

## Christmas, Spinning Tops and Chairs



Hello fellow turners. Apologies for the lateness of this issue – I got caught up with stuff and lost my beard and roundtuit. I'm looking to change the release schedule for the Woodpecker to 3 issues a year

- 1: March, April
- 2: May, June, July, August
- 3: September, October, November, December

This (special) issue we cover awards at the Christmas party (December), spinning tops with John French (March) and chair making with Paul Howard (April).

## Christmas Party

A good turnout again this Christmas with Alan "Saxy Alan" Emms playing saxophone and singing and Clive Baker hosting a quiz.

There was also a competition for the most Christmassy table decoration.



As is customary, awards were handed out: Senior Competition 2018 winner was Clive Baker (who looked shocked by the news)

Novice Competition 2018 winner was Andrew Stone who couldn't make it to the party, but was awarded at a later meeting, the Wallace Trophy went to Louise Taggart for all her outstanding work on promoting the Guild as Publicity Coordinator.



Mary Ward presented Linda Arter with a basket of flowers for all her efforts with the raffle prizes.

And Richard Ackroyd was awarded a prize for his Christmas-themed table decoration.



## March Meeting (42 attendees)

Clive started the meeting by reviewing the minutes from the February AGM, noting that most of the committee had been re-elected, but that Mary had resigned as Vice Chair, leaving the position vacant for now, Alan had resigned as Programme Secretary, with Mary Ward volunteering to stand and Stephen Franklin has resigned from the committee. Committee now stands as:

**Chairman:** Clive Baker

**Vice Chair:** Vacant

**Honorary Secretary:** Simon Taggart

**Honorary Treasurer:** Malcolm Arter

**Assistant Treasurer:** Mick Saul

**Programme Secretary:** Mary Ward (proposed)

**Competition Coordinator:** Terry Lincoln

**Publicity Coordinator:** Louise Taggart

**Lathe/Equipment Coordinator:** Gerry Lawrence

**Art in Wood 2019 Coordinator:** Clive Baker

Clive also stated that the proposal raised at the AGM to raise the annual membership fee to £35 was passed and that the Guild's £100 donation to charity would go to a charity of Jenny's choice which will be the village hall for the repairs about to be carried out; these repairs will mean that a third of the hall from the kitchen end (including the stage) will be unusable for the June meeting. We are hoping to rearrange the hall so that we can still have the meeting and Jenny has said she will do her best to see that we can still get our usual teas and coffees. We hope the works will be finished before the July meeting.

Clive mentioned that we would not be replenishing the 4<sup>th</sup> place rosettes in the competitions once the current stock has run out; we'll still declare a 4<sup>th</sup> place though.

Jenny was presented with an orchid for her work slaking our thirsts each month – justly so, in my opinion.

Clive also thanked Adrian Moore for a very informative talk about the use of the hall's defibrillator after the February AGM.

He announced that Simon Taggart will be organising the Hands-On Day this year and that Clive himself would be organising Art in Wood, which takes place from 17<sup>th</sup> August to 26<sup>th</sup> August.

The All Day Demo this year will be hosted on 19<sup>th</sup> October by Colin Smith who is the chairman of Cambridge Woodturners and also the South East rep for the AWGB. He started woodturning in about 1980 after going to evening classes in the mid 70s. He met Ray Hopper at a craft fair who introduced him to the Ely Guild in 1988 and he remained a member until 1996 when he moved to Stevenage. His main interest is off-centre woodturning, practising what Ray Hopper said to him about "thinking outside the box".

Malcolm has been in touch with Lisa Stubbs about the hall car park and lighting; S&SC say that repairs have been made to the lights and repairs to the car park surface are in hand.

Richard Ackroyd did a show and tell, explaining how he'd turned a bowling ball into a beautiful vessel. He commented that it required removing the centre which turned surprisingly well considering the hardness of the Lignum Vitae from which it was made. This piece will be available to view at the Hands-On Day.

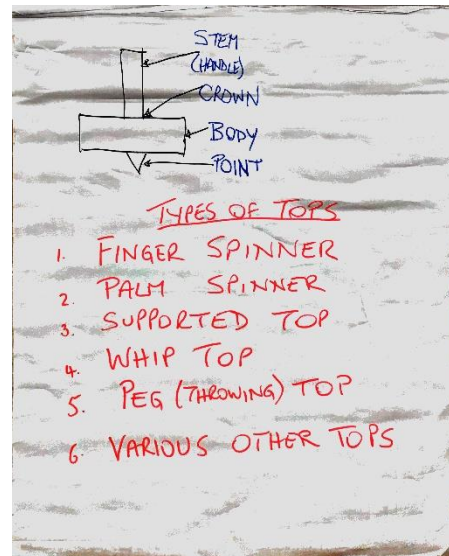
## John French - "Men don't stop playing when they grow old, they grow old when they stop playing"



"Although I did some turning at school, it was not until I was approaching retirement that I began to think seriously about it. I had some tuition with Bill Care and through him joined the West Suffolk Woodturning Club, and I've been turning for just over 20 years.

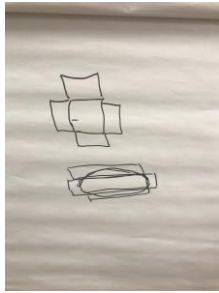
I have just retired as Newsletter Editor for the West Suffolk Club, a post I held for 17 years. During that time I also held the position of Chairman of the club for 5 years. My career background was in analytical chemistry and R&D management."

John's demonstration was all about spinning tops – and what a variety of tops he had! Everything from your traditional top to ones that spin upside down (which you can apparently do with drawing pins). John provided some handy flipcharts to show the anatomy of a top and some of the various types:



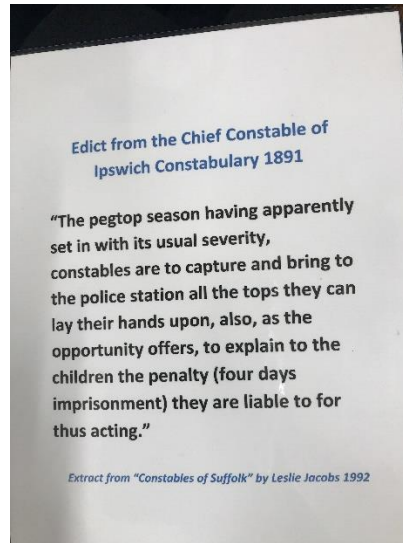
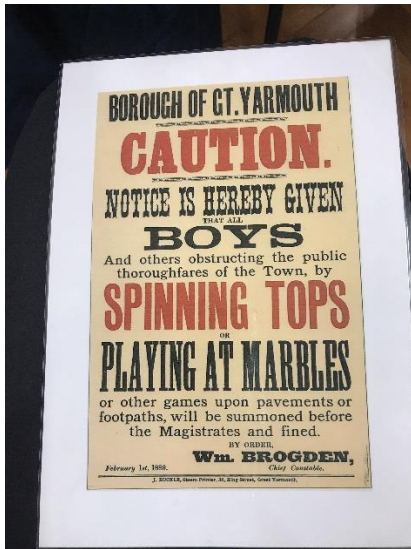
One of the more interesting shapes was the one with turtles on it (above left) which would only spin in the direction the turtles were facing, even if you turned the turtles around. John drew a quick diagram to show how to turn the main top body:





Essentially, the central piece of wood is sacrificial with four pieces of wood the same length glued to each side of the central piece. The whole thing is then turned to produce the oval shape in the bottom picture and the glued pieces separated to produce four 'canoe-shaped' spinning tops.

Although considered playthings, spinning tops were so popular back in the day that they were seen as a nuisance, as evidenced by these notices that John produced.



As part of the demonstration, John made a "drawing pin" top:



These are very simple to make and can be decorated with coloured pens. The low body keeps it stable; the wider the body, the slower it spins. Conversely, slimmer bodies spin faster.

John mentioned that a round point is better than a sharp one.

You can also make tops with separate bodies and stems. That way, you can mix and match. The stem needs to be tapering, thick end at the point and thinner near the handle, so that the body can be wedged onto the tapered stem.



Much of the time John was using a parting tool to remove waste from the stems; in fact, you only really need a parting tool, spindle gouge and perhaps a skew chisel to make these. However, you can turn some very intricate tops, including ones used to simulate dice rolling:



These are clever as they don't fall off the stand, but you do need to ensure that the top remains at exactly 90 degrees to the base when at rest for this to work properly.

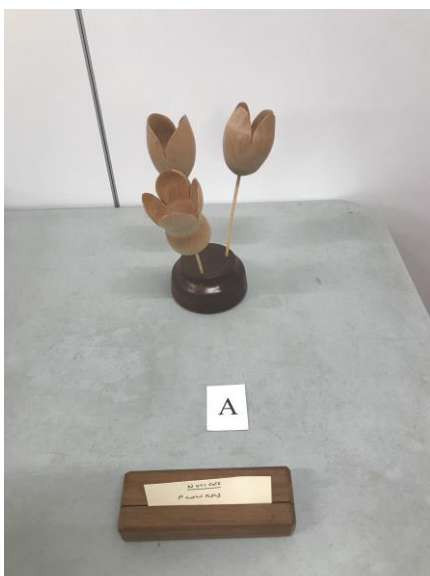
## The competitions

Senior section: Box with Concave Sides, Finial & Decoration



- 1st • 2. Clive Baker (14)
- 2nd • 4. Peter Symonds (10)
- 3rd • 5. Chris Horne (5)
- 4th • 3. Terry Lincoln (4)

Novices: Set of 3 Flowers on a Base



- 1st • A. Malcolm Lister
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th

### Interesting Interjection...

On 23rd December last year Clive, our illustrious chairman, was contacted about the replacement of a brass knob from the Witchford church that had been stolen. In his usual style, Clive was up for the challenge and fashioned a replacement from an existing finial that he'd rescued from being dumped or burned.

He finished it in copper gilt and it was fitted in time for Christmas

– well done, Clive!



## April Meeting (41 members)

Clive started off by encouraging participation in Art in Wood 2019 and sent round a clipboard for people to sign up for stewarding. He asked for a show of hands for who would be exhibiting this year.

He reminded members to ensure that they paid their membership fees to Malcolm as soon as possible.

Howard Dyson stepped up to warn members about a YouTube video depicting a 'professional' turner who was using a spindle roughing gouge on faceplate work – this is VERY dangerous due to the weak tang on the gouge. It's called a SPINDLE roughing gouge for a reason, folks... please be careful when turning and, if in any doubt about what you're doing, seek professional advice from several sources or don't do it!

Stephen Franklin also stepped up to inform members that Lincolnshire Woodcraft will be retiring soon and, if you're quick, you should be able to grab some wood bargains.

Mike Harding commented that he had a biscuit jointer for sale. Please contact him if you're interested.

## Paul Howard – chairman in more than one sense of the word!



I am a member of the AWGB (Association of Woodturners of Great Britain), the SECB (Suffolk, Essex and Cambridge Borders) Colchester Woodturning Club. I am now the Chairman for the Sandon Woodturners and also a member of the AAW (Association of American Woodturners); I managed to get to the 25th anniversary symposium in St Paul, Minnesota.



I now spend much of my time teaching, demonstrating and continuing to develop ideas of how to further my own skills of woodturning in general.

Some of Paul's turned work (right)



For this evening's demonstration, Paul was going to show us how to build a small chair:



He started with the seat and stressed that you needed to ensure that you double checked the angles of the holes for the legs and back spindles – the last thing you want is legs that face inwards and back spindles that face outwards! He also suggested using a spur drill for the holes as it left a cleaner finish than even a Forstner bit.

Paul used a wooden template to ensure he got it right:



(You'd never know he was a mechanical engineer...)



Paul had already created a recess for the chuck and mounted the seat on the lathe. He commented that you could cover the recess in the seat base with a domed piece, perhaps with the owner's name pyrographed on it. He mentioned that he always leaves a pip in the centre of the faceplate and sands it off – this ensures that you never create a sunken spot in the centre which is harder to remove/correct. He also suggested that you should slow down as you near the centre to produce the same cut from edge to centre.



He used a skew chisel to round off the seat edge – this has the same effect as using a shear scraper.



The underneath of the seat...



...and the top of the seat

Paul was slowly cutting through the faceplate to produce a ring, half of which would be the seat back piece.



The moment the ring parted from the plate...

Paul commented dryly that you need to ensure that you cut the ring properly so that the holes are placed correctly; he once made this mistake on a lovely piece of wood, but recovered it by filling and re-drilling the holes.

He demonstrated using Simon Hope's sanding arbor on the lathe which is very useful for this kind of work.



The rest of the demonstration consisted of Paul showing us how to turn all the spindles necessary for the chair build (montage below). The plans for these are in the appendix at the end of this newsletter and, if you print them to scale on your printer, can be used as story boards for making the chair yourself if you feel like having a go.



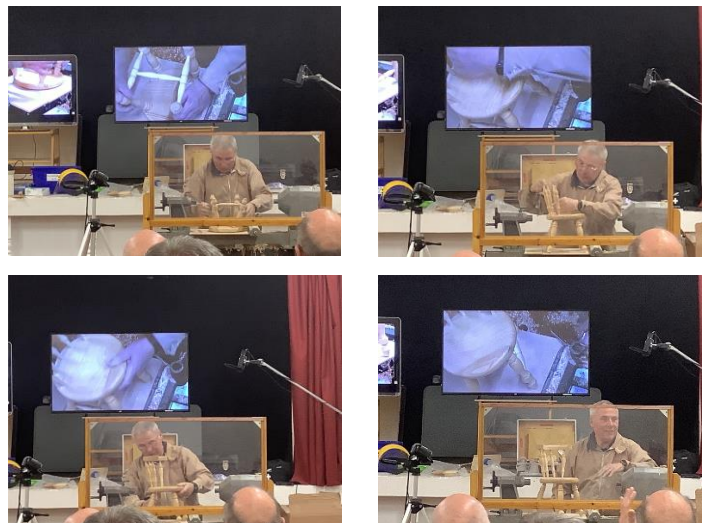


### A little aside...

Paul mentioned the use of Copy Fingers for spindle production turning. These are simply fingers of metal cut to specific lengths, attached to a pole in front of the lathe that can be used to ensure that you cut profiles to the same size. More information can be found on Paul's website and he can even make them for you (if you have the inclination and wallet!).

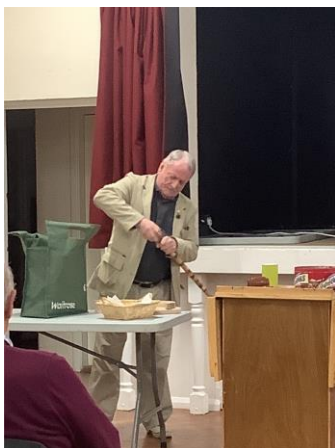


Finally, Paul built the chair itself (in true Blue Peter fashion, he'd brought a box of parts along to show us the process)



### Meanwhile, in the break...

Clive did a show and tell about a walking cane he'd made using several types of hardwood turned around a long metal pole. He'd also finished it with a nice resin handle on top made by casting using a mould. Due to the length of the cane, Clive had to build a steady to stop it flexing at speed on the lathe; this he accomplished by upcycling a pair of roller-skate wheels onto a wooden jig (see pictures).



The cane with top



The mould used for the handle





The roller-skate for the steady



The steady jig

## The competitions

### Senior section: Sugar Scoop



- 1st • 5. Chris Horne (12)
- 2nd • 6. Chris Edwards (7)
- 3rd • 3. John Last (6)
- 4th • 1. Ray Dellow (5)

### Novices: Set of 3 Mushrooms on a Base



- 1st • B. Malcolm Lister
- 2nd • A. Mark Williams
- 3rd
- 4th

END

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## CONSTRUCTION OF THE MINI-CHAIR/PLANTSTAND

Cut out the STICKY LABEL SPINDLE TEMPLATES and fix to a piece of card or hardboard so that these can be used as a simple sight guide when turning the spindles. Also cut out the BOTTOM OF SEAT, TOP OF SEAT and BACKREST TEMPLATES as indicated and stick to pieces of card.

Turn the spindles to the sizes indicated on the SIZE SHEETS but leave the final sanding until you are ready to assemble the chair. Care should be taken when sizing the spigots as these will need to be a push fit into the drilled holes later.

Every effort should be made to match the shapes of the templates but slight anomalies are not critical as it is the overall shape that is important.

All the spigots on the spindles need to fit into a drilled hole so they must not taper.

Fit the SEAT BLANK to a screw chuck, turn to 9" diameter and square off the bottom and cut a recess to accept the expanding jaws of your chuck, then reverse the wood on the lathe and turn the front flat. Mark the centre of the seat with a pencil and remove from the lathe.

Draw a centre line around the whole of the seat (preferably with the grain of the wood) and fit the LEG TEMPLATE to the centre line and mark the front and back legs using a bradawl or a drawing pin. Turn the template over and mark the other two legs. Draw the sight lines across the bottom of the seat and use these as a guide to the drill holes for the legs.

Turn the seat over and do the same thing with the BACK SPINDLE TEMPLATE (note that this template is at 90 deg to the leg template). Also mark all the sight lines on the wood exactly as on the template. Drill the back spindle holes using the sight lines as a guide.

Refit the seat and slightly 'hollow out' the centre to remove your first chuck recess (taking care to remove the template marks) and round over the outside.

Drill the legs for the side spreaders and the side spreaders for the centre spreader taking care to cut at the correct angles. A V-block is advisable when drilling the spindles.

Fit the backrest blank to the lathe and flatten the back and turn to 10" diameter. Turn a recess for whichever chucking system you have in the bottom and a  $\frac{1}{8}$ " x  $\frac{1}{8}$ " groove in the bottom at  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in from the outside. Using the BACKREST TEMPLATE mark and drill the holes for the back spindles. (If you drill two sets of holes, you will get two backrests from one turning.) Make sure the grain direction matches the seat with the long grain running across the back.

Reverse the disc and fit to your chuck. Cut an arc in the top to meet the groove in the bottom stopping about  $\frac{1}{8}$ " short of parting off. Sand the back rest.

Cover bottom with adhesive tape and part off using a thin parting off tool. The adhesive tape will support the backrest while you turn off the lathe but try to judge and be quick.

Cut the backrest in half, sand the inside curve on a drum sander and round over the ends.

Fit the chair together and glue and cramp with tourniquets, webbing etc. Should the chair not fit perfectly, a little 'judicious' sanding of the spindles usually helps.

Finishing is up to the individual, either on or off the lathe, but should be hard wearing and care should be taken to keep off the spigots to ensure good glue joints.

Good luck.

PS. Please let us have your comments on the Mini-Chair/Plantstand and any suggestions you may have to improve our product. Also please send us a photo of your finished item for our album.

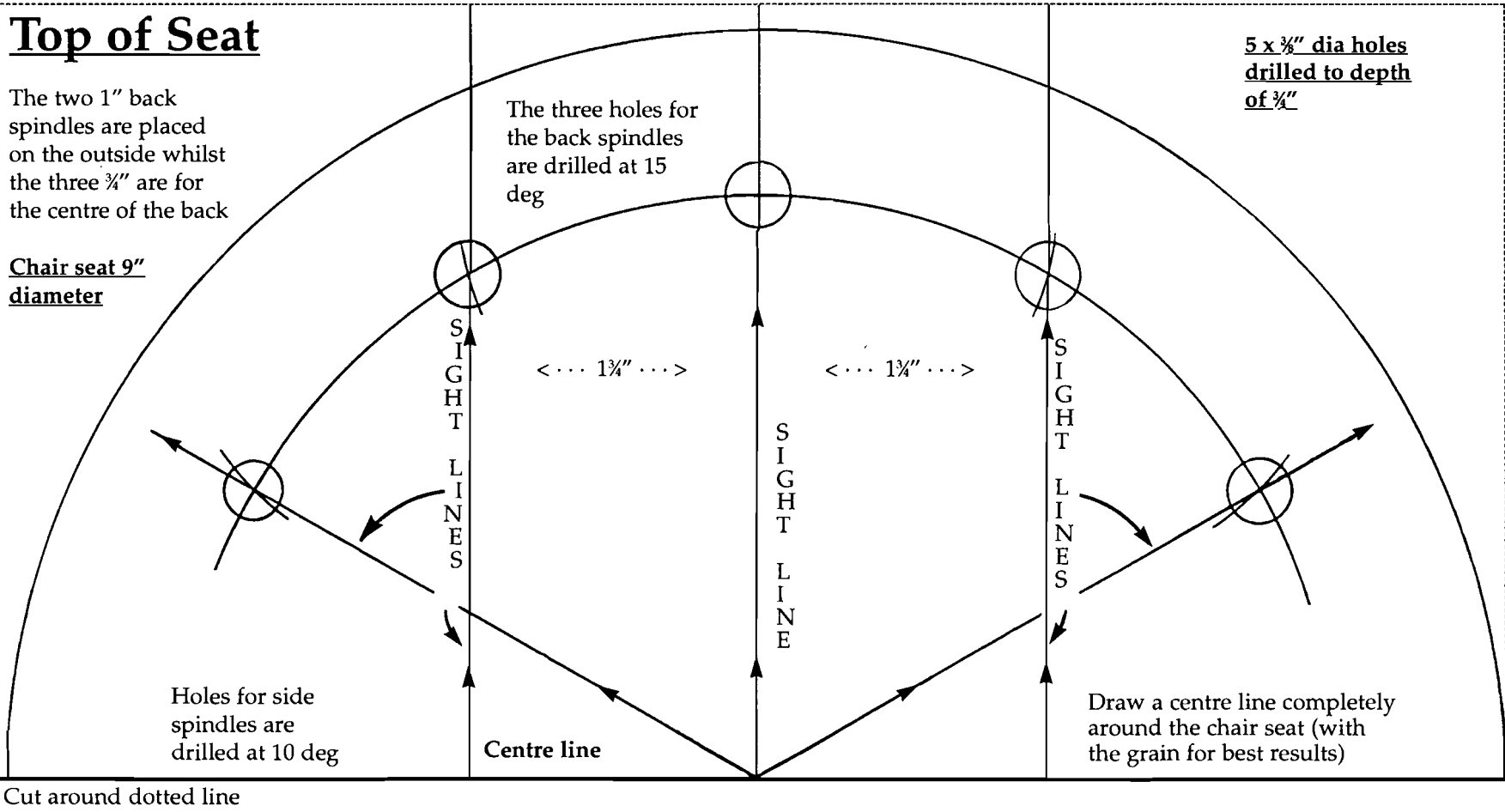
# Top of Seat

The two 1" back spindles are placed on the outside whilst the three 3/4" are for the centre of the back

Chair seat 9" diameter

5 x 3/4" dia holes drilled to depth of 3/4"

The three holes for the back spindles are drilled at 15 deg



Holes for side spindles are drilled at 10 deg

Centre line

Draw a centre line completely around the chair seat (with the grain for best results)

Cut around dotted line

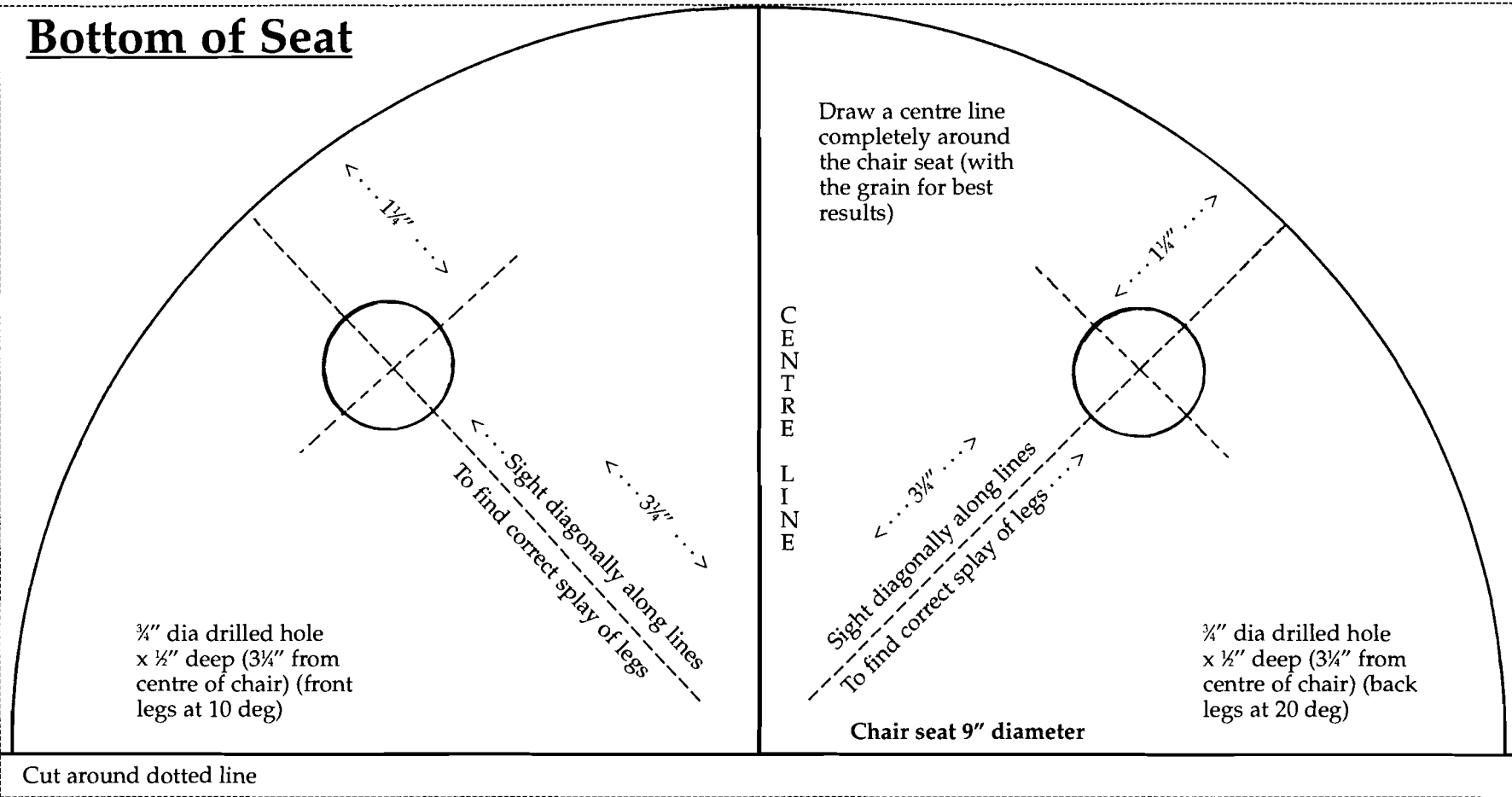
**Important – The centre line must “wrap around” the whole of the chair seat so that the legs and the back spindles are correctly spaced. Note that the sight lines for the three centre spindles are at 90 deg to the centre line but the two outside ones are sighted from the actual centre spot.**

**Cut out the seat template and stick to a piece of card.**

**Using a drawing pin, centralise the template on top of the seat along the centre line, use more drawing pins to mark the positions (through the card) of the holes to be drilled onto the seat.**



## Bottom of Seat



**Important** – The centre line must “wrap around” the whole of the chair seat so that the legs and the back spindles are correctly spaced.

Cut out the seat template and stick to a piece of card.

Using a drawing pin, centralise the template on the bottom of the seat along the centre line, use two other drawing pins to mark the positions of two of the legs (through the card), then turn the template over and mark out the other two legs.

**NB.** The top and bottom seat templates are at right angles to each other.

The two 1" back spindles are placed on the outside whilst the three 3/8" are for the centre of the back

# Backrest

**Backrest 10" diameter x 1 1/2" thick (254 x 29mm)**

5 x 3/8" (10mm) dia holes drilled to a depth of 1/2" (12mm)

The three holes for the back spindles are drilled at 15 deg

SIGHT LINES

SIGHT LINE

SIGHT LINES

<... 1 7/8" ...>  
<... 48mm ...>

<... 1 7/8" ...>

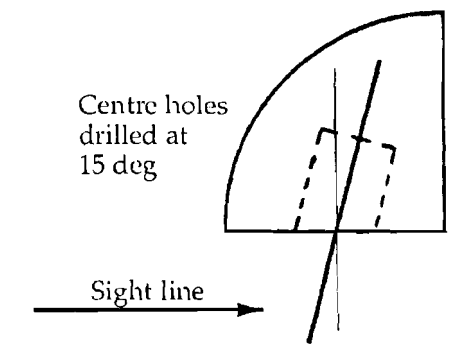
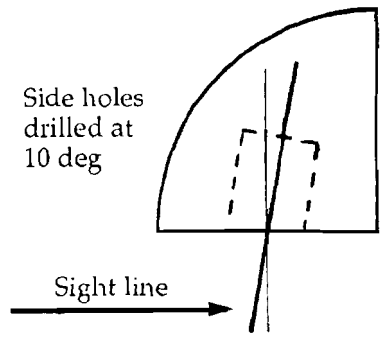
Holes for side spindles are drilled at 10 deg 3 3/8" (81mm) from 'outside centre' holes

After turning sand inside edge and round off corners

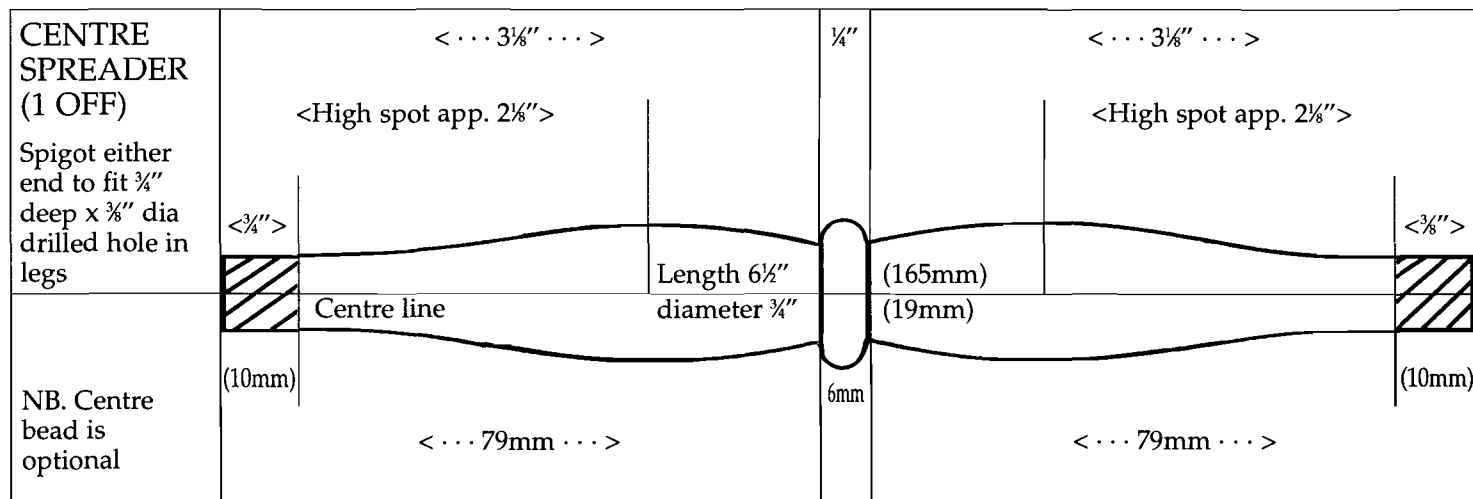
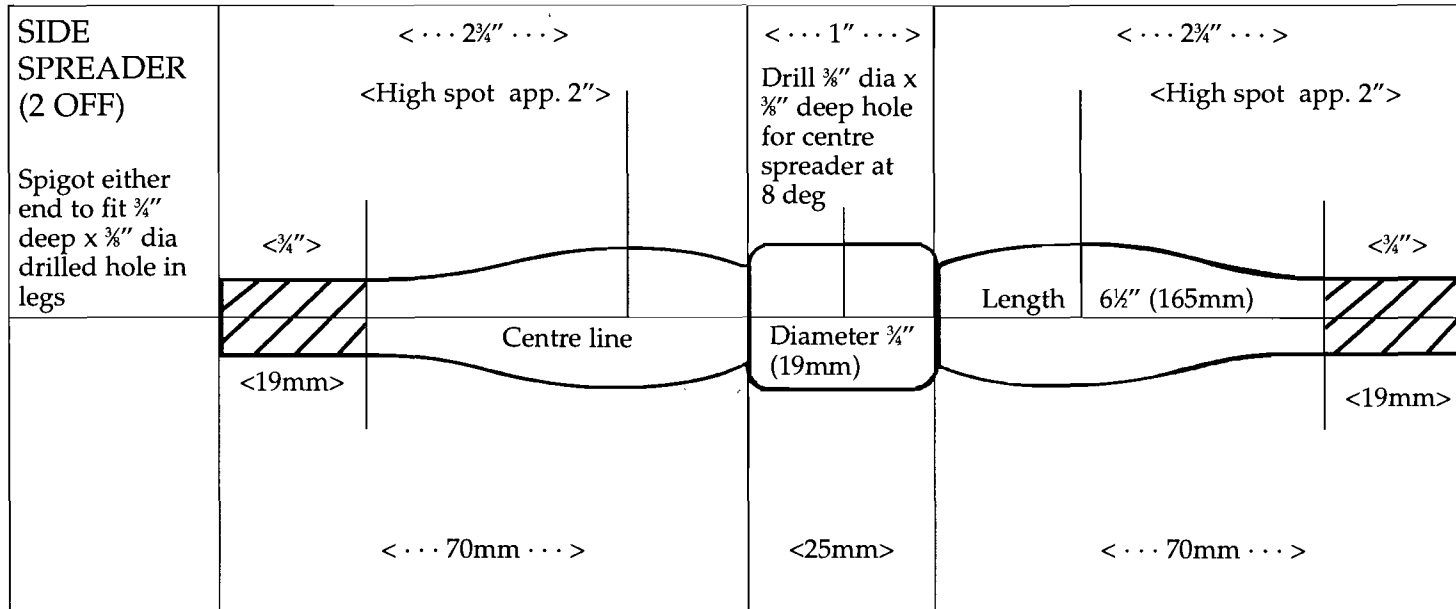
Centre line

Cut around dotted line

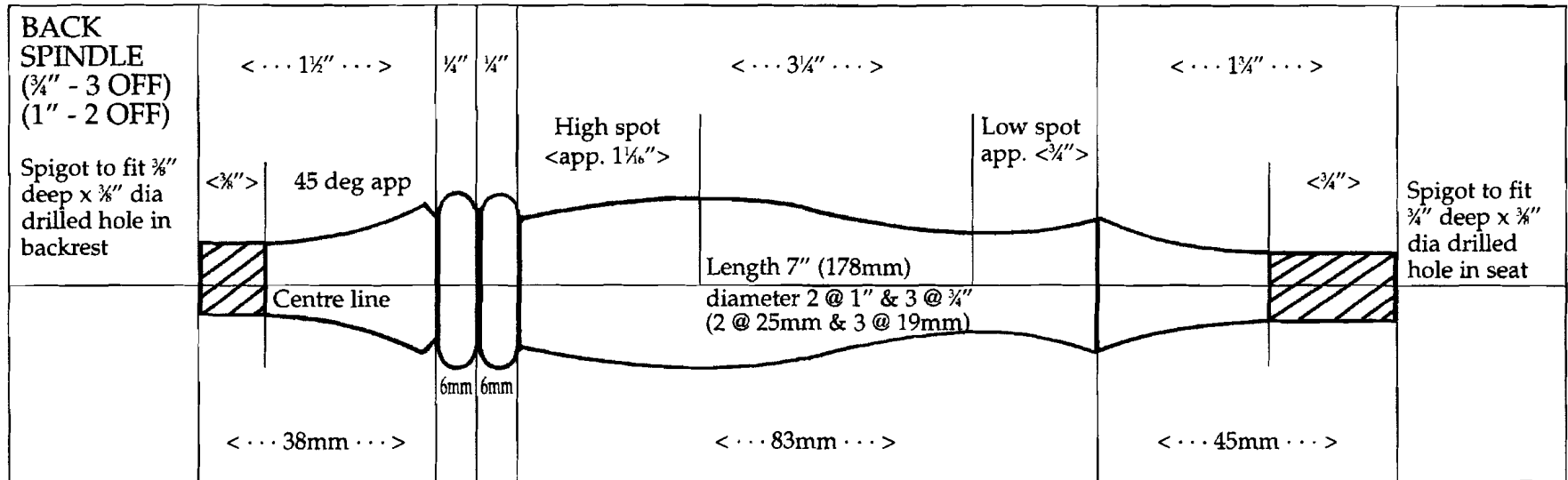
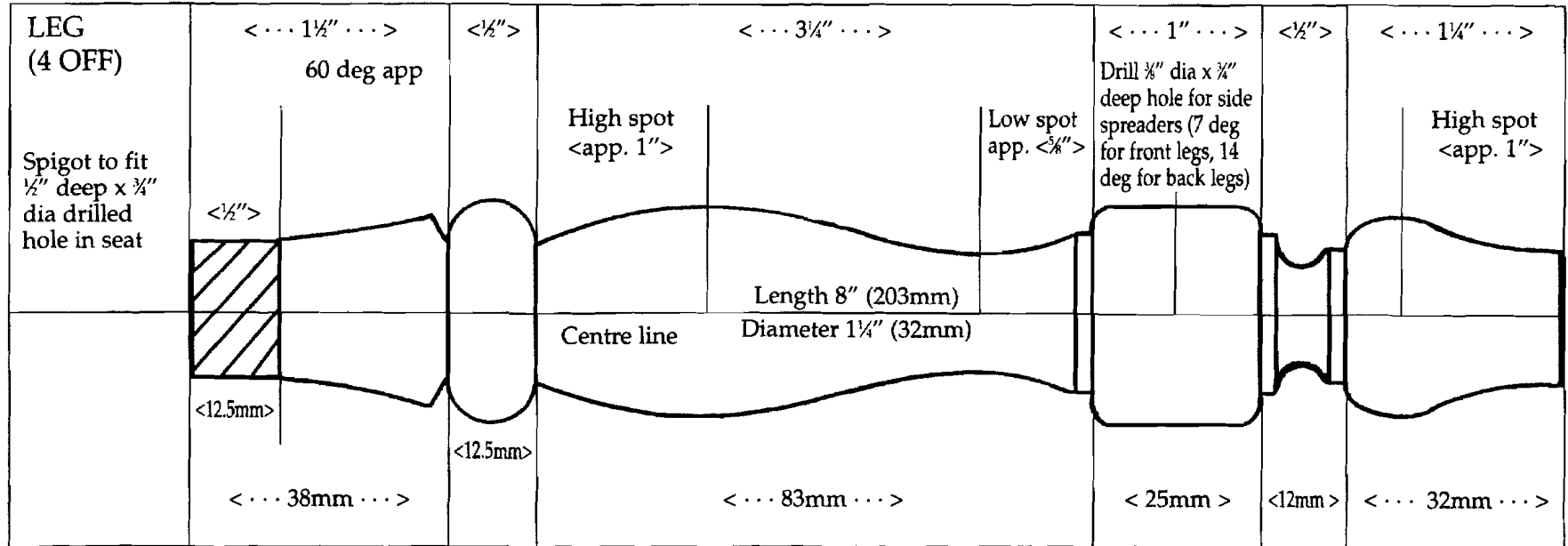
Check that the sight lines for the three centre spindles are at 90 deg to the centre line but the two outside ones are sighted from the actual centre spot.  
 TEMPLATE cut out the backrest template and stick to a piece of card, using a drawing pin, centralise the template along the centre line of the backrest then use more drawing pins to mark the positions (through the card) of the holes to be drilled.  
 INSTRUCTIONS turn bottom flat and to 10" diameter, use template and drill holes.  
 Turn to lathe and turn a 1/4" x 1/4" groove 1 1/4" in from outside of disc and a recess for your chuck. Remove from lathe and cover bottom with adhesive tape.  
 Turn to lathe and turn face in an arc to meet the rebate in the bottom, sand when you are app. 3/8" from breakthrough. Break through with a thin parting tool (the adhesive tape will support the backrest), cut in half, sand on drum sander and round over ends.  
 If you drill both halves you will have made the backrests for two chairs.

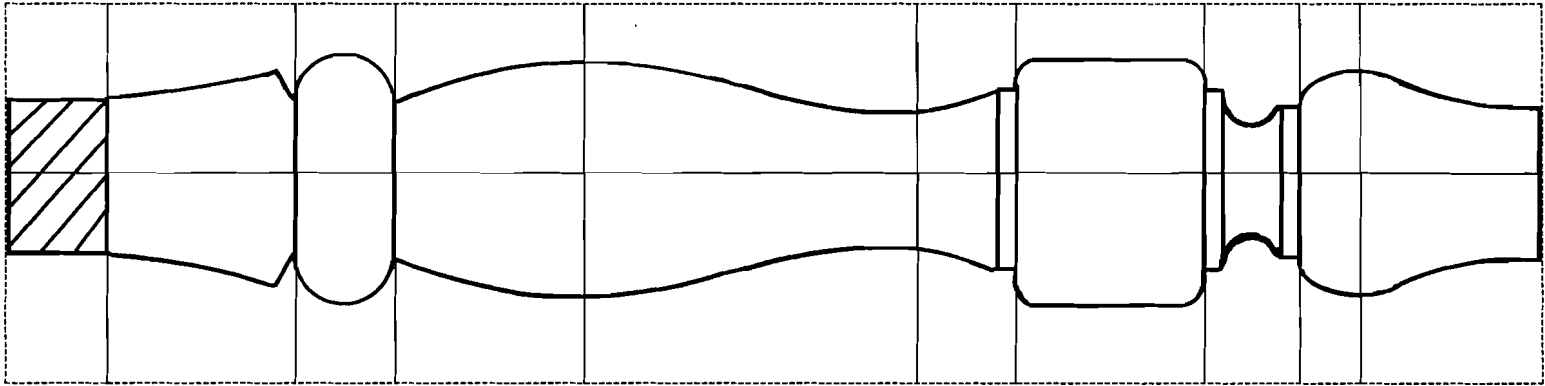


MINI-CHAIR/PLANTSTAND

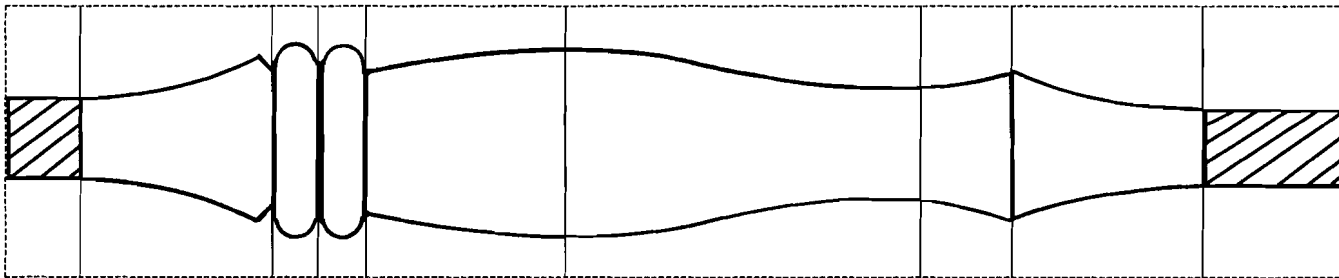




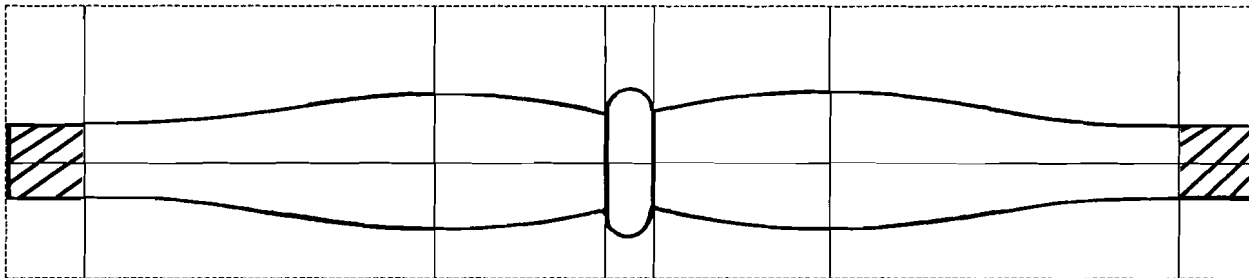




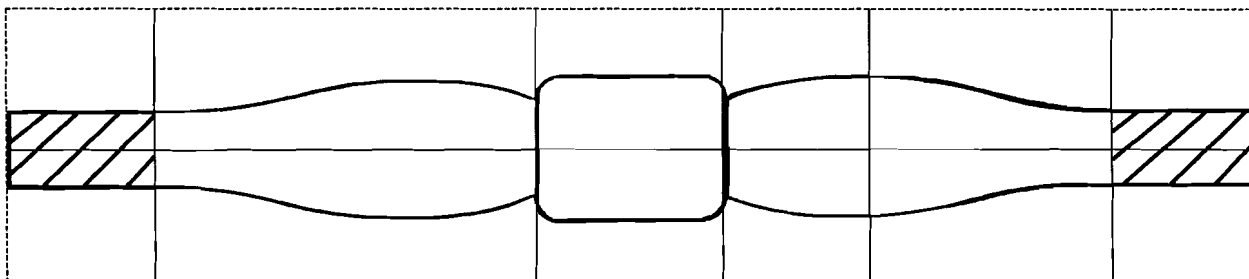
Cut along dotted line



Cut along dotted line



Cut along dotted line



Cut along dotted line

**MINI-CHAIR/PLANTSTAND**

**Parts List**

Legs	4	8"	Dia	1½"
Side Spreaders	2	6½"	Dia	¾"
Centre Spreader	1	6½"	Dia	¾"
Centre Back Spindles	3	7"	Dia	¾"
Side Back Spindles	2	7"	Dia	1"
Seat	1	9"	9"	1½"
Backrest	1	10"	10"	1½"

