

New Woodwork Bench (part1) . By **Keith Davidson**

I haven't contributed to the newsletter recently because I've been very busy, thinking more than doing. When I made a few more crickets earlier this year Joan was not happy with the sawdust and shavings I dragged in from the garage all around the house, despite dusting off and changing shoes and slippers. So at her suggestion, I have ordered and am awaiting a shed for the garden.

Now the bench I use for woodwork is an old school bench, you might remember the style, which has a few niggles. Firstly, it's designed for two people, one on either side, and is quite wide/deep. Secondly, when making the crickets, I found I was getting a lot of back ache. Also, my lathe bolts onto the bench, so if I want to do woodwork, I have to dismantle the lathe. One of the few benefits of a two bar bed lathe is that it can be dismantled in a few minutes, with all the bits, except the bars, going into a storage box. But this gets tedious.

As the bench is considerably wider than the shed door, I asked the shed folk if they could assemble the shed around the bench- no problem. But some further research hinted that my back ache might well be due to the bench being too low, despite already being raised on lengths of 4x4. So a taller, narrower bench is needed. This will also leave sufficient space in the shed for a dedicated lathe bench.



I acquired a "new" vice from ebay and the wood, after much research, head scratching and sketching, from NY Timber, formerly Joseph Thompson Timber in Sunderland. The staff there, particularly Keith Walton, were particularly pleasant and helpful (unashamed plug there)

There's enough wood here to also make most of the new lathe bench.



Frame bits cut to length



All the joints cut (8 mortice and tenons, 4 with haunches, and 8 lapped dovetails)



Unfortunately I haven't a decent photo of the two trestles, but here they are from the side showing: testing for wind, nice mortice end grain and unflatness!



And the final glue-up of the frame:

My present workbench has wind from front to back, so I assembled this on a piece of kitchen worktop mdf. The dovetails could not hold the joints tight with the slight twist in the trestles, so, as my sash cramps aren't long enough, I invested in the orange floor board clamps, cheap as chips from Screwfix, and worked fine. Another pair and I'd have a double bass!

Unusually, I have put the dovetailed rails on the inside of the legs, in case a diagonal brace proves to be necessary. This could be fitted retrospectively. I don't think it will be needed, as the unglued trial assembly seemed quite stable.

The framework seems to be all square and flat now. When the glue is set, and the whole lot cleaned up, it will be ready for the top and well-board, which I started with:



The 3"x12" top being glued, having been hand planed from rough-sawn stock.



The well-board being glued up, using the traditional technique with a No.7 Jointer plane.

To be continued.