

wood CARVING

Projects this issue

Georgian doll

Naturalistic rose

Abstract love heart

Black-necked grebe

Classical acanthus leaf

Introducing...

GUY REID

and his realistic
figure carvings

Maquettes

Modelling
the hands
and head



Extreme-performance... Precision-made.

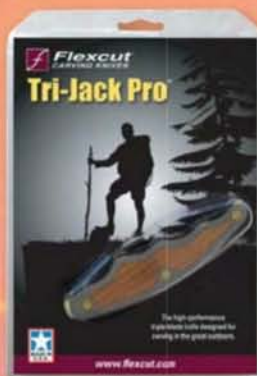
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Woodcarving is an inherently dangerous pursuit. Readers should not attempt the procedures described herein without seeking training and information on the safe use of tools and machines, and all readers should observe current safety legislation.

Something to consider

I feel like being a bit controversial now; that makes it twice within six issues. I touched lightly on this topic a little bit in conjunction with collective responsibility in issue 128.

Lack of direction

Many calls and conversations throughout the year seemed to come around to commenting on clubs and organisations, both local and national and, typically, the conversations run along the lines of not being able to get enough people to stand on committees. There is a sense that apathy reins in some quarters; that there is a lack of direction and focus; that there are no new ideas coming into play; that there are a lack of people willing to take part. The list goes on and all this and more is preventing things from moving forward in some way.

I do not believe all is a tale of woe. I think some of it may be perception and actually I think in many cases we forget that we have a great network of clubs and many are happy, fun places of sharing and learning. Many function wonderfully and I genuinely think that there are things happening worth shouting about. There is stunning work being created and many organisations actively show others what happens and what goes on; but still people cite or focus on underlying issues like those I have mentioned.

Changing apathy

Apathy is a part of everyday life and letting someone else get on with things is certainly the easy route, but everyone has an opinion on this or that and people are often vocal with those opinions, but do not necessarily participate or help bring those changes about or put something into action. I also wonder, do people really know what they want and just enjoy pointing out what they do not like, but don't have any real solutions or ideas

other than not liking something? Is it easier to focus on perceived or real negatives than look at the good and the bad and weigh up which is in ascendance. Do we only know how good something really is when we no longer have it available to us? I know trying to manage the magazine groups with all the various likes and dislikes of readers is like herding cats. There are many differing views on the same subject from various quarters so striking a balance of consensus or walking a middle line or even taking a stance are never easy. And someone will always say something about it. The organisations and national bodies need to know what their members want in order to create a cohesive plan and have a collective vision to develop and drive things forward – that is in our hands. They cannot mind read. They need support and have people who are willing to take part and help bring about things requested. Helping takes many forms, but it is an active not passive thing. Help can be participating in the organised events by making the tea, helping with the car parking, moving chairs and possibly being on committees. I know this is already happening in some cases, but could more be done?

Play your part

I know I ask myself what I can do to help bring about changes and have joined some organisations in order to help with this process. I would ask that if you want to see changes, ask yourself how you can help.

Happy carving,

Mark Baker
Editor of Woodcarving



Problem finding Woodcarving magazine?

It can be ordered at any newsagent, or call Tony Loveridge, our Circulation Manager, on 01273 477 374 or email him at tonyl@thegmcgroup.com. Alternatively, save 30% on the cover price by subscribing. See page 72 for details.

wood CARVING

Issue 131 March/April 2013

MICHAEL PAINTER LOOKS AT TRACERY TOOLS & BACK-BENT CHISELS

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and head



Read up on the remarkable carvings of Guy Reid on pages 38-41

Main cover image is 'Ellie' by Guy Reid, photographed by François Deladerrière

The Woodworkers Institute web forum

Why not join in the discussions on all matters woodworking on the Woodworkers Institute web forum? Covering all four GMC woodworking titles including Woodcarving, you can view the work from fellow craftsmen, exchange useful hints and tips, or join in on the hot topic of the day on the live forums. To register, simply log on to www.woodworkersinstitute.com, click the register button, and follow the instructions.



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Woodcarving Round & About

We talk to the BWA, the BDWCA and take your letters from the forum and important dates for your diary to bring you the latest news from the woodcarving community. If you have something you want your fellow carvers to know, send in your news stories, snippets and diary dates to Miriam Bentham at Woodcarving, 86 High Street, Lewes, BN7 1XN or to miriamb@thegmcgroup.com

BWA: Spring is here



'Be Careful When You Go Out in the Light of the Morning' by Bill Cross

Trees are bursting into colour, serving nature's needs and, for woodcarvers, providing a versatile medium to give thanks for the part they play in our lives. We aspire to showcase the unseen beauty of the huge variety of trees in our carved creations.

Our Oxfordshire and Bucks region's 'Building a Medieval Monastery' carving featured on a card, raising over £1,000 for Help for Heroes. They have also collected over 1,500 surplus tools from BWA members for the Prince of Wales Trust. Our North Wales and Borders region produced an imaginative display of transport carvings, including the stunning 'Mayflower' – a life-like depiction of a laden camel and a witch with her own mode of transport – a broomstick! Congratulations to Ron Cannell who won with 'Hot Air Balloon'.

Our North Staffordshire members have taken on the challenge of making chairs! See our website for more inspirational ideas – what a clever lot we have in the BWA! Whatever your carving ability, it's the process of carving that's most satisfying. Some of us have been whittling from childhood, using branches fallen from trees in our gardens. Others have been hooked later in life – our eldest member is in her 90s!

Maybe you've inherited tools and need advice on how to use them? Perhaps now is the time to dedicate yourself to



Doris Grogan carving a relief flower in lime wood

a passion you have been yearning to try for years? There are so many reasons to join the BWA: friendly chatter, swapping of good carving ideas, the satisfying sound of a sharp gouge slicing through timber – all in a relaxed environment.

Contact the BWA

Tel 07749 769 111

Web www.britishwoodcarversassociation.com

Or write to The National Secretary, 32 Beaufort Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 8PF

BDWCA: Bohemian waxwings



The Cheshire group were the winners of the 2012 regional group competition



Individual winner by David Welham

The subject for the 2012 regional group competition at the BDWCA Annual Show – selected by the previous year's winners, the Essex Group – was the bohemian waxwing. There were 40 carvings that graced the table and this year the Cheshire group was determined to win the competition and win it they did with an impressive display of 15 individual carvings comprising a total of 18 waxwings. The Essex group came in second place, but they did win the award for the Best Individual Waxwing, carved by David Welham.

So this year it was the responsibility of the Cheshire group to decide on the subject for the 2013 competition! After some deliberation, they narrowed the selection down to a shorebird and finally announced 'To Be or Knot to Be?' with apologies to the Bard. Yes, the subject for the 2013 competition is the knot, or red knot as it is known in North America. Knot plumage is extremely variable and we see amazing tints of grey and white in our winter birds, very different from the flamboyant breeding birds which we miss as it breeds in Siberia and the high Arctic, with its brick-red breast and complex upper parts; a true challenge to paint realistically.

The group competition has

proven to be an excellent catalyst for members working together as a team and encouraging newer members to take the first steps on the competitive ladder, so it will be interesting to see how many knots make their way to Bakewell in September 2013.

On a different subject, we were very pleased to see more entries in the youth section, with the youngest carver only eight-years-old and a total of eight carvings on the table. The numbers are growing – slowly but steadily – and we look forward to more young contestants at this year's show. Last year's winner of the Best Youth Entry, James Langford, took the award again with his carving of a common quail and also collected another three rosettes for his other carvings. James will be competing in the novice group this year and we look forward to seeing him progress through the categories.

Contact the BDWCA

Tel 0161 483 7116

Web www.bdwca.org.uk

Or write to Mr Keith Royle,
10 Mostyn Road, Hazel Grove,
Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 5HL

Conversion chart

2mm	(¹ / ₁₆ in)
3mm	(¹ / ₈ in)
4mm	(⁵ / ₃₂ in)
6mm	(¹ / ₄ in)
7mm	(⁹ / ₃₂ in)
8mm	(⁵ / ₁₆ in)
9mm	(¹¹ / ₃₂ in)
10mm	(³ / ₈ in)
11mm	(⁷ / ₁₆ in)
12mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
13mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
14mm	(⁷ / ₁₆ in)
15mm	(⁹ / ₁₆ in)
16mm	(⁵ / ₈ in)
17mm	(¹¹ / ₁₆ in)
18mm	(²³ / ₃₂ in)
19mm	(³ / ₄ in)
20mm	(³ / ₄ in)
21mm	(¹³ / ₁₆ in)
22mm	(⁷ / ₈ in)
23mm	(²⁹ / ₃₂ in)
24mm	(¹⁵ / ₁₆ in)
25mm	(1in)
30mm	(1 ¹ / ₈ in)
32mm	(1 ¹ / ₄ in)
35mm	(1 ³ / ₈ in)
38mm	(1 ¹ / ₂ in)
40mm	(1 ⁵ / ₈ in)
45mm	(1 ³ / ₄ in)
50mm	(2in)
55mm	(2 ¹ / ₈ -2 ¹ / ₄ in)
60mm	(2 ³ / ₈ in)
63mm	(2 ¹ / ₂ in)
65mm	(2 ⁵ / ₈ in)
70mm	(2 ⁷ / ₈ in)
75mm	(3in)
80mm	(3 ¹ / ₈ in)
85mm	(3 ³ / ₈ in)
90mm	(3 ¹ / ₂ in)
93mm	(3 ³ / ₄ in)
95mm	(3 ⁵ / ₈ in)
100mm	(4in)
105mm	(4 ¹ / ₈ in)
110mm	(4-4 ³ / ₈ in)
115mm	(4 ¹ / ₂ in)
120mm	(4 ³ / ₄ in)
125mm	(5in)
130mm	(5 ¹ / ₈ in)
135mm	(5 ¹ / ₄ in)
140mm	(5 ¹ / ₂ in)
145mm	(5 ³ / ₈ in)
150mm	(6in)
155mm	(6 ¹ / ₈ in)
160mm	(6 ¹ / ₄ in)
165mm	(6 ³ / ₈ in)
170mm	(6 ³ / ₄ in)
178mm	(6 ⁷ / ₈ in)
180mm	(7in)
185mm	(7 ¹ / ₈ in)
190mm	(7 ¹ / ₄ in)
195mm	(7 ³ / ₈ in)
200mm	(8in)
305mm	(12in)
405mm	(16in)
510mm	(20in)
610mm	(24in)
710mm	(28in)
815mm	(32in)
915mm	(36in)
1015mm	(40in)
1120mm	(44in)
1220mm	(48in)
1320mm	(52in)
1420mm	(56in)
1525mm	(60in)

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAY LOUGHLIN

DIARY

Dates for the woodcarver's diary

The South East Woodworking and Power Tool Show

8–9 March, 2013
Kent Event Centre
Kent County Showground
Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3JF
Tel: 01474 536 535
Web: www.nelton.co.uk

Now in its third year, The South East Woodworking and Power Tool Show is a mixture of demonstrations, personalities, trade stands, advice and fun. This incredible event is held at the Kent Showground – almost certainly the most accessible exhibition venue in the South East feeding directly off the M2 and M20, thereby linking the whole of the South East Motorway network.

The 2013 show has demonstrations from every woodworking discipline including a demonstration by wood sculptor Bill Prickett.

With more than 50 companies exhibiting plus free parking, a free show guide, free raffle and entry if bought in advance at just £6,

the South East Woodworking and Power Tool Show 2013 is certain to be a great day out.

Yandles Spring Show

5–6 April, 2013
Yandle & Son Ltd
Hurst Works, Hurst, Martock,
Somerset, TA12 6JU
Tel: 01935 822 207
Web: www.yandles.co.uk

Yandles Spring Show is always a highlight on the woodworking events calendar.

Thousands of visitors come from across the country to enjoy the informal and friendly atmosphere created within the surroundings of this historic timber yard.

The usual working site is transformed with marquees hosting a vast array of leading craftspeople. Live demonstrations will keep you entertained with new techniques to learn, useful advice on tools and handy tips. The Sawmill itself is converted for use by international manufacturers, traders and publishers displaying the hottest new product lines.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF NELTON EXHIBITIONS

Woodcarver Bill Prickett will be demonstrating at this year's South East Woodworking and Power Tool Show

LETTERS

Rabbit toothpick

Dear Woodcarving,

I would like to compliment you and your team on an outstanding publication. I have been a reader for just over six months now and have found it both informative and inspirational. Whilst browsing the net I was introduced to the toothpick carvings of Bob Shamey and Linda Master, both highly skilled artists in their own right. I finally decided to carve a toothpick myself. To date I have completed 15, and only broken two toothpicks in all that time, not a bad feat! Please keep up the good work and continue to inspire those like myself.

Robin Hemsall



One of Robin's 15 toothpick carvings

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBIN HEMPSALL

The South East WOODWORKING & POWER TOOL Show

*A great line up of
Demonstrators and Stars including:*



Tony Wilson



Mick Hanbury

FRIDAY 8TH &
SATURDAY 9TH
MARCH 2013

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- DETLING •
- NR. MAIDSTONE • KENT •
- JUNC 5 M2 / JUNC 7 M20 •
- SAT NAV ME14 3JF •

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Carving acanthus leaves

Chris Pye talks you through carving Romanesque and Baroque versions of that classical carving staple, the acanthus leaf

From Corinthian capitals to the wallpaper of William Morris, the acanthus is arguably the most widespread and famous of all decorative motifs. Languishing as an architectural element in the Gothic period, the acanthus saw a major revival in the Renaissance and enjoys continued use and stylistic development through to today.

Woodcarvers will find this stylised leaf widely used in furniture, picture frames, brackets and fireplaces – in fact, anywhere carvers have been able to lay chisel to wood.

The heart of the acanthus leaf is its flow. From a central vein, every lobe or secondary leaf runs fluidly out to play, divide, overlap

or turn over. In so doing, other characteristic elements such as eyes and pipes are formed.

I'm choosing two types of acanthus to show how these leaves work. Romanesque refers to the rather stiff style of Medieval Europe. Although carved in stone, and often in friezes of repeat patterns, our leaf will demonstrate most of the acanthus's basic features. Baroque was a period in Europe between the 17th and 18th centuries in which design expressed itself in ebullience and energy. Our leaf is a very simple example, almost an extract, which will show what happens when the lines and secondary leaves of the acanthus start to move.

Things you will need...

Romanesque acanthus:
60° V-tool, 10 and 6mm
No.4, 10 and 6mm
No.5, 16mm
No.6, 8mm
No.9, 3mm
No.10, 10 and 6mm
No.11, 6mm
Eye punch

Baroque acanthus:
No.3, 14mm
No.5, 16mm
No.6, 14 and 16mm
No.8, 10mm

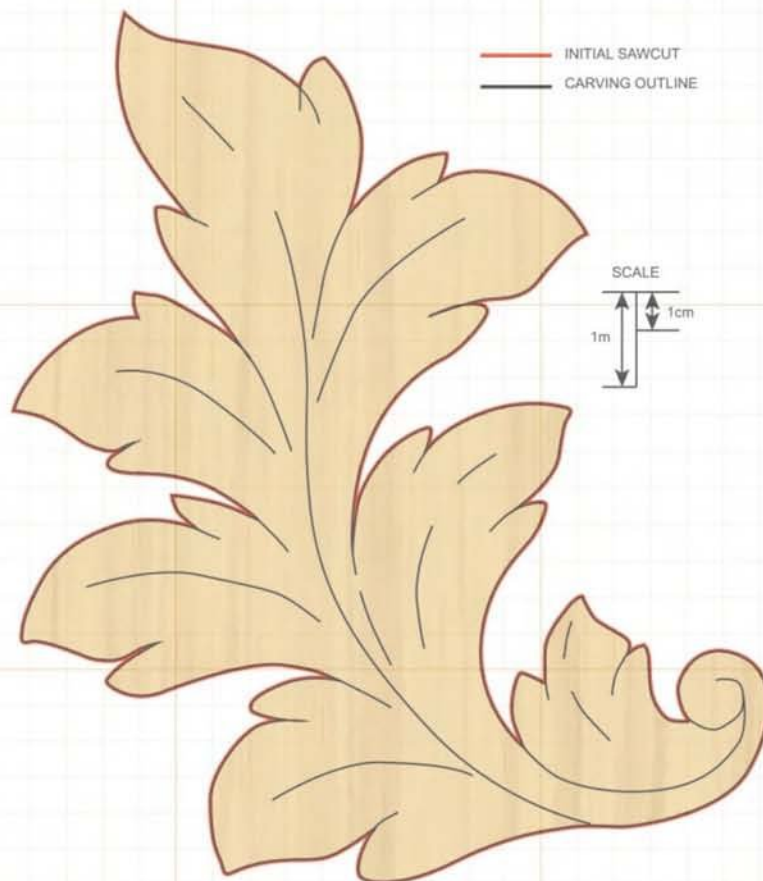
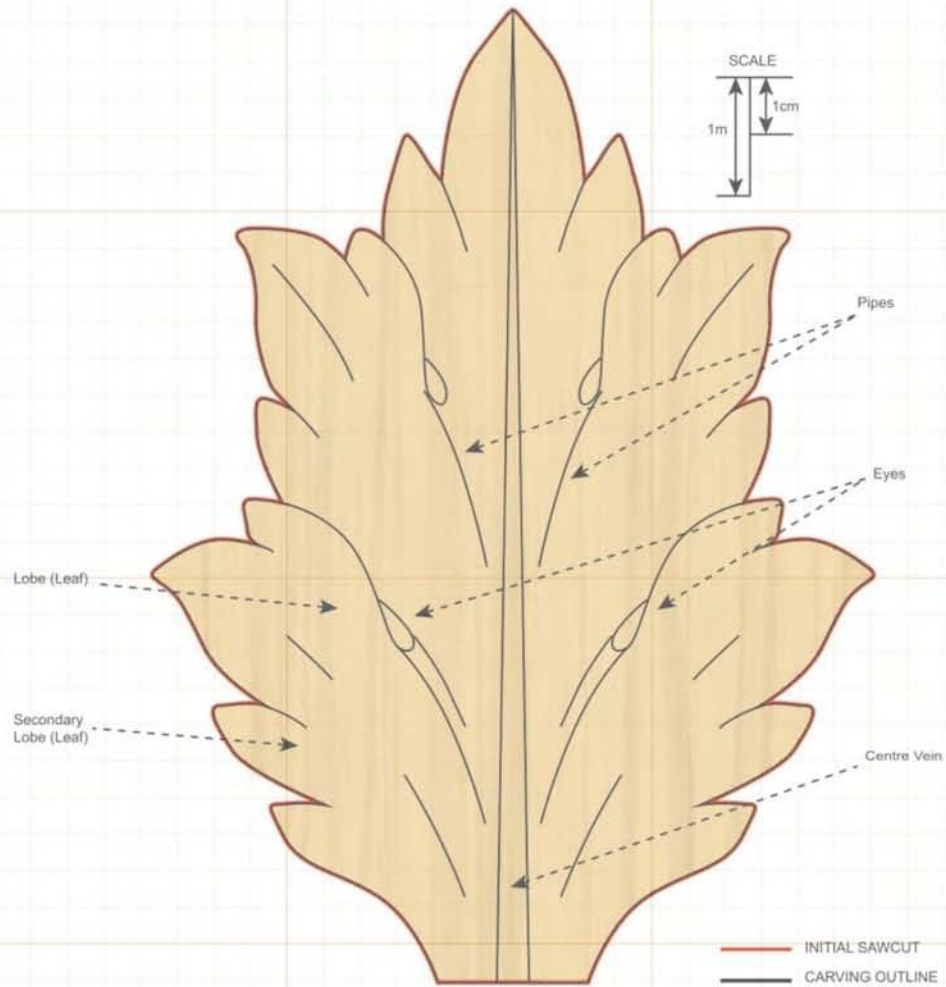
Wood:
Limewood (*Tilia vulgaris*)
Basswood (*Tilia americana*)
Brazilian mahogany
(*Plathymenia reticulata*)
Dimensions: 25mm thick

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Pye is a member of the Master Carvers Association; a woodcarving instructor both in Hereford and the USA; the author of some seven woodcarving books and numerous magazine articles and co-founder with his wife, Carrie Camann, of the online instructional website: www.woodcarvingworkshops.tv. His work can be viewed at www.chrispye-woodcarving.com



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS PYE



➔ Romanesque

1 Glue a copy of the Romanesque leaf drawing to your wood. Neatly cut the profile and fix it to a flat backing board. Tilting it away, run a V-tool down either side of the centre vein, going deeper towards the leaf tip. Merge the outer edge of the 'V' groove into the body of the leaf with a flat gouge turned upside down

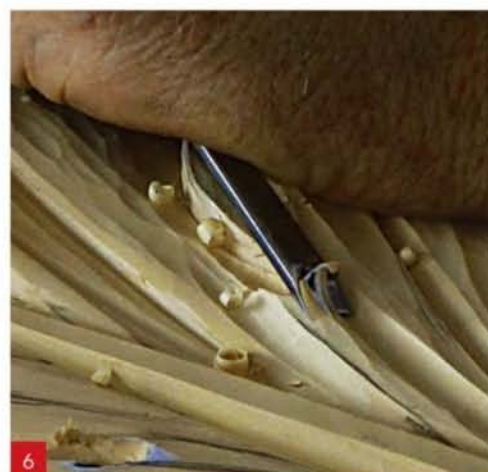
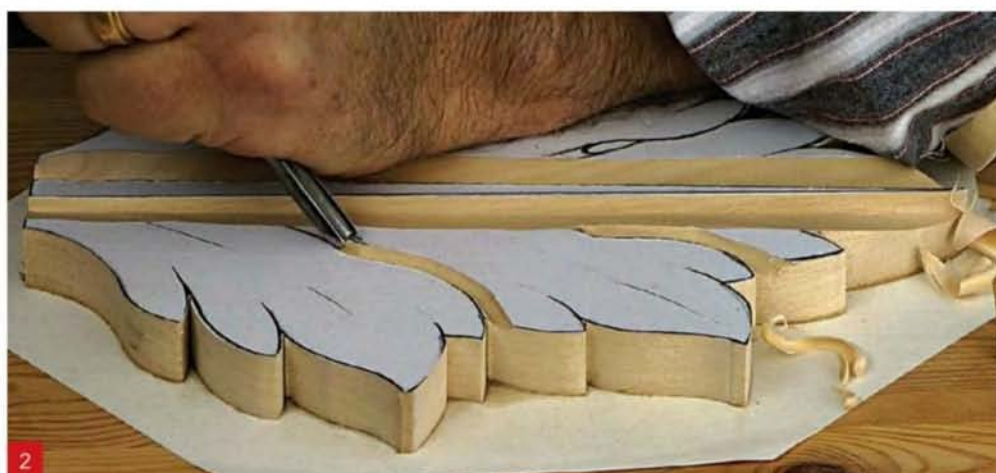
2 Run a deep groove using the No.10 or 11 gouges from the start of each eye along the upper border of the side leaves. Start the cut with a strong scooping motion into the eye. You'll see that each side leaf – or lobe – overlaps the one above it; an order characteristic of acanthus leaves. Make sure you run the groove to the correct side, separating the lower lobes

3 Shape the leaves, reducing wood from the groove you just made, but leaving the upper edges at their full thickness. Flow your cuts from the centre vein and add a little twist towards the end. The Romanesque style is quite chunky so leave around 5-6mm at the outer edges

4 To set in the edges of the side leaves, stab vertically down with a gouge matching the edge profile and remove wood from the leaf behind. At the end of this stage you will have made a first pass: getting the overall shape, separating the secondary leaves and positioning the eyes. There is no undercutting in this leaf. Redefine and lower the centre vein towards its tip with your V-tool. In the end, this leaf is thicker at the bottom than the tip

5 Define the pipes by reducing the wood on either side. Use a deep gouge and sweep the lines of the pipes smoothly towards the centre vein so it appears as if the pipes arise from it. The pipe is, in effect, a fold created when the lower leaf overlaps the upper

6 Add a centre vein to each side leaf with a V-tool. Tilt the tool to give a harder edge to the upper half of each leaf, sweeping out from the main vein. Start a final shaping of the leaves: a second pass. Cut cleanly and work the surface to splay and flow out from the centre. Give a twist to the end of the side leaves and round over the pipes. You may have to reverse your cut to deal with awkward grain





7 At the end of this stage the acanthus is more-or-less complete, with side leaves and veins splaying out symmetrically from below. It should not be necessary to sand the leaf if you finish lightly with sharp tools. In fact, the faint tool marks that you leave add an energy and richness. Each side leaf has two smaller lobes; there is often a rule of three with the acanthus. Two angle cuts will create these. See stage 9

8 Deepen the eyes to create more shadow by rotating a small semi-circular gouge – No.9 – at the very end to pop out a plug of wood. Merge this hole with the leaf edge above, and form a new edge to the lower leaf that appears to pass beneath the upper one. The result should be a teardrop-shaped recess. Clean up and deepen this recess with a punch made from a short rod of metal such as a bolt



9 Separate the acanthus leaf from the backing board with a wide spatula. Keep the spatula flat against the backing board as you move it from side-to-side and resist the temptation to lever. Clean up the back by rubbing the leaf on sandpaper board



Baroque

10 Glue a copy of the Baroque leaf drawing to your wood. Neatly cut the profile and fix it to a backing board as previously. Make a first pass at the overall shape of the leaf. As with all acanthuses, the centre vein is the principle reference line; note and maintain its middle high spot. Make a smooth, rounded form of the secondary leaves to the tips at the front, down to the backing board; the leaves at the back make more of an 'S' shape. Slope down to the volute from which the leaf arises



11 Carve the centre vein with a V-tool, tilting the tool towards the back. This vein remains a flowing groove that runs fluidly from the outside of the volute, separating the bulk of the leaf into 'front' and 'back', and ending at the tip of the lower front leaf. Note its division into a secondary tip above

12 Shape the leaves to the front as you make a second pass over the whole leaf. The 3D lie of the centre vein is crucial in getting this leaf to work and from this all the secondary leaves and lines arise. Keep an eye on this vein and the sense of flow

PROJECT

Acanthus leaves with Chris Pye

➔ **13** Set in the edges of the main leaves and sweep these cuts and the leaves themselves around and into the volute

14 Add centre veins to the side leaves with a tilted V-tool and shape the leaves at the back. With this you have completed a general second pass over the whole carving: firming up the forms and cutting right down into the backing board at the tips

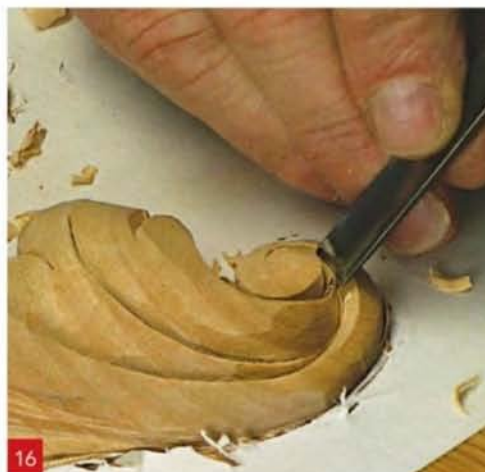
15 Subdivide the leaves with angled cuts from your gouges – as with the Romanesque acanthus – and refine all the leaves to a finish. The outside edges of all the leaves should now be set in

16 Carve the volute, bringing the long ends of the leaves – and the line-like junctions in between – around in a smooth curve. Tilt in the circular end of the volute towards the main carving

"Add centre veins to the side leaves..."

17 Undercut all around the acanthus leaf at an angle of around 20° and more deeply where you need to increase shadow. As always, keep your cutting fluid, echoing the fluidity of the leaf itself. Feel free to stab directly through the paper and into the backing board. Make a final finishing pass over the whole leaf to smooth surfaces, true lines and clean-up junctions

18 Release the carving from the backing board by splitting the paper as with the Romanesque leaf. Back cut – also called 'backing off' – the carving by turning it over and finishing places that you couldn't reach from the front. Hold the carving in one hand and trim into the junctions with a sharp, narrow blade. And, with this, your carving is finished ▶



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You can see Chris complete these acanthus leaves in a live tutorial at his Woodcarving Workshops website: www.woodcarvingworkshops.tv

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Love heart

Challenge your carving ability with
Andrew Thomas's abstract love heart

Love Heart' symbolises the essence of love between two people captured in an affectionate embrace. The outline of the sculpture is a simple heart shape divided into two elliptical volumes representing the heads. The overall composition of the sculpture is simple in design, but poses quite a challenge when it comes to creating the even flowing contours symmetrically around the two heads and then down through the lower section. This requires patience, skill and careful observation to achieve the correct balance and harmony.

Before you start working, study the finished images and read the complete step guide to see how the form develops.

Ensure the grain of your block runs vertically through the design.

Scan or photocopy the scale drawings provided, as well as creating a template for the base following the dimensions in the box opposite. Enlarge them to the correct size, print them onto card and use them as templates to transfer the designs onto the face and side of your perfectly square, prepared block, ensuring that they are in precise alignment with each other and that there is enough spare wood at the base to attach to your faceplate. Cut both profiles out, measure and mark a centreline all of the way around the edge of the form and then mount it onto your vice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

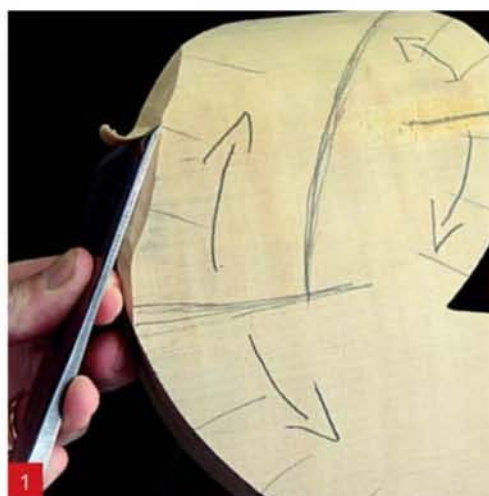
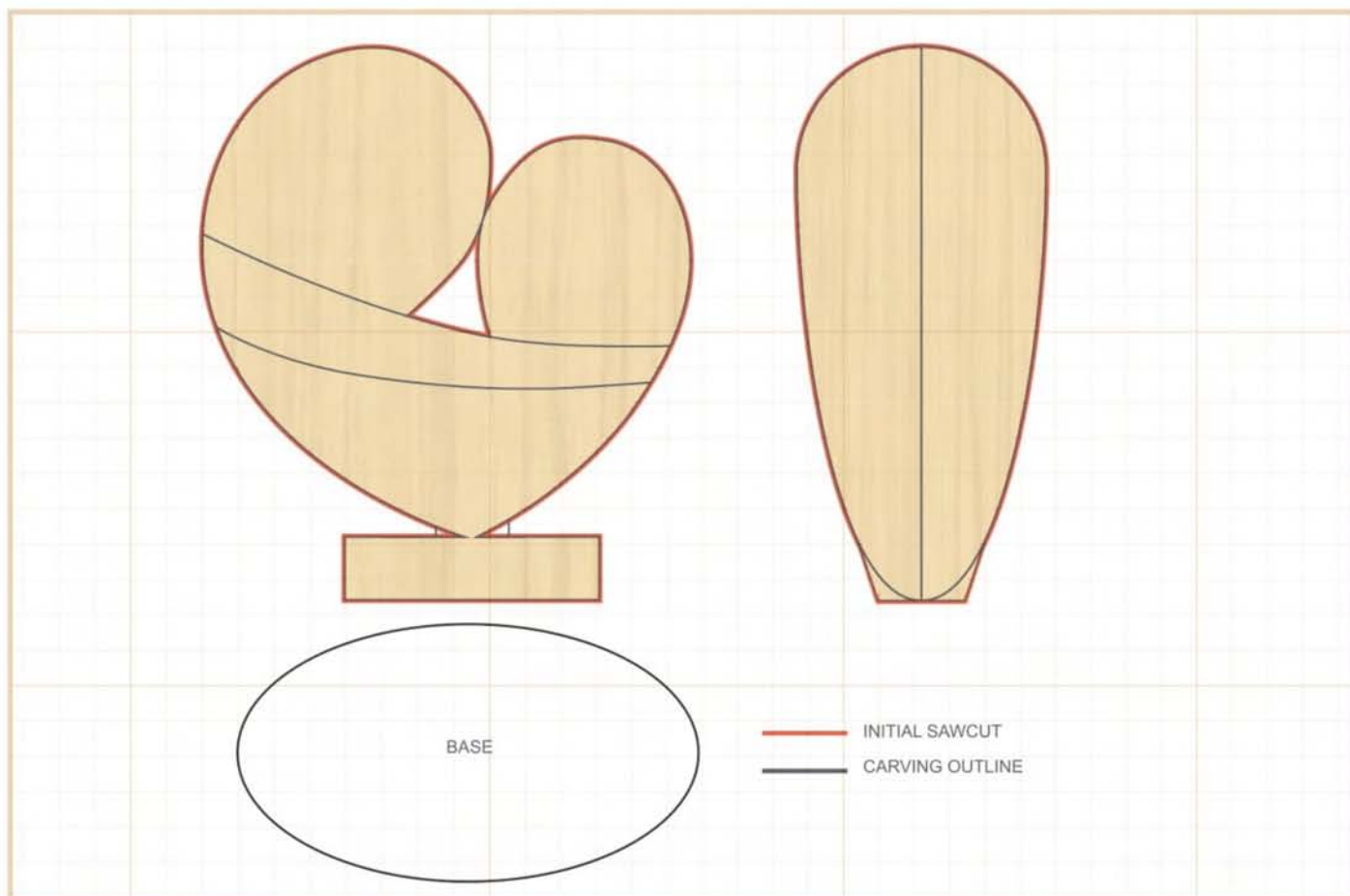
Andrew Thomas is a professional sculptor living in Wareham, Dorset with over 20 years experience on the subject. Working principally with wood, bronze and mixed media, his work can be seen in many private collections, both in the UK and Europe. Andrew is a qualified tutor in further education and delivers weekly lessons for private students at both beginner and intermediate levels.



Things you will need...

Swiss:
No.2, 30 to 40mm
No.2, 20mm
No.2, 8mm
No.12, 8mm (V-Tool)
Knife

Wood: Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*)
Dimensions of article
example: W 250 x H 250 x D
115mm
Base: American black walnut:
(*Juglans nigra*). Dimensions:
W 180 x H 25 x D 100mm



1 Measure and mark centrelines on both sides of both heads, these being the widest position of each volume. Use a No.2, 30 to 40mm gouge to create an even contour around the top edges of the larger head, from the centreline on the face side – main view – to the centreline on the edge, following the direction of cut depicted. It is important to note that the objective is to produce a delicate symmetrical curve around the edges from the front side to the back, which will need to be carefully observed regularly from several angles. If it appears to be even slightly square in its mass then it will need to be further developed

"Blend the upper and lower edges together evenly..."

2 Do the same on the lower edges but just enough to roughly round over them. We shall develop and refine this area later in step 17

3 Blend the upper and lower edges together evenly by carving across the grain at the position in between these grain directions

➔ **4** Your first edge should now look like this. If you haven't already done so then repeat steps 1-3 on the opposite side and check for correct symmetry and curvature between them, adjust if necessary

5 Next, move onto the front of the head and carve the upper area on both sides, creating an even contour which blends naturally together with the edge that you initially carved

6 Use your template – or draw by hand – the upper line that separates the heads from the lower section on both sides

7 Use either a razor sharp knife or a No.12, 8mm V-tool, to cut directly along the upper side of the line, from the foremost position of the head back along to the centreline – widest position

8 Use the No.2, 30 to 40mm to continue the curvature of the head symmetrically down along the inner edge until you meet the knife cut at the base, blending all of the surrounding areas naturally together as you work

9 Repeat steps 7 and 8 until the head curves evenly around from the centreline on the face of the wood to the centreline on the inside. If you are using a knife to cut along the line then you may have to switch to the No.12, 8mm as you work inwards towards the centreline, depending on whether your blade is long enough!

10 Your sculpture should now look like this

Top tip

To help you effectively examine the surface of your work – preferably using a natural source of light or a daylight bulb – turn it around slowly and observe the shadows as they strike across its surface. This method will help to expose any uneven areas of depth or other imperfections that may need further work. This technique can also be used for examining the surface of your sculpture in between sanding grits, which will expose any little dark pits or deep scratches that need to be revisited and eradicated





11 Repeat steps 1-4 on the outer edge of the opposite smaller head

12 Repeat steps 5-8 on the inner edge of this opposite smaller head

13 The dividing line between the upper heads and lower section can now be extended all of the way around both heads. The objective here is twofold: to create a separation between the heads and the lower section and to create an even contour all of the way around each head to produce the desired elliptical shape. This will require skimming over the complete surface of each one several times until you have produced perfectly symmetrical volumes. Ensure that you regularly check this from all angles and take your time. Start by using the No.12, 8mm to cut directly above the line

14 Then use the No.2, 30 to 40mm to evenly blend the mass of the head into the V-tool cut and the surrounding areas. Repeat steps 13 and 14 until the large head is carved approximately 5mm in from the edge all of the way around its circumference; the smaller head should be 8mm in from the edge

15 The area at the base of each head and the section in between them needs to be tidied up and carved perfectly flat and even. Use a knife to cut around the base of each head into the flat area, carefully following their contour

16 Then use a No.2, 8mm to pare the wood around the heads evenly down into the knife cuts and a No.2, 20mm to tidy up and blend the area together in between them. The lower edges around the side of the heads will then also need to be carefully tidied up and tooled precisely into the knife cut

17 The lower section can now be further developed; use the No.2, 30 to 40mm gouge to carefully carve a symmetrical contour along these edges, blending them delicately around onto the face of the wood until the entire surface has been evenly skimmed over

18 The lowest position which joins the faceplate base can also be refined to follow the contour of the edges but leaving an area of approximately 25mm attached to the base. Check the contour from all angles to ensure it is even and then make any adjustments

➔ **19** Before you draw on the line that represents the arms of the carving, sand over the top half of this lower section with 100 grit sandpaper

20 Using your template as a reference to help you, draw the lower line – that represents the arms – all of the way around the complete lower section

21 Use the No.12, 8mm to carve a groove directly along the lower edge of the line

22 Use the No.2, 30 to 40mm to pare the wood back to the depth of the V-tool cut previously made. Repeat steps 21 and 22 until you undercut the line to the depth of approximately 5-7mm. The area below this line will then need to be evenly blended down through the lower section to produce a harmonious visual connection to the arm section of the piece

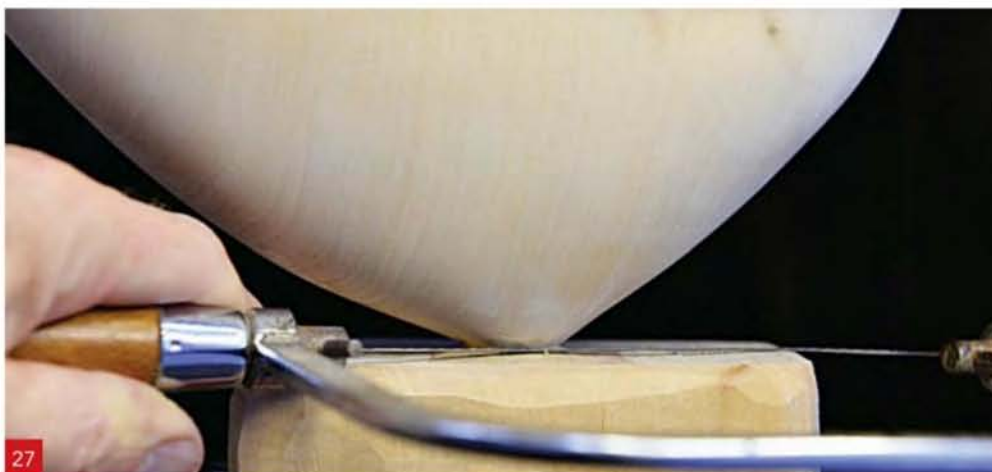
23 The lip that has been undercut will then need to be cut evenly and flat in the same way as you did with the flat area above it in steps 15 and 16. Use the knife to slice into the inner corner following the contour of the adjoining lower edge

24 Use the No.2, 8mm to pare the wood back evenly into the knife cut. The top edges of the adjoining lower section will then also need to be meticulously tidied up and tooled precisely into the knife cut

25 The final important job to do to your sculpture before you start the sanding process is to skim over its complete surface to tidy up and level any uneven areas of depth. It is also important to ensure that all corners of the piece are neatly cut and finished without any deep knife marks or messy tool cuts around them. This will create a good base from which to start the process of sanding and ultimately make it quicker to complete the task

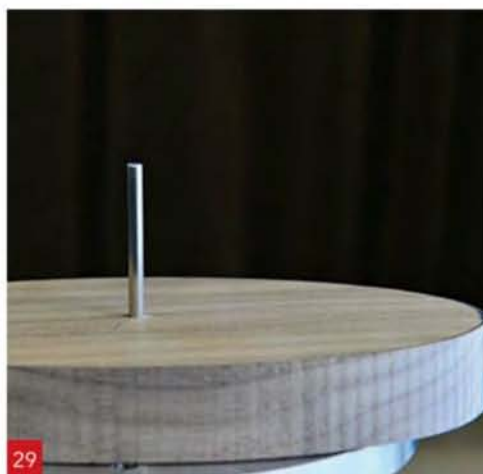
26 Start with 100 grit and work over the entire surface of the sculpture following the line of the grain where possible to completely remove every tool mark you have made. Dust off the surface and then brush or pour hot water over it and leave it to dry. Next, work through grits 150, 240 and 400 repeating the hot water process in between every grit grade





27 Your sculpture can now be sawn off from the base

28 Roundover the area at the base of the sculpture and carefully blend it into the surrounding depths. Secure it safely, leaving both hands free to work and making sure that its surface is protected with some dense foam or polystyrene. Use the No.2, 30-40mm to naturally round over this end. Sand through all grits using the hot water process in between each one



29 Apply the scale drawing provided onto your wood and cut it out. Measure and mark the precise centre position on the top surface. Use a 4mm brad-toothed wood bit to drill a hole in the centre position stopping it at a depth of 20mm to prevent it from going right through the base. Secure the base to your faceplate

30 Use the No.2, 30-40mm to create a gentle curved contour from the lower edge of the base up to the drill hole, all of the way around the surface. Check carefully for symmetry from all angles and then sand through all grits, as outlined in step 26. Remove from faceplate. The love heart can now be carefully drilled at its lowest position with the 4mm brad toothed drill bit to a depth of approximately 30-35mm. Ensure that the hole is vertical from every angle so that the sculpture does not lean to one side when mounted



31 To finish, apply three applications of Rustin's two-part wood bleach, followed by two applications of clear wax to the love heart. For the base, apply a very fine application of quick drying boiled linseed oil, left for a week to dry, followed by two applications of dark wax. Finally, cut either a piece of 4 x 50mm length stainless steel rod – as pictured in step 29 – or a 4 x 50mm wooden dowel. Insert the 4mm rod or dowel into the love heart and then mount it onto the base. Either or both ends can be bonded if you wish to, but it will be easier to re-polish if it can be disassembled. Alternatively, you could drill a hole straight through the base, countersink it from the underside and then screw the two pieces together



32 The view from the left side

33 The view from the right side

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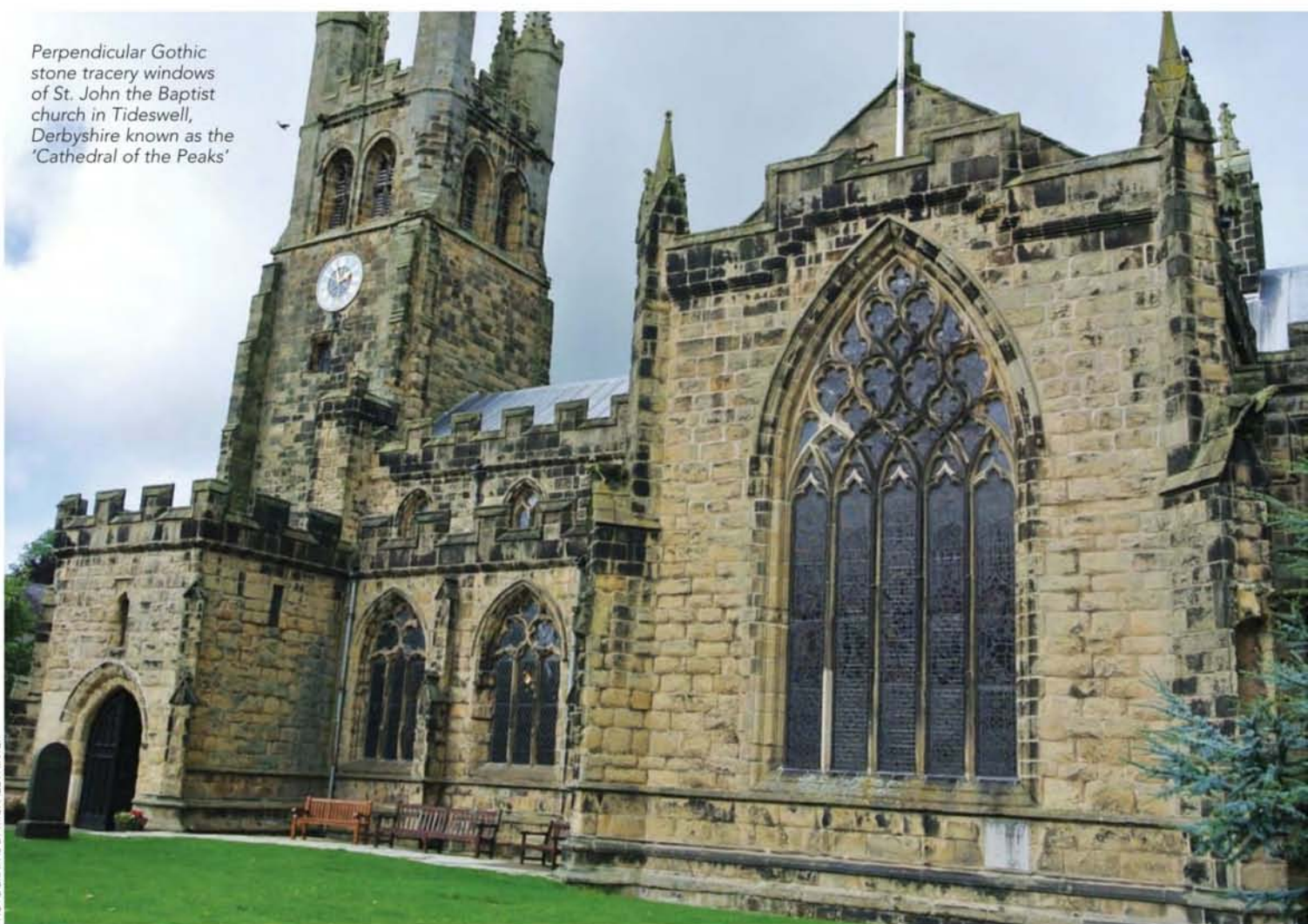
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Perpendicular Gothic stone tracery windows of St. John the Baptist church in Tideswell, Derbyshire known as the 'Cathedral of the Peaks'

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL PAINTER



Michael Painter

Diary of a professional carver

Michael Painter explores the history and many uses of the tracery tool and back-bent chisel

Most carvers call them by their common name of spoon or short-bent gouges, but in a carver's workshop they are called tracery chisels and I would like to explain their original use in the tradition of woodcarving.

The purpose of this tool as its correct name implies is to carve tracery work. Tracery evolved from the pointed stone arches called lancet windows in the style of architecture known as Gothic. Stonemasons embellished the area between two or more windows at the top of the stone

arches and rose windows with designs including trefoils and quatrefoils which had the desired effect of minimising the weight of stone without compromising its strength. The woodworkers were obliged to copy the stonemasons' design on internal objects as a continuation of the Gothic style.

Uses of the tracery tool

The tracery tools used to form these features in wood when viewed from the side have a tight hook shape and form part of a sphere at the bottom of the shaft – sometimes called the bowl – that

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Painter specialised in traditional wood and stone carving for over 28 years – starting as an apprentice and becoming a Master Carver. Since 2003 he's been balancing commissioned work with private teaching. To see more of Mike's work, visit: www.mikepainter.co.uk



usually includes a uniform radius to the cutting edge.

They are only sharpened on the outside of the cutting edge and should incorporate a curved bevel so the outer ball shape runs into the cutting edge and forms part of a sphere, allowing it to enter and exit the wood with ease. If a heel is included with the bevel then the effectiveness of the tool is reduced because it does not present a continuous curve to the back of the chisel.

The overall shape of the tool, when seen from the top, flares out towards the cutting edge similar to a fish-tail chisel and minimises the chisel from binding in the wood as it cuts. Modern fish tails are more like spades today but that's another 'soap box' moment! Incorporating a curved cutting edge – 'bull nosed' – further enhances its efficiency by allowing the bottom of the cutting edge to be forward of the corners and therefore cuts first around an inner curve.

All these characteristics including the hook shape allow you to cut a hollow form that flows around an inner curve typically found in tracery features. You cannot successfully execute tracery work without traditional tracery chisels and of course if the chisel can cut a tight inner curve, it can certainly create a long curve so they are far more versatile.

The tool's history

Instead of the tight hook shape, many manufacturers have decided to incorporate a more



One of the tracery panels behind the organ case in Tideswell church carved by 'Old' Advent Hunstone of Tideswell and executed in 1895



The hooked shape allows you to create hollows around tight inner curves



The cutting edge of a back-bent chisel



This tracery chisel shows the correct 'fish tail' shape. It originally belonged to the foreman woodcarver at the company I worked at, Mr. W. J. Bull – Bill Bull – who retired around 1960. His name is stamped on the handle together with a face etched in ink

moderate, longer, flatter curve to their chisels, echoing the shape of salmon-bend chisels; I can only assume this is because they are easier to manufacture. This restricts their usefulness for reproducing tracery elements as they can only cut hollows on convex curves that have larger radii due to their flatter curve. These are useless to a carver who needs to replicate tracery details that include tight radius curves, for example.

It was the tradition in larger workshops that tracery work would be delegated to a few joiners who may be interested in entering the carver's domain. From a carver's perspective, this would be appreciated as the precision of this type of feature is suited to a joiner. They would be titled 'tracery hands' and for this reason would have a few carving chisels in their tool kits appropriate for this work.

The term 'spoon', as mentioned, is the common name used for this type of chisel; we must assume it derives from the general shape of the chisel echoing the piece of cutlery with which you stir your tea or coffee. To save time in the olden days you had your rest periods at your workbench and this was the tool's secondary use – I have witnessed it. If you needed more sugar in your mug of tea all you required was a larger tracery tool; perhaps these should have been called dessert spoons!

Back-bent chisels

Like tracery chisels these are used for creating tracery features producing a convex form – roll or bead, technically called an astragal – on the inside of an internal curved surface. Similar to the tracery chisels the curved

hook at the bottom of the shank should be short and tight to allow the tool to be effective. They are only sharpened on the convex surface of the cutting edge – outside the cutting edge – with the concave – inner – surface being a uniform constant curve. Traditional joiners tend to use these tools to create similar architectural features as carvers but for 'part time' carvers they are seldom required. ▶



The traditional tracery chisel above fits the curve while the two more modern tools above it do not



A panel from the choir stalls in Lichfield Cathedral. It would be essential to use a back-bent chisel to form the beads around the tracery. They would also be useful in cutting the stems of the leaves

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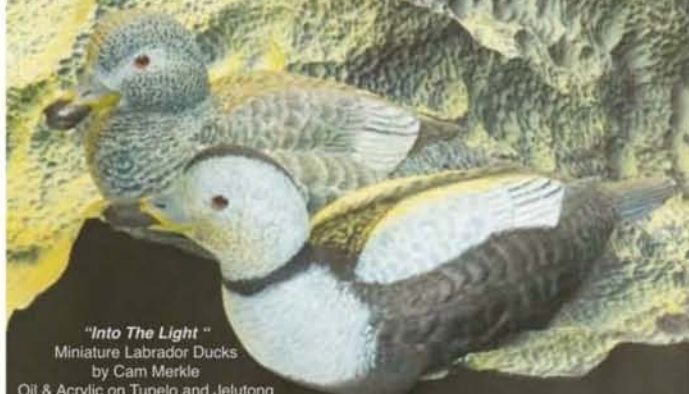


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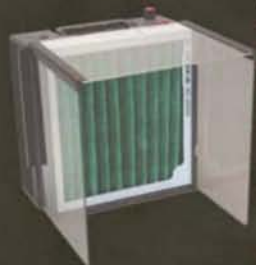
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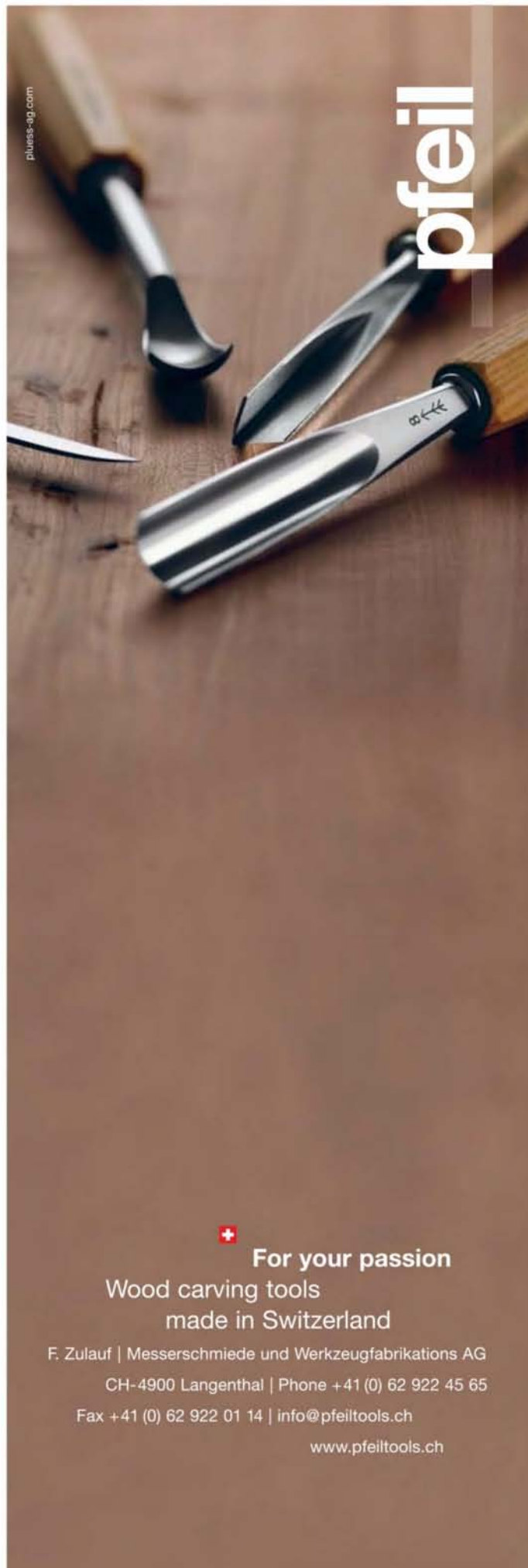
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Georgian doll

Peter Clothier carves and paints a replica wooden Georgian doll

In the valleys of the Southern Alps there was a strong tradition for wooden toy and doll making since the 15th century. Output increased dramatically around 1750 when farmers realised making these objects was a means of increasing their income. As a result, many families began making toys and it soon became a widespread cottage industry.

Wooden dolls – also called peg dolls, Dutch dolls, fan comb, tuck comb or peddler dolls – have always been popular and the industry thrived. After about 1850, when lathes were introduced, production increased even more. However, by the late 19th century, social change, new materials and a fall in demand led to a decline in prices and production, which in turn meant poorer quality items and by the end of the First World War, the tradition all but ceased.

The doll in this article is loosely based on one typical of the Grödnertal region and has been dressed and painted in the 1830s style.

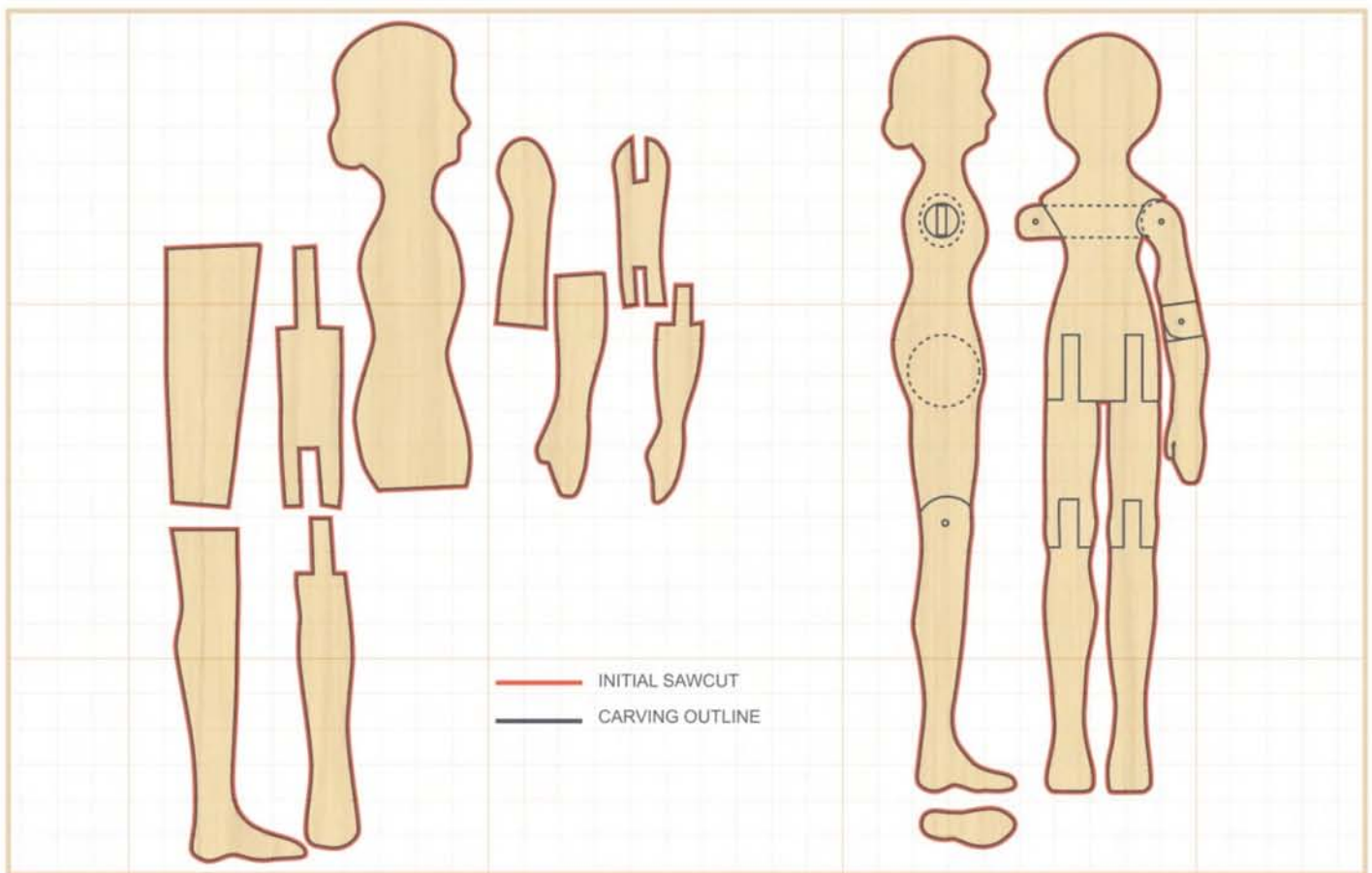
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Clothier began carving in 1968 under the tutelage of master carver, Gino Masero. He went on to train as an antique restorer of furniture and took up sculpture at the City and Guilds Art School. He has been teaching and carving part-time for over 35 years and can be found at West Dean College as a tutor of sculpture and woodturning.



Things you will need...

- Coarse tungsten carbide cutters
- Drum sanders
- 3mm HSS cutter
- Bandsaw
- Mortise gauge
- Tri-square drill and 12mm and 3mm bits
- 100-150 grit abrasive
- Acrylic paint

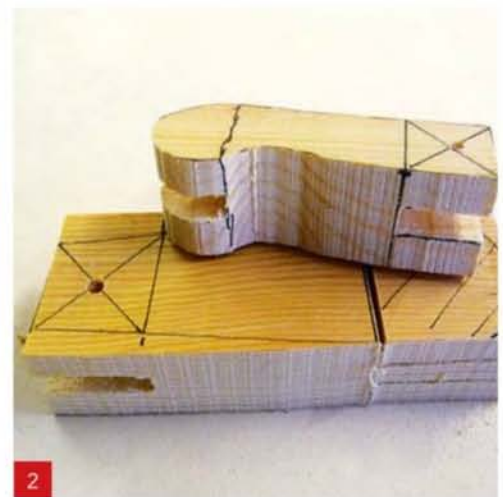


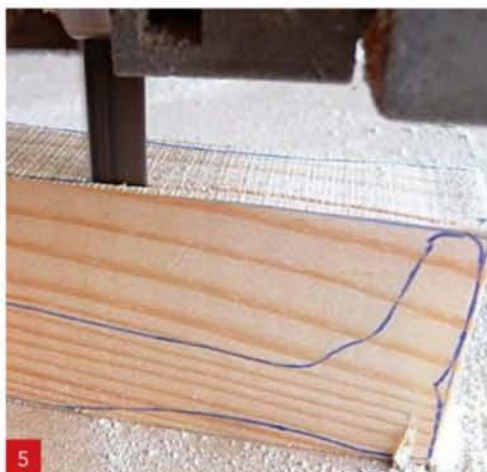
1 The head and body section is made from lime wood (*Tilia vulgaris*) and the limbs are made from Scots pine (*Pinus spp.*). Use 12mm dowel to hold the arms in place and pin the joints with bamboo barbecue skewers. Using the templates, mark the components – front and side elevations – and indicate waste wood, particularly on the joints

2 Drilling and joint cutting are most easily accomplished whilst the wood is square. Drill a 12mm hole for the arm dowel. Drill 3mm holes for the hip joints and on the legs and arms

3 For bandsaw cutting use a 6mm six-tooth blade. When cutting the side profile, leave bridges of wood at the end to hold the waste in place and the front view attached; remember to stop the saw before reversing out of the cut

4 The bridle joints used for the knees, hips and upper arm are marked out using a mortise gauge; the mortise elements being lined and the tenons being cut to the outside of the gauge lines. Cut the shoulders leaving a small bridge of wood to keep the waste in place until the profiles are cut





5 The next step is to cut the front elevation of the leg element before the side profile

6 After the initial drilling and sawing stages have been completed, all the elements are ready to be shaped and the waste wood on the tenons can now be removed, using a razor saw

7 Using the templates, the rounded ends of the tenons are marked out for shaping at a later stage. Mark out the soles of the feet, flipping the template to give left and right shapes

8 This selection of power tools is all that is required to complete the doll; it includes coarse tungsten carbide cutters, drum sanders and a 3mm HSS cutter. Use the wire brush to clean the tungsten carbide cutters. Other tools used to make the doll include a bandsaw, mortise gauge, tri-square, drill and 12mm and 3mm bits. Hand sanding will be needed to achieve a final finish; the abrasives used are 80, 100, 120 and 150 grit. Painting is dealt with later in the article

9 You can now remove the bulk of the waste from the arm and leg elements with a 9mm carbide burr bringing them to generally cylindrical shapes. Start by drawing a line along the centre of each face of the leg elements – this is to help you keep the work symmetrical

10 Next, roundover the leg joint and tenons and shape the feet, generally refining the shape. With the bulk of the waste removed, put the two parts of the leg together, drill through the pre-drilled hole and insert a bamboo barbecue skewer. Cut it short, but not flush as it will be removed again later for final finishing. Now blend all the leg elements together

11 With the leg together fit it into the hip joint, drill and peg it into place and then blend up from the upper leg to begin shaping the torso

12 Once the rough shaping of the doll is complete, the bamboo pin is removed and the two elements sanded with a 14mm drum sander and then finished off by hand sanding. The mortise part of the knee joint is rounded at the back of the leg in order to let the knee bend

➔ **13** Continue shaping the body and head section by removing the bulk of the waste with a 9mm sphere-ended coarse carbide burr. Keep the two halves symmetrical

14 Once the waste wood is removed from the body, refine the shape with a 14mm sanding drum and at the same time, radius the lower part of the body to allow the hip joint to work. Hand sand

15 Modelling the head requires great care to keep it perfectly symmetrical. Mark a centreline from the forehead to the chin, running along the nose and throughout the modelling process. Reinstate if it is removed. Use a 3mm HSS cutter, which gives a finer surface to model the details of the nose and face. The features need to be fine and delicate

16 Shape around the neck and chin with light cuts from a drum sander. Final shaping and modelling of the face is achieved by using 9mm sanding points. These permit access to the eye area and around the nose

17 The arms are now treated in the same way as the legs – and can be made at the same time

18 Once the bulk of the waste is removed from the arm sections, they are drilled and pinned. The shapes are refined as one unit and then dismantled and the elbow joint is rounded to allow the joint to move. At this stage only minimal shaping on the shoulder joint is needed

19 The unit is then finally hand sanded to a smooth finish and the hand refined into a thumb and the fingers are left joined

20 The ball on the top of the arm must be gently rounded to form a sphere. On the torso where the dowel hole has been drilled use a sanding drum to make a slight concave shape that should relate to the ball on the arm. Cut a length of 12mm dowel approximately 75mm long and on one end make a tenon that will fit into the mortise of the shoulder joint. With the ball joint held in the correct position on the dowel tenon and the arm held down by the side of the body, drill through the centre of the sphere and fix it with a bamboo dowel. Slight adjustments to allow better movements of the joint can be made with the drum sander





21



22



23



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27

21 Once the joint is fairly well seated, fix it in position by drilling the 3mm hole through the back of the body, about 10mm from the edge of the shoulder socket, but not so deep that it pierces through the front; the drill must be sited so it just cuts through the dowel

22 Withdraw the shoulder joint and dowel and using a 3mm HSS cutter, extend the hole so that it becomes a groove 3mm deep running around the dowel

23 Replace the joint and push a slightly over-length bamboo dowel through the hole and line it up with the groove. This will now allow the arm to rotate in the shoulder joint. Small adjustments, often needed to the underarm area, can be achieved with the use of a drum sander

24 Once the shoulder joints are satisfactorily adjusted the dowels can be cut to length, allowing both sides to fit

25 Double check all the components are carefully sanded and all the joints are working, then cut the bamboo dowels flush. Next, wet all the surfaces that are going to be painted to raise the grain. Leave it overnight then using 150 grit, sand off any rough spots. Paint the surface with acrylic gesso – the first coat thinned with water – plus two normal coats. Sand with 220 grit when dry

26 Before painting the doll, practise the various details of the facial features. Use very faint pencil guidelines of the features to ensure accurate work

27 The finished doll ▶

Painting the doll

Using acrylic paints, apply the general skin tone to all gessoed surfaces. The mixture is mainly white, with a touch of permanent rose and a dab of raw sienna. Paint the main hair section and once it is dry, add the curls using a No.2 brush. Paint the eye colour first, followed by the pupil, eyelids, eyebrows and dots for eyelashes. For the lips use the skin colour plus more permanent rose. Use a kitchen sponge to very lightly dab pale pink for the cheeks

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The romance of the rose



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BISCO

Steve Bisco shares his techniques for carving a naturalistic rose

The rose is the most romantic of flowers and is a perennially popular subject for carving. As roses occur so often in decorative carving, it is worth learning some techniques for carving them. For this project I am going to focus on a single rose. It is a full-blown garden rose with thin naturalistic petals, a slender curving stem and four undulating leaves – the sort of rose romanticised by Chaucer and Shakespeare.

The rose is carved in limewood (*Tilia vulgaris*) as this is the most

suitable wood for fine foliage carving. Lime has a fine, even grain which yields to the chisel and holds together very well in thin sections.

Don't worry if you haven't tried limewood foliage carving before. This piece uses so little wood that you can easily make several versions of it to improve your technique. Just make the petals and leaves as thin as you dare for now and then have another go as you build up more experience and confidence. Keep your tools sharp, work carefully, and the wood will co-operate with you. ➔

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Bisco has been carving as a hobby for over 25 years, specialising in decorative carving and period styles. He is inspired by a love of historic buildings and aims to capture the spirit of a period in pieces for display in the 'home gallery'.



Things you will need...

Wood

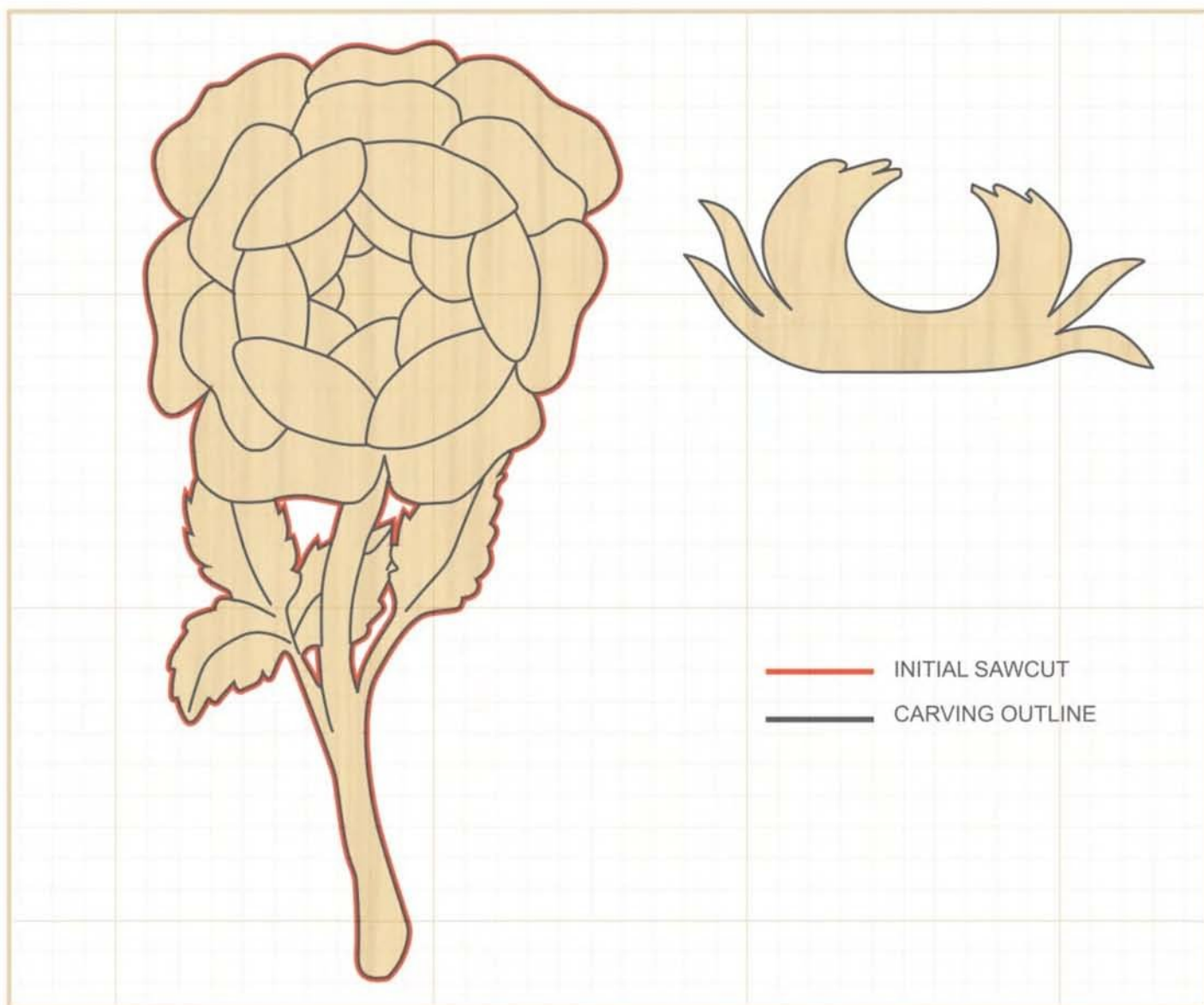
Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) 200 x 100 x 50mm

Tools

No.3, 10mm fishtail gouge
16mm hooked skew chisel
No.4, 13mm curved gouge
V-tool
No.8, 8mm gouge
No.8, 8mm curved gouge
No.3, 5mm bent gouge
No.5, 7mm gouge
No.5, 5mm gouge
3mm chisel

Finishes

Acrylic sander/sealer, clear wax (Chestnut Woodwax 22)



Designing for carving

Like most carvings, the process of portraying a rose in wood starts at the design stage. Work out the practicalities on the drawing first, and you won't have to go back to the drawing board later.

The petals

A full-blown garden rose has several layers of large, thin petals fanning outwards from a central cluster. It is very difficult to carve a lot of separate layers convincingly, so the best way to portray a rose in carved form is with the central layers of petals curled tightly inwards.

The central cluster is carved firstly as a dome, which is then hollowed with gouges – see cross section illustration above. The hole you make in the middle should be big enough for a bee to climb inside and walk around.

The petals which curl inwards around this hole are represented mainly by their overlapping edges. The large petals encasing the central cluster are carved fully on their outward sides, but their thin inward edges are just slightly undercut where they overlap those in the middle.

The outer layer of petals curls outwards towards the background and can be undercut from behind, so the most difficult carving is limited to just one intermediate layer which has to be carved both sides into petals about 3mm-thick with sharp edges. Put a shallower curve at the top of the petals which run across the grain as a thin vertical edge may crumble.

Leaves and stems

Rose leaves are rounded at the stem end and taper to a point at

the other end. They have small serrations along their edges and fine veins along the surface. The branch end of the main stem should be angled and scooped out so it appears to have been ripped from the branch. This is a traditional portrayal for just about every type of carved stem.

To carve very thin leaves and stems on your rose, the design needs to build in a support structure. A leaf can appear to be held only on a thin fragile stem, but derive its main support from contact with another leaf or petal at one or more points. The minor stems can then be carved impressively thin without making the structure excessively fragile, and liable to potentially break. The main stem must be aligned along the grain as it is unsupported at its lower end.



1 Create a full-size copy of the drawing and trace the pattern onto a piece of lime measuring 200 x 100 x 50mm. Align the tracing so the stem is running along the grain. Cut round the outside with a bandsaw, jigsaw or coping saw and fix the piece to a board, screwing from the back

Roughing out

2 Reduce the level of the stem and leaves to isolate the flower. Slope this section to the right so the leaf on the left is 32mm above the backing board and the one on the right is 13mm high



"Separate the outer petals of the dome and round them over at the sides, working them to a lower level on the right-hand side to maintain the right-facing tilt of the whole rose"

3 Reduce the levels of the outer two layers of petals, again creating a general slope to the right. The upper outer layer, which goes about two-thirds of the way round the flower is about 19mm above the lower layer

4 The inner cluster of petals curves towards the middle in a dome shape. Separate the outer petals of the dome and round them over at the sides, working them to a lower level on the right-hand side to maintain the right-facing tilt of the whole rose



Handy tips

When carving thin stems, align the wood so the grain is running along the stem if possible. Thin cross grain sections are inherently weak. When a limewood carving is to have a natural wood finish, keep it clean by wearing carving gloves as you work. Only use wax pencils for marking – graphite makes the wood grubby

→ Carving the petals

5 Use a No.5, 7mm gouge to open out a hole 13mm-wide in the centre of the rose – taking account of the right-facing slant. Undercut and open out a void inside it about 25mm-deep by about the same width

6 Now separate the inner dome into individual overlapping petals. They should be tightly clustered, with each one overlapping from the outside inwards. A hooked skew chisel is the ideal tool for cutting the acute angles of the overlaps. Shape and undercut the edge of the centre hole so it is made up of overlapping petals

7 The large inward-curling petals encasing the cluster are one of the key features of the rose. Use a No.5, 7mm gouge to carve two grooves down each petal from the inner edge to its base. Use the same gouge to cut indentations into the edges so each petal takes on a 'crinkly' look

"Now separate the inner dome into individual overlapping petals"

8 The next bit is trickier; you need to carve the middle and outer layers so they lay away from the centre. Use a shallow gouge to cut downward sloping grooves in these petals, and curl over the outer edges. The outermost layer of petals must curl down almost to the backing board on the right-hand side, but curl upwards a little on the left side to maintain the right-facing slant of the rose. Undercutting the middle layer must be done with care after you have finished the top surface of the petal

9 With the petals finished, form the shape of the leaves and stem. Create a natural-looking curl to the leaves with a curved gouge. Some deep excavation is required to separate the stem and leaves, especially where the middle leaf flows under the stem from left to right. Each leaf connects with either the rose or another leaf to support the structure. Fix a couple of screws in the backing board each side of the stem to brace it while carving





10 Carve the detail onto the leaves and shape the main and subsidiary stems. Form a ridge down the middle of each leaf and use a curved V-tool and shallow gouge to carve veins with shallow grooves between them. Cut little serrations in the edge of the leaf where the veins end and little curves between the serrations. Carry out some undercutting from the front to shape the elements. Note how the end of the main stem is hollowed in the traditional way as if torn from the branch



Undercutting and finishing

11 Place the rose face down on a soft surface. Fix edge strips to a board so you can push towards the corners as you carve. Very carefully shave away the surplus wood on the underside to create thin edges to the leaves and outer petals. Open out the gaps between the leaves and stems, just leaving points of contact at the ends to provide support

"Open out the gaps between the leaves and stems..."



12 The petals and stem need to be smooth, so give them a thorough but gentle sanding with 120 followed by 180 grit abrasive. Give the leaves just the lightest touch to remove any stringy bits without dulling the detail. A wall-mounted limewood carving could be left with a bare wood finish, but as this small piece is likely to be handled over time and pick up dirt from moist hands, it will benefit from a clear wax finish, starting with a coat of acrylic sander/sealer to seal the wood without changing its colour



13 Next, finish with a coat of a clear wax that will not darken the wood – test it on the back first. Brush the wax on, working it into all the crevices. Use a dry brush to buff it up and brush out surplus wax from the crevices. Finish off with a cloth to buff up the wax to a soft satin sheen



14 The finished rose may not have the scent of a real rose – just a faint smell of wax – but the soft sheen on the leaves and petals gives it a natural lively look, and you can enjoy its beauty without being troubled by greenfly and blackspot! 🍷

Art in wood

Guy Reid is a carver for the 21st century who draws on the influences of old to create new and exciting work as Miriam Bentham discovers



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANÇOIS DELADRIÈRE

'Andrew and Guy as Gentleman Farmers', 2011, lime (Tilia vulgaris), 420mm high

Despite the fact that Guy Reid studied politics and history at degree level, he had always wanted to be a wood sculptor. Having graduated in 1984 at the age of 21, by complete chance, unemployed and living in London, he bumped into someone from his hometown who he knew to be a great cabinetmaker working in furniture restoration. After mentioning that he had always wanted to be a carver and work with wood, he told Guy of an apprentice position available in North London's A.J. Brett's workshop where he worked. After receiving basic cabinetmaker's training there, he moved to the famous Spink workshop – now Arlington Conservation – where he stayed for 10 years and was encouraged to specialise in carving. "I always had in the back of my mind though," Guy says, "the idea of using the skills I had learnt in carving to make art." Guy began using the skills he had developed to start carving his first figures in 1995.

A unique style

Woodcarving is a form of creative expression that often gives way to debate of the distinction between art and craft. In the case of Guy's work, no debate is necessary. His ability to bring wood to life – in the delicate creases of his subjects' faces; their perfectly proportioned features or beautifully formed fingers – with a sensitive eye and a deft hand is a rare artistic talent. His subjects are frozen in the midst of their mannerisms, translating a distinctly animated quality to decidedly static sculptures.

Guy's ability to distort perspective is incredible;



Guy originally trained as a classical carver

most of his work in relief is indistinguishable from that in the round. Relief carvings that take a bird's-eye or side view suggest far more depth than they possess. Guy is masterfully capable of creating depth – a prized skill many carvers spend a lifetime trying to achieve.

The lack of sentimentality in his sculptures, surprisingly, compounds how relatable they are. "I try to be as objective as possible in the representation of the subject," Guy says. "I never allow myself to be manipulated by the commissioner or the gallery." This statement is certainly recognisable in his body of work. Although they are beautiful, his sculptures lack any artificial gloss that would perhaps appeal to mass audiences; they are challenging in their refusal to hide their very human imperfections in the idealised form sculpture often takes.

Influences

Guy names Tilman Reimenschneider and Gregor Erhart – the great sculptors of the late Gothic and early Renaissance period – as his most prominent influences. Unlike the Italian Renaissance artists, who were most interested in the ideal human form, they found the everyday nature of their subjects fascinating, choosing their models from the local villagers living close to their workshops. Their representation translates such humanity, one cannot help but be moved.

Another modern influence Guy names is the hyperrealist sculptor Ron Mueck whose work bears similarities to Guy's in both his experimentation with scale and love of detail.

Technique

Guy believes his location – the beautiful French countryside – plays an important role in his work by providing him with the peace necessary for him to concentrate on his art. He credits his classical training for giving him the self-discipline to follow the daily rhythms of a work routine he has been practising since his apprenticeship.

The traditionalism of his influences – both the medium he works in and the Gothic masters that inspire him – is at odds with the modernity of his subjects. Asked about the tensions between the traditional and contemporary forms his sculptures take, Guy comments,

"Although the work I make is resolutely modern and fits into the world of contemporary art, the very



Like Guy's influences he is more interested in capturing the humanity of his subjects than an idealised form. 'Bust of Katie', 2009, lime (Tilia vulgaris), 330mm high

It is hard to tell the difference between these relief and in the round carvings



"Once a carver has the skills in place to work for their own voice. In my own work I have found that the important thing is to feel passionate about the process and don't be scared of the finished product."



'Grace Pregnant', 2012, lime (Tilia vulgaris), 530mm tall

fact of being carved in wood places it very much in the tradition of technique. The ability to master technique enables one to be free to express something beyond just technical skill. From this basis of technical mastery comes the freedom of unconscious self-expression." He continues, "Once a carver has the skills in place to master their work, they need to search for their own voice. In my own work I have never tried consciously to copy a style. The important thing is to feel passionately about your subject, enjoy the making and don't be scared to experiment."

One aspect of Guy's methodology which is important in understanding the finished piece is his use of live models and reference photographs. Where the live models enable him to capture a depth of detail that makes the finished work so lifelike, the photographs allow him to permanently capture the idiosyncrasies of his subjects so that his work can be continually improved.

His dedication to detail is definitely one of the attributes that guarantees the powerful impact of Guy's finished work. "No matter how small or large the job, how important or modest the commissioner, a piece is never finished until it is finished," he says. "One needs to look, look and then look again."

The work

Like many artists, Guy's favourite pieces of work are nearly always those on which he is currently working. Interestingly, the works themselves hold little sentimental value to him as objects. "It is the process of making them and the journey taken with them that means the most," Guy says. Once they are finished, I am perfectly happy to see them depart for the outside world." Perhaps this falling in love with the process rather than the finished product is due to the nature of Guy's art. Woodcarving is a lengthy

process and the constant, gradual sculpting of its medium is a more intimate affair than applying paint to a canvas.

When asked to select his favourite pieces of work, Guy chooses the many portraits of his long-term partner Andrew, particularly those showing him lying down, both in the round and in relief.

Commissions

The fluidity of Guy's talent as a sculptor has enabled him to work on a variety of commissions. One of these is the much-acclaimed nude Madonna and Child at St Matthew's Westminster – which has graced the pages of many publications. It has also been an object of controversy after its installation, when some church members criticised the intimacy of Mary's naked body. There have been many other commissions involving religious imagery – a subject of great interest to Reid. After spending time in Buddhist and Indian monasteries in India and Thailand and undertaking an MA in Theology he has carefully explored the relationship between religion and art. Commissions such as his figure of Adam for Mirfield College, a sculpture of St Editha for Polesworth Abbey and a nude crucifixion for Saint George's Church, Paris. In all



to master their work, they need to search
we never tried consciously to copy a style.
ely about your subject, enjoy the making
ed to experiment"

these carvings Guy has sought to universalise their traditionally religious elements; stripping them of exclusivity.

At the moment, Guy is working through a series of seven portraits of children's authors and illustrators commissioned by the publisher David Fickling. So far he has completed miniature portraits of Philip Pullman and a similarly small Jacqueline Wilson. The third will take the form of writer and illustrator Nick Sharratt.

Future projects

Guy's 'Little Me' exhibition is currently on show at the Coningsby Gallery in London. The show takes the form of several very personal studies including Guy's partner Andrew and pregnant friend Grace who have been carved in typically lifelike forms. Guy is currently working towards a July–October exhibition at the Centre for Contemporary Art at La Chapelle de St. Jacques in South West France. The centre is also publishing a book of his work which should be available this summer.

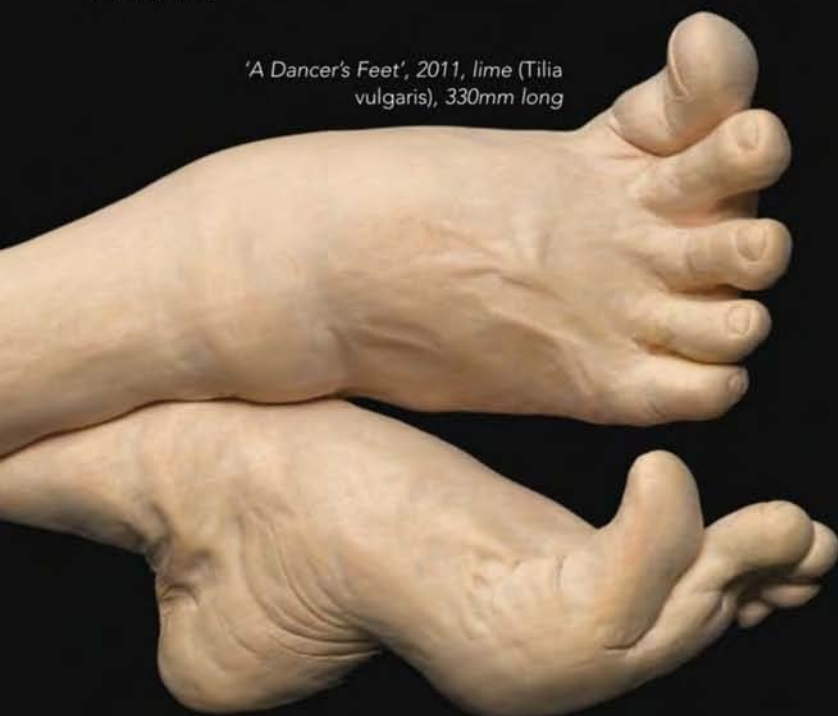
The future holds the completion of the other four author portraits – one of which will feature Michael Morpurgo, author of *War Horse*.

As well as being a gifted artist and sculptor, Guy Reid is, inextricably, a carver and it is exciting when this marginalised artform which holds such an important place in our cultural past, takes its rightful place in our cultural present. Work like Guy's propels carving to a more prominent position in the art world and challenges preconceptions that it is a vehicle too dated to accommodate the concerns of the modern-day world. When we are lucky enough to see work that contradicts these opinions, it is a good day for carvers everywhere. ■

Contact

www.guyreid.com

'A Dancer's Feet', 2011, lime (Tilia vulgaris), 330mm long



This carving of Jacqueline Wilson is one of seven portraits of children's authors commissioned by publisher David Fickling, 370mm high

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Which blade?

Alan Holtham delivers an article packed with information about which bandsaw blades to use and when

The bandsaw has probably become the most popular and useful machine for the woodworker.

Most woodworkers tackle a variety of woodworking projects and although they may focus on one particular aspect in the main, the bandsaw plays a vital part in the general workshop dimensioning process, but knowing which blade to use for the job is vital to ensuring success. However, as with any machine it's only as good as the blade, which makes it essential to understand the various blade options available so that you can choose the correct one for your particular needs.

If you flick through any blade manufacturer's catalogue it's easy to become confused by the selection of blade types on offer. There are different widths, gauges, sets, pitches and tooth forms even before you start thinking about the range of backing material. But don't panic; much of this blade technology is aimed at the metal worker, who needs a wide variety of blades to suit different materials. For us woodworkers, the situation is much simpler, as timber is relatively easy to cut and in reality you only need a very small selection of blade types.

Preferences

Every bandsaw user you speak to will swear by their own preference, so the answer is to try a few different types and then make up your own mind, as we all have different applications. Being too lazy to keep swapping blades around and resetting the machine each time, I actually use just two different blades for 95% of my cutting – aimed at general woodworking needs. These are a 10mm x 6tpi and a 20mm x 4tpi, both skip pattern. The rule of thumb is that for straight cutting you need a wider blade and for cutting curves you need a narrower blade. For carving, one often encounters the need to cut tight curves and radii. For such work 3mm x 6tpi is a good option when tight radii are required and can cut radii of 3mm, but such a size might not be available for some bandsaws so the next commonly available option is a 8mm blade which will not cut a radii of 16mm.

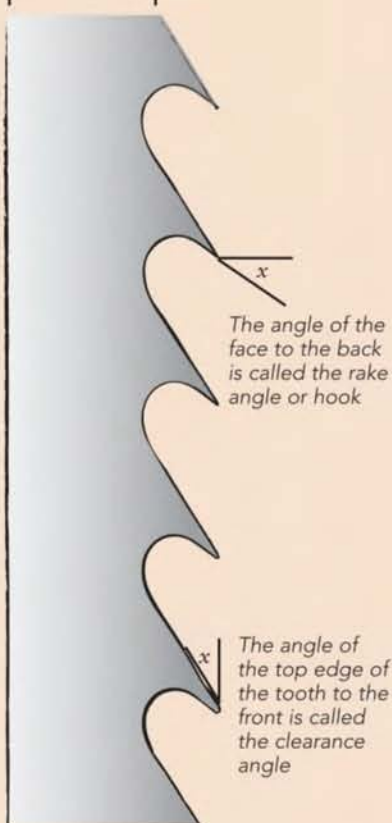
Based on over 35 years experience using bandsaws, I would say that for

general wood cutting, the blade type is not too critical and you can usually successfully find a general purpose blade that suits your particular needs. What is vitally important though is that you buy a good quality blade that is sharpened and set properly. Many of the new bandsaws are supplied with a cheap, stamped-out blade, which will never cut straight and leads to huge disappointment with the machine. Throw that blade away, fit a decent one, and your ugly duckling of a bandsaw will be instantly transformed into a smooth and accurately cutting swan. It really does make that much difference. The importance of investing in good quality blades cannot be overemphasised.

Also, remember that bandsaw blades are consumable, they will not last forever, so be prepared to change them regularly to maintain cutting accuracy. I shall look at the merits and feasibility of sharpening them in a later article, but for now it's best to regard them as disposable.

Anatomy of a bandsaw blade

The blade width is the distance between the tips and the back



The thickness of the body is described as the gauge



The difference between the gauge and the kerf is called the side clearance



The teeth are set (a) to either side of the body so leave a kerf (b)

A bandsaw blade is made from a strip of flexible steel called the body into which the teeth are ground

The back is smooth and straight

The teeth are ground into the front edge of the body

Each tooth has a point

Each tooth has a face

The gullet is the space between the teeth

The two ends of the body are joined to form the loop at the weld

The distance between the teeth is the tooth spacing

The pitch is the number of teeth per inch (not to scale)



Body

So let's look at these various terms in a bit more detail...

Traditionally the blade body was made from silver spring steel, with the teeth ground into one edge. There was no heat treatment so the hardness was the same across the width of the blade. The big advantage of these blades is that they could be resharpened with a file, but they tended to be thinner gauge, more flexible, and unless set very accurately, tended to drift sideways in a straight cut. Also, because the material is relatively soft, they do not hold an edge for long, particularly in hardwood, and ideally need to be run with the teeth overhanging the edge of the wheel to prevent the set being crushed off one side of the blade. They have largely been superseded with other harder body materials now.

The more popular option these days is flexible back carbon steel blades, which are heat-treated to harden the teeth. Edge holding is greatly improved, but because the teeth are hardened, they cannot be resharpened with a file. The blades are a uniform dark blue/black in colour, and are usually a thicker gauge than their spring steel equivalents so require more tensioning, which may be a problem with wide blades on small diameter bandwheels. Because the teeth are hardened, the blade can also be run in the middle of the bandwheel, which makes it much easier to set up.

There's a newer hybrid blade starting to emerge, notably in



The new hybrid blades consist of a thinner flexible back blade with hardened teeth

The weld

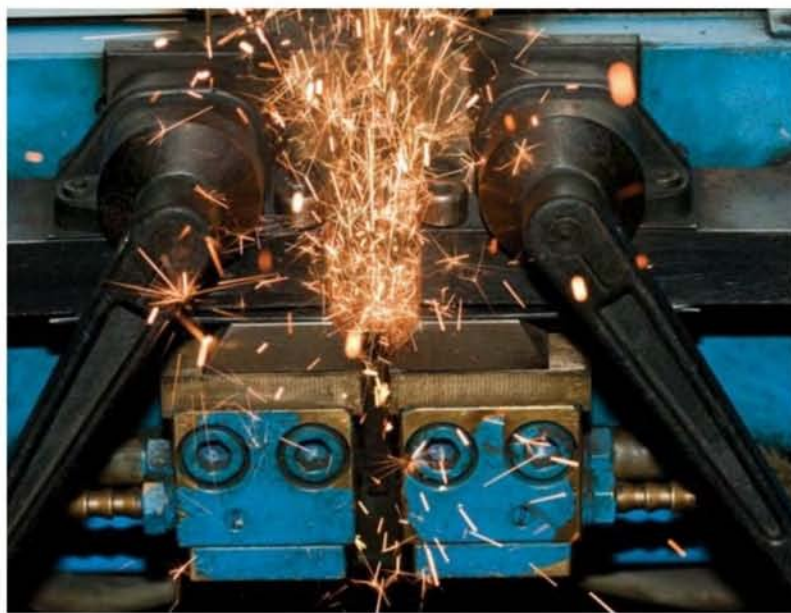


Blades with hardened teeth can be run in the middle of the bandwheel, which makes it much easier to set up

blades supplied by Tuffsaws, consisting of a thinner, flexible back blade with hardened teeth. This gives you the best of both worlds, in that they are easier to tension and cut with a narrower kerf so there is less waste, but they still have excellent edge-holding characteristics.

The ultimate is perhaps the bi-metal M42 blade, which is ideal for cutting abrasive timbers. This is made by jointing a thin strip of triple tempered, cobalt high speed, steel teeth to an alloy steel backing strip, and then grinding the teeth into it. Originally designed for cutting metal, these blades are considerably more expensive, and cannot be easily resharpened, but they do have a definite place for specialist woodworking applications as they should last between six and ten times longer. They will cut through the occasional nail without damaging the blade, so are good if you're working reclaimed timber.

Although they are becoming more popular, a lot of the blades being sold for wood cutting are too thick for the smaller machines to tension properly, so check the gauge carefully before buying.



Most blades are joined by butt-welding; the two ends must be joined dead in line with each other

Most blades these days are joined by butt-welding, rather than overlap brazing. The welding process is very efficient if carried out properly, but if the blade is to run properly the two ends must be joined dead in line with each other. If you have a blade that surges backwards and forwards as it runs, then the two halves have been joined at a slight angle.

It is almost impossible to check this just by looking at the weld, but generally speaking you get what you pay for in bandsaw quality. More importantly the

joint should be ground so that it's the same thickness as the body of the blade or it will make that characteristic clicking noise as it passes through the blade guides. In severe cases it can actually jam in the guides, but otherwise the repeated knocking as it runs through will damage them, so just run your finger over the weld to check the thickness before you buy. A quality weld should show hardly any interruption in the teeth pattern. Any discrepancies here leaving odd bits of teeth can affect the smoothness of cut.

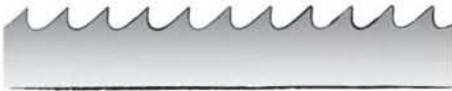


A quality blade can often be identified by the cleanliness of the weld. A uniform thickness and unbroken tooth pattern are good indicators

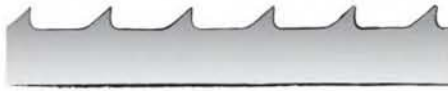


An irregular tooth pattern at the weld can result in a rough finish

- Tooth shapes



Regular tooth



Skip tooth



Hook tooth

The shape and angle of the tooth has a lot to do with how it cuts different materials and there are three common tooth forms: standard, skip and hook. Standard blades, often also called regular, have a rake angle of 0° and a clearance angle of about 60° and are said to have zero rake. The teeth and gullet are the same size and it's the most universally useful tooth pattern. When used with a slow material feed speed, a regular blade will produce the best quality finish of any bandsaw blade. Conversely, the disadvantage is that because the gullets are relatively small, they soon fill up and the blade can clog so you cannot cut fast, particularly in thick material.

Skip tooth blades have alternate teeth missing, so the gullet is

very much longer and again the rake angle is zero. With fewer teeth, the blade cuts and clears much faster but the finish is not as good, though this is often not as important as speed of cut. They will also cut with less heat build up, and so will last longer, but there are other mechanical advantages.

The shallower gullets leave more body in the blade so you can tension it more to increase the beam strength. I have also noticed that the gullet corners of a standard blade are a definite point of weakness, as the blade fatigues and breaks with use. This doesn't happen with the more rounded gullets of a skip tooth blade.

The hook blade is better suited for cutting metals, but a lot of woodworkers prefer it for cutting wet material. The positive rake of the hook tooth is more aggressive, almost pulling itself into the cut, so you need less feed pressure which is a real advantage on thick

material, and you can also get away with less tension which helps the blade last longer, as does the fact that its cutting action produces less heat. However, for deep cuts the aggressive nature of the cut will require more motor power relative to a skip blade. A hook blade is particularly good for resaw work as it has the least tendency to follow the grain, and the deep gullets clear quickly, but the surface finish is generally poor.

An exciting new development is the advent of the SuperTuff Fastcut blade, which has a unique tooth form in that there is one smaller unset tooth between two set teeth. This unset tooth acts as a raker to clear the waste from the cut, enabling the blade to give a faster and cleaner cut, and is by far the best blade I have used for resaw work.



A skip tooth blade cuts and clears quickly but the finish is not as good



A lot of woodworkers prefer a hook blade for cutting wet material...



... they are also particularly good for resaw work as they have the least tendency to follow the grain

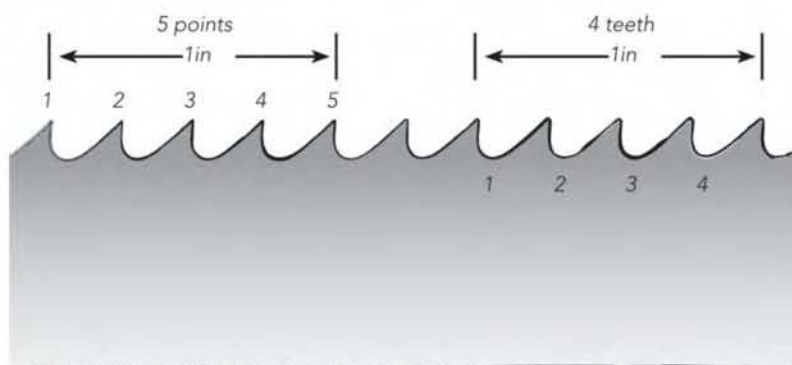
The SuperTuff Fastcut blade has a unique tooth form in that there is one smaller unset tooth between two set teeth



Tooth pitch



Blades with skip or hook teeth have fewer teeth per inch and for most woodcutting the common pitches are between 3-6tpi



The measure of the tooth spacing is usually denoted as the number of teeth per inch (tpi), or less frequently as points per inch (ppi)

This is a measure of the tooth spacing and is usually denoted as the number of teeth per inch (tpi), and less frequently as points per inch (ppi). Just to confuse things, remember that there is always one more point than tooth per inch!

In most cases the pitch is determined by the width and grind of the blade, as this dictates how big the teeth are and how closely they can be spaced. The smaller the physical size of the tooth, the greater the tpi, and as a general rule the wider the blade the fewer teeth there are. Blades with skip or hook teeth have fewer teeth per inch than an equivalent

standard blade. For most wood cutting common pitches are between 3 and 6tpi.

The pitch influences both the speed and smoothness of the cut and the resultant surface finish. The lower the tpi, the faster and rougher the cut. But if the pitch is too coarse the teeth will dull down more quickly, particularly on hard material. Finer toothed blades take a slower, but smoother cut, and this can cause an increase in friction and heat.

Thick materials need a coarser pitch, thinner ones need a finer pitch, but harder materials also need a finer pitch than softer

ones. In theory you need a different tpi for each different material, thickness and hardness.

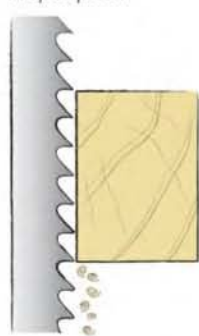
This is fine if you're consistently cutting one material but obviously not feasible for general-purpose cutting. In reality I would always err on the side of a coarser blade, say 3-6tpi for general cutting and only go finer if you are cutting thin material or want a better finish. There are variable pitch blades available, again primarily designed for cutting metal. They work particularly well on very hard materials as they generate less vibration, but are rarely seen in a woodworking shop, though they are now becoming more popular.

One factor, often overlooked when considering blade pitch, is the speed of the machine. Most saws are set to give a blade speed of around 2,500ft per minute, which covers most wood cutting operations. If you can vary the speed, increasing it for coarse pitch blades will often improve the finish. I've always felt that lighter duty machines benefit from fitting a slightly finer pitch blade; they seem to cut so much smoother with little loss in performance.



Variable pitch blades are primarily designed for cutting metal, but also work well on other very hard materials

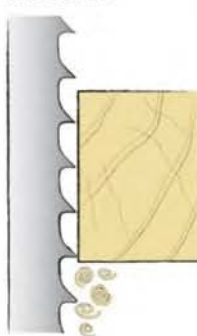
Proper pitch



Too fine



Too coarse



Blade set

Bandsaw blades are set to produce a distinct kerf which gives clearance to the blade, particularly important when cutting curves. Set can be formed in several ways, but on narrow bandsaws it is usually produced by bending the teeth outwards from the body.

There are three common set styles: alternate, raker and wavy. Alternate set is perhaps the most common for woodcutting. With every tooth set alternately left and right

there is a big contact area in the kerf so the cut is always smooth. In raker set, every third tooth is left unset to aid chip clearance so is better for thicker sections and rip cuts, but the finish is not as good as alternate set. Wavy set has groups of teeth set alternately left and right, and because they take a much smaller bite each time, they are of less use for woodcutting although they do work well on thin sheet materials.



Raker set



Wavy set



Alternate set

TECHNICAL

Which bandsaw blades to use and why

- Gauge



A broken blade caused by metal fatigue

The gauge or thickness of the blade body is another important consideration. In theory you would think that a thicker blade would be better, but actually the continual flexing, induced as the blade revolves around the bandwheels, soon generates metal fatigue, which is what can eventually lead to it breaking. A thinner and more flexible blade will always last longer. Thicker blades are also harder to tension correctly without straining the tensioning mechanism on the saw.

Gauge is measured in thousands of an inch, common sizes for smaller machines being .014, .022 and .025. The maximum gauge you use has to be carefully matched to the diameter of your bandwheels to minimise this fatiguing; current thinking being that thinner gauge blades are better as they can be tensioned more to maximise beam strength.

Wheel diameter (in)	Recommended max blade thickness (thou)
6	0.014
6-8	0.018
8-10	0.020-0.022
11-16	0.025
17-24	0.032



A thinner and more flexible blade will always last longer, and is easier to tension correctly without straining the tensioning mechanism on the saw

Width

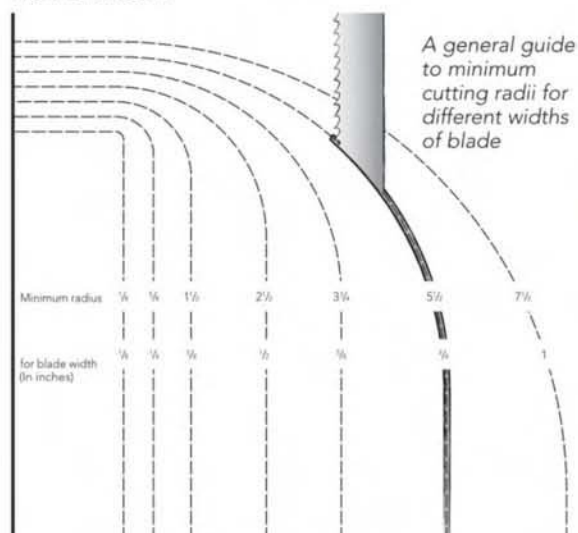
The width should actually be the first thing you consider when choosing a bandsaw blade. It is measured from the back of the blade to the tip of the teeth, and for smaller bandsaws this varies from 1/8in all the way up to 1 1/2in. If you're cutting mainly curves with your bandsaw, the radius of the smallest curve will determine the most suitable width. Most people think that to cut thick stock they need the widest blade that will fit on their machine. It is often difficult to convince them to try a narrower blade that will tension more easily, as the correct amount of tension is actually a more important factor for straight cutting. The size of the radius that a particular blade can cut is determined by both the width of the blade, and the width of the kerf as these control how much you can twist the workpiece before the blade starts to bind. For instance a 1/8in blade with its wide kerf-to-width ratio allows you to cut really tight radii. ▶



If you're cutting mainly curves, the radius of the smallest curve will determine the most suitable width of blade...



... an 1/8in blade with its wide kerf to width ratio allows you to cut really tight radii



Contacts

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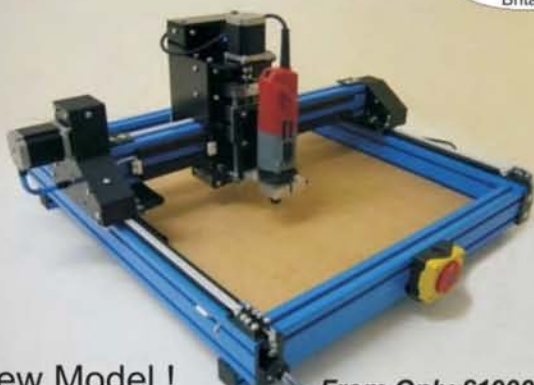
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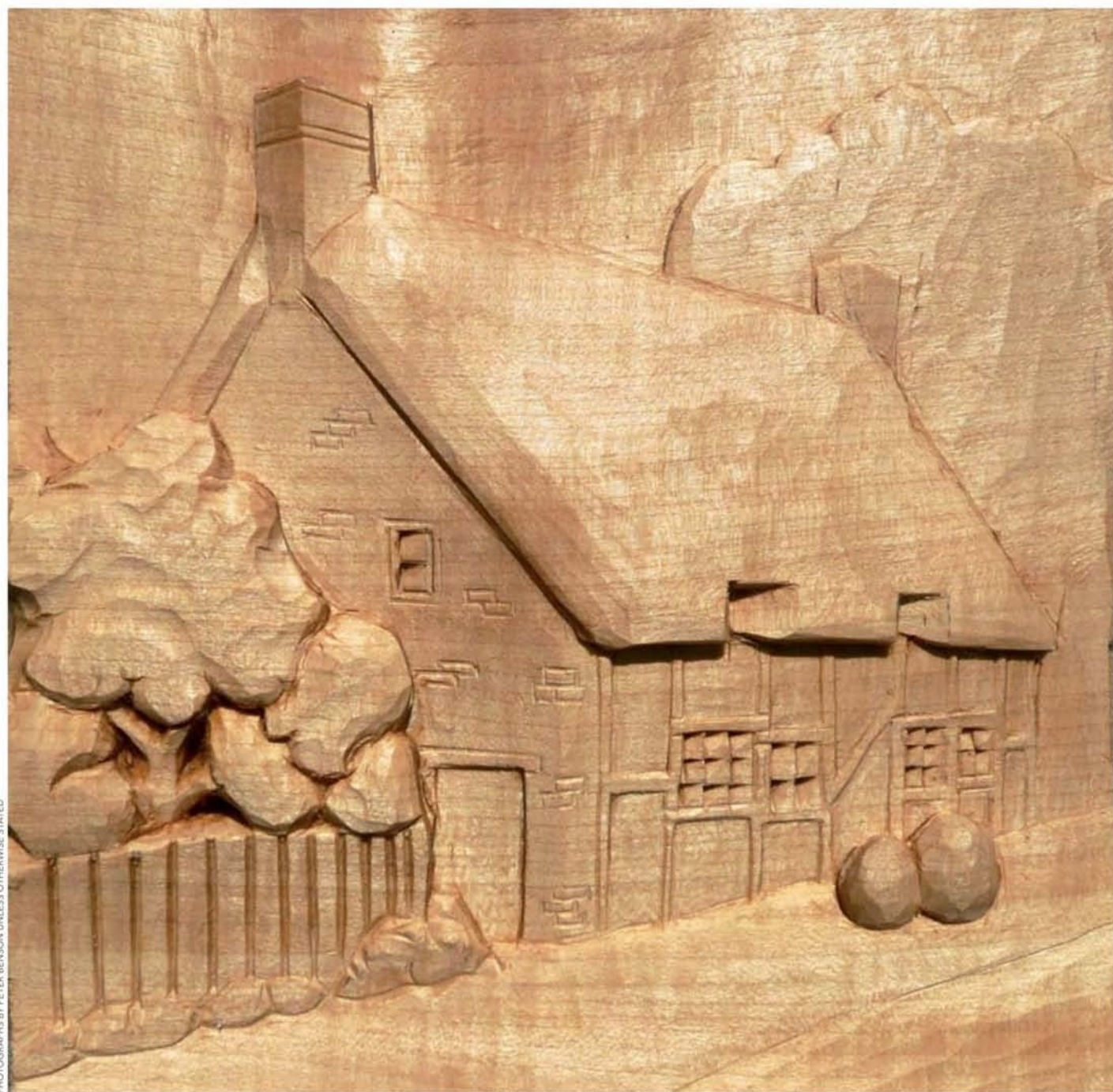
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Carving know-how: Starting relief carvings

In the first of two articles Peter Benson examines the processes involved when beginning relief carvings



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER BENSON UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

In the last issue we looked at getting started with in-the-round carving and many of the basic principles are the same when approaching relief carving. As long as the tools are kept sharp, they are essentially

no different. Holding the timber is different however and can be done by clamping onto a simple bench top or using a large bench hook. Most carvers will find a suitable method depending on their circumstances. ■

What is relief carving?

First of all, we need to be sure what we mean by a relief carving. Carvers seem to have varied ideas about this – some feel that anything with a flat back is correct, irrespective of how deep it is and how much of it is actually carved in-the-round. Others think that it describes anything carved out of a thin piece of wood, no matter what the shape is.

I subscribe to the third opinion, which is that a relief carving is one that has a flat background and involves a degree of foreshortening and/or perspective. The subject is given the illusion of depth by skilful use of these techniques, which creates the appearance of being carved from a much thicker piece of timber. In my view, if there is no illusion or

foreshortening in a carving, it doesn't really become a relief – it is a flat-backed carving in-the-round. The carving can be very thin, forming a shallow relief of similar style to the pattern on a coin, or it can be quite deep, meaning that the subject can be very nearly, but not completely, the correct thickness or depth. The degree of perspective or foreshortening involved will obviously be greater the thinner the original piece of wood was to start with.

I would stress that this interpretation is only my opinion and others will have their own views. I have not found any definitive description of exactly what this type of carving should be, so until I am convinced otherwise, I will go with my current thinking.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Benson has been carving since he was 11, discovering his passion when evacuated from his home during the war, making daggers and planes with his pocket knife. He became a P.E. teacher before moving on to teach children with special educational needs, finding the time for carving along the way. Since retiring, Peter set up the Essex School of Woodcarving in his studio home, tailoring his courses to the requirements of the individual.



Preparation

Unlike carving in the round, where you can start carving with only a fairly rough idea of what your carving will be, with relief you really need to have decided pretty much everything you wish to include in your piece. At least you need a detailed drawing of the carving you are starting so you can transfer this to your timber.

There is one technical point here that we cannot really overlook – the place of vanishing points when

using perspective. Any design that includes horizontal lines, particularly like those in buildings, will involve vanishing points of some kind. A picture can generally have one, two or three points of perspective, depending from which point it is viewed, meaning that it will have more than one vanishing point. The carver should check with all horizontal lines and see where they meet. This may be at a single point or more and may be within

the picture or outside it. Wherever these points are in your original picture, they should be the same in your carving or the final result will not look right. I have seen some very well-carved relief carvings where the carver has got the perspective very wrong, often with conflicting and confusing vanishing points. Once you have an understanding of how perspective can affect a picture, any deviations can scream out at you, making the picture very wrong.



This Parisian street demonstrates what a vanishing point looks like

Transferring designs

Once the design is decided upon it needs to be transferred to the timber; here is where most novices encounter their first problem. They painstakingly draw their pattern onto the surface of the timber without considering that they will very quickly be cutting off all their lines. Worse still, they start the carving very carefully trying to retain the lines they have drawn, losing almost any chance of getting any depth into their work.

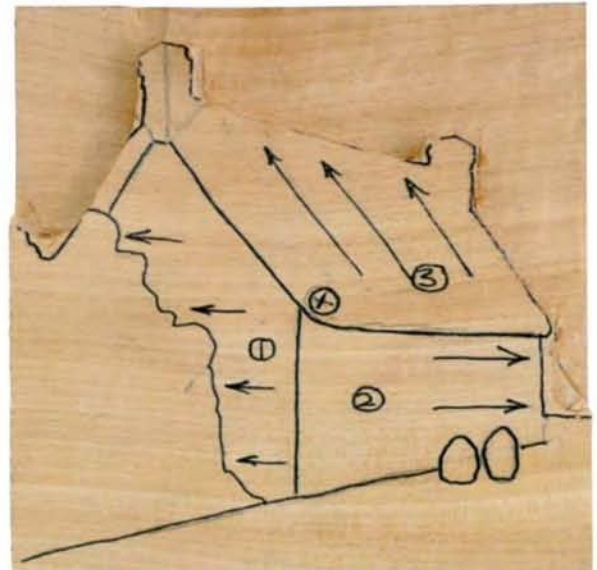
I always advocate drawing your pattern onto a clear acetate sheet with a very fine permanent marker pen and only transferring the outline of your pattern onto the block at the beginning so you can see where you need to remove wood for the background. By putting location marks on your block and sheet where you will not be carving you can always locate the pattern in the same place to check your design.

You may have heard the expression that relief carving is done from the back. What this means is you need to remove the

bulk of your waste material to establish where the deepest part of your carving will be and work forward from there. This way, you know exactly how much wood you have available and will make the best use of it, avoiding what I see so often, all the detail in the first 6mm or 12mm and no real appearance of depth.

The drawing of each section of your carving can be transferred from the acetate to the wood by laying it over the wood and drawing underneath. In order to cut round this detail I advise using a veiner rather than a chisel or V-tool as you will cause far less damage and avoid breaking away.

Once you have a channel around your outline, you can cut round with a chisel or shallow gouge to get a vertical edge from your outline to the background causing minimal damage. There is nothing worse than seeing half-moon cuts in the background of a relief from careless edging. Always be aware of the grain direction when doing this. Cutting obliquely across the



line of the grain will avoid creating splits along the edges that cause important pieces to break off. You may even be able to leave a small amount of extra wood on the background as a safety measure and then clean this up in the final stages.

Background removed and the three different planes marked

Adding angles

Once you know how much wood you have to play with you need to study your pattern and sort out where all the angles are and carve these as well as you can without

including any detail. You will probably find it very helpful to draw this detail using your acetate to check whether you have got these angles right.

Creating perspective

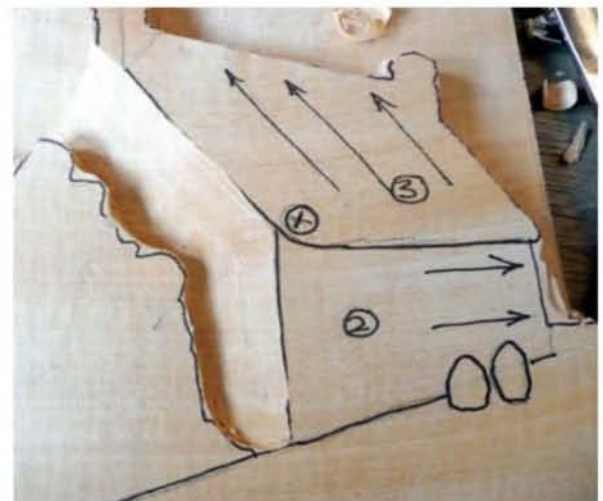


It is at this stage that you should be making any adjustments to your design to get the correct perspective and foreshortening. Any experimentation should be done by drawing with your pencil not with your carving tool. You are actually drawing a relief with a pencil and giving it some depth with your carving tools and shouldn't lose sight of this.

This process is best done by standing your carving upright and stepping back from it to view the effect. You might also like to consider where it is likely to be displayed and from which direction the light source will be coming. The success of a relief carving can actually come down to how effective the use of shadows has been and these cannot be easily seen when the carving is lying flat on the bench. Once you are happy, use a gouge or V-tool to mark the

boundary of the bushes, then a wider, flatter blade to pare down the side elevation of the house. Remember to check regularly to make sure the perspective is correct. ▶

First plane carved



20 minutes with...

Donna Menke

Woodcarving catches up with Donna Menke to find out more about her work

When did you start to carve?

In 1995 I attended my first meeting of the Central Texas Woodcarvers Association, where I found people to be friendly and willing to help a newcomer. It was so instructive seeing how some of the more experienced carvers made the chips fly from their carving knives. No more would I hack away in frustration with a hobby knife on a hunk of mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*) wood!

What made you continue carving?

By attending many workshops put on by the Texas Woodcarvers Guild, I learned how best to teach others how to carve. By the second year I was holding my own classes and very much enjoying teaching. I have now been teaching for 15 years and it is still as much fun as it was in the beginning.

What inspires you when you carve?

Creating something beautiful. Capturing nature in all its glory – in wood. With my background in scientific illustration I try to get as close as I can to reproducing in wood what I see with my eyes. Sometimes I feel that I have succeeded – sometimes not!

What are you currently working on?

I enjoy teaching, a lot, but not everyone can make it to my classes, so I have made a few videos in order that they can learn as though they were in my class. After making the carving of the wren on the hand, I decided that I should make a video showing others how to carve birds without using power tools. Since I simultaneously generate a magazine article showing the process, it takes a bit of time to complete.

Which tool wouldn't you be without and why?

My Helvie bench knives are my 'do everything' tools. I won my first knife when I placed well with a bird carving in 2001 at the International Woodcarvers Congress in Iowa. After experiencing how well the handle filled my hand and how long the blade stayed sharp, I bought another Helvie knife, but this time with a bigger blade.

Which is your preferred style of carving and why?

I like to carve realistic animals in the round. Although I mostly work in basswood (*Tilia americana*) to be wood burned and painted,



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DONNA MENKE

I also enjoy the challenge of working in harder woods like mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*) and butternut (*Juglans cinerea*).



'Kestrel' proved to be a painting challenge



'The Wren in My Hand' is my latest major carving



'Bocephus, Funerary Urn Topper'

What do you think has been your biggest carving achievement?

My biggest and best carving achievement is always the one I've just completed. After time passes, the older pieces fade into the background and the latest becomes my favourite. With each new piece I want to challenge myself to do ever-better work, and to that end I work very hard.

Whose work do you most admire?

I admire Ian Norbury very much. His figures are wonderful and amazing. I swear it looks as though he has shrunk real humans down to size. The carver from whom I've learned the most though has been Desiree Hajny. I was fortunate to be able to take some of her classes and I give full credit to her teachings for my lifelike small mammals.

If you weren't a carver what would you be?

I was involved in classroom teaching when I got into carving, and I may well have continued on that path if I hadn't gotten more involved in woodworking. Teaching adults how to carve and do other woodworking, by the way, is much more enjoyable than teaching elementary school children how to do maths!

Describe the view from your workshop/workbench

I live on a small cattle ranch in central Texas and I can see cattle walking by and chickens pecking for insects – when they are not being chased by coyotes.

Sometimes a great blue heron will fly by from one cattle pond to the next – distracting, yes, but refreshing too.

Who would you most like to carve for?

Working on commissions has been very important in keeping my interest in carving. I like the idea that someone wants to own a piece I have made. I like to work with a patron to determine exactly what they want and then do my very best to fulfil that obligation.

What do you listen to whilst carving?

Music. Doesn't matter much what kind, though I usually have the classical station on, but just something playing helps with concentration. Sometimes I could not even tell you what I'd been listening to, but it works in any case.

What are your interests outside of carving?

Ever since making my first harp in 2007 I have been trying to teach myself how to play it. All I can say about that is I make a better harp builder than I do a harp player, but I'll keep trying. I also very much enjoy taking photographs of butterflies and dragonflies. So far I've captured 43 different butterflies in decent digital images by traipsing over our acreage for hours at a time. Life doesn't get much better. ▶

Contact:
donpbk@yahoo.com



For 'Bluebird' the bird was made in tupelo and the post carved in butternut

From the workshop

Ben Hawthorne has some advice on carving with old tools and keeping warm in the workshop

The summer, such as it was, has now officially finished and we can look forward to a few months of even colder and wetter weather and the associated colds and flu that seem to be bred and distributed very successfully by the school system.

Apart from Christmas, when the whole family will be gathering here, I don't anticipate seeing much of Will, so I am taking the opportunity to get those jobs sorted out that I have been meaning to do for months.

Following the success of Will's first attempt at carving his runner in relief, he spent another session with me trying a bit of knife carving on a simple Christmas project for his mum. She was so pleased with the result she asked me to get him a knife and some cut-outs that he could carve at home over the holidays under their supervision. Not only would this give him something to do with his mum and dad, but there would also be lots of painting to do once they were finished, which should keep him occupied for hours. He has even got plans to get some of his friends involved in that part of the operation.

Keeping warm

Meanwhile, back at home, I have been spending time cutting up logs for the fire in the house as well as for the stove in the



Will trying knife carving – he will grow into the gloves, but for now, they offer him suitable protection

workshop. Last winter it got very cold in there and I had problems with condensation that made some of my carving tools in the rack go rusty. I decided that I would line the walls with insulation board and fill the space with loft insulation. Also, whilst the stove keeps me warm when I am working there, it doesn't help at other times, so I have also added a small oil-filled radiator for the very cold days and nights. So far,

the difference has been quite noticeable, but we will see as time goes on.

When I had the woodburner installed, the fitter made it very clear that I should only burn dry wood as this not only gives off more heat but also reduces the build up of tar deposits in the flue. As a result of this advice I have built a small covered area behind the workshop where I can stack the logs for a time to let them dry. Apparently this applies to wood burned on an open fire as well as in a stove.

Old tools

I was at the Club last week talking to some of the lads about why so many people have the opinion that the old tools you pick up at car boot sales are so much better than the new ones you buy. This got me wondering as there is no doubt that I tend to pick up my old tools in preference to the



The worn and newer spoon chisel

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBIN SPRINGETT



newer ones I own.

I came to the conclusion that there seems to be little difference in the quality of the steel or the ability to hold an edge, but in general, the older tools tend to be much shorter. I started looking at the other carvers and many of them actually looked quite uncomfortable working with long tools, so there might be some truth in that thought.

I started looking at some of my old tools and some of my favourites are actually quite well worn, particularly the spoon gouges and chisels, and this makes them much easier to use.

A lot of my tools are pre-war, but have a lot of life left in them, so I am wondering whether to shorten some of my newer ones. This goes against the grain a bit as I am of a generation that doesn't like wasting anything, but these tools could last a hundred years or so and who knows if anyone will ever use them after me. After all, I might as well be comfortable and safe whilst carving!

One thing I have been warned about was to have a good look

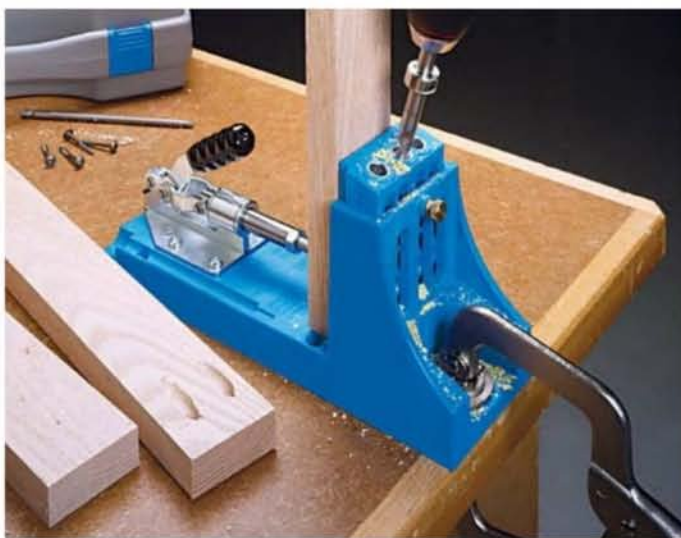
at the inside surface of old gouges to ensure there is not too much pitting as this will prevent achieving a good cutting edge. If you find a tool that you like with a minimum of pitting, you can grind a very small bevel on the inside until you get to clean, sound metal. As long as this bevel is small and flat, it will not affect the cutting potential of the tool. The best way to do this is with a slip stone with a rounded edge, or even by sticking a piece of fine cloth-backed abrasive onto a length of wooden dowel. The advantage of this is that you can match the curve of the dowel to the sweep of the gouge.

I have included a photo of my first attempt at creating an inner bevel – see right – and there is no doubt that it improves the cut, but there is still much room for improvement – a bit like my carving really! Oh well, it's back to the logs again for now. ▀

Ground inner bevel on an old tool



WIN!



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Send your details on a postcard with the title 'Kreg Jig Master System Giveaway' to Woodcarving Reader Giveaway, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN. Closing date for the giveaway is 25 April, 2013

The competition is open to UK residents only. Only completed entries received by the closing date will be eligible. No entries received after that date will be considered. No cash alternatives will be offered. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. The winner will be expected to be in possession of a copy of this issue of Woodcarving magazine. One entry per household. Employees of GMC Publications, their associated companies and families are not eligible to enter. By entering the competition, winners agree to their names being used in future marketing by GMC Publications, unless you mark your entry otherwise.



Maquettes

part 3

In the next part of this series on maquettes, Andy Hibberd looks at hand and head modelling

A miscalculated ferry timing last summer led to an unexpected few hours in the port of Calais. This turned out to be very serendipitous, enabling our party to visit the elegant town hall and clock tower and to admire and study Rodin's monumental work nearby. A larger-than-life-size bronze, it depicts the surrender of Calais to the English King Edward III in 1357, during the Hundred Years War. The citizens of Calais held out for 11 months until finally, due to starvation, they were forced to capitulate. Fortunately a plea from the King's wife spared the six representative burghers and the Calais citizens. Rodin's depiction is a snapshot, which shows men expecting death, completely spent, but still with pride and heroism, he brilliantly manages to capture this feeling and tension in the worked



Rodin's 'The Burghers of Calais', Place du Soldat, Calais, bronze circa 1895

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Hibberd trained as a woodcarver at City and Guilds. He was mentored by David Holgate, a leading figure in lettering and figurative carving. His workshop is in Norfolk and he can be found demonstrating at shows up and down the country. To see more of Andy's work, visit his website at: www.andyhibberd.co.uk



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDY HIBBERD

clay. Opposite I have focused in on one of the hands of the burghers, which clearly shows how much of an understanding Rodin had of both anatomy and design.

It is very comforting to realise how easily accessible great art and sculpture can be; usually with no cost other than taking the time to seek it out, or noticing it as you pass by. None of us will probably even come close to the skill and sensitivity of material that Rodin had, however, I for one will never give up trying.

Requests occasionally appear in my mailbox for carvings which I classify as outside my comfort zone and by inference, uninteresting. In truth, the real reason for rejection is probably a lack of familiarity with the subject matter and an underlying self-doubt as to the success of the carving. Fortunately, there is a solution that does tend to work and is the focus of this

article, the third in the series on maquette making.

Most objects, man-made or natural, have an underlying skeleton or structure upon which the other material, the part you are trying to replicate, is either attached to or supported by. In the case of the human figure, the bony skeleton dictates the changes of plane and the way shadow is trapped allowing us to recognise firstly the human being, and secondly – because of the differences in size and shape – the individual person. I would suggest that, without a fundamental understanding of this hidden structure, it is very difficult to produce a realistic copy, let alone an interpretation or a stylised carving.

The following two pieces of work were produced using either recycled or relatively inexpensive materials and were fun to make.

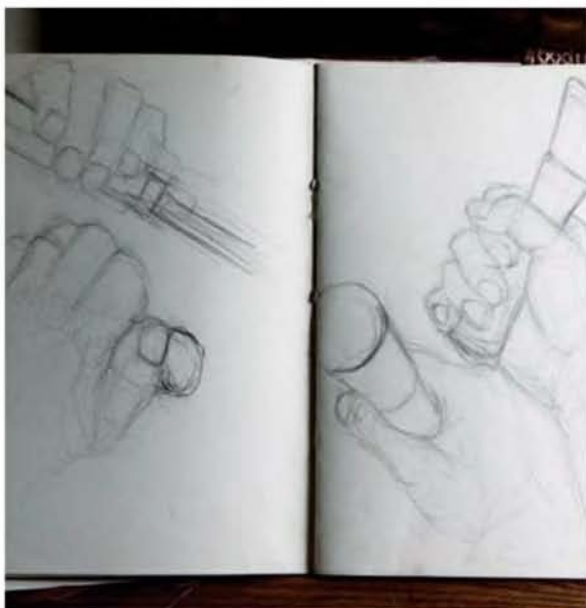


A close-up of one of the burgher's hands

Skeletal structure



Plaiting wire veins on the back of the hand will show up if a further thin covering layer of material is added. Rodin has handled this extremely well as you can see from the close-up bronze photograph above



I created an armature of my own hands in carving positions

There is really no need to study at the level of a medical student when becoming familiar with the skeletal structure. Textbooks and specialised software applications on the internet all contain detailed images of the skeleton and musculature. Your local medical centre or physiotherapy department will often have a plastic skeleton; they may allow you to take a few snapshots or email you some images. A good starting point is to attempt to model your own face – with a mirror handy – you will then have a life model readily at hand, and always in the correct position.

Start to recognise the bony protuberances such as the malar or cheekbone, the mandible, and the way the brow ridges in a male differ to those of the female. Be aware of course that tendons, muscle and fat all affect the way that we look; try and think your way into the structure of the person you are observing in front of you.

Hands are frustratingly difficult to model or carve, so it is definitely worthwhile spending time getting to know them better structurally. The position of the thumb relative to the fingers is very important. Let your own hand dangle at rest, and see how everything lies; it might surprise you. Also, note from the skeletal photographs there are four finger bones and three bones in the thumb. It is easy to forget this when looking at your



Skeleton provided by Laura, 'Back in Motion', Wymondham, Norfolk

own hand which appears at first glance to only have three and two respectively. The other thing to note is that the pads of muscle are on the inside of the hand, which is why veins and tendons are so pronounced on the bony outside of the hand, with no padding. This should be acknowledged in the carving or model you create.

Hand structure



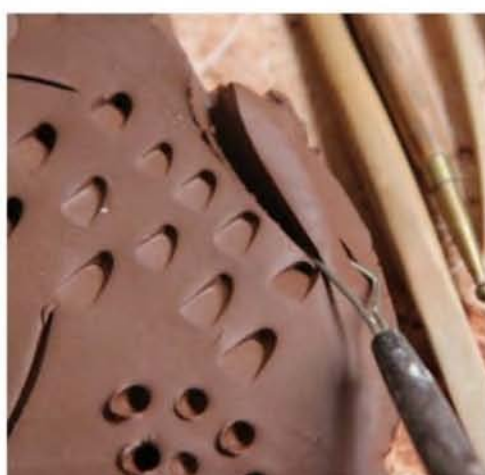
The items needed to create a hand armature

I decided to start sketching hand and came up with the idea of creating an armature of my own hands in carving positions. This has the big advantage of ready-made models to copy, but the disadvantage of having to change your drawing hand when sketching the dominant hand that you usually draw with. This is good practice and at least worth an attempt; however, if it is too frustrating either use a mirror, draw someone else's hand, or change the subject matter. I previously mentioned the structure of the body, equally important is to be aware of the dexterity, the power and the sensitivity that we often take for granted when thinking about our hands, if we ever consider them at all! Somehow we have to try and translate this into our armature or model, and then into the carving.

Equipment, tools and sundries – hand armature



My equipment for modelling the clay



These test marks were made with the modelling tools

Square sectioned armature wire can be purchased either in metre lengths or by weight in kilograms. Being made of aluminium it is flexible enough to be bent by hand, but rigid enough to support a large weight of clay.

I have used two sizes of flexible galvanised wire; dimensions are 1.6mm and 2.6mm in diameter. The galvanised mesh purchased from a garden centre had square dimensions of 6 x 6mm.

Weight

Weight is always a consideration when modelling heads or figures, so a lightweight packing is often used to fill in the gaps between the mesh or wound wire, rather than solid clay. In this particular case I used recycled blue foam that came with an electrical device, this was lightweight and easy to cut with a scalpel or hacksaw.

I also used masking tape which

is a quick and easy method of just holding things together either temporarily or if it is never going to be seen, permanently. The clay for the head was a fine terracotta natural clay, which can be found online, in various sizes, or is supplied by Tiranti's.

Keeping clay moist

The garden centre also provided the little hand sprayer used to keep the work moist when being worked or stored. Cling film, rags, and a carrier bag tied over the work in progress will also keep it workable, if it is left before finishing. A word of warning though, if you intend to store it for a long period, mould will definitely start to form. You can mix in a mould killer or just let the clay naturally dry in the open air if the maquette is finished. My preferred method as I've mentioned before, is to create a rubber mould of the work

which can then be used to cast in whatever material you choose.

The clay modelling tools shown in this article were purchased from Tiranti's, but for the modelling of the clay head I only used the tools shown in the photo here. This photograph shows a piece of clay rolled out on the plaster slab created in article two of this series. The test marks shown were all quickly made using the modelling tools to give you an idea of just how adaptable this process and material can be.

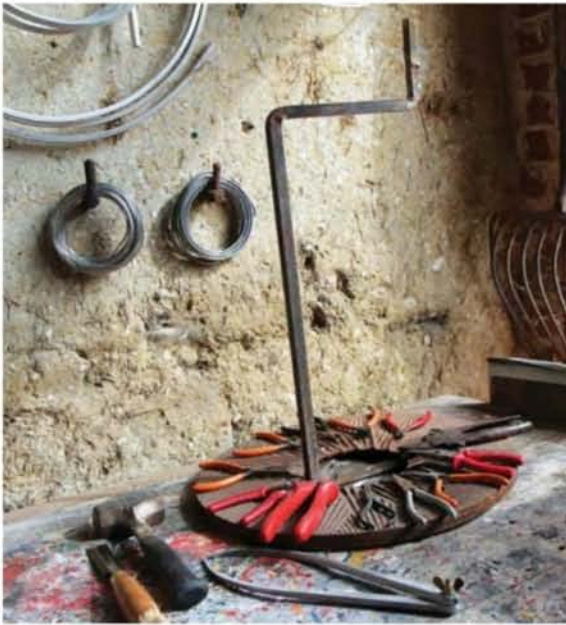
Work surface

A large piece of oak proved to be very useful as the workbench for bending and generally working the armature wire. Historically, metalworkers used the end grain of large sections of wood to beat out metal bowls with tools such as peen hammers. The end grain compresses and can therefore be shaped; this means that a design or pattern is formed, and used repeatedly.

A good selection of pliers,



Spreading and attaching the wire



The homemade stand I use to support the hands

side cutters and tin snips can all be purchased easily. The photo on page 61 shows me spreading the wire and attaching it in such a way that it is pointing inwards rather than sticking out. If it snags it will give you a nasty cut. I find using the flexible mesh helps consolidate everything and also gives you the necessary changes of plane required. Although at first glance the wire loops, twists and turns appear chaotic, you do end up with order and an understanding of the structure you are creating.

The stand

The stand used to support the hands – I actually wired them to it – is a square section length of bar with welded feet with screw holes in. I had this made up at a

local forge by the blacksmith based on the design of the ones I used whilst training; it is shown clearly in the photo opposite. The heavy metal circular base also shown is agricultural I believe, and was picked up at a reclaim yard locally. It fully supports any figurative armatures and clay models I might attach to it and allows me to move it around the workshop easily.

I'm sure this type of stand is available commercially, if you are unable to find a metalworker or blacksmith in your area. Often though, county shows such as the one I demonstrate at every year, the Essex Country show, in Billericay, will have one or more blacksmiths demonstrating on-site; they would be more than happy I'm sure to make you a stand.

Construction of hand armature



Chopping out 'V' sections with a chisel



The mesh is applied to the packing foam

In my sketchbook I drew an outline of my left hand and marked the finger and thumb bends onto the armature wire. Using an old but relatively sharp wood chisel, I chopped out 'V' sections to allow me to bend the digits at the required sharp angles. Once they were bent in a satisfactory manner, the mesh was applied encasing the packing foam. A word of warning

here, the mesh when cut is rather sharp and will happily snag your clothing and skin. Obviously the choice is yours whether you wear gloves or not. Periodically I would add the chisel and mallet to the armatures and then present them to the stand in their relative positions. The photo to the right shows this.

Another tip is to have a spare set of mallet and chisels, and hold them in your hands in front of the mirror, observing the way your fingers grip them. On several occasions after doing this I re-bent the armature fingers into what I considered to be identical positions. Again, be quite careful here how you bend and flex the cut armature wire, it can break; not always a disaster, but often quite inconvenient.

The photo opposite shows the completed armature. I have decided to leave it in this form at present, because it gives me a wider range of options if I decide to use it in a direct carving project or to bend it about a bit in a future design change. Also, I happen to rather like it as it is in its present form.



Using an old but relatively sharp wood chisel I chopped out 'V' sections to allow me to bend the digits at the required sharp angles



The completed armature

Head modelling



This assortment of metal pieces shows how easy it is to source materials for maquettes



The maquette before any clay was added



Don't try and blend or smear the clay in with your finger, add smaller and smaller pellets to fill the gaps



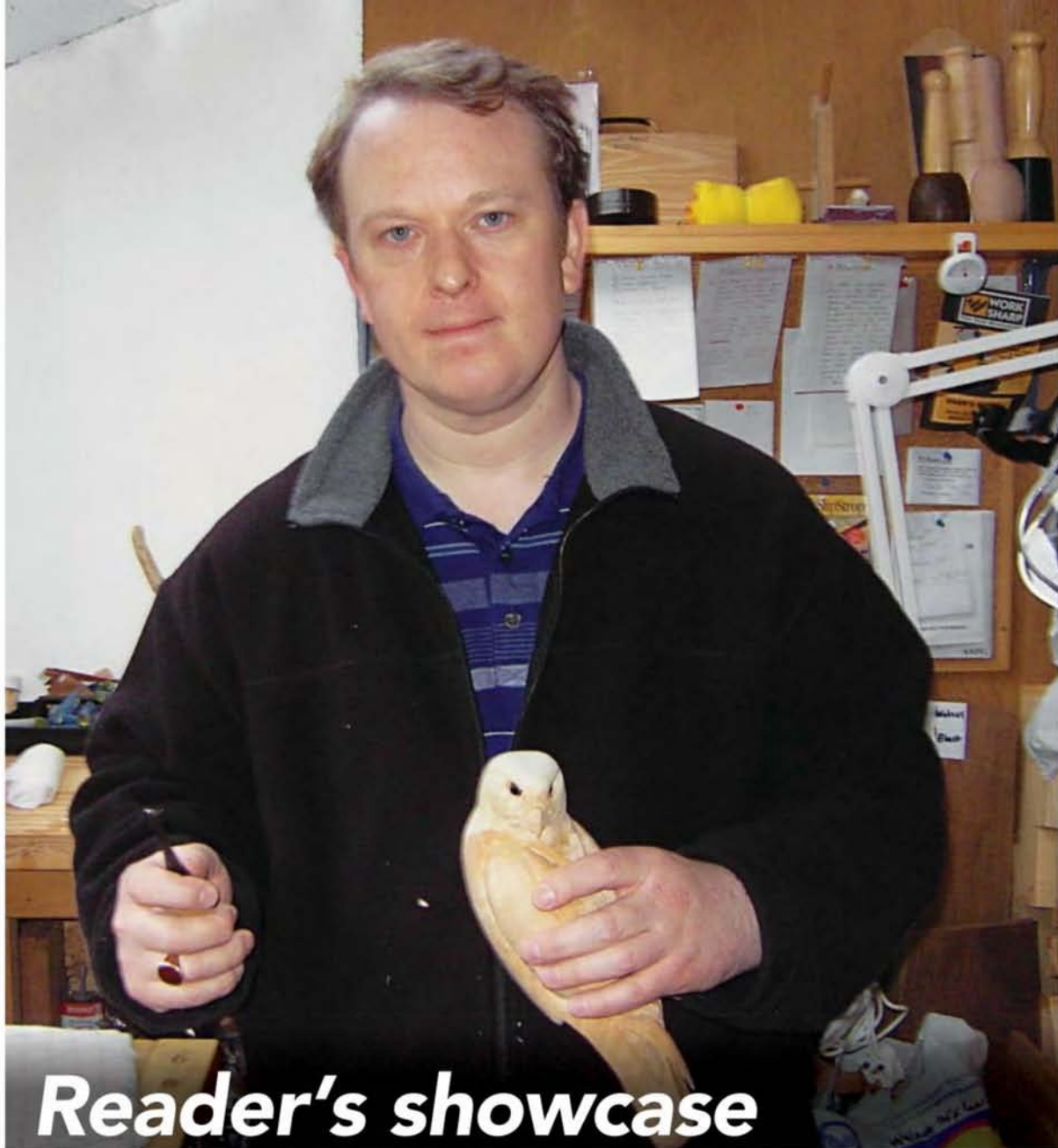
This skull has no mandible attached because I was only initially interested in a view of the top part of the skull

Having salvaged an assortment of metal pieces, an old metal whisk from a charity shop and a twisted up ball of wire, I decided to show how inexpensive and easily everyday materials could be used to produce satisfactory maquettes. Once the stand was made I decided initially to create the upper part of a Green Man, mouth open with foliage winding round his head. To the observant amongst you, this will explain why the skull in the photograph here has no jawbone or mandible attached. It wasn't necessary and I wanted a view only of the top part of the skull. As is often the case, when creating your own work I had a change of plan and decided to turn it into a female, with an incomplete face but with

the jawbone added to allow for the modelling of the lips.

Modelling with clay is something that you will really have to experiment with, to try and explain it in words is quite difficult, especially within the confines of an article such as this. A few tips though; it needs to be the right consistency, not too wet and not too dry. Apply it in small pellets, building up rather than adding a big lump of clay, and trying to carve it away. Don't try and blend or smear the clay in with your finger, add smaller and smaller pellets to fill the gaps, using a variety of shaped modelling tools. The finish you then achieve doesn't appear overworked and has a more natural look. It is often a good idea to mark a centreline, useful when taking calliper measurements. Reference points can then be located and marked with wire pins. Although on this occasion, I decided not to use this method.

Figurative modelling in clay and the associated skills are a very big subject, hopefully you may be interested enough to experiment and become as interested and addicted as I have. 🍷



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TIM WILLIAMS

Reader's showcase

Tim Williams

We catch up with Woodcarving reader Tim Williams to find out more about his life in carving

Having done a lot of carvings of animals and birds, I have recently turned my attention to figurative studies. I got into carving after a brief period of illness and needed something therapeutic that would occupy my mind. Somehow I came across woodcarving and have been steadily making carvings for the past 15 years. My level of attainment has gone up and up and the years have passed with me always striving for perfection, but never quite reaching it.

My work

My recent work has included figures carved from many

different species of timber, which I have selected to suit the different elements of the carving in progress. These include lime wood (*Tilia vulgaris*) which is good for the flesh parts, or a small piece of walnut (*Juglans regia*) for a moustache or hair which is shaped, textured and sanded and then carefully pegged and glued into place. With clothing I will use walnut camphor or other coloured wood that will give a contrast with the lighter-coloured woods. I know purists would not like this, as they think things should be carved from one piece of wood, which, I admit is a purer form of carving. But you get special

'Flapper Girl, 1920a'



effects when using different species of wood for different elements, not possible from a carving made from one piece of timber. Some of the woods I have used are cherry (*Prunus* spp.), camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*), apple (*Malus sylvestris*), pear (*Pyrus communis*), boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), ebony (*Diospyros* spp.), lime, elm (*Ulmus procera*), purpleheart (*Peltogyne porphyrocardia*) and rosewood (*Dalbergia latifolia*) to name a few.

The way I work is, for example, when carving a pair of jester's shoes, using a two-way cut out and then shaping, refining and adding detail and sanding through six different grades of abrasive. I then position, peg and glue together the legs and carry on with the other parts, using initial drawings and original designs.

Tools

The tools I use most are Flexcut gouges. I like these

as they are made from thin section steel and keep their edge a long time. Other tools involved in my work are Microplane rasps, Dremel drills and a variety of tungsten and diamond bits. Sometimes I use a Black & Decker power file for rough shaping and sculpting. This is especially useful on some of the larger parts and for finishing, I use good quality abrasives.

I don't have a bandsaw which is a disadvantage, so instead I use a jigsaw for initial cutting out of designs. For smaller parts a coping saw is used. Recently I have been adding other materials in my work including small beads and semi-precious stones, which I use for details such as buttons on clothing. I will also fashion parts from sheet brass copper and aluminium using tin snips and files. I think adding other materials to wood sculptures greatly enhances them.

Influences

I have learnt a lot from the DVDs and books produced by Ian Norbury. I think his work is sublime. Also the work of Fred Zavadil is just as brilliant. For my figurative studies my inspiration comes from medieval history and watching people in general. For birds and animals I am obviously inspired by the natural world.

Sometimes I like a carving that someone else has completed and will make my own version, but I will never copy, always altering and trying to improve it by following my own path.

My current work will be more figurative studies. Presently I am working on a carving of a Knight Templar. ■

Contact

timpo.williams76@googlemail.com



'Flying Lady'



'Medieval Drunken Jester'

NEXT ISSUE

wood CARVING

Profile on **Bob Guge**

**Andy Hibberd returns
with part 4 of his
maquettes series**

**Carve a pull-along dog
with Peter Clothier**

**Chris Pye –
when edges
turn blue**

**Mike Wood
carves little
owls**

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BOB GUGE



**Issue 132
May/Jun 2013**

ON SALE 25 APRIL

Black-necked grebe



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKE WOOD

Mike Wood carves and paints a black-necked grebe, a bird found in every continent except Australasia and Antarctica

The black-necked grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) is known in North America as the eared grebe. It occurs on every continent except Australasia and Antarctica.

This grebe exhibits a marked change in its feather colours during the breeding season. Normally the feathers are a mix of black, white, grey and brown – during winter – but during the breeding season – in summer – it changes colour to include beautiful golden tufts of feathers on its face, contrasting with its black head and neck. Its steep forehead makes its head look peaked.

This is not a large bird; it is about 250-

350mm long. It is usually found in estuaries, lakes, reservoirs and similar places.

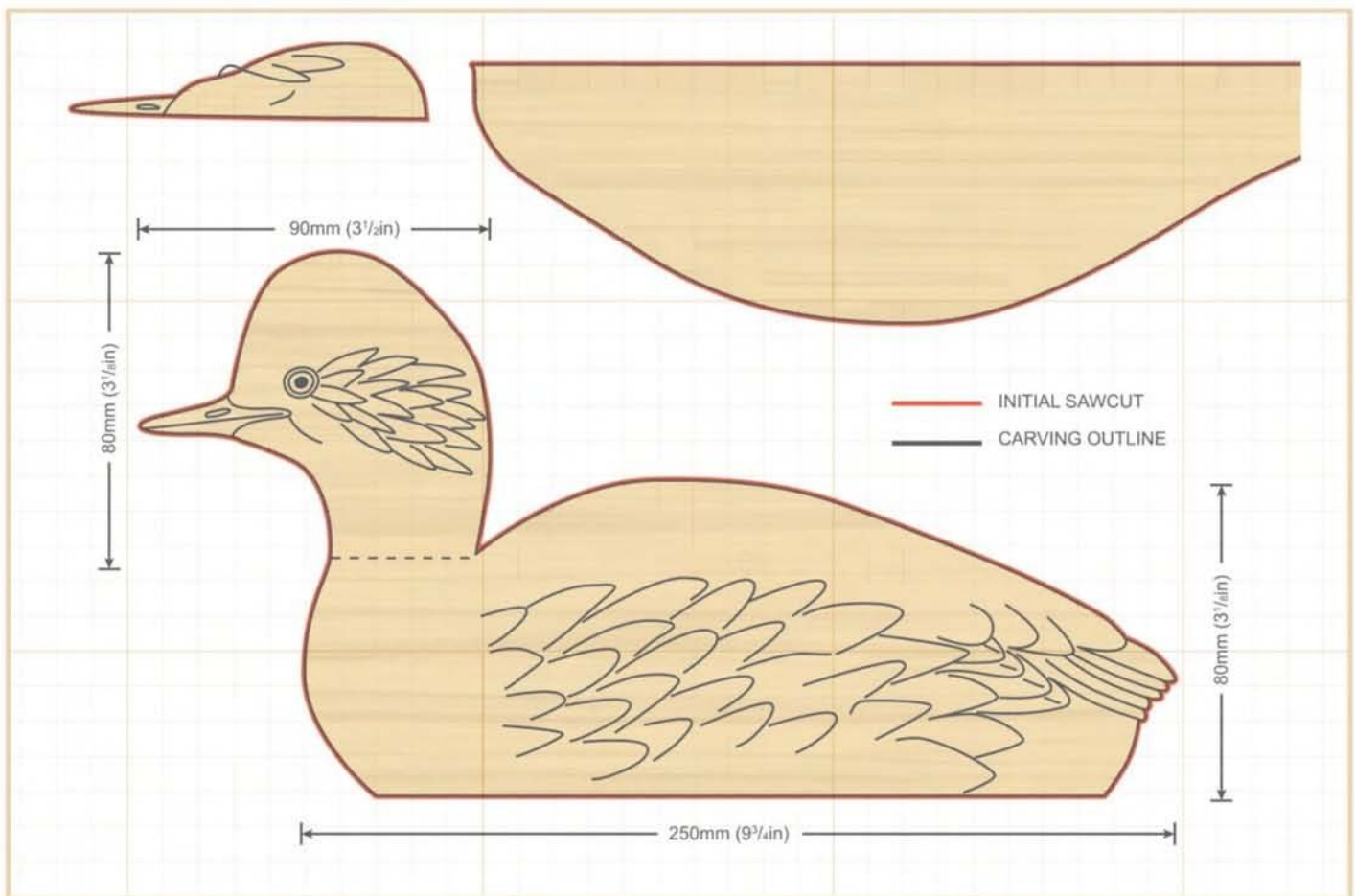
There are a rich variety of birds to choose from as far as carving is concerned, and one can do a lot of research into shape, pose and composition by researching books, videos and websites. Aim to create your own variations of what you see in order to create something factual but new. Research is the key to making anything; you have to understand what it is you are making in turn which requires knowledge of the habitat, diet and posture of a particular bird species.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Wood has been carving all his life and professionally since 1986.



Carving mostly birds, he is self-taught and takes great inspiration from the American bird carvers. To see more of Mike's work, visit: www.mikewoodbird.co.uk



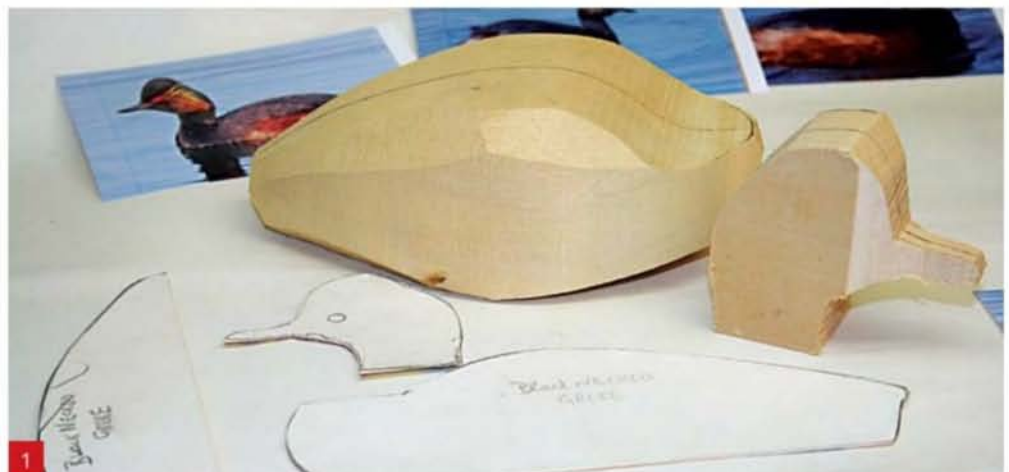
Things you will need...

Rotary carving unit
Coarse carbide-tooth taper
Sanding drum
Ruby taper carver
Small diamond taper
Small white stone
Pyrography unit with
scalpel/skewed chisel tip
Eyes
Gesso
Airbrush and acrylic paints

1 Here's the blank. The head is made of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) and the body from jelutong (*Dyera constulata*). The body measures 250 x 120 x 80mm and the head is 90 x 40 x 80mm. If you prefer, the whole thing can be made from either lime or jelutong

2 Shape the body and top of the wings using a Foredom with a coarse-tooth taper, then using a sanding drum and different grits of sanding cloth, sand the body of the bird smooth

3 Draw all the feathers in ready for carving and then carve all the feathers in with a high-speed grinder and a Ruby taper





4 Using a high-speed handpiece fitted with a tapered Ruby taper, create the feathers on the back, breast and wings, then smooth them with a white stone or fine abrasive. Look closely at your source material so you get the shape of the feathers right. Note also that they change shape according to their function and position on the body. This is where close attention to detail is important

5 Use a high-speed handpiece, this time fitted with a small diamond taper and create the 'splits' in the feathers. After these are created, smooth them out with a small white stone

6 Again, using the Ruby burr, carve in the tail and feathers and then burn in the side feathers using a skewed chisel-edged pyrography tip

7 Using the same tip, burn in the back feathers

8 Here's the bird half-finished. Continue with the pyrography until the whole body section is complete. Again, look closely at position and orientation of feathers. Once completed it is now time to shape the head

9 The head will be joined to the body via a metal dowel and of course has two wooden meeting faces. Drill and fit the dowel into the lower neck section and glue in place. Once dry, shape the head using a coarse-tooth taper. When you are close to the finished shape, check the fit with the main body and refine the shape to make it all work in unison. Once happy with the overall shape and fit with the body, sand it smooth

10 Draw the crest on to the head and outline it with a small taper in a high-speed grinder. Next, carve the individual feathers with a high-speed grinder and a small round Ruby carver. With the same round Ruby carver, carve the nostrils in the bill. The tricky part is getting everything in the right position and of course, in proportion. Measuring and marking before cutting certainly helps with this and using very controlled movements of the hand when cutting is pivotal. Take your time – there is no hurry – unless of course you are working on a timeline with a commission

➔ **11** Using a small cutter, carve the holes for the eyes. The eyes of the black-necked grebe are special and deserve consideration when selecting which kind to use. The ones I have used here are red with a gold band and measure 7mm wide. Fit the eyes into the sockets previously cut using plastic wood. Once the eyes are in place and the plastic wood still damp, remove the excess before it sets and blend the plastic wood into the surrounding areas to make a seamless fit and flow



12 Burn the head detail in using the same pyrography tip as before. Again, closely check the direction and appearance of the feather detail and notice how it flows in certain directions

13 Once the pyrography is complete, fit the head to the body ensuring that you have the alignment of it just right. Once happy, glue it in place and allow it to set. You can make adjustments if you need to, but it is better to have cross-checked regularly before everything is finally assembled. Once happy...



14 ... it is time to apply base colour undercoats to the bird. You need to have grey on the back, head and breast, which is made from a mixture of black and white gesso. The side and crest are painted with gold oxide. These base colour undercoats are not only to soften the overall detail but the colours will help build up a tonal richness and depth that causes the whole carving to have a realistic feel and look

15 Now to add definition and detail. Use a template – you may need more than one depending on which feathers you are working on – in conjunction with an airbrush to define all of the individual feathers. Note how the setting on the airbrush needs to change to create not only fine lines but also a more diffused spray pattern for the lower sections of the feathers. If you are new to using an airbrush, practise on waste wood first until you feel you have a sensitive feel for the equipment you are using. Of course you can always recoat areas, so don't be put off trying



16 Use a fine-tipped brush to create the breast-feather detail

17 You should end up with something like this



PROJECT Black-necked grebe



18 With a rigger and white gesso, dry-brush the edges of the breast feathers and then on the back, head and breast paint the outer edges of the sides of the feathers using burnt umber

19 You can now paint the eye-ring pink, which requires a steady hand. If you end up with a little paint on the eye, it is easily removed using a cotton bud while still wet or it can be cleaned off with a wooden tooth pick if the paint is dry

20 The next stage is to use the airbrush to lighten and apply a white or light grey colour to the base of some of the feathers. This creates more realism and definition. A similar treatment is applied to the side feathers lower down. Build up the various coats of orange and brown in order to create the required feather effect. You have seen how it was done on the top and wing section, all you need to do is change the colour palette. Look how rich the colours are. To create a realistic look it has a mixture of high and low lights and traces of dark and brown streaking in the feathers. Look closely at your source material to see how these feathers look under different lighting conditions too and adjust to suit your composition. Once happy with the overall look, it's time to deal with the crest feathers

21 Using white gesso, highlight some of the crest feathers...

22 ... now paint the crest yellow with thin paint. Note the phrase thin paint – if it is too thick then it will not allow the base colours already applied to show through. There is a theme here. The paint on birds – and many other projects requiring the application of paint – is built up in layers. Each layer is fundamental to the overall success of the piece. But remember, with acrylics you can backtrack if you need to

23 Once again, if all goes to plan, here is the crest prior to adding the finishing touches to the bird

24 To finish everything off, the breast, head and back are given several thin glazes of black gesso and the sides of the bird are given a light glaze of burnt umber to make the overall effect a lot richer and tonally better

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Nic Westermann spoon & bowl knives

Tools are described from top-to-bottom. **Compound Curve Twca Cam:** This blade is especially suited for bowl carving and features a special mix of steels and blade profile for optimum cutting performance, chatter reduction and ease of use. It has a 50mm-diameter curve at either end and a flatter section in the middle that allows you to match your cut to nearly any curve you encounter when carving. It's a great tool for carving spoons and bowls and is supplied unhandled.

MacNic Hook Knife: This is forged with a 25mm-diameter hook at the end. Although aimed at spoons, it is equally capable for tighter radius bowls. The spoon can be used not only to shape but the compound-curve cutting edge is

ideal for cleaning up any remaining facets too. This blade features a special profile to optimise use and performance.

Medium Spoon Knife: Another blade that is capable on spoons or smaller bowls. A spoon knife that bridges the gap between my roughing knife – 16mm internal diameter – and the larger MacNic

hook knife. This blade is forged around a 20mm bar, but has the same grind and cross section of the other blades.

By the time the magazine comes out Nic will have all these blades in left- and right-handed versions.

Contact Nic Westermann

Tel 01650 511 715

Web www.nicwestermann.co.uk



Eli woodcarver's vice

Using the Eli vice will ensure you can carve safer, faster and easier. The vice will hold your work securely, allowing both hands to be free to use the mallet or gouge. This is a valuable tool for the woodcarver and was designed and produced by Nancy Eli and her late husband, Sam. Nancy is still continuing manufacture of the vice, which can hold both large and small carvings using the 50mm or 75mm-based ball. The vice has

quick change release for either left- or right-hand operation and works well for relief carving too by being mounted on plyboard on the 75mm-based ball.

Contact Little House

Woodcarving

Tel (001) 320 241 9799

Web www.littlehousewoodcarving.com

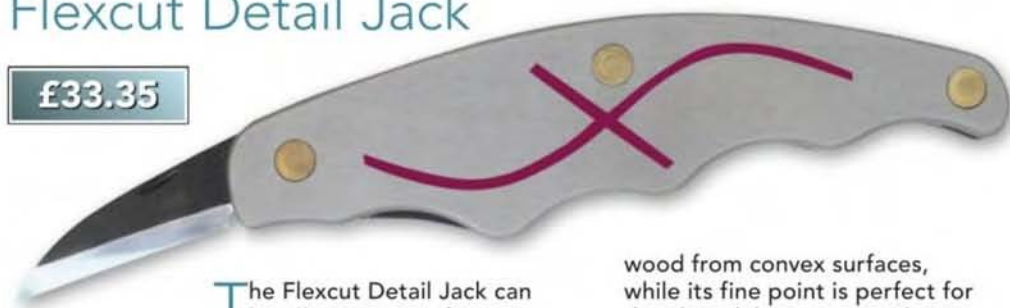
(please note that all products from USA to UK are subject to shipping & taxes)



\$190 (£117)

Flexcut Detail Jack

£33.35



The Flexcut Detail Jack can handle a variety of carving projects from start to finish. Its single detail knife quickly removes

wood from convex surfaces, while its fine point is perfect for detailing delicate areas. This is a Flexcut Jack in its simplest form. The knife handle is crafted from

aerospace-grade aluminium and is ergonomically designed to allow a strong, comfortable grip for long periods of carving with minimal hand fatigue. Supplied nice and sharp and ready for use, it doubles as a pretty useful pocket knife too!

Contact BriMarc

Tel 0333 240 69 67

Web www.brimarc.com



Jost Superpad Abrafilm

This new abrasive disc offers excellent cutting properties and has an extremely durable and tear-proof film carrier. The overall perforation of the abrasive in combination with the multi-layer structure of the hook-and-loop system guarantees the continuous dust extraction over the entire surface, provides optimum sanding results and a much higher service life. Thanks to the overall perforation, the patented

Abrafilm discs fit on all sanding machines available on the market, irrespective of the different hole pattern and number of holes in the backing plates. This ensures 100% availability and major savings in storage costs. Suitable for either wet or dry sanding across a wide range of projects.

Contact Southern Filters
Tel 01297 33860
Web www.southernfilters.com

£16.50

Veritas Carver's Knife

This versatile knife has an oval handle for a comfortable fit and fine grooves for a good grip in your hand. Designed to use standard disposable scalpel blades, it comes with 12 razor-sharp high-carbon blades that are easy to hone for repeated use. Featuring a solid brass collet on an anodised aluminium body, blade change is quick and easy and blade orientation

is always ideal, in line with the major axis of the body. The magnetic end cap is removable to store up to six blades in the handle and keeps blades from rattling around inside. Measuring around 150mm-long and made in Canada.

Contact BriMarc
Tel 0333 240 69 67
Web www.brimarc.com



Hans Karlsson heavy duty straight gouge 55-40

This heavy duty double hooped gouge which can be used with a wooden mallet has a thick brass hoop at the end of the handle for strength and a sound absorbing nylon insert, the shank is also heavy duty. A unique – and refreshingly straightforward – reference system describes the sweep-curve. The number 55, refers to the radius in millimetres of the cutting edge. The width of the cutting edge is 40mm. This tool is perfect for the hollowing of bowls and other hollow or curved forms. As a straight gouge it is one of the strongest for the initial stages of wood removal, if you prefer not to use an adze. Further down into the bowl use a bent gouge to create a smooth transition from side wall to corner.



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The Kreg Deck Jig makes it easy to create a beautiful and functional deck surface completely free of exposed fasteners. Securing the deck boards is a simple three-step process. The Deck Jig works with timber and composite boards. The easy-grip handle gives you a secure hold and complete control over each and every joint. Handy spacer rings ensure accurate deck board spacing for proper drainage and longer deck life, and three separate drill guides allow you to install deck boards in a variety of hard-to-reach areas.

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Contact Kreg
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Elmer's Carpenter's Wood Glue Max

Elmer's ultra-strong Carpenter's Wood Glue Max is the ultimate woodworker's glue, creating a powerful bond stronger than the wood itself and including real wood fibres for superior staining, painting and sanding. It is ANSI Type 1 waterproof, so suitable for interior and exterior applications and resistant to heat, mould and mildew to provide outstanding durability. With Wood Glue Max, the wood will break before the bond does. Carpenter's Wood Glue Max is easy to apply precisely from the shaped applicator top, and easy to clean up with just water. The non-toxic formula and inclusion of real wood fibres ensures Carpenter's Wood Glue Max is safe and easy to sand and paint to a perfect finish. Carpenter's Wood Glue Max is also fast setting – with a minimum setting time of 20-30 minutes for light use. Liberal applications on heavier items should be clamped and left overnight for the same solid, unbreakable bond.

Contact Elmer's
Web www.elmersglue.eu

£3.31



Erratum in Woodcarving 129

In *Woodcarving 129* we published a test on the Mastercarver hanging basic set with an incorrect price and specifications. The correct details are as follows.

Featuring a heavy duty, 1/2hp, 0-30,000rpm maximum speed motor with sealed ball bearings and reverse, which is great for grain changes and left-handed carving plus a 978mm flex-shaft and one handpiece. The Stealth™ has a key-chuck and adjusts 0-8mm to accept accessories with 8mm or smaller shanks, without collets. This is

great for roughing out.

The set includes a motor with foot pedal speed control, one handpiece, a carbide roughing burr, manual and 2-year motor warranty. For use with 220-240V power only.

There are various rotary bits, cutters and other accessories that can be obtained for this unit at extra cost.

Price £264
Contact Classic Hand Tools
Tel 01473 784 983
Web www.classichandtools.co.uk

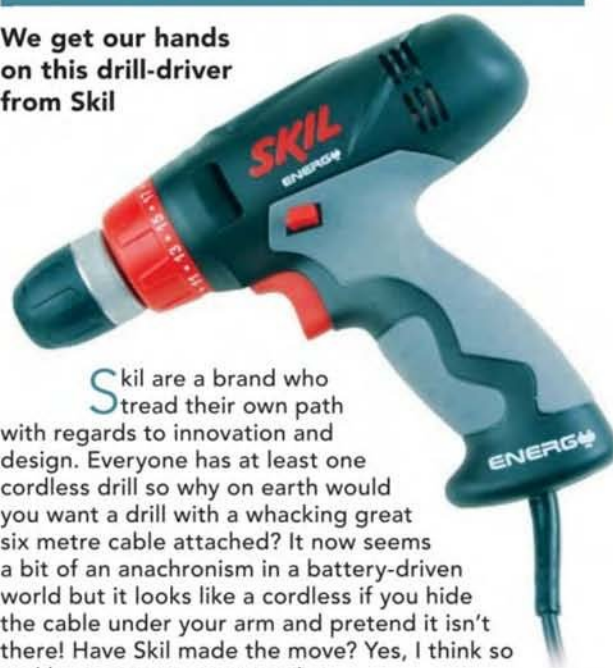
Erratum in Woodcarving 130

In *Woodcarving 130* in an attempt to point you in the direction of Mike Painter's excellent article 'Diary of a Pro Carver' we mentioned the article in a review of the HDP carver's mallet. Some readers have assumed incorrectly that

Michael was endorsing the mallet in question. We'd like to confirm that this is not the case. In the review of the mallet we incorrectly ascribed the article as being written by Mike Wood. We'd like to apologise for any inconvenience caused.

MINI TEST: Skil Energy corded drill-driver

We get our hands
on this drill-driver
from Skil



Skil are a brand who tread their own path with regards to innovation and design. Everyone has at least one cordless drill so why on earth would you want a drill with a whacking great six metre cable attached? It now seems a bit of an anachronism in a battery-driven world but it looks like a cordless if you hide the cable under your arm and pretend it isn't there! Have Skil made the move? Yes, I think so and here are our reasons why.

Features

It looks and feels like a typical cordless drill, so has operator familiarity. A six-metre-long lead gets you almost anywhere from the nearest plug socket and it has 19 torque plus drill settings, forward, reverse and two gear ratios. The energy weighs 1.2kg instead of the 1.7kg and 1.6kg for their 18V and 10.8V drill drivers respectively. It doesn't have a battery(s) and charger so no power loss, no charging time and no extras to cart around. There is also less harm to the environment as no battery chemistry is involved and less cost in manufacturing.

Verdict

Plenty of power and no draw-down due to a weak battery, so long as you work within its power limits it will keep chugging. Quiet, comfortable to hold with its rubberised overmoulds and a keyless chuck. Cheap, reliable power. What's not to like?

Specifications

- Manufacturer: Skil UK
- Model: 6222 AH Energy
- Motor input: 0.45Amps
- No load speed: 0-300/0-850rpm
- Max torque: 27Nm
- Clutch settings: 20 plus drilling
- Chuck capacity: 10mm
- Maximum diameters: 20mm wood, 9.5mm steel, 6mm screws
- Cord length: 6m
- Weight: 1.2kg

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Web www.skileurope.com

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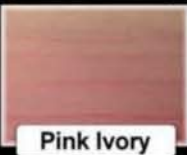
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'Ercole col centauro Nesso' or
'Hercules Slaying the Centaur
Nessus' can be found within
Florence's Piazza della Signoria

Hercules slaying the centaur Nessus

This issue we're back in Florence admiring one of Giambologna's magnificent marble carvings

'Ercole col centauro Nesso' – 'Hercules Slaying the Centaur Nessus' – can be found within Florence's Piazza della Signoria, among the square's other famous marble occupants. The statue was completed by Giambologna in 1599 and embodies the fine sense of action and movement the sculptor was famous for.

Showing an advanced understanding of anatomy – visible in Hercules' rib cage, showing through his taut skin and the veined legs of the centaur,

poised in battle – Giambologna's statue is a powerful evocation of the strength of mortal man.

Greatly influenced by Michelangelo, but an expert in his own mannerist style, Giambologna's stone carvings exhibit a focus on beauty rather than emotion. Under the influence of Georgio Vasari, Giambologna became one of the Medici's most important court sculptors. Fearing he could be enticed into full-time employment by the Spanish or Austrian Habsburgs

he was interred in a chapel of his own design in the Santissima Annunziata – a basilica in Florence.

In Greek mythology, it is the robe of Nessus, poisoned with the slain centaur's blood that kills Hercules after his wife gives it to him, burning Hercules and compelling him to throw himself on a funeral pyre. Metaphorically the 'Robe of Nessus' represents a source of inescapable misfortune and features in the works of Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot and Alexandre Dumas. ■

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