TESTED BY RALPH LAUGHTON

Although it isn't the kind of job the home woodworker is going to be attempting on a daily basis, *gaining access to the void under a timber floor to carry out plumbing or wiring work can be a major job. The Trend cavity access system solves that problem very neatly*

SPECIFICATION

MAX BOARD THICKNESS	22mm (⅞in)
HOLE SIZE	102mm (4in)
PILOT DRILL SIZE	6.3mm (¼in)
ARBOR	11mm (7/16in)
REBATE DEPTH	2mm (5/64in)
ACCESSORIES	5 steel cover plates, disc removal tool, carry case

VERDICT

This is a useful tool if you're an under-floor DIY enthusiast.

PROS
- Superb build quality
- Quick and easy to use
- Neat end result

CONS
- Expensive for home use

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■□□

PERFORMANCE ■■■■□

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Trend
- 01923 224657
- www.trend-uk.com

The side handle is a must for keeping control

The kit cuts a hole quickly and with little effort

Remove the blank while the saw blade is still hot

The steel cover plate fits the rebate perfectly

Trend cavity access system

Once upon a time, if you needed to gain access to the void under a timber floor, you had to prise up a floorboard or cut a piece out of a chipboard sheet and run the risk of severing the pipe or cable you were trying to reach. Then you had to put all the bits back afterwards. Now Trend has produced a power drill accessory that does the job for you in seconds and provides a neat cover plate in case you need repeat access in the future.

Rout and about

For some years now Trend has sold a floor cavity access system called the Routabout. This required a router, a cutter and special plastic guide rings. It worked well enough, but this system is much easier and quicker to use (although it creates a smaller hole than the Routabout's 250mm capacity).

The kit consists of a variable-pitch bi-metal hole saw fitted with a heavy-duty rebate cutter with three solid carbide blades, a substantial arbor and a pilot drill bit. The kit is also supplied with a waste removal tool and five galvanised steel cover plates, and comes in its own carry case.

The hole saw is supplied assembled with the rebate cutter. The arbor is also supplied with the pilot drill bit fitted. The one omission is the hex key required to adjust the drill bit. This is unusual; most cutters and accessories are supplied with the correct adjustment tools these days.

Cutting the hole

Trend recommend the use of an electric drill with a 13mm chuck and at least a 600W motor, ideally fitted with a side handle for ease of control. You fit the cutter assembly in the chuck and bore a hole with the pilot drill bit. As this breaks through the board, you need to keep the hole saw square to the surface because the increase in load is considerable as the teeth make contact. It's at this point you realise why you need the side handle!

I found that steady, slow progress is the answer to getting a clean hole. When the hole saw is through the board, the rebate cutter will then be in contact with the wood and you'll experience another sudden increase in load. The rebating is fairly quick and the opening is finished when the rim of the rebate head is in contact with the board surface. This leaves an even 2mm rebate so long as the drill is held perfectly perpendicular. I found that slight adjustment of the drill's position by gently rocking it back and forth, left and right, ensured an even cut.

A very good tip in the instructions recommends that you remove the waste disc from the saw using the tool provided while the blade is still hot. When it cools down, it will contract and clamp the disc so tight it will be almost impossible to remove.

Once the hole is cut and the under-floor work is done, simply drop a steel blanking plate into the rebate to fill the hole. A bead of sealer round the rebate will keep the plate securely in place.

The system can also be used to cut holes in plasterboard walls and ceilings. Mesh discs are available as an optional extra so the hole can be plastered over afterwards