

TESTER Bill Cain tries the Trend Snappy System and finds it's tough to top

▶ The versatile Snappy System is available in a 19 piece Imperial or Metric set



Make it snappy

OVER the past year I have looked at the Trend Snappy System several times; on each occasion failing to make up my mind whether or not it really was of interest to me. Having had all the items in the System on test for a while, I have at last made up my mind – I like it.

These are quality tools, and I'll be adding elements of the System to my workshop kit.

The System has a wide range of uses, relating to working 'holes' in timber, plastics and metal; its scope covers:-
Drilling Imperial $\frac{1}{16}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ in dia and Metric 1mm – 7mm.

Pilot drilling/countersinking/counterboring for No. 4 to No. 12 woodscrews or their metric equivalents.

Plug cutting Imperial $\frac{3}{16}$ in and $\frac{1}{2}$ in dia (9.5 & 12.7mm).

Self-centring pilot drills for No.6 to No.10 woodscrews, or their metric equivalents.
Screwdriving, No. 1 to 3 'Pozidrive' and 'Phillips', plus three sizes of regular slotted screw heads.

Tapered drilling 3mm – 14mm.
Tapping threads M3.5 through M10 inclusive.

Reaming of holes to match the required tapping size for M3.5 – M10 inclusive.

Countersinking

All the bits have standard $\frac{1}{4}$ in A/F hexagonal power drive shanks which click into the Snappy Quick Chuck and are held firmly in place.

It's all designed for use with power drills

and screwdrivers, with the ability to change quickly and easily between bits and their various functions.

Testing

All my testing was conducted using a Skill 12V cordless reversing, variable-torque and speed (0 - 700rpm) either drilling, screwing into and generally attacking: solid timber, oak, pine, teak and sycamore; plastic, various sections as used within the PVC/double glazing industry, plus Perspex; metal, mild steel plate (14SWG/0.08in thick) and aluminium alloy extrusion ($\frac{1}{8}$ in thick).

Findings

All bits are manufactured from either High Speed Steel (HSS) or Tool Steel, and came well presented in various forms of moulded plastic protective packaging.

Quick chuck

This was quick and easy to use, with three machined flats on its shank to ensure positive location, with no slipping in the powerdrill chuck. A $\frac{3}{16}$ in dia capacity drill chuck is needed.



◀ The Quick Chuck, centre, is the core piece of the System

"These self-centring tools are magic!"

Drill bit guides

These self-centring tools are magic! They ensure spot on alignment when drilling for hinges or other fittings – always a challenge.

Just place the ball-end of the tool into the hinge countersink, switch on the drill and push. Very innovative, simple and effective.

They also work well when used for 'spotting-off' holes through a jig or template.



▲ Drills are available in a wide range of Imperial or Metric sizes

Drills

All were well ground, performed well and covered a useful range in Imperial or Metric sizes.

Their mounting collets will accept bits up to 0.13mm oversize or 0.25mm undersize. The collets need two spanners for drill bit replacement (not supplied).

I got the best results by running the cutter in reverse for a few revs, to scribe the edge of the plugs, before commencing the actual cut.



▲ A set of drill countersinks could save a lot of time

Drill countersinks

I tried these on the non-metallics, and they produced satisfactory countersinks/counterbores. As expected, hardwoods cut cleaner with better results than softwood, which tended to tear at the edges of the cut.

Plug cutters

These produced good results in all timbers. I found that to prevent 'wander' when starting the cut, it was essential to position the cutter square to the workface and maintain positive pressure at all times.



◀ These plugs are designed to suit the drill countersink holes



▲ It takes a good countersink to impress Bill Cain

Hole countersink

Designed for use in timber and man-made boards, I found this produced satisfactory results when used to countersink holes $\frac{3}{16}$ in dia and above. Sizes smaller than this resulted in slightly wonky holes.

"When it comes to countersink cutters, I'm one of the hardest people to please"

▲ Fantastic! The drill bit guides work superbly well

Router Project

► *Screwdriver bits can be bought individually or in a set*

Screwdriver bits

I tried two different examples, those from the Magnetic Screwdriver Bit Set, and those included in the 19 Piece Kit Box. All fitted the screws well.

Only time will tell how well they last with use! I am yet to find a 'Pozi' bit that lasts any time at all – anyone found one they can really recommend?



▼ *Always use a cutting lubricant when tapping*



Tapered drills

Designed for opening up holes in thin sheet materials, metal, plastic, man-made boards and wood, these worked well.

You need to take it easy though, as the rate of material removal can result in a much larger hole than you wanted. Use a suitable lubricant with sheet metals.

Taps

Use a torque-controlled drill/screwdriver and a suitable cutting lubricant when tapping. I got very good results in both the steel and aluminium alloy, though I only tested on thin sections.

The holes were reamed to size prior to tapping, *see below*.

▼ *Quite a bit of space is needed to accommodate the length of the Snapppy System when drilling*

▲ *Tapered drills work extremely well although use with care*



"I am yet to find a 'Pozi' bit that lasts any time at all – anyone found one they can really recommend?"

I took it very gently as taps are 'glass hard' and can break very easily, so I used the slowest speed and the lowest torque setting possible, just sufficient to maintain constant cutting.

Watch out when you come to remove the tap from the work, as its alignment must be maintained, and it's easy to 'strip' a thread you have just cut.

If in any doubt, remove the tap from the chuck and wind it out by hand. Blind holes are probably not really suited to power tapping with anything other than special equipment. Removing a tap from a blind hole is usually difficult, and can be an expensive task.

► *Achieve an excellent finish with a stepped reamer*



Step reamers

Drilling a perfectly round hole in thin sheet metal can be difficult. Before using these reamers a pilot hole must be made and the hole then reamed to size.

The result is a round hole, the right tapping size, with an excellent surface finish. Simple and very effective. As with the taps, a suitable tapping fluid is needed.

Conclusions

The Snapppy System is made from good quality parts, and performs as advertised. In particular, I was impressed by the step reamers and drill bit guides, which will certainly be added to my kit.

The only slight downside to the System is that the chucking/collet elements add significantly to the effective length of the tool bits. Whilst this can be a plus in certain circumstances, it can be a problem when space is limited.

Of course, you can just remove the System and install the various bits directly in the drill chuck. ●