Yorkshire trugs

Neil Lawton creates an easy-to-make trug project, so there's no excuse for vegetating...

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NEIL LAWTON

I've been making trugs in this style for quite a while now, but only recently learnt they are usually referred to as 'Yorkshire'. Generically they are a basic box construction with some sort of centred handle, be it string, bentwood, or turned, as in my examples.

You may see versions of these that have gaps between the laths that form the box. These are usually for jobs like the harvesting of root vegetables, the idea being excess soil can come off the crop and fall through the gaps. This does tend to limit what can be carried in them, so I prefer the closed bottom version. I also now provide these without a final finish, as many people want to paint or decorate them themselves, depending on their final use.

1 As usual with reclaimed timber, it is best to check for hidden metal. The stud wall type of detector are cheap enough compared to having to replace saw blades, and are more than capable of detecting nails, pins, or staples.

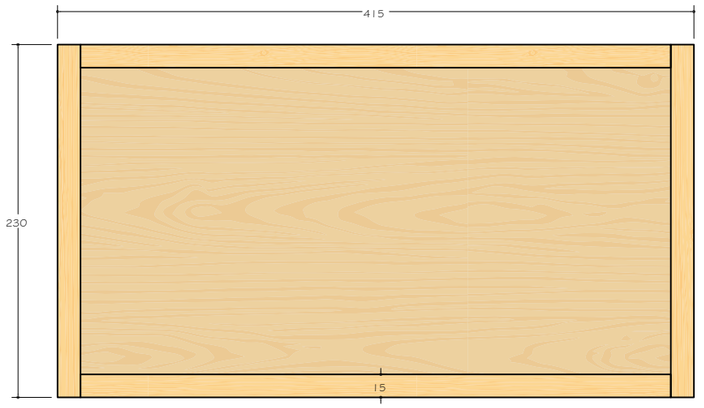
2 These are to be a utility item so leave the timber for the sides at its full thickness. A planed finish is not necessary, but trim to tidy up one edge before cutting to the required width.

Things you will need

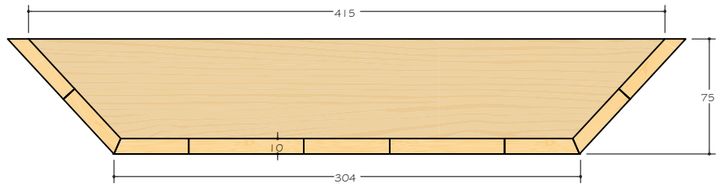
- Pallet wood or similar
- Tape measure
- Rule
- Tablesaw or hand saw
- Panel pins
- Hammer
- Power or hand sanders
- Appropriate clamps

1

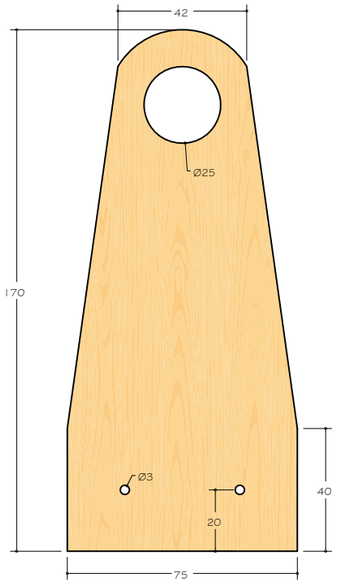
2



PLAN OF TRUG



SIDE SECTION OF TRUG



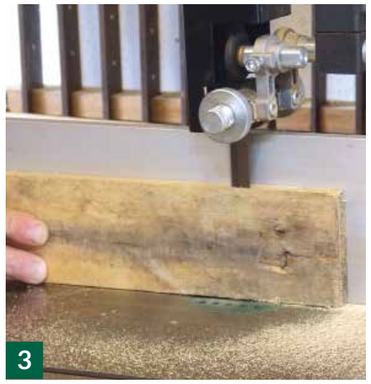
TEMPLATE OF HANDLE SIDE

3 If left the same, we would have quite a heavy trug, so rough saw the wood for the laths thinner on the bandsaw.

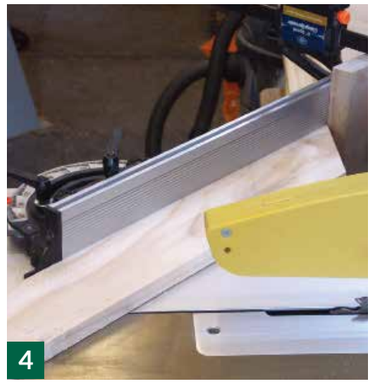
4 Cut the side pieces at 45° at each end. I'm using the tablesaw, but a chopsaw or hand saw and mitre block would do the job equally well. Clamping the block to the fence will ensure the sides are cut to the same length. With this setup make the cut and turn off the saw before returning the cross cut slide to the front of the machine to avoid the workpiece getting trapped between the block and the blade.

5 While rustic is okay, dirty is not, so be sure to sand the inside edges before assembly.

6 For ease of construction, clamp the sides to a piece of wood cut to an appropriate width. Lining up the top end of the mitre with the edge of the clamping piece ensures you are on the square. It is actually very easy to glue up on the skew with such a simple construction. It is possible to 'nip up' your clamps too tight, so take measurements at both ends of the cut to make sure they tally. ➤



3



4

5

6 ➤

7 With the power disconnected, set the saw to 22.5° to cut the mating lengths of the laths which straddle the mitre. An accurate guide like this one is a bonus, but not that necessary.

8 Pin and glue the first laths in place. Only apply glue to the area where the lath meets the sides. An unsightly glue line may appear if you adhere along the lengths, as the soft wood is prone to contraction and expansion, depending on moisture.

9 Add laths at their trimmed width, and take a measurement to cut the centre piece to fit the spacing correctly.

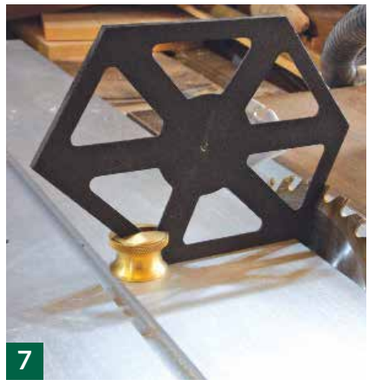
10 Again, a measurement is not critical, but it helps to cut the end laths to match the 45° to the top, before marking to the width to be cut.

11 With the glue set, sand the trug back for a cleaner appearance. I used a belt sander but an orbital sander would do instead. If you have a detail sander the inside can be tidied up a little bit.

12 A simple template helps to make the handle sides of equal size. Then use an awl to accurately mark the centres for drilling the screw and handle holes.

13 Make the first cut, which will eventually become a lap joint. Do this prior to shaping to ensure the workpiece is stable on the saw. Use a block of wood to keep the piece tight against the fence, and to keep fingers well away from the blade.

14 Use a bandsaw or hand saw to rough cut most of the waste away and shape the sides on a disc sander. Or, use coarse abrasive stuck to a board in a static sander.


7


8

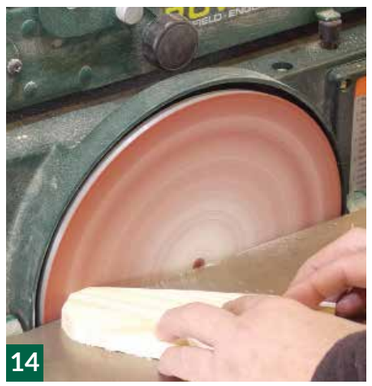

9


10

11


12


13


14


15

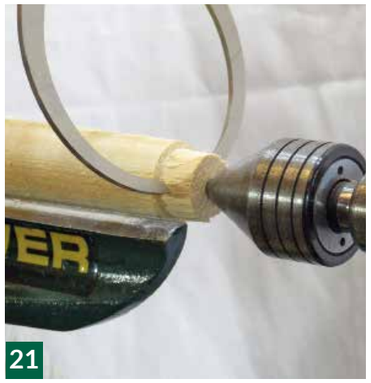

16


17


18


19

20


21


22


23

15 Then, drill the holes for the screws and the handle tenon. Here I am using a sawtooth Forstner to cut a handle hole on a drillpress.

16 With a block clamped along the line as a saw guide, the shoulder can then be cut. I used a pullsaw, but a standard tenon saw is equally suitable.

17 With the centres marked, screw the handle sides on temporarily.

18 Now measure the space between the two handle sides at the bottom. This will give you the length you need between the shoulder cuts on the handle.

19 I used some pine (*Pinus* spp.) from a skip rescue. Dowel holes were still evident after cutting, but they can be turned away. The final diameter needs to be about 30–32mm.

20 Rough the handle to round using a roughing gouge and finish with a skew or general planing tool parallel from end to end.

21 Then cut the shoulders and turn the tenons to match the holes in the sides. It needs to be a good fit, but a wedge will tighten the tenons.

22 Make a saw cut in both tenons. These will accept a small wooden wedge to spread the tenon tight into the hole. Don't force the wedge in too far or the surrounding wood may split. Glue and wedge the handle in place with both side pieces already screwed to the trug. Once dry, the tenon can be sanded back flush to the side.

23 Here's the finished trug ready to be used, or maybe decorated first? The choice is yours, but you now have a useful means of carrying produce in your garden or allotment! ■