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The Woodworker

Autumn 2016

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& Woodturner

WHERE THERE'S A SWILL...

OWEN JONES ON KEEPING TRADITIONAL CRAFTS ALIVE

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WORKSHOP ESSENTIALS PRIZE BUNDLES

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- Machining wide panels
- The art of wainscoting
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The Editor proudly presents the latest project to leave the workshop

Most of us can remember the last thing we made, but does everyone remember their first woodworking project? I never completed mine, an overly ambitious attempt to build a working cuckoo clock in my weekly junior school lesson, but it remains in my memory as a collection of plywood pieces fully charged with excitement and potential. For the lucky ones – and I suspect that's the vast majority of the readers of this magazine – this is the feeling that drives every new project and sustains an existing one, and is something that will never go away.

There's something about our craft that not only gives us enormous pleasure right from the start of a job, but somehow enables us to express ourselves and to feel the satisfaction of triumphing over a specific set of – often difficult – circumstances as things progress. The true woodworker will possess an indomitable spirit, a pragmatic way of looking at things and be reluctant to walk away when the going gets tough.

It's true that there may be times when a particular job has not gone as well as intended, and maybe the scrap pile or fireplace has seen a brief flurry of action again, but the true woodworkers among us will take a deep breath, have a cup of tea or a good night's sleep, and make a fresh start with a clear mind and a renewed sense of purpose. At least we now have the knowledge of what not to do, and this is a very valuable commodity, even if it's a hard-earned and sometimes expensive one.

When it comes to materials, I'm not going to suggest doubling your timber purchase list just in case something goes wrong; not only is this a bit on the negative side but also doubly tough on the wallet. There's no harm, however, in getting a bit extra in for practice purposes and to enable a swift replacement of the occasional component if required, especially if it has to be machined to a set size first.

All things considered, through the bad and the good, I'm very glad to be a part of this extended woodworking family, and strongly suspect that the rest of its members are too, wherever in the world your bench might be.

mark

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



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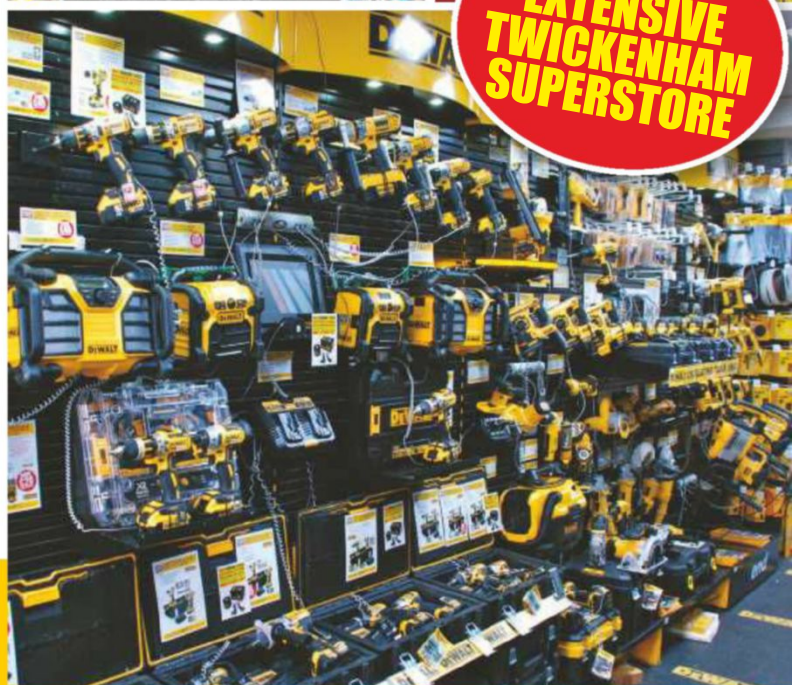


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In brief...

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Forget January, autumn is traditionally the time for a new start. Just think about it: the schools go back, evening classes are signed up for, and general preparations for the winter months ahead are begun. Here at *The Woodworker* we like to think that we can make a small contribution to the work, even if it's just something of an encouraging nature.

When it comes to preparations and getting the place in order, *The Woodworker* workshop is still some distance away from being the clean and efficient environment that most of us dream of. The good news is that I've finished the new benching, fitted extra vices and am in the process of redistributing acquired clutter – some of which I really can't throw away as I just know it will come in useful any day soon! – on new shelves and in recycled cupboards.

I've even been up on the roof (a complicated journey but fortunately a safe one – this time!)

to attend to a variety of leaks. It's an undulating flat roof in mastic asphalt, the size of a five-a-side football pitch and dotted about with structural glazing and numerous cracks and fissures. Hopefully my bitumen paint and 15m of flashing will keep the worst of the rainwater out of my place, and any other drier spots in the vicinity will be appreciated by all who pass underneath. Heavy rain is expected before long, and as soon as I perceive a marked improvement (fingers crossed!) I shall clean off the vaulted ceilings and freshen it all up with some new paint. A spot more lighting, an ambient dust extractor/filter and it'll be closer to the pro shop that surely is the target for all of us woodworkers fortunate enough to have a workshop we can call our own. So, my advice is to make a start now, and see what sort of a difference you can make. And if anyone has any interesting workshop-related stories, we'd love to hear them.

Mark



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This new app extends the free Bosch Toolbox app and helps you find the right tool or accessory. All it takes is a simple scan of a Bosch product or accessory packaging using a smartphone, and you have instant access to all available information about the product, including technical details and videos. This is all possible thanks to a new product identification function implemented by Bosch in this form for the first time worldwide. It combines various technologies to ensure that reliable results are obtained. The new app not only recognises the scanned product, it also gives recommendations on which accessories are best suited to which products and allows you to order tools and accessories directly online via the app.

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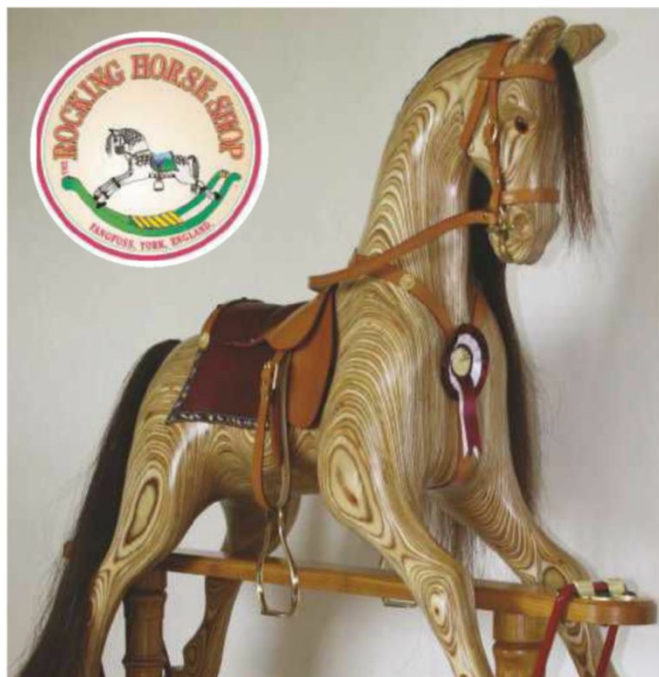
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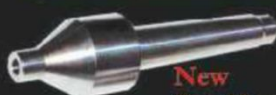
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DEWALT XR FLEXVOLT SYSTEM

MANUFACTURER: DeWalt
D&M GUIDE PRICE: see website

XR FLEXVOLT is a new range of 54V power tools from DeWalt that offer runtime and performance that has never been seen before. For the first time, professional tradesmen can reliably undertake heavy-duty construction applications without the need for mains power.

This innovation means that you can have 54V power across a whole range of tools without the inconvenience of a cable. DeWalt XR FLEXVOLT is the only battery on the market that can switch from 54V to 18V, making it backward-compatible with your existing XR power tools.



The power of the XR FLEXVOLT battery opens up new avenues in cordless, heavy-duty construction power tools, and DeWalt are delivering the new XR FLEXVOLT product range to accompany this innovation, comprised of eight products designed to completely transform the jobsite of tomorrow: a 54V grinder, 54V circular saw, 54V alligator saw, 54V reciprocating saw, 54V table saw and a 54V 216mm mitre saw, followed by a 54V 10in mitre saw and 54V plunge saw in October. These are cordless, heavy-duty construction power tools with all the accuracy, capacity and power of corded.

Take the **XR FLEXVOLT DCS7485 table saw** (above) as just one example, which is **the world's first cordless table saw**. This is a power tool capable of cutting 50m of 19mm OSB from just one charge of a single battery, yet portable enough to be easily moved from room to room, and without the need to search for a power source. This is world-leading performance, from cordless solutions that promise to redefine the very notion of cordless technology.

DML250 CAST-IRON FIVE-SPEED 10IN MINI LATHE

MANUFACTURER: Record Power
D&M GUIDE PRICE: £219.99



The new DML250 is a compact and extremely well built five-speed machine that offers excellent performance and exceptional value for money. The finely ground cast-iron bed, along with the cast-iron headstock, tailstock and toolrest, greatly reduce vibration and provide ample strength for the lathe to cope with heavy-duty work. The capacities of this machine and its overall size make it a perfect choice for the smaller workshop. It is also ideal as a second lathe for regular use on small work and its portability means it can be used at demonstrations and shows.



STANLEY INTELLI TOOLS SMART MEASURE PRO

MANUFACTURER: Stanley
D&M GUIDE PRICE: £134.95



The Stanley Intelli Tools Smart Measure Pro measures distance, area and volume and features a calculator function for instant adding and subtracting of measurements. It has Bluetooth connectivity to sync directly to a phone (not included), tablet or computer and to transfer files in jpeg and pdf format. See the video on our website for more information.



NEW LIGHT

Desperately seeking shed windows, Robin Gates goes skip-diving for old cabinet doors, repairs Victorian leadlights, makes trim from a maple log and tries a Japanese saw

Working in a garden shed improves my view of the world. When the door swings shut and my hands grow busy with tools and timber, worries evaporate like condensation from a window pane and I see things in a new light. Or at least that was the case until I moved into a shed without a single window. I was plunged into gloom.

This shed isn't quite the timber-framed building of a carpenter's dream but as common-or-garden sheds go it isn't a bad one, about 10 years old yet bearing up well to the see-sawing sun and rain of a changing climate. It stands at the sturdier

end of shed construction being of 12mm tongue & grooved timber throughout, floor included – so there isn't that sinking feeling you get from a weary chipboard floor.

The pent roof means headroom must be taken into account when planning what goes where. Although there is 6ft 4in under ceiling beams on the east side this falls to 5ft 7in in the west, so the bench would go under a west window to avoid banging my head.

For now there were no windows, I worked by the light of the open door, in a draughty few square feet, squinting at a pencilled line unsure which side of it I was sawing, and the shed's dark hinterland remained the silky kingdom of countless spiders. Still, it was fun, being stranded there on one occasion during an autumn gale when lightning bolts were fizzing to earth as though Thor had traded his hammer for an arc welder.

But every now and then a gusting north-easterly would grip the open door and fling it hard against the shed as if to say: 'When are you going to do something about windows?'

up in bicycles and a brake lever prodded me where it hurts. With a surge of blood to my sawing arm I decided it was time for action.

I'd been harbouring the notion that ready-made shed windows would be on sale locally and I'd simply have to buy and fit them to the apertures I'd saw, but if they did exist, I couldn't find them. However, what I did find was a display cabinet in a skip outside a charity shop. The cabinet itself was genuine rubbish but the glazed doors had solid wood frames and an applied lead lattice which, as windows, I saw adding a bit of old-world charm to my shed. For a donation I found myself manoeuvring the unwieldy object from skip to car.

Cutting holes in the side of an intact structure feels like a step into the unknown, like meddling with the interior walls of a house: will the ceiling collapse? As I turned the brace and bit to make holes for the pad saw I wondered if I might be about to qualify for a Darwin Award, standing saw in hand with the wreckage of a shed around me. Timidly I joined up the dots with the saw and removed the pieces.

But I needn't have worried; whoever put up this shed didn't skimp on fastenings. With the wood out and the windows up, all seemed as solid as ever. It was rough and



Victorian leadlights undergoing repairs



Painting the frames

Prodded into action

Rushing into the shed one day to look for something, blinded by the contrast between broad daylight and the dark, I got tangled



Joining up the holes with the pad saw



Removing the tongue & grooved pieces



Display cabinet doors
repurposed as shed windows



5 Ripping through the bottom plank



6 Tidying an edge with the apron plane

ready carpentry, more state of emergency than stately home, but how the shed had been transformed: I could close the door at last, and work in the soft light of day reflecting from the ivy outside.

Spiders set up home in the corners of the new windows and I might have carried on like this indefinitely, tucked into one light corner, if I hadn't ventured off piste in an antiques shop one afternoon.

Lucky find

Leaning in obscurity behind a forest of rusty garden tools, where it seemed no customer had set foot in this millennium, I made the lucky find of three Victorian stained-glass leadlights around 450 x 520mm and only £6 each (**photo 1**). They were of the top-hung awning type, with a flower-like stained glass motif giving a touch of Art Nouveau. When I



7 Squaring up half a maple log with the carpenter's axe

landed them on the counter amid a shower of dust the shopkeeper seemed not to recognise them, and then downhearted as he read the price tags.

Although the glass and lead cabs were undamaged, no doubt preserved through tough times by lead's flexibility, the frames were broken at the corners and only held together by old putty. Fitting these was not going to be so quick and easy. I toyed with the idea of making new frames, but was put off by the likelihood of wrecking the glass panels in the process. Indecision set in and the windows resumed their hibernation in a corner of the shed.

With the advancing spring, and the urge for sorting out that comes with it, I surveyed the frames in a more optimistic mood and decided they could be saved. Their old pine released a resinous aroma laid down like a fine wine a century ago as I cut back to sound timber with saw and chisel, repairing splits with screws and glue, and using graving pieces across the broken corners. They were workmanlike repairs, meeting a need for solidity more than classy joinery, but I was aiming for the repairs to dovetail with the general wear and tear and not stand out as new parts.

Teapot lid fit

A feature of the frame lending itself to a snug fit was the lip and flange created by the rebate, promising to let it drop into place as tidily as a teapot lid. After planing the lip a tad deeper I'd fasten from inside using screws passing through the walls into the lip outside.

Cutting apertures for these windows was essentially the same as for the repurposed cabinet doors but speeded up by switching from pad saw to cross-cut hand saw or rip saw, as appropriate, when the kerf was long enough for the wider blade. The top of the



8 The maple about ready for planing

aperture coincided with a joint in the T&G so the top plank was simply pulled free, and as the others followed suit the daylight flooded in (**photo 4**). It sounds daft now but I felt a real sense of freedom. A window is a wonderful thing.

After cleaning up the aperture with a chisel and apron plane (**photo 6**), I needed some narrow trim to support screw heads on the inside of the shed, because the holes were so close to the edges. For the first of the leadlights, I used recycled mahogany but for the second there was nothing suitable to hand, at least not ready-made.

What I did have was a slender log of field maple I'd brought home from the woods and which had split neatly down the middle. Maple is a tough timber and would be perfect for the job.

With the carpenter's axe I roughly squared up a half log (**photo 7**), smoothed it further with the jack plane (**photo 9**) and then ripped it into four with my six-point Spear & Jackson – freshly filed for the purpose. I didn't fiddle with rulers and gauges; marking the piece for sawing by eye and pencil was good enough (**photo 10**).

Portable vice

The rip saw ripped the maple end to end with barely pause to clear the dust, but the



9 Flattening the maple with the Bismarck jack plane

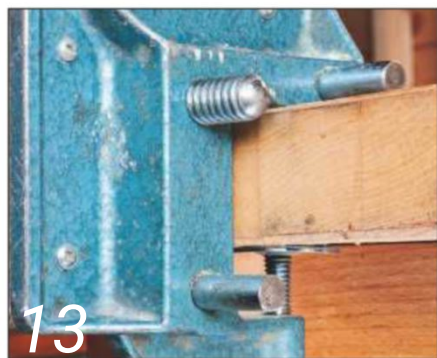


10 Marking for ripping to thickness by eye and pencil

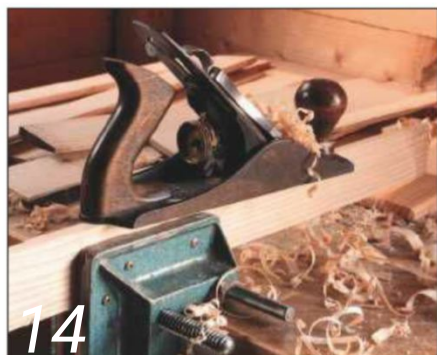
impressive part of this operation was the role of the portable woodworker's vice (**photo 11**). Sometimes called a 'corner' vice this is the most versatile piece of workholding kit I've acquired in a long time. Constructionally it's a hybrid of a vice and a G-cramp, with jaws perpendicular to the edge and top of the bench, holding the work in ways which a fixed vice struggles to imitate (**photo 13**).

The cramp component attaches to any flat surface up to 60mm-thick, while also being the fixed jaw. The moving jaw is adjusted by a smoothly turning main screw and has two guide bars, which are effective in preventing racking. But it's the L-shaped jaws which make the vice so user-friendly, holding timber securely horizontal, vertical or at any angle between the two.

This vice was made in Birmingham by the long-gone tool makers Parry & Bott, but the design is rooted in a US patent granted to engineer Christian Bodmer of The Stanley Works in June 1930. Stanley corner vices are much easier to find, especially the Stanley 702, which has a single guide bar and the main screw mounted lower so that the bench itself can support the work. I also have a 702 but find myself using the P&B because it's so well made, simply adding a levelling block if I want to enlist the bench for extra support while planing (**photo 14**).



The P&B corner vice clamps to any surface up to 60mm-thick



The versatile P&B corner vice with a levelling block for edge planing some ash

If you fancy a new corner vice, then take a look at Lee Valley's 'In-Line' model, which is a near copy of the Stanley 702.

75p saving!

After the rough surfaces from the rip saw had been smoothed, I was left with maple strips about 4mm-thick and 16mm wide (**photo 16**). Then I happened to be visiting the local DIY store for garden plants and, on the way out, laden with flower pots, glanced through the timber racks only to find I could have bought 4 x 12 x 900mm 'pine stripwood' at 75p a piece! Well, price and convenience are not everything when woodwork is your hobby, besides which my timber is locally-grown maple with satisfaction in its every millimetre.

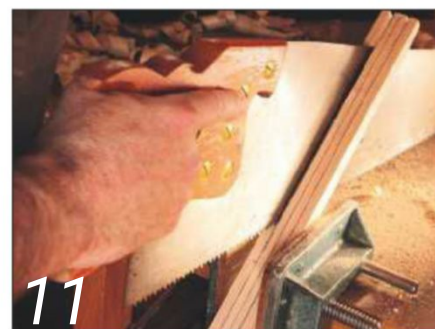
Certainly the fine-grained maple behaved well under the drill and countersink when making clearance holes (**photo 17**), and the six gauge 30mm screws tightened firmly into the narrow pieces without so much as a hint of a split. The frame was a firm push fit in the aperture but, imagining the worst, I saw myself dislodging it with the auger while making pilot holes and it crashing to the ground, so engaged my wife as a safety net poised on the steps outside (**photo 18**).

Having mitred the maple strips and offered them up for fitting it was a juggle to get them to sit level because the plain-sawn planks of the shed had more cups than a WI tea tent, but I managed to lower the highest spots with a chisel without thinning the wood excessively.

I'd wondered if this whole operation might weaken the structure but once pulled into place by a dozen screws the windows seem to have added rigidity to the shed besides light, and now that all the windows are installed my one regret is that I didn't do this sooner. The windows have restored my view of the world, and I'm just hoping the extra light will bring a parallel improvement in the quality of my woodworking!



Trying the bench under a leadlight window



The maple in the corner vice for ripping into four pieces



The pieces as they came from the saw

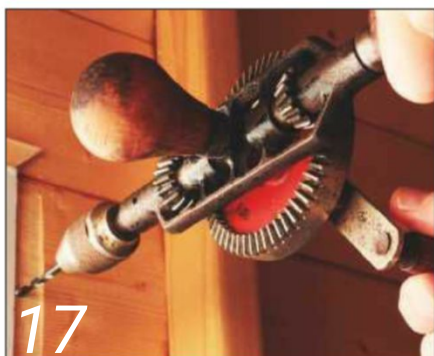
Japanese keyhole saw

My old Footprint pad saw is a favourite tool, it worked hard and well on this project, but when it was over I began to consider alternatives. With the blade being so narrow there isn't much surface area to dissipate the heat build-up caused by friction during a longish cut. And as the blade gets hot and perhaps a little soft, the possibility of a hiccup in the kerf causing it to buckle is an ever-present danger.

So I took the plunge with a complete reversal to my Western way of thinking and, for about £12, bought a Japanese keyhole saw, which cuts on the pull stroke instead of the push, thus eliminating the buckling problem altogether. There were



Smoothing away the saw marks with the Stanley No.4



17 Drilling clearance holes before fitting the maple strips

no specs available for the saw so here are some key measurements and my impressions for anyone interested.

Firstly, weight and size. The Japanese saw is much lighter at just 59g compared to 170g for the pad saw, which is reflected in a less solid feel in use but then again the pull saw technique is a lighter action and it feels right for the job. The toothed length of the Japanese blade is shorter at 175mm versus 258mm for the pad saw, and the pad saw blade can be set at any preferred length. Both blades are about 6mm wide at the first tooth (critical for starting a cut from a hole) while the Japanese saw is wider at the handle, about 14mm versus 10mm.

Secondly, blade thickness. The blade was



18 My wife Omi acted as the safety net while fastenings were added

thicker and more rigid than I expected. Most Japanese saws have much thinner blades than their western counterparts, removing less wood and requiring less effort because of that, but in the micrometer the Japanese saw measured 1.24mm versus 1.32mm for the pad saw. That's negligible difference – the kerf widths for these saws are almost identical.

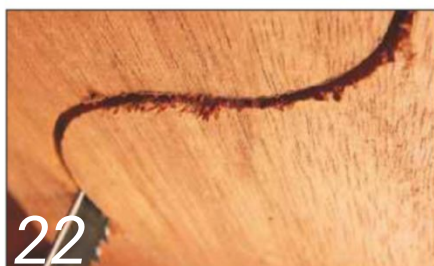
Thirdly, teeth. The Japanese saw has 4.5 teeth per cm (photo 24), the pad saw only 3.5. Both saws have low rake suited to ripping but the Japanese has greater fleam.

Test: in sawing a series of 40mm radius curves in recycled 10mm-thick mahogany (photo 21), I found the Japanese saw cut much faster across the grain than with it, leaving a tidy kerf with only a little tear-out on the exit and very smooth surfaces (photo 22). The pad saw is slower at cross-cutting but that could be improved by filing more fleam.

Conclusion: pulling a narrow Japanese blade is easier than pushing a western one. I'll definitely be using this keyhole saw again. **WW**



19 Stained glass floral motif in a leadlight window



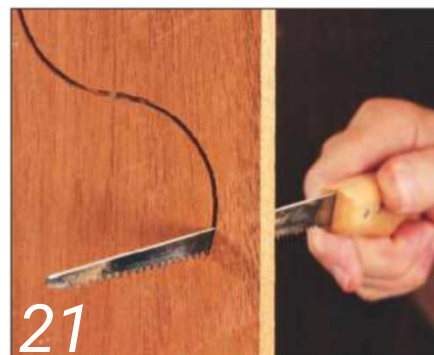
22 Only a little tear-out on the exit of the kerf



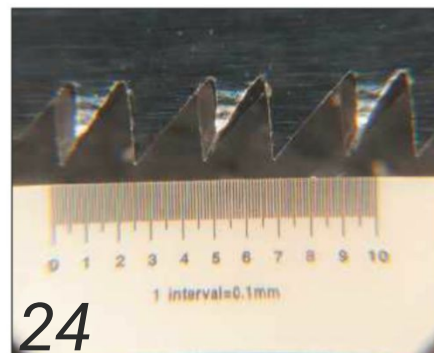
20 The Japanese keyhole saw and the western pad saw



23 Close up on teeth, which are more cross-cut than rip



21 Japanese saw cutting to a 40mm radius in 10mm-thick (recycled) mahogany



24 4.5 teeth to the centimetre



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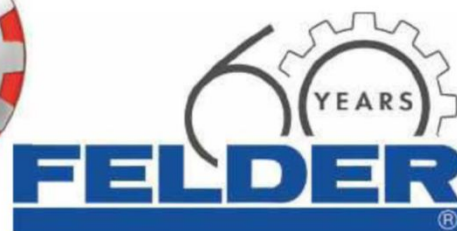
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- Please outline your name, address, age and the piece of furniture you've entered at the start of the email (preferably in the subject heading)
- Please note that finalists must cover the costs of transport to the judging ceremony as well as any costs involved in transporting their piece of furniture
- Entry is open to UK residents with a permanent UK address
- The closing date for entries is 17 February 2017. Pieces will be judged on Friday 17 March 2017, so please ensure you are free on that date in case your entry is chosen as one of the final five
- All entries should be emailed to tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com and should be sent no later than 17 February 2017 – postal entries will not be accepted
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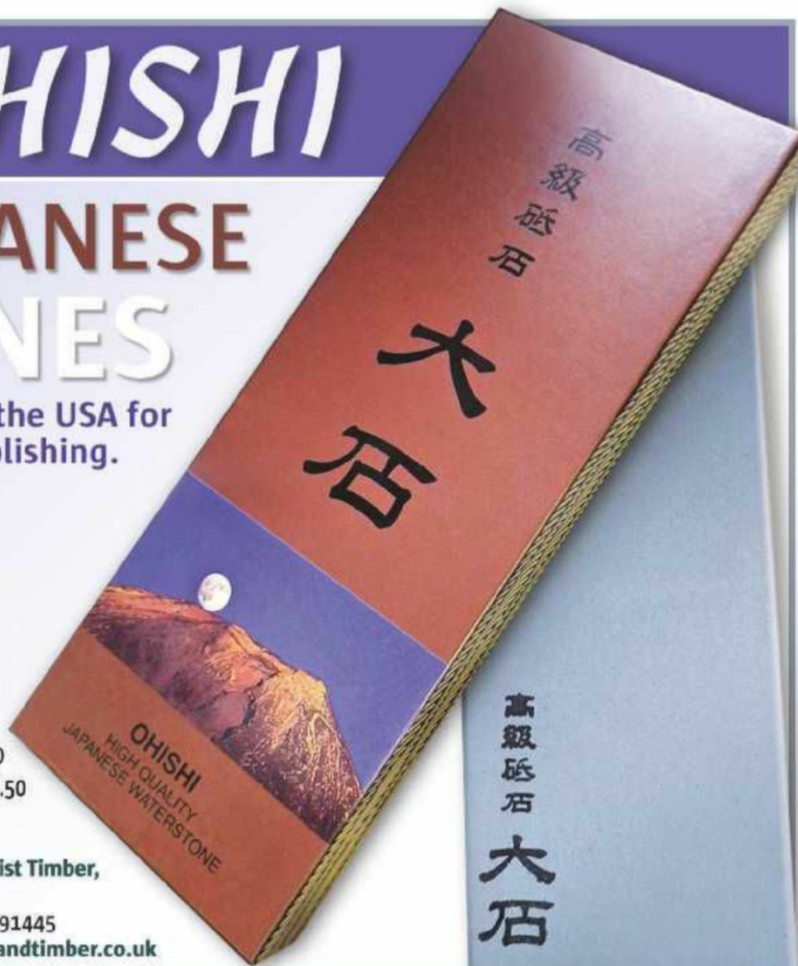
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In your own write...

Here are just some 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!

The Woodworker
& Woodturner

SNAIL MAIL OR EMAIL?

You can write to us at *The Woodworker*, MyTimeMedia Ltd, Suite 25, Eden House, Enterprise Way, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 6HF or send an email to mark.cass@mytimemedia.com

MYSTERY OF THE LATHE

Dear Mark,

I'm the son-in-law of Peter Whittle who was an occasional contributor to *The Woodworker*. He was a great supporter and admirer of the magazine and all his family have many pieces of his work, not only the lovely toys he made and whose patterns he shared in the magazine but also other 'one-offs'.

Sadly he died recently, and in the process of redistributing his tools to good homes, we found this piece of his lathe left over and wondered if you could identify its purpose? Many thanks,

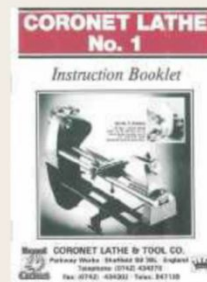
Pete Miles

Hi Pete,

Sorry to hear about Peter, but you'll be glad to learn that we've done a bit of sleuthing,

and thanks to Jonathan Wells at Record Power, can now inform you of the following. The lathe is a Coronet CL1, and the accessory in question is for holding the toolrest when the headstock is manoeuvred for turning larger items. If you remove the headstock from the bed bars it can be swivelled round and held on its own to the bench. The bed bars nearest the headstock are then held in place using another angle strap and brackets (same as the ones used for the tailstock end). The accessory pictured is then mounted to the bed bars and the toolrest mounted to that. Apparently spare brackets are available from Record Power as Coronet were incorporated some years ago, and share many common parts.

Mark



The brochure for the Coronet CL1 lathe



The accessory in question holds the toolrest when the headstock is manoeuvred for turning larger items

DOOR PANEL DILEMMA

Hi Mark,

I was wondering if you can help me with a current project? I have four door panels – two pairs (see photo) – that I want to put up in a double doorway so that they fold in on themselves. Firstly, the doors need to be square, then a half quadrant needs to be taken off each side so that the doors are light tight when closed. I also need to fix on hinges to the bi-folds, and where the doors fit onto the door frame. There may be a better way to achieve all this – please advise.

Many thanks,
Brian Hargreaves

Hi Brian,

Well you've got yourself a challenge there and no mistake. Multiple sets of bi-fold doors are notoriously tricky, especially if you're adapting four old doors to make two matching sets.

Even though the doors don't look too bad in the photo, if any of them are even slightly twisted, it will make the whole project even harder to pull off.

Once you factor in three sets of rebates to close snugly for light tightness, then you're really giving yourself some work to do. And have you considered the bolts and other ironware you'll need to stop them from flapping about when closed? If the light issue is important and you're set on using those doors, I'd recommend you edge joint two of each and use them as a simple pair of rebated double doors. Good luck with it, and please let me know how you get on.



Brian certainly has a tricky task on his hands with these doors, but we're sure he'll pull it off!

DRAWING QUALITY

Hi Mark,

I just had a look through the October issue and was greatly saddened by the quality of the drawings. They seemed to be of a mixed and varied nature, and many had missing dimensions, misaligned views and small, hard to read dimensions. Is there anything that can be done?

Jason Moore

Hi Jason,

I can only apologise wholeheartedly for the recent standard of drawings in the magazine, it's mostly down to budget cuts and the unaffordability of a permanent illustrator. While I will endeavour to avoid this happening again, it occurs to me that there may be a reader or two out there who would like to try their hand at a spot of technical drawing? If you enjoy CAD or similar, please get in touch and we'll see what we can do. **Mark**

GET IN TOUCH!

Don't forget, we're always keen to see your photos, so please don't hesitate to send them in if you've snapped something of interest recently. Email me at the usual address: mark.cass@mytimemedia.com

1 This large flat panel was an appropriate case for veneered MDF with a solid edging strip...

Flat panels with ease

Producing a wide, solid table-top that won't warp doesn't need to be difficult. Michael Forster looks into the causes and the solutions

They're deceptively simple-looking things, flat panels. With modern machinery it might seem that producing a flat, solid panel should now be child's play – no more of all that arduous hand planing; just run it through a thicknesser, then perhaps the drum sander and Robert's your sibling's brother. However, most of us will know it isn't that simple by a country mile. And because we know that, it's easy to be intimidated into seeking easier alternatives – after all, there seem to be new forms of sheet material evolving almost hourly, so who needs all the hassle of unstable solid wood when a nice bit of veneered MDF will fit the bill? For some projects, that's true, and I've been known to take that course myself a number of times (**photo 1**), even choosing veneer for its positive advantages (**photo 2**).

Sometimes, though, it just has to be

solid – maybe because it's going to get some wear and you need to be able to sand it back occasionally, or perhaps you want a classic look with decorative panel-work (**photo 3**). And that raises (among others) the topic of seasonal movement. The wider the panel, the more the movement will show. To manage it, we need to understand something about how movement happens, and have some basic woodworking hand-skills at our disposal.

Two significant factors in timber movement are moisture content and the way the board is cut from the log. Both of these need to be considered when ordering supplies of timber.

Moisture content

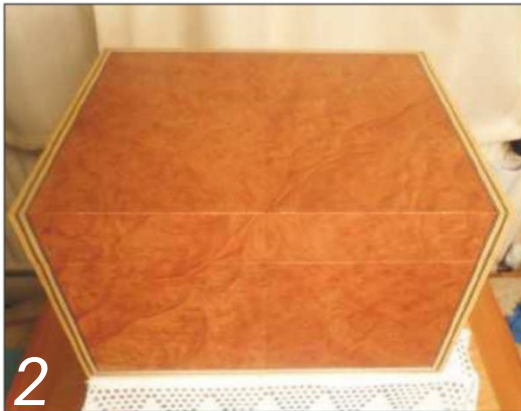
In very simple terms, if the atmosphere is moister than the timber, then the timber will absorb moisture and expand as the fibres fill up, while in the converse case

timber will release moisture into the air and contract. This, if not managed, can have all kinds of effects including opening joints and splitting. So, clearly, one would not use timber intended for outdoor use for a cabinet destined to be in a centrally heated room – or furniture grade timber for building a garden shed to stand out in the rain.

This suitability is generally measured in terms of moisture content – drier timber being specified for furniture than for fencing. A good timber yard should be both willing and able to advise and if in doubt it's helpful to tell them what the timber is for – they might also sometimes advise about the idiosyncrasies of particular species for specified functions. Then there's the matter of how the log has been sliced up.

Stress relief

Slicing up a tree trunk to produce planks releases stresses in the timber, and the



2 ... and veneering this decorative box meant I could create a four-way bookmatch where the top meets the front...



3 ... but for this raised and fielded panel there was no option but to joint up some wide boards



4 Plain sawn timber has the annular rings running across, which leaves the board vulnerable to cupping...

effect of that is directly related to the way the cutting is orientated. The most economical (and therefore most common) approach is simply to slice the log along its length ('plain-sawn'), so that each plank has the curves of the annular rings running, in various degrees, laterally across the width (**photo 4**). The releasing of the stresses allows the annular rings to begin to straighten up, and the effect is 'cupping' – something easily found in boards sold in general DIY stores. Make a table-top from a wide board cut this way and it will end up as more of a feeding trough than a dining table, as I learned to my cost as a teenager making a coffee table (**photo 5**).

One way I could have guarded against this would have been to rip the board into several narrower ones, turn over each alternate segment and glue them back together to form one board but with the direction of the annular rings alternating. This would not prevent the movement but would even it out to create a series of subtle undulations rather than a single and very obvious curve.

A better way of cutting the log is to 'quarter-saw', by which method the cuts are arranged so that the annular rings run

perpendicular (or something close to it) to the wide surfaces. This is much more expensive to do, which is reflected in the cost – but for fine furniture work is a worthwhile expense. As will readily be appreciated, there's a lot less scope for the annular rings to straighten out in timber cut this way, and the result is vastly improved stability (**photo 6**).

Buying & preparing timber

As I indicated earlier – and hopefully is now clearer – it's vital to have the purpose in mind when buying, and to ensure that the moisture content will be appropriate for the environment. So for a wide panel that's to be used in a living room we'd be specifying a low moisture content and, for preference, quartersawn. However, that second point might mean burrowing deep into our pockets when the bill came in. So now's the time to think about whether there's a cheaper way we can get the benefits of quartersawn timber – and the good news is that there is.

Although most of my work is relatively small-scale, I like, wherever possible, to purchase my timber in boards about 200mm wide x 100mm-thick. These invariably come

plain-sawn, which is not what I want but is what I consider economic. So, let's suppose that I want a board 200mm wide and 20mm-thick. The obvious thing to do would be to rip the board on edge to take off, say, 25mm (**photo 7**) – but by the time the board had settled it would be more suited to the aforementioned feeding trough than a table-top! Instead, I'm going to rip it on its side rather than its edge and produce quartersawn boards (**photo 8**) – and it's immediately clear that the annular rings are much more favourably orientated. As a further precaution, when joining them I'll reverse one of the boards so that the annular rings are angled the opposite way (**photo 9**), and this will give me a much more stable board. I'll come to how to carry out the joining operation shortly – but we haven't finished with the preparation aspect yet.

Acclimatisation

I don't enjoy the luxury of a heated – let alone air conditioned – timber store. My timber racks are in the machine shop, AKA garage, and after a while in that environment will definitely have more moisture in them than I want in my furniture. Furthermore, the moisture



5 ... as happened to this teenage project



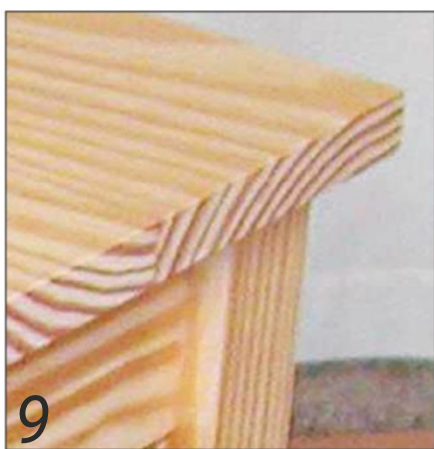
6 Quartersawn timber allows much less scope for the rings to straighten and results in a much more stable board



7 This may seem an easy way of getting a wide board, but it'll give us much more trouble in the long run



8 After a time in the offcuts rack, the quartered board is still flat while the plain-sawn one is distinctly cupped



9 Reversing the annular rings when arranging for glue-up will even out what little movement there is and minimise the effect of cupping



10 The 'cabinetmaker's triangle' is a simple way of ensuring the carefully-prepared boards are not then glued up in the wrong order



11 I've deliberately planed these two boards visibly out of square...



12 ... to demonstrate how they compensate on assembly

content will vary the deeper into the board I cut – obviously the fibres near the surfaces breathe more than those at the centre. So there's another excuse (and it's not as if it needs much encouragement) for the timber to move – which means that the next stage of preparation will be a couple of weeks in my home to acclimatise. For this reason, I prepare the boards a little over-size to allow for truing up later.

Only after giving time for that to take place will I return the boards to the machine shop for final flattening and dimensioning at the planer and thicknesser.

I'm now ready to combine my two narrow boards into one wider version, for which I turn to one of my favourite tools: my trusty jack plane. And for this task I change from a cambered to a straight cutter.

Get the edge

The first thing to do is arrange the boards, taking into account the grain with regard to both appearance and stability. To ensure they stay that way round throughout the process, I mark them with a triangle (**photo 10**). What we need to do now is prepare two (or more, depending on the size of panel we need) mating edges that fit together perfectly all the way along, so closely that once glued up the join will only be detectable by looking for changes in the grain. Unless you've got a much



13 Taking twin shavings from two boards together – it's best to use a straight, rather than radiused, cutter for this



14 Pencil reference marks on each end of the boards help me to take stopped shavings, thereby creating a microscopic hollow in the length

better power planer than I have (and/or are better at using it, which you very well may be) this is much more likely to be accomplished by hand. In fact, however good the planer, I remain convinced that a slicing blade is preferable to a rotating cutterblock when two mating surfaces are required. When I first learnt to do woodwork I would try to plane each edge separately until each was perfectly flat in both directions and perfectly square to the face side. There are times when that needs to be the method – such as when jointing very thick boards – but for most purposes it makes unnecessarily heavy weather of it. It means a lot of trial and error work, frequently removing the timber from the vice and replacing it to adjust. It doesn't need to be such a fiddle.

My approach now is to start by placing both boards in the vice, face sides together and mating edges uppermost. This means I don't have to worry about squareness of the edge – the angles will be complementary when the boards are glued up (**photos 11 & 12**). I do, however, need the edges to be flat and 'straight' (the reason for the quotation marks will become clear in a moment).

I now plane both edges together (**photo 13**), and keep planing until I'm removing continuous, full-width, full-length shavings. In theory the two edges are both flat, but in reality the likelihood is that they're convex longitudinally – and in that case when I bring the edges together there'll be gaps at the ends. It's important to resist the temptation to release the vice and try just on the off-chance that it's right, because if it isn't – which is almost inevitable – the chances of getting those boards back in the vice perfectly aligned is probably less than minimal, which will mean virtually starting over again. Instead I mark the ends of the boards (**photo 14**) and take stopped shavings with a finely-set plane between the marks, continuing planing until the tool stops cutting. I now know that the boards are microscopically hollow lengthwise, at which point I take one or two (no more) pairs of full-length, full-width shavings, removing the pencil marks and the tiny bumps that will have been left. I now have two boards that for this purpose (most purposes, in fact) I should call 'flat'.

Why is minutely concave better than convex? Three reasons at least. Firstly, this concavity is controlled – we know it can't be too much because the plane won't cut a deep hollow, whereas the boards might have had almost any amount of convexity, which would have made the

gluing up impossible. Secondly, with the two ends together the cramp will pull the middle up tight – convex boards would rock and resist that process. Thirdly, it co-operates with the timber's natural process of breathing. Timber exchanges moisture with the air more through the ends than anywhere else – think of the grain fibres as tubes holding water. This means that any shrinkage taking place in a centrally heated room will be more at the ends than the middle – and that will tend to pull the boards more tightly together. Had we left the boards slightly convex, the cramps might still have pulled the joint together at the ends, but as the boards shrunk further in a centrally heated environment the crack would have opened up – or more probably, given the quality of modern glues, the timber would have split.

Gluing up

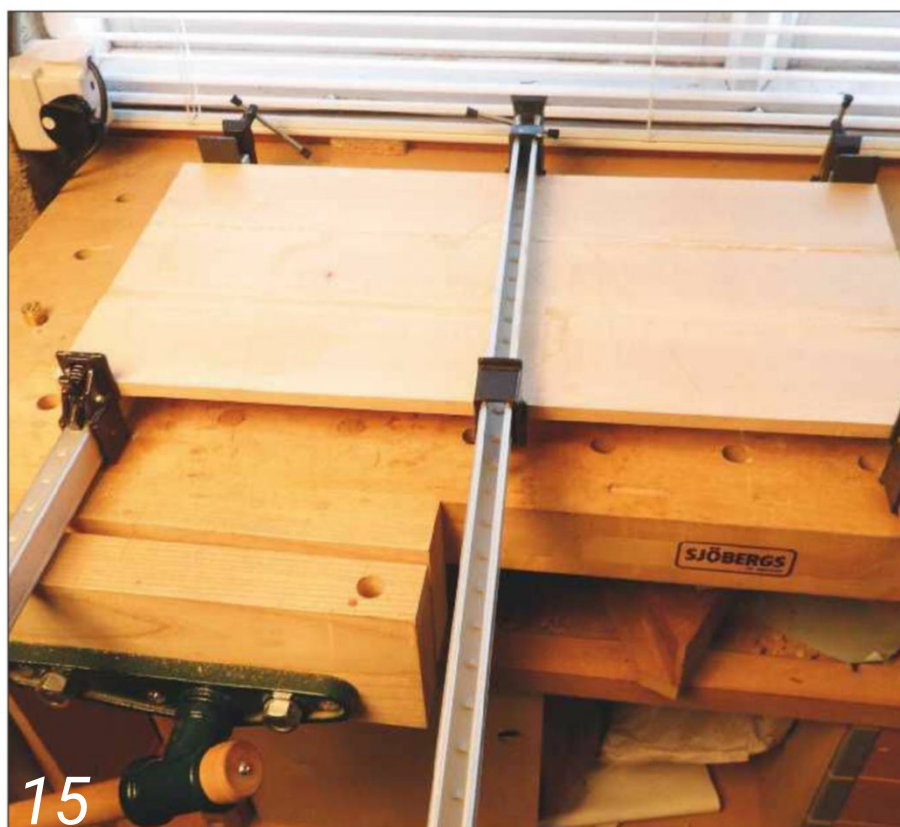
For very wide panels this might be done in stages. I never glue more than three boards in one operation – preferably only two – as it's just asking for alignment issues. So four boards, for example, would be glued as two pairs and then brought together.

Once again, the word is 'preparation' but in this case it's about assembling the kit in

advance, setting the cramps on the bench with the appropriate jaw opening and ensuring that brushes, cleaning cloths and water are to hand. Three sash cramps are required: two flat on the bench beneath the panel and one to go across the top afterwards in between them to discourage the joint from lifting (**photo 15**).

In most cases, there's no need for any mechanical reinforcement of the joint. Biscuits can be helpful in getting the joint well aligned, but modern adhesives will hold tenaciously without any help. I generally use Titebond 3, which is excellent for my purposes, but there are a variety of suitable adhesives out there. I think it's quite important to brush a thin film onto each edge, rather than just squeeze a bead and rely on the cramp pressure to spread it evenly. I then rub the edges together from end to end to squeeze out the excess before placing the boards in the cramps and tightening up, checking for flatness.

After a quick clean with a damp cloth or kitchen paper the panel can be left for the glue to go off, and then it will probably need a little tweaking for flatness using a sharp plane. Et voilà! One wide panel that should stay about as close to perfectly flat as is realistic with natural timber. **WW**



15
The glue-up – note the cramp across the top to discourage any lifting of the joint. I didn't bother to pad the cramps in this instance because the edges were to be concealed within a groove

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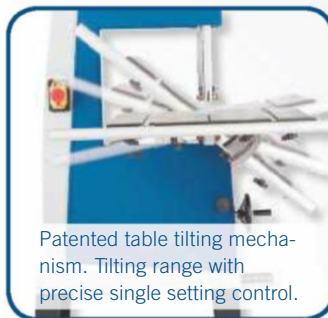
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306 mm

205 mm

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Swill to power

Owen Jones is single-handedly keeping the South Cumbrian tradition of swill making alive

Despite our economy no longer being based on manufacturing as it once was, many places around Britain are still inextricably linked to their mighty past. We still link Sheffield with steel, Stoke-on-Trent with pottery, and High Wycombe with furniture, even if the trade is now a mere fraction of what it used to be. To this list we should add the southern part of the Lake District and oak swills.

During the industrial era, the Furness Peninsula (Cumbria, as of 1974, and formerly Lancashire) was the home of a flourishing trade in this woven basket, an offshoot of the coppice wood industry. Oak swills would generally be used in agriculture, for sowing seeds or gathering potatoes. Of course, the Northwest was a hotbed of industry, and it would not be uncommon to find them being used for industrial purposes, often in coal mining. The trade was big enough to exclusively occupy whole workshops of makers, but was strictly a regional thing, exclusive to a circular area no bigger than 15 miles.

Inevitably, the making of oak swills went the same way as so many of our crafts and trades – gradually dying away, just another victim of post-war technological advances and shifting economical priorities. Nevertheless, there is one man yet keeping the tradition alive. From his workshop near Coniston Water, Owen Jones continues to make these oak and hazel baskets by hand. So how did Owen defy the sweeping hand of fate to become the last oak swill maker of the area, and most likely the country?

Changing times

The story began in the late '80s. Through his father-in-law, Owen had met a man named John Barker. John had been a swill maker for over 50 years, having served his apprenticeship in the 1930s. Retired by that point, he continued to make oak swills for a

hobby. As for Owen, he had reached something of a crossroads in his life. Feeling that it was "the right thing to do," he decided to learn the trade from Barker. "In many ways it worked quite well," Owen reflects. "He was getting old, and was starting to find the physical aspects difficult." Quite simply, Owen would provide the brawn to complement John's brains. John Barker has since passed on, thus leaving Owen as the last of his kind. "When I first started," he recalls, "I came across quite a few other swill makers at craft shows, but there's no one left of that generation now."

As a result of learning his trade at the feet of an ex-professional maker who had served a five-year apprenticeship, the methods Owen uses are the same as would have been used many generations ago; the term 'swill' itself is derived from the Norse 'spelk', so we're talking about techniques that are quite likely to be over 1,000 years old.

The process, unsurprisingly, begins in the woods – the Furness Fells are rich in woodland. Owen explains that they remain this way today probably as a result of the rocky terrain making the area unsuitable for agriculture. In the past, 'swillers' would have sourced their timber from a coppice merchant. Indeed, when Owen started out he did buy his from such a merchant, but today there is no reliable and consistent source, so Owen fells his own timber, coppicing nearby woodland at Force Forge, owned by the National Park Authority. "I use a variety of different qualities," he states. "Ideally I'd want a tree with a 6 or 7 inch diameter, straight and without knots, still growing with vigour." Owen fells trees all year round, tending to use the wood within a few weeks. Traditionally, the coppice merchant would have cut down oak trees in April, when the sap was up, peeling the trunks to supply the tanning industry with bark. The swillers would then receive a bulk



A swill begins with Owen dressing a taw with a hand knife



A spelk is dressed with a drawknife on Owen's swiller's mare

load of peeled oak, which would normally last until around Christmas, after which they would get hold of what they could until April came around again. Of course, Owen is working alone, so he doesn't have to adhere to the classic coppicing timetable, so he prefers to use the wood green, before it dries out. In his role as coppice merchant, however, he does still supply a tannery in South Devon with bark. Incidentally this tannery has something in common with Owen, being the last oak bark tannery in the country.

Making a swill

With the timber sourced, the next step is to saw the trunk into various lengths, ranging from 2 to 5 feet long. The longer lengths are used for the weaves of the basket. Generally Owen will reserve the best quality timber from the butt end for these, using the first 6 feet, the wood he uses is all from the first 12 feet of the felled timber. These weaves are known as the 'taws'. The ribs, made from wood from higher up the tree, are known as 'spelks', either derived from the Norse word, or perhaps indicating that ribs were the essential part that gave their name to the whole.



Using a drawknife to shave off any sharp edges of the hazel boole – the bottom of the basket



Owen's boiled oak is riven by hand

After the parts are sawn to length, they are cleaved lengthways into billets using a froe; a 6 inch tree would yield around six billets. These billets are then placed into a large iron boiler, and boiled for several hours. While this is happening, Owen cuts the hazel rods for the rims of the baskets, usually to about 1 inch diameter. They are then dressed and steamed for 20 minutes, before being bent into an oval shape. The rim of the basket is known as the 'boole'.

To get up to this point usually takes a day. The next morning, the billets are brought back to the boil, and left to simmer as they are taken out one by one and riven down into thin strips.

The spelks will be around 3mm, and 1 or 2" in width, and the taws will be 1.6mm, and very flexible, to the extent that you can wrap them around your finger. The process is very physical, with knees being used "like a cleaving break." The knife used has more of a splitting edge than a cutting edge, and the billets are often torn to size, albeit in a controlled fashion. If they prove too tough to pull apart this way, they can simply be held underfoot and ripped that way. Usually Owen rives 'the back way' (tangentially), but sometimes radially.

Once the boole, taws and spelks are all cut to size they can be stored for months, only requiring an overnight soak in the stream at the bottom of Owen's garden

to make them good to go again.

The next stage is the dressing of the taws and spelks, probably the hardest part of the process, according to Owen. The former are dressed over the knee with a hand knife, the latter on a mare (a type of shaving horse) with a drawknife. "This is where the quality of the material makes a huge difference," Owen explains. "If you have really nice material then the dressing doesn't take that long, but with bad material it can be a bit of a challenge." Once dressed the spelks can be bent into shape, and put in place, and the taws woven in. And there you have it: a strong, versatile and aesthetically charming traditional basket.

The process is mostly done by feel, but the design of the basket is firmly established, to the extent where each spelk (there are 15 of these) and taw has its own specific name! A dozen or so baskets is all it takes for the process to become familiar Owen reckons, but concedes you'd have to make hundreds before it was easy. Back in the days of apprenticeships, it'd be three years before they'd even let you touch a basket (so said the late John Barker). There'd be plenty to enjoy, though; the boiling oak makes a "wonderful fruity smell," and the oak tannin's reaction to boiling results in a spectrum of colours being revealed when the strips are riven.



The flexibility of the spelk must be tested after dressing – which, it should be noted, takes some strain on the wrists



Owen slips on the second working-up taw



He weaves round the boole with the narrow bottom taw...



8

... and then weaves the broad bottom taw

Hearts of oak

So is it only oak that can be used for a swill? "I have made a basket out of lime," says Owen, and it has been known to have been used in the past. Lime is extremely easy to cut to size, he tells us, but the obvious corollary of this is that the basket lacks strength, which is no good if it's to be loaded with potatoes! Conversely, you can jump up and down on an oak basket without adverse effects, so it seems more fit for purpose. Of course, another reason oak has always been used is due to the regional character of the swill. In southern Cumbria, oak is plentiful, so it's no surprise that oak is the timber of choice. Owen adds that he "gets a great satisfaction from using local material."

Sadly, now that coppicing has died down in the area, the woods are uneven, and much of the oak is over-stood. Some of it is 60 years old, considerably older than the 20 to 25 years that Owen tells us is ideal for coppiced oak, so he is working with bigger material than would've been used in the past. He is working conscientiously, though, trying to cut down a section at a time, rather than cherry picking the best timber, to help

the woodland even out again. "It has been a tough winter," he tells us. "The oak's been pretty ropery." Inconsistency, he surmises, is a key aspect of the trade. "Even a tree that you think looks perfect can be harsh and full of knots, whereas a bent and twisted tree can be silky smooth. It's very difficult to predict." Swill making is not for those who are fastidious about their materials, he concludes: "A lot of the time you're battling against it," he points out.

Where there's a swill...

Owen has started selling his baskets on his own website, but the majority of the selling is usually done at trade and craft shows. This means the whole process is done by him and him alone, from living oak to selling the finished product to the consumer, which in itself gives Owen great pleasure. He admits that the process is a little insular, but he is by no means reclusive. He's involved with the Heritage Crafts Association, and has become a Yeoman of the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers, although he stands alone in the latter, as most British basketmakers work with willow. As a woodsman, he's also involved with the local

coppice group, and can be found making charcoal, hurdles and besom brooms when not occupied with swill making.

So, a busy schedule all in all, but we must ask the inevitable question: is this the end of the line for swill making, or is there a new generation of swillers being trained up? Owen doesn't have a traditional apprentice, and is adamant that he has no desire for his business to grow (which taking on an apprentice would inevitably result in). However, he is keen that the skills live on, and is happy to train up willing students on an informal basis. Sadly, one young man he trained up in this fashion had to give it up as it didn't play well with his wrists, but he is currently working with a young lady, so the signs are good: "You don't need inherited skills," he asserts. "Perhaps it suits certain body types, but the most important thing is the right temperament, as it can be repetitive and you have to accept that sometimes you'll have to work with rubbish materials." Desire, he posits, is the key ingredient to success. He currently teaches about six or seven three-day courses a year, which are well attended and he enjoys running.

Despite this he has no intention of expanding this side of his business. You sense, talking to Owen, that he is satisfied with the hand he has been dealt – that he has truly found his calling. He is a craftsman first and foremost, and he clearly plans to keep it that way. There is definitely something admirable about that. **WW**



9

The 'finisher' is pared prior to the completion of the swill



10

With the basket more or less finished, any protruding spelks need to be carefully trimmed

FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about Owen and his work, see details below:

Tel: 01229 885 664

Web: www.oakswills.co.uk

A useful combination

DO GET IN TOUCH

If any readers have memories and photos of things they or their forebears made from *The Woodworker*, please get in touch as we'd love to see them. Just email me on the usual address: mark.cass@mytimemedia.com and we'll get them in the mag

WALL BOOKSHELF

This novel wall fixture should prove an attractive addition to any room. The book rack is flanked at the one end by a handy cupboard, whilst at the other is a shelf with mirror back. The timber requirements are small and the design is of a type that the sizes could be easily adapted to meet individual requirements.

THE piece would look equally well in any timber. One suggestion is for oak with a walnut crossband on the door. Alternatively, if made in softwood it could be painted.

Construction.—The top E is lap-dovetailed down into ends B and C. The bottom D is also lap-dovetailed into end B, the other end being slot-dovetailed into end A. Alternatively, it could be plain housed. End C is housed down into bottom D, the housing stopping short of the front. Back rail G runs the whole length of the piece and binds the whole together at the back. It also provides a convenient fixing to the wall with rawlplugs. In addition it forms the top rail of the mirror back frame. It is secured at the one end by dovetailing and screwing into end B, lapping into ends C and A, and finally by halving and screwing to stile H. Stile H is secured at the bottom by dovetailing (Fig. 2) into the back of shelf F.

This shelf has a groove worked along the top at the back so providing the bottom fixing for the mirror, whilst the one end is dovetailed up into end A. After making all these joints the piece is ready for assembling. The door can be made up according to materials available, a frame with plywood facing, or of blockboard. The shelf K would rest inside the cupboard on fillets. After the whole has been finished and secured to the wall at a convenient height the mirror back should be secured by dropping the mirror into the groove in shelf F and by mirror clips fixed to the edges of stile H and rail G.

(754)



CUTTING LIST

	Long	Wide	Thick
ft. in.	ft. in.	ft. in.	ft. in.
A 1 End	1 2	6	1 2
B 1 End	1 0 1/2	6	1 2
C 1 End	1 0 1/2	6	1 2
D 1 Bottom	1 10 1/2	6	1 2
E 1 Top	8 1/2	6	1 2
F 1 Shelf	6	6	1 2
G 1 Back rail	2 4 1/2	1 1/2	1 2
H 1 Back stile	1 2	1 1/2	1 2
I 1 Door	11 1/2	7 1/2	1 2
K 1 Shelf	7 1/2	6 1/2	1 2

All sizes are net.

How to Make Woodwork Tools. This latest addition to the *WOODWORKER*, 3/- series is proving extremely popular amongst craftsmen. It is especially valuable now that many woodworking tools are in short supply. It shows how to make planes of all kinds, gauges, routers, squares, sliding bevel, bow saw, mitreing appliances, spokeshave, mallet, tool chest, bench, and many other tools. All told there are nearly sixty tools. It can be obtained through any bookseller for 3/-, or direct from the publishers for 3/3, post free. Evans Bros., Ltd., Montague House, Russell Sq., London, W.C.1.

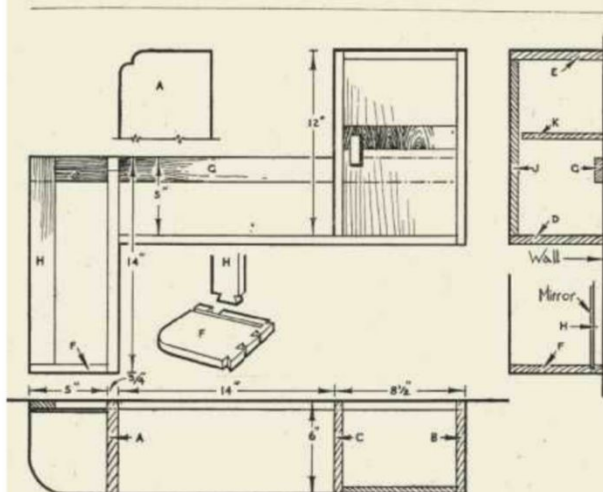


FIG. 2. FRONT ELEVATION, SIDE ELEVATION, AND SECTIONAL PLAN

This wall bookshelf from *The Woodworker* of January 1947 would certainly have proven an attractive and useful addition to any room – made doubly so by the inclusion of a small mirror at one end and a shallow cupboard at the other

When it comes to simple and achievable projects, there are many variations on the 'useful shelf' and this one, from *The Woodworker* of January 1947, would have definitely been worth attempting. With resources of all kinds at a premium after the war, furniture and fittings were generally designed with the smaller dwelling in mind. Most pieces would include extra features and anything that had a dual purpose was certain to be popular. The useful shelf here is made doubly so by the inclusion of a small mirror at one end and a shallow cupboard at the other.

Utility furniture

The suggested timber is oak with a veneered walnut cross-band on the door. This is a classic combination to be sure, and one which would have entirely suited the then current trends for interior decoration. When it came to looks and aesthetics, design hadn't moved on much from the '30s; the 1940s were all about Utility furniture and just keeping things going with the limited resources available. Despite continuing shortages in many raw materials, it wasn't really until the early 1950s that a new look began to appear, heralded by the 1951 Festival of Britain, which aimed to give a boost to the nation's morale and encourage renewal, manufacturing and consumer spending.

Valid plans

The plans shown here are still very valid, and I would be very pleased to learn of anyone giving the job a go; at the very least it may well inspire a few readers to adapt it for their own requirements or to make an equivalent for the present day. Let me know how you get on at the usual email address: mark.cass@mytimemedia.com. **WW**

Mark



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In brief...

THE WOOD AWARDS: 2016 SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED

A shortlist of 12 projects has been selected from a record number of 182 British furniture and product entries in this year's Wood Awards. Two bespoke designs, six production and four student designs, have been selected by the judges led by Max Fraser, design curator and author.

20 outstanding buildings have also been selected for the Wood Awards 2016 shortlist, featuring some of Britain's best architectural designs in wood. Led by architect Michael Morrison of Purcell, the judges reviewed applications in a variety of categories, including: Commercial & Leisure, Education & Public Sector, Interiors, Private, and Small Projects. The winners of both competitions will be revealed at the 45th annual Wood Awards ceremony, which will be held at Carpenters' Hall on 22 November.

Established in 1971, the Wood Awards is the UK's premier competition for excellence in architecture and product design in the world's only naturally sustainable material. The Awards aim to recognise, encourage and promote outstanding design, craftsmanship and installation using wood. For more information on these unique awards, see the website:

www.woodawards.com

Look out for *Good Woodworking* issue 314 (January), which will feature a special article showcasing all the deserving winners.



Shortlisted within the Furniture and Product Competition's 'Student Designer' category, Jan Waterston's 'Velo Chair', made in ash and inspired by the bicycle, connects body and object by seamlessly wrapping itself around the user

BUILDINGS COMPETITION SHORTLIST

Commercial & Leisure

1. Alconbury Weald Club
2. Gloucester Services
3. Sky Health & Fitness Centre
4. Stihl Treetop Walkway
5. Welcome Centre

Education & Public Sector

1. Conservation & repair of Harmondsworth Barn
2. Maggie's at the Robert Parfett Building
3. Mellor Primary School
4. St. Clare's, Oxford
5. Stanbrook Abbey

Interiors

1. Christ Church Crypt – Spitalfields
2. The Portledge Rear Staircase
3. Tufnell Park Road

Private

1. 'Ansty Plum' designed by Coppin Dockray
2. 'Contour House' designed by Sanei Hopkins Architects
3. 'Woodpeckers' designed by Strom Architects

Shortlisted within the Furniture and Product Competition's

'Bespoke' category, 'Log Stack Cabinet', designed by Byron & Gómez, began with a desire to highlight the beauty of end-grain



Shortlisted within the Buildings Competition's 'Small Projects' category, the 'Twist', made using birch ply, features CNC-milled ribs and wings



Shortlisted within the Furniture and Product Competition's 'Production Made' category, Ercol's 'Flow Chair' features refined sweeping lines, a tapered seat and was made using European beech

Small projects

1. 'Doors for 55 St. James' Street' by Sarah Kay
2. 'Hollow' designed by Zeller & Moye
3. 'Kingston Ancient Market Place & stalls' designed by Tonkin Liu
4. The 'Twist' designed by Architectural Association

FURNITURE & PRODUCT COMPETITION Bespoke

1. 'Log Stack Cabinet' by Byron & Gómez
2. 'Pantori' by Steph Leake – an intern at Jack Badger Ltd.

Production Made

1. 'Dyehouse Fall Bench' designed by Dyehouse
2. Ercol 'Flow Chair' by T.n.a Design
3. 'Planks Collection' by Max Lamb
4. 'Sebastian Cox kitchen' by deVOL
5. 'Stretch extending dining table' by Pengelly Design Ltd.
6. 'Well Proven Stool' by van Aubel & Shaw

Student Designer

1. 'Geometry' by Michael Stevenson
2. 'Milena' by Juan Junca
3. 'One-sheet dining chair' by Terry Davies
4. 'Velo Chair' by Jan Waterston



Also shortlisted within the Furniture and Product Competition's 'Production Made' category, Van Aubel & Shaw's 'Well Proven Stool' uses a composite of sawdust and soya-based resin. The waste created from the hardwood legs goes into producing the 'foamed wood' seat while the colour of the sawdust used dictates the colour of the seat



Shortlisted within the Buildings Competition's 'Education & Public Sector' category, Harmondsworth Barn is regarded as an outstanding example of medieval carpentry, and one of the largest surviving medieval barns in England



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SETTING UP A WOODTURNING WORKSHOP

If you're thinking about setting up your own woodturning workshop, then this indispensable guide from Bob Chapman will provide you with a wealth of sound advice, hints and tips



My workshop features a well insulated pitched roof with panels, which emit natural light

Workshops vary in size from a corner of the garage with a bench narrow enough to get the car in beside it, to spacious buildings bigger than some bungalows.

My own workshop (see main photo) began life as a double length garage with a flat sloping roof. It was dark and dingy with a low ceiling and no natural light. It was not a very pleasant workspace and, as my business grew, I decided to replace it. I had the whole thing pulled down and replaced with a slightly bigger building – still with a garage door, and still technically a garage. In fact the large up-and-over garage door is very useful when I have to load the car with lathe and tools for a demonstration, or bring in a load of timber from the local sawmill.

Now it has a higher, well insulated pitched roof with panels, which emit natural light (photo 1). A 3 x 3m section of it remains traditional garage – after all, the lawnmower and the bikes have to live somewhere, but it's never had a car in it. The rest of the space constitutes my workshop and measures 6.7 x 3.6m. I consider myself very lucky to have this much room dedicated to my woodturning.

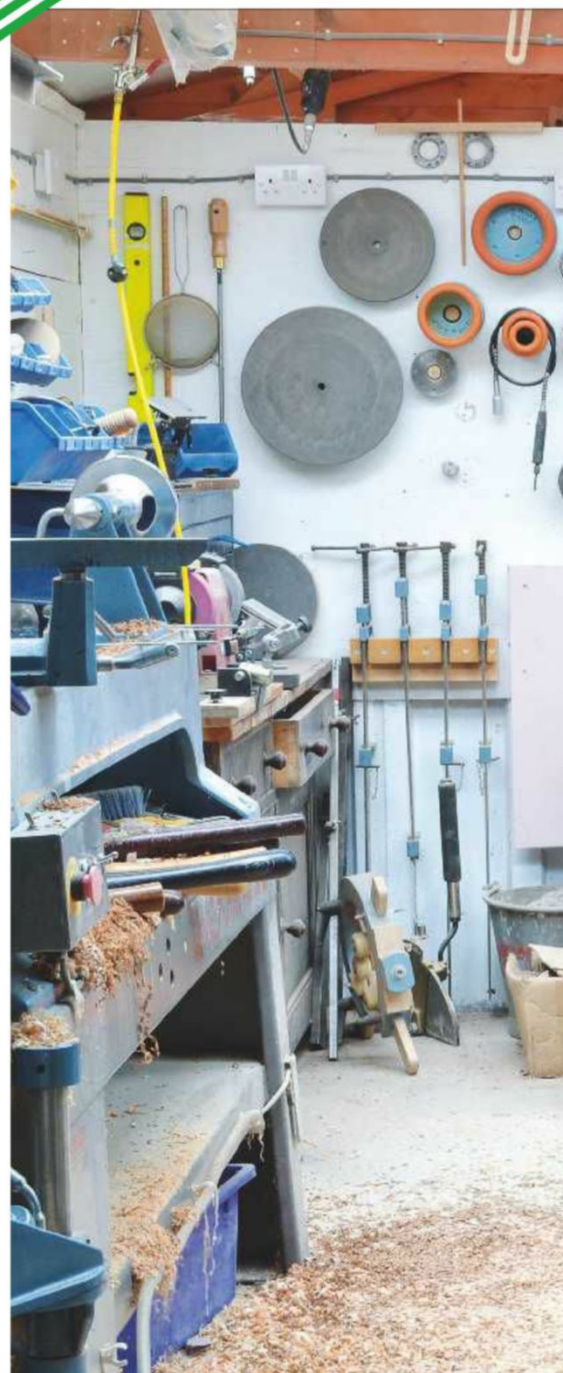


My lathe is positioned against the wall to maximise the central space in the workshop

Where should everything go?

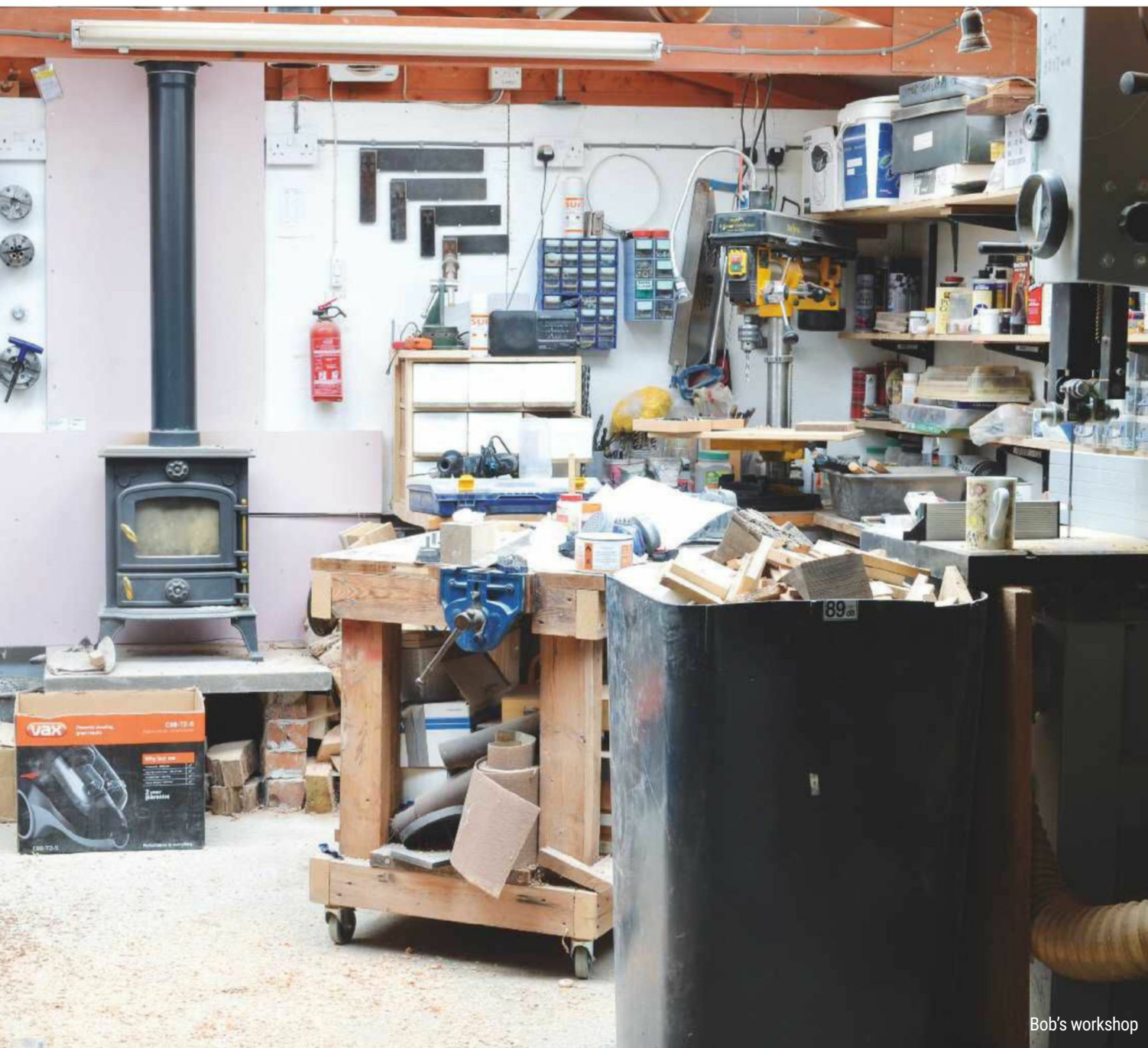
Having a larger space means greater flexibility and more alternatives for how you might set it out. When the workshop was built I already had most of the equipment which would go in it, but I spent some time deciding where things would go. I think one of the most crucial decisions was building shelving out at right angles to one wall, just opposite the side door. This effectively partitioned the garage and helped to define my workshop area. It also helped to hide my tools and machinery from public view when the main garage door is open. The security aspect of this is not to be taken lightly. In these days of Google Street View, many garages with open doors, contents on display and street address given, are shown online for anyone to look at. I try to open the main door as little as possible and close it again immediately.

Cupboards and shelving went naturally to the walls, but a decision was required about the lathe. Should it go along a wall, which would hinder access from the other side, or should it be placed centrally, allowing access from all around it?



My decision was to put it against a wall (photo 2). This maximised the central space in the workshop and the lathe's swivel head would solve most access problems likely to arise. Similarly, the bandsaw was positioned such that long pieces of wood could be passed through it without hitting obstructions. A reasonably large island workbench on lockable wheels is a very useful addition (photo 3).

I had electrical sockets installed at regular intervals on a dedicated 30 amp ring main around the workshop. My intention was that I should never be in the position of not being able to easily reach a socket with whatever power tool I might be using at the time. Having plenty of sockets has proved useful although, of course, they are never all in use at the same time, and I suspect several of them may never be used.



Bob's workshop

Lighting

Lighting is mostly fluorescent with a couple of incandescent bulbs in the garage area. I've read of possible problems of a stroboscopic coincidence between the speed of the lathe and the frequency of fluorescent lighting, which can make the lathe appear stationary even though it is rotating. It's a possibility I suppose, but it has never happened to me and despite trying, I've never been able to deliberately produce the effect. In any case, by far the most important light sources are the transparent roof panels, which emit plenty of natural light even on winter days. To maximise reflected light, I decided to paint the walls of the workshop white before fitting it out, and this has worked so well that I find I rarely need to turn the electric lights on.

Workshop heating

Workshop heating is a perennial problem. In my previous workshop I'd used a bottled gas heater, but this was expensive to run, the gas always ran out at the most inconvenient time and, worst of all, the combustion of the gas produced large amounts of water vapour, which then condensed on my tools and machinery. I briefly considered a woodburning stove but these are expensive to install and there is the ever-present risk of fire to consider. I eventually decided in favour of a small electric convection heater, but in winter the workshop never reached a satisfactory temperature. Eventually I reconsidered my views on a woodburning stove. It didn't escape my attention that I was regularly throwing out timber waste, which would have been free fuel. After weighing up all



A reasonably large island workbench on lockable wheels is a very useful addition

the pros and cons, I finally installed a small woodburning stove mounted on a stone slab and with a double layer of fireproof board behind it and to the sides (**photo 4**). A senior fireman who came for a lesson one day gave it a quick once over and pronounced it safe, but warned me not to let the pile of firewood get too close to it. I am amazed at how efficient it is. Even in the depths of winter the workshop is now as warm as the proverbial toast and the harmful water vapour goes up the chimney.

Lathes

Irrespective of lathe manufacturer, there are certain features to look for. Choosing a lathe is never easy, as it will invariably involve playing one desirable feature off against another, with perhaps the most important aspect being the price. In my opinion, the things to consider when buying a lathe are:

How much can you afford?

We all have budget constraints and we all, at times, overstep them, but there are limits and it's wise to know what they are before you start looking. Don't automatically assume you must have a brand-new lathe. They are very simple machines and, provided they start when you switch them on, there is not a lot that

can be wrong with them. Always look at what's available second-hand. I'd never buy a lathe without looking on eBay first, for example. Woodturning and woodworking magazines often carry adverts for second-hand machinery (see our marketplace on page 89). Woodturning clubs sometimes have members upgrading to a better lathe who would like to sell their current machine.

What's the biggest diameter piece the lathe can take?

Obviously bigger is generally better, but bear in mind that very large pieces of wood are actually not all that commonly available. I really can't remember when I last used a piece in excess of about 500mm diameter. A swivelling headstock might be a better idea for those occasional bigger pieces. Some lathes will allow larger pieces to be turned on the outboard side of the headstock, but this might require faceplates and chucks with a left-hand thread to prevent them unscrewing and this will increase the cost of these accessories.

What's the longest piece the lathe will take?

Many 'long-bed' lathes will accept lengths up to about 1m and this is fine for things like staircase spindles and so on. Longer

pieces always present a problem and making them almost always involves a joint somewhere along the length, although some specialist workshops may have very, very long bed lathes. Some lathes will accept bed extensions, and may be worth looking at if this sort of work is what you have in mind.

How powerful is the lathe motor?

Generally, the more powerful the better, but remember that you will pay for it so be sure you need it. If the maximum diameter you can turn is 250mm, it's unlikely you will need more than, say, a half horsepower motor although many new lathes this size now come with as much as $\frac{3}{4}$ HP motors.

How heavy is the lathe?

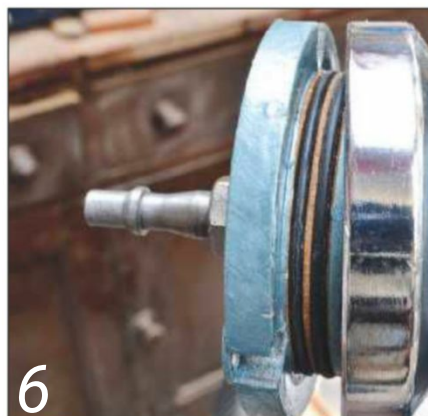
Vibration is the enemy of turning and the heavier the lathe, the better in terms of damping any vibrations. Bolting your lathe to a heavy bench will also help and many also bolt the bench to the floor. Some then add bags of sand, concrete blocks, bricks, etc. to increase the weight. These precautions might be necessary if you're working with large unbalanced pieces or doing offcentre work, but with small pieces, you probably won't need to go to these lengths. Just make sure the lathe is firmly secured to whatever it is mounted on.



My woodburning stove is mounted on a stone slab with a double layer of fireproof board behind it



Indexing is a handy feature, although most lathes don't have it



Having a hole all the way through the headstock spindle is useful for removing centres and such from the spindle's internal taper, and also makes the building of a vacuum system much easier when you decide you want one

What else might you want?

There are a number of desirable, very useful but not quite essential features that you might come across.

- Electronic variable-speed is becoming increasingly common on new lathes and can be added, at a price, to older lathes. There is no doubt it is a very useful feature and I'd put it top of the wish list.
- Indexing, i.e. being able to lock the lathe spindle in a number of fixed positions, is a handy feature, although many lathes don't have it. With a little ingenuity it's usually possible to add it, for very little cost, to a lathe that doesn't (photo 5).
- Having a hole all the way through the headstock spindle is useful for removing centres and such from the spindle's internal taper, and also makes the building of a vacuum system much easier when you decide you want one (photo 6). Most Record Power lathes are notable in not having this facility, although the very latest ones have. Alternatively, you can buy a ready-made vacuum system, but it will set you back an extra £500-£1,000.
- Being able to remove the tailstock by sliding it off the end of the bed is surprisingly useful and can be a source of irritation if your lathe won't allow it, so possibly worth considering.

Bob's lathes

So, after writing all this, what lathe do I have myself? I have two: a Vicmarc VL175SH (photo 2), which fulfils my needs on most of the criteria stated and has served me well although it originally came with a 1HP motor and was definitely underpowered. I believe that Vicmarc now supply it with a 1.5HP motor as standard but I upgraded mine myself with a 2HP motor and electronic variable-speed unit from an independent supplier.

Until recently, my second lathe was also a Vicmarc, the much smaller VL100 (photo 7), which I used almost exclusively for demonstrations. I purchased it without a motor and then fitted the 1HP motor and variable-speed taken off the VL175. Both lathes have the same spindle thread, which means that all my chucks and other bits and pieces fit them both, therefore reducing the need for duplication.

When I stopped demonstrating I sold the VL100, but soon found I missed the convenience of a second lathe. After a few months of waiting and watching, I bought a replacement on eBay for £85. It needed a little work to add indexing, variable-speed and a vacuum system, but it now performs more than adequately (photo 8). It is, of course, always worth remembering that the quality of the work depends on the turner,

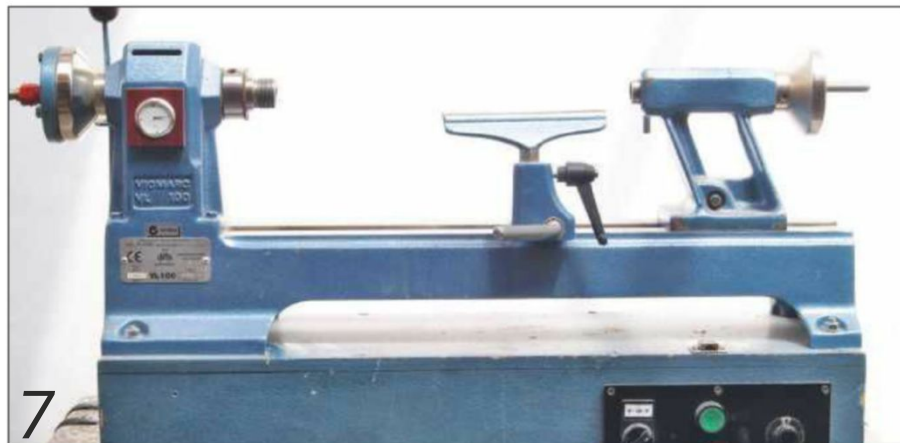
not the lathe. The best lathe in the world won't make you a better turner, and a cheap lathe won't prevent you from becoming one.

Sawing

When I first began turning as a young man more than 30 years ago, I soon discovered that buying ready-prepared bowl blanks is a very expensive way of acquiring timber. Instead I would pay a visit to my local sawmill (photo 9) where I could buy entire sawn boards for the price of a single ready-prepared bowl blank. The proprietor gradually got to know me and, provided the saw is not actually running at the time, will now let me wander about looking through the various stacks for the pieces I want.

In those early days I'd draw a circle near the end, avoiding any cracks, and use a hand saw to cut across the board. Then I'd cut off the corners with straight cuts, then cut off the smaller corners, before mounting the piece on the lathe to turn to round. It was hard work, all that sawing, but it helped keep me fit.

As soon as I could afford one I bought a bandsaw. What a luxury it was, to watch that blade slice through the boards like a knife through butter. Pretty soon I was cutting thicker and thicker boards to give me deeper blanks for bowls and hollow forms until, inevitably, I reached the limit



7 The Vicmarc VL100 lathe



8 My £85 unbranded eBay lathe now features indexing, variable-speed and a vacuum system



9 Visiting a local sawmill is a great way to buy entire sawn boards, which can then be made into bowl blanks



10 My Record BS500 bandsaw



11

My tools are kept in racks on the wall behind the lathe

of the bandsaw. There is an unbreakable natural law about bandsaws: no matter how big your bandsaw, the day will come when it is too small. My advice is to buy the biggest you can afford, also taking quality and power into account and, the moment it is delivered, start saving for a bigger one.

My current bandsaw, a Record BS500, will cut through timber 280mm-thick and, finally, I can go no bigger. It is taller than I am and only just fits in the space available in my workshop (**photo 10**). Strangely, when cutting out bowl blanks I still often do it by using the bandsaw to cut off corners with straight cuts, just as I did in my hand sawing days. Alas, it doesn't keep me fit anymore.

If you prefer to cut circular blanks, then remember that narrower blades will cut tighter circles. I find that a 10mm blade is a good 'all-round' size.

A basic toolkit

Many woodturners are tool 'collectors' and would probably admit to having more tools than they actually use – at least on a regular basis.

My tools are kept in racks on the wall behind the lathe (**photo 11**). The left-hand rack of eight tools contains mostly bowl gouges and one spindle roughing gouge. The next rack of 10 holds scrapers and 'special' tools, such as bead-forming tools and a captive ring tool. To the right of these is a group of parting tools, skew chisels and spindle gouges, followed by a pair of thread chasers and some hollowing tools. I also have a Rolly Munro mini hollower and

a few home-made deep hollowing tools. These comprise my entire kit of turning tools and I only have as many as this because there is a great deal of duplication. For example, I have four almost identical 13mm bowl gouges. When I did demonstrations, it was much quicker to put down a blunt gouge and pick up a sharper one than to stop and sharpen the first one.

The tools I use most are a 32mm spindle roughing gouge, 13mm bowl gouges, 38mm round-nosed scraper, 6mm scraper, 3mm parting tool and a 25mm skew chisel. These six tools probably account for about 80% of the turning I do. Less frequently, a smaller bowl gouge, say 10mm or 6mm is useful, as is a 25mm round-nosed scraper. I use a 10mm spindle gouge for hollowing boxes.

I also have a very useful narrow parting tool, homemade from an old machine hacksaw blade, but please don't take this as an indication that I approve of using things like old files or Land-Rover springs to make scrapers – I don't – and regard the practice as very dubious and potentially highly dangerous. Manufacturing your own tools from proper tool steel is another matter, however.

If you are new to turning, consider buying tools in the 'most used' list first, and adding to it as you need to. Remember that with tools, as with much else, you get what you pay for. Don't expect cheap tools to perform well. I like Ashley Iles and Hamlet tools best (an unbiased testimonial, because I get nothing from them for saying so), but this is a personal choice and tools from any of

the well-known 'quality' manufacturers will serve you well.

It's also perhaps worth mentioning here that brand-new tools are not sharp. You must sharpen them before use. I've met several beginners who blame themselves for poor results when in fact they have been using brand-new, but blunt, tools.

Sharpening

A hand plane, used to plane a piece of wood for 15 minutes, will cut through something like quarter of a mile of wood. It's no surprise, then, that it might require re-sharpening at this stage.

However, a spindle roughing gouge, used for 15 minutes on a 150mm workpiece rotating at 1,000rpm, will cut through almost four and a half miles of wood. The message is clear: your turning tools work very hard and frequent sharpening is required to keep them in good condition.

PLANE BLADE

Suppose a stroke length of about 450mm at a rate of one stroke per second, kept up for 15 minutes without pause. Unlikely, perhaps, but it gives us a basis for calculation.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Distance cut} &= 450\text{mm} \times 60 \times 15 \\ &= 405\,000\text{mm} \\ &= 405\text{ metres } (= 0.405\text{ km}) \\ &= 450\text{ yards} \\ &= 0.26\text{ miles}\end{aligned}$$

SPINDLE ROUGHING GOUGE

Suppose a workpiece diameter of 150mm at 1,000rpm for 15 minutes. Of course, the diameter wouldn't remain the same throughout but, again, it gives us a basis for calculation.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Distance cut} &= 150\text{mm} \times \pi \times 1,000 \times 15 \\ &= 150\text{mm} \times 3.14 \times 1,000 \times 15 \\ &= 7068584\text{mm} \\ &= 7068.58\text{ metre } (= 7.069\text{km}) \\ &= 7854\text{ yards} \\ &= 4.46\text{ miles}\end{aligned}$$

Grinders

The two most favoured methods of sharpening turning tools are dry grinding on a high-speed bench grinder or slow grinding on a low speed water-lubricated and water-cooled grindstone.

Dry grinders usually come with two wheels: one coarse and one fine grit (**photo 12**). The coarser pink wheel on my grinder is used for reshaping tools, where it might

be necessary to remove relatively large amounts of metal. The finer grit cubic boron nitride wheel is used to retouch the edge of the tool with minimal metal removal, and gets more use than the coarse wheel. The CBN wheel gives a very sharp edge, but these wheels are very expensive and a fine grit white wheel may be better value at about a fifth of the price.

I've removed the guards that came on my grinder so that I can see the cutting edge more clearly but, lest you think me careless of safety, please note that I always wear safety glass in the workshop, no matter what I'm doing and that obviously includes sharpening.

For many years the water-cooled sharpening system was the Tormek (photo 13) and it is still probably the one that people think of first although cheaper versions are now available from other manufacturers. The Tormek system gives a wonderfully sharp edge and there is no danger of overheating the tool, but this assurance comes at a price – the smallest and cheapest of the Tormek grinders will set you back about four or five times the price of a reasonable quality dry grinder, and you have to consider whether the difference is worth it. In my experience, seeking advice on this is fruitless – for every turner who favours a dry grinder there is another who prefers a water-cooled system.

On either system the sharpening of straight edge tools is relatively easy and satisfactory results can be achieved with only a little practice. Sharpening gouges, however, is another matter altogether and some quite experienced turners find it difficult. The answer is to use a jig, and



12 Dry grinders usually come with two wheels: one coarse and one fine grit

several different types are available for both types of grinder. Many professional turners, myself included, also use these jigs, not necessarily because they can't sharpen freehand but because the jig guarantees consistency in the shape of the cutting edge and hence the way it will behave in use.

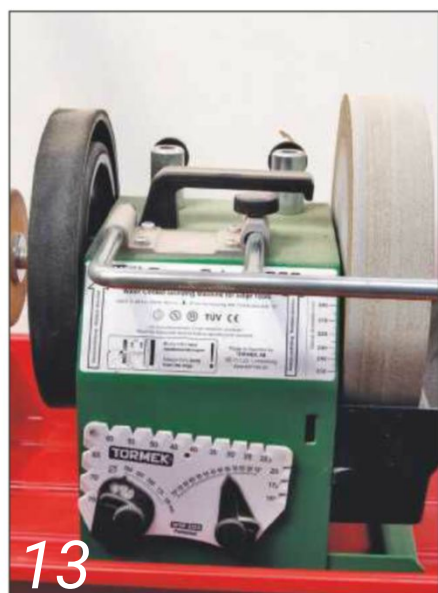
Metalworking lathe

Some years ago I bought a Myford ML7 metalworking lathe on eBay (photo 14). From its serial number I know it is a year or two older than I am, although it looks younger. I bought it for a specific job at the time, with the idea of selling it again straight afterwards, but decided to keep it as it would, no doubt, 'come in handy' sometime. Well, it has – several times in fact.

Of course there is no reason why a metalworking lathe can't also be used to turn wood and I have found it particularly

useful for cutting dowels with perfectly parallel sides. With a small scraper mounted in its toolpost, the carriage can be wound along the bed with the cutting edge moving in a highly accurate straight line. The diameter can be adjusted by the thousandth of an inch (there's nothing metric about this machine) until it is spot on the required size.

Metalworking lathes traditionally use a three-jaw chuck, which won't hold a square workpiece. When I needed to, I overcame the problem by buying a Myford ML8 insert for one of my woodturning chucks. For those who don't know, the spindle thread on the ML7 (metal lathe) is the same as that on the ML8 (woodturning lathe). Thus I can now use my four-jaw woodturning chucks on the metalworking lathe. I certainly wouldn't advocate buying a metalworking lathe just to cut dowels but, even so, I don't think I'll part with it just yet. [www](http://www.getwoodworking.com)



13 Tormek's water-cooled sharpening system



14 The Myford ML7 metalworking lathe



William's woodwork

Here's an interesting letter from William Pearson, a college lecturer in carpentry and joinery. Having been recently employed in a similar role at the Editor's own local technical college, we entirely sympathise with his opinions

As a college lecturer I have a lot of trouble encouraging students to return for the second and third year. The NVQ apprentices attend one day each week, they are sponsored by their employers and receive a weekly wage to support them throughout their course. As part of their studies they have to develop a portfolio of work-based evidence that is verified by a work-based recorder and checked by myself on regular site visits where I observe students at work on the job and talk with the employer.

As well as NVQ apprentices, at our college we provide courses for the unemployed or those not in the trade. These students study the Diploma Portfolio levels 1, 2 and 3, and when they become employed they can develop their NVQs by on-site studies and attending college to complete set tests.

It is this group that require the most support and encouragement to return for

the following year. To make them think more about the benefits of further study, I give them all the following document: woodwork as it was, as it is, as it should be...

New modern woodworkers

I first became interested in joinery at secondary school, and after four years of study I managed to win the school prize for woodwork. I became an indentured apprentice for five years with a small company specialising in cabinet work and general joinery. The work was very hard and varied, often starting at 7am and continuing until 8.30pm. We often worked outdoors and in all weathers, and everyone worked hard to complete the projects on time.

The main concern was to work neatly and produce a finish worthy of praise, remove all waste and clean up before leaving. A main priority was the quality of the joinery, and professionalism towards the customer and the completed work.

To this end we apprentices had to complete many long and strenuous years of training; even after becoming a mature craftsman you had to put a serious effort into executing the joinery correctly or another company would quickly benefit from your experiences.

The modern trend to reduce the amount of time taken to train a person suggests a 'trainee' can be out of his time in two years or less allowing him to practise in the trade and call himself a 'joiner'.

These novices rely almost totally on

modern technology to make up for their shortfall of trade knowledge and skills by the use of power tools, jigs and gadgets, glues and silicones, etc. Many are incapable of producing any quality work at all so much so that people's attitude towards woodworking has changed to the point where they tend to ignore the value and capability of the human hand.

I strongly feel that these new modern woodworkers are too dependent on machinery and gadgets that are fast and easy to use. This modern trend has led to attitudes that disassociate the end result of the work from the 'human touch'.

Traditional hand-built joinery and furniture would exude quality and a feeling of warmth and individuality as well as craftsmanship. Mass-produced woodwork using modern technology and machinery has lost much of its individuality and the feel of quality found in joinery made in previous times.

Machines and power tools can only carry out a practical procedure and therefore you cannot feel the human touch anywhere in their products. When you begin to realise this then you can understand why woodworking is not a matter of working down to a price and rushing about to get the job done, but a way of working to a high standard by adding quality and richness into your work that will be admired for generations to come. **WW**

W Pearson



N-M-O.com Woodworking Machinery



Established in 1978, Neville M. Oldham Woodworking Machinery has a well respected reputation for supplying new, used and reconditioned woodworking machinery. Neville previously worked in sales in the north of England for Multico.

Why buy used woodworking machinery?

Gareth believes there are three reasons:

- 1.** The used equipment we sell, manufactured by Wadkin, Sedgwick and many others, built in the UK, were built to last by the best engineers, using the best materials, and building the highest standards.
- 2.** Due to the build quality of this used machinery and the fine adjustments that can be made over the years, these machines continue to be extremely accurate, easy to work with and, on most occasions, will give a far more professional finish.
- 3.** Used woodworking machinery built in England can be as expensive as new machines manufactured overseas but will still have a value when you come to sell, making them excellent value in the long-term.

NMO has supported the Northern Woodworking Show since the early 1990's and we look forward to meeting you all on Stand No.54, where we will be exhibiting a range of quality used machines.



Remember - NMO advice is FREE!

As in the past, NMO will continue to stock a comprehensive range of used and reconditioned woodworking machinery.

www.n-m-o.com

Gareth Tomlinson joined the company in 1985 after marrying Neville's oldest daughter, Judith.

As a small, family-run business, Gareth's role in the company was both in sales and purchasing and, when necessary, to help the engineers in servicing and re-building machinery.

NMO has always had a strong customer service policy and we have felt that this has been enhanced by our desire, whenever possible, to deliver the machinery purchased directly to the customer. This enables us to ensure that the customer is completely satisfied with the machinery delivered and also that the customer understands the workings of the machines.

For five years in the late 1990s Gareth worked for one of the largest woodworking machinery suppliers in the UK as Sales Manager, and later as Export Sales Manager.

During this time Gareth gained a comprehensive knowledge of all types of woodworking machinery. He travelled the world selling single machines through to full turnkey projects.

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The *art* of wainscoting

Mark Griffiths offers advice on how to go about panelling a room

Some years ago I found myself in a client's ugly, box-like dining room extension, which had been built in the 1920s onto his beautiful 17th-century country house. We were discussing ways of making this room connect with the rest of the heavily timbered house; I was extolling the benefits of bookcases and radiator covers, when the client said: "Why don't we cover the walls with oak panelling?" As has happened many times in my working life, I heard myself saying: "What a great idea – I would be happy to take that on." I left the meeting with the client's enthusiasm for the project matched only by my feeling of being way out of my depth.

When safely back in the workshop with a cup of tea in hand, I decided that I would do a bit of research using some of the old woodworking books I have collected over the years – before calling the client to

explain that I had no idea how to panel a room and he was best off calling in a joinery company. After a few hours poring over these dusty tomes, and plenty more tea, my confidence was returning. As far as I could see, room panelling basically used the same techniques as frame and panel door making, which I was very familiar with.

I spent quite some time studying the origins of panelling (see 'a brief history of wainscoting'), and was impressed by how, if done right, it can give a room an authentically traditional, luxurious look. When faced with a challenging or intimidating project, I find that time spent researching similar work not only helps with the understanding of how to go about designing and constructing the project, but also fires up my creative interest in the process ahead; it is this interest that enables me to overcome any challenges that will inevitably arise.

Starting with a job like this, it's a good idea to make up to scale a section of the panelling for the room in question. Not only does this give you a chance to check that you have all the right tooling for the job and to see how best to joint it, but it will also enable the client to see the effect created and how the colour and finish will look – things that a drawing can never convey. It's also handy to have a sample or two (**photo 2**) to show other prospective customers in the future.

Measuring & drawing

So with slightly more confidence than before, I set about the first and most important part of the job, which was to accurately measure up the room to be panelled. With any job, but especially one on this scale, I will start by taking a lot of accurate and clearly set-out measurements in my sketchbook, then go away to make



my drawings, after which I'll return to take a second measure with a copy of the plans, referencing each measurement against what has been drawn up. There are two great aids for this process.

An accurate measuring device or two is essential. I used a telescopic measure – the BMI IdeeFIX (photo 3) – which will extend from 500mm up to 2,300mm. It's also very useful to have another person on hand to help. Not only are they able to hold the end of the tape, but another pair of eyes to point out potential issues such as electrical plugs and plumbing is very handy.

As well as a 1:10 scale drawing of each wall section to be covered, I would highly recommend making a full-scale rod drawing of any corner sections or areas that may require complex joining, like the meeting point with a door frame, radiator cover or step-out in the wall. The benefit of this is that potential problems can be worked out in pencil first, ensuring that the panel work will visually run correctly around the room and look as though it has always been there.

Materials for the job

With all drawings made and double-checked, it was time to source the timber. On this job a locally sourced English oak had been specified to match two original ledge and brace doors, which were a feature of the room. When using waney-edged native oak I will allow for a 30%

waste ratio; as the room would require 15sq.m of timber I would be ordering a lot of lumber. It is essential to visit the timber yard and discuss the job with the yard manager, as with their skill and knowledge they will hopefully direct you to planks that have a uniform colour and character, something of the utmost importance when covering such a large surface area. Any strong colour variation will give an unpleasant contrast to the rest of the work. They will also advise you on the timber's stability if your design requires large panels.

Machining the panels

With the design completed and approved, it was time to begin machining. I started by rough-cutting each component oversize, individually marking them to correspond to the cutting list. Ensuring each piece of timber always has a clear identification mark not only avoids confusion when dealing with multiple components, but will also make it easy for any other person who may be assisting in the workshop to understand what goes where.

To avoid a sense of being overwhelmed by the scale of the conversion, I split the operation into different stages. Firstly the panels were machined up, then the frames, and finally the mouldings were spindle-cut.

I machined up the oak for the panels to 20mm-thick with both edges planed square.

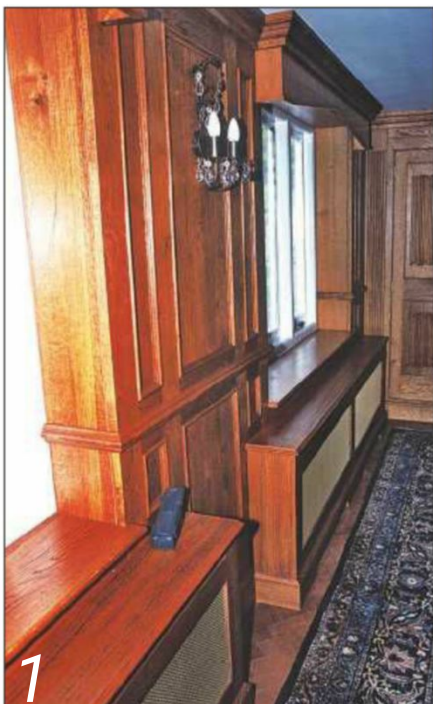


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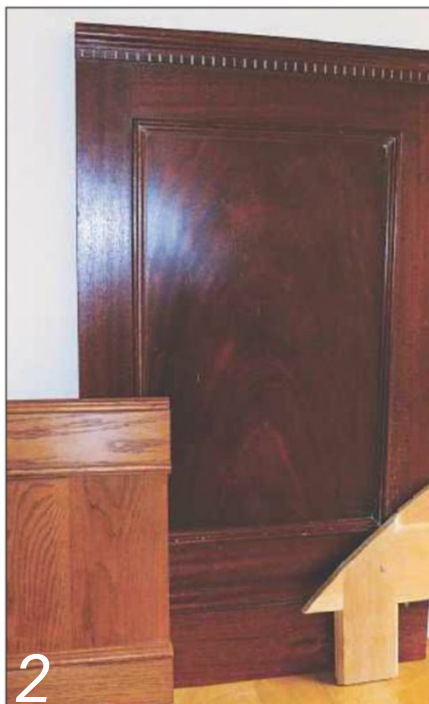
The BMI IdeeFIX is a useful measuring tool

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WAINSCOTING

In my research I discovered that wainscoting – the proper name for wooden wall panelling – has been around from before the 14th century, where it was made up of hand-wrought vertical planks that were fixed to a frame with nails or slotted into a grooved stud or 'muntin'. By the end of the 15th century, joinery skills had progressed and we start to see what we think of as classic wood panelling, comprising a top and bottom rail with an intermediate one depending on the room height. These would be peg tenoned into vertical styles. Muntins were jointed into the rails at equal intervals to fit the panel size. All of these members would be grooved to take a panel. A scratchstock was used to produce a moulded detail around the internal frame edge, typically ending in a hand-carved mason's mitre at the join of the muntin to a rail. Other stonemason details would be found in the design, such as linenfold carved panels. By the late 17th century, the style and woodworking techniques had changed to reflect the taste for the classical Renaissance architecture of the time. Oak was still in use as a timber, but the vogue was for a wider panel, which would be made up in pine and painted in one of the period's fashionable colours. Other details were lifted from the interest in classical styles such as heavy cornices, pilasters and architraves, all of which were cleverly employed to hide any construction details. Another new technique was to fit the panel in a rebated frame and then apply a planted or bolection moulding around the inside edge



It might seem oppressive to some, but wall panelling can actually seem to open up a room



Customers always like to see a sample or two

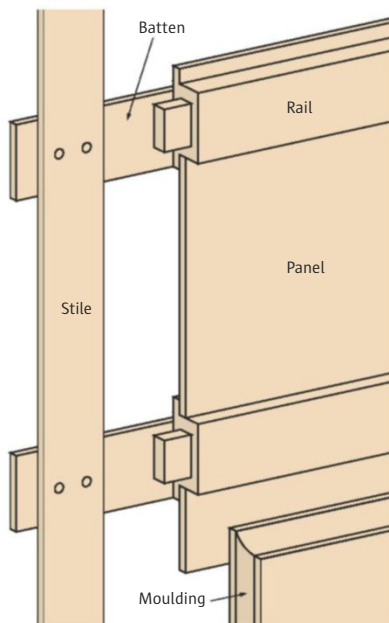


Fig.1 Details of frame and panel construction

Each panel would be made up of four planks, which when joined together would have an extra 10mm on each edge to allow for trimming in. A 30 x 10mm rebate would be run around the back edges, making the panel sit below the face of the frame.

After spending three whole days slaving over a hot planer, it was a relief to break for two days to joint and glue the panels up. Joining the sections for the panels was carried out using the biscuit jointer with the cutter set for No.10 biscuits. Extra planks were machined up in order that there would be plenty of choice when sorting the four lengths for each panel; this would help ensure that every panel would be made up to display a nice selection of both matching and contrasting boards.

When in the process of choosing the sections of timber for your panel, one thing that must not be forgotten is to make sure that each plank is laid with its growth rings in an opposing direction from its neighbour

to improve stability. After each panel was dry it was rough-sanded with a 120 grit belt sander and stacked in stick somewhere flat and dry (**photo 4**).

On the subject of gluing up, for this type of application I am a big fan of the Titebond range of glues – they even do a fluorescent one that reveals any un-sanded residue left after sanding using an ultraviolet light. This can avoid major problems on a job like this one, where the finish is going to be applied after installation, and the last thing you need is a visible glue mark.

Making the frames

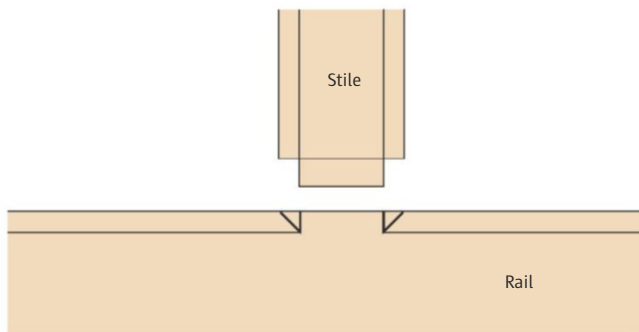
It was then back to the planer for the next few days, as I produced the frame sections (**photo 5**). When faced with long stints on a noisy machine, I am very grateful for my FM radio ear defenders – what can be a mind-numbingly boring, repetitive task becomes far easier to bear with *The Archers* for company.

When thickening timber I always mark the upturned face coming out of the machine with an arrow showing the grain direction so that the next time the piece is picked up it's obvious which way it has to be fed in to avoid tear-out. Also, stacking the piece face up as it leaves the planer will ensure that you turn it over on the next pass, planing the opposite face, and in doing so, ensure that the component will have an even amount of timber removed from each surface to help prevent movement.

With all of the framework components machined to size and thickened down to 25mm, I could set the spindle moulder to cut a 15mm deep, 8mm wide groove on each edge with one of the shoulders reduced by 10mm for fitting the panel; you could do this just as easily using a router table. Having double-checked my measurements, I then cut to length all of



End-grain layout for panels



Mason's mitre

Fig.2 Recommended grain configuration for panels. Detail of 'mason's mitre'



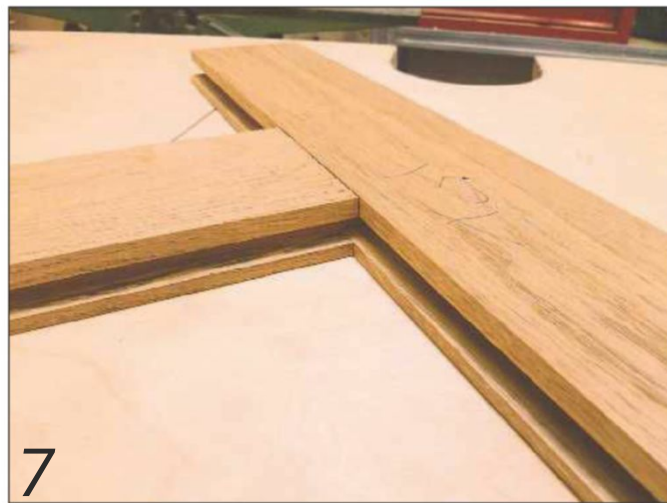
The boards for the panels were machined first then left stacked prior to jointing



Some of the frame components cut to length



6 I used the spindle moulder with a dado cutter fitted to form the joints



7 The frames were glued and jointed together, before the framework was built up

the rails, muntins and stiles, and fitted a dado cutter to machine all of the tenons (photo 6). The last sections to be machined were the plinths, panel mouldings and cornice, all of which were produced on the spindle moulder. Due to the long lengths required for the plinths and cornice, I had help running them over the cutter. Even with a long table and outfeed rollers set up, it's hard to get a totally smooth cut with no judder marks, but having a friend on hand who understands how to keep an even pressure and feed speed will beat even a powered roller feed, and save the time spent later laboriously sanding out machine marks.

Linenfold section

One of the more enjoyable machine 'shop' tasks was making up the linenfold sections using a router cutter set. While leafing through a cutter catalogue from the Wealden Tool Company, I found a two cutter set for £66.73 and could not wait to have an opportunity to try it out. Following the supplied instructions you cut your timber to a specific width and thickness, the length and quantity determined by your panel size.

The pieces are first moulded on the face edge with one of the cutters and then placed in a simple jig (instructions for making this are provided), and the second cutter runs a shaped rebate on each end. I think the results are incredibly impressive when you think of the time this operation would take by hand, and you can always take a carving chisel and dress them up a bit to give some evidence of a craftsman at work.

On-site fitting

Preparing the groundwork on this type of



8 On site the frames were fitted into place before slotting in the panels and fitting the mouldings

project is all-important. Firstly, a painter and decorator had applied a damp proofing paint to all the walls, onto which I fixed 25 x 50mm softwood battens set in line to a point on the rails that would have a dowel detail I could fix through. Time spent with a long level checking, and if need be packing out the battens so that they sat flush with each other, ensured that when the frames met in the room corners an even joint would be created. Manageable sections of the frame had been glued and cramped together in the workshop; when fitted to the battens these sections formed the main reference point to the smaller sections that would be fitted around them. All of the frame and panelling had been given a coat of exterior varnish on the back to seal it before wall fixing.

With the entire framework fixed into place the panels could now be located in their positions (photo 8). The mouldings could also be mitred and glued and pinned with an air nailer into the framework, taking

care not to get glue on the panels (which need room to move over time). The end cabinets and radiator covers were fitted, and all additional mouldings, such as the ones on the dado and around the original door frames that helped blend them into the frame rails. The final items to fix into place were the plinth, which again was secured using glue and some well-placed pins fired through part of its moulded detail, which when filled with a bit of hard wax would be virtually undetectable. Time and again I find taking an air-driven pin/nail gun running off a small compressor an invaluable tool for fixing mouldings on site, holding joints together while glue dries and doing countless other tasks.

After the mitres for the cornice had been cut using a snip saw they were fitted into place 20mm below the ceiling. Along with a chamfer, which ran along the back of the cornice, this 20mm gap would allow the wall behind to breathe by creating airflow. On the uninsulated exterior walls typical of

older properties it may also be necessary to either cut slots or fix ventilation grills in the plinth to aid the airflow further, thus avoiding any future issues with damp.

Final touches

Before applying the finish, all of the pin holes were filled with a hard wax; hand-rounded oak dowels were lightly glued and tapped into the batten fixing holes and in the adjoining holes that would give the frame a pegged tenon detail. The dowels were saw cut a few millimetres proud and then not trimmed flush but blunted over with a chisel and abrasive paper (**photo 9**). This is an old trick I learnt back in the days when I used to reproduce antiques. If you look at original pegged joints, over time the end-grain dowel will protrude slightly and as it is rubbed and worn it takes on a domed quality. This will also add a bit of texture detail when being viewed from the side.

Finally, the panelling was stained with a mild oak stain that I had made up to match the two existing oak doors in the room, making sure that I had mixed plenty for the job in hand – you don't want to run out before the end and have to try to remix

exactly the same colour again. Three coats of a quality finishing oil were applied, with at least 10 hours allowed between applications, each time cutting back with a woven abrasive finishing pad; don't use steel wool as it will react with the oak.

With the knowledge and confidence that I gained from completing this project, I've gone on to do several more panelled rooms, some at $\frac{3}{4}$ -height and another one at just dado height. They have all been equally challenging and rewarding to make. In every case, much to the client's surprise, instead of the finished room feeling smaller it

actually has had the opposite effect, making it seem considerably larger. The real benefit for the client, of course, is that they will never have to buy wallpaper again... **WW**

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9 The dowels used for filling the fixing holes were left slightly proud and rounded over to give an authentic look to the job

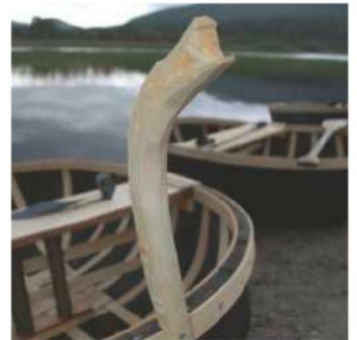


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WHAT IS W16?

W16 is the national show for the Joinery and Furniture industries, showcasing the latest products and developments.

As the UK's leading dedicated trade exhibition, formerly known as Woodmex and Asfi, W16 provides the opportunity to see running woodwork machinery together with components and materials all under one roof at the NEC, Birmingham.

WHY ATTEND THE SHOW?

At W16 you can find everything you need to succeed in your search for new products and improve your production capability.

Taking place over four days in three halls, it's an opportunity for joinery and furniture manufacturers, large and small, to meet and buy from machinery and components suppliers.

New attractions for 2016 will include Elements of Innovation, The Skills for Excellence Zone and The W Challenge, a competition embracing apprenticeships and training within the industry.

The W exhibition has over 40 years of heritage, and continues to grow and follow the success of Woodmex and Asfi.



As the exhibition expands, more components suppliers and materials join the show, consolidating the furniture and joinery industries and inviting everyone in this field to embrace the opportunity to see all products and machinery under one roof.

The event is the 'must see' show for manufacturers of all sizes working across a huge range of product sizes. Every two years the UK industry meets at this show to experience the latest in machinery, components and materials with the emphasis on live demonstration of product and process.

As the UK economy continues to grow, the manufacturing industry goes from strength to strength, with accelerated house building programmes and the use of wood rising as a sustainable and economical material. Much of W16 deals with the working of wood and use of Timber in building.

W16 embraces the growth of this industry, not just through an increase of exhibitors coming to the show but also by recognising and showcasing new talent and training within the industry & promoting the next generation who will take the industry forward, through it's educational focus.

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Variable Angle Fence for rebate planes

This product mounts onto the fence rods of the Veritas skew rebate or jack rebate planes and locks firmly in position with brass collets. It will allow you to plane accurate and consistent angles anywhere between 45° and 135°. You can set the fence using a square, a bevel, an angle gauge or directly on an angle you wish to match. The spring-loaded locking lever can be rotated out of the way if necessary.

Through-holes in the fence allow you to attach a wooden sub-fence or tapered spacer for planing angles less than 45°. The fence is 275mm long and made from aluminium and brass. Currently priced at £46.96, see www.brimarc.com for more information.



VIC TESOLIN TO DEMO IN CARDIFF & HARROGATE

Vic Tesolin of Veritas will be demonstrating at Axminster's Cardiff store and the North of England Woodworking & Power Tool Show at Harrogate this November.

Before entering the world of woodworking, Vic served for 14 years in the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. After leaving the RCHA, he studied furniture design and making at Rosewood Studio and learned from some of the best in the business, including Garrett Hack, Adrian Ferrazzutti and Michael Fortune. After graduating, he ran his own studio furniture business while working at Rosewood as a part-time instructor and craftsman in residence before becoming editor of *Canadian Woodworking* magazine.

Vic now has what might be seen as one of the best jobs in woodworking and it is a role which allows his charismatic personality to shine through. By day, Vic is the woodworking technical advisor at Lee Valley & Veritas Tools and by night he teaches privately and for Lee Valley's seminar programme. Vic is the author of *The Minimalist Woodworker* – a book which deals specifically with the needs of woodworkers who only have a small space at their disposal. Vic says: "You don't need to have all the tools, hundreds of square feet of space or thousands of dollars worth of gear. What you do need is the desire to make something with your own hands."

If you would like to catch one of Vic's demonstrations or have your copy of *The Minimalist Woodworker* signed by the author himself, he will be at the following venues on the following dates:

Saturday 12 & Sunday 13 November – Axminster Cardiff store, Valegate Retail Park, Cardiff CF5 6EH

Friday 18–Sunday 20 November – North of England Woodworking & Power Tool Show, Harrogate HG2 8QZ.

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THE 'HARROGATE' SHOW IS BACK

The North of England Woodworking & Power Tool Show, or the 'Harrogate' show as it is affectionately known, will take place this year from 18–20 November in the newly refurbished Hall 1 at the Yorkshire Showground.

The new hall was officially opened in July and will be great for the show, with easier access, more catering areas and almost 20% extra exhibition and demonstrator stands.

With 40 demonstrators and almost 100 exhibitors on show, this year's event will certainly be something special – make sure you put the date in your diary. For more information, see www.skpromotions.co.uk.



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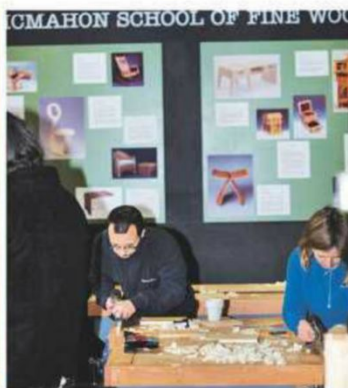
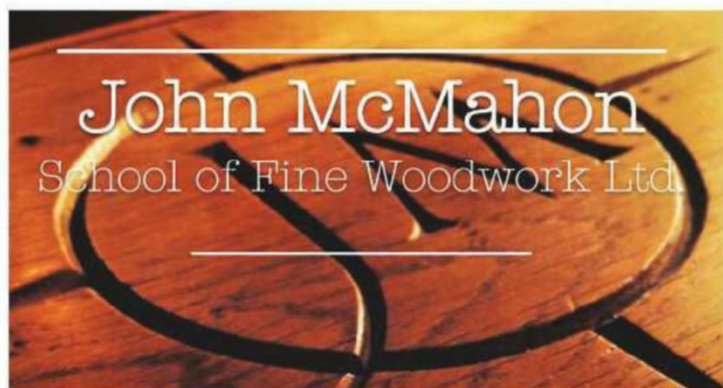
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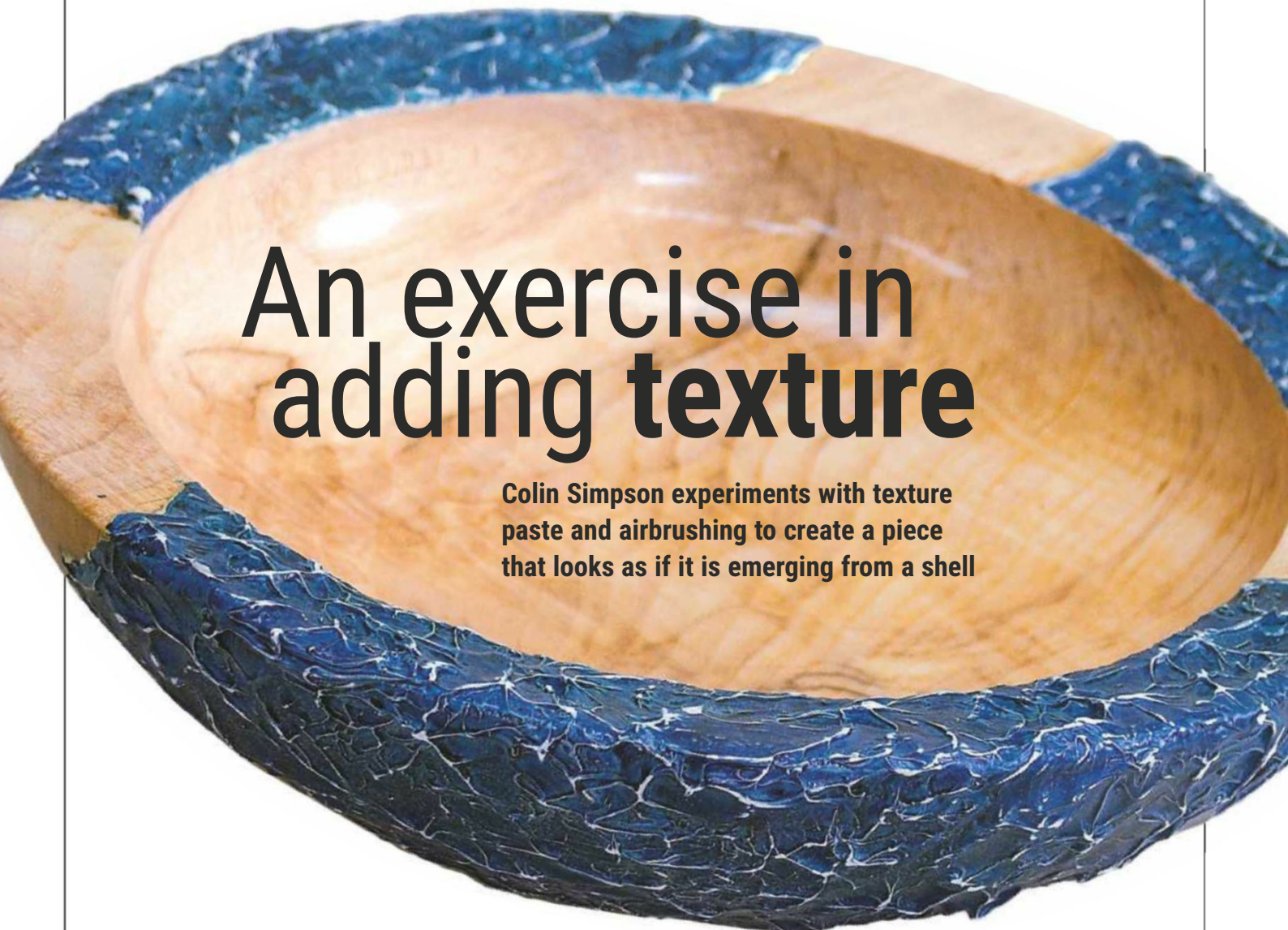
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An exercise in adding texture

Colin Simpson experiments with texture paste and airbrushing to create a piece that looks as if it is emerging from a shell



1 Try to avoid stooping at the lathe – it is less stressful on the spine

This article has some similarity to last month's in as much as I am trying to combine turned wood with other media. Last month I used copper metal reactive paints and this month I am using a medium called texture paste. This is an acrylic medium that artists use to add texture to their canvas prior to painting. I wanted to create a piece that looked like a bowl was emerging from a shell, not dissimilar to a smooth chestnut coming out of its spiky pod.

The actual turning is straightforward. I used a piece of lightly spalted sycamore, but any wood could be used. I think well polished oak with its medullary rays would look good.

Pull cut

Start by mounting the blank on the lathe and use a pull cut to flatten the bottom. I have shown this cut many times before, so this time I took a wider shot (**photo 1**),

showing my stance. Notice I am standing upright with my spine straight. This is far more comfortable than crouching or stooping. The handle of the tool is tucked into my right side and is held lower than the cutting edge. The fingers of my left hand are wrapped around the shaft and the heel of my hand is resting on the toolrest. With the flute pointing into the wood, the bottom



2 Roll the tool up for a bevel supported pull cut

wing of the tool does the cutting. Start in the centre of the blank and pull the tool towards you – the pull cut. As I have described it, this cut is really a scrape as only the cutting edge of the tool is touching the wood, but if you roll the tool up then the bevel will start to rub the wood (**photo 2**), resulting in a better surface finish. Continue to use the pull cut to flatten the bottom of the blank, then true up the side using a push cut (**photo 3**). Use the tip of the tool with the flute about half open and keep the handle lower than the cutting tip.

Keep the pressure down on the toolrest but don't push the tool into the wood. Slowly slide the tool along the toolrest and just take off the high points on the edge of the blank. Try not to alter the angle of the handle as you move the tool along the toolrest. If you feel the tool banging on the high points as the blank revolves, then you are pushing too hard into the wood. Repeat this cut as many times as necessary to bring the blank into round.

Shaping the outside

Next, start to shape the outside of the bowl with either pull or push cuts or a combination of both (**photo 4**). Cut the chucking spigot using the tip of the bowl gouge (**photo 5**) and then remove the waste wood with a pull cut. Cut the dovetail on the spigot with a skew chisel on its side (**photo 6**) and make a pop mark in the very centre of the spigot with the long point of the skew (**photo 7**). Finalise the outside shape of the bowl and then make several finishing cuts with the bowl gouge to clean up the surface (**photo 8**). The finishing cut is made by lowering the handle of the gouge and rolling the tool over so that the cutting edge is about 45° to the surface of the wood. Take light, gentle cuts and aim to achieve very fine spiral shavings and remember to keep the handle low so the cutting edge stays at 45° to the wood.

Truing up the top

Sand the outside of the bowl – I used a power sander (**photo 9**) – and then apply a coat of sanding sealer. If you are going to use the texture paste, then don't apply wax at this stage.



True up the edge of the blank with a push cut...



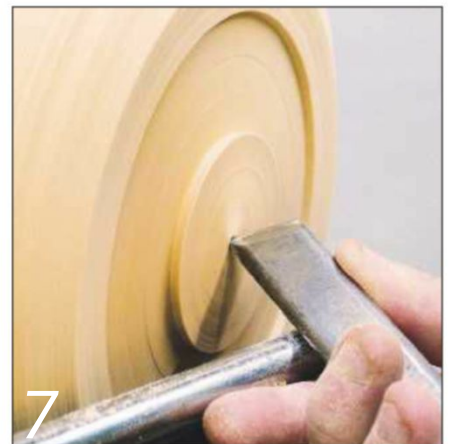
... and start cutting the outside curve



Cut the spigot using the tip of the bowl gouge...



... and cut the dovetail with a skew



Pop mark the centre to align the bowl when reverse chucking it



Make light finishing cuts, keeping the cutting edge at about 45°



Sand down to 400 grit



Start the hollowing process using the tip of the tool



11 Cut a little wider and deeper with each pass

Remove the bowl from the lathe and mount it on the spigot in your chuck. True up the top surface of the bowl, particularly the area near the edge that will become the bowl's rim and start to hollow it. Place the gouge on the toolrest so the flute is pointing to 3 o'clock and the handle well over the bed bars. Use the tip of the tool to create a groove about 4mm from the



12 Use a round-nosed scraper to undercut the rim

centre (**photo 10**). Next, swing the handle towards you at the same as pushing the cutting edge down the side wall and across the bottom of the bowl towards the centre. This action should be done at the same time as rotating the tool anti-clockwise until the flute is pointing to about half past one. Continue this cut, each time going a little wider and a little deeper (**photo 11**). I undercut the rim of the bowl slightly using a round-nosed scraper (**photo 12**), then sanded the inside and applied a coat of sanding sealer.

Creating texture

In a similar way to marking out the vase



13 Mark the areas that are going to be textured

last month, I used the natural spalt lines to mark out the areas I intended to texture (**photo 13**). The next process is done more easily off the lathe and I placed the bowl on an old lazy Susan to give me easy access all round. **Photo 14** shows the texture paste I use and I 'painted' it on to the rim quite thickly using a cheap glue brush (**photo 15**). I stippled it on to create a 'spiky' texture. For the larger areas underneath the bowl I found it quicker and easier to use a palette knife to apply the texture (**photo 16**). If you put the knife flat on the paste and lift it off, it creates the spiky texture. When you are happy with the texturing, leave the piece to dry. This can take some



14

This is the acrylic texture paste I use...



15

... painted on carefully at the edges...



16

... or trowelled on with a palette knife



17

Carefully apply the masking fluid to the wood



18

Use acrylic airbrush paints to colour the bottom and rim of the bowl



19

Lightly sand back the high points of the texture

time, depending on how thick the texture is. I left mine overnight.

The next stage is to mask the bare wood. Masking tape can be used on the large areas, but to mask right up to the texture I used a product called masking fluid (**photo 17**). This is a rubbery solution that is painted on and can be bought from artist suppliers. It dries quite quickly and can be rubbed off with your finger. Carefully paint it on with an old brush and leave to dry.

Airbrushing

I am going to airbrush acrylic paints onto the textured areas, but I have also used the metal reactive paints and the Jo Sonja iridescent paints over texture like this, both with good effect. My advice is to experiment, either on an old turned piece that you are happy to practice on or simply

on a flat scrap of wood to see the effects you can achieve before 'spoiling' your turned piece. I use Golden acrylic paints in my airbrush.

Spray the paints on lightly, overlapping each colour so you can't see where one coat starts and another finishes (**photo 18**). I used red, purple and blue and sprayed the bowl on the lathe with it running at about 50rpm.

When the paint has dried, remove the masking tape and fluid. I found the fluid came off easily (**photo 19**), but any stubborn areas can be removed by rubbing it with your finger. Next, lightly sand the textured area, taking off some of the high spots to reveal the white texture paste (**photo 20**). If necessary (and it was for me) re-sand the inside of the bowl to

remove paint overspray. Having sealed it before with sanding sealer, any overspray will be removed easily.

Finally, I gave the whole piece a couple of coats of Chestnut's acrylic satin lacquer (**photo 21**), before reverse chucking the bowl to remove the chucking spigot (**photo 22**).

Critique

I am not sure that I have achieved what I set out to do. I think the texture should not have come over the rim. It is a technique I plan to develop further. **Photo 24** shows an elm bowl where the texture paste has been modelled with a pointed tool and painted with iridescent paint. I think I prefer this one. [www](http://www.getwoodworking.com)



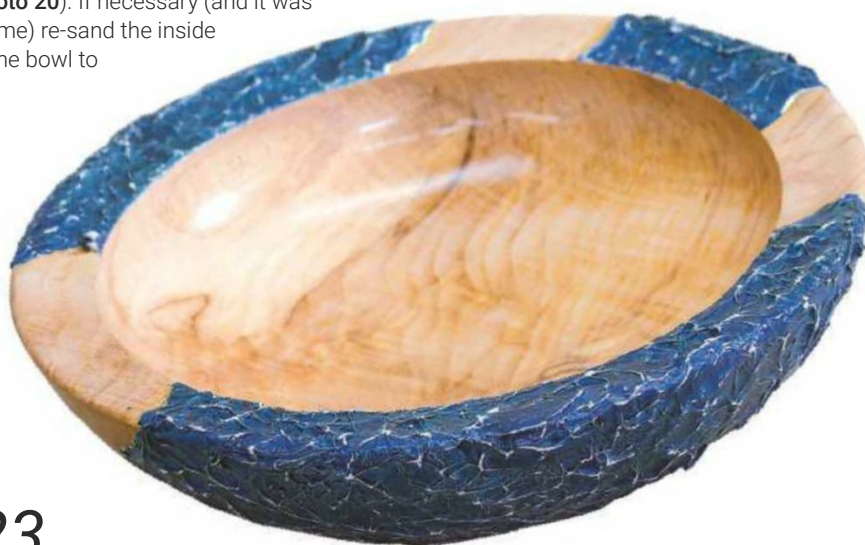
20
A gentle rub with a finger usually removes the masking fluid



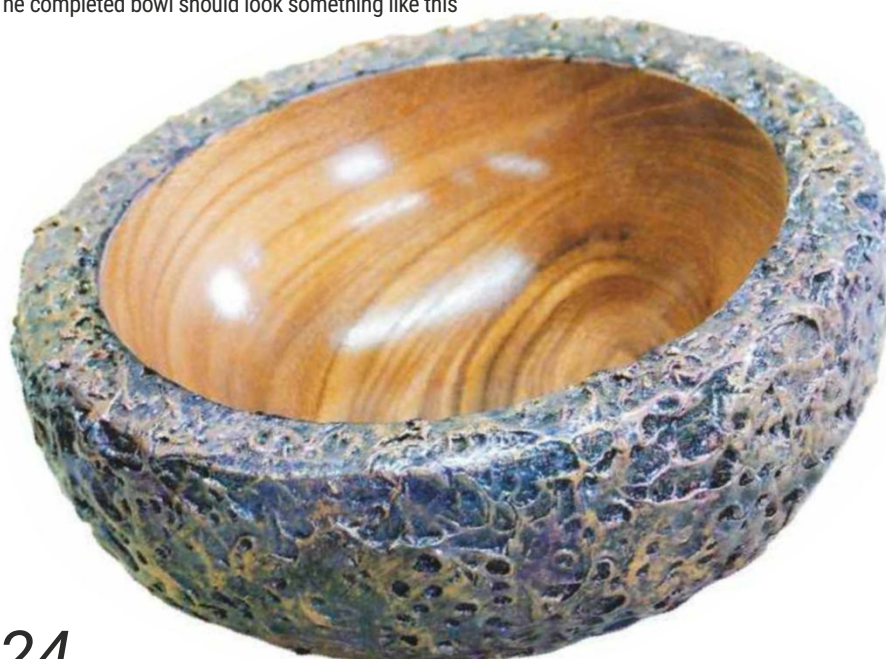
21
Finish the piece with a couple of coats of acrylic satin lacquer



22
Reverse the bowl onto a wooden dolly to remove the chucking spigot



23
The completed bowl should look something like this



24
Another example of a bowl that has been given a similar treatment

BEHOLD, the thingamajig!



Mike Riley challenges himself to try something different and ends up making a handy item

Recently, I have mostly been making a mess. It's gotten so bad that at one point I even resorted to sweeping up the workshop – 'heavens, no!' I can hear you cry – though it wasn't long before I was knee-deep in dust and chippings again.



Two square, planed pieces were glued together to provide a blank for 'The Thing'



The inside of the trough was gouged out and refined with various tools



After trying several different tools, a drawknife was used to rough-shape the outside...

A detour

I had been seeking inspiration for a quick project to keep me busy, preferably something that could be made from scraps knocking around the workshop that would allow me to try something new. I was circling around objects with interesting form – I wasn't overly concerned about functionality. I wanted to avoid making a piece that was too straight and square; the goal was not to assiduously produce a set of components and finally construct them, but to work on something that gradually came to life with each cut or chop.

The end result, which I have dubbed 'The Thing', embodies pretty well what I was going for. In terms of its purpose in life, it can be used as a holding tray for keys, coins, jewellery and the like, but as I've said, I was more interested in the form and finish of the piece than what it could be used for.

Inside and out

'The Thing' started out as a collection of offcuts from another project. The main



With the inside complete, it was time to carve the outside



... after which a spokeshave yielded a smooth but textured finish

parts were destined to be legs for a cabinet that was never made, and had sat on the rack for a year or two waiting to be requisitioned for another project. As cabinet legs, they had been planed straight and squared, and by gluing them together into one blank, I had the basis for a carved trough that would serve as a long, narrow kind of container.

I marked out the tray profile roughly on the ends of the blank and, starting at the end furthest from me, began gouging out the centre. It didn't take long to reach the desired depth; I changed the gouges as I approached final depth, moving from deeper to flatter sweeps to make even finer cuts.

Once satisfied with the inside, I flipped the blank over and started on the outside, aiming to carve a shape that matched the inside. I tried various means of wasting away the outside of the blank, calling upon gouges, rasps and abrasive paper, before finally settling on a drawknife for fast stock removal, followed by a flat spokeshave to achieve a finished surface. Perhaps I'm using cheap abrasive paper, but I am yet to get a better finish than one straight from a sharp blade.

After several false starts, the drawknife and spokeshave combined well and I managed to achieve a smooth but textured finish, if still displaying the marks of the tools that formed it. Using the same tools, I whittled down another small ash offcut to form two feet for mounting the tray on. Circular in profile, the feet were flattened to give the top an effective mounting point and a stable bottom.



The outside edges of the trough were taped up before I began to apply the finish

Stain trouble

Usually I finish my work with wax or a plain oil – Danish or linseed, depending on what I'm doing – but this time I thought I'd try something different. I had ordered a tub of graphite powder for another project and thought that I would see what kind of effect it would produce on the ash.

Thinking that I might localise the application of the graphite powder, I taped up the outside edges of the trough, and then started to mix a couple of spoonfuls of the graphite powder with a clear shellac in an old jar. Clumsy oaf that I am, I managed to spill most of it across the bench-top. The bench now sported a large black patch – as did I. Inevitably, the black contaminated anything that came into contact with the bench, so after I gave the trough a quick coat of the mixture, I stopped for the day to wait for the large stain to dry.

I'd wanted to achieve a stained rather than painted appearance, so I mixed the shellac and powder to the consistency of ink; the thin consistency meant that it took four coats of the mixture to coat the entire surface of the trough. I waited for the stain to dry between applications, as applying a

fresh coat before the last was completely dry tended to have the effect of lifting the previous one.

After a couple of hours the final coat was dry to the touch. At this point it became apparent that I had created such a mess that the outside of the trough was black in parts as well. I considered colouring the outside and pretending that it had been my intention to do so all along, but decided that this wasn't really satisfactory. Without further delay, I had to clean the bench-top so as to avoid more unwanted staining; I ended up bringing forward my annual bench flattening session and, by planing the top flat, removed the black patch. Once I had a clean bench to work on again I started shaving the outside of the trough once more with the spokeshave.

Before too long I had managed to remove all of the graphite stain, maintaining the smooth but textured feel.

Well-mounted

All that was left for me to do was mount the feet. I measured their position and then drilled small holes through from the top of the trough all the way through the ash piece, before pinning everything

TAKE TWO

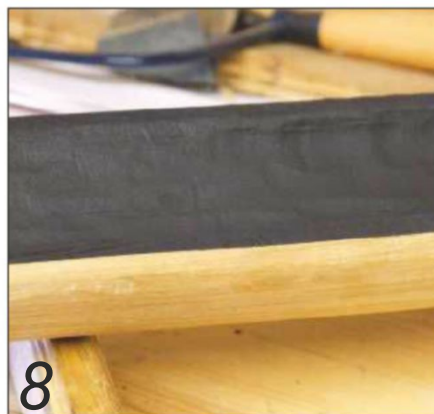
Before setting off on this mess-making crusade, I had to finish off a carving knife. The whole thing took about eight hours to complete with no machine use other than the initial cutting of the handle blanks. The finished result was quite good, though, and incrementally better than the last one I made. The handle is figured alder, with several coats of raw linseed lending it a reddish colour



together with thin sections of brass rod. And behold, 'The Thing' was complete. A strange thing to be sure, but it was a worthwhile project, allowing me to get some practice with the spokeshave and drawknife, and to experiment with the new finish. Its function is admittedly ambiguous, but I'm sure it'll see some kind of use! **WW**



7
The thinness of the graphite and shellac mixture meant that four coats were required...



8
... the result being the more stained than painted effect I was after



9
The finish to the workbench, however, was rather less desirable



10
The feet were shaped up from ash offcuts using the same drawknife/spokeshave combination



11
The trough was mounted to the feet, leaving a piece full of form over function!

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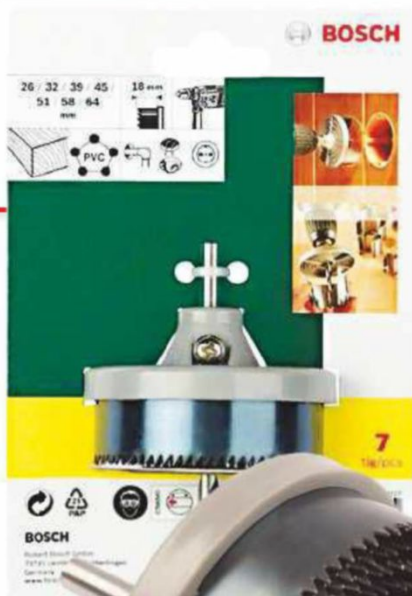
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TURN YOUR OWN TOOLS

Buying turning tools can be costly, so how about making your own? Niall Yates takes you through the steps for making a basic set, from sourcing the steel, tempering and hardening it, to turning custom tool handles

As someone who has earned a living in the woodworking trade for the last 30 years, I have had many occasions when the work I was undertaking required turned items.

In the beginning I contracted out this work, but after a few years, I acquired a lathe and a few tools and started to produce turned components in house. I cannot claim any great skill or expertise in the field, but I have had to produce a variety of items over the years. My approach to turning has always been to give the customer adequately made and workmanlike pieces. With this in mind, I have often relied upon scrapers of various kinds, including those specially ground to produce circular mouldings. Needless to say, the tools I have collected, adapted or made are not necessarily those suited to bowl turning or box making. In fact, I turned my first bowl only recently and have

become painfully aware that both my skill level and my limited selection of tools is woefully inadequate.

What to do

With a view to plug the gaps in my selection of turning tools, I looked online with a shopping list in mind and almost abandoned hope when the costs started to rise past the mid-hundreds. It also made me appreciate the tools I already had and be thankful that I wasn't starting from scratch. Some of the tools needed to fill those gaps included the large chatter-free scrapers, the French curve, the square-sided cut skew and the 45° skew. These don't require any forging, forming of curves or milling of channels and are easily made by cutting and grinding. They then need to be heat treated and have a turned handle and ferrule added to be serviceable. If you choose the correct tool steel, then this is easily accomplished in a small home workshop. The M2 type steel, popular for turning tools, is best avoided as it requires specialised heat treating. The plain carbon steel, though easily worked and capable of taking a very sharp edge, is probably best avoided also because of its loss of temper if overheated during grinding.

The solution

Having decided that the solution to my problem was to make the tools rather



than purchase them, I chose a selection of 10 to produce. I can only turn small bowls over the bed of my lathe (a Union Jubilee) and larger ones have to be turned on the outside. This means I have to have right- and left-handed versions of any scrapers that feature an asymmetric profile. The three chatter-free tools I required immediately became six. I also needed two box scrapers: a square and a curved, plus a dovetailed scraper and a skew chisel.

Materials required

The steel I purchased was O1 tool steel: 10mm-thick and 40mm wide for the hefty scrapers; 6mm-thick and 20mm wide for the smaller scrapers; and 6mm-thick and 30mm wide for the skew chisel. This is sold as ground flat stock or gauge plate and comes in 500mm and 1m lengths. It is the steel equivalent of planed timber and requires very little further finishing.

The handles can be turned from virtually any hardwood, but ash is a favourite of mine. I had a rather blackened baulk of timber languishing in the corner of my workshop, which turned out to be mahogany. There was also a piece of American black walnut, which was adequate for the smaller handles.

I also required ferrules in two sizes: 32mm and 20mm diameter. You can buy these ready-made in brass, or you can cut your own from pipe or tubing. I plumped for stainless steel. Over the years, I have had brass ferrules crack open on my chisels left in the workshop, especially during very cold winters.



1 Tool blanks cut to length



2 Coated with primer and ready for marking out



3 The profiles of two small box scrapers



Marking out & cutting the steel

The steel I ordered online duly arrived and I set about cutting it to size, having worked out the various profiles required, and having made allowances for the tang. During the initial sizing I left the paper covering on the stock (**photo 1**). After unwrapping the steel, I cleaned the oil from the surface before marking out. When marking out, the convention is to coat the steel with blue layout ink before scribing through to the bright surface underneath. I find it a lot easier to spray a pale grey car body primer on the surface. When dry, this can be drawn upon with a sharp pencil; this is a lot easier to see in poor light conditions (**photo 2**).

The small scrapers

I tackled the small scrapers first. Large areas that had to be removed were cut away with a hack saw. I then ground the profiles and tang on a 150mm bench grinder. This had an additional flat bed that I could easily position. One of the wheels I had dressed to a semicircular profile, which helped me obtain the curved profile at the top of the tang (**photo 3**). The overall shaping was ground at 90°; those that would be the cutting edges I ground to 60° although the final angle is up to personal preference.

One thing I discovered that is worth bearing in mind is that all hack sawing and filing should be done before grinding. The steel, when it arrives, comes in an annealed state and is at its softest; however, it is still tougher than mild steel. The heat caused by



The shoulders being drilled in the jig



Shoulders being ground on the dressed wheel

grinding and the subsequent air cooling can make the steel hard and very difficult to cut with a hack saw.

The six large scrapers

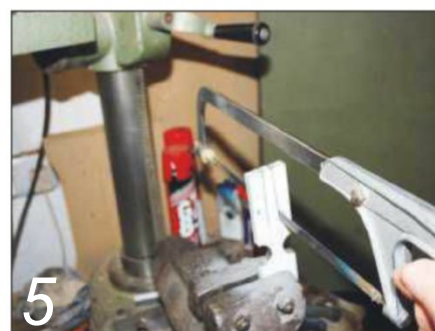
With the smaller scrapers set aside, I then tackled the six large scrapers. The profiles were cut by hack saw and ground to a finish as before. The thicker sections take a lot longer to work. I tried not to get the steel too hot and since I was working on six tools, it was easy to set aside those that were heating up and work on others.

The tangs I tackled in a different way. The shoulders of these are quite substantial, so I found it easier to place the tools in pairs in a wooden jig and use a 25mm TCT hole cutter to remove a circular plug (**photo 4**).

This left me with a semicircular bite out of the side of each tool. They were then repositioned in the jig to remove another plug, so forming the shoulders of one pair of tools. It is best to use a pillar drill and drill a pilot hole first. Clamp the jig and the steel firmly down on the bed of the pillar drill and use plenty of cutting compound. Standard hole cutters are not up to the task and cause too much vibration.

The tools now have to be held obliquely in a vice allowing for a vertical cut to be made to the waste side of the lines marking the tang (**photo 5**). The tangs can then be ground to their final shape (**photo 6**).

The steel needs to be wiped clean and the primer removed with a suitable solvent. All the sharp arises are taken off with a file so



The sides of the tang being cut



Small scrapers and skew after hardening

that they do not dig into the toolrests when in use. The tools are now given an overall clean with emery cloth and set aside (**photo 7**).

The ferrules

Regarding the ferrules, it is simply a matter of cutting the tube to length. If you have a metalworking lathe, then you can part them off a section at a time. However, if like me this is not an option, the ends of the tube can easily be squared on a disc sander. They can then be marked and cut slightly oversized in a vice with a hack saw.

To square the cut ends and bring them to finished size, I made a holder using a section of tube with a short tight fitting dowel on which to slide the ferrule. The ferrule can be held with a piece of masking tape to stop it revolving while being sanded. Don't press too hard as this generates lots of heat. Slowly but surely does it (**photo 8**).

It pays to make a few extra at this stage, as ferrules seem to have a habit of disappearing. Any sharp arises can be removed with a file and the surface polished with emery.

The handles

Select what size handles you require. In my case, the large handles were 400mm overall with a largest diameter of 40mm. The smaller handles were 300mm in length with a largest diameter of 30mm. When cutting the blanks, I added a further 18mm to the length. I turned all to slightly oversized cylinders before embarking upon any marking or shaping (**photo 9**). I turned the handles between



8 A ferrule being sanded square in the jig

centres with the spigot for the ferrule at the tail end of the lathe. The salient points are marked on the cylinders; I find yellow pencil stands out clearer on darker woods (**photo 10**).

Using a bedan, I turned down a spigot for the ferrule a tad longer and fatter than required. I also turned a spigot on the waste section at the drive end and brought to size the narrow waist of the handle.

Most of the turning can be accomplished with the spindle gouge. For the curve at the butt of the handle you can use a skew chisel, but do not remove the waste spigot at this point.

The handle can now be sanded to a finish. I didn't get too hung up on going through lots of different grits, but plumped for 80 and 120 grit; after all it is a tool handle.

The ferrule can now be fitted. I aimed for a fairly tight fit. At this point, I reversed the work on the lathe and drilled the hole for the tangs using a Jacobs chuck fitted at the drive end. I find it beneficial to drill an initial hole with a centre bit; this makes it easier to centralise the main drill bit. The waste spigot should now be cut from the end of the handle and the end sanded. I decided for convenience sake to finish the handles with a satin cellulose spray. After masking the ferrules, I applied three coats, denibbing after



9 Various turning blanks and ferrules

each but the final one. However, I could quite as easily have applied an oil finish.

Heat treatment

The first stage for heat treatment is to bring the business end of the steel slowly up to 820°C. At this stage, the steel will glow a cherry red colour. The crystal structure of the steel changes at this temperature and to confirm this, the steel will no longer be magnetic. O1 tool steels have to be plunged into oil, rather than water, to quench them. This quenching makes the steel very hard and brittle prior to being tempered.

Ideally for heating the metal, you would use a gas forge or an electric furnace with temperature control. As I have access to neither of these, I used a small solid fuel forge (**photo 11**). Over the years I have had to improvise many ways of heating metal; from a small depression dug in the ground, filled with coke and blown upon with the workshop vacuum cleaner, to a barbecue packed with charcoal, again using the vacuum set to blow.

Excessive blowing on the coals can make the fire remarkably hot, which can cause the metal to melt. In my experience, I find it best to heat a large amount of fuel slowly to

temperature. As an added refinement to my forge, I placed a thick metal tube horizontally in the fire with fuel packed evenly around it. Any metal I require to heat is placed in the tube and left to reach temperature. This has the added advantage of allowing me to withdraw the metal to check its progress. It also avoids excessive forge scale building up on the metal.

Full information on the heat treatment of O1 tool steel can be obtained from your supplier or downloaded online.

The hardening

Once the tools have been heated slowly to temperature they are quickly withdrawn, checked with a magnet, any residual scale brushed from them with a wire brush, and then plunged vertically into the quenching oil (**photo 12**). This operation I carry out outside my workshop as the oil can burst into flame. Still very hot, these tools are then set aside to cool. A file can be used to check that the metal has indeed hardened. If it skates over the surface and doesn't bite as a file should, then you have been successful. If not, then repeat the hardening process.

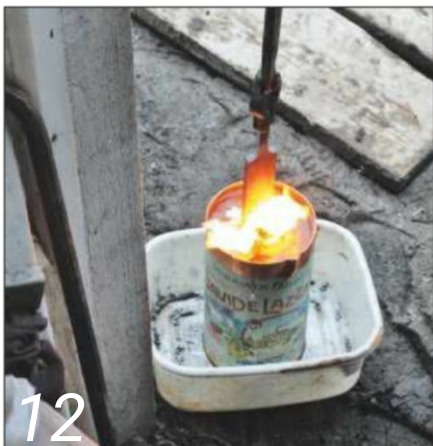
For the quenching oil, I use five litres of



10 Yellow crayon shows up better on dark woods



11 Improvised forge used to heat the tools



12

A large scraper being quenched

cooking oil in a metal container. Safety is an issue here as the oil does become very hot, so do take care, ensure you are wearing the appropriate safety equipment and always have a fire extinguisher to hand in case of an emergency.

The tempering

Care should be taken with the metal at this stage: it is very brittle and should not be dropped as it is in danger of cracking or breaking.

For tempering, the metal has to be cleaned with emery cloth (photo 13) of any black scale to reveal the shiny surface that is hiding beneath. I chose to leave black on the sides and shoulders of the tangs. You can also leave the cutting profiles black, as these will be reground later.

The tempering process relieves the stress in the metal and fixes the hardness at a certain level. The hardness I chose was in the region of 61 Rockwell. For this the metal has to reach a temperature of 225°C. This is easily achieved in a domestic electric fan oven. An added refinement is to use an oven thermometer to check the temperature.

Once the tools have reached the correct temperature, they are kept in the oven for an additional period of time depending on their thickness. The oven is then switched off and allowed to cool.

The final stage

The tools that emerge from the oven have a straw coloured oxide on their surface. This is cleaned off with emery cloth and the tools brought to a fine finish. Any small dinks on the metal can now only be removed with a diamond file or oil stone.

The finished handles are wrapped in cloth to protect them and held vertically in a wood vice. The hole profiles are relieved with a small chisel of the appropriate size until the tangs almost fit. The handles can



13

Small scrapers cleaned before tempering

then be knocked onto the blades.

This relieving is necessary, especially with the larger tangs, as they can split the handles, even with the ferrules fitted.

The profiles can finally be sharpened on the grinder, and the tools are then ready for action (photo 15).

Update

Having now turned my second bowl, I can confirm that I am happy with the way the tools work and hold their edge. The trouble is, I now need somewhere to store them... [www](http://www.getwoodworking.com)



14

Large scrapers ready for tempering



15

The completed set of tools with their turned handles

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9. Grinding Wheel
10. Wolf Bandsaw and Drill Plinth
11. Clamps x 2
12. Parmo NO 34 Vice x 3
13. Millers Falls Electric Drill
14. Drill Electric
15. Drill boxed
16. Wolf Grinder Drill/Mill Clamp
17. Ball Pane Hammer x 4
18. Claw Hammer x 2
19. Mallets x 2
20. Rubber Mallets x 2
21. Mallets x 2
22. Mallets x 2
23. Panel Hammers x 4
24. Axes x 2
25. Hammers x2
26. Tin snips
27. Spanners Various
28. G Clamps Various
29. Table Vice Clamps x 4
30. G Clamps x 2 (red)
31. Eclipse Saw abd Blades Boxed
32. Junior Hacksaw x 2
33. Surf Form Shave
34. Woolf Junior Drill Stand
35. Sentry Circular Saw attachment
36. Golden Dog Jigsaw Attachment
37. Hammers x 3
38. Marple Chisels X12 (Set)
39. Chisels x 3
40. Saws x 2
41. Saws
42. Gouges x 6
43. Chisels x 2 Gouges x 2
44. Chisels x 3
45. Gouges x 3 Chisels x 5
46. Chisels x 1
47. Chisels + Scraper
48. File + Surfform x 2 Blades
49. 49 Vernier boxed KANPON
50. Stanley Spoke + Surf
51. Die Handle
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HOBBIES HANDBOOK

1940
WITH
FREE
DESIGNS

The cover of *Hobbies Handbook* showed models of Big Ben and the TSS *Mauretania* (described in detail within) plus father and son woodworkers

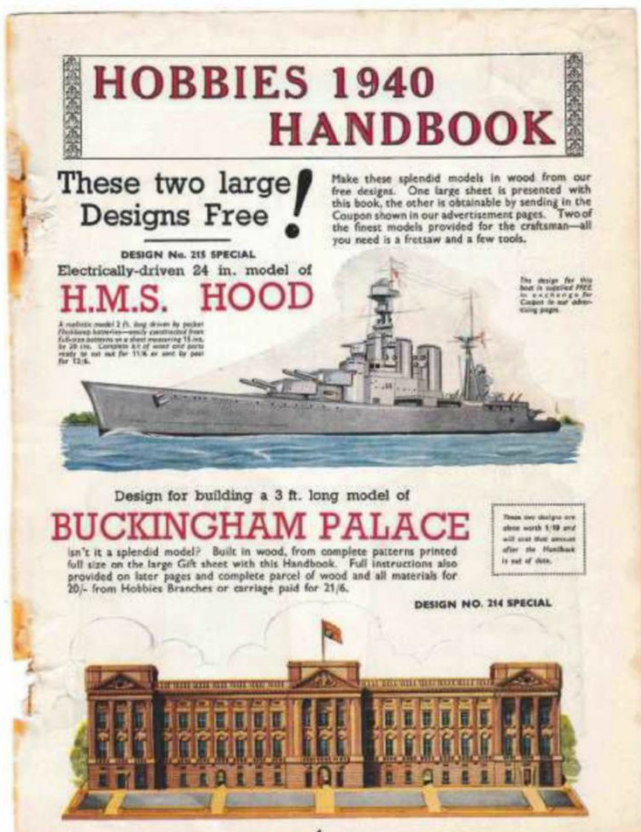


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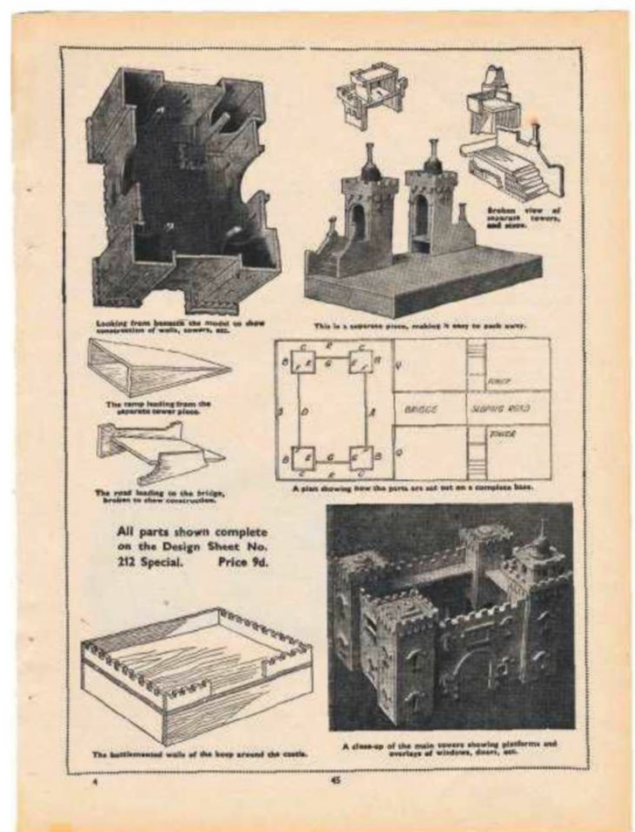
Something to be proud of—say these Hobbies Craftsmen

WARTIME WOODWORKING

Looking back through archive copies of *Hobbies Handbook*, Francine Kirsch shares some of the wonderful content with us and shows that despite the wartime risk, people were still woodworking and avidly making a variety of projects



Colour photos of a 3ft-tall Buckingham Palace and electrically-driven HMS *Hood* were followed by five pages of directions for the palace, and three for the ship



Construction details for a medieval fort

Browse through the 1940 edition of British woodworking magazine's *Hobbies Handbook* and you might be amazed that, a few months into World War II, people were still practising hobbyist woodworking.

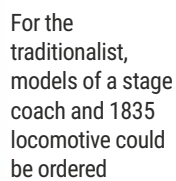
Of course the 1914 issues of an earlier British woodworking magazine, *Handicrafts & Pastimes*, reveal that the previous generation had produced matchstick

cathedrals and countless fretwork brackets memorialising RMS *Titanic* just before the Great War began.

'Father and son find Hobbies fun'

But escapism was only marginally behind the 1940 woodworking craze. After all, until the Blitz began in September, life on the home front was so uneventful that many were calling it 'the phoney war'.

An even bigger reason was the popularity of DIY in interwar Britain. Tremendous suburban growth had occurred between the wars: new 1920s and 1930s houses often had space for a workroom along with a need for (handmade) home furnishings and accessories. Many of these suburbanites were white collar workers – for them manual pursuits like woodworking were a leisure time activity



CARPENTRY OUTFITS

Here are three complete carpentry outfits at popular prices which include only named British Tools selected for their usefulness combined with good value. Each Outfit is contained in a strong wooden box with louvered lid and catches, and includes a practical 64-page book of things to make and tools to use.

No. 1 OUTFIT

This outfit contains a 15in. Stanley Workmaster Plane, a 4in. Chisel, a Saw, a 12in. Folding Rule, a Hand Plane, a Gouge, a Carpenter's Pencil and a 64-page Handbook. **10/6**

POSTAGE

1st class 10p
2nd class 7p
3rd class 5p
1st to 1st
1st to 2nd
1st to 3rd

No. 2 OUTFIT

The contents include a 15in. Stanley Workmaster Plane, a 4in. Chisel, a Saw, a 12in. Folding Rule, a Hand Plane, a Gouge, a Carpenter's Pencil and a 64-page Handbook. **19/6**

No. 3 OUTFIT

This fine outfit contains an 18in. Stanley Workmaster Plane, a 4in. Chisel, a Saw, a 12in. Folding Rule, a Hand Plane, a Gouge, a Carpenter's Pencil and a 64-page Handbook of Things to Make.

Also include one 6in. and one 12in. square plane. **30/-**

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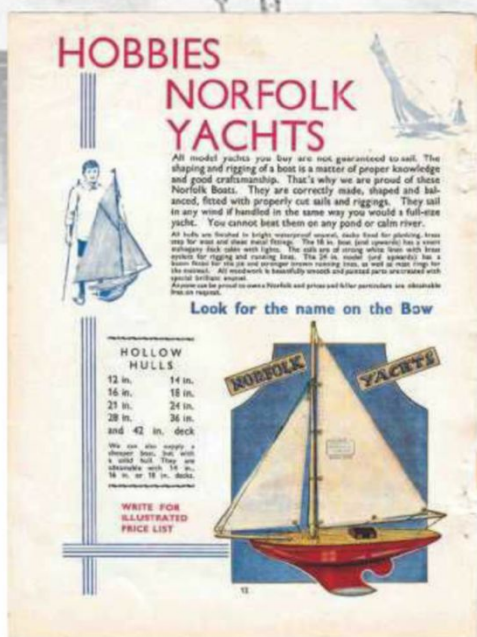
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For full details
see FRETWORK
section, pages
109 to 112

Wartime risk was more forthrightly conceded in the 'Working Model A.A. Gun', on a wheeled chassis and "with a spring mechanism for firing (replica wood) shells." "In these days almost every one of us is interested in the anti-aircraft defence of the country," read the copy. "Those who have one in



Classic yachts, too good to be called toys, but rather working sailable models



A whimsical fretsaw project

Fretwork had long been a staple of the hobbyist; today we're mostly using a scrollsaw



A selection of makeable musical instruments, including the unlikely 'one string fiddle'



their neighbourhood can easily see how faithfully we have followed the prototype."

Acknowledgement of the war was also expressed in patriotic projects. Along with the cover's 3ft high fretwork Big Ben, *Hobbies Handbook* readers could find directions and design sheets (and order materials kits) for models of Buckingham Palace, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London, and the HMS *Nelson*.

One could also cut out a fretwork frame to read 'OUR ROYAL FAMILY' (a photo of the family came in the materials kit). Or make a fretwork plaque commemorating the King and Queen's Canadian tour. The kit for a second fretwork plaque, reading 'God Save

Our King And Queen', came with linen for backing it.

Within a few months, hobbyist woodworking machines and tools would be swept away by the war effort – either by individual donation or officially, by the retooling of factories for aircraft and weapons production. Even paper for *Hobbies Handbook* would be hard to find when, by mid-war, even Britain's daily newspapers were down to four pages an edition.

Alas, a fretwork plaque on page 264 would soon prove sadly wrong: 'TODAY IS THE TOMORROW WE WORRIED ABOUT YESTERDAY AND ALL IS WELL.' **WW**

MAIL ORDER PRODUCTS

The publisher of *Hobbies Handbook* and its sister publication, *Hobbies Weekly*, sold their products both by mail order and in retail shops throughout Britain, including three in London alone. Patterns were offered free within the magazines or by mail request, but the materials to actually make up the patterns had to be purchased from the firm, often in kit form. We are glad to say that *Hobbies* is still going strong and details for the company can be found below:

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Woodwork Course 1 (Tools and Things)

A self-interest woodwork course where the aim is to give you the confidence and the knowledge to use basic hand tools and some of the more common power tools.

You will be able to pick from a list of projects before you arrive that I believe you can complete in 5 days or less so that you will go home with one of them and you can proudly say "I made that".

I cover the teaching of how to handle tools by getting you started on your project and, as you need to use a new piece of equipment, I show you how. This means that the instruction is fresh in your mind and you do the task there and then.

On all courses there will only be a maximum of 4 at a time, this will mean that I will be available when you need help and advice.

Woodwork Course 2 (Wood and Things)

This is a continuation of course 1 (tools and things) with the emphases on timber, what are acceptable defects in timber and what isn't, how do you write out a cutting list that means something to your supplier, what to look for when buying wood and what to avoid.

You will ideally have done course 1 (tools and things) or have a good working knowledge of how to use hand tools and have used hand held power tools.

The projects for you to pick from will be more complicated and will involve the use of the more sophisticated hand tools and hand held power tools and will include using some of the static power tools in the workshop. We will also be looking at buying timber, making cutting lists and drawing plans.

Woodwork Course 3 (Project Days)

The advanced course is rather different from the previous two.

To come on this course you will need to have done both the other courses and have used your skill at home on your own projects and be ready to take on something more difficult.

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This bench radial drill press from Axminster is a real contender and an excellent manual to accompany it is certainly a welcome addition

Axminster AHRD16B bench radial drill press

Drilling accurate holes can be quite a challenge. While a cordless drill may be fine for simple jobs, when accuracy and repeatability are important, a good pillar drill, or drill press, is definitely the way to go. This model from Axminster features a particularly versatile design, with the drilling head mounted on a radial arm, thus allowing it to extend and rotate to drill at almost any angle.

Any serious workshop needs a good pillar drill; it is a vital tool for boring accurate holes in almost any material, safely, accurately and repeatedly. If you are using sawtooth or Forstner bits, a pillar drill is an absolute necessity. Also, with the addition of a set of sanding drums, it can be used as an efficient bobbin sander for smoothing and shaping.

Design

A standard pillar drill has the drilling head mounted on a vertical column with the worktable mounted directly below. The head may be swivelled horizontally, but the throat depth remains the same.

This Axminster pillar drill offers considerably more flexibility. Its drilling head is mounted on a rail with a rack and pinion adjuster so that it can be extended away from the pillar to increase its throat depth. The head may also be tilted to 45° as the rail can be turned in its mounting. There is also a sprung pin, which locates in a groove cut in the rail to make it easy to re-set the head to 90°.

Worktable

The worktable is cast-iron and mounts on an articulated arm so that it may extend away from the pillar. It can be moved to one side of the column and will also tilt. It uses a rack and pinion system to wind it up and down the main column and can be firmly locked in position.

Chuck

This model features a keyless chuck with a 16mm capacity, which is easy to use and grips effectively. A Perspex chuck guard is fitted.

Plunging & depth setting

The drill has three feed handles mounted on the plunging



mechanism spindle. Depth is controlled with an adjustable locking ring on the spindle. This has a clearly marked scale, so you just touch the drill bit on the workpiece and then turn the ring to indicate the desired depth, lock it in position and then proceed to drill the hole.

Speed changing

Changing the speeds on some pillar drills can be a bit fiddly, but it is important to use the correct speed. Remember large diameter bits need slower speeds than smaller bits. Also when drilling hard materials, such as metal, be careful not to overheat the bit by running too fast and use some lubricant as necessary. This pillar drill has only one drive belt, so speed selection is quick and easy.

Safety

All workshop machines can be dangerous, so safety features are an important consideration. As already mentioned, a chuck guard is fitted to stop anything getting tangled in the spinning mechanism. A shrouded NVR power switch is mounted on the front of the machine, and a safety micro-switch is fitted to the top cover so that the motor will not run if the cover is open.

PILLAR DRILL TIPS

To help you make the most of your pillar drill, here are some tips. To make a sanding table, take a piece of MDF and bore a hole in it that is slightly larger than the diameter of your sanding drum. Fix it to the worktable and plunge the drum so that it enters the hole by about 1mm. This ensures that when you sand an item you will not end up with a ridge on the bottom edge. Use a vacuum fixed to the table to catch the dust,

or, connect it to the central hole underneath the table to catch the dust.

To drill a set of identical components, make a simple MDF table with a solid fence. Clamp, or screw, this onto the worktable and use another clamp to hold a stop-block in place to hold the workpiece in the correct position.

Finally, sometimes you have a situation, particularly when making furniture, where you have an awkwardly-shaped component, which needs to be

drilled but is almost impossible to clamp at the desired angle. The answer to this is to take a short length of batten and drive a nail through it, close to one end. Clamp this to the table and align the nail directly beneath the tip of the drill. Now mark your workpiece on both sides where you wish the drill to enter and where you wish it to exit. Place the exit mark on the tip of the nail, align the entry mark with the drill bit and bore the hole. Job done!

In use

This is certainly a good quality machine; it runs smoothly and quietly without any noticeable vibration. The plunging mechanism is well-balanced and entirely accurate. The adjustments are simple to make and reliable without any hint of slipping. The chuck grips well and speed changing is straightforward. The range of adjustments and the machine's capabilities are only limited by your imagination.

In summary

This is a great piece of kit, which would make a welcome addition to any workshop. To make maximum use of its versatility, it should be mounted on the corner of a bench so that it may swivel out over the workshop floor, enabling it to deal with large workpieces. Finally, the manual deserves a special mention. It is clearly written in plain English with bright colour photos illustrating the various



Plunge mechanism with depth setting ring

points, and at the end there is also a handy full parts list. Axminster have clearly taken great trouble to improve the quality of their manuals, and I have to say that this is certainly one of the best I have seen. **AS**

SPECIFICATION

POWER	375W
SPEED RANGE	500-2,450rpm (five speeds)
CHUCK	16mm keyless
HEIGHT	790mm
MAX CHUCK TO BASE	375mm
MAX CHUCK TO TABLE	220mm
THROAT	420mm
TABLE SIZE	230 x 210mm

VERDICT

A well-built and accurate machine. I found that it was very versatile in use as well as easy to set-up

PROS

- Easy operation
- Efficient chuck
- Simple speed changing
- Good safety features
- Excellent manual

CONS ■ Needs a fair amount of space around it

VALUE FOR MONEY
PERFORMANCE



FURTHER INFORMATION

■ Axminster Tools & Machinery
■ www.axminster.co.uk



The keyless chuck



Radial arm support bracket with rack and pinion and locking lever



The articulated worktable



The head tilted



Simple speed adjustment



The drill press in use

Good quality, functional workwear that's built to last is the staple of many a tradesman and this range from Blåkläder certainly fits the bill

Blåkläder workwear range



Up until a few years ago, the average tradie could be identified most easily by the amount of paint, dirt and plaster dust on his ragged clothes. With increased awareness of both health and safety and customer impact, the construction industry has done much to smarten up its image, and now the average working man and woman are generally marked out by their multi-pocketed and coloured apparel. This can only be a good thing, and if appearances have been improved, so also have personal comfort and ease of working.

Workwear for every industry

With numerous brands out there and workwear (to give it its proper title) readily available at many trading estate and high street outlets, it's only right that we should take a look at a small selection. I've

been monitoring trends and developments as well as keeping a discerning eye out for the top quality kit on show. There are a small number of really good brands on sale, and one of the best has to be Swedish specialists Blåkläder. Having been in the workwear manufacturing business for over 50 years, they now have a large worldwide catalogue and make clothing for pretty much every industry.

There's something about good tailoring that makes itself known the moment you put a garment on; the feel and the fit seem just right. This is how I found the Blåkläder kit: you really get the feeling that they've made everything to the best quality they can. Recently I requested a few woodworking-related items from their catalogue, and here's what they sent us...

Carpenters' trousers

A good pair of woodworking trousers must surely be top of the list when it comes to workwear, and even if you're just fixing up your own home, there's no excuse for not looking after your appearance. But today's workwear, unlike high street fashion, is not just about looking good, it's also about comfort and ease of working. The trousers here are 100% cotton canvas and a heavy quality one too (270g/m²),

so there's little chance of overheating and sweating up if your day becomes unexpectedly physical.

All the seams are triple stitched and, accidents apart, you get the feeling that this is a pair of trousers that could probably last forever. The knees have an additional layer of CORDURA®, an extremely hard-wearing fabric, which forms a pocket into which can be fitted a replaceable kneepad. These are supplied separately but are a standard size so any that you may have knocking around should probably fit. I've seen people use offcut squares of carpet before and let's face it, anything is better than nothing when it comes to easing one's knees on a hard floor.

But it's the pocket side of things where proper workwear really comes into its own. Unless you're a big fan of the tool-belt, the average pair of jeans or trousers is no match for the dedicated work trouser. This particular pair boasts no less than 17 assorted pockets, and two loops and a D ring for good measure. Extra wide belt loops will enable them to stay up should they ever get fully loaded, and this really would be a situation where belt and braces could be genuinely deployed.



A good pair of trousers is like an extra piece of kit in your toolbox

£50.90



Fit a pair of pads and you're ready for that flooring job



Just some of the many pockets fitted

Carpenters' smock

This is a curious item; it's sort of an overshirt and jacket combined. The Swedes have a fine tradition in smocks and are keen to lend an extra outer layer to any sort of outfit you might care to mention. This one is in a navy blue and white twill, all cotton, and quite heavy for a shirt at 250g/m². It's a very soft and comfortable fabric, and I found it worked best when it was worn over something else.

It's got the sort of stand-up collar that used to be called collarless, and this isn't a bad thing when the chips are flying. At first, I thought it might be aimed at the woodturner, what with it having no side pockets and all, but there's a curious pair of strings attached at the back which tie together in the front. It doesn't take a genius to see that maybe this wouldn't be such a good thing to wear in the proximity of spinning machinery, and it still has a small breast pocket, which could easily fill up with the aforementioned chippings. The strings look like they're there to improve the fit and to reduce draughts up the back, and it certainly felt snug to me whenever I had them tied. Overall, I did enjoy wearing it, and the absence of front pockets actually makes sense when you're wearing an apron too (as would the potentially hazardous back ties). It's an interesting item, and to me, something not unlike an enigma.



I found the smock made a good outer garment, and a very useful one in the colder months

£39.90



Detail of the back ties

Jacket

More than just a windcheater, this jacket is really well constructed and features the same sort of triple stitching and multiple pockets that are the distinctive features of Blåkläder clothing. In a hard-wearing mix of polyester and cotton twill (300g/m²), the jacket has a single top quality YKK zip fastening backed up by hook-and-loop to keep it weatherproof and hold things all together. Again, the quality of construction is readily apparent, as is the quality of the design, which provides the wearer with that oh so useful inner pocket – zipped of course!

With the sort of extreme weather that they must get in Sweden, it's no surprise to see these small touches, things that will make a difference when the cold north wind is blowing; things like the stand-up collar which fits together with the aid of a hook-and-loop fastening that will hopefully keep the elements out. Available in five different colours.



The jacket is both functional and good-looking



£40

Fastening pockets are a real boon, especially this inside one

Polo shirt

Well this is an item that you wouldn't think anyone could get wrong, but over the years I've encountered more than a few which fitted badly and chafed and sweated in all the wrong places. This one from Blåkläder is a pleasing break from what's often the norm and feels good the moment you get it over your head. It makes you feel just that little bit smarter than wearing a T-shirt, and is available in seven different colours.

£13.90



Black polo shirt, white kilt

Craftsman kilt

I think most of us in the UK are sufficiently familiar with kilts to accept them as normal outerwear, and there is that special ease of comfort that comes from wearing one. It's not the most common form of clothing on site, and it did raise an eyebrow or two when I wore it out; there was some approval expressed, though, which was a bit of a relief, I have to say.

It's 100% cotton twill in a heavy 320g/m², which made me think it would be best for the cooler months. Again, equipped with a multitude of loops and pockets, the outer ones (suggested for nails and fixings) can tuck into the main ones behind for a more streamlined appearance, and there are others for phone, ruler, pens and knife. It has an adjustable waistline but I felt I needed a belt on mine, and it took a bit of getting used to jumping in and out of the van. It's also a bit tricky in the wind, and you'd definitely have to be a bit careful if you're working up a ladder or on scaffolding. Very comfy, though, and I can see why it's an item of clothing that remains popular in Scotland and elsewhere.

£47.90



A plethora of pockets; note wide belt loops

Safety shoe

A stout pair of protective boots or shoes is at the top of the list when it comes to working on site or in a college workshop, and there are so many to choose from these days that you're sure to find a pair you like. Quite apart from the H&S regs, it makes really good sense to take care of yourself and to keep your feet free from the danger of falling tools or timber.

These ones have the look of a trainer about them and are fitted with aluminium toecaps and a synthetic sole guard to protect against nails and similar puncture injury. I've tried on quite a few safety boots and shoes in recent years, and I have to say that these are by far the most comfortable. They are sufficiently flexible to enable normal walking and, unlike many, actually fit to size with no need for the felt inner sole I requested just in case. They're soundly constructed from the most appropriate materials, and should last a good long time depending on what sort of work you're using them for.

(shoes)
£76.60
£3.30
(felt soles)



There proved to be no need for these felt inner soles, but maybe once the temperature drops...



A pair of safe, stylish and very comfortable shoes

In summary

Top quality workwear from experts in the field. Not cheap, but definitely worth the price. **MC**

SPECIFICATION

15301310 CARPENTERS' TROUSERS

FABRIC 100% cotton, canvas, 270g/m²

REINFORCEMENT CORDURA® reinforced knees and back pockets

DETAILS Metal zipper fly; side hammer loop; loops, one with D ring; metal buttons; inner leg seam with three-needle stitching; ID pocket

POCKETS Back pockets with bellow; leg pocket with bellow, flap and pen pocket, extra pocket, telephone pocket and ID pocket; knee protection pockets with two placement level options; nail pockets with chisel pockets and tool holders, can be tucked in the front bellowed pockets

40411860 JACKET

FABRIC 65% polyester, 35% cotton, twill, 300g/m²

DETAILS Metal buttons; inside of collar in contrasting colour; high collar; adjustable waistline

POCKETS Chest pockets, one with flap and button closure and one with pen pocket; side pockets

FINISH Adjustable sleeve end with press studs

32501125 CARPENTERS' SMOCK

FABRIC 100% cotton, twill, 250g/m²

DETAILS Band collar

FRONT CLOSURE Wind flap with buttons

ACCESSORIES Tie belt

FINISH Wristlet at sleeve end

33051035 POLO SHIRT

FABRIC 100% cotton, pique knit, 220g/m²

DETAILS Neck opening with buttons; rib-knitted collar; reinforced shoulder seam; reinforced neck seam

FINISH Rib-knit sleeve

85661210 CRAFTSMAN KILT

FABRIC 100% cotton, twill, 320g/m²

DETAILS Wide loops at back and sides; adjustable waistline

POCKETS Back pockets with bellow; leg pocket with flap; bellowed front pockets; side pockets; nail pockets – can be tucked in the front bellows pockets; telephone pocket; ruler pocket with knife holder and pen pocket

24303905 SAFETY SHOE

LINING Mesh

UPPER PART Upper in ventilating synthetic leather

SAFETY Reinforced outer sole; penetration protection in textile composite; toe cap in aluminium

SOLES Inner sole of PE and EVA; intermediate sole in EVA; outer sole in nitrile rubber

SECURITY CLASS S1P SRC

FUNCTIONALITY Water and oil-repellent; antistatic

VERDICT

VALUE FOR MONEY
PERFORMANCE



FURTHER INFORMATION

- Blåkläder Workwear
- 0800 028 8234
- www.blaklader.uk

Despite being well engineered and sporting some great features, this combi and impact driver set from Wolf is let down by the fact that both tools have to share one battery, which unfortunately hinders performance

£99.98

Wolf Professional 20V combi drill & impact driver kit

There's long been a tradition of manufacturers to supply a pair of drill and driver as a set; this is pretty much the most useful combination when it comes to essential power tools, and the driver has lately become the impact driver. The last few years have seen the popularity of this tool continue to grow, and even sceptics like me who were slow to adjust at first have finally come to realise its true worth.

Combi drill

These two from Wolf, one of the oldest names in power tools, are good examples of the type, and offer a good all-round solution to anyone on a budget. They come



The conventional controls: note hammer, drill and screw settings on torque ring, also steel chuck



The impact driver shares common body parts with the drill

in a zip-up hold-all, are both solidly constructed and I found them equally effective in their work. The combi drill is of the conventional pattern, with the main controls where you'd expect them and the torque rings pretty much as standard, as are the LED work lights below. I liked the steel chuck; something to both inspire confidence and easier to grip than some plastic ones.

Impact driver

The impact driver could do no wrong in my eyes, powering in big screws all day long as I progressed my workshop bench building. It's got a nice bit of heft to it, partly due to its rugged construction and also to the large 3Ah Lithium-ion battery. This gives it a longer run time than most and provides a solid base for standing the tool up between working. It's labelled as 20V, a marketing contrivance I'm not really keen on, but however it's named, it kept going for as long as I needed it to. The indicator light is useful here, and will advise on when it's time to reach for the one-hour charger.

Battery issues

When it comes to batteries, though, the big question here is why just one? Obviously the kit will be more expensive with two batteries included, but I don't think enough thought was given to this decision. Sharing batteries between power tools is pretty much the norm these days, but a drill and driver are used so closely together that swapping batteries after every operation soon becomes a real chore. It's not that much different from multiple bit changes for every screw or fixing; the very reason we all started using two drills in the first place.



The single battery features an onboard indicator light



The full kit, including instructions

In summary

Both drill and driver are good examples of their class, and will get the job done with ease, but I would rather have had two smaller 1Ah batteries than a single 3Ah one. **MC**

SPECIFICATION

COMBI DRILL

RATED VOLTAGE	20V
NO LOAD SPEED	0-350/0-1,250rpm
IMPACT RATE	0-5,250/0-18,750bpm
MAX TORQUE	35Nm

SPECIFICATION

IMPACT DRIVER

RATED VOLTAGE	20V
NO LOAD SPEED	0-2,200rpm
IMPACT RATE	0-3,000bpm
MAX TORQUE	150Nm

VERDICT

Despite both combi drill and driver performing well and having some great features, the issue with there being only one battery did unfortunately let them down

PROS ■ Solid construction – comes with basic drill and driver bit set

CONS ■ The drills are fine but the single battery is a pain

VALUE FOR MONEY

PERFORMANCE

FURTHER INFORMATION

- UK Home Shopping
- www.ukhs.tv

This handy jig is ideal for the majority of mortise locks or latches, and invaluable as an aid for mortise work in the construction of joinery or furniture

Trend Adjustable Trade Lock Jig



FROM
£108.94

I've looked at lock jigs in the past, and while they do speed up and give consistent results each and every time, they all rely on interchangeable plates to restrict the router to the correct parameters, and you need the correct plate to suit a specific lock or latch.

In use

This new offering from Trend is adjustable and setting up is a breeze both for the door thickness as well as the lock case and faceplate. There's a large angle plate that adjusts to 35, 40, 44 and 54mm door thicknesses to automatically centralise the jig, with slots to allow movement if you have a door that doesn't hit these.

The upper section of the jig is phenolic resin with etchings for width and lengths on the main body or sliding plates, allowing for the cutter to guidebush ratio so that the

setting automatically accounts for the offset. The width setting comes with a couple of gauge blocks for setting either two standard lock case widths or two common faceplate ones, but it's very easy to set to any width using the etched centreline as your mark.

The lock or faceplate length is determined in equal fashion with white laminate sliding plates, again working on a centreline. The etched scale is in 2.5mm increments on each side, which equates to 5mm overall when using the jig centre as the start point and measuring back each side to set the length.

Once the jig is set, you're ready to go. The jig clamps to the door using the aluminium angle and all you need is a 12mm diameter straight bit and 30mm guidebush.

A router with a plunge of at least 70mm is required for lock case mortising as well as a longer cutter for the task. Be aware that if you fit locks deeper than 63mm, you will still need to drill the last part as the cutter and maximum plunge won't allow a deep enough cut.

This same cutter and router combination

can also be used for the faceplate, but if you only need the jig for faceplate work, then a smaller router with a 12mm diameter/30mm guidebush will be easier.

Jig workout

I gave the jig a workout fitting a standard sashlock as well as a second deadlock, which meant resetting the jig for lock case dimensions as well as faceplates. It really is such a simple jig to set up, clamp to the door and rout away.

Used in tandem with a hinge jig, this particular jig will make door hanging, especially into new frames or linings, a far quicker job. You can clamp it to a ready hung door to rout the faceplates easily enough, but any lock case routing needs to be done prior to hanging for safety purposes.

In summary

This cracker of a jig can be clamped to components using either the same setup for the locks for 12mm-wide mortises, or by experimenting with different cutter and bush ratios to gain any width required. **AK**

SPECIFICATION

MIN DOOR THICKNESS	30mm
MAX DOOR THICKNESS	80mm
MAX FACEPLATE LENGTH	250mm
SET POINTS AT	16, 19, 22.5 & 25.4mm for standard lock cases and faceplates

VERDICT

This jig is a real hit with me and is ideal if you regularly fit mortise locks or latches

PROS

- Adjusts to suit
- Faceplate includes obscure makes
- Fast to set up and use

CONS

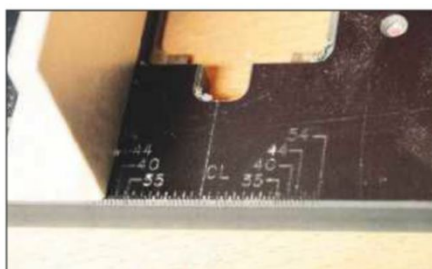
- No cutter or guidebush supplied
- Deeper lock cases need additional drilling out

VALUE FOR MONEY

PERFORMANCE

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Trend Routing Technology
- 01923 249 911
- www.trend-uk.com



The underside of the jig is etched for common door widths to centralise it on the work



A heavy-duty router is needed to rout out the lock case, or you can drill and chisel if needed



A pair of spacers is supplied to set the width for common lock case and faceplate widths



With the case routed and the jig still clamped, the stops are then adjusted for the faceplate

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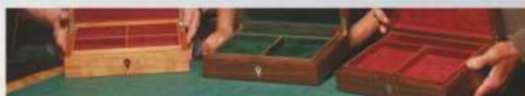
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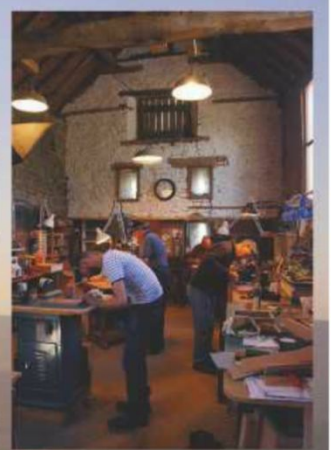
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The mysteries of HJ Shop

Now working as a skilled cabinetmaker, Peter Baker tells us about putting on a 'good show', the concept of potential productivity and the unfortunate side of Trades Unionism

As HJ Shop was top secret, nobody was allowed in without permission. However, Sir Herman Lebus would invite certain people, friends in the industry and often competitors, of whom he would acquaint us during the morning. He would suddenly appear in the shop, walk around to each of us and tell us who was coming that day. As mentioned last month, the productivity potential of RF can best be illustrated by a few examples that I experienced, as I operated three different presses, which were: a) a press in which was formed an end panel with round corners for the dressing tables and chests; b) a press in which the whole carcass of the sunk-centre dressing table was assembled; and c) a press in which I assembled the drawers. Sir Herman always told me to, "give them a good show." The reason for 'give them a good show' was to do with the time factors involved. I can't remember the time involved with the first press but the other two were b) 14.75 minutes and c) 4 minutes. The curing times were b) 90 seconds and c) 35 seconds.

A 'good show'

The 'good show' was that I could unload the sunk-centre dressing table press of an assembled carcass and glue and assemble the next whole carcass into the press within five minutes. With 'drawer making', there was a standard time throughout the factory of four minutes per drawer. During the curing time of 35 seconds, I would have the next drawer glued and assembled ready to be placed into the press and always knocked the 'stop' button with my knee (before the curing cycle was finished) to unload and reload the press. This was always my 'pièce de résistance' and, I think, why Sir Herman would often stop and talk to me on the shop floor. The industry still does not use these marvellous inventions, I am sad to say. When I tell you that we six cabinetmakers could produce 100 bedroom suites a week, consisting of a 4ft wardrobe, three-drawer chest and a 4ft wide sunk-centre dressing table, and we were being paid a basic bonus of 25% (so not working at full capacity), perhaps there is some concept of the potential productivity in this innovative development.

Another side to Trades Unionism

An event occurred which had an immense effect on my own career. I have just said that the time allowed for assembling the sunk-centre dressing table was 14.75 minutes. Three of us operated this particular press and I had been timed originally, achieving a time of 10 minutes. I was quite happy with this because I could perform in five minutes and earn 100% bonus. The other two chaps could not, so the time had to be put 'in dispute'. This required a retime which, by the rules established within the company, had to have the shop steward in attendance beside the work study engineer. For some strange reason, I had been elected shop steward when we first arrived and now had to take up my responsibility. Ron, the chap who was being retimed, was embarrassed and flustered; it was a hot day and he was breaking out in a sweat, also making a ham fisted job of the whole thing. I was more interested in what the work study engineer was doing and concluded that I could do his job so, after the study had ended, questioned him about being of his profession. I then discovered that one had to be, at Lebus, 25 years of age and a tradesman to be allowed to train as a work study engineer. I decided to wait. About this time I discovered another side to Trades Unionism of which I was previously unaware. As shop steward I was summoned to a meeting of stewards where the shop convener (chief steward and a full-time employee, whose only job was to liaise between management and employees) informed us that the company was suffering a downturn in orders and that we were going to commence working a four-day week. As one could not claim benefits for one day and to assist in covering the shortfall in income, we would have Friday and Monday off, alternate weeks, and in that way we could claim for the Saturday and get three days benefit from the State, even though we did not normally work on Saturday! How kind, I thought. Unfortunately, the industry was beginning one of its downturns and the HJ project was shelved. The staff were disbursed and I was relocated to No.22 Shop, the Makers Shop, where I worked on the wardrobe assembly line. **WWW**

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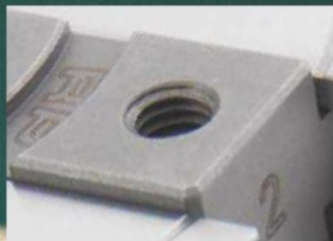
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