



Trend time

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS SCARBON

Editor, **Alan Goodsell** gets out his spanner and screwdriver to build and use a comprehensive collection of routing kit from Trend



Make up the base stand using a suitably high surface to work on



▲ Lay out all of the parts of the table to identify them

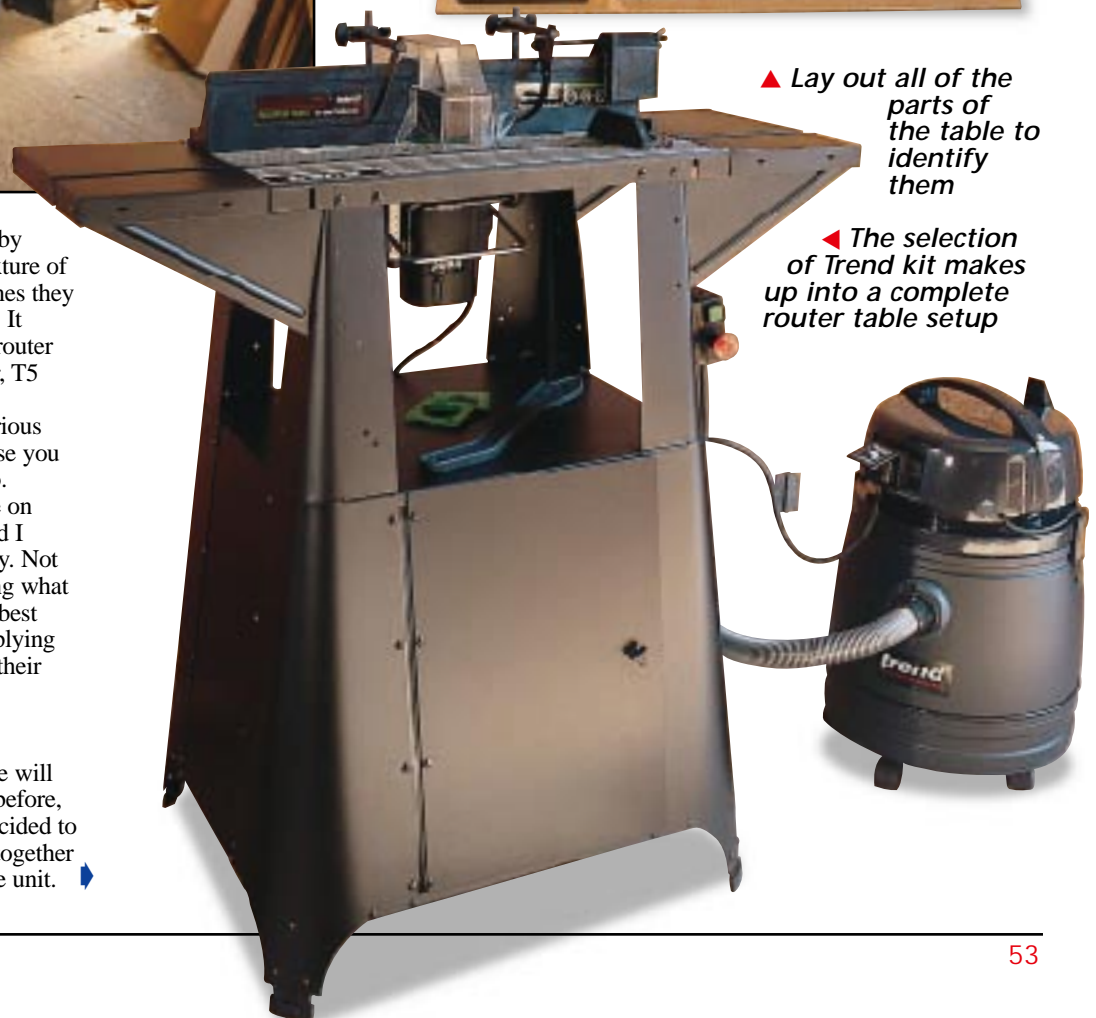
◀ The selection of Trend kit makes up into a complete router table setup

THE selection of kit supplied by Trend for evaluation is a mixture of existing products and new ones they have gathered into their fold. It consists of their new Craftsman Mk2 router table, base and enclosure kit, extractor, T5 router and a set of plungebars. In fact everything you would need to start serious table routing, apart from cutters. In case you haven't heard, Trend supply these also.

The Mk2 table serves as an upgrade on their old, smaller Craftsman model and I expect it comes out of the same factory. Not that this is a bad thing, just Trend doing what they do best, selecting the crop of the best routing products in the world and supplying them at competitive prices – but with their name on.

Assembly

As most of the equipment you see here will have made an appearance in the mag before, sometimes under different guises, I decided to concentrate more on how to put it all together and see how it performs as a collective unit. ▶





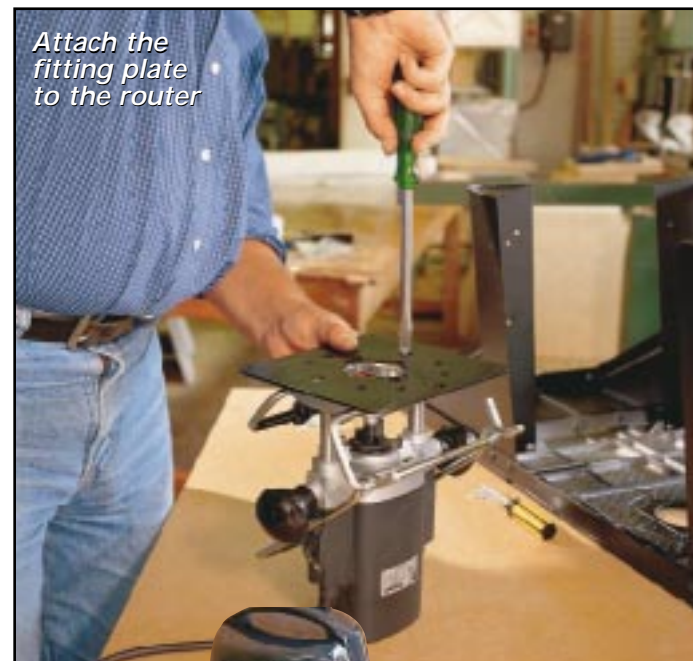
When assembling the table make sure you use a flat surface to level the extension beds



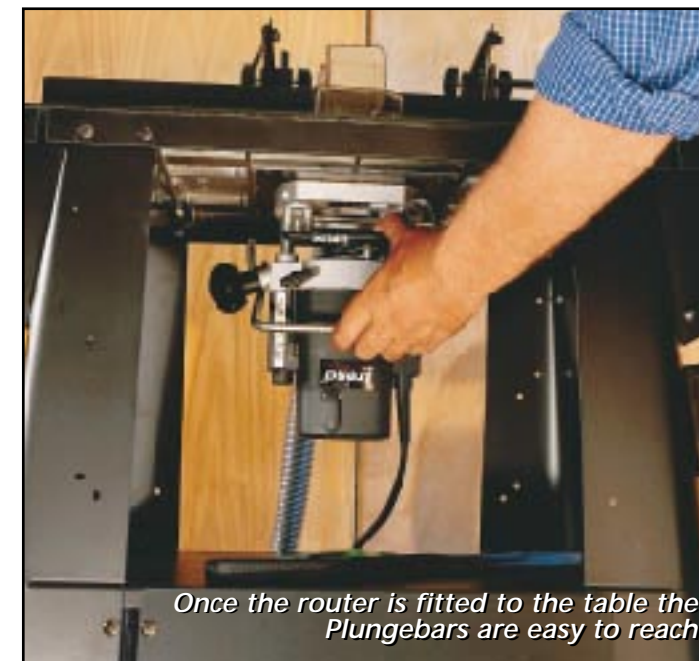
Fit the first part of the Plungebars to the baseplate...



...then the second part to complete



Attach the fitting plate to the router



Once the router is fitted to the table the Plungebars are easy to reach

The first thing to do is get it all out of the boxes, lay it out and try and tally everything up with what is in the manuals. After some headscratching I discovered that it was all there and my least favourite part of testing begins – assembly.

I know from experience that this is going to take me the best part of a day, mainly because every stage has to be photographed, and photographers, being perfectionists by nature, always want to “make sure the shot is just right”. What I didn’t expect is one to say “I don’t think you have put that together correctly” and be right.

In this case he was, and through my impatience to get the job done quickly I hadn’t studied the manuals carefully enough – the answer was even on the picture on the box. So it just goes to show no matter how

clever you think you are, studying the instructions and taking care pay off, and save time in the long run.

Mind you, in my defence, the base stand and table are made up from pressed steel and about a million fiddly nuts and bolts, and I made an assumption about which bits go inside what – my logic didn’t agree with the manufacturers. After assembly my fingers eventually suffered from what I call ‘Meccano burn’ – anyone who played with it as a kid will know what I mean.

For your information, the top of the base goes inside the legs and the table uses the same fixings, so leave them out until the table is in place then bolt them all together at the same time. Incidentally, the box the extractor comes in makes an ideal work-bench for assembling the base and table.

When the whole lot is bolted tight together the structure is an extremely rigid platform to do router work on, and adjustable feet on the base make up for uneven floors.

Plungebars to router

The next job is to fit the Plungebars to the router. This is a simple matter of sliding the main, sprung part into the rod hole in the back of the baseplate and tightening in position. There is a flat on the rod to ensure it positions itself correctly.

The end of the handle is then flipped over the top of the plunged router, the power cable fed through, the bar rests on the router’s handles. The second part of the Plungebar is pushed into the other rod hole, again its position is set by a flat on the bar. The handles of the two parts are positioned so they are easy to grip and squeeze together for setting the router’s depth.

Router to table

A large thick steel plate is supplied for attaching the router – in this case a T5 as tested in TR7, a creditable copy of an Elu MOF 96E – to the substantial cast table. It is pre-drilled to suit Elu type router baseplates which Trend’s own T5 and T9 routers have.

If you have other brands, specify the type of router and you may be in luck and find there is a pre-drilled plate for your model. If not, all you have to do is drill your own holes, which is a simple matter of making a paper pattern and transferring the hole positions to the plate.

Attach the router to the plate then bolt it to the underside of table from the top, this



▲ The T30 extractor with its supplied accessories

is a bit difficult and a third arm would be useful. When in place it is rigid, the plungebars are easy to reach and the remote NVR switch makes touching the router a rare event.

Accessories onto table

The fence is bolted to the table and slots allow movement back and forth to set a cut, the hexagonal bars for the hold downs must be attached first. There is a sliding plate set into the left side of the fence which will allow the planing or heavy moulding of workpieces. A mitre slide is also provided as is a tenoning slide, both work well enough.

Three insert rings are provided to close the gap around the cutter and a NVR switch is essential for safe inverted routing.

Extractor

The new Trend T30 extractor is a neat little unit that has a capacity of 34 litres and is ready to go, straight out of the box, apart from popping on the five castor wheels. It has a range of accessories including pipe reducers, filters and various cleaning attachments.

There is an auto power socket, that will operate at 40 to 2,000W, built in so power tools, in our case a router, can be plugged in, which when started will in turn automatically start the extractor.

In use

When all is put together you have a comprehensive routing work centre. The T5 router performs well, although if you want more power the T9 can be fitted. The base stand is extremely stable and with the enclosure kit fitted it makes a large and useful storage cupboard for router accessories.

The table is an improvement on the previous model, mainly because of the extension beds, although these need some care in setting up to make sure they are level with the main bed. The T30 extractor sucks as much dust away as is possible and is small enough to not get in the way in a smaller workshop.

Plungebars make the setting of cutting depths a breeze, and the NVR switch is easy to reach.

Conclusion

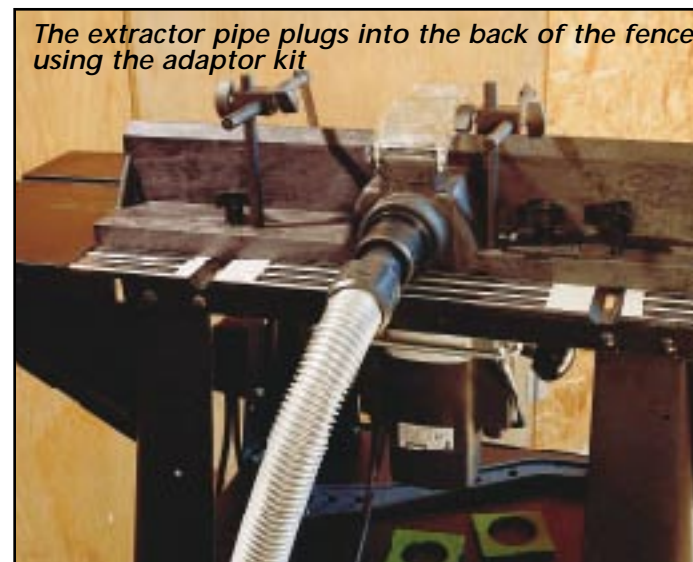
A very capable collection of equipment which can all be bought with one phone call from just one place. It would suit the keen amateur and would even provide good service to a professional outfit for general-purpose use.

You can win a similar set of kit from Trend in this month’s competition. ●

Prices

Craftsman Mk2 router table	£170.31
Router fixing plate	£17.56
Spring pressure clamps (pair)	£28.08
Profiling top guard	£11.45
Hose adaptor	£8.81
Floor stand	£58.69
Enclosure kit	£29.31
T30A extractor (standard filter)	£175.00
T30AF extractor (fine dust filter)	£198.57
Plungebars	T5 £23.44, T9 £29.31
T5E router	£175.07
T9E router	£351.32

All prices include VAT. To contact Trend see page 99



The extractor pipe plugs into the back of the fence using the adaptor kit



When the whole lot is assembled the routing can begin