

The tool is fixed in the Jig with about 50mm protruding above the clamp. When the bar beneath the clamp is inserted into the cylindrical block, the gouge is constrained to move in a rolling motion over an arc when in contact with the belt. This motion creates the correct contour on the tool, forming a precise cutting edge.

The Profiler Jig (Photo.14) is easy to use and makes it possible to repeatedly sharpen fingernail gouges to exactly the same shape.

The Honing Wheel

The Honing Wheel (Photo.15) is supplied with an arbor that is screwed to the lower drum. First the belt cover is removed, then the belt, and after that the arbor is attached using the screws and Allen key provided with it. (The removal of the belt is to avoid accidental contact with it while using the Wheel.)

Sorby's instructional video shows how the edges of the Honing Wheel can be rounded over to allow it to be used on concave surfaces such as those on carving and turning gouges. It also shows that since the Wheel is made of a rubber compound, it doesn't have the same problems associated with conventional grinding wheels, so tools can be honed by holding them against its side.

My short trial consisted of simply polishing the bevel on a Sorby chisel (Photo.16). The Wheel is certainly effective and I found its slower than normal speed an advantage in controlling the process.

It takes a couple of minutes to fit the Honing Wheel and also to remove it, so you would probably only use it when you were sharpening or honing a batch of tools.

The Buffing Wheel

As you would expect, the action of the Buffing Wheel is more mild and less precise than that of the Honing Wheel. The Buffing Wheel is mounted on a Pigtail Mandrel which is secured to the lower

drum in exactly the same way as the Honing Wheel arbor (Photo.17).

Summary

The Sorby Pro Edge is the outcome of an interesting idea — translating a machine used for decades in the Sorby factory into a budget priced machine for the recreational woodworker. It has the ability to sharpen virtually any edge tool, including those made from HSS or exotic steels, quickly and easily, provided care is taken in the selection of the appropriate abrasive belt.

The addition of options such as the Honing and Buffing Wheels make the final product even more attractive in the small workshop environment.

As suggested earlier, despite some similarities, it is a mistake to see the machine as a finisher.

The belt speed on an average finisher is probably double the 440 metres per minute of Sorby Pro Edge. Also, the backing plate beneath the belt on the Pro Edge is several millimetres thick (much thicker than the same plate on most small finishers) and this aids in the transmission of heat away from the abrasion zone.

Finally, the variety and quality of belts available is far greater than those that can be obtained for a standard finisher.

It is in this area of belt use that I feel I

have not yet explored the entire potential of this machine.

The belts currently available include: Aluminium Oxide (60, 120, 240), Zirconium (60, 120), Ceramic (60, 120), Trizact (600, 1200, 3000) and Diamond.

I had the opportunity to try the Aluminium Oxide 60 and 240grit, the Zirconium 60grit and the remarkable Trizact 3000grit.

The differences in speed of metal removal and finish are extraordinarily wide and suggest that it would take some time to decide exactly which belts are best used for a particular purpose.

Comments from other sources on this machine make occasional reference to the lack of heating of the tool while sharpening. I found this depends upon the choice of belt and the amount of pressure applied. It is possible to make the tool too hot if an inappropriate belt is used and the approach is too aggressive. But with the 'right' belt and a lighter touch, tools can be gently honed or even re-shaped without undue heating.

I've spent little time in this Report describing the patented toolrest, mainly because it is so simple and so easy to use, that it hardly needs explanation.

Nevertheless, it should be added in this Summary that the speed with which the toolrest can be adjusted and the way in which it can be positively clamped to achieve any bevel angle between 15° and 90° is an important feature of the Sorby Pro Edge.

Finally, this is the full list of optional Jigs and Accessories which can be fitted to the machine:— Skew Jig, Fingernail Gouge Profiler, Standard Gouge Jig, Woodworking Chisel Jig, Pigtail Mandrel, Buffing Mop, Wheel Arbor, Honing Wheel, Cutter Holder, Honing Paste, Short Tool Platform, Knife Sharpening Jig (Small), Knife Sharpening Jig (Large), Knife Holder (Small), Knife Holder (Large), Long Grind Jig Proset.

The Pro-Edge is available for \$655 from Carroll's Woodcraft Supplies, Ph: 03 5251 3874, www.cws.au.com 

Photo.15: The rubber Honing Wheel



Photo.16: The Honing Wheel in use



Photo.17: The Buffing Wheel in use

