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The Woodworker

September 2014

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& Woodturner



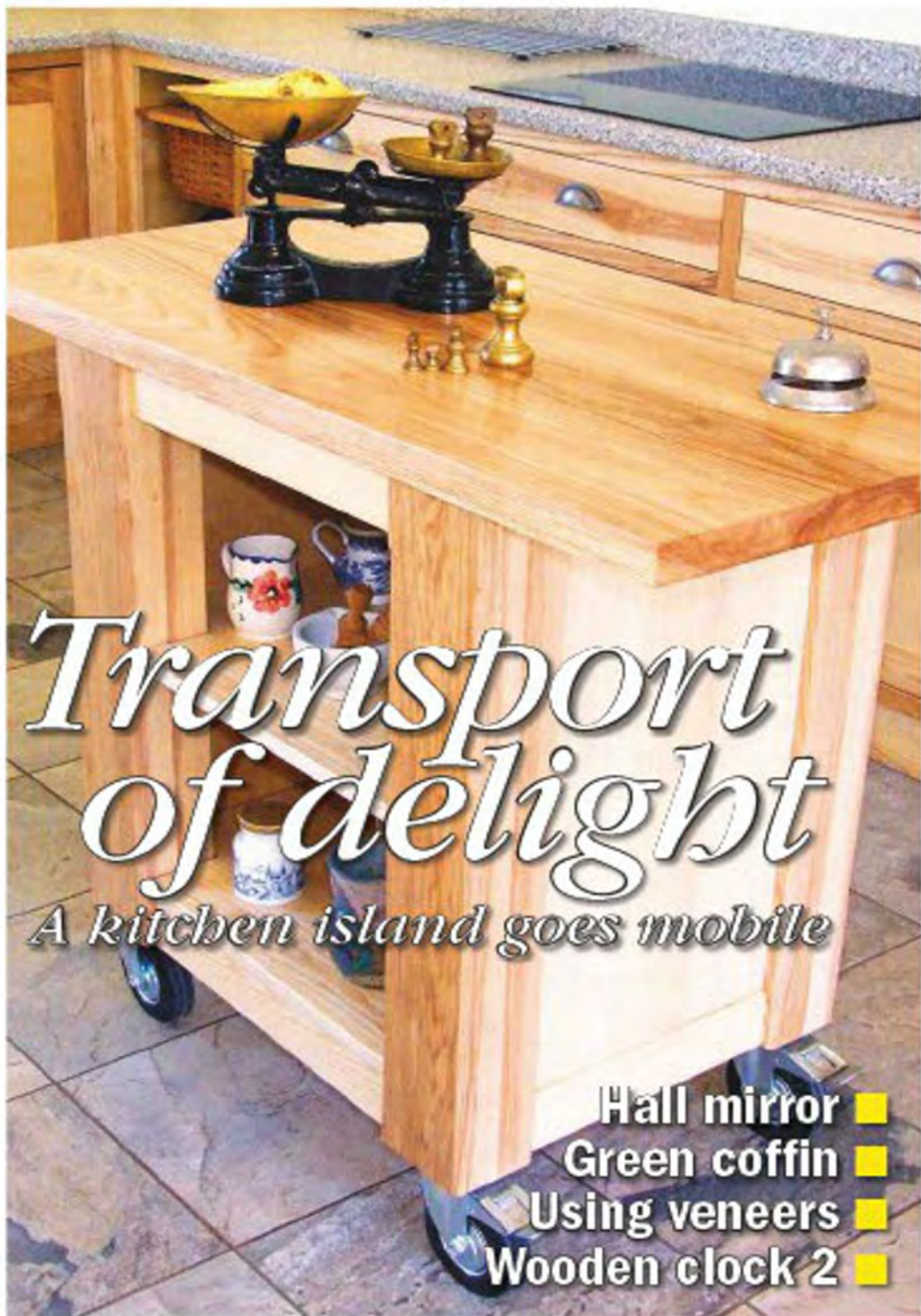
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Transport of delight

A kitchen island goes mobile

Hall mirror ■
Green coffin ■
Using veneers ■
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PLUS: SPINDLE TURNING ■ 4 POWER SAWS TESTED

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welcome



It used to be that this time of year was pretty quiet when it came to work. Most customers – and a lot of other trades – were on holiday, and the suggested indolence suited the siesta-inducing weather. Not any more. With signs that the world is waking up to the fragility of life and the limitless potential that some of us have before us, a spirit of making full use of every second of the day seems to have taken hold, and a huge majority of people are endeavouring to live their lives to the fullest possible capacity.

Rush rush rush

This includes maintaining and improving their homes, and, as one of many construction-related workers out there, I can only applaud their decisions to beautify their flats and houses with top-quality fitted furniture and sundry interior woodwork from my busy workshop.

I jest, of course, but the honest truth is that very few of us seem to have much spare time of late. Well, I hear you say, that's not so bad. At least we're not sitting around getting bored watching re-runs of old shows on the TV, and I would definitely agree with you there.

Precious priorities

My worry is that the pressing nature of many pseudo-important tasks and responsibilities will all but take over our days, hours and minutes, and leave us with precious little time to enjoy those good things in life – the ones which involve working with wood. As an occupation it's second to none (but then I would say that, wouldn't I?), and as a pastime it's unrivalled. I'm sure I'm not alone in feeling the need to go and make something if I've not been in the workshop for a few days, and even on holiday I particularly enjoy getting the house tool kit out and repairing something.

Tell me it's ok

Now, at this point I'd like a little reassurance that perhaps I'm not unusual in my need for extra work (if work is what we'd call it), so if there's anyone reading this who likes a busman's holiday, or who maybe just dabbles a bit when away – does building sandcastles count? – then I'd love to hear from you. Or, from an amusing anecdote viewpoint, have you ever been on a holiday which has turned into a job when the door on your chalet blew off or something? Perhaps you've been a holiday hero and have saved a little kid's tears by mending their kite, or you've carved and whittled a musical instrument out of a piece of driftwood to calm a savage beast. Either way I'd love to hear about it, as well as anything else vaguely woodwork-related that you've been up to lately. Don't let me down.

mark

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



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OF DELIGHT**



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The Woodworker & Woodturner

September 2014

Published by MyTime Media Ltd
Enterprise House, Enterprise Way,
Edenbridge, Kent TN9 6HF

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www.getwoodworking.com

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The Woodworker & Woodturner, ISSN 1752-3524, is published monthly with an additional issue in summer by MYTIME MEDIA Ltd, Enterprise House, Enterprise Way, Edenbridge, Kent TN9 6HF, UK.
The US annual subscription price is \$65.00 (equivalent to approximately \$5.42 per issue) and mailing in the USA by agent named Woodnet Shipping Inc., 1955-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA.
Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11434.
US Postmaster: Send address changes to The Woodworker & Woodturner, Woodnet Shipping Inc., 1955-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA.
Subscription records are maintained at CDS GLOBAL Ltd, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9EF.
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All the leading brands are represented, many with huge stands displaying the widest range of products, making this the premier showcase for power tools, hand tools, woodworking machinery, accessories and workwear. Several brands including Festool, Makita and Metabo will be using this opportunity to debut new products from their Autumn 2014 range for the first time at a UK exhibition.

Plenty of live demonstrations and masterclasses each day of the show make this a unique opportunity to see the products in action before you buy. Talk direct to the manufacturers and compare makes and models under one roof.

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In brief...

Hitachi online

Hitachi Power Tools' new A4 product catalogue features its entire range of power tools, including its range of mains-powered products and its 10.8V, 14.4V, 18V and 36V cordless tools. It also features the popular 18V range kits, providing flexibility and choice for users. For instance, the 18V FlexiKit 3+1 allows the user to combine a KC18DCL/JS 5.0Ah kit and UB18DAL torch with a choice of eight different tools, including saws, drills, a planer or angle grinder, all with batteries and charger included.

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Inspire the Next



2ND EDITION 2014

You can now register Hitachi power tools for an extra two years warranty. Mains power tools and cordless tool bodies are covered, as well as 4Ah and 5Ah Li-Ion batteries. Online registration is required within four weeks of purchase via the Hitachi Power Tools (UK) Ltd website. For more details or to download the catalogue, visit www.hitachi-powertools.co.uk



The chips are down

The new Jet DC-850 chip extractor is neat, compact and unobtrusive. It's perfect for use with a lathe or any benchtop machine, and can be stored away under the bench when not in use.

This extractor is designed for common wood machining tasks where a higher airflow than that provided by a vacuum extractor is required.

A quiet induction motor provides plenty of power but won't annoy the neighbours. The inlet diameter is 100mm, the outlet into the bag is 125mm, and the airflow is sufficient to handle the majority of waste likely to be produced by the home workshop. The base is fitted with castors and a grab handle for easy mobility.

Note that this is a chippings extractor; it should not be expected to collect fine dust. As with all the high-volume low-pressure airflow machines, the inlet should not be restricted to below 75mm diameter and the bag should be emptied regularly. A hose can be purchased separately. The price is £169.96 until 31st December 2014. www.axminster.co.uk

Site for saw eyes

The new Makita 2712 site saw is a rugged table saw ideal for operation in many on-site situations. Weighing just 54kg and fitted with two robust trolley wheels and carry handles, this saw can be easily manoeuvred around the working site.

It features a 315mm 40T carbide tipped saw blade as standard, but can be used with other Makita blades. Maximum cutting depth is 85mm at 90° and 58mm at 45°. The bevel cutting angles range from 0° to 45°.

The main steel table measures 550 x 800mm, and the useful extension table 400 x 800mm. The maximum cutting width is 710mm. Lastly, the saw has a built-in dust extraction coupling that can easily be connected to a vacuum unit. www.makita.co.uk



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Post and go

A team from multi-award winning company Handrall Creations recently created an oversized traditional pillar post box to be used as part of a retail fit-out display project at London Airport. Measuring almost a metre in diameter, the solid tulipwood (American poplar) crown was custom-made in the purpose-built factory and features intricate details that demanded the company's full five-axis machining capabilities. www.handrallcreations.co.uk



Awesome exhibition

Northern Contemporary Furniture Makers is a group of professional designer-makers, all based in the North of England, who aim to celebrate and promote the excellence of high-quality furniture and support each other in artistic and professional development. Their latest Celebration of Craftsmanship & Design is now on at Cheltenham College in Gloucestershire until August 25th, and features work from many of the best contemporary fine furniture makers in the country... including Philip Dobbin's 'Mito bird's-eye maple demi-lune table' shown here. www.celebrationofcraftsmanship.com

Opportunity knocks

Kelly Baker of Axminster Tools was one of four young professionals chosen to attend a three-week pilot course run by The Furniture Makers' Company this summer. This gave them an unrivalled opportunity to learn about all aspects of the furnishing industry supply chain.

During the three weeks the group covered components and raw materials, the complexity of manufacturing, testing, buying criteria, pricing, marketing, merchandising, customer service, consumer law and after-sales. The group also attended tours, presentations and seminars hosted by other companies up and down the country.

The course culminated in each of the four young professionals giving a presentation about what they had learned over the three weeks of the course, and how they felt this could be put to practical use by their respective companies. Paul von der Heyde, the Master of The Furniture Makers' Company, then presented certificates to Kelly and the other three participants.



Heritage skills

A new project has just been launched that will see a new generation of heritage workers learn the skills used to build the nation's waterways. The Canal & River Trust is recruiting 42 people to keep alive the traditional techniques that were used to construct the waterways across the country more than 200 years ago. Trainees will



learn the arts of lime mortaring, stonemasonry and carpentry, among other skills that are essential to maintaining and improving the network. The project - called Waterway Heritage Skills - will see 14 trainees recruited each year for three years, with each post lasting 12 months. They will work alongside the Trust's staff across the country on projects such as the winter stoppage programme that this year saw 141 new lock gates replaced and major work to lock chambers and masonry. For details about how to apply, go to <https://careers.canalrivertrust.lclms.com/jobs/1460/waterway-heritage-trainee/job>

DIARY

SEPTEMBER

Axminster Skill Centre courses

1-2 Beginners routing
1-2 Beginners woodturning
2 Spindle moulding *
4 Scrollsaw course *
5 Sharpening with Tormek *
9-10 Beginners woodturning *
15-16 Beginners woodturning
16-17 Making beehives
17 Spindle moulding
17 Woodturning refresher
18-19 Hollow forms with Nick Agar
* Course held in Sittingbourne, Kent
Unit 10 Weycroft Avenue, Axminster
EX13 5PH
0800 975 1905
www.axminsterskillcentre.co.uk

John Boddy's courses

9-10 Woodcarving: Peter Berry
01423 322370 ext 257
www.john-boddy-fwts.co.uk

John Boddy's demonstrations

22 Woodturning: Simon Whitehead
Details as above

Record Power Bandsaw Masterclass

12 John Davis Woodturning, Chilbolton
Down Farm, Stockbridge SO20 6BU

Record Power Road Show

5-6 Yandies, Marlock (see below)
www.recordpower.co.uk

Robert Sorby demonstrations

5-6 Yandies, Marlock (see below)
13-14 Times Rebat, Harworth DN11 8RU
01302 744344
26-28 Irish Woodturners Guild
National Seminar, Sligo
www.robert-sorby.co.uk

West Dean College courses

West Dean College, Chichester PO18 0QZ
5-7 Woodcarving for beginners
13/22/23 Woodturning taster days
14 Make a country stool
14-19 Ladderback chairs
23-26 Turning bowls from wet wood
01243 811301
www.westdean.org.uk

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NEW 5.0Ah BATTERIES LAUNCHED BY DEWALT AND MAKITA

MANUFACTURER: DeWalt
D&M GUIDE PRICE: £119.95

The new DeWalt DKB184 5.0Ah XR Li-Ion battery packs will deliver 66 per cent more runtime than a standard 3.0Ah pack. The LED state-of-charge indicator helps to manage pack recharging, and the lightweight design provides the user with upgraded 5Ah power without increasing the size or weight compared with the 18V 3Ah battery pack.

The new battery features no memory effect and virtually no self-discharge for maximum productivity and less downtime. It also offers protection against overheat and overload, and deep discharge conditions increase battery life. It's compatible with all DeWalt XR Li-Ion 18V tools.



MANUFACTURER: Makita
D&M GUIDE PRICE: £99.95

Makita has also joined the ranks of the 5.0Ah brigade with the introduction of the BL1850 18V LXT 5.0Ah lithium ion battery in September. Offering 66 per cent more runtime than their 3.0Ah battery, but maintaining the same weight and size, the battery has a 45-minute charge time and like the 4.0Ah battery, is compatible with most existing 18V machines (if they have a star on the connector plate, have a yellow plate with a star on it, or have a yellow plate only).



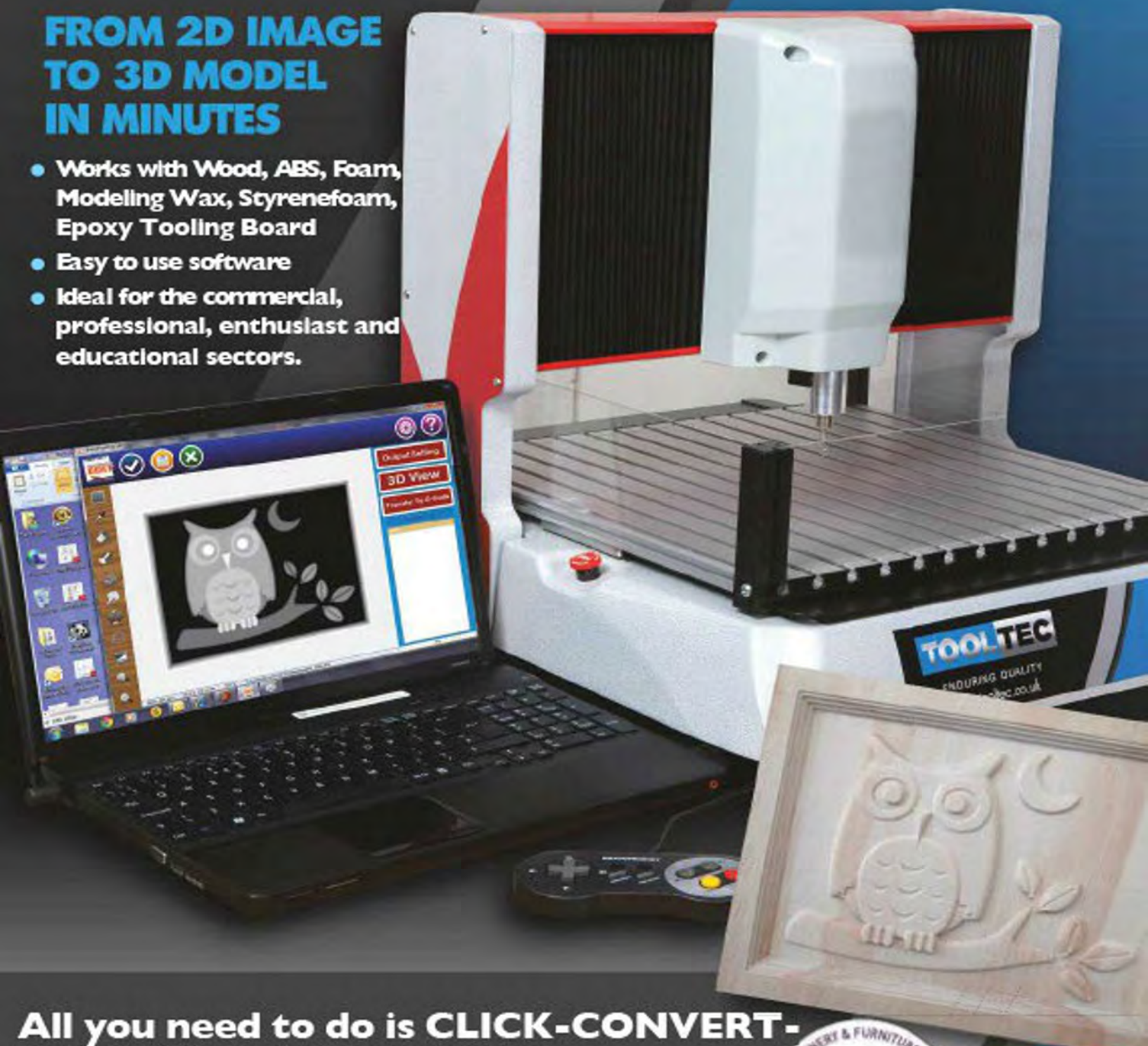
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In your own write...

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

SNAIL MAIL OR EMAIL?

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



THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

Hi Mark

Thank you for getting in touch re: my letter about setting up a workshop. Last week I picked up some tools from Rugby, from a lady whose husband had passed away. I feel I paid a fair price for them, which will benefit the lady as well as helping me get my workshop up and running. I now have a very useful Trend dust extractor, a noisy but fully functional belt sander and other useful sanders, and a Tormek grinder missing all its jigs, which I will save up for later on.

I picked up some other tools recently from Axminster's eBay shop, including a bandsaw. You can find some tremendous bargains there, as the machines are either used (but perhaps only a few times) or are ex-display models. I would recommend anyone with a limited budget to visit this site regularly. Their customer service is always excellent.

Finally I borrowed from family, and combined with my meagre savings I purchased a planer thicknesser. Since then another kind reader, Peter Harvey, offered me one. I thanked him, but mine had already been delivered. I'm really amazed and grateful for the response... not just from readers of the magazine, but from friends and friends of friends, who have donated many hand tools.

Lastly, since mentioning that I would like to make furniture I've had my first commission, an oak hi-fi unit of frame and panel construction. Ideally I would use a table router for this. I'm still looking for a solid table router, and also some means of crosscutting wood accurately, especially if I can't find a small but accurate table saw. Though a bit slow, I suppose I could use my bandsaw for ripping hardwood. I'd be interested to hear the pros and cons of working without a table saw. So as you can see I'm almost there. Thanks once again.

Kat Flaschi, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Well that's great news Kat, and thanks to everyone who has offered help. My next question to readers is this: if you could have only one machine in your workshop, what would it be, and why?

A PLAN FOR PLANS

Dear Mark

I saw Mr Pentold's letter and your reply in the August issue of the magazine about providing better plans.

One low-cost solution for this would be for *The Woodworker* to make plans available to readers as downloadable online files on the website in pdf format. Readers could then download and print the files themselves at whatever size they wanted. In my experience, this format gives good crisp results at A3 size from reasonably sized files, and the resulting drawing size (420 x 297mm) is in my opinion the most handy for workshop use.

Many of your readers will have online access to the Internet and to a standard A4 size printer (albeit sometimes via the good offices of a computer savvy friend, grandson or granddaughter!), and A3 size home printers are becoming more common. Also, many high streets in larger towns have walk-in print shops that will produce prints of single drawings from pdf files at A3 or larger for a very reasonable charge.

It seems a shame not to use the benefits of the digital revolution!
Peter Hales, Montrose

Very true words, Peter, and this is indeed a service we could provide. I'll look into it and see if we can't find something suitable before much longer. Also, if anyone has any plans of their own which aren't subject to copyright, perhaps they could send them in and we could all benefit.

MODEL CARTS

Thanks, Mark...

...for publishing my Standard Lamp article in the July issue. It was good to see it in print. Cabinetmaking is my preferred pastime and I would like to spend more time on it, but doing it only for items in our bungalow limits the possibilities as it's already well furnished with my handwork, and not only woodwork.

Coincidentally, I have also made the John Thompson tip cart featured in the same issue. This gained me a silver medal at the 2012 Model Engineering Exhibition. I've attached a picture of it.

Once again thanks!
Harold Hall



It's a pleasure Harold, and great to see another version of the tip cart. I'm quite tempted to have a go at one myself!





BY MICHAEL FORSTER

Study centre

These are difficult times and we're all having to think about making economies. This was the precedent I decided to follow when Woman with iMac asked for a study centre in an alcove of our lounge

Function is everything when you're on an economy drive. The unit's in our living space, and needs to look presentable from the outside. So all visible areas are either solid ash or ash-veneered mdf, edged with solid ash where necessary.

Using plain mdf where possible is a double economy. Apart from being over £35 per sheet cheaper than veneered board, I can buy it locally – using the store's free cutting service and carrying it home in my little convertible – so I save delivery charges, too. And on top of all that, I get ready-cut panels and the store gets to dispose of the dust, so all ways round it's a winner!

Design matters

Essentially, this is a built-in pedestal desk: two base units flanking a kneehole and linked by a top and a drawer. The first consideration of course was the overall size, which obviously depends on personal circumstances. I began by modelling this on my own study desk which has a top height of 750mm, but when Woman of Diminutive Stature saw the base unit carcasses, she pointed out that they were way too high for her.

Fortunately I'd got enough leeway on the plinth height to cut them down to 700mm. The kneehole drawer of course had to clear her knees, and still did so comfortably at a height of 580mm while the kneehole width of 550mm also suited her very well. The overall width of the unit needed to be a little smaller than the alcove width between skirtings, to allow filler panels to be fitted at the ends, scribed to the walls for a neat finish.

Tailor-made drawers

The filing drawers were also modelled on my own desk, but I hadn't realized that the makers had adapted a standard drawer unit that was a little wider than necessary and had added rails inside to take up the difference. It's easier simply to make the drawers a few millimetres wider than the suspension files, which can hang from the top edges of the sides. Just ensure that there's enough vertical clearance for the filing tabs as the drawers open and close. I used some aluminium angle to form the file rails; this obviously needs to be allowed for too.

Plain or veneered

I began by cutting the veneered mdf panels to size and preparing the edgings, which I decided to make 20mm deep so that they could be biscuted on and then planed and sanded without fear of exposing the biscuits, photo 1. Each unit had one side panel of plain mdf – the one with its exterior face against the wall – and one of veneered board.

Further economizing on the veneered board, I cut them to the depth of the visible kneehole and jointed on plain mdf for the part hidden by the back panel. The desk top and kneehole back panel were also veneered board, with plain mdf everywhere else.

The critical dimensions were the filing drawers, so I assembled those and tried a file for size first. I didn't want to get the carcasses together and then find that the drawers needed to be bigger! They're really frames rather than drawers, having no bottom panels. However, the sides are still deep enough to give extra rigidity to the corner joints.



The edging strips were biscuit-jointed and then cramped to the boards



A pocket-hole jig makes quick work of jointing the unit corners



I used a clamping jig to hold the filing frame boards while I drilled and screwed them



The drawer runner simply screws to the side of the filing frame



Aluminum angle, available from most DIY stores, makes good file rails

Assembling the carcasses

Once the panels had been identified, they were biscuit-jointed to their edgings and trimmed to size before being assembled using either pocket screw technology, photo 2, or simple screwed butt joints, photo 3, according to whether they were visible or not. Screws going into the edge of mdf don't make a very strong fixing, but they can be strengthened by inserting a dowel first to give the screw some real timber to bite into.

Drawer test

The file frames are mounted on sturdy full-extension runners which need precise fitting as they have very little play. Generally they add 25mm to the carcass width, but it's best to check the instructions that come with yours as they may be different.

It was easiest to plot the positions and mount the slides on the carcass sides before assembly, photo 4. Then the top rails, base and back panels were simply screwed into place and all of a sudden I had carcasses. After adding the aluminium angle file rails to the drawer sides, photo 5, and fitting the stationary drawer runners, photo 6, I tried the filing drawers in place, complete with a tabbed file to check the clearance, and celebrated my success with a doughnut!

The final job at this stage was to make up the central drawer box and its simple mdf carcass, photo 7.

The home front

Next I turned my attention to the cupboard door and drawer fronts. These were framed, with raised and fielded panels, and the frames were dowelled at the corners rather than tenoned – perfectly adequate for this task, and also much easier and quicker to make as I could simply cut the frame members slightly over-length and shoot the ends square at the shooting board before drilling the dowel holes using my Joint Gentle dowelling jig, photo 8. The grooves for the panels were run next so I could try the panels in the grooves as I worked.

Raised panels

These are optional, as is the hand-cut aspect. You can use other kinds of panels; it's a chance to be creative and transform what could be a purely utilitarian piece into a feature. If your carving's up to snuff (mine isn't!), you might want to do linen-fold panels, or just insert some flat veneered ply for a Shaker look.

For raised panels you'll need either a panel-raising cutter in a router table, or some form of rebate plane if you're doing it by hand. Because I enjoy this kind of work,

I've got a choice of planes I can use, and I chose to give my bench rebate plane an outing. I'll describe the process I follow for this, and you can adapt it to your own circumstances and preferences.

Groove and rebate

The first stage was to prepare, joint up and then re-flatten the panels. I made up each panel from three quarter-sawn boards, alternating the end grain. It's hard to avoid some slight misalignment, so a little work with a plane will be required to flatten the panel and produce a good finish, photo 9. With that done, I planed the ends square on my shooting board, photo 10, and then ran a groove around the face of each to define the field, photo 11. It's important to cut the cross-grain grooves first to avoid break-out at the corner of the field. Any break-out that does occur will then be on the far edge that's going to be chamfered away later.

Then I cut a rebate all round to leave a tongue that was a slightly over-tight fit in the grooves I'd cut in the frame members. The tightness gave me a bit of leeway in planing the chamfers.

Planing technique

Now the chamfers could be planed away, taking the outside edge of the tongues off but leaving the inside a nice snug fit in the grooves. Again, work the cross-grain chamfers first.

Planing technique is quite important for this task. The tool obviously has to be very well controlled as there's no fence. A freshly-sharpened blade will make this much easier. The push comes from the feet, leaving the hands free simply to steer the plane. At first, you'll be able to stay well away from the field because of the groove, but the time will come when the plane has to be run along the edge of it, by which time the edge of the field will be able to serve as a fence, photo 12.

Working by eye

It's largely done by eye – watching the inside and outside edges of the chamfer and seeing it come down, tweaking the pressure on the plane to even it up as you go. Something to avoid is thinking you need to tilt the plane – the chamfer is angled, after all, so it does seem logical. That way you have little or no control over the flatness of the chamfer. It's better simply to move the whole plane across, taking more shavings off the outside part than the inside, but keeping the sole fully in contact with the surface. This will produce all the angle required.

Ideally the plane will shave up to the edge of the field just as the line of the edge rebate is swept away – but things are rarely as simple as that. Test the tapered tongue in the groove of one of the frame members – it should go in just the 6mm (or whatever depth of tongue you chose to use) for a snug fit that won't push the frame corners apart.

The router option

The alternative if you don't already possess an appropriate plane is to use a panel-raising cutter in the router table. Remember these cutters must only ever be used in a table, and never in a hand-held router. Always lower the speed, and experiment on some scrap wood before risking those painstakingly jointed panels.

Frame test

You need to ensure that the frame corners come together neatly, so a dry trial fit is really essential. Assemble the frame and panel without any dowels, using cramps lightly to hold it together while you check for square and wind, photo 12. Make sure that the panel seats snugly in the groove all round and that all the frame shoulders pull up tight. Then you can prepare the dowels, remembering to cut an escape groove for excess glue and air and to whittle a taper on the ends to ease entry.

Before actually gluing up, do all the sanding and finishing on the chamfers of the panels while they're still accessible – and on the inside edges of the frames, too. This is also a good time to seal the raw edges of the mdf where they will remain exposed.

Laid back

Fitting the door and the drawer fronts to their units is best done before installation so that the carcasses can be laid on their backs, photo 14. Use a jack plane to shoot the edges to get an even joint all round.

I happened to have some decorative antique-effect knobs and some similar surface-mounted H-shaped hinges in stock, so I used those instead of butt hinges.

The drawer front panels can be temporarily held with quick cramps while they're screwed into place from behind. You'll need to do each of these with the other filing frame removed for access. Then remove the door and the filing frames to make handling the carcasses easier during installation.

Trial installation

I peeled back the carpet and underlay from the alcove and then stood the base units in place, photo 15. To my amazement they were perfectly level! The next step was to



6 The runners need to be packed out on the hinge side to clear the door edge



7 The central drawer unit is temporarily tacked together using battens as spacers



8 I used my Joint Genie to dowel the door and drawer front frames



9 After assembling the door panel, I cleaned up the joints with a hand plane...



10 ...and shot the panel ends perfectly square on the shooting board



11 The edges of the field and the tongue are defined with ploughed or routed grooves



12 Cut the cross-grain chamfers first so any edge breakout will be removed later



13 Glue up the door frame and panel and check that it's perfectly square



14 Place the base unit on its back, clamp the drawer fronts in place and screw them on from behind



15 Cramp the base units together temporarily and set them in place in the alcove



16 Use a rod to measure the gap between unit and wall at one end



17 Prepare and fit the filler panel. Then repeat the whole process at the other side



18 Screw the drawer unit in place. All we need now is the top panel



19 Use compasses to scribe a template on hardboard, then scribe round that onto the top itself



20 This aluminium cable tidy from Eurofit does exactly what its name implies



21 Finally, just add a back panel to the kneehole and the job's done

scribe the filler panels at either side between the carcasses and the alcove walls. I assembled the entire desk with the central drawer bearers, set it in place and used a rod to gauge the gap at either side, photo 16. After separating the units again, I cut a strip of ash and screwed it to the side of one base unit, photo 17. Then I used the mark on the rod to mark the filler panel with the required width.

With the base unit back in the alcove and the filler panel butted up to the skirting board, I set a pair of dividers to the mark and ran them down the length to reproduce the wall profile. The filler panel was then removed, cut on the bandsaw and re-fitted.

After repeating the operation at the other side, I set the units back in position and screwed them to the wall and floor. Then I fitted the central drawer unit in place and removed the temporary struts, photo 18. The kneehole back panel was next – leaving a void behind for any cables – and with the door, drawer and filling frames in place it was starting to look very businesslike!

Topping it off

I cut the top panel over-size and edged it with solid ash exactly as I had the carcass sides. This then had to be scribed to the wall on three sides, and that meant I needed a template. I rigged up a couple of overlapping pieces of old hardboard, laid on top of the units and temporarily tacked together. I then ran a pair of compasses round the back and sides of the alcove to reproduce the wall profile on the hardboard sheets, photo 19.

Having cut the template to shape with a jigsaw, I then scribed round that, using the same pair of compasses to compensate for the discrepancy in size, and jigsawed to the line. After biscuiting on the front lipping, the top was now ready to drop into position, but before doing that, I fitted a cable tidy to allow excess cables to be pushed down into the void rather than having them lying around the desktop, photo 20.

The final touch

With the top in place, I was ready to apply the finish. Three coats of polyacrylic varnish should give a reasonably hard-wearing finish while leaving the wood close to its natural colour. The final touch was a silicone mastic bead run round all the joints where timber met wall. I'm useless with that stuff, so I took the precaution of laying down masking tape to ensure I got a crisp edge. It all looked fine with the IT equipment in place, photo 21... and Woman with New Study Centre seemed pleased too.

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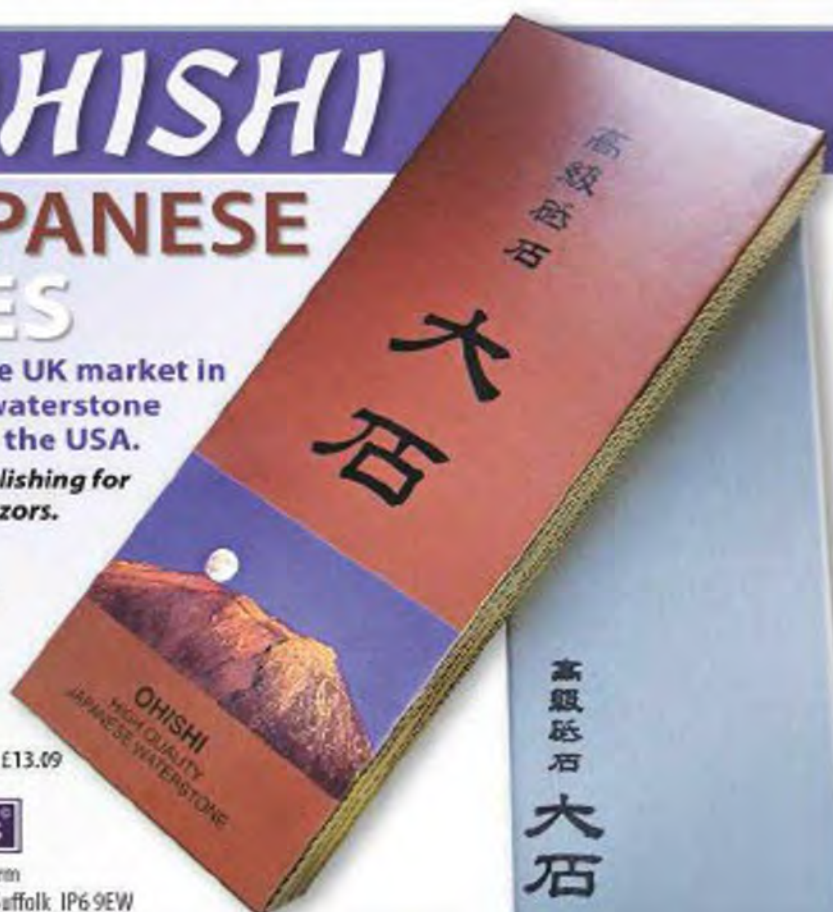
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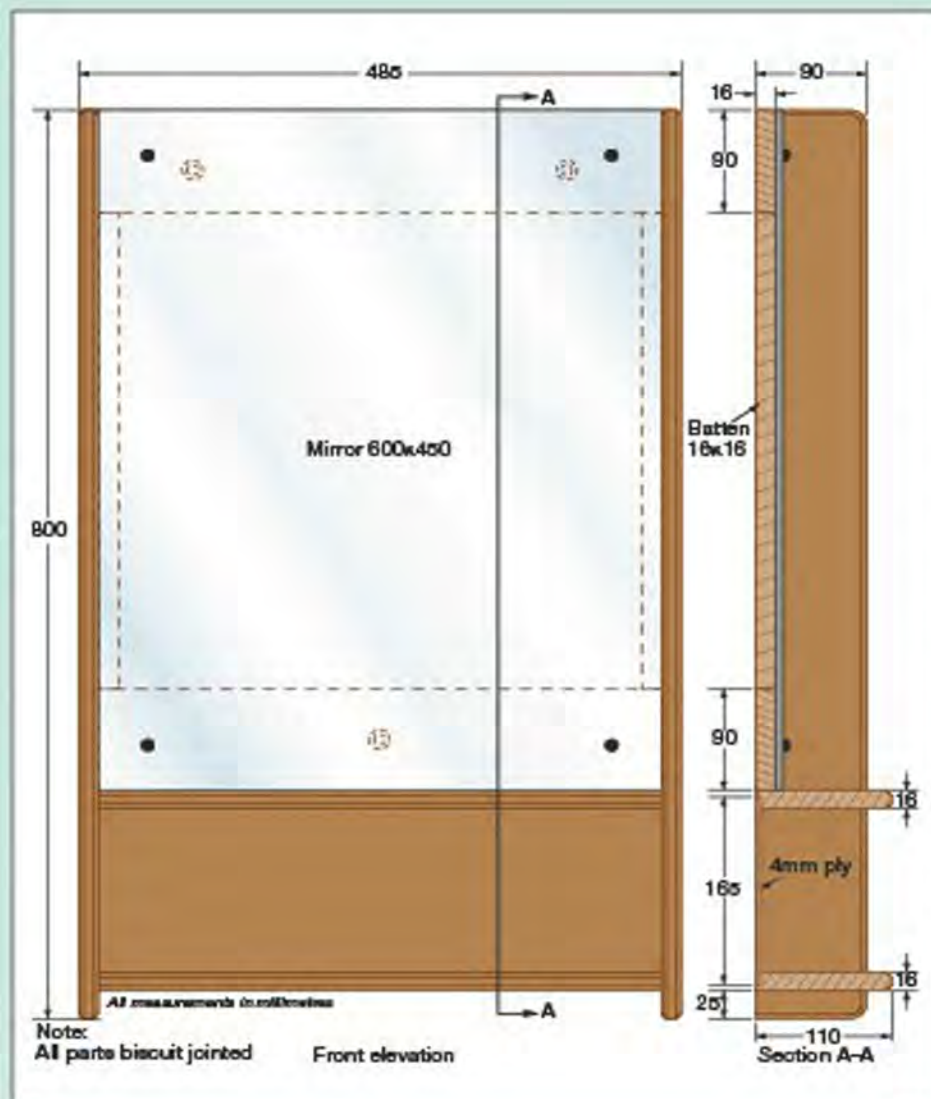
We all like to look our best when leaving the house, so a last glance in a mirror will put our minds at ease, and that is exactly where this hall mirror plays its part. It also features space for gloves, a clothes brush and a small ornament or two



Who's the fairest?

Mirrors are readily available in various sizes, complete with pre-drilled fixing holes. I bought one measuring 600 x 450mm, which is ideal for this project. The wood I chose was mahogany, but almost any hardwood would be suitable.

I started by preparing the vertical members and the two shelves to size, but left a little extra on the widths of the latter as this makes for easier sawing of the curved front. The two cross rails behind the mirror are hidden on completion, and so they don't need to be mahogany. Holes were



HALL MIRROR CUTTING LIST

All dimensions are in millimetres

Part	Qty	L	W	T
Side	2	830	90	16
Shelf	2	500	110	16
Cross rail	2	485	90	16
Side batten	2	440	16	16
Back (plywood)	1	500	165	4

Widths and thicknesses are net. An allowance has been added to the lengths. You will also need a 600 x 450mm mirror and four domed mirror screws.

drilled and countersunk in them to enable the flirment to be secured to the wall. I used biscuit jointing throughout.

Marking out in pairs

The two side components were held together in the vice while the overall length was marked, along with the positions of the two shelves and the hidden cross rails, photo 1. The rails were similarly gripped and all marked together to length; then the waste at the ends was sawn off.

The centres for the biscuits were now marked on the slide members, and the kerfs for these formed, photo 2. For the two lower ones in each slide, a cross member was cramped to the slide component so as to control the position of the jointer as each cut was made.

Next, the cross rails were marked at their ends for the centres for the biscuits. Note though that for the two shelves, the kerfs are positioned off-centre because of the greater width of these to allow for the curved front edge profile.

Cutting curves

It was these curved edges which were tackled next. They were marked using my adjustable tourniquet bow, which gives an accurate curve. The waste was quickly sawn off on the bandsaw, photo 3, and smoothed down to the line using a compass plane before being sanded smooth.

I had planned to form a small cove cut to all the front edges of the sides and shelves, but before these could be tackled the upper and lower front corners of the sides needed to be rounded over. Forming these corners was completed on my disc sander.

It's best to carry out router work using a router table, so with a small cove cutter in place, these cuts were formed to both sides of these four pieces, photo 4. The rounded corners to the vertical parts were tackled in the same way and just as easily as the straight parts, photo 5.

Assembly time

The four main components were now cleaned up, ready for the assembly stage, photo 6. After gluing up, I applied cramps to ensure the joints were tight and then checked the assembly for being square and free of twist. Excess adhesive was removed while still wet.



1 Mark the positions of the two shelves and the hidden cross rails on the side pieces



2 Cramp a cross rail to the side component to position the jointer as you make each cut



3 Mark the curved front profile on the shelf and remove the waste on the bandsaw



4 Use a small bowl cutter in the router table to profile the front edges of the shelves and sides



5 Round over the outer corners of the two sides on the disc sander



6 Glue up and assemble the various components using biscuits, then cramp the frame square



7 Form a shallow rebate round the edges of the lower section to take the plywood back panel



8 Use a sharp chisel to square off the rounded internal corners of the rebate left by the router



9 Glue and screw the two 16mm square vertical battens to the sides of the fitment, flush with the cross rails



10 Apply the stain, followed by three coats of lacquer, and burnish the surface with a soft cloth



11
Glue and pin the plywood back panel into the rebate prepared for it earlier



12
Stick four pieces of 12mm foam plastic to the cross rails to act as cushions for the mirror



13
Check that the fitment is level, then drive fixing screws through the holes in the cross rails



14
Use four dome-headed mirror screws to fix the mirror in place to the unit



15
Polish any finger marks off the mirror and admire your handwork!

Once dry, the lower part of the fitment had to be rebated for the ply back. Because these rebates are stopped on the end parts, I decided that this stage would be best tackled after the gluing up had been completed. Again this is a job for the router mounted in the table. The rebates were quickly formed, photo 7, and the rounded internal corners squared off by hand chiseling, photo 8.

The 4mm thick mahogany plywood for the back was now cut and trimmed to fit, and a series of holes drilled around the edges for fixing by screws. It was not fitted yet, though; this stage is best tackled before final assembly.

Just one small job remained. A vertical batten needed to be added to each side so as to be level with the two cross rails, photo 9. These pieces would ensure that no gaps would be visible along the vertical edges of the mirror.

A rich finish

I decided that the richness of the mahogany would be further enhanced by staining. I used a stain recommended to me by a professional French polisher – a 50:50 mixture of rosewood and mahogany oil stain which gives a very rich colour indeed, is easily applied and dries very evenly.

This was followed with three coats of pre-catalysed lacquer, flattened down between coats. The final coat was lightly abraded with grade 0000 steel wool dipped in a soft beeswax polish, then burnished with a soft cloth, photo 10. Now the plywood back panel could be secured into the rebate prepared for it, photo 11.

Easy fixings

One final job remained before wall-mounting the fitment and screwing the mirror in place. I glued four square pieces of 12mm thick foam plastic to the cross rails, photo 12. These were to act as cushions to ensure the mirror would not be in tension in any way.

Fixing the fitment to the wall was quite straightforward, with screws driven through the pre-drilled holes in the cross rails. I used a level to ensure the unit was horizontal, photo 13. Last of all, I used special mirror screws to fix the mirror in place, photo 14. Snapping the covers over the screw heads completed the project, photo 15.



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BY DUNCAN ROSE

Transport of delight

As the popularity of the period home soars, I've just been finishing a retro-inspired kitchen I designed to match the age of the customer's home. The final stage is this stunning island on wheels

In keeping with the kitchen, the island has a chunky top of character wood. Its overhanging ends are designed to be used with stools as a breakfast bar. A mobile island such as this can also be used for food preparation in the main kitchen, and as a partition or a serving trolley between the kitchen and dining area. Substantial wheels were requested, with lots of colour variation in the ash timber used.

Initial planning

I used my CAD system to draw the island design for the customer's approval. A very clean design without drawers was selected, with a top that matches the height of the main kitchen worktops and large 125mm diameter wheels.

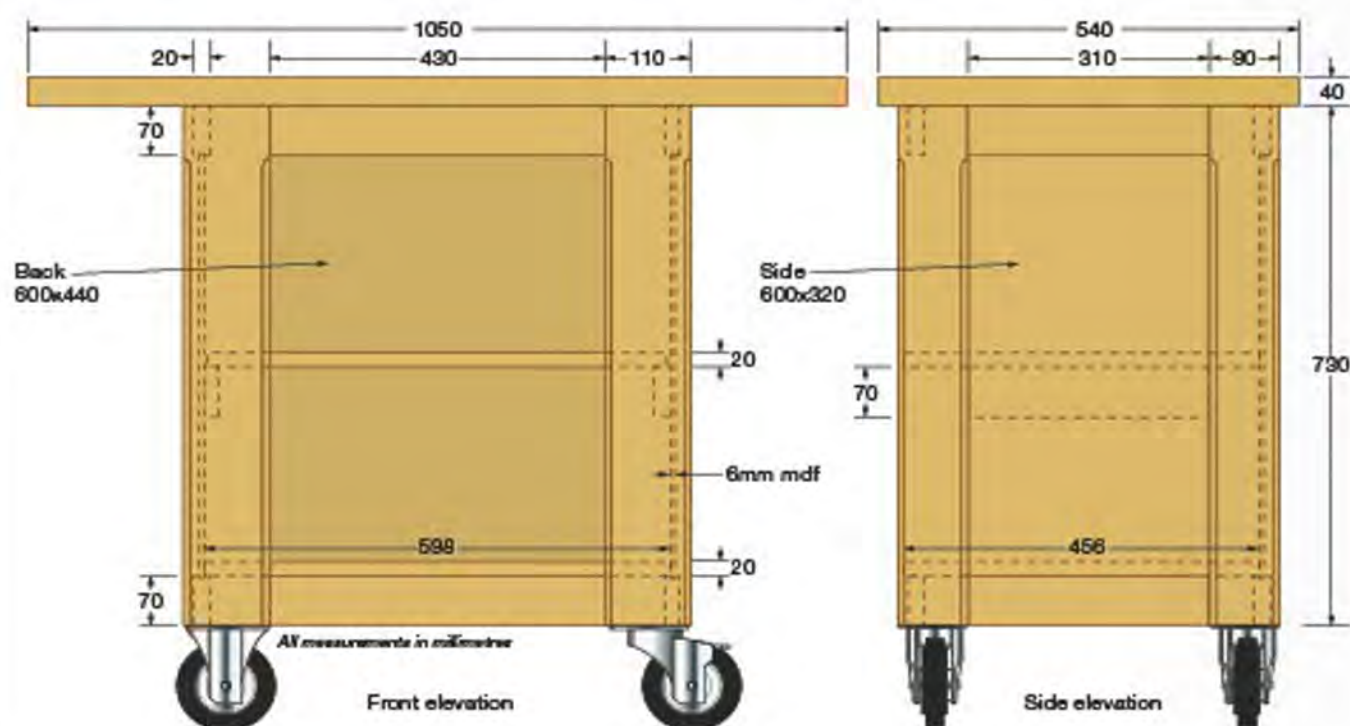
I bought the wheels in advance of starting work to check their overall height and mounting plate dimensions. Using pairs of

fixed and castor-type wheels give a good balance between easy manoeuvrability and relative stability.

Laminated legs

I started the project by making the four legs. I'd planned to make the legs by converting boards of 104mm thick sawn ash, but my local timber merchant quickly informed me this was not a stocked size. There's another

Fig 1





lesson to remember; when using the CAD system, try to keep the designs practical! So I made the legs by laminating together two thinner boards of 52mm thick sawn ash.

Into the workshop

Mark out your stock, selecting the best sections, and cross-cut them slightly over-length. If you plane one face flat and square an edge, you'll find it easier to guide the work against the fence when ripping down the length using the bandsaw, photo 1.

Next, thickness the leg halves a few millimetres thicker than required. Then arrange the pieces in pairs to give the best appearance. I tried to match the timber colour to help conceal the joint, and also matched the direction of the growth rings, photo 2.

KITCHEN ISLAND CUTTING LIST

All dimensions are in millimetres

Part	Qty	L	W	T
Leg	4	730	110	90
Front/back rail	4	430	70	20
Side rail	4	310	70	20
Back panel (mdf)	1	600	440	6
Side panel (mdf)	2	600	320	6
Base	1	598	456	20
Shelf	1	598	456	20
Shelf support	2	310	70	20
Top	1	1050	540	40

You will also need metal shrinkage brackets, threaded metal sockets, epoxy resin adhesive, M6 fixing bolts and four wheels or castors.



1 Rough-cut the wood for the legs slightly over-length using the bandsaw



2 Arrange the leg halves in four carefully matched pairs to form the legs



3 Assemble the legs by rub-jointing and cramping the laminations



4 Plane, square up and dimension the legs to their finished sizes



5 Mark and trim the legs to their finished length on the bandsaw



6 Mark out and cut the mortises in the rails for the floating tenons



7 Rout the grooves in the rails to take the panels using the table router



8 Dry-assemble the island legs and rails by tapping in the floating tenons



9 Mark out the extent of the stopped grooves required on the legs



10 Dismantle the parts and rout the stopped grooves along the legs

Check that the joint faces fit together tight and flat. Then apply glue to the pairs and rub-joint them together. Cramp the legs tightly while the glue dries, photo 3.

Now you can plane, square up and dimension the legs to the required 110 x 90mm section, photo 4. Then mark and trim the legs to their final length of 730mm, photo 5.

Time for some joints

Machine the rails for the island front, back and sides to the required size – see the cutting list on page 29. Prepare the two shelf supports at the same time.

Cut the rails to length to suit your chosen jointing method. I used floating tenon joints cut using a proprietary hand-held cutter. If you don't have one of these, then the rails can be jointed traditionally using mortises and tenons. Mark out and cut the mortises on the legs and rails, photo 6.

Cutting the panel grooves

The 6mm thick ash-veneered side and back panels are jointed to the legs and rails in grooves 6mm deep. First, rout grooves along the inner edges of the rails to accept the panels. I used the router table fitted with a 6.35mm slot cutter, photo 7.

Next, dry-assemble the legs and rails, photo 8. Mark the extent of the grooves required on the legs, photo 9. Then dismantle the parts and rout the stopped grooves up to the marks, photo 10.

Now is also a convenient time to cut the joints for the two shelf supports. Mark out the positions of the supports so they're clear of the side panel. Again I jointed them using floating tenons, photo 11.

Next, cut the side and back panels to size. I made their widths and lengths 2mm smaller than needed to ease assembly.

Chamfer time

Soften the edges of the legs at this stage with a shallow chamfer. I cut this 8mm wide using a 45° cutter mounted in the router table. I stopped the chamfer about 70mm from the top of each leg, photo 12.

Also cut a small chamfer along the exposed edges of the rails. This is the traditional method of preventing dust collecting on the otherwise horizontal edge of the lower rails.

Gluing up the frame

Begin by gluing the legs, rails and panels a final sanding. This is easier to do now before assembly, and requires just a little follow-up sanding after glue-up. Sand the panel edges too, as this makes them easier

to insert when gluing up. Then dry-assemble everything and check the fit of the panels within the rails and legs.

The island frame is now ready for gluing up. I did this in two stages, starting with the island sides, photo 13. Once the two side assemblies have dried, I glued the front and rear rails in place together with the back panel. At each stage, cramp and check for squareness, removing any squeezed-out glue.

Top, middle and bottom

Next make the island top, shelf and base panels from solid ash boards. To improve their stability, use several narrower pieces to make up the required panel width, photo 14.

Start by cross-cutting the pieces slightly longer than their final length. Prepare the pieces, planing the top to a thickness of 40mm and the shelf and base pieces to a thickness of 20mm. Arrange the top pieces to be visually pleasing and with alternate growth ring directions in adjacent boards. Check that the joint edges are square and that they fit together tightly.

You can now rub-joint the pieces and cramp them together tightly until the glue is dry. You can use biscuits or floating tenons to help align the edges during assembly; doing this can save a lot of effort after glue-up, photo 15. Again I used pva glue spread evenly with the roller, photo 16, and removed any squeezed-out glue before it was fully dry using a chisel. I used sash cramps while the adhesive dried, photo 17. When it has, flatten all the joints with a sharp plane, photo 18, and give the panels a light sanding.

Size the panels

Now you can dimension the top, shelf and base panels to their final measurements. Start with the top; cut it to width and then trim the ends square and to length, photo 19.

Next, dimension the shelf and base panels to their required sizes. Notch out their corners so each panel fits neatly between the legs and rests on the shelf supports and bottom rails. I cut the notches using the bandsaw, leaving a small clearance gap to allow for any future timber movement.

Soften the appearance of the top, shelf and base panels by cutting a roundover profile along their exposed edges. I cut this using a 3mm radius cutter fitted in the router table, photo 20.

Fixtures and fittings

The next stage is to fit the top, shelf and base panels to the island frame by a method that allows for any future timber movement caused by variations in air humidity. I used metal shrinkage brackets that are strong and easy to fit.



11 Mark the positions of the two shelf supports and cut the mortises



12 Form 8mm wide stopped chamfers along the leg edges using a 45° cutter



13 Begin the frame assembly by gluing up the two island side sections



14 Use several pieces planed flat and square to make up the top, shelf and base panels



15 Mark the positions of the floating tenons to help align the meeting edges



16 Spread the glue evenly on both joint surfaces using a hard roller



17 Rub-joint the pieces and cramp them all together tightly while the glue dries



18 When it has, flatten any raised panel joints using a sharp plane



19 Mark and trim the panel ends square and to the required length



20 Rout a small roundover profile on the exposed panel edges with a 3mm radius cutter



21
Use metal shrinkage brackets to fix the shelf to its supports...



22
...and also to attach the top panel to the island's top side rails and legs



23
Use small glued and screwed blocks to strengthen the lower front rail joints



24
I started boring the holes for the threaded sockets using a straight router cutter...



25
...and finished the job with a 10mm twist drill bit to achieve the full depth



26
Squirt adhesive into the leg holes and insert the threaded sockets using a bolt to hold them



27
Brush on your chosen finish and sand it while it's still wet for a smooth finish



28
I chose 20mm M6 flange-head bolts to secure the wheels to the legs



29
Apply thread lock fluid to the bolt threads to prevent them from working loose



30
Attach the four wheels by tightening down the bolts with a hex driver

Insert the shelf and base in position within the island frame and arrange the shrinkage brackets at regular intervals. Then mark out the location of the bracket slots, before drilling pilot holes and fixing them with roundhead screws, photo 21. You may find this easier to do with the island resting on its side.

Next, carefully position the island frame on the upturned top and fix the top in position using more shrinkage brackets, photo 22. For additional strength, I added blocks between the front legs and the lower rails using screws and glue, photo 23.

Mobility scooter

It's time to attach the wheels to the legs. You could use wood screws; however, these don't hold particularly well in end-grain. Instead I used chemical fixings – internally threaded steel sockets bonded into the legs using epoxy resin adhesive. Although these are a bit more expensive and require more work to install, they give a very strong fixing.

Start by upturning the island and use the wheels to mark their fixing positions on the leg ends. Then drill clearance holes to suit your threaded sockets. The body of mine measured 50 x 8mm and required fixing into 55 x 10mm holes. I cut the holes in two stages. Initially using my hand-held router fitted with a straight cutter, photo 24, and then a twist drill, photo 25. My sockets also included an optional rubber ring that centres the socket in the hole. If this is used, enlarge the top of the hole to 11mm.

Now apply some epoxy resin into the leg holes before inserting the threaded sockets. Check that the socket is flush with the leg and wipe away any squeezed-out epoxy before it dries. When inserting the socket, I held it with an M6 bolt fitted with a lock nut, photo 26, making it easier to hold and keep the threads free of adhesive.

Finishing touches

Disassemble the island top, shelf and base, give everything a final sanding and apply your chosen finish. I applied several coats of hardwax oil with a foam brush, photo 27. Rubbing the wet surfaces with fine wet-and-dry paper after each coat gives a lovely smooth finish.

Next, reassemble the island top, shelf and base using the shrinkage brackets, loosening the panel screws slightly to allow for any future timber movement.

The last stage is to attach the wheels. I used M6 flange-head bolts, photo 28, and applied some thread-locking fluid, photo 29, to prevent them from working loose in use. I gave a final turn to each one and the job was done, photo 30.

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BY PAUL BATHO

Tick tock 2!

Last month I described how I set about making the mechanism for a working wooden long-case clock, and gave a hint of how I built the case to house it. Here's a bit more detail...

When designing a case for my wooden clock I needed to consider some practicalities such as its height. It needed to be tall enough for the weight-driven clock mechanism to run for approximately 30 hours between windings. The size of the case would inevitably be large, so I needed to make it in easily detachable sections for ease of construction and transportation. I also wanted a contemporary style, similar to the familiar grandfather clock case but with a modern take. Lastly, it had to show off all the time and effort put into the design and construction of the clock mechanism!

Computer aided

Throughout the design of the clock, including the case, I've used a CAD drawing package called TurboCAD to produce elevation views of piece parts, sub-assemblies and the main assembly. Fig 1 shows the main assembly of the complete clock. Each sub-assembly is shown in a different colour and is placed on a different layer of the drawing so that it can be 'hidden' (made invisible) to reduce clutter when working on a specific part of the design. Each sub-assembly is built up of piece parts, and then the main assembly is populated with the sub-assemblies.



1 The base of the clock case is a framed box construction with oak-veneered plywood panels



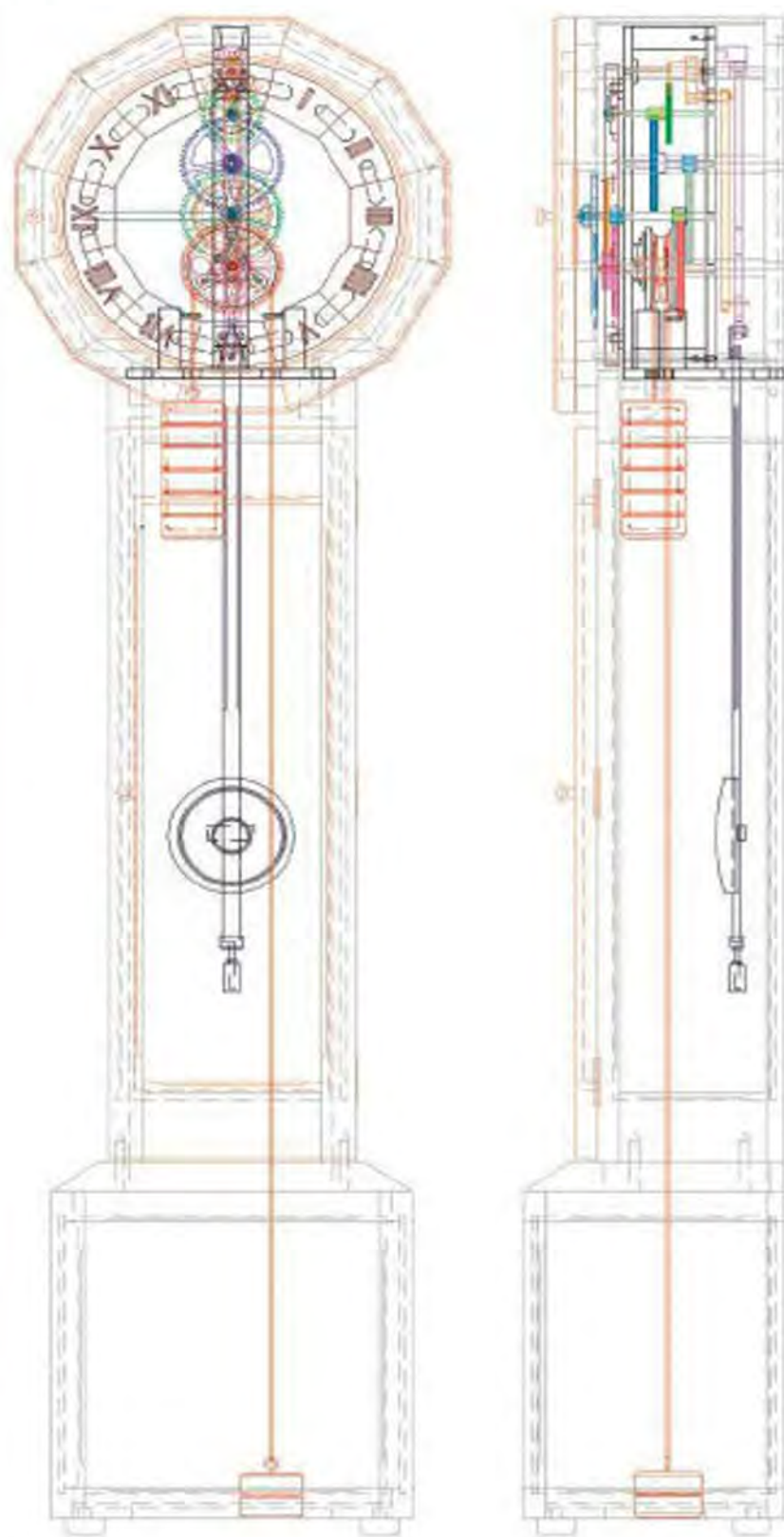
2 The trunk section is similar in construction to the base, but has a custom support cradle on top



3 The trunk section features a bevelled glass door opening to a panelled interior



Fig 1



I must admit that on some occasions I deviated from the drawn piece parts during construction, either because it looked better or because I made a (small) mistake. This is OK so long as you go back and update the piece part drawing, and make sure that everything still fits into the sub-assemblies and main assembly.

Building blocks

The clock consists of four stack-together sections – the base, the trunk, the hood and the clock mechanism. The clock case is made from white oak which has been stained and finished with three coats of Danish oil.

Photo 1 shows the completed base of the clock case. It's a fairly standard box construction using haunched mortise and tenon joints, with 6mm oak-veneered plywood panels fitted into routed grooves. It was completed by fitting four turned button feet.

Trunk connection

The trunk section of the case sits on the base and provides access to the clock pendulum and the drive train weights. Photo 2 shows the completed trunk section, which is similar in construction to the base except that it has a glass-panelled door. In addition the bottom part of the trunk is fixed to a sloping plinth which provides stability when it's mounted on the base.

The top of the trunk section, photo 3, provides the interface with the clock mechanism and the hood section of the case. The four upwardly pointing dowels were made long enough to protrude through the base of the clock mechanism, holding it in place, and to locate the hood section of the case.

I've also included a wooden hook which is moved into a vertical position when the hood is fitted to secure it when its heavy glass panel door is open. For safety's sake the clock case is fixed to the wall via the bracket shown at the back of the trunk section.

Reflecting the hours

I wanted something a little different for the hood section, which would show off the mechanism of the clock. I settled on a 12-sided shape called a dodecagon (I looked it up!) to reflect the 12 hours on the clock dial.

Photo 4 shows the part-assembled hood. The 12-sided front is actually made from four sections, each containing three side pieces, joined together using biscuits.

Getting a grip

One of the biggest challenges was to devise a way of cramping the structure together during the glue-up stage. I didn't have a band

cramp, so I reverted to the old nylon-cord-and-large-screwdriver tourniquet trick, photo 5. I then used a length of threaded stud and some scrap wood to make a central cramp that would hold the assembly tightly against my router-cutting table top.

Following a dry cramp-up I discovered that I needed to do more work if the unstable assembly wasn't to end up totally out of square... or as a pile of matchsticks. I therefore made four rectangular plywood pieces to fit into some of the apertures in the frame, thus ensuring that everything remained square. Note the use of clingfilm to make sure that they didn't end up being permanently glued into the assembly!

Photo 6 shows the completed hood assembly, ready to receive the plywood back and the plywood and glass side pieces.

A solid door

The door needed to be reasonably substantial as it would bear the weight of a large piece of glass and be hung onto the hood case by one relatively small section of its frame. The twelve sections were glued together using biscuit joints as shown in photo 7, and cramped up using the same techniques as for the hood itself, photo 8.

To finish the door I needed to create a circular section on the inside. To do this I used my router with a 6mm straight cutter, and made a compass jig from plywood as shown in photo 9. The door and the central spacing piece were stuck to the router-cutting table top with double-sided sticky tape.

The centre of the required circle was easily found by drawing lines across the opposite corners of the dodecagon with a straightedge. The pivot pin for the compass jig was a small wood screw which was screwed into a hole made at the centre of the circle. The head of the screw was then cut off to allow the hole in the compass jig to be located. Following a number of shallow passes the circular section was cut all the way through the door.

The router was also used in the traditional way to produce the rebate to take the glass front and to create a 45° bevel on the outside. The completed door is shown fitted to the hood in photo 10.

Assembling the case

Photos 11 to 14 show the four main sub-assemblies, and how they fit together to form the final long-case clock assembly.

The clock has been sitting in our lounge at home now for just over two years. It has been running all that time (apart from when I forget to wind it, or we are away). It's showing no signs of wear, and is accurate to about one minute per week.



The 12-sided front is made from four sections, each containing three angled side pieces



One of the biggest challenges was to devise a way of cramping the structure during the glue-up



The completed hood assembly is ready to receive the back and the plywood and glass side pieces



The 12 oak sections forming the hood door were glued together one by one using biscuit joints



Once assembled, they were then cramped up and kept flat using the same method as step 5



I needed to cut a circle on the inner edge of the door, so I made a compass jig for my router



The router was also used to form the rebate for the glass front and a 45° bevel on the outside edge



Assembling the finished clock case starts with positioning the base on a level surface



The trunk section with its glazed door stands on the base, to which it is linked by a chamfered plinth



The clock mechanism is mounted on top of the weight case, and is located on four projecting dowels



Once the clock face is fitted and the pendulum and weights set in place, the clock is ready to run

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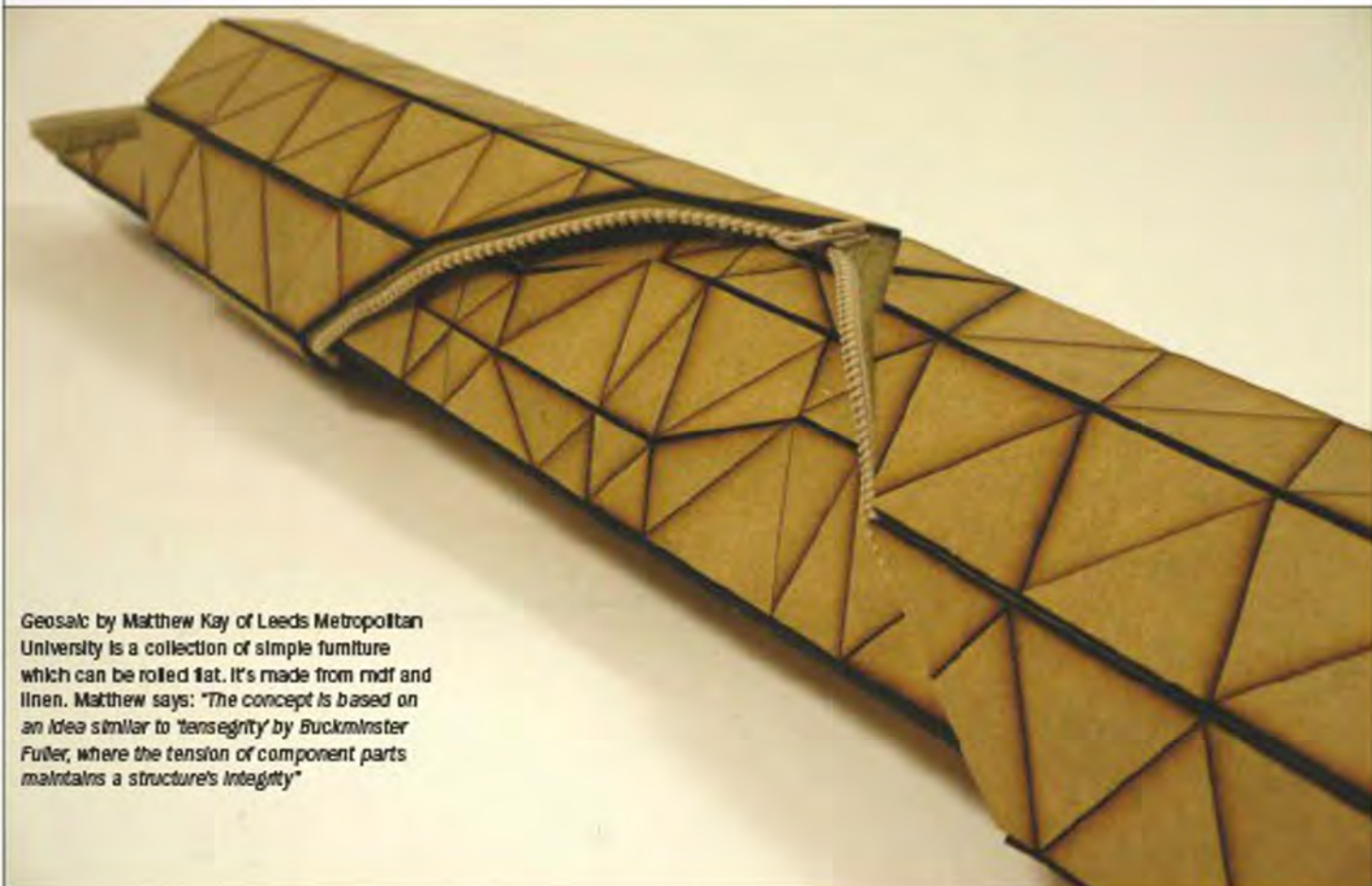
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Geosalc by Matthew Kay of Leeds Metropolitan University is a collection of simple furniture which can be rolled flat. It's made from mdf and linen. Matthew says: "The concept is based on an idea similar to 'tensegrity' by Buckminster Fuller, where the tension of component parts maintains a structure's integrity"



BY MARK CASS

Show and tell

There are some shows – and I'm thinking West End theatre here – that don't disappoint; you know what you're going to get with *The Mousetrap* or *Billy Elliot*. With design and woodworking shows however, it's always a bit of a gamble

This is particularly true if the last year's show was very good indeed. Perhaps we all like the element of uncertainty, and this is what keeps us attending...

It was therefore with some apprehension that I entered the imposing premises of London's Business Design Centre, formerly the Royal Agricultural Hall and the site of many a large-scale livestock and arable show until the start of the Second World War. Amidst near record attendances, it soon became clear that I needn't have worried; the standards of design and execution were as good as ever – if not even better than before.

In at the deep end

At the top of the Grand Staircase with but a moment to take a breath, and like diving into the chilly sea, I plunged into the colour and noise and immersed myself in the realised plans and dreams of this year's myriad young graduates.

The New Designers show features well over a hundred universities, colleges and schools from around the country, all showcasing a selected group of students and their work in a wide variety of disciplines, spread across two parts and spanning eight days. It's impossible to do the show justice in a few scant hours, but

by concentrating on the woodwork-related zone (which took up about half of the floor space) I gave it my best shot and tried to see everything.

Enthusiasm in spades

One thing that remains a constant of this particular end-of-year show is the enthusiasm of the students (or should I say, ex-students?); anyone who could bottle that particular essence would do very well indeed. I also felt that there was a stronger grasp of reality this year – an acceptance of the current commercial milieu and a cognisance of the necessity of sponsorship.

This helped many students, and also introduced them to an early integration with the world of manufacture and sales.

Sponsors' names and products were visible but not dominant, and there was evidence of cooperation in ventures which could be of dual benefit if all goes well.

Mixed materials

Although some colleges exhibited furniture and other pieces which were exclusively timber-based, I noted a growth in the amount of work which featured fabrics and other materials as part of the finished design. This has to be taken as a good sign, and shows that there is a healthy development and exploration of what else can be done in a familiar field.

Money talks

While the bigger universities and colleges maintained their expected standards, it was a tough call as to which were providing the most innovation; the big uni design departments or the smaller private schools and colleges. Certainly, and speaking as someone with recent experience of the FE (further education) teaching system, larger organisations are judged and funded on their results alone – something the privately-run colleges worry less about than the quality of their actual teaching.

In conclusion

All in all it was a really good show, and I extend my thanks to everyone who played a part in it. The students' work shown here is but a sample of what was on offer, and I hope readers will enjoy the various photos. I welcome your comments, and hope to feature one or two of the pieces in more detail in the near future.



This asymmetric low table in walnut was made by Joe Cottingham of the Building Crafts College, London



Coffee table No 27.4 is a sculptural design in painted mdf and black walnut by George Harding of the Williams and Cleal Furniture School. He says: "The way that the legs just slot into the top makes this table a piece of high-end flatpack furniture."

This fabulous set of interlocking tables was made in Formica and mdf by Hannah Stockley of Loughborough University



This set of Cera Kitchen utensils was fabricated in maple and Corian by Jamie Mansfield of Nottingham Trent University. He explained: "Corian worktop offcuts are used to create the handles for these utensils, which are then fixed to the pre-manufactured wooden tool parts, providing the customer with a utensil set which matches their new kitchen."



This textured and coloured clock is one of a range of items presented by Will Phillips, who studied at the National School of Furniture in High Wycombe



This pair of angled interlocking side tables called *Transform* was designed by Rebecca Milligan of Northumbria University. "From the development of my geometrical research came the idea of a modular table that was essentially the solid transformation of two polygonal shapes", said Rebecca



Otto is an ottoman storage unit in walnut and screen-printed birch ply, designed and made by Sarah Kirby from Nottingham Trent University. Sarah said: "After reading *The Giving Tree* I was inspired to explore the ecology of the woodlands and the creatures within; the screen-printed elements are inspired by the feather patterns of a barn owl"



This *Chief's Chair* in steam-bent olive ash is by Irene Banham, also of the Williams and Cleal Furniture School



The *Apto* shoe rack by Hannah Knowles of Northumbria University features ash dowel and copper pipe and fittings



Sound3 by Grace Nugent of Glasgow Caledonian University (Product Design) is a CNC-machined iPhone directional amplifier in oak



This striking *Honesty* chest in sycamore by Uana Sims of Buckinghamshire New University exposes all the constructional details



Fallboard by Sam Fenton of Northumbria University is a minimalist desk in American black walnut. According to Sam: "Fallboard explores how minimalism in design can affect a product's function, and shows it needn't be done just for aesthetic effect but can also be a powerful tool which influences use and function"



The *Elder* drinks cabinet in burr sweet chestnut, walnut and sycamore is one of two pieces shown by Thomas Jarrold of the Williams and Cleal Furniture School. He explained: "When you open the doors you're greeted with a luxurious interior of rippled sycamore, which almost gives the feeling of the silk lining in a tailored suit"



Gordon's Table is an award-winning desk in walnut and maple by Gustav Swanson of Rycootwood Furniture Centre. It features a secret drawer that's unlocked using a pen

The *Rogart* side table in oak and ash was made by George Mead. He's one of the last students at Buckinghamshire New University where the Furniture Design and Craft Degree has just been discontinued



Convene consists of two chairs and two small tables which all nest into one compact unit. It was made in birch ply by Mark Hampson of Nottingham Trent University, who told us: "With cost an issue, it was essential that every single piece of the puzzle could be cut out of one 8 x 4ft sheet of plywood"



An unusual seating unit in maple and woven cord called *Seren* was made by Scarlett San Martin of Nottingham Trent University. She explained the concept: "Watching people in public spaces, I saw that we're all plugged

into our headphones these days and rarely even acknowledge each other. The instability of the woven seat causes its users to notice one another, disrupting the disconnection currently experienced in today's society"



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BY PETER BISHOP

Going green

Making a coffin may seem like a somewhat unorthodox woodworking project, but there's growing interest in the use of recycled or green materials for something that's the ultimate in disposable goods

Bill the Box, as he's affectionately known, has been a mate of mine for many years. He's an undertaker. If you hadn't worked it out! He recently raised the subject of making a coffin from sustainable materials to meet the demand for green burials. "Pallets," he said. "There's loads of them about, and I only see them being burnt or chopped up for firewood." "Ah," I responded, "there's a reason for that. They're so full of shrapnel you'd have to chainsaw both ends off and then get all the other nails out. And after that, you'd end up with a pile of useless short ends!"

A change of tack

Instead I suggested using wood that would otherwise be wasted, burnt or thrown away – ideally something that hadn't done too many road miles. So off I went to my local indigenous hardwood supplier. Willy Bullough, the boss, was intrigued when I told him about the project and asked what he'd got that might be suitable.

A huge stack of 38mm thick sycamore was the answer. This stuff had been in stick for many years but had a bad attack of powder post beetle, but there was way too much of it for me. A further search revealed some alder that was suffering from the same problem. Willy couldn't sell it as good stuff, so we negotiated a deal whereby he'd deep-cut the whole stack to produce 18mm thick boards. I left him to it and awaited his call to collect.

A tall alder

A few days later the alder was back at my works... I sorted it into two piles, one with slightly less infestation than the other. Although it was dry, I wanted to keep it in as good condition as I could, so into stick it went, photo 1.

Alder isn't used a great deal in woodworking. Growing alongside streams, brooks and rivers, it can have a decent-sized trunk and its straw-coloured grain is easy to work. It had originally been cut from



1 Although dry, the alder was put into stock to ensure it stayed reasonably flat



3 The plank shapes are cut on the bandsaw and then planed true afterwards



5 The side planks are cut with straight edges to make up the required widths



7 These short head-end side sections have a temporary brace fitted in place

logs sourced locally, so we could call it reasonably sustainable and a good material for up-cycling.

Making plans

I searched the internet for plans, drawings and images of coffins, looking for something plain and simple. Bill gave me some guidance on dimensions, so I settled on a fairly large model. My first task was to



2 I used a ply template to mark out the side shapes for the top and bottom panels



4 The top has cross braces that allow for the width of the sides and their vertical braces



6 The end angles at the shoulder joint on each side can be cut on a cross-cut saw



8 With the sides inverted and braced by supports, the bottom can be screwed on

create a template from which I could work. I mapped one out on a length of old chipboard. To work the profile onto the raw material I then produced a thin ply template, photo 2, so I could mark round its edge. With some of the alder cut with one straight edge, I got to work on these profiles using my bandsaw, photo 3. The two edges were shaped and then an odd bit cut to fit the middle and make the width up.

Top and bottom

The bottom is joined together with three flat cross braces screwed and glued across it, photo 4. Each was set in about 18mm from the edge to allow the sides to be fitted. The top had four of these pieces fixed across it. They were positioned to match the vertical braces on the sides and were therefore set in a bit further so that the whole top would drop into place securely. The top needs to be two board thicknesses longer than the bottom at each end. This is because the top and tail are nailed to the sides after they are fitted to the bottom.

Side by side

The sides are made up in two straight-edged lengths each, photo 5 – a long one up to the shoulder point from the bottom and a short one from the top. These four pieces can be made from a various widths as long as they are all the same once joined.

The joining ends of the side components need to be angled so that the joint is fairly tight on the outside. Working off the template, you can work out the amount of lift required to create these angles on a cross-cut saw. These cuts can be made with care, so long as there's a fence behind the workpiece to stop it being drawn into the saw, photo 6. With the angles cut, the cross braces can be cut dead to length to fit across the overall width.

Adding braces

A specially angled cross brace will join each side section together at the shoulder point. We don't need this just yet, so on the longer, tall end side sections a cross brace is fitted at the bottom and another half way up, to match the position of the braces on the top board. The shorter, head end has a cross brace fitted at the top and a simple, temporary one a bit further down, photo 7. All the braces at the very ends need to be secured with screws set well in from the bottom edges. This is because, later on, I would use a saw to cut the sloping ends.

Bottoms up

At this stage the sides can now be fitted to the bottom, photo 8. Working on my bench I set the sides up on the chipboard template, propping them up with supports clamped to the table. The bottom was then placed onto the sides, with some glue under, and the whole lot lined up. Screws are then driven right through the bottom into the sides. With a temporary brace screwed onto each end, I was just able to turn the whole lot over on the bench without too much difficulty.

Angled shoulders

I then had to make the special vertical brace to join the sides up at the shoulder point. These have two different angles off one face. To work these out I had to look at my template on the chipboard. I was then able to trim and finish the two pieces on my surface planer. Cramped and glued up, photo 9, I could then screw them in place.

Now I fitted a support brace across the top and tail of the coffin a little way in from each end. With these in place the two temporary braces across each end could be removed so I could shape and trim them to the finished size. There's a 25mm inward slope from the top to the bottom at each end. This was marked out and the sides were cut through using my portable circular saw. With the whole lot upside down I was then able to cut, by hand, across the bottom to finish it off, photo 10. A few extra screws into the now cut braces helped to give a bit more strength to the sides, ready for the next stage.

Angled ends

Odd pieces, to make up the width, are glued and nailed onto the ends. As these nails were the only ones on show, apart from fixing the top, I decided to use old-fashioned cut nails. The pieces can be over long and, once fixed in place, are trimmed off at a slight angle with a handsaw; photo 11.

Next, I checked and made final adjustments to the fit of the top. Four cut nails each side would secure the top onto the sides. I pre-drilled some guide holes for the nails, ready for later. The whole coffin was now roughly sanded off with my belt sander; it was nearly finished.

Rope research

Handles? My net research had come up with vast choice. I wanted to keep them simple and natural, in line with the green concept, so I settled on sisal rope as the answer. An eBay purchase saw a length of this arrive just in time. I decided that three handles on each side would be best and worked out where to place them.

The rope was 20mm thick, so I bored a pair of 16mm holes for each handle along the sides. To ensure the rope didn't fray I then bound the ends with twisted wire before cutting from the length. Each piece, I worked out, had to be about 500mm long.

All wired up

With six of these bound lengths in hand, photo 12, I could work them through the holes by turning them in the direction of the



The two double-angled shoulder braces are prepared and fixed in place next



After cutting the end angles, the bottom is trimmed to size with a hand saw



The ends are glued and nailed on, and then trimmed off flush with each side



Half a dozen rope handles are wire-bound at their ends, ready for fitting



The ends are pushed through their holes, overlapped and joined with twisted wire



The wire is taped over and a couple of nails driven in to hold each handle in place



The top is pre-drilled to take the cut nails that will secure it in place

twist. I was then faced with the conundrum of how to secure them in place. I twisted wire round the overlapped ends, photo 13, and then used electrical tape to secure this, photo 14. Now I could place a pair of strategically located nails and tack the whole lot to the inside of the coffin. Despite some vigorous testing, they held in place; job done! Then on went the top – a perfect fit, photo 15.

Final journey

We loaded the finished coffin into the back of Bill the Box's estate car and headed over to our local green burial site, where we had an appointment with the proprietor. After a close inspection she said it was good to see a coffin that looked so natural. Let's just hope the orders don't come flooding in too quickly! I'm not sure that I want to become known locally as Bishop the Box...

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BY ANDY STANDING

Pause for thought

Life can be busy and stressful, and it's often hard to get away from the constant barrage of noise and activity. Many people find that meditation is an ideal way to relax and calm the mind. This simple folding stool will help to get you in the right mood...



Contrary to popular belief, meditating doesn't necessarily involve wearing a kilt and sitting in the lotus position for hours on end. The term meditation covers a range of different practices, many of which can be learned from specialist teachers and tailored to suit your specific needs. However, one thing that all forms of meditation share is the need to be comfortable and secure during the practice.

A small meditation stool can be a great help. These stools are designed to support you while kneeling. They relieve the pressure on your feet and the angled seat holds your spine at the perfect angle to promote good posture and prevent backache. This particular design has folding legs, making it easy to carry around when travelling or attending meditation classes.

These stools are easy to make and have great potential for



1 Mark a straight line to remove the bark and the sapwood, and cut along it using a jigsaw



2 After planing and thickening the board, you can now cross-cut the seat to length...



3 ...and rip it down to the final width. I made mine 150mm wide and 500mm long



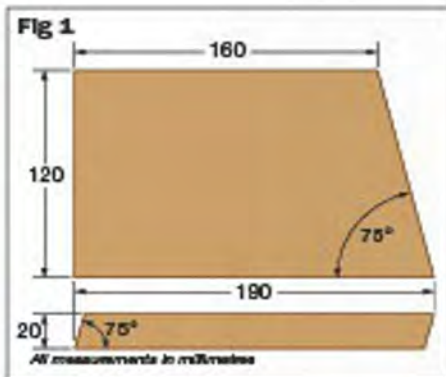
4 Add an edge moulding, profiling the ends first and then tackling the long side edges



5 Use a table saw or mitre saw with the fence set to 15° to cut the angled ends of the legs



6 Then mark the overall length and cut the other end of each leg square



decoration and personalisation with inlays or by using contrasting timbers. Apart from the three timber components – a seat measuring 500 x 150 x 20mm, and two legs cut to the size and shape shown in fig 1 – you'll need a pair of 100mm butt hinges, four small screw-on rubber seat bumpers and some 16mm No 8 countersunk screws.

Preparing the components

I made this stool from some sawn boards of air-dried sweet chestnut. The first job is to assess the boards and create a straight edge so that the timber can then be safely processed on the table saw. Mark a straight line to remove the bark and the sapwood, and cut along it using a jigsaw, photo 1.

Now transfer the wood to the table saw and rip it to width, leaving a little extra width for planing and final dimensioning. Keep the legs as one single piece of wood for the moment.

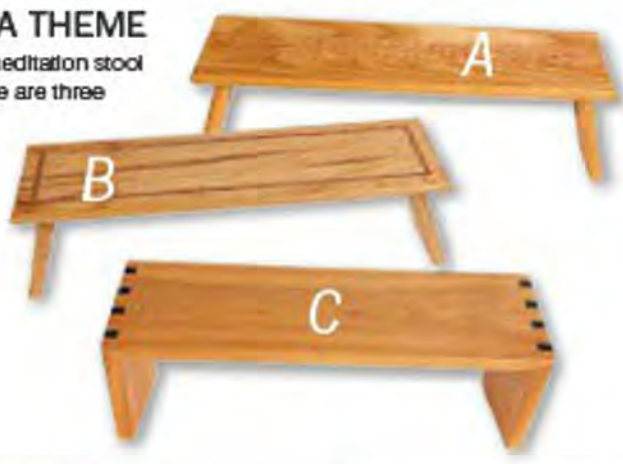
Planing and thickening

It is, of course, perfectly possible to do this next stage by hand, though it takes a fair amount of time and skill to produce a perfectly accurate piece. I reckon that most woodworkers will opt to use a planer thicknesser (if they have one), which can do the job in moments. Plane the face first, taking shallow cuts until the surface is smooth. Don't be tempted to take deep cuts, as you will only risk spoiling the surface. Once the face is done, plane one edge square. Now run the timber through the thicknesser.

When thickening timber, it's important to try to balance any stresses that may exist within the wood. This means that it's a bad idea simply to place the face side down on the thicknesser table and then remove all the waste from the back side. A better method is to thickness the timber until it is smooth on both sides, and then to

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

You can personalise your meditation stool in many different ways. Here are three examples; a seat made with two different woods (A), one with the top decorated by some inlaid banding (B), and a fixed-leg version featuring spline dovetails in a contrasting wood (C).



take equal passes from each side so that the core of the board remains central. The board will now lose moisture equally from both faces, meaning that it is less likely to deform over time.

You can now cross-cut the board to length, photo 2, and rip it to width, photo 3.

Adding edge detail

The next job is to mould the edges of both the seat and the legs. I used a spindle moulder fitted with a rounded cutter that has a 20mm diameter. This produces a clean rounded edge in one pass. You can, of course, use a router fitted with a rounding-over cutter, or any other moulding cutter that takes your fancy.

Mould the end grain first, holding a length of sacrificial board behind the workpiece to support it and prevent breakout. Then mould the side edges, photo 4.

Cutting the angles

Now you can cut the legs to length. Use a table saw or a mitre saw with the blade tilted to 15°. The bottom end of each leg is cut using the mitre fence also set to 15°, photo 5. Make sure that the 15° cuts on both ends are parallel; otherwise the legs won't work. Then the top ends can be cut perfectly square, photo 6.

Sand all the components to remove any machining marks and blemishes, sort out the hardware and you're ready to begin the assembly, photo 7.

Fitting the hinges

Mark the positions of the two hinges. The inside of the leaf is set at 85mm from the end of the seat board. The hinges I used are 100mm brass butt hinges, fixed with 16mm No 8 screws.

Drill a pilot hole for just one screw to begin with and fix the hinge lightly in position, photo 8. Then offer up the first leg, drill another pilot hole and drive in one screw, photo 9. Repeat for the other leg.

Now fold both legs down and ensure that they line up, photo 10. Adjust their positions slightly if necessary. Now you can drill and fit the remaining screws in each hinge.

Finishing the stool

Now fit the four rubber bumpers, photo 11. These protect the legs and the seat and allow the stool to be folded quietly.

Finally, take a small sanding block and soften all the edges of the legs, photo 12. This will eliminate any tendency for them to splinter. Now you can apply your chosen finish. I used Danish oil and a final coat of wax for a smooth and lustrous effect.



Sand all the components, sort out the hardware and you're ready to begin the assembly



The inside of the hinge leaf is set at 85mm from the end of the seat board. Fix it with a single screw



Offer up the first leg, drill another pilot hole and drive in one screw. Repeat for the other leg



Now fold both legs down and check that they line up. Adjust their positions slightly if necessary



Fit the four rubber bumpers. These protect the legs and seat and allow the stool to be folded quietly



Finally, take a small sanding block and soften all the edges of the legs. Now it's time to relax...





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Veneering 1: the basics

Veneering is a perfect way to exploit the natural variety of wood. Here's the first of two articles that will explore the subject

People often talk about veneer as if it implies poor quality. So why should anyone want to use it? Why? Well, the answer's as obvious as the implication of poor quality is mistaken: veneering affords you the opportunity to introduce an extraordinary degree of variety, class and polish to your woodworking. It allows you to do things that would be either impractical, impossible or simply unaffordable with solid timber. You can veneer man-made boards,

for example, to create large panels that look like solid timber but which have none of the problems of movement. You can exploit the decorative beauty of burls, say, in ways that you couldn't if you tried using them in the

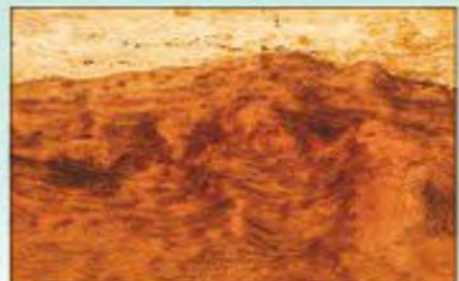
solid. You can lend your work the outward appearance of exotic timbers while using more workaday woods for the inner structure – which, if nothing else, is good stewardship of a precious resource. And if you want to



Selected figured maple stock is peeled to reveal the classic bird's eye detail



Slice cut quilted bubinga comes from an African hardwood that's similar to rosewood...



...the rotary-cut form is more widely used and is commonly known as kewasingo



Zebrano provides spectacularly attractive veneers when sliced from quarter-sawn stock

BARE ESSENTIALS

You need just a few specialist tools to enable you to try your hand at veneering.



VENEER SAW

The teeth of a veneer saw have no set, and are designed to cut on the pull stroke only. For all the thinness of veneers, you should expect to take several passes to achieve a clean cut. See *Joining*.



VENEER TAPE

Gummed paper tape that's wetted and used to hold veneer sections together. The gum Arabic it uses is veneer-safe, and as the tape dries, it shrinks slightly, ensuring a tight joint. After gluing, the tape's easily removed by simply wetting and scraping it. For some alternative taping practices, see *Joining*.



GLUE POT

If you're going to use pearl glue – and it's good stuff – you'll need a means to keep it warm. Simple double-walled kettles stand on a stove or hotplate that heats the water in the outer pot, which keeps the glue in the inner pot at a working temperature without the risk of burning. If the veneering bug bites, you can buy a thermostatically controlled electric glue pot – a Teasmade for gelatine, really. See *Adhesives* in next month's article.



ELECTRIC IRON

Handy for exploiting the property of pearl glue that means it can be softened by heating, allowing you to press the veneer and ensure a sound bond to the substrate. See *Hammer veneering*.



SCALPEL/CRAFT KNIFE

Handy for fine work, or just because you've already got one in the workshop, but see *Joining* for advice on cutting square edges with knives.



VENEER HAMMER

When drawn down the veneer with a side-to-side motion, the hammer encourages any excess glue to move from the centre of the veneer to the edges. You can make yourself a veneer hammer by mounting a strip of acrylic or brass into a wooden block with a handle. The trick is to relieve the edges of the strip so that there's nothing sharp to catch the veneer. Some people make theirs from 75mm brass hinges; their round backs make good bearers.

add decorative detail, there's marquetry. Oh, but then that's another story altogether...

A remarkable palette

If you've ever fancied giving veneering a go but thought of it as a dark art rather than a practical craft, then you should forget about the mechanics, about the cutting and the matching and the gluing. Think instead about the palette that is provided by wood's natural variety. Almost anything you can make can be painted with the unique grains, colours and figures of veneer. And if that doesn't inspire you to warm your glue pot, nothing will!

A quick walk in the woods

The organic and wonderfully capricious quality of that palette is perfectly illustrated by burr (or burr) veneer, which comes from the outgrowths that can occur where a tree has been damaged or infested by mould and insects. When sliced into veneer, the close-packed and dormant buds that make up the burr are transformed into the whorls of its unmistakable figure.

The ink-on-parchment pattern of masur birch, meanwhile, is caused by the work of wood-boring larvae, though no-one has a satisfactory explanation for the unique figuring in bird's-eye maple.

It doesn't necessarily take galls or grubs to give us decorative figuring, though. The irregular grain of a tree stump is used to produce burl veneer, which is a less dramatic alternative to burr. A further variation comes in the form of curl veneer, which is taken from a fork in a tree. Rotary cutting – which slices layers from a whole log as you might peel a potato – turns the three-dimensional diverging grain into a feather-like two-dimensional figure.

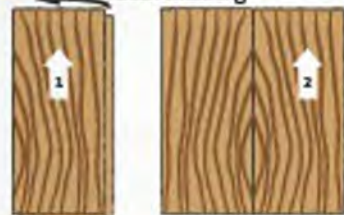
In the same way, depending on how they're cut, wavy grained woods can give rise to striking effects such as quilted bubinga, or that favourite of musical instrument makers, the appropriately named fiddleback sycamore.

You'll find much more conventional figuring in crown-cut veneer, which is taken from a half-round log by taking tangential slices. This produces decorative veneers that can be as wide as 600mm. They also have the same figure as plain sawn boards – whorls where the older, smaller growth rings meet the face at more acute angles, and lines where the larger rings meet the face at more obtuse angles – which is why it's often used in cabinet making.

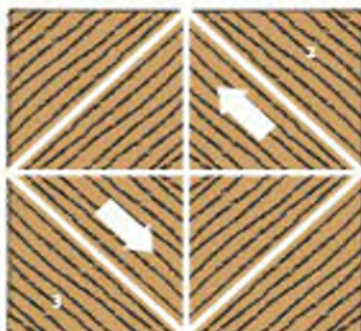
When timber is quarter-sawn, on the other hand, the radial cuts will reveal the rays in woods like oak or plane, and the striping of the growth rings in timbers such as zebano.



Book matching



Four-piece matching



Diamond matching

Leaves from a tree

Today's sliced veneers generally come in leaves about 0.6mm (1/4in) thick. The most common veneers can come in lengths of 3.35m (11ft) or more, which will usually be sold in rolled-up form for convenience. If you buy your veneers in smaller sections, though, you'll find that the bundles have been stacked in the order that they're taken from the log – what's often referred to as sequential order. For matching purposes, then, this is how you should expect to buy your veneer.

When you examine your bundle, you'll find that, because modern commercial veneers are cut with a knife rather than a saw, no wood has been lost between the leaves. This means that you can lay successive veneers side by side – one face-up, the next face-down – with the matching edges touching so that abutting pieces all but mirror one another. This is called

book-matching, and when you're using straight-grained veneers to lay up a single panel, it's an approach that will help blend together multiple leaves.

With more heavily figured veneers, you can create some striking effects by butt matching: book-matching the second pair of leaves in a set of four, and laying them end to end with the first pair to create a figure that is symmetrical on both sides of the two axes.

As a rule (one that's immediately broken by book-matching, mind you!) you should lay veneers with their back – what's called the open face – to the groundwork, which is the substrate onto which it'll be glued. You'll find that this open face is slightly coarser than the closed, front face, and is readily identified by bowing the veneer along the grain: you'll find that it'll bend more easily when the coarser open face is convex.



This Krenov-style cabinet has book-matched veneered panels for the doors, which look great



Diamond matching (see left) can create a truly explosive effect!



A shooting board for veneers is very useful – simply glue support boards to a baseboard



The jig can also be used as a cutting board for trimming veneers



A low-angle jack plane is ideal for shooting veneers, but No.5 upwards will work well too

FLATTENING VENEERS

Some veneers, particularly burns, bird's-eye and quilted leaves, may need to be flattened before use. To help you decide whether this is necessary, rest the edge of a steel rule on the high spots of the leaf. If the low spots create gaps of 4mm or more beneath the edge, then it needs flattening.

Proprietary veneer softeners are available, but you can make your own using one of the many recipes in circulation. Bear in mind, though, that some of these contain glue, which may affect the ability of the veneer to take stain later. One quick and innocuous recipe uses 8 parts water and one part glycerine. Mix up the solution and spray it onto the veneer, sandwiching each leaf between a double thickness of

newspaper as you go. Then press the stack between two flat boards and apply pressure. Change the newspaper every 24 hours until the veneer is flat and – quite importantly – dry. If there's any residual moisture in the leaves, it means that they've still got some shrinking to do. And if they do their final drying after you've cut and laid them, there's a real risk that any joints you've made will open up.

An alternative veneer flattening recipe goes as follows:

- 2 parts powdered resin glue
- 1 part plain flour
- 2 parts water
- 1.5 parts glycerine
- 1 part isopropyl alcohol

The argument for using adhesive in this formulation is that it 'fixes' the wood fibres in their new, flattened state. Anyway, mix the glue and flour first, then add the water slowly to avoid lumps, followed by the glycerine and alcohol. Paint the solution onto both sides of the veneers and hang them up until they're touch dry before again sandwiching the leaves between newspaper, placing the whole lot between flat boards and adding weights.

Leave the veneer for two hours before changing the newspaper and pressing the stack again. Repeat this process after four hours, and then leave the veneer to dry for a day before separating the leaves; any longer and they'll stick together.

JOINTING VENEERS

When you're laying several leaves of veneer over a large area, the joints need to be as discreet as possible. If you're cutting your veneer with a knife rather than a veneer saw, however, you'll find that the bevel of the blade creates an angled cut that will show in the finished work unless you cut from the back side of the leaf. The answer is to hold the knife so that the bevel on the good edge (that's to say, away from the waste) is vertical and produces a square cut.

If you're using a veneer saw, you can tune the blade by using a fine oilstone to apply a light bevel (about 15°) to the handle side of the blade. This will create a knife-like edge providing that you're careful not to grind off the tops of the teeth, which

will obviously blunt them and defeat the whole object. The other side of the blade is then honed to give a dead flat face which runs against the straightedge used to guide your cut.

The way to ensure really accurate butt joints, however, is to lay the sheets of veneer face to face between two boards with the mating edges projecting just enough so that you can shock them with a jointing plane.

The leaves are then laid out and the mating edges held together with straps of tape laid across the joint 100mm apart. Some woodworkers suggest using masking tape for this, as its slight elasticity will serve to pull the leaves into close contact and hold them there while you

check the joint by holding the veneers up to the light. You shouldn't see any light between the two leaves, and if that's the case then you can congratulate yourself and run a strip of veneer tape down the length of the joint on the face side. Remove the masking tape when you're done.

Experience shows that the adhesive in Sellotape and the like tends to penetrate the veneer – which makes it hard to remove at best and, at worst, discolours the veneer.

A better tape to use is clear, low-tack parcel tape. This does a good job of holding the veneer – but not so good a job that you can't remove it easily – while its extra width affords a better hold and greater pull to draw the joints together.

SIMPLE HAMMER VENEERING

The traditional method of applying veneer is hammer veneering, named for the tool used to press the veneer into place. In principle, the technique's straightforward: paint pearl glue onto the groundwork and the back of the veneer. On small projects, it's probably sufficient to apply the glue to the ground alone and just wet the back of the veneer with a damp sponge.

One of the secrets of successful hammer veneering is timing: you need to apply the veneer when the pearl glue is tacky, and then apply it quickly so that you have time to work the veneer with the hammer before the glue gets too thick and

sticky to be squeezed out.

If you've judged it right you'll be able to press the veneer into place with the hammer, working from the centre of the leaf out towards the edges. Any glue that you squeeze out should be peeled or scraped away before it hardens. You can put it back in the glue pot to go round again, if you like.

Used in this way, the hide glue will have sufficient tack to hold the veneer without the need for a press, though there's no harm in cramping your work between boards while the glue cures. However, the advantage of hammer veneering – or of the

gelatine-based pearl glue, to be precise – is that the bond can be re-softened using moisture and heat if you need to reposition the veneer or make repairs in the future.

Moisture and heat are also involved in a variation on hammer veneering's simple but effective 'cold' process, and will give you an even tighter bond. Having laid the veneer in place, dampen it with a wet cloth and then run a hot iron over the surface. The idea is that the water turns to steam, which penetrates the veneer, making it more flexible and willing to lie flat, and also softens the glue so that it will key to the veneer as you hammer it.

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Microclene filters are hand assembled in the UK factory in Gosport, Hampshire; where they only ever use high quality components throughout.

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The Company

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About the team

Acrol is a family run business, managed by Ron and his two sons, with another member of the family helping out at woodworking shows.

Ron designs all the machines, comes up with an idea and with help from his sons then refines the idea and if the prototype is ok puts it into production.

All of the products are made in Gosport, Hants, the bodies are made by a sub-contractor and then delivered to the powder coaters adjacent, then they are assembled, each machine is then tested during assembly and after it finished, they are again tested before being packed and boxed.

The reliability record is very good. A lot of the Microclene customers that bought machines when Acrol started are still working, (20 years is quite a long time in this age of throwaway goods). The motors are very robust, and have an expected life of 40,000 hours running, that is 5 days a week for 50 weeks of the year, and 20 years total!

Prices at the moment are only 12% more than when Acrol introduced the machines 20 years ago, this is the result of buying components at better prices as the sales went up. Acrol do not annually increase prices, only when component prices go up.



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BY COLIN SIMPSON

In at the deep end

Turning large hollow forms or vases poses additional problems to those we encounter when turning the same projects on a smaller scale. Here I'll explain how to overcome these challenges



Shaping the outside of a bigger blank is the same but, unless you have a tool rest that can fit inside the form, the first additional problem you will encounter is the increased pivotal force as the tool overhangs the tool rest to a greater extent. The second problem is how to hold the piece securely when hollowing it out. This project shows you my method, and also introduces specialised hollowing tools

such as Hamlet's Big Brother and the Woodcut Pro-Forme.

Figure of eight

I started with a block of spalted beech about 380mm long and 250mm wide, photo 1. This was cut from a larger trunk, and doesn't include the pith. I cut it roughly to an octagonal shape using my chainsaw. This project is, of course, scalable and you



1 My starting point was a roughly chainsawn block of beautifully spalted beech



2 A simple homemade sledge like this one saves having to tip the bandsaw table



3 I used a fingernail profile bowl gouge to turn the blank to a cylinder



4 Square off the end and form a spigot about 130mm in diameter and 25mm deep



5 Shape the outside next, using the bowl gouge to achieve a shear cut and a smooth finish



6 Aim for the widest part of the vase to be about a third of the way up from the base



7 There were a couple of areas that needed stabilising with superglue



8 Mount some scrap on a faceplate and cut a recess to fit the vase spigot

can make the hollow form whatever size you like. If it is over 100mm in diameter I always recommend sawing the corners off before starting the turning. Smaller pieces can be cut on the bandsaw by tipping the table to 45° or by making a simple angled sledge to support your work, photo 2.

A bigger spigot

Mount the block between centres and rough it down to a cylinder. This is usually done with a spindle roughing gouge, but for these larger pieces I prefer to use a fingernail profile bowl gouge and chop into the revolving blank with the tool on its side, photo 3.

Square off the end and form a spigot, photo 4. I have the large Axminster gripper jaws that grip on a spigot 87mm in diameter and 16mm deep. However, for a piece of this size and weight I prefer something a little bigger, so I made my spigot about 130mm in diameter and 25mm deep.

Getting into shape

Shape the outside next, still using the bowl gouge. If you keep the handle quite low and the tool over on its side, you achieve a shear cut that gives a very good surface finish, photo 5.

I was aiming for a shape where the widest part of the vase is about a third of the way up from the base and a gentle curve from there up to the rim, photo 6. If you're new to deep hollowing or want to practise with your specialist hollowing tool, this shape is a good one to do as you'll be able to see the cutting tip when hollowing. However, if you don't have specialist hollowing tools, don't worry – this shape can be hollowed with a large fingernail bowl gouge.

At this stage I was reasonably happy with the outside shape. Final adjustments can be done later, but there were a couple of areas on the spalted beech that needed stabilising with superglue, photo 7. Flood in the glue and then rub fine wood dust into the split. You can get away with this on spalted beech, and the finished repair blends in with the spalt lines.

Mounting the vase

Remove the vase from the lathe and mount a piece of scrap wood about 170mm in diameter on a faceplate. This scrap needs to be deep enough to allow a 25mm recess to be cut into it without interfering with the screws holding it to the faceplate.

True the scrap up and cut a recess to fit the spigot on the vase, photo 8. Take your time here; this needs to be a very good interference fit, so keep offering up the vase

until it fits perfectly. I used a little PVA wood glue to secure the spigot in the recess, and I also drove a couple of screws through the side of the scrap piece into the spigot, photo 9. This way I'm screwing into side grain – far more secure than if I were to screw into end grain.

When the glue has dried, true up the top of the vase and bore a hole down the centre, photo 10. My drill bit wasn't long enough to bore right to the bottom of the vase, so the hollowing process needed to be done in stages.

Making a start

Photo 11 (right) shows the business end of some of my hollowing tools. They include the Hamlet Big Brother, the Woodcut Pro-Forme, BCT's Super Cut with its exchangeable cutting tip and outrigger, and finally Rolly Munro's hollowing tool.

Whatever tool you use, start hollowing from just inside the hole and swing the handle away from you as you start to cut, photo 12. Each time go a little deeper into the hole and a little wider towards the rim. As I said earlier, don't worry if you don't have any hollowing tools; the bowl gouge will work well with this shape. Again, start the cut just inside the hole and swing the handle away from you, photo 13.

The guarded cutter type tools such as the Big Brother, the Pro-Forme and the Rolly Munro hollowing tool all work well on both end grain and side grain, so you can move the tool in both directions. Keep hollowing until you reach the bottom of the drilled hole; then reduce the side wall to its final thickness, photo 14.

Digging deeper

Drill the hole a little deeper and continue hollowing. Photo 15 shows me using my Big Brother tool. Note that the cutting tip is rolled slightly anticlockwise. This rolling action controls the depth of cut; the more it's rolled anticlockwise, the finer the cut.

Photo 16 shows my stance when hollowing. I try to stand reasonably upright so there's less pressure on my back, and I tuck the handle of the tool under my forearm. This helps to counter the pivotal force caused by the tool blade overhanging the toolrest, as the force is taken by my arm and shoulder.

Again, hollow to the depth of the drilled hole and bring the wall of the vase to its final thickness. Repeat the drilling and hollowing as necessary. Photo 17 shows the hollowing almost complete, but as I was about 330mm into the vase I needed to use my deep hollowing rest to finish the job.



9 Glue the vase spigot into the recess and secure it with a couple of screws



10 Use a large spade bit to drill a starter hole down the centre of the vase



11 From top to bottom: the Hamlet Big Brother, Woodcut Pro-Forme, BCT's Super Cut and Rolly Munro's hollowing tool



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



13 If you don't have any hollowing tools, the bowl gouge will work well with this vase shape



14 When you reach the bottom of the drilled hole, reduce the side wall to its final thickness



15 I'm using my Big Brother tool here. Note that the cutting tip is rolled slightly anticlockwise



16 Keep the long handle of the tool under your forearm for greater control



Here I'm using the Rolly Munro tool and my deep hollowing toolrest to finish the job



Refine the outside shape using a small spindle gouge, taking light shear cuts



With the hollowing complete, power-sand the outside of the vase first...



...and use a hand-held sander to finish the side walls as far as you can reach



I then used my Extend-a-Sand in a power drill to sand the bottom and the lower side wall



Remove the fixing screws and take gentle cuts to remove some of the scrap block...



...and weaken the joint so you can prise off the vase carefully by hand



Reverse-chuck the vase onto a domed dolly to remove the chucking spigot

Refining the shape

With the hollowing complete, I refined the outside shape using a small spindle gouge, taking light shear cuts, photo 18. I then power-sanded the outside of the vase, photo 19, and used a hand-held sander to finish the side walls as far as I could reach, photo 20. Finally, I used my Extend-a-Sand, photo 21, in a power drill to sand the bottom and the lower side wall I couldn't reach earlier.

The end is nigh

With the sanding complete and several coats of oil later, it was time to remove the chucking spigot. Undo the screws shown in photo 9 and gently turn away as much of the scrap wood as necessary, photo 22, to weaken the joint so you can prise off the vase by hand, photo 23. Then reverse-chuck the vase in the normal way on a domed scrap of wood and turn away the spigot, photo 24.

Now with the vase finished it's time to clear up the workshop. It's surprising the volume of shavings that come out of a big piece like this!





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BY CHRIS CHILD

Spindle turning

TURNING BASICS 2

This month I'll delve a little deeper into the turner's toolkit, and bring out the skew chisel, the parting tool, the beading tool and some more gouges. I'll show you how to use them to tackle V and parting cuts, and make beads, hollows and pear shapes – the basic ingredients for a simple candlestick project

Spindle turning is a term commonly applied to working on the lathe with your workpiece held between two centres, but it may cover projects as diverse as four-poster bed posts, gate post finials or minuscule lace bobbins.

Unlike bowl turning, where most of the work is performed in a gradual progressive process using one or two tools (usually a bowl gouge and round scraper), spindle turning requires a step-by-step approach, using a combination of tools in succession. Complicated designs with lots of mouldings and intricate shapes have to be broken down into their separate straight, concave and convex parts.

Spindle turning involves using the following tools: the roughing-down gouge, the skew chisel, the parting tool, the beading tool and bowl and spindle gouges. You'll find recommendations about sizes at various points in the article.

Making copies

If you have a problem visualizing turned shapes, have a look round your home for round objects. You'll find a wealth of traditional woodturning shapes to choose



1 Turn the workpiece to a tapered cylinder with the roughing-down gouge



2 Start the V cut on one side of the bead position with the $\frac{1}{2}$ in skew chisel



3 Move the tool to the other side and slice down the opposite side of the V cut



from, and one of the best ways to learn is to select a design from a chair leg, piece of pottery or whatever attracts you, and have a go at copying it.

Once you've mastered a vocabulary of shapes in this way, you can then combine and utilize them to create one of your own designs. When forming the various shapes and mouldings which make up a spindle with cutting techniques with your tools, because any resorting to scraping will almost always result in rough finishes and broken detail.

Making a straight cut

This simple candlestick is made up of a combination of basic shapes – two full beads, one half bead, one dowel, and two pear shapes (or ogees, as they are sometimes called). You need an easily workable timber to practise on – preferably one with some sap still in the grain to make it cut cleanly. I've used a short length of 100mm diameter apple branch, which was pruned from a tree a few months ago and brought into the workshop to dry off.

To start with, I bored the chamber in the

end of the log for the candle, and fitted a bung so that the work could be held on the revolving centre.

With the lathe set at about 1000rpm, run your roughing-down gouge along the tool rest and take a series of light cuts, until the work is true and balanced, and then form a long, straight taper. You can see how green and flexible the wood is by the way the shaving is coming off in one continuous length, photo 1. Dry, fully seasoned timber would produce nothing but short, hard chippings or flakes.



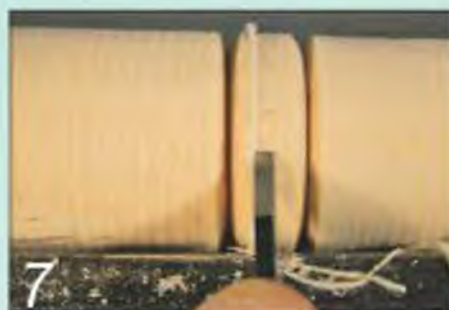
Note that the chisel is cutting only with the point of the tool



Continue the cuts on one side of the line and then the other in turn



Carry on cutting until the two V cuts reach the required depth



Start rounding over one side of the bead with the parting tool



Move the cutting edge to one side with a slow-motion twist of the tool



Reverse the tool angle and start cutting the curve in the opposite direction



Complete the bead by working down into the depth of the second V cut



Hold the tool firmly on its side to start the cut and form the pear shape



Then twist the handle and start to cut in the opposite direction

Making a V cut

Once you've made a smooth taper, mark out the cylinder with the intersections of the beads. The first stage of making a bead is performed with a $\frac{1}{8}$ in oval skew chisel, by slicing V cuts on each of these lines. The tool needs to be ground with a very fine angle, and then honed on an oilstone until it's very sharp.

Position the tool rest slightly above the centre height so you can support the tool handle comfortably against your lower rib cage. Present the long point of the tool to the side of the line at a slight lateral angle to the axis of the work, photo 2.

After making a shallow incision, move the tool over to the other side of the line and make a similar cut, photo 3. Note the angle

of approach, and that the tool is cutting only with the point of the chisel. Catching the full cutting edge of the skew in the side of the V would result in the tool zipping out of control and forming the all too familiar spiral gash along the workplace.

As well as the angle, the thickness of the cut needs to be finely judged so the fibres sever at their base, photo 4. If too wide a cutting section is attempted, the point will simply stick in the side of the cylinder. Continue the cuts on one side of the line and then the other, photo 5, until the V cut is completed to the required size, photo 6.

Changing positions

Note that the hands change over for cutting each side of the V. Although this isn't

absolutely necessary, it helps to place your body and eyes in a better position to sight down the side of the tool and judge the thickness and angle of cut. It's important when you do change over hands that your feet and the whole of your body move over too. A fair analogy could be taken from snooker, where the player moves round the table so that he can get his eye and cue lined up onto the ball. In woodturning it is the bevel on the underside of the tool that is lined up with direction of cut.

Forming beads

To form the curved shape of the bead, use a standard $\frac{1}{8}$ in parting tool. Place the edge almost flat onto the surface of the work, and twist the tool handle in the palm of your

hand so the corner of the tool edge engages and lifts the fibres of wood slightly, photo 7. Create the round shape of one side of the bead with a series of repeated slow-motion twists of the tool, photo 8, using very fine cuts. Start off each time at the crown of the bead and end up where the bead intersects the point of the V. The same technique is then used, mirror fashion, to shape the other half of the bead, photo 9. The result should be a perfectly smooth hemispherical shape, photo 10.

Hollowing out an ogee

The neck of the pear shape is formed with a spindle gouge. Hold the tool firmly on its side to start the cut, photo 11. Then twist the handle and cut in the opposite direction, photo 12, so the edge pans out at the bottom of the hollow, photo 13. Note that it's the side of the point of the tool that is used to cut the slice each time. Make sure that the bevel is always flat on the side of the spindle, as this helps prevent digging in.

This process of shallow cuts is repeated on each side of the depression, photo 14, until the full depth and size of the hollow has been created. At the base of the hollow, work with just the point of the tool so the cut produces no more than a light flake of a shaving, photo 15. This will counter the tendency for the gouge to snatch at the bottom of the hollow, due to the work face being further away from the support of the tool rest.

Simply repeat the bead and ogee cuts as many times as necessary to complete the shaping of your candlestick.

Making parting cuts

The dowel at the base of the spindle that joins the stem of the candlestick into the base is formed using a straightforward parting cut with a beading and parting tool, photo 16. Place the cutting edge flat on the work and raise the handle, at the same time feeding the tool forward into the work at a constant speed. With wood as soft as this and the rigid support of the drive centre so close to the cutting point, you can part in with the full $\frac{1}{4}$ in width of the tool, but with harder timber you will have to reduce the width of cut considerably.

The candlestick base

With the candlestick stem turned to your satisfaction, it's time to tackle the base. Start by cutting the disc roughly to shape, either by hand or on the bandsaw. To hold the disc on the lathe, plane the bottom of the disc flat and screw it onto faceplate. Alternatively you can use double-sided carpet tape to attach the workpiece.

Set the lathe speed to about 600rpm and flatten off the face of the disc with a bowl gouge or large round-nosed scraper. It's essential to wear your face shield whenever you're turning wide-diameter work such as this. Then drill the hole for the dowel of the candlestick's stem with a drill bit the same size as the dowel, mounted in the tailstock.

Turn the outer edge of your base with a bowl gouge by slicing away the waste to form a simple smooth convex curve, photo 17. Notice how sweetly the gouge cuts when it is going away from the centre of the

workpiece and forming the radius, photo 18. This is because it is cutting with the grain. I'll explain more of this technique in my next chapter – on bowl turning.

Postscript

This candlestick wasn't expected to survive – unseasoned branch fruitwood has a tendency to split through the heart. However, apart from a bit of warping in the base, it has remained perfectly whole... which just goes to show that it pays to experiment, whatever you're turning!



Make sure that the bevel is always flat on the side of the spindle



Repeat this process of shallow cuts on each side of the depression



At the base of the hollow section, work with just the point of the tool



Form the straight dowel at the base of the candlestick stem with a parting cut



Start rounding off the edge of the base with a bowl gouge by sliding away the waste



Notice how smoothly the gouge cuts when going away from the centre of the work

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When you depend on your tools for your livelihood, you need to be sure that they won't let you down. While cheap power tools can occasionally be fine for simple one-off jobs, it makes sense when buying workshop machinery to get the best you can afford. If you're making (or aspire to make) high-quality furniture, then you'll appreciate that accuracy and reliability are paramount. The last thing you need is machinery that slips out of adjustment and can't be relied upon to produce consistent work. These two Axminster drill presses are aimed firmly at the demanding professional user, and won't disappoint.

Recently we reviewed a pair of drill presses from Axminster's Hobby series. Now here's a look at a pair from their more expensive Trade series. So what more do you get for the extra money?

Axminster Trade series drill presses

Design features

The first thing that you notice about these drill presses is that they're very heavy. The bench-top version has to be assembled on the bench, because there's no way you'll be able to lift it there by yourself.

The next thing you'll notice is the large transparent chuck guard. This surrounds the keyless chuck and can be adjusted to suit the job in hand. It's fitted with a safety interlock, so when it's open the machine won't run.

On the front of the drill head is a standard NVR switch with an E-stop cover. The top cover on both these machines also has a safety interlock to prevent accidental operation when changing speeds.

Unlike cheaper machines that use thin





The swelling chuck guard seems over-elaborate, but actually works very well in practice



Both machines allow you to carry out a range of precision drilling tasks with ease



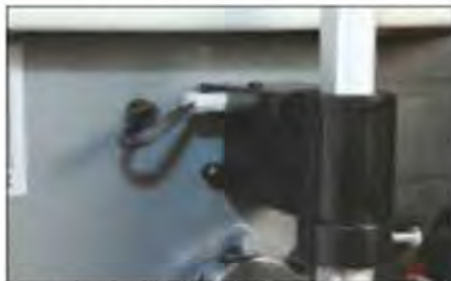
The quills run in high-quality SKF bearings and are absolutely rock solid



The tables have mounting slots and a coolant gutter around the edge for drilling metal



Both machines use the standard three-pulley-and-two-belt drive system



The chuck guard has a safety interlock; when it's open the machine won't run

screw-in handles, these machines both have a one-piece cast iron feed handle. These are long and strong with rubber-coated grips, giving excellent control over the drill.

Keyless chucks

Both these machines have keyless chucks mounted on a tapered arbour that's fitted into the quill, which is the sliding shaft that connects to the driving pulley. Any play in any part of this assembly will affect the accuracy of the drill. On cheaper drill presses it's often possible to lower the chuck and then, when you grip it and try to move it from side to side, some movement can be felt. On these two the quills run in high-quality SKF bearings and are absolutely rock solid. The chucks are also highly effective, providing excellent grip while being simple to set.

Depth control

The depth stop is an especially good design. It uses a threaded rod connected to a plate on the end of the quill above the chuck. This runs through a bracket on the drilling head. As the chuck plunges the rod moves down. A pair of locking nuts is tightened on the upper part of the rod when the chuck has reached the desired depth. The advantages of this system is that it's very easy to set and gives a good visual indication of how deep you're drilling.

Work tables

Both machines are fitted with heavy cast iron work tables. Unusually they don't have a central hole, only a small depression, so you must be careful to set the depth stop accurately. The tables have mounting slots and a coolant gutter around the edge, for use when drilling metal with lubricants.



Both these machines both have a sturdy one-piece cast iron feed handle



The depth stop is easy to set and gives a good indication of drilling depth



A pair of nuts and bolts is supplied for fitting accessories to the table

A pair of bolts is provided for mounting accessories on the table.

The tables can be tilted for angled drilling or even set at 90° to provide support when dealing with long workpieces. They're adjusted with a rack-and-pinion system which runs up the column, and can be securely locked at any height.

Changing speeds

Both machines use the standard three-pulley-and-two-belt system. Changing speeds is very simple, and diagrams are printed inside the top cover to show the correct belt placings for each speed.

Using the machines

The moment you start up these machines you can feel their quality. They run quietly and smoothly, without any of the rattling or vibration often experienced on cheaper machines. The plunging mechanism is easy, with perfectly balanced return springs that gently raise the chuck. The large feed handles are comfortable to grip and give considerable leverage. Though at first I found the chuck guard rather elaborate, it actually works really well, is easy to adjust and doesn't get in the way. Their performance was first class, drilling perfect holes effortlessly with total accuracy.

Summing up

These are certainly two impressive machines. They're extremely well made and perform faultlessly. If you're looking for a high-quality professional machine, then either one of these will fit the bill.

We'll be giving away these two drill presses free in our October issue. Don't miss it! **AS**

SPECIFICATION

MODEL	AT2001DP	AT2801FDP
MOTOR	375W	550W
CHUCK	13mm keyless	16mm keyless
TABLE SIZE	300 x 300mm	355 x 355mm
TABLE TILT	± 45°	± 45°
SPEEDS (12/18)	180-2,740rpm	160-3,000rpm
THROAT	195mm	215mm
CHUCK TRAVEL	80mm	80mm
MAX CHUCK TO TABLE	320mm	610mm
MAX CHUCK TO BASE	560mm	1,100mm
WEIGHT	58kg	73kg

VERDICT

These are two extremely impressive drilling machines. They're smooth-running, extremely accurate and a pleasure to use.

PROS

- Robust and well engineered
- Highly accurate
- Powerful yet safe

CONS

- Very heavy
- No central hole in worktable
- Over-elaborate chuckguard

VALUE FOR MONEY

PERFORMANCE

FURTHER INFORMATION

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



The table can be rotated through 90° to the vertical position...



...so it can support a long workpiece when drilling end grain



The adjustment scale on the table is clearly marked and accurate

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A jigsaw is one of the mainstays of a woodworker's toolkit. It's the most versatile of the portable power saws, able to cut a wide variety of materials into a wide variety of shapes. It's invaluable both on site and in the workshop

Draper JS710VK orbital jigsaw



A jigsaw is such a useful saw. With the correct blade fitted it can cut metals, plastics, timber and many other things. It's ideal for rough-cutting large sawn boards so they can then be processed on the table saw. It's also the tool of choice for cutting curved components and is the perfect site tool for fitting jobs involving scribing and making intricate cut-outs.

Cheap jigsaws tend to be suitable only for thin materials, cut very slowly and suffer from inaccuracies due to poorly supported blades.

Professional tools are powerful and reliable, but expensive. This 710W Draper model is a mid-priced machine with good performance and some attractive features.

£69

and an integrated dust extraction tube in the baseplate. The main handle houses the power trigger, and just in front of it is the variable speed wheel. On the front of the machine is a button which operates the LED work light; this shines down just in front of the cutting point.

The baseplate is moulded alloy and has a plastic insert to ease movement and reduce work-surface scratching. It can also be tilted for bevel cutting, and a hex key is supplied to make the adjustment.

The left-hand side of the saw houses one unusual feature, a removable blade store. This slides onto small rails on the side and can contain three blades safely. It's a shame none were included.

Changing blades

On some jigsaws this can be something of a chore, particularly if a hex key is needed and it's not readily to hand. The Draper has a toolless blade changing system which is quick and simple. The front transparent shield hinges open and then you simply depress the collar round the blade holder to release the clamp and insert the blade. Behind the blade is a solid support roller to improve cutting accuracy.

SPECIFICATION

MOTOR	710W
NO-LOAD SPEED	800-3000spm
MAX DEPTH OF CUT	wood 80mm
	steel 8mm
WEIGHT	2.7kg
ACCESSORIES	storage case, side fence, dust extraction adapter

VERDICT

This jigsaw is a good solid performer at a reasonable price.

PROS

- Simple controls
- Quick blade change
- Convenient blade storage

CONS

- No soft start
- Mediocre dust extraction
- No blades supplied

VALUE FOR MONEY

PERFORMANCE

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Draper
- 02380 494333
- www.draper.co.uk

Design features

This is a solid tool with a heavy alloy front and a robust plastic body. It has a four-position orbital control on the left-hand side



The four-position orbital control is clearly marked and very easy to set



The saw has a tool-free blade changing system which is simple to use



The removable blade storage box is a clever and useful feature



The LED work light remains on even when the trigger is released

Veritas has looked at the standard cam clamp used in many templating jobs – and indeed in their own bench blade holding devices – and taken it one step further with this excellent hold-down

about
£69.99
(see text)

Using the saw

The first thing you notice with the Draper is that there is no soft start, so when set at full speed it starts with quite a jolt. However, as the speed-setting wheel is on the front of the handle you can adjust the speed with your thumb, starting the cut slowly and then gradually increasing to your desired speed.

The saw cuts quickly and cleanly. The orbital control is efficient and the blade is well supported and cuts accurately. The LED light is a great bonus, and having its own switch means that it stays on even when the trigger is not pressed. The saw is comfortable to hold and easy to manoeuvre. Dust extraction is average, but the transparent shield at the front is a bit short so some dust does escape. The side fence is a useful accessory; it's easy to fit and works well.

Summing up

This is a well-specified and attractively priced machine that has been thoughtfully designed with some useful features. Performance is good, and it's robust enough for both light trade use and the dedicated home woodworker. **AS**

Veritas fast-action hold down

This hold-down uses the same ridged post as the standard Veritas models, but features an ingenious cam lever to secure the work. A screw thread connection allows the standard 250mm post to be swapped for a shorter 135mm one if you don't have enough room under the bench top to allow the post to drop through.

Average grip

A forged hold-down can have its grip increased with a deft whack on the top. A screw-down version can be tweaked with an additional turn of the screw. This model has just the cam action to hold the work.

Under direct heavy load – from planing, for instance – it was prone to losing its hold slightly because of a lack of direct pressure and a smooth hard metal contact point from the hold-down foot. However, Veritas includes a small leather pad to stick to the shoe and give a better grip. This also acts as a protective pad for delicate surfaces.

Fast action

This hold-down can be engaged and disengaged from the workplace quickly and

easily; it's just a matter of positioning it on the work and applying a bit of downwards pressure before flipping the lever over so it holds. With the leather pad, it grips very well for work where you aren't applying huge amounts of lateral pressure, and with a throat capacity of 125mm it can cope with wider work too. However, this isn't the cheapest hold-down on the market, so you have to consider the speed and ease of use against the infinitely adjustable pressure available from some other types.

Incidentally, it's available only from Lee Valley Tools at present for \$62.50 plus shipping, but Brimarc hope to make it available in the UK soon. **AK**

SPECIFICATION

DOG HOLE DIAMETER	19mm
THROAT	125mm
CLAMPING HEIGHT	200mm (long post) 100mm (short post)

VERDICT

This unusual design is an interesting variation on a traditional theme.

- PROS**
- Very fast action
 - Choice of cramping posts
 - Adaptable for vertical and horizontal work

- CONS**
- Doesn't exert as much grip as traditional hold-downs

VALUE FOR MONEY PERFORMANCE



FURTHER INFORMATION

- Coming soon from Brimarc
- 03332 406967
- www.brimarc.com
- www.leevalley.com



The sturdy side fence guides parallel cuts smoothly and accurately



The saw cuts quickly and cleanly when following intricate curves



The post simply screws into the head. A shorter post is also available



The cam lever swings through from back to front to increase the pressure



The work could move under pressure unless the leather pad is used

Plunge saws seem to be taking over the world, and here's another contender for best buy from the Bosch stable. How well does it perform, especially when compared with the Festool model? Read on...

Bosch GKT 55 GCE plunge saw



Bosch enters the plunge saw arena with a model that looks very similar to the superb Metell saw, and indeed it uses an identical rail system, sitting on a thin milled upstand on the rail rather than a pressed wide extrusion. The aluminium baseplate has two plastic wear strip inserts that are used to adjust the fit to the rail and allow free movement as well as ensuring a parallel cut. These are adjusted with the knobs on the upper surface of the baseplate. Alongside is a full-length insert that can be slid out to allow the saw to fit on other extruded-type rails such as the Festool version.

The rail allows the saw to move freely along the surface. The underside has full-length round rubber inserts to grip the work surface, compressing and bonding to it as you push the saw through the work. They hold securely without the need for cramps, even when cutting mdf where slipping can often occur.

The right blade

The saw can also work other materials. When cutting aluminium-faced sheets, plastic composites and laminates, having stepless speed control to gain the best cut to suit the material is a great advantage, along with the 48-tooth Freud blade. This resin-filled blade with its heat-reduction slots is ideally suited for crosscutting timber and working sheet stock derivatives. Putting that to the test on some veneered ply, the resulting cuts were exceptionally clean with no grain tear-out.

The saw was also used to cut a water-bar groove in an external

door. As the rails can be bought in various lengths and connected using the flat connector plate, it's very easy to lay the rail tight to the edge of the door, tilt the saw by a couple of degrees and run it up the door on both edges. This gives both a closing and a hinge clearance bevel in a matter of a minute or so.

Simple adjustments

The saw tilts to 45° in its normal tilt setting, but this can be overridden by an additional 2° if you need to gain that bit more; there's also a negative 1° undercut. Both these functions are set using the small buttons on the baseplate protractor scales.

To set the cutting depth on the saw, a sliding adjuster is positioned against the scale. A rotating cursor allows for the depth of the rail so you can set it accurately either on or off the rail – useful for through plunge cuts and decorative scoring features.

The connector plate is better than any seen on other rails. Its wide, flat profile keeps the rails aligned very well when connected.



Plunge depths are set on this scale. The cursor rotates to include rail thickness if required



The base can be adjusted to fit the rail perfectly using the dials on the top



The connector plate holds can be tightened with a coin, and can stay on board when not needed



The locking pin sets the blade at the correct position to gain access to the blade retaining flange.

It also stores on board without obstructing the saw in use, and you don't need to carry a screwdriver to set it, just a coin.

Blade changes and dust control

It's also very easy to change blades. A lever on top of the handle is lifted and the blade plunged, locking the blade at the correct position to access the flange nut. Re-engage the lever and the lock is released. Like the other parts where the end user needs to interact with the tool, the lever is picked out in eye-catching red.

This saw certainly delivers some dust when it's not hooked up to the shop dust extraction system, but when it is connected dust collection is excellent. To aid this even more there's a small clear sliding window at the front of the saw that drops down to the work to help gain a better vacuum seal.

Summing up

If there is a negative with this Bosch saw, it's the protrusion of the dust outlet. Festool recently redesigned its own model to allow it to sit flush and trim against an adjacent surface, but the Bosch isn't able to do this because of its design.

Aside from this, though, the Bosch is certainly a very user-friendly saw, easy to get to grips with and a great all-round performer. The Bosch rail system is where it really hits the mark, especially when connecting two rails together or using them without cramps. *AK*

SPECIFICATION

MOTOR	1400W
BLADE DIAMETER	165mm
NO-LOAD SPEED	3600-6250rpm
MAX CUTTING CAPACITY	at 90° 57mm
	at 45° 42mm
BEVEL RANGE	-1° to 47°
WEIGHT	4.7kg
ACCESSORIES One 1.6m rail, L-BOXX storage case	

VERDICT

This saw is as good a plunge saw as the Festool, and shares similar high-quality attributes.

- PROS**
- Smooth plunge
 - Good dust control
 - Multi-fit baseplate
 - Excellent rail connectors

- CONS**
- Dust port protrusion prevents flat-to-surface cuts

VALUE FOR MONEY 

PERFORMANCE 

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Bosch
- 01895 838743
- www.boschpowertools.co.uk



Although ideal for converting sheets, it's perfect for door fitting as well



You can override the standard bevel settings with the small buttons on the protractor scales



The saw operates smoothly on repeat mitre cuts using the bevel setter



Blade changing is very easy; lifting this lever engages a locking pin

A table saw is the most used machine in the workshop, and there are many models to choose from. Some are small enough to sit on a bench; some are so large they need their own workshop. This Einhell model is a compact floor-standing machine, ideal for home use

Einhell TH-TS 1525U table saw



When buying tools and machinery, it's important to buy the product that is right for your needs. It's so easy to be seduced into buying the wrong thing either by appearance or price. Table saws are a case in point. There are so many different types to choose from and

with a massive range of prices, it is easy to become confused.

Here is a small, budget-priced table saw to suit the home user. It has a generous depth of cut and is supplied with a sturdy legstand and both rip and cross-cut fences.

Design features

This is a fairly conventional machine. Setting up is a straightforward process, involving assembling the stand and fitting the table extensions. The blade and riving knife are already in position, so you only need to fit the crown guard. The main table is made from pressed steel and has a slot on either side of the blade for the mitre fence. Two side extensions can be fitted to increase the table surface area.

All the controls are on the front panel, with a standard NVR power switch and a knob with an integrated handle that sets the blade height and tilt. On the rear of the machine is a dust extraction port that connects to the underside of the saw. The crown guard also has an extraction port, though this is concealed under a removable cap. With an additional length of piping it would be possible to connect this through to the main extraction port. The floor stand is robust and is

fitted with a pair of small extensions on the rear legs, to help prevent the saw toppling over if too much weight is put on it.

A choice of fences

Two fences are supplied; a two-part rip fence and a sliding cross-cut/mitre fence. The mitre fence is part plastic and is a slightly loose fit in the groove, so when using it you have to be sure to twist



The two-part rip fence is sturdily designed and performs well

The large crown guard has to be fitted in place before the saw is used



The scale is clearly marked for both the wide and narrow sides



The lower dust port can be connected to the crown guard port...



...which is cleverly concealed beneath a removable plastic cap



Ripping is fast and accurate using the blade supplied with the saw

It slightly so it will cut accurately.

The rip fence is good and the scale is clearly marked for both the wide and narrow sides of the fence. Unfortunately the scale doesn't extend across the side extension table, so the rip capacity is unnecessarily small. However, you could always clamp a batten to the extension table and use that as a fence.

Using the saw

This is not an expensive machine, and it actually performs fairly well. There is some vibration as the table is rather thin, but it cuts well and the motor feels powerful. The blade settings are easy to apply, though the height setting handle feels a little flimsy. It is a pity about the short rip scale – rather a missed opportunity.

Summing up

This saw is a good choice for the home woodworker with limited shop space. It's best suited to smaller projects, but will reward the careful user with accurate results. The blade supplied is mainly for ripping and it would be worth buying a finer blade for cross-cutting work. It's also a good idea to connect up the two dust extraction ports to improve dust collection. **AS**

SPECIFICATION

MOTOR	1500W
BLADE DIAMETER	250mm
NO-LOAD SPEED	5700rpm
TABLE SIZE	basic 640 x 440mm
	with extensions 640 x 946mm
MAX DEPTH OF CUT	at 90° 75mm
	at 45° 48mm
WEIGHT	25kg

VERDICT

This is a competent floor-standing table saw at a very realistic price.

PROS

- Powerful motor
- Efficient performance

CONS

- Short rip scale
- Flimsy adjustment handle

VALUE FOR MONEY

PERFORMANCE

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ Einhell
■ 0151 649 1500
■ www.einhell-uk.co.uk

You need to twist the cross-cut/mitre fence slightly so it will cut accurately



The mitre fence is part plastic and is a slightly loose fit in the groove



The rip fence scale doesn't extend across the side extension table – a missed opportunity



The controls are all located on the front panel, and are very simple to use

You may well recognise this saw from a bygone era as it's based on the highly successful Elu PS184. It's a saw that's still available in various guises, including Milwaukee's own MS216 SB, but this is the first time it's been free of the need for a power cord

Milwaukee M18 SMS216 mitre saw

£478.80



coming in slightly shy of 50mm nowadays, it's a saw that will cover general first fix work as well as the finer side of things in the second fix arena.

The saw is very light, but despite this the build quality isn't compromised. It's a robustly built machine, only the motor housing and handles are ABS plastic. Everything else is metal, including the lower guard which is plastic on many saws, making it durable enough to withstand the day to day bashing of site work.

Lighting-up time

The saw has a laser as well as a work light, and with slits in the lower guard the beam transfers through to the work so you can align it accurately to any layout marks before commencing the cut.

The laser is also crisp and fine and bright, so it's a major asset for fast setting up of cuts.

Both the light and the laser are individually switched so you can use them whenever necessary; just remember to switch them off when you're finished as they'll continue to drain the battery!

Changing angles

Both the compound tilt and standard mitre functions are easy to operate and equally easy to lock. The compound tilt uses a large Bristol lever at the rear that gives a 45° tilt to the left. There's also an override function that gives you 48° maximum as well as a negative -3° tilt to the right which is useful for ensuring the face of any butting work is crisp and tight.

Combining the tilt and mitre functions for compound cutting means the fences need to be slid back accordingly, but both stay on board to continue to give the work maximum support.

Standard mitre work using the turntable allows 50° cuts to the left or right, with indents at standard angles of 15°, 22.5°, 30° and 45°. Any other settings are locked with the twist grip.

Apart from the left-only compound tilt, there is another drawback.

As part of the expanding Milwaukee 18V platform, this saw still manages to maintain the capacities and capabilities of its mains counterpart, although the motor speed is 2300rpm lower than the mains model. This makes cutting a little more laboured, especially with thicker stock, but it's certainly a lot quicker than a handsaw!

Size matters

Its integral bar-over-bar sliding action keeps the footprint very small; no additional rear space is needed for the pullover function, and its narrow width makes it a very portable machine.

The overall cutting capacity is certainly enough for most work, especially if you're working standard construction timbers. The compound tilt cuts 48mm, and with construction stock normally



Pushing down on the front handle allows the turntable to rotate. You twist it to lock a position



Slits in the lower guard allow the laser beam to spot the work for accurate alignment



The head is locked down when required with this robust steel pin



With the saw head pivoting rather than sliding in a parallel motion to the turntable, you can't cut housings or rebates. This isn't a big problem for most of the work a mitre saw tends to get used for, so this shouldn't put you off unduly.

Using the saw

The pullover is sprung, so you pull against the spring that automatically returns the saw head back to a parked position after a cut. To make the cut, a large paddle in front of the handle is squeezed to release the lower guard and allow the head to plunge. The resistance from both the springs and the paddle is low, so the cuts can be made without fighting against them.

As a pullover saw has to be lifted up and over the work, making the cut on the return to ensure it doesn't race across the work, this particular design works well as you work in a cyclical motion rather than a pull-across motion so it's a more natural cutting style. The lower cutting speed is a downside, but the finish from the 48-tooth negative-rake blade is superb; you just need to let the saw do the work a little more slowly.

Incidentally, the dual dust extract outlets need a dedicated adaptor to close them down for connection to one hose, and you have to buy that accessory separately.

Summing up

Battery stamina is obviously going to be the main issue, but after making around 50 cuts in succession on 100 x 50mm stock alongside some other cuts, the battery indicator still showed two lights out of four. If you are already on the Milwaukee 18V platform, you'll probably have a spare battery ready to go or on charge while you work. Even if you aren't, this saw is well worth a look as a stand-alone tool with a couple of batteries.

SPECIFICATION

BATTERY (not supplied)	M18 Red Li-Ion
BLADE DIAMETER	216mm
NO-LOAD SPEED	2700rpm
MAX CUTTING CAPACITY	at 90° 270 x 60mm
	at 90° x 45° 270 x 48mm
	at 45° x 90° 190 x 60mm
	at 45° x 45° 190 x 48mm
WEIGHT	14.5kg
ACCESSORIES	blade, spanner, work clamp

VERDICT

This slightly underpowered saw is ideal for second-fix work where the workload isn't likely to be so intensive.

PROS

- Compact but with big capacities
- Excellent laser
- Very accurate performance

CONS

- No trenching function
- Runs slower than a mains model
- Battery not included

VALUE FOR MONEY



PERFORMANCE



FURTHER INFORMATION

- Milwaukee Tool
■ 01628 894400
■ www.milwaukeetool.co.uk

Making the cut on the return stroke is a more natural cutting style with this saw.



Double dust ports are fitted, but you need to buy an adaptor to connect to a single hose



You can override the standard head tilt by 3° with this metal lever



For compound cuts the upper fences slide back but remain on board

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On site in town

BY MARK CASS

I was greeted at the door by a medium-sized short-haired dog who gave a couple of uncertain barks before retreating back down the hall. I'd just met Peppa, the reluctant guard dog, a Hungarian Vizsla, who brightened up my successive site visits whenever our paths crossed. Mostly she just sat in the garden away from the dirt and noise.

A bit of an upset

The house was in a good state for working in – no carpet on the stairs, other trades around, sporadic visits from the customer, good-quality tea bags and an efficient kettle. I had the small back bedroom to myself, and was fixing a set of cabinets on the wall when I heard the plasterer raise his voice. To be fair, there were no profanities; he merely stated his disbelief in recent dramatic events.

Engaged in preparing the hall and landing with a roller coat of bonding primer (think thin PVA glue), he'd inadvertently tipped his flexible tub bucket – capacity 26 litres – down the stairs. Swiftly descending my stepladder, I was treated to the spectacle of a Niagara Falls of Unibond cascading down into the hall below. It was quite a sight. I couldn't help remarking after the clean-up just how well it made the stairs look; we agreed that they had a nice shine about them now.

Fixing and fitting

Meanwhile the fitting job was going well, although whenever I was at the top of my steps, I felt a curious and distracting tickling sensation. It's not often that I've been bothered by a full-size toy zebra's head before, but there it was, hanging over the door and fixing me with a jolly glass eye whenever I forgot and glanced back.

Regular readers won't be surprised to hear that I'm continuing to use a detector device whenever faced with the prospect of drilling into a wall for fixings. With one of these and bit of common sense, an expensive – and possibly dangerous – accident can be avoided. I know a lot of people are generally apprehensive when it comes to fixing things to walls. If I'm in any doubt I just pack the drilled hole as tight as possible with matchstick-sized chips (in addition to the plug) until it's hard work to drive the screw in.



Moving and changing

While we're all progressing our work techniques with new tools and innovations, it's easy to forget that newcomers to the scene may have only known power tools and nothing else. For me there will always be a place for my hand tools on site jobs, but it still surprised me to hear one of the painters on this job remark that he didn't see a chippy using one of those (a jack plane) very often these days. I didn't know whether to feel proud or sad.

Rocket fuel

Although open to new ideas, I have to confess to being a traditionalist when it comes to many things, and the regular stop for tea is right up there on the sacrosanct

list. Observing other trades at work of late, I get the feeling that we're witnessing the beginning of the end of the teabreak.

Staggering and unlikely as it sounds, I've noticed that many people no longer stop work to open their flasks or drop massive hints so that even the dullest customer gets the message to put the kettle on. No, since the huge growth in popularity of caffeine-based energy drinks, many trades just keep on going! Blame it on Red Bull and Monster (not to mention dozens of 'own-brands') or not, it's got me wondering if there's a hidden agenda somewhere and someone high up is trying to engineer a shift in sociological working patterns for their own evil ends. Or something.

More news from the work front soon...

Cabinet of curiosity

Music brings so much pleasure to us earthly beings that it's no surprise to note how much human ingenuity has gone into the wide field of making musical entertainment since records began (no puns intended there)

Although quite a few skilled woodworkers have undertaken – and successfully pulled off – an actual instrument build such as a guitar, a ukulele or even a harpsichord, the majority of us would probably settle for some kind of boxed housing for a modern entertainment system if pressed to execute a music-related project.

Recorded sound reproduction may well have changed since this particular advertisement was run in the June 1931 issue of *The Woodworker*, but back then, the wireless was king (with the 78 rpm disc not far behind). Anyone who could offer both to their party guests would have been very popular indeed, and with the cinema as the only video entertainment, no home was complete without some kind of sound system.

Self-assembly required

Like many a flatpack furniture item today, the Osborn radio (or radio-gramophone) cabinet required a certain amount of customer participation to achieve the finished result. I suspect there would have been an absence of knock-down fittings, Allen keys and mysterious plastic doodads; in their places were things like screws, hinges and probably nails too. The cabinet also came with sufficient metallic fabric to cover the owner's loudspeaker.

A choice of finish

Offered in a variety of timbers, the music cabinet would then need to be stained and polished by the new owner – not a job for the faint-hearted. Slightly more well-off readers could spend an extra £2 and get one ready made, but I suspect that Chas Osborn's best seller was the 'machined, ready to assemble' version in oak for three pounds five shillings.

With today's huge variety of electronic devices, we are more than well catered for as far as home entertainment is concerned. However, when it comes down to it I don't expect that merriment levels would have been any different whichever century you were partying in.

Mark

AN OSBORN RADIO OR RADIO-GRAMO- PHONE CABINET

No. 219. 20" high, 18" deep, 10" wide; 11" high, 10" deep, 10" wide; 11" high, 10" deep, 10" wide. Board behind fixed in 20" x 10" x 10" size. Machine inside the front and back, opening at top and bottom. Cabinet takes about 20" x 10" x 10" size of speaker.

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