Woody's World

7th August 2025

The Skew

Please also read "Open Evening" and "Other News" towards the end of this newsletter

We are grateful to Roger for meeting the many requests for an expert session on mastering the Skew. A really useful technical demonstration followed by the opportunity for many of us to show whether we were paying attention or not!

Skews are primarily used in spindle work and, once mastered, one advantage is that they give a lovely finish requiring much less sanding.



Roger brought along a number of different Skews (notionally numbered 1-7 top down in this picture). Whilst they are all essentially used in a similar way, there are various pros and cons worth noting:

The flat underside of Skew 7 can mean that it catches on the tool rest thereby upsetting a smooth transition along the work piece. This can be addressed by smoothing the skew edges as well as dressing the tool rest to keep it free of blemishes.

The curved end of Skew 4 means that the 'long point' (see Fig1 below) will naturally sit slightly back from the spindle thus reducing risk of a catch.



Skew 2 is 'oval'/elliptical in profile which seems a good idea in terms of helping it glide smoothly across the tool rest – but it also means it is relatively unstable and liable to rotate - even the experts find this difficult to use. Not entry level!

Skews 3 & 6 (and pic =>) have a square profile but with nicely rounded edges – ideal.

For a planing cut:

Once you have prepared your workpiece, position the tool rest just above the horizontal spindle centre line.

The first picture shows where Roger has made a black sharpie line across the bevel of the skew about 1/3 the way in from the ‘short point’. This will act as a guide for the safe cut zone and, perhaps more importantly, where not to cut.



Your cut will be made high up on your workpiece – the second picture shows the cut being made at about 1 or 11 O’clock if looking along the piece from either end.



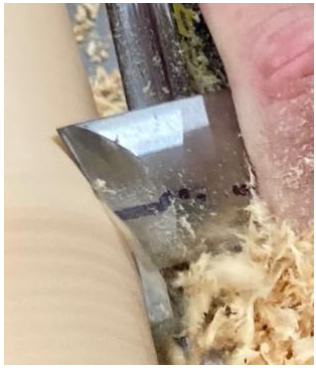
Back to the black line. Your cut will be made at about ¼ the way in from the short point so just before or up to the black line.

Start with the tool flat onto the tool rest, lift the handle so the back of the bevel rubs on the work piece, lift it slightly more & it will naturally tip until it cuts. This movement means the leading (ie bottom) edge of the skew is the only part of the skew touching the tool rest.

It is because the bottom edge is the only part of the skew that's actually touching the tool rest that you need to cut low down on the cutting edge ie below the black sharpie line, where it is supported by the tool rest. If your cut point moves above the line the cut becomes unsupported by the tool rest and you’ll get a catch ie the higher up long point will meet the downward path of the workpiece and...’clang’







<=The long point is also good for going in to small coves because you can see the tip whereas with the short point it would be hidden.

Roger suggested an example angle to grind would be 30° on the point ie 15° either side of the centre line. You'll see in Fig 2 below that this is referred to as the 'included angle' with the example shown being 22° on the bevel and, therefore, an included angle of 44°. There should be no burr on the skew so finish with a diamond card.
Practice moving the tool along the work piece by moving your body – and not in the natural arc that you will create if you rotate rather than moving along the work piece.
A chatter noise will occur if you begin to cut too high above the sharpie mark – rectify by cutting lower.



Roger mentioned that Steve Jones is brilliant with a skew – well, this is him along with a link to his youtube channel.

https://www.youtube.com/@woodturner21/videos

So, quite a subject and one to do a bit of studying for along with some methodical practice. Thank you for your demonstration Roger – no doubt one to revisit!

Fig1. Parts of a Skew

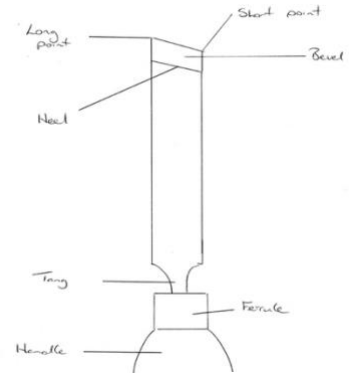
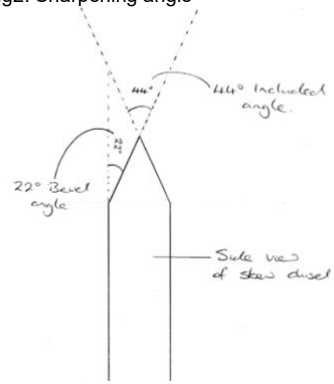


Fig2. Sharpening angle



Source: The Woodworkers Institute

Here is some further reading and practical exercises for you on these excellent resources from the Woodworkers Institute:
https://woodworkersinstitute.com/skew-chisel-skill-builder-part-1/
https://woodworkersinstitute.com/skew-chisel-skill-builder-part-2/
https://woodworkersinstitute.com/skew-chisel-skill-builder-part-3/

Club Open Evening:

A little of your help to make it a success

We will be holding our Club open evening at the next meeting on 4th September....please read below to help the evening be a success.

The aim of the evening is to attract new members, by inviting them along to see some live turning, have a look at a display of members work and have a chat and a cup of tea/coffee - all free of charge. We will be doing some on and offline promotion but **please can we ask members to help by**:

- Bringing 5 or so pieces of your work for display
- Bring a friend or relative that might be interested in Woodturning
- For those ex members still on the list who have moved away - if you know anyone still in the Leamington area who you think might be interested in coming along, please send them details - we are even friendlier now than we used to be so we will make them welcome!

The link below is a poster (copied on to the following page) for the evening which you can use to help promote the evening with friends, relatives or share on any appropriate Facebook pages or similar. We will meet as usual to set up well before 7pm for a 7.30pm start for walk ins but, if you are bringing a guest and display items, please come at 7pm.

https://offchurchwoodturners.org.uk/documents/news/Cubbington%20and%20Offchurch%20Woodturners%20open%20eve%202025.pdf

Thanks in advance.

Any queries please contact me, Mike via m.widmer@btinternet.com

CUBBINGTON and OFFCHURCH WOODTURNERS

Woodturning Open Evening





7.30pm Thurs 4th Sept 2025

Offchurch Village Hall, School Hill, Offchurch CV33 9AL

Learn a new craft, take up a new hobby, meet new friends.

We are a small and friendly Woodturning club that meets in Offchurch each month. Ideal for newbies and novices as well as those with experience, both men and women. If you've never touched a gouge and don't own a lathe, this is the place to start, come and see what we do.

www.offchurchwoodturners.org.uk

Phone number on 'contact' page of website

To see what's going on at the club please scan these QR codes with your 'phone for our... Website Facebook

Other news:

FOR SALE @ September Meeting ~ Bowl Gouges, Spindle Gouges, Scrapers and Parting Tools of various sizes.

Andy will be bringing a quantity of the above to sell on behalf of a friend in need. If you are on the lookout for any additional tools please come armed to buy – I would imagine cash will be king.

Woodturning Podcasts

If you need something to while away the hours in a Bank Holiday traffic jam here are a couple of ideas:
These are links to a British Woodturning podcast - 22 episodes so far - of pretty casual Woodturning chat from three woodturners in Essex. Apple & Spotify links below.
https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-woodturning-podcast/id1774065248
https://open.spotify.com/show/2jOIcmV8XewgSOJxIqHjM5

…and here are links to an American Woodturners podcast that is equally chatty with links via Apple & Acast.
https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/a-woodturners-journey/id1727042194
https://shows.acast.com/a-woodturners-journey

Meeting date change

As previously mentioned – the meeting originally planned for November 6th will now be one week earlier on Thursday October 30th due to hall availability.

Forthcoming Club Meetings

Meetings are normally on the first Thursday in the month except when there are elections. Meetings start at **7pm** in Offchurch Village Hall, CV33 9AL unless stated otherwise

2025		
Thu 4th September	7pm	Open Evening
Thu 2nd October	7pm	Visiting demonstrator from Weedon Club
Thu 30th October	7pm	Exploring Resin – Ray **(DATE CHANGE)**
Thu 4th December	7pm	Christmas Trees Mick
2026		
Sat 10th January	7pm	Club Social
Thu 5th February	7pm	Captive rings - Nick
Thu 5th March	7pm	Hands on – topic tbc

Committee 2025/26

Chairman	Mick Jones	cmike.jones@btinternet.com
Secretary (joint)	Alan Begg	alanrbegg@hotmail.com
Secretary (joint)	Ray Burden	rayburden1@btinternet.com
Membership Sec.	Paul Liggins	paul.liggins@ntlworld.com
Treasurer	Andy Smith	01789 612649 / 07865 938850 Andrewrewsmith1125@outlook.com
Media Secretary	Mike Widmer	07484 270479 m.widmer@btinternet.com