



SUPPLIERS

Beaufort Ink

Web: www.beaufortink.co.uk

Snainton Woodworking Supplies

Web: www.snaintonwoodworking.com

Turners Retreat

Web: www.turners-retreat.co.uk

25th anniversary pen

To celebrate Woodturning magazine's 25th anniversary, **Walter Hall** shows you how to make a special sterling silver plated fountain pen

WALTER HALL



Walter Hall is a woodturner who has specialised in making pens and pencils for more than 20 years. Based on the beautiful Northumberland coast in the UK, Walter sells his bespoke pens and pencils through local craft centres and via his website.

walter@walterspens.co.uk

www.walterspens.co.uk

EQUIPMENT USED

25mm or 19mm spindle roughing gouge
19mm or 12mm skew chisel
disc sander and jig
Suitably sized drill bits
Pillar drill or means of drilling on the lathe
Bandsaw
Abrasives to at least 800 grit
Plastic polish or burnishing cream

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

Fingernail grind spindle or bowl gouge
TCT tipped turning tool
PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

TIMBER REQUIREMENTS

Baron pen kit
Silver Storm – or similar – acrylic blank

In last month's article I gave some hints and tips for making acrylic pens. This month, to celebrate 25 years of *Woodturning* magazine, I have made a Turners Retreat sterling silver plated fountain pen using a 'Silver Storm' acrylic blank, available from Snainton Woodworking Supplies, and take

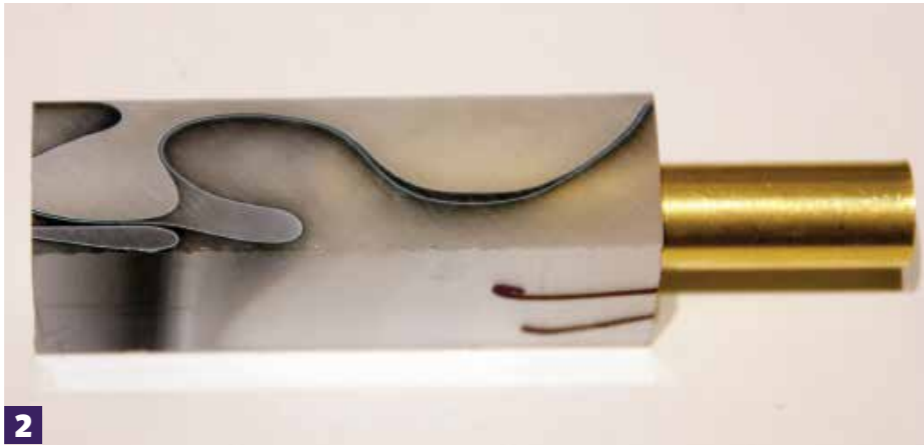
you step-by-step through the process using some of the techniques described in the previous article.

Assembly instructions for the pen with drawings are available online from Turners Retreat, see www.turners-retreat.co.uk/pdf/baronrollerballandfountainpen.pdf.



1 Proper preparation of the blank is very important if satisfactory results are to be achieved. Begin by carefully measuring the blank against the brass tubes and cutting it to length. Next, drill out using a pillar drill for the upper and lower tubes using $\frac{15}{32}$ in and $\frac{25}{64}$ in bullet-tipped drills. These imperial-sized bullet-tipped drills can be difficult to obtain in the UK, so at a push you would probably get away with 12mm and 10mm but a better option would be to use the correct sized jobber bits and use the drilling short technique described in the previous article to prevent breakout

2 The 'Silver Storm' blank is very translucent. And as you can see from the photo, even before any material is turned away, the colour of the brass tube can be clearly seen reflecting through the acrylic. Left like this the result would be a very unattractive muddy coloured mix of brass and silver colours – not what you want at all



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3 Here, I used my patented 'four nails in a piece of wood' spray support and protected the bench with newspaper and paper towels. Using a similar setup, spray the brass tubes first with white primer and then with Mercedes Bright silver. Any silver will do here – just use what you have available



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4 You don't need to paint the inside of the blank even though it is very translucent, but rather take great care to get an even distribution of glue on the surface of the tube so an even coloured reflection will show through. Once the tubes are in place, there will no longer be any sign of discolouration and you can move on to the next step



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5 The commercially available jigs for use with a disc sander come as standard with a shaft the same diameter as a standard mandrel and while this is fine for slimline pens and others with a 7mm tube, when working with larger diameter tubes, it is important to use a suitably sized sleeve to keep the tubes square to the sanding disc. These can be purchased in various sizes but it is easy enough to make your own as I have done here by turning a hardwood blank on a 7mm tube to match the inside diameter of the Baron tube



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6 Mount the blanks in their respective bushes and mount each assembly between centres for turning. You can buy special bushes that are designed for use with 60° centres but the standard ones will do the job well enough, although they are more likely to cause wear to the centres if any slippage occurs. Begin by taking light cuts with a spindle roughing gouge



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7 In the previous article I listed a number of tools that can be used with acrylic materials but it is by no means exhaustive. Here I am using the long swept-back edge of a fingernail-grind bowl gouge to take fine finishing cuts and as you can see, it produces long trails of fine swarf if used lightly. It is not what tool you use that matters, but how you use it



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8 I think the Baron pen kit looks best with a very slightly curved shape to the barrels rather than dead straight sides. Too much and it becomes a bit fat and unwieldy but a gentle curve is enough to give the appearance a slight lift. That is just my opinion of course, you can make the barrels any shape you choose. Here is the finished cap end ready for sanding and finishing



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9 Having protected your lathe bed with paper towels, wet sand through the grits from 360 up to 800 using Rhyogrip abrasive. You may need to start with 240 or even 180 grit, depending on the quality of finish you have achieved with the tools, but it does not matter where you start so long as the final result is a smooth, matte, scratch-free surface ready for polishing



11

10 One of my favourite polishes for acrylics is Farécla 500 and if used with its coarser stable mate Farecla 300, you can start polishing from a surface sanded to about 320 grit. On this occasion, however, there was no need for the coarser paste and a fine polish was achieved with the 500. I applied it using a safety cloth and strongly advise against using any other kind of cloth for polishing on the lathe. You'll also need to give the blanks a final polish on a buffing wheel

11 Now the barrels are completed all that remains is to assemble the finished components. Lay out the components and partially assemble those that can be pre-assembled so as to avoid confusion. It can be very frustrating having to disassemble a pen you have just assembled because a part is in the wrong place or upside down. Good preparation prevents this



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12 Before beginning assembly of my pen, I decided to upgrade the nib from the standard Chinese IPG nib supplied with the kit to a 5mm fine point Bock nib with a kit threaded housing supplied by Beaufort Ink. The new nib is shown on the left fitted to the Baron housing with the removed original on the right for comparison

13 An ordered and structured approach to assembly and attention to some important details will make the difference between a good pen and an exceptional one. There are many ways of pressing the parts together but I used a Milescraft pen press and started by assembling the cap components



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14 To ensure the patterns on the barrels are aligned when assembled, screw the nib housing into the cap and lightly press the barrel body into position. When you are happy with the alignment, unscrew the housing from the cap and press the assembly together



15 Equally important with a pen with a postable cap is to ensure that the clip, when the cap is posted, aligns with the nib and this is achieved by carrying out a similar process to that used when aligning the barrel to ensure the correct alignment of the posting tip. My deliberate mistake was to assemble the ends in the wrong order so as you can see in the photo I had to align the nib unit with the clip retrospectively

16 It all worked out in the end and even if you do have a few minor mishaps on the way, with a little care and attention to detail you can create a pen of high quality that will stand out from the crowd and be good enough to mark any important occasion ●



MINI TEST

Woodturner's Sauce Starbright Plastic Polish

This new product from Turners Retreat is the latest addition to the variety of polishing options available to woodturners who are working with acrylic and polyester materials.

Supplied in a convenient squeezable bottle with a nozzle that is opened and re-sealed with a twisting action, it will have a long shelf life in the workshop without drying out. The polish is easy to use following the instructions on the bottle and only a small amount is required to produce a high gloss. The suppliers recommend that it is used on work that has already been sanded to 1,200 grit but I found that a high gloss could be achieved from as low as 600 grit, if care was taken to work through the grits carefully first.

Verdict

I was impressed by the results achieved and this product will also be useful to pen makers who are finishing their work with Cyanoacrylate or other hard finishes as an alternative to the finer grades of Micromesh or burnishing creams or compounds.



Applying the Starbright Plastic Polish to a pen tube mounted on the lathe

This product is designed to remove scratches and create a high gloss – perfect for pen making

DETAILS

Price: £9.95

Contact: Turners Retreat

Tel: 01302 744 344

Web: www.turners-retreat.co.uk