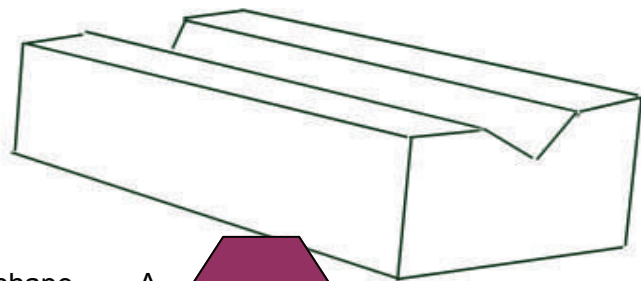
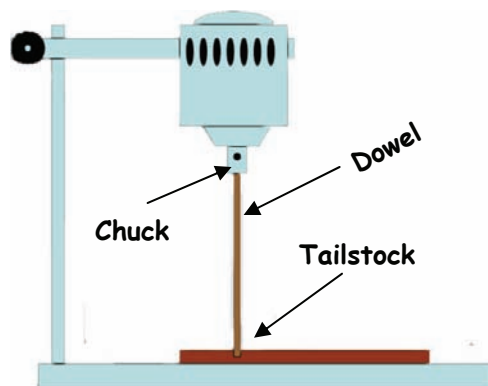


Building Masts & Spars

A Roundtable

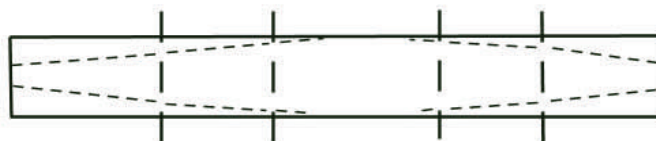
Our roundtable started out with a discussion on how to taper masts and spars using doweling pins or other materials. Quite a few variations on this came out including chucking a dowel into a drill or drill press and manually shaping the part by wrapping sandpaper around it and applying pressure. One refinement on the idea was to create a tailstock for the free end of the dowel by clamping a block to the drill stand with either a hole (soaped) drilled into it or a bearing fitted into it (see drawing). This prevents the dowel from whipping while turning.

Another method was to start with square stock and progressively plane it down to a round and tapered



shape. A "V-block" is useful for this operation to hold the part steady. Insert the square stock into the v-block groove and use a thumb plane, file or sanding block to remove material. Rotate the stock and continue

to remove material until you have created a hexagon. Taper the stock when removing material by marking off the desired diameter change points before starting and then plane from each change point from the small end backward until correct diameter



is achieved. Sanding will take you from hexagonal shape to a smooth round shape.

Another great tip was to coat the dowel with pencil graphite before shaping so you can see the effect of removal as you work along.

Foot rope mounting was another critical issue. To make the foot ropes look authentic and hang properly without a curl, it was suggested that they be made with wire of the proper gauge. To mount



them, drill a small hole in the spar and cement one end of the wire stirrup with C/A, then wrap the wire around the spar to simulate lashing.

One member stated: *"Doing it the way it really was done isn't necessarily best"*. With this idea in mind, making it look good to the eye should be our goal. Read more on this in books such as: Milton Roth's *Ship Modeling from Stem to Stern* and Lennarth Pettersson's *Rigging Period Ship Models*, or read *A Fixture for Making Masts* by Ray Oswalt and Sid Wotman, which also appears in the *Technical Articles* section of this website. ❖