

WOODWORK | TURNING | TOOL TESTS | PROFILES

The Woodworker

www.getwoodworking.com

August 2017



THE ORIGINAL & BEST SINCE 1901

& Woodturner

HEAD FOR THE TREES

Why we love a woodfair

TURNING CHINESE | BRANCHING OUT | SAWING TIPS | TOOL COLLECTOR
TURNED PENS | CROSS-BOARDED DOOR | MISSION-STYLE COAT RACK



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We endeavour to ensure all techniques shown in *The Woodworker* are safe, but take no responsibility for readers' actions. Take care when woodworking and always use guards, goggles, masks, hold-down devices and ear protection, and above all, plenty of common sense. Do remember to enjoy yourself, though



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Welcome

Most of us know what we like in life and woodwork, and generally stick to it as a reliable choice. As we've evolved over the millennia, we've come, as humans, to repeat patterns of behaviour that has been proved to be safe and not a threat (or indeed has actually killed us). In primitive times we've returned to food that has not made us ill and followed tracks where we've not been attacked by wild animals, and these patterns of learned and safe behaviour continue in a modified form today. Where once self-preservation was the ruling motivation for nearly every choice we made, these days the average (Western) human equivalent amounts to little more than settling for the easy option.

We find ourselves frequenting the same timber yard and buying the same sort of products, safe in the knowledge that we can predict the outcome and won't be bothered by any unforeseen complications. This is fine, and I do exactly the same thing for most of the jobs I encounter in my tradie life. It comes as a pleasant surprise then to take on a project that calls for a different approach and materials that have to be sourced elsewhere. All of a sudden the brain sounds the 'new experience' signal, and the senses all go on alert. For us, the end user, we feel excitement and hopefully a bit of a thrill at the new challenge ahead.

I've found, as I'm sure many others have, that it's often the new things in life that can bring rewarding experience. Whenever we get the chance to try something novel it's generally worth doing, even if we might have our doubts at first. How many times has something proved to be a really good thing, despite a poor beginning or a dragging of the feet? Plenty, and this is great. But can we carry this philosophy beyond a challenging job or activity and over to tangible things like kit, tools and products?

You can contact Mark on editor.ww@mytimemedia.com

Mark



The Editor tries something new and is confident of staying alive

To a certain extent I believe we can. Although we're no longer risking our lives, when it comes to buying an unaccustomed commodity, we'll definitely be risking our cash, and no one enjoys that particular game of chance. Fortunately, manufacturing standards have improved considerably over the last decade or so, and nearly everything these days is 'fit for purpose'. That's not to say you can't come unstuck if you're just trying something for the first time, and this is where it pays to have the knowledge of others to hand. Clubs, groups, shows and helpful staff can all play their part; even our own humble magazine has been known to be of use over the years. Ultimately, though, we have to trust our own judgement and experience and, despite one or two personal setbacks, I would always urge fellow woodworkers to take a chance and try something new – start a fresh pattern of behaviour today.

THIS MONTH THE EDITOR HAS BEEN:
Making a bookcase ■ searching for mouldings ■ studying architecture ■ in the sea

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In this excerpt from *The Woodworker* of April 1925, we look at plans for an Adam-style extending dining table, which remains a very useful item to this day

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Our new resident 'tool hunter' Gary Cook takes a look at a plane dating back from 1831–1846

36 Why we love a woodfair

Woodfairs are becoming increasingly popular across the UK, and prove to be a great day out for all the family. Here, the Editor casts his mind back to 2016's Bentley Woodfair and all it had to offer

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Operating from his workshop in the Shropshire countryside, Adam Barker not only runs a range of timber framing courses, but also provides various traditional woodworking services, as Colin Eden-Eadon discovers first hand

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Phil Davy sets about making a coat rack in the Mission style

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Mastering hand-held saws can be tricky, says Andy King, but by following some central tenets your abilities will quickly improve

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64 Braced against gales

Needing protection from Dartmoor's gusty winds, Iain Whittington sets about making a Victorian-style cross-boarded oak plank door

72 Sticky situation

In the absence of a lathe – or the skills to use one – how do you turn legs, rails and spindles? Jeff Gorman reaches for a 'shop-made rounding plane

90 Working for Harold Ward

In the first of a brand-new series, we enter the world of traditional ladder making, and join Stan Clark as he leaves school and sets out on his woodworking career in the 1950s



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Robin Gates delivers a bundle of branch wood projects requiring only basic hand tools



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CBG6SB	PRO	150mm	£54.99	£65.99
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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Occasionally we have the chance to try something new in life and it's all the better if there's minimal risk involved and very little in the way of capital outlay. Recently I came close to getting into gilding as there was a brief and fleeting opportunity of acquiring a pro gilder's kit (for good or bad it didn't come about) and instantly having all I needed to start a new career if I so wanted. All I needed, that is, except the necessary years of experience.

It's all too easy to take those years of experience for granted – whether they be our own or those of someone else – and it's only when you try your hand at something new that you begin to appreciate the true value of your own skills. How often have we hidden our light under a bushel and thought less of

ourselves for whatever reason? In this day and age our woodworking skills are valued by all, and much in demand as a vital part of the construction industry.

We can all think of ourselves as contributing members of today's creative society, and can happily take our places alongside the other artisans on the big table. With new generations waking up to the burgeoning craft movement in this country, there hasn't been a better time in years to be a woodworker. So let's all be proud of ourselves with every job we take on – and price it up accordingly.

Mark

IN THE 'KNOW-HOW' – 121WITH

The way in which people acquire and share expertise and 'know-how' will change forever, thanks to a new platform that was recently launched. 121with is an online marketplace for those providing or seeking 'know-how'. It is also the platform where the know-how is delivered from the 'seller' to the 'buyer', via live and interactive video sessions.



The 121with platform enables the sharing and receiving of expertise primarily via one-on-one (1-2-1) live video sessions. After a one-on-one (1-2-1) session, direct and instant payments are made to the 'Provider' (the 'seller') by the 'Seeker' (the 'buyer') through a third party payment merchant.

This service will enable anyone with professional or non-professional knowledge to 'sell' their know-how to consumers or businesses from a location of their choice.

The platform offers 'Providers' a completely risk-free advertising and marketing platform. Creating a profile and promoting their know-how on the 121with platform is free of charge to 'Providers' and is free for 'Seekers' to join.

Using relevant tag-words, 'Providers' can choose the relevant keywords they want to

be found for by 'Seekers' within the online marketplace. They will benefit from a free 'shop window' where their know-how can be found by those seeking it.

From professionals in legal, financial and health fields, tutors for academic and professional exams, experts in digital marketing and PR, through to practical support from carpenters, chefs and interior designers – all professions; all walks of life.

Unlike other online marketplaces that demand high commission rates of 50%+ and massive 'slashed prices' from merchants/suppliers, 121with takes just 20% from each call made on its platform, and does not dictate the rates set by its 'Providers'.

To find out more about this exiting new service, see www.121with.com.

DIARY – JULY

- 3–4 Turned boxes (advanced)
- 5* Introduction to Leigh Jigs
- 7 Sharpening with Tormek Woodturning
- 7* & 17 Pen making
- 10 Pyrography – Ben Beddows
- 10 Woodturning refresher
- 11–12* & 18–19 Beginners' woodturning
- 15* Bandsaws
- 20 Fine-tuning hand planes
- 21 Sharpening
- 24–28 Windsor chair making
- 27–28* Beginners' routing
- * Course held in Sittingbourne, Kent

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 - 24–28 Joints week: making a table
 - 29–30 Cabinetmaking fundamentals
 - 31–4 Making a dovetailed drawer
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- 1–2 Dovetailing weekend
 - 10 Improver's make a bookcase
 - 15 Chair making – part IV
 - 21 Beginners' four-day course
 - 29 Chair making – part V
 - 31 Router skills
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 - 15 Basket making
 - 16 Willow lantern making
- Greenwood Days, Ferrers Centre
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- 9 & 23 Spoon carving
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FEEL, TOUCH, LOVE: FORBO'S FURNITURE LINOLEUM



Forbo Flooring Systems has refreshed its Furniture Linoleum Desktop surfacing collection with a new contemporary colour palette. The rejuvenated range now offers specifiers and craftsmen a modern, natural surfacing material that delivers a beautiful high-end finish to a variety of furniture designs.

Renowned for its elegance, durability and finesse, Furniture Linoleum's satin matt surface acquires a beautiful patina over time, and combined with its warm and tactile texture ensures that every object it is applied to, whether a desk, chair, door or cabinet, will have a truly distinctive and individual look and feel.

The new colour palette offers a selection of 21 shades from warm and natural hues to contemporary, vibrant colour pops that complement the latest interior trends and classic design favourites, such as charcoal black and anthracite grey.



The easy to work with and flexible nature of the material will also allow craftsmen to create a variety of organic shapes, which can be applied both horizontally and vertically, as well as contoured around curved surfaces on all common materials such as MDF, chipboard, plywood, composite materials or even steel.

Currently priced at around £17.91 per m², see www.forbo-flooring.co.uk/furniturelinoleum to find out more.

FASTER, SMARTER & FUTURE-PROOFED: BOSCH GCL 2-50 C & CG COMBI LASERS



Bosch Professional has announced that its new GCL 2-50 C and CG combi lasers, featuring Bosch connectivity, are now ready to buy and enjoy. With their smart functions and simple, precise, long-range operation, Bosch expects these products to become indispensable go-everywhere tools for builders, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and other tradespeople.

Bluetooth connection allows them to be controlled remotely via a smartphone with the Bosch Toolbox app, or using a remote control unit. By combining the Bosch remote levelling app and Bosch RM 3 Professional multi-functional motorised rotating mount, positional adjustments can be made with millimetre precision.

Vertical and horizontal laser lines, extending almost 360°, can be aligned around centred plumb points, which are projected sharply onto the floor and ceiling. This allows pinpoint accuracy when transferring reference points.

Diagonal alignment, for fittings such as stair handrails, is simplified by an incline function, and all tasks benefit from an intuitive user interface, which can be operated with one hand.

For supreme visibility the CG model with green laser light can be chosen. Its visible line range is up to 20 metres, and with a laser receiver the working range is 50 metres. These combi lasers can be conveniently powered by a rechargeable 12V lithium-ion battery or non-rechargeable

AA batteries. They are built to last, with an IP54 sealed housing and a pendulum lock, which ensures safe transportation and storage.

Connected technology

Bosch connectivity has been developed to help tradespeople work faster and smarter, and to future-proof their businesses. The tools and their users communicate with each other via the Bosch Toolbox app, offering functions such as:

- Remote interaction and control
- Quick personalisation of settings
- Fault alerts
- Tool usage, condition logging and reports
- Battery level monitoring
- Easy registration

The small Bosch connectivity module now fitted to a range of connected tools will be easy to upgrade or replace as new advances emerge, so businesses will always be a step ahead.

The new line lasers are available from specialist retailers and are priced from £240 for the GCL 2-50 C and £336 for the GCL 2-50 CG. For further information on these products, visit www.bosch-professional.com/upgrade.

ICONIC SCOTTISH HILL REDESIGNED AS COFFEE TABLE

It's the famous extinct volcano that overlooks Edinburgh, and although nobody knows how it came to be called Arthur's Seat, it's said by some to be the site of legendary Camelot. The 269m high hill has been featured in many novels, including Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, *The Underground City* by Jules Verne and in several Ian Rankin novels. But now, one enterprising woodworking student at the Chippendale International School of Furniture has turned Arthur's Seat into a striking and artistic coffee table.

Paddy O'Neill, 32, has made his sycamore and yew table due to his passion for the outdoors and the importance of Ordnance Survey maps for safe navigation.

Paddy, who used to work offshore on oil rigs in the UK, Norway and the USA, was inspired to make his Arthur's Seat table "because I live in Edinburgh and see it every day."

He enrolled at the Chippendale school after deciding on a change in career and, following graduation in June, is setting up The Natural Edge, his own woodworking business in Edinburgh to specialise in furniture design, making, and kitchens. His Arthur's Seat table is all to scale from Ordnance Survey maps, has a large two-way drawer underneath and, to maximise visual impact, is glass-topped – giving a bird's-eye view every time you pick up your coffee cup.

"Everyone has their own special outdoor places, whether it's a coastline, hill or a mountain. I would be delighted to render any of those landscapes into beautiful and functional pieces of furniture," says Paddy. To find out more about this furniture maker and his work, see www.thenaturaledge.co.



Paddy working on his artistic coffee table

KEEP COOL WITH CLARKE COMMERCIAL DRUM FANS

These great value robust drum fans from Machine Mart are ideal for commercial and industrial applications, providing a solution for fast cooling in large workshops, garages, factories and more.

This range produces an excellent amount of air flow, up to 310m³ per minute, allowing large areas to be cooled quickly and efficiently, with three large fan sizes to choose from: 610mm, 762mm or 914mm.

All models feature two handles and are mounted on large rubber wheels for easy transportation to wherever it is required. Models in the range start from £142.80; see www.machinemart.co.uk to find out more.



AXMINSTER LAUNCHES NEW KNOWLEDGE WEBSITE



Furniture maker Alex Brooks in the workshop at Ed Brooks Furniture

Axminster Tools & Machinery has just launched its new 'Knowledge' blog, the aim of which is to share ideas, learn new skills, try out new projects and keep up-to-date with everything happening at Axminster.

The Knowledge is composed of several informative and exciting sections, all designed to help you discover, learn and create. This is how the new Knowledge site looks:

- **Meet the Maker** – features stories and inspiration from Axminster customers and what drives their craft. To kickstart the series, Axminster blogger Tom Galvin met with Alex Brooks and the team at Ed Brooks Furniture based in the tranquil setting of Wootton Fitzpaine near Bridport, Dorset.
- **First Look** – 'does what it says on the tin' with news and reviews of all things new at Axminster. Be among the first to preview and find out about new products.
- **How To's** – are practical and cover a range of projects and tutorials, with tips and techniques showing how to increase your skills, and words of wisdom and guidance on using certain tools and machines.
- **Buying Guides** – here Axminster share their knowledge and advice to help you make the right choice when buying a product.
- **Insights** – this is the writers' corner where you will find comments, opinions, top tips and the inner thoughts of the Axminster bloggers.
- **What's On** – tells you about all the things Axminster have been up to and what's coming up in the future. Here you will find information about shows and exhibitions, retail events, company news and competitions.

Readers are encouraged to put forward their own suggestions as to what they would like to see within the Knowledge and can post their comments on any of the articles. For all the latest news and posts, see www.knowledge.axminster.co.uk.

NEW HILTI CORDLESS HAMMER DRILL DRIVER – THE ALL-ROUNDER READY FOR ANYTHING

Hilti has expanded its range of cordless tools with the reliable, versatile and safe SF 6H-A22 cordless hammer drill driver.

The latest addition to the company's 22V Li-ion battery platform has a powerful motor capable of 1,600rpm, which enables users to tackle a wide variety of applications across many base materials.

In addition to being able to drill with auger and spade bits up to 32mm diameter in wood, and up to 13mm on metal with HSS drill bits, users can also undertake hammer drilling in diameters up to 14mm in brick, masonry, sand-lime block and aerated concrete. The tool also comfortably takes on high torque applications including screw fastening up to 12mm screws or cutting a recess.

Tool users can perform any application with complete confidence thanks to the Hilti Active Torque Control (ATC) technology, an innovative electronic clutch which stops kick-back virtually immediately if the bit becomes snagged, thus minimising the risk of wrist injuries.

The SF 6H-A22 delivers market-leading performance through an 'intelligent' electronic clutch linked to a two-speed metal gearbox, which provides different operating modes for various applications while also cutting down noise.

The SF 6H-A22 cordless hammer drill driver can be obtained through the Hilti Fleet Management programme, whereby a fixed monthly charge covers all service and repair costs up to three years.

For customers who prefer to own their SF 6H-A22 outright, Hilti Tool Service gives a complete no-cost period of up to two years, which includes the same high level of cover. Following the initial no-cost period, repair costs are capped and the company promises a turnaround time of '3 days or FREE!'. To find out more, see www.hilti.co.uk/sf6.



NEW M-CLASS DUST EXTRACTOR FROM TREND

Equally at home in the workshop or the jobsite, the new Trend T35A (dust class M) dust extractor offers ultimate performance and protection from fine dust generated by power tools, including MDF dust.

The T35 is dust class category M rated to EN60335-2-69, for dust with workplace limit values $\geq 0.1 \text{ mg/m}^3$. Designed for professional use, the extractor offers industry-rated protection to home woodworkers as well as the trade and has a durable, impact resistant tank with a 27l dry pick up capacity as well as a 16l wet pickup facility.

The auto shaker facility keeps the HEPA 0.3 micron cartridge filter free of excessive dust build-up and the extractor also has a blockage warning light to ensure maximum performance at all times.

An auto-start socket allows power tools to control the extractor with an eight second run-on to clear any residual dust once the tool is switched off. A maximum of 2,200W can be plugged into the auto-start socket (1,000W on the 115V model).

Alongside the extraction capabilities the T35 also features an extra-long 7m power cable and a 5m 39mm diameter hose. It can also be used as a blower and comes supplied with a complete set of floor cleaning tools, crevice tool and round brush, making the T35 a top class all-rounder for micro fine dust, liquids and general clean up tasks.

The T35 M-Class Dust Extractor is available in two versions: the 230V is rated at 1,400W and is priced at £418.80 inc VAT, and the 115V version is rated at 800W and priced at £454.80 inc VAT. Both are available from all Trend Routing Centres and stockists across the UK; see www.trend-uk.com to find out more.



A SUPERB NEW RANGE OF PILLAR DRILLS FROM AXMINSTER

Axminster's new trade-rated pillar drills have many qualities in common and are well suited to the trade, school or home woodworking workshop. Of the four drills, two are designed to sit on a bench and the other two are floorstanding.

Despite their compact size, both bench-top models offer a whole host of features. All four drills are robustly made from cast-iron and machined steel with a highly accurate quill and spindle assembly, running in NSK ball-bearings to ensure consistent drilling. Powered by smooth running induction motors with 12 belt speeds, the Japanese-made belts are 'multi-vee' type giving maximum grip and the lowest level of vibration. A quality 3-16mm keyless chuck is fitted and other features include an electrically interlocked chuck guard, belt cover safety switch and separate emergency stop switch.

Prices start at £399.95 for the smaller of the bench-top drills, rising to £909.95 for the larger of the floorstanding models. The two floorstanding models come 95% assembled on delivery. Please note that prices include VAT and may be subject to change without notice; see www.axminster.co.uk for more information.



PETER SEFTON FURNITURE SCHOOL'S ANNUAL OPEN DAY

This popular event is due to take place on 22 July this year, giving you the opportunity to find out about the long and short furniture making and woodworking courses available, as well as allowing you to meet expert tutors, see professional demonstrations, and pick up advice, tools and products.

Peter Sefton will be demonstrating hand tool techniques; Andrew Hall will be demonstrating woodturning, including his famous turned wooden headwear (see *WW* Sept for an exclusive article on how to make one of his small turned hats); Artisan Media will be filming the Open Day and Peter's own Series 1 DVDs will be on sale. You can also see demonstrations from Chris Yates (routing) and Bob Jones (French Polishing and traditional finishing), and the Wood Workers Workshop will have deals on many tools throughout the day.

The Professional Long Course students will have their End of Year Show where you can also talk with Sean Feeney, the School's Designer/Maker in Residence, and at the end of the day the Student Prize Giving will take place.

As well as manning the barbecue on the day, the school's charity, Help for Heroes, will be collecting any unused or old hand tools to be auctioned off, with all proceeds going to the charity in order to equip their woodworking facilities. To find out more about this great event, see www.peterseftonfurnitureschool.com.

T5 ROUTER PROMOTIONS

T5 PROMOTION

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Chinese puzzle



Bob Chapman's turned version of a 13th-century Chinese jar is a real delight, but it remains to be seen if it will survive for as long as its pottery counterpart

Pottery is a great source of inspiration for a woodturner so when we were in London a little while ago, I took the opportunity to visit the V&A museum.

The Japanese and Chinese pottery collections are always worth a look and I came across a 13th-century Chinese jar, which appealed to me. Unfortunately the only camera I had with me was a rather old phone, but I took a couple of shots and hoped for the best.

Back home again, I used the computer to 'cut out' the jar from a pretty awful photograph (photo 1), but it was good enough to give me a working drawing with correct proportions if not actual sizes (Fig.1). The V&A has an excellent

photograph of this piece on their website: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O109710/jar-unknown/>.

Turning & shaping the jar body

Because the jar is going to be painted the timber chosen is relatively unimportant and I used a piece of ash, which happened to be about the right size at 100mm square and 175mm long. Mounted between centres, use a spindle roughing gouge to turn it to round, before forming chucking spigots on both ends (photo 2). Using a 3mm parting tool and allowing a margin for waste, divide the cylinder into a section for the lid and one for the base (photo 3). Do not attempt to part

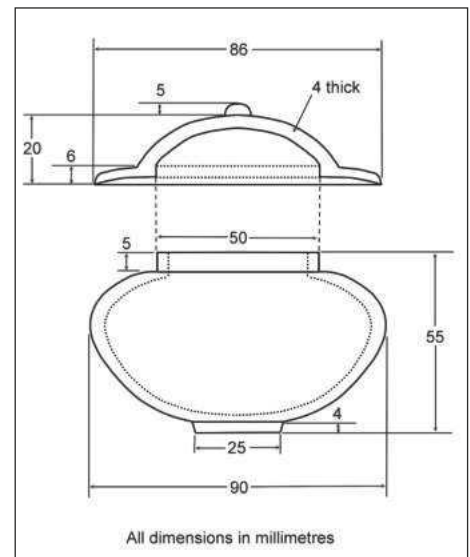


Fig.1 Chinese jar dimensions



1 Although it's a poor photograph it allows the relative proportions of the piece to be calculated



2 Any suitably sized piece of wood can be used. Make a spigot at each end



3 Divide in two for the lid and the body parts

all the way through while the work is held between centres. If you do, the two pieces will collapse at the moment of breakthrough and trap the tool between them. At best the pieces will be damaged; at worst it might be you who is damaged. Instead, stop the lathe and finish the parting off with a saw (**photo 4**).

Next, mount the body section in the four-jaw chuck and clean up the exposed end. Mark a line at 25mm (the widest part of the jar) from the end and another at 55mm (the bottom). With a parting tool, cut a parallel-sided spigot 5mm deep and 50mm in diameter to form the rim of the jar (**photo 5**). Next, using a small bowl gouge, round over the top of the jar from the

pencil line to the bottom of the rim (**photo 6**). Unfortunately this revealed a crack in the ash, which I dealt with by filling it with cyanoacrylate glue, allowing adequate time for it to set thoroughly before continuing (**photo 7**). As the piece is going to be painted, this blemish will not be visible when finished.

Begin shaping the lower part of the jar (**photo 8**) but do not make the bottom too narrow at this stage because the jar still has to be hollowed out. Using a 42mm Forstner bit (**photo 9**), bore a hole no more than 40mm deep to aid hollowing (**photo 10**). Alternatively, any convenient drill bit could be used or the hole can be bored using a spindle gouge.

Hollowing the body

Begin to hollow out the body of the jar with a straight scraper (**photo 11**). This will allow you to reach almost the whole of the interior, which can then be smoothed and refined using a 'teardrop' scraper (**photo 12**); this also allows the small region under the top wall to be hollowed.

As hollowing proceeds, gradually refine the shape of the jar's underside, taking it down little by little to the final foot size (**photo 13**). Keep an eye on the wall thickness and reduce it by judicious removal from the inside and outside as needed.

It is very unwise to put your fingers into a hollow form while it is rotating on the lathe. To sand the interior make some form of padded sanding stick that will allow you to reach around the inside (**photo 14**). Sand through the grits from 120 down to 400 and, with the lathe off, apply a coating of a paste wax, such as Woodwax 22 or similar. Buff to a smooth sheen with a polisher made in the same way as the sander (**photo 15**).

Reverse the jar body and expand the chuck jaws into the opening, bringing up the tailstock



4 The final cut is made with a saw to prevent jamming



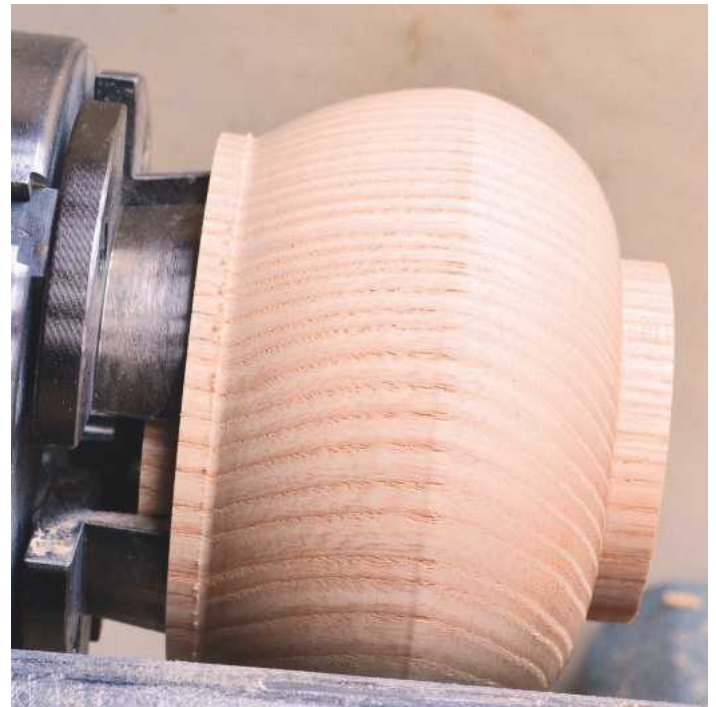
5 Size the rim of the jar to leave a suitable wall thickness



6 Begin to shape the upper part of the jar using a small gouge



7 Aagh! A small crack, but CA glue to the rescue



8 Don't make the lower part too narrow to begin with



9 Bore out the body, taking care not to go too close to the bottom



10 The Forstner bit leaves a good wide hole to reach the inside



11 Begin hollowing with a scraper. This one is made by regrinding a strong mortise chisel



12 When hollowing is almost complete it can be tidied up with a teardrop-shaped scraper



13 Now the underside can be refined so it is closer to the final size



14 Sand inside, but not by hand...



15 ... and polish in the same way



16 With the piece reversed on expanding jaws, the bottom can be refined



17 Remove the tailstock for the final cuts, then sand and seal



18 With the lid section mounted, cut a recess to match the rim on the body. Don't make it too tight



19 Reverse the lid on expanding jaws and take down to final size...

for additional support (**photo 16**). Sand the outside to 400 grit and seal with sanding sealer but do not apply any other finish. Complete the shaping of the foot as far as possible with the tailstock in place, removing it for the last few, very careful cuts, then sand and seal the foot (**photo 17**). The body of the jar is now complete.

Turning & shaping the jar lid

Mount the section reserved for the lid and clean up the front face. Reduce the diameter to 86mm and use a parting tool to cut a recess in the lid (**photo 18**), gradually enlarging it until the jar body is a close, but not tight fit. Note that the rim is slightly undercut and curves inwards towards the recess. Use a scraper to make the lid dome-shaped inside and sand, seal and polish it as you did for the jar body.

Reverse the lid and hold it by expanding the chuck jaws inside the recess. Use tissue to protect the wood surface and use a pencil to mark the finished size of the lid and remove the waste (**photo 19**). Retaining the tailstock, shape the lid as far as possible (**photo 20**). With the lathe

switched off, remove the tailstock and carefully cut away the remaining waste leaving enough to form the little knob on top. Sand the lid to 400 grit and seal with sanding sealer (**photo 21**).

Reproducing original details

The original pottery jar lid has six evenly spaced decorative features where the unknown potter had pressed the clay back, probably with finger and thumb, to form a curved indent with a raised bump behind it. This feature makes a major contribution to the attraction of the piece and I wanted to include it, but obviously couldn't use the same technique on wood.

Eventually I used a suitable bobbin sander to cut the curved indents, and simulated the bump by mixing some filler, picking it up on my finger and scraping it off onto the jar lid (**photo 22**). I used Plastic Padding 'Leak Fix' but other fillers would do the trick provided they are a suitably thick consistency and adhere well to the wood. If you don't have a bobbin sander, turn a dowel of suitable diameter and glue some coarse abrasive to it.



20 ... maintaining support from the tailstock for as long as possible



21 Remove the tailstock and finish with light cuts



22 The raised bumps are made with a stiff filler and left to harden



23 The colour difference doesn't matter because it's going to be painted



24 Mask off the areas not to be painted



25 Rub down gently between coats



26 The completed Chinese jar

The result was a fair imitation of the original jar in all respects but colour (**photo 23**). I had already decided that I didn't want to disguise the fact it was made of wood, and that's why I'd polished the inside. However, I did want it to resemble the original on the outside, and that could only be done by painting it.

The first job was to mask off the parts that didn't need painting (**photo 24**) before mixing up a similar shade of acrylic paint. At first I used the paint straight from the tube thinking it would cover the wood grain better, but it took a long time to dry hard and left a very uneven finish, which showed every brush stroke. I then tried remounting the pieces and sanding the paint smooth, but I ended up having to sand it all off.

I then tried the opposite extreme and watered down the paint until it was very thin. It didn't cover well but after two or three coats, rubbing down lightly in between, the colour was looking even and, just as important, I'd managed to achieve quite a smooth finish (**photo 25**).

When the final coat was fully dry the jar was sprayed with a couple of light coats of acrylic to finish the job (**photo 26**). The two photos below also show the jar's underside and the top of the jar with the lid removed.

I find it an amazing thought that this jar, made by an unknown Chinese potter, has survived in all its beauty for around 800 years. I am really pleased with my version and I'd love to think that mine would last as long. Somehow I doubt it. **WW**





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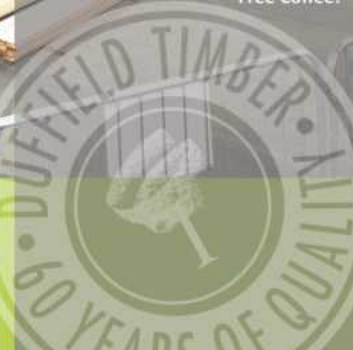
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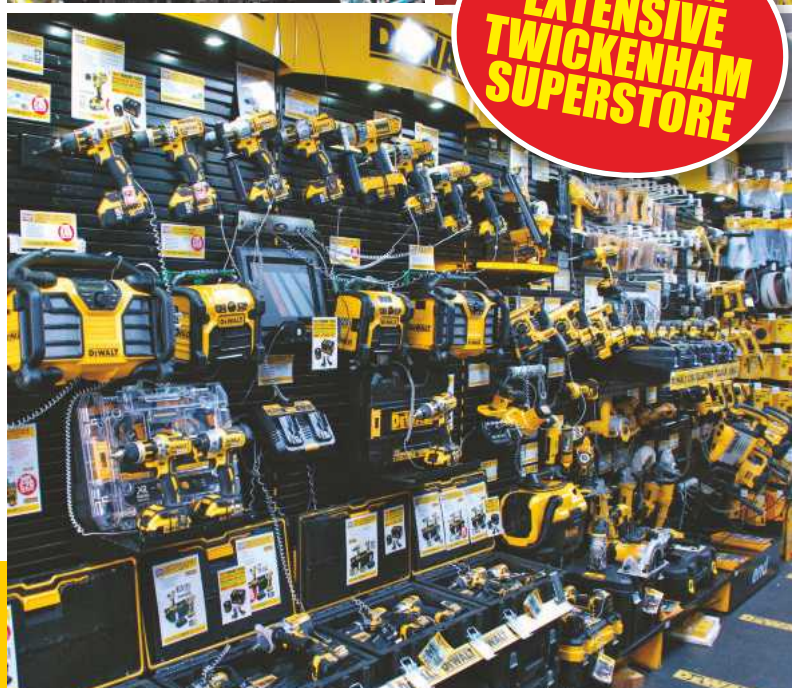
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1 A rack for gouges and a branch mallet on its 'thumb' hook

Going a bundle on branch wood

Robin Gates delivers a bundle of branch wood projects requiring only basic hand tools

Branch wood's reputation among woodworkers is on the up and up. Not long ago branch wood was merely what stood in the way of the real timber, the brush and the brash, only fit for the fire if anyone could be bothered to saw it, and otherwise left to rot on the woodland floor.

It's different now. Shake a bundle of branch wood and half a dozen spoon carvers will fall out of it, each looking for the perfect bend to shape a ladle or a scoop. I've made a few spoons myself, but in the last year or so I've been racking my brains for other things to make from this most humble of materials.

Humble? Definitely, you don't sit lower on the woodworking tree than using branch wood, scavenged from the forest floor before the insects and fungi claim it. In comparison, the woodworker having his pick of the racks of PAR in the DIY store is a timber aristocrat. But working with these poor-man's gleanings is an enriching experience, a journey beginning at the very roots of the material.

To make something beautiful from straight-grained and well-seasoned timber is an

achievement and a pleasure, but when you make something even remotely functional from an awkward bit of branch walked home from the country, its extra dash of history adds more than a hint of satisfaction to the project. More than once the piece I wanted has turned out to be part of a branch as branched as the London underground and I've walked home looking like Treebeard, the giant Ent from *Lord of the Rings*. Note to self: carry a folding pruning saw in future!

Getting organised

I was taking stock of my tools spread around the garden shed in old shopping baskets and shoe boxes, and thinking that I'd seen better organisation at a village jumble sale. These tools have arrived with no grand plan, not in tidy sets or fitted boxes, but as an odd tool now and then as the need arose or the fancy took me.

This is especially true of my chisels and gouges, which span the ages from mid-Victorian carving tools to things I've fashioned from recycled tyre levers. But a handful of gouges, in particular, have fallen into a set of sorts simply because



2 The split reveals that the branch grew twisted



3 The froe splits an ash branch down the middle

I find myself using them so often, so I decided to organise them in a rack on the shed wall where they'd hang safely out of harm's way (photo 1).

A straightish piece of ash offered itself for the job, as some 'natural' as-found wood seems to do – you look at it and see what you're going to make lurking beneath the bark. Although straight it proved to be twisted (photo 2) as I worked the froe from one end to the other (photo 3), so it would have to be sawn in short lengths if to be squared up without also being reduced to the width and depth of a carpenter's pencil.

Having cut a half-cylinder of log to approximate length for the eight tools, about 400mm, I roughly flattened the top and rear surfaces with the carpenter's axe, then planed them smooth before setting out the gouges where I wanted them (photo 4). Using the spokeshave, I smoothed the natural convex of the rack's underside as a reminder of its arboreal origins, using a bench hook as a handy stop to steady the piece (photo 5).

As a guide to the shape and size of hole required, I impressed the cutting edge of each blade at the appropriate spot (photo 6), then



bored a pilot hole and carved it to a fit that was specific to each blade but with some wiggle room. If I'd bored plain round holes for the broader gouges, their slim handles would have slipped part-way through and they'd have perched in the rack as haphazardly as birds on power lines.

The rack was finished with a wipe of linseed oil and attached to the wall with a couple of screws fastened from outside. In terms of age and appearance, my assortment of gouges in

their new rack may resemble *Dad's Army* on parade but the rack has turned them into an effective fighting unit, standing ready for action, and I don't know why I didn't do this sooner.

Knock knock

Nothing conjures the scene of a traditional carpenter's shop like the knocking of a wooden mallet. In my mind's eye I see the mortises being cut for a Georgian window sash, or the proud

figurehead for a sailing ship rising from a sea of wood chips. Alas, nothing so elegant in my shed, but I can dream.

Every mallet I've seen has been either of the joinery type, in two parts with handle through-mortised to a head at 90°, or of the carving sort with handle and head in line – sometimes turned from one piece but more often assembled from two. Some years ago I came across a branch with another at an acute angle, saw the makings of a



4 Planing top and rear surfaces flat



5 A bench hook used as a stop for working with the spokeshave



6 Impressing the cutting edge as a guide to shape and size



7 Three holes were linked to accommodate a large gouge



8 Shaping the hole for a fishtail gouge



9 Branched oak to make a mallet



10 Leaving the piece long facilitates clamping for the drawknife



11 Sawing a flat surface for the striking face

mallet in it and, although it looks a bit odd, I haven't used another since. It hefts superbly well, positioning the mallet hand at a more natural angle when knocking a chisel or gouge held in the other.

Recently I chanced upon the stump of a felled oak, and although the really useful wood had been carted away, I found among the wreckage a piece with a perfect mallet inside it (**photo 9**). To my mind that's with the handle at about 45° to the head, which is about 100mm long and with a striking face of about 50mm diameter. The handle is about 35mm diameter and 300mm long.

The route from rough branch to finished mallet is an easy one requiring only the simplest of hand tools: drawknife, spokeshave, saws and a short-bladed carving knife. After cutting away stubs of small branches with the coping saw, I sliced off the bark and soft fibres with the drawknife, then used the spokeshave to smooth the surfaces, working across the grain to minimise tear-out.

An important point here, as with any oddly-shaped piece, was to keep the piece long for as long as possible, because whereas with an axe you can hew with one hand and hold the work with the other, the drawknife and spokeshave are two-handed tools and the work has to be securely clamped (**photo 10**). If the workpiece is sawn to final length too soon, then the clamping setup can get in the way of the tools.

I used my home-made carving knife for

finishing in the angle between head and handle (**photo 12**), and for chamfering around the edge of the striking face to prevent splintering (**photo 13**) – the grip and leverage offered by a short blade and big handle provide good control in tight corners. With that done, and a wipe of linseed oil, the mallet was ready for its first strike.

Thumbs up

A piece of ash remaining from the gouge rack bore a small branch reminiscent of a human thumb, which looked just right to make a hook for the new oak mallet. In retrospect the suggestion of a thumb seems highly apposite, because it was the evolution of a thumb capable of moving oppositely to the fingers which provided the grip enabling our species to develop and use tools.

For this piece the usual greenwood tools of drawknife, spokeshave and carving knife were joined by a 'V' tool to outline a thumb nail and a bow saw to shape the wrist of the hook where it would taper into the wall of the shed (**photo 17**).

Like the coping saw, the bow saw's blade rotates 360° in its frame, which is invaluable for sawing curves, while its longer, wider blade with coarser teeth handles thicker timber. With both saws the open frame is a great boon to visibility, but the bow saw nevertheless had me craning over the work like a hungry heron (**photo 18**), watching the progress of the blade on the far side of the kerf.



12 Pull strokes with a knife in the angle of handle and head...



13 ... and push strokes when chamfering an edge to prevent splintering



14 Working across the grain of the handle with a spokeshave...



15 ... and finishing with a concave scraper



16 Beginning the mallet hook, with push strokes of the drawknife



17 Shaping the 'wrist' of the hook with the spokeshave



18 Craning over the bow saw to monitor progress



19 Rounding the 'thumb' with a coping saw



20 The knife works where other tools cannot reach



21 The tool-gripping thumb – an evolutionary milestone for woodworkers

A fascination in using these chance finds of wood with their variety of shapes, moisture levels and grain lies in learning how tools behave in different situations. When I'm planing plantation-grown off-the-rack softwood one experience is much like the last, but a twist of oak that struggled for life on a windswept hill or a bend of alder, which arched above the river, is not such plain sailing. I'm constantly changing the set and direction of the blade, re-clamping the work in new positions. Sometimes my hands seem to be getting on with the job by themselves.

As with the gouge rack, I screwed the mallet

hook to the shed wall from outside, but this wasn't as easy as it sounds. Having bored a clearance hole through the shed, I wedged the hook in position using a Heath Robinson arrangement of battens braced from the roof and the floor. Next I sharpened a long pencil lead to pass through the shed wall to mark the spot for a pilot hole on the flat face of the hook. After boring the pilot hole, I re-positioned the hook and delicately turned the screw from outside, but not delicately enough and the cobbled-together arrangement of battens and hook collapsed in a heap. When the screw did

eventually bite into the timber and the hook pulled tight, I felt like I'd defeated the laws of physics.

Tempting dish

I tell myself I don't eat a lot of chocolate, but my typical shopping list tells a different story, for among the fruit and vegetables (destined for slow death at the bottom of the fridge) the chocolates are there by the bagful.

It's those 'treat-size' and 'share' bags which are my undoing, as they trick me into thinking that eating smaller means eating fewer when, in fact, the opposite is true. Finishing the entire bag becomes a job that needs doing, tidying away the last few so I can dispose of the evidence.

It was while plucking a packet of those temptingly gilded Galaxy Golden Eggs from the supermarket shelf I wondered, if I was to pour them into a small wooden dish that I'd made so as to become part of an artistic whole, perhaps I would be less likely to scoff the lot in one go.

Beginning with a piece of the ash log already split down the middle, I used the drawknife to roughly smooth what would be the convex upper surface, then planed the base flat. To grip the piece in the vice I planed small flats (**photo 23**), which would be rounded away later.

This was the first outing for the new branch mallet, used to drive a 19mm gouge in excavating a hollow (**photo 24**) – and I'm pleased to say it was not found wanting. Somehow the mallet,



22 Temptation in an ash dish

with its head and handle in this acutely-angled arrangement, becomes part of my arm in a way that other mallets don't. I anchored the piece to the bench between branch wood dogs, tightened by a wedge (**photo 25**).

I've made dishes like this before so decided



23 Temporary flats enable the vice to grip the work

to experiment with a different handle design, cutting away quadrants in the ends with the coping saw (**photo 26**), rasping these to fair curves and then gouging secondary recesses for the fingertips (**photo 27**). Leaving the tool marks of the gouge on the inside, on the outside



24 Driving a gouge with the new oak mallet

I used a scraper to shave away stray fibres, then applied a food-safe paste of beeswax and liquid paraffin.

With regard to the handles, that upturned design has only proved more inviting than what I've done before, seemingly lifting the dish in my direction the more I look at it – with disastrous consequences for the golden eggs. Oh well, it's a good thing (or not) a few spare bags of them slipped into the shopping basket among the beans and broccoli, for just such an emergency!

Joy stick

The joyful chap, shown in **photo 29**, cut in the smooth bark and straight grain of a small ash stick, is as simple as he looks, only marginally more sophisticated than initials carved in a wayside tree with a penknife. Yet he's brought a smile to everyone who's seen him, and is a reminder to myself, as a hobbyist, not to take woodwork too seriously. While the quest for the perfect dovetail joint goes on, sometimes it's good simply to have fun.

When I first sawed around the piece, then chiselled up to the cut, I'd had it in mind to make a slim toadstool, with a tapering



25 Branch wood dogs and an oak wedge anchor the work



26 Sawing a handle to shape with the coping saw



27 Smoothing the sawn curve with a rasp



28 Final smoothing with a concave scraper



29 A smiling face among the greenery

stalk and a tall cap, but put the piece aside for some months and forgot about it. Then with my brother Phil's birthday approaching and me bereft of ideas for what to give him, a keen and knowledgeable gardener, I found the stick and re-imagined it as an emissary of birthday greetings, a wooden 'birthday boy' to stand in the garden and smile among the greenery, perhaps to be a kind of scarecrow.

With a pencil I drew the outlines of the eyes and mouth, centred around the knot of a small branch that would make a nose, then incised them with the 'V' tool, also adding wavy cuts to make a hairstyle (**photo 31**). I used a small gouge to open the figure's eyes and mouth, also making a few light cuts to shape the teeth of his ash-white smile (**photo 32**). Below the long neck I gave him the muscled arms and legs of a willing garden helper, and with the drawknife pointed the lower end of the stick to be driven into the earth (**photo 33**).

In spring this cheery fellow, which grew in a Herefordshire hedgerow, was packaged off to a Durham garden where, Phil told me, it was installed beneath a weeping pear tree and watched blackbirds pecking flowers off the primroses – so much for being a scarecrow! **WW**



30 Shaping the long neck with a gouge



31 Creating a hair style with the 'V' tool



32 Carving a clean set of teeth



33 Pointing the base to drive into the earth



34 With arms and legs, ready for the garden

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! 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 editor.ww@mytimemedia.com

★ STAR LETTER

Saw maker identification

Dear Editor,

Please can you help me identify the maker of a saw I have in my toolkit. It has on the handle and stamped on the blade the logo 'Tools Specialists Bishopsgate EC2'. All the other wording is worn off, but I have attached a photo of the medallion.

Thank you, **Bill Croucher**

Hi Bill,

Sadly no one here has yet been able to identify this particular saw, but we're still looking. Despite the medallion (pictured) showing promise as an identifier, we're still in the dark. For anyone else engaged in this sort of sleuthing, it's good to view the tool as a whole as often there are clues to be gleaned from the handle shape, etc.

You may have some luck if you approach the Ken Hawley Collection, the largest collection of saws in the UK, based in Sheffield.

See www.hawleytoolcollection.com for more information.

Mark



Are any readers familiar with the insignia shown on this saw's medallion?



What uses do you find for your broken bandsaw blades? All suggestions and ideas are welcome

Uses for broken bandsaw blades

Dear Mark,

Having been brought up in the days of 'waste not, want not' during World War II – yes, I am that old! – I'm a bit of a hoarder and hate waste. Consequently, I cannot bear to throw anything away, and among the things that I cannot bear to throw away, I have some broken bandsaw blades. And I do mean broken, due to carelessness, I suppose, rather than them being worn out. Can someone please suggest a use for them, do you think? If I could invent some way of anchoring the ends, I could use short pieces to make a kind of wood-cutting junior hacksaw, but this is as far as my thoughts extend. Any sensible suggestions from other readers would be most welcome. Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon L Robinson

P.S. My next problem is where to store a stack, about 2ft high, of past copies of *The Woodworker*!

Bench dog dilemma

Dear Mark,

I greatly enjoyed Andy King's article on building his new workbench (shown in the March 2017 issue), and wanted to ask a question about dog holes. Do they go all the way through his aprons, which look to be at least 125mm deep, and if so, could you provide some tips on how to drill 20mm holes truly vertical through 125-150mm of beech? And do you then use dogs which you press upward from underneath the apron when you want to use them? I've just fitted a Veritas tail vice to my new bench and the instructions only refer to 4 x 20mm dog holes 'thru' without advice on how – perhaps I should ask them?

Many thanks, and any help with this would be much appreciated.

Roger Gray

Hi Roger,

Bench dogs, at their most simple, are just square topped pegs fitting snugly in a round hole. They come in all sizes, from the short plastic ones you might encounter on a Workmate, through to the simple ones previously mentioned (in wood or metal), to longer engineered sprung examples for the 'high-end' workbench. Most are inserted from the top when and where needed.

Drilling a vertical hole can be a challenge but not one beyond the average woodworker, and from the photo of your bench this shouldn't be a problem for you. I'd recommend a sharp auger bit at a slow speed for maximum control, with an upturned try square or similar as a guide. Your truest hole will be from a drill press, but another pair of eyes can also be a definite help. **Mark**



Roger's workbench

Hi Gordon,

Unlike you I wasn't brought up in the war, but my mum was and she naturally passed on that make do and mend attitude to me and my brother. I completely understand your reluctance to discard broken bandsaw blades; I suffer the same angst every time myself, and traditionally spend a minute or so pondering what to do before committing the blade remnants to the scrap pile.

It's been suggested that drilling a strip of blade and using it in a hacksaw frame could create a rough all-rounder saw, but I've yet to try it myself. If anyone out there has a good idea of a use for a broken bandsaw blade, we'd love to hear about it. And yes, storage of all kinds remains an issue; to my slight embarrassment my own magazine storage solution has yet to progress beyond the multiple cardboard box. All the best, **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 on the usual address: editor.ww@mytimemedia.com

Please note that all digital photos need to be greater than **1MB** in size to guarantee sufficiently good reproduction for the printed page

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Extending dining table

In this excerpt from *The Woodworker* of April 1925, we look at plans for an Adam-style extending dining table, which remains a very useful item to this day

An extending dining table is a very useful item (particularly if you can quickly lay your hands on the extension leaf or leaves) and this article from *The Woodworker* of April 1925 may prove to be of interest to many. Keen readers with working memories may recall a letters page query from last year requesting information on just this type of table. At the time I was unable to find much in the archives, but I came across this one a few days ago.

Victorian innovation

Although extending tables have been around since Georgian times, the wind-out extender, complete with cranked key and nicely turned handle, was a Victorian innovation, and featured a long screw thread and barrel, which enabled a castor-shod diner to telescope in and out either side of the latest dinner party. Examples often turn up for sale in high street antique shops, and while I've heard of them extending unlikely distances, most were made to fit one or two leaves of about 2ft wide.

Key component

The article partially reproduced here gives a full explanation of how to make one (mahogany or teak is recommended for the extending frame), together with the vital information that Messrs. Joseph Fetter of Cheapside, Birmingham are the best known manufacturers of these extending screws – the key component of the job. Anyone wanting to make one now will have to find a breaker at a junk shop, but please let me know if you require any more information on this subject and I'll happily help you out.

Mark

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: editor.ww@mytimemedia.com and we'll get them in the mag

DINING TABLE—ADAM STYLE

109

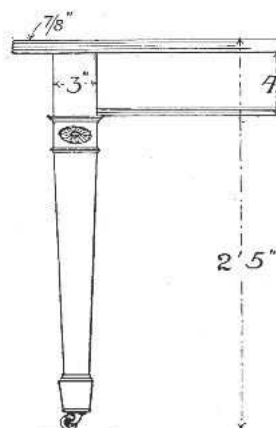


FIG. 2.—DETAIL OF LEG AND RAIL.

FIG. 3.—DOVETAILED RAILS.

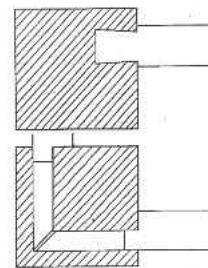


FIG. 4.—SECTION OF UPPER BLOCKS OF LEGS.

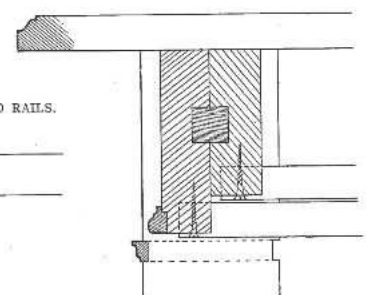


FIG. 5.—SECTIONAL VIEW, SHOWING THE SLIDES IN POSITION. (NOTE.—SEE FIGS. 9 AND 10 FOR DOVETAIL-TONGUED SLIDING RAILS.)

SECTIONS OF TOP MOULD, RAIL MOULD AND LEG CAPPING ARE ALSO SHOWN.

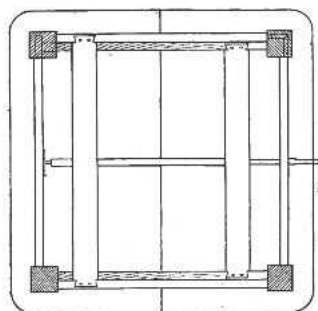


FIG. 6.—PLAN, CLOSED.

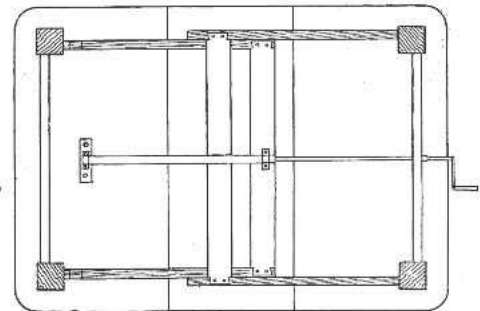


FIG. 7.—PLAN, EXTENDED.

properly done and with the rails tenoned and pinned to legs, one pair of rails should travel freely within the other. The inner pair is lessened in width to say 2 1/2 ins. to 3 ins., so that the dovetailed stretcher does not hinder its sliding action. Nicely fitted, it is found possible to extend the table by hand without the aid of a screw, which might then even be dispensed with. The dovetailed stretchers must be fitted square to ensure easy working, and a stop block can be screwed on to prevent the slides pulling out too far.

A plan showing underpart of table with two pair rails to slide, dovetailed stretchers and extending screw is seen in Fig. 6, and a plan showing this table extended with one leaf, indicates the working of the rails (Fig. 7). The detail

of the sliding rails is more clearly seen at Fig. 8, giving a sectional view looking from inside. The method of grooving and tonguing with square fillet is seen, and also the lessened width of inner slide so that it clears the dovetailed stretcher in its course. Instead of the square fillet, a dovetailed tonguing is met with in high class work as at Fig. 9. This method involves very careful work but is recommended for the best class of table. A sectional view of those slides in position (Fig. 5) will make matters clear.

THE SCREW. The best-known are the patent extending screws of Messrs. Joseph Fetter, of Britannia Works, Cheapside, Birmingham, who make a reliable article. Screws vary, and it is advisable to procure this part early in the course of the work. In fixing, the handle end of screw

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A very nice badger plane made by John Arnold at his Bloomsbury premises, sometime between 1831–1846

The badger plane

Our new resident 'tool hunter' Gary Cook takes a look at this plane dating back from 1831-1846

I'd completely forgotten about this old badger plane. It's been in a cardboard box at the back of my storage unit for a good couple of years. It was made by John Arnold at his Bloomsbury (London) premises between 1831–1846. The plane also carries a 'Wilson' owner stamp in a zigzag border.

Unique characteristics

In *Modern Practical Joinery*, George Ellis mentions that badger planes were used primarily for cleaning up rebates to take away machine marks. Other writers suggest the badger may have been used to make the complete rebate, by referencing a pre-made groove from a plough plane and rebating to the same depth, or neglecting the

groove and using a fixed wooden fence on the stock to guide the badger. I'm inclined to go with Ellis' explanation, because of the plane's unique characteristics.

Tool evolution

These planes do their work very well, partly because they have a skew mouth, and partly because the blade passes through the stock at a slight angle (about 10°). Without this rotation, the skew would mean the cutting edge would be slightly angled upward and not parallel with the sole. The correct combination of skew and rotation results in the blade being drawn to the extreme right-hand edge of the sole, meaning you get a clean inner edge to your rebate.

With the plane working as it should, you can feel it drawn tight into the shoulder of the rebate as you work. Cutting the recess for the iron when making this plane must have been a tricky job in itself with that skew angle and tilt.

The plane evolved through time into metal varieties, with some of the Scottish makers producing the finest ones. It's still confusing to me why badger planes were used in place of more adaptable 'left and right' rebate planes. Badgers themselves seem to be relatively sparse in the tool history and I can only assume machines overtook them?

A true badger

I've been told a badger plane is only a true badger if it has a tote, a skew mouth/blade, that 10° blade rotation and a small side escapement, the purpose of which is only to allow the blade to get to the extreme edge of the plane, rather than allowing for the ejection of shavings. Badgers often have damage on this stressed edge. The blade doesn't come right across on the other side of the sole for obvious reasons, leaving a good chunk of wood to limit distortion and to maintain strength. On this plane, you can see that the tote has been strengthened with a screw to the fore end, probably due to it coming free with hard use.

Badger planes aren't expensive; you can find them cheaply online. However, there are a couple of things I like about this particular one. The first thing is the boxing along the wear edge. It's very nicely done with keyed-in boxwood, the same technique you see on better moulding planes and fillisters. The second thing is the brass depth stop. That seems a bit odd if you aren't using the plane to make full rebates I suppose, and it also seems to fly in the face of Ellis' comments about using badgers for final passes. Maybe it was a later addition? Like so many fascinating tools I find, many have user-modifications to aid the owner in particular work. **WW**



You will often find damage at the extreme edge of these planes, just where the blade protrudes



A useful depth stop in brass has a screw to allow movement and a brass thumbscrew for adjustment



The skew-angled blade with cap. The wedge also had to be made to fit the angle

FURTHER INFO

Gary's blog – www.hackneytools.com – concentrates primarily on quality woodworking tools from the 19th–20th centuries. He also tries to include information about the woodwork and carpentry trades from those times. You learn something every day, so do get in touch if you have information about hand tools and traditional work that others might find useful



Those angles! Look at Konrad Sauer's infill plane build (online) to see how he worked it out



The maker mark of 'Arnold' appears above what seems to be two variations of owner marks

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Why we love a woodfair

Woodfairs are becoming increasingly popular across the UK, and prove to be a great day out for all the family. Here, the Editor casts his mind back to 2016's Bentley Woodfair and all it had to offer

I love the feeling of setting off for a show; all the planning that went before, the anticipation, and frankly the excitement of what's to come. These were all my feelings and more as I stood in line to enter the Bentley Woodfair last year, billed (and rightly so) as the leading woodcraft event in the South East. Spread over 90 acres of Sussex countryside, the Bentley estate includes a motor museum, wildfowl reserve, a sizeable woodland (Glyndebourne Wood) and what's been described as one of the best miniature steam railways around.

The show first started in 1996, and continues to attract a wide and diverse representation of

trades and pastimes associated with the timber industry, always drawing a good crowd. There was very much something of the childhood day out about it for me, and I found myself almost rushing from one attraction to the next so as not to miss anything. There was a wide range of things to see,

both for adults and kids of all ages, including plenty of historical stuff like reproduction clothing, tools and weapons that our ancestors would have used. I particularly enjoyed the 'have a go' archery (bull's eye, natch) and watching the Welsh axemen tearing through logs like they were made of nearly nothing.

Homes wanted

With affordable accommodation a big interest for a lot of people – me included – a number of 'homes on wheels' attracted a lot of attention. As well as vintage 'working' caravans on display there were modern day versions of the classic shepherd's hut to have a look at and nearly all of them made me want to move in straight away. I particularly liked the one made by Nightingale Shepherd Huts – www.nightingaleshepherdhuts.com – which showed good ergonomic use of space and had a generous amount of reclaimed and upcycled features incorporated. Features such as fold up furniture and stained glass windows really made the interior feel human and homely.

As well as supplying a generous portion of entertainment, a woodfair is a great place for learning, too. Pretty much every trade or pastime



One of the many mobile working vans on display



The ever popular pole-lathe turning



Kids get creative at the wood recycling stand

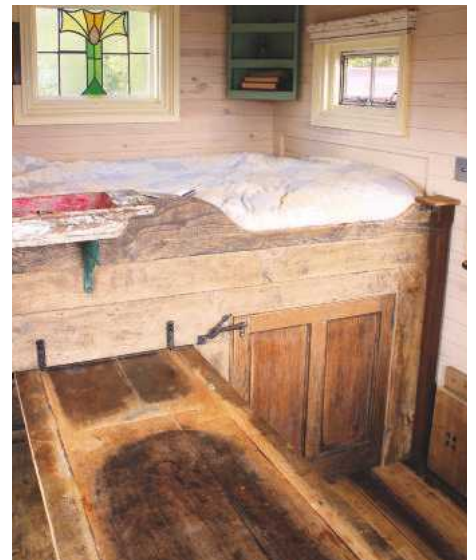


Natalie and Carsten Harud outside one of their Nightingale shepherd's huts...

associated with timber has a representative who will be demonstrating his or her particular craft and helping demystify aspects of it that may have been previously unexplained. As they say, you never stop learning and there really is always some new bit of knowledge to acquire. It was particularly heartening to see so many opportunities for kids and young people to have a go, and to actually make something for themselves. It's easy to underestimate the importance of this and the positive impact that hands-on creative activity can have on today's generation of screen swipers.

Diversity

Bentley has a well established record of wood shows, and this ensures it continues to attract a large and diverse number of exhibitors. As well as the public exposure that attendance will guarantee, the event is something of a social event for anyone who takes a pitch here, and the camping field nearby is host to all manner of festivities for the duration of the show, culminating in a singalong barbecue party on the penultimate night. Such things help to maintain a jolly atmosphere within the park, and well worth the cost of a sore head or two.



... and the interior of their hut – note slide-out table



A steam traction engine from the South Eastern Vintage Agricultural Club



Loading up the big swing next to the climbing wall



Back on terra firma; the Editor has come down from the trees

There's no shortage of opportunities for spending a bit of money on woodworking-related kit and materials, and there are always a few secondhand tool vendors present. Considering the paucity of such establishments in town these days (and the uncertainty of online auctions), it was a genuine pleasure to trawl through some sensibly priced hand tools. Most of these were in original condition (i.e. not polished, shined and waxed) and I bought myself a 1970s (modern!) tenon saw with straight and sharp blade and solid handle for £8.

Going up

Even if many of us might not have done it for a few years, I think we all like to climb a tree, and I took the opportunity to make an easy – and safe – ascent, courtesy of the Scott Fraser rope access training team. Once secured into

my harness and hooked up to a rope and tackle high up in the branches, it wasn't long before I was beyond the top of the temporary climbing blocks and waving down to those below. It's funny how the security of knowing you won't get hurt if you fall off really makes the climb both easier and suddenly as normal as it is for any 10-year-old who knows no fear.

There's always a good choice of food stalls at this type of event, and it really pays to have a good look around before you make your lunchtime selection. I say this, but am generally guilty myself of just stopping at the first one I like the look of. I'm sure there must be a science somewhere when it comes to queues; usually the best food outlets are the most popular and have the biggest queue, but you can't always be certain and often the choice is swayed by the availability of a sunny table or proximity to entertainments. **WW**



Working on a shavehorse



Jeff Higley introduces the next generation to the dugout canoe



One of the Welsh Axemen poised to strike

IN THE WOODS

Most importantly for a woodfair, Bentley has its own woods. Yes, actual woods that both house part of the event with stalls and demonstrations within and also provide a venue for activities for young and old alike. Recently they have opened up an adventure trail (Branching Out), which was proving very popular with kids and their parents. I watched a whole family on what must be one of the biggest bench swings in the world, arcing down from a height of 50ft or so with a priceless assortment of expressions on their faces.

For a show which includes the description 'forest to final form', I have to say that it does exactly that, and would encourage every reader to attend, either here at Bentley or wherever there is a similar one in your own part of the country

FURTHER INFORMATION

My thanks to all at Bentley. This year's Woodfair takes place from 15–17 September, and more details can be found on the website: **www.bentley.org.uk**

VINTAGE FARM ENGINES

A stationary combustion engine would have been a definite asset for the average farm back in the early part of the last century, and during World War I a quarter of a million came to this country from the US, mainly to help make up for the shortage of both men and horses. These were machines made by a number of manufacturers, and were classed and named according to their power rating. From the smaller versions, typically about 1HP and, known by evocative names such as Johnny Boy and Chore Boy, they increased in size through the Hired Man (2½HP and shown here), to 3 Mule Team (3HP) up to a 6 Mule Team (6HP), which also came in a portable version (a forerunner of the tractor).

All feature a Hit & Miss governing system to maintain a steady speed; the intake valve won't open if the engine is running too fast



A nicely restored example of the Hired Man engine powering a table saw via drive belt – note riving knife and guard



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TRADITIONAL TIMBER FRAMING IN SHROPSHIRE

Operating from his workshop in the Shropshire countryside, **Adam Barker** not only runs a range of timber framing courses, but also provides various traditional woodworking services, as **Colin Eden-Eadon** discovers first hand

Nestled in the soft green rolling hills of AE Housman's south Shropshire (of *A Shropshire Lad* fame) is a business that is founded on traditions and skills that he himself would have recognised, and which he and many of his era valued. In fact, while the techniques and methods may have changed with the times, they're rooted in even older times and craft skills.

Green timber building

Green timber framing has been with us since medieval times. Many towns, such as Shrewsbury, Chester and similar towns dotted around Britain, have many fine examples of this type of building. Ludlow, a few miles down the road, has some excellent examples itself, and London too has its fair share. Many parts of Europe have a long standing timber-framed building tradition, with France having some of the oldest, dating back

to the 12th century. Similarly, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Basque region too, all have a strong connection to this type of building and construction.

While the principles have remained the same, green timber building is a very eco-friendly and efficient way of building even in this modern age. It's no mistake that in many of our coldest climates, Scandinavia and the like, there is a strong tradition of timber building, as they are cheaper, faster to build, and easy to keep warm. It is a very pleasing and aesthetic way to build, and fits, I think, into our British landscape rather well.

From apprentice to master craftsman

Oak Heath Timber Framers is a green timber framing company that is situated between Craven Arms and Ludlow. Hopton Heath is its home and Adam Barker the owner and proprietor. Adam has been working with wood since he left school at

the age of 16 when he joined a youth training scheme with a placement at Acton Scott Farm Museum near Church Stretton – a working farm based on traditional Victorian farming principles. There he trained under Keith Crane, master craftsman and wheelwright who was in charge of Shropshire's museums woodworking operations. Under Keith's direction, together they built the first original Shropshire wagon to be made in the county for 50 years. He learnt many wheelwrighting techniques, including tiring a wooden wheel under the watchful eyes of Keith and the county's last wheelwrights still in business. While he was learning many other traditional aspects of a woodworker's skill, he gained a City & Guilds Levels 2 & 3 qualification with a distinction at Shrewsbury College of Art and Technology. The scheme finished and Adam went out into the world to gain more experience, working with various companies, doing bank fit



The yard at Oak Heath, showing the workshop and office



Adam Barker leads a new course explaining how timber framing works



Cutting a mortise with the portable mortiser



Cutting a shoulder with a hand-held circular saw



Cleaning the internal sides of a mortise with a paring chisel

outs, green timber building and first and second carpentry fixing, in the days before cordless screwdrivers! He went back to the working farm, but this time as the master craftsman in charge, as his mentor, Keith, had retired. Adam was happiest being his own boss, so, with that in mind, he decided to go self-employed working with another timber framer and more often than not, back with Keith again.



A very neat completed tenon

Expanding & developing

For a few years Adam ran his business with himself as the sole craftsman from the back of his van, but in 2008 there came the opportunity to buy the old railway yard at Hopton Heath through his mother and auntie, who owned the rights to the yard. His grandfather as P&T Jones had run a very successful designers and steel erectors business, which won many awards for

its innovative designs, including a new type of railway shed. Adam saw this as an opportunity to expand and develop his business and as it would provide him with a base to operate from, it made a lot of financial sense. It has allowed him to broaden his work type and set up a popular scheme of timber framing courses.

The 1860 main building in the railway yard had a tree growing through the roof and the



Using a drawknife to make pegs for joints



Two sides and half an end ready for the main beam



Fitting the main beam



Trying the fit – notice how the tenon is cut to allow it to fit at an angle

floor was several feet too high, as well as many other obstacles that had to be overcome before it could be a fully operational woodwork workshop. Once the workshop was fully restored, however, he added two covered wings to both sides of the original building, and in time for Adam and his wife's 10th wedding anniversary, a flat above the main workshop.

Adam now has another full-time craftsman working for him, Rob Lewis, and spends half his time on site and the rest planning and setting out jobs in the workshop.

Some modern methods are applied and techniques have moved on, but the principles and the concept is centuries old, steeped in tradition. Circular saws and mortise machines now cut the joints, but if you looked at one of Adam's buildings and compared it to an older example, you would recognise many common characteristics and working methods. What Adam provides is a local service harking back to times when everyone used local craftsmen and services for their building needs. Timber framing may be a very old craft but, like a lot of techniques in the woodworking world, some of the tools in use have changed. We live in faster times, and people therefore want faster results. Fortunately, science and engineering have given us advances in many technologies, such as glues and fixings, and modern craftspeople have had to adapt to these changes.

Learning with Adam

The site has come a long way since 2008 and it now has several other buildings and accommodation for the week-long courses.

Adam and his family now live on site, having built their house at the yard fairly recently.

During the early spring and summer, Adam runs one-week courses at one per month, usually for between 4-8 people. There are various types of accommodation available, varying from simple camping and small pods to a full-size flat. There are plenty of lovely local pubs and places to eat in the area, and Adam's wife is a superb cook and provides delicious homemade lunches. In the evenings there is a fully fitted kitchen available, as well as shower and laundry facilities, not to mention a small bar and a pit fire (weather permitting!).

To my mind it is extremely good value, good



A happy end to the course. Job done, now where's the bar?



The mark of timber framing excellence

fun and a whole package experience. With Adam's 30 odd years of knowledge and experience on hand, you learn something new and creative, and with gorgeous home cooked food, good company and good local beer to accompany it – all set in the rolling Shropshire hills – what's not to like?

Partners or wives, if you take the flat for instance, can come too and go off during the day exploring the wonderful countryside or local towns such as Ludlow and Shrewsbury. There's certainly plenty to do, including all the usual shopping facilities, galleries, museums, cafés and restaurants galore. Ludlow even has its own Michelin star restaurant if you really fancy pushing the culinary boat out! **WW**

THE COURSES

Adam likes to teach modern methods, working to a drawing, as well as traditional techniques, adding his experience. The courses span five days, with each having a maximum allocation of eight people, ideally divided into four pairs

Course structure

Day 1: Introduction to tools, timber, framing and creating a mortise & tenon by hand with a cleft draw peg set offcentre

Day 2: More about the type of wood used, and a project such as a summer house, all made by hand

Day 3: Power tools, chain mortise and circular saw, as well as modern expanding joints

Days 4 & 5: Finishing the projects that have been started

This is only an outline, so to find out more details contact info@oakheath.co.uk or visit www.oakheath.co.uk



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Mission accomplished

Having always found Mission furniture appealing, Phil Davy sets about making a coat rack in that particular style

Although I'm more familiar with traditional Shaker furniture, I've always found a certain appeal to Mission furniture. It has an understated elegance to it, predominantly featuring straight lines, with very few curves. Originating in the Spanish missions of California and America's southwestern states some 100 years ago, the Mission style was pretty much the equivalent of what was being produced during the Arts and Crafts period in Britain. It was usually made from oak using quartersawn boards and frequently stained (or fumed) a darker brown to highlight the timber's medullary rays, which would really stand out.

I still have an assortment of European and American oak boards in the workshop bought over recent years when the opportunity seemed too good to pass up. It's obviously best to build any project from exactly the same batch, as a mix of different timbers might not match up. I used a mix of offcuts from a couple of boards, and

actually the visual difference is hard to see. If you're faced with an obvious colour variation, one solution is to bleach the timber once you've completed the project. After rinsing off the bleach and allowing the oak to dry, lightly sand and then use a suitable stain to gain an even colour. Always experiment on offcuts first, though.

Construction of the coat rack is pretty easy,

making use of biscuits for jointing. Probably the most awkward part is forming a consistent curve to the lower edge of the main panel. It's harder to produce a shallow curve than one with a tighter radius. After cutting with a jigsaw, I used a spokeshave to clean up the curve, though this is much easier to do in softwood. The most reliable method is to first cut an accurate template from



1 Prepare your timber to width and thickness, planing the face side and edge on each board first



2 Saw rear and top boards to length, leaving them a tad oversize for cleaning up with a plane

TOOLS YOU'LL NEED

Marking tools
Straightedge
Bench and block planes
Spokeshave or sanding drum
Drill and bits
Jigsaw or bandsaw
Router and bits
Biscuit joiner
Hand saw or circular saw

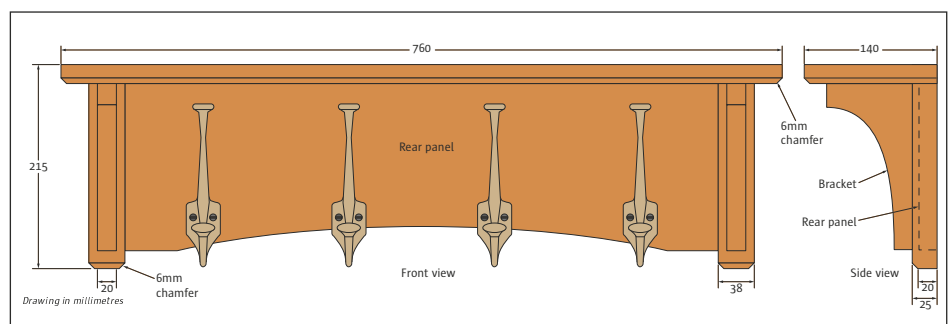
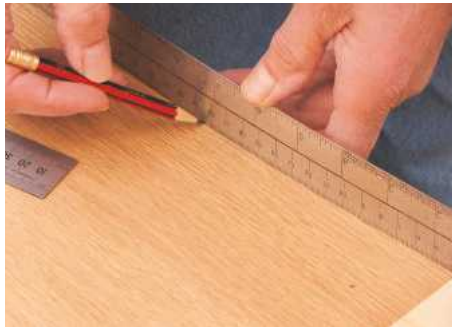


Fig.1 Mission coat rack



3 Plane the board ends square, working from each end towards the middle to prevent any splitting



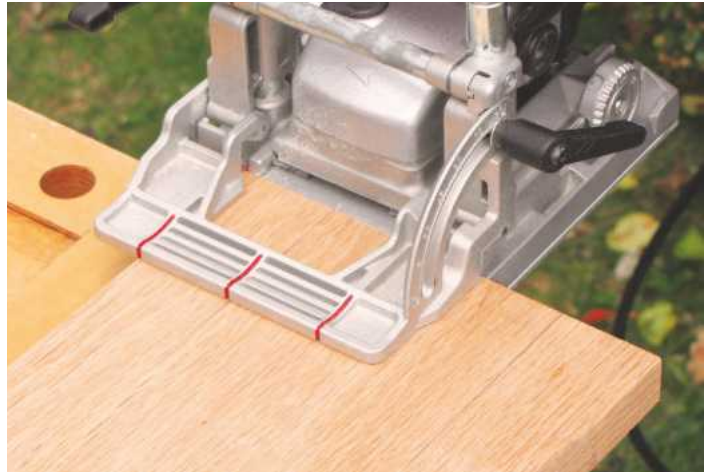
4 Draw the lower curve on the back by fixing a steel rule or narrow batten between two cramped offcuts



5 Next, carefully cut the curve on the waste side of the line, either on a bandsaw or with a jigsaw



6 Clean up the curve with a spokeshave. Alternatively, use a sanding drum fitted in a drill stand



7 Cut slots for biscuits in the ends of the rear panel. These are for attaching the end pieces later



8 Saw the shelf to length and plane the end-grain. Mark out biscuit positions on the shelf and back panel



9 Plane the two end pieces to size, and then cut slots. Rout a chamfer around their lower edges



10 Sand the back and underside of the shelf before gluing the rack together



11 Cramp end pieces to the panel using PVA glue. Masking tape makes cleaning up that much easier



12 If necessary, you can tidy up your routed chamfers with a few strokes from a sanding block



13 Use No.20 biscuits for fixing the upper shelf to the rear panel. This size is also used for the end pieces



14 Glue the rear panel and shelf together, checking for square as you tighten the clamps



15 Using a smoothing plane, trim the upper shelf flush at the rear of the coat rack



16 The shelf is supported by shaped brackets. A card template will help you get an even curve



17 Draw around the template on both brackets, then cut these carefully with a bandsaw or jigsaw



18 Tidy up the curves of each bracket with a sanding drum or spokeshave, making sure you keep the edges square



19 Glue a bracket to each end piece and cramp them together. Check the brackets are in the centre



20 A single screw fixes the shelf to the top of each bracket. Counterbore and plug the holes



21 Drill a 13mm hole into the rear face of each end piece; this creates clearance for the fixing screw heads



22 Starting from the hole, rout a 6mm wide slot. Follow with a dovetail bit set to the correct depth



23 Sand with 180 grit abrasive, raise the grain with a damp cloth and re-sand. Apply two or three coats of oil



24 Spacing four hooks evenly apart, drill and screw to the back panel. Drill and plug the wall for hanging

6mm ply or MDF, taking time to get this precise. With a suitable bearing-guided cutter you can then rout the oak to the exact symmetrical curve, with no cleaning up to do after you've completed the cutting.

It's a good idea to buy the actual hooks before you start cutting any timber, as you may need to increase the height of the back panel to accommodate them. I got mine from The Door Knocker Company (www.thedoorknockercompany.co.uk) based in Shropshire, which sells a fascinating range of period hardware, so you should be able to find something suitable. To give the project some authenticity I chose cast-iron hardware

in its natural grey finish. Unless you obtain hardware with a lacquered finish you should spray grey iron items before fitting, as they'll rust with the slightest hint of moisture in the air. It's not advisable to fit untreated iron to oak, either, as the tannin will react with the metal to create black stains. Use clear or black satin lacquer, depending on the effect you want. You can, of course, make the coat rack any length you like, increasing or reducing the number of hooks as necessary.

Finally the rack can be sanded and oiled, but remove the hooks first. I brushed on two coats of Chestnut Finishing Oil, wiping off the excess after a few minutes. **WW**



25 The Mission-style coat rack in use



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PACKAGE 1

The novice sawyer

Mastering hand-held saws can be tricky, says **Andy King**, but by following some central tenets your abilities will quickly improve

I was 13 when, with weekly two-hour school lessons, I made my first tentative steps into woodworking. These invariably revolved around my old woodwork teacher, Mr George, letting us hit the bench with our tools and half-made attempts at projects before, just minutes later, declaring with his booming Welsh voice: "Right boys, here please! All round this bench!" Once we were assembled, this would be followed by: "This boy has made a foolish error..." A good hour later, we were still at the bench while Mr George showed us all where we were going wrong.

Though I perhaps didn't get to do as much practical work in those lessons as I would have liked, the technical knowledge I gained was invaluable, providing a great foundation for my future career.

Sawing was always Mr George's favourite subject – he would go to great lengths telling us how to do it correctly, and we gained a fair bit of practice using tenon saws. Finding a sharp one was always tricky as there were plenty of pupils who abused the tools by cutting the vice, knocking panel pins into the benches and then cutting the pins with saws, planes or chisels. They would have fitted in well at St Custard's – we certainly had our own versions of Nigel Molesworth, Grabber et al.

Despite the obstacles, the sawing techniques I learned certainly stuck with me. Some of the same methodology is still quoted in textbooks, while other points passed on by my old school tutor are more obscure, like 'piston' sawing and his pinch method (see 'Where to start?'). To saw effectively, stance, as well as how to start a cut and grip the saw, are important, as are the techniques used for various sawing tasks.

First, though, you need to know what saws there are at your disposal and how to set them up.

Setup & selection

Setting up a saw to suit a particular task is all part of the fun of learning to sharpen, but selection of the saw is also important. Most saws fall under one of three categories: handsaws, backsaws, and frame saws (we won't be looking at the latter type here). Under the handsaws category comes rip saws, crosscut saws and panel saws. Broadly speaking these are pretty similar, being big saws for converting large stock; where they differ is in how their teeth are set. Rip saws, which are designed for use in solid long-grain timber, have every other tooth set in opposite directions, but square to the blade's face, thus making the kerf marginally wider than the blade's thickness; they average 3 to 4tpi (teeth per inch). Crosscut saws, on the other hand, have their teeth filed at an angle so that their points score the sides of the kerf before removing the wood in between, making them perfect for cutting across the grain as they limit tear-out; they're 6 to 8tpi. Panel saws are similar to crosscut saws, but their teeth are 9 to 10tpi, enabling them to cut finer kerfs; they're used mostly for sheet materials and veneered boards.

As for backsaws, the end opposite the cutting edge is stiffened with a metal strip, hence the name. Tenon and dovetail saws count as backsaws and are typically set in the same way as crosscut saws.

Those are the facts, but in reality you'll probably end up tailoring your saws to match the work you most commonly deal with. I was

taught how to crosscut-file backsaws – and, indeed, all handsaws, with the exception of the rip saw. Learning to crosscut-file a 12tpi tenon saw on a regular basis certainly developed my sharpening prowess! I think you'll find, however, that you actually end up doing as much ripping as you do crosscutting with backsaws; you'll find a tenon saw particularly useful for crosscutting shoulders, for example, but I also have a tenon saw set up for ripping.

Although a tenon saw is the mainstay for joinery and general woodwork, it often won't have the depth required for larger-scale joinery. Back in college we practised ripping shoulders on full-sized door stiles with a panel saw. At around 10tpi the cutting speed wasn't the quickest, but we were being tested on our ability to control the saw on a deep cut, aiming to get a push fit into the tenon direct from the saw. The finer scratch pattern from the set of the saw, plus the cleaner cut, makes this the proper saw for such a job, where a tenon saw wouldn't be deep enough and a coarse-toothed, rip-filed saw would leave a gappy joint.

One current trend is for saws to have differently sized and set teeth on their blades to aid cutting. Progressively filed teeth, like that offered by Lie-Nielsen's dovetail saw, means having a finer tpi at the tip of a backsaw, increasing over a few inches until the saw levels out at its normal tpi. Rob Cosman has come up with a variation on this theme, with the first couple of inches of his saw filed at a finer 22tpi while the rest has the 'working' 15tpi.

While both saws act as an aid when getting started, the concept wouldn't work well for rip filing, as rip saws grab the end-grain on the initial start of the cut. Rather than mess about with different tpi settings in a single saw, I think it more prudent to select a finer tooth pitch for thinner stock, perhaps 18 to 20tpi for 10mm and under, and a coarser tpi for thicker stock.

The most important thing is to have the front tooth knocked back slightly, so instead of standing upright at 90° it should be about 80° to 85°. That alone makes a rip-filed saw a lot easier to start and you aren't then left with differing teeth to file and set on the same saw. Veritas has seen the value of this in its new saws, which start very sweetly, and won't break the bank for those looking to get into dovetailing.



1 While the technique of starting on the far end and dragging is valid...



2 ... on dovetails, I prefer to start with the saw held as flat as possible



WHERE TO START?

1 – Sawing stance

Firstly, you need a good sawing stance – you have to be comfortable while still retaining control. I was taught that you should stand like a boxer, so legs apart, one in front of the other with your weight leaning forwards onto the front foot. This way your body is positioned over the work, enabling you to get power into the stroke through your shoulders. The hands should also take the same ‘stance’, so the left hand should be in front as the lead or guide, with the right, as the power hand, holding the saw (unless you’re a southpaw, of course!).

The boxer approach might sound a bit arbitrary, but it’s surprising what a difference it makes.



3 The boxer's stance is the way to go for sawing

you get back; rather, it’s about knowing how hard to push the saw through the cut.

Pushing too hard on the saw tends to introduce a sideways swing into the stroke and that in turn forces the saw. On a handsaw, if the saw doesn’t bind and buckle, that will usually manifest itself as the blade starting to wobble from side to side at the end as it comes back through the cut.

Keep your elbow in and you’ll have a straighter track through. “Be like a piston on a steam train wheel boys!” was what my teacher used to say, describing a sort of elliptical stroke while

2 – Gripping the saw

The index finger plays an important role in sawing. Placed down the side of the handle, pointing down the blade, it acts as a balance and a stiffener to keep the wrist from rolling to the side, and therefore aids the saw to track down the line while also making minute adjustments if needed.

The grip you impart on the handle should be firm enough to keep it aligned, but not such a stranglehold that your knuckles turn white and all your finger and wrist muscles are tensed. A lighter grip is better for efficiency, control and stamina.

3 – The pinch

You often see the start of a cut being conducted with a finger or thumb on the free hand used as a guide. There’s no real problem with this, but you can easily nip the skin with the saw if you aren’t careful. Using the thumb knuckle will keep you away from the teeth, but one of the arts of sawing is to lightly track the saw to start the cut, making minute adjustments before it starts to bite too deeply and you go past the point of no return.



4 The perfect handsaw grip

remaining in line. That also describes the pressure of the stroke, with more effort on the push (though not forcing), and easing off on the pull.

With this ‘piston’ stroke in mind, there are saws available with a breasted profile, which you can introduce yourself when sharpening. In theory, the slight convexity of the tooth line keeps the teeth on a better cutting plane as your arm naturally arcs slightly.

Full strokes

Taking fast furious strokes using only the middle

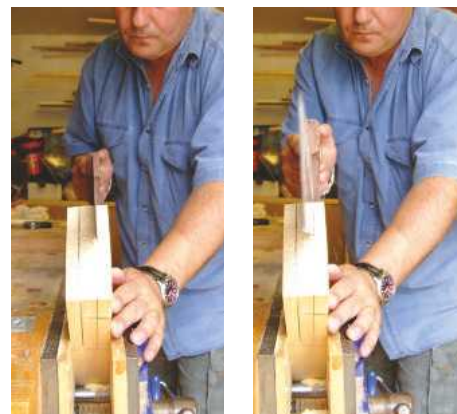
The tip I was shown at 13 years of age stands the test of time. You should pinch the edge of the work where the saw first addresses with thumb and forefinger. The curve of the digit tips keeps you up and away from the teeth, but by pinching a little harder, or relaxing slightly, the tips of the finger and thumb act as fine adjusters, allowing the blade to be adjusted minutely to get the start of the cut smack-on.

4 – Tracking the cut

So with stance and grip correct and the cut started, you need to master tracking the saw through the cut. This is where the statement ‘let the saw do the work’ comes in. Unfortunately, that doesn’t mean scooting off for a cup of tea and finding the sawing fairies have been in when



5 To start a cut, pinch the edge of the work where the saw first addresses thumb and finger



Double grip

When using handsaws, rip cuts can be pretty strenuous, and as they normally don’t see use for work demanding a very fine finish, you can afford to apply a bit more pressure. You still should avoid forcing the saw, but using a two-handed grip will give additional weight through the cut to speed things along.

The normal grip of the index finger pointing forwards remains, but the thumb of your other hand goes through the grip, with the hand and thumb clasping the index finger. As long as you retain your arm in its usual tracking position, the saw will stay on target.



Flattening

These photos show how the saw is progressively flattened going through a tenon shoulder.



1



2



3



4



5



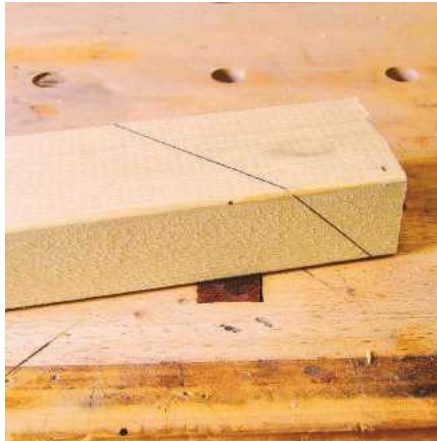
6

Cutting to two lines

Cutting to a single line isn't too complex once you master the saw control, but all sawing works in two planes – the line you follow on the surface and the angle of the blade in relationship to this. If a component has to butt up against another without the edge being seen, a slight undercut is often used to make sure the face sits tightly against the mating piece. However, most of the time both faces of the cut need to be accurate, either square or at an angle such as a compound cut or bevel.

Today's adhesives are immensely strong and often capable of filling inaccuracies, but tenons, compound cuts, dovetails and any joint where both cut planes are seen has to be accurate to minimise additional work with planes or chisels.

While an experienced sawyer will be able to cut along two lines quite easily, it's still far easier to put the work in such a position that as you look at it, both cut lines are aligned so it looks like one straight line. This then makes the saw control that much easier.



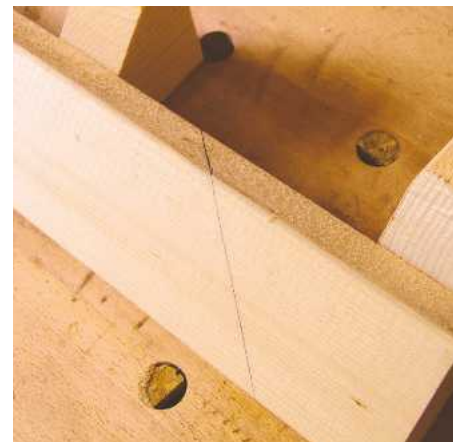
1 A compound cut can be tricky to execute accurately



2 You can start the cut squarely on one line...



3 ... and tilt the saw to try and align to the second line once the cut is established



4 However, chocking the work up so you can see both lines in one plane...



5 ... allows you to simply cut in one position, with the saw held vertically as normal



6 The result is a perfect cut to both lines without any tracking or alignment problems

of your saw blade is inefficient – you need to make full strokes. As an apprentice, some of the first words I heard when I used a handsaw for the first time were: “How many teeth do you think that saw has?” “About 200?” was my reply. “So why are you only using the middle 30 or 40 then!” A rhythmic longer stroke engages more of the saw teeth and aids control through the cut as you become better at keeping your arm in alignment with the cut.

Once you become more proficient in saw control, the ability to saw a straight line should become second nature, and with handsaws, you should be able to cut gentle curves as well as a straight line by easing or slightly twisting the blade accordingly as you cut.

Saw cutting angles

Cutting sheet materials can be difficult as they can flap and bind if they aren’t fully supported. The trick here is to keep the meeting point between the saw and the material at a shallow angle, as this helps minimise vibration while also engaging more teeth in the cut; this also



1 Thin material can pinch and bind; flattening the saw minimises the whipping effect

gives a cleaner cut on the breakout side, so is useful for melamine-faced boards. If cutting laminae such as Formica by hand, a fine-toothed saw held at a flat angle is another way of preventing splitting.

Backsaws are generally used in a horizontal plane so that the back does its job and gives weight to the teeth as they cut, making a vertical cut through the work. The saw is often



2 On dovetails, It can be easier to tilt the work in the vice so you are sawing vertically

tilted slightly to start a cut, usually at the far side, dropping the blade down flat to track the marking-out line (tenons are different – see ‘Tenon cutting’ below). There’s a school of thought that on bevel cuts such as dovetails, you tilt the work in the vice so that you track the cut vertically on the tail cuts, which is valid if you struggle to hit two lines such as a compound cut (see ‘Cutting to two lines’, p51).

Tenon cutting

The traditional method for sawing tenons has three stages, with the work in the vice at an angle and the saw held horizontally, starting on the corner; this goes by the same principle as the cutting to two lines technique.

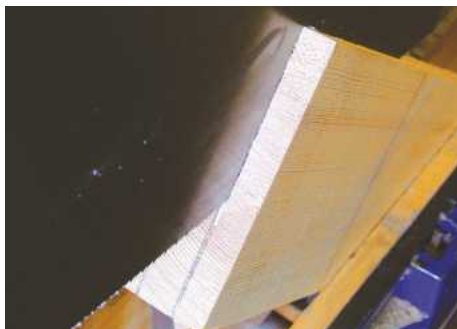
You cut down to the shoulder line, flip it over and repeat. The final cut is to put the work in a vertical position and then remove the rest of the waste. This becomes far easier as the majority has been removed in the previous stages. It should also minimise any chances of twist or misalignment in the tenon as it is cut from both sides.



1 The first cut is made with the work in the vice at an angle, with the saw held horizontally



2 Cutting in this manner gives you a good view of both lines for better tracking



3 The work is flipped and cut in the same way, taking the cut down to the shoulder line



4 Putting the work into a vertical position, the third cut is made



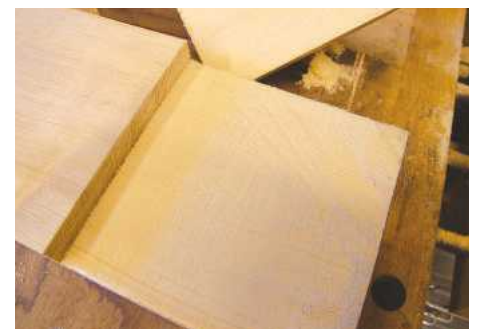
5 The cut is taken right down to the shoulder line



6 I was taught to cut bigger tenons by hand using a panel saw



7 The same method applies, except for a two-handed grip with extra cutting power



8 The finish on the tenon cheek from this Pax saw is very clean



3 In the vice you can get power into the cut by ripping at 90° to the work with a two-handed grip



4 Leaning the work against a couple of timbers makes it easier to rip thin boards



5 Lying the work flat will allow you to kneel on it, ensuring it is held securely

Handsaws are often used on site, which will call for different methods of holding the work. If you have the work flat, supported on trestles or horses, you can get a lot of power into the cut, cutting with a saw angle of around 45° with your shoulders acting as the weight to drive through the cut. Holding the work is always the problem, and if you can't clamp or hold it down, your body weight can do the job, either

by placing a knee on the piece to cut or by standing on it.

Leaning the work vertically can speed up ripping, but on thin stuff like sheets, the whip of the work can make life difficult. Placing a couple of timbers against a wall on an angle with the work leant against it gives you a sort of lean-to trestle and takes some of the whip away. If you find the saw starting to whip and

bind, dropping the handle to a shallower pitch will help.

Particularly with handsaws, lots of different approaches will come into play. Cutting uphill into an edge, cutting away from you, or with an overhand grip cutting towards you, are all grips and methods you can use. Even with these, though, the basics still apply – a good grip and stance or balance being the starting points. **WW**

Splitting the line

Once you have got to grips with controlling the cut, being able to do basic cutting to a line is the next step. You often hear that it's important to 'split the line', but this is contrary to what I was taught, as it implies that you should take part of your line away as you cut. I was taught that any sawing should just graze the line, which should always be left in. The need for fine lines and accurate setting out is paramount here – a wide pencil line is of no use as it gives you a false reference. I usually use a 2H pencil for marking out as it is hard enough to stay sharp and dark enough to be seen on the majority of timbers.

The aim is to sight just alongside the layout line, cutting into the waste and just kissing the layout line. As with any woodworking, practice here is what it's all about.



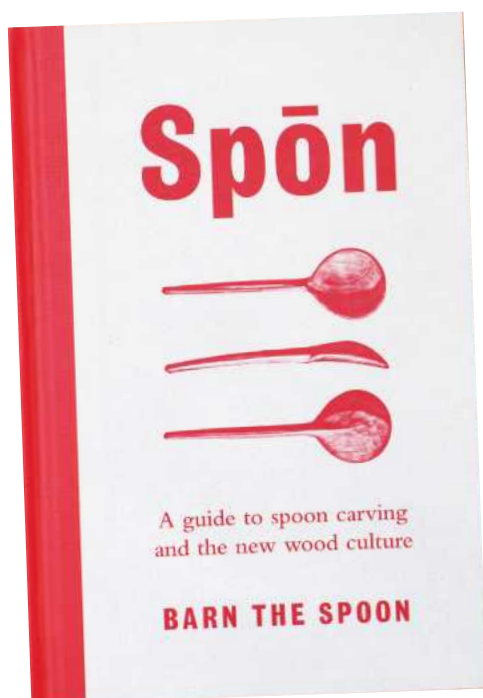
Leaving the line is good practice on any joint or cutting to size

Tooth pitch

Rip-filed dovetail saws are a current favourite, but they can be difficult to start. The current offerings from Rob Cosman and Lie-Nielsen are designed to aid the initial start of the cut, but a fine-toothed saw will help as long as the work isn't too substantial. For me, however, the better option is to set up the saw to make starting a cut far easier.

Although the saws pictured are identical in tpi, the top saw has a more upright aggressive pitch. The lower saw has the tooth pitch knocked back by a few degrees; this will slow down the cutting speed marginally, but will be much easier to start as it isn't so aggressive.





An inspirational guide to spoon carving

The Editor looks at a great new book written by London's most famous and charismatic spoon whittler, **Barn the Spoon**

Transcending the divide

The majority of woodworking books concentrate solely on the technical aspects of a specific branch of the craft, and this is mostly what we're all looking for in an instructional guide. It's likely that such a book would have little appeal to anyone without an interest in the subject, and afford them no more than a few moments of novel and casual entertainment. Some books, however, do manage to transcend the divide between enthusiast and neutral reader, and offer up more than just a step-by-step guide on 'how to do it'. Such a book is this one, and along with excellent instructions, Barn the Spoon effortlessly evokes an image of the world which, while not actually Utopian, is the sort of place that we'd all like it to be – and believably so.

Anyone new to the subject could be forgiven for thinking that there's not too much to carving a spoon, and it's true, in some ways – certainly tools and equipment – there is very little that's required. It's only when you see the end product, the spoon itself, as being part of a much larger

and cyclical picture that the true value of spoon carving can be perceived and appreciated.

A fascinating process

As well as telling the story of his route into spoon carving, Barn manages to convey his enthusiasm for a fresh way of looking at things as he describes the fascinating process of making this most basic and humble of human artefacts. He talks of his influences and describes in detail the manufacture of 16 of his favourite spoons, and all of the knife and axe techniques that can be used to make them.

Speaking as one who has recently had a taste of spoon making, I can't recommend it highly enough; working with green wood is a real delight and a far cry from carving seasoned timbers. Turning out a batch of potential gifts not long ago, I was surprised at how quickly each job progressed and, even though I had to resort to the bandsaw from time to time (referred to by Barn as a 'distraction' from the real joy of sculpture), the carving was more of a joy than I had imagined.

In summary

Barn's is truly an impressive book and will surely remain the spoon carver's favourite guide for many years to come. Myself, I'm currently looking out for a new axe. **WW**

When I first picked this book up I felt there was something special about it. Not just the thick cover boards and the design and layout, but after reading a few pages my initial feelings were confirmed; it seemed to touch me in a way few other woodworking books have come close to managing. More than just a guide to making spoons, it reads like a book of its time, and one in which Barn has managed to convey a real sense of optimism in the possibility of a radical change in how we go about our lives. It gives hope and encouragement and discusses the benefits of a gentler and more natural way of life. It's quite an achievement and yet what Barn talks about is perfectly in tune with many others of this new generation of craftspeople.



The Chest Lever Grip

This is quite counterintuitive and requires you to use your full body to work most effectively. You use your back muscles to rotate, push out and lift up your rib cage: this creates the cut. This is a very powerful grip but we don't use it for long cuts. Rather, it is perfect for cutting across the fibres, such as when we round the back of the bowl forward towards the end of the spoon, which is potentially very hard work but which can be achieved very economically with this action.

Start with your fingertips touching and palms up, knife in one palm and spoon blank in the other, with the edge of your knife facing out and away from you. When you close your knife grip into a proper fist, make certain you have your fingernails up.

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Knives & Axes



This is the weird bit – but don't worry, it is meant to feel this way! Bring your hands up onto your chest with your fingernails still up. Start with the first and second knuckles of both hands on your chest and, using the first part of the blade on top of the blank, engage the edge, lock your wrists and rotate your shoulders out, pushing your ribcage up through the action. Your forearms, hands and wrists act together as two levers, with your chest as a fulcrum; your knuckles should not leave your chest. The action of your hands should mirror one another and in this way the action is similar to scissoring. With practice, because this is such a powerful grip, you can work with the full length of the knife, to carve right across the spoon.

Knife Grips

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Just one of the 16 spoons Barn describes in detail

FURTHER INFORMATION

Price: £20 (plus P&P)

Web: www.barnthespoon.com

Details of courses, tutorials and the Thousand Spoon Project can also be found on the website

Barn describes a great many tried and tested axe and knife techniques, all designed to make the job easier and safer

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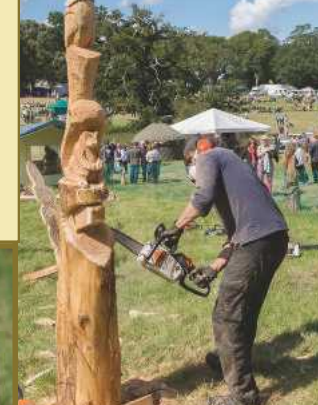
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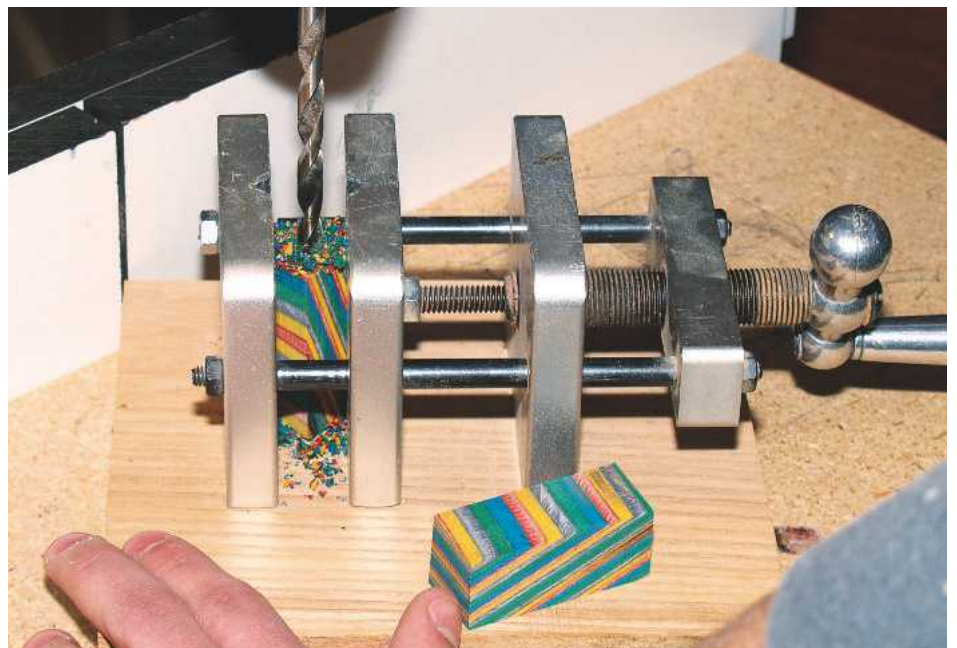


Pens

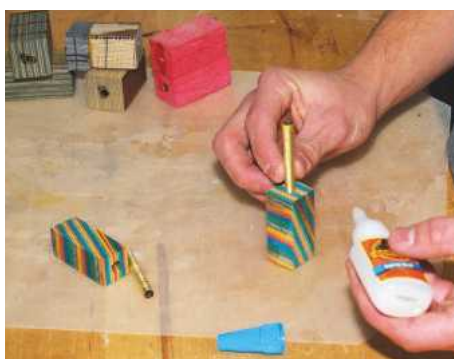
Thinking outside the boxiness

James Trimble suggests some great tips for turning pens and takes you through the process of turning your own nonconformist version

Turners tend to look on pens as a decorative but still very functional item. I wanted to find a way to be unique within the confines of this very simple art form. While looking for inspiration, I noticed that all of the pens online had one thing in common – they included a pocket clip. While the bottom half of a pen needs to fit one's fingers, the only restriction on the shape of the top half was this clip. Designed for the business suits of an era when men ruled the office, the clip is now virtually obsolete. So, I simply eliminated it. Now my pens could evolve into something new, as I'll go on to show in this article.



1 Clamp each blank in turn in a vice and drill all the way through them



2 Secure the cylinders in the drilled holes with cyanoacrylate (CA) adhesive



3 When dry, sand the ends of the blanks flush to the brass cylinders



4 Use a drill bit to gently ream out the ends of the cylinders; a holding aid or clamp would be preferable



5 Reduce the blanks to round using the square cutter



6 Use the hollower to create an inside (concave) curve where a writer's fingers will grip the pen

Ground-breaking tools

And speaking of new, the tools that I use are far from traditional. Based on a flat carbide insert, they never need sharpening, and I only need three: a hollower, a rougher and a detailer, which are made in the USA by Easy Wood Tools (see details at the end of the article). The hollower has a small round cutter, the rougher has a square insert, and the detailer has a diamond-shaped cutter. I tried other carbide insert tools, but they all have a concave profile that catches a lot. These flat-topped tools are as comfortable for beginners as they are for old pros. There's nothing wrong with using traditional tools, however, as long as they're very sharp and you take your time while using them.

Kits & blanks

If you'd like to make some pens, it's a good idea to buy the kits before you start cutting or buying blanks. There are two brass cylinders in each kit that determine the length of your blanks. The pen kit used here is the Apprentice Slimline kit from

Craft Supplies USA. Most slim kits are similar, and they accept standard Cross-type ballpoint refills that are widely available in the UK. Aside from the kit, each pen requires two wood blanks: one for the top and one for the bottom. For each, start with something about 65mm long, and at least 20mm square, so you'll have room to sculpt it. Coloured and dyed multiply blanks such as the ones used here are widely available from woodturning websites. You'll also need a 7mm drill bit and an inexpensive pen arbor/mandrel.

I'm going to guide you through turning one pen, and shown above you can see examples of others that are made in a similar fashion.

Prepare the blank

Cut two blanks to size and then chuck the 7mm drill bit in the drill press. If you have a drill chuck and a self-centring chuck for your lathe, you can certainly use that setup instead of the drill press. Clamp each blank in turn in a vice and drill all the way through them (**photo 1**). Use 120 grit abrasive to rough the outside of the two brass cylinders and then secure

them in the drilled holes with cyanoacrylate (CA) adhesive (**photo 2**). They may need to be very gently tapped home with a hammer, or squeezed in a vice. When dry, sand the ends of the blanks flush to the brass cylinders (**photo 3**). Be careful here: if you sand into the brass, the blank will be too short to assemble as a pen. Next, use a drill bit to gently ream out the ends of the cylinders (**photo 4**). The idea here is to just remove any excess glue without changing the diameter of the cylinder. Size your drill bit accordingly.

Mount & round the blanks

Now you're ready to mount the blanks on your pen arbor/mandrel, following the mandrel manufacturer's instructions. This usually entails securing the mandrel in the Morse taper of the headstock, then sliding a metal ring called a bushing onto the mandrel, followed by the top half of the pen blank, another bushing, the bottom half of the blank, another bushing, and then a threaded and knurled brass tightening nut. Snug up the nut by hand (no need for pliers),



7 Clean up the bottom face of this latter curve using the point of the detailer...



8 ... then create a gentle taper towards the centre of the pen, again using the round hollowing tool



9 Create a cove that allows for a gracious transition from the wood to the metal bushing



10 Square up the bead with the rougher...



11 ... then switch to the hollower to form the bead as you'd like it, and to create a small decorative groove just below it



12 Use the hollower to make a matching cove at the bottom of the upper blank...

and then draw up the tailstock so that the point of your live centre seats in the end of the pen mandrel. Don't tighten the tailstock too much or you'll flex the mandrel, and it will no longer be straight and true.

A safe speed to begin with is in the 1,000rpm range. Reduce the blanks to round (**photo 5**), using the square cutter (called a rougher). These tools' handles are held parallel to the floor and the cutting edge should be absolutely centred on the wood, so adjust the toolrest up or down to accomplish that. The recommended grip is to slide the index finger into the groove in the back of the toolrest, and trap the front of the tool by placing your thumb on top of the shaft. As the shaft is square, it has virtually no tendency to roll. Tuck the back of the handle against your hip.

Creating the shape

With the blanks round, turn up the speed to about 1,500rpm and use the hollower to create an inside



13 ... then stay with this tool to create a bead and a concave cove above this



14 Add a second bead and cove...



15 ... then switch to the detailer to fashion the head of the pen



16 Separate the head visually from the body with another groove



17 Smooth out the rest of the curves in a very light pass with the hollower

(concave) curve where a writer's fingers will grip the pen (**photo 6**). It's much more comfortable for writers if you also create a small outside (convex) curve below this, to stop their grip sliding down onto the funnel-shaped metal nib housing (cone) of the pen. Clean up the bottom face of this latter curve using the point of the detailer (**photo 7**), then create a gentle taper towards the centre of the pen, again using the round hollowing tool (**photo 8**). This culminates in a wider bead at the top of the lower blank. Create a cove here (**photo 9**) that allows for a gracious transition from the wood to the metal bushing. Keep in mind that your carbide tools are a whole lot harder than the soft metal bushing, so don't allow them to touch or the bushing will be reshaped. Most mandrels come with bushings that work well with the Slimline kits, but if you're having problems getting this transition to work perfectly, the makers of the kit do offer their own bushings. Square up the bead with the rougher (**photo 10**),

and then switch to the hollower to form the bead as you'd like it, and to create a small decorative groove just below it (**photo 11**). Use the hollower to make a matching cove at the bottom of the upper blank (**photo 12**), and then stay with this tool to create a bead and a concave cove above this (**photo 13**). Add a second bead and cove (**photo 14**), and then switch to the detailer to fashion the head of the pen (**photo 15**). I like this to be the widest diameter, just for aesthetic reasons. Separate the head visually from the body with another groove (**photo 16**), using the detailer to cut it and also to round over the adjacent sharp edges. Smooth out the rest of the curves in a very light pass with the hollower (**photo 17**), and you're ready to sand. I like to work down from 120 grit (**photo 18**) to about 320 grit on pens, using thin strips of paper that I cut with scissors. For sanding, I ramp up the speed to the fastest available, after first checking that everything is still tight and safe.



18 I like to work down from 120 grit to about 320 grit on pens

Burning grooves & burnishing

Use a wire to burn black lines in the grooves (**photo 19**), holding the wire in place until you see smoke. A couple of safety issues pop up here: the wire should be long enough to keep your hands away from the work, and should be attached to dowel handles so that it is never wrapped around fingers. And hot wires shouldn't be placed anywhere near shavings or sawdust.

After burning, use some of the shavings to burnish the pen while it's spinning slowly. These act like a mild abrasive and begin the polishing process (**photo 20**). Next, apply paste wax with a soft cloth (**photo 21**), making sure the cloth can't get tangled up in the work. Polish this first coat of wax almost immediately at high speed (**photo 22**), as it's just a



19 Use a wire to burn black lines in the grooves



20 The shavings act like a mild abrasive and begin the polishing process



21 Apply paste wax with a soft cloth



22 Polish this first coat of wax almost immediately at high speed



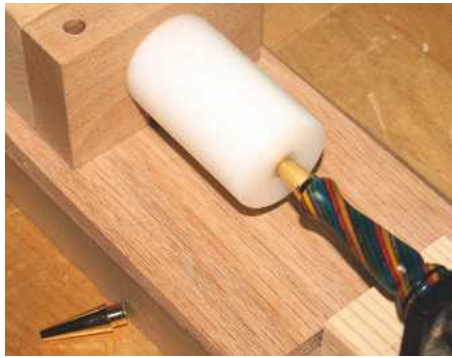
23 Now apply a liberal coat and allow it to set for about 20 minutes



24 Wipe off the excess and then use the edge of a buffing wheel to polish the pen



25 Give the piece a final polish with an old sock or a soft cloth



26 Begin by inserting the nib casing



27 Install the cap on the other end of the pen



28 Push the cartridge into place, and test this as you go



29 Slide the waistband on...



30 ... then install the refill permanently



31 Slide the two parts of the pen together and the project is complete

seal coat. Now apply a liberal coat (**photo 23**), and allow it to set for about 20 minutes. Wipe off the excess and then use the edge of a buffing wheel to polish the pen (**photo 24**). Give the piece a final polish with an old sock or a soft cloth (**photo 25**).

Assembly

The final stage in making the pen is to assemble the kit. Begin by inserting the nib casing (**photo 26**), using a pen press to exert just the right amount of pressure – part of the press is the white block shown in the photos above. Next, install the cap on the other end of the pen (**photo 27**). Push the cartridge into place (**photo 28**), and test this as you go: that is, you'll need to install the refill a couple of times and twist it to see how much of the nib emerges, to judge how far the cartridge should be pushed in. If you push it too far, there's really no simple way to retard it, and it's time to move on to a new pen. Next, slide the waistband on (**photo 29**), then install the refill permanently (**photo 30**). Slide the two parts of the pen together (**photo 31**), and you've just completed your first nonconformist, radical pen.

I hope that the other pens shown here will also inspire you to think outside the box, and surprise your family and friends with your artistry. **WW**

FURTHER INFORMATION

Easy Wood Tools –

www.woodworkersworkshop.co.uk

Craft Supplies USA –

www.woodturnerscatalog.com

You can see instructions for standard pen turning with a slimline kit on Craft Supplies USA's website

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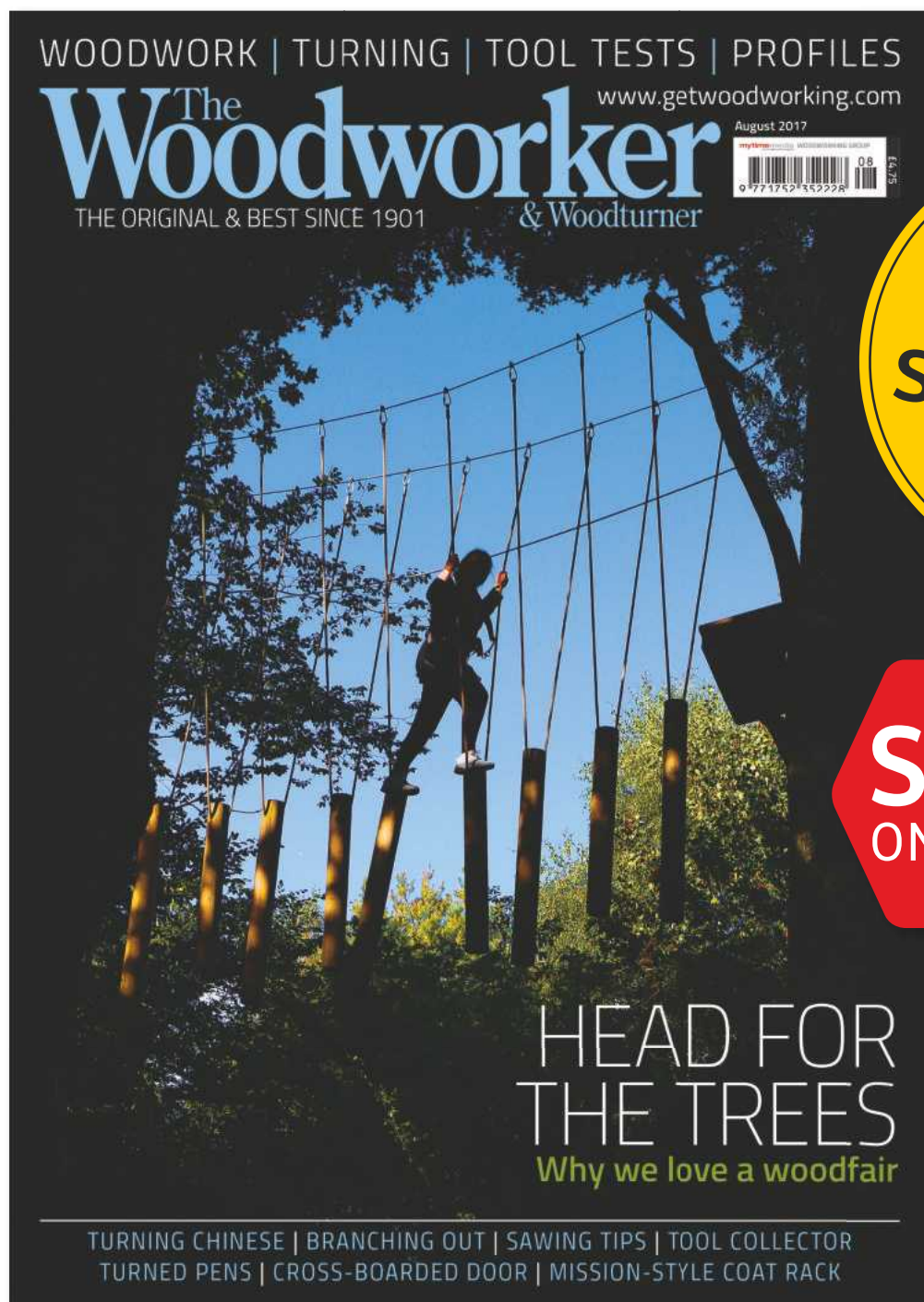
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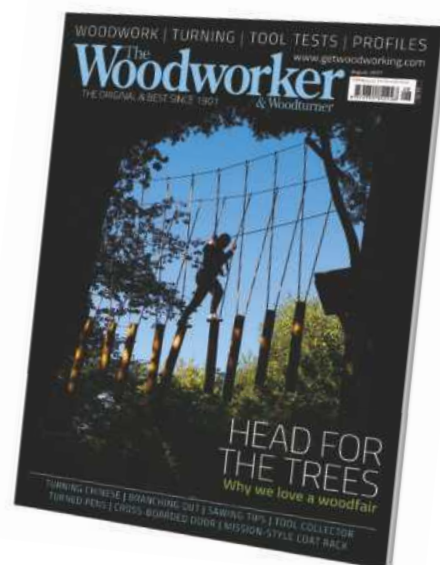
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Braced against gales



Needing protection from Dartmoor's gusty winds, **Iain Whittington** sets about making a Victorian-style cross-boarded oak plank door

The Devon longhouse is thought to have been developed from the Saxon hall house and was built in the Dartmoor area from the 13th to 17th centuries usually on a slope, either side of a cross-passage, with living space above the passage and cattle housed in the shippon below.

Our longhouse has a 17th-century plank door at one end of the old cross-passage that not only lets a lot of Devon through the cracks and has a notable lack of head clearance, but boasts a lock box that falls far short of insurance requirements. As a consequence this door is seldom used, with entry and exit generally being through a standard 2,000 × 900mm modern door at the other end, which is not in keeping with the house.

A replacement for this door was called for, the whole to be sympathetically rendered in oak in a style that would both suit the 400-year-old house and keep out weather (and intruders).

Design considerations

With a sound 'modern' door-frame to fill, it is fortunate that part of the house is probably a 19th-century conversion of the dairy into a 'parlour', so a Victorian style could be justified. A familiar form of oak plank door from these periods is the cross-boarded door, where the outside vertical planks are backed up by internal horizontal cross-boarding for the whole height of the door.

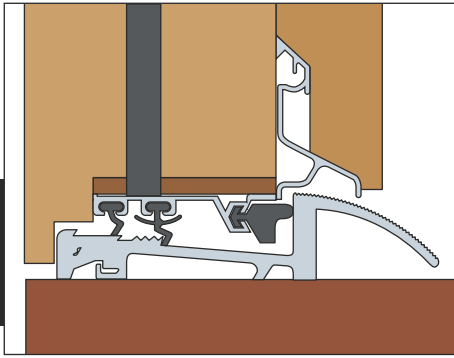


Fig.1 Cross-sectional detail of weather proofing

Oak is notorious for seasonal movement and the cross-boarded style has the benefit of providing some mechanical stability to the boards, through the full cross-bracing. This increased stability would have appealed to the Victorian search for perfection, while retaining the appropriate 'country' style.

Such doors would have been 'through nailed & clenched', with end-grain exposed on the sides. However, even with the best oak available, oak planks are going to move, potentially opening cracks in both directions, which, with the straight-edged boards typically in use, would have led to pinholes at the intersections. A quality Victorian replica of a 16th-century door would probably have been designed with an edge frame to hide the end-grain and utilised tongue & groove edges on the boards, the whole to have been assembled with concealed fastenings. As this interpretation would meet both conservation and modern requirements, this is the style adopted here.

Board requirements

Unless I was going to machine a lot of air-dried oak, the practical alternative would have to be a design using nominal 25mm machined oak floorboards inside and out, that give a variation in finished thickness of between 19-22mm, so a composite design was needed to bulk up the door to fit a conventional 2,000 × 915 × 50mm (**Figs.1-3**).

A sheet of 6mm marine ply, sandwiched between the boards, will give the required standard finished thickness of between 44 and 50mm, while providing an aid to stability and a guarantee of a draught-proof board door.

Door furniture was specified as strap hinges and black-finished ironware. The conventional compression draught excluder on the existing frame was to be supplemented by a brushing seal – which would also neatly cover the exposed edge of the 6mm ply – and a modern sill system, suitable for exposed locations.

Exterior build

The first job was to dimension the 2,400 × 1,200mm sheet of ply to the required door size using my two-part cutting guide (**photo 1**). Similar to the Veritas power tool guide, this bolts together to enable a circular saw to be run down a sheet of ply for accurate dimensioning. After dimensioning the ply, a grid of screw holes was drilled and countersunk, to enable the front boards to be securely screwed from behind.

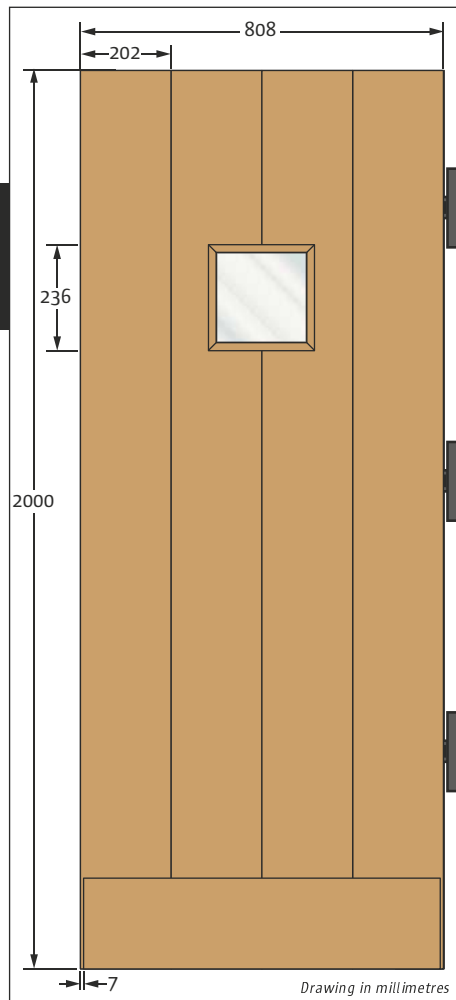


Fig.2 Vertical planks

With the relevant tongue or groove removed from the outer edge of the two outside-edge boards, the first long vertical-edge board was spread with exterior-grade PVA and carefully aligned with the two remaining 'factory' edges (**photo 2**). Once edge clamped, it was counter-screwed from behind (**photo 3**). The stainless steel screws I was to use – to avoid rust staining the oak – required pilot holes, but to save time initially I just back-screwed the boards with conventional hard-point steel screws.

This procedure was repeated for all the front boards, taking care to apply glue to the relevant tongue before knocking the board tight into its predecessor and checking diagonals before clamping and then counter-screwing.



1 I cut the ply with a circular saw...

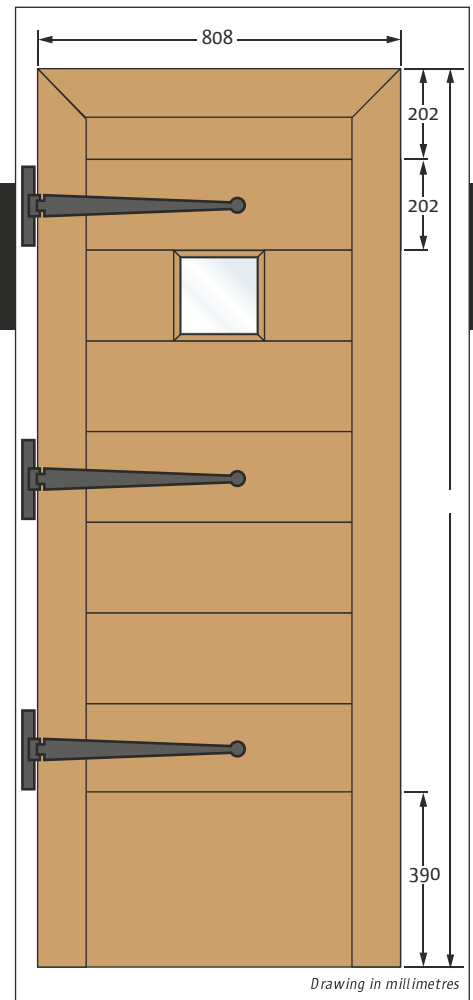


Fig.3 Cross planks

With all the front boards in place, the assembly was left overnight for the glue to set before all the screws were removed and replaced with stainless steel ones.

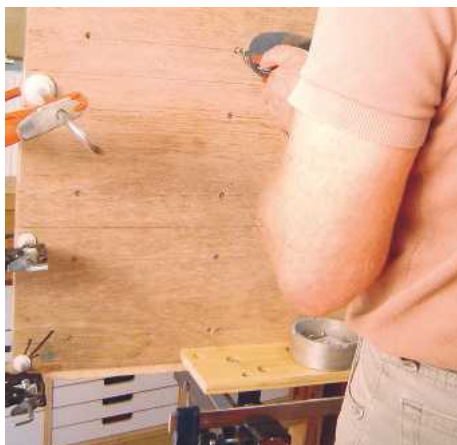
Sides & top

With the assembly of the front complete, a full-length board was then split down the centre on a bandsaw for the side frames, prior to setting up inside edges with the remaining tongue or groove.

The top of the board was then cut for the 45° mitres on the inside edges and the mitred ends grooved to take a loose tongue during the final assembly. The first (top) cross-board was then prepared with the groove cut/planed from the top side, before cutting and grooving the necessary



2 ... before lining up the exterior boards...



3 ... and counter-screwing the long boards

'half' mitres – they only go halfway across the width of the board – with the rest of the square end having the appropriate tongue or groove cut, in order to mate with the gender of the relevant side frame (photos 4 & 5).

Finally, the bottom tongued edge had a decorative beading cut along its entire length using a Record 050 combination plane or router, with the edge eased with a small 1mm chamfer, using an A77 rabbet plane (Fig.4).

After an initial trial fit, the first side frame was glued to the reverse of the ply core and secured with screws through the tongue, as you would for a floorboard. The top cross-board was then glued and screwed in the same way, taking care to check for square as I went along, before finally inserting the loose tongue from the corner. Having double-checked for square, this was then left to sit overnight as it was to form the basis for the accuracy of the remaining cross-boards.

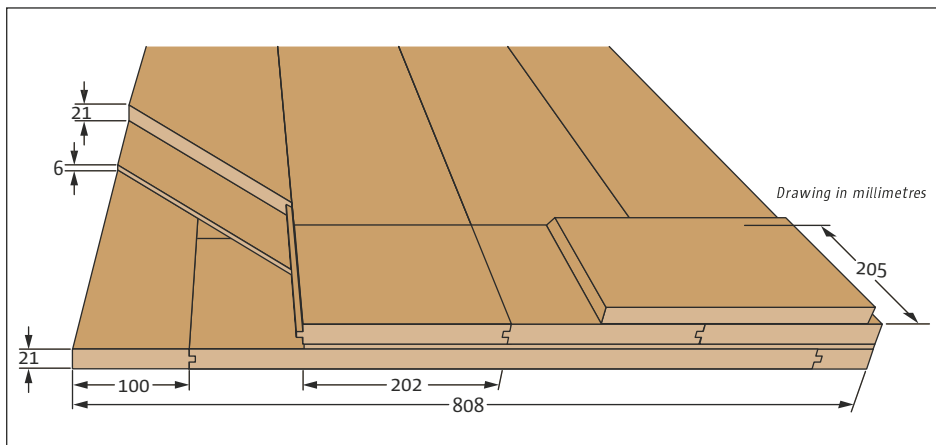


Fig.4 Cross-section of the 3 layers involved

More cross-board work

The next day, the remaining cross-boards were cut to length and the tongues/grooves cut to mate with the gender of the relevant side frame. Next, the bead was cut above the long tongue with the edge eased to make a 1mm chamfer above the short tongue or groove with a sharp chisel or plane (photos 7 & 8), depending on the grain.

The majority of the cross-boards were glued, then fitted (photo 9) using old credit cards as spacers – using any necessary persuasion from a reciprocating tolerance adjuster – before they were checked for square, then secret-screwed as before.

With the majority of the boards now in place the dimensions of the final (wider) cross-board could be measured and fabricated by edge-jointing a well-matched pair, slightly cutting back the T&G to obtain a tight fit, and leaving overnight to allow the glue to adequately dry.

Last side piece

With all the cross-boards in place, the last side piece could now be inserted. First, however, the slight irregularities of the end widths were cleaned up with a rebate plane (photo 10) before the edge chamfer was cut with a sharp chisel.

Having test fitted and checked all relevant dimensions, the piece was rebated for the lock and handle mechanisms. The rebate in the (still) loose piece was easily and accurately started with a few cuts of the radial arm saw, but cutting it into the back of the already assembled front of the door was more complicated, requiring a Heath-Robinson collection of roofing square and clamps to line up the router accurately – perhaps cutting the rebate into the last front plank before assembly might have been a more cunning plan. All the waste was then removed with an



4 I cleaned up the top edge mitre...



5 ... and made a pie of glue and clamps



6 Cleaning up the tongue with a chisel



7 I then planed a 1mm chamfer...



8 ... and used a chisel for the cross-grain



9 The fit of the cross-board was adjusted

appropriately wide chisel before the board was glued and clamped into position and the rebates cleaned up using an old Stanley 'hag's tooth' hand router.

Cleaning up

With the whole door now assembled, the geometry was finally checked prior to final dimensioning – it was a few millimetres over-sized – using a circular saw for the sides and an up-cut router bit to rebate the bottom end for the draft excluder. It had been my intention to hand plane the last few millimetres to the final size with a hand plane, but due to bad luck – or planning – I had inadvertently ended up with a different grain direction between the outside board and the inside board, which meant having to use the messy alternative of the belt sander. Since the floor was now covered with dust, I finish sanded the whole door with a random orbital sander, up to 240 grit.

Weatherboard

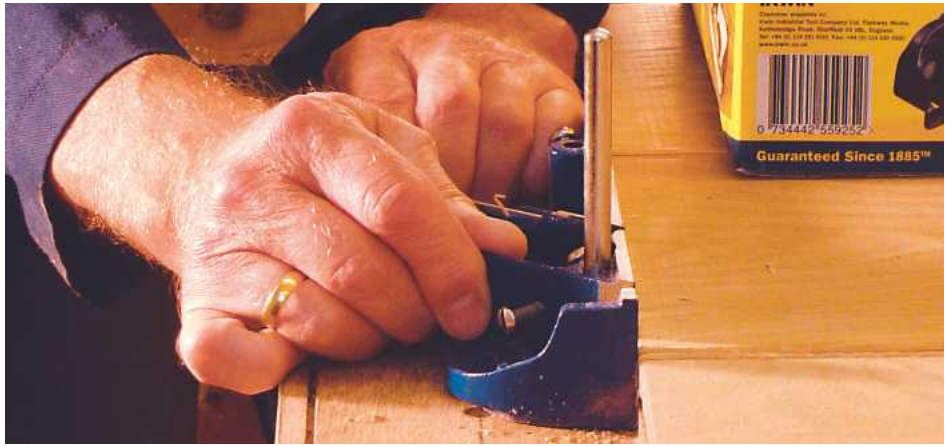
The weatherboard was designed to cover the composite modern draught excluder-cum-dripboard on the base of the door, with three of the edges chamfered and the fourth/ bottom edge, rebated. The chamfer (**photo 11**) was applied quickly and accurately using a very nice Veritas adapter for my old Stanley block plane and the rebate (**photo 12**) was made using the excellent modern Record 778 rebate plane.

To cover the exposed ends of the drip bar, a small block was glued in place at the end of the rebate. Screw mounting holes, designed to take oak plug covers, were then drilled in the corners, for the board to be added after the door had been hung.

Portal window

Having pre-planned for the small portal window, the back of the door was missing the relevant part of the second cross-board, so it was a simple task to drill through at the corners, turn the door over and cut out the front boards with a jigsaw. The inside of the hole was then tidied up using the spiral bit on the router, together with a small detail rebate on the inside edge, before making the frame.

As the hole exposed end-grain and the ply core, I decided to insert a solid section that went



10 A rebate plane provided a square edge



11 A chamfer was formed on the drip board...



12 ... and the back of the drip board rebated

the full depth of the portal, with an integral frame on the outside. This, however, meant that I had to plane down a length of board into a T-section (**photo 13**) with a lip on it – a process that was so fiddly, even with a good rebate plane, that only the bottom piece was completed to the original design, with the remaining three sides quickly modified to a straightforward angle section.

With the four parts cut to length, the external

frame portion was jointed, taking into account the order needed to achieve a 'mason's mitre' on the outside, before the parts could be inserted in the correct sequence.

Once in situ as a complete frame, I added a chamfer to the inside edge with a router, finishing the mason's mitres by hand in the corners (**photos 14 & 15**). The matching interior frame was then made to fit within the portal, the corners glued and pinned (**photos 16 & 17**).

Strips & seal

Although rendered redundant by the ply core, cover strips gave the door an authentic look. The dimensions were as much governed by the available stock as by any artistic interpretation. Having found a suitable piece of oak, the edge was planed flat and the block plane, with the Veritas chamfer adapter, again put to good use, before running the prepared face through the bandsaw – a task repeated three times.

Unfortunately, the use of 'iron' tools left tracks on the strips, which all had to be cleaned off again using Mujingfang wooden finishing planes. As hand-forged nails were to be used to apply the strips, they were pre-drilled – authentically offcentred – before being put aside until the door had been hung.

The brush pile edge-seal was designed to fit in a 7mm carrier, which nicely covered the 6mm ply core. Unfortunately, to ensure a tight fit it also required the purchase of a router arbor and a pair of slot cutters with spacers from Wealden Tools, but with the correct setup, the ply core was easily routed out and the carrier strip inserted, although the insertion of the pile strip was left until after the door had been hung.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Oak planks

Web: www.turnerstimber.co.uk

Edge draught excluder

Web: www.schlegel.co.uk

Weather bar

Web: www.exitex.com

Hand-forged hinges

Web: www.forgeriesonline.co.uk

Door furniture

Web: www.fromtheanvil.co.uk

Anant planes

Web: www.rutlands.co.uk

Narex chisels

Web: www.workshopheaven.com

Record 778 plane

Web: www.screwfix.com

Mujingfang wooden finishing planes

Web: www.george-higgins.co.uk

TIP

Even with a ply backing, an oak floorboard is going to be prone to some cupping, which was acceptable for my rustic door. If, however, you want a perfectly flat front to the finished door, replace the steel screws with shorter wooden dowels. These will maintain mechanical strength while ensuring that no screw tips can come through the front when planing or sanding flat the final door

Final throes

Before the door could be hung, the old compression weather strip was replaced and the threshold updated, including fitting for the frame half of the modern Exitex 'mobility' (severe) weather bar (**Fig.5**). As the normal trim-to-fit process would have been hard to follow with this design, the rebate for the door half of the weather bar had been cut to include room for a spacer in the edge of the door.

The door was hung using three handmade 450mm strap hinges, the bottom weather bar inserted and the spacer planed to the

necessary thickness before the alloy drip-bar was fixed, followed by the oak weather board.

The cover strips were fixed in place with handmade rose-head nails that had been ordered with the hinges, and a small leaded double-glazed unit was inserted in the portal window and finished on the inside with a small mason's mitred frame similar to the exterior.

With a small patera (dish) turned for the bell push and the door furniture in place, my happy interior designer could turn on the central heating without the Devon air intruding. All in all, a good job well done, I think! **WW**



13 I then cleaned up the portal frame...



14 ... and trimmed the mason's mitre

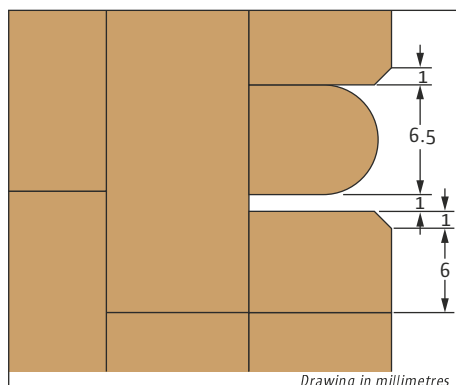


Fig.5 Exitex sill seal detail



15 Chamfered strips were bandsawn off



16 Internal frame corners were pinned...



17 ... and internal edges routed

A photograph of a wooden plank door set in a white wall. The door is made of vertical wooden planks held together by screws. It features a small, square, four-paned window in the upper center and a dark, T-shaped handle on the left side. The door is framed by a black border. Above the door is a white, semi-circular archway. To the right of the door, there is a small, circular, orange-colored object on the wall. The door is slightly ajar, revealing a dark interior.

18 Because I ended up with a 1mm bow at the top of the door that had to be planed out, for my next external plank door I will add a 'T' to the top edge of the ply. This will not only make aligning the front boards easier, as they can just be butted up to the 'T' as a stop, but will also keep the ply from bowing as the boards are screwed through



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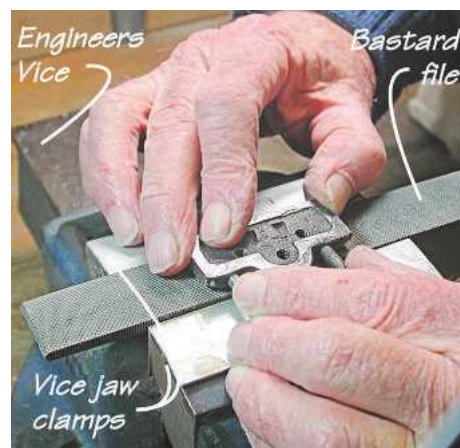
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1 My round-faced trapping plane allows me to shape the front leg of a stick chair



2 I found this to be the easiest way to smooth the rough surface of the casting



3 To attach the blade adjuster to the blade holder, I drilled two holes and cut a thread in each

Sticky situation

In the absence of a lathe – or the skills to use one – how do you turn legs, rails and spindles? Jeff Gorman reaches for a 'shop-made rounding plane



4 By roughing out with a series of overlapping stab cuts, I avoided a tricky router setup

TIP

To start a screw in an insert, first turn it backwards until you feel a slight jump and then turn forwards. The starts of the male and female threads will now be correctly aligned and the threads will easily engage

Some 40-odd years ago rounding planes were an unknown territory to me, but I became intrigued when I realised that they might fulfil a long-standing ambition to make a 'stick' chair. Attempts to make them on a woodturning lathe had previously been thwarted by my inability to turn even the 35mm diameter legs without getting the bad finish that happens when the end-pressure from the lathe's tailstock makes the work whip slightly as the tool starts to cut, so slender rails and back spindles were, in my untutored hands, quite out of the question.

My interest had been aroused by the loan of a Marples rounding plane and a rather primitive trapping plane, possibly of the kind used by some fishing rod makers, so I decided to construct a chair, and give myself the satisfaction of making the tools that produced it.

Using old blades

The rounder that shaped the legs was furnished with a blade from an old wooden plane while several smaller planes that made the rails and back spindles incorporated spare blades that can be obtained for Record or Stanley metal spokeshaves.

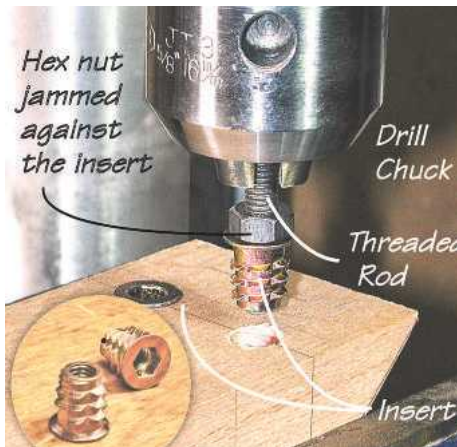
I felt that I'd rather overdone my efforts to make it light to handle so I put aside some spare ash and resolved that someday I would make a version with stronger arm supports. 'Someday' arrived many years later. In the intervening time I'd occasionally brooded over the idea of designing and making a trapping plane that would allow me to make concave shapings on the front legs-cum-arm supports and more shapely back spindles. Subscribers can look at the digital archive to see how I met the challenges, while here I show you some of the tools and techniques used.

Adjuster assembly

The early prototype blades were fairly easily bolted onto their frogs, but micro-adjustment with a pin hammer proved rather erratic so I hit on the idea of sawing off the handles and toe of a cheap metal spokeshave and using its frog as blade-support-cum-adjuster. Unfortunately the configuration made it impossible to ensure firm fixing to the trap's own frog, so I used two 4mm metric countersunk-headed machine screws (photo 2) to fix it to a blade holder (photo 1), whose own location could be adjusted – a welcome feature when trying out a prototype!



5 This gadget uses a lever cap as a clamp for keeping small items well away from vice jaws



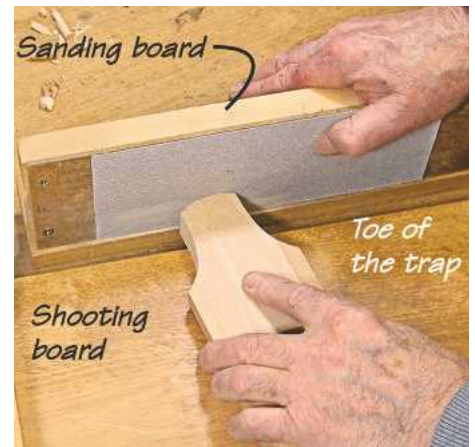
6 The drill was switched off and turned manually for this task



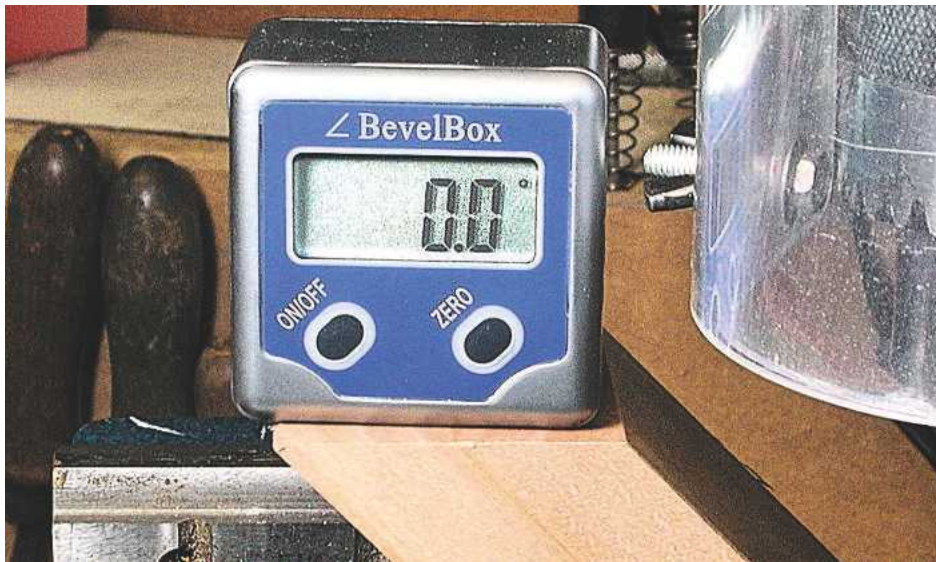
7 To prevent breakout I first took upward-sloping strokes from each side and finished horizontally



8 The bandsawn shapes are smoothed with small and large bobbin sanders



9 A hand-operated sander on a shooting board deals with the trap's toe



Blade holder

Once the assembly was fixed, I found that to allow the knurled adjusters (**photo 1**) to turn I had to cut two rounded grooves, so, not wishing to set up my router table for the risky job of working such a short workpiece, I mounted it in a cheap machine vice (**photo 3**) that I ran between a pair of cramped-on fences and a stop block (**photo 4**).

Drilling machines are not designed for bearing sideways loads – the drill chuck tends to fall out – so first I set the drill's depth stop and roughed out the grooves with closely-spaced stab cuts

that were finally run together by gently sliding the vice along the fence.

Once it was screwed against the trap's frog, the edges of each adjuster groove had to be trimmed, so I reached for a pet gadget (**photo 5**) that can be very useful for holding small and thin components without exposing the vice jaws to damage from accidentally slipped chisels and suchlike.

Inserting inserts

When I first tackled the job of fixing this pattern of screwed metal insert I found it not as easy as

FURTHER INFORMATION

Digital archive

Web: www.getwoodworking.com/members/login.asp

Tapping size chart

www.metrication.com/engineering/threads.html

Trend threaded inserts

www.mtmc.co.uk

Stanley surform round file – part No.21-297

www.stanleytools.com

anticipated, so after several trials I locked a short length of studding into the insert by jamming a nut against its flange (**photo 6**). By combining gentle pressure to the drill's capstan and turning the chuck with a short rod in the chuck keyholes, the insert could be threaded home – this time in good alignment. Phew.

Shaping body

It is inevitable that prototyping involves dealing with unforeseen difficulties, so before I could adjust the blade, I had to use a round surform file (**photo 7**) to form the thumb notches (**photo 1**). These were smoothed with a smaller bobbin sander while a larger bobbin dealt with the bigger curves (**photo 8**). My shooting board-mounted sander conveniently sanded the trap's toe (**photo 9**). **WW**

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PART # HU5125

Up Cut

Part #	Shank Dia.	Cutting Dia.	Cutting Length	Overall Length
HU4125	3/8"	3/8"	1-1/4"	3"
HU5125	1/2"	1/2"	1-1/4"	3"

Down Cut

Part #	Shank Dia.	Cutting Dia.	Cutting Length	Overall Length
HD4125	3/8"	3/8"	1-1/4"	3"
HD5125	1/2"	1/2"	1-1/4"	3"



NEW



PART # HC5122M

Up / Down Cut (2+2 Compression)

Part #	Shank Dia.	Cutting Dia.	Cutting Length	Overall Length
HC4122	3/8"	3/8"	1-1/4"	3"
* HC4122M	3/8"	3/8"	1-1/4"	3"
HC5122	1/2"	1/2"	1-1/4"	3"
* HC5122M	1/2"	1/2"	1-1/4"	3"

* Mortise Style (Short up-cut flute for shallow dado cuts)

COVE NOSE SPIRALS

Two Flute



PART # RU2075CN

RU2075CN

Up Cut

Part #	Shank Dia.	Cutting Dia.	Corner Radius	Cutting Length	Overall Length
RU2075CN	1/4"	1/4"	1/16"	3/4"	2-1/2"
RU5125CN	1/2"	1/2"	1/8"	1-1/4"	3"

BALL NOSE SPIRALS

Two Flute



PART # RU1800RN

RU2075RN

Up Cut

Part #	Shank Dia.	Cutting Dia.	Radius	Cutting Length	Overall Length
RU1800RN	1/4"	3/16"	3/32"	3/4"	2-1/2"
RU2075RN	1/4"	1/4"	1/8"	3/4"	2-1/2"
RU5125RN	1/2"	1/2"	1/4"	1-1/4"	3"

CONICAL BALL NOSE SPIRALS

Four Flute



SC64



PART # SC64



SC66



PART # SC66

Up Cut

Part #	Shank Dia.	Ball Dia.	Radius	Included Angle	Overall Length
SC64	1/4"	1/16"	1/32"	11°	2-1/2"
SC66	1/4"	1/8"	1/16"	7°	2-1/2"

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(A) FLUSH TRIM (B) PLUNGE / PATTERN (C) COMBINATION

Part #	Shank Dia.	Cutting Dia.	Cutting Length	Overall Length
(A) UDF9112	1/2"	7/8"	1-1/8"	3-3/4"
(B) UDP9112	1/2"	7/8"	1-1/8"	3-1/2"
(C) UDC9112	1/2"	7/8"	1-1/8"	3-3/4"

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NEW

Up Cut Part #	Down Cut Part #	Cutting Dia.	# Of Flutes	Cutting Length	Overall Length
1/4" SHANK					
RU1581A	-	1/8"	1	1/4"	2"
RU1601A	RD1601A	1/8"	1	1/2"	2-1/2"
RU1701A	-	5/32"	1	5/8"	2-1/2"
RU1801A	-	3/16"	1	5/8"	2-1/2"
RU2074A	RD2074A	1/4"	1	3/4"	2-1/2"
RU2076A	RD2076A	1/4"	2	3/4"	2-1/2"
RU2111A	-	1/4"	1	1-1/8"	3"
3/8" SHANK					
RU4111A	RD4111A	3/8"	1	1-1/8"	3"
1/2" SHANK					
RU5121A	-	1/2"	1	1-1/4"	3"
RU5161A	-	1/2"	1	1-5/8"	3-1/2"
RU5201A	-	1/2"	1	2"	4"

TOP VIEW



PART # RU1581A

NEWS

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Coming up in the next issue...

WW September on sale 28 July



FROM TREE TO BENCH – PART 1

Join Rick Wheaton and a group of volunteers as they embark on making an amazing green timber outdoor bench seat using a selection of froes, wedges, side axes, mauls and beetles



SETTING SAIL

John Greeves takes us through the steps for building a coracle – a small, keel-less boat, which has always been used as a means of fishing or transportation



MISSION-STYLE MIRROR

Carrying on the theme of making household items in the Mission style, Phil Davy turns his hand to this lovely mirror, which uses quarter-sawn European oak

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- PLUS** ■ Andrew Hall turns one of his small signature hats
■ Peter Bishop restores a wind-out mahogany extending table
■ Gary Cook reports from a charity vintage tool auction

Kamasa adjustable clamp

This adjustable clamp from Kamasa features extending arms, which are perfect for holding wooden objects

Looking for a cramp that's lightweight but still has reasonable capacity and gripping power? This new one from Kamasa could be the answer. It's slightly unusual in that you can extend one or both arms outwards, so increasing capacity. You depress a steel locking button and slide the corresponding jaw outwards. To close it again, simply push the arms inwards. Extending just one arm enables you to cramp items off centre, sometimes handy when holding panel work. Maximum capacity with arms closed is 58mm; both open, fully, to 144mm.

Made from high-density plastic, handles are soft grip and comfortable. Squeeze them together to exert cramping pressure, a quick-release lever opening them up again. The hard plastic swivel jaws are V-notched, so gripping

dowelling or similar items is possible without the cramp slipping. Though it may not be the cheapest around, this is a pretty useful cramp for a variety of situations. **PD**

Specification

Price: £12.79

Web: www.kamasa.co.uk

RATING: 4 out of 5



Depress a steel locking button and slide the corresponding jaw outwards...



... and to close it again, simply push the arms inwards



- Adjustable clamp with extending arms for holding objects.
- Depth of throat 51mm, maximum capacity 145mm.
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- Swivel jaws.
- Quick release mechanism.

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www.kamasa.co.uk



Specification

Price: £44.39

Web: www.brimarc.co.uk

RATING: 5 out of 5



When held in the palm of the hand you can see how tiny it is!



This bench plane measures 85mm in length and the sole is 20mm wide



As you can see, it really is a miniature version of the small Veritas smoothing plane



This plane is not a gimmick or toy – it is very sharp and works really well on small sections of wood

Veritas miniature bench plane

We look at two interesting new tools, both of which are extremely well made and will no doubt last for years to come

It was with pleasure that I received the latest addition to the Veritas miniature tool collection of planes to review. This bench plane measures 85mm in length and the sole is 20mm wide, and when held in the palm of the hand it certainly is tiny!

Great features

This miniature version of the small Veritas smoothing plane features a bubinga knob and main handle, which match the other tools in the range. The plane features a stainless steel, Norris-style adjuster and the instructions explain the setting. The A2 tool steel blade is ground at 25°; replacement blades are available, and the body is made from investment cast steel, which has been accurately machined and surface ground.

In summary

This plane is not a gimmick or toy – it is very sharp and works really well on small sections of wood. It will interest model makers in particular and possibly musical instrument makers. My only criticism is not of the tool but of the custom-fitted box. The other boxes in this series are all light grey inside, which makes it easy to see which way the tool fits in, but for some reason this time the interior is black and I found it more difficult, but that is really a minor point. This tool is extremely well finished as one has come to expect from Veritas. It is a pleasure to handle and use and the size is fascinating. This tiny plane is expensive but extremely desirable and hard to resist!



My only criticism is not of the tool but of the custom-fitted box, the dark colour of which makes it difficult to see which way the tool fits

150mm Empire True Blue combi square

On a recent amble around the aisles in Homebase my eye alighted on a new blue 150mm combination square. I bought a similar model in 1954, the red one in the main photo, which has given sterling service and been lovingly re-painted several times! This original square was imperial whereas this new one is metric. The castings are almost identical. The clearly etched 150mm blade is now stainless steel, which is an improvement and it has 45 and 90° faces.

Versatile & useful

The square has a built-in spirit level as well as a built-in scribing pin. This versatile and useful measuring device also easily slips into the apron pocket when you're working. I frequently use it for marking out; the blade is easily set and held securely when locked. It can also be used as a depth stop.

In summary

I will hand this square on to my grandson in due course and he can reassess it in 50 years' time because I am confident it will last that long! A good buy at £10. **IW**



Specification

Price: £10

Web: www.homebase.co.uk

RATING: 5 out of 5



This square has a built-in spirit level...



... as well as a built-in scribing pin



This is a versatile and useful measuring device, which slips easily into the apron pocket when you're working



I use it frequently for marking out; the blade is easily set and held securely when locked. It can also be used as a depth stop

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Specification

SB3 set: 48 bits × 25mm; 7 bits × 75mm

SB4 set: 12 × 25mm (6.3mm hex fitting); 18 × mini (4mm hex fitting); 5 × splined sockets – 6, 7, 8, 01 & 13mm

Prices: SB3 – **£34.40**; SB4 – **£38.24**

Web: www.trend-uk.com

PROS

- Excellent range in each set
- SB4 ideal for controlled smaller work

CONS

- Be careful not to overload the SB4 driver on bigger fixings or bolts
- Magnetic holder has no power on longer bits

RATING: 4.5 out of 5

Snappy SB3 & SB4 screwdrivers

These Trend kits, while not designed for impact work, offer a great range of applications

If you already own a battery driver, the SB3 kit is the more comprehensive in the fixings that can be used, with 48 25mm-long bits covering Philips, Pozi, slotted, hex, Torx and Torx security, plus seven 75mm-long bits covering the three common Pozi and Philips sizes along with a single slotted bit.

Each bit has a coloured identifier ring, and all are of good quality, as is the magnetic bit holder. This has a pullback sleeve that locks each bit in place, but while the magnetism within is good on the 25mm bits to help hold a fixing, I found it has no hold when the 75mm bits are in use. Nonetheless, there's a decent set of good-quality bits within this set in a compact little case if that is all you need.

41-piece set

However, the SB4 is the more interesting of the two and gives more scope, especially if you want the closer control that hand driving offers. It's a 41-piece set and has a small $\frac{1}{4}$ in drive ratchet handle for the five sockets as well as a natty little ratchet handle for the screwdriving tasks, which can be used in its own right for additional purchase on stubborn

fixings or for an extra nip up as required. There's an adaptor included so the sockets can be used, but the advice is to go no bigger than the 10mm socket.

Easy identification

With a decent set of commonly used bits in various sizes, again with coloured collars for easy identification, it's the inclusion of a further set of micro-sized bits that could prove useful for some repair work, on small electrical items especially.

A neat dual-function bit holder is included for these as they have a smaller 4mm hex shank, so the bit holder has a retracting sleeve that reveals a 4mm holder in one position and a standard 6.3mm holder in the other.

In summary

The overall quality is again very good indeed, and used within its capabilities this is a kit that is especially useful for small assembly work where finer control is needed while still attaining decent torque on the fixings. **AK**



The SB3 bit holder magnet works well enough with a short bit fitted...



... but with the longer bits there's no magnetism at all through the bit



With the black sleeve forwards the standard 6.3mm hex bits are held



Slide it back and it holds the micro 4mm hex bits



The SB4 ratchet handle can hold the bits directly for tight areas



Alternatively, it will take the magnetic bit holder to extend it



You can also fit the sockets using the adaptor



For general nut and bolt securing the ratchet handle is good



IRWIN impact right-angle drill/drive tool

IRWIN's right-angle attachment is designed for tight spots

With plenty of impact-rated driver bits and drills on the market, IRWIN has kept up with the pack with a whole raft of bits in all the common styles and sizes to cover most screws and fixings, as well as bit holders, including this impressive right-angle attachment. It has a standard 6.3mm hex shank for direct fitment to impact chuck, and it runs very slickly with all-metal 1:1 gearing, so any fine trigger control is replicated through to the driver bit for precision.

Chunky feel

With a standard 25mm-long driver bit fitted the overall head height is a mere 50mm so it will gain access to some very tight spots as required, but with the added advantage of the impact action transferring through so the fixing can be driven or undone without the additional torque stress of a normal drill driver. That doesn't mean it can't be used on a normal drill, just

that the construction of the attachment is designed to cope with the impacting action as it works, so you gain the efficiency when it's used with an impact driver. Size-wise it has a good chunky feel in the hand; not so slim that it slips in your grasp, and with a sculpted rubber overmould on the metal casing and a clipped end behind the chuck to rest the thumb, I found you can get good purchase on it to assist any drilling or driving jobs.

In summary

This should prove to be a handy addition to your kit for the odd occasion where you need to get to a tricky area, so is worth the money for that alone. The only downside for me is the magnetic bit holder; it retains the driver bit pretty securely but that magnetism isn't transferred through the bit to help keep any fixings in place, and with tighter spots that's when you need it most. **AK**

Specification

Overall depth: (chuck to back) 35mm

Shank: 6.3mm hex

Chuck fitting: 6.3mm hex

Price: £30

Web: www.irwin.co.uk

PROS

- All-metal gears
- rubberised sculpted grip

CONS

- Poor magnetic transfer to screws

RATING: 4.5 out of 5



It's a comfortable accessory to grip; the clipped end is ideal for applying thumb pressure



In tight spots the adaptor comes into its own



Specification

Various configurations available to suit screws/fixings

Prices: Bit Check Rapidaptor **£19.99**; Impaktor Diamond **£30**
Web: www.wera-tools.co.uk

PROS

- Ring magnet secures Impaktor holder screw
- High-quality bits and holders
- Long lifespan

CONS

- Weak Rapidaptor magnet when using long screws

RATING: 4.5 out of 5

Wera bit sets

Our hard to please tester says these bits put Wera at the top of its game

It makes sense to back good-quality screws with decent driver bits if you don't want cam out, bits chewing up from being too soft or snapping from being too hard. Equally important is to get a suitable setup if you use impact drivers as the driving action can easily damage standard bits.

Wera is certainly top of the game when it comes to driver options, and the durability and quality soon balance out against cheaper purchases.

In use

For general use in a drill driver the Rapidaptor set with nine Pozidriv bits is excellent. The bits incorporate 'BiTorsion', essentially a thinner area just behind the driver point encased in a sleeve that allows a little give or twist as the driver comes under load to lessen the stress on the bit as it drives.

The fit betwixt screw and driver point is good enough for the screw to hold without falling off – a good thing as the magnet on the bit holder isn't that powerful. But the holder itself is excellent, with freely rotating sleeve so you can hold it while driving, and a self-locking collar. You simply pull on the sleeve to release the bit.

But if you are an impact driver user, then the Impaktor Diamond kit raises the bar that bit higher, the bits having a diamond coating to the tips for additional wear properties as well as gripping the screw heads more firmly.

Three-point stress reduction

The bit holder has a double torsion strain-reducing design that, combined with the torsion ring of the driving bit, gives a three-point stress reduction to minimise screw and bit damage. The front of the holder has a sliding sleeve that moves up close to the front of the bit so that the front ring magnet can sit tightly to the screw head for a very secure fit on any screw as you start to drive it.

In summary

Both these kits put in exemplary performance, with the Impaktor kit especially good with the ring magnet retention of the holder. A decent holder can set you back a few quid, so the price is actually very competitive, and having used Wera bits in the past, I can vouch for how well they last. **AK**



The Impaktor bit holder has an additional ring magnet...



... that allows the sleeve of the holder to move forwards and contact the screw head...



... resulting in a powerful connection between the two to hold it in position



Driving performance of both sets is exemplary



Skil F0157226AE Fox 2-in-1 sander

This sander from Skil performed better than expected and is comfortable to operate – just ensure to work within its parameters

There seems to be a growing number of budget 240V multi-purpose sanders available these days. Hardly surprising when consumer brands compete to tempt the user who may only want to buy one sanding tool for occasional work. For finishing a variety of surfaces this can make such tools an attractive option, although whether they will perform as well as dedicated single-format sanders is perhaps open to question.

The Skil Fox combines a disc sander format with a delta pattern. This time you only need remove one retaining screw to swap the bases, though. A hex key is provided for this and it takes no time at all. The delta base is unusual in that you can swivel it to any position, even pointing backwards. Like many sanders the front triangular pad is attached by Velcro and can be removed fast and rotated as the tip wears. All pads feature hook-&-loop fixing and a reasonable number of abrasive discs and sheets is supplied.

Electronic braking

Instead of variable-speed, the Skil has two fixed speeds (9,500 and 13,000rpm), activated by the three-way power slider button. This works well and I found it more effective than relying on a speed dial, which invariably gets left set at maximum. You can instantly switch between speeds, which

arguably is all you need. Electronic braking means the tool comes to a standstill quickly. With the 125mm diameter pad fitted you have a fairly efficient sander for those larger flat surfaces. Although this is not a true random orbit mechanism – there are inevitable swirls left on the surface – it's still pretty effective.

Motor rating is 250W, while cable length is 2.8m. Weighing 1.3kg, this is a fairly lightweight tool, so not too tiring for vertical or overhead work. There's plenty of soft-grip rubber where it's needed, which helps to further add to the Fox's ergonomic credentials.

Dust collection is via a rigid plastic box, which is a push-fit at the back of the tool. Inside appears to be a fabric filter, though you can't access this. Once the box is full you just tip out the contents. No adaptor is provided for hooking up a vacuum extractor, though this is an extra accessory.

In summary

Sanding performance was better than expected and it's a comfortable tool to operate. Having the disc sander option is certainly an advantage. Don't forget that the Fox is not a professional power tool, so it can't be expected to work for extended periods without overheating. **PD**

Specification

Weight: 1.3kg
Dimensions: 332 × 170 × 168mm
Power source: Corded-electric
Power: 250W

Price: £69.99

Web: www.skileurope.com

PROS

- Changing sanding pads is easy
- Fixed speed system works well
- Fairly lightweight in use
- Strong ergonomic credentials

CONS

- No adaptor provided for hooking up a vacuum extractor – this needs to be bought separately
- Can't be used for long periods of time

RATING: 4 out of 5



Bases are speedily swapped via a hex key



The delta base can be swivelled in any direction



The pads are secured with hook-&-loop fixings...



... and several discs and sheets are supplied



The fixed speeds are activated by a 3-way slider button



The 125mm pad copes with larger flat surfaces



Specification

Sole shapes: Convex, double convex, concave & flat

Sole size: 39 × 17mm

Iron width: 10mm

Handle: Bubinga

Price: £43.63 each

Web: www.axminster.co.uk

PROS

- Adjustable shaft
- Easy to control
- Good for finer control on smaller work

CONS

- Plane screw has to be completely removed to hone the iron

RATING: 4.5 out of 5

Veritas detail palm planes

Instrument makers especially should welcome these planes from Veritas

These planes are very competitively priced alongside their traditional brass counterparts, but have a couple of nice tricks up their sleeves to tempt you. Four sole configurations are available: a standard flat sole, concave, convex and double convex, each with a sole area of around 39 × 17mm with a 10mm-wide iron.

This range covers the same parameters as the violin-style planes, but with the inclusion of an extended neck, culminating in a bulbous bubinga handle that can be wound in and out by about 12mm to suit finger length. It definitely gives more push through a cut, and I felt it had finer control than just gripping the body only.

It can also be used in more standard style by removing the whole of the handle stem and relying on finger and thumb grip alone to make the cuts.

A closer look

Handle apart it's a simple construction much like the old-style Stanley block planes, so the iron is trapped against the bed by a small screw pushing the iron up against a retainer, in this case, grooves in the casting.

The small brass screw has to be removed to get the iron out for honing; no particular problem here, but remember that it's a left-hand thread.

The iron is A2 steel, ground to 30°. The thinness of the steel and the limited useable length warrant the need for retaining this as the cutting bevel rather than a secondary honing one to ensure the longest lifespan.

The mouth fit is tight, and there's minimal, if any, lateral movement with the way the conical end of the retaining screw centralises it. Bear that in mind when honing or you could find the irons sitting askew to the mouth.

The hard steel should give a long life between hones, especially as they are used for small concentrated work rather than taking huge swathes of stock away.

In summary

Running chamfer edges and roundovers were nicely controllable, and the different base options proved handy when rolling out yet another boomerang for my dog, helping with the tighter radius work as well as hollowing the underside of the wings – maybe not what Veritas saw as its primary role, but they certainly make it easier! These are cracking little planes, obviously specialist, but lovely to use and maybe not limited to instrument making; more intricate shaping jobs could be attempted with them, so apart from my boomerang making, they would work well alongside carving tools. **AK**



The handle can be removed to use as a finger plane



By unscrewing the top part of the handle the length can be extended



You have to remove the retaining knob in order to hone the iron



The planes are easy to control for finer detail



Here the convex plane is ideal for contouring the underside of a boomerang

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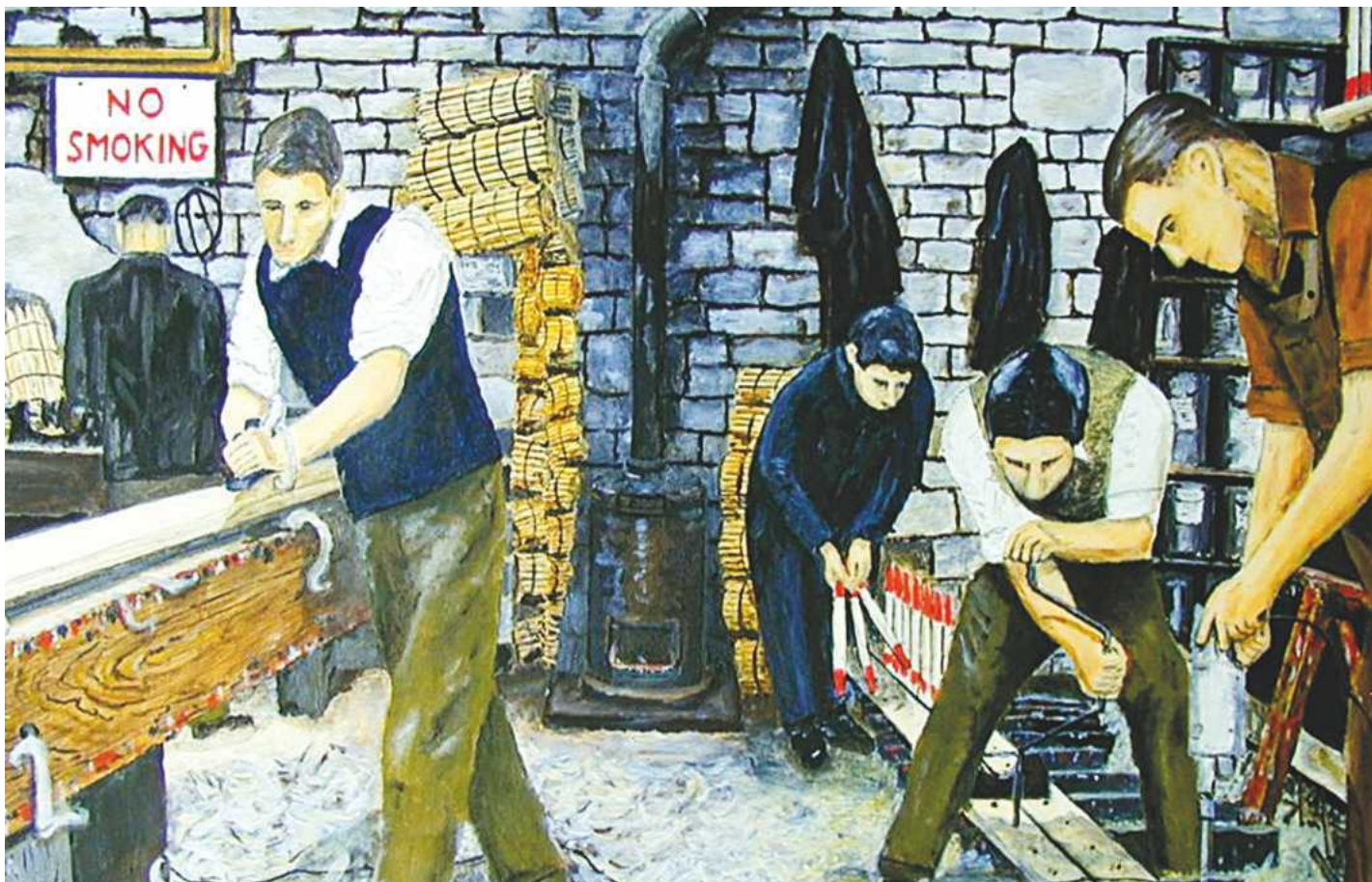
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The old barn at Harold Ward's workshop by Stan Clark

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In the first of a brand-new series, we enter the world of traditional ladder making – join **Stan Clark** as he leaves school and sets out on his woodworking career in the 1950s

During my last years at Bugbrooke School, while being in the top class in the early summer months, there were times while sitting in the classroom that we would hear the noise from Mr. Harold Ward's saw nearby, cutting spruce poles that would be made into ladders.

At the time it never entered my head that, in the following year, I would be down at John Ward & Son Ladder Makers & Undertakers, Church Lane, Bugbrooke, working for Mr. Harold Ward, helping out cutting ladder poles in half. Getting back to school during the month of March 1954, I sat in class wondering whether I'd have to come back after the coming Easter break, for it was to be an early Easter that particular year, and it meant that I normally would've had to have stayed on at school until the August holidays came along, due to the time of my birthday.

Pastures new

But one morning Mr. Lantsbury, my Headmaster, was talking to all those who were leaving, and to those who had a job to go to, when he said to me: "Clark, I do not want to see you back in class either after the Easter break." The way in which he came out with it was quite a shock to me, as well as making me very pleased in another way. He then told me that my mother had got me a job, working for Mr. Harold Ward down Church Lane, and this was the first I knew of it, or as to where they intended to send me in the first place.

I had the pleasure of working for Mr. Ward upon leaving Bugbrooke School on the Easter of 1954, starting on 19 April, up until having to leave in November 1958 to start my two years' conscription (National Service), which started on the sixth day of that month. And on completion of serving my two years in the

services, I was to return back to work for him for a short period of time.

Heavy work

From the experience of starting work for Mr. Ward in the April of 1954, the first major event a week or two later was the delivery of the many Norwegian spruce poles (aka Christmas trees) that would be cut up the centre and stacked to dry or season. Mr. Ward would order these poles from a firm in Great Yarmouth, whose registered trading name was Jewsons Timber. They came in all different lengths and sizes, the majority of them ranging from 15ft to 40ft in length. Among the order would be some extra large poles that were to be 50-65ft and even 70ft in length. There would be about 1,500 different sized poles delivered to the workshop in Church Lane.

The very large poles, when made up into ladders, were used as the main attraction or centre piece on the show stands. The cutting up the centre of these poles on a circular saw was done in the early summer months, when the weather was normally hot and dry. It was very hard and strenuous work for everyone, and during the period of my very first time of helping out with this sort of heavy work, I began to wish I was back in school, just sitting at my desk. **WW**

NEXT MONTH

In the next instalment of this series, we have more tales from Stan as he continues his training at Wards ladder manufacturers. And if any other readers have a story to tell, we'd be glad to listen. Just write to editor.ww@mytimemedia.com and we'll see how we get on



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