Making a Cutting Box

By Maureen Williams

While Lorna was staying with me after one of the carving camps, she took down all the measurements from my cutting box, so she could make her own when she got home. A suggestion that she make a table top version resulted in a very functional unit which allowed her to work inside during all types of weather.

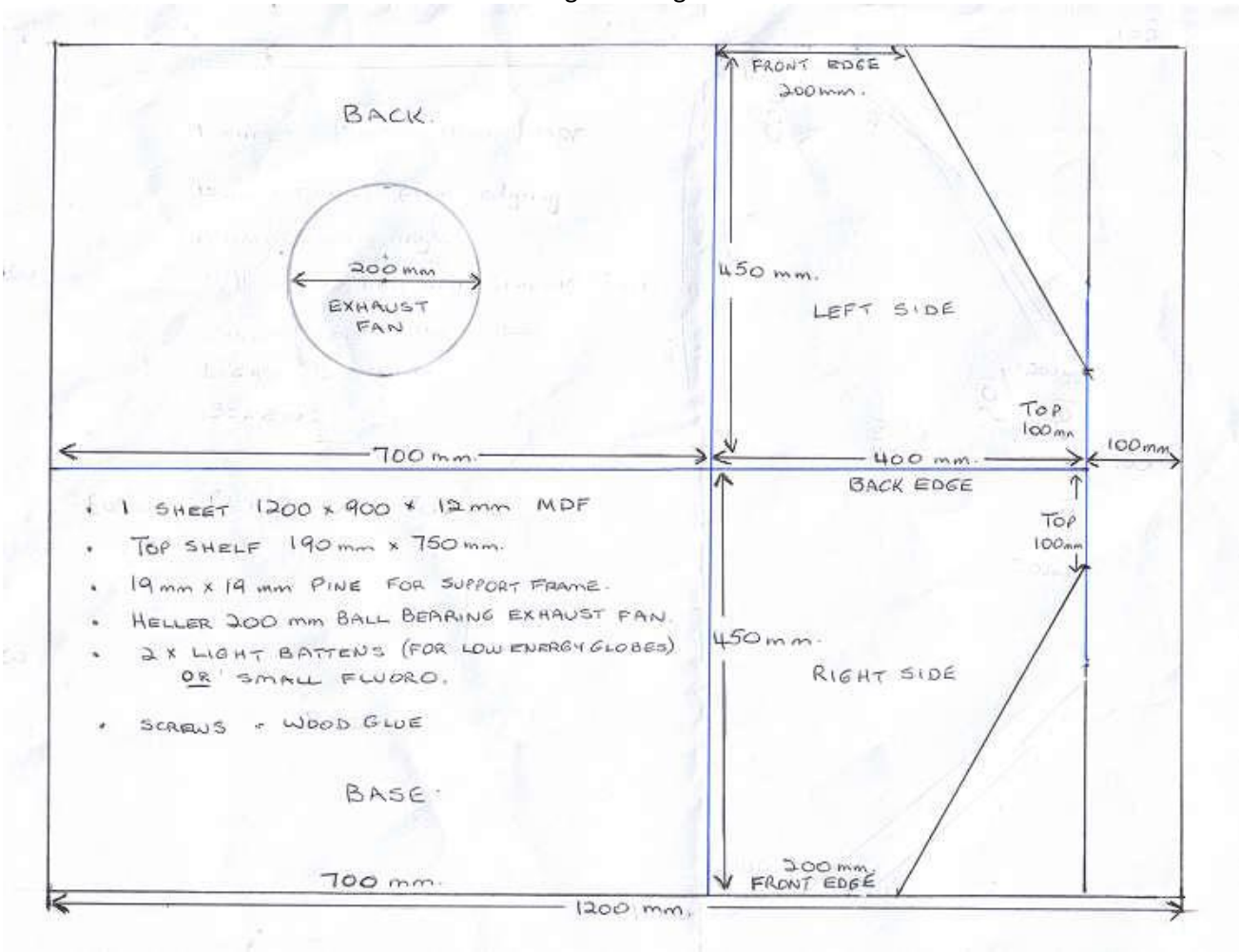
I decided to make up a table top model using Lorna's measurements as a guide and have added these details here, so you can make your own cutting box or get your friendly handyman to do it for you.

The base, back and sides and the cover piece for the light (above the glass) can be cut from a 1200 mm x 900 mm (approx 47" x 35½") standard size sheet of MDF or chipboard. You can get your piece of wood cut into the required pieces at Bunnings then you will need to cut off the angle on the sides and also cut out the 200 mm hole in the back for the exhaust fan.

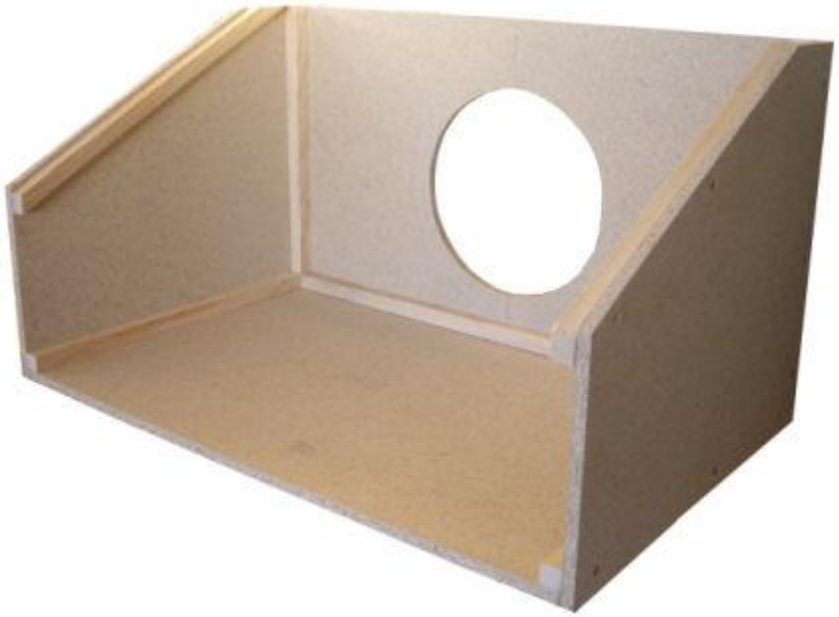
Cut a 100 mm (approx 4") strip off one end of the sheet which will become the piece across the front to hide the light inside. Cut the remaining piece at the 700 mm (approx 27½") mark, leaving a 400 mm (approx 16") piece. You will then have two pieces - one piece 700 mm x 900 mm and one piece 400 mm by 900 mm. These two pieces are then cut in half at the 450 mm mark giving you 2 pieces 700 mm wide x 450mm and 2 pieces 400 mm x 450 mm. See the cutting diagram below.

You will then need to cut the angle off the smaller pieces for the sides to allow for the glass to rest on the pine supports and use a jigsaw to cut out the hole for the exhaust fan. There is a template in the exhaust fan box for this.

Making a Cutting Box



These photos show the basic construction of the cutting box - lengths of 19 mm x 19 mm dressed pine have been used to make the cutting box sturdy without needing to use a thicker MDF. This also cuts down on the overall weight of the box.



If you put the sides on the outside of the base and the back pieces as I have done here you will need to cut a 50 mm strip off the back piece of wood or you could use it as a backing piece to the top shelf which will sit across the top of the box to stop things falling off the back.

The cutting box has been painted with white semi gloss paint making it bright and reflective inside

A shelf was added to the top of the cutting box and strips of the 19 mm pine forms an edge to stop things falling off. Mirror support brackets were used to hold the glass in place on the pine strips.

Two low energy globes have been installed on either side of the cutting box to provide a well-lit work area. I've also added a piece of thick clear plastic under the cutting mat to protect the bottom of the cutting box.

Modifying my Existing Cutting Box

A desire to be able to use my cutting box in my craft room led me to look at modifying what I was already using outside.

The original cutting box was constructed from 16 mm (5/8") white laminated MDF, with a piece of glass across the front, which also acts as eye protection from the light when cutting an egg. The open front allows plenty of room to move the egg around while carving.

The outside model had a vacuum cleaner connected to the bottom outlet, but this was a noisy option and not really suitable for inside. The foam on the inside of the bottom compartment help to reduce some of the noise.

By installing an exhaust fan in the back wall of the cutting box this has now made a very user-friendly unit which is relatively quiet and inexpensive to modify.

The exhaust fan I used is a Heller Ball Bearing fan which I purchased from Bunnings. Ensure the exhaust fan you choose can be used in the orientation you wish to use. Not all fans will work in a vertical position as they are mainly designed to go in a ceiling. This particular fan also has ball bearings as opposed to sleeve bearings and this is supposed to contribute to the quieter operation of the fan.

The template which came with the fan was used to mark the hole in the back wall of the cutting box. After installing the fan, I cut a large hole in one side of a plastic storage box to allow adequate airflow around the fan motor. The storage box was then screwed into position to cover the fan housing, thus keeping any dust contained inside and preventing anyone from sticking their fingers in the wrong place.

I used two thicknesses of air conditioning filter foam taped over the hole to stop any dust from being pushed out into the room.

On the inside of the cutting box I used a circle of the same air conditioning filter foam to go between the fan cover and the blades. Some twisty ties hold the foam in place so there is no danger of it being sucked into the blades. The fan cover is easily removed so the filter foam can be washed out

The addition of a couple of low energy lights complete the cutting box making it suitable for day time or night time use.

If you have found these instructions helpful you may also find
our instructional carving DVD's useful as well.
Relief Carving—The Heart Rose
Introducing Shelly—Reverse Relief
For more details on these products and other decorated egg publications
visit our website - Products page
Published by:

Aussie Eggshell Carvers
Unit 23, 1 Murray Dyer Avenue
RENMARK 5341
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
http://www.aussieeggshellcarvers.com/

Maureen Williams
aussieeggshellcarvers@yahoo.com.au

Lorna Winch
lorna@ozemail.com.au