

Gary Cook has asked me to write some articles expanding the information on the “English Sashmaking Planes” paper I wrote. What I proposed to Gary was a series of short articles on each tool category or process. This will be the first of those articles.

Before I get started I want to acknowledge the assistance of Jane Rees and her late husband Mark, who helped me get started collecting and using sash planes. Jane also provided me with some drawings of sash doweling boxes in her collection. I made two of them. They will be shown in a later chapter.

I also want to acknowledge the late Rob Patterson who provided much of the how-to knowledge in this series of articles. Rob was a member of P.A.S.T., a tool collectors organization I have belonged to for 18 Years. The club meets at several locations in Northern California. I attend the annual meeting in Sonoma every August. The meetings have tables for sellers and tables for displays. About ten years ago I was sitting next to Rob while we had lunch and I mentioned to him that I was starting a collection of English Sashmaker’s tools to compliment my collection of English molding planes. He told me he had been making wooden windows in Scotland until 1960, when he immigrated to the United States. I asked him if he would spend some time discussing the tools and processes he used. Over the next two meetings in 2005 and 2006 I spent about four hours with him discussing his experiences. Unfortunately he died in 2007.

The other knowledge acquired comes from making or modifying glazed doors in cabinets in our house. I constructed four cabinets with glazed doors and modified doors on six of the cabinets in our kitchen. I also created various sash joints for a display at a P.A.S.T. meeting. Articles in the “Chronicle”, published by the Early American Industries Association provided additional information.

We will begin with the sticking board. The purpose of this fixture is to hold the sash components, stiles, rails and bars while they are being shaped. I also use this fixture for making or “sticking” regular moldings.

Rob said that since he worked on site and the windows usually used the same molding pattern they would make a purpose built sticking board and toss it after the job was over. Since I work out of my garage I built a sticking board usable for a wide variety of sash sizes.

I made mine three feet long. I needed to accommodate the glazed doors I was going to make for two of the cabinets in our family room. The base is ash with a cherry wear strip along the side. The other components were made from whatever scrap wood was available. In the photographs you will see walnut, oak and maple. The base has $\frac{1}{4}$ -20 threaded inserts located at five points on the horizontal surface and two on the edge. The shims have slots spaced to use these inserts. I made the knobs to secure the shims using threaded brass rod and some knobs I got at a flea market. I tapped threads in the knobs and screwed the rod into the knob. I then drilled a 1/16 inch hole through the base of the knob and rod and inserted a spring pin to secure the rod to the knob. The shims are made in increments of 1/16 of an inch. When using a sash fillister the arms would sometimes run into the knobs. In this case I use screws to secure the item being fabricated. The stop has a tapered dovetail to hold it securely in place.

When making the components of a sash one always registers the tool from the top of the bar. This way the portion of the bar, stile or rail on the decorative side of the sash will always be consistent.

When making the muntins there are three or four steps, depending on whether you use a glass check plane or a sash fillister. I prefer a sash fillister because I can control the thickness of the putty rabbet. The glass check plane was used in Scotland and makes both rabbets at the same time. This plane makes the work go faster, but since the tongue left after planing the workpiece is fixed by the dimensions of the plane, the glass check plane is not suitable for smaller sizes of sash bars.

Two more pieces are needed. One is a piece That controls the lateral movement of the molding plane. This will sit on top of all the other pieces used to secure the workpiece. The second is a piece used to align the workpiece with the front of the base. I use a spare shim for this. I will discuss why this is needed in later section.



This is the set of Sticking boards and shims I made. The peanut butter jar holds the knobs and fasteners and has a hook to hang on the pegboard with the wooden parts.



This shows the sticking board configuration when making the final cut to the molding.



This is a photo of the fence to align the top of the bar with the edge of the sticking board.



This is the view of the alignment fence installed from the back side.
The next section will deal with the planes directly involved in shaping the sash components.