



MID WALES WOODTURNERS

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a branch of

The Association of Woodturners of Great Britain

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From the Chairman

This month I am going back to a small round coffee table in brown oak which I made over 20 years ago. This has been in use in my lounge since then.

Dimensions: diameter of top 15 inches by 1 inch thick, height 17 inches, stem is 2 ½ x 2 ½ x 12 inches [*this has two spigots to be added*], the x of the base is 3 x 3 x 14 inches.

One of the main problems is the size of the top which in my case was from a solid plank. It may be difficult to obtain this so the alternative would be to laminate two or three pieces together. The other issue is the capacity of your lathe over the bed. Most smaller lathes these days have a 12 inch capacity which in some cases can be more if the headstock rotates. You can always scale the size of the top to accommodate your lathe, but the other way would be to complete the top without the use of a lathe. At all stages components can be finish sanded and polished.

Top: For this I decided that I would turn the underneath, therefore I had to hot glue a 6 inch x 1 inch piece of wood with a 3 inch recess already prepared to the top surface. Now I was able to true up the edge and the lower surface. As you can see from one of the photos there is an extra disc [*about 7 inches in diameter*] which has a recess for the stem [*this recess will be right for the 2 inch jaws of the chuck*]. To enable this to be accurate I turned a shallow recess for this disc ready to be glued and screwed. When this has been done the top can be reversed so that the edge can be shaped and the top surface completed. I remember taking this off the lathe and giving it a final sand with an orbital sander.

Stem: This will have a short spigot at the top which may be about 2 inches in diameter, check what you have turned into the 7 inch disc. At the bottom there will be a longer 1 inch spigot to go into the base. When I am faced with this situation I bring the spindle blank to round then turn the two spigots, they need to be good tight fits, then turn the shape as required. Please note the bottom of the stem is kept square.

Base: The first stage is to saw and plane the timber to the correct size. Then I worked on the rather straight forward half lap joint. Drill a 1 inch hole in the centre. Then we move on to the shape of the two pieces which can be achieved with the band saw. I always find that once a band saw blade has cut many round discs it will not saw in a straight line with

the fence so I usually use a new blade.

Assembly: Turn the top upside down and glue in the stem. Glue the base together. Finally glue the table together. Allow to fully cure before the final rub down and polish.

The design of this table with more weight in the base makes this a very stable piece of furniture in a living room. The dimensions and choice of timber can be adapted according to what is available or the capacity of your lathe. I always find that it is a good idea to draw a life size plan so that the proportions look right in the end result.

I hope you have found this interesting. Making small round tables allows plenty of scope for different designs. They also require careful thought to the order of turning, chucking and need a range of turning tools and more important skill. Best wishes John



▲ The finished table.

CLUB CONTACTS

Chairman : John Morgan : 0193 855 4572 : chairman@midwaleswoodturners.com

Treasurer : Les Symonds : 0167 852 1235 : treasurer@midwaleswoodturners.com

Secretary : Kym Price : 01650 511 572 : secretary@midwaleswoodturners.com