

Pro-active

An eager **Colin Simpson** gets his hands on Robert Sorby's ProEdge sharpening system

The people at Robert Sorby are very excited about their new ProEdge sharpening system. We featured it in tool talk last issue and I asked if I could borrow a unit to give it a more in-depth review. At that time the MD, Peter Gill, told me that sales had surpassed all expectations and the only unit available was an ex-demo one. This is the one featured here, but I have to say that, apart from one little scratch on the paintwork, it looked brand new. It came very well boxed with a comprehensive handbook.

The ProEdge is a complete sharpening system, capable of putting an edge not only on turning tools but also hand chisels, plane blades and carving chisels and gouges. There is also a range of accessories available for the ProEdge.

The skew chisel jig, standard profile gouge jig and fingernail profile arm come as standard with the ProEdge Plus. The other accessories can be purchased separately and extend the versatility of this unit considerably. There are a number of different belt types and grits – aluminium oxide for woodworking chisels, plane irons and carving tools, ceramic belts for heavy material removal and zirconium for HSS tools as well as router bits and drills.

I was going to start my test by sharpening my turning tools so I loaded the 120grit zirconium belt.

Loading

Loading or changing the belt is simple. There is a belt-release lever that, when moved, releases the

tension on the belt. Two T-bar bolts need to be undone to remove the metal guard before the belt is simply slid over the two pulleys. Re-apply the tension to the belt and refit the guard. Alignment is also very easy. The two tracking adjustment bars – supplied with the unit – are used to slacken off the locking collar and to move the tracking shaft. When correctly aligned, the locking collar is tightened.

The whole of the sharpening belt assembly can be tilted through about 80° from vertical to almost horizontal. This enables it to be set in the most comfortable position for the user. Adjustment of this is also simple – just a matter of slackening two screws near the drive pulley.

I found that I preferred the belt assembly in a lower position for sharpening my skew chisels and general woodworking chisels and in a more upright position for sharpening my gouges and scrapers. With the exception of the fingernail gouge, the tools are sharpened using the adjustable platform. This can be adjusted to any angle you like but there are pre-



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Accessories available. Some of these are standard with the ProEdge Plus