band and re-knot the fishing line as necessary to ensure that the woodworker's body movement is smooth and natural. As a finishing touch, you can then apply a light coat of oil and wax to the piece if you wish, keeping any finish well away from the holes and the joints.

Congratulations! You've just completed your first mechanical wonder. Now what will you automate next?

Fig 6



15

Attach the woodworker to his bench by inserting the mounting rod



16

Use a small try square to check that the body assembly is vertical



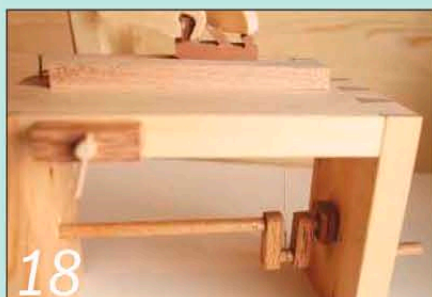
17

Thread the fishing line through its hole in the benchtop and tie it to the crank pin



18

Hook on the rubber band and turn the handle to check the sliding action of the plane





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**The O.M.S Tool Company have appointed Dowelmax UK as distributors for the renowned, Dowelmax doweling jig**

The O.M.S Tool Company have appointed **Dowelmax UK** as UK distributors for the renowned, Canadian manufactured, **Dowelmax** doweling jig. The move is in response to increased demand for the product in both the UK and European markets.

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BY PETER BISHOP

# Ready for the chop

**This is a cracking project that can produce a really useful and attractive bit of kit for use in the kitchen or dining room. You can vary the dimensions of the block to suit the space you have available, and the finished blocks also make excellent presents**

I've made a couple of different ones myself. Everything is easily achievable using standard hand tools and the usual methods of facing and edging. But, let me tell you, if you've got some powered saws and planers available they'll make the job that much easier!

## Beech is best

Butcher's blocks are traditionally made from beech. It's one of several timbers, including sycamore, with a tight grain that can easily seal itself up again when it's cut. Imagine a butcher cutting down into the endgrain of the blocks and then, when he's finished,

scrubbing it down and chucking some salt on it. The salt helps to kill off any bacteria on the surface, and the wash-down swells the endgrain, sealing up all those cuts. This chopping block will do the same thing if it's looked after... with a little help from some modern finishes.

First I needed some beech. A trip to my local sawmill produced some stuff that was either a thin 50mm or a thick 38mm. No matter: I thought I could get 38mm finished wood out of it, so it was fine. As usual I bought more than I needed – a bad move really, but you know what it's like. I never could resist a bit of good stuff!





1 Start by ripping the beech stock down into strips about 50mm wide



2 Plane the eight centre strips so they measure 42mm in one dimension



3 The strips will be assembled showing the 38mm faces; mark them all



4 Hold the first strip in a vice and apply a thin coat of adhesive to it

## CHOPPING BLOCK CUTTING LIST

All dimensions are in millimetres

| Part  | Qty | L   | W  | T  |
|-------|-----|-----|----|----|
| Block | 60  | 75  | 38 | 38 |
| Side  | 2   | 460 | 67 | 20 |
| End   | 2   | 310 | 67 | 20 |

5

Rub each joint back and forth as you assemble it to ensure maximum bond strength



## Doing the maths

This is a really simple assembly job, but there are some twists and turns to get to grips with. Firstly I needed to cut some 50mm strips off the stock wood. Then I had to calculate how long these strips had to be. My board was to be ten blocks long by six blocks wide, with each block a nominal 75mm long. So the simple way to start is with strips of wood that will produce six blocks in the length comfortably and, to make up the numbers, ten strips of this length in total. Do you follow me so far? The ten strips will be glued together flat. Later the six rows of ten blocks will be cut from this blank and then joined together to make the finished block. Easy, but...

## Allowing for planing

Getting all the blocks lined up and square first time isn't easy; that's why I came up with the above construction method. But you have to be a bit canny than that. This stack of ten strips is made up of pieces with different cross-sections. The eight central ones are the required 38mm across one

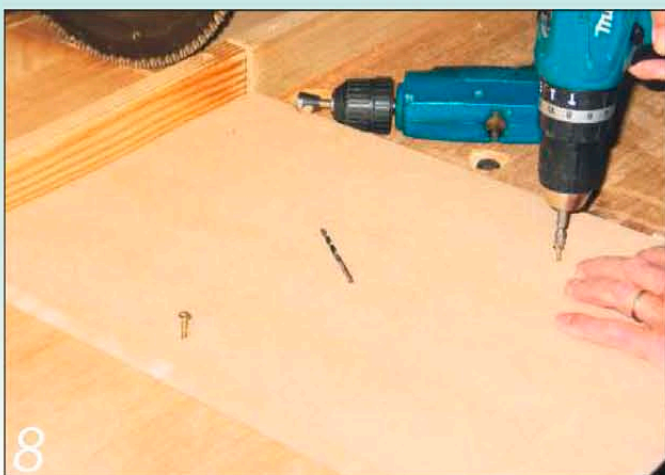




6 Add the two square outer strips and leave the assembly in the cramps



7 Sand the assembled panel to smooth it and remove any excess glue



8 A new sacrificial bed on the radial arm saw will help to reduce breakout...



9 ...as you cut the six strips of glued blocks 75mm wide from the large blank

dimension, but are closer to 42mm across the other. The two end pieces finish square at 42mm. This latter dimension can be a little more but shouldn't be any less.

The eight central pieces will be glued together showing the 38mm face as you look at them. The two square outer strips then fit flush up against these. So that's the first stage. Everything is planed square to the dimensions above. Make a mark on the outside faces so that you get them the right way round when gluing them up.

### Rubbing the joints

Joining these ten pieces is simple but critical. I used Cascamite, the powdered resin glue, mixed thinly so that the adjoining faces could be cramped together tightly. Start with one strip in the vice, apply some glue and rub the next one onto it. Rubbing ensures that the glue is worked deep into the pores, making a good joint. Build up the ten pieces like this and then transfer the assembly to the cramps. Make sure the strips are all tight up together and as flat as they can be; you've

only got a few millimetres of tolerance to play with. Once the glue has cured and gone hard you can clean off the excess.

### Strips into blocks

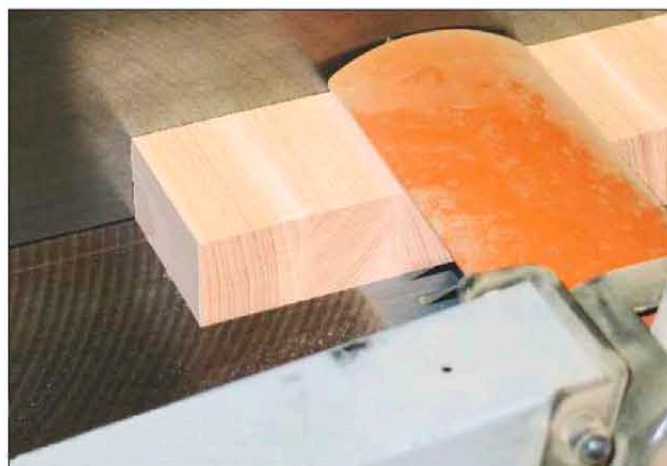
The large blank of ten stuck-together strips is now ready for the next stage. It should be long enough, with a bit of waste at each

end, to produce six pieces, ten blocks wide and about 75mm long with the grain. Try to minimise any breakout on the ends when they're cut off the blank. That'll mean less cleaning up later.

Now you can plane off the difference between the oversize and the finished size from both sides. A sharp plane or planer is

## 10

Use the planer to finish the strips of blocks down to their finished size



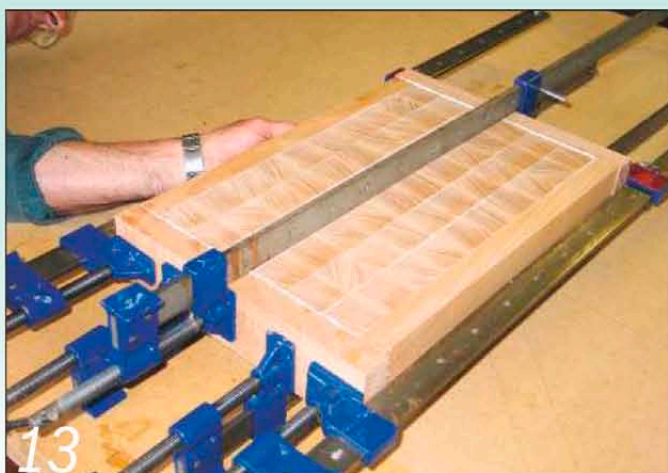




11 Assemble the six strips and the two sides as before and cramp them up



12 When the glue has dried, trim the ends down to size on the planer



13 Glue and cramp on the two end pieces to complete the assembly



14 Sand off any excess glue and apply the finishing oil of your choice

required for this. The finished surface won't be as smooth as usual but it will be a great one for adhesion purposes. Each of the six strips of blocks should now be at the finished size/thickness of 38mm. The two end blocks on these strips are still oversize.

### The final assembly

Plane up two lengths for the sides and a couple for the ends. More gluing and rubbing brings the six strips of blocks together with the two sides. Cramp them all up as flat as you can and leave them to cure. Make sure you line up the existing joints. Once the glue is hard you can remove the excess.

Now up-end the nearly completed blocks and plane across their ends to reduce these to the correct finished size. All the blocks in the board should now be 38mm square. Glue and rub on the two end pieces and cramp them up.

Later, after removing the excess glue, plane down the sides to finish them completely. Don't worry if a little bit of the end pieces flakes away; you plane these last to remove this.

Now it's time to set to with the sanders and finish all the surfaces off flush and smooth. Take the grit size down to 180 to get a really good finish. Damping down the surface and letting it dry off before the final sanding with 180 grit will greatly improve the finish.

### The ideal finish

In the past I've used linseed or tung oil to finish items like this. Both have a smell that lingers, the latter resembling an old fish and chip shop! Regular readers may recall that back in the September issue I finished my butler's tray with a product I'd recently discovered called Ronseal Worktop Oil, which is clear, water-resistant and doesn't smell! A couple of coats of this stuff, applied with a lint-free rag, set the whole block off a treat and the job was done.





## GO AHEAD, GLUE ALL

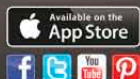
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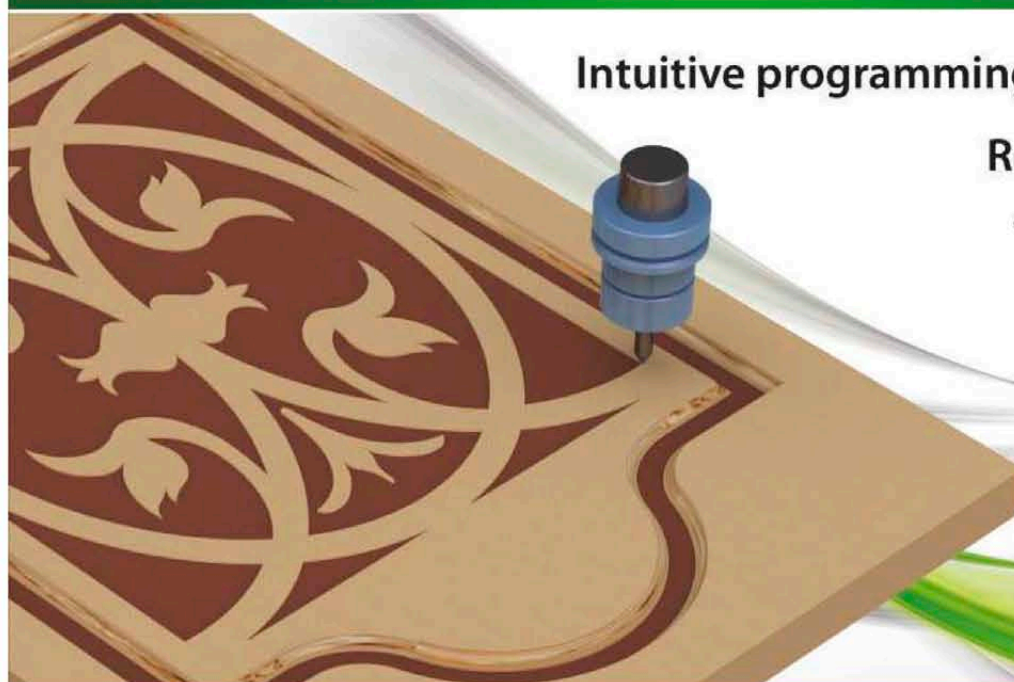
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|---------|-------|---------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| CTS800B | 600w  | 200mm   | 90°/45° BORE DIA. | £69.98  | £83.98  |
| CTS11*  | 1500w | 254mm   | 185/20            | £139.98 | £167.98 |
| CTS10D  | 1500w | 254mm   | 185/20            | £149.98 | £179.98 |

CCS-2

| MODEL  | MOTOR  | MAX CUT | BLADE  | EX VAT  | INC VAT |
|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| FURY   | 1200w  | 54/35mm | 185/20 | £54.99  | £65.99  |
| Clarke | 1300w  | 60/45mm | 185/20 | £64.99  | £77.99  |
| CCS-2  | 1200w  | 66/46mm | 190/30 | £109.98 | £131.98 |
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| Ryobi     | 1400  | 0-55   | £99.99  | £119.99 |
| ERT1400R# |       |        |         |         |
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Power tools

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\*DIY #Professional

| MODEL          | POWER (W) | DEPTH OF CUT (WOOD/STEEL) | EX VAT | INC VAT |
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| B & D KS600*   | 450w      | 60/5mm                    | £33.99 | £40.79  |
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|         |      |          |        |         |
|---------|------|----------|--------|---------|
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|--------|-------|---------|---------|---------|

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|        |      |         |         |         |
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|--------|------|---------|---------|---------|

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BY IAN WILKIE

# Stripped for action



**1** The JWBS-9 benchtop bandsaw is the smallest machine in the Jet range. Its list price is £132.50

**There are lots of uses for thin wood strips, whether for inlay work, framing, edging or even making models. Here's how to use a range of small woodworking machines to prepare small stock**

**I**n this article – the first of two: more next month – I'll show you how I prepare thin stripwood, as I call it. Originally I wanted to make my own planking and decking for model ships. I was on a very limited budget, so my methods were on the thrifty side... and anyway, there were very few machines available which would give the finished quality I required. There are now, however, several reasonably priced machines on the market aimed at the hobby user and the smaller workshop, so this is how I prepare

my stripwood today. The sequence I'm about to illustrate may seem slow and pedantic to some woodworkers, but it gives excellent and very satisfying results!

## The right machines

I use a combination of the following machines: a small Jet bandsaw and a planer, a thicknesser and a table saw from Proxxon. These are all serious, expensive machines and if, like me, you've been working in wood over a good number of





2

The Proxxon AH80 planer will cope with wood up to 80mm wide, and is currently priced at £258



3

I made this large push pad with a sheet of abrasive paper glued to the underside



4

The Proxxon DH40 thicknesser is an expensive luxury. The new model costs around £450



5

This false table enables very thin sections to pass through the cutter without damage

years you'll probably have purchased some or all of them along the way.

I suppose some woodworkers (better off than me!) might go out and buy the whole lot in one major shopping spree but, for me, thinking long and hard about each machine before buying it and adding to the workshop equipment gradually as funds permit was part of the pleasure!

As regular readers will know by now, my work is predominantly small in scale, and my machines are selected for this reason. With the exception of the bandsaw which lives in the garage, the other three machines fit into my small workshop and are light enough to be lifted in and out of cupboards when they're not being used, which helps to keep bench space free.

### My baby bandsaw

I recently gave my trusty Kity bandsaw to my son, who is in the process of renovating his workshop. This gave me the excuse to buy the considerably smaller Jet JWBS-9 benchtop bandsaw, **photo 1**, which is better suited to my needs.

This bandsaw is the smallest in the Jet range and has been designed as a hobby machine, which is fine because I'm not intending to run it for eight hours at a time! It was reviewed in *The Woodworker* in March 2012 and received favourable comments, so I thought I'd see how it performed when used regularly.

I've never been an enthusiastic user of large circular saws, but I'm much happier with a small bandsaw. This one weighs just 17kg, so it can be moved around the workshop and put on a bench with ease, which is what I was looking for.

### Cut and thrust

It will cut timber up to 75mm thick, and has a throat depth of 230mm. The machine comes with an extra 10tpi Axcaliber blade 1510mm long x 3/8in wide, as well as a standard 1/4in blade. The Axcaliber blade is very good, and I keep it just for cutting wood – not man-made boards such as mdf, which blunt a blade pretty quickly. I also use the blade only for straight cuts. If a blade is used for cutting curves, the set on one side will be worn unevenly, and after a while it will no longer cut straight. I don't want to be constantly setting up and changing blades; I want the machine ready for instant use!

The fence is not of the highest quality, but it'll do. I could consider replacing it with a better one, but I'm reluctant to spend any more money. The worklight on its flexible arm is a useful bonus, and comes on when the machine is operated.



### Plane and simple

The AH80 surface planer, **photo 2**, is a new addition to the Proxxon range of small machines, and was reviewed in the June 2013 issue of the magazine. I've only recently purchased it, and I'm delighted with the results it gives. It will cope with wood up to 80mm wide, and when linked to an extractor very little escapes in the way of shavings and dust.

Although a plastic push-stick comes with the machine, I've made a larger hold-down pad with some abrasive paper glued to the underside, **photo 3**, to give a better grip on small workpieces and to keep fingers well away from the blade. I've since noticed that a set of three plastic versions, described as working pads, costs £12.35 from Axminster.

### Through thick and thin

I've just tested Proxxon's DH40 thicknesser for the magazine because, having bought an earlier model some years ago, I feel able to assess its capabilities from experience. Although it was a bit of an expensive luxury at the time, it has proved extremely useful. You can read my review of the new model, **photo 4**, on page 76.

For this article I made an 80 x 300mm false table 10mm thick from a laminate-faced offcut with a small stop under the front end to prevent it from sliding right through the machine, **photo 5**. This enables very thin sections to pass through the cutter without being gobbled up. I've managed to get work down to 2mm thick using this jig; if you want to go thinner than this, you'll have to glue the wood temporarily to a backing sheet, and take care to use very fine-grained wood which won't break up.

### Cutting things fine

**Photo 6** shows the new version of the Proxxon FET table saw. This recently replaced an earlier model I'd had for several years. I reviewed that in *The Woodworker* in April 2011, and it scored well. As I've already said, I'm not very keen on standard-sized table saws, but these smaller machines are much less intimidating and with the right blade will give a very fine cut – exactly what I'm after.

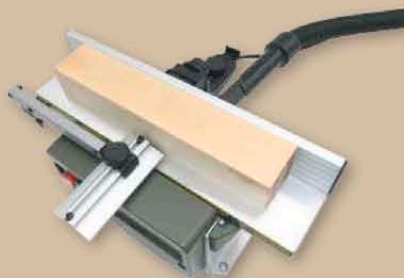
The saw table lifts up to enable blade changing, **photo 7**, which is useful and makes the job easier. However, do take care to make sure it's well supported by the stay and won't fall down on your hands.

### Modification time

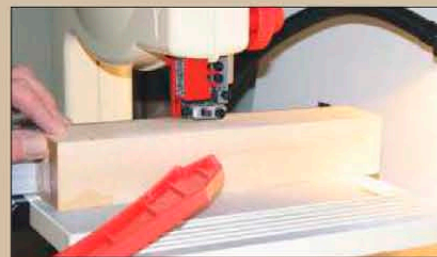
If you're familiar with this saw, you may notice that I've made some slight modifications which enable me to cut the very thin planks I require for building model ships.

## NINE STEPS TO PERFECT STRIPWOOD

Carefully select stock that's as free from knots and faults as possible, and make sure you have enough pieces of the same colour for any project you have in mind. The piece shown here is a sycamore turning blank measuring 305mm long and 53mm square.



**1** Set up the planer and plane all four faces of the stock. With a small machine like this it's best to take two or three light passes rather than one heavy one



**2** Set up the bandsaw fence and expose just enough blade to make the first cut, using the push stick to guide the wood past the blade. Cut the first plank slightly over the thickness required and put it aside

**3** Take the blank back to the planer and plane the sawn surface. Put that against the face of the fence on the bandsaw and cut the next plank. Continue cutting planks in this way until the blank is used up



**4** Adjust the thicknesser to give a fine cut and run each plank through with the planed side down on the table



**5** Return to the planer and plane the two edges on each plank. Repeat this for all the planks

**6** The result will be a series of uniform planks, probably about 10mm thick by this time



**7** Move to the table saw and set the fence to give the thickness of strip you require. Cut the first strip and put it aside. True up the sawn edge of the plank on the planer and repeat the process until you have a pile of strips with one planed surface and one sawn surface

**8** Pass the strips through the thicknesser with the planed sides down, using the false table described earlier. Several can go through at the same time



**9** The end result of the process is a pile of strips – here sycamore and walnut – ready for use







6

The new version of the compact Proxxon FET table saw costs £337 from Axminster

7

The saw table lifts up for blade changing, which is useful and makes the job easier



The first modification is to take the spare throat plate supplied with the new machine, drop the blade down below the table, **photo 8**, and screw the plate in position. Gently bring the blade up and run the machine so it cuts a slot through the new plate, **photo 9**. This gives the minimum of clearance either side of the saw blade and prevents very thin strips of wood from slipping down through the gap in the standard throat plate.

## A see-through fence

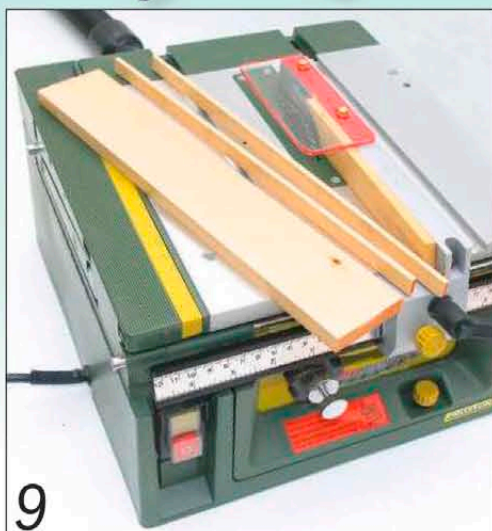
Secondly, I removed the orange guard and riving knife. There's nothing wrong with these items, but I wanted a clearer view so that I could see exactly what I was doing. I replaced the guard with one made from thick, clear Perspex, **photo 10**, and bolted it to the top of the fence.

A strip of accurately prepared boxwood fitted to the inner face of the fence is held in position with strong double-sided carpet tape. This enables me to cut thin strips without any binding past the blade, and gives a very precise and smooth cut so long as the wood has been carefully prepared.



8

Drop the blade down below the table and screw the spare throat plate in position



9

Bring the blade up and run the machine so it cuts a fresh slot through the new plate

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Jet and Proxxon machines

- Brimarc
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## NEXT MONTH...

...I'll describe how I used this method to produce sheets of contrasting strips, which I then made up into a series of attractive containers. Don't miss it!



10

I replaced the supplied guard with one made from thick clear Perspex for better visibility



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STC = Sliding Table Carriage, TWE = Table Width Extension, TLE = Table Length Extension.

Scheppach Precisa 3.0 is designed by scheppach in Germany but made in China where scheppach resident engineers oversee manufacturing quality control. Precisa 3.0 has the same warranty as Professional Series. Scheppach machines have been sold and serviced in the UK by NMA since 1972. Go to [nmatools.co.uk](http://nmatools.co.uk) and see what users say about NMA unprecedented service.





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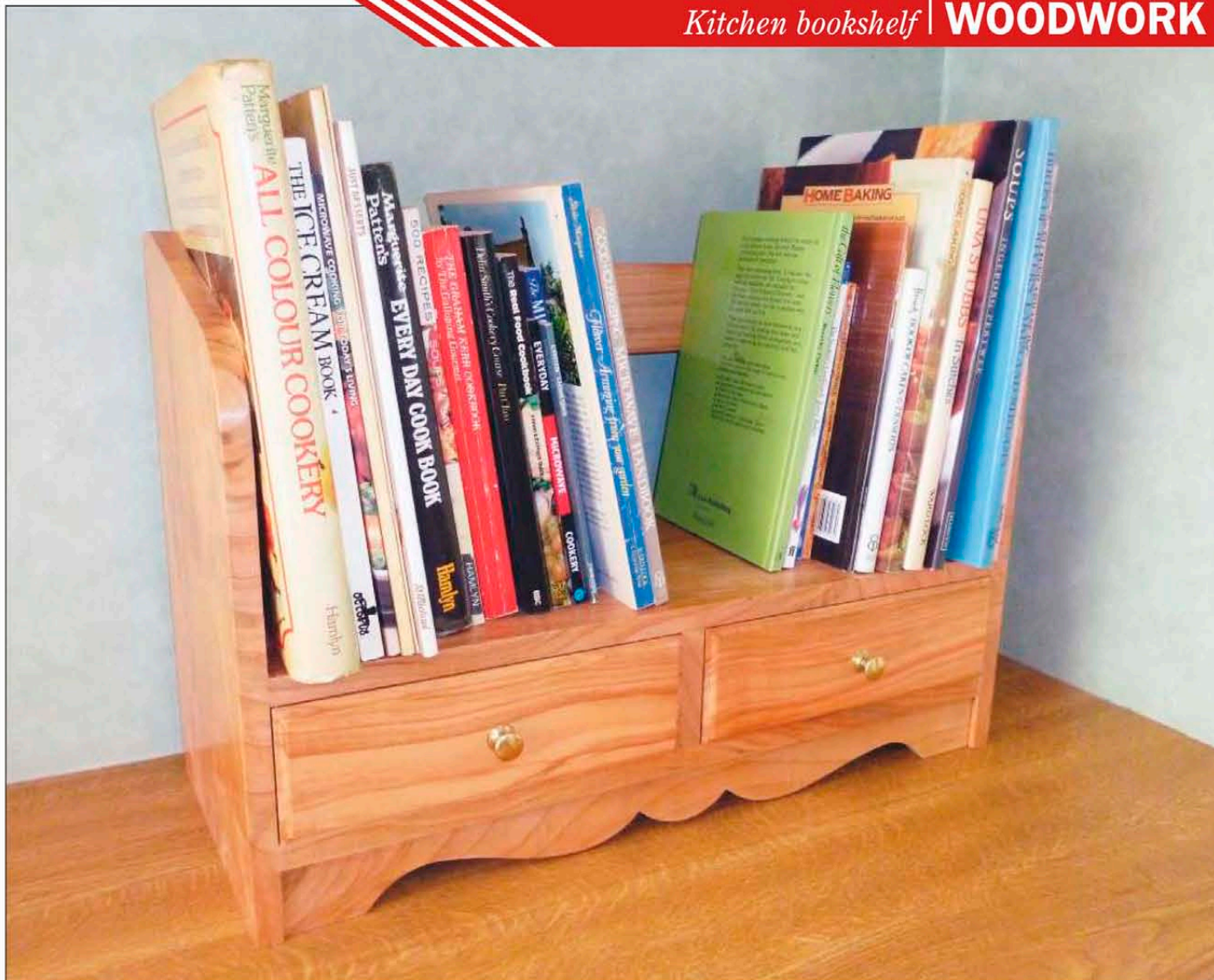


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BY GORDON WARR

# Recipe, chef!

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**A** cookery book tucked away somewhere in the lounge is very likely to remain there, and not where it's wanted to hand in the kitchen. This compact shelf unit is designed to hold the cook's most popular books, which can always be changed as

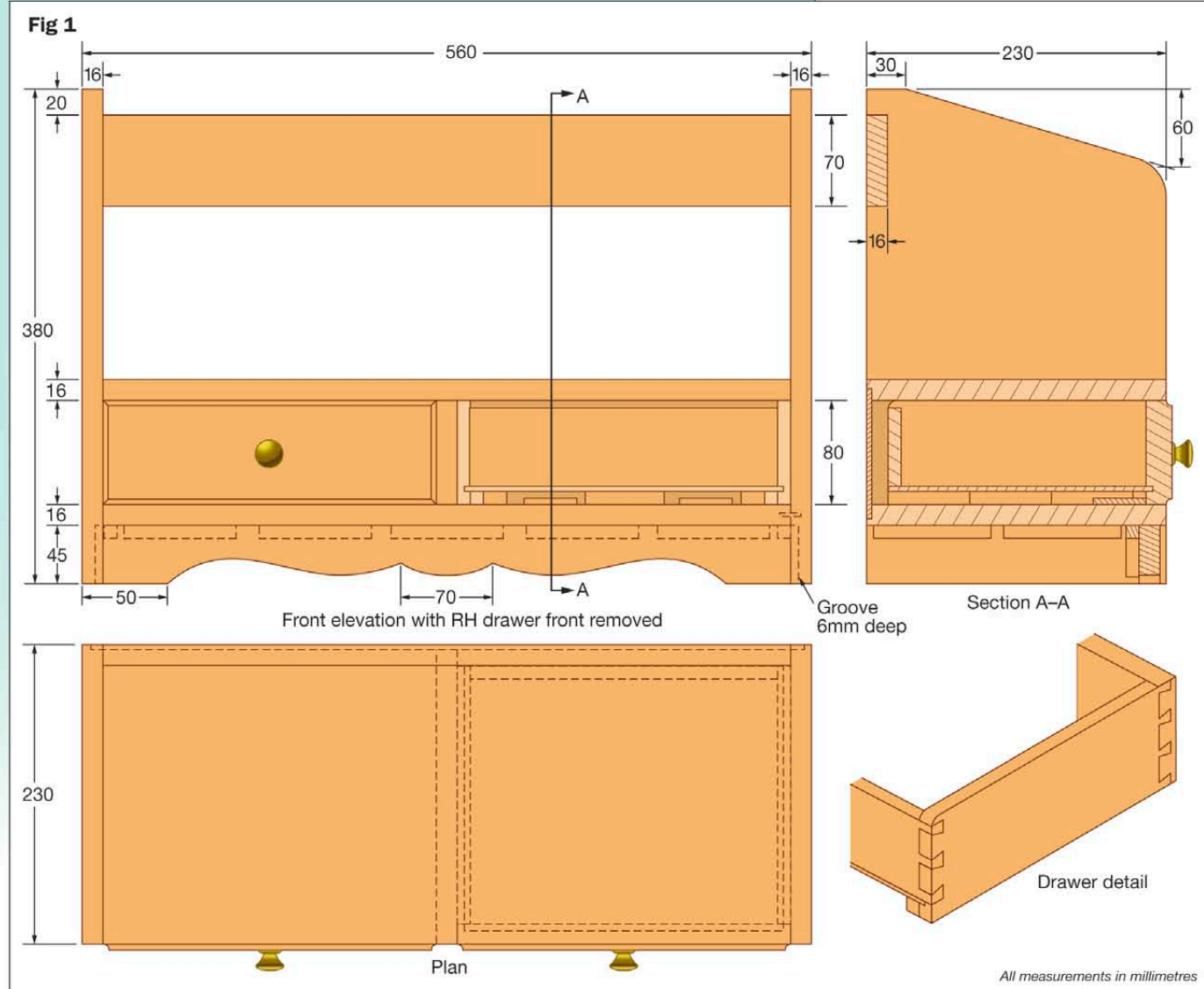
new favourites come along. The small drawers below the shelf are always useful to hold spare keys, rubber bands, a roll of Sellotape and notelets for shopping lists.

## Jointed and planed

Any hardwood is suitable for this project; mine was cherry, a popular wood used by many for kitchen units.

When planing the five pieces needed for the carcass, I deliberately kept the wood slightly oversize in its thickness. Apart from the rear upper rail, the remaining parts needed to be jointed to make up the required width. I planned on reducing the





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| Part                  | Qty | L   | W   | T  |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| CARCASS               |     |     |     |    |
| End                   | 2   | 405 | 230 | 16 |
| Shelf/base            | 2   | 560 | 230 | 16 |
| Drawer divider        | 1   | 210 | 80  | 16 |
| Back rail             | 1   | 560 | 70  | 16 |
| Plinth                | 1   | 560 | 45  | 16 |
| Back (plywood)        | 1   | 560 | 100 | 4  |
| DRAWERS               |     |     |     |    |
| Drawer front          | 2   | 280 | 80  | 20 |
| Drawer back           | 2   | 280 | 60  | 10 |
| Drawer side           | 4   | 240 | 80  | 10 |
| Drawer base (plywood) | 2   | 280 | 210 | 4  |

thickness down to the 16mm required once jointing up had taken place.

I used biscuits for the jointing, **photo 1**, and once glued and cramped the four components were passed through the thicknesser to give me the final dimension needed. I could then cross-cut them to length on my bench saw using a fine-toothed blade for a clean cut.

### Marked and shaped

Now I could proceed with the marking out of the five components that make up the carcass, plus the small drawer divider. I again used biscuits for jointing all the carcass members together. Next, I marked out the slopes at upper ends of the side components, including the curved corners, and once the waste was sawn away and smoothed, I completed the curves on my disc sander, **photo 2**. Just one small stage still needed to be carried out on the two ends – routing small grooves at the lower ends to receive the plinth.



### Sanded and glued

I was now nearing the assembly stage, but before this some cleaning up was needed. This I completed with a belt sander, then applied adhesive to all parts forming the various joints. The small drawer divider was the first to be glued to the two lower horizontal pieces, then one end was added followed by the other along with the back rail, **photo 3**. Cramps were applied, **photo 4**, checks were made to ensure everything was square, and surplus adhesive was removed while still soft.

The front edges of the assembled carcass then needed a little attention in order to level off adjoining surfaces where they abut – a simple job using an orbital sander as the base spans the various components and thus ensures level surfaces.

### Routed and squared

The rear of the drawer compartment also requires attention, a small rebate being required to take the plywood back. This was an easy job for the router, **photo 5**, but the corners produced are rounded and required some attention from a sharp chisel to square them off. With a project which involves drawers, it is always wise not to secure the carcass back at this stage. The absence of a back makes it much easier to fit the drawers accurately.

### Sawn and blocked

I next prepared a template for the decorative lower edge of the plinth, and after marking out the edge I cut off the waste on the bandsaw, **photo 6**. Then I smoothed the sawn surfaces with a combination of a drum sander for the concave parts and hand sanding for the remainder.

This component was soon glued in place, helped by a couple of cramps to keep it tight to the lower shelf. I then added glue blocks all around the underside, **photo 7**; these add a lot of rigidity to the assembly.

### Dovetail time

It was now time to tackle the two small drawers. I prepared the four main pieces for each drawer to the exact width required, and cut the fronts and backs so they just (and only just) fitted in the drawer openings.

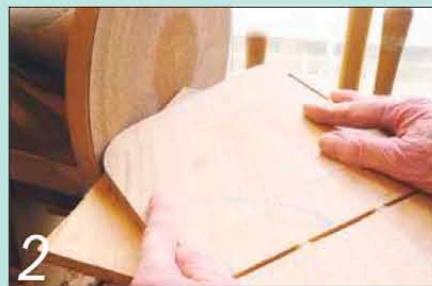
The first stage in marking out both through and lap dovetails is to show the extent of the pins and sockets; this should be carried out using a cutting gauge.

### Cutting the components

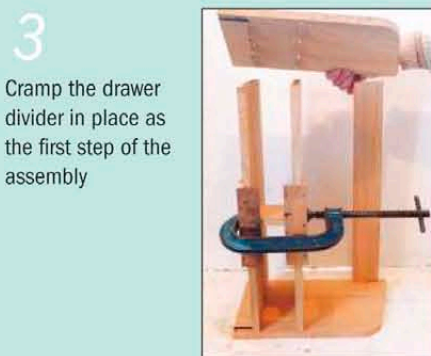
Removing the waste from the through dovetails on the rear components was a simple operation – dovetail sawing, then



1 The main carcass components are all biscuit-jointed together



2 The front corners of the end members are rounded on the disc sander



3 Cramp the drawer divider in place as the first step of the assembly



4 Assemble the other components, check that they're square and cramp them up



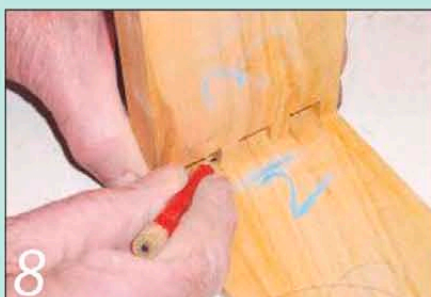
5 Rout the shallow rebate for the plywood back panel and square up the corners



6 Mark the plinth shape with a template and cut it out on the bandsaw



7 Fit the plinth in place and add glue blocks all round the underside



8 Cut the dovetail pins first, then mark the sockets out directly from them



9 Use the dovetail saw to make the initial cuts at each pencil line





**10**  
Bore out the bulk of the waste and trim to shape with a sharp chisel



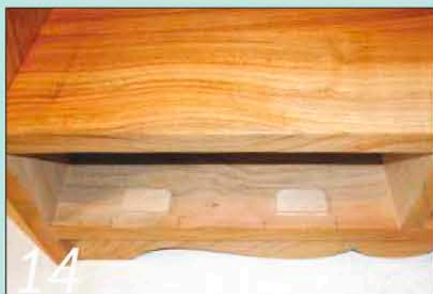
**11**  
When you're happy with the fit of the joints, it's time to assemble the drawers



**12**  
Slide the plywood drawer base into place and pin it to the drawer back



**13**  
Add small glue blocks to the underside of each drawer for extra strength



**14**  
Glue two small stop blocks to the carcass to restrict each drawer's travel



**15**  
Apply three coats of your chosen finish, flattening down lightly between coats



removing the bulk of the waste with a coping saw, and finally chiselling away the remaining waste down to the gauge lines.

Lap dovetails are not quite as straightforward. The sockets are marked directly from the pins, using a sharp 2H pencil, **photo 8**. The dovetail saw can only be used part way down the sides of the pins, **photo 9**, and the coping saw isn't used at all.

My preferred way of removing the bulk of the waste is to bore most of it away using a saw-toothed bit in a bench drill. It's possible to set the depth of cut exactly as required, with this part of the joint completed entirely by chiselling, **photo 10**.

Dovetail joints should never be fully driven home at the fitting stage. If the joint can be half-assembled, then careful inspection will show that all is well. Constant assembling and dismantling of the joint will worsen the fit as the wood fibres become compressed.

### Assembling the drawers

I normally form the groove for the plywood drawer base on my router table, and follow this by cleaning up the inside surfaces. Now the drawers can be assembled, **photo 11**, adding glue to both the pins and the sockets. Check each one for squareness once the joints have been tapped fully home.

The next stage is to cut and fit the drawer bases, **photo 12**, and then to add small glue blocks to their undersides, **photo 13**. Fitting a drawer once the glue has dried must be carried out so that the fit in the opening is both smooth and as free of unwanted movement as possible. With both drawers fitted, I added small stops to the carcass so the drawers couldn't be pushed back too far, **photo 14**. The final stage of making the drawers was to form the small bevel cut all around the front edges – another simple job on the router table.

### Finishing touches

With the drawers fitted, the back could be added. The plywood panel fits into the rebate prepared for it earlier, and a little glue and some fine pins hold it in place.

After giving all the external surfaces a final smoothing to remove sharp arrises, the project was ready for finishing. I used one of my favourite finishes, pre-catalysed lacquer, and applied three coats to all the surfaces, plus an extra one to the shelf which will hold the books. This lacquer is easy to apply, dries quickly, is heat- and waterproof, and is very tough. If desired, the final coat can be flattened down with fine steel wool dipped in a little soft wax, **photo 15**, and then buffed to give a low-lustre sheen.



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# The frugal table

BY WILL GREEN

**What's the largest piece of functional furniture you can make from a 2.3m length of English ash measuring just 120 x 80mm? Here's one possibility...**

**W**ill Green's Frugal Table aims to refute the statistic that timber wastage averages 200 per cent from tree to product. To make the most of his wood, Will studied industrial construction techniques and then refined a rigorous manufacturing procedure.

"In a time with issues such as timber sustainability and ash dieback, shouldn't we as designers be reducing consumption of materials through maximising productivity in our designs, cherishing local materials, and minimising waste?" says Will. "The ash used for this project was felled from a country estate that was open to the public. The tree was deemed unsafe and a danger to the estates' visitors."

## Design for strength

Inspiration for the structure of the table was taken from old plane wing designs, where an internal lattice structure was used to provide strength. The lattice structure here is a series of lap joints and routed elements that had to be very accurate to enable seamless construction, and to maintain as much strength as possible. The design of bridge arches also had its part to play.

A real bonus in the manufacturing of this piece is that all the components were machined to the same thickness of 5mm. This meant that productivity was vastly increased. The machine used was simply set up and the cuts repeated as often as necessary, so reducing labour and construction time.

The unexposed surfaces remained rough from the saw. However, with a belt sanding machine that used increments as small as one tenth of a millimetre, Will was able to finish all the exposed surfaces to their precise dimensions while keeping wastage to a minimum.

## What next?

Will explained: "The project was very successful at pushing the limits as far as possible for material productivity and the minimum of waste; as a stand-alone piece it conveys the message very well. Next I'd like to rein the project in and start thinking more about its commercial feasibility."

He added: "I'd also like to increase the lifespan and practicality of the project. I believe that thickening up the wooden slats from 5mm to maybe 8mm would go a long way towards addressing this. Also the slats could do with being closer together, to increase the functionality of the table surface."



**1** All the components were finished to size with a belt sanding machine to keep wastage to a minimum



**2** A lattice structure was used to create maximum strength with minimal amounts of material



**3** The finished table, complete with its arched braces, is 2300mm long, 750mm wide and 700mm high



**4** Will used the same structural techniques to create two matching benches. The braces make them amazingly rigid





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BY DAVID SALTMARSH

# Way down in the forest...

**"Each time I pick up a piece of wood I know why I started making Windsor chairs. It's the feeling you get from touching the wood, and the way the colour, texture and grain all go to make a great piece of furniture."**

**S**o says David Saltmarsh. He's a green woodworker, living and working on a smallholding near Wootton Fitzpaine in West Dorset with his wife and four daughters, along with several cows, pigs, sheep and chickens. They grow vegetables organically, and his wife makes preserves and cheeses which are sold in a local market.

## In the beginning

"When I started making the chairs they were a straight copy of the traditional design, but now I've evolved my own style, albeit still using all the old techniques. I keep power tool use to a minimum; I prefer to use mainly hand tools," said David as he picked up a piece of wood and started working with a traditional drawknife to shape a leg. "I use mainly oak, ash and elm, selecting trees for their straight grain. After sawing the wood to length I work with an axe and a drawknife. Good wood is a joy to work with, and the straight grain helps to make a good strong chair."

## Simple stages

David takes time cutting and smoothing the wood. Some parts are bent using a steamer; then most of the work on the legs and spindles is done with a traditional pole lathe, which is foot-powered. It's been in use since at least 500BC, and had no real competitor until the 14th century when wheel-driven lathes came into use. It works via a treadle which is fixed to a cord wrapped round the workpiece. The other end of the cord reaches up to the branch of



The raw wood is first trimmed roughly to shape with an axe...

a nearby tree which provides the recoil action. David pushes the treadle down and the workpiece turns. As he repeats the action, he cuts and shapes the wood with a chisel.

Green woodworkers like David are known as bodgers, and in the past they would have erected their lathes in the depths of the forest. Here they would fell the trees, cleave the timber and make chair legs and spindles.

## Five-penny piece

David and his family have had their smallholding for some years. It's called Five Penny Farm, after a 5p piece he found in a bread roll he was eating at the auction for the land. "We built the house first and then got planning permission; we needed to get the house up quickly," said David. "But it was all right in the end!" He sells the chairs locally, ranging in price from £200 to £2000. With a steady demand for his work, David knows he's got it right.



...before being shaped with a drawknife on the workbench



The legs and back spindles are turned on the pole lathe



The spindles connect the shaped seat, arms and backrest to complete the chair



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BY ANDY STANDING



# T is for...

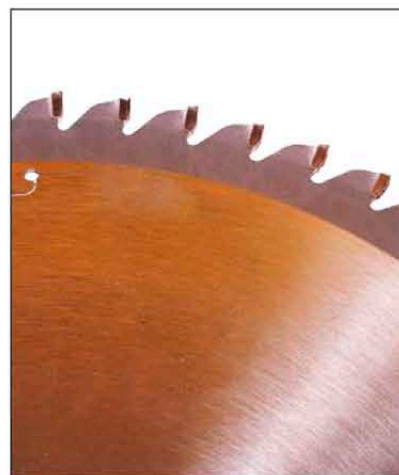


**The aim of this series is to provide you with snippets of interesting and, I hope, useful information concerning all aspects of woodworking. It will explain some of the mysteries for those new to the craft, and will I hope inspire and entertain everyone else**

**T**he idea of pottering through the alphabet and looking at woodworking topics that begin with each letter in turn generates some unusual entries. But it's an interesting exercise in lateral thinking, because in a curious way one topic seems to lead on to another, even if there's no obvious link between them as you first consider them. Here's my latest batch; please read on, and see what useful nuggets you can pick up from my trawl through subjects beginning with the letter T.

## TCT

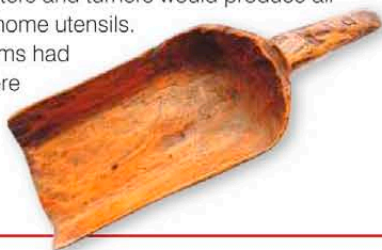
You'll often see the letters TCT when looking at sawblade or router cutter specifications. It stands for Tungsten Carbide Tipped, and the majority of blades and cutters are now made in this way. A small piece of tungsten carbide is brazed onto each saw tooth or cutter edge. This material is very hard and holds its edge much longer than high-speed steel. However, it can't take such a sharp edge, so the finish can be a little inferior. Some hardwoods and man-made boards such as mdf, plywood and chipboard are highly abrasive and wear blades and cutters out fast. Tungsten carbide tips are the answer to this problem, and you can even sharpen them yourself so long as you use a diamond stone.





## TREEN

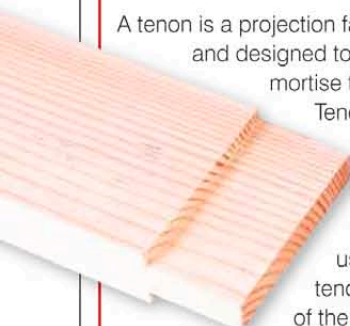
Treen (or treenware) is the name given to small wooden household items such as bowls, plates and other utensils. It means literally 'of a tree', hence 'wooden'. Before the advent of mass production, modern synthetic plastics and cheap metals, wood was still the preferred material for home use, and was easily available. Carpenters and turners would produce all manner of kitchen and home utensils. Unsurprisingly these items had a limited life, though there is a thriving market among collectors for surviving antique treenware.



## TENON

A tenon is a projection fashioned on the end of a piece of timber and designed to fit into a corresponding socket called a mortise to join the two components together.

Tenons are simple to make and are usually cut by hand using a tenon saw, though there are also many other possible methods involving machinery. When cutting tenons, the usual rule is that the thickness of the tenon should be one third of the thickness of the workpiece on which it is cut.



## TABLE SAW

The table saw is probably the first piece of workshop machinery that most people buy. It is the most used and the most useful of all the workshop machines. From rough-cutting sawn boards through to final dimensioning and jointing, it's a machine that you return to throughout the making process.

Table saws are made in many different sizes and formats. There are small, portable models for use in the workshop and on site, and though these are useful tools, they lack the precision and accuracy of the larger, heavier models. For the cabinetmaker or small workshop, a solid machine with a sliding crosscut table is a necessity; this will allow boards to be ripped and crosscut with ease.

The largest of the table saws are called panel saws and these are industrial-sized machines with sliding tables large enough to support a full-sized sheet of plywood or mdf. Motorised electronic setting systems are often incorporated for extreme accuracy and rapid set-up. Needless to say, these are very expensive machines.

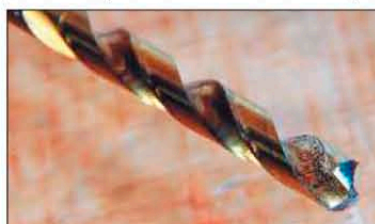


## TURNING

Turning is one of the oldest woodworking disciplines. Treadle-powered pole lathes have been used for centuries to fashion all kinds of circular and cylindrical objects from chair and table legs to plates and bowls. Modern lathes are sophisticated machines with electronic variable speed control, and are strong enough to handle large and heavy timber blanks. Skilled turners can produce the most remarkable designs, working to the finest tolerances and using a range of ingenious tools.

## TWIST DRILL

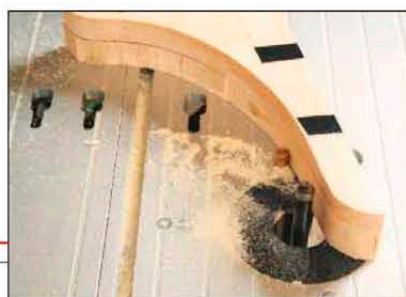
A twist drill is the most common type of drill bit and also the most versatile. It has a cylindrical body with two cutting edges machined on the tip. A pair of spiral grooves lead up the body and are used to carry the waste material away from the cutting point. They can be used on a variety of materials, from timber



and metal through to plastics. They can be resharpened, but the smaller sizes are fragile and prone to breakage if roughly handled. Luckily they are also cheap to buy.

## TEMPLATE

Templates are an important part of woodworking. They can be used simply as marking-out aids for making several identical components. Alternatively they can be used on machinery to guide the cutters on the workpiece. Templates are generally made from stable material such as mdf, plywood or even plastic. Great care should be taken when making templates to ensure that they are as near perfect as possible, because any mistake will be transferred onto the workpiece, necessitating remedial work.





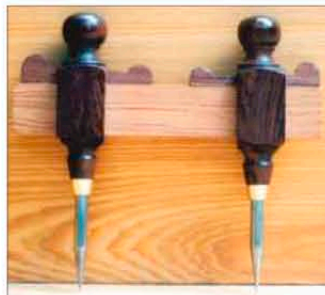


## TRY SQUARE

Along with the ruler, the try square is an invaluable marking-out tool. It comprises a wooden stock with a metal blade set in it at exactly 90°. The stock may have a brass facing on the edge to minimise wear and increase accuracy. The try square is used to mark out lines at right angles to an edge, and is also used to check that corners and edges are square.

## TRAMMEL POINTS

When marking out large circles or arcs, a normal compass is fairly useless. What you need is a pair of trammel points. These are basically two spikes that have integrated clamps and can be attached to a length of timber to make a large compass or a pair of dividers. Usually one of the points can be replaced with a pencil or a pencil lead so you can draw the outline you require.

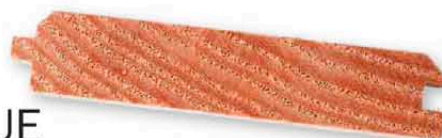


## THICKNESSERS

The thickness planer, commonly called the thicknesser, is a workshop machine for reducing timber to a set dimension. It planes a surface parallel to an already planed surface to produce a flat board of even thickness. The thicknesser relies on having one truly flat surface to work from. It is always used in conjunction with a surface planer which is used to plane the first surface flat. This surface is then laid down on the thicknesser



table and the timber is drawn through the machine to plane the reverse face parallel to the original. In smaller workshops the functions of both machines are often combined in one, known as a planer thicknesser.



## TONGUE

The tongue is often used for licking one's wounds after a close encounter with a sharp piece of woodworking equipment. It's also a ridge that's machined onto the edge of a board and is intended to fit into a corresponding groove on the adjacent board or other component. It is often used in frame and panel construction, where the boards slot together and sit in a groove in the frame without any glue being used in the joints so they're free to move. Floorboards are often tongued and grooved, providing good draught proofing while at the same time allowing the boards free movement. You'll often see the term abbreviated to T&G in timber price lists.

## TRIMSAW

A trimmer is a cordless circular saw. These tools are surprisingly useful and convenient to use. To maximise performance and reduce strain on the motor the saw uses blades with a thin kerf, which also minimises material wastage. They are especially useful for cutting up sheet material such as plywood and mdf on site, where the lack of a power supply can be a hindrance. They can, of course, also be used on thinner sections of solid timber, and are ideal for removing the tongues on floorboards when they need to be lifted for maintenance work. However, for heavy work a mains-powered tool is really a better option.







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BY ALAN HOLTHAM

# Freshly ground

**Even the most rudimentary workshop needs to have a double-ended grinder of some sort these days, but few people ever seem to bother about basic care and maintenance of what is potentially one of their most dangerous machines**

**T**he main problem with grinders is that with regular use the open grit of the wheel tends to clog up, **photo 1**, particularly if you're naughty and grind soft metals like aluminium... or even try to trim bits of timber: don't do that! The surface becomes glazed, and you then have to apply serious pressure to get it to cut. This leads to overheating and burning of the tool edge, and this is why dry grinders get a bad name as an aid to sharpening.

## Properly dressed

The remedy for all this is regular dressing of the stone, which means removing the top glazed layer to expose a fresh, sharp cutting surface. This new layer should then grind off metal with very little pressure, resulting in a cooler, safer grind. Even brand new grinding wheels need dressing from new, to get them balanced and to remove the hard outer surface that's left by the manufacturing process.

## Safety first

For most woodworking activities I always wear proper safety glasses, but for any serious work on the grinder I supplement these with a full-face visor, **photo 2**, to give added protection from the flying sparks and grit which still seem to find their way in round the glasses.

The other potential – though remote – danger is that grinding wheels can disintegrate during use, throwing fragments all over the place. Although this really is rare, it does happen and a proper impact resistant visor is the obvious safeguard. Always, *always* wear eye protection of some sort. Relying on the spark guards fitted to the machine is not really enough, and these often restrict your vision anyway.

## The heavy brigade

There are three types of wheel dresser available, all having slightly different uses. The star-wheel dresser is used when the

surface of the wheel requires quite radical cleaning or reshaping. It's a very crude tool, **photo 3**, consisting of a heavy cast metal holder housing four star-shaped wheels loosely located on a simple axle. On larger diameter grinders, the lugs of the holder are meant to hook over the edge of the toolrest to give extra grip. However, for most grinders there isn't sufficient travel on the toolrest to move it back far enough, so the dresser is used with the lugs on the rest.

## Diamonds are forever

The other dressers are the diamond dresser and the devil stone. The diamond dresser is just that: a tiny industrial diamond mounted in the end of a metal rod, **photo 4**. I find these more difficult to control for general dressing, but their precision makes them ideal if you want to shape the wheel to an intricate shape – for grinding shaped cutters, for example.

More modern diamond dressers consist of a wider pad on the end of a handle, and

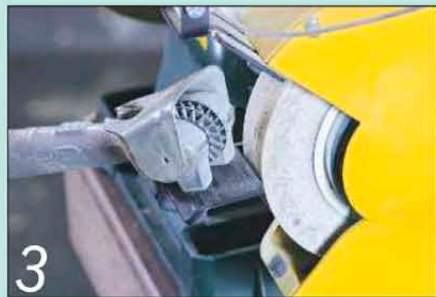




**1**  
A worn and untreated grindstone will have a glazed and ridged surface



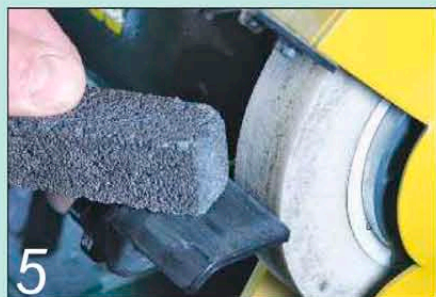
**2**  
Safety gear must include goggles, and preferably a face shield as well



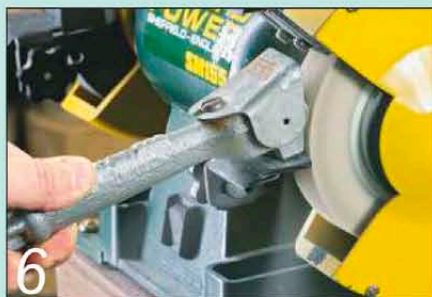
**3**  
The star-wheel dresser looks like a miniature medieval torture instrument



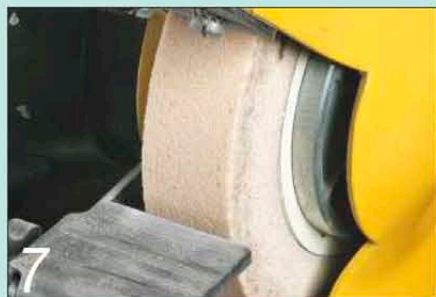
**4**  
The diamond dresser has a tiny diamond set into the end of a metal rod



**5**  
The curiously named devil stone is a stick of hard, rough carborundum



**6**  
Hold the star wheel dresser firmly against the wheel as it revolves



**7**  
It leaves the wheel with a cleaned but fairly roughened surface



**8**  
Lightly re-dress the surface with the devil stone for a smoother finish



**9**  
Adjust the tool rests and spark arresters after dressing is complete

this makes them more controllable for cleaning up flat surfaces.

## Devil take the hindmost

The devil stone is a stick of hard carborundum, **photo 5**. It's less severe in use than the wheel dresser, as it removes only individual grit particles rather than big clumps like the wheel dresser. This means that the dressed wheel surface is much smoother and presents a better surface for grinding.

Ideally regular use of the milder devil stone should keep your wheel in good trim, but if it gets really bad you'll have to start with the star wheel dresser. Devil stones come in a variety of hardness grades, so make sure you get one hard enough for the grindstone you're dressing.

## Five steps to success

A typical wheel surface on an amateur's grinder often shows deep grooving and severe clogging, which makes it virtually useless as a sharpening device. However, the problem can be put right very easily: here's how.

■ With the grinder running at full speed, place the wheel dresser firmly on the toolrest and push it square on into the face of the wheel, **photo 6**. The wheels will spin violently, making a great deal of noise and dust, but keep pressing firmly to get the cutting effect.

■ Keeping the pressure on by gently raising the handle, move the dresser from side to side across the face of the wheel. Keep this up until you can see that all the grooves have been removed and a clean fresh surface is exposed. Use the edge of the toolrest as a visual guide to keep the face of the wheel square, **photo 7**.

■ If you stop the grinder at this stage and look at the surface it will appear quite rough, with clumps of abrasive torn out. Although this will grind tools satisfactorily it's not ideal, so now's the time to run over the surface with the devil stone to smooth it off a little.

■ Hold this in exactly the same way and use the same side-to-side action, **photo 8**. Just pressing the dresser straight in isn't good enough; it must be swept across the face from side to side to allow the loose grit to clear.

■ If you've had to remove a significant amount of wheel to get it true, it's important now to adjust the toolrest and top guards, bringing them back in close to the wheel, **photo 9**.

Your grinder should now cut freely and with little overheating. It's amazing how few people ever bother with this simple procedure, but just try it and see. Grinding your tools with a sharp and clean wheel will almost become a pleasure!



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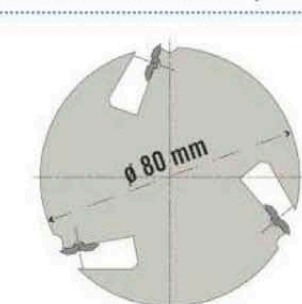
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|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
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| Plana 3.0 inc mortiser att  | Workshop             | Inc x2 Knife cutterblock HSS                                  | 3.2 / 240v or 415v        | 250 x 210 mm                | £832.50                           | £999.00                           |
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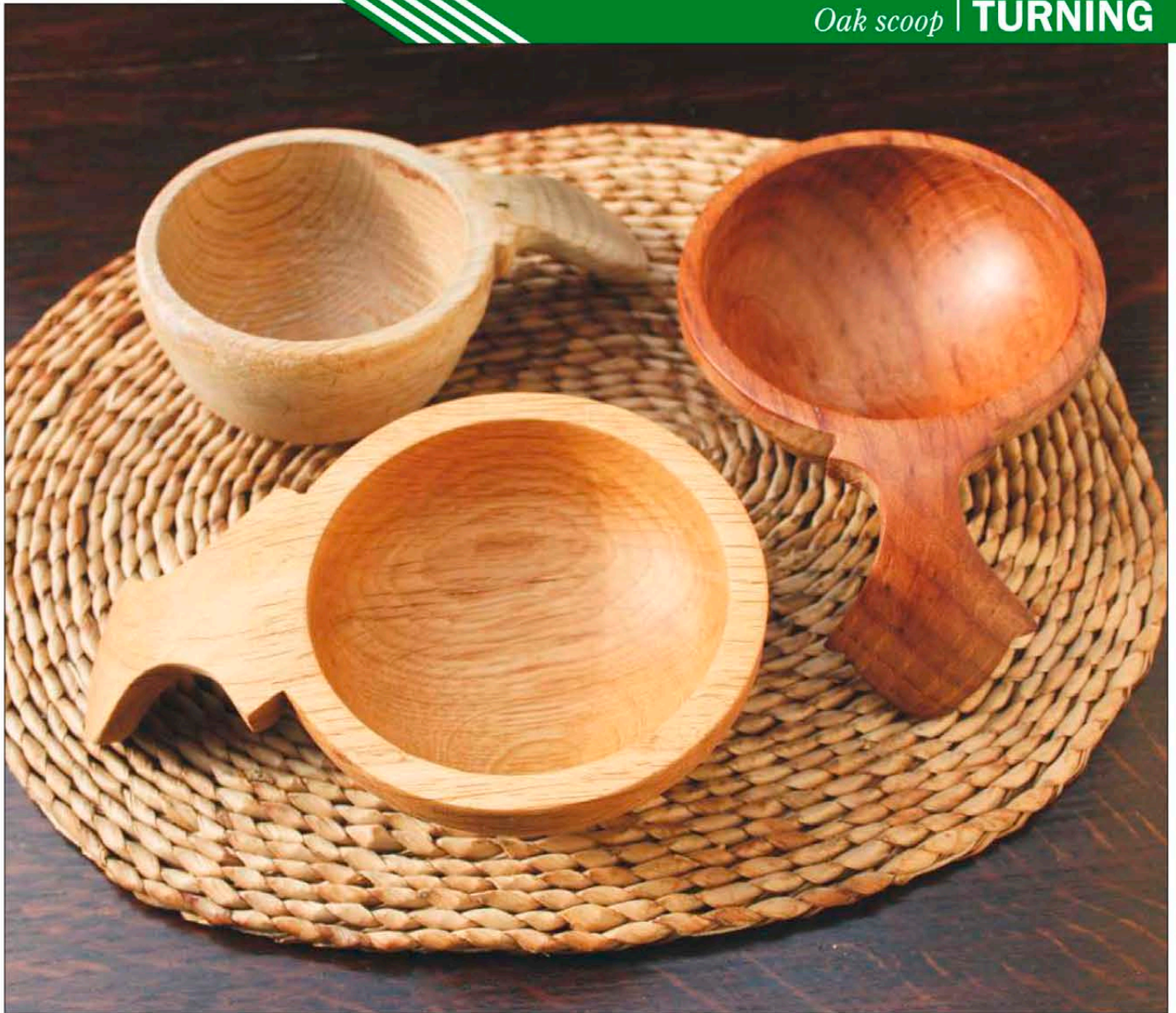
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BY CHRIS CHILD

# One scoop or two

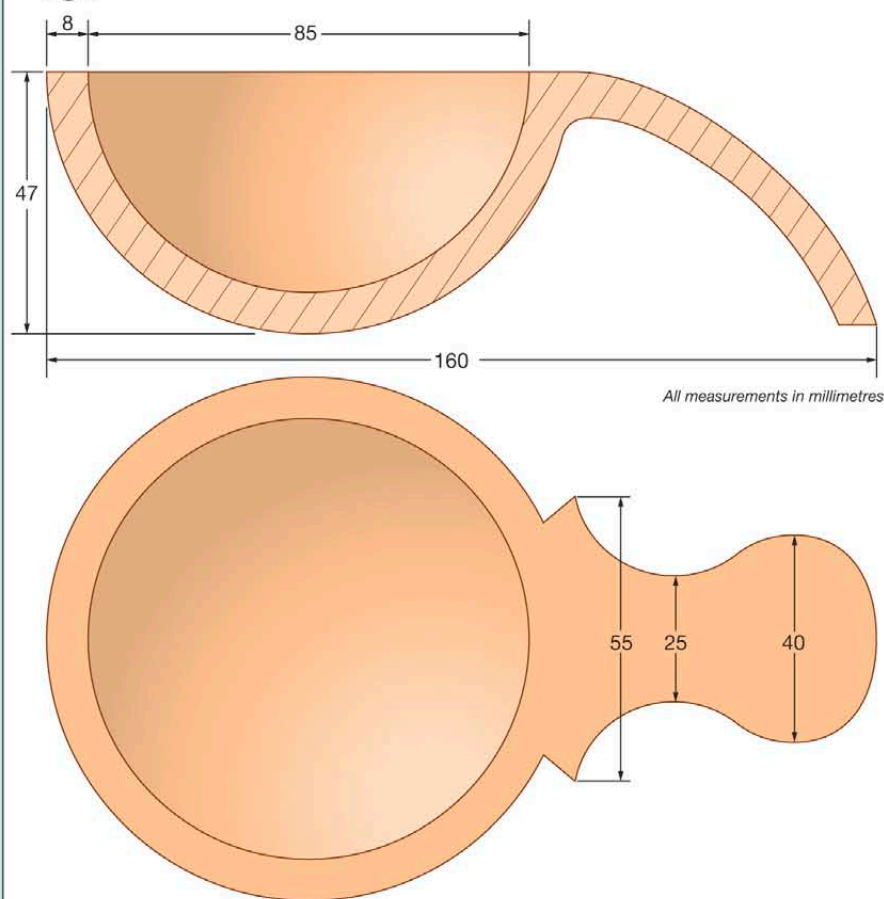
**Scoops – and their long-handled relatives the ladles – have been around for as long as man has needed to take up and transfer liquids or loose dry materials. Making one is an interesting turning challenge**

In the days before factory packaging, when the pace of life was altogether much slower, every grocer's shop or local store had a selection of wooden scoops and ladles of various shapes and sizes. These were used to dispense all kinds of produce such as tea, sugar, flour and dried fruit, all of which would have been supplied in loose bulk form. Meanwhile down on the farm, larger and more roughly hewn scoops were essential for measuring out grain, seed and animal feed.

Today these humble artefacts have all but disappeared from the world of trade and exchange. Well-preserved examples have found



**Fig 1**



their way into rural life museums and into the hands of treen collectors, but most are long gone, discarded along with so many other undervalued wooden utensils of the time.

## Waste not, want not

This scoop was fashioned from a disc of English oak about 180mm in diameter and some 50mm thick. It was deliberately chosen because the disc had a deep split in the side, **photo 1**, which made it unsuitable for turning into a bowl. A piece of wood taken from the end of a board which contains endgrain shakes can often be used in the same way, because with this kind of asymmetric project, the side which is free from faults is used to make the bowl of the scoop, and the opposite side with all the splits is simply cut away.

## Getting ready

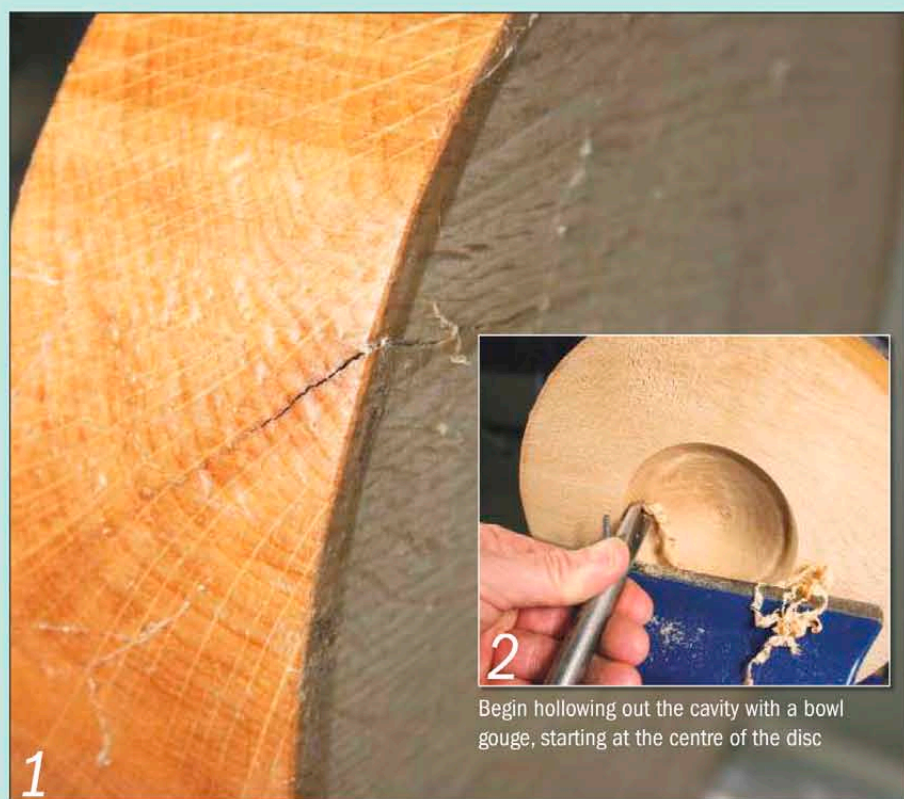
Before mounting the disc on the lathe, plane one side flat and screw it onto a faceplate. Make sure that the screws are spread far enough apart so that the holes don't interfere with the bowl of the scoop. The screw holes can then be removed when the underside of the handle is hollowed out. You could use a disc of plywood to extend the width of your faceplate if it's too small.

When working on the lathe there's always the danger of chips and splinters flying off as you work, especially with a damaged workpiece like this one. For this reason it's always advisable to wear a faceshield to protect your eyes.

## Cutting in

With the disc firmly secured, use a bowl gouge to slice the rim of the disc true, and then flatten off its face. Mark out the circumference of the scoop's bowl onto the face of the disc and begin hollowing out the cavity, starting at the centre of the disc. Guide the gouge in a slow arc so it generates a smooth even curve, **photo 2**.

When you come to forming the edge of the bowl, it's a good idea to fix some kind of vertical tool post to support the back of the gouge. I use a masonry nail fitted into a hole drilled in the toolrest. By resting the back of the gouge against it at the start of the cut, I'm able to stop it from sliding backwards and snatching into the edge of the bowl. The bevel of the gouge acts like the sole of a plane, gliding over the surface that has just been cut, and it follows the inside curve of the bowl right to the centre of the hollow.



**2** Begin hollowing out the cavity with a bowl gouge, starting at the centre of the disc

The blank had a deep split in the side, so it was unsuitable for turning into a bowl



### A continuous curve

Forming the smooth curve where the sides of the bowl meets the floor needs particular care with the gouge, and you may wish to change over to using a round-nosed scraper for this part. By holding the tool horizontally on the toolrest, you can sweep it outwards from the centre so the floor forms one continuous curve with the walls of the bowl. To enable the scoop to be reversed and gripped firmly onto a jam chuck (see below), form the inside wall of the cavity at a 90° angle... or even undercut it slightly.

When you've completed the hollowing operation, use the gouge in the opposite direction to form the top surface of the scoop's handle. This is a gentle curve which starts at the rim of the scoop and flows in an even curve to the corner of the disc, **photo 3**.

Before removing the work from the faceplate, make a record of the diameter of the opening and also check that it has parallel sides, **photo 4**.

### Working in reverse

You now need to make a jam chuck to hold the scoop in reverse on the lathe. The jam chuck is a square-sided projection which is cut on the face of a disc of fairly dense-grained wood such as beech or maple, **photo 5**. Making it is one of the most critical stages of the project, the short projection being sized so that it creates a very tight fit inside the edge of the scoop's bowl.

Mount the work onto the jam chuck by hammering it with your hand if necessary so it comes up against the back of the recess, **photo 6**. Then test that it runs true before running a bead of hot glue all round the joint to provide extra grip, **photo 7**. This bead of glue usually comes off fairly cleanly when the finished work is removed from the chuck later on.

### Turning the underside

Start at the edge of the disc and form the underside of what will become the tip of the handle, **photo 8**. Then mark out the width of the bowl you recorded earlier on the face of the disc. Carefully position your vertical tool post so it supports the back of the gouge when slicing at right angles into the work face, **photo 9**.

Use the  $\frac{1}{4}$ in bowl gouge, which you must keep sharp at all times, to block out the sides of the bowl and form the underside of the handle. Work in from both directions so



3 Use the gouge in the opposite direction to form the top surface of the scoop's handle



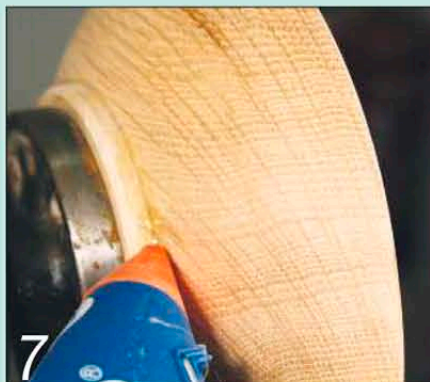
4 Record the diameter of the opening and check that the recess has parallel sides



5 You now need to make a jam chuck to hold the scoop on the lathe in reverse



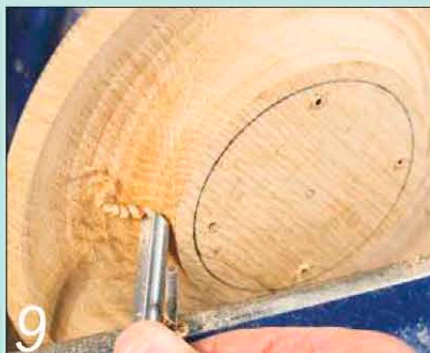
6 Mount the scoop onto the jam chuck by hammering it hard with your hand



7 Run a bead of hot-melt glue all round the joint to provide some additional grip



8 Form the underside of what will become the tip of the handle at the disc edge



9 Use a bowl gouge to block out the sides of the bowl and form the underside of the handle



10 Switch to a spindle gouge to finish hollowing the angle where the handle meets the bowl

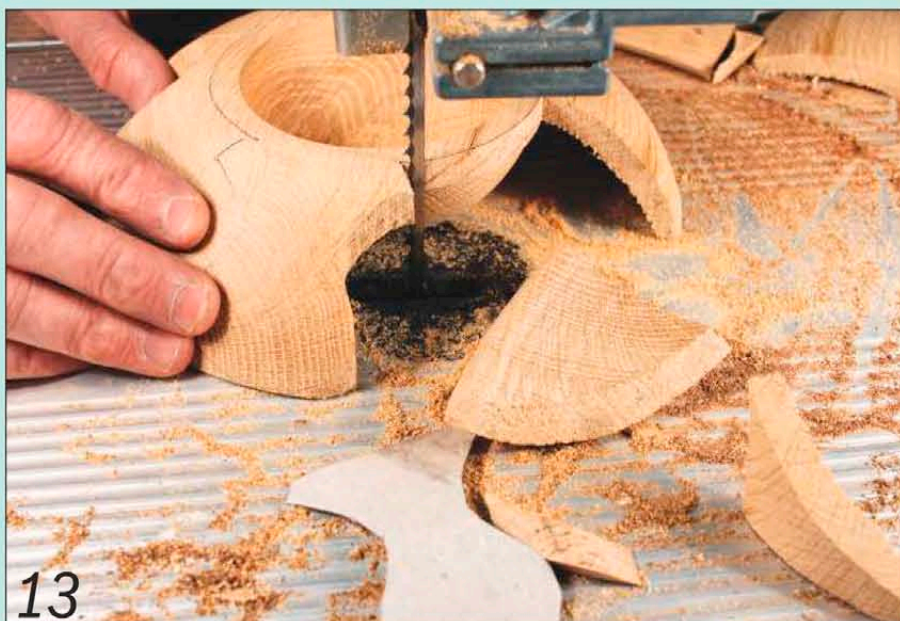




**11** Take very fine cuts as you work, with just the point of the tool cutting into the tight angle



**12** Complete the underside of the scoop by rounding off the bowl and sanding it smooth



**13** Cut out the handle shape on the bandsaw with the bowl held down flat on the table



that you form a tight inside angle where the lower side of the handle meets the bowl of the scoop. Check the thickness of the handle between your fingers, and use a depth gauge to check the junction between the handle and bowl.

## Switching tools

Change over to a spindle gouge with its pointed edge to finish hollowing the tight radius where the handle meets the bowl of the scoop, **photo 10**. Take very fine cuts as you work, with just the point of the tool cutting into this tight angle, **photo 11**. Try to avoid catching it on the wall of the opposing side; otherwise it may dig in.

Once you have a gently tapering handle profile, you can complete the underside of the scoop by rounding off the bowl, **photo 12**. Sand it using 80 grit abrasive first, and work down through 240 grit, finishing off with 400 grit. Use each successive grade to remove the scratch marks left by the previous grade.

## Cutting the handle

To shape the handle, mark it out first using a paper template and then saw out the approximate shape on the bandsaw with the bowl held down flat on the table, **photo 13**. The rest of the shaping work is done by hand, although you can use a belt sander to do some of the initial smoothing. Like me, you may regard hand sanding as a rather tedious task, but in this particular case I discovered a kind of tactile pleasure in smoothing away the saw marks on this oak scoop that rolled around so naturally in my hand.

## Approaching the finish

You'll need to think about what you'll use your scoop for when it comes to choosing a finish. Many people prefer to leave their work au naturel when it's to be used with food, so it can be washed under a tap after use. I prefer to wipe on a couple of coats of a special product called food-safe finish. This is a colourless oil which dries to a soft satin finish and imparts a high degree of water resistance.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Food safe finish

- Chestnut Products
- 01473 425878
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BY COLIN SIMPSON

# 1: Choosing a lathe

**So you think you want to try your hand at woodturning, but don't know where to start? This article – the first of three – is aimed at the complete novice who is looking to buy a lathe, and takes you on a guided tour round this simple but versatile machine**

**W**ith so many lathes on the market nowadays, choosing the right one for you can be a confusing experience. Let's try to simplify things a bit. All woodturning lathes are designed to hold a piece of wood securely and rotate it about a central axis while the turner shapes it using hand-held tools. The lathe consists of five main parts, **photo 1**, which I'll describe in detail.

## The motor

Most electric motors for lathes intended for hobby use are single-phase types, **photo 2**, and can be plugged into the normal domestic supply using a standard three-pin

plug. Some lathes come with electronic variable speed; more of that later. These lathes have three-phase motors, but are still able to operate off a normal domestic supply because the motor runs through a cunning device called an inverter.

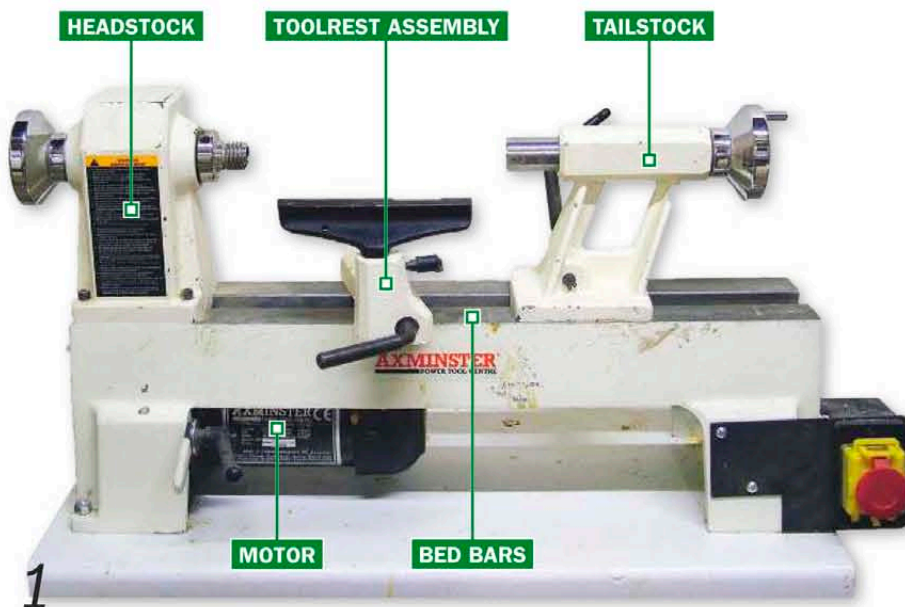
A motor's power is usually given in watts (W), but in the somewhat old-fashioned world of woodturning we often tend to talk in terms of horsepower; 1hp is the equivalent of about 750W.

Smaller lathes (unsurprisingly) tend to have smaller motors. Unless you intend to make only miniatures or items such as pens or lace bobbins, I suggest you go for a minimum power rating of  $\frac{1}{2}$ hp (250W). You will be able to turn bigger items with a smaller motor, but you'll have to take really small cuts to prevent the lathe from stalling. The lathe shown in **photo 1** is one from the Axminster range and has a motor rated at 500W (about  $\frac{3}{4}$ hp).

## The headstock

This is normally made from cast iron or fabricated in steel, **photo 3**, and houses the lathe's spindle – the component that drives everything round – and one set of pulleys. The corresponding pulleys are attached to the motor's spindle, which in some models is also incorporated within the headstock, **photo 4**.

The spindle is supported by two or more bearings situated at the front and back of the headstock. The spindle also has a screw thread machined on its exposed end, **photo 5**, which will take a number of accessories such as faceplates and chucks. Unfortunately, lathe manufacturers haven't standardized on this screw thread



The bed bars are the bare bones of any lathe. The motor is usually fitted below them (or behind the headstock); the other components fit on top of the bars





size, so you'll need to buy accessories that correspond to your particular lathe.

### The tailstock

Like the headstock, this is normally made from cast iron or fabricated in steel. It is designed to slide along the bed bars, **photo 6**, and be clamped to them in its chosen position. The method of clamping it varies between manufacturers, but a common method is by means of a cam locking assembly. The tailstock houses the quill or barrel, which in turn houses a revolving centre, allowing the free end of spindle work to be supported, **photo 7**

### The toolrest assembly

The toolrest sits in the toolpost, sometimes called a banjo, and can be swivelled and adjusted in height, **photo 8**. The toolrest assembly is designed to slide along the bed bars, and can be clamped to the bed in its chosen position. The top of the toolrest should be kept smooth and free from dents to allow the turning tools to slide along it



Most lathes have induction motors, with ratings ranging from around 250W for the smallest machines up to 750W on larger models



The headstock houses the lathe's spindle, plus on-off and speed-change controls. On some models the headstock can swivel round





Two sets of pulleys connected by a ribbed drive belt transfer rotation from the motor's drive shaft to the lathe spindle

5

The lathe spindle has a screw thread machined on its exposed end to take work-holding accessories such as faceplates and chucks



The tailstock is designed to slide along the bed bars, and is held in the required work position with a clamping mechanism



The tailstock houses a revolving centre (far right) which supports the free end of the workpiece and allows it to spin freely

without catching. Filing this occasionally will keep it in good condition, **photo 9**.

## The bed bars

The headstock, tailstock and banjo rest on and are clamped to the bed or bed bars. The bed can be of cast iron, fabricated from heavy-section steel, or made from box section or even round bars. Regardless of its means of construction, the bed needs to be rigid to reduce vibration, and also accurately machined to ensure alignment of the headstock and tailstock. My preference is for cast iron, as it dampens vibration better than other materials.

## Choosing a lathe

So what type of lathe do you need? To answer that question you need to consider the sort of turning you intend to do. In simple

terms turning can be divided into two types. In spindle turning – when making chair legs or stair balusters, for example – the work is held between centres in the headstock and tailstock, **photo 10**. Faceplate turning is carried out at the headstock end only, without the use of the tailstock, **photo 11**.

If you're going to do mainly spindle turning, then the length of the bed will be important. The greater the distance between the headstock and tailstock, the longer the piece of work you can turn. However, if you intend to turn mainly bowls and platters, the height of the headstock spindle above the bed becomes more important, **photo 12**.

## Height matters

This height governs the maximum diameter of work you can turn when the lathe has its headstock fixed to the bed bars. So if this

height is 125mm, the maximum diameter of work you'll be able to turn is 250mm.

Many lathes nowadays have headstocks that are designed to swivel, and these are therefore capable of turning larger diameter pieces because the bed bars don't get in the way, **photo 13**. On some lathes you may need to buy a special bowl turning attachment to take advantage of this.

Another advantage of a swivel-head lathe is that it makes life easier and more comfortable when you're hollowing out vases and the like. This is because you don't have to lean over the bed bars to gain access. It's worth pointing out that the spindle must line up with the tailstock when the headstock is returned to its normal position over the bed bars. The simplest way to check this alignment is to perform the 'kiss test'. The two points should line up precisely, **photo 14**.





8 The toolrest sits in the toolpost, and can be swivelled and adjusted in height to give a wide range of working configurations



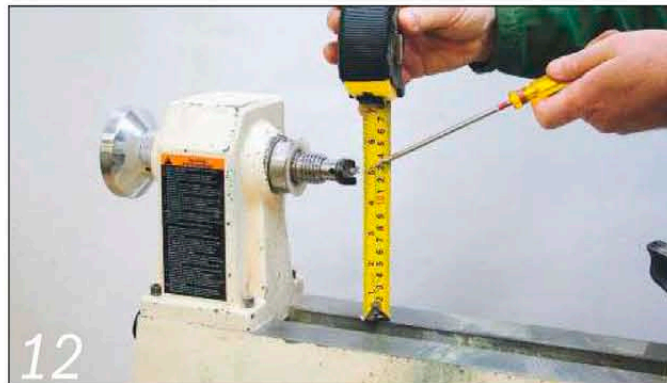
9 It's important to keep the toolrest smooth and free from rust so your turning tools can slide along it easily as you work



10 In spindle turning, the workpiece is held between centres in the headstock and tailstock, and is turned with the toolrest parallel to the work



11 In faceplate turning the work is held at the headstock end of the lathe, and the toolrest is positioned across its face or edge



12 The height of the headstock spindle above the bed bars limits the diameter of turned pieces such as bowls and platters



13 Many lathes have a headstock that can swivel on the bed bars, allowing large-diameter pieces to be turned without fouling them



14 When the headstock is returned to its normal position, it's important to check that the spindle lines up accurately with the tailstock

## Finding a home

You will also need to consider where you are going to set your lathe up. Is it to have its own dedicated area in a specially-built workshop, or will it have to share space in the garage and be moved to the side in order to get the car in?

If it can be permanently set up, you could consider buying a purpose-built stand or building your own turning bench. Either way, the stand needs to be strong and rigid enough to limit the amount of vibration that will occur. A concrete or solid floor is also better than the wooden floor of a garden shed.

Lastly, if you'll need to move the lathe in order to use the space for other things, you might consider bolting it to a thick piece of board and fixing this to a workstand, **photo 15**. When it's not in use, this set-up is simply moved to the side of the workshop and the stand is folded away.

## Variable speed?

As you tackle different turning jobs, you'll need to change the rotation speed of the headstock spindle. The larger the piece of work you are turning, the slower it will need to rotate. Speed changes are normally made by moving a pulley belt between corresponding sets of pulleys on the motor and headstock spindles (see **photo 4** again).

Some lathes are equipped with infinitely variable speed. While this can be very useful, the cost is high as they normally require a three-phase motor, an inverter and an electronic box of tricks. Some of these electronic boxes continually monitor the force being applied to the work, and will change the torque accordingly in order to maintain a constant speed.

There is another solution. Some lathes like the SIP 01949 shown in **photo 3** have a

stepped variable speed. The normal pulleys are replaced by cones, and moving the lever on the headstock makes the pulley belt slide up and down the cones. These lathes are often referred to as 'variomatic'. If variable speed is important to you and your budget won't stretch as far as an electronic variable-speed model, these lathes are well worth considering.

## Spending wisely

Clearly, your budget will also be a consideration. My advice would be to buy the best quality you can afford and go for a well-known brand name. Try to buy a lathe a little bigger than you think you will need. If you get hooked on woodturning (and it can be quite addictive) you may soon grow out of a smaller lathe.

Branded lathes such as Record Power normally have a better guarantee and much





15

If you'll need to move the lathe when it's not in use, bolt it to a sturdy board and set this on a folding workstand for easy portability



16

Don't set up your lathe too close to a wall, as some turning manoeuvres mean leaning right over the bed bars



17-18

Keep the lathe away from the corners of the workshop to ensure that you have room for operations such as removing drive centres from the headstock or tailstock



better after-sales service than the cheaper lathes imported mainly from the Far East. The build quality of a branded lathe will generally be better and spares, if ever you need them, will also be easier to come by.

## Shopping around

I'm often asked to recommend lathes, and I'm generally reluctant to do so. That said, Record Power have a very good range of lathes, from a 'starter' version up to models I'd be happy to use every day in my role as a professional turner. However, they're not the only contenders. For example, I really like the VivaMac, Vicmarc and Jet lathes, and Axminster also have a good range of their own branded models.

Take a good look around what's available before making your mind up. Many lathes look the same, and this is because they are. They just have different livery and badges on them.

If you don't want to buy new, the online

auction websites are worth looking at. If you can, it's a good idea to look over a second-hand lathe in the flesh before buying it. In particular, check the bearings and make sure the spindle runs true. Remember *caveat emptor*: buyer beware.

## Living with your lathe

Let's assume that you've made your choice of machine and have got your lathe home. Here are a few tips on setting it up to suit you, its new owner.

As a general rule of thumb, a comfortable working height for your lathe is one where the spindle is at the height of your elbow when you're standing normally. If it's any lower, you'll tend to stoop and you'll soon get lower back pain. Any higher and your shoulders will come up, resulting in aches and pains in the shoulders and neck.

Whether you buy a purpose-built lathe stand or make a bench yourself, it must be solid; consider bolting it to the floor. It's also

worth considering building a shelf below the lathe stand to load with ballast or turning blanks. This will add weight to the lathe and help to make it more stable.

Siting the lathe near a wall is fine, but don't have it too close. There are some cuts that require having the handle of the tool right over the bed bars, **photo 16**, and the wall might get in the way. Remember also that you might need access to the back of the headstock (**photo 17**) and the tailstock (**photo 18**) in order to insert a knock-out bar to remove drive centres, so don't site your lathe too near the corner of your workshop.

## What next?

So with your lathe all set up, are you ready to start turning? Well, not quite. You'll need all sorts of special tools and accessories, abrasives, polishes and, although it sounds boring, you need to consider some safety equipment. I'll make a start on some of these points next month.



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BY BOB CHAPMAN

# BOXING CLEVER

I like making boxes, and in my craft-fair days they were good sellers, making attractive but inexpensive gifts. Although they are for the most part straightforward to make, there are still some key points to be aware of... like these

## 1: DESIGN BEFORE YOU START

Boxes are fairly easy to design, often requiring little more than a simple sketch of the intended shape. The overall proportion of the diameter to the height is an important factor, and so is the ratio of the lid to the body of the box. The 1:2 rule is helpful, but I like to take the diameter closer to the height (3:4) and make the lid slightly deeper in relation to the body of the box (3:5). **Fig 1** opposite shows the development of a possible box design, starting from a simple cylinder.

## 2: SIZE MATTERS

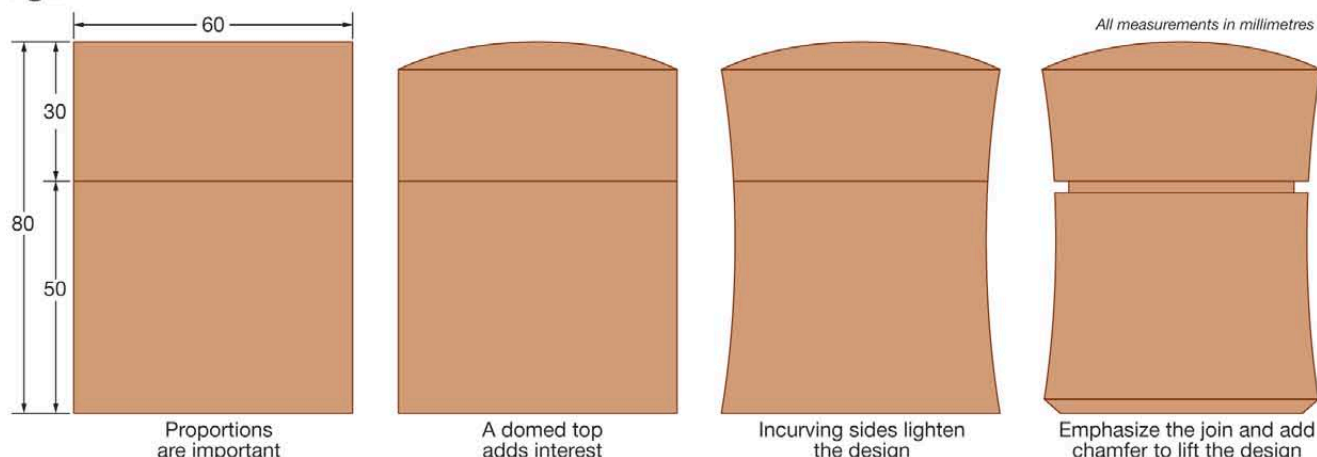
These turned wooden boxes are intended to be small items, and aren't improved by making them bigger. The overall proportions of 6:8 – 6 across and 8 high – work well if the unit of measurement is the centimetre, but a box six inches in diameter and eight inches tall begins to look rather ungainly and unattractive. I want to make boxes, not biscuit barrels. The everyday phrases 'small but perfectly formed' and 'big and clumsy' say it all. This, of course, raises the question of what such a small box might be for.

Sometimes there's an obvious use. For example, the very narrow mushroom-shaped box in **photos 1 and 2** couldn't be anything but a needle case. However, my own answer is usually that they're not especially for anything. They're attractive objects in their own right. Having said that, my wife does use one for earrings and the like. Once, at a craft fair, a man and his wife (at least, I assumed she was his wife) stopped and the lady picked up a box. In a mystified tone the man asked me what could be put in a box that size? Before I could say a word his wife answered: 'Diamonds, darling, diamonds'. Be warned!



This long and narrow mushroom shape suits itself to a decorative needle case



**Fig 1****3: CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIMBER**

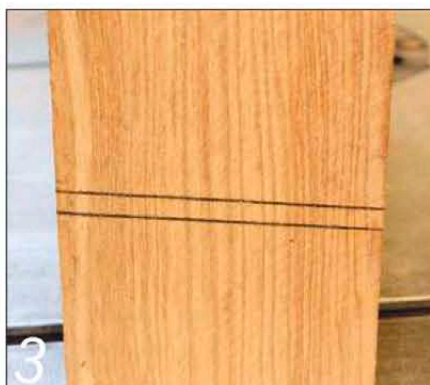
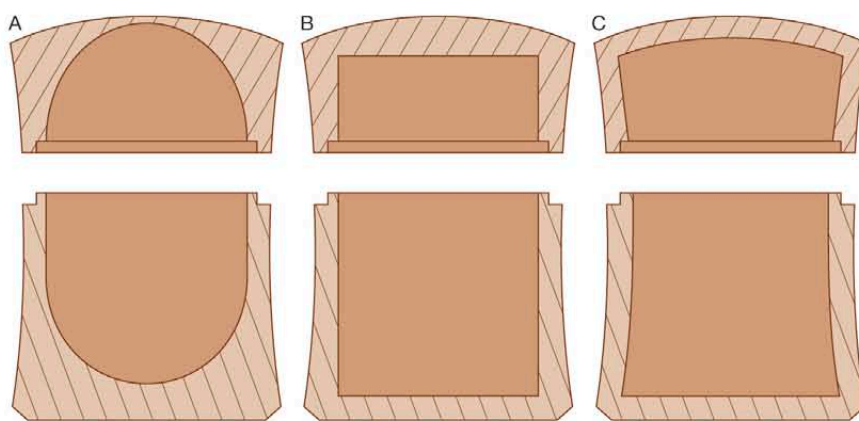
In making a box there must always be a region where the lid fits over the body or vice-versa. If the overlap is, say, 6mm and the parting cut separating the top and bottom is about 3mm wide, then around 9mm of the wood's grain pattern will be missing between the top and the bottom sections when the two are put together.

**Pick parallel grain**

The choice of timber is very important in minimising the effect of this missing pattern. If the grain markings are not parallel to each other, then cutting 9mm or so out of the middle makes matching the two parts together again very difficult. Wherever you try, matching the grain in one place leaves a mismatch somewhere else. On the other hand a parallel grain that runs fairly straight from top to bottom, **photo 3**, can be matched well all round the piece even after a small section is removed, **photo 4**.

**Hide the join**

Another way of overcoming the 'missing pattern' problem is to make a box where the grain match – or mismatch – cannot be

**Fig 2**

**3** This piece of ash is beautifully straight-grained, so the lid joint won't show after assembly



**4** This picturesque little plum box reveals a near perfect grain match



**2** Matching the grain is not an issue when the top is fitted to the base

seen. The yew needle case in **photo 2** is an example. Alternatively the problem can be overcome by designing boxes where the lid and body are made of different timbers, and where there will obviously be no grain match. The little acorn box shown in **photo 5** illustrates the point perfectly. The acorn's nut is made of holly, while the cup is laburnum.

**4: DECIDE ON THE INTERIOR SHAPE**

It's generally assumed that the shape of the inside of a box matches the shape of the outside, but it's worth remembering that it doesn't have to... and that sometimes it might be better if it doesn't.

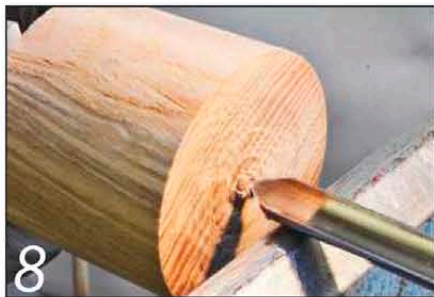


**5** Using different timbers for the box and its lid makes life a lot easier

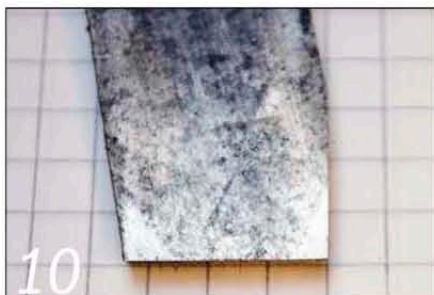




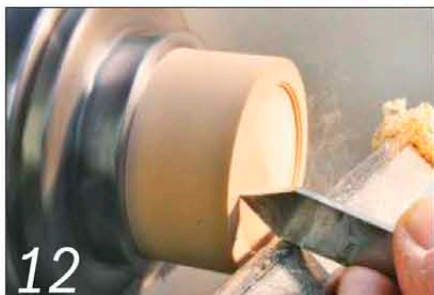
**6** Prepare your blank by marking out the various areas that will be lost during the turning



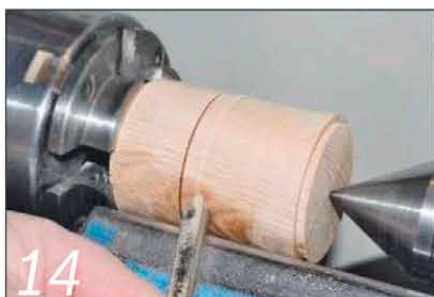
**8** The gouge should be exactly on centre when you start the hollowing



**10** This home-made scraper has its side and front edges sharpened at 90°



**12** Use a parting tool to make a shallow recess in the lid for the box body



**14** Any outside shaping must be done with the lid and body fitted together



**7** Part off the section for the lid, widening the cut to stop the tool binding



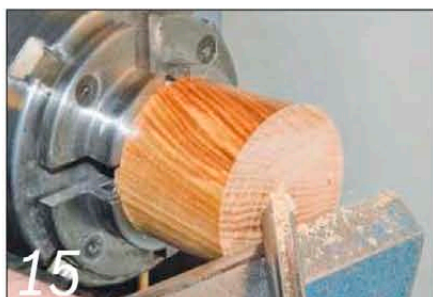
**9** Cut from the bottom outwards with the gouge or a round-nosed scraper



**11** Its slightly angled blade is designed to cut the internal corner square



**13** The fit should be tight enough for the box body to grip without support



**15** Turn the dovetail spigot away, leaving the box base slightly concave

The three boxes in **fig 2** are shown with different internal shapes. The shape of **A** is a simple curve in both the lid and the body of the box. This is by far the easiest to make and may possibly be regarded as the best shape for a box interior.

Consider the internal corners in boxes **B** and **C**, and bear in mind that these boxes are small so whatever has been put in them must also be small. In attempting to get something out of the box, a finger will probably push it into the corner. This can only make it more difficult to remove, especially in box **C** with its undercut interior. By contrast, anything in box **A** can be simply scooped up the gently sloping sides.

## 5: SET OUT THE BLANK WITH CARE

While the blank is still square, set out the approximate dimensions. Allow 6mm or so at each end, and approximately 10mm where the top and bottom meet, **photo 6**. Setting it out in this way lets you see where the join will be, and might also allow you to avoid a difficult grain pattern simply by turning the blank round and working from the opposite end. If there's obviously no such problem, simply add about 25mm to the intended finished height of your box.

Mount the blank between centres, turn it to round and form a small dovetail spigot at each end before parting off the lid section. This allows you to hold each section in the four-jaw chuck as necessary. When parting off the lid, widen the cut slightly to prevent the tool from binding as you cut deeper, **photo 7**.

## 6: CONSIDER OTHER TECHNIQUES

Whatever interior shape you want, the easiest and quickest way I know of hollowing out a box is with a spindle gouge. Set the tool rest so the tip of the gouge is on centre, with the tool held horizontally and the left-hand cutting edge at about 9 o'clock, **photo 8**. Push the tip a few millimetres into the centre of the blank. Then pull it across to the left, cutting on the lower wing, and withdraw it when the hole is the diameter you want. Repeat this as necessary, going a little deeper each time.

## Work with the grain

When hollowing, always begin the cut in the bottom of the hole and cut on the way out. This is cutting 'with the grain' and will give a better finish. Cutting down the side and across to the centre, on the way in, is cutting against the grain and will give a rougher, torn surface. If the interior shape shown at **A** in **fig 2** is what you want, finish with light cuts from the spindle gouge, **photo 9**, or from a round-nosed scraper, again working from the bottom up and out.



### Scrape it straight

If you prefer the flat bottom and straight sides shown at B in **fig 2**, it may be worth investing in (or making) a box scraper, **photo 10**. This has its side and front edges sharpened at right angles, just right for finishing a straight side and a flat bottom squarely into the corner.

When using it, be sure to take very light cuts across the bottom, **photo 11**; cutting endgrain with the tool so far over the rest is never easy. With practice you can do the same job with a skew chisel, and the undercut corner inside box C is best tackled with the long point of a skew.

### Bore your way out

An entirely different alternative to all this is to use an appropriately sized Forstner bit or saw-toothed cutter to bore out the inside of the box. This inevitably gives straight sides and a flat bottom, and the bottom will have a small hole in the centre left by the lead-in point of the Forstner bit. This rather spoils the look of things, but it can be covered by cutting a thin disc to fit the box and gluing it in, or by lining the box with baize.

Before removing the box body from the chuck, don't forget to form the spigot (or recess) to take the lid, and sand and polish the inside.

### 7: TIME FOR THE LID

Holding the lid by its dovetail spigot, use the parting tool to make a shallow recess in the lid, **photo 12**, gradually widening it until the box body just fits. Keeping the recess shallow means that, if you make a mistake, you can skim it off and start again.

Gradually deepen the recess until the box body goes in far enough but leaves a small gap (around 1-2mm) between the two parts. The point of this gap is to give a visual and intentional break in the grain pattern. It looks neat and also fools the eye into thinking the match is better than it probably is. Without the gap, any mismatch in the grain will be much more obvious. The fit should be tight enough for the box body to stay put when unsupported, **photo 13**.

An alternative not yet considered is to leave the lid solid, but this would make the box top-heavy and has little to recommend it. Hollow the lid to your chosen shape. If you sand inside the lid, take care not to sand the inside of the lip where the two parts meet or you will make the fit sloppy. At this stage a reasonably tight fit is necessary.

### 8: MODIFY THE EXTERNAL SHAPE

It's essential that the transition between lid and body is smooth and continuous, and

this is most easily achieved by fitting the two parts together on the lathe. The whole cylinder can then be skimmed true before sanding and polishing. The tight fit between the lid and the body ensures that both pieces rotate together.

### Keep the parts together

If you intend to modify the shape of the box beyond a simple cylinder, it must be done with the lid and the body fitted together, **photo 14**. This ensures that any curves flow smoothly from one piece to the other. Trying to do them separately is a recipe for disaster,



I prefer to polish boxes on a buffing wheel, and generally use the Beall system



Sand and polish the finished piece before removing it from the chuck

and will almost certainly result in some sort of discontinuity between the two parts.

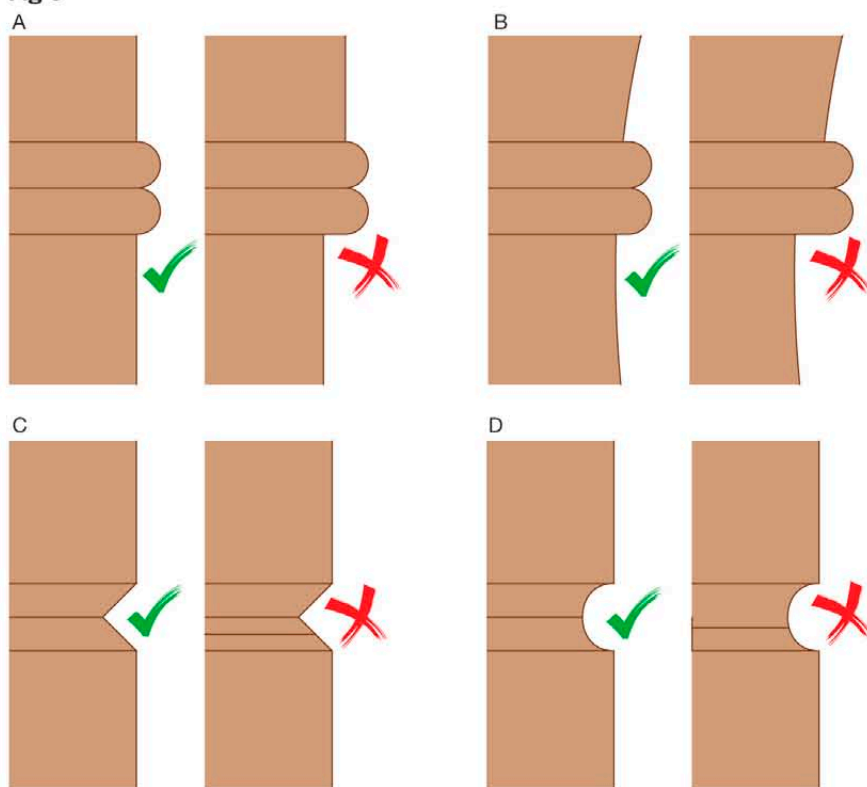
If you're curving the sides inwards to form the familiar 'cooling tower' shape, don't overdo it. The low point of the curve is only a millimetre or so in from the straight side.

### Loosen the lid... slightly

Now, and only now, can you consider loosening the tight fit of the lid on the body. When I sold boxes at craft fairs, I always found that loose lids sold better than tight ones. It was mostly women who bought the boxes, and they didn't like it if the lid was difficult to remove, usually putting the box down for fear of breaking it.

My wife Linda always says that tight-fitting

Fig 3







18

This simple finial-shaped lid was borrowed from a design by Chris Stott

lids are only done to show other turners how clever you are. She thinks it's silly to need two hands to pull a box apart before she can put anything in it. I now always make boxes with loose-fitting lids.

### 9: TOP AND TAIL THE BOX

The bottom of the box should be finished to the same standard as the sides, and this



20

Islamic domes inspired this design, and there are many others around



19

Finials become stems on the spinning-top lids of this unusual collection of boxes

means finding a way of holding it in order to work on the bottom. The simplest way of doing this is to turn the box body round in the chuck and grip the lip gently in the chuck jaws. So long as you work carefully with a sharp gouge, **photo 15**, the dovetail spigot can be removed leaving the bottom of the box slightly concave so it will sit well on a flat surface. If you're forming a chamfer on the bottom as in **fig 2**, now is the time to do it. Sand and polish the piece before removing it from the chuck.

### Jam in the body

An alternative method, and one which prevents any risk of damage to the lip, involves cutting a recess in a piece of scrap wood, of a size such that the box lip is a tight push fit in it. This arrangement is called a jam chuck, because the box body is jammed into it. Provided the fit is tight enough, the bottom dovetail can then be turned away as before.

Similarly, the lid can be held by expanding the jaws into the recess, thereby allowing the top of the lid to be shaped with a gouge. Alternatively a mating spigot can be turned on scrap wood and the lid jammed onto it while the top is turned, sanded and polished

### Spit and polish

With that done, the box is finished, **photo 16**. However, on small items like this I prefer to polish them on a buffing wheel. I use the Beall buffing system, **photo 17**, but Chestnut Products also produce a similar one which presumably does the same thing. See the panel (right) for contact details. These buffing systems produce a very high shine which looks good on boxes, although I don't care for it on larger items such as bowls.

### 10: VARIATIONS ON A THEME

I've used a very simple design to illustrate most of these points, but obviously a box design can be as simple or as complicated as you want to make it. Many boxes

incorporate finials of greater or lesser complexity, **photo 18**, and these can be made to serve a secondary purpose too, as in these spinning top boxes, **photo 19**.

### Beads and coves

Decorative beads can be added as another way of disguising the joint between lid and box, again drawing the eye away from the grain and helping any mismatch to go unnoticed. If you plan to apply beads in this way, make sure that the sides of the box appear to pass through the beads without any step, as shown at A and B in **fig 3**.

Small V-shaped grooves and round coves can also be used for the same purpose, but make sure you avoid the error shown at C in **fig 3** where the bottom of the V doesn't coincide with the division between body and lid. When the lid is lifted it will take a small very sharp and fragile edge with it. Likewise, the division shown at D in **fig 3** isn't precisely in the middle of the cove, and looks unsightly.

Lastly, the box itself may be inspired by shapes you have seen elsewhere. For example, the box in **photo 20** was based on the onion shape of Islamic arches and domes, and the teardrop influence is obvious in the main photo on page 64. Don't be afraid to experiment, and if what you try doesn't come off, all you've wasted is a small block of wood and a couple of hours of your time.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

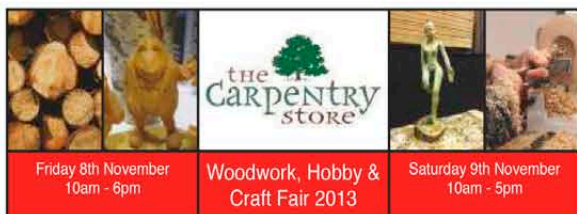
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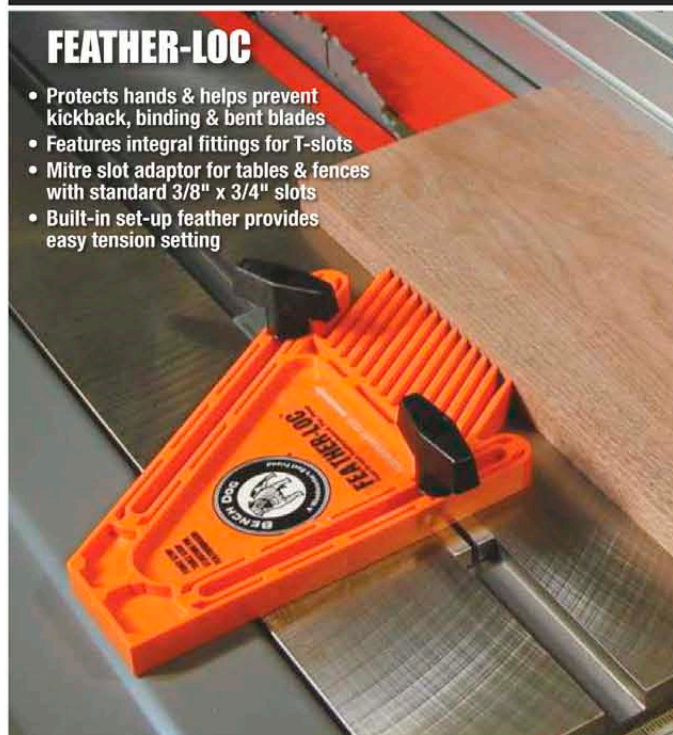


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*Many woodworkers think of the planer thicknesser as an unaffordable 'big beast', but smaller machines can deliver perfectly adequate performance at decidedly budget prices. Here's a good example*

## Woodster pt65 planer thicknesser

Although the pt65 is one of the smallest planer thicknessers available, it's capable of working to high standards within its capacities. Little has been lost because of its diminutive size. Its construction is robust, and its weight makes it readily movable within the workshop, and portable in the back of a car for use on site.

### Standard features

There is little plastic to be seen on this machine. The body is pressed steel, the surfacing tables are alloy castings and the fence and thicknessing table are also of steel. The infeed table is controlled by the knob at the front, with a scale to one side showing the depth of cut graduated in 0.5mm markings. The outfeed table is fixed, with the inner ends of both being serrated. The cutter block holds two knives with four securing screws to each, and revolves at a speed rather higher than usual. The universal motor is tucked away within the lower part of the body.

The fence position is fixed, and it can't be moved laterally. However, it can be tilted easily for bevel edging and chamfering. The Allen key required for securing the fence is included, as is a push stick.

### Thicknessing time

The thicknessing table is mounted on four threaded corner pillars linked by a chain. The height setting is controlled by a handwheel located to one side of the infeed table. This handwheel is loose and simply locates on a spindle alongside the infeed table, so it can be positioned and removed as required. Both the infeed and outfeed rollers are rubber-covered.

The chippings hood is designed for use both when surfacing and thicknessing, and incorporates a key which must be used to

£200



activate the safety microswitch. When surfacing, this hood locates neatly and securely on the thicknessing table.

### Good switching

The on-off switch features a small cover to the housing which has to be raised to gain access for switching on, but the cover itself can be



The fence can be tilted for bevel edging (see opposite) but cannot move laterally



The thicknessing aperture holds the debris hood when surfacing



The fence must be removed to fit the hood in place for thicknessing





Manual support is essential on the outfeed side of the machine as well

pressed to switch off. There is provision for padlocking the cover, making the machine very safe. Should the machine be overloaded, there's an automatic cut-off device which switches it off. This overload control is re-set by pressing a button close to the main switch.

### Using the machine

With the fence in position, we put the machine through its paces by first facing various pieces of stock material. The surfaces produced were all excellent.

Before trying out the machine for edging, we checked that the angle between the fence and the tables was 90°. As with surfacing, the quality of the surface and the accuracy in terms of being straight and square were excellent.

With the machine changed to thicknessing mode, various pieces of hardwood and softwood were passed through the machine. There is a scale to one side of the thicknessing aperture, but as with the scale on the fence, this must be taken only as a guide, and the wood should be carefully measured for accuracy of thickness. When thicknessing, the fence has to be removed to allow for the debris hood to be fitted correctly.

Just one small test remained; to try some bevel edging. This was just as straightforward as normal edging, although extra care is needed to ensure that the wood remains close to the fence, as there can be a tendency for it to slide down the face.

### Summing up

This machine must be treated like a friend, with care and affection. Overload it, and the pt65 will be the first to complain. Like all machines, use it within its capacities; it's not designed for preparing floor joists. It has just the one weakness; the need to remove the fence when the machine is used for thicknessing. Despite that, this machine is a little gem. **GW**

### SPECIFICATION

|                                |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>MOTOR</b>                   | 1100W       |
| <b>CUTTERBLOCK SPEED</b>       | 9000rpm     |
| <b>CUTTING KNIVES</b>          | 2           |
| <b>SURFACING TABLE SIZE</b>    | 655 x 160mm |
| <b>THICKNESSING TABLE SIZE</b> | 255 x 152mm |
| <b>MAX PLANING WIDTH</b>       | 152mm       |
| <b>MAX THICKNESSING HEIGHT</b> | 120mm       |
| <b>WEIGHT</b>                  | 21kg        |

### VERDICT

Used within its capabilities, this is a superb little machine that's ideal for the small workshop.

**PROS**

- Compact design
- High cutter speed
- Light and portable

**CONS**

- Just the fence issue

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**



### FURTHER INFORMATION

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

Hold the work tightly against the angled fence when bevel edging



The basic operation of surfacing is simple and straightforward to do



It's always wise to check that the fence is truly vertical before doing any edging



The thicknessing table is quite small, so you need to support the work as you feed it in



Small cordless screwdrivers are such convenient and useful tools. The only difficulty is making sure you have the right bit to hand. Bosch has solved this problem with the PSR Select, which has an integrated magazine to store and load the bits

## Bosch PSR Select cordless driver

£45



Cordless screwdrivers come in all shapes and sizes, from powerful professional tools capable of ripping the heads off screws to pocket-sized models ideal for delicate jobs and a bit of DIY. This Bosch driver is firmly in the latter category, but is nonetheless an impressive little performer. It also solves the perennial problem of never having the right bit to hand.

### Brilliant design

This driver has all the usual features – a soft-grip body, a large power trigger and an LED worklight. But the ‘killer app’ is the bit magazine at the front. At first glance it

appears that this simply stores the bits, ready for you to remove the one you want and insert it into the bit holder, but it’s much

more sophisticated than that.

On top of the machine is a small magnifying window, and behind it a sliding switch. When the switch is in the rear position, a small LED illuminates the window and you can see the screwdriver bit at the top of the magazine. Rotate the magazine and all the bits pass under the window. When you see the bit you want to use, push the switch forward and the bit is injected into the bit holder from the rear.

To change bits you pull back the switch, rotate the magazine and select a new bit. It’s foolproof, and you never need to remove the bits from the tool. However, should you want to replace any of the supplied bits you can easily remove them by simply pulling them out of the bit holder, where they are held magnetically.

### Slow charging

The PSR Select has an internal battery which can’t be removed, so you have to recharge the whole tool. An intelligent charger is included, and an indicator light on the tool tells you when it’s fully charged. It takes about five hours to recharge a flat battery.

However, that’s the only small drawback. Bosch screwdrivers are always good and this is one of the best. It’s powerful and effective, and the magazine and loading system are faultless. It’s the perfect combination of convenience and versatility. **AS**

### SPECIFICATION

|                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>BATTERY</b>            | 3.6V Li-ion                    |
| <b>NO-LOAD SPEED</b>      | 210rpm                         |
| <b>MAX SCREW DIAMETER</b> | 5mm                            |
| <b>MAX TORQUE</b>         | 4.5Nm                          |
| <b>CHARGING TIME</b>      | 5 hours                        |
| <b>WEIGHT</b>             | 500g                           |
| <b>ACCESSORIES</b>        | storage case, charger, 12 bits |

### VERDICT

This tool is a brilliant idea, brilliantly executed.

**PROS**

- Simple to operate
- Good performance
- No more lost bits

**CONS**

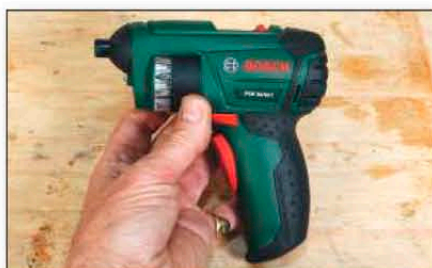
- Relatively slow charging

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

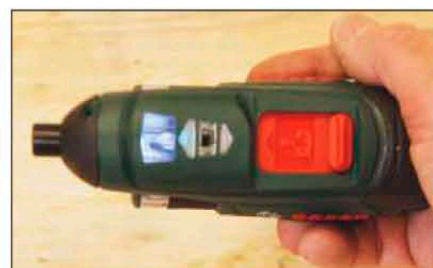
**PERFORMANCE**

### FURTHER INFORMATION

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



The rotating magazine contains a selection of 12 different bits



The illuminated window on the top shows the type of bit selected



You simply slide the switch forward to load the selected bit in the holder

The LED worklight shines a bright pool of light on the screw you’re driving





You may think that once you've seen one cordless screwdriver, you've seen them all, but then you come across the new Black & Decker Gyro driver. It has no trigger. It has no reversing switch. In fact it doesn't even look much like a screwdriver. So how does it work?

# Black & Decker BDCS36G Gyro Driver

£40

The Gyro Driver is a rather remarkable tool. It goes against all the conventions of the usual cordless screwdriver. It doesn't really look like a pistol and it doesn't have a trigger. It's more like an extremely chunky manual screwdriver. You operate it by inserting its bit into the screw head and then twisting the tool in the direction that you wish the screw to turn and... Hey presto! The little motor starts turning. The further you twist the tool the faster it turns; it's as simple as that.

The mechanism is activated by a large button on the rear of the tool which you press as you hold it, and gyroscopic sensors inside the body determine the level of twist and set the motor accordingly. There is an LED worklight on the top of the body which comes on as soon as the button is pressed.

## Slow recharging

In common with most small screwdrivers, the Gyro Driver has an internal battery that isn't removable. It has a warning system using the LED worklight to tell you when it

wants charging. The charger simply plugs into the tool. However, there's no charging indicator light so you don't know when it's fully charged. The instructions say to leave it connected for 16 hours.

## Using the driver

Having initially thought that it was a bit of a silly gimmick, once we started using the Gyro Driver we really liked it. It's remarkably sensitive, easy to control and surprisingly gutsy. It sits comfortably in the hand and is a real pleasure to operate.

## Conclusion

This is rather a brilliant little screwdriver. Its clever operating system makes it easy and fun to use. It's an ideal tool for assembling flat-pack furniture and doing minor DIY jobs around the house, and would also be useful for delicate jobs in the workshop. **AS**



## SPECIFICATION

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| <b>BATTERY</b>            | 3.6V Li-ion      |
| <b>NO-LOAD SPEED</b>      | 0-180rpm         |
| <b>MAX SCREW DIAMETER</b> | 5mm              |
| <b>MAX TORQUE</b>         | 3Nm              |
| <b>CHARGING TIME</b>      | up to 16 hours   |
| <b>WEIGHT</b>             | 300g             |
| <b>ACCESSORIES</b>        | charger, 10 bits |

## VERDICT

This is an innovative tool that works well and is fun to use once you get the hang of its unusual *modus operandi*.

**PROS** ■ Compact and well-designed  
■ Simple, intuitive operation

**CONS** ■ Slow charging

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

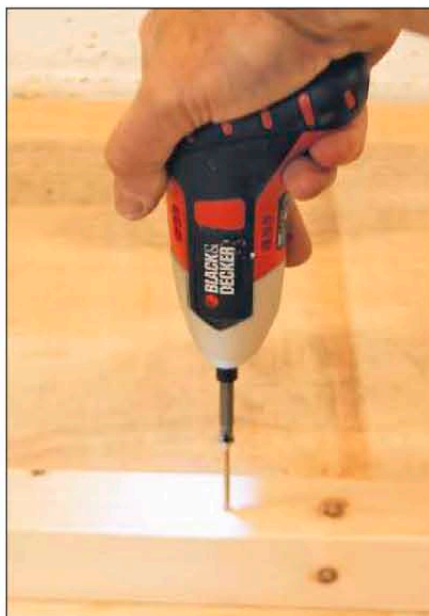
## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Black & Decker
- 01753 511234
- [www.blackanddecker.co.uk](http://www.blackanddecker.co.uk)



The Gyro Driver is tailor-made to fit snugly in the palm of the hand

The motion of the driver is controlled by pressing the activation button



Its bright LED worklight lets you see exactly what you're driving





Scheppach have for several years offered a full range of bandsaws, from the smallest 1.0 to the largest 7.0 with its 600mm wheels. Now this range has been updated, and not just in the slight change of name from Basato to Basa

# Scheppach Basa 4.0 bandsaw

The Basa 4.0 is a mid-range machine with a healthy appetite for hard work. It's made mostly from fabricated steel, with a cast iron table and an alloy fence. The one-piece door is held by a button at the top, while the lower part is released by unscrewing a knob. The drive is to the lower wheel, with a belt which can be moved across a two-pulley arrangement to give a choice of speeds. Before the belt can be changed the motor has to be moved slightly using a lever, which also allows the tension of the belt to be adjusted.

The upper wheel has the usual arrangement for blade tensioning and tracking, but with a slight variation. The tensioning can be quickly slackened by lever, making blade changing both easy and quick. The insert in the centre of the table has to be removed for this purpose, as does the rail which holds the rip fence.

## Easy adjustments

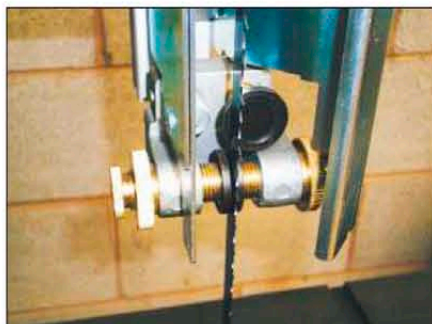
The table is mounted on a large quadrant which is readily controlled by rotating a large knob, despite its size and weight. The quadrant support carries a graduated scale to show the angle chosen, and there's a stop at the inner end to ensure that the table is returned to the horizontal.

The rip fence locates on the rail which runs across the front of the table. This fence is a very good size, can be used to the left or right of the blade, and has high and low sides. As well as being adjustable forwards and backwards, it has further fine adjustment facilities to ensure it's vertical, and with its face parallel with the cut of the blade.

The cross-cut fence locates in grooves machined to both sides of the blade. This allows for mitre cuts to be made up to 60° to the left and right. The fence slides across the table with no detectable unwanted movement. Another feature of this fence is the loose pin which locates it at 45° and 90° to give very positive locking.



The rip fence anchors very firmly to the calibrated rail by means of a toggle lever



The upper blade guide wheels are fully adjustable for accurate control



A series of levers hold the rail securely across the front of the table





For compound cuts the table can be tilted and the mitre fence angled

### Good guides

The most critical part of a bandsaw is the blade guide system. There are three wheels to control the blade: one on each side and a thrust wheel to the rear. All are fully adjustable to within a whisker on this machine, thanks to a micro system, with the thrust wheel positioned to allow the rear edge of the blade to pass over the face of this, but close to its edge. All this is enclosed behind a hinged panel to give protection to the user.

The guide system and its cover are controlled in height by rotating a large knob to the right-hand side, where it is held by friction. Thus the position can be quickly adjusted to give the minimum of clearance above the wood being sawn. The guide system is repeated below the table.

### Using the machine

Our tests started with some freehand work in thinnish wood, the blade being sufficiently narrow for the gentle curves marked. Then it was on to some ripping. We deep-cut one piece with a width close to the maximum depth of cut. The cutting was easy, with the fence giving adequate support. Thinner pieces were also sawn, all without any tendency for the blade to wander; the fence was positioned on the right-hand side of the blade for all these cuts. This is essential when bevel ripping, to ensure that gravity helps keep the wood close to the fence.

Cuts using the mitre fence were made in various pieces of wood, including compound cuts where the table was tilted and the mitre fence set to an angle other than 90°. In reality such cuts are rarely needed, but the Basa 4.0 cut them all perfectly.

### Summing up

This machine is a pleasure to use. Adjustments are easy to make, with the blade guide system performing excellently. The fences incorporate many refinements not usually seen. The build quality is well up to what is expected from Scheppach, and it will satisfy the most fastidious woodworker who demands the highest of standards in workshop equipment. **GW**

### SPECIFICATION

|                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>MOTOR</b>            | 1500W                 |
| <b>TABLE SIZE</b>       | 548 x 400mm           |
| <b>TABLE TILT</b>       | -22.5° to 45°         |
| <b>BLADE LENGTH</b>     | 2955mm                |
| <b>BLADE WIDTHS</b>     | 6 to 30mm             |
| <b>CUTTING SPEEDS</b>   | 800 or 1200m/min      |
| <b>THROAT WIDTH</b>     | 375mm                 |
| <b>MAX DEPTH OF CUT</b> | 250mm                 |
| <b>EXTRACT OUTLET</b>   | 100mm                 |
| <b>WEIGHT</b>           | 112kg                 |
| <b>ACCESSORIES</b>      | cross-cut fence (£69) |

### VERDICT

This isn't the cheapest bandsaw on the market, but it's one that's hard to better.

**PROS** ■ Excellent fences  
■ Superb blade guides  
■ Near-perfect cutting performance

**CONS** ■ Somewhat pricey

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

### FURTHER INFORMATION

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

The cross-cut fence can be located to the left of the blade if required



The minimum blade width is 6mm – ideal for cutting shallow curves like these



The cross-cut fence runs in grooves at either side of the blade



A loose pin locates the cross-cut fence positively at the 90° and 45° positions



*If your woodworking tends to be on a small scale, you don't have to fill your workshop with full-size machines. Just take a trip to your local Proxxon stockist for their compact precision-made equivalents*

## Proxxon DH40 thicknesser

The Proxxon thicknesser is a small machine designed to give a fine surface finish on hardwoods and softwoods. It's very compact, measuring just 280mm deep, 230mm wide and 235mm high. The machine is constructed in aluminium and steel, and the case is made from reinforced polyamide in the distinctive Proxxon colours of olive green and mustard yellow.

The 200W motor gives a single no-load cutter speed of 6000rpm. The motor is not rated for continuous use, and should not be run for periods longer than 15 minutes at a time without a break.

### Vital statistics

You can pass wood up to 80mm wide through the machine, and the maximum thickness is 40mm. The machine has automatic feed with an efficient kick-back fitting. The in-feed roller is metal; the out-feed roller is coated in rubber so no marks are left on the wood. The balanced cutter shaft takes two HSS blades which can be reversed or replaced with ease. A new set of two blades costs £7.45.

### Easy adjustments

The height-adjusting knob is firm and positive and controls the depth of cut. One turn of the knob corresponds to 1mm, and there are clear calibrations. The operator can adjust the cut to very fine limits.

When one side cover is removed, the nylon gears and toothed drive belt can be seen and the high quality of the engineering becomes evident. Removing the other side cover gives access to the motor, the height adjustment system and the second toothed belt. Remember that you should never remove these covers unless the mains supply has been disconnected.

### Using the machine

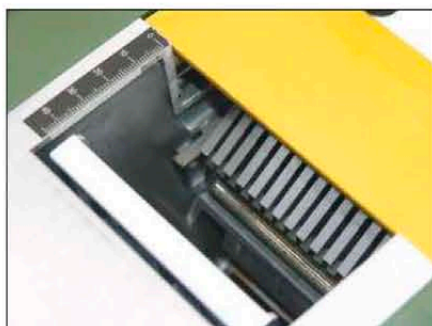
The best results are obtained if one surface of the wood to be thickened is planed accurately first; this is the surface which is placed downwards on the table. It is advisable to set the cut so that only a little wood is removed with each pass. Remember that the machine has a fairly small motor and can easily be overloaded. It's much better for the wood to go through several times until the thickness required is obtained.



**£451.50**



The balanced cutterblock takes two HSS blades which are reversible



The machine features automatic in-feed with an efficient kickback fitting



One turn of the clearly calibrated knob alters the depth of cut by 1mm





For the best results, plane one surface first and place this face down on the thickening table

You can speed up the process when machining very small stock by putting several identical narrow strips through at a time. Make sure that they're at least 300mm long. If you wish to thickness shorter lengths, glue or stick them to a larger mdf base carrier and thickness them this way. Using this technique you can machine fine-grain woods down to 1mm thick, which is pretty impressive. Without a carrier, wood can be reduced to 3 or 4mm thick.

### Looking after the blades

Don't be tempted to put recycled wood through the machine, as it may contain hidden nails and screws that will wreck the blades. These are relatively long-lasting, but once the edge has gone it's time to reverse or replace them. Putting new blades in is a simple matter, and clear instructions are supplied on how to do this. Wear gloves when handling the blades to protect your fingers.

There is no dust extraction outlet; adding one would make the machine bulky and more difficult to store away. In any case the shavings produced are very fine, and don't present a big waste problem. From time to time it's a good idea to take off the side panels to check that there's no build-up of shavings inside the machine.

### Summing up

This precision machine is the smallest and most compact thicknesser around. It's ideal for producing wood for boxes, inlays, jewellery, model making and so on. If used within its design limits, as set out in the instruction leaflet, and with carefully prepared wood, excellent results can be obtained. It is, however, expensive.

There are other small thicknessers which are cheaper and have larger capacities. These will also do a good job, but they're heavier and bulkier and may have a tendency to gobble up very thin sections. If you're looking for a small thicknesser which won't be too heavy to lift up and put away, and you need to thickness only relatively small stock, then this may be the machine for you. It makes a very good companion to the new Proxxon AH80 surface planer which was reviewed in the June 2013 issue of the magazine. *IW*

## SPECIFICATION

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>MOTOR</b>                   | 200W     |
| <b>CUTTERBLOCK SPEED</b>       | 6000rpm  |
| <b>CUTTING KNIVES</b>          | 2        |
| <b>MAX PLANING WIDTH</b>       | 80mm     |
| <b>MAX THICKENING CAPACITY</b> | 40mm     |
| <b>MAX DEPTH OF CUT</b>        | 0.8mm    |
| <b>FEED SPEED</b>              | 4.8m/min |
| <b>WEIGHT</b>                  | 8kg      |

## VERDICT

This machine is small and perfectly formed, and does an excellent job... at a price.

**PROS**

- Superb performance
- Very fine level of adjustment
- Good blade system

**CONS**

- Shouldn't be run for longer than 15 minutes
- No dust extraction facility

### VALUE FOR MONEY



### PERFORMANCE



## FURTHER INFORMATION

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

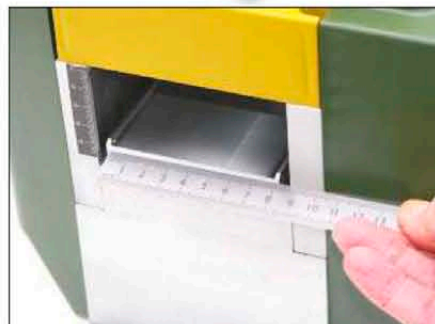
You can speed up the process by putting several narrow strips through at a time on a base carrier



Removing one side cover reveals the well-engineered drive mechanism

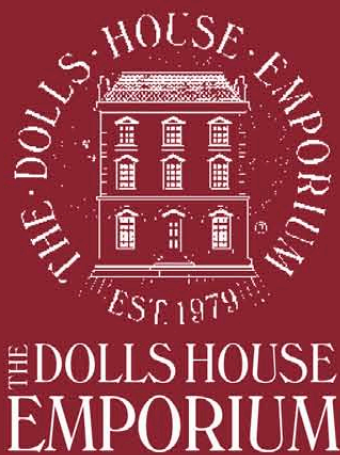


Removing the other cover gives access to the height adjustment system



The machine's capacities are 80mm in width and 40mm in height





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*There's still no substitute for a set of traditional bench chisels in the workshop, and this one brings together two famous names from the world of hand tools*

## Stanley Bailey chisel set

These Bailey bevel-edge chisels – named after Leonard Bailey, one of the fathers of the modern hand plane – are manufactured in Sheffield from carbon-chrome steel. Aimed mainly at the contractor, they're tapered chisels featuring lacquered blades for improved edge retention and rust resistance, according to the company. The set of five chisels, in blade widths from 6 to 32mm, come with a quality leather tool roll. It's sold in a box, making it easy to wrap as a gift for the woodworker in your life!

### Flat and true

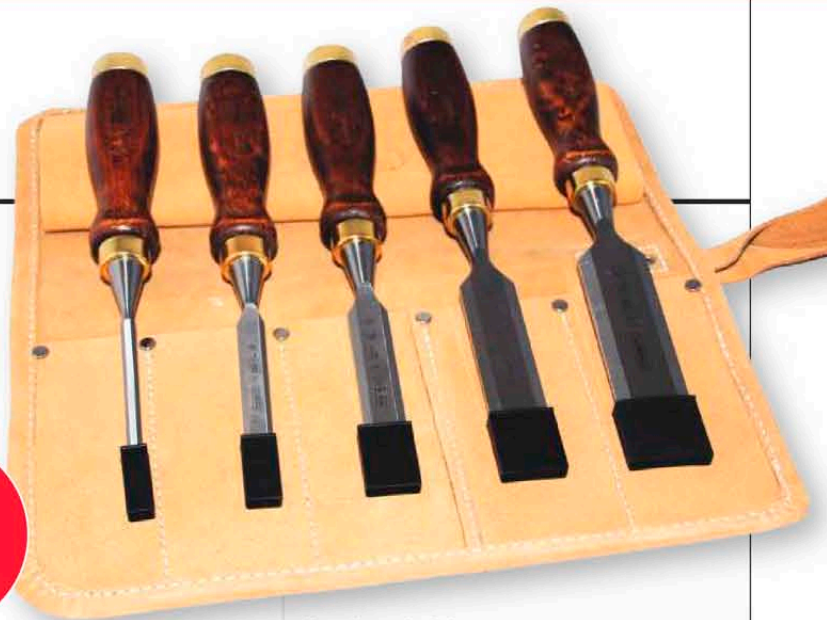
The first test we carried out was to check the flatness of the backs. These are almost Japanese in nature, having a hollow just behind each cutting edge, so there's no drawn-out flattening procedure required to ensure the wire edge is removed.

We had the 25mm chisel licked into

shape after less than a minute's work on a diamond stone, and it took a similar amount of time to prepare the rest of the set. While the preparation was quick, there was still enough feedback through the stone to indicate that this is pretty hard steel – apparently it's ball-bearing grade, and it's British as well!

The finish on each blade is consistent, but the deep side edges (known as the 'lands') below the somewhat rudimentary bevels aren't ideal for fine dovetail work.

**£55**  
(web price)



### Good to hold

The handles are made from lacquered and stained beech. Each one is fitted with a hoop and ferrule for durability when struck, although these are nowhere near the thickness and quality of the brass hoops and ferrules on chisels of old. Instead they're a thin pressed affair that looks like electro-brassed steel.

That said, these chisels will certainly do a good job for general bench work, and are particularly comfortable to hold for paring work where the flimsy ferrules won't cause any problems. **AK**

### WHAT'S IN THE SET

**Five bevel-edge chisels** in widths of 6, 12, 18, 25 and 32mm

### VERDICT

This is a well-made set of bench chisels from a famous brand, selling at around £11 per tool.

**PROS**

- Excellent finish
- Good edge retention
- Leather tool roll

**CONS**

- Thin and flimsy-looking hoops and ferrules

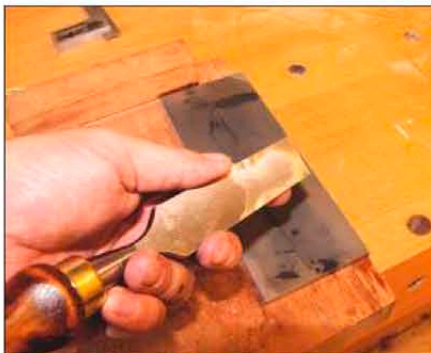
**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**



### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Stanley Tools
- 0114 291 7146
- [www.stanleytools.co.uk](http://www.stanleytools.co.uk)



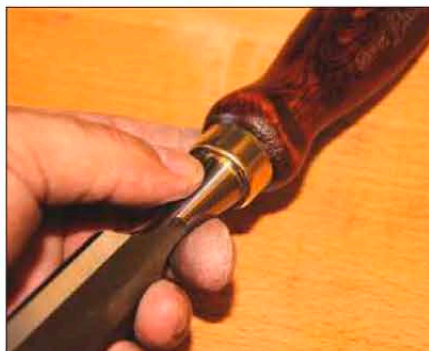
The slight hollow behind the cutting edge made sharpening quicker



The chisels take a fine edge that's ideal for paring work



The brass-coloured hoop on the striking end of the handle...



...is matched by a similar ferrule, but they both appear very thin



*Hot on the heels of the original Veritas dovetail saw comes... another Veritas dovetail saw! This time the tooth pitch is finer than the 14tpi original, making it ideal for those really delicate cuts and joints*

## Veritas fine-tooth dovetail saw

£59



## SPECIFICATION

|                         |       |
|-------------------------|-------|
| <b>OVERALL LENGTH</b>   | 360mm |
| <b>BLADE LENGTH</b>     | 235mm |
| <b>BLADE THICKNESS</b>  | 0.5mm |
| <b>TEETH PER INCH</b>   | 20    |
| <b>MAX DEPTH OF CUT</b> | 40mm  |

## VERDICT

For cutting fine joints in thin stock, this saw is as good as it gets, even if you might not like the modern styling!

### PROS

- Comfortable pistol grip
- Quick and easy start to the cut
- Very sharp teeth

**CONS**

- Could be tricky to sharpen

**VALUE FOR MONEY  
PERFORMANCE**

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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

The design of this saw is identical to the original 14tpi model, so it's equally comfortable to handle, and with the same slightly raked back rip-filed tooth pattern, it gives a very sweet start to the cut. For the novice, this is a major benefit for initial alignment and tracking.

### Novel features

The back is a resin composite rather than the traditional folded brass or steel strip, and is injection-moulded onto the blade and the handle-mounting bolt. This is equally as rigid as a traditionally designed saw, and provides enough weight to get the saw to work without having to resort to leaning on it. The pistol-grip bubinga handle is attached to the spine of the moulding

with a brass nut fastener.

Like its 14tpi counterpart, the blade is of Japanese origin, but there's no logo or manufacturer's mark on it, just a simple etching to show the tpi number and tooth pattern for easy reference.

The teeth are machine filed, which usually means they have a slight bluntness compared with a hand-filed saw. However, that's not so here; this model is as sharp as a hand-filed saw, so the cuts are fast and clean with no wandering.

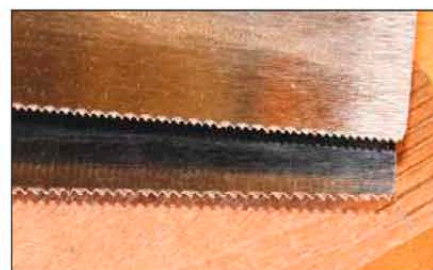
## Do you need two?

There's no need for two dovetail saws of differing tooth size in most workshop situations, but you now have the option to buy the tool you think will serve you best. What's important is selecting the tool for the work in hand, so the choice really depends on the thickness and depth of the cuts you expect to make.

Testing the 20tpi saw against the 14tpi version for speed in 20mm thick sapele, cutting to 20mm deep, the coarser saw hit the mark after five or six strokes, with the finer one not far behind at seven or eight strokes per cut. However, the thicker timber means there's more resistance with the finer teeth; this saw is undoubtedly more at home on thinner stock. Putting it to the test on some 10mm thick ash, the cut was really sweet and tracked through beautifully. **AK**



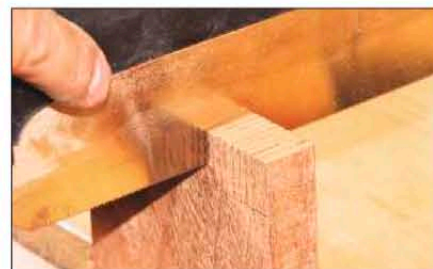
The back is a resin composite, and the blade is discreetly etched for ease of identification



Both saws have the same knocked-back front tooth for easy starting



The 20tpi saw is definitely at its best when cutting thinner stock...



...but still performs nearly as well as the 14tpi saw on thicker wood



If your workshop machines regularly generate high volumes of coarse waste, a bag-over-bag extractor offers the best performance. This model from Record Power certainly looks the part

# Record Power CX3000 chip extractor

This type of bag-over-bag extractor works really well for planers and other bulk waste producers such as spindle moulders. It utilises what's known as an HVLP (high-volume low-pressure) system to do so, meaning that the airflow is at a high rate but the air speed is relatively low by comparison. The large-diameter extraction tube ensures that the machine isn't overwhelmed by the volume of chippings and shavings being produced, and it will also work well when hooked up to other machines such as table saws to deal with the sawdust they produce.

The bonus of this style of extractor is its manoeuvrability, allowing you to site it close to the machine you're using without it getting in the way. This means you can keep the hose length to a minimum and ensure optimum performance.

Some extractors have impellers with plastic fins that can easily get damaged. This model has an all-metal welded impeller to deal with shavings, chips and chunks of wood, and even metal such as screws and nails, so you could also use the hose to pick up waste from the workshop floor.

## Dealing with the waste

Waste is collected in the lower polythene sack. This can be disposed of when it's full, but it's more economical to empty it and re-use it. Getting the sack back on and holding it there while positioning the metal band clamp and springing the toggle over is an awkward process, but it's standard on most extractors of this type.

Finer dust is also captured pretty efficiently, although ultra-fine dust can still escape through the top cloth bag that acts as the exhaust for the air drawn through the machine. The theory is that the top bag will filter out fine dust once the weave begins to clog with finer particles. A quick look inside after planing up a few planks does indicate exactly how much fine dust it will capture.

## Summing up

All in all, basic as it is, the CX3000 puts in a sterling performance, pulling everything cleanly away even under a full-load cut on a planer with brand new cutters that will always make the shavings more likely to overwhelm an extractor. **AK**

**£259.99**  
(promo price)



## SPECIFICATION

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| <b>MOTOR</b>               | 600W       |
| <b>AIR FLOW</b>            | 1200cu m/h |
| <b>INLET HOSE DIAMETER</b> | 100mm      |
| <b>BAG CAPACITY</b>        | 128 litres |
| <b>WEIGHT</b>              | 32kg       |

## VERDICT

This is a solidly built and capable extractor offering ample power and suction.

**PROS** ■ Heavy-duty steel impeller  
■ Motor can be inverted for static use

**CONS** ■ Bag clamp awkward to use

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

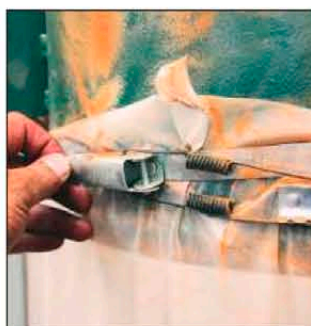
## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Record Power
- 01246 561520
- [www.recordpower.co.uk](http://www.recordpower.co.uk)



The NVR switch is fixed directly to the motor housing, which can be inverted for a fixed system

The toggle clamp for the bag holds well but is difficult to secure while being tightened



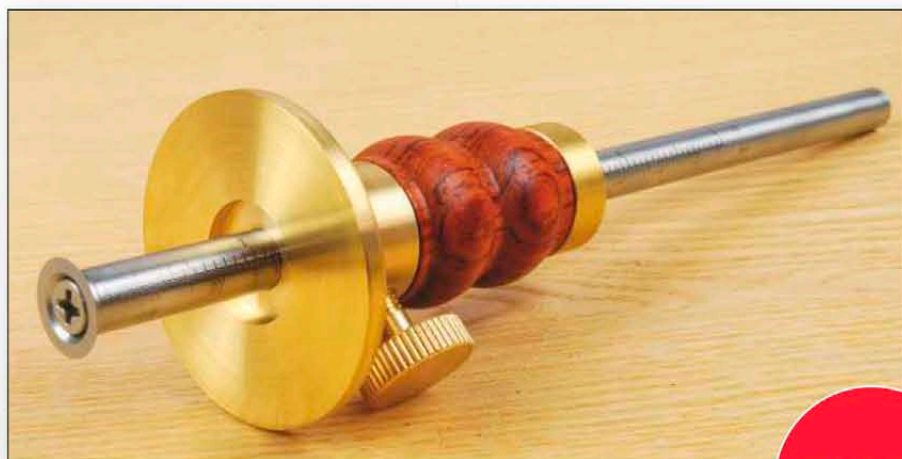
Although it doesn't filter out ultra-fine material, the top bag collects a lot of fine dust





There are two sorts of marking gauge on the market. The cheap ones have wooden parts and a metal marking pin. The expensive ones have metal parts and a marking wheel. This is one of those...

## Qiangsheng marking gauge



gauge body, but it's always wise to confirm the setting with a ruler as it's subject to slight parallax. A left-hand-threaded brass collar serves as a fine adjuster if you hold the threaded collar still with one hand and turn the head with the other. This works well if you're using the etched scale, but for dovetailing it's usual to set the gauge by the thickness of the board, and this needs a third hand. A second lock-screw would be useful, but it's a very minor niggle.

### Using the gauge

The engine-turned 12mm diameter lock-screw held the head firmly, and during a full day's use we had no problems with the gauge slipping. The first shoulder line cut it made was slightly disappointing, but removing and honing the 12mm-diameter steel cutting wheel on a fine abrasive sheet brought immediate improvement.

The shaping and finishing of the components – especially the head profile – make the gauge very comfortable to use. If you like to cut the edge shoulder lines on tails deep to help guide the saw, the nicely rounded Qiangsheng definitely has an advantage as you can press the tool very firmly into the work without discomfort. The resulting crisp lines defined the shoulders well, and provided somewhere to set the chisel for those vital final cuts.

Workshop Heaven have now come up with a clever mortise attachment (see below) to make this a dual-function tool. It costs £14.40, and spare marking wheels are priced at just £3.90. **MF**

**£34.50**

### VERDICT

If you're looking for a good, reliable gauge that will also give you a little buzz of visual pleasure, look no further than this.

**PROS** ■ Well engineered  
■ Comfortable to hold  
■ Useful fine adjuster

**CONS** ■ Wheel may need honing

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

### FURTHER INFORMATION

■ Workshop Heaven  
■ 01295 678941  
■ [www.workshopheaven.com](http://www.workshopheaven.com)

The general design of this elegant-looking marking gauge immediately invites comparison with the Tite-mark and Veritas gauges (the latter model was reviewed in the January 2013 issue of *The Woodworker*). First impressions were very encouraging. The 182mm-long gauge feels well engineered, and the bubinga infill certainly adds visual appeal. The cutting wheel (which doesn't rotate in use) is withdrawn into a countersunk recess in the fence face of the body for protection when its job is done.

We decided to tackle marking out some dovetail joints as a challenging way of checking the gauge's functionality.

### Setting up the tool

The scale etched on the stainless steel shank is a useful guide to positioning the



The scale etched on the stainless steel shank is a useful guide to positioning the gauge body



The fine-adjuster is a useful feature; a lock-screw on the collar would make it even more so



Workshop Heaven now offer a mortise gauge attachment as a screw-on option



*A version of these shears with a solid, thick blade is normally used to cut neoprene glazing gasket to length and mitre its corners. Now here's a version designed to cut mitres on thin timber battens and mouldings*

# Trend hand mitre shears

This tool aims to offer a means of cutting accurate mitres in thin stock by using a shearing cut rather than the more usual sawn one. It features a supporting wing angled at 45° to the cutting line on each side of the tool, and uses a standard replaceable Stanley knife blade to slice through the workpiece as it's held in the tool's jaws.

## Using the shears

We tried the shears out on some thin softwood mouldings, and found that the work is forced back slightly in the jaws as pressure is applied. The top surface of the work is cut cleanly and at the correct angle, but the face of the cut slopes slightly. This means that the two components of a mitred joint cut with these shears will show a gap where they meet.

Thicker pieces such as small picture frame mouldings all get forced back in this same way as the cut progresses. Thinner inlay type work is cut cleanly enough, but it's still hard to get a tight fit.

## Design defect

The design of the shears should help prevent this slippage. The base of the shears where the workpiece rests is angled back slightly, so that if the work stayed put it would be undercut. If it slides back, it goes back too far and the resulting overcut means that the top face of the joint is open.

Even on a 45° cut where the work can be held firmly to the fence, there's still a tendency for it to slide back however tightly it's held.

## Summing up

These shears do a reasonable job of cutting thin, narrow moulding and beading cleanly, and swapping the blades is simple with just a single screw holding the retaining plate. However, unless you have a vice-like grip to hold the workpiece securely to the bed, the results in thicker material are disappointing for a show joint that relies on its fit to serve its purpose. **AK**



**£47.50**

## SPECIFICATION

|                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| <b>LENGTH</b>                 | 210mm |
| <b>MAX STOCK THICKNESS</b>    | 7.5mm |
| <b>MAX STOCK WIDTH AT 45°</b> | 35mm  |
| <b>WEIGHT</b>                 | 380g  |

## VERDICT

Getting a decent finish to the face of the cut is tricky to achieve consistently.

**PROS**

- Replaceable blades
- 45° stop faces
- Clear intermediate angle markings

**CONS**

- Work tends to slip as it's cut
- Expensive for what it does

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**

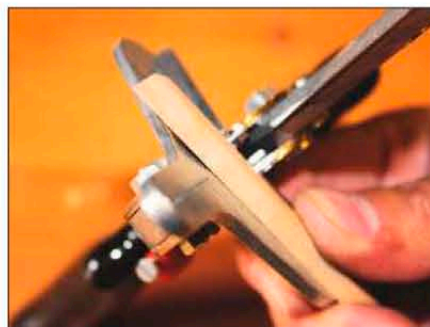


## FURTHER INFORMATION

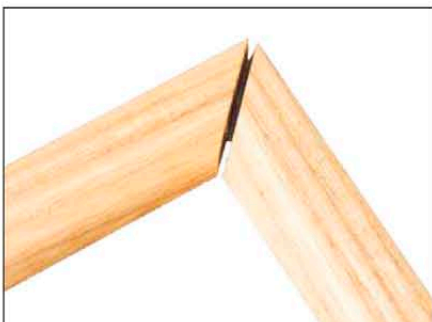
- Trend
- 01923 249911
- [www.trend-uk.com](http://www.trend-uk.com)



You need a very firm grip on the handles to hold the workpiece securely while you make a cut



You can see here how the tilt of the beds tries to stop the work sliding back



Two cuts should form a perfect mitre; these are actually 'grinning' badly



A single screw holds the replaceable Stanley knife blade in its holder



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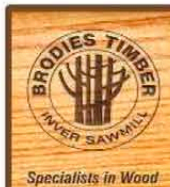
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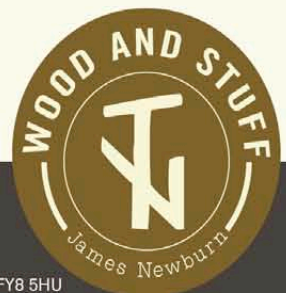
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Axminster electronic digital calliper,  
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**01983 551416 (Isle of Wight)**

**Woodworker magazines** for  
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**01306 640110 (Surrey)**

**Record BS300 bandsaw** with  
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**01244 540832 (North Wales)**

**Poolewood 15-90 lathe** with metal  
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**01295 402902 (North Oxon)**

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binders; sensible offers please.

**01544 230251 (Herefordshire)**

**Fox router table**, heavy-duty  
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attachments, little used; £250.

**01278 685067 (Somerset)**

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at £280, will accept £120. Buyer  
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**01273 440691 (West Sussex)**

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condition, with 1/2in collet and all the  
usual refinements; £150 ono. Can  
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**Elektra Beckum planer  
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**DeWalt mitre saw**, model  
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**peterwarden182@btinternet.com**

**Record planer thicknesser**, model  
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**01244 571497 (Cheshire)**

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Buyer collects.  
**01732 700255 or  
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**01424 882775 (East Sussex)**

## WANTED

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# All work and no play...

BY MICHAEL FORSTER

I like it when I've finished a commission and there's a bit of leeway before I need to start the next job. It's something that I try to work into my schedule. It's *my* time: time to play around in the workshop and maybe learn something new, or just improve a skill I already have. This time it was fancy dovetails, a subject I'd been promising to experiment with for a long time.

## Fine and fancy

Dovetails are my favourite joints – very appropriately for a box-maker – and I like to highlight them by using contrasting timbers. So some finer, fancier versions of the joint would really enhance the decorative effect.

The first stage was to get the pins finer, tapering to a single saw-kerf. I'd admired those in other makers' work for a while, and now the time had come for me to go there too. The first joint turned out better than I'd dared to hope – but I also made some unexpected discoveries.

## Learning curve

Firstly, I was so distracted thinking about those fine pins that I allowed the saw to drift a long way past the shoulder-line on the tails. That's the way it often is with learning something new – the new skill will fall easily into place, but at the expense of something elementary! I also noticed (and in case I hadn't, Woman With Good Eye pointed out) that the half-pins were far too chunky in comparison, **photo 1**. Finally, cutting the sockets for the pins needed a bit of forethought. My smallest chisel is 1.5mm wide and the thinness of the pin board meant that the pins only just reached that width with no wiggle-room for cleaning up the sockets afterwards. Thickening the tail board made a big difference there.

## Onwards and upwards

Emboldened by the general outcome, I then continued heroically with my valiant exploration of new territories by graduating to a houndstooth dovetail, **photo 2**. I needed a

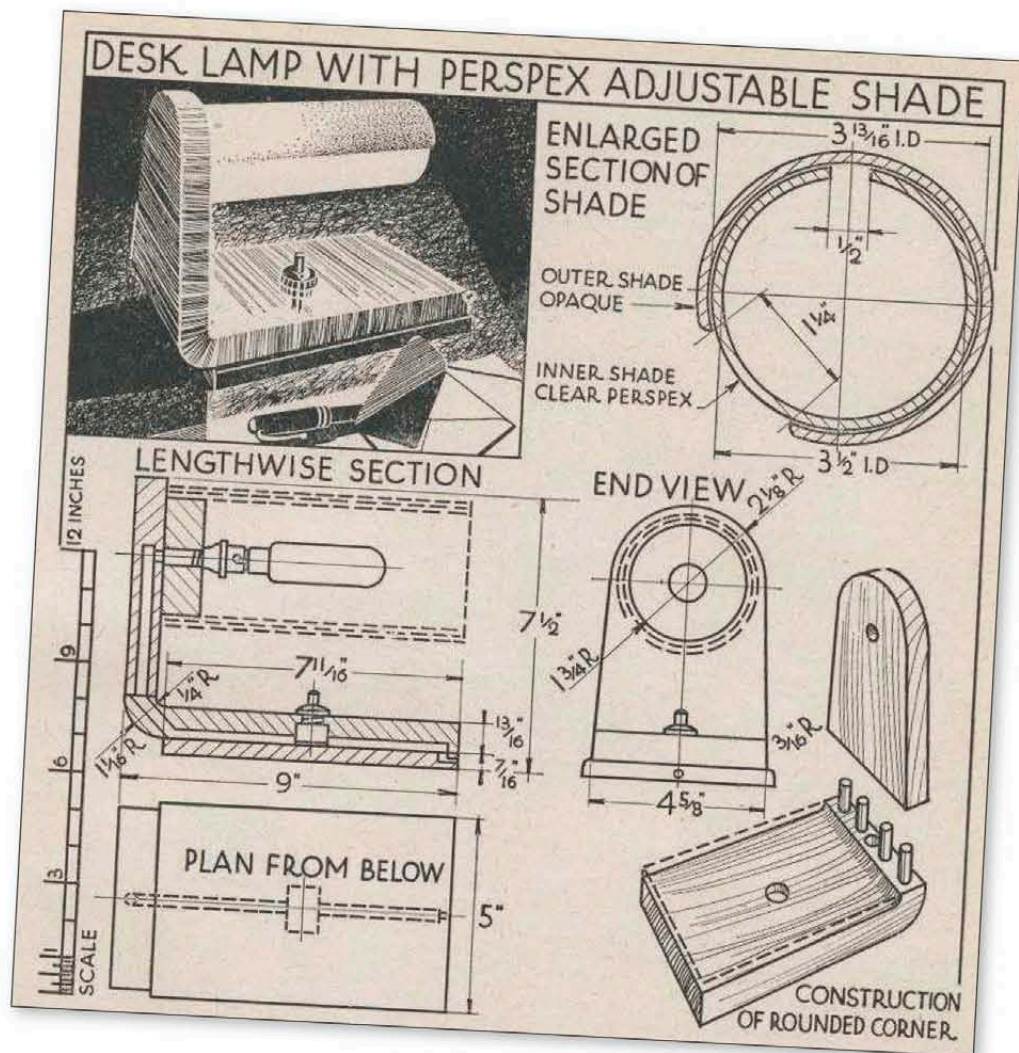
thicker pin board for this; otherwise the teeth would be impossibly narrow at the thick end. After cutting, I held my breath as I tapped the joint partly home to check the fit. I got a real buzz when the 'tapometer' told me that it was going together perfectly.

## Double or quits

What next? The day was yet young, after all. Well, I've long wanted to make a double dovetail – with the light tails and pins outlined in a darker timber – and as I was on a roll, it was now or never. This job is really about cutting a dovetail, and then cutting another one inside it. Obviously, precise sawing was even more vital as I wanted an even border, so the cuts had to be absolutely parallel... but there were other issues around grain direction, too. As you might imagine, here my beginner's luck wore a little thin and it all went a bit wrong, **photo 3**.

I now know what I need to do differently, and I'm going to give it another try. You, dear reader, will be among the first to see it.





# Variety: past and future combine in material mix

**Billed as 'an attractive combination of wood and plastics', this project from 1951 offered the mid-century woodworker a way of incorporating modern materials in a piece of craftsmanship: in this case, Perspex...**

Here at *The Woodworker* we're entirely aware and appreciative of the rich heritage we've been bequeathed by earlier generations of craftspeople, and my monthly delve into the archives generally borders on something of a voyage of discovery. Today I've stumbled across this compact 'modern desk lamp' project. It's the sort of job that presents the perfect combination of challenge and fear!

## No hiding place

Not only does it offer plenty of hand-planing to achieve a difficult dowelled butt joint – whose curves are later to be enhanced with

veneer – but also some hot-forming of clear and opaque acrylic sheet just to keep the maker on their toes. Although fairly small, there's a lot of tricky work involved and, being illuminated, there's little in the way of hiding places for error.

## Making your mark

It's at this point that I may well be doing something rash – and not for the first time – in offering readers a chance to influence future content of the magazine. Specifically, and depending on the response, I shall undertake to craft this very desk lamp for your edification (and possibly even amusement), following as closely as possible the original plans (if not the methods). I await your decision with interest.

*Mark*

More from *The Woodworker* archive next month...



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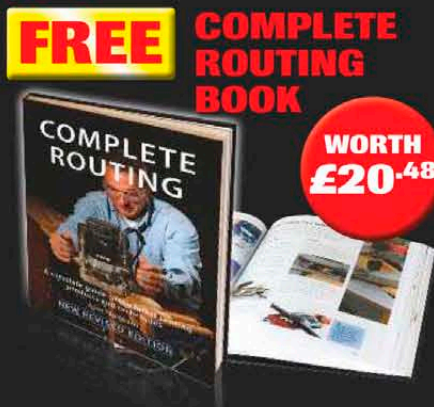
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