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April 2020

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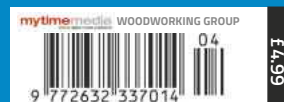
1 OF 5 TICKETS TO
MAKERS CENTRAL WITH
DICKIES WORKWEAR



PLUS...

- ADRIAN PARFITT SHARES HIS CHURCH ALTAR TABLE COMMISSION
- LES THORNE TURNS A CAULDRON-STYLE BOWL WITH CARVED FEET
- TOP 10 TIPS FOR PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR WOODTURNING PROJECTS

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Welcome

I recently had the opportunity to visit Bath for a few days, a city I've always been fascinated with but have never actually seen with my own eyes, which seems odd given the fact I'm originally from the West Country! Narrowly missing several storms, I'm pleased to say that the weather for my trip couldn't have been more perfect: crisp but sunny, with not a single drop of rain or wind. This gave me ample opportunity to explore Bath in all of its historic wonder, and I couldn't wait to get started.

Glorious Bath

Beginning in the Canary Gin Bar seemed the most logical starting point, which even has its own distillery on site and 'Gin' Austin themed concoctions, which I assume are linked to the Jane Austen Centre, situated just a few doors up on Gay Street. I was also informed that I couldn't possibly visit Bath without enjoying a 'Sally Lunn Bun', which is described as part bun and part cake. Topped with jam and cream I certainly devoured mine and it seemed rude not to enjoy it in the eating house itself, which is one of the oldest buildings in the city, dating all the way back to 1482.

Suitably fed and watered, the next stop was Bath Abbey, whose imposing exterior (and interior) certainly kept me open-mouthed throughout the tour. Founded way back in 1499, it was ruined after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539 by order of Henry VIII, before being completed in 1611. As soon as I stepped inside I was drawn to the ceilings and the sheer intricacy of the carvings, both in wood and stone, as well as the stunning stained glass windows. I think it's fair to say that you cannot possibly go to Bath and not visit the Abbey, but then again, you can't really miss it!

I have to admit that I was mostly looking forward to seeing the Roman Baths, the site of which consists of the remarkably preserved remains of one of the greatest religious spas of the ancient world. The city's unique thermal springs rise in the site and the baths still flow with natural hot water, and yes, I had to dip



my hand in when I walked past, just to make sure! Other sites visited during my short stay included The Circus, a historic street of large townhouses, The Royal Crescent, plus Pulteney Bridge, one of the most photographed examples of Georgian architecture in the city. It was a wonderful trip and I can strongly advise anyone who hasn't been to pay it a visit, especially if you're interested in history, Georgian architecture, museums and galleries.

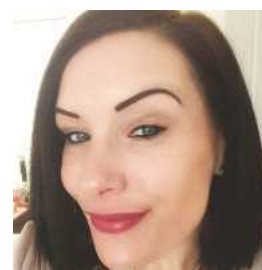
Spring woodworking

But enough about me, what have you been up to? Hopefully your woodworking projects are now in full flow seeing as the weather is a fair bit warmer, or perhaps you're busy putting the finishing touches to your entry for the upcoming 2020 Alan Peters Furniture Award? Also, don't forget to keep sharing your workshop hints and tips with us, as if yours is chosen, you'll win a brand-new Veritas apron plane fitted with PM-V11 blade, so what are you waiting for? We hope to hear from you soon!

Enjoy!

Tegan

Email tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com



Tegan Foley

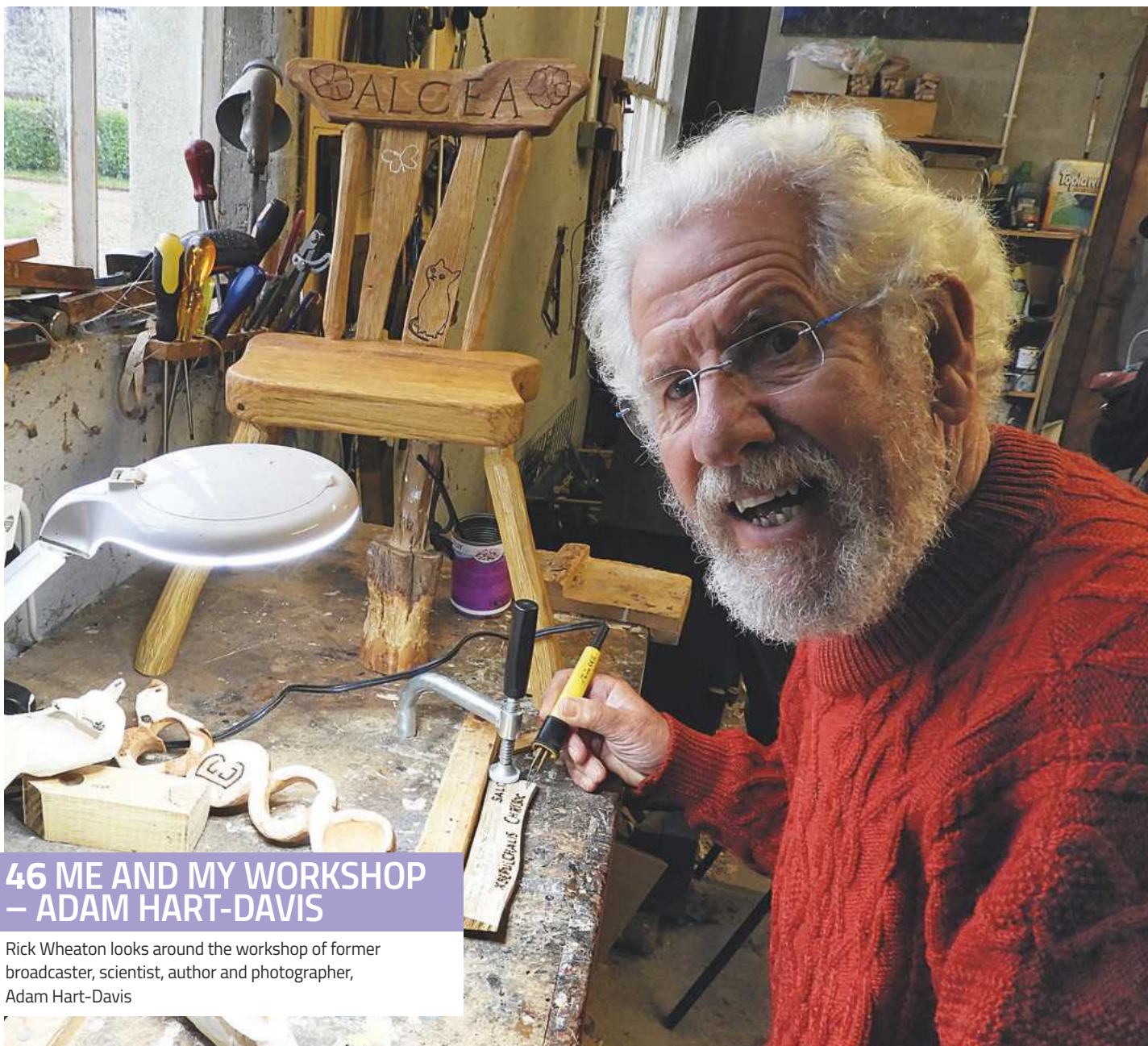
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Phil Davy

Technical & Consultant Editor

We endeavour to ensure all techniques shown in this issue 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



46 ME AND MY WORKSHOP — ADAM HART-DAVIS

Rick Wheaton looks around the workshop of former broadcaster, scientist, author and photographer, Adam Hart-Davis

WIN!

1 of 5 tickets to Makers Central with Dickies Workwear



In conjunction with Dickies Workwear, we're giving five readers the chance to win a ticket to Makers Central – an event that celebrates makers, creators, hobbyists and artists from all over the world. For details on how to enter, see page 37 – good luck!

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Innovation in Blades

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**BLADE – see page
59 for details**



PROJECTS

40 The gift of wine

Usually made using a router jig, inlaid dovetails enhance any piece with a distinct sense of craftsmanship. Here, Charles Mak shows you how to cut the decorative joinery – by hand

64 Geometric gem

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78 Open door policy

If you want to maximise room space by reversing the door, Phil Davy tells you how to do it with mortise & rim locks

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We're concentrating on the Fs at the moment and there will be more to come – Peter Bishop aims to make this series interesting enough for you to read on through and look forward to each issue

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Don't miss out on the opportunity to be part of this fantastic new award, which champions UK furniture making talent while celebrating the life and work of the late Alan Peters OBE

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Robin Gates is entranced by the making of a violin, the subject of a marathon series of articles running in *The Woodworker* from 1958 to 1959

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83 Market yourself the Chippendale way

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90 Market trading – part 3

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Going back to roots

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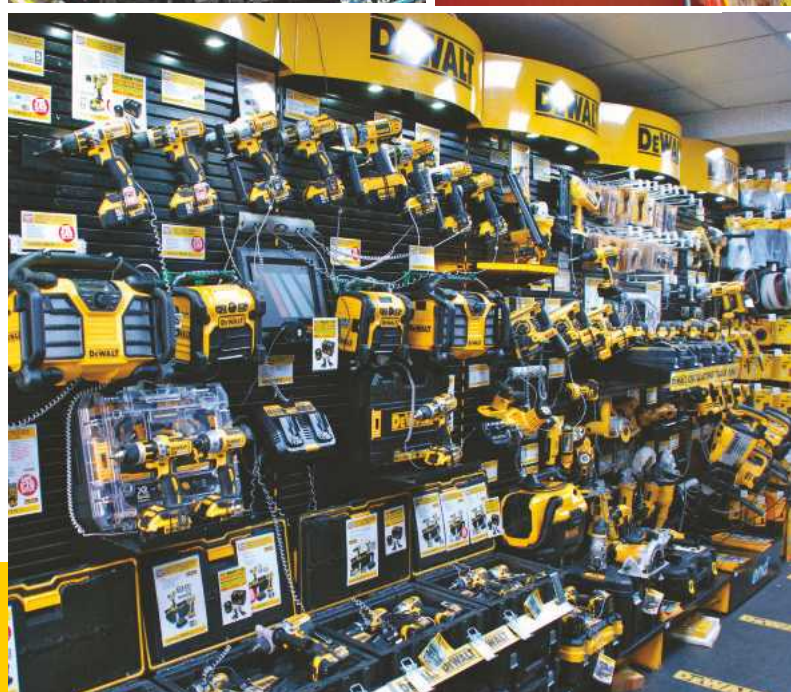
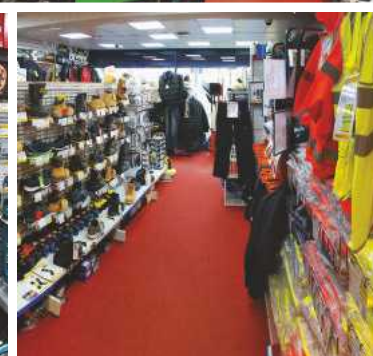
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TRITON TOOLS' PORTABLE SPINDLE SANDER CONTINUES TO IMPRESS

Triton Tools, internationally renowned power tool brand, continues to impress the world of woodworking with its TSPSP650 Portable Oscillating Spindle Sander. Recently launched in the US market, the TSPSP650 has been voted "one of the Best New Tools of 2019" in the US *Popular Woodworking* publication.

Like its bench-top counterparts, the portable spindle sander includes a variety of drum diameters from 13-38mm, which are quick and easy to switch out with the keyless drum lock, and the sanding sleeves come in a variety of grits. Unlike bench-mounted sanders, the TSPSP650 is more powerful at 650W. Another key feature is the variable speed, which controls the rotation and oscillation of the spindle to reduce edge burning.

Where traditional spindle sanders are restricted to bench-tops, the TSPSP650 has the flexibility of a portable, hand-held tool. If the workpiece is too large to manoeuvre on a traditional spindle sander, the TSPSP650 can be brought to the work. This portable versatility goes hand-in-hand with the supplied adjustable edge guide, which acts as a fence to control the amount of material removal.

Ideal for smaller workspaces, the TSPSP650 comes with a bench-mounting kit complete with clamps and an anti-slip mat, which means even the smallest woodworking shop can include a powerful bench-mountable spindle sander. Visit www.tritontools.com to find the nearest stockist.



MAKERS CENTRAL RETURNS TO NEC BIRMINGHAM THIS MAY

Makers Central, the fun-packed weekend for all the family, returns to NEC Birmingham from 2-3 May. The show was designed to bring together makers, creators, hobbyists and artists from all over the world, to celebrate their passion in all things creative. Last year the show saw big names like Jimmy Diresta, Bobby Duke Arts, Bob from ILiketomakestuff and the one and only YouTube inventor Colin Furze, along with many other big names from the community.

This year some of the main attractions include the stars of TV's *Robot Wars* battling it out in a live action arena, and big names offering live demonstrations from woodturning, blacksmithing, pottery demonstrations and even ice sculpting.

Meet your idols, join in and make something to take home with you, watch exclusive live demonstrations and talks from viral makers, or simply browse the stands and grab yourself a bargain. For more information and to buy tickets, visit www.makerscentral.co.uk.

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16-17 Advanced turned boxes
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4, 5, 11, 18 & 19 Green woodworking experience
11 Kuksa carving
12 Sharpening day
12 Shrink pots
19 Willow weaving for beginners
22-23 Shavehorse course
25-26 Greenwood stool making
25 Hazel hurdle making
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THE 'MIDLANDS' WOODWORKING SHOW

Returning from 27–28 March and taking place at the Newark Showground, Notts, the 'Midlands' Woodworking Show is one not to be missed! Now in its fifth year, this event is firmly established as a major part of the woodworking calendar, and for good reason. With more than 30 top demonstrators taking part and over 50 trade stands offering some great bargains, the 'Midlands' show certainly promises something for every woodworker and woodturner. Save money by purchasing advance tickets – **01749 813 899** – or visit www.nelson.co.uk.

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Osmo UK, the eco-friendly wood and finishes specialist, has introduced a new finish to its Door-Oil range – 3033 Raw Matt – which is designed to protect and enhance light coloured wood, without leaving behind a wet-look appearance.

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For stockist details and more information on Osmo UK and its range of environmentally friendly wooden products and specialist finishes, see the website: www.osmouk.com.



DICKIES GOES FOR GOLD AT MAKERS CENTRAL

Dickies Workwear is a Gold sponsor of this year's Makers Central, as part of its ongoing campaign to celebrate the passion and skills of tradespeople who inspire others with their dedication and ingenuity.

Now in its third year, Makers Central will be held at The NEC, Birmingham, from 2–3 May and is aimed at bringing together makers, creators, hobbyists and artists from all over the world. From furniture makers and woodturners to metalworkers, famous YouTubers, and creators, a vast range of the global maker community is represented at the show.

As well as selling some of its most iconic products, Dickies will be holding interactive workshops at its stand with Rachel Millar, a signwriter and lettering artist based in Glasgow. Rachel has featured in Dickies' recent Meet the Makers campaign, which celebrates the skill and ingenuity of those who make a living with their hands. Learn more about Rachel's craft at www.dickiesworkwear.com/uk/blog/dickies-makers-rachel-millar.

Specialising in designing and painting lettering by hand, Rachel uses a lot of colour in her work and plays with perspective to create a 3D effect. She will be holding workshops for those interested in picking up some of her skills while painting their own coaster.

"We take pride in designing workwear that supports the makers of the world to do what they do best by offering them the comfort, safety and durability they need to focus on the task in hand – with designs that suit their individual image," said James Whitaker, Marketing Director for Dickies.

"From tradespeople to those who make things as a hobby, we know there are many people who are really passionate about what they do and our Meet the Makers campaign has been a way of celebrating that. We're excited to see the skills and talent in action at Makers Central."

Dickies will be at stand E8 – opposite the YouTube area at Makers Central. For more information, including tickets, visit www.makerscentral.co.uk or enter the ticket giveaway on page 22.

The series of videos created for Dickies' Meet the Makers campaign is featured on the blog – www.dickiesworkwear.com/uk/blog – or visit www.dickiesworkwear.com.





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CRAFT FESTIVAL BOVEY TRACEY

Set in idyllic surroundings on the edge of Dartmoor, Craft Festival Bovey Tracey is returning for the 17th year at Mill Marsh Park, Bovey Tracey from 12–14 June. As well as meeting and buying from over 200 of the UK finest makers, there is a hand-picked collection of craftspeople demonstrating their craft throughout the weekend. The first stop should be StartUP, an area dedicated to emerging makers in the initial two years of business.

Getting hands-on is a big part of the festival, and the exhibitors are excited that model maker extraordinaire, Jim Parkyn, Senior Model Maker at Aardman Animations, will be attending with 'The Amazing Scene Machine' where visitors can add their character to the scene. Jim is the man responsible for creating some of the UK's most loved plasticine characters, from Morph to Shaun the Sheep.

There will still be a spotlight on the Festival Favourites, with Cornwall's Otter Surfboards demonstrating making their beautiful wooden boards, plus Pole & Hunt returning with an extravaganza of blacksmithing. The Common Room, an area for grown-ups to drop in and make, run by Plymouth's Common Sense Studio, will focus on sustainable making practises including mending workshops and a clothes exchange.

The very special Out of the Woods, curated by internationally respected basket maker, Hilary Burns, hosts a range of makers working with native woodlands, including spoon carving, basket making, steam-bending and ash pounding.

Don't miss out on Craft Festival's bookable and drop-in workshops, which offer visitors the opportunity to try a new craft. For tickets and further information, see www.craftfestival.co.uk.



MACHINE MART'S NEW SPRING/SUMMER CATALOGUE

The new Machine Mart catalogue is packed full of all the tools and equipment you need, whether it is for a hobbyist, DIY enthusiast or professional. Featuring over 500 price cuts and new products, the 508-page Spring/Summer catalogue is a 'must have' for anyone seeking a huge choice of tools and equipment at unbeatable value.

With over 6,000 items of tools and machinery in the new catalogue and over 15,000 extra products online, you'll be sure to find something you need! To order your catalogue, visit the website – www.machinemart.co.uk – or call 0844 880 1265.



MACHINE BOARDS MORE EASILY & SAFELY WITH THE NEW STM 1800 SAW TABLE & WORKBENCH FROM FESTOOL

From April 2020, Festool will extend its workplace organisation range with the addition of the new, unique and mobile STM 1800 saw table and workbench. The contact surface is equipped with wooden coverings, which securely supports both the sheet material and workpieces, therefore allowing for precise work. Consequently, even boards up to 3,100 x 2,150mm can be held and machined by a single person – without additional assistance. It can be adjusted up to 90cm to the required working height and converted into a mobile panel saw using a portable circular saw and guide rail.

Safe working

With the new STM 1800 saw table and workbench, Festool has created a new opportunity for workshops and installers to machine large panels – without additional assistance. Large panels are usually machined in workshops with stationary systems, which often start at more than €10,000. However, not every workshop can afford this, and there may even simply not be the space for the bench. Neither have there been any suitable solutions with respect to flexible working and assembly work. To date, the easiest and most common solution has been machining supported by trestles or using home-made aids. With the new STM 1800, Festool has developed something completely new: a professional solution for machining large panels. The folding table is an optimal addition to the system and can be turned into a mobile panel saw in no time at all in conjunction with a saw and guide rail. When fully assembled, the contact surface amounts to 1,800 x 1,800mm and is made from differently positioned beechwood coverings, which securely support the sheet material/workpiece. This means that longitudinal and cross-cuts can be made on different types of boards and the sawn off boards always remain on the contact surface. Whether in workshops or at assembly sites, the STM can also be used as a workbench for sanding, milling, fitting and gluing. Moreover, when the bench is not needed, it is very easy to store without taking up a lot of space. The robust steel frame design also ensures that the bench has a long service life. Plastic slide elements and cover plugs ensure that the extendable tubes have good sliding properties. The bench is also equipped with robust rollers and a brake, which means that the bench – whether holding a workpiece or not – is mobile, regardless of whether it is used in workshops or on construction sites.

Optimal ergonomic design – even for just a single person

As stated, the STM 1800 saw table allows large sheet material or workpieces to be held and machined by a single person. This is made possible by a tilting function. The working height can also be set to up to 90cm, as required. The bench is light and compact to transport thanks to its special folding system. Moreover, the bench can be assembled to be small or large, as required. It is also practical in that all parts can be fitted to the bench. This means that nothing is lost and everything you require is always available when you need it, whether it be wooden coverings, holders, buttons or wheels.

For more information on the new Festool mobile STM 1800 saw table and workbench, see the website: www.festool.co.uk.



MAKITA MAKES WORK PLANE SAILING

Makita has launched an exciting new range of products, including the DKP181 18V Brushless LXT planer (82mm). Combining the speed and capacity of a corded planer with the convenience of cordless, the tool is part of their expanding 18V series, the world's largest cordless product line-up powered by an 18V Lithium-ion battery.



With a 12,000rpm brushless motor providing power equal to that of AC models, the DKP181 is a powerful cordless solution offering increased battery efficiency, designed for building and construction applications.

Its high cutting power provides up to 3mm max planing depth, a planing width of 82mm and a rebating depth of 25mm, ideal for shortening doors, ship-lapping or tapering mouldings.

For user comfort and flexibility, operators can precisely adjust the planing depth and manoeuvre around projects easily by diverting the wood chips either to the left or right, by adjusting the ejection cover plate to the preferred side. The planer offers easy chamfering with three chamfering grooves for different groove dimensions and positioning.

Featuring an electric blade brake to prevent user injury or damage to the workpiece, the blade rapidly stops after the trigger has been released, and the line-up includes model options fitted with Makita's Auto-start Wireless System (AWS), which connects to compatible dust extractors via Bluetooth to help minimise dust inhalation as well as keeping the workplace clean and tidy while working.

The planer uses a brushless motor, meaning no friction is created within the motor, to improve the longevity of the tool. Combining this technology with LXT batteries makes the machine up to 50% more efficient and two times as durable, in comparison to alternative models with standard motors. In addition to this, the Automatic Torque Driver (ADT) technology automatically changes the cutting speed according to the load conditions for optimum operation and efficiency.

For more information on the DKP181 Brushless planer and Makita's new range of products, see www.makita.co.uk.

HIKOKI POWER TOOLS LAUNCHES UC18YTSL 18V FOUR-PORT CHARGER

HiKOKI Power Tools has launched its UC18YTSL 18V four-port charger, which means you will never have to be without power out on site again. With a compact design, the charger rapidly and simultaneously charges HiKOKI 18V and 36V power tool batteries, including Multi Volt.



Rapid mode charge times are just 20 minutes per 3.0Ah battery, 32 minutes per 5.0Ah battery and 38 minutes per 6.0Ah battery. Simultaneous mode charge times are 80 minutes for 4 x 3.0Ah batteries, 128 minutes for 4 x 5.0Ah batteries and 152 mins for 4 x 6.0Ah batteries. The UC18YTSL 18V four-port charger also includes two USB charger points for added convenience, so mobiles can be topped up through the working day too. It also has a three-pin outlet, so it can be used as an extension lead.

A high visibility charge indicator lamp is included, and the charger operates at low temperatures and is compatible with petrol generators – a real plus as more building sites now insist on cordless tools only. With a folding carry handle, the UC18YTSL 18V four-port charger is easy to transport. To find out more, see www.hikoki-powertools.co.uk.

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AXMINSTER CRAFT AC200BDS BELT & DISC SANDER

Although this combined belt and disc sander from Axminster is aimed at smaller workshops, it's a step up from a budget machine, says **Phil Davy**

If you make items in small batches, such as models, boxes or toys, you probably look to work as efficiently as possible. Cleaning up repeat components (particularly end-grain) can be tedious without a bench-top sander of some sort. Whether ends of timber are angled, square or convex, all can be finished neatly on such a machine. And with a tilting table, compound curves are also feasible.

From Axminster's Craft range, the AC200BDS machine follows the standard format for a combination sander: a vertical sanding disc at one end, with belt sander (or linisher) at the other. This belt can be used vertically, horizontally or at any angle between, simply by slackening a screw and tilting the linisher assembly back. The exposed,



rounded end of the belt makes it useful for sanding concave surfaces, while its long platen is designed for flat workpieces and convex curves.

You can sand end-grain or smaller items on either the belt or vertical disc. Both have a small

tilting table for bevelled work, with a T-slot to accommodate a sliding mitre fence. Set at zero, these tables are designed to help produce clean, square ends quickly and accurately, and with the mitre fence it's a cinch to sand square and compound bevels, too.



The AC200BDS machine follows the standard format for a combination sander: a vertical sanding disc at one end...



... with belt sander (or linisher) at the other

Construction

Designed to sit on a bench-top, you won't want to move this machine too often, unless mounted on a stand with castors. Weighing around 26kg, the base itself is solid cast-iron, with a fixing hole in each corner. Also fitted with four rubber feet, minimal vibration means you probably won't need to bolt it down. There's some assembly work to get the machine up and running, though this is minimal along with a slight degreasing. Two hex keys are included for this.

There are no drive belts to wear or replace here. Instead, the motor shaft drives both the vertical sanding disc and lower roller of the belt sander



This belt can be used vertically, horizontally or at any angle between, simply by slackening a screw and tilting the linisher assembly back



You can sand end-grain or smaller items on either the belt or vertical disc



With the mitre fence it's a cinch to sand square and compound bevels, too



Also fitted with four rubber feet, minimal vibration means you probably won't need to bolt it down

directly. Tension is applied automatically to the belt, which revolves around a pair of aluminium rollers. The upper one is spring-loaded, and to reduce tension for belt changing you simply open out a side lever on the linisher casing. This operates a heavy steel mechanism and spring that lowers the roller.

Made from aluminium, the 200mm diameter vertical sander disc feels solid, with a substantial steel casing behind. This covers the motor too, while access plates and guards to other parts are virtually all plastic. Although the linisher frame is steel, side covers are also plastic but seem sturdy enough.

Table talk

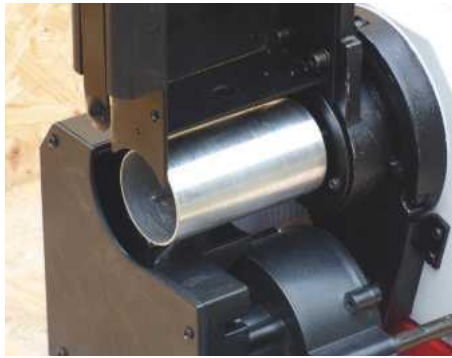
Installing the sanding tables only takes a couple of minutes, with plastic levers for locking them from 0 to 45°. Two levers are provided on the disc sander, just one on the linisher table. I found tilt action on both tables wasn't too smooth, although once locked off they were fairly solid.

An adjustable pointer on each protractor scale is handy when resetting tables to zero, though there's no stop as such. For accuracy, it's always best to check with a square when setting up. The disc sander table measures 263 x 190mm, the linisher version 170 x 125mm.

Tables are cast alloy and not exactly heavy-duty, nor dead flat, though you'd really need machined cast-iron tables for absolute accuracy.



For accuracy, it's always best to check with a square when setting up



The motor shaft drives both the vertical sanding disc and lower roller of the belt sander directly

Each has a 17mm 'T' slot machined lengthways to accommodate the mitre fence. Although this fence is also plastic, it seems to work well enough. There's slight play as you slide it in either slot, though not enough to worry about. This action is something you tend to compensate for on cheaper machines and learn to live with.

Graduations on the protractor scale are clear, though for absolute accuracy it's perhaps better to use a square, sliding bevel or homemade template where precise angles are important. The chosen angle is locked with a large thumbscrew.

Power & extraction

Rated at 550W, there's plenty of power for sanding larger workpieces. There's no variable speed, just a fixed speed of 520m per minute stated for the belt. The NVR push button switch is easy to reach at the front, while cable length is 1.85m.

A small fan located underneath the linisher



Installing the sanding tables only takes a couple of minutes, with plastic levers for locking them from 0 to 45°



Although the mitre fence is also plastic, it seems to work well enough



The upper aluminium roller is spring-loaded...



... and to reduce tension for belt changing you simply open out a side lever on the linisher casing



An adjustable pointer on each protractor scale is handy when resetting tables to zero, though there's no stop as such



The NVR push button switch is easy to reach at the front, while cable length is 1.85m



A small fan located underneath the linisher draws dust from both tables towards the back of the machine, a corrugated hose guiding it across from the disc sander

draws dust from both tables towards the back of the machine, a corrugated hose guiding it across from the disc sander. Dust exits via a 63mm port, with a locking collar to hook up a suitable hose. Once more, fittings are plastic, but when installed in the workshop, you probably won't need to adjust this connection too much. An access plate is removable for cleaning.

Sanding action

Both disc and belt reach full speed quickly, returning to standstill in under five seconds once you hit the red button. Guiding a workpiece across either table was smooth enough and the fence can be angled up to 60° on either side.

An advantage of the linisher design is that you can alter the plane of the sander to suit your work. With the belt angled back or horizontal you can still adjust the table accordingly.



With the belt angled back or horizontal you can still adjust the table accordingly



Dust exits via a 63mm port, with a locking collar to hook up a suitable hose

This machine isn't too noisy and extraction is pretty efficient, even with a 100mm hose lashed up with gaffa tape.

Changing abrasives

Abrasives fitted as standard are 80 grit (both belt and disc). Although 80 grit may sound coarse, it actually gives an excellent finish while still shaping wood rapidly. Included with the machine is an extra belt plus five more discs.

To change a belt means removing several screws for access, releasing tension, then fitting a replacement before tracking it correctly on the rollers. This is easy to do by rotating an adjuster wheel as you move the belt downwards by hand, then fire up the machine briefly to check the belt is running centrally. Belt size is 100 x 915mm, so there's a decent width available when sanding. Disc removal is harder as these abrasives are self-



To change a belt means removing several screws for access, releasing tension, then fitting a replacement before tracking it correctly on the rollers



Guiding a workpiece across either table was smooth enough and the fence can be angled up to 60° on either side

adhesive, which involves having to peel off and scrape the backing disc. You may need to clean any gunge with a suitable solvent before reapplying a new disc.

Conclusion

You do need an extractor with this machine, especially as the dust produced is so fine. Although cover plates, adjuster knobs and so on are plastic, these are mostly out of the way when sanding. You could probably replace the knobs with metal versions if need be. Tables and mitre fence are lightweight, so don't expect absolute solidity at this price.

Although this combined belt and disc sander from Axminster is aimed at smaller workshops, it's a step up from a budget machine. It's capable of excellent results, though don't forget that square... ✂

SPECIFICATION

Abrasive belt size: 100 x 915mm
Abrasive disc diameter: 200mm
Belt speed: 520m/min
Dust extraction outlet: 63mm
Weight: 26kg
Overall L x W x H: 590 x 520 x 380mm
Power: 550W
Rating: Craft
Table size – belt: 170 x 120mm
Table size – disc: 264 x 190mm
Voltage: 230V

Typical price: £179.96

Web: www.axminster.co.uk



This is easy to do by rotating an adjuster wheel as you move the belt downwards by hand



Disc removal is harder as these abrasives are self-adhesive, which involves having to peel off and scrape the backing disc

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Generally heavy build; versatile sanding application

CONS

- Basic tables; tilt action not smooth; plastic components

RATING: 4 out of 5



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DEWALT DCW210N-XJ RANDOM ORBIT SANDER

Benefitting from a brushless motor and compact design, Phil Davy thinks this new offering from DeWalt will give similar random orbits a run for their money

You just can't ignore the convenience of cordless power tools, especially for site work. In a workshop environment with mains electricity this is less important,



You slot the battery vertically in place at the rear, though to check remaining capacity means turning the tool upside down



With a 5.0Ah battery fitted it was easy to lose track of the amount of sanding achieved on one charge



Alongside the on/off button is the speed dial, with numerical stages clearly visible

particularly when corded tools are cheaper anyway. Depending on your specific area of woodwork, a compact random orbit sander makes cleaning up panels, joinery or slightly convex surfaces that much easier. Whether you use veneered boards or solid timber, a small but sturdy model could be pretty much the only sander you need.

The DCW210N from DeWalt is one of the newest products to fulfil this brief. Like most 18V professional tools it's supplied bare, without batteries or charger (or even a storage box), putting it beyond the budget of many. If you already own a DeWalt cordless tool this will be less of a consideration, though.

Brushless technology

Fitted with a brushless motor means the tool is efficient and relatively quiet when sanding. You slot the battery vertically in place at the rear, though to check remaining capacity means turning the tool upside down. Hardly a problem, though. To release, simply depress the large button above. This tool accepts DeWalt's powerful XR batteries, which give increased run time. Although rated at 54V, these batteries switch to 18V when fitted into appropriate tools.

Almost completely covered in soft-grip rubber, the DeWalt is unlikely to slip out of your hand if using it vertically or even overhead. It feels



Although rated at 54V, the powerful XR batteries switch to 18V when fitted into appropriate tools



With a standard hook-and-loop surface you can attach any suitable abrasive, though disappointingly no discs are included



substantial but only weighs 1.55kg with a 5.0Ah battery on board. The on/off button at the front of the tool is easy to reach with your forefinger and shrouded against dust. Alongside this is the speed dial, with numerical stages clearly visible. A bit stiff to rotate, this is better than being too floppy. Speed range is from 8,000-12,000rpm, while orbit diameter is 2.6mm. The dense polyurethane sanding pad is 10mm thick, with a nominal diameter of 125mm. With eight extraction holes, an outer skirt helps contain the dust during sanding. With a standard hook-and-loop surface you can attach any suitable abrasive, though disappointingly no discs are included.

Basic dust collection is via a sturdy cylindrical fabric bag that locks on to a 35mm dust port at the base of the tool. The AirLock collar fits securely with a slight twist of the hand. Alternatively, you can hook up a vacuum



The DeWalt is unlikely to slip out of your hand if using it vertically or even overhead



Basic dust collection is via a sturdy cylindrical fabric bag that locks on to a 35mm dust port at the base of the tool



The AirLock collar fits securely with a slight twist of the hand



I ended up using a standard stepped vacuum extractor, which made the connection a bit unwieldy



On veneered boards you can reduce the orbit speed accordingly, while at full throttle it will remove material fairly rapidly

extractor for greater efficiency, though without an AirLock adaptor this is easier said than done. I ended up using a standard stepped version, which made the connection a bit unwieldy.

In use & conclusion

In the past, random orbit sanders often took several seconds to reach standstill when you hit the off button. Not any more, however, with braking instantaneous on this tool. On veneered boards you can reduce the orbit speed accordingly, while at full throttle it will remove material fairly rapidly. It was hard to detect any telltale sanding swirls too, a hallmark of early random orbit tools.

Sanding performance wasn't too aggressive, though it's certainly an efficient tool. With a 5.0Ah

battery fitted it was easy to lose track of the amount of sanding achieved on one charge.

This DeWalt should give the excellent Makita DBO180 sander (tested April 2019) a run for its money, even though the blue model isn't brushless. Both rated as professional power tools,

SPECIFICATION

Voltage: 18V
No load speed: 8,000-12,000/min
Orbit size: 2.6mm
Paper size: 125mm
Weight: 0.9kg

Typical price: £198 (bare)

Web: www.dewalt.co.uk

the DeWalt has a brushless motor, reflected in the price. Shop around and you should be able to find it for less than £140, though don't forget you'll still need batteries and charger. ✕

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Brushless motor; compact design

CONS

- Battery and charger extra; no abrasives included

RATING: 4.5 out of 5

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DICKIES CAMERON SAFETY BOOTS

Looking more like hiking boots than traditional safety footwear, Phil Davy looks at the Cameron model from Dickies

While most of us probably don't need heavy-duty footwear for our woodwork, on occasions a sturdy pair of safety boots can literally save our toes. Unloading timber, chopping firewood, demolition or construction work generally are obvious examples of where they're virtually essential. Dickies are one of the leaders when it comes to protective clothing, with footwear a speciality. As you'd expect, these Cameron boots include composite toe caps, which may seem a tad unnecessary until you drop a length of heavy timber on your foot...

Boot features

With durable synthetic uppers, there's extra moulding around the heels and across the toes. Padded, breathable mesh tongues and cushioning around the collars mean comfort is a priority, while the removable foam inserts are washable. You'll probably need to wear a thick pair of socks, especially if you usually take a half size – my size 9 (Euro 43) boots were on the large side.

There's a puller loop at the back of each boot to help get them over your heel, while plated steel eyelets all the way up the front enable you to tie



the nylon laces securely. Moulded soles are anti-static and slip-resistant, with plenty of tread depth. A tag on each boot claims they're waterproof, so I reckoned the best way to check this was to cross a waterlogged field or two (there's no shortage where I live). Very muddy and squelchy, but thankfully my feet remained dry. To satisfy my curiosity I washed them down afterwards with a garden hose, and still both feet stayed cosy. Extreme perhaps, but the Dickies withstood the deluge pretty well.

Conclusion

Looking more like hiking boots than traditional safety footwear, there's a choice of three colours: black, brown and honey. Although slightly stiff initially, it didn't take long to get used to wearing these tough Cameron boots. Not as comfortable as a pair of dedicated hiking boots, but better for working in and way cheaper. ✂

SPECIFICATION

- Product weight: 742g (based on a UK size 8)
- Anti-scutt toe
- Anti-static
- Breathable mesh lining
- Composite toe cap
- Leather heel puller
- Direct injection construction
- Dual density polyurethane
- Energy absorbing sole
- Fuel & oil resistant
- Non-marking
- Non-metallic anti-penetration underfoot protection
- Padded collar & tongue
- Removable foam insole
- SRC slip-resistant
- Waterproof membrane
- Choice of three colours: black, brown & honey

Typical price: £50

Web: www.dickiesworkwear.com

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Protective toe caps; choice of three colours

CONS

- You may need thick socks

RATING: 4 out of 5



Unloading timber, chopping firewood, demolition or construction work generally are obvious examples of where safety boots are virtually essential



With durable synthetic uppers, there's extra moulding around the heels and across the toes



Padded, breathable mesh tongues and cushioning around the collars mean comfort is a priority, while the removable foam inserts are washable



There's a puller loop at the back of each boot to help get them over your heel...



... while plated steel eyelets all the way up the front enable you to tie the nylon laces securely



Moulded soles are anti-static and slip-resistant, with plenty of tread depth

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ROWDENS FINE FURNITURE MAKER TOOLS



A striking range of fine hand tools designed to be handled with care, **Simon Frost** gets to grips with this David Savage-designed set

Upon lifting each neat blue lid from its box to reveal a hardwood hand tool, nestled smartly in a bed of straw-like shavings, my first impression of the Rowdens Fine Furniture Maker range was that these are exquisitely made tools.

My next thought was that, beautiful as they are, some might just be too nice to actually use. Precision-engineered steel squares are made not only to be relied upon for a right angle, but to be near enough indestructible; my Starrett straightedge will probably forgive me if my scalpel blade skips across it in a moment of carelessness. Surely, such essential and often used tools are made from steel, not hardwood, for a reason.

But then I thought about the working philosophy of the late, great David Binnington Savage, the renowned designer-maker responsible for these tools. In his book *The Intelligent Hand*, a parting gift published by Lost Art Press shortly before his passing in 2019, Savage imparted his all-encompassing approach to designing and making, firmly rooted in a reverence for the Arts and Crafts movement.



The 12in square is practically the same weight as my 4in steel square, and much nicer to look at

In short, every detail of fine making requires not only well practised skill, but thought, reason, and care. Incidentally, this overview does a disservice to Savage's ideas, but I'll expand on this in my review of *The Intelligent Hand* in the next issue of *The Woodworker*.

These tools are more aesthetically pleasing than most, but tools are not made to be looked at. What makes them special is the careful, considered use their design not only encourages, but demands.

Large & small squares

First, let's look at the two hardwood squares, which are available in two sizes, with a blade



The clever eccentric shape of the marking gauge's stock and stem...

length of 7in (197mm) for the small, and 12in (300mm) for the large. They can be bought in either Honduras mahogany or Indian rosewood, both of which are edged with maple strips, and finished pleasingly with shellac and wax, as all of these tools are.

As you'd hope, both are indeed perfectly square – there wasn't the faintest glimmer to be seen when I held each up to the light against my Kinex. Both, too, are of course lighter than a steel square of equivalent size would be, which naturally is most apparent with the larger of the two. One realises just how cumbersome a 12in steel square is when steel is replaced with wood – the 12in wooden square weighs roughly the same as my



... make setting the gauge quick and easy



The contrasting maple inlays can easily be seen on the far winding stick



The simple dovetail marker offers a full 20mm square line, meaning that both rake and square line can be marked without moving the marker for stock up to this thickness. Much less fiddly than this Veritas equivalent, which must be used with a square



The straightedge doesn't lie – a valley runs through this table top

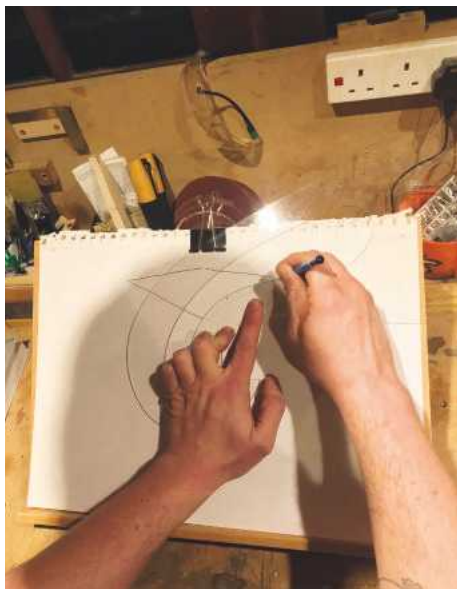
4in steel version. Having been somewhat dubious as to how a potentially 'gimmicky' wooden square would perform, I was happily won over.

Marking gauge

The rosewood marking gauge – also available in maple – is pleasing in its simplicity. It comprises just three parts: a stem, stock, and a sharp pin. Twisting the stock clockwise locks it on the stem without the need for a clamping knob, owing to the stem and stock hole's ingenious eccentric form, which is ancient in its conception. At the opposite end of the stem, a hole to receive a pencil means that the tool can also be used to scribe with the pin and to mark with a pencil – perfect for setting out dovetails, which requires both.

Winding sticks

Next, the mahogany winding sticks, with maple sighting inlays. At 400mm in length, they're a good size to exaggerate any twists in boards, taking the guesswork out of stock preparation, and they're dead accurate. There's not much that can be said about these; winding sticks are winding sticks, and as long as they're accurate and easy to read, you can't ask for much else; embellishments would only distract from the



This set has all the curves you're likely to need – you just have to find them

job at hand. These are probably the least 'wow' part of the range, and I wouldn't trade them for my pair from Rickerby Hand Tools in walnut and sycamore, but that's just my preference – they're no better or worse at being reliable winding sticks.

Dovetail marking gauge

The 1:8 dovetail marker, in maple or rosewood, is a slick little tool. Given that marking out dovetails requires the use of a knife, it's a perfect example of a tool that forces care. Unlike when using, say, a steel Veritas marker, it urges the user to scribe gently to avoid cutting a line in the marker itself, marking with more control and therefore not slipping off your line or overrunning the shoulder line. It is deep enough to allow for the square line to be marked at the same time, too, up to 20mm. Smart, simple, and effective. It would also be easy to re-true, if necessary, with a block plane and sanding block.

Straightedge

Completing the set of wooden tools is the straightedge in either mahogany or rosewood, with a maple wear strip. A delicate bevel on one side makes it bottom-heavy, improving its stability. When checked against a granite stone and my Starrett steel straightedge, it passed with flying colours. Less expensive than a reliably well engineered steel straightedge, it's also much nicer to look at and to work with; and being made of exceptionally stable timber, it's unlikely to move out of true for a very long time. Its relative lightness and the feeling of well finished timber, rather than cold hard steel, once again disavowed



The set is beautifully presented and all finished in shellac and wax

me of the notion that precision marking tools need to be made from steel. I'm sold.

Large French curves

The final product in the range is the only one not to be made of wood, nor designed by David Savage. 'Mr Chandler's Finest French Curves', a pair of large clear plastic French curves, are simply the best I have ever used. Savage created these as copies of a set made by the father of Nick Chandler, an employee who's only set Savage was frequently borrowing.

It's surprisingly difficult to find French curves of this scale – the larger of the two is 20in long, and the other 16in – especially with such fantastically fair curves and smooth edges that make using them a pleasure. These are a snatch at £58.

Conclusion

The Fine Furniture Maker range is made by the finest makers, to be used in the finest work. Mistreat them and they'll soon become useless; but use them with the care and consideration they demand, and you'll become a better maker. ✂

SPECIFICATION

Typical prices: Large & small squares – £65.50 (small mahogany), £71.50 (small rosewood) & £82.50 (large rosewood); Marking gauges – £82.80 (maple) & £94.80 (rosewood); Winding sticks – £71.50 (Honduras mahogany with maple sighting inlay); Dovetail marking gauges – £37 (maple) & £41.50 (rosewood); Straightedges – £60.50 (mahogany) & £71.50 (rosewood); Large French curves – £58

Web: www.classichandtools.com

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Beautifully designed and crafted; accurate and easy to use; encourage fine working

CONS

- Not as durable as steel equivalents

RATING: 4.5 out of 5



Organised by

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In collaboration with

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Good Woodworking

AXMINSTER
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THE WILSON
CHELTENHAM ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

THE ALAN PETERS FURNITURE AWARD 2020

Don't miss out on the opportunity to be part of this prestigious annual award, which champions UK furniture designing and making talent while celebrating the life and work of the late Alan Peters OBE



Alan Peters' 'Fan table'

This newly evolved annual award celebrates the legacy of one of Britain's most prominent furniture designer-makers of the late 20th century – Alan Peters OBE – while aiming to encourage emerging talent in the craft of furniture design and making.

Any woodworker who is a resident UK citizen over the age of 18, and who has a passion and talent for designing and making contemporary furniture, is invited to submit up to two items of furniture that echo the philosophy of Alan Peters. Judging is based on the appropriate use of wood, the quality of workmanship, functionality and originality of design. Both one-off designs and potential batch-produced designs are encouraged.

Applicants should be familiar with the work of Alan Peters prior to applying and are encouraged to read Jeremy Broun's 64-page video-integrated online e-book, which is offered free-of-charge (via the website link opposite).

The man behind the award

Alan Peters OBE (1933–2009) was one of Britain's most prominent furniture designer-makers of the latter part of the 20th century. He was apprenticed to Edward Barnsley and had a direct link to the English Arts and Crafts Movement. He was hugely influential internationally in his practice, teaching and publications. Above all, his respect and understanding of how wood behaves and the value of hand skill, yet moving tradition forward, resulted in the creation of many timeless pieces. He created affordable functional furniture, which was made to last, making an art of his craft in some of his subtle innovations.

History of the award

The original award was called 'The Alan Peters Award For Excellence' and was initiated by Jason Heap in 2010. The prize was offered to three winners, each of whom were given free exhibition space alongside the professionals at his annual furniture exhibition in Cheltenham. The award ran for eight years, and some of the past winning pieces are shown here. The judges were Jason Heap, Keith Newton and Jeremy Broun.



Anais Dancet's '10 Degrees' stackable stool – a 2012 winner of The Alan Peters Award For Excellence

Award judges

Jeremy Broun (organiser) – designer-maker and co-exhibitor with Alan Peters 1978–2002;
Andrew Lawton – designer-maker who worked with Alan Peters and on his last commission;
Keith Newton – early apprentice and employee of Alan Peters for 21 years.



Chris Wiseman's 'Oak Within' sideboard – 2016 winner of The Alan Peters Award For Excellence



Alan Peters chest with silver inlay



Alan Peters and Jeremy Broun in 2005

PRIZES OFFERED

1st prize

£1,000 Axminster Tools & Machinery voucher

2nd prize

£500 Triton Tools voucher

3rd prize

£300 Judges' prize

Winning pieces will be exhibited at Axminster's Nuneaton store and then at The Wilson Gallery (Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum).

Award deadline is **30 May 2020**. Entries can be submitted any time up to this date. A £20 entry fee applies and a maximum of two entries can be made (£20 per entry).

The judging ceremony will be held at Axminster's Nuneaton store on 29 June 2020, and an exhibition at the store will run from 1–13 July 2020.

Following this, the pieces will then be exhibited at The Wilson Gallery – dates to be confirmed.

To download an application form and the 64-page e-book, please visit www.woodomain.com/alanpetersaward. The form can be found at the right of the page. Payment for entry can also be made securely via the website.

For further information, please contact either Group Editor, Tegan Foley (tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com), Organiser, Jeremy Broun (jb@woodomain.com)



Alan Peters chest

DO WHAT *you believe in*

In the lead up to the entry deadline of the **2020 Alan Peters Furniture Award**, Organiser **Jeremy Broun** looks at the importance of making furniture you believe in – an ethos very much held by Alan Peters himself

'Never feel pressured into designing or making something you don't believe in' is something the late Alan Peters once expressed to

Andrew Lawton, fellow judge of the 2020 Alan Peters Furniture Award. It came up in a recent telephone conversation I was having with Andrew and I thought it would make an apt topic for a further article accompanying the promotion of the award in the magazine.

The topic has a general implication in today's technological consumer world where, for example, the wonderful medium of DVD has been forced into obsolescence, so the medium that delivers the message is being destroyed. In this respect we have diminishing choice in pursuing what we believe, replaced by being told what to do.

Today, young people are entering into a world where the words 'never feel pressured' might soon have some poignancy. Pressure to conform to the mobile phone 'app' culture, pressure to go to university and rack up high debts before you even start working. It is probably very difficult for an individual today to stand aside and say I am not going to be pressurised into doing this just because everybody else is doing it, and indeed the real pressure is on the parents

feeling they have to give in to the demands of the child. Few seem strong enough to say 'no'.

Pressures

For those of us (left) who remember food rationing after World War II, inherited second-hand 'hand me down' clothes and who made our own stories before the mass advent of television, it was probably easier to be your own person because the pressures of keeping up with the

Joneses and being dictated to by advertising did not exist. Creative resourcefulness based on financial hardship, such as making Christmas presents or Christmas cards, was not that unusual in post war years. Making do was making good.

In the absorbing world of woodworking and furniture making, what are these pressures? Why would Alan Peters make this comment several decades ago and before the appearance of the mobile phone? As a craftsman designer, Alan was always true to material. He had a profound respect for wood, its working characteristics and limitations and understood how wood moved and how this should be factored into a design. Having trained in the Arts & Crafts tradition, perhaps the main



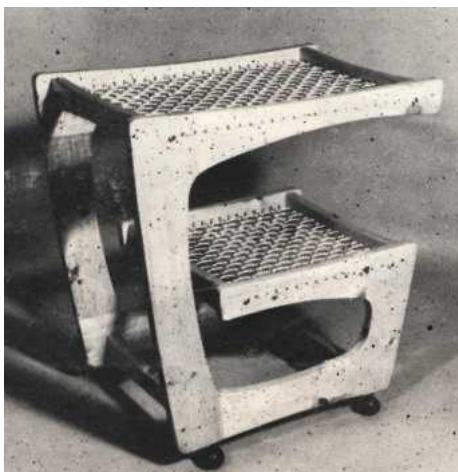
A functional blanket chest in Douglas fir by Alan Peters with distinctive protruding tenons that allow for timber movement



Jeremy Broun with the late Alan Peters in 2005, during the filming of *The Makers' Maker*



Round chair at London
tribute exhibition 2010



Archive photo of a tea trolley designed by Jeremy Broun in 1974. It is made of pine and uses halving joints and his trademark woven sailing cord (used in the upholstery of his rocking chairs)

pressure he experienced was to follow tradition. I recall him once saying to me in the 1990s that he felt we got rather stuck in tradition when we really need to move it on.

The British furniture market has always been essentially traditional and anyone in commercial practice, certainly in Alan Peters' time, would be dictated to largely by a dominant style. In the 1950s the style was for splayed table legs at a time when Alan was emerging as a prominent designer-maker. I recall his early tables were rectilinear using mixed materials. It stood out to me because it was different.

The fine balance between serving a client's need (in some cases whim) and doing what you want is what makes the client-maker relationship so interesting. It is probably true to say that, in general, designer-makers are in a unique position to transcend fashion, the work is more expensive for a start, so an eye into longevity is a consideration and anyone studying design or at least observing it through the ages can get a fair idea of what is going to become quickly dated. So any sensible designer will not be a slave to fashion but carve out a personal style or approach that also fits the circumstance of what tools and equipment you have, your workspace and your access to a potential market.

'We shouldn't feel we have to follow fashion', but fashion is fickle and transient, whereas a belief runs deeper and doesn't necessarily have to lead to a Stephen Hawking moment that 'I may have got it wrong'.

Believe in what you're doing

A big reason I survived as a young furniture designer-maker and before a market was properly established, was because I chose to make things that nobody else did, not least because I could not compete with mass-production. But whereas a set of six dining chairs added to the cost of a dining table would not be cheap, for more or less the same amount of skill and labour, creating a rocking chair would command a higher price or certainly grab attention if it had something to say as a design.

To believe in what you're doing takes



Keith Newton (right) as an apprentice and employee of Alan Peters OBE

commitment, courage and indeed vision.

To follow, to copy without question, is a much easier path and it depends on what you believe in. In my case I simply believed high street furniture was hidebound and unimaginative and I had some ideas of my own even though I found selling a real brick wall. The designer and architect Ron Arad, when showing me around his studio, once told me 'a chair has to have a very good reason to exist'. I have for many years used massive halving joints that have allowed me creative freedom to explore sculpted designs using limited resources. This is almost unheard of to use a crude carpentry joint in furniture, but I believed it was stronger than a mortise & tenon in cantilever structures and embraced permanent glues. Time would tell, as it has.

What did Alan Peters believe in? Andrew Lawton, who worked alongside him, added these comments: "Alan was a strong advocate of hand tools both for the pleasure their use brings and the bond hand tools help forge between material and maker, so it shouldn't bother the craftsman or woman that they don't own the latest piece of kit just because they feel they are missing out if they haven't got it. Some of us are tool junkies and there's nothing wrong with that, if you love tools for their own sake, but I don't think that Alan would have advised anyone to buy equipment unless there was an actual need for it in the workshop. For him, it was the work that the tools could do, rather than the tools themselves, which was important.

I think what Alan was driving at was that as designer-craftsmen, we should aim to develop and follow our own individual and distinctive styles, without feeling any imperative to go off in directions which seem alien to us. For example, there is a current vogue for twisting and laminating timber, often allied to the use of resins or metal, that sits uncomfortably with the way some of us feel about wood;

we should not feel any compulsion that we too should go down this route, unless of course it interests us and we think we can develop this, or any other constructional or stylistic approach, in a personal way that has value to the maker, and not simply a gimmick to get our work noticed."

Attention to detail

Keith Newton, who worked for Alan Peters for many years and who, alongside Andrew and myself, is the third judge for the 2020 Alan Peters Furniture Award and had this to say: "One major thing that set Alan apart from other makers was his attention to detail; he would rather lose money on a job and be happy with it than be unsure about the design, aesthetics or materials used. It could be very frustrating for the maker when they might have to start another job because Alan could not decide on the position of an escutcheon plate or the size and position of a door handle. What would appear to be a minor decision to others could be to Alan the making or breaking of a design. It could take days, sometimes weeks, to make these decisions; he would often stick mock-ups on with double-sided tape, and each time he walked past would move it up, down, left or right, sometimes only a few millimetres until he was happy with it. If he could still not decide, he would set up position A, B and C, for example, and ask us for our opinion, but very rarely accepted it, preferring to go with his own final decision. One of Alan's criteria when designing anything was that it should not just be aesthetically correct and superbly made, etc. but functional; he wanted to make furniture to be used, not to sit in a museum and be looked at."

This raises an interesting point about a trend today that furniture should be so expensive (e.g. a chair for £10,000) that it might just be a museum that will purchase it or at least just the rich! Is this something today's furniture making newbies believe in? ✕

Hammer

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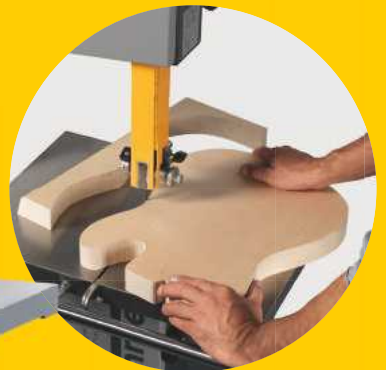
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PUT YOUR PHONE TO **WORK**



My phone in its mount on the tripod. This gives me the opportunity to carefully set up the shot exactly how I want it before committing to taking the photo

Martin Saban-Smith shares his top tips for taking great product photos using a few inexpensive pieces of kit and a smartphone

Before I got into woodturning, I was an award-winning professional photographer and graphic designer, working at a studio in Alton, Hampshire. Since I moved into woodturning, I've brought those previously learned lessons into my new businesses and use them almost every day. It saves me a fortune of course, but I rarely use the old equipment for my day-to-day photography needs. Instead, I have embraced mobile technology and discovered that you really don't need a posh camera and expensive equipment to take great shots of your work.



Smartphones have become the go-to camera for most people in the 21st century. They are the perfect tool for capturing anything from a fleeting moment of a baby's first steps to a major disaster. They are small, lightweight and incredibly powerful. You can pick up, grab your shot and walk away – job done.

As convenient as it is, using your smartphone to capture images can make us complacent with the most important part of a picture: composition. Most of the time, you don't need to rush it. In this article, I'll share my top tips for taking great product photos with a few inexpensive pieces of kit and the smartphone you may well have within arm's reach right now.

A quick note before we go on: the photos here use the popular square format. The majority of E-commerce sites prefer them as do the social media platforms of Facebook and Instagram. This is the only thing you may need to set on your phone before using some of these tips.

TIP 1 USE A TRIPOD & PHONE MOUNT

Using a lightweight tripod will help to slow you down when taking your photos (**photo 1**). It forces you to consider the shot and frame it nicely before committing the image to film (or pixels). Combining the tripod with the use of a dedicated phone ensures everything is held securely for the shot. Both of these items can be found online and don't have to be expensive. Decent tripods range from £20 upwards. Make sure the tripod extends up to the height of your workbench. The phone mount I use cost me about £6 (**photo 2**).



1 Using an inexpensive tripod is a good method for slowing your picture taking down, helping you to consider the photo before taking it



2 Use a cheap dedicated phone mount for your tripod

TIP 2 USE AN UNCLUTTERED BACKGROUND

3 Although a bench shot adds context, its busy background detracts from the piece

Take the two shots of the fantastic steampunk mouse turned by Stuart Ingrouille on Guernsey (**photos 3 & 4**). The shot on the bench gives the piece some context and tells a story with the inclusion of an array of tools used to make it. Everything behind the piece is distracting, however, and makes the shot messy. The photo lacks impact as the viewer's eye is drawn all round the piece, detracting from the impact of the work itself – see tip 9 for story ideas.

Now, look at the mouse when it is placed on a simple and uncluttered background (**photo 4**). The difference is huge – your eye is drawn to the piece immediately (as there is nothing competing for attention), which makes it a much easier photo to look at.

Background choice can be as simple or complex as you want it to be, but the less busy and cluttered it is, the better. The focal point of the shot should always be your piece.

A photographer's background, like the one in the nice mouse shot, is perfect and doesn't have to be huge. They are available in a variety of widths and lengths, colours and patterns. They are not very expensive either and are readily available – and not just from specialist photography shops.



4 On a clean background, the mouse can clearly be seen, which makes it perfect for E-commerce

If you don't want to buy a background, then use a bed sheet. The sculptural piece in **photo 6** was photographed on the background set-up pictured here, too. The result is acceptable enough as the piece is clearly visible with nothing in the background clambering for attention.

When setting up the sculptural piece, it took much longer than those shots on the 'proper' background. I had to iron the bed sheet, move the coffee table, stack the cushions and then smooth out the background for the shot (**photo 7**). So, from a time perspective, an inexpensive photographer's background would certainly be the way forward for me.

Or, if you're handy with scissors and a sewing machine, cut up a sheet to about 4-5ft square, put a hem around the edges and make your own ready-to-use background. It may be wise to double the thickness of the sheet as cotton can be see-through in some instances. As nice and fluffy as towels are, they don't make for great backgrounds and can look a little 'amateur'.

When setting up the background, make sure there is a curve where it turns up behind the piece. This ensures a smooth transition from the bottom to the top of the shot.



5 Detail shots of the steampunk mouse



6 A bed sheet is an acceptable background for your pieces but will take longer to set up than a purpose-made background



7 An ironed bed sheet can be easily and cheaply used draped over something with an upturned serving tray as a solid base

TIP 3 REDUCE SHADOWS

In a nutshell, direct light (particularly sunlight) causes harsh shadows, and in most cases will spoil your shot. Ambient light is much more forgiving and produces even illumination for your work. If you are shooting outside, wait for the sun to go behind a cloud, or wait for a bright but overcast day.

For the majority of my photos, I just use the ambient light in my workshop with perhaps a couple of inexpensive Anglepoise-style lights

if I feel I need to. Most of the time, the ambient light set-up works perfectly well, however.

To avoid shadows as much as possible when using ambient light or a couple of spotlights, stand your piece away from the background. The mouse is about 30cm from the background. Doing this ensures that any shadows cast by ambient light are as diffuse as possible.

TIP 4 ADD LIGHTS WHERE NECESSARY

Occasionally, I'll decide to use additional lights to push some extra illumination into the piece if it is dark wood or the ambient light isn't as bright as I'd like. I use inexpensive spotlights from a well-known Swedish shop and chose Anglepoise models for flexibility.

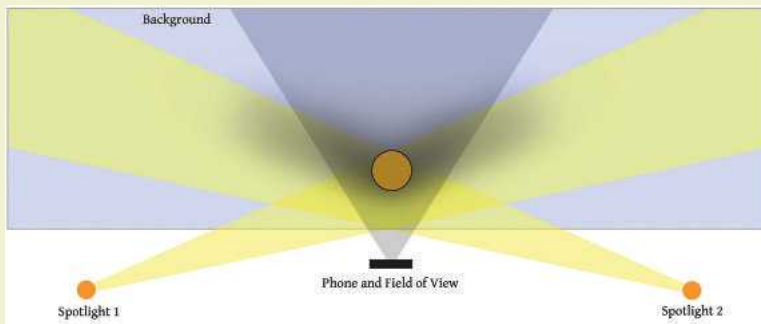
As these are spotlights, they will cast fairly harsh shadows, so I place away from the phone and choose the angle carefully to avoid them as much as I can. See the lighting diagram in **photo 8**, which shows how the lights are used to keep the background clear. I may also angle the lights slightly up towards the piece so that any shadows are cast up and away from the background. Play with a set-up that suits you.

Look at the comparison shot of the mouse (**photo 9**). The left image was taken with ambient light only, and the right-hand shot was taken with the addition of spotlights, as per the diagram. You can clearly see the right-hand shot has highlights not visible



9 The right shot was taken with extra lights – you can see how adding these highlights those areas missed by the ambient light

on the left shot. Notice too that the background only shows the diffuse shadow from the ambient light.



8 My light set-up – note how the light from the spots casts shadows outside the field of view of the phone, leaving the background free of shadows

TIP 5 PERSPECTIVE: COMPOSE YOUR SHOT AT, OR JUST ABOVE, THE LEVEL OF THE PIECE

Look at the shot of the mouse again, and the coloured bowl I turned in a demo some time ago (**photo 10**). Both the photos have been taken at, or slightly above, the same level as the pieces. You can see all the mouse, and get a great view of the shape of the bowl as well as the colours and detail on the rim.

Consider how the viewer will be looking at your photo. 99% of the time, they will be looking at it with their device opposite their eyes, not from the top or bottom of the screen. So, if your photo is taken from the same perspective, the image will be easy to look at. A shot from too high will subconsciously make the viewer want to look under the piece, and from too low, they'll want to look from a higher perspective.



10 This coloured bowl has been photographed just above the level of the rim, which shows the shape and rim detail

TIP 6 THINK 'GOLDILOCKS' WHEN FRAMING YOUR SHOT

Look at the mouse again, there is room at the top of his head, and beneath his feet. He doesn't feel like he's been squished into the frame. The bowl is sitting towards the bottom of the photo – the natural place for it to be. Higher in the shot and the bowl would feel like it is above the eye-level of the viewer.

'Overcropping' or cropping in too close is when the subject doesn't have enough space around it to make it look natural and the resulting photo makes the piece look squeezed into the frame. A shot like this can make a piece feel claustrophobic. And the same the other way – if a shot is undercropped, the subject can look lost and swimming in the frame. You'll also miss out on some of the details in the piece. So think 'Goldilocks' – not too close, not too far, not too high, and not too low.

TIP 7 THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAIL

Whether you're shooting for an E-commerce site, or your social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.), don't forget the details. Each piece of wood is packed full of interesting details that you will not be able to capture well in one shot. Close in on these and capture the essence of the piece. Focus on novel grain patterns, for example, where two colours blend, or a feature you've turned into it – these are the things that other woodturners and woodworkers want to see, so don't leave them wondering. There are plenty of potential shots you can take to help with a sale or show the piece off to your Facebook friends. Be careful when using a background, though, and keep the detail shots against the background – don't let anything else creep into the corners and background of the shot.

TIP 8 LET THE PHONE DO THE WORK

If you're not comfortable changing the white balance on the phone, or using camera modes other than the fully automatic mode, DON'T. There's no point playing with something if you just want to get some decent shots of your hard work. Most of the shooting scenarios you will come up against will be easily handled by your phone's automatic settings. The photos in this article are shot after simply opening my built-in camera app.

The biggest problem in photography (to my mind) has always been white balance and how various light sources render as different colours

when committed to film (or pixels). If you remember shooting on film, then you'll know that indoor tungsten lights leave photos with a reddish, orange hue and fluorescent lights leave anything from a pink to a green hue (depending on manufacturer and age of the tube). These days, though, cameras (and in this case, phones) are excellent at figuring out a near-correct white balance in the majority of situations.

Let the phone do the legwork, use the automatic settings and instead concentrate on setting up the bits the phone can't do for you.

TIP 9 TELL A STORY

While standalone piece-shots are great, a photo-story really adds to the, well, story! To be able to see the transformation in a handful of photos adds a level of depth missing in a single shot. A single shot of a completed piece with some tools around it on a decent background gives a hint at the process and also lends a sense of scale to the finished work. For greater impact, however, document the making of it from start to finish, taking photos each step of the way (**photos 11A, B, C, D & E**). Your phone is too convenient not to do this. Then, complete the story with your finished piece on a nice background – and don't forget the detail shots. Even if you don't post all online for the world to see, they could turn out to be great reference shots later, and for your family to look at, too.



11A Instagram story photos documenting the making of a piece



11B



11C



11D



11E

TIP 10 SHOOT TO SELL

Even though you may not be putting your work up for sale in a gallery or E-commerce website, such as Etsy, for example, taking a good photo of your work that is of a high enough quality to use to sell it is, to my mind at least, more important. Take the best photo you possibly can of your work. If the piece took you five hours to make, what's another 10 minutes or so spent to make it look its best in a photo?

If you're sharing your work on social media, a good photograph will attract more attention, comments and likes, which is always a bonus.

Likewise, on selling sites, such as eBay,

good photos help to sell products. A good photograph will reflect the work and care you put into the piece in the first place. If you are charging a sensible price for your work, ensure the photo oozes quality and makes the piece look as much as the price.

Tell the story of your work on websites like Etsy. Use the photos of the steps you went through to complete it – potential customers love to see how things are made, it gives them a better idea as to how long it took to make and assures them that the price tag you're charging is worth it.

Conclusion

To conclude, none of the accessories mentioned here cost a huge amount and some of them you may already have at home. You could even do without a tripod if you remember the other tips!

Remember, though, that executing a decent photograph of your work really doesn't require much work. For ease, take photos using the full automatic mode on your smartphone's camera app; slow down; consider the background, the composition and details of the subject piece. Take as much pride in the photo of the piece as you took in making it in the first place. Ensure the photo reflects the time and effort you put into it. There is a lot more I could go into here, but those tips are more expensive and time-consuming, and best left for another article. ✂

What's new from

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NEW RANGE OF MIRKA SANDERS, DUST EXTRACTORS & ABRASIVE PRODUCTS ADDED

D&M Tools is pleased to announce that we've recently added a range of products from Mirka to our extensive portfolio of brands. Mirka Ltd is a family-owned Finnish company and a world leader in abrasives technology innovation. They offer a complete range of technically superior, high quality abrasives, innovatively designed tools, complete sanding systems and supplementary products.

The range includes the DEROS and DEOS mains sanders and LEROS wall sander. Their unique, lightweight and compact design make the tools comfortable to grip and easy to use, while the low-profile footprint gives high manoeuvrability, delivering precise and efficient sanding performance. Mirka direct electric sanders can be connected with the myMirka app via Bluetooth to help monitor vibrations.

The Mirka range of L-Class and M-Class dust extractors are designed for dust-free sanding as well as cleaning workrooms and have adjustable suction and automatic electric start. There is also a range of Mirka abrasive discs, sheets, rolls and other accessories – see the website.

MIRKA



FESTOOL CORDLESS IMPACT DRIVER TID 18

MANUFACTURER: Festool
D&M GUIDE PRICE: See our website

Launching in April from Festool is the much anticipated new TID 18 impact driver. This compact powerhouse offers an impressive service life thanks to its extremely robust hammer mechanism. The perfect combination of the new generation brushless EC-TEC motor and the battery pack ensure maximum performance and endurance. In addition to this, the TID 18 with 1/4in tool holder turns the screw without straining your wrist – thanks to the tangential hammer mechanism with no strength sapping back torque. The machine weight of just 960g also allows you to work for longer without becoming tired.

The TID 18 will be available as a body-only machine, as a kit, and also as a twin-pack with either the T18 cordless drill driver or the PDC 18 cordless percussion drill (shown right).



FESTOOL

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WIN! 1 OF 5 TICKETS TO MAKERS CENTRAL WITH DICKIES WORKWEAR



In conjunction with **Dickies Workwear**, we're giving five lucky readers the chance to win a ticket to **Makers Central**, an event that celebrates makers, creators, hobbyists and artists from all over the world

Held at the Birmingham NEC from 2–3 May, visitors to Makers Central can watch exclusive live demonstrations and talks from viral makers, join in and make something to take home with them or simply browse the stands – to find out more, see www.makerscentral.co.uk/ **KEY-ATTRACTIONS.**

Gold sponsors

Dickies is a Gold sponsor of this year's event, as part of its ongoing campaign to celebrate the passion and skills of tradespeople who inspire others with their dedication and ingenuity. As well as selling some of its most iconic products,

Dickies will be holding interactive workshops at its stand with Rachel Millar, a signwriter and lettering artist based in Glasgow. Rachel has featured in Dickies' recent Meet the Makers campaign, which celebrates the skill and ingenuity of those who make a living with their hands.

Event highlights

Highlights at this year's Makers Central also include Charis Williams, AKA the Salvage Sister, who loves to create unusual, quality homewares with salvaged items, plus self-taught woodworker Meghan from Sweet Aloha Designs and Chris Fisher, otherwise known as The Blind Woodturner.



To celebrate its support for Makers Central, Dickies is giving readers the chance to win one of five tickets to the event – see below for details on how to enter.

For more information on Makers Central, visit www.makerscentral.co.uk, and to find out more about Dickies' Meet the Makers campaign, including Rachel's story, see www.dickiesworkwear.com/uk/blog/dickies-makers-rachel-millar.

HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning 1 of 5 tickets to Makers Central with Dickies Workwear, just visit www.getwoodworking.com/competitions and answer this simple question:

QUESTION:

Name one of the highlights at this year's event

The five winners will be randomly drawn from all correct entries. The closing date for the competition is **17 April 2020**

Only one entry per person; multiple entries will be discarded. Employees of MyTimeMedia Ltd, Dickies Workwear, Makers Central and Saint Nicks are not eligible to enter this competition



A specially shaped wooden box

Robin Gates is entranced by the making of a violin, the subject of a marathon series of articles running in *The Woodworker* from 1958 to 1959

Running over 13 issues from February 1958, *The Woodworker's* series on 'Making a violin' by E.H. Varney must rank among the most entrancing projects in this journal's history. Mr Varney worked at E.R. Voigt, the London branch of a business originating in 17th century Bohemia, and I'm delighted to find at www.voigt-luthiers.de that the 10th generation of Voigt luthiers is still making classical and flamenco guitars in Germany.

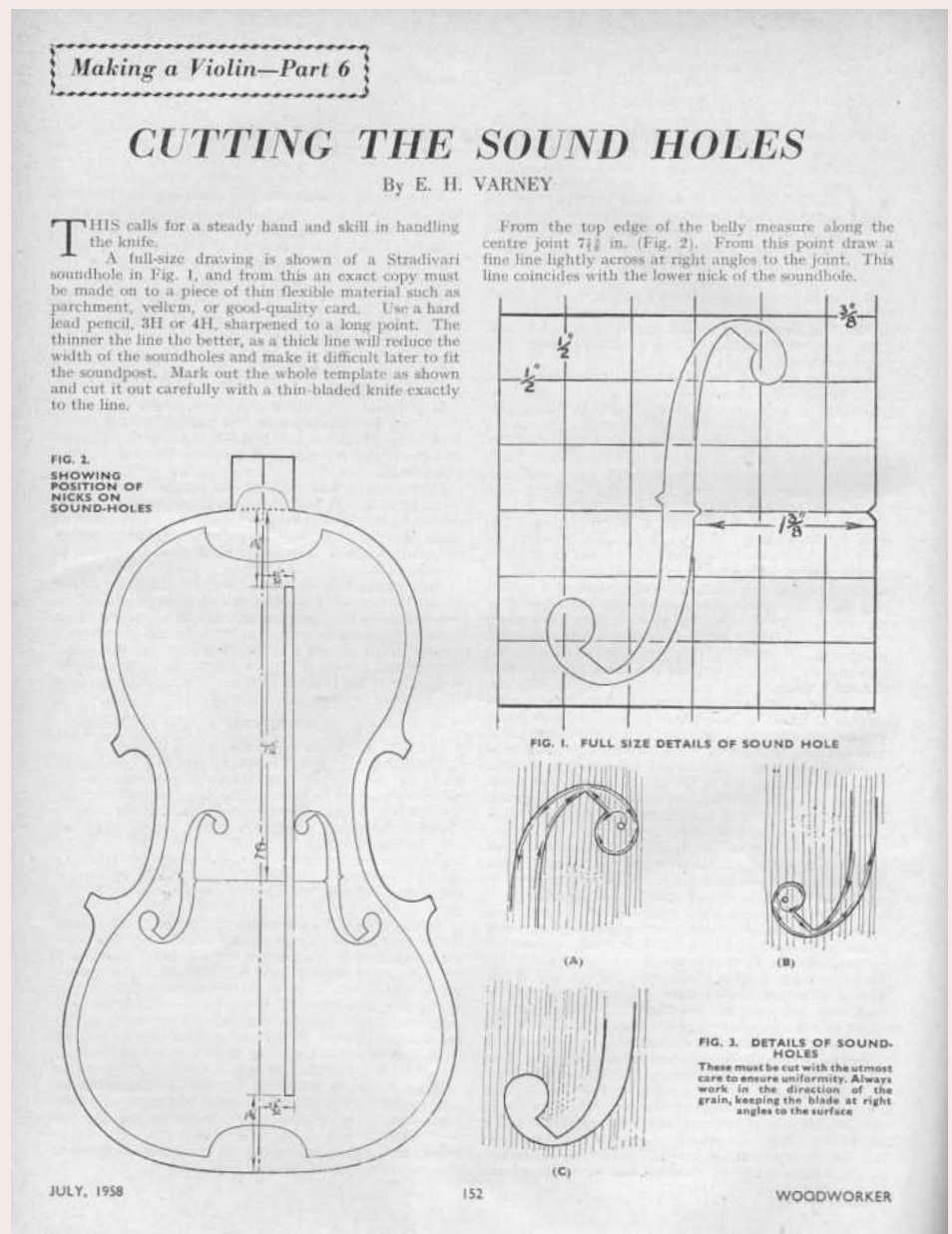
Diving in at Part 6, from July 1958, we find Mr Varney calling for 'a steady hand and skill in handling the knife' for cutting sound holes, which permit sound waves to escape from inside the body of the instrument and echo its shapely arches. **Fig.3** illustrates how the author drills a hole at each end of the 'f' so that it can be roughed out with a fret saw before cutting to the line with a knife. Earlier in the series he says the knife is 'the most important tool in fiddle making', and shows how he makes handles for the two different blades used. Before cutting across the grain at top and bottom of the hole he advises applying a coat of glue and water and allowing it to dry, which results in a cleaner cut – the series includes numerous tricks of the trade.

A common mistake

Before reaching this stage, however, considerable work has already been invested in making what Mr Varney calls this 'specially shaped wooden box'. He begins with an assurance that so long as we 'do not hurry or scamp the work' we'll get a good sound from our first effort, although working 'in England and not under blue Italian skies' the instrument may not sing like a Stradivari. Full-size drawings are provided throughout, beginning with a half section for the back to be made from figured sycamore, either in one piece or glued up from two. With a view to future repairs he specifies scotch glue, prepared in a kettle, so that the instrument may be dismantled. In the absence of a bandsaw, the outline may be cut using a bow saw while 'holding the work down with your knee on an old chair'. Apparently the most common mistake at this stage is to saw through the button, the rounded projection where back meets neck.

Marathon series

In the second article he covers thickening the edges of the back with gouge and file, then making the front or belly of the instrument from a wedge of Swiss pine, ripped in two and jointed as for a two-piece back. The outline is marked using the back as a template, and the waste sawn



away leaving a good margin for safety because 'soft pine is treacherous' before knifing to the line and thickening around the edge.

Next comes purfling, the inlay of contrasting laminations around the edges of the violin. Grooves are marked using a home-made tool having two cutters, and the waste picked out with a narrow chisel. Then strips of purfling are fitted, ensuring the white strips between the black meet exactly at their mitred ends.

Part four includes templates for shaping, and even drawings of a fiddle-maker's elliptical plane

for anyone who wishes to make one. Subsequent parts cover hollowing the back and front, fitting the bass bar, linings, ribs, corner blocks, the neck and head with its scroll, pegs, soundpost (fitted through a sound hole!), bridge and strings.

In February 1959 the marathon series drew to a close suggesting a good violin shop would provide the right chin rest, and presumably a bow. But did any reader actually build a violin? Yes they did! A photograph in the June 1965 issue shows a superb 'violin by P.S. Spicer from the 1958 *Woodworker* articles'. ✂

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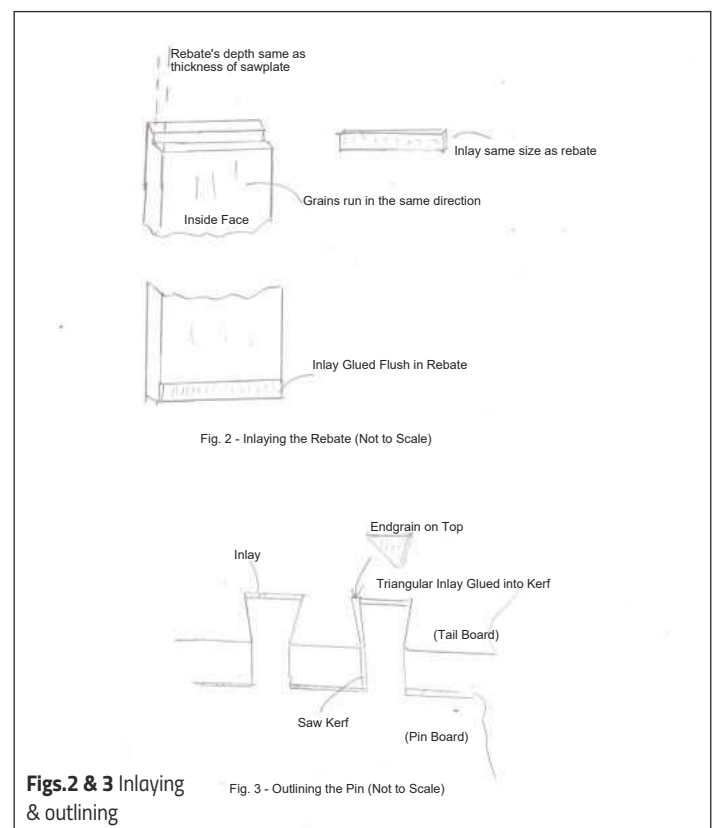
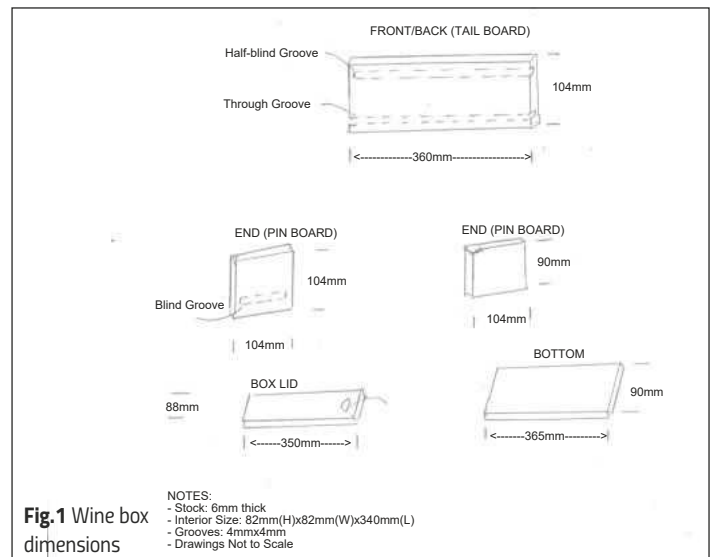
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THE GIFT OF WINE



Usually made using a router jig, inlaid dovetails enhance any piece with a distinct sense of craftsmanship. Here, **Charles Mak** shows you how to cut the decorative joinery – by hand



On the web, you can find plenty of 'tutorials' explaining how to cut inlaid or double dovetails by hand, but their methods are often cumbersome or overly complicated. It doesn't have to be like that.



1 The first step is to mark out all the pieces in their proper orientation and trim the shorter end to length

Tage Frid had written about an inlaid dovetail technique that is easy to understand and simple to execute using hand skills. Here, I will use his method to make a gift box for a standard-size wine bottle with what he called 'outlined' joinery. You can change the dimensions suggested in the drawing (**Fig.1**) to suit the actual wine bottle or object you plan to use the box for. I built mine with pine, a softwood commonly used for wine boxes.

Understanding the outlined joinery process

The foundation of Frid's outlined dovetail technique lies in how the stock is prepared. As shown in **Fig.2**, the dovetail boards are first prepared as usual and then rebated on their inside faces to house the contrasting inlays. Once the inlays are glued in place, the tail and pin boards are marked and cut as a through dovetail joint.

After the box is assembled, a hand saw is used

to make saw kerfs diagonally – on the pin's sides – into each joint. In the final step (**Fig.3**), inlays are glued into the kerfs and trimmed flush. Frid's method is as simple and foolproof as it can be!

Rebating & inlaying the boards

With the timber of your choice properly dressed and sized, lay out the pieces with cabinetmaker's triangles or your marking system (**photo 1**). Choose a wood of contrasting colour and make a bunch of accent inlay strips to the same thickness as the saw plate of the dovetail saw you're going to use – mine was about 0.5mm thick (**photo 2**). Or, you can buy and use veneer of the required thickness. If you can only find thin veneer, stack and glue them to thickness.

Next, scribe the dovetail baselines on all the boards, and rebate them with a joinery tool, such as a shoulder plane or a skew rebate plane



(photos 3-5). After the rebates are cut, orient the inlays so their grains run in the same direction as the rebates, and glue them to the rebates.

Sawing the tails

Mark out the tails on the front and back boards, and cut them out using your usual dovetailing tools and techniques (photo 6). Gang-sawing is efficient, and that is how I usually cut the tails.

The starting saw cuts are critical in dovetail work. Make a light saw kerf on the pencil line that is square across the end-grain before tilting the saw and cutting down the sloping line (photo 7). Use long sawing strokes without putting downward pressure on the saw, and take care not to cut beyond the baselines, which will spoil the finished look of the joint.

Once the tail slopes are sawn, remove the bulk waste in the pin sockets with a coping

or fret saw (photo 8). In the last step, chisel everything square and clean.

Sawing the pins

With the tail boards ready, transfer the tail marks to the end pieces to mark out the pins (photo 9). After marking the end-grain, use a square to draw perpendicular lines from the scribed lines to the face of the pin boards to complete the layout. Now, guided by the vertical pencil lines, saw the pins by splitting the scribed lines, and chop off the waste (photos 10 & 11). After dry-fitting the joints, disassemble the box in preparation for the next step.

Milling the grooves

Most mass-produced wine bottle boxes will have their bottoms nailed to the cases. An exposed bottom will spoil the decorative joinery

so grooves are cut to hide the bottom inside the box. Here, you will have three types of grooves to cut by hand: through grooves, blind or stopped grooves and half-blind grooves. While it is a lot easier to cut all the grooves through and then plug the groove holes, a more refined and skill-



2 To dampen vibration, hold down the thin inlay sheet with a scrap board before sawing



3 To use a shoulder plane to rebate, scribe out the rebate, and clamp a batten to guide the plane



4 The inlay itself can be used to set the rebate plane's depth of cut – no measurements needed



5 The scribed line on the face can be used to set the rebate plane's fence

building approach is to cut blind or half-blind grooves, as illustrated here. To cut through grooves, a plough plane or a dedicated grooving plane is the tool of choice (**photos 12 & 13**). On the other hand, for half-blind and blind grooves, when the board is too short for the plough, traditional woodworkers will use a chisel and a router plane from start to finish (**photos 14 & 15**). Router planes can also handle rebates and dadoes, and you can check out my instructions

in *GW* 256 on how to make your own router plane. As is always true with any hand tool, sharpen your chisels and router plane cutters before you start as you will get better control of the tools and better results from their use.

Gluing up the inlay triangles

Cut the bottom to size with allowance for wood movement. After dry fitting the box one more time with the bottom in place, glue up the assembly

and let it set (**photo 16**). Make enough triangular inlay strips (**photo 17**), and then follow these inlaying and outlining steps:

- 1)** Saw a diagonal kerf into each joint on the pin's sides, stopping between the tail and pin baselines (**photo 18**).
- 2)** Glue isosceles triangular inlays in the kerfs, and let the set-up cure (**photos 19 & 20**).
- 3)** Trim the inlays flush with a fine-tooth flush-cutting saw, and plane or sand it all smooth.



6 Mark out the top and bottom grooves on the end-grain so you can position the half pins in alignment with the grooves



7 Check that the guide kerf is square across on the end-grain before sawing to the slope



8 Saw at a steady, unhurried pace, taking care not to overshoot and mar any edge



9 British woodworker David Barron's style of dovetail alignment board is used to mark the pin boards



10 Install the fret saw's blade with the teeth pointing at the handle so it cuts on the pull strokes



11 When chopping to the shoulder line, angle the chisel very slightly to undercut the tail socket



12 Scribe the grooves with a marking gauge, which would give cleaner edges whether you chisel or plough



13 In ploughing, start from the front end, gradually taking longer and eventually full-length strokes



14 Drill a blind hole on either end of the groove to act as a stop to guide the chiselling work



15 For better control of the router plane, use a sharp cutter and set it for light cuts



16 Before clamping, press on the opposite corners until the two measured diagonals become equal

Installing the sliding lid

As for the bottom of the box, the lid needs to be cut slightly smaller, which will allow for side-to-side wood movement. The last step here is to carve out a thumb recess on the top of the holder (**photo 21**). Whether the finger recess is just a plain hole or the result of some meticulous effort, every time the lid is slid in or out effortlessly, the maker's skill will be noted and appreciated.

Finishing touches

Finish is traditionally not needed for a wine bottle box, but with this decorative joinery, a light coat or two of shellac or wax on the outside will bring out its beauty. But before I put a finish on any hand-cut dovetailed projects, I like to run those baselines – which I consider a mark of authentic handwork – with a marking gauge one more time (**photo 22**).

Lastly, to add a natural touch, stuff some

shavings in the box with the wine bottle

(**photo 23**). Don't forget to sign and date your work, and start picking that perfect wine for the occasion – if you haven't already done so.

Whether you plan to use this decorative joinery technique on a gift box to present to someone special, or on an heirloom case to stay in the family, your hand skills will be admired. And for that very special occasion, wine will be enjoyed, but your handcrafted keepsake will last forever. ✕



17 Cut a few narrow inlay strips, and chop out the inlay triangles



18 Elevate the work so you can saw the kerfs in a sitting position, without bending and getting tired



19 To keep the inlay strips from swelling, CA adhesive is dispensed into the kerfs, not onto the strips



20 Press the inlay against the kerf as you hammer the strip home



22 To highlight the hand-made character, make the faint layout lines visible



23 The spiral shavings from the rebate plane add a decorative touch to your presentation



21 A hand-carved finger hold adds a bespoke element to the work

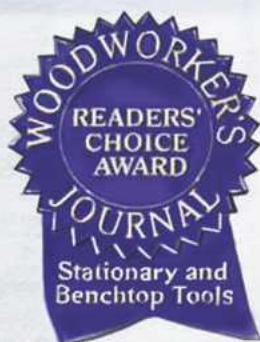


24 The completed inlaid dovetailed wine bottle box

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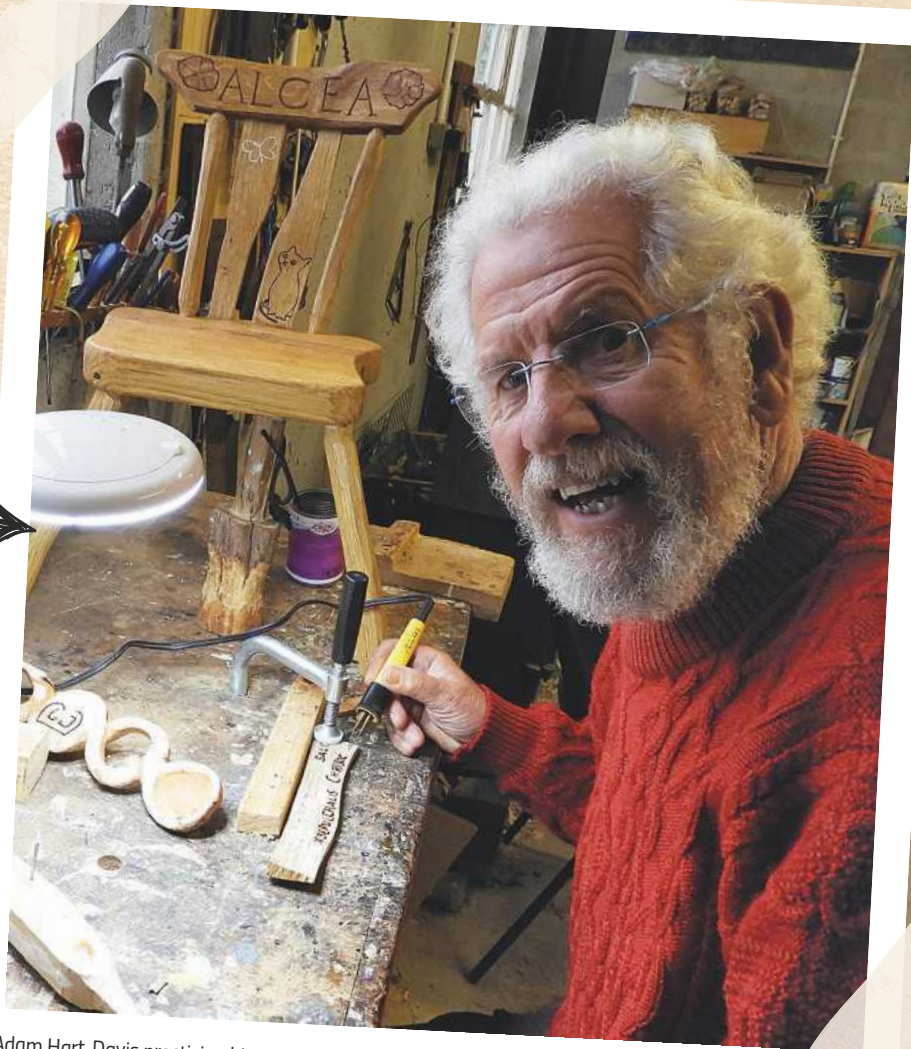
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ME AND MY WORKSHOP

Adam Hart-Davis

Rick Wheaton looks around the workshop of former broadcaster, scientist, author and photographer, Adam Hart-Davis



Adam Hart-Davis practising his pyrography skills in the workshop

1. What is it – and where is it?

I was lucky enough to inherit a fine large workshop attached to the garage, although it's now in danger of being washed away by the river.

2. What's the best thing about it?

It's almost big enough.

3. And what's the worst?

It's perishingly cold, and not really warmed up by the log-burner I installed.

4. How important is it to you?

I go there whenever I have spare time; I love working with wood.

5. What do you make in it?

Tables, chairs, bowls, egg cups, spoons (including love spoons), Christmas presents (I have orders for a sheep and a mouse), shoe racks, wine carriers and all sorts of other stuff.

6. What is your favourite workshop tip?

Spend more time there.

7. What's your best piece of kit?

My Ben Orford bushcraft knife.

8. If your workshop caught fire, what one thing would you rescue?

My bushcraft knife.

9. What's your biggest workshop mistake?

Making the legs of a chair too short.

10. What's the nicest thing you've ever made?

Probably a bench for my stepson and his wife as a wedding present – but four chairs for grandchildren come close.

11. And what's the worst?

A bowl with a hole.

12. What's the best lesson you've learned?

Go slowly: measure twice and cut once.

13. If you won the lottery, what would you buy for your workshop?

A complete set of Colt Forstner drill bits. ✂

NEXT MONTH

In the next issue, Rick Wheaton finds out more about Herefordshire-based retired engraver and furniture maker, Clive Hurman. We'd love to hear about your workshops too, so do feel free to send in a photo of your beloved workspace, and please answer the same questions as shown here – just email tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com

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WATCH MY DUST

One man's heroic stand against the Invasion of the Particles – **Michael Forster** brings us more

Ah, how I remember those halcyon workshop days of yore: the air, filled with the scent of wood dust and freshly-cut timber, resonating with the sound of happy chippies at work: the slicing

of sharp blade through crisp timber; the tapping of mallet on chisel... and at the end of the day the great clean up when the brooms came out, the debris was swept away, raising the dust to float in the air and glisten charmingly in the evening sunlight. OK, I'm milking it more than somewhat, but it does have a germ of authenticity.

Those were the days

Yes, indeed – and thankfully we now know better. Before I go on, let's be clear: I'm no expert in dust extraction, so I'm not here to dispense authoritative advice – just to share with you some of the things I've learnt, and how I've arrived at an outcome that's right for my circumstances.

Firstly, I've learned that there's nothing romantic about glistening dust particles. They're nasty beasts that make people ill – and, in the worst cases, dead. However, the visible dust is not the worst of it. The real threat comes from what you can't see – microscopic particles that penetrate deep into the lungs. And if the visible ones are there...

So, let's get positive. I reckon that, on a practical level, dust management can be broken down into four basic topics:

- Extraction at source
- Personal protection
- Ambient air cleaners
- Good housekeeping

My recent problem lay mainly with the first – the extraction system in my machine 'shop simply wasn't fit for purpose. Why? Well, that takes us back into the mists of time...

When I moved into my new house, with the luxury of two workshops – a garage for a machine 'shop and a small workshop for hand tool work – I got carried away with enthusiasm and set up a plastic ducted system linking all the machines by a complex cats' cradle of bends, junctions and blast gates. It looked impressive, but over time I became aware of limitations. The ducting runs were probably too long for the hobby-rated extractor's power; the plastic blast gates, and some joints, didn't seal well enough; and every corner and junction impeded the remaining airflow.

On top of all that, I'd been advised to earth the system with copper wire to avoid static build-up in the plastic ducts with the attendant risk of sparks and fire. It was then I discovered that planer shavings have minds of their own



1 Compact dimensions, finger-tip mobility and a fine filter make this the extractor for me



2 The shorter and straighter the hose, the better



3 Axminster's quick-release hose clips make moving the extractor around simple





4 Swapping to the smaller hose means I can connect the same extractor to my router table

(you probably didn't know that – not a lot of people do) and they quickly learnt to cling to the copper wire, and then to each other, to create blockages. Thereafter, the beleaguered extractor sucked valiantly but in vain and the desperate, choking machine took the easiest option and sprayed shavings into the 'shop where they quickly multiplied as pests do, to become a serious infestation. Cunning, eh?

It was time for serious action. I did a lot of research, taking advice from a range of sources. The most helpful advice was the simplest.

KISS (Keep It Simple – Savvy?)

The best system, where it's workable, is a direct short, straight connection between machine and extractor. Long ducting runs with junctions, bends, corners and blast gates just invite problems unless they're very well designed and installed. Sadly, mine were quite another story.

This started me thinking: I'm a hobbyist. Working alone. Using one machine at a time.

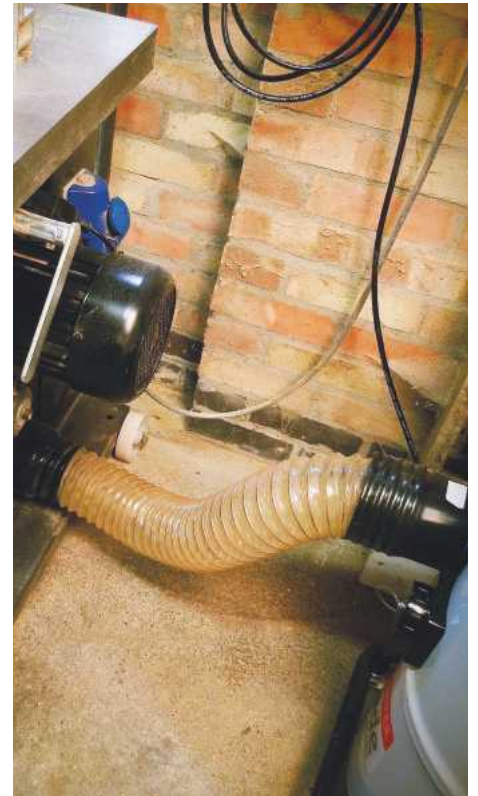


7 On my surface planer, the cutter rotation throws the chippings directly into the chute for the extractor to catch and suck away. Full marks to Record



5 A well-positioned extraction port on a new Startrite bandsaw. Photograph courtesy of **Record Power**

Do I need a ducted system? Why not just move one very mobile extractor to whichever machine I'm using? Direct connection via one short hose with minimal bends (**photo 2**): what could be simpler? So my first, single most effective, and definitely most expensive improvement would be to replace my cumbersome bag-over-bag extractor with something more mobile – easily



6 On my older model, the poor positioning makes hard work for any extractor

wheeled between machines and connected with a short, easily-interchangeable hose. And with fine filtration.

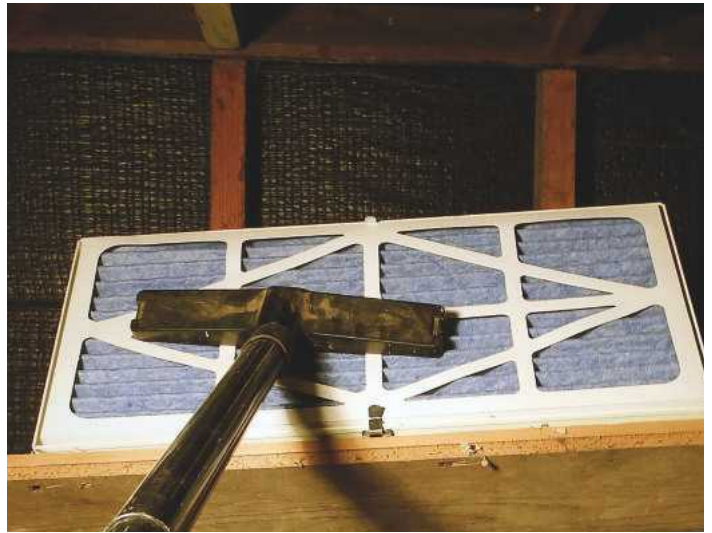
Finally, I had to consider noise – housing has sprung up near my workshops and (to paraphrase the wise words of philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche) in dealing with my own pests I don't want to become one myself.



8 A well-filtered face mask is also essential



9 An ambient air cleaner sucks in dirty air and returns it, cleaned, to the machine 'shop



10 An occasional vacuum-clean extends the life of the filters

My solution

Let's cut to the chase. Exploring the options, all roads led to Axminster's Trade (aka Numatic NVD750) vacuum extractor (**photo 1**). OK, so it would need emptying more often than my old one, but that would be a small price to pay. Otherwise, it ticks all my boxes, and so I ordered one along with the extra filter to raise the extraction level from 'L' to 'M' Class for good measure. I could easily wheel this over to whatever machine I was using and reconnect the hose there (**photo 3**).

I now had one handy, easily mobile extractor to serve all my machines (**photo 4**). OK, so the price made my eyes water, but not as much as the dust had – and it'll keep me breathing...

Sorted! Well, almost

It worked almost as I had expected. Almost. My big bandsaw has one lamentable design flaw: the positioning of the extraction port. Ideally, this should be just under the table, directly below the blade guides, catching the dust close to the cutting point, and angled downwards to ease the airflow (**photo 5**). Positioned far away from the blade and at 90° (**photo 6**) mine could hardly be worse. In fairness to Startrite, they've corrected this on their current bandsaws, as **photo 5** shows, but correcting mine would be expensive and complicated. So it's a matter of being fastidious about protective equipment (see below) and vacuuming out the machine regularly – and always after any long sawing session or cutting MDF.

This experience teaches me something really important (if a little late in the day for me). When choosing a machine – any machine – think about extraction. Where will the dust be produced? Which way will the cutters throw it? Is the extraction port well placed to catch it (**photo 7**)?

In reality, probably no machine (certainly within my price bracket) can really be 100% guaranteed where extraction is concerned. So it's time to look at those other areas I mentioned earlier.

Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)

For added protection – especially when operating the machines or emptying the extractor – a respirator or facemask is essential kit (**photo 8**). Mine has a P3 filtration rating and is claimed to capture over 90% of dust particles. Make sure



11 In the smaller hand tool 'shop, a more portable one is handy



12 I hate discarding timber, but it had become a liability and will now help to keep someone warm



13 The start of a good day – opening the door on a clean workshop



14 The only time I now use a broom (with facemask on and air cleaner running): copious shavings produced by my lathe are just too much for the extractors

it's stored carefully to keep it clean – there's something particularly sad about a respirator that's covered in dust. I store it in a plastic bag – in a cardboard box – inside a closed cupboard. It requires but a few very worthwhile seconds to take out, put on, take off and put away.

Ambient air cleaners

Back in my judo club days (more nostalgia – but relevant, I assure you) I remember a very small contestant who seemed to us bigger guys impossible to pin to the mat. Whatever kind of

hold we tried to use, he would wriggle out and emerge to stand, grinning down infuriatingly upon his frustrated opponent. He used to put me in mind of the Scarlet Pimpernel – but now he symbolically represents tiny dust particles that wriggle out of the extractor filters. So I have ambient air cleaners in both workshops. One sits high in the roofspace of my machine 'shop (**photos 9 & 10**), operated by a remote control. It has three speeds, and a timer facility so that I can set it to run on for a few hours after I finish. In my hand-tool 'shop, I have a smaller one (**photo 11**) that can be moved to wherever it's most effective. Connected through a timer socket, it runs for a couple of hours every day whether I'm there or not. This ensures that when I open the door at the start of a day I'll be greeted, not with the nostalgic tang of suspended wood dust, but just fresh, clean, breathable air.

Good housekeeping

Now: remember that infestation I described earlier – when planer shavings and dust particles ganged up in a scarily successful attempt to turn my workshop into a nesting site? Well, any pest control officer will tell you that pests love clutter, finding abundant nooks and crannies in which to hide. My workshops had been highly desirable real estate – so much clutter, so many perfect little concealments that seriously hampered my attempts at eradication.

Alright, let's not overwork the analogy: it was a combined operation of cleaning and decluttering.



15 A 'shop 'vac takes care of the cleaning



16 A random glazing effect created by adding wood dust to a potter's kiln



17 For dust-free hand-sanding, I like Mirka's Abranet abrasives and extracted sanding block

Wood is a valuable resource, so most of us husband it carefully – but there are limits. Offcuts were everywhere! I tidied up and stored the most valuable, but some of it clearly had to go, and I knew just the person to help me out – a friend with a woodburning stove. She jumped at the chance of free fuel for the winter (**photo 12**), and with that gone the machine 'shop was clear (**photo 13**). Now I just have to keep it that way: empty the extractor regularly, cleaning the filters each time, and leave the place clean every night. That might be a personal challenge, but let's give it a go. And finally, on that note, there's just space for one more wallow in nostalgia. Get the violins out... Ready?

The great brush off

Back in the day – when the world and I were very, very young – every workshop day ended with a good clean sweep: clear the bench of shavings – using a hand-brush; sweep the floor – with a broom – and then take pleasure in surveying the scene: a clean, tidy workshop, with everything in its place... and that haze of fine dust twinkling prettily in the evening sunlight that streamed through the window or the open door. Well, we'll have no more of that, thank you!

I hardly use a broom anymore. One exception aside (**photo 14**), that's been superseded by the 'shop 'vac, with its fine filter and kit of tools (**photo 15**), which I empty frequently while wearing a respirator and with the air cleaner going. Then the question arises: what do I do with the dust?

A dusty response

Having made enquiries from the recycling industry and my local authority, I don't have good news. The industry isn't interested, understandably, in collecting small quantities of, shavings (probably contaminated with dust and debris) from a multitude of homes, and my local authority site won't recycle it for health and safety reasons. I'm currently checking the position in other authorities and may come back with more information, but for many this only leaves landfill – the ubiquitous black bag and bin. Some people use shavings for pet bedding but that needs very great care. Apart from the danger of respiratory disease from the dust, chemicals in some wood species can be harmful to some animals and, well, it gets complicated. So if this idea tempts, do the research first.

My extractor waste is collected by a potter friend. He's experimenting with different glazing effects, one of which is created by firing his pots packed in organic material, such as wood shavings (**photo 16**). At the end of my Big Clean Up, he kindly carried off three large bags of clean wood waste from the extractor. Waste from the 'shop 'vac which picks up all manner of dirt from the floor and surfaces, has to be bagged and sadly consigned to the black bin.

On a clear day...

Now, when I look around the 'shop as I lock up, I expect to see nothing more than a nice, clean and tidy workshop, viewed through clear air. Still, I've got my memories... ✂

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A-Z

WOODWORKER'S ENCYCLOPAEDIA **PART 15**

We're concentrating on the Fs at the moment and there will be more to come – **Peter Bishop** aims to make this series interesting enough for you to read on through and look forward to each issue

Fibreboard

Unlike chipboard, which is made from small chips and particles of solid wood, these composite boards are made up of wood fibres. Because the wood fibres are much smaller and finer than wood chips, a range of different types and qualities of boards can be produced.

To prepare the raw material, which can be logs or wood waste, it is soaked, heated and mashed into a fibrous 'porridge' that is mixed with resins and waxes, etc. This concoction is then compressed, under pressure with heat, to produce the primary sheets. The continuous rolls produced then go through a curing and trimming process to produce the recognisable boards we might use today. These boards are exuded from the production line in various sizes, thicknesses and densities. Some have enhanced moisture-resistant properties; some are made lighter for insulation, etc. We might recognise 'hardboard' sheets as one of the original fibreboards. Technology has moved on and we are now more familiar with medium density fibreboard (MDF), which has a much enlarged range of

uses – we'll cover this in more detail later on. Fibreboards, in their various guises, are used extensively for a huge range of products and fittings. Most domestic properties will have a few examples in kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. Flooring, roofing and even simple notice boards will potentially be made from this stuff.



Medium density fibreboard production line

Fibre Saturation Point – FSP

Within the structure of wood there are two types of moisture: 'free' moisture, which is contained within the cell cavities; and 'bound' moisture, which is contained within the cell walls. When drying wood, the free moisture is given up more easily than the bound moisture. The result of this is that we come to a point where the free moisture has vacated the cavities and all we have left is the bound moisture in the cell walls – this is the FSP. On average, FSP is anything from around 27% through to 30% moisture content. Giving up this bound moisture takes longer and the consensus is that it is at this point shrinkage starts to occur. In the UK, wood, if stacked correctly for drying, will continue to give up moisture beyond the FSP. Eventually it'll probably dry down to about 18-20% moisture content; that is when it comes into equilibrium with the local atmosphere and humidity ranges. Further reductions in moisture content will require its forced removal via some form of artificial kiln or vacuum drying process. We'll discuss later on the importance of FSP when related to wood preservation processes.



A neat stack of drying wood



Raised and fielded panel doors
by Martin Howlett Furniture

Fielded & raised & fielded

We'll all have come across panels of some form or other, be they in a door or on a wall. A simple 'fielded' panel is one that has been created from edging a flat surface with a moulding. This can create an impression of many small panels if applied to a larger, plain surface. 'Raised and fielded' panels will actually be individual panels that are fitted into a frame. There is also an illusion that mimics this when pressed panels are made to look as though they are individual ones!



A stunning piece of quilted maple



Cutting $\frac{1}{16}$ in veneers

Figure

We bandy this word around when trying to describe the attractive surface appearance of wood. It comes in many guises. Most are natural, some are caused by trauma and others created when the wood is cut in a specific way. In the UK we'll probably most easily recognise the 'flower' figure associated with quartersawn oak. Maybe the finely clustered groups of swirls in 'burr' walnut or the waves of 'fiddle back' sycamore. Figure can be found in solid wood or, to use it much more economically, in veneers. There are a number of general classifications associated

with figure and veneers. 'Appearance' will be things such as birdseye, blister, dapple, motte, quilted, stripe and swirl. 'Abnormality' could be burr, crotch, stump, curl, fan and feather. The way in which the figured veneer is cut from the stock will vary from rotary, slash through to quarter. Effectively, anything that provides a decorative, attractive surface in wood could be called figure.



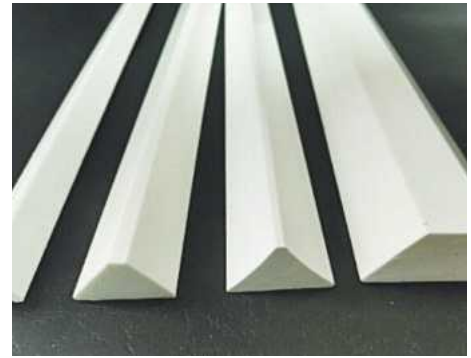
Using a Briwax Filler Stick



Using wood filler on a woodworking project

Filler or stopper

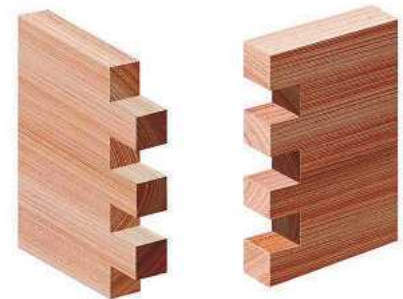
All of us will probably use fillers or stoppers at some point in our project making careers. Small blemishes, dead knot holes, splits and cracks might require their gaps to be filled. Punched in nails or countersunk screws might require their associated holes to be 'stopped up'. There are many different types of filler on the market and, of course, you can make your own. It's a good idea to buy the correct filler for the job in hand; interior or exterior use. If you fill a crack it is very difficult to get a colour match even if you subsequently stain afterwards. Think darker rather than lighter; it won't show up so much. You could always make a statement by using a filler that completely contrasts with the host wood. Try not to fill big holes with copious amounts of filler; it'll stand out like a sore thumb. Best to try and fix a matching piece of solid wood in the middle and have a finer, filled edge all round. Make your own from fine sawdust and sanding dust simply mixed with an adhesive. It'll work well but, as with all other fillers, make sure you fill the cavities proud of the surface and finish off flush once dried.



Construction timber fillets

Fillet

Any smallish strip of wood that is used to fill a gap or support something could be called a fillet. You can have 'dovetail' fillets that are set into concrete floors onto which you later fix wood coverings. Another example could be a fillet that runs along the wall at the back, or underneath the face of a shelf to help support it.



Example of a typical finger joint



Finger-jointed box in cherry

Finger joints

These are strong, sometimes decorative joints used in the length, the edges or at angles to the grain of the joining pieces. Unlike a dovetail, the finger joint is flat-sided and slips directly together. When making them by hand we'll usually cut them with straight fingers. However, there are tools that will fit in a router or spindle moulder to produce sloping-sided fingers. The more surface area you can create with your joint, the stronger it becomes because of the larger areas covered with adhesive – that's as long as there are not too many gaps! Today you'll see finger joints used in some stock sizes of softwood. As long as it is structurally sound, and tested where necessary, this is more than acceptable. To make better use of hardwoods, and reduce waste, shorter lengths are often joined and manufactured into joinery and furniture, etc.



Traditional ceramic finger plates



Antique oak finger plates

Finger plates

You'll find most finger plates as part of a door furniture set, especially where doors are mounted as push through ones. Made from materials such as plastics, ceramics and metals, they'll help protect the door faces from grubby hands.



Vintage cap newel post finials

Finial

These are vertically, or horizontally mounted, decorative moulding made from wood, metal or any other material. Traditionally, you'll find finial mouldings at the apex of a stair newel post or as an adornment to a cornice on top of furniture. You'll also find them on the ends of curtain poles, and at the top of many long-cased clocks you might see a pair of brass finials. They are all aimed at providing a decorative focus and finishing of a point.

Finished size

We talk about finished sizes, be that planed or sawn, in or workshop or with suppliers. Effectively it means the cross-sectional size of a workpiece from which we can make a component without having to further reduce its gross size. We might have to add rebates or mouldings to it but the finished size is what we start with.



Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)

Fir trees

A generic term we use to cover a range of coniferous trees, which mostly include firs and spruces. Generally we can recognise fir trees by their, loosely, conical shape – think of large Christmas trees! Pine trees tend to have a more varied branch configuration and profile. Later on we'll discuss the wood produced from firs as opposed to pines.

Robert Sorby
38mm registered
firmer chisel



Hirsch
firmer chisel

Firmer chisel

Some manufacturers have blurred the edges when it comes to defining what a firmer chisel is. Traditionally, it is a square-edged chisel rather than a bevel-edged one. You'll now find both described as such in tool catalogues!

The square-edged chisel can be a general purpose one or a mortise chisel. For cutting square holes, like mortises, the firmer chisel is probably better because it tends to follow the sides of the holes more consistently. I have several firmer chisels in my workshop – the largest is 2in wide!

Fish plate joint

A fish plate joint is where you might strengthen a joint in the length with two plates either side. These plates can be surface-mounted or set in flush.

Fissile

If wood can be split through its length, along the grain and how easy this can be achieved, will determine how fissile that wood is. The easier it is, the more fissile it is. We cleft fissile woods, such as chestnut and cedar, to make a range of products. Others, with more interlocking grains, will be difficult to split. So the next time you're chopping firewood and the axe gets stuck, you can exclaim: "This is no fissile good!" ❌

NEXT MONTH

In part 16 of this series, Peter will look at more terms, all the way from flitch, flogging and floor dogs to flush bolt, forked tenon and foxiness

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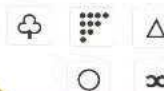
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LETTERS

★ LETTER OF THE MONTH

A LONG-LIVED ROCKING HORSE

Dear Tegan,

In the March issue of *The Woodworker*, which was delivered this morning, my eye was caught by the picture on page 58, and the accompanying letter. If you delve into *Woodworker* archives, and turn to page 17 of the June 2000 issue, you will find under the 'Star Letter' another photograph of this rocking horse, and my story of how I came to make it (with a couple of minor modifications), and my wife and I to paint it.

To continue the story, after much strenuous activity, the little horse is in good health and safely stabled at my son's house, against the day when our granddaughter may possibly have a son or daughter of her own to enjoy it also. In the original article, the horse is described as "a toy which makes an instant appeal." It obviously makes a long-lasting appeal as well. You may,

Rocking horse

Do you ever wonder what happens to back issues of *The Woodworker*, and if designs are ever resurrected long after publication? If so, this may interest you.

On the cover of the November 1960 issue (price 1 shilling) is a picture of a little rocking horse. My son was born some two years later and I decided that when he was old enough I would make it for him. Unfortunately, house moves got in the way and the opportunity was lost. However, I never forgot the design, and when in January 1969 my son and his wife presented us with our first grandchild, here was the second opportunity.

I followed the design quite closely, and made only small changes. I turned shaped handles instead of the simple dowel rod used by the author. I also glued a strip of half-round plastic (from a PVC window) to the pine rockers. My wife and I did the painting between us and altered the colour scheme slightly. The horse was duly presented as a Christmas present, and latest family heirloom.

Dr C.B. Barrett, Wirral, Merseyside



if you so wish, copy this email to your correspondent (Rachel Wadey) and your author (Robin Gates, who is mentioned in your footnote).

Yours sincerely, Dr C.B. Barrett

Thank you so much for your email, Dr Barrett, and for sharing your story with us. After a lot of archive trawling, I have been able to find your letter, which is featured here, some 20 years after it was first published! I love the story behind your rocking horse and think it's wonderful that 60 years on, this design is still being made. Hopefully the project we're due to feature soon will encourage another 'Neddy' resurgence!

Best wishes, Tegan

PLANE & SIMPLE SUGGESTIONS

Hi Tegan,

I have a couple of points to add to Martin Pim-Keirie's article on a home-made block plane for readers new to heat-treating steel.

Hardening: the whole of the cutting edge area must be up to temperature, so for a wide blade a forge as suggested, or a torch with a large burner is needed. A small burner can't get everything up to a consistent heat. For quenching, old engine oil should be used with care as it can be carcinogenic, and the flash point may be spectacularly below what you might expect. Vegetable oil is an alternative; peanut oil is recommended (not too expensive for small jobs); or old chip pan oil would probably suffice. Glass is not a suitable container for quenching as it can fracture under heat stress, and plastic can soften and collapse; use a metal container instead – an old can is fine.

Tempering: this is much better done in an oven; heating with a torch and watching the colour changes is a bit fraught. 200°C gives 60-61 Rockwell, which is fine for edge tools. It is a good plan to check with an oven thermometer as oven thermostats can vary. A soaking time of one hour per 25mm of thickness is specified, although more will not harm.

Regards, John Bullock

Hi John, thank you very much for your comments, which I have passed on to Martin for you. It's always interesting to hear other people's opinions and experience with such techniques, and I find there's always something new to learn. It's great we have this community platform whereby we can share such things, and long may it continue!



Martin's block planes, which were featured in the February 2020 issue

HEGNER WOODY BLUES

Hi Tegan,

It's your old faithful from the wintry North of Scotland again, but this time, with a conundrum that I'm hopeful your letters page can resolve.

Regards, Ken Mackinnon

Hi Y'all

*I got up this mornin', I was feelin' sore
I'll lay my problem on the floor
Got a lathe for my birthday, in twenty-O-two
It don't work no more, that's why I'm blue*

*'Twas a thousand pounds or more back then
And served me well for years but when
I threw the switch one day last spring
Nothin' happened – not one darn thing*

*I emailed Hegner, told my story
Expected help but just got "sorry"
Don't make that model any more
Don't even support it – closed the door*

*Well, that is not entirely true
They made a guess at why I'm blue
The inverter, we think is to blame
And sent a manual for the same*

*Now I'm no sparky and to date
There surely has not been a spate
Of local experts volunteering
Electronic engineering*

Hegner HDB200XL woodturning lathe with the upgraded 1HP motor
ken@mackinnon.myzen.co.uk

Hi Ken, it's always a pleasure to hear from you and I love it when our readers get creative! I absolutely adore your little song/poem and really hope that someone here can help you to locate the part you're looking for. Here's hoping we can solve your conundrum in double-quick time!

Best wishes, Tegan



A Hegner HDB200XL woodturning lathe similar to Ken's

*In Hegner I have lost all faith
The company advertised this lathe
Years after my one had arrived
But of support I've been deprived*

*The reason that I sing this song
Is I've been told some folks belong
To self-help groups for this machine
And help from them I might just glean*

*So, if you recognise my plight
Just email me – this very night!
If not, I fear I'll take to booze
And drown my Hegner woody blues*

READERS' HINTS & TIPS

For the next nine issues, in conjunction with Veritas and BriMarc Tools & Machinery, we're giving one lucky reader per month the chance to get their hands on a fantastic **Veritas apron plane with PM-V11 blade**. Ideal for trim carpentry and featuring a ductile cast-iron body, its unique side wings allow for a comfortable, firm grip. To be in with a chance of winning this great piece of kit, just send your top workshop hints, tips or pointers – indeed anything that other readers may find useful in their woodworking journeys – to tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com, along with a photo(s) illustrating your tip in action. To find out more about Veritas tools, see www.brimarc.com



A CUTTING-EDGE CUTTING LIST

You may be tempted to think you don't need a cutting list for your project, but if you're making anything more complicated than a chopping board from offcuts, you'll thank yourself when you have a well thought-out list to consult throughout the project. Cutting lists are highly advisable for the hobbyist, and essential for the professional. You have to know exactly what your materials will cost if you intend to make a profit.

A good habit is to write your cutting list in pencil until the very end of the job. It's not unusual to make changes as the project progresses, so rubbing out and amending where required will prevent your list from becoming an incomprehensible collection of scribbles and crossings out. Once the project is complete, write the list in ink or type it up. Keep this list on file, along with any notes you've made during the project. If you make the same item again, your list and notes will save you a lot of time (and, if you're selling, money).

Costing & selling

Order your list of components in the order you intend to machine them. It's good to do this in width order, rather than thickening your components first, as thicker timber is more stable.

Machining brings us on to the costing of waste, when selling work. If you're buying square-edge timber, you should add 100% for wastage, and 200% if you're using waney-edge timber. Your cutting list must be your finished dimensions, or it'll be no use to you during the build. When you send your list to the timber supplier for a quote, make them aware that these are your finished dimensions, and the wastage you would like to account for.

Going back to the drawing board

If the cost is higher than expected, you will need to go back to the design and see where you can make changes to bring the cost down. If you don't intend to make profit through a sale, then this isn't important – but if you are selling, then don't start a project until you know it can be made at a saleable price. There are two ways that will go: either you'll try to lower the cost by reducing the time and making it sloppily, or you'll make it properly but end up with an overpriced piece that can't be sold at a profit. Each item on the list should have a reference, which can be pencilled or masking taped onto the component itself to make everything clear as you work. When done properly, the cutting list is one of the most important tools at your disposal.

Ben Amadi



If you're making to sell, you have to cost your wastage. Make sure you allow for 200% wastage when buying waney-edge timber, unless you're creating work that incorporates the waney-edge



Remember, your timber will need to be dimensioned (most likely machined), which will lead to wastage. Allow an extra 100% for wastage when purchasing square-edge boards, and 200% for waney-edge



There are many cutting list templates available freely online. Find one that works for you. You must convert the volume of each component into cubic metres (if buying in the UK) to estimate its price. In some countries, timber will be priced by the cubic foot

WRITE & WIN!

We always love hearing about your projects, ideas, hints and tips, and/or like to receive feedback about the magazine's features, so do drop us a line – you never know, you might win our great 'Letter of the Month' prize, currently the new Trend X-in 30-piece Router Cutter Set, worth over £100. Simply email tegan.foley@mytimemedia.com for a chance to get your hands on this fantastic prize – good luck!



AIDAN DONOVAN PROFILE

Hi Tegan,

Just a quick message to say how much I enjoyed the article featuring an ex-student of ours, Aidan Donovan. It's always great to see our past students getting going in their new lives as furniture designers and makers, and I'm sure articles like these give them a real confidence boost. Kind regards, **Oliver Waters**



Hi Oliver, thanks so much for reaching out and I'm thrilled you've seen the profile. Martin did a fantastic job of finding out about Aidan and I feel he really captured an essence of this maker's personality, values and how this translates into his design ethos. Look out for more great features in the coming issues! Best wishes, Tegan

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When art meets ENGINEERING

Undoubtedly a singularly gifted and knowledgeable individual, it is reassuring to know that someone like **Theo Cook** is instructing and inspiring the next generation of furniture makers in their craft, as **Martin Pim-Keirle** discovers here



Theo's Highly Commended console table in Japanese oak

The human brain is the single most complex thing we know of, and the way it can be adapted to all manner of purpose is truly awe-inspiring. There is something particularly wonderful about those gifted individuals who excel in both art and science simultaneously, and history is replete with examples of the polymath artist-engineer. From Leonardo Davinci to Hedy Lamarr, there have always been a lucky few with abilities that span both spheres.

Fortunately for us, our shared passion is an area in which this duality is more common than most. In a Venn Diagram of engineers and artists, there would surely be more woodworkers at the

intersection than any other single profession. It's a craft that demands an understanding of materials science, engineering and mathematics, and yet truly great work is only possible when these academic skills are combined with a strong aesthetic sensibility and a fundamental urge for creative self-expression.

Theo Cook is clearly one such individual, a status confirmed when he recently received two awards on the same day: one in recognition of his furniture-making skills, and the other for a set of exquisitely-crafted hand planes. His work perfectly exemplifies that balance between artistic expression and engineering nous, with an almost improbable level of manual skill thrown in for good measure. As he says himself: "You have to have an understanding of the materials you're working with in order to be creative with them."

Barnsley apprenticeship & beyond

The softly-spoken tutor of a small furniture school in East Sussex, Theo's manner is somehow that of one who has spent time in academia, ▶



Exquisite Japanese dovetails are as technically impressive as they are beautiful



Theo's award-winning set of planes



Joints this complex and accurate require extreme precision



Two of Theo's unusual but highly-ergonomic scraper planes

yet in reality he left school at 16, dyslexia making academic success more challenging than it might otherwise have been, and embraced his natural affinity for practical subjects. A two-year City & Guilds at Highbury College in Portsmouth followed, and with the encouragement of one particular tutor, Theo was able to secure a place on the shortlist for a five-year apprenticeship at the Barnsley Workshop. Famously hard to get into, and only taking on one apprentice a year, the Barnsley Workshop is supported by a charitable trust, and is rightly famous for the quality of both its furniture and its craftspeople.

"I think they're the only place in the country that still offers traditional apprenticeships. When I started, the rule was that you were only allowed to use hand tools for the whole of the first year – I wasn't even allowed to use a jigsaw to cut up timber!" recalls Theo.

He initially began by making stock pieces, then, once he was judged to have built up sufficient skill, he was able to move on to commissions

and speculative pieces: "At Barnsley, we were always taught to work to the highest standards, and that's stayed with me. I may work slower than some, but I pride myself on making very few mistakes."

It was during his apprenticeship that Theo had the opportunity to study at the College of the Redwoods for nine months: "It was the first time I'd left home, so it was a liberating experience. It was also the first time I'd had the freedom to design and make my own pieces. James Krenov, the iconic furniture maker who founded the school, was 80 at the time, but he still made time to come and chat to the students. He's a really inspirational character – he was our Yoda!"

At the end of his apprenticeship, Theo stayed on at Barnsley for two years as a craftsman before going to work for Senior & Carmichael for a further nine years. Now Vice Principle and a Partner at the Robinson House Studio, Theo only began teaching in 2014, after an enquiry about using their bench space led to an arrangement with Robinson House to teach a few hours a week in return for use of the workshop.

An extreme eye for detail

These days Theo spends most of his time teaching, and as for life outside of the workshop, he says he's always happy "doing something practical – I enjoy car maintenance and I've tinkered with my cars quite a lot in the past. These days, though, if I'm not teaching or making furniture, I'm usually changing the baby's nappies or running around softplay with my five-year-old!"

Despite the relatively late start, passing on knowledge clearly comes naturally to Theo, something that is obvious from his YouTube videos. On the subject of what makes a good student, Theo says: "The most important characteristics for a student are passion and dedication. There's so much to learn. You also need to be well-organised and a hard-worker."

Based on the content of his videos he might also like to add 'must have an extreme eye for detail' to that list. Where most of us are content working the nearest millimetre, or even half-

millimetre if we're feeling brave and have our reading-glasses handy, Theo is operating at another level of accuracy entirely. There is a particularly memorable moment during his instructional video on Japanese dovetails where, in absolute seriousness, Theo instructs the viewer that it is important to reduce a particular measurement by 0.1mm before marking out in order to achieve the best possible end result. This, then, is a woodworker who truly understands what it means to work with precision.

And nowhere is that clearer than in the work you see before you. Theo's beautiful console table in Japanese oak was Highly Commended at The Furniture Makers' Company Design Award, while on the same day his hand planes were crowned winner in The Future Icons Award for Accessories. Not bad considering that this was the first time Theo had exhibited under his own name, rather than representing an employer.

The console table's graceful and apparently simple form hides an array of finely-crafted details that undoubtedly elevate the whole piece. The legs are tapered in both directions, giving the table subtle poise and grace, while the lower edge along the front is chamfered, slimming the appearance considerably, retaining strength while adding elegance. And this is before we consider the standout detail of the piece: beautiful Japanese dovetails that join the sides to the top, a feature that is a stunning visual device for the uninitiated, and a supreme expression of the maker's skill and accuracy for those in the know.

Zero margin for error

Once you understand just how much skill and experience goes into creating these beautiful joints, it is impossible not to feel somewhat in awe of the maker. Talking about the build process for the table, Theo says: "It took about six weeks, working evenings and weekends around my teaching. The Japanese dovetails took the longest, as they're incredibly hard to make, with zero margin for error."



Theo receiving the award for his console table from Dids McDonald, OBE



A bookcase in American walnut, made while at the Barnsley Workshop

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Theo's console table sold almost immediately – a bittersweet moment for its maker: "Obviously I was really pleased when it sold, but you're always a bit sorry to see something go that you've worked really hard on. I'd only finished the table the week before, so I hadn't really had it around to appreciate much."

And on the subject of how he is able to work with such precision, he says: "It does take a lot of experience to work to this level of accuracy, but it's the only way to achieve a Japanese dovetail that's going to fit together. I used Japanese oak – you need wood with a fine grain, and it needs to be quartersawn and well-seasoned."

If you are unfamiliar with Japanese dovetails it is probably worth taking a moment to look closely at the photos. The thing that strikes you first (aside from the almost impossibly perfect fit) is the complexity of the joints. You might also have the passing thought that they seem as if they could not possibly fit together, the dovetails apparently working to resist pull-out in both lateral and longitudinal directions at the same time. Only when you discover that the two pieces fit together by sliding at 45° to each face does the joint begin to make sense. And when I tell you that Theo's toolkit for cutting these joints includes digital callipers, a scalpel and a selection of homemade chisels slim enough to fit the restricted space, you may begin to see how that incredible level of precision might be possible.

Planes in the Krenov style

Precision is also a key ingredient in Theo's beautiful hand planes. His submission for the award consisted of five planes, all in the Krenov style and all featuring Hock blades: "I like Hock blades – I started using them as the company was local to the College of the Redwoods, but I still use them now." Theo favours the A2 steel used in these blades as he feels it takes a better edge and retains it for longer than some alternatives.

A variety of woods were used for the planes, from ziricote to pink ivory, all beautiful in their own ways, and crucially all stable and close-grained. All have a separate sole made from either rosewood or lignum vitae. Theo favours a bed angle of 45° for smoothing planes and 30° (in the other direction) for scrapers.

It was during his time at the College of the Redwoods that Theo made his first wooden plane, a simple jack plane, also in the Krenov style, maple-bodied with a cocobolo sole. It is fair to say he fell in love with both the process and the end result, and has been making planes regularly ever since. For Theo, one of the great pleasures of making his own tools is the control it affords him; being able to choose the wood and shape the tool to suit his own way of working: "It's got to be comfortable in your hand and not too heavy."

Although it seems fair to describe Theo's planes as being influenced by Krenov in their form and construction, there is certainly a difference in the quality of finish. As Theo himself says of Krenov: "His planes were more about just making a practical tool. He felt that if the plane was usable straight off the bandsaw, then that was fine."

Theo's planes, on the other hand, while also



Table made during the second year of Theo's apprenticeship, with frame and legs in bog oak

being functional tools of the highest quality, are each minor works of art in their own right, organic sculptural forms in exotic hardwoods that would not look out of place on display in an art gallery.

The judges of the award noted that plane making is listed as a critically endangered skill set on the Heritage Crafts 'red list'. Does this surprise Theo? "It does surprise me as they're really satisfying to make, and it's something practical that you can use. I regularly use the planes I make – particularly the scraper planes"

Louisa Pacifico, from Future Icons, commented that they were: "A cohesive collection of beautifully made planes, with a very fair price point. Instant collector items. I'm delighted to see a maker investing time to create such beautiful tools that can be handed down to generations to come."

Proudest achievements

So is it the console table or the planes that are his proudest woodworking achievement so far? Neither, as it turns out: "I made two desks for the Duchess of Northumberland, which I think are the best pieces of furniture I've made to date. One is on display at Alnwick Castle – you can see a picture on the Robinson House Studio website."

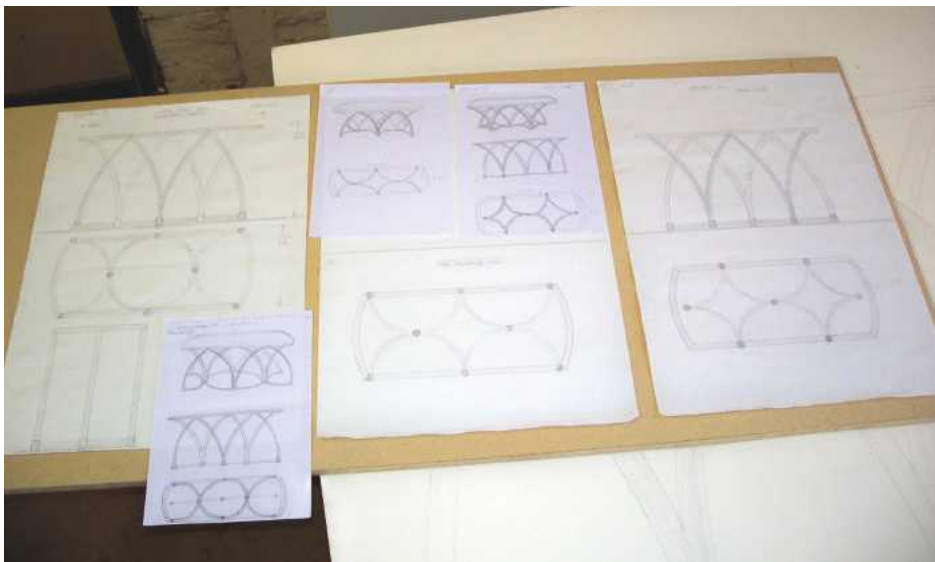
Whether making it himself or teaching others the skills they need, it seems it is with furniture that Theo's heart will always lie. Making tools can bring great satisfaction, but the broader challenge of furniture still contains much uncharted territory, and therefore more for this artist, engineer and teacher to get his teeth into. Undoubtedly a singularly gifted and knowledgeable individual, it is reassuring to know that someone like Theo is instructing and inspiring the next generation of furniture makers. ✂



There is no margin for error when Theo creates his trademark joints

GEOMETRIC GEM

Tasked with undertaking a commission for his local church, **Adrian Parfitt** comes up with two complicated designs for an arched altar table before one is finally chosen



1 The first stage was to sketch out some design possibilities

Some time before this commission I had made a similar, but simpler hall table, simpler in that it was half the size, with six legs rather than 12. This table was seen by some of the members of the church council, and it was agreed that it had something of the church Gothic about it. With this in mind, I was asked to design and make an altar table.

Designing

The first stage was to sketch out some design possibilities and then it was off to the drawing board to work these designs up to scale drawings (**photo 1**). I knew that the table needed to be 915mm high so it could be stood at, and somewhere between 610 and 762mm wide and 1,500mm long. The geometry of



2 Full-size rod showing the front elevation



3 Full-size rod of the plan, showing the bottom rails and feet



the table is interesting in so much that in all of the designs that I had sketched, the circles and semicircles of the bottom rails had a direct correlation to the width and length of the table. With this in mind I drew the bottom rails and feet first, starting off with the length of 1,500mm. I drew out the bottom rails and feet and this gave me a table width of 686mm, which was just right. There were two designs to draw up but there were three bottom rail designs: design 1a being a variation on design 1 and design 2 a totally different layout of both the bottom rails and legs.

With the layout of the bottom rails and feet worked out, I could now start working out the front elevation. As you can see from the drawings shown in **photo 1**, design 1/1a has two full arches for both the front and back row of legs, with one



arch and two half arches for the centre row. Design 2 is the opposite with one full arch and two half arches for both the front and back row of legs – the centre row has two full arches.

Armed with my sketches, scaled drawings and photos of the smaller table, I attended the next church council meeting to present my ideas. The designs were discussed in some detail before the second one was decided upon.

Full-size setting out

The next task was to set out the table full-size; this was done on a board of white painted MDF. This rod would be used for marking out, making laminating moulds and laying components on when gluing up, so all in all, a most valuable tool and well worth spending a bit of time doing.

A cutting list was made and 7cu.ft of 50mm English oak was ordered. The boards were 11ft long and pretty clean. One of the boards, which was quartersawn, was pulled out for the top and put to one side; the others were cut out for use on the bottom rails, legs, top surround and feet. When working out the quantity required for laminating, I usually double the size – in this case the rails and legs are 36mm diameter – so for each leg, I planed up a piece 1,200mm long × 75 × 45mm. All of this oak was left to settle while I made the laminating moulds.

Laminating moulds

The moulds were made by gluing three layers of 18mm MDF together, for each of the moulds. When the glue had dried they were marked out,

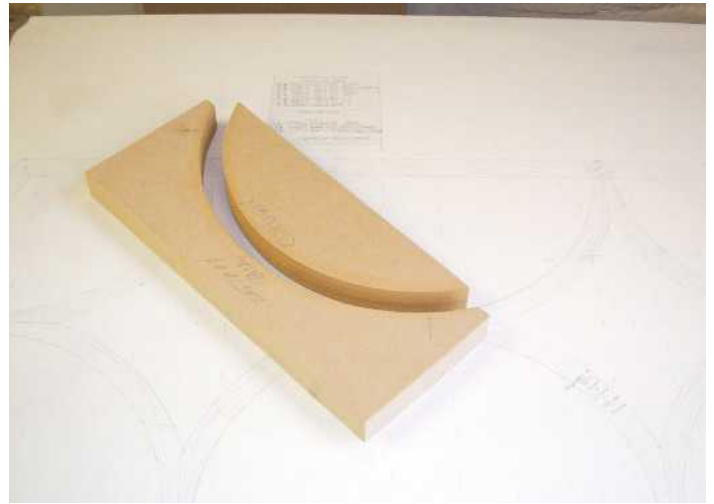
cut out and cleaned up with a compass plane. One thing I should say here, for those who haven't done any laminating, is that the radius, which is cut on the moulds, needs to be a few millimetres tighter than the components want to be; this allows for spring back. So with the moulds completed, it was time to start work on the oak.

Preparing the oak

The oak to be laminated was planed up and identification cuts made in the ends. A new blade was put on the bandsaw and with the aid of a long wooden fence, which was clamped to a bandsaw table, cutting commenced. I like to make my laminates all the same size – in this case 12 blanks each being 1,200mm long × 75 × 45mm. I cut one laminate off of each of them,



4 Leg laminating mould being checked against the rod



5 Bottom rail laminating mould being checked against the rod

and then put all 12 through the thicknesser to the same size, repeating this process until I had enough laminates. In this case 132, plus a few spares. These were then sat on a board and sent through the thicknesser again, but this time to a finished size of 3-2mm, there being 11 laminates to each leg. The laminates for the bottom rails were completed in the same way, except that they were 1-5mm thick, on account of the tighter curve. Of course there were a lot more of them as well – 192 not including the spares. The laminates were then sorted out into their sets, which was where the identification cuts came in useful.

Gluing the laminates

With all the laminates machined it was time to start gluing up. Using Cascamite, I glued one leg and one bottom rail at a time, leaving them clamped up in their moulds for 24 hours before the next one was completed. While the gluing up process continued, I set to work on the top.

The top

The board I'd set to one side for the top was

planed up and cut into veneers. The method for cutting these veneers is the same as for cutting the laminates. The 50mm board cut eight veneers, 175 x 2-5mm thick, four for each side. These were bookmatched, shot together, taped and stuck onto an oversize plywood top and pressed in an airbag. The oak for the surround was planed up, marked out and mortised & tenoned. The rebate to take the top was cut using the spindle moulder and a router and trammel bar in the case of the end curved rails. The top surround was fitted together and glued up, the top panel was then cut to size, fitted in and glued into the rebate.

Cross laminate feet

The next task was to make the feet. I wanted to be able to fit the legs and bottom rails directly into these, without having to shoulder them. This meant drilling two, and in one case, three holes of 36mm diameter into them. Fearing that they might just disintegrate, I decided that laminating might be a safer bet. This was carried out by having a thick laminate of 6mm in the

direction that I wanted the grain to run, followed by a thin laminate of 2mm at right angles to it, and so on, until I had a big enough block for turning. This worked well as the thin laminate looked like an annual ring, and all seven feet were drilled with a 36mm bit with no breakages.

Shaping, joining & gluing up

With all of the legs and bottom rails glued up, it was time to cut them to size. This was done by cutting a thin sliver off one edge, flattening with a jack plane, and running past the saw to 36mm. The scarf joints were cut next, and shot together using the rod as a guide. The legs and bottom rails were then made round on a spindle moulder with the aid of a few simple jigs, plus a template follower fitted. The bottom rails were then glued together, cut to length and glued into the feet. The legs were paired up, fitted together and taped together dry before being fitted into the feet. With this done they were then laid on the rod and the tenons that fit into the underside of the top marked out. The top was also laid on the rod and the positions of the mortises marked out.



6 Cutting laminates on the bandsaw



7 Laminates cut and stacked in their sets, ready for gluing up



8 Laminated leg glued up in mould



9 Bottom rail glued up in mould

The mortises were then cut using a router, while the tenons were cut by hand and fitted into the mortises. The legs were cleaned up, glued up in their pairs, glued into their respective feet, and finally attached to the cleaned up top.

Finishing

It was agreed with the church council that staining would be wrong, and as a contemporary piece it should be left as light as possible. With this in mind the table was oiled with five coats of thinned linseed oil, five coats of Danish oil, and finally one coat of finishing oil.

Conclusion

I really enjoyed the designing of this table, with its exacting geometry. The quarter curves of the bottom rails that gave me the width of the table in turn then dictated the length of the table, the height of the top then giving me the radius of the legs.

The marking out had to be spot on, with the scarfing of the bottom rails so that they were 36mm diameter at the exact point of



10 Bottom rails being checked against the rod, then glued together

where the feet had to be – all seven of them. If this had been out, it could have had a knock on effect of the legs not meeting at the top of the arches, just under the top. Finally, this commission called on a variety of different skills, from woodturning to laminating and veneering, which all helps to keep the little grey cells working. ✂



11 Bottom rails being checked against the rod before being glued together



12 Gluing the legs to the table top

FURTHER INFORMATION

Adrian is retired and runs courses from his home workshop, based in a village not far from Cambridge. If you are interested in one of these courses, email Adrian here: adrianparfitt@yahoo.co.uk



13 The completed table was finished using thinned linseed oil, Danish oil and finishing oil



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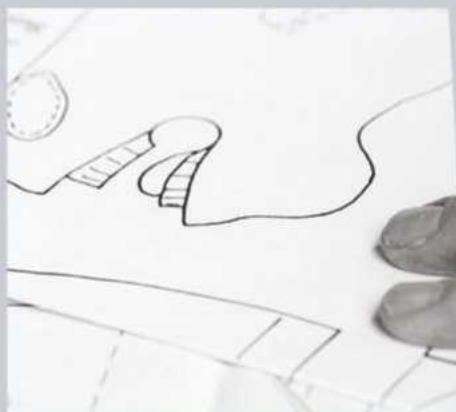


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TRAVELLER'S TABLE

Dave Roberts uses antique mahogany to recreate a classic piece – a travelling salesman's sample

This project was based on a small salesman's table, a classic antique piece, so I wanted to use some old, reclaimed timber that would give it that feeling of authenticity. I was lucky enough to come across an old table dating back to around 1820, which was made of what I believe is Honduras mahogany – the timber's certainly very heavy and has a tight grain. The table itself was beyond restoration, but I was able to get hold of two of the legs and two of the leaves. The leaves were large, though just 24mm thick, and fortunately they had stayed reasonably flat

over the years. Being so well seasoned, of course, it turned very well and took a good finish. Obviously, if you choose to make a merchant's table of your own, you can use a timber of your own choice – quartersawn oak would be lovely with all those medullary rays on show, or perhaps American cherry.

Take it from the top

The first piece to be made is the top, the blank for which is cut out on the bandsaw, keeping it as round as possible to produce as balanced a blank as possible when you mount it on the lathe.

As the timber I was using was only 24mm thick, I couldn't fix it to a faceplate because the holes

TOOLS YOU'LL NEED

- 6mm scraper
- 6mm & 9mm gouges
- Parting tool
- 12mm skew chisel
- $\frac{3}{8}$ in & 1in taps and dies
- 9mm drill
- $\frac{5}{8}$ in and $\frac{3}{4}$ in drill
- Jacobs chuck

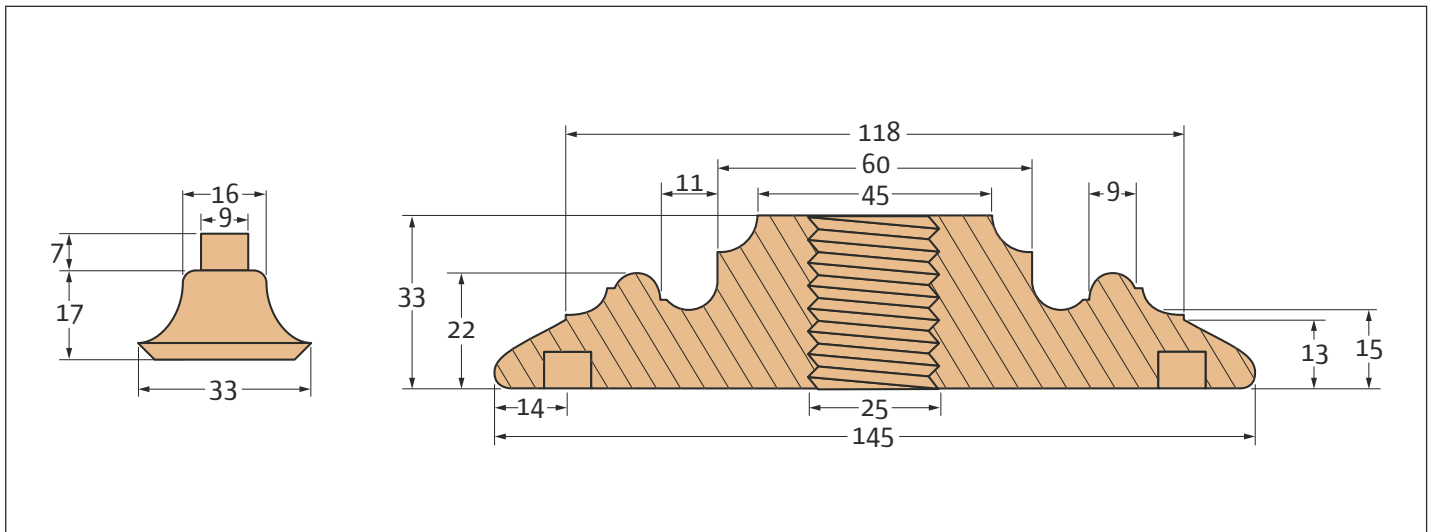


Fig.1 The base

would have shown through on the finished piece. Instead, I mounted it onto my homemade Cole jaws. Start by turning the underneath of the table top, which has a recess inside, into which the cross-members will sit. The gouge I'm using here is a 9mm bowl gouge, which is very effective at removing waste quickly, though you have to be careful to keep the surface even and not to turn too deep. For turning the outer edge, however, you'll have to use a parting tool: push it slowly, so as to leave the surface clean. Use a small steel rule to check that the surface is flat; if it isn't, the cross-members won't sit flat

on the surface. Once done, it's time to sand, working through the different grades up to 400 grit, and finishing by sanding the piece with the lathe stopped, working the paper up and down the grain to eliminate any sanding marks.

At this stage you can either apply sanding sealer or, depending on your timber and tastes, a stain. If you're aiming for a mahogany finish, there are many different shades on the market, so you can probably find exactly the one you want – just make sure you apply it evenly using a brush or a cloth. It will take a little while to dry, after which you can apply a coat



1 Turn the underneath of the top with a 9mm gouge, keeping it as even as possible



2 Use the parting tool to turn the edge; take a slow cut to ensure a good finish

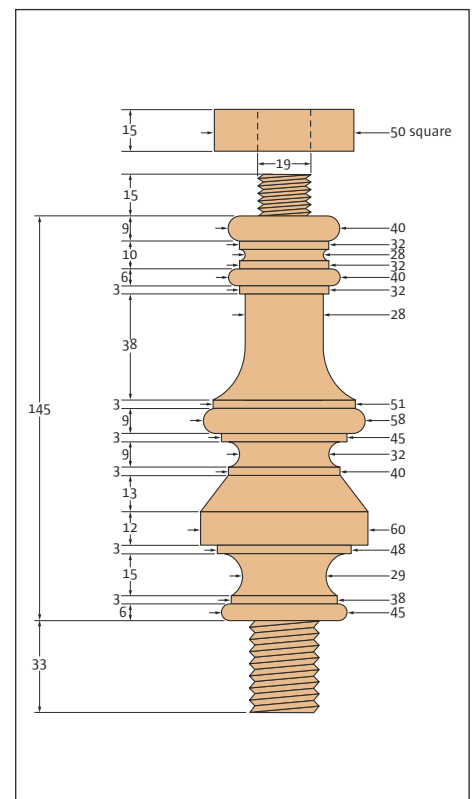


Fig.2 The column

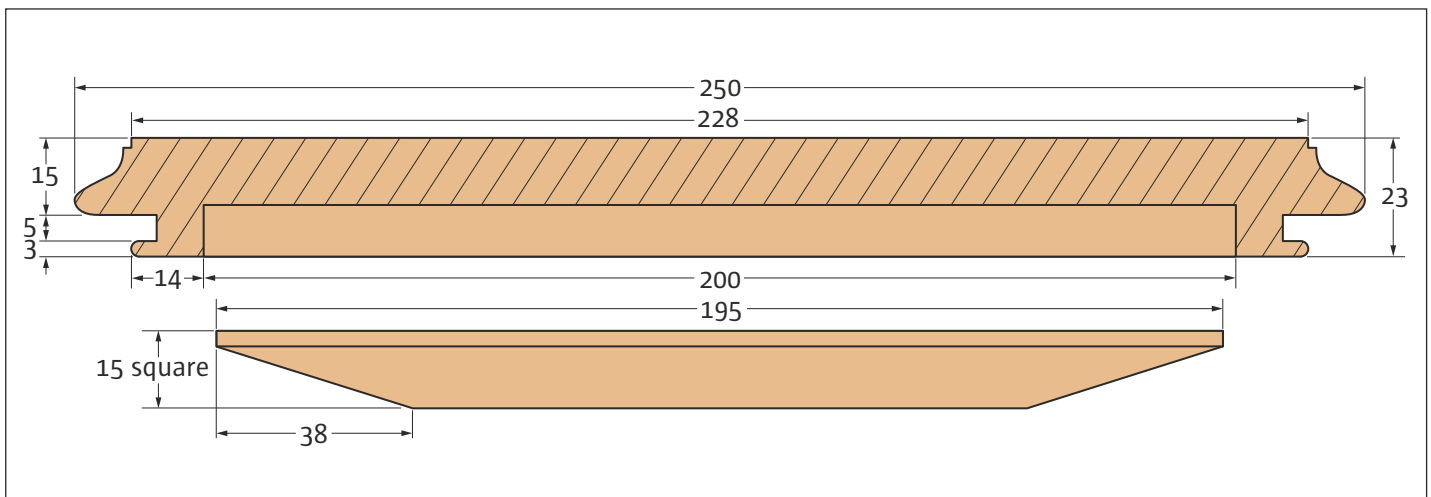


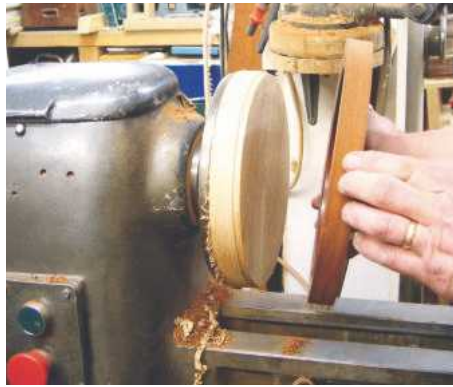
Fig.3 The top



3 Use a small straightedge to check the flatness of the surface

of sanding sealer. When that's dry too, rub it back with '0000' wire wool, before putting on a light coat of polish to give it a bit of a sheen.

The next step is to turn the top face of the table top. I used a jam chuck fitted into the recess on the underside to mount the piece on the lathe, but remember that it has to be a tight fit or you risk it flying off when you're turning. If you're in any doubt, then fix it to a faceplate, which will provide plenty of support. Turn the top to the finished diameter with a 9mm gouge and then to the finished thickness, going carefully so as to achieve a flat surface, and checking all the while with a steel rule. Now you can sand it, a job which – as always with flat surfaces – is best done with the lathe stopped, and using abrasive wrapped around a cork block. Sand with the grain, moving through the different grades up to 400 grit. The rest of the top is turned with a parting tool and a 6mm gouge. This is delicate,



4 Reverse the top onto a jam chuck, making sure it's tight



6 Use a 6mm gouge to slowly form the profile on the outer edge

but if you keep the bevel rubbing it will leave the surface clean; without the bevel rubbing you run the risk of tearing out the end-grain. Once you've sanded it, the top is complete.



5 Sand the top by wrapping abrasive around a cork block, sanding with the grain



7 I used a disc sander to shape up the ends of the cross-members

The cross-members...

The two cross-members and the square 'capital' (Fig.3), that sits atop the column and holds the screw pivots on which the top tilts, are cut out



8 Pre-drill all the holes before you screw it all together



9 A 6mm scraper is ideal for turning the concave in the base



10 Use the 6mm gouge and the parting tool to turn the rest of the base



11 Slowly drill a hole in the base for the thread; make sure the lathe is on a low speed



12 Hold the base in a vice while you tap the thread



13 Mark out three equal spaces and drill the holes for the feet



14 Turn the feet carefully; check with Vernier callipers that they're all the same



15 Put the lathe on a low speed and drill the holes both ends

on the saw. The ends of the cross-members can be shaped on a disc sander, then drilled for the screws, which form the pivots.

The square, meanwhile, is drilled with a $\frac{1}{8}$ in

bit and threaded with a $\frac{1}{8}$ in tap ready to receive the threaded column that screws into the top and the base. Making threads to join these parts may seem an unnecessary complication when

you could simply use spigots, but screw threads are traditional, and thread-making not only adds a little more excitement to the project but gives you a skill that you can adapt to other pieces.

The square also needs to be chamfered at one end of the square to provide clearance when the top is tilted. Once that's all done, you can glue and screw the cross-members to the top, laying them across the grain.

... the base & feet

Turning the base started by attaching a piece of scrap wood to a small faceplate and turning it flat so that I could attach the base blank to it using hot glue. One ring of hot glue will hold it, but don't hang about: once you've applied the glue you have only a few seconds to get the base into position; use the tailstock to hold it in place while the glue sets.

Once it's secure, move the tailstock out of



16 Use a dead centre to drive the column and use the tailstock to support the other end



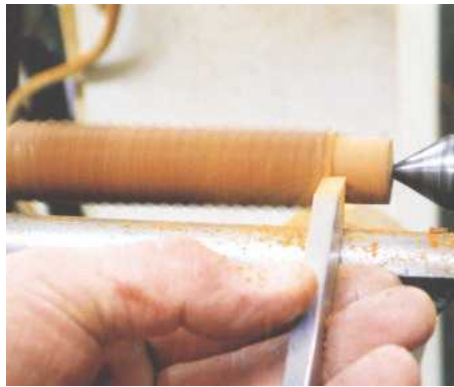
17 Pay particular attention to all the detail, keeping it crisp and sharp



18 Use the long point of the skew to clean up both ends



19 Hold the dowel in a vice while you cut the thread



20 Use the parting tool to turn a spigot and check it with Vernier callipers



21 Apply a little PVA and glue it into place

the way and begin turning. The first step is to reduce the base to its finished diameter and thickness before starting work on moulding. The three tools I used for this were a 6mm gouge, a parting tool and a 6mm scraper.

The parting tool is ideal for turning the fillets, and the 6mm gouge for the bead and the rest of the base. When it comes to forming the deep concave, the only tool that will successfully do the job is the 6mm scraper; the narrowness of the concave would make it difficult to turn it with a gouge. If you make sure that the scraper is freshly sharpened, it will leave the surface with a good finish.

Drilling the hole for the column is best done while the base is still on the lathe. Fix a $\frac{1}{8}$ in Forstner bit into a Jacobs chuck and put the lathe on a low speed while you drill it all the way through, then sand and finish.

Remove the base from the lathe, but leave it attached to the glue chuck and faceplate so that you can hold it in a vice while you tap the 1in thread. Then use a rubber mallet to knock the base off the glue chuck so that you can sand the underneath by hand. The holes for the three feet are 9mm in diameter, spaced equidistantly around the base, and drilled on the pillar drill. The feet themselves involve nothing particularly complicated: a 6mm gouge and a parting tool will turn them effectively. I simply mounted a piece of timber in the chuck big enough to turn three feet, and used the gouge to turn them to shape, and the parting tool to form the 9mm spigot. Use Vernier callipers to check the size so that they all come out the same diameter and height. Once finished, glue them into place.

The column is fixed to the base via a threaded dowel



Making the column...

The column contains plenty of bumps and curves, which may seem difficult at first sight, but are easily accomplished with careful planning, diligent use of the Vernier callipers, and just three tools: a parting tool, 12mm skew chisel, and a 6mm gouge. There's also a thread at both ends, of course, $\frac{3}{8}$ in to match the one in the top, and 1in in the base.

Having said all that, I found it easier to make the thread sections separately and then glue them into the column, but I'd advise you to drill the holes for these inserts before turning – a $\frac{3}{8}$ in hole at the bottom and $\frac{1}{2}$ in at the top as you can then guarantee that the holes will be in the centre when you've finished. To drill the holes, I find it easiest to fix the Forstner bit into the Jacobs chuck, and then put it into the headstock. Offer up the timber to the bit, then wind in the tailstock; a slow speed of around 450rpm is fine for drilling.

When it comes to turning the column itself, use a dead centre fitted into one of the holes to drive the timber, and a live centre in the tailstock. You won't be able to apply too much pressure while you're turning because the timber

may well slip, which should encourage you to take your time over all that detail. To finish, turn the ends of the column with the skew chisel to create a flat surface against which the top and bottom will sit flush.

To turn the threaded inserts, start by mounting the timber between centres and turning it to the required diameter: 1in for the base thread, and $\frac{3}{8}$ in for top thread. Remove the piece and hold it in a vice while you run the die down it. You can then put it back on the lathe and turn away the end with a parting tool so that it fits the corresponding hole in the column. Measure the diameter of the spigot before you remove it from the lathe and try it in the column; if it fits, measure off the required amount of thread and cut to length. The insert is then simply glued into the column. Once dry, you can screw the column into the top and base, and there it is – your very own salesman's table is complete and ready for peddling! ✂

NEXT MONTH

Dave turns a wall-hanging corner whatnot using reclaimed mahogany

MEASURING TALENT

Before the days of portfolios and showrooms, a small table like this would have been produced by craftsmen to demonstrate their ability to prospective customers. They were known as travellers' samples because they were designed and made to be small enough for salesmen of the furniture workshop to carry around. Other trades also produced travellers' samples, especially the foundry workshops of the Victorian era, as almost every house had a cast-iron fireplace or range.

These small portable samples are highly collectable today, as are apprentice pieces, though these had a very different purpose. Apprentice pieces – miniature pieces of furniture such as chests of drawers, bureaux, bureau bookcases, and sometimes chairs – were made by apprentices coming to the end of their time. If their capabilities were deemed up to scratch, then, and only then, were they allowed to set up their own workshops and offer their wares to prospective clients

Small merchant's tables like these were once used as examples of workmanship



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AROUND THE HOUSE WITH PHIL DAVY



Having installed a new woodturning stove a few months ago, news that the government will ban the sale of unseasoned logs and bagged coal from next year is slightly baffling. One solution to cut air pollution perhaps, but it could lead to further problems.

Most responsible users of stoves and open fires plan ahead, sourcing firewood at least a year in advance anyway. It's partly lifestyle, having a system which allows green timber to season naturally, rotating existing logs air-drying under cover. The fact that logs in future must be either kiln-dried or at least certified as seasoned seems daft. Yes, moisture content ideally should be below 20% for efficient burning, but consider the energy used for kiln-drying each load. Not to mention the extra cost. And buying kiln-dried wood won't necessarily mean users will store this properly, so it could easily become wet again. I wonder if we'll be issued with moisture meters...

WORKSHOP MY MATE WORKMATE

Many *Good Woodworking* readers will know that I've always been a huge fan of the Black & Decker Workmate. It's actually one of my favourite tools and I would have been lost without it – at one stage I had three of them. It's featured in many projects over the years, largely due to its versatility, portability and choice of working heights. And the fact I enjoy working outdoors when the sun occasionally shines!

Regular 'Around the House' readers will remember a Workmate restoration project some years ago. This included stripping the bench down, cleaning it up and respraying with green Hammerite, before making and fitting new birch ply jaws. I'm happy to say that this extended its life by several more years.

Recently I accidentally sliced through the front jaw, shortening it somewhat. Fortunately the saw's teeth didn't hit the steel framework beneath. The bench was just about useable, although with some difficulty. Having lost one of the jaw retaining bolts, a couple of springs and three of the rubber feet, things weren't too encouraging.

I could have spent a few hours rebuilding it again, though this time I reckoned my Workmate was due for retirement.

It seemed rather undignified to take it along to my local household recycling tip and simply throw it in the skip. Not worth trying to sell it on Gumtree either, although it's amazing what people will buy... Then I remembered Tools With A Mission (TWAM). I've delivered several old tools to them in the past to be recycled and start new lives. TWAM's skilled volunteers restore hand and power tools at their Ipswich workshop before sending them out in shipping containers to various countries across Africa. As part of carpentry kits assembled here, these tools help local people start up their own small businesses. Fantastic work, which also includes sending out garden and mechanics tools, bikes, sewing machines, even computers. So, hopefully someone several thousand miles away will perhaps get even more life out of my old Workmate.



Recently I accidentally sliced through the front jaw of my Workmate, shortening it somewhat

For more information on TWAM, see www.twam.co.uk



Having lost one of the jaw retaining bolts, a couple of springs and three of the rubber feet, things weren't too encouraging

USEFUL KIT/PRODUCT PEC TOOLS SOLID SQUARES

Although it's one of the simplest hand tools, the square is fundamental to almost every woodworker. Most of us probably have at least two in the tool kit in various states: a basic tool for rougher carpentry work, plus a better quality square for workshop use, which tends to get more care. For accurate marking out it's hard to beat a reliable engineer's square, unless you're prepared to pay a lot of money for a handmade tool with inlaid stock, such as those by Vesper or Blue Spruce.

These solid (engineer's) versions are produced in the USA and come in several sizes. Made from hardened tool steel, they offer the precision often missing with traditional woodworking squares. Squareness is claimed to be within 0.0006in, so accuracy isn't a problem here.

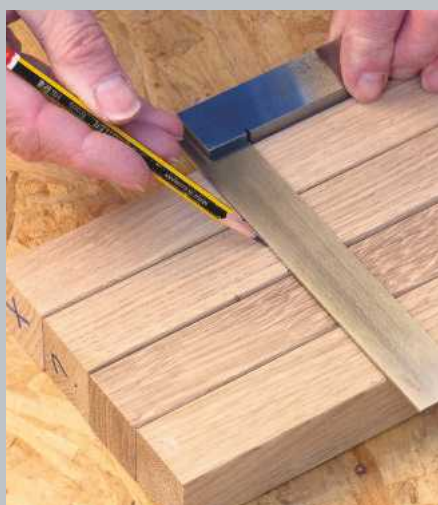
Stock thickness on the smallest tool is around 8.5mm thick, with the largest nearer 10.5mm, making them heavy enough to stand upright on the bench or machine table. Blades are 1.5mm thick, with components machined neatly. Each square has a notch where the blade and stock meet, so arrises, glue squeeze-out or small imperfections shouldn't interfere when inspecting external corners.

Whether used for marking out timber or checking machinery fences and blades, each tool performed flawlessly. It's a good idea to either wrap these squares in rust preventative paper or wipe on a coating

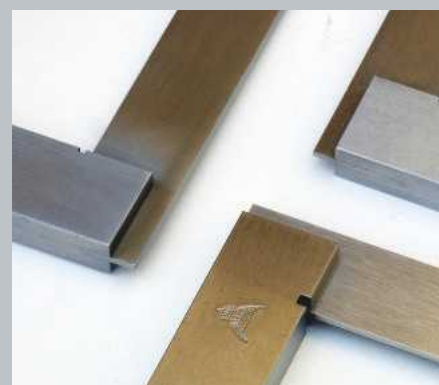
of camellia oil or similar when not being used for a while. Light tarnishing on the surface is inevitable as a result of finger marks.

Conclusion

Just the job for musical instrument makers, fine furniture makers or anyone needing complete accuracy, these PEC squares are highly accurate tools. Not too pricey, choose the most appropriate size to suit your work. There are also 230mm and 305mm blades available if you want something larger.



These solid (engineer's) versions are produced in the USA and come in several sizes



Each square has a notch where the blade and stock meet, so arrises, glue squeeze-out or small imperfections shouldn't interfere when inspecting external corners

For accurate marking out it's hard to beat a reliable engineer's square, unless you're prepared to pay a lot of money for a handmade tool with inlaid stock, such as those by Vesper or Blue Spruce

SPECIFICATION

Typical prices: 50mm – £18; 75mm – £19; 100mm – £22.50; 150mm – £26.50

Web: www.classichandtools.com

THE VERDICT

PROS

- Precision quality

CONS

- Likely to tarnish, so needs careful storage

RATING: 4.5 out of 5



Whether used for marking out timber or checking machinery fences and blades, each tool performed flawlessly

SPRING PROJECT: DOOR REVERSAL

Takes: Half a day

Tools you'll need: Small router, jack, block & shoulder planes, marking tools, chisels, drill, screwdrivers, tenon saw

OPEN DOOR POLICY

If you want to maximise room space by reversing the door, **Phil Davy** tells you how to do it with mortise & rim locks

What appeals to us in terms of comfort and style in the 21st century would not have been so popular once upon a time. Times change and a common request from owners of older houses is to reverse the opening of internal panelled doors.

Originally, this was probably due to draughty hallways and stairs or possibly modesty, too. I suspect Victorians especially did not want visitors peering through a doorway from the hall when a door was opened. Whatever the reason, these days it often makes sense to change the way a door hangs to make the most of space in a room.

Often, there are two ways to do this. Firstly, you can remove the hinges and fit them to the opposite stile, so the door still fits the opening exactly without having to use a plane. You'll then need to remove latch and lock if fitted and fix them on the opposite side, too. Alternatively, flip the door around so that handle and lock mechanism don't need to be moved. This can be the easier option as you don't have to cut new hinge recesses on the door itself. The downside is that the door will probably not fit the opening so well, especially if things are a bit out of square.

Whatever method you choose, you'll need to cut new hinge recesses into the door lining,



not so easy when there are layers of paint to get through. No matter how sharp your chisels, existing paintwork will chip as you cut new recesses in the jamb.

Old recesses in the jambs can then be filled with softwood offcuts. You may need to remove and rehang the door two or three times to check the fit. If the door is badly warped you may want to correct this with a batten across the offending corner temporarily screwed to the lining. Narrow blocks can be inserted against the door stop to counteract the cramping action.

On internal doors it's sometimes easier to prise off the stop and refit it once the door is reversed.

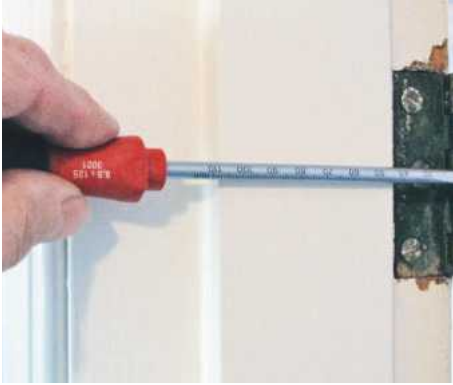
Loose joints

It's likely that you'll need to carry out repairs to a door at the same time as reversing it. Splits,

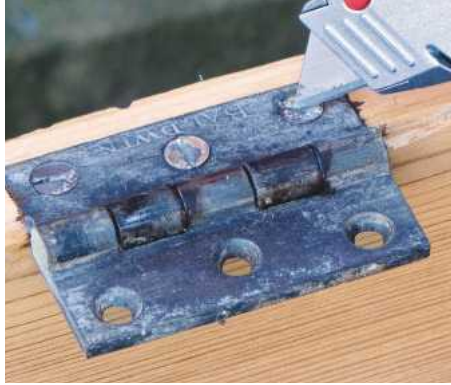
worm holes and other defects all add to the character, though if the homeowner wants the door to look immaculate, then it could be cheaper to fit a new replacement. If doors are to be painted, using filler here and there is less of a problem. Where doors are stripped, then it becomes more important to fill obvious holes or splits with matching wood where possible.

Pine doors that have been chemically dipped and stripped may well have loose joints, so you'll need to get out the sash cramps. Prise joints apart slightly and clean out old glue. Cut new wedges and hammer these into tenons when re-gluing.

One of the doors I worked on had a badly split corner, which meant routing an angled recess before gluing in a replacement piece of wood. Where repairs made with new timber are visible, try to match grain as closely as possible.



1 Remove the door from the jamb; old screws may have narrow slots, so several screwdrivers are useful



2 Screw slots are often clogged with paint; use the knife tip to clean so that the screwdriver blade seats securely



3 When reversing hinges, set the marking gauge to the thickness of the hinge flap, then mark the depth on the edge of the door



4 Make a series of vertical cuts with a chisel into the wood adjoining the recess, then remove the waste carefully



5 Pare down to the gauge line and check the recess is flat with a small square; trim ends and check the hinge fits



6 Not all screw holes will line up with the new hinge position so carve small plugs, glue and tap into the old holes



7 Mark centres of new holes with a bradawl; drill and screw flap to door edge; repeat for second hinge



8 It's wise to label hinges with masking tape so they don't get mixed up – screw holes don't always match



9 Cut and glue wood strips to cover the edges of the old hinge recess; remove pins when dry and trim flush



10 Mark new hinge recesses on the jamb – chop out with a chisel or carefully rout away most of the waste



11 Clean up recesses with a chisel and check hinges fit snugly; chipped paintwork will be sanded later



12 You'll need to plane the door edge if it binds when closing; remove door to plane if the lower edge binds



13 Remove mortise lock from the door; to reverse its operation, unscrew the metal case and swap the latch over



14 Unscrew the striking plate and chop the mortise on the opposite jamb; cut a softwood block to fill the cavity, then glue



15 Fill old hinge recesses in the same way, pinning softwood until the glue is dry; trim flush with a shoulder plane



16 Check the latch engages properly; fill holes and small splits and tint new wood that will stay unpainted



LOCK SWAP

1 A rim lock is easier to swap than a mortise lock, though its box keep still leaves a cavity



2 Brass door knobs are usually secured with fiddly grub screws; once removed, unscrew the rim lock



3 Remove the door and check for fit between jambs. Shoot if tight, but be economical when planing



4 Place the rim lock on the reverse side of the door and draw around the plate, making sure spindle holes line up



5 Carefully cut a new recess with a chisel; check the lock fits and glue a softwood blank to fill the old cavity



6 Clean off paint from old hinge and lock recesses with a chisel; aim to get wood as flat as possible



7 For a neat job, cut softwood blanks slightly oversize; glue in place and trim flush with a shoulder plane



8 Although rim locks are face mounted, box keeps can be cut into the architrave; fill the cavity as before



9 If the door corner is badly split, it's best to splice in new wood; mark the face of the stile for routing or sawing



10 Cramp the guide batten to the door and cut away damaged wood with a router; try to avoid cutting the tenon



11 Glue a new piece to the door, if possible trying to match the grain; allow glue to dry and saw the end flush



12 Trim the face and edge flush with a block plane; finish with a sanding block and stain new wood if desired



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MARKET YOURSELF THE CHIPPENDALE WAY

As Tom Fraser, Principal of The Chippendale International School of Furniture shows here, becoming a successful furniture maker requires more than a talent for woodworking and design

Thomas Chippendale is considered by many to be the father of modern woodworking. From his humble beginnings as a Yorkshire-born cabinetmaker, his designs became a raging success internationally, with his furniture being among the most coveted of the 18th century. As the name might suggest, we are great admirers of Thomas Chippendale at the Chippendale School. Our students, who come from all four corners of the globe to study professional furniture making, all leave with a keen appreciation of his work.

Becoming a successful furniture maker requires more than a talent for woodworking and design. Marketing oneself is also a key component of running a furniture business. This is a big element of what we teach our students as business know-how sets them up for success after graduation. Beyond his approach to design, woodworkers can take inspiration from Thomas Chippendale for his marketing techniques.

Understand consumer appetite

Although we'd all love to be admired for our pioneering designs or our innovative approaches,

the truth is, as woodworkers, we need to be attuned to the commercial appetite of the day. Making designs that appeal to the paying customer is key to running a profitable business. Chippendale was a master at reading the landscape and responding to what customers wanted. Although he had a distinctive design perspective, he was adaptable, creating furniture in the Rococo, Georgian and neoclassical styles. These made his works extremely popular for a huge range of customers across the Americas, as well as back home in the UK.

Make your work accessible

We can all be a little precious with our designs at times, preferring to keep them to ourselves rather than shouting about them. But how can you expect a customer to buy your work if you're not showing them what's on offer?

Chippendale's famous design book, *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director*, is one of the earliest examples of a product design brochure or catalogue. With it, Chippendale was able to showcase his furniture before customers placed their orders.

While this might not seem a particularly novel idea today, at the time, it was extremely forward-thinking. Using the *Director*, Chippendale was able to capture his customers' imaginations, allowing them to visualise his pieces in their homes before they placed an order. Making your work accessible is still so important – showcasing your designs in a way that your customers can engage with them before they



Chippendale's famous design book, *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director*

make a purchase is crucial. If you don't have an Instagram for Business account, now's the time to make one. Get in front of your audience and show them your designs, so that they can covet your work and be encouraged to make a purchase.

Don't neglect functionality

Chippendale understood that this work was to be used by people, not just looked at, and this is what made his designs so successful. As Ann Sumner, Historic Collections Adviser at Harewood House Trust put it in her interview with Christies: "Chippendale understood the relationship between design and craftsmanship, with many pieces being highly functional and practical, as well as beautiful."

Being able to produce furniture that is both visually appealing and fits in with customers' lifestyles is a rare ability but one that is greatly valued. This is what makes the likes of IKEA so popular.

That's not to say that woodworkers need to compromise on quality – there is still very much an appreciation of bespoke, custom and artisan woodwork, and there will always be an appreciation of quality, as there was in Chippendale's day.

If you're a passionate craftsman, you won't regret finding yourself a copy of *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director* and familiarising yourself with Chippendale's techniques. Today, we can still learn from his pioneering approach to both design and marketing. ✂

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you'd like to follow in the footsteps of Thomas Chippendale and set up your own woodworking business, then apply to study on the Professional course at the Chippendale School – find out more at www.chippendaleschool.com



Ribband back chairs, by Thomas Chippendale

CARVED CAULDRON BOWL

Continuing with his legs theme, **Les Thorne** comes up with a cauldron-style design in olive ash, which features textured and carved feet as well as pyrographed detail on the rim



More legs I hear you say! Putting a bowl on some feet seems to be an ongoing theme nowadays, but the difference with this one is that they are carved. Work like this requires a fair amount of hand sanding so will take some time, but the rewards are there if you want to put the hard work in. This project is something that is not new by any stretch of the imagination, but is a design I've not done before. I had a reasonable idea in my head as to how I'd go about working on this piece, but had to change what I was doing halfway through due to the timber moving and a fault in the blank, which meant that I had to put a new spigot on the bottom. This was certainly a learning curve and Mk2 will definitely be an improvement on this one. The other main theme of the project is the importance of a gouge's bevel in woodturning. The ability to be able to 'ride' the bevel when making a cut will make the whole turning experience not only more enjoyable but also safer, normally leading to that perfect finish straight off the tool, which we all dream of. ✂



1 I've had this ash blank in the wood store for a while now and even though it's quite thick, it's down to 12% moisture content. The depth will allow me to make a cauldron shape bowl



2 I am often asked by beginners how to mount the blank up on the lathe. I prefer the ease of using a screw chuck as opposed to a faceplate unless I am turning a really large blank. Make sure the hole size matches the screw, which will afford you the most strength



3 Being safe when turning is always a top priority and there's nothing more important than protecting your eyes and face. This photo shows how I approach the timber with the tool handle held low



4 With the handle held low, the bevel of the tool will rest on the surface of the wood behind the cut. The shaving should curl around the inside of the tool's flute and exit, hopefully in one pleasing ribbon



5 Using the 10mm skew chisel, cut the chucking spigot. The outer ring is what the feet are going to be formed from. This is a scraping type cut, so won't leave a great finish, but this doesn't matter as it will be reworked later anyway



6 At times, it felt as if I was making this piece up as I went along, which isn't my normal way of working. The decision to leave a band on the top for texturing was a design change, which I hope improves the look of the finished piece



7 The Arbortech mounted with the mini industrial cutter is nearly always my go-to tool for carving and texturing. The power of the dedicated grinder will easily create the deep texture across the ridge



8 It's important to use this tool safely, so I lock the spindle on the lathe and keep both hands on the grinder at all times. Light pressure is all that's needed in order to cut to the required depth



9 This is what you're left with – a texture formed from some random grooves. I often use this technique to hide small splits in the blank, which transforms a fault into a feature



10 The finish from the Arbortech will be pretty good, but does depend on the grain of the timber behaving itself. Any fluffy bits can be rubbed off by burnishing with a handful of shavings



11 With the lathe's indexing, I could mark out three sections on the ring remaining on the bottom. The curve of the bowl should carry on through the ring, so when parts of it are removed the shape will be seamless



12 Once the back is turned to shape, but not sanded, grip on the spigot and start the hollowing process. Unbeknownst to me a split in the spigot made the bowl come loose, so I had to lose some of the depth on the bottom



13 Here you can see the position of the tool required in order to get the bevel of the tool in contact with the surface. The bevel is pointing in the direction that I want the tool to advance through the timber. The arc in the centre can be removed later



14 Remove the centre part with a push cut but work from the centre outwards. I don't bring this cut up the side of the bowl as it would lead to the tool losing bevel support, and perhaps even causing a dig in



15 These are my main two tools for bowl turning: the 45° gouge with swept-back wings, which does the bulk of the work, and the 60° gouge, which I use in the bottom of the bowl



16 The undercut rim is one of the most pleasing design features on a bowl like this, and it's achieved by making sure the tool's handle is started further over to the right. Once the tool is cutting, swing the handle over and curve towards the left



17 Once the bulk of the inside is removed, the 60° gouge can be called into use. This tool is very easy to sharpen as it can be placed on the grinder's platform with the flute pointing up and rotated evenly against the grinding wheel



18 The angle of the bevel means that it's very easy to get it in contact with the surface of the wood. The toolrest is placed a little way into the bowl, which gives the cutting edge a little extra support



19 I see a lot of ruined bowls online, which could be avoided by some simple measuring using the figure-of-eight callipers. The large size of these custom-made ones allow me to get right into the base of the bowl



20 Power sanding, in my opinion, is the most effective way of preparing the inside of the bowl for finishing, and the 75mm Hope Woodturning sanding pad is perfect for this when coupled with a power drill. I use the drill in the 3 o'clock position on the inside of the bowl



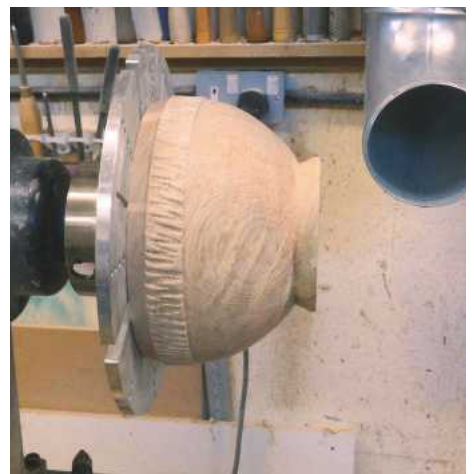
21 Ash is one of the timbers that tends to be fairly easy to sand, but its open-grain means that any abrasive which comes off the cloth will be trapped. This can lead to scratches, so a blow out with compressed air between grits is advantageous in terms of avoiding this



22 The top rim needs to be sanded before the back of the bowl is worked on, as you'll not be able to access it when the bowl is remounted on the button jaws



23 These type of jaws are available for most makes of chuck and are certainly an asset in the workshop when it comes to working on the bottoms of bowls. The drill makes moving the buttons from one position to another very easy



24 The shape of the bowl means that it would've been difficult to grip on the outside, so I've expanded the buttons into the inner curve. The undercut will add to the security of the fixing



25 Just before I started cutting away the unwanted wood, I realised that one of the feet would be weak due to the grain direction, so I remarked their position. As I've lost some of the spigot, I may not be able to achieve the curve I first envisaged



26 The feet have been marked out and the fine-tooth saw is used to cut down the side of the feet being careful not to mark the curve of the bowl. Lock the spindle of the lathe to stop the bowl revolving



27 These Microplanes are so sharp that they remove the timber really easily. Ensure to not put too much pressure on them as being this sharp means they therefore aren't as robust



28 At this stage I need to get the curve from the bottom up to the feet, and for this I use a spindle gouge. Once more the bevel is in contact and the tool is worked from the centre outwards to give the optimum finish



29 Sanding is a necessary evil and this type of work requires quite a lot of it. Using a series of cork blocks and hook-and-loop pads means I have every chance of maintaining the curve of the bowl without sanding flats on it



30 The obligatory decorative woodturner's grooves are cut in the bottom using the point of a skew chisel. Be really careful with those spinning feet, as knocking them off at this stage would be really frustrating



31 I've used a few different pyrography machines in my professional life and this one from John at Woodart Products is one of the best. When using it for texturing the handset can get hot due to the length of time it's used, which isn't really a problem on this one



32 The thin wire is used on the feet to make them black and create a texture. The wire is really hot and the old drawer underneath the project will catch any embers, which ensures I won't burn down the workshop!



33 A good pyrography pen will take thicker wire and keep it hot, and I wanted a deeper texture on the rim. The wire could be shaped into a coil or a circle to create some patterns on the rim



34 Olive ash and Danish oil are a marriage made in heaven. The bowl will receive three coats with a light rub down between each using some fine artificial wire wool. The piece would be difficult to buff due to the sticking out feet



35 I thought this timber was going to warp as olive ash normally does, but 5mm overnight even surprised me. I should have part-turned it in order to minimise the impact of the timber moving, but wood will often catch you out



36 The completed olive ash bowl with carved and textured feet should look something like this

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MARKET TRADING PART 3

In the final part of this series, **Gareth Jones** describes finding a niche with his craft products and an odd customer who commissioned a loo roll holder

Last month I continued my memories of setting up as a market trader selling the products of my joinery shop on the England/Wales border. In this instalment, I recall my first day at Sandbach market, where a rich farmer's wife posed a mystery that has baffled me and my wife ever since.

Carved oak house signs

On our first day at Sandbach Market it became clear that our carved oak house signs were going to be a winner in that prosperous corner of Cheshire. These very up market signs carved in relief in solid oak were already our best bread and butter line in my home town, many still adorning properties today after 40 years or more. I attach a photo of the one still on our own home. The signs had not taken off in Wrexham, but given the very depressed state of that area at the time I had not expected such luxuries to be in demand there.

While still an amateur woodworker I had

discovered the great usefulness and versatility of routers, and had started my love affair with the Makita company after investing in one of their heavy-duty 12mm collet machines, then the best on the market within my price range, and this was soon to be followed by no fewer than four smaller Bosch and Trend units set up to add chamfers and other decorative finishes to our growing range of products.

When the big Makita router gave up after many years of service, I shopped around and preferred the large Trend 9 and bought two of them so I could enjoy the luxury, when carving signs, of not having to switch cutters. Even today, in semi-retirement, I have seven routers in regular use, including two inverted to make improvised spindle moulders.

Seven routers

The house signs were made by marking out a border and the lettering in ballpoint (using stencils I had cut out from aluminium) onto a piece of 6 x

1in planed English oak of high quality mounted from below onto a jig held firmly in the vice. Then came the removal of all the background timber. A tidy border was created with a 12mm cutter using a fence on the router, the same cutter staying put as I switched to freehand removal of more timber, then reducing to a 6mm cutter, which would fit into the corners of letters like Ms, Ns and Ws where the larger cutter had stopped short. A 45° chamfer (using a smaller router) was then added to every edge, including internal and external edges of the border, with a piloted cutter.

This still left quite a bit of finishing to be done by hand wherever the chamfer bit had turned a corner without reaching into the apex, typically in the letters I have already mentioned and in lots of others too. Only letters such as S and O with continuous curves escaped the chisel. Burn marks were also taken out with the sharp carving tool I used to get into these awkward corners.

With a lot of practice I became very adept at all this, and although it was tiring and dusty work, could comfortably complete the machining of upwards of 50 letters between 9 and 3 o'clock, which seemed to me good money in those days at £3 a letter retail, leaving only the hand finishing to do. It was a stressful job, because the slightest slip of the router could mean an instant write-off of the full length of the sign in oak which then, as now, was costly. I made it a golden rule that whenever I made such an error, I took the sign straight to the table saw and cut it in half before temptation kicked in to salvage the error. I was working so fast that any repair would have taken longer than starting again from scratch.



Examples of various house signs made by the author

Chipping away...

Now here's the really nice bit. This finishing work of course required no power, so I could take nearly completed signs with me to a market and sit at a portable bench armed with mallet and chisels chipping away and looking for all the world as if I had carved the whole thing using just these tools. I never made such a fraudulent claim, of course, and in fact the ever scrupulous Alice insisted on our using a leaflet explaining how the signs were made, but it's just possible I suppose that the odd person may have been under this delusion when ordering a sign and appreciated it all the more!

Be all that as it may, our first day in Sandbach passed well, with several orders for signs. But our very first customer, if I may call her that, posed a mystery, which to this day I cannot fathom out. She was a well-dressed, middle aged lady, extremely well spoken who I judged correctly to be the wife of a prosperous farmer. A lovely down to earth lady. Let's call her Angela.

An early bird, she arrived at the stall soon after we had finished setting up at around 8.30, and it's no exaggeration to say that her eyes lit up as they fell upon our display of woodwork, which Alice had prepared with her usual flair, all laid out on crisp new linen.

"Oh at last! She enthused. "Somebody doing really nice woodwork." The stall did look good, and Angela gave us a warm welcome to Sandbach, delighted that she would at last be able to buy grandchildren proper old-fashioned wooden toys, and admiring the range of grown up stuff, which included things like wall-mounted loo roll holders in walnut, sycamore chopping boards, letter racks,

clocks, mirrors, all kinds of stuff. I was sure we had a potentially very good customer hooked.

A suggestion

Eventually she paused for breath and said she hoped I wouldn't mind if she made a suggestion. Her kitchen, she explained, was very large, and the kitchen roll holder was wall-mounted like our loo roll holders. But whenever she was doing a messy or greasy job like boning a turkey, she seemed to be miles away from it. What she would give anything for, she said, was a simple, portable kitchen roll holder on a stand, so that she could have it at her elbow whenever needed.

Could I, perhaps, make her one in the same lovely timber as that in evidence on my stall? Well of course I could, and she was delighted with my suggested price of a fiver. Very taken with her idea of a worthwhile product, I made half a dozen in beech the following morning. I sold three of them in Wrexham market the following Monday, and would have had none left by midday Wednesday if I had not already made another half dozen to cope with the demand. 10 sold off two markets!

They remain one of our most popular products, and have sold by the score in various hardwoods, and in a range of heights to be used for free-standing kitchen and loo rolls.

Thursday morning arrived, and Angela was thrilled to bits when I showed her her kitchen roll holder. It exceeded her expectations, she said, and she specially liked the little brass finial (an upholstery stud hiding the tailstock hole). It was just perfect, she said, but surely would cost more than a fiver? Not at all, I replied.

In fact by making several I had been able to get the price down to £4. That, too, was wonderful, she said. How nice to meet an honest trader and not to be taken advantage of!

"Thank you so very, very much," she said, putting the holder back on the stall and walking off. Alice and I watched her retreating figure in amazement as she headed towards the vegetable stall. Then Alice, a lot brighter than I am in these matters, solved the mystery. "She's gone to buy spuds and heavy stuff, and doesn't want to risk crushing her lovely new holder. She'll be back in a second to buy it and lay it on top."

Empty handed

And sure enough, a few minutes later Angela returned to our stall. "I just want to say thank you again for making me such a lovely holder," she said "I really don't know how I would have managed without it." And with those words, she left. Empty handed. Every Thursday she popped by and admired the stall on her early morning visit, but she never bought a thing, not even, when Christmas came around, the toys she had been so excited about. That was par for the course, but the kitchen roll holder broke new ground.

Do you find that as baffling as we did? She had gone out of her way to describe a long-standing and perfectly understandable problem, and we had solved it for her on time, below budget and to her entire satisfaction. Yet she walked away.

Up there in Cheshire we were close to Lancashire, of course, where they say there's nowt so queer as folk. That's you, Angela. ✂

Coming up in the next issue...

The Woodworker & Good Woodworking
May issue – on sale 17 April



NAUTICAL BUT NICE

Finding some brass port hole surrounds at a local antique shop prompts Glenn Perry to get nautical and create this novel mirror design



DAPPER DICKIE BOW

Andrew Hall shares another one of his signature projects with us – the dickie bow tie – a fun exercise in turning which also makes a fantastic gift for friends and loved ones



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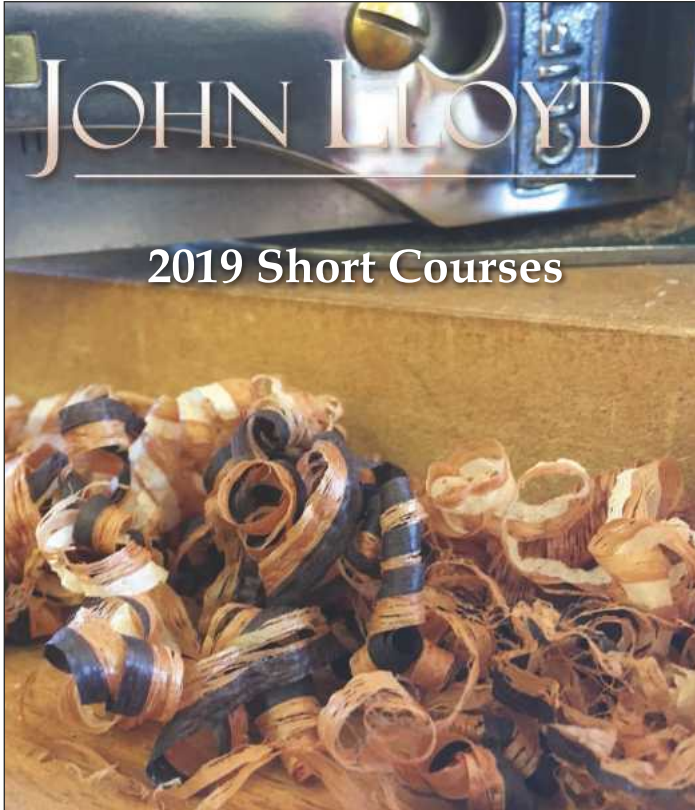


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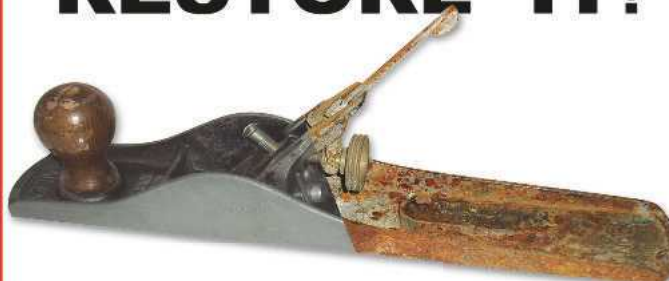
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TOUCH WOOD

Going back to roots

My GP (at the time) wrote in the church magazine that she was continually amazed that, on hearing a hopeful prognosis, many of her patients would corroborate it by touching wood. She seemed divided. The scientific part of her trusted the physicality of medicine; the spiritual bit of her believed in the invisible. Touching wood was neither of these. It seemed to her to be a pointless superstition. I disagreed, and I wrote a reply. The magazine didn't print it. Hmm.

She will have known of the placebo effect, where it is not the medication but trust in the medication that is efficacious. If touching wood gives the patient a spark of optimism, then surely it's a good thing? Rather than dismissing the habit, she might have

acknowledged it and commissioned someone like me (i.e. me) to produce an ingot of wood to sit on her vinyl laminated desk by her heavily lacquered chair in her fiercely clinical surgery so that customers wouldn't have to search wildly about and, failing to find any timber within reach, self-deprecatingly tap the side of their head. Acting like a wooden-top in front of a professional is not a healing experience.

It wouldn't just be her of course. Every GP in the country should have a beautifully produced block of wood on their desk. A small brick of lightly waxed oak would work well. It shouldn't be fancy. It is the wood itself that matters. Decoration would distract and say too much. (It seems to me to be superfluous to write 'Bread' on a bread bin or 'Tea' on a tea caddy, but in the spirit of Alice and rabbit holes, and to encourage all positivity, the block could be inscribed, 'Touch me'. Mmm. I'm not so sure.) Beech might be preferable for its antiseptic properties. Maybe sycamore, though it could get grubby. People like a choice so I'd offer alternatives. Anyway, she didn't ask, and that potentially global enterprise never left the hangar.

We have contact

No one would believe that the block of wood would do anything. It would just sit there. The efficacy would come from the patients themselves. To touch wood is to make a deliberate connection with the natural world and, by implication, with the rules that govern it. They govern it perfectly, and by touching wood, we tangibly align ourselves with them. We go with the flow. With the utterance 'touch wood', we emphasise the connection, making it public and more solid. And by hearing our words, we believe them that much more. This isn't magic, but it's coming close. Touching wood is more than wishing; it is accepting our dependence. Recognising that some things, maybe all things, but certainly these things that worry us at the moment, are beyond our control. In touching wood there is an instant of abandon, of letting go. It may only be for a split second, but in that blink, we shift our view: we hope.

Crossing our fingers isn't so different. It is momentarily to disrupt accepted operations; suspend normal workings, and give pause for another (unknown) system to take over. It's beyond us, and few people would like to be put on the spot to explain themselves. Nevertheless, these trivial personal gestures are important to us. We know they don't make sense, but without understanding why, we still do them.

The patient in the surgery has a pulse of apprehension and wants to reach out to something reliable and dependable. In a better world it would be the doctor's hand, and the comfort received would be far more powerful. Failing that s/he looks for something else of depth and worth. Something with power. Look around. How many natural materials do you have within arm's reach? Maybe some metalwork. Perhaps some pottery. Leather. Wool. Even these are being squeezed out by our increasingly synthetic environment. Pottery and glass are fragile, ephemeral. Wool speaks of sheep: here today and shorn tomorrow. Leather talks of death. At the other end of the scale, metals, like rocks and jewels, measure their paces in millennia.

In the middle of these two scenes (the cosmos and your living room) is wood. Wood is closest to us in lifespan and scale: it is the most human of materials; individual and characterful. Before the age of disposability, a piece of furniture could be generations older than ourselves and stacked like a battery with memories, feelings and stories. Many people, on seeing an impressive piece of woodwork instinctively want to stretch out to feel it, to connect with it. Is it so surprising then that at times of mild anxiety, touching wood is an instinctive reaction? Harry Nilsson sang: 'Such a comfort to know, it's dependable and slow, but it's always there. It's the one friend I've got, a giant of all times, my Good Old Desk', the initials being deliberate. ✕



Tree-hugging: an extreme form of touching wood

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