

Here is how you get to Wellesbourne Mill: Coming South from Offchurch on the Fosse Way, turn right on the B4086, Friz Hill. Turn left after about a mile, down to the mill.



Woody's World

The Newsletter of



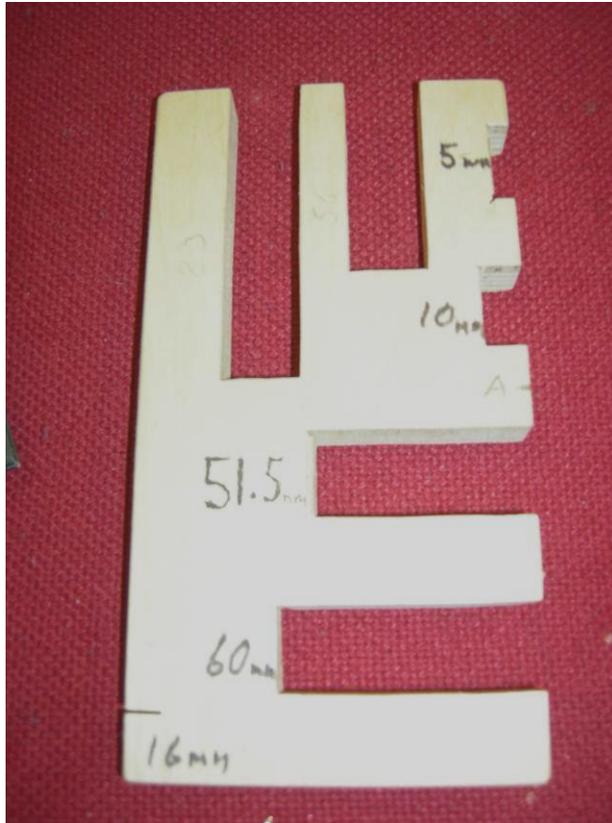
July 2009

Tonight is a hands-on session, with Dave Simms refereeing. We're going to make pocket watches. I can't wait to see how you do all those little cogs...

June's meeting saw a demo of pen turning by Bob Fox. Bob has been making fine and unusual pens for many years and passed on many time and labour saving tips, also showing the diversity of materials that lend themselves to producing pens.

In the past, Bob has used pen kits from Axminster and Craft Supplies. Now that Ken Croft is selling pen kits and supplies at club meetings this is obviously the source of choice. I've also bought pen kits from The Tool Post in Didcot, near where I used to work. They do a good selection of the acrylic pen blanks.

Using a bandsaw makes cutting the pen blanks from any old piece of wood very quick and easy. Bob has a nice little jig for cutting the blanks accurately to the various lengths required by the different pen kits.



Cutting the wood to exactly the right length by using this jig means that you don't then have to use an end mill to trim the wood that pokes out beyond the end of the brass inserts.

You can use just about any wood for making pens. Bob demonstrated making one out of an old piece of oak furniture. It's probably best to check with an adult first before you do this. A Woody's World "Top Tip".

Small pieces of wood trimmed from a garden shrub can be quickly dried in the microwave. Put the microwave on DEFROST, put the wood in for three 3 minute bursts, letting it cool between each time. It's probably best not to save energy by defrosting those chicken breasts at the same time. Wow, that's 2 Woody's World "Top Tips" in as many paragraphs!

When cutting each piece to length, make sure you mark it so that you can make sure that the grain will match across the central joint in the finished pen.

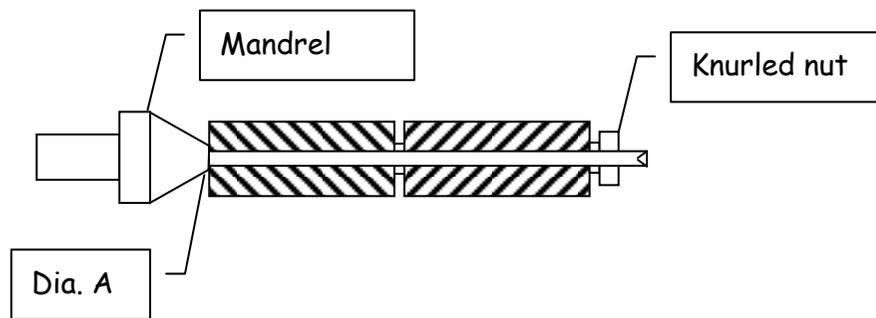
Now you're ready to drill out the centre of the wood, to the diameter of the brass insert. In this case a 7mm drill was used. Use a bullet nosed drill, so it breaks through cleanly on exiting the far end of the wood. Also drill from what will be the centre of the pen outwards, so that you know that if you get any run-out, it won't be where the grains are supposed to match.



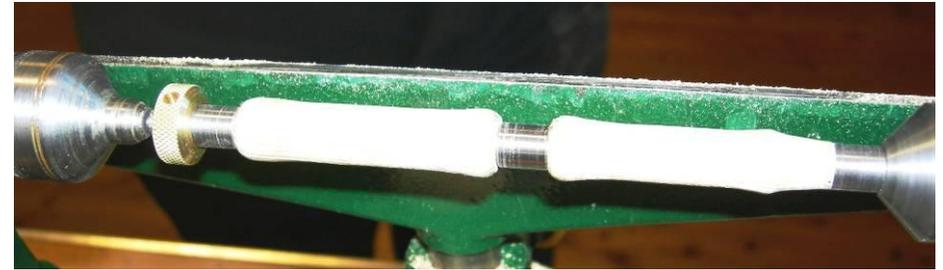
Use a slow speed for drilling, to prevent the wood from overheating and potentially splitting.

Now glue in the inserts using a good quality Superglue. The glue "goes off" in a minute or so, so you are soon ready to mount the wood on the mandrel on the lathe.

Bob uses a mandrel that has been turned down such that it can be mounted in the chuck, rather than the more usual kind that has a morse taper on it. Bobs' one also has been made such that the chuck end has the same diameter as the pen nib-end taper, so it's nice and easy to get that diameter correct. (dia. A - Below)



Bob shapes the nib end first and works back to the clip end, using a 3/8th inch spindle gouge throughout.



The finished profile can now be sanded down using your preferred abrasives. Make sure you don't remove the details with excessive sanding. Bob used Scotchbrite and a Hermes 180 grit sanding pad.

Bob then put some character lines and burn them in using Formica.



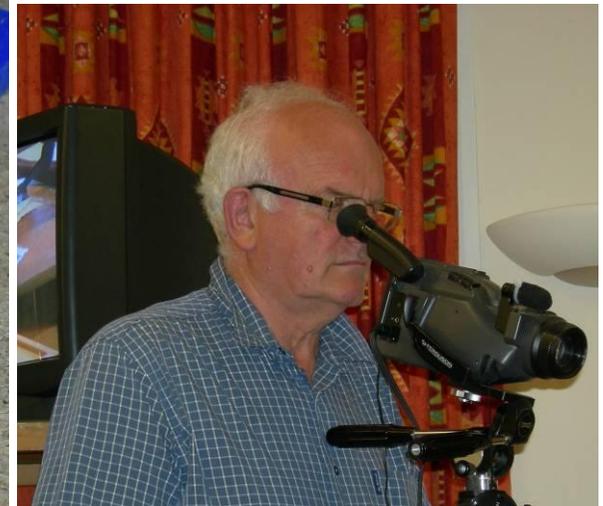
Then he sanded the pen down again to clean up the burns, and put on 2 coats of sanding sealer, which he polished off with a paper towel.

The pen was finished with a Carnauba wax stick.

The pen can now be assembled. It's possible to buy pen presses from many sources and they can be as much as £45. As an alternative, Bob has made a devilishly cunning jig using a mastic gun. Using spacer blocks, this makes the process of pressing together the pen parts quick and easy.



Bob's next trick was to make one a series of glued blocks of contrasting wood. Each piece was cut approx 5mm square in section and the length of the pen. These were then glued together to produce a single piece of the normal pen length and section. Then this single piece was cut into 5mm lengths. Each of these pieces were glued onto a pen insert so that the finished result was chequered. Nice and fiddly for Neville to capture on the camera.



Having glued all the pieces into place, the 2 inserts were then mounted on the lathe as before and shaped. Go gently when roughing, to ensure that the pieces don't separate.

This pen was finished using a mixture of Superglue and boiled linseed oil (ratio 2 drops to 1), which gives a durable and not-too-high-gloss finish.



More Top Tips

- When making pen from acrylic blanks, use Superglue, it works just as well as for wood.
- Polish acrylic pens with T-Cut.
- Superglue can also be used for gluing a photograph onto the pen, prior to finishing.
- Make small, fiddly custom made chisels from masonry nails.
- Use these for doing fine things, such as captive rings.
- When you make a mistake, think of it as a design change.

Here's something to ponder on when you're lying in the bath after a hard day's sawdust making. Who are these Woodies?



August meeting. Any takers for helping with some notes and pictures for the August trip to Wellesbourne please? If not, it'll be a painfully thin September issue!

Forthcoming Attractions

August 6th - Pole Turning at Wellesbourne, including Cleaving, using Spoke Shaves, and making brooms. Subs will be £2.50. See the map below for navigating there.

September 3rd - Chris Eagles demonstrates the making of a necklace stand.

October 6th - Hands On

November 5th - Demo (To be defined)

December 3rd - Hands on

January 9th - Social Evening

February 4th - Demo

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Feel free to send me something to put in!

Photos

If you'd like the photos from this issue emailed to you please let me know. Contact details below.

Committee Contact Names & Numbers

Chairman	John Davies	01926 499675
Vice-Chairman	Roger Gilbert	01327 260086
Secretary	Mary Davies	01926 499675
Treasurer	David Tilley	02476 302508
Club Shop	Nick Milton	01926 777961
Editor Dave Mason	01295 660508	davemason9@talk21.com