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The Woodworker

August 2015

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& Woodturner



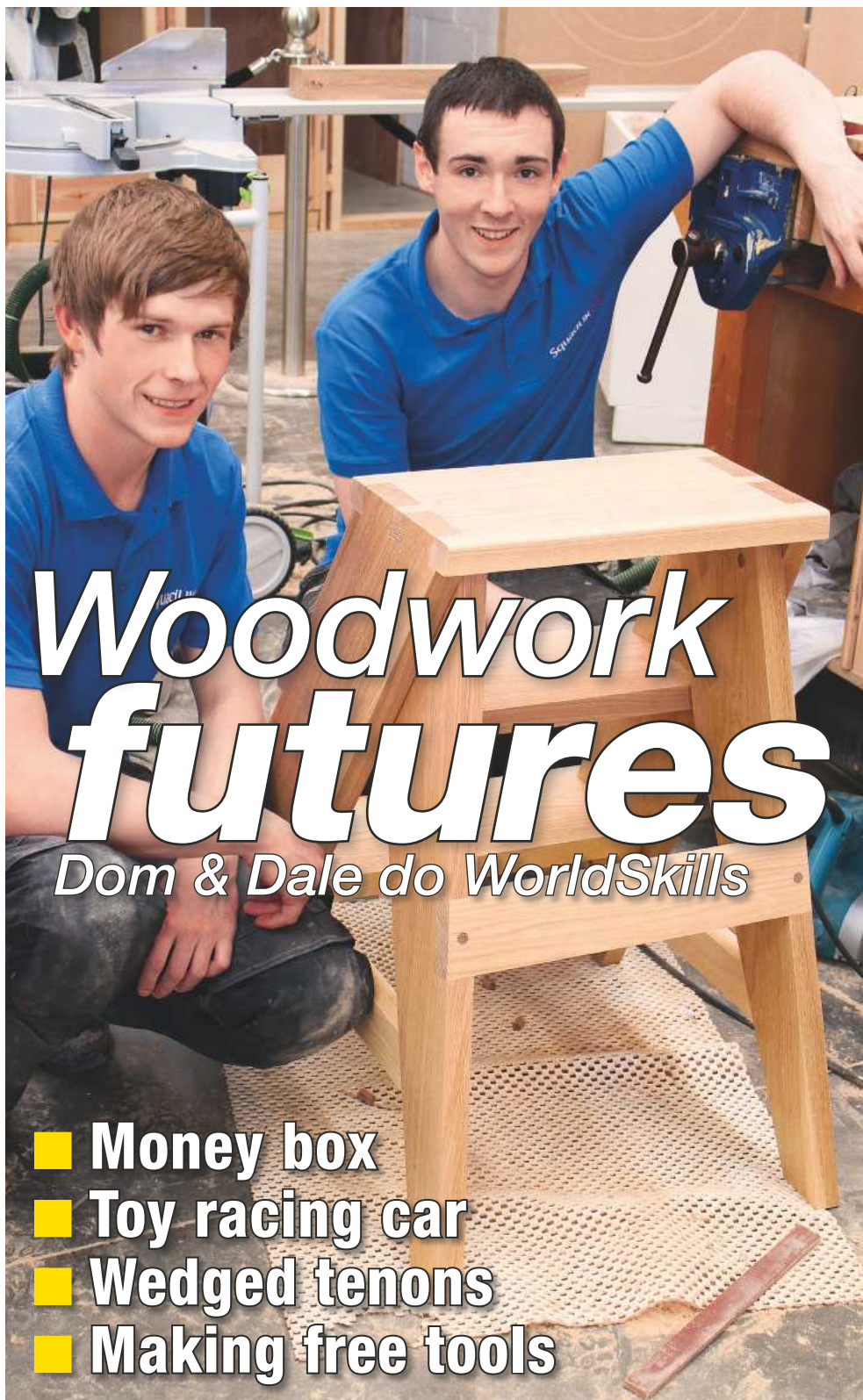
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Welcome



They say that change is the only certainty in life, and right now I'm in full agreement.

Things at my Neon Saw workshop have been chugging along nicely for quite a while, rubbing shoulders with Roy, my landlord, as he tackles a wide variety of cars and vans in his rambling garage premises alongside. It turns out he's finally calling it quits after many a long year, and a new team of motor engineers will soon be taking his place. I'll miss being asked over to the ramp to help finesse a tricky gearbox into place or to pull a cable that's out of arm's reach, and as for helping push invariably large and heavy cars around the garage... that goes without saying!

More importantly though I'll miss Roy's company; he's one of the nicest blokes I've ever met. Fortunately he's keeping part of the place for himself, including the double pit which resembles a ship's deck with its hand-railing and ankle-high bulwarks all round. I reckon he'll be back in more than he thinks. Like all of us who enjoy the working day, we like to keep busy and, if not actively employed that moment ourselves, we enjoy the spectacle and entertainment provided by those who are. And I bet I'm not alone in relishing the chance that a road crew or delivery team provides for occupational observation when on holiday abroad.

Other recent changes have been

an increase in my drive to clear out some of the extraneous stuff from the workshop, and eventually to build some new benching along the North wall. There's even talk of getting the roof fixed, and I suspect that, with the new tenants and all, it may finally come about.

This will mean the re-emergence of an important corner of the 'shop, and hopefully the end to 'bandsaw blotch roulette', a game of chance which depends on a combination of the saw's position (it's mobile) and the vagaries of a complicated leak system which rarely drips in the same place twice. Does this sound familiar to any readers out there?

I've also got one of my college students working alongside me most days, and that's something that really makes a difference. When you can rely upon someone to complete a task as instructed – and to find they've also managed to improve on your expectations – that's a very nice thing to have. It also means I can get a bit more magazine work done, and I'm sure we all want that!

As ever, I'm always keen to hear about readers' working lives past and present, and I hope to receive a few more contributions for the proposed reappearance of *'Chips from the Chisel'*. Do please drop me a line, any time.

Mark

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



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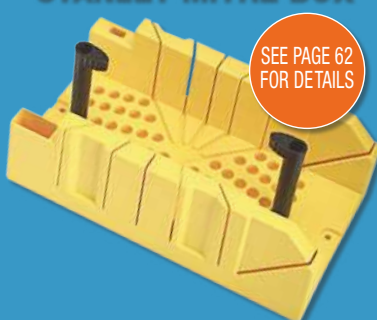
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August 2015

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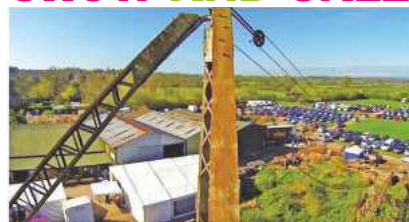
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Our events attract around 6000 visitors from throughout the UK and Europe and gives Members of the Public and Professional Woodworkers a chance to see what is going on in the Woodworking World with free entry and parking.

There will be in the region of 50 manufacturers attending, including well-known names such as **Record Power, Charnwood, Robert Sorby and Triton** to more specialist company's such as **Hot Spot UK**, who specialise in Wood burners for the

workshop and Miles Craft.

See all their latest equipment and take advantage of their special offers. This coupled with a show discount on timber and shop stock makes it an opportunity not to be missed.



We are very excited about our show line-up which includes **Phil Irons, Simon Hope, Andy Rounthwaite and Andy Coates** demonstrating Woodturning. We also are pleased to announce that we have the author of 'Letter Carving', **Andrew J. Hibberd** demonstrating, part sponsored by GMC, who will be providing their wide variety of books to satisfy all of our Woodworking Visitors interests.

For something different, this year we have a hurdle maker attending along with a Willow demonstrator plus many more stands and demonstrations. Watch them as they show off their amazing talents and get motivation from their ideas.

This event is open to everyone, with **FREE PARKING & ENTRY**, as we feel very strongly that you shouldn't have to pay to browse and shop.

We also think that with so many visitors and exhibitors expected to attend, our Show gives a major boost to the local economy which is so important in this economic climate.



The event will be held in our historic Sawmill

The Hobby shop, after the success of the last show are again offering mini taster sessions from wet needle felting to Dorset button making. If someone in your party is not so interested in the wood working side why not book them a session by phoning **01935 822207** and asking for the Hobby shop.

Hobby demonstrations will be taking place during the day, also don't miss the chance to visit our **303 Gallery** which offers a wonderful array of local Craftsmen's work.

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For further information please contact:

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In brief...

PLAY AND DISPLAY

Here's the latest news from members of the Northern Contemporary Furniture Makers group. Firstly, Dovetailors (the Yorkshire-based design house) has just completed work on a handcrafted lithophone made using local limestone for the Grassington Festival. David Wilson, creative director at Dovetailors, explained: "A lithophone is a musical instrument made of pieces of rock, which produce musical notes when they're struck. It's similar to a xylophone or glockenspiel. This isn't the first lithophone we've been asked to make. Last year the team designed and made a two-octave lithophone for Clitheroe Castle Museum."



This year's festival celebrated the way that limestone has shaped the landscape, flora and fauna of the area. As part of the festival, there was a world premiere performance of *The Song of the Sea that Was*, a work composed by Thomas Lydon for orchestra and solo lithophone.

On a more conventional note, Andrew Lawton has just produced a chest of drawers in his signature style, in response to a client's very particular brief, with projecting shelves for displaying items of pottery. The 1760mm long chest is of American cherry and Fenland bog oak, with drawers of sycamore and Lebanon cedar. www.northernfurniture.org.uk



OPEN ALL HOURS

Peter Sefton Furniture School in Worcestershire is having an open day on Saturday July 18th from 10am to 4pm to showcase the school's long and short furniture-making and woodworking courses. You can meet expert tutors, see professional demonstrations and pick up advice, tools and products. The demonstrators include:

- **Peter Sefton** hand tool techniques and WoodRiver planes;
- **Chris Eagles** woodturning with Easy Wood Tools;
- **Bob Jones** French polishing
- **Lee Stoffer** green woodworking techniques including carving wooden spoons;
- **Chris Yates** routing techniques.

Amongst the many manufacturers present, you can see Thomas Flinn saws, Clifton bench planes and Hammer Felder's silent spiral cutter block. Wealden Cutters will be there with Gordon Fry talking about their new cutter range, and Wood Workers Workshop will have deals on many tools on the day.

Lastly, the Professional Long Course students will have their End of Year Show, where you can talk with Sean Feeney, the School's Designer/Maker in Residence. For more details, visit www.peterseftonfurnitureschool.com



BARGAIN BEECH BENCH

The new Axminster 1700 workbench is the latest addition to Axminster's bench range. The benchtop of laminated, kiln-dried beech is lacquered on both sides for maximum protection. Being tough and resilient, beech is a particularly good choice for the top, and a laminated construction results in a stable and rigid surface that will remain flat in use.

The benchtop is 30mm thick with a 90mm deep apron. The large working surface measures 1550 x 500mm overall; including the vices, the bench footprint is 1700 x 650mm. Both the front and end vices have a double row of bench dog holes extending the width and length of the worktop, and the bench comes with four bench dogs. These allow you to hold workpieces with a wide variation in size or shape. The 360mm long vices have steel guide bars on either side of a strong central screw; their maximum opening is 130mm.

The underframe is solid beech, and more dog holes in the legs allow you to clamp items vertically. A full-length shelf in the base offers storage for larger tools or materials. This bench is supplied flat-packed with full instructions for assembly. The price is £289.96. www.axminster.co.uk

COLONIAL COMEBACK

Danish furniture designer Ole Wanscher's signature work is, without a doubt, his sophisticated Colonial chair. Carl Hansen & Son is now reintroducing the other classic designs in the series – the sofa and the coffee table. The launch restores the Colonial as a complete furniture series that highlights Wanscher's minimalist yet functional design approach.

Few people realize that Wanscher also rendered the design as a two-seater sofa. The sofa, however, was only produced in small quantities. The armchair dates back to 1949, while the sofa was first introduced in 1964. The coffee table, featuring a simple, timeless design with a square tabletop, is another element in Carl Hansen's series relaunch.

Based on the same core design as the armchair, the sofa clearly reflects Wanscher's



pendant for the delicate and refined, as well as for his fascination with furniture design from 18th century England and bygone colonial times. He wished to create furniture that paid tribute to classic conservative trends but also stood the test of time, and was so successful in achieving this balance that the Colonial chair remains his most famous design to this day.

The sofa comes in cherry, mahogany, oak and walnut, with fabric or leather cushions; prices start at £2370. The coffee table is made only in oak or walnut, and costs from £498. www.carlhansen.com



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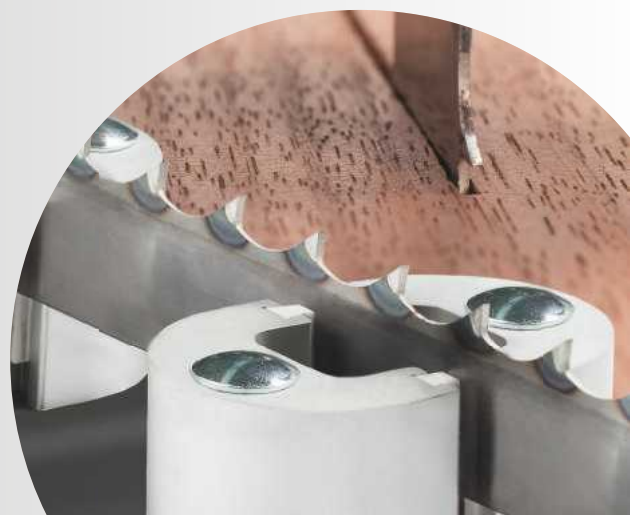
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The price of the boxed set is £43.96.

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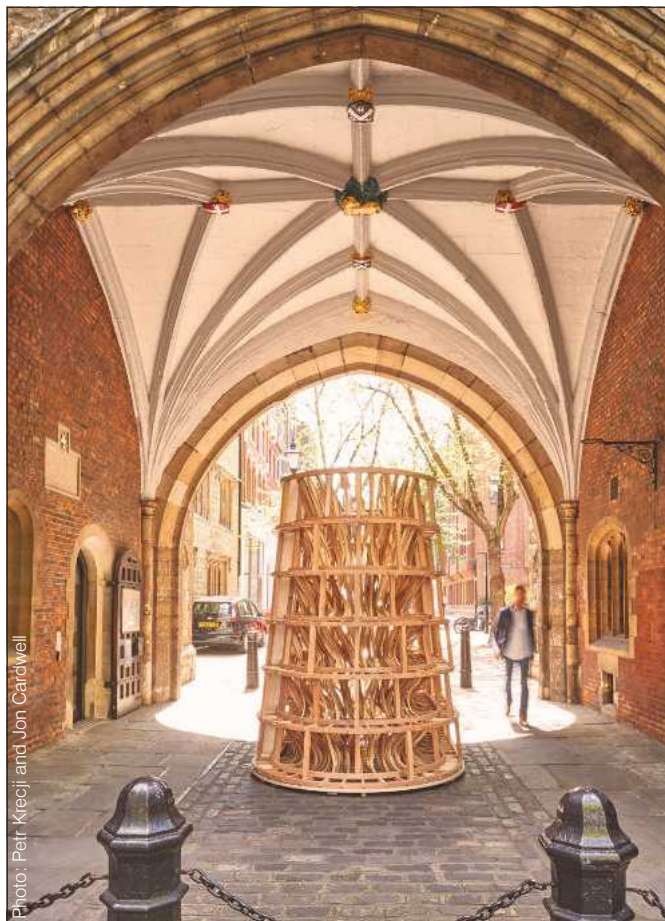


Photo: Petr Krecj and Jon Cardwell

THE INVISIBLE STORE OF HAPPINESS

This amazing structure is a 3m high ode to wood and inventive craftsmanship. It has taken two of the UK's brightest talents – furniture designer/maker Sebastian Cox and artist Laura Ellen Bacon – three months to craft it out of American hardwood.

The maple and cherry have been fashioned into a huge elliptical frame that showcases fine craftsmanship and impeccable cabinetry on a grand scale, with huge arcs of steam-bent cherry wood hand-jointed together in mostly glue-free draw-bore mortise and tenon joints.

Through complex machinery the components of this solid frame are effectively shredded into strips and made supple and weavable from time spent soaking in the river Thames beside Sebastian's Woolwich workshop. These strips were then manipulated by hand, flowing and twisting into the space to create a whirlpool of texture and shape, all held within its mighty external frame.

It was showcased for the recent Clerkenwell Design Week (CDW) in the archway in front of the historic Museum of the Order of St John in London, above. The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) supported the project to allow experimentation with these timbers and to celebrate their potential. Sebastian Cox, one of the UK's foremost makers, challenges how wood works in a way nobody else does. And Laura Ellen Bacon, with her artistic sensibility coupled with her wonderful sculptural work in willow wood, is the perfect complement to Sebastian's approach.

www.americanhardwood.org

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BY MICHAEL FORSTER

Straight shooting

Hunting and fishing don't figure in my lifestyle at all, and I have a pathological aversion to firearms, so please don't misunderstand me when I say I spend an awful lot of time shooting. Let me explain...

Shooting timber, that is. Shooting is the process of getting an end or edge perfectly true – which generally means a straight, flat edge or end at precisely the angle I require. Since a great proportion of my work involves dovetails and mitres, ends are particularly critical. So probably one of the most useful things I ever made was my shooting board.

Getting on board

The board itself is a simple enough device, best made from mdf as it must be seriously

and reliably flat. The idea is to support the workpiece in position at precisely the correct angle, and also the plane as it runs on its side. Mine consists of two pieces of mdf, **photo 1**. The smaller upper one is set in the centre of the lower one, leaving a runway at each side for the plane, **photo 2**, its edge forming the plane guide.

This arrangement means I can use the plane left- or right-handed, ensuring that where it's critical I can always keep the face side of the timber flat on the board with the face edge against the fence. In some

instances perfect squareness is not particularly vital – the dovetail clocks I make for craft fairs, for example, can be a hair out of square without affecting the appearance or function – but a box with mitred corners would be quite another matter, and could well end up being not only asymmetrical but in wind and with open joints to boot.

Adding a fence

A hardwood fence is set on top of the board at 90° to support the workpiece, **photo 3**. It also serves to control breakout – something that can ruin a beautifully prepared piece of timber. Hidden by the washers, slots allow the fence to be adjusted for different planes.

The board needs to be of an appropriate size to fit comfortably on the bench. It must also support the plane well, not only during but before and after the cut on follow-through. My board has a batten underneath that I can grip in the vice, **photo 4**, ensuring that everything is good and firm as I work. A replaceable sub-fence, **photo 5**, means I can quickly renew the worn contact area without disturbing the squareness.

Precision really is important: it will save an awful lot of messing around later. Yes, it's possible to tweak the cut on an imprecise board, by shimming with card or paper, but really it's much easier to get the thing right in the first place. So we're looking for precise 90° angles. From that basis we can use jigs to produce others, but basic squareness is our starting point.

Getting the fence square is in truth not difficult. Just ensure that everything is firmly held by cramps, and check it repeatedly before screwing the fence down. Don't glue it, because one day it'll need to be replaced. It's a good idea to form a dust groove by lightly chamfering the bottom



1 This simple board has served me for many years and saved me countless hours



2 Making it double-sided means the datum surfaces of the workpiece are always in the right place



3 A recent adaptation is the extra guide to keep the shooting plane against the fence



4 A batten underneath means I can secure the board in the vice for stability

edge of the fence, **photo 6**; just a tiny accumulation of dust here will ruin the accuracy of a job.

That's about it for the board, although it can be as complex as you want it to be. For me, a simple, robust board made with precision has a lot going for it.

Creating jigs

Once the basic board is made, you can devise jigs to work with it in order to produce different angles. My favourite one is the 'birdhouse' jig, **photo 7**, which I use for the corners of mitred boxes and also for the contrasting hardwood linings I like to use for the interiors. Cramped to the main fence, the jig holds the timber at a 45° vertical angle. That's fine for four-sided boxes, and it's quite feasible to make a number of these jigs with different angles for polygonal boxes. I prefer these to adjustable jigs, as once made they're very solid and reliable.

Practice time

Setting out joints like the dovetails shown in **photo 8** demands precision at the preparation stage that only a shooting board can provide. The board is also great for long-grain work on thin pieces, **photo 9**; you simply align the workpiece to the plane sole rather than the fence.

Using the board isn't difficult, but it's worth practising the technique. The most common mistake beginners make is tilting the plane towards the workpiece so that the side on which the plane rests lifts away from the board. Not only will this spoil the precision of the cut; it will also damage the board. Pressure should be mostly downward, pushing the plane firmly onto the runway with just enough lateral pressure to keep it against the guiding edge. Push the plane firmly, allowing it to run on past the far edge of the workpiece.

The right plane

People sometimes ask why the plane doesn't just cut away the edge of the upper board and the end of the fence. Well, of course, it would if the wrong plane were being used. Bench planes don't have full-width blades, so there's a continuous casting running past the edge of the cutter, **photo 10**, and this bears on the edge of the board – so always use a bench plane and not any kind of rebate plane.

On first use, the plane will indeed shave the edge of the board – and the end of the fence – but once the casting comes into contact, that will act as a depth stop. This is a factor that can be used to advantage in

making the board: set the fence to overhang by a whisker, and then 'initialise' the board by running the plane along and shooting the fence level.

Four options

There are several planes that are suitable, depending principally on usage and budget. You can do excellent work without too much investment or you can splash out on something really fancy. I'm going to look at four options. Three are in my toolkit, while the fourth – the Lie-Nielsen No 51 shoot board plane – was kindly supplied by Axminster for the purpose of comparison.

Jack of all planes

It's eminently possible to use a basic jack plane – or indeed a block plane, **photo 11** – for shooting board work as long as it's

good in the essential areas. A low-angled (bevel-up) plane is a good choice for end-grain work. My workhorse low-angle jack, with its blade bedded at 12° and a honing angle of 25°, gives an effective pitch of 37° – 8° shallower than a standard jack with its 45° 'common pitch' frog.

It's vital that the vertical sides of the plane are at 90° to the sole. Check this carefully using an engineer's square, **photo 12**. Any error here will be directly reflected in the angle of your shot edge or end (and a mitre joint will double the error). For the same reason, it's also important, as I know to my cost, that the cutter edge is perfectly aligned to the sole, **photo 13** – and that's down to the user, of course.

The main disadvantages of the standard bench plane for shooting are its shape and mass. It's not really designed for that





5

A replaceable sub-fence means I can quickly renew the worn contact area



6

The small chamfer on the fence forms a dust groove, preventing a build-up of dust



7

The 'birdhouse' jig is excellent for shooting mitred box linings accurately

8

Setting out joints like these demands total precision at the preparation stage



9

A shooting board is also great for long-grain work on thin workpieces

10

The casting bears on the fence and prevents it from being planed away



purpose and will need a little more care to avoid tilting it in use. Also, over long periods of use it can get uncomfortable and tiring. However, if you use a shooting board only occasionally it's probably the tool of choice.

One more tip: for shooting, you obviously don't want a radiused blade, so if you're using your workhorse jack plane it's best to invest in a spare cutter and hone it straight.

Come in number 9

If you do a lot of shooting, a dedicated plane for the job could be really useful – and that could mean a Lie-Nielsen No 9 mitre plane. The different shape is immediately obvious. The sides are wide to give good support and the weight of the plane, all concentrated in the right places, helps deter tilting. When I bought mine, it was generally acknowledged (and in some ways still is) as the best tool for the job by far.

This plane is now shipped to the buyer with a sausage-shaped 'hot dog' handle, **photo 14**, which sits in just the right place to give maximum control of the plane. It can be swapped from side to side so the plane can be turned over and used in either hand, perfectly complementing my double-sided shooting board.

Because it's worth it

At £380 this plane is no casual purchase, but the amount of use I give it well justifies the cost. It's purpose designed, beautifully made and (like all the planes featured here) usable straight out of the box, although a little light honing never goes amiss.

The bevel-up blade, similar to the low-angle jack or block plane, gives an effective pitch of 37°, and as it's bevel-up that can be tweaked to suit the timber being worked – a great advantage when shooting long grain in difficult timbers.

Now we come to the disadvantage of this plane (which also applies to most ordinary bench planes): the blade presents to the timber straight on, and this can be unnecessarily traumatic for the end grain – especially in hard, brittle timbers such as padauk. This brings me to a more recent development.

A brace of specialists

A recent addition to the range – and my kit – has been the Veritas shooting board plane. It's very similar in principle to the Lie-Nielsen No 51 shoot board plane – itself based on the old Stanley 51 – yet is very different in detail. So it seemed appropriate to ask Axminster to send me the Lie-Nielsen for review alongside my Veritas model, **photo 16**.

Like the No 9, these are both purpose-designed planes that can be set up for

shooting and left that way. Each has a tote set to direct the pressure into the corner between the plane guide and the runway, plus loads of mass and contact area. The crucial difference is that the cutters are angled to make a shearing cut, which is much kinder to end grain. To simplify sharpening, they skew the entire blade rather than simply angling the edge.

Spot the difference

The Veritas plane has the blade in a bevel-up configuration; the Lie Nielsen's is bevel-down. The advantage of the former is that the effective pitch of the blade can easily be changed simply by honing at a different angle – a valuable plus, as mentioned, earlier, if shooting long grain in difficult timbers. The Veritas blade is set at a bed angle of 12° and comes with a 25° bevel, giving an effective pitch of 37° that's similar to a low-angle block plane. However, the 20° skew effectively reduces that to 35°. The Lie-Nielsen uses a standard 2³/₁₆in 45° frog; a 50° 'York pitch' frog is available as an extra. For me, that favours the Veritas for the reasons already stated.

Choose your blade

Veritas also offer options of O1, A2 or PM-V11 tool steel blades. In a nutshell, these give a different balance between ease of sharpening, edge quality and retention. There's always a trade-off: do you want to spend a little longer sharpening to get more working time, or reduce the honing time but have to sharpen more often? Lie-Nielsen make the choice for you, offering just the A2 cryogenically treated blade, which is at the 'harder to sharpen' end of the spectrum.

Both planes have good lateral adjustment – an improvement over the No 9 that has only minimal wiggle room. The Veritas uses a Norris-style combined lever, and the Lie-Nielsen a traditional frog. Mouth adjustment is also approached differently; the Veritas moves the sole plate while the Lie-Nielsen moves the frog, which is adjustable without dismantling the plane, **photo 17**.

A neat Veritas touch is their signature system of grub screws that help maintain the blade's lateral setting, **photo 18**. It also features a movable soleplate to adjust the mouth aperture, **photos 19 and 20**.

Handling matters

If you're using a shooting plane a lot, then the comfort and control of a good handle becomes more important. In this area the jack plane fares least well. The plane has to be gripped by its side wing, and is easy to tilt as well as uncomfortable for prolonged



A block plane is ideal for tasks such as mitring banding using a 45° block as a jig



Check that the vertical sides of the plane's body are perfectly square



It's also important that the cutter edge is perfectly aligned to the sole



The No 9 mitre plane with its unusual 'hot dog' handle has a lot going for it



15

The handle is well shaped and ideally positioned for a comfortable grip



16

Two different takes on the same principle – by Lie-Nielsen (left) and Veritas



17 The Lie-Nielsen uses a traditional bedrock frog, adjustable without dismantling the plane



18 The Veritas plane uses a Norris adjuster featuring well-engineered screws



19 It also features a movable soleplate to adjust the mouth aperture



20 The smaller knob is positioned to stop the soleplate from contacting the blade



21 The Veritas tote (left) is a shade more upright than the Lie-Nielsen, and less comfortable

use. Having said that, for occasional shooting it's probably the financially sensible option.

For me the most comfortable of this quartet is the No 9. The 'hot dog' handle puts the grip in exactly the right place and lets the hand work in a natural position.

Both the shooting planes are excellent, and the only real area of disappointment for me is this matter of handling. The tote position means that guiding the plane requires more effort to hold it against the running edge of the board. This can be easily overcome, however, with a simple guide rail (which is best made adjustable and removable to keep your options open).

Totally satisfactory

However, the hand position still feels slightly less natural to me – and more so on the Veritas than the Lie-Nielsen, **photo 21**. The Veritas tote is less curved, which means that the push tends to be less down and more forward. A nice touch, though, is that it's mounted on a pivot so that the lateral angle can be set to personal preference.

The fixed Lie-Nielsen handle is more curved, directing the pressure downward, which I found more comfortable. Having said that, the Lie-Nielsen carries a huge price premium – a difference of some £170 in the retail price. Now you really do need to be doing a lot of shooting to justify that!

Summing up the options

■ **A jack plane** (any good one, but preferably a low-angle model)
This is the least expensive choice, and will be quite adequate for occasional shooting but less comfortable to hold in this role and easier to tilt accidentally. Keep a dedicated, non-radiused blade for the job. It can be used in either hand and various blades are available.

■ **The Lie-Nielsen No 9 mitre plane**
This is a dedicated tool with good mass and contact area, and is stable and very comfortable in use. It doesn't have an adjustable mouth or a skewed blade, but does benefit from a low-angle configuration and can again be used in either hand.

■ **The Lie-Nielsen No 51 shoot board plane**
Here's a purpose-made tool with plenty of mass and contact area. The blade is skewed to make a shearing cut, but only one blade (A2) is available. It's currently offered only in a right-handed version, but a left-handed one is coming soon. Using a standard frog, it has a higher effective pitch that can't be adjusted except by honing a back bevel to make it higher still. Compared with the Veritas, the handle is more comfortable but the price difference is very considerable.

■ The Veritas shooting board plane

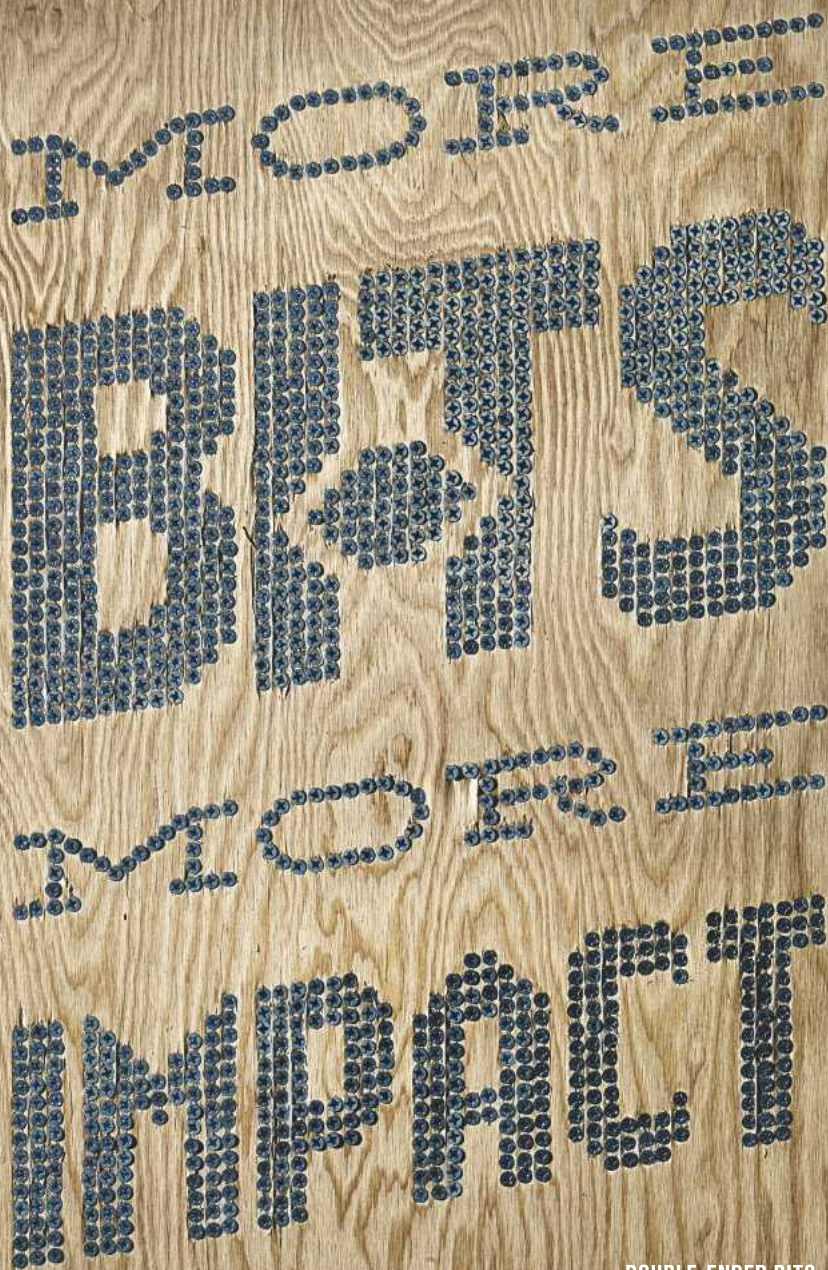
The final option is also purpose-made, with plenty of mass and contact area. The blade is again skewed to make a shearing cut, but it can only be used one-handed (left- and right-handed versions are available). Its low-angle bevel-up blade is kinder to the timber, and allows tweaking of the effective pitch simply by honing to a higher angle. The slightly more upright handle may present a comfort issue for some users. Various blades are available.

All the planes featured here are available from Axminster except for the No 9 mitre plane, which is not currently on their website but is listed on www.classichandtools.com

Making a choice

In an ideal world I'd have a pair of the dedicated shooting planes, with the Veritas blade system but the Lie-Nielsen handle – or even better, a 'hot dog' handle similar to the No 9 if the design obstacles could be overcome. But this is the real world, and as usual there's no one perfect answer. When all's said and done, the choice is down to individual circumstances and preferences.

Inevitably, I've only scratched the surface of the shooting topic, but this simple board and jigs have met my needs for many years. For those who want to find more there's a wealth of information online, particularly at <http://cornishworkshop.co.uk/shootingboards.html>



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**BY GORDON WARR**

On the money

Boxes have endless uses, and this one can be put to a variety of uses with the coin inlaid into the top giving it a distinctive appearance. It features dovetail joints and sloping sides, which pose some novel challenges

For anyone who has never made a box with two sloping sides (which therefore affect the layout of the dovetail joints), then this is a useful project to get familiar with this variation. I used a 2p coin to embellish the lid of the box, but other denominations could be used... or even a foreign coin. If the box is intended for a particular person, then the date of the coin can be chosen to match their date of birth, or another date of some significance.

Making a start

Almost any hardwood can be used for this box. The original was made in cherry, one of our native timbers with a lightish colour tinged with pink. It's easy to work and also polishes well.

As usual, the project starts with preparing the wood, but in this case the top and the long sides are left with a little extra on the width to allow for final trimming later. At this preparation stage, the sides and ends are cut to length, with the ends being sawn at the required angle, **photo 1**. This is most easily carried out using the mitre fence on a saw bench. Now you can use one of these pieces to set the fence of the planer to the same angle, and then plane the edges of the sides of the box to the same angle and to the required width, **photo 2**.

Setting out the dovetails

I always cut the pins of a dovetail joint first rather than the tails, as some craftsmen prefer to do. I started this part of the project by using a cutting gauge to establish the extent of the joint from the ends of all four pieces. However, a dovetail gauge could not be used to mark the pins, and a sliding bevel was brought into use instead. It did of course have to be set twice, with a slope of 1:7 being adopted.

Pins and sockets

After sawing down the grain of the pins, the bulk of the waste was then cut away with a coping saw, working just clear of the gauge line. Final trimming down to the line is completed using a chisel, **photo 3**, working from both sides.

Because the pins and tails of dovetail joints are cut to suit one another, it's essential that corresponding corners be marked with an identifying number or letter. I always use a pencil rather than a knife to mark the tails, but a hard pencil which has a sharp point is a must. I usually use a 2H pencil for this, and the tails are marked while the pins are held in place on the ends, **photo 4**.

The next stage – cutting away the waste from the tails – is the most critical. The sawing must be done so as to just touch the pencil line, down to the gauge line. From then on, the waste is removed in the same way as for the pins. The lower edge tails are removed entirely by sawing.

Test-fitting the tails with their corresponding pins must be carried out with extreme care if any final trimming is required. The difference between a well-fitting dovetail and one that is even very slightly slack is very minute; hence the need for careful trial fits.

Shaping the ends

The next step is to mark out the curves to the top edge of the two end pieces. In reality with



1 Cut the pieces for the ends to length with the ends splayed. The saw guard has been removed for clarity



2 Plane the edges of the sides to the same angle. Again the machine guard has been removed



3 Mark out and cut the dovetail pins, using a tenon saw, a coping saw and then a chisel



4 Then use the finished pins to mark out the corresponding tails and cut them as before



5 Shape the top edges of the two ends to a smooth curve on the disc sander, and check that they match

a small project such as this, just one piece can be marked and shaped initially, then the second end marked by using the first as a template. I removed the waste entirely on my disc sander, **photo 5**. By placing the two together and also reversing them, I checked that they were identical.

Initial assembly

Gluing up followed, using cramps and scrap wood to ensure the joints were fully seated. I always remove excess glue from inner surfaces while it's still soft, using a damp cloth. Once dry, I flattened off the



6 Assemble the sides and ends, then cut a rebate for the plywood base on the router table

lower edges using an orbital sander; the platen on this is large enough to span the edges, thus ensuring they were level.

A little routing

Now the rebates could be formed to the inner edges to take the ply base, **photo 6**. I used a bearing-guided cutter in my router table, being careful not to apply too much sideways pressure as the bearing was only being controlled by a part of its surface because of the slope of the sides. I soon had a piece of ply cut and fitted into these rebates, gluing and cramping it in place.



7 Cut the top to size and form the rebates along the long edges of this piece on the router table



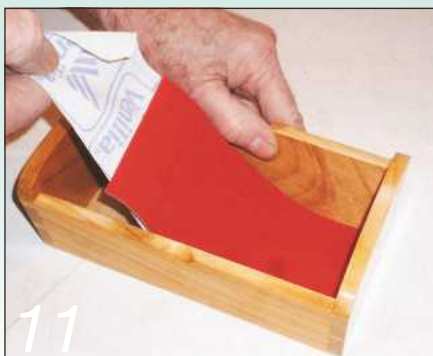
8 The edge of the rebates needed to be bevelled slightly – an ideal job for a shoulder plane



9 Create the curved profile of the top using jack, smoothing and block planes, followed by sanding



10 Drill a shallow hole to take the coin using a Forstner or saw-toothed bit of the correct size



11 Apply three coats of finish inside and out, then stick self-adhesive baize to the interior and underside of the box

With the glue dry, I levelled off the outer surfaces; this time my belt sander was more appropriate for the job.

Making the top

I had prepared the top with just a slight amount of extra width, so I now trimmed this to size using a fine-toothed saw. The next step was to form the rebates along the long edges of this piece, **photo 7**, another simple job carried out on the router table. However, the edge of these two rebates required a little further attention to improve the fit of the top into the lower part of the box. A few shavings with a shoulder plane soon had the lid a perfect fit, **photo 8**.



12 Stick the coin in place with epoxy resin adhesive and set it aside to allow the adhesive to set

Shaping the top

With the lid in place, the curve to its upper surface needed preparing. First, a jack plane was used to remove most of the waste, then a smoothing plane followed by a block plane, **photo 9**. Again my belt sander proved a quick and effective way of finalising this curve so that it was level with the ends of the box. During this stage, I reversed the lid end to end a number of times, thus

ensuring that whichever way round the lid was fitted, the top would be perfectly level with the ends.

The finger grips to both the lid and the base of the box were quickly formed using a small drum sander mounted in my bench drill. I took care to ensure that all four recesses were equal and in line with each other when the lid was reversed.

Adding the coin

It was now time to cut a recess for the coin in the lid. The choice is yours, but bear in mind that you'll need a drill bit to match its size. An old imperial halfpenny is exactly an inch in diameter, while a 2p piece measures 26mm. Either a Forstner bit or a saw-toothed pattern is suitable, **photo 10**, as both leave a flat bottom to the hole. Test the fit, but don't glue the coin in place yet.

Finishing off

All was now ready for the finishing stage. I applied three coats of pre-catalysed lacquer to all the surfaces, including the inside. I diluted the lacquer with about 10 per cent cellulose thinners, and applied it with a polisher's mop. The final stage was to lightly abrade the finish with very fine steel wool dipped in soft beeswax, and then to burnish it with a cloth. Then just two final jobs remained; to cover the inside and the underside of the box with self-adhesive baize, **photo 11**, and then to glue the coin securely into its recess with a little epoxy resin adhesive, **photo 12**.



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*Black & Decker

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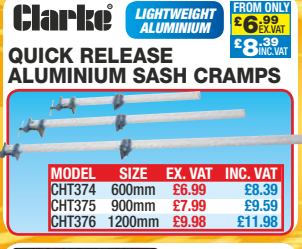


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Clarke CBS2	1200W	480	£69.98	£83.98
Makita 9911	650W	75-270	£94.99	£113.99



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• Max thickness capacity 130mm
• Planing depths adjustable from 0-2.5mm
• Powerful 1250w motor
• 8000rpm no-load speed

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CPT600	1250W	120mm	£169.98	£203.98
CPT800	1250W	120mm	£189.98	£227.98
CPT1000	1500W	120mm	£269.98	£323.98



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• Powerful, bench mounted disc sander • 900W
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• Dimensions (LWH): 440x437x386mm
• Weight: 28kg

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INCLUDES 12 PIECE BIT SET

2 Batteries

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CON18Ni	2 x Ni-Cd	£64.99	£77.99
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CTS11*	1500w	254mm	£139.98	£167.98
CTS10D	1500w	254mm	£149.98	£179.98

* SS = Stainless Steel



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PC60	5.5HP	32amps	£319.00	£382.80



Clarke
SHEET SANDERS
CON300

FROM ONLY **£12.99** EX VAT
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*110V in stock

MODEL	SHEET SIZE	MOTOR EX. VAT	INC VAT
CON300	190X90mm	150W	£12.99
CON300	230X115mm	370W	£29.98
Makita	112X102mm	200W	£54.99
BO455*			£65.99



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• Weight: 28kg

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2 Batteries

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DRILL STANDS
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• Dimensions (LWH): 440x437x386mm
• Weight: 28kg

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MODEL	MOUNTING	JAW (WIDTH/OPENING /DEPTH)mm	EXC.VAT	INC.VAT
Clarke CHT152	Bolted	150/152/61	£13.49	£16.19
Stanley Multi Angle	Clamped	72/60/40	£16.99	£20.39
Record V758 Clamped		75/50/32	£18.99	£22.79
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8/250

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Tiger 7/250	2Hp	7	24ltr	£89.98	£107.98
Tiger 8/36	1.5Hp	6.3	24ltr	£109.98	£131.98
Tiger 11/250	2.5Hp	9.5	24ltr	£119.98	£143.98
Tiger 8/510	2Hp	7.5	50ltr	£129.98	£155.98
Tiger 11/510	2.5Hp	9.5	50ltr	£149.98	£179.98
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Tiger 16/1010	3Hp	14.5	100ltr	£269.98	£323.98

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- 1800W motor
- Laser guide

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CMS10S2

Clarke MITRE SAW STAND

CFMSS1

£64.99 EX VAT £77.99 INC VAT

- Suitable for most sizes/makes of saw
- Inc. outriggers & rollers

Clarke DOVETAIL JIG

- Simple, easy to set up & use for producing a variety of joints • Cuts work pieces with a thickness of 8-32mm • Includes a 1/2" comb template guide & holes for bench mounting

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CDT112 Router not included

Clarke ROUTERS

BOSCH

FROM ONLY £39.98 EX VAT £47.98 INC VAT

ACCESSORIES IN STOCK

* DIY

MODEL	MOTOR	PLUNGE (W)	EXC.VAT	INC.VAT
CR1C	1200	0-50	£39.98	£47.98
Bosch	1400	0-55	£74.99	£89.99

POF1400ACE

Clarke SCROLL SAWS

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- 120V, 230V motor • 50mm max cut thickness
- 400-1,700rpm variable speed • Air-blower removes dust from cutting area

MODEL	MOTOR	RPM	EXC.VAT	INC.VAT
CSS400B	85w	1450	£64.99	£77.99
CSS16V	120w	400-1700	£79.98	£95.98
CSS400C	90w	550-1600	£99.98	£119.98

* Includes flexible drive kit for grinding/polishing/sanding

MITRE SAWS

TH-SM 2534

Quality Range of Mitre saws and blades available

MODEL	BLADE DIA	MAX CUT BORE (mm)	DEPTH/CROSS	EXC.VAT	INC.VAT
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Fury 3	210/25.4	60/200mm	£119.98	£143.98	
Einhell 250/30	75/340mm	£159.98	£191.98		
TH-SM2534					
Makita LS1040	260/30	95/130mm	£199.98	£239.98	

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Kit includes:

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CBG6SB

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- Variable speed control from 7,400-21,600 rpm • 2100w motor • 0-60mm plunge depth. CR3 Router with 15 Piece Bit Set also available only £94.99 £113.99

INCLUDES 15 PIECE SET WORTH OVER £20

Clarke ROUTER TABLE

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- Converts your router into a stationary router table • Suitable for most routers (up to 155mm dia. Base plate)

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- Flow rate of 850M3/h

MODEL	MOTOR	FLOW RATE	BAG CAP.	EXC.VAT	INC.VAT
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CD7B	750w	850 M3/h	114Ltrs	£139.98	£167.98

Clarke 5PCE FORSTNER BIT SET

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CHT365

Clarke BENCH GRINDERS & STANDS

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MODEL	DUTY	WHEEL DIA.	EXC.VAT	INC.VAT
CBG6RP	DIY	150mm	£27.99	£33.99
CBG6RZ	PRO	150mm	£37.99	£45.99
CBG6RSC	HD	150mm	£47.99	£57.99
CBG6SB#	PRO	150mm	£49.98	£59.98
CBG6RWC	HD	150mm	£54.99	£65.99
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evolution 255mm MULTI-PURPOSE TABLE SAWS

FURY 5 ONLY £149.98 EX VAT £179.98 INC VAT

WAS £191.98 INC VAT

MODEL	MAX CUT DEPTH	CUT SIZE (mm)	EXC.VAT	INC.VAT
FURY5	54mm	73mm	£149.98	£179.98
RAGE5	55mm	79mm	£269.00	£322.80

*FURY power: 1500w (110V available)
*RAGE power: 1800w/230V (110V available)
table extensions included
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CON185

*Includes laser guide

MODEL	MOTOR	MAX CUT (mm)	EXC.VAT	INC.VAT
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Clarke CCS2	1300W	60/45	£59.98	£71.98
Clarke CON185*	1600W	60/40	£59.98	£71.98

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Toolmaking has been the driving force of civilisation, expanding our capabilities through the ages. As a hobbyist chipping away with hand tools, I feel a whole lot closer to my ancestors felling trees with flint axes than I do to latter-day programmers making push-button furniture with CNC milling machines, but I'm equally fascinated by both ends of the woodworking spectrum. It's just a little easier to be making scrapers than robots.

Strip away the sophistication we've put between ourselves and the things we're making, and the physical processes of working wood have remained virtually unchanged through the ages. It all comes down to using weight and friction, applying sharp edges to split, cut and smooth. And we don't have to look far inside ourselves to find the stone-age roots of our actions – at least not if my childhood experience is any guide.

Alternative technology

It was a spring day in 1965 or thereabouts when, tasked with scraping old paint from the seemingly endless planks of our elderly wooden dinghy, my young heart sank like a fisherman's anchor. What? Scrape all that,



BY ROBIN GATES



Something for nothing

A satisfying spin-off from my hobby of scavenging for free timber has been making simple woodwork tools from scratch. Having obtained the wood for nothing, there's some thrifty logic in getting tools for nothing too

using only this? Yet before long I was engrossed in the work, with a mysterious pleasure having transcended the monotony. Gripped by an instinct to experiment, I also found myself looking for other, better ways of doing the job.

Living where we did at the foot of the South Downs, you only had to scuff the ground to dislodge a flint and sometimes it would be one of the countless sharp flakes left by generations of knappers. I picked up one of these flint flakes and began scraping away at our dinghy, impressed at what a piece of stone could do. Before my investigations got as far as boring a hole through the hull, my father gently reiterated his advice on proper use of the hook shave. However, that day was without a doubt when my interest in toolmaking took root.



Old hand saws, bought on eBay, are a good source of high-quality steel

Scrapers from saws

Prompted by a wish to get something useful from some terrible old saws bought on eBay, **photo 1**, the first tools I made were card scrapers. The steel used in old saw plate is ideal for scrapers because it keeps a good edge and can be resharpened.

With a misting of WD40 and a bit of elbow grease behind some wet-and-dry abrasive paper, it didn't take long to get rid of the rust. Cutting the steel plate into useful sizes was somewhat trickier. A springy old saw is surprisingly tough, which bodes well for the scrapers to be made from it, but it's hard to cut even with good-quality Gilbow metal shears, **photo 2**. I could almost hear the bones in my right hand cracking under the pressure, although a leather gardening glove takes the sting out of the work.

Because some force was required in closing the jaws, which were being squeezed out of the cut by the springy metal, it helped if the saw plate was braced against a bench dog. I'd also advise wearing safety glasses because when the pieces eventually separate they can fly across the workshop like Batman's batarangs.

A cutting edge

Having thus obtained a conveniently sized piece of plate, I filed the chosen edge square to the face and, using the shank of an old chisel, turned the edge to form a hook. Now placing the hooked edge of the scraper on



Gilbow metal shears cut saw plate, but it's hard going; wear a leather glove



This small bowl adze was improvised from a gouge wedged into a sycamore handle

the surface of the timber to be smoothed, I leaned the scraper forward by around 15°, applied thumb pressure from behind so as to bow the cutting edge and then pushed the scraper forward. When I'd got it right – which took a bit of adjustment – the hooked edge

raised minute wood shavings rather than dust, **photo 3**, leaving the surface as smooth as if it had been planed.

The beauty of card scrapers is that you can make them in any shape and size you need to get into awkward spots, to apply a light finishing touch where a plane would be overkill, or perhaps to tame a swirl of grain which the plane might struggle to level without tear-out. The downside to using them is the physical discomfort: it can be torture maintaining the bow in a small one using just fingers and thumbs, and the friction generates significant heat. But they do work...

Seeking inspiration

Having been bitten by the bug of green woodworking, I was finding that the most difficult part of making spoons and bowls was the hollowing process. While the carpenter's axe handled the roughing out and everyday chisels and knives brought most of the shaping to an acceptable level of finish, it was proving slow and awkward to excavate the hollows using regular carpentry gouges. A weighty evening with the tool



Using a saw-plate card scraper on elm produced fine shavings rather than dust



The cobbled-together adze worked but felt unbalanced, and tended to fall apart

catalogues followed, pondering whether I could justify buying a proper bowl adze costing a small fortune. All very well if I were to be a maker of spoons and bowls for years to come, I thought, but what if my passion were to wane?

A basic bowl adze

The idea of making a bowl adze came to mind when I was making a spoon from a piece of holly, as much to investigate the character of holly as to add to our range of kitchen utensils. The too-dry holly was proving hard going, and I really needed a tool with more authority and aggression to hack away the waste. At first I improvised a mini-bowl adze using an old $\frac{3}{4}$ in gouge. I then recalled seeing a stone-age adze in the local museum, with its flint head lashed at right angles to a wooden handle, I found a curve of sycamore for the handle and hacked out a slot at one end so that the gouge would slip through sideways and jam tight when twisted through 90°. The gouge was locked in this position by an elm wedge hammered into the slot behind it, **photo 4**.

A better design

The home-made gouge-adze was effective as a prototype, **photo 5**, chipping out the waste as I'd hoped and illuminating a technique I hadn't tried before, but in the longer term I wanted something better balanced and less likely to fall apart.



Hacksawing the broken claws from the wrecking bar was a severe test of patience

Having fiddled and fettled with sticks and gouges a while longer and with no greater success, I'd almost shelved the project when I chanced to dig an old wrecking bar out of the garden.

A wrecking bar is an ugly piece of kit at the best of times, but this one with one claw missing seemed particularly nasty. Then it struck me that the acute angle of its business end was very similar to that between the blade and handle of a proper bowl adze, and with the bonus of it being a one-piece tool. So I cleared the bench of



I next made a perpendicular saw cut to create the initial taper for the blade...



...before creating a gentle sweep with a half-round file. The rag is to protect my fingers



To file the cutting edge to shape, I clamped the wrecking bar in my engineer's vice



The last stage was filing a back bevel to help ease the blade out of the cut



Honed and ready to go, I thought the tool resembled an eider duck so I gave it eyes

woodwork tools and prepared for some elementary metal-bashing.

A change of tack

The shock-absorbing bulk of a massive engineer's vice is invaluable for sawing, filing and hammering metal. I keep my vintage Record 84 under the bench, where it also serves as stabilising ballast. Having removed the wrecking bar's remaining claw with a hacksaw, **photo 6**, I next made a perpendicular saw cut to establish the blade's bevel, **photo 7**, tapering it towards what would become the cutting edge. As an infrequent metalworker, more accustomed to ripping through softwood with a 5-point Spear & Jackson, the slow progress of the fine-toothed hacksaw blade through steel always comes as a test of patience, but I got there eventually.

I then hollowed the sawn surface using a half-round file to produce a subtle sweep, **photo 8**, and cramped it in my engineer's vice so I could file this cutting edge to shape, **photo 9**. To assist this cutting edge out of the cut I then filed a modest outside bevel on it, **photo 10**, before honing the edge on coarse and then fine oil stones. For someone who gets their figures-of-eight in a tangle while rolling a bog-standard bench gouge through its sharpening routine on the oil stone, I can tell you that honing the end of an unwieldy wrecking bar was no small challenge!



The 'eider' adze was remarkable effective at hollowing a rustic cherry log bowl

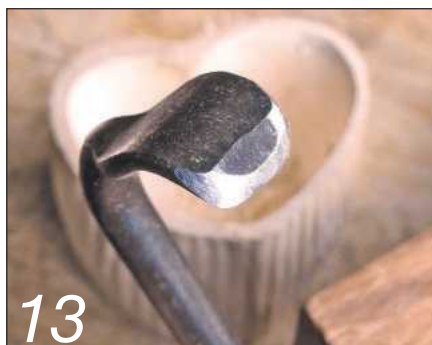
Ugly duckling

It took a few trial swings to get a feel for the weight of the new tool and to decide where to cut the handle length for maximum comfort, which was around 15in long. The extra weight of this all-steel tool proved a revelation, requiring only a small swing, and with little effort, to drive its edge into the work with attitude and accuracy. Although the surface of the hollow it excavated was rough, I found the adze also made an effective scraper for smoothing and shaping. Drawn with the grain under its own weight it took long curly shavings. Considering its brutal origins it behaved with surprising delicacy.

It had another unexpected attribute. In its shining beak I imagined I saw a friendly eider duck, so to reinforce the idea I drilled two eyes and named it my 'eider adze', **photo 11**. It never ducked a challenge, **photo 12**!

A fine finisher

My next project was driven by the need for a finishing tool for the inside walls of small wooden pots hollowed from sections of branch wood, **photo 13**. I had been struggling to manoeuvre my straight gouges



This hook gouge for smoothing the interior of small pots was made from a hubcap lever

at effective angles in the narrow confines of these pots, and was hesitating to invest in proper spoon gouges. In fact I doubted a spoon gouge would achieve what I was after because, while using the 'eider adze' in scraping mode, I'd come to realize that it was the reflex angle of the head that made it so handy. Since the inside diameter of the pots narrows towards the base, the walls must be worked from bottom to top in order to be going with the grain; gouging from top to bottom only creates tear-out.

Lateral thinking

With that idea in mind I recalled the metal hubcap levers my Dad used when changing the wheels on our Morris Minor in the 1960s, and I felt sure I still had one... if only I could remember where. It wasn't until Christmas, while concealing presents from the kids, that I eventually found two of the old levers – in the attic!

One end of the lever is flattened and bent back through about 145° so that, in use, this end could be hooked under the rim of a steel hub cap, and the shaft of the tool pushed towards the tyre thereby popping the hub cap from the wheel.

This flattened end would be ideal for converting into the blade of a reflex-angled gouge. Using my hand-cranked grinding wheel I rounded the corners, ground a bevel on the outside and then honed the edge on an oilstone using the usual rolling, zig-zag motion up and down the stone – much easier this time than with the wrecking bar!

Repurposed as a gouge, the tool is dragged towards the top of the pot, **photo 14**, removing minute wood shavings in the process. Being a solid piece of tool steel, it not only holds a reasonable edge but also has such weight that it's hardly necessary to apply down force. It's a delight to use and was so easy to make, but I fear vintage car buffs will be outraged!



The gouge is used with a pulling action towards the rim, producing very fine shavings

Grinding the Bismarck

One tool I can't do without is the hand-cranked grinder I used on the hubcap lever. This really proved its usefulness when I converted a so-called 'Bismarck' smoothing plane into a scrub plane. The voracious scrub plane is effectively a hand-powered thicknesser, and is just the tool for someone wanting to dimension small timber without recourse to machinery.

I was encouraged in this project by the Bismarck's dimensions. These echo those of

today's metal-bodied scrub planes made by the likes of Lie-Nielsen and Veritas, being narrow in proportion to the length: 2in across the sole, 11¼in from heel to toe, and with the all-important iron being just 1½in wide. All I needed to do was reshape the straight cutting edge to a 3in radius. It's this tight radius – or camber – that enables the scrub plane to do its work of removing a lot of wood fast.

Creating the curve

My old school protractor has just the right radius, so I inked the required curve around that, **photo 15**. Then it was simply a matter of putting the iron to the grinding wheel and

watching the sparks fly – from behind safety specs, because tiny fragments of hot metal that become temporarily lodged in the stone's surface can fly off at any point in its orbit.

There was a good deal of metal to remove, **photo 16**, so I stopped frequently to slide the iron into the plane's stock and sight down the sole to judge the state of the camber, **photo 17**. The ideal is to have the corners of the iron tucked just inside the ends of the mouth, so that virtually the entire arc of the edge is active in gouging a trench in the wood without splintering at the sides.

I then ground a fairly steep bevel so as to leave plenty of supporting metal behind the

edge as it tears into the timber. After a spell on the oilstones it was ready for work, **photo 18**, and what a satisfying tool it proved to be, ploughing across the grain and taking over where the rough hewing of the axe left off to leave a characteristically fluted surface, **photo 19**.

Satisfaction guaranteed

Making tools to make simple wooden artefacts has not only brought a deeper satisfaction to my woodworking; it's given me an insight into the achievements of our toolmaking ancestors and made me realize just how lucky we are to be able to buy good tools off the shelf.



15 Converting a wooden Bismarck plane to a scrub plane began with marking a 3in radius on the iron



16 Grinding the scrub iron radius on the hand-cranked grinder was a slow but effective process



17 Sighting down the sole of the scrub plane shows the corners of the iron just inside the mouth



19 Here you can see the relationship between the scrub plane's iron and the flutes it cuts



18 The aggressive scrub plane leaves a fluted surface on some salvaged mahogany

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A TWIST OF FATE

Proving that timber can be both a functional and an aesthetically stunning design material, The Timber Research & Development Association (TRADA), the UK's leading timber authority, has teamed up with the Architectural Association (AA) School of Architecture to create a wooden pavilion that it hopes will steal the show at this year's Timber Expo, part of UK Construction Week.

Let's twist again

Named *The Twist*, the project is a collaboration between students from the Emergent Technologies and Design Programme at the AA and TRADA, and explores the bending and twisting capacity of



The finished panel is quite stunning. You can see the completed pavilion at the NEC in October

timber by integrating structural and spatial performance into one architectural solution.

Built from 4 and 6mm birch plywood supplied by TRADA member Hanson Plywood, the pavilion will be on display throughout Timber Expo at the Birmingham NEC this October, before going on to be displayed in Bedford Square, London in January 2016, as part of the AA's Public Programme Exhibitions series.

Coming to life

Progress on the project is already under way, and the students have recently completed a residential week at Hooke Park, a 350-acre working forest, during which

they worked on prototyping and designing the project, as well as using CNC routing technology to bring the sculpture to life.

Join the show

Bringing together nine shows under one roof, UK Construction Week will be the biggest trade event the UK has seen in years. Visitors will be able to attend Grand Designs Live, the Build Show, Timber Expo, the Surface and Materials Show, Energy 2015, Kitchens & Bathroom Live, Plant & Machinery Live, HVAC 2015 and Smart Buildings 2015.

Taking place at the Birmingham NEC from October 6-11 (with trade-only days from October 6-8), the event will unite 1,000 exhibitors with an expected audience of 55,000 visitors.

For more information please visit www.ukconstructionweek.com



Cutting multiple components is easy on the CNC router

FAB LAB: the rise of the maker workshop

With publicly accessible 'maker' workshops springing up all over the country, it was only a matter of time before one or two started offering the very latest in CNC and laser machining. Anyone keen to add to their bespoke furniture toolkit and looking to improve their manufacturing processes can sign up for one of many workshops available at Fab Labs across the country

The Fab Lab is part of a growing global group of high-tech workshops. Originating at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the USA, the workshop based at Derwent Mills in Cockermouth, Cumbria is funded by Britain's Energy Coast and offers a range of equipment and machines to stimulate creativity and imagination. This includes a 3D printer, a table-top CNC milling machine, a laser cutter, a large-bed CNC router and more.

The future is digital

"Many bespoke furniture makers see the rise of digital fabrication as an end to traditional skills," says Fab Lab Cockermouth's manager Danny Frost. "What we're looking to do with this course is to demonstrate how the technologies and methods used in Fab Labs can really help people develop more skills and manufacture things faster while still retaining all that's great about furniture making."

Danny has been a furniture designer for more than 25 years, and through his work managing the Cockermouth Fab Lab he's helped many designers to grow their businesses. "What digital fabrication can do is take out some of the more arduous elements in manufacture, freeing up more time for furniture designers to focus on the elements of the craft they love," continues Danny. "Let's say you need to make 16 chair legs. You might spend only 20 minutes working up a design and take then 40 minutes to form each leg. With digital fabrication you might invest 40 minutes in the design phase, but then each chair only takes ten minutes to make."

For more information contact 01900 825080 or visit www.becfablab.org

BUILDING FOR EDUCATION

Prime Minister David Cameron has announced plans for a batch of 49 new Free Schools across England. Due to overcrowding, there is now an urgent need for schools to be built with fast, lean and cost-effective methods of construction. This makes timber structures assembled off site using cross-laminated timber (CLT) the ideal solution.

The X-LAM Alliance (sounding like

something out of *Star Wars*) has a wealth of experience in creating CLT structures for education buildings, from nurseries and schools to universities and academies. CLT has become a valuable tool for enhancing education environments, and is made to exceptional levels of accuracy, ensuring minimal defects and overall high standards. For more details visit

www.xlam-alliance.com
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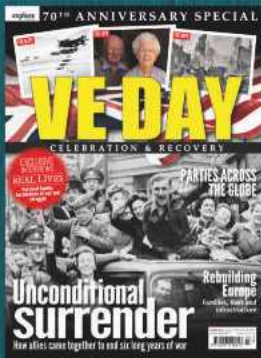
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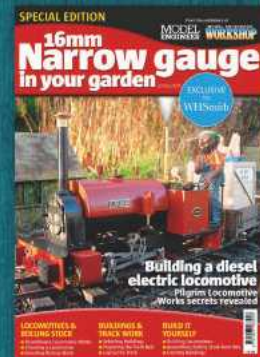


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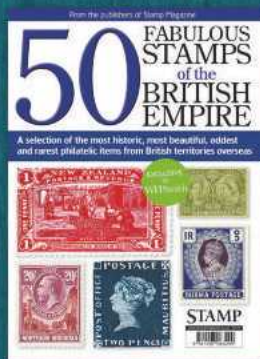
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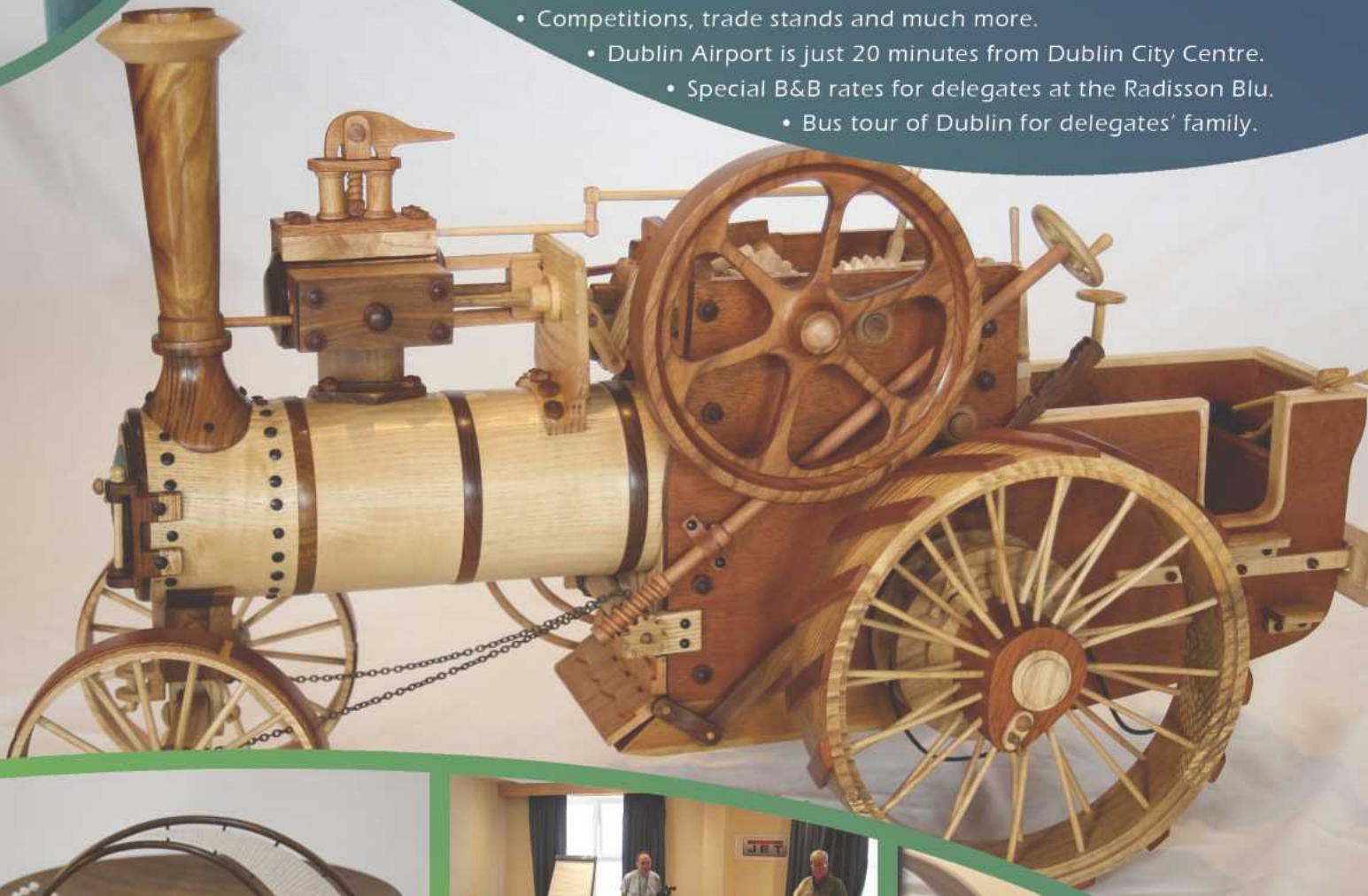


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World class

When you're learning a trade, it's good to be able to compare your skills with those of your peers, and even better to compete directly with them in a worldwide event. That's what WorldSkills is all about

It's quite possible that many readers will not have heard of the City & Guilds-backed WorldSkills competition, a nationwide enterprise that selects the very best young tradespeople to compete with their peers from around the world. It takes place every two years, and draws huge crowds who come to watch and cheer on the competitors. Come September, along with young tradies from 71 other countries, proven members of the UK team will be heading to Brazil to participate in the 2015 WorldSkills competition in Sao Paulo, and we wish them every success.

On the podium

Much like the sporting Olympics, there are no big cash prizes, and each person competes purely for the honour of winning a gold medal for their country. For many, just getting to the finals is an accomplishment in itself – the training and 'feeder' competitions take up an enormous amount of time and dedication – but for the winners, it's a lot like being given the key to a golden door of opportunities.

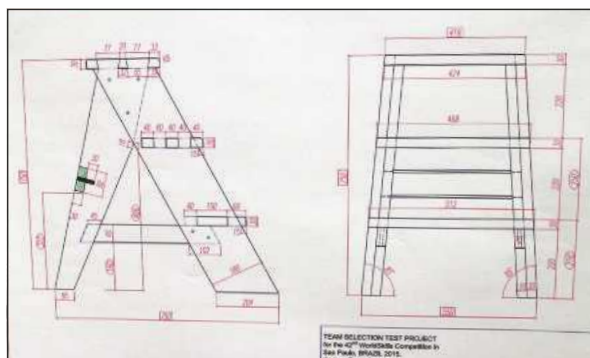
As well as the acclaim and respect of colleagues in the trade, there's a very strong chance that some of the biggest and best firms involved will come calling with a view to offering top class employment. Indeed, in recent years the competition final has become something of a hunting ground for blue riband companies on the lookout for the very best craftspeople in their chosen fields.

Seeking inspiration

Up and down the land, local and regional competitions are run regularly by the CITB (The Construction Industry Training Board) in an ongoing search for excellence in every trade. With continuing successes at the World



Both the joinery and cabinet making competitions took place in the same workshop



This is one of the working drawings issued to the joiners at the start of the exercise. Spot the complexity!

Finals (see the panel overleaf), everyone taking part can see just what can be achieved, and can derive the necessary inspiration. Like most things in life, there's a certain amount of luck involved in making a smooth progression; probably the best help a young tradesperson can have is the wholehearted backing and support of their employer. Torn between maximizing the skills of their employee for the benefit of the firm,



Andy Pengelly and previous finalist David Beattie assess the fit of a housing joint



The judges all use the same marking criteria and score cards during their deliberations



The joiners were asked to work in both oak and ash to further test their mettle



A couple of the painting finalists drop by to see how the woodworkers are getting on

and enjoying the success – and the attendant publicity – of a medal-winning performance, it's a tough road for any company, and especially those of modest size.

Every little helps

Government help is currently available, but, in classic UK fashion, there is an element of perplexity amongst the various organizations as to who is responsible for what, and one or two of these could be vulnerable to future rounds of funding reviews. It looks as if there's a very real chance that future participation in this valuable tournament could be jeopardized unless more is made of the whole event. Publicity is important, and we should do all we can to spread the word.

The last couple of years have seen a welcome increase in the provision of apprenticeships right across the trades (and not before time too), but chances to publicise the benefits – and attractions – of training for a trade to a sometimes apathetic youth market are not so common and should be taken at every opportunity.

I've been talking up the competition since I got back from Burton-on-Trent, and am



It's time to clean up the steps with every joiners' favourite power tool, the 4in belt sander

looking into every avenue to help increase exposure of this worthwhile event. If any readers have a good idea which might help, I would encourage them to act upon it without delay.

National finals

The Woodworker was present at the Swadlincote construction campus of Burton and South Derbyshire College to witness the last day of a week of assorted trades including bricklaying, tiling, welding, stonemasonry and hairdressing to name but a few. Some of these individual

competitions were also guest to a variety of young tradies from around the world, as international cooperation is a big part of the whole shebang.

Of particular interest to me were the joinery and cabinetmaking competitions (sadly the carpentry comp was held elsewhere in the UK). On arrival, the most noticeable characteristic shared by all of the competitors was an intensity of purpose; if concentration could be measured in millimetres, it would have exceeded the longest tape. All five of the young men – two joiners and three cabinetmakers – were fully engaged with the job in hand, working at a brisk pace that gradually increased as the clock counted down.

Judges ahoy

The event was overseen by Peter Legg, an experienced tradesman in his own right and a veteran of many a similar competition, with Andy Pengelly for the joiners and Christian Notley for the cabinetmakers on



George Callow, winner of the 2013 competition in Leipzig, shows off his recently awarded British Empire Medal. Ashley Terron got one too

WORLDSKILLS WINNERS 2013

Britain won six medals at the last WorldSkills competition, held in Leipzig, Germany. The winners were:

Bricklaying	Ashley Terron	Warrington	Gold
Cabinetmaking	George Callow	East Sussex	Gold
Stonemasonry	Robert Broomsgrove	Somerset	Silver
Autobody repair	Matthew Quinn	Northern Ireland	Bronze
Aircraft maintenance	Ben Tullett	Hampshire	Bronze
Electrical installation	Matthew Crane	Bristol	Bronze



The cabinetmakers (from left), Edward Harringman, Steve Pickton and Sam Brister, with coach and mentor Christian Notley in the foreground

CABINETMAKING CRITERIA

Along with a working drawing, all the cabinetmakers are issued with a list of marking criteria which helps them concentrate on the important aspects of the project. Although they have a rough idea of what to expect, the final plans will vary from an earlier sketch by up to 30 per cent, and they only have one hour in which to study and digest the requirements and to plan their order of work.

The job here was to make a hybrid workbox/table with gullwing doors and an internal sliding tray, all set on a variety of tapers to ensure maximum complexity of compound angles for virtually every face and edge. The hinges were of the Soss variety (everyone's favourite!) and were set into endgrain mdf to boot. There was also a bit of veneering (Bagpress provided) just to keep things interesting! I think the only thing missing was some kind of turning. For more information on the cabinetmakers' competition, please see the latest issue of our sister publication *Good Woodworking*.

A tough challenge

Andy, a Cornishman, likened the standard of skills required to a Level 5 NVQ, and described the workpieces this year as 'tortuously difficult'. Certainly, while I feel that – given a couple of weeks – I could eventually complete each of the two joinery projects to a satisfactory standard, to finish them in just three and a bit days (22 hours for both disciplines) is an enormous achievement, and one which is worthy of an award in its own right. With speed of the essence, much of the training concentrates on organisation and structured methods of working.

On your marks...

The competition begins with the drawing of lots for work positions; each entrant has a 3 x 2m space in which to park their own toolchest and to carry out all of their work. Free-standing machines like chop saws and router tables – in this instance generously supplied by Festool and Starrett respectively – are hard on their boundaries, but the larger machines like table saws and spindle moulders may be near or far, depending on the luck of the workspace draw.

Strictly timetabled slots are booked on the static machines, and if your job isn't running to schedule then you will miss your

hand at all times. All three are passionately behind the whole WorldSkills business, and fully recognise the importance of maintaining the exemplary standards that are necessary for competitors to stand a chance of a podium finish. Judging starts right at the beginning, with the joiners' preparatory rods (full scale drawings) being assessed for accuracy and clarity of work.

Triple marking

As the various jobs progress, each joint is marked for fit and execution by three different pairs of eyes, a system of flash cards being employed to ensure an accurate average. WorldSkills Finals' criteria are strictly adhered to – there are tight controls on what is acceptable and what not – and substandard work is marked down mercilessly. As one would hope and expect, realistic marking keeps it all real and helps maintain the sort of standards necessary to succeed in the final stage of the event.

Helping Andy out on the joinery judging was David Beattie, a joiner from Northern Ireland who had won a Medal of Excellence at Leipzig in a previous competition. Standing watching, it was all I could do to restrain myself from chipping in with my two pennorth, but then we all know how enjoyable it is to get involved and to join in with the job in hand.



Work in progress, checking measurements; accuracy is all in this close competition

All work has to be executed and presented to a high-end industry standard



The joiners down tools and find a brief moment to relax with judge David Beattie (left)

Dominic fits the back legs to his steps with only minutes to spare





Dominic Hicks presents the two completed projects required by the competition



Mirella McGee was one of the stonemasonry competitors, pictured earlier in the week

turn. As in the best of any professional's workspaces, ergonomics play a large part and the UK finalists showed the sort of planning and training which had them reaching for tools unerringly; I felt that they could almost have done the job blindfolded!

Safety first

As a woodwork tutor myself at my local technical college, I was pleased to see that all recommended safety precautions were



Dale Hodgins relaxes with his two perfectly formed joinery workpieces



This extraordinary piece was completed by a tiling finalist. Note the Brazil references



Owain Jones was eventually declared the winner of the carpentry final

being taken, further enhancing the reality of the event as well as keeping everything trouble-free. I asked if *Health & Safety* rules were also taken into consideration by the judges. It would seem that, after some tales of scary practices from some of the South American competitors in regional heats, it won't be long before this necessary side of things also carries some point-scoring weight. Although the noise levels weren't any higher than you might expect in any large

workshop in the land, all of the finalists spent a fair bit of time wearing some form of ear protection. Christian told me that this was a surefire way of keeping the concentration going throughout each session.

Taking a break

In what would be an ideal situation for many an employer (me included!), breaks are kept to a minimum and last for only 15 minutes. Such is the drive of the competitors, breaks are enforced and are taken at strictly scheduled times. I was reluctant to chat to any of the entrants during these brief few moments as they were still clearly 'in the zone' and – with every minute of work time to be accounted for – a break of concentration could have made a significant difference to their final scores.

Nearly there

The key to a successful contest, I was told, was completion. If you can get every part made and fitted you will be scoring points, so speed is everything. Watching the lads in the last hour, in one or two cases the pace quickened to just shy of frantic, but I realised that anyone with the time for an (almost) leisurely clean-up was probably in pretty good shape. While all work had to be sanded down to 240 grit, it was the accuracy of the final finished dimensions which carried most weight in the judges' eyes.

Counting down

As each competition drew to a close, it was clear that everyone was going to finish, and the sense of relief at the final counted second was almost palpable. The quality of all the work I saw was of a sufficiently high standard to render each piece almost indistinguishable from another.

Smiles were broad and backs were slapped as each competitor compared various difficulties with his rival, and surreptitious glances and tactile checks were made on the others' pieces.

The whole thing was carried off in the best of humour, with a strong spirit of camaraderie which bolstered the team spirit and would help sustain the winning finalists on their long journey to Brazil. With the rest of the judging still to take place, everyone would have a long anxious wait until the next day when the final decisions were made. **MC**

STOP PRESS!

The woodworking winning finalists were:

- Dale Hodgins (joinery);
- Edward Harringman (cabinetmaking);
- Owain Jones (carpentry).

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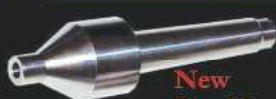
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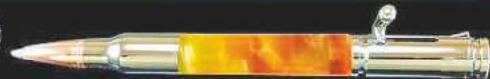
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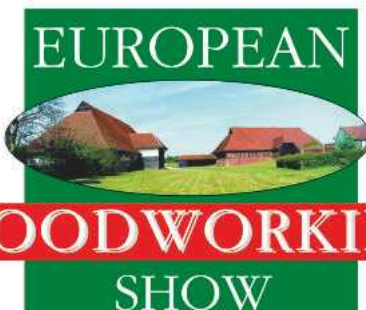
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BY EDWARD PULLEYN

Comic cuts

This is an unusual project straight out of the school workshop, and here at *The Woodworker* we're always pleased to see this sort of thing. As the teacher might say: 'highly commendable!'

The design of this storage drum to house my growing collection of comic books is drawn primarily from postmodernism, as the circular design is not necessarily practical or efficient, but is unusual for the sake of it. I felt that it would be more aesthetically pleasing than a cardboard box, which seems to be the only other storage solution for comic books on the market.

I also wanted the unit to subtly reflect the items that were being stored, so I added the iconic Batman symbol as an inlay onto one of the circular sides. During the design phase, I also took panels from comic books, and used shapes and images from them to incorporate into the design. The final design that I settled on actually began as the Owl Ship from *Watchmen*.

Essential ingredients

All of the comic books stored within the drum must be protected from light, to prevent them from fading, so I decided on a rotating aluminium cover that would allow easy access to the contents while also covering them. The drawer beneath allows tape for sealing comic bags to be stored. I chose plywood as the primary material, to keep the unit lightweight but durable.

Machine precision

Some of the components, such as the circular sides and their grooves, were cut on a CNC router. I used a laser machine to cut the small Batman pieces for the inlay. All the other pieces of wood were cut by hand or with a bandsaw, and the aluminium sheet was bent to shape using a metal roller to form the lid.

Pop rivets connected the handle to the lid, and simple comb joints were used for the drawer and the main body. I also created a handle for the drawer on a metal lathe, and used a knurling tool to create a grip.

Final tweaks

The main difficulty was ensuring that the lid would fit in its grooves and open and close smoothly. Thankfully, I managed to achieve the perfect shape after lots of readjusting. I also added beeswax to the grooves and to the rail of the drawer to allow them to move more smoothly.

I'm incredibly fortunate to have had all of the resources available to me in the design and technology department of Bootham School, as well as the technical expertise and support of my teacher, Eamonn Molloy.



1 Long finger joints connect the main storage box components



2 I used all the sash cramps I could find to secure the glued-up box assembly



3 The decorative roundel for the end was initially formed on the pillar drill



4 I used a laser machine to cut the small bat motifs for the inlay



5 Drilling a leg stretcher rail was simple using a drill mounted on the engineering lathe



6 The storage drawer is a sturdy plywood box with a false front panel glued to it



7 The aluminium sheet to form the rotating lid was carefully rolled into shape



8 I added a small chamfer round the edges of the drawer front with a palm router



9 The finished drawer contains rolls of Scotch Magic tape, invaluable to collectors



10 The splayed plywood legs are glued and screwed to the ends of the drum



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BY ANDY STANDING

The thin edge of the wedge

The twin wedged mortise-and-tenon joint is generally used when the joint is to be cut into the face rather than the edge of the mortise member. It's a very secure version of an old favourite

This example could be used on a narrow shelving unit, where the strength and decorative qualities of the joint can be emphasised by inserting diagonal wedges made from contrasting timber in the ends of the tenons. For a wider joint, you can simply use multiple tenons across the width of the joint.

You'll need the following tools to create the joint: a try square, a short steel rule, chisels, a mallet, a tenon saw, a coping saw, a hammer and a plane.



1 Start by marking the shoulder line around the tenon member. Leave a little extra length so the ends can be planed flush after assembly



2 Mark out the position of the tenons. First draw a line about 6mm in from each edge. Then divide the space between these two lines into three equal sections, so the tenons and the spaces between them are all of equal width



3 Mark the waste areas clearly. It's all too easy to cut out the wrong piece by mistake, especially on a complex joint



4 Transfer the marks from the tenon member onto both sides of the mortise member



5 Remove the waste from the mortises using a mallet and chisel. You'll need to work from both sides. Take shallow cuts and be careful not to damage the edges



6 Saw out the tenon waste with a tenon saw. Make the vertical cuts first, ensuring that you keep on the waste side of the marked lines



7 Next, saw carefully along the shoulder line at each side of the workpiece



8 Use a coping saw to remove the section between the tenons. Keep on the waste side of the line, then trim down to it with a chisel



9 Cut the slots for the wedges in the ends of the tenons. They can be at 90° to the tenon face rather than at 45° if you prefer



10 Cut a thin sliver of contrasting timber to make the wedges. Taper the end with a chisel and then cut the wedge to size



11 Assemble the joint and tap the wedges into place with a hammer. Once they're tight, trim off the tops and plane the ends of the tenons flush with the surface

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Mortiser set-up

This series is all about setting up and fine-tuning a range of standard woodworking machines and static power tools. This month we're looking at the bench mortiser



1
This small bench-top machine will cut a mortise up to 16mm wide in softwood

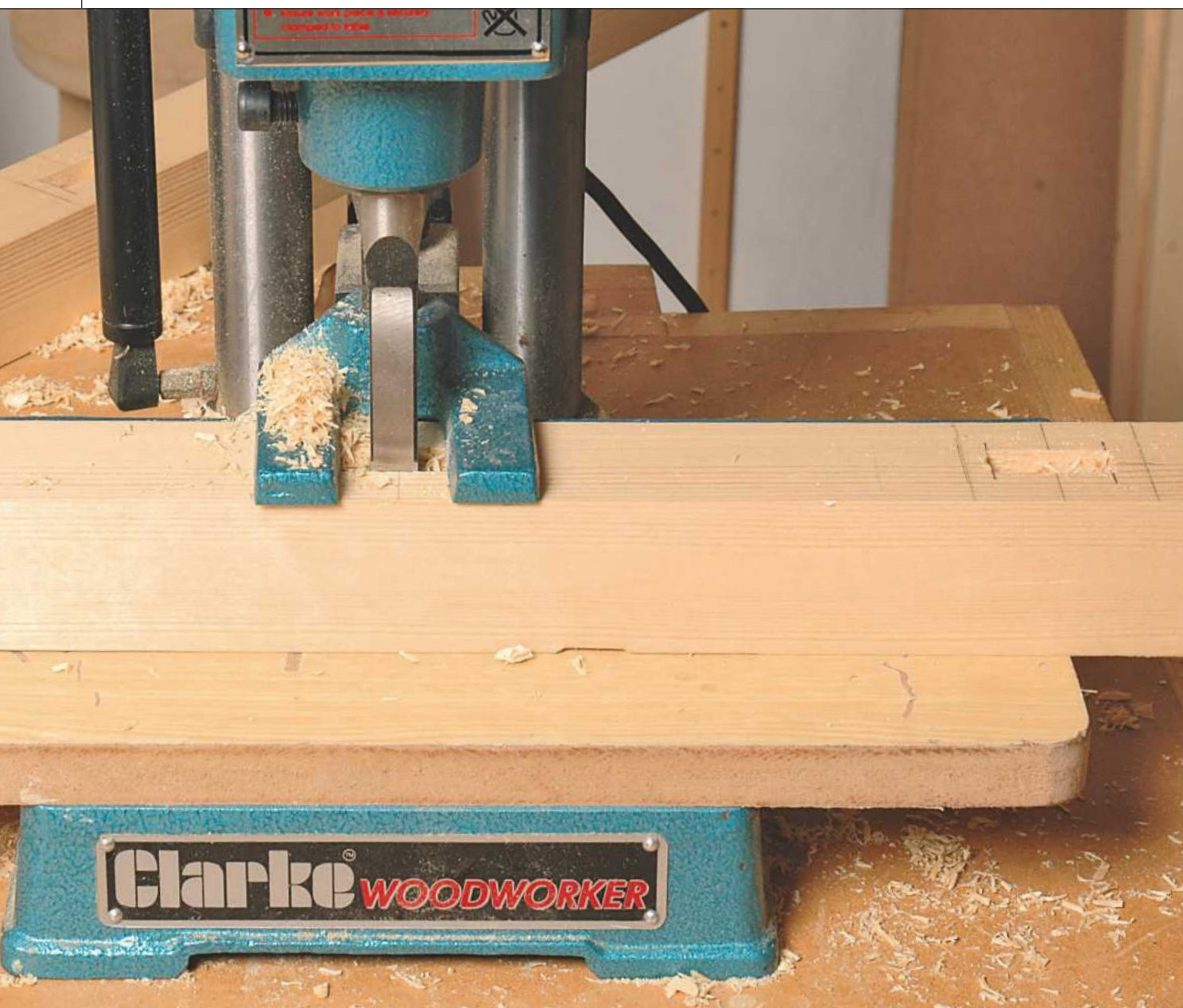
2

A bigger machine will handle larger mortises with its 25mm capacity



Like most of the machines that are now commonplace in our home workshops, the bench mortiser became more popular once it had begun to appear in the American woodworking programmes that filled our TV screens back in the mid-1990s.

The instructions for use that came with these machines were never that clear, and what made matters worse was that most of them were supplied with a set of cheap chisels. Combined with our obsession with using softwoods, this usually made for a disappointing result. Many years later the situation has got a lot better, but there are still a few things that can be done to improve the end results immensely.



Two types

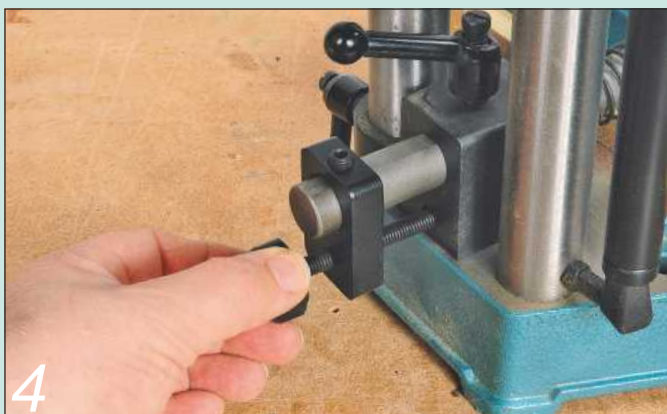
This article is about dedicated mortisers – machines with the sole purpose of producing mortises. There are accessories designed to fit on a conventional drill press and convert it into a mortiser. However, the mechanics of a drill press can easily be overloaded by the forces required to drive the square chisel into the wood, even if the centre of the hole has been removed. You only have to compare the thickness and length of the operating handles on a mortiser with those on a drill press to see the problem.

Cheap and cheerful

Small 'portable' mortisers will usually be capable of driving chisels up to 13mm wide, or even a little larger. These small machines



3 The fence of a small mortiser is adjusted by hand and locked into position



4

On the smaller machines, a basic micro-adjuster helps to fine-tune the positioning



5

The work is held down with an adjustable fork so the chisel can be withdrawn



6

The work is held against the fence using hand pressure



7

The main advantage of the small machines is that they can be moved around easily



8

Larger machines have to be partially dismantled before they can be moved

are perfectly good enough for most jobs. Their big advantage is that they can be put away under the bench when they're not in use. Where working room is at a premium, as in most workshops, this will free up valuable bench space.

Apart from their size, the main difference compared with larger machines is the method of holding the work. These small machines have a flat bed and an adjustable back fence that is used to position the work

under the chisel. An adjustable fork arrangement holds the work down as the chisel is withdrawn from the wood. Sideways adjustment is made by sliding the work along the fence and holding or cramping it in position during the cut.

Bigger and better

The heavier machines are capable of cutting mortises up to 25mm wide. These machines are not practical to move about in

one piece unless they are mounted on a wheeled cabinet of some kind.

Other than size, the main difference is the cross vice that holds the work in place. The wood is held in the carriage, against the fence. It can now be positioned by moving the carriage forwards or backwards to locate it under the chisel. It's then locked in place using the built-in cramp, and any sideways movement is made by moving the carriage from left to right or vice versa.



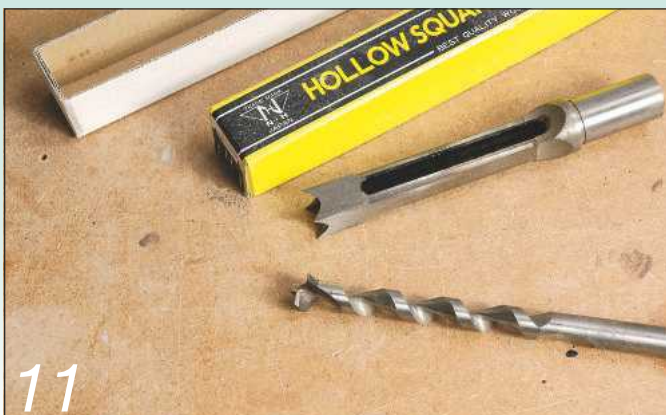
9

The cross vice can be moved forward and back and left to right to position the work under the chisel



10

Cheap chisels will do the job, but aren't of the best quality and tend to be noisy in use



11

Japanese-pattern chisels cut more quickly and are less likely to clog than English-pattern ones



12

You will need to hand-finish the cut mortise using appropriately-sized chisels if you want perfection

Peace and quiet

Mortisers are one of the quietest machines in the workshop. Their induction motors drive the chuck directly, with no gearbox or transmission to generate any noise. The only thing that can set the teeth on edge is a badly adjusted auger bit.

Chisels and bits

Make sure you are using good-quality chisels. There are lots of sets in wooden boxes around that are fine for just chopping out a rough mortise. These are mainly of Chinese origin.

For better results, go for the more expensive chisels. Singles can cost more than an entire box of cheap chisels, but the difference is well worth the extra expense. There are two types of chisel: the English pattern and the Japanese pattern.

Slow or fast?

English-pattern chisels have a double helix auger bit with two spurs and no lead-in points, and cut relatively slowly. The advantage of a slow speed is that the mortise produced tends to be cleaner. Japanese-pattern chisels have a single helix



13

Fit the chisel and auger to the machine using a coin to space the shoulder away from the yoke



14

Loosen the chisel, remove the coin and tighten the chisel up against the yoke



15 Mark up the mortise and cut in the lines to ensure a better finish. Mark both sides when cutting a through mortise



16 The mortise is cut in steps, as this cutaway of a partially cut joint shows



17 The finished mortise is completed in next to no time!

auger bit with a single spur and a lead-in point. This makes them easier to sharpen and quicker to cut, and also less likely to get jammed.

Setting up the cut

Regardless of type, the setting up of these chisels is identical with the exception of the clearance. As the Japanese pattern chisels remove larger pieces of waste, it is advisable to increase the clearance slightly to prevent the waste jamming in the tip of the chisel. This clearance will also vary according to the type of wood and the size of bit. The following is a starting point from which fine adjustments can be made.

Coin spacer

Set up the chisel and bit so they're pushed into the machine as far as possible, using a 2p piece to space the shoulder of the chisel away from the yoke. The bit is in contact with the chisel at this point. Loosen the chisel, remove the coin and, using the fence to square its position, push it up tight to the yoke and retighten it. This will create a gap between the chisel and the auger at the business end so the waste can be pulled into the chisel and ejected through the relief slots.

These chisel and auger bits are supplied

with long shafts that will usually need cutting down. This is because the distance between the yoke that holds the chisel and the chuck that holds the auger bit varies considerably from one machine to another.

Chip discharge

Ensure that the waste relief slots in the chisel face to the left or right of the machine. The chisel will then be able to discharge the chips into the open mortise. A common mistake is to set the chisel with the slot facing forward; most photographs of mortisers have it set this way to show that there is a slot there. This means that the walls of the mortise will block the slots and restrict the chip removal as the chisel is plunged into the wood, forcing the chips higher up the auger before they can be ejected. The result? They jam the chisel and cause it to overheat, risking burning the wood and drawing the temper of the steel. This can soften the cutting edge and make the chisel ineffective.

Marking the cut

The first thing to do is to mark the position of the mortise and cut in the pencil lines with a knife to make a clean sharp edge to the mortise. Cutting the marks in like this prevents the mortiser from dragging the top

edge of the timber into the mortise and making it look soft instead of crisp. Mark the other side of the timber too if you're cutting a through mortise.

Staircase cuts

Progress the cut, working down in small steps starting from each end. Make the first cut at each end of the mortise as deep as the chisel is wide; this will give a crisp end to the mortise. Then move in a whole chisel width and make a cut twice the depth of the first and so on, making a 'staircase' cut. Then go back and repeat the process until the full depth is reached along the length of the mortise.

Avoid overlaps

Don't try to make overlapping cuts or to trim the ends of the mortise, as the chisel will just deflect and bend... or even break. For through mortises, work from both sides into the middle. Trying to cut straight through is bound to end up with an inferior result.

It's usually the case that the length of mortise doesn't divide up perfectly into multiples of the chisel's width. Remove the remaining waste from the centre of the mortise with the chisel positioned centrally above it, so you don't impose any uneven wear on the cutter.

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BY IAN WILKIE

Boy racers!

MAKING THE BODY

Cut out the three parts that form the car's body from thickened wood to the dimensions shown in the drawing on page 61



Square off the ends and check that they're accurate; a disc sander is the ideal tool for this



Cut out the cockpit area in the centre piece. I used my Proxxon bandsaw with a narrow blade; alternatively use a scrollsaw or coping saw



Woodturning should be fun. If you need a break from turning bowls, candlesticks and boxes, or you've run out of people to give them to, why not enjoy yourself by turning some of these little racing cars for the young Lewis Hamiltons in the family? Then they can stage their own wacky races!

This model is an ideal project for the Jet Midi range of lathes, which are relatively inexpensive and very popular. It's also a good way of using up small pieces of colourful contrasting wood that are a shame to waste. My oddments box yielded up some pau amarello (a yellow boxwood from Brazil),

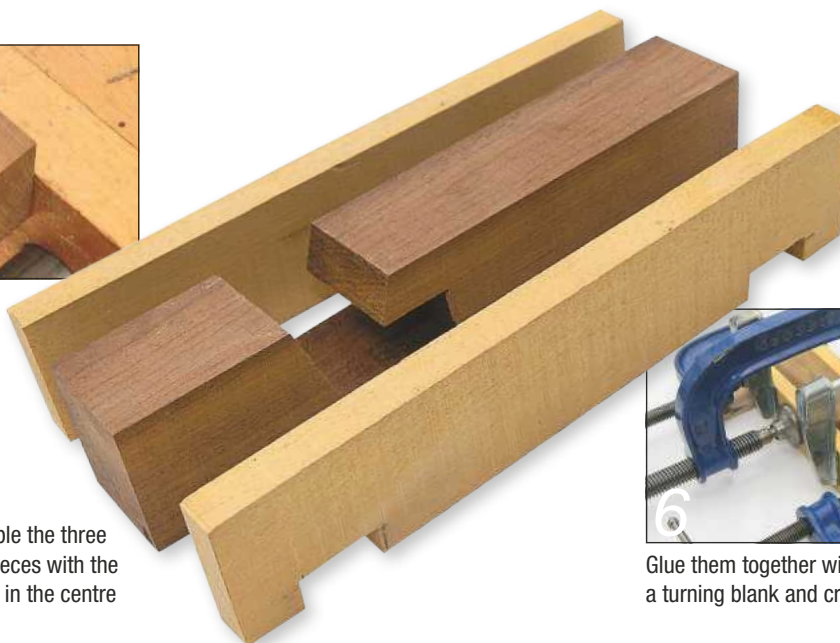
padauk (a red African hardwood), walnut (brown), and holly (white). To complete this project you'll also need four 30mm No 8 brass roundhead screws for the wheel axles, four small washers, and a short length of 6mm brass tube (readily available in model shops and DIY stores) for the wheel bushes.



MAKING THE BODY



4 Mark and cut out the rebates on the underside of the three body pieces for the axle blocks, and clean them up with a rasp



5 Assemble the three body pieces with the cockpit in the centre



6 Glue them together with PVA adhesive to form a turning blank and cramp them securely



7 Mount the blank with a revolving centre in the tailstock and a prong drive or Steb centre in the headstock. Set the lathe speed to 1500rpm



11 Make sure your tools are really sharp before starting to turn. My Sorby Pro-Edge sharpening system is efficient and quick to use



12 Use a sharp 12mm roughing gouge to turn the blank to a cylinder. Then shape it with a 9mm deep fluted spindle gouge

MAKING THE WHEELS



16 Draw out the wheels on 12mm thickened wood and mark their centres. I've made this sample wheel in a light wood to show up more clearly in the photographs



17 Drill a 25mm diameter x 4mm deep recess in each wheel with a Forstner bit. Then cut out the wheel blanks roughly to the round



18 Fit a chuck with small jaws onto the headstock spindle and mount the first blank in expansion into the recess



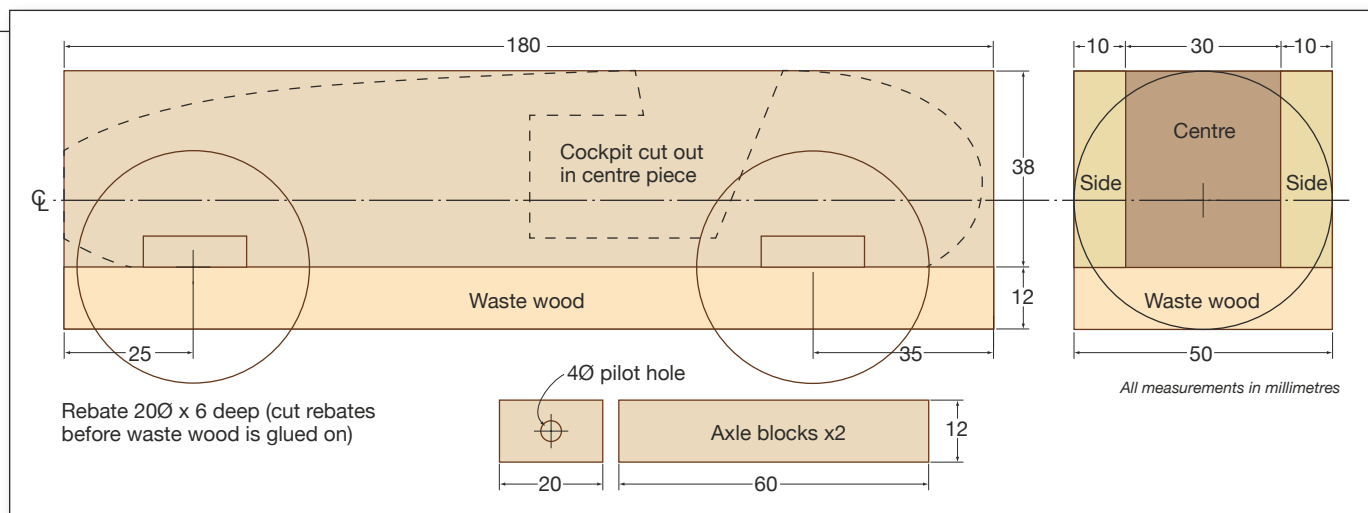
19 Fit a drill bit in a chuck in the tailstock and use it to bore the axle hole in the blank to a diameter of 6mm



20 Turn the blank to a diameter of 45mm. Shape the tyre edge with a point tool to represent the tread. Sand it well, then repeat the process to create three more wheels



21 Cut the hubs from 3mm wood. Put them together on a mandrel in a drill chuck and turn them all to 25mm. Remove them from the lathe and bore five decorative holes in each one



7 To give the blank balance, temporarily glue a piece of scrap wood to the bottom, over the rebates, using a paper joint



8 Cramp this firmly, making sure the joint doesn't slip as you do so, and set it aside for the glue to harden



9 Once it's dry, mark the centres of the glued-up block at each end and centre-pop them



13 After sanding, remove the car body from the lathe and part off the waste wood by prising the paper joint apart with a chisel



14 Clean off any remaining scraps of paper and glue from the base of the car body



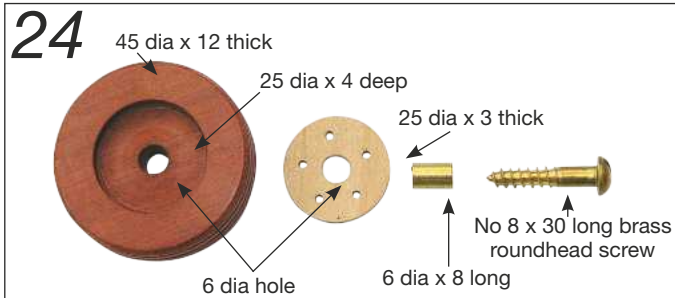
15 Cut out the axle blocks, find the centre at one end and bore a 6mm pilot hole right through. Glue the blocks into their rebates

FINAL ASSEMBLY



22 Make a saw cut in the rear of the body and insert a fin cut from thin wood. Make a similar cut across the bonnet to take the windscreen

Lay out each set of wheel parts, with an 8mm long brass bush and a 30mm No 8 roundhead screw. The bushes will ensure that the wheels will always rotate freely and not seize up if the wood expands



23 Turn a steering wheel, an exhaust pipe and a radiator grille, and make a seat for the driver to fit in the cockpit. Then varnish or oil the body and the wooden wheel parts



25 Screw the wheels on with a washer between the wheel and body. Check that they spin freely, then remove the screws, put a little Araldite on their threads and drive them in permanently



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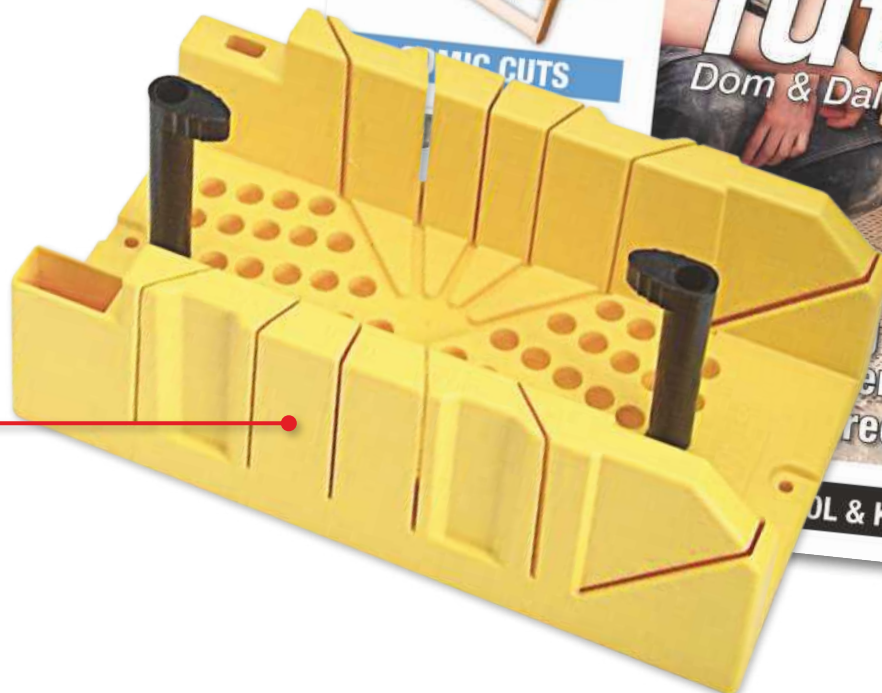
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BY COLIN SIMPSON

Sunday roast

This was an opportune commission to receive as it fits very neatly into my ongoing series about turning treen for the kitchen. It's a traditional meat carving platter, properly known as a trencher

A few weeks ago I was approached by a lady who asked me to turn something useful from a piece of wood that had been lying around in her father's shed for many years. The piece was some 480mm long by 390mm wide and 35mm thick, and was apparently left over from some furniture he'd made some years ago. The wood is probably mahogany or a close relative: I'm not entirely sure.

After some discussion the lady asked me if I could make her a carving board. I was a little hesitant, saying that that type of item would be better made from beech or sycamore, but she was adamant and, after

all the customer is (almost) always right! Here's how I went about it.

Preparing the blank

There were a few end-grain checks in the piece that had to be cut away, and I also needed to remove a split running the length of the piece. This was easily done on my table saw, **photo 1**. Once the piece had been squared off I marked the centre accurately using the corner-to-corner method, **photo 2**.

I didn't want screw holes from a faceplate showing on my finished piece, so I decided to mount it on a hot-melt glue chuck. Mount a disc of plywood approximately 150mm in



1 A table saw makes short work of squaring up the ends of the blank



2 Find the centre of the blank by drawing two diagonal lines across it



3 Prepare a circle of plywood and form a recess in it to fit your chuck



4 Drill a small hole in the centre using a bit fitted in a Jacobs chuck in the tailstock



5 Locate the centre of the blank using the centre screw and glue it to the ply



6 Clean up the blank and mark where the wings and the foot will be



7 Cut a recess for your chuck and remove the waste area next to the foot



8 Use a square-ended scraper instead of a bowl gouge to finish the clean-up

diameter on a faceplate, true it up and cut a recess in it to fit your chuck, **photo 3**. Then drill a small hole in the very centre using a Jacobs chuck in the tailstock, **photo 4**.

Remove the plywood disc from the faceplate and insert a screw in the centre hole. Place the tip of the screw on the centre of the blank to locate the plywood accurately and stick it in place with the glue gun, **photo 5**. Allow the glue to set and mount the blank in your chuck on the lathe.

A warning or two

When rectangular pieces like this are rotating on the lathe, it's sometimes difficult to see the extremities, so I like to mark my toolrest with a piece of masking tape where the corners of the rectangle will pass it; you can see this in **photo 9**. Remember that if you move the toolrest while you're doing the turning, you will also need to reposition the masking tape.

The other warning I should give when turning these type of pieces is to keep the whole of your leading hand, including your fingers, behind the toolrest. I know some turners who like to wrap their fingers over the toolrest when holding the tool. *Don't do this*. If you do, sooner or later you 'll get a very nasty rap on the fingers as the wood comes round and hits them.

Making a start

True up the bottom of the blank and mark a line where the 'wings' of your board will start. I chose mine to be about 25mm in from the solid wood as the blank rotates. I also marked an area for a raised ring that will become the foot of the board, **photo 6**.

Next, cut a recess for your chuck and remove the waste wood between the raised ring and the recess using a bowl gouge, **photo 7**. The base can then be cleaned up using a square-ended scraper, **photo 8**. Remember to use the scraper with the handle held slightly higher than the cutting edge – the opposite to the bowl gouge technique. You should aim to get fine shavings with the scraper; if you're only getting dust, then you need to sharpen the tool.

Creating the wings

I then worked on the wings of the piece using a fingernail profile bowl gouge. This time keep the handle well down, **photo 9**, and try not to push into the wood. You should aim to put downward pressure on the toolrest and lightly caress the wood with the cutting edge. **Photo 10** shows the same cut from a different angle. Note that the handle is held very low, the tool is almost right over on its side and the shaving is

coming off just below the tip of the tool. The bevel is very lightly caressing the wood behind the cut.

Once you've removed most of the wood with the bowl gouge, you can clean up the surface if necessary with the square-ended scraper, **photo 11**. You'll see that my stance is upright – less stress on my spine – and I'm holding the tool at the junction of the blade and the handle. The rest of the handle is tucked under my forearm to help absorb any pivotal force produced as the tool overhangs the toolrest. My forearm is also tucked into the side of my body. I find this the most stable way to use the scraper.

Cutting curves

When you're happy with the finish on the wings, stop the lathe and mark an arc at their widest point, **photo 12**. Now cut away the waste wood using a coping saw, **photo 13**, working just outside the marked line.

The edges of the wings can now be cleaned up down to the line using a spindle gouge, **photo 14**. Cut in from both sides of the edge to prevent any breakout, **photo 15**. This is a difficult cut because you're cutting wood, then a lot of air, then wood again. There is a considerable amount of ghosting, but if you keep the tool handle low and avoid pushing the blade into the wood, you should achieve a good cut.

Sand the underneath of the board. I like to power-sand pieces like this, especially on the wings. I don't like the idea of the wings coming round and rapping my fingers. Try to keep the pad of the power sander as vertical as possible but avoid contact between the wood and the top of the sanding disc, **photo 16**. By keeping the sander vertical, you avoid rounding over the leading edge of both wings.

Reversing the platter

With the underside complete, you can break the glue joint. I find a hot air gun useful for softening the glue to help the separation. Reverse the piece onto the recess on the base and clean up the top surface. This time I used a push cut, starting at the edge of the wing and cutting towards the centre. I dished this cut slightly so as to leave a raised area about 180mm in diameter in the centre. This area is obviously where the carving of the joint is going to be done, and I wanted it to be slightly higher than the rest of the board.

The other reason for sloping the wings inward slightly is to help any juices that accumulate on the wings to run into the gravy moat. This will be cut next. Mark the position of the moat, **photo 17** – note the raised area in the middle – and make the



9 Keep the handle of the gouge right down when you're cutting the wings



10 The view from another angle shows where the shaving should come off the tool



11 Note the position of the handle under my forearm in this alternative shot of the scraper



12 Stop the lathe and mark an arc on the extremities of the wings



13 Remove the waste using a coping saw, cutting almost down to the line



14 Take gentle cuts using a spindle gouge on its side to clean up the edge



15 Cut in from both sides of the edges of the wings to avoid causing any breakout



16 When power sanding, keep the sanding pad as vertical as possible



17 Mark the position of the moat; note the raised area left in the middle of the platter



18 Work from both edges, as if you were cutting a cove on some spindle work



19 Use a modified parting tool to make a cut at each side of the rings



20 Use a spindle gouge to remove the area of waste wood from between the rings



21 Mark out the equidistant positions of the notches using the lathe's indexing system



22 Remove the board from the chuck and cut all the notches carefully with a chisel



23 Power-sand the wings and then hand-sand the rest of the piece. Note my hand grip



24 Finish by applying a couple of coats of liquid paraffin or a food-safe finish

cuts from both edges, as if you were cutting a cove on some spindle work, **photo 18**.

Cutting the rings

Mark the position of the rings next and make a cut either side of the marks. I used a modified parting tool to do this. I simply ground an old parting tool's cutting edge at an angle to make a small skew. This enabled me to make these cuts at an angle so that the rings were tapered, becoming wider at their base, **photo 19**.

The long point of the modified parting tool cuts down the side of the taper and leaves a much cleaner cut than a normal plunge cut with a standard parting tool.

Now use a spindle gouge or a square-ended scraper to remove the waste wood from between the rings, **photo 20**. I also made this area of the board slope gently towards the moat.

To allow the meat juices to run into the moat, the rings need to have gaps cut into them. I used the lathe's indexing system to mark the location of these notches evenly, **photo 21**. Remove the board from the chuck and use a sharp carpenter's chisel to cut the notches, **photo 22**.

Finishing the platter

All that's required now is to give the platter a final sanding on the lathe and apply the finish. I power-sanded the wings but hand-sanded the rest of the piece. Note in **photo 23** that I'm supporting my right wrist with my left hand. Both my elbows are tucked into my sides. This method of hand sanding is ideal and helps prevent putting any strain of the sanding hand. This is important if, like me, your hands and wrist aren't as strong as they used to be. It also keeps my hand safely clear of the wings as they spin round.

The finish I use on all culinary items is liquid paraffin; alternatively you could apply a good food-safe finish such as Chestnut or a cooking oil such as sunflower or rapeseed. Brush copious amounts onto the wood, **photo 24**, and let it soak in. A couple of coats will normally do to start with. You can then give it regular refresher coats every two or three months.

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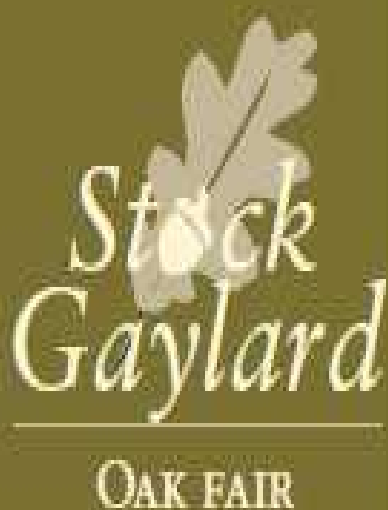
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BY ALAN HOLTHAM

Turning for beginners 2: THE TOOLS

If you're a confused newcomer to woodturning, the sheer variety and cost of the necessary tools may all seem a little off-putting, particularly if you've shelled out most of your budget on the lathe itself. However, don't let this dishearten you. As with a lot of hobbies, woodturning can be as simple or complicated as you want to make it, and you can actually turn quite advanced work with no more than a basic toolkit

Five or six well chosen tools are all you need to get started. The others can come later as you develop your own turning technique, and find out what you need for yourself. In fact, it is probably a positive advantage to keep it really simple in the early stages. You'll soon learn that there's no strictly right or wrong way to make a cut. As long as you're cutting the wood as cleanly as possible, and getting a good finish and the shape you require, it doesn't really matter which tool you use.

First principles

Always remember that turning techniques are highly individual, and what suits one person may not suit another. I can, however, recommend a very basic set of tools that are essential, no matter what technique you later develop. From then on you are theoretically on your own, although there is a huge resource of help out there in the form of books, videos, magazine articles, and even demonstrations at woodworking



Stay with well-recognised brands when you're buying woodturning tools



2

A wide range of different handle styles is available



3

Carbon steel blades will soon start to show signs of wear

shows and clubs. Watch and listen to the way other people work, and then adapt their style and technique to suit yourself.

Pay for quality

There are several key players amongst the turning tool manufacturers, and while they all sing the individual praises of their tools, I think there is probably very little to choose between them, provided you stay with well-recognised makes, **photo 1**. Keep away from unbranded 'market-stall' tools that are inevitably poorly made from soft carbon steel. You will always get what you pay for in the world of tools, and as the edge-holding ability is more critical on a turning tool than any other, you are far better investing in fewer tools of better quality than buying lots of cheap ones.



4

Boxed sets are often an economical way to start your tool collection

In fact, because the various manufacturers all produce slightly different tool profiles, only one of which may be suited to your particular technique, you will probably end up with tools from a variety of sources. It is sometimes difficult to stay loyal to one brand, even if you want to.

Handle with care

The only significant difference between leading makes is in the handles, which often vary tremendously in style, **photo 2**. This variation in shape may not appear important at first, but as you have to hold the tool for lengthy periods of time it is essential to find a design that is comfortable for you. Once again, experience tells here and you'll soon recognise the style and feel that suits your technique. If you want



5

Avoid buying specialized tools such as these until you know that you'll need them

bespoke handles, some manufacturers supply unhandled tools to allow you to turn and fit your own.

Blade parade

As well as a vast selection of shapes and sizes of the tool, they are also made in a variety of different types of steel. However, the choice here is much easier. High-speed steel (HSS), with its superior edge-holding qualities, has virtually taken over – mainly because it is very difficult to damage by overheating during sharpening. The old carbon steel tools, while superior in the quality of edge they will take, are very easily 'blued' and damaged by heavy-handed grinding, and their edge will only last a very short time, particularly if you start turning some of the more abrasive exotic



6 There are a few tools you need to start with – see **The five essentials** below



7 Roughing gouges come in a wide range of different sizes



8 A 3/4in deep-fluted roughing gouge is the most useful size



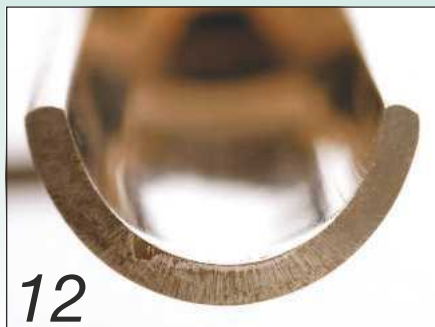
9 Parting tools form shoulders and separate finished work on the lathe



10 Some parting tools have a diamond-shaped cross-section



11 A parallel-section 1/8in parting tool is a good starter



12 Gouges used to be forged by hand from flat bar steel



13 Most gouges are now machine-ground from a solid round bar



14 Your first spindle gouge should be the 3/8in size

hardwoods, **photo 3**. New materials like powder technology steel, cobalt coatings and tungsten carbide have all found niche markets among turners, but HSS remains the most popular.

Single or boxed

The other dilemma you may face is whether to buy tools individually or in boxed sets assembled by the manufacturer. Many years ago sets were often a poor buy, as they always seemed to contain at least one tool that was totally useless. Things have changed nowadays, however, and most manufacturers now put together sensible sets containing a range of useful tools. Their attractive price means that this may be a very economical way to start your tool collection, **photo 4**.

When you're looking through the racks of tools at your local dealer, don't let yourself be sidetracked into buying any of the specialised tools that have been developed for unique applications, **photo 5**. These are for buying when you need them, or more importantly, when you understand how to use them. Before you get to that stage, you will first have to master the basics.

The five essentials

You'll quickly realise that every woodturner has his or her own ideas about what constitutes a basic kit of tools. There is, however, almost universal acceptance of the five essentials, which are a roughing gouge, a parting tool, a 3/8in spindle gouge, a skew chisel and a bowl gouge. Some sort of scraper, probably a 3/4in or 1in round-

nosed version, should be your next purchase, **photo 6**.

Roughing gouges come in many sizes, **photo 7**, from the massive 1 1/2in versions for really heavy spindle work, down to a tiny version for miniature turning. The curvature of the gouge may also vary, but it's well recognised that a 3/4in deep-fluted gouge is most useful, **photo 8**.

Parting tools are the next essential, being used for cutting right through or forming shoulders, **photo 9**. They vary in width from 1/16in to 1/4in, and the more elaborate versions may have a flute ground into one edge, or a diamond cross-section, **photo 10**. For starters, a parallel section 1/8in parting tool will do all your parting work with a minimum of waste, **photo 11**.

Spindle gouges not only vary in size; there



15

Oval skew chisels slide easily along the tool rest



16

Choose a $\frac{3}{4}$ in or 1in skew chisel to begin with



17

The bowl gouge is more U-shaped than the spindle gouge



18

A $\frac{3}{8}$ in bowl gouge is a useful size to choose for your first tool



19

Scrapers are viewed with contempt by some woodturners

are two distinct manufacturing methods used to produce them. Until relatively recently, gouges were always forged by hand from a flat bar, to form uniformly thick tools characterized by a tang that fits into the handle, **photo 12**. The advent of HSS has meant that a lot of tools are now ground from solid bar, which is a much quicker and cheaper process. These round bar tools are quite satisfactory and, in fact, most spindle gouges are now of this section, **photo 13**. Popular sizes are $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ in, and you will eventually need one of each, but start with the $\frac{3}{8}$ in size for now, **photo 14**.

Skew chisels have also had something of a modern update. The traditional flat skew chisel, so feared by most beginners because of its undeserved reputation for digging in, now has more a more user-friendly brother in the form of the oval skew, which has a curved profile and rounded edges that slide much more easily along the tool rest, **photo 15**. They all work in the same way, and size is not really so important. My preference would be for a $\frac{3}{4}$ in or 1in skew, **photo 16**.

Bowl gouges are similar to spindle gouges in that they too are ground from round section bar. However, in this case the internal profile is different and is much more U-shaped than that of a spindle gouge, **photo 17**. Bowl gouges are also much longer and stronger than spindle gouges to withstand the greater forces generated



20

However, most will give acceptable results if they're used properly



21 A standard double-ended grinder will do most of your sharpening work



22 The narrow wheels on budget grinders can make the tool difficult to control



23 White grinding wheels are best for sharpening HSS tool blades



24 Clean your grinding wheels periodically with a dressing stick



25 Many professional turners prefer to grind their tools freehand



26 A jig such as this helps amateur turners to achieve professional-quality results

during bowl turning. Like the spindle gouges, a $\frac{3}{8}$ in version is the most useful size to start with, **photo 18**.

Scrapers are always looked upon with some contempt by professional turners, **photo 19**. This is mainly because although they're very simple to use, they have been misused over the years either to perform either the wrong function or to work on unsuitable timbers, resulting in torn out or massively bruised fibres that are almost impossible to finish. However, scrapers do have a place in your tool kit, and provided they are used properly, the results are quite acceptable, **photo 20**.

Sharpening your tools

Of course, any cutting tool has to be sharp for it to perform properly, and woodturning tools will require more sharpening than any others. Imagine how much wood is passing over the edge when the timber is revolving on the lathe at 2000rpm. It has to stand up to miles and miles of continuous use. A grinder of some sort is therefore essential, and most woodturners use a standard double-ended version for the majority of their sharpening, **photo 21**.

The good news is that nowadays you don't need to spend a fortune to get a very serviceable machine. You need one with wheels of at least 6in in diameter, and as wide as possible. This is where the cheap machines differ from the more expensive

ones. Budget grinders often have very narrow wheels that make the grinding process a bit trickier to control, **photo 22**.

Better quality grinders will have much wider wheels, and the composition of the wheel may also be better. White wheels are renowned as being more suitable for sharpening HSS tools, **photo 23**.

Good practice

As you'll have to use the grinder regularly, it's important to locate it near the lathe, or you'll spend a lot of time wandering around the workshop. However, just having a convenient location isn't the end of the story. For it to work effectively, the wheels must be cleaned regularly by 'dressing' them. For this you need a dressing stick. Holding this against the revolving wheel cleans off all the impregnated metal, and exposes a fresh surface that will grind more quickly and without overheating, **photo 24**. You can't use a grindstone without a dressing tool, so make sure you buy one with the grinder.

Sharp advice

Unlike most other wood-cutting tools, it is unnecessary to hone woodturning tools. The edge formed by a fine grinder is sharp enough for most purposes and, in fact, you often do more damage to the edge trying to sharpen it further with an oilstone. Certain tools like the skew chisel may benefit from a

little light honing with a fine slipstone, but don't overdo this, and be prepared to regrind them regularly.

Many professional turners will sharpen their tools freehand on the grinder, **photo 25**, and whilst this may look simple, it will have taken them some years to perfect their technique. It's actually quite simple once you get the hang of it, but do your practising on some old tools first!

Handy jigs

If you're still struggling with sharpening, there are all sorts of jigs available to help you get a professional-looking grind, **photo 26**. Some of these are easier to operate than others, so try to arrange for a demonstration of a particular jig before you buy it. Many of them are very fiddly to operate and take ages to set up, which means you end up not bothering to use them, and therefore defeat the purpose.

There are, however, some jigs that are so simple to operate that even the seasoned professionals find them useful – particularly with the more involved grinding profiles required on some of the latest tools, such as the Ellsworth gouge profile.

NEXT MONTH

Alan introduces the different types of chuck, and explains how to set up and use each one in detail

Diamonds are forever

Trend are excited to announce a very special new product range which will leave Trade professionals tools super sharp and back to their best!

The Diamond Cross Sharpening range is now available from Trend and is packed with features & benefits:

- Use to sharpen chisels & plane irons
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trend
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The range includes:
Credit Card Stone, Router Cutter Stone, 5 inch File, Twin Handle File, 8 Inch Workshop Stone and bench holder.

Trend's Head of Marketing, Luke Hulley adds:

"The Trend Diamond cross range is a fantastic piece of kit. It was great timing to launch this product as we celebrate our 60th Anniversary at Trend. What makes this range so exciting is that the Diamond Cross Technology provides the perfect balance between diamond and recess, maximizing abrasion rates and clearance of debris"

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

For more information contact:



Luke Hulley, Head of Marketing, Trend Machinery & Cutting Tools Ltd.,
Odhams Trading Estate, St Albans Road, Watford WD24 7TR
Tel: 01923 249911 • Fax: 01923 236879 • Email: hulleyl@trendm.co.uk

How fast can you scribe?

Trend is excited to announce a very special new product, which will change the way you scribe forever!

The Trend Scribmaster Pro skirting board scribing jig for use with a router is now available and is packed with features and benefits:

- Pre-assembled, ready to go
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- Scribes profiles into kitchen plinth
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- Even scribes warped boards accurately
- Quick mounts onto mitre saw bench*



trend
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Trend's Head of Marketing, Luke Hulley adds:

"The Trend Scribmaster Pro is a fantastic piece of kit and the feedback from demonstrating this at recent shows has been very positive. People have been blown away on how quick and simple it is. Time is money and with The Trend Scribmaster Pro you can save time on scribing without compromising on the quality of your cuts".

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

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These router templates from Trend enable a range of top-quality lettering to be produced easily and accurately. They're designed for use with any plunge router, and are particularly suitable for creating house names and numbers

Trend router templates



The letter templates measure 396 x 110mm, while the number templates are a little shorter at 360mm; they're all 5mm thick. All the characters are about 57mm high. The letters produced are all capitals.

Trend can supply a 13mm guidebush which must be fitted to the router, and an 8mm straight cutter. You can use a V cutter or a cove cutter if you want to vary the profile of the characters. A Unibase may have to be fitted for certain router makes and models.

Lining things up

To get the characters in the same line, you need to secure a guide to the workpiece for the templates as they are moved from side to side. This guide needs to be slightly thinner than the thickness of the templates.

The spacing of the lettering needs care, as allocating an equal space for all the letters will result in a poor layout. Generally, a space of 10 to 12mm is about right, but when letters such as T (wider at the top) or L (wider at the base) are next to one another, then they need to be closer together.

To be on the safe side, it is wise to have a trial run on scrap mdf with the proposed layout before cutting the characters for real.

Characters with cutouts

While most of the letters and numbers can be formed with a single positioning of the template, letters such as Q and R and the numbers 6, 8 and 9 have to be formed in two stages by repositioning the template. To ensure that the two cuts are in exact alignment, there are small incised marks near the upper edge of the templates. When making the first cut, draw a mark on the guide; when the template is moved, the second cut is then lined up with the mark.

With letters and numbers which have their centres completely cut round in the templates, the router must be controlled with the guide bush held firmly against the template to prevent breakout of the central portion.

Colouring in

I've used these templates successfully several times recently, and have painted the recesses with various colours including black, red, and gold. It's virtually impossible to confine the paint to the recesses without any overspill onto the surface of the wood. However, the surface can be sanded afterwards to remove excess paint. **GW**

THE RANGE

Letter templates (4)	£48.95
Number templates (2)	£24.41
Cutter & guidebush set	£17.17

VERDICT

These templates offer the user a quick and simple way of achieving a professional standard of signwriting

PROS ■ Easy to set up and use
■ Durable and easy to clean

CONS ■ Good results need practice
■ Quite expensive

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

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



Trend can supply this optional guide bush and cutter set for £17.17



The guide bush and cutter are mounted in the router baseplate as shown



The templates sit between guide battens cramped to the workpiece as the cuts are made



The template is moved along the guides to cut successive letter or number shapes

If you're looking for a simple but reliable conventional plunge router with a reasonable price tag for the occasional woodworking task, you may be interested in considering this Bosch model

Bosch POF1200AE router

This router's powerful motor gives variable speeds up to 28,000rpm; the speed is selected by means of a neatly recessed calibrated knob near the top of the router body. It comes with three collets to take cutters with shaft sizes of 6mm, 1/4in (6.35mm) and 8mm diameter. One 8mm diameter twin-flute HSS cutter is also supplied, along with a 17mm template guide.

Additional accessories are available for this router, including a micro adjustable side fence, different sizes of bushings from 13 to 30mm and longer guide bars.

Standard features

The housing is made of die-cast aluminium and high impact plastic. The soft-grip handles are set at an angle to give a well-balanced, comfortable and positive grip. The controls are either on the handle or easily accessible.

The red lever on the side of the router body locks the spindle shaft. With the shaft locked, one spanner is all that's needed to secure and release the cutter from the collet. Always unplug

the machine for safety whenever you're changing collets and cutters. The bushing fits into the base with a bayonet fitting; no screws are necessary to install it.

The machine has a calibrated depth stop rod which comes into contact with an rotating adjustable three-position turret which can

be pre-set to give regularly-used cutting depths. The small red lever in front of the left handle locks the machine in plunge mode.

The side fence slides into the baseplate. The guide pin supplied to cut circles and other shapes fits into the side fence mechanism and is tightened with a wing nut.

Safety first

A clear plastic safety screen protects the operator from the cutter. It can be folded down or removed completely when changing cutters.

A clear plastic dust extractor shroud is secured to the upper part of the base plate by means

£69.96



The red lever on the side of the router body locks the spindle shaft



One spanner is all that is needed to secure and release the cutter



The guide bush fits into the base with a clever bayonet fitting; screws aren't needed



The guide pin fits into the side fence and is tightened in place with a wing nut



Cutting a test circle out in 18mm thick melamine-faced chipboard needed several passes but left a very clean cut

of two knurled screws. An adapter is supplied to allow connection of a workshop extractor to the spigot on the shroud.

Using the router

This machine will undertake most standard routing tasks such as cutting grooves and rebating, making straight cuts with ease. The guide pin makes it easy to cut circles; I cut one out in 18mm thick melamine-faced chipboard, taking several shallow cuts with a TCT cutter, and the results were first-rate. Finally, I fitted the bearing follower to cut a test groove on a curved edge; again, perfect.

Always wear eye protection, a dust mask and ear defenders when you're using a router. They're noisy machines, and also produce a lot of fine wood dust.

Summing up

Bosch is a well-known worldwide brand with tried and tested products suitable for many home tasks. There are many more powerful and sophisticated routers on the market if more rigorous work is planned (and these are regularly tested in this magazine) but they are consequently much more expensive.

If, like me, you're only an occasional router user and don't want to spend too much money, then the Bosch POF1200AE fits the bill and I'm well satisfied with the one I purchased recently. *IW*

SPECIFICATION

MOTOR	1200W
NO-LOAD SPEED	11,000 to 28,000rpm
MAX PLUNGE DEPTH	55mm
COLLETS SUPPLIED	6 & 8mm, 1/4in
WEIGHT	3.4kg
ACCESSORIES 8mm cutter, side fence, 17mm template guide, bearing follower, centring pin, spanner, dust extraction adapter	

VERDICT

This is a very good small router for light-duty applications.

PROS

- Powerful and versatile
- Well priced
- Plenty of accessories supplied

CONS

- Some sharp metal edges needed filing

VALUE FOR MONEY
PERFORMANCE



FURTHER INFORMATION

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

The follower is used to cut a test groove on a curved edge, and does so easily and accurately



A clear plastic dust extractor shroud is fixed to the upper part of the router baseplate



The calibrated depth stop rod bears down on a standard three-position turret



This machine will undertake most standard routing tasks with ease

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There's a wide range of wood finishes currently on the market, but most are straightforward oils or varnishes. This product works in a slightly different way

Craft Coat wood finish

£14.99
(170ml)



The product is easy to apply to pen barrels on the lathe as a friction coating

Craft Coat is an American import; hence the imperial pack sizes. It's described as a waterborne linseed oil modified wood finish that self-crosslinks when exposed to oxygen to develop an extremely durable film. It's formulated to ensure maximum protection on any type of wood, especially hard-to-coat dense and oily exotic hardwoods. It doesn't have a solvent base, so it dries very quickly and can be sanded after 1½ to 2 hours. It can also be friction-applied while turning, which allows you to apply multiple coats with as little as 1 minute of drying time between coats.

Perfect for pens

Craft Coat is apparently popular with pen turners in the USA, so this was my first test. The finish is applied directly to bare wood, which should be dry and free of dust, wax, grease, oil and polish. After shaking the container, I squeezed the liquid onto a cloth and applied it to the rotating pen barrel.

The finish was easy to apply. There were no toxic or volatile fumes and only a very slight smell of linseed oil, which was not unpleasant. I was able to apply a further coat very quickly and the results were perfectly satisfactory.

The product claims to be ideal for exotic woods which can be difficult to finish. I tried snakewood, zebrano, red coolibah (an Australian eucalyptus) and elm burr pen blanks. The results differed from wood to wood, as you might expect. For instance,

the zebrano retained a fairly matt appearance, the elm a lustre and the snakewood quite a high gloss. I went on to turn and finish a boxwood and a tulipwood lace bobbin.

Not just for turners

I also tested Craft Coat on several small samples of mahogany and sycamore, applying the finish with a n artist's brush. The finish dries hard and should offer good protection against moisture, dirt and abrasion. It's a great advantage to be able to wash out brushes and cloths in soapy water after use. The product can also be sprayed on, in which case it would be wise to wear a mask.

Summing up

At first I considered the price to be rather high, as you have to add on the cost of postage (£3.70 for the size I tested). However, you use only a small amount of the product at a time. If turning wooden pens is your hobby, I think it would prove quite economical and you may find the price acceptable. **IW**

THE CRAFT COAT RANGE

2fl oz (57ml)	£8.99
6fl oz (170ml)	£14.99
1 pint (568ml)	£24.99
1 quart (1.14 litre)	£34.99
1 gallon (4.54 litres)	£89.99

Carriage is extra, and depends on the size

VERDICT

PROS ■ Solvent-free
■ Hard and durable finish
■ Brushes washable in water

CONS ■ Rather pricey

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

- The Turners Workshop
- 07870 587615
- www.theturnersworkshop.co.uk



It can also be applied with a brush to coat small wooden items



As it's quite expensive, it's best used only for small-scale pieces

This small dual-purpose sander is aimed particularly at the toy and model maker, but at the same time would find a place in any workshop. Although keenly priced, it's nevertheless very solidly built

Scheppach BD7500 belt & disc sander

£85



The base of this machine is cast iron, with the two alloy tables. It's powered by an induction motor, making it run very quietly. Its compact size means it's also quite light, and thus can be readily stored out of the way when it's not in use.

The disc sander

The disc sanding table is located onto the machine body by a couple of pins which prevent it from coming into contact with the disc, and is then locked in position with a knob at the front and rear. Slackening these enables the table to tilt by up to 45°, with a small protractor scale indicating the angle of tilt. The table doesn't have an automatic return stop to the horizontal position, and while the protractor has a zero mark, it's better to use a try square to check the 90° angle between the table and the disc. The table is grooved to take the small mitre guide.

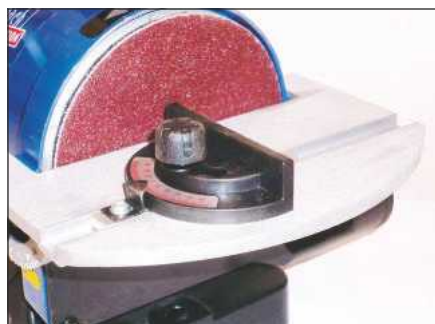
The lower half of the disc is shrouded with a plastic hood to control the dust generated, with an outlet at the rear. This can be connected to a vacuum hose, as a dust bag is not supplied. The abrasive discs are held in place by the Velcro system.

The belt sander

The belt part of this sander is on the left, with provision for tilting the table.

This too will tilt up to 45°, but there is no protractor scale this time to indicate the setting. A good size ratchet tightening lever locks the table very firmly as required. There's an adjustable stop on the underside of the table to ensure that it can readily be returned to the horizontal after being tilted.

There's a fixed vertical support to the rear of the belt, to prevent it from flexing as it sands. There's a plastic guard to the whole of the rear section of the belt; this incorporates the dust outlet.



The tiltable disc sanding table is fitted with a small but useful mitre fence



The disc guard below the table features a 45mm diameter dust outlet



The sanding disc is ideal for smoothing a convex edge after bandsawing

Using the disc sander

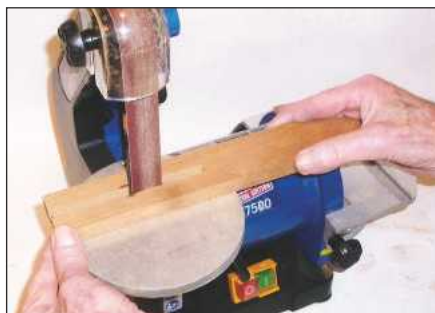
A favourite use for a disc sander is smoothing a convex edge after bandsawing off the waste. This was my first use of the BD 7500, and although both the table and the disc are smaller than on my own sander, I had no difficulty in producing a smooth edge.

Next I brought the mitre fence into use, first for trimming an end at 90°, then for sanding a 45° mitre and other angles. There were no problems here, so long as the wood is not too long for the table to offer good support.

My final test with the disc sander was with the table set at an angle. I tried forming a compound surface at the end of the wood, that is, with the table set at an angle other than 90°, and using the mitre fence. It worked perfectly.

Using the belt sander

While the belt sanding part of the machine can be used for general trimming purposes, it has a particular use when there is a cut-out at the edge of the wood, or even a narrow slot. Here, the narrow belt proves ideal.



The narrow belt is ideal for jobs such as smoothing a long slot in a piece of wood

The belt can be used for freehand shaping and smoothing too. Remember that for such work the wood must always be held pointing downwards.

Summing up

Although this sander is small, it operates just as

efficiently as a machine two or three times its size. It's the tables which are small, and these limit the machine to tackling correspondingly small and light workpieces. It has all the adjustments needed for everyday operations, with the two dust outlets performing adequately. You will of course have to change the dust hose from one side of the machine to the other.

Apart from its size, nothing has been skimped on the materials used; it's well designed and solidly built to the usual high standards of this German company. Best described as a little gem, it tackles plastics and non-ferrous metals as well as wood. **GW**

SPECIFICATION

MOTOR	250W
DISC SPEED	2850rpm
DISC DIAMETER	150mm
DISC TABLE SIZE	184 x 128mm
BELT SPEED	820m/min
BELT DIMENSIONS	762 x 25.4mm
BELT TABLE SIZE	150mm diameter
BELT TABLE THROAT	110mm
TABLE TILT	0 to 45°
DUST OUTLET DIAMETER	45mm
WEIGHT	7.2kg

VERDICT

This little sander tackles a variety of small-scale jobs with gusto, and performs very well.

PROS ■ Compact in size, light in weight
■ Accurate tilting tables
■ Good guarding and dust extraction

CONS ■ No automatic zero reset on disc table

VALUE FOR MONEY
PERFORMANCE



FURTHER INFORMATION

- NMA (Agencies)
- 01484 400488
- www.nmtools.co.uk

It will tackle metal too, such as this brass hinge having its corners rounded to fit snugly within a routed hinge recess



You need to hold the work firmly against the fence set when trimming mitres



The same point applies when trimming an angled end with the table tilted



The fixed vertical support behind the belt prevents it from flexing in use

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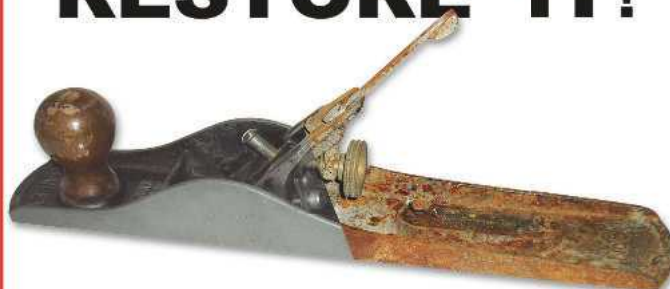
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Axminster AWWSL lathe, with new motor and speed control unit fitted; £120. Record Power DML24 lathe; £50.
07775 510724 (Essex)



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

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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



HELP AND ADVICE

Dear Mr Cass

As a regular reader of your magazine, please allow me to suggest two areas that you might consider covering in future.

Firstly, CAD. Many of the articles written by your contributors refer to laying out plans on CAD. Full-feature packages such as Autocad, for example, involve a steep learning curve, are expensive and very much overkill for the odd bedroom cabinet. CAD is a bit of a minefield for the unwary, and a review of packages likely to suit the amateur woodworker would be very useful. Please also remember we don't all have PCs; I use a Mac, as do many others these days.

Secondly, how to find, choose and buy good-quality timber, particularly with regard to prices and any pitfalls for the unwary. I read articles in which authors choose cherry, sycamore and so on. Sadly, in the area where I live, about all I can find locally is mdf and softwood... and that's generally not much cop! I hope you find my comments constructive.

Mike Matthews, Sandwich, Kent

Thanks for your email, Mike, and the sensible comments therein. I agree entirely with you about most CAD programs. As well as being very expensive, they require hours of dedicated study to get the best from them. My own personal favourite is SketchUp, an intuitive piece of software which is not only free from Google, but can also be run on a Mac.

As to timber, well, that's another story, and something I will look into over the next week or two on your behalf – and for the benefit of other readers too.

Mark

SHARING A ROOM

Hi Mark

I'm writing after reading your article about keeping a dog in a kennel. I built this kennel for our pet labrador Cara. It's built with 4 x 2s, clad with shiplap boards, and has fully insulated walls, floor and roof to give her shelter during the tempestuous Irish weather we often have!

A porch in the front gives her – and our new Yorkshire terrier Bella, who joined the clan after it was built – a sheltered area without having to be inside the kennel, as both like to know what's happening about the house.

Gerald Clancy, Co Laois, Ireland



Thanks for your letter, Gerald, and that great photo too. I have to say that Cara and Bella look very comfortable in the porch of their cosy home, and I love the welcome mat!

Mark

DESIGNER HOMES

Mark

I thought I'd send you a photo of a kennel I made, although this one is for my cat. As well as this, I made a hedgehog house and a bird table to match. Both buildings feature insulated walls and roofs. The walls are made from two 9mm plywood boards which sandwich 9mm thick polystyrene tiles.

The cat kennel has a clip-in back panel to give access for cleaning, although the roof also lifts off. The hedgehog house roof is on hinges for easy access, and also has gaps under the eaves for ventilation. Surprisingly, the hedgehog house had a resident two days after being put in the garden.

Steve Kemp



Fantastic Steve! That cat kennel is an absolute palace! And three cheers for the birds and hedgehogs too. The wildlife in your corner of the world probably can't believe its luck! Good on you

Mark

Here at *The Woodworker* we're always pleased to see photos of your work, and we know everyone else is as well! So send 'em in now and see if you can make the cut.

Oil, water and a craftsman's spirit

Here's a great advert from the September 1934 issue of *The Woodworker*, extolling the virtues of our good craft. It promotes a product as well as a profession

The studious expression of face, the smart and tidy image of a man at one with his work, skillfully wielding some kind of high-angle cleaning-up plane (does any reader recognize this tool?), with sleeves rolled up and a job to do: we can nearly all relate to one or all of these things. Chuck in the words 'craftsmen only' and you've got everyone's attention: mine, certainly.

The finish matters

Staining (and finishing generally) is often seen as something of a minefield – a necessary chore, and simply the last thing to be done before the job is complete. Not so. Casual work at this vital point can really mar an otherwise decent project. With the knowledge that this is a vulnerable time for a woodworker in mind, giving the impression that here is a product which will reduce the risk of failure in 'one sweep of the brush', S C Johnson & Son would have improved their UK sales no end.

Oil or water

The advert advises that 'no water' is involved in their wood dyes, only oil and spirit. Certainly a water-based product is rarely my stain of first choice, but increasingly it's the most common option on shelves these days as manufacturers conform to 'safe and healthy' standards.

Sadly, like so many other products I've favoured, oil stain seems to be becoming a thing of the past. This surprises me as I've found them to be by far the easiest type to

apply, with almost guaranteed success. True, they take longer to dry than the others, but hey, what's the hurry?

A light touch

Spirit stains are the trickiest, and although the colours seem clearer somehow, it's still very hard at times to avoid unwanted blotchiness. A light touch is required, but only after assiduous cleaning up to the finest grade of abrasive paper you have. I occasionally use a pre-stain, a clear solution which seals those especially absorbent areas of grain and prevents them sucking up more stain than they ought to.

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Market forces

The market for wood dyes or stains was pretty competitive back in the 1930s, as nearly every homeowner was involved in making their own stuff. I expect most of us have never seen the Johnson's brand, although this could be because they decided to specialize in waxes and cleaning products, going on to become the global concern that they are today.

Mark

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

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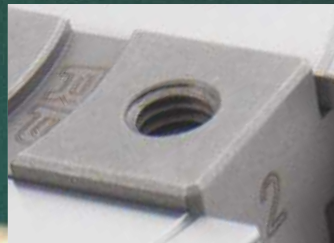
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