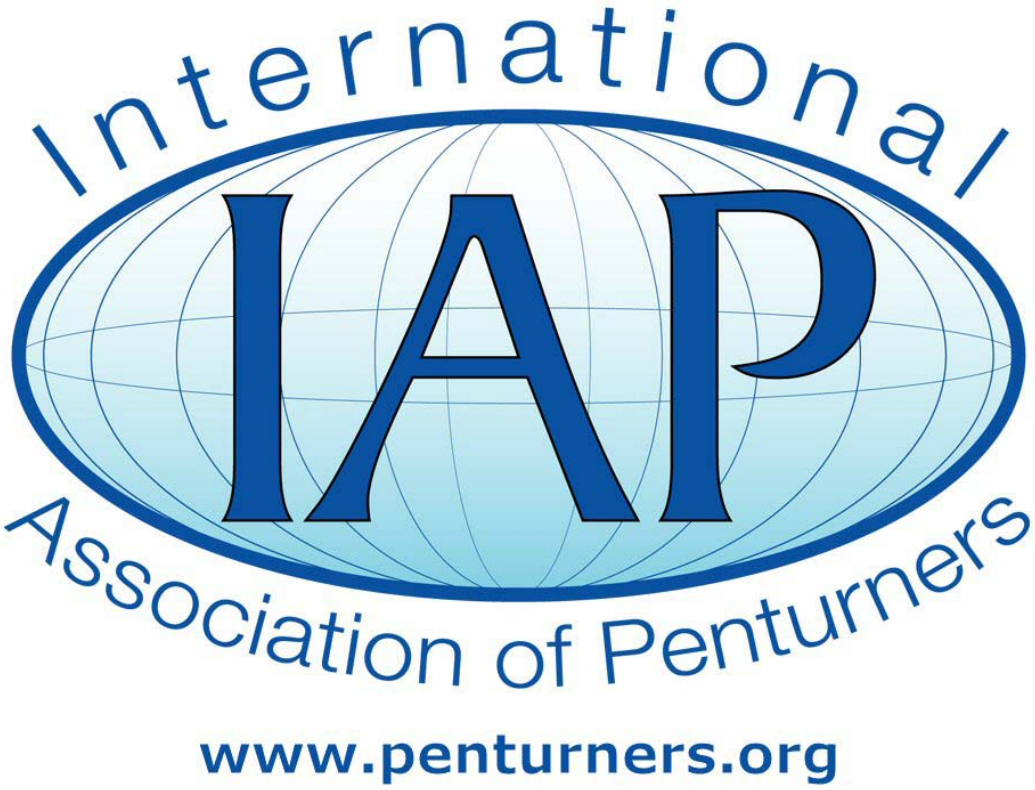
Replacing a Decorative Cap Ring

Contributed by: Bob Dupras

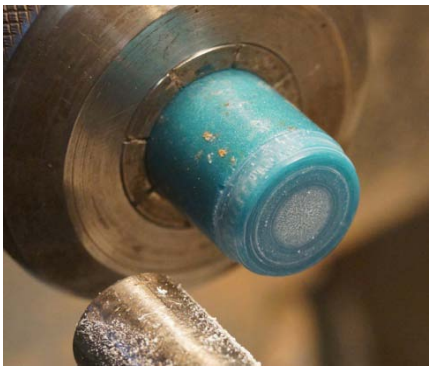
A.K.A "BSea"



Replacing a Decorative Cap Ring by Bob Dupras aka BSea

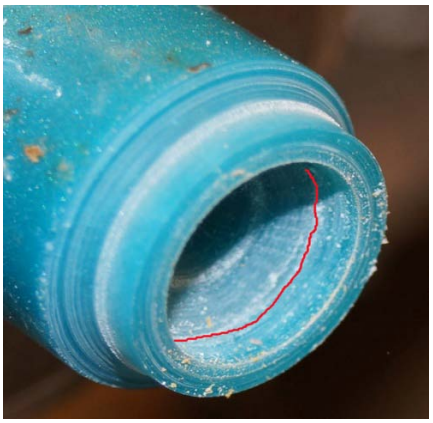
The kits that I use are the Jr Gent I and the Sr Gent. You can also remove the center ring using a skew and some elbow grease from the Jr Victor. I'm guessing that most kits that have a decorative ring can be done one way or another. I've never tried the method that's described in the Library. But I don't make Jr Gent II kits. In fact I've only done 5 or 6 of these, so my kit knowledge for doing this mod is pretty limited.

Depending on the kit, the decorative ring may be easily removable. Other kits require a little work to get the ring off. But if you want to do a custom decorative ring, here's how I do them.



Step 1: Using a chuck of some kind that will hold a pen blank, square off the blank. I use a small parting tool. I only expose about an inch of the blank so it doesn't deflect when turning.

Step 2: Find the largest drill bit you have that the ring from the kit will still fit over. It can be the decorative ring, or the trim ring next to the decorative ring. What you are looking for is a drill bit slightly smaller than the inside diameter of the ring. The easiest way is just to try sliding the ring over your bits till you find the largest one that the ring will go over.



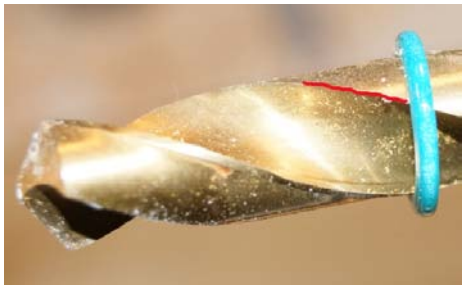
Step 3: Then drill till the bit has drilled in about 1/8" to ¼" The red line shows where I drilled the blank.

Step 4: Turn the blank down to a size slightly larger than the original decorative ring.. You will sand off some of it when you polish the ring. Create a recess between the blank and the ring. This is where you decide the thickness of the ring. Normally, I just eyeball it. I don't think it will matter much as long as you are reasonably close. When you cut the recess, don't go too deep for obvious reasons. All you want to do is go a touch deeper than the outside diameter of the trim ring. Because the trim ring will hide any marks on the side of the decorative ring. I actually cut this one deeper than I needed to.

Step 5: Polish the ring. I start with 320 grit sandpaper, and round the edges slightly, then go through the Micro Mesh pads to finish polishing the ring. There is no need to polish the inside of the ring.

Step 6: Part off the ring. I normally use an X-acto knife for this. Just be careful not to scratch your new ring. It's also a good idea to blow off any sawdust around your lathe before you do this. Those rings can be hard to find. DAMHIKT. If you have some material that needs to be removed from the side after parting, just rub the ring on some 400 grit sandpaper or higher. I just put the ring down on the sandpaper, and make a figure 8. All you want to do is remove any rough edges from parting. You don't want to change the thickness of the ring. Remember, the trim ring will hide any scratches from this step.

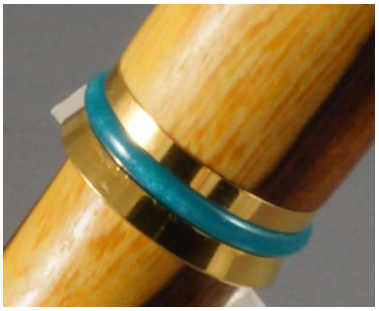
Step 7: Try the ring on the fitting. It should be snug without much play. It may be too tight. Don't force it. If the ring is too tight, trim off some of the inside of the ring using the drill bit used to drill the blank.



DO NOT USE A DRILL PRESS OR POWER HAND DRILL FOR THIS STEP!

Just slowly spin the ring against the edge of the ***non-spinning*** bit. You should notice small shavings coming off the ring. I don't use the cutting edge of the bit. It should work too, but this way works for me, and I'm a little concerned about being too aggressive with this step. Just continue till the ring slips over the fitting. Be sure to test often. Once you have a nice slip fit, you're done

Step 8: Assemble the cap like you normally would.



Depending on the blank, you may have to paint the inside of the ring, or the coupling that the ring goes over. However, I found that the ring material is generally thicker than the material for the cap. So if you don't have to paint for the cap, then you won't have to paint for the ring. That is provided the materials are the same which they weren't in this example.