

NIC WESTERMANN CARVES A HAND-FLUTED BOWL IN BIRCH

wood CARVING

Projects this issue

Pull-along dog
Limewood lily
Sleeping cat
Little owls

Chris Pye
keeping blue
tool edges at bay

Michael Painter
looks at the
versatility
of the fluter

In profile

Bird carver Bob Guge



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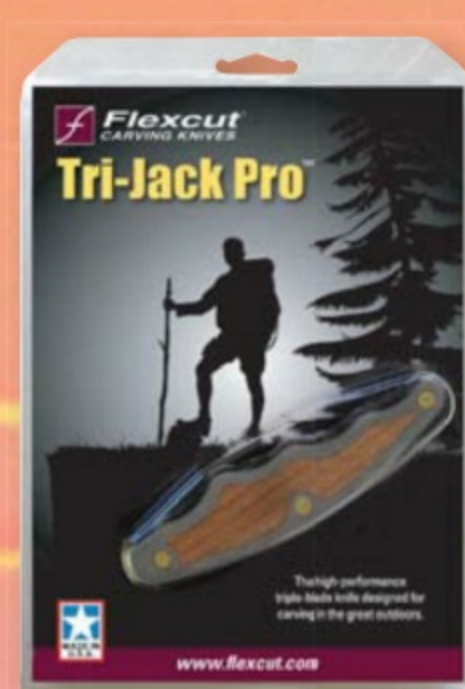
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Guild of Master Craftsmen Ltd 2013

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.

Have your say

It is always a fun thing being in the hot seat when heading up a magazine. The diversity of views expressed and articles liked, disliked and requested is very much a tricky thing to balance. Let's just say it keeps me on my toes. As you know I have tinkered with the magazine design and also the mix of articles recently and very soon the mix of articles will change a little bit more still, so there is even more in the magazine for you.

It will still have what we currently have but there will – as a result of requests – be more bite-sized technical articles that cover specific things that would be helpful to know. I do however have a problem which is in your hands to solve and that is the Club Profiles. It is something that was requested by many people, but in fact is not being supported in as much as currently we only have one club profile to put in the magazine, which means people are not coming forward to tell us what they do.

If you want your club to be featured in the magazine, contact me and we can work out how to bring this about or in the absence of any such contact, I will replace those allocated pages with other types of article. The magazine is created for you, but if it is working, there are plenty of other things that can be included to replace something that is not.

This fits in part with my previous leader connected with apathy and lack of direction within some clubs and organisations, but of course those have implications in other areas too. Basically the common factor in this is each of us. We have something to say most of the time, but don't necessarily offer assistance in bringing about change or things that we would like to see. I am passionate about what I do and also how I can

help make carving the creative, enjoyable fun thing that I know it to be, but it requires others to play their part too.

I value your thoughts and I know I am being somewhat controversial, but I sometimes thinks it is good to stir the pot once in a while and see what happens.

Yes, my job involves taking flack sometimes and no, I don't always think that I am right or even get everything right all the time, but I am prepared to help guide, shape and develop ideas and articles to help you have as much information at your fingertips and consequently enable you to have as much fun carving as you possibly can, but cannot do that all on my own.

Have fun,

Mark Baker
Editor of Woodcarving



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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.

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Learn how to make these Little Owls made by Mike Wood on page 24

Main cover image photographed by GMC/Anthony Bailey

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 Simon Frost at Woodcarving, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN or to simonf@thegmcgroup.com

The BWA are always doing!



The new Cratfield sign

"It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing." So said Thomas Jefferson, and that aptly describes the careful and persistent effort of the skilled craftsmen in the BWA who enjoy demonstrating and sharing their experiences with us.

The BWA craftsmen are extremely good at what they do. We are thrilled to announce the opportunity for you to meet and learn from some of them who will be tutoring students from all over the country at the 'BWA Summer Seminar 2013', through both the basic and the more advanced aspects of the subjects

and making classes suitable for all levels of carving skill. Classes will be informal and fun, but will give students a greater understanding of how to approach, or improve in their chosen subject. They will be running workshops on 'Carving the Human Head', 'Lettering', 'Furniture Decoration', 'Chip Carving and its Application', 'Netsuke and Small carvings' and 'Carving a Green Man'. Organised by the Gloucestershire region, it will be held at The Gala Club in Gloucester and there are limited spaces – so book early!

Whilst on their 11th carving holiday in Cratfield, Suffolk, our Essex Region were asked by the Village Parish Council to carve a new village sign. The previous sign had been made by the sculptor who created the statue of Sir Winston Churchill in Parliament Square. With four greens located around Cratfield, each one was represented as silver birch leaves, a swan, a bell and a half compass, all carved in teak (*Tectona grandis*).

BWA Summer Seminar 2013

22–23 June, 2013
The Gala Club, Fairmile Gardens,
Gloucester, GL2 9EB

£35 per day course, £30 for BWA members. See the BWA website – www.britishwoodcarversassociation.co.uk – to download the brochure and booking forms

Contact the BWA

Tel 07749 769 111
Web www.britishwoodcarversassociation.co.uk
Or write to The National Secretary, 32 Beaufort Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 8PF



BWA Essex region members with their handiwork

BDWCA: Carving with palm fronds



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAM WILSON

Some palm frond carvings, and the raw material of palm fronds

In the middle of February I made a 'flying visit' to San Diego help my friends in the administration of the 40th California Open Wildlife Art Festival, hosted by the Pacific Southwest Wildlife Art association (PSWA).

There was, as always, a wide range of carvings in many categories, and it was interesting

to learn that there has been a swing away from spending many hours burning in feathers with a pyrograph in favour of detailed painting instead.

As always, there was the PSWA signature class – this year divided into three categories – of the Palm Frond Carvings. The criteria for this category is that the major

portion of the entry must be made from a palm (Arecaceae) frond. The challenge is to portray the 'essence of the species' of the subject while retaining as much of the character of the palm frond as possible. The Decorative Divisions were judged on the table, but the Decoy Division was judged floating, as were all other decorative ducks, apart from those which included habitat in the composition.

One thing we all have in common is the desire to encourage young people to take an interest in our art form, and the PSWA holds a children's painting competition where the youngsters get to take home their finished painted silhouette. Hopefully this will go on to develop in young people an interest in carving in future years.

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 (5/64in)
3mm (1/8in)
4mm (5/32in)
6mm (1/4in)
7mm (9/32in)
8mm (5/16in)
9mm (11/32in)
10mm (3/8in)
11mm (7/16in)
12mm (1/2in)
13mm (1/2in)
14mm (9/16in)
15mm (9/16in)
16mm (5/8in)
17mm (11/16in)
18mm (23/32in)
19mm (3/4in)
20mm (3/4in)
21mm (13/16in)
22mm (7/8in)
23mm (29/32in)
24mm (15/16in)
25mm (1in)
30mm (1 1/8in)
32mm (1 1/4in)
35mm (1 3/8in)
38mm (1 1/2in)
40mm (1 5/8in)
45mm (1 3/4in)
50mm (2in)
55mm (2 1/8-2 1/4in)
60mm (2 3/8in)
63mm (2 1/2in)
65mm (2 5/8in)
70mm (2 3/4in)
75mm (3in)
80mm (3 1/8in)
85mm (3 1/4in)
90mm (3 1/2in)
93mm (3 2/3in)
95mm (3 3/4in)
100mm (4in)
105mm (4 1/8in)
110mm (4-4 3/8in)
115mm (4 1/2in)
120mm (4 3/4in)
125mm (5in)
130mm (5 1/8in)
135mm (5 1/4in)
140mm (5 1/2in)
145mm (5 3/4in)
150mm (6in)
155mm (6 1/8in)
160mm (6 1/4in)
165mm (6 1/2in)
170mm (6 3/4in)
178mm (6 7/8in)
180mm (7in)
185mm (7 1/4in)
190mm (7 1/2in)
195mm (7 3/4in)
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)



A youngster proudly shows off his finished bird

Dates for the woodcarver's diary

Fresh Air 2013

16 June–7 July, 2013
Quenington Old Rectory,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire,
GL7 5BN Tel 01285 750 358
Web www.freshair2013.com

Fresh Air is one of the UK's leading outdoor sculpture shows. The purpose of the biennale Fresh Air sculpture exhibition is 'to wash the dust from the soul of everyday life'.

Art for the garden has now become mainstream but in order to compete with the richness and colour of nature, outdoor sculpture has had to evolve in surprising and delightful directions since the very first Fresh Air show in 1992. Over 12,000 people visited Fresh Air 2011. This year's line-up includes 91 international artists combining established and inspiring new talent – 31 are new this year – using a combination of conventional and unusual materials. The show is running for three weeks, so there's plenty of chances for you to slot in a visit for some inspiration from an array of sculptural art.

PR Industrial Toolshow 2013

20–21 July, 2013
American Express Community
Stadium, Village Way, Brighton,
East Sussex, BN1 9BL
Web www.toolshow2013.co.uk

Toolshow 2013 is building on the massive success of the 2012 event and aims to be the largest tool show in the country. Toolshow 2013 will be over twice the size of the 2012 event and takes place at the award winning 'Amex' Stadium – home of Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club – on Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 July. PR Industrial has years of experience in the industry and aims to bring one of the largest gatherings of suppliers to one venue in the south east of England for the ultimate tool show.

The event this year features free parking, free entry and free demonstrations as well as a range of big brands in the woodworking and tool industry offering you great deals and big savings. Exhibitors at the show include Trend, Festool, Veritas, IRWIN, Mirka, Stanley, Metabo, Makita and

Bosch, as well as a host of others. See the website for the full list.

To receive regular updates on the show you can follow Toolshow 2013 on Twitter @toolshow2013 and on Facebook, search for prindustrialtoolshow2013.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FRESH AIR

'Concentra II' by Alison Crowther, one of many outdoor sculptures on show at Fresh Air 2013

City & Guilds Art School paid a royal visit

The Historic Carving Department of the City & Guilds Art School of London received a special visit in February this year by HRH the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall. This comes after the Department was involved in the design, modelling in clay, casting in resin and gilding of the prow ornament for the Royal Barge on the Queen's Jubilee. Although the materials were necessarily modern, the joyously baroque design drew upon the knowledge of style and period that is taught as part of the curriculum.

The school continues to train carvers and conservators to an exceptional standard, and many alumni go on to occupy important positions within the heritage sector, or to successfully establish their own workshops. The Arts and Crafts philosophy still lives on at the School today. Tutors are still artists and craftspeople, and students of the Historic Carving Department, who work in both wood or stone, have the opportunity to put the skills they learn into effect in real and prestigious art projects. If you have ever thought of turning your hobby into a career, there is still time to apply for courses starting in October. www.cityandguildsartschool.ac.uk.



HRH the Prince of Wales recently visited the City & Guilds Art School of London

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CITY & GUILDS ART SCHOOL

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"The video site is invaluable to carvers of every skill level... If you are serious about learning to carve using traditional hand tools, this site is easily worth the low monthly fee."

"There is no detail uncovered and the site navigation is excellent, putting everything right at your fingertips."

"It features some of the highest quality made-for-the web videos I have ever seen."

Chris Pye

As featured on BBC 4 'Carved with Love: The Genius of British Woodwork'

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Limewood lily

Steve Bisco shows us how to create delicate petals and thin leaves with this limewood lily

Limewood foliage carving is most closely associated with the stunning swags and garlands of the great 17th-century master Grinling Gibbons and in modern times with the equally stunning floral bouquets of David Esterly – see *Woodcarving* 128. If you are not quite ready to aim that high, this project provides a single flower to help you practise creating delicate petals and leaves with ultra-thin edges before you tackle more complex compositions.

The flower is an arum lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*) originating from Africa, but grown as a garden flower in Britain since the 17th century and a favourite of florists. Its charm lies in its beautiful bell-shaped wrap-around petal – technically a spathe – and its long protruding spadix – like a stamen, but technically a spike of minute flowers.

The plant is carved from a single block of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) measuring 300 x 80 x 60mm, which should cost so little you can afford to have more than one go at it. The spadix is carved separately and inserted into the flower, so don't panic at how delicate it is.

The essence of good flower and foliage carving is the amount of space you create within the carving and the thinness of the elements, so most of the wood ends up as shavings. The attributes you as a carver must call upon are patience and delicacy. This is not a job for the heavy-handed. If you break bits, glue them back together and

keep carving until you master the technique.

Design and composition

To make a limewood foliage design look as natural as possible, you cannot simply copy a natural specimen exactly. You have to consider the composition of the carving and arrange the elements in a way that will give it balance, movement and, most of all, structural integrity.

To carve the stems, leaves and flowers as thinly as possible, give a thin element support at two or more points by touching it against another element. This gives the carving structural strength while maintaining an impression of fragility.

Work out the three-dimensional arrangement of the elements and build in as much natural depth as possible. You may need to carve some elements separately and attach them, as with the thin spadix in this lily.

Things you will need...

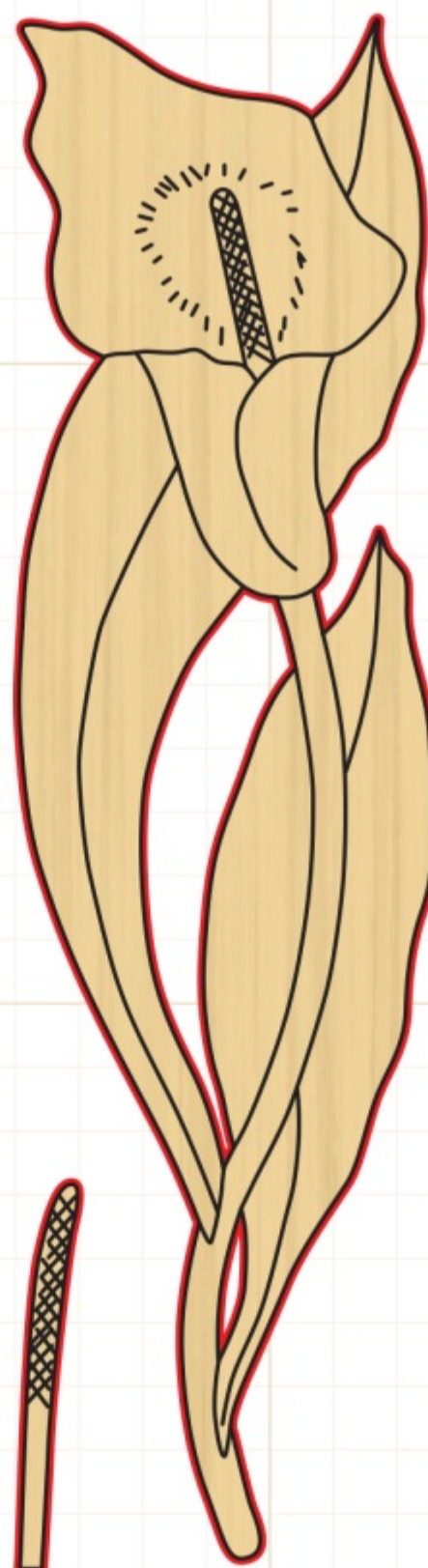
Wood: Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*)
300 x 80 x 60mm

Tools: 20mm No.3 fishtail gouge, 16mm hooked skew chisel, 10mm No.3 fishtail gouge, 16mm No.9 curved gouge, 13mm No.4 curved gouge, 8mm No.8 curved gouge, 8mm No.8 gouge, 7mm No.5 gouge, 5mm No.5 gouge, bent V-tool, 3mm chisel and 2mm chisel

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE BISCO

Stropping

The secret of limewood foliage carving is to keep your tools ultra-sharp and that means not just sharpening them on a stone but also honing them on a strop. Honing turns a sharp edge into a razor-sharp edge and reduces the pressure on the wood as you carve. You can buy honing/stropping systems from carving suppliers, or you can use traditional leather strops, or even pieces of MDF, coated with an abrasive paste



— INITIAL SAWCUT
— CARVING OUTLINE

Preparations

1 Begin this project by sourcing a block of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) measuring 300 x 80 x 60mm and make a full-size copy of the drawing – see above. Next, trace the pattern onto the block using carbon paper and mark the cutting lines in red

2 Cut out the internal void – between the leaves – with a jigsaw. A bandsaw is best for the outer edges if you have one. Now cut out the thin strip – bottom left – that you will use for the spadix later

3 Work holding can be difficult when you are working with thin foliage carvings. A method to make this easier is to coat some card both sides with diluted PVA glue and place it between the carving and a backing board that you can clamp to the bench. You now need to let the glue set overnight before moving on

Roughing out

4 'Roughing out' removes the bulk of surplus wood and helps us position the main elements of the carved lily. Start by reducing the levels of the leaves and stem

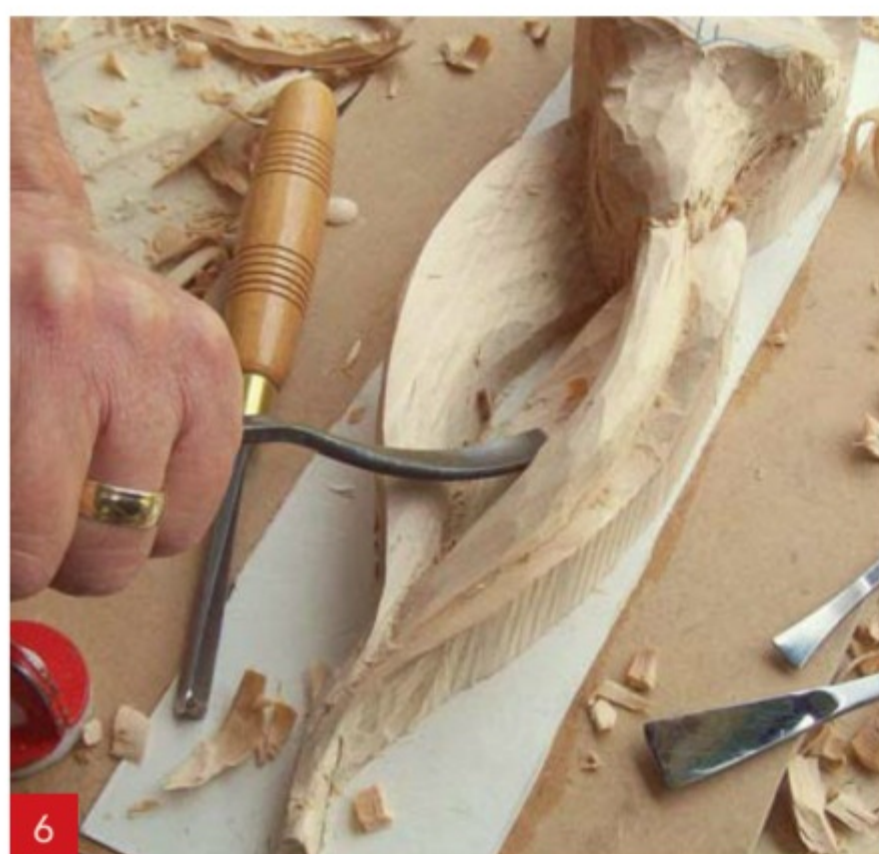




5 Roughly shape the flower and slope the top from its front edge back to its tip

Forming the shape

6 Refine the shape of the leaves and stem. Refer to the pictures of the finished carving – in step 20 – to see how the leaves curl and dip. The largest leaf curves in a smooth spiral under the flower and up into the top right corner. The right leaf undulates behind the stem. Don't undercut anything at this stage

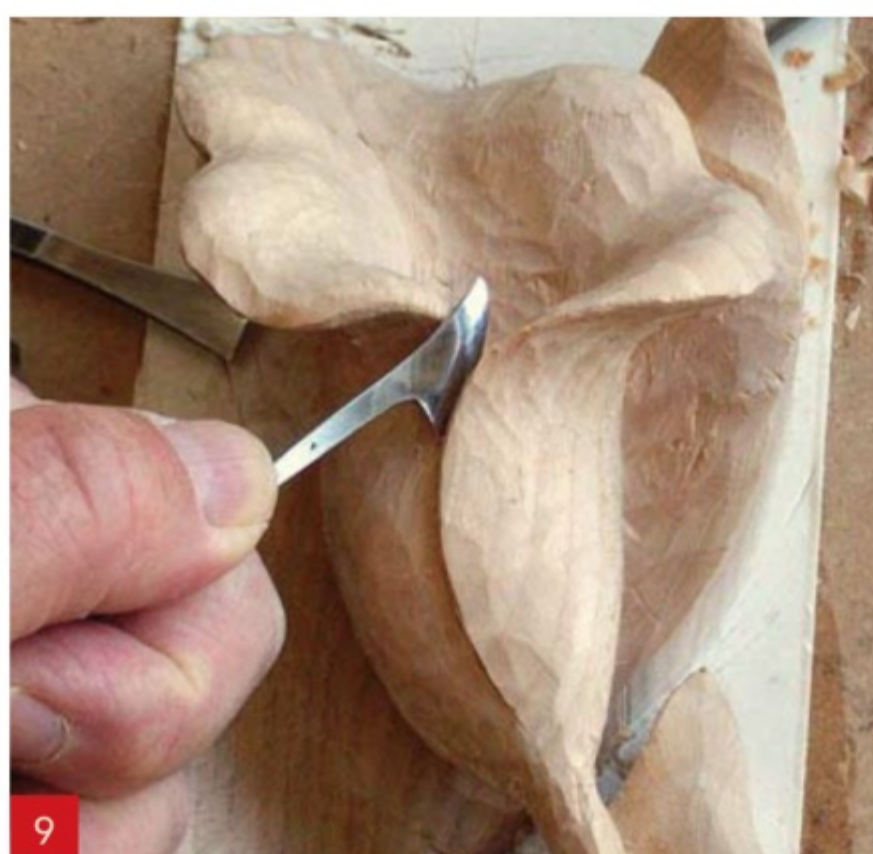


7 Hollow out the flower – open the hole carefully to depth first with an 8mm drill – and carve distinct undulations around the top edges to create a natural curl

8 Carve away the surplus material behind the flower edges and under the bell shape where it touches the leaf. Carefully remove the material under the stem in the gap between the two leaves

Carving the detail

9 A hooked skew chisel is a good tool for paring off the edges of the petals to create a sharp edge. It is also the best tool for creating sharp overlaps like the one at the front of the flower



10 Carve away the material underneath the edges to make them appear as thin as possible. An 8mm curved gouge, sharpened to a razor edge, will enable you to pare away thin shavings without putting too much pressure on the thin edges. Leave a little more thickness under the thin cross grain sections where it is hidden from view

11 Refine the basic curl of the large leaf by adding crinkly undulations and faint veins. The angle of the grain changes in the bottom of the curve so you often need to carve across the grain to get a smooth finish



Top tips

1. When carving thin stems, align the wood so the grain is running along the stem if you can. Thin cross-grain sections are inherently weak
2. When a carving is to have a bare wood finish, keep it clean as you work by wearing carving gloves. Only use wax pencils for marking – you'll find that graphite versions make the wood grubby

- ➔ **12** The right leaf of the carved lily touches the stem near the top and bottom, but otherwise is detached from it. Undercut the stem and shape it to a natural flowing stalk about 6-8mm in diameter. Merge the leaf stalks into the stem and, at the very bottom, scoop out the traditional sloping 'pruned' end

Undercutting

13 Undercutting is a major job in a limewood foliage carving. Undercut the parts you can get at easily while the carving is still attached to the board

14 When the carving starts to detach from the card, remove it from the board by sliding a knife under it gently

15 Place the carving face down on a soft surface on a board with raised corners you can push towards. Carve away all surplus material from the back. An 8mm curved gouge is best for scooping out small shavings with the minimum of pressure. Don't press too hard or you may snap the thin sections of the lily

"Undercut the stem and shape it to a natural flowing stalk about 6-8mm in diameter"

16 Shave away material with a very sharp chisel to create wafer-thin edges. You can increase the thickness to about 3-4mm as you move away from the edge, but try to focus the viewer's attention on the sharp edges and keep the thicker bits hidden

17 One of the secrets of good foliage carving is to open out gaps throughout the carving to enhance the impression of lightness and airiness. Where the leaves join the stem, open out gaps at the back so the stems merge together with a natural thinness

Finishing touches

18 Limewood usually benefits from being smoothed with 120 and 180 grit abrasives to remove its stringy bits and create a silky finish to petals and stems. The leaves and any other textured surfaces need a lighter touch so don't remove all the detail, such as the leaf veins





19 Using the thin strip you cut out at the beginning for the spadix, trim off a piece about 60mm long by 3mm square with a slight curve at the end. Round off the edges and create the spadix's natural texture by carving spirals down it in one direction, then back again at right angles to the first. Make a small hole in the bottom of the flower to receive the spadix and glue it in place

"Round off the edges and create the spadix's natural texture by carving spirals down it in one direction, then back again at right angles to the first"

20 The carving is now finished. Photos 20a and 20b illustrate the finished piece from the front and side. Use them for reference when carving ▶



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Bisco has been carving for over 25 years specialising in decorative carving in period styles, first in wood and more recently in stone. His latest book *Stone Carving for the Home & Garden* is available from GMC Publications.



Lime wood

The European lime or linden tree (*Tilia vulgaris*), and its American cousin basswood (*Tilia americana*), provide the best – almost the only – wood suitable for fine foliage carving. Lime is fine grained, takes detail well and can be carved very thinly. It can be difficult to source from ordinary timber merchants, but is generally stocked by specialist craft wood suppliers. See the adverts in this magazine and search the internet. In countries where the tree is not native, you may need to order from overseas

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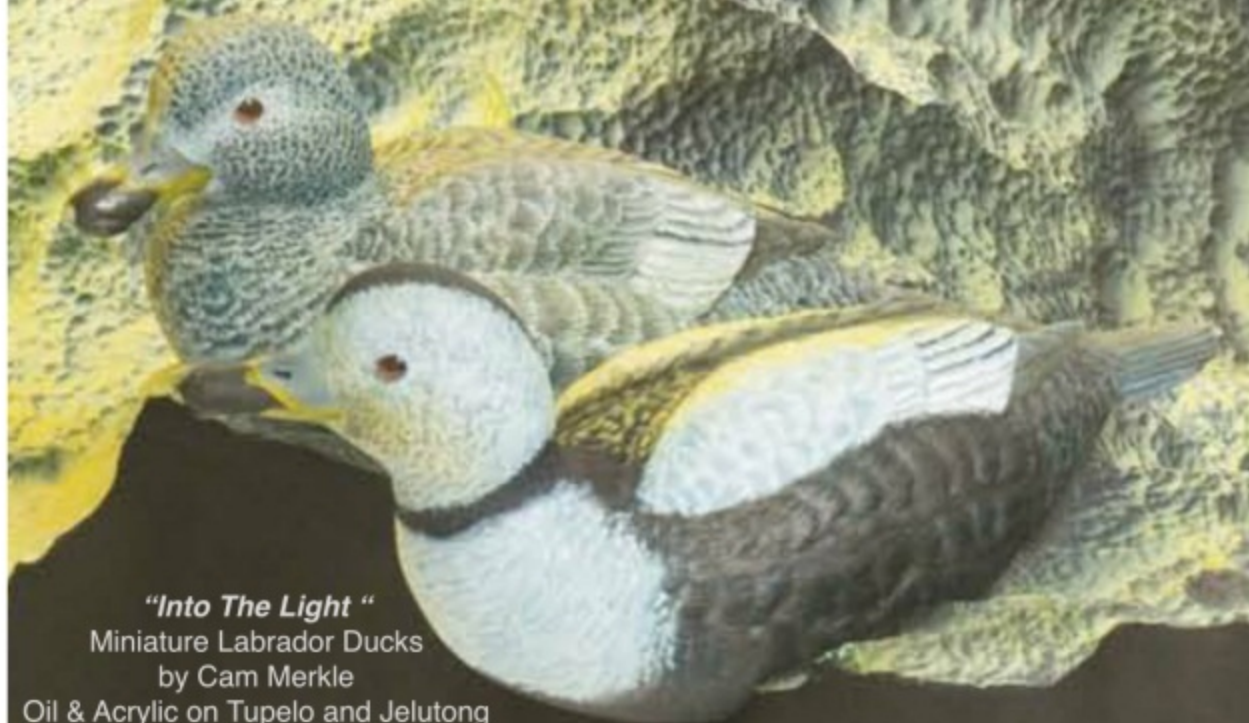


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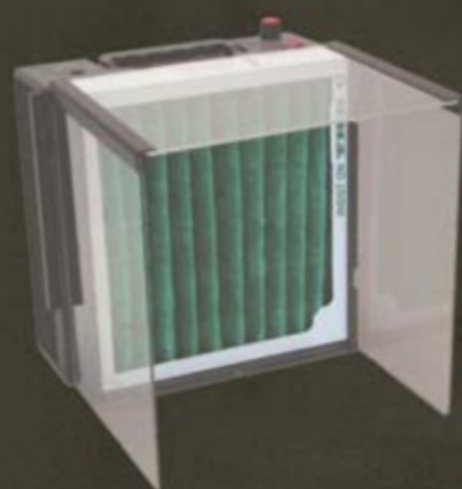
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Miniature Labrador Ducks
by Cam Merkle

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Michael Painter

Diary of a professional carver

The fluter is a versatile chisel and can be put to great use on a variety of carving methods, as Mike Painter explains

The fluter is a chisel that is constantly overlooked and yet very versatile. Fluters are 'U'-shaped in section, so have the advantage of two curves in one tool, the bottom being a tighter radius than the sides. There are variations within fluters: curved sides or straight; sometimes the sides are not parallel but splayed out, it doesn't really matter, they just produce a different character to the cut. With practice, using them on either of their sides produces a flatter cut to its rounded bottom; this means you can keep the chisel in your hands

for longer, eliminating the need to pick up another chisel to produce the flatter cut. This is why they are so versatile; by delivering two different distinctive cuts in the wood, you get two chisels for the price of one! Fluters are far more versatile than the uniform semi-circular cutting edge gouges that can only provide one type of cut however you apply it.

Uses

I personally use the fluter to 'sketch in' my work, similar to how we use a pencil on a piece of paper, but in three dimensions. ➡

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



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL PAINTER



Cutting the sketched form of a leaf

➡ Having the rounded bottom to the cutting edge means the cuts in the timber do not produce a precise commitment so adjustments may be made. It has been written many times that the parting chisel – 'V'-tool – should be used for this procedure, but in my opinion if these chisels are used for this purpose they leave a sharp and specific commitment in the timber that is consequently difficult to remove if errors are made. This only applies when 'parting chisels' are correctly shaped for the purpose they were traditionally intended; most aren't today!

Small fluters are known as veiners, though I don't know where the transition starts; they're smaller than 3mm but still have the same characteristics as fluters. The name 'veiner' derives from their traditional function of cutting raised veins on leaves when used in foliage carving.

Cutting angles

Contrary to all the instruction books and articles I have ever seen, I was instructed during my apprenticeship that the cutting edge should be angled back! Viewed from the side, the angle back should be approximately 70° from the line of the shank and definitely not square. As always there has to be a practical reason for this so let me explain why. With the cutting edge angled back this allows the bottom of the 'U' section to become the leading cut and not the corners and, to my knowledge, there is only one modern day manufacturer that incorporates this feature. This has an incredible advantage when carving up to a raised form within a piece of work. If the cutting edge is square to the shank then the corners are forward when the chisel is being used at the angle of its bevel. This hinders the

efficiency of the work by requiring a second cut with another chisel to finish the cut. Very time consuming!

Carving foliage

They are useful in many situations such as foliage carving. With a couple of fluters of different sizes, most of the internal work of leaves may be done and the external shape sketched in. The advantage of the angled-back cutting edge helps create deeper hollows that also help with the cutting of Gothic-style foliage. For the acanthus leaf, which is part of the strict format of classical carving, the fluter is used for cutting the 'eyes'. These are deep oval holes, all identical and positioned symmetrically in pairs along the centre vein, looking like a row of eyes. It also assists in creating the pipes that connect the eyes to the stem but taper in the opposite



Cutting veins in foliage work and taking advantage of the angled cutting edge while approaching an up-stand



The angled cutting edge helps form deeper cuts as in Gothic leaves

direction to the stem. Holding the handle lower than the angle of the bevel means the bottom of the cutting edge doesn't bite and the sides of the fluter may be used along a raised form such as the sides of a raised vein. You can see just in the carving of foliage in all styles the chisel rarely leaves your hand and with maybe two different sized fluters and the addition of two or three fishtails, the execution of a leaf will be restricted to about five chisels.

Carving hair

For carving hair, the vast majority of the work is done with three fluters of different sizes that provide six varying cuts in the timber, generating a variety of shadows to make the work

vibrant. If done with a parting chisel – when sharpened correctly – the hair tends to look like a thatched roof. My DVD, *Carving the Human Head*, explains carving hair in greater depth.

Carving 'U'-cut letters

The fluter is also the only tool you can use for carving 'U'-cut letters! These are the ultimate style of gilded letter that maximises the reflection and shine of the gold leaf, far more than the common incised 'V'-cut letters. The problem with these is that they take longer to cut so are therefore more expensive. Though I must state that with experience the 'V'-cut letters can be made to enhance the gilding more, but this is definitely not achieved by

cutting incised letters with a parting chisel.

The mighty fluter

Traditionally the fluter is just one type of tool that we constantly use to reduce the number of chisels utilised on any particular item; this in turn reduces the time taken to execute the work. Ultimately the urgency of executing the work helps to produce carvings with the character of 'cut' associated with the profession. Have a flirt with a fluter – it is such a versatile chisel – you get two for the price of one. In the next article I will be discussing how some carvers and manufacturers insist on sharpening parting tools; this destroys the traditional cut and is, for me, a major 'soap box' moment! ▶



Forming the facial features of a Green Man



Two fluters and a veiner that are very useful for creating hair

Pull-along dog toy

Peter Clothier carves and paints a pull-along dog toy in the 19th-century European style

The Victorians were very enthusiastic about wheeled toys. Some of the more popular ones represented different breeds of dogs, but horses, bears and elephants were also produced. The dog is especially appropriate because it follows its owner as it is pulled along by its lead.

The version shown here is based on 19th-century toys made in Germany and Northern Europe. As in the originals, the main body is made from pine wood (*Pinus* spp.) – laminated in this version – and mounted on a pine platform. Wheels were either made from wood or metal. The toys had a painted finish.

Preparation

The dog is made from four laminations of 21mm-thick planed pine wood. This is easy to obtain from builder's merchants or DIY stores. It may be necessary to edge-join two or more boards to

achieve the necessary width of timber to fit the templates.

There are two middle sections and two side sections which differ from each other in that the back legs are in slightly different positions to give the impression of movement.

Templates

Enlarge the templates shown on a photocopier so that the height of the dog from the top of the ear to the base of the foot block is 255mm. This percentage of enlargement will apply to all the templates.

Mark out the shapes of the templates onto the pine boards ensuring the grain runs along the length of the legs and the tail. Cut out the profiles on a bandsaw using a 6mm-wide, six skiptooth blade. Use the template for the base of the toy to mark and cut out a piece of pine 15mm-thick. Do not drill the fixing holes yet.

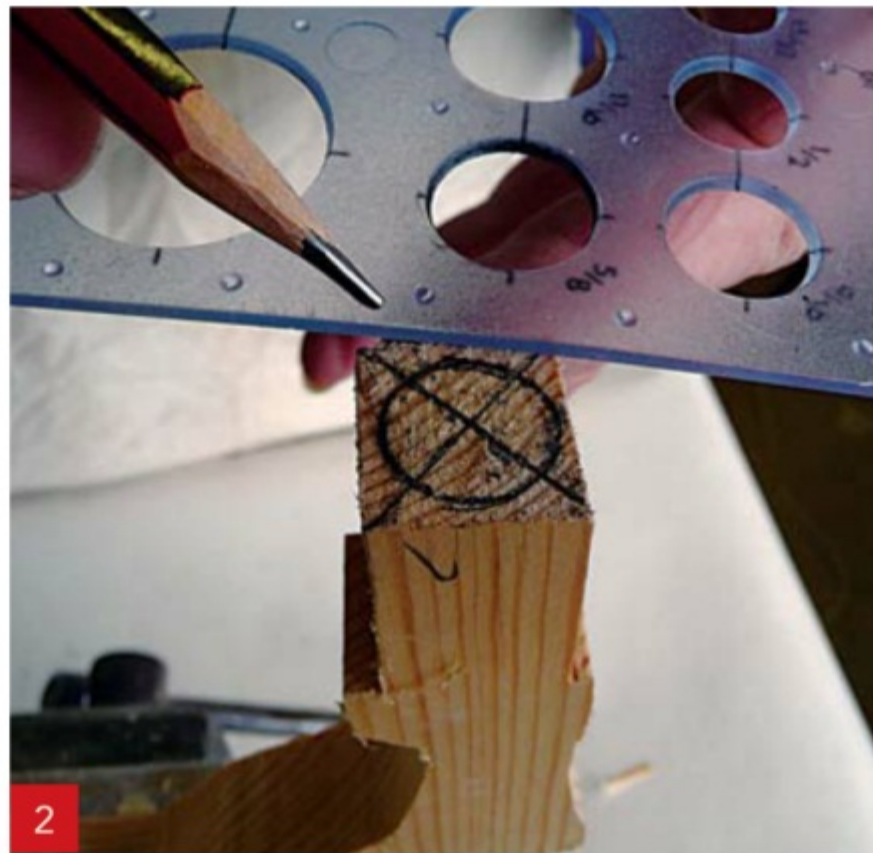
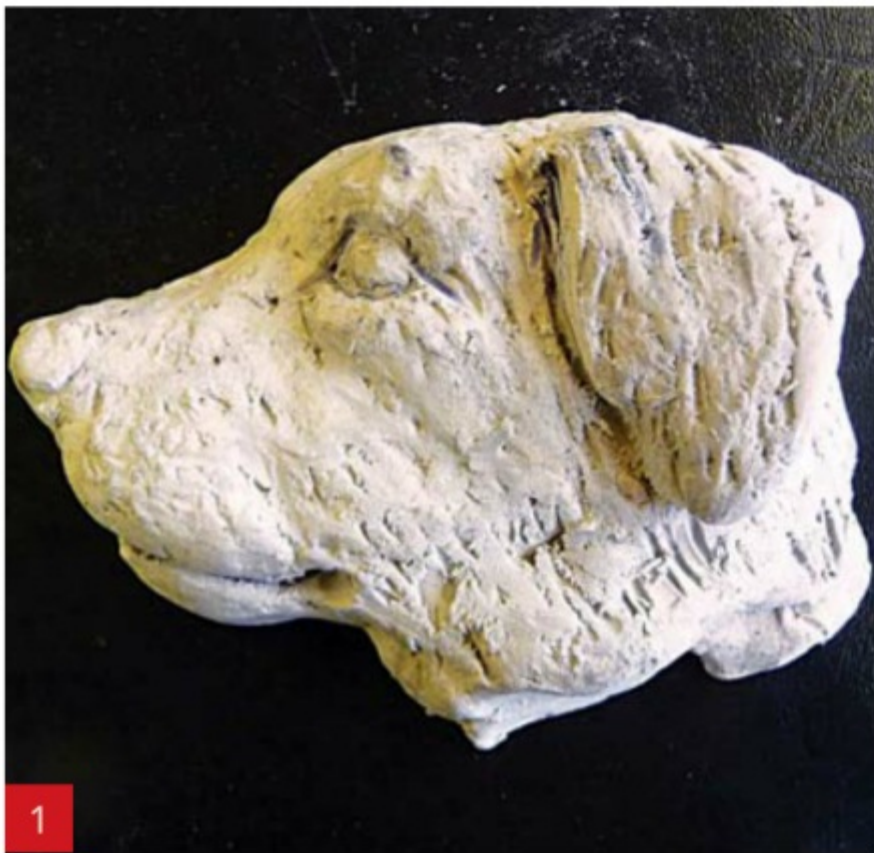
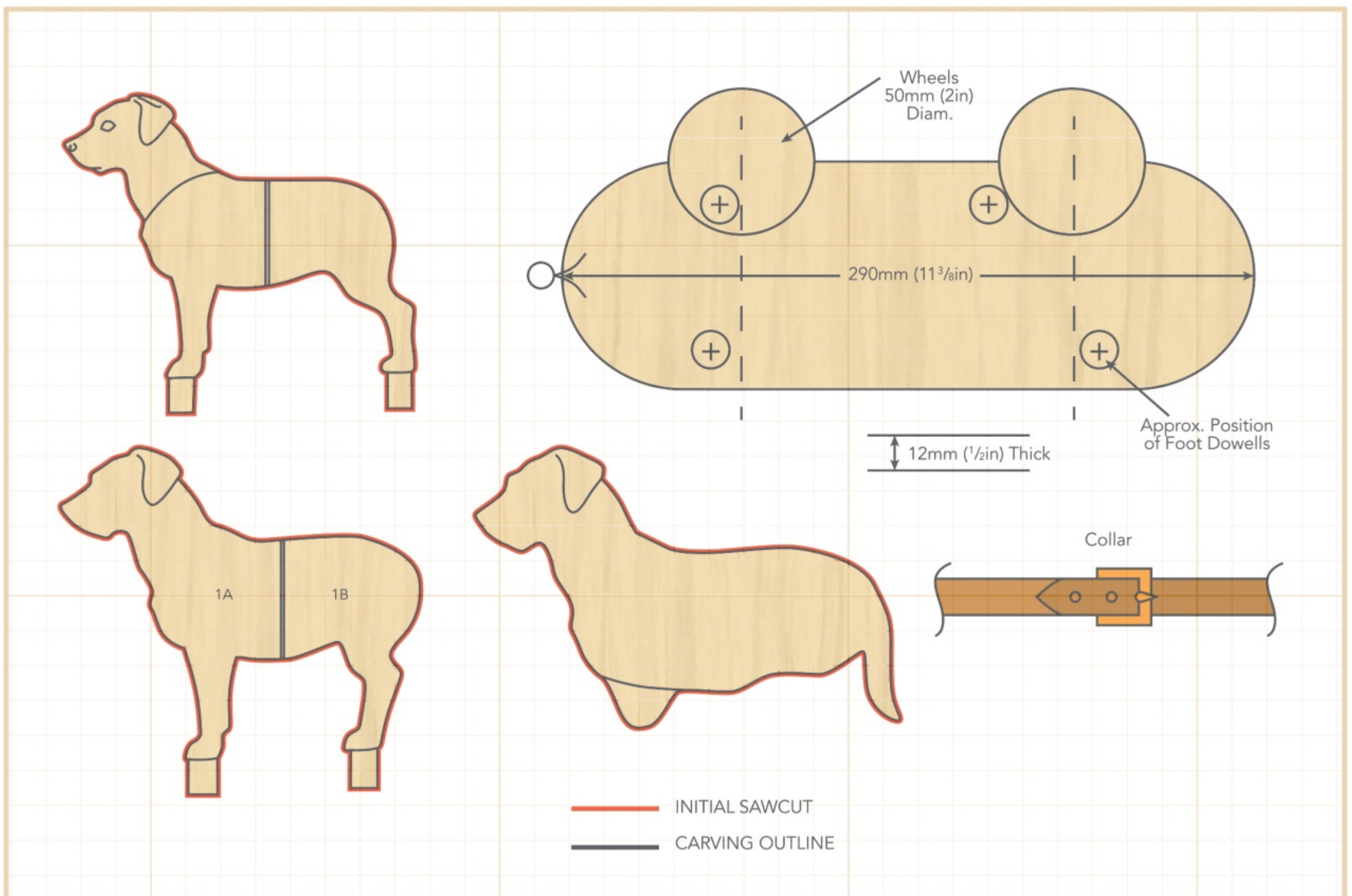
The template for the collar can be prepared at this time for later use. Keep one of the side templates for marking out the ear positions at a later stage.

Things you will need...

- A selection of gouges and sweeps
- Plasticine
- 10mm dowel
- Coping saw
- 6mm glass eyes
- Rasp or coarse sandpaper
- G-clamps
- 9mm ball-ended tungsten carbide cutter
- 12mm drum sander
- 3mm high speed grinder
- Two-part epoxy putty
- Acrylic gesso
- Acrylic paint (white, burnt sienna, black olive green)
- Brass screw eye
- Selection of abrasives

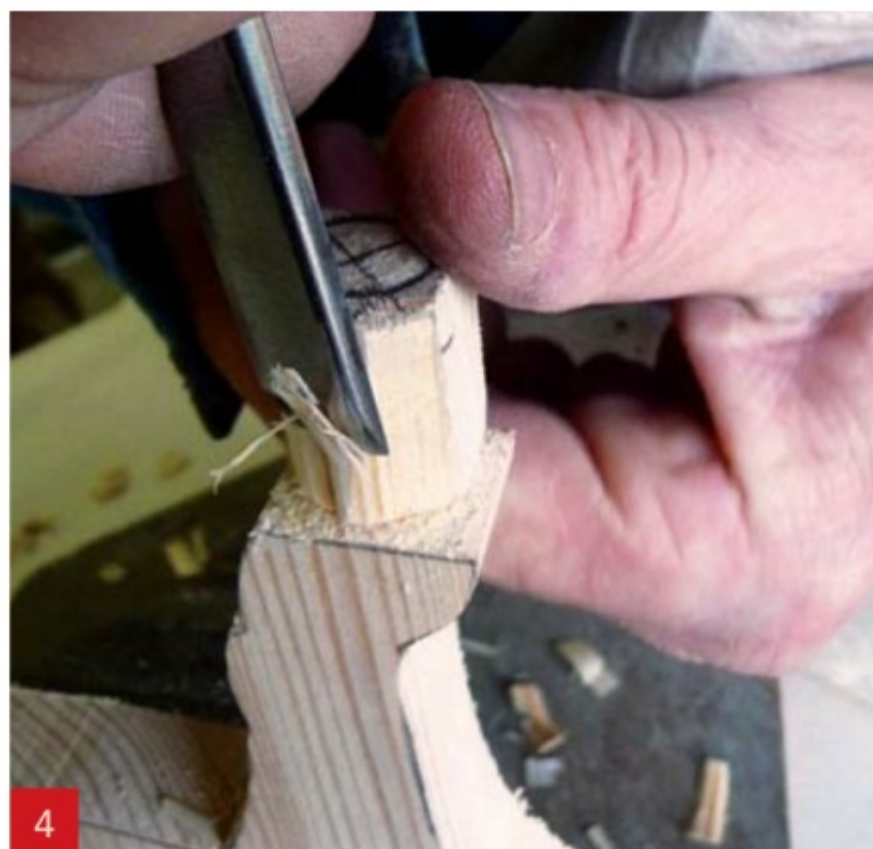


PHOTOGRAPHS BY TABITHA MCBAIN



1 Using the head part of one of the side view templates as a guide, make a half section Plasticine model of the dog's head. This will be very helpful later when refining the details on the head

2 The pull-along dog is fitted to the base with a 16mm dowel formed from the foot blocks beneath each of the paws. You need to find the centre of the square with diagonal lines and then use a hole gauge, to draw on the position of the dowel



"The dog is fitted to the base with a 16mm dowel..."

3 You now need to create a dowel on the underneath of each foot. Use a coping saw or other small saw to cut beneath the paws just on the corners of the foot blocks in order to release the shavings at the next stage

4 Chisel away the waste wood from the foot blocks leaving a 16mm dowel extending beneath each paw

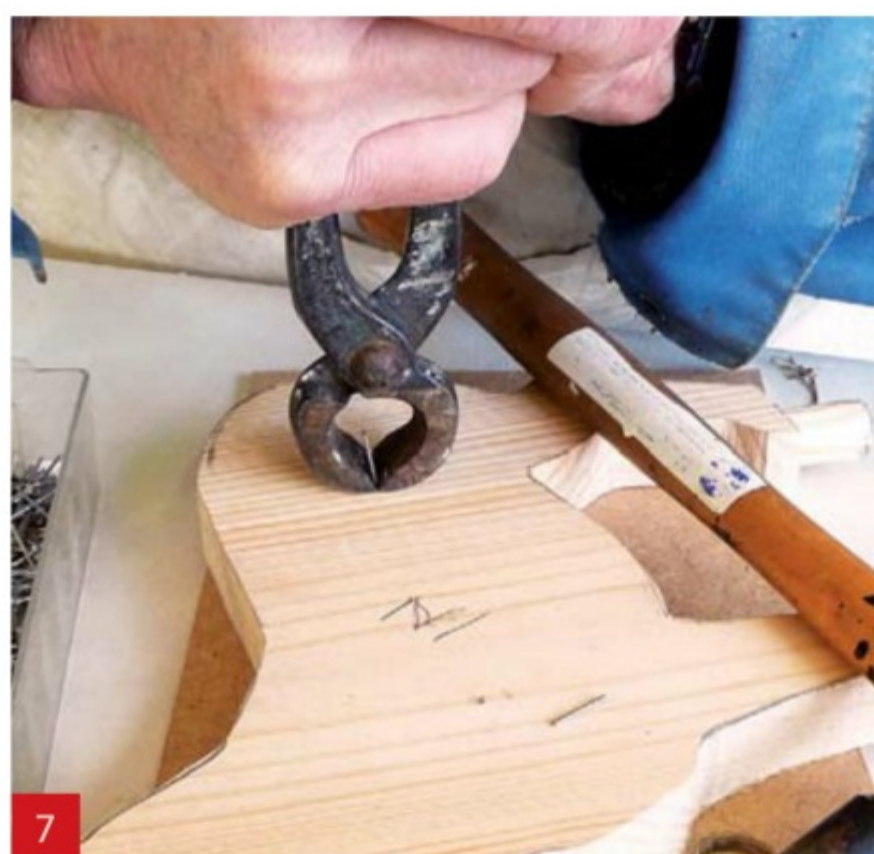
➔ **5** Use a jig made from a piece of 6mm scrap MDF with a 16mm hole drilled to make the rounding of the dowel more accurate. Fit the jig over the dowel and it will reveal any tight spots; mark them with a pencil and chisel off. Use a rasp or coarse sandpaper to smooth the surface. Ensure the junction between the dowel and base of each paw is clean and flat



6 Glue up the two centre elements. Make a jig to keep the base of the feet on the same plane during glue-up. Clamp – without glue – all the sections in position and stand on a piece of 6mm MDF. Mark the position of each foot dowel and drill the holes. Fit the foot dowels into the holes and it will then be clear if the feet are not all on the same plane. Adjustments can be made by slackening and repositioning the clamps. Once you are satisfied that all the paws fit flat on the floor then go ahead and glue it all together



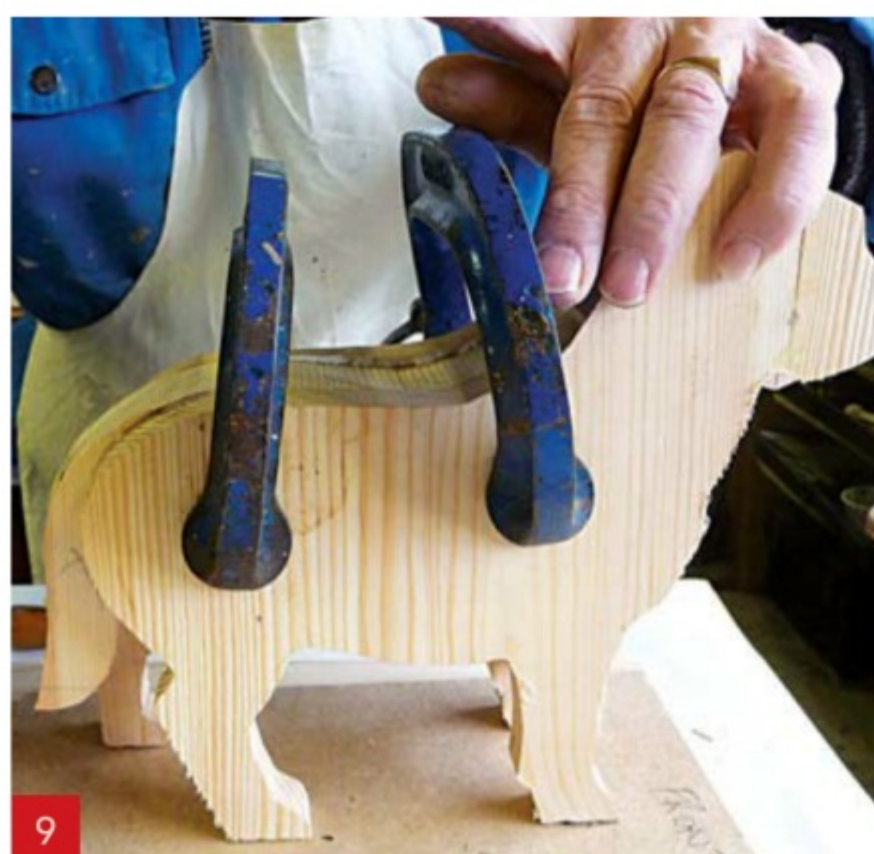
7 During gluing, in order to prevent the sections slipping when pressure is applied from the clamps, insert and cut short two panel pins on the inside of each of the gluing faces



8 Next, use white PVA glue applied evenly to all the sticking surfaces, paying particular attention to the edges



9 Using G-clamps, lightly hold the sections together. Fit the dog into the foot jig, adjust the section so that all the feet touch the base, tighten the clamps – two to the body and one to the head section. Leave overnight to set hard



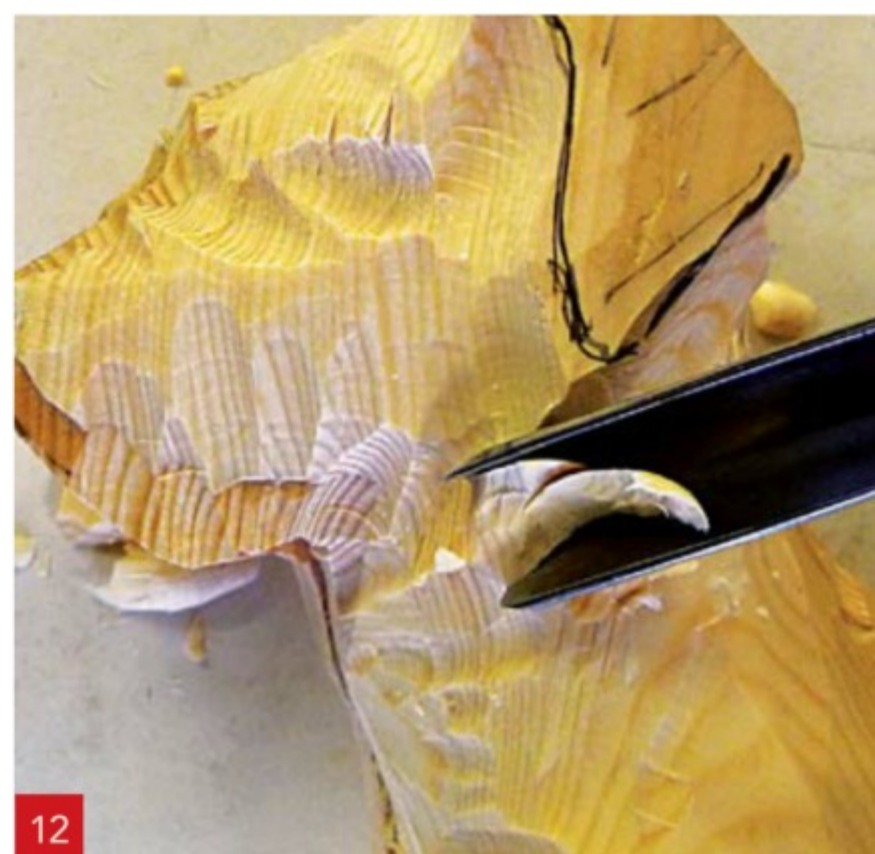
10 Use one of the side templates to mark out the ear position on both sides of the head. Keep this template handy for checking the ear position as the carving develops later on



11 Mark out the centreline of the dog, which coincides with the centre of the four laminations, also draw a pencil line along the approximate centreline of each of the legs on all four faces. Use a large G-clamp to hold the work onto the bench top and with a gouge and mallet begin removing the waste wood. Continue refining the shapes with smaller gouges



12 Leave the ear piece, shoulder and hip flat so that the carving doesn't rock whilst the bulk of the waste is removed from each side



PROJECT Pull-along dog toy



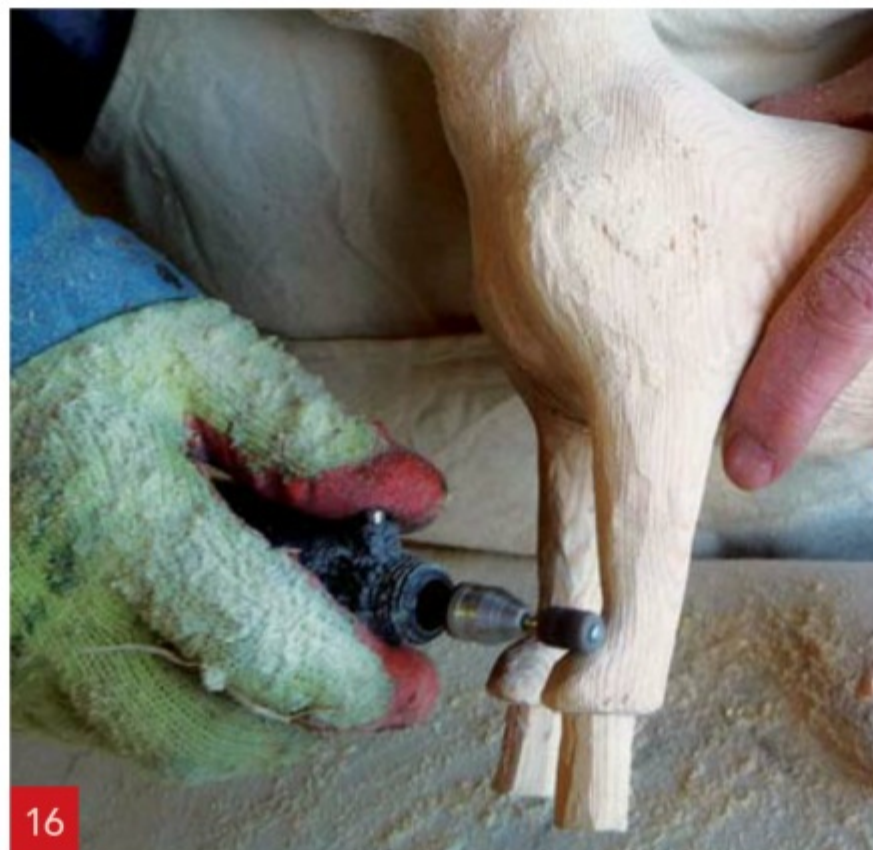
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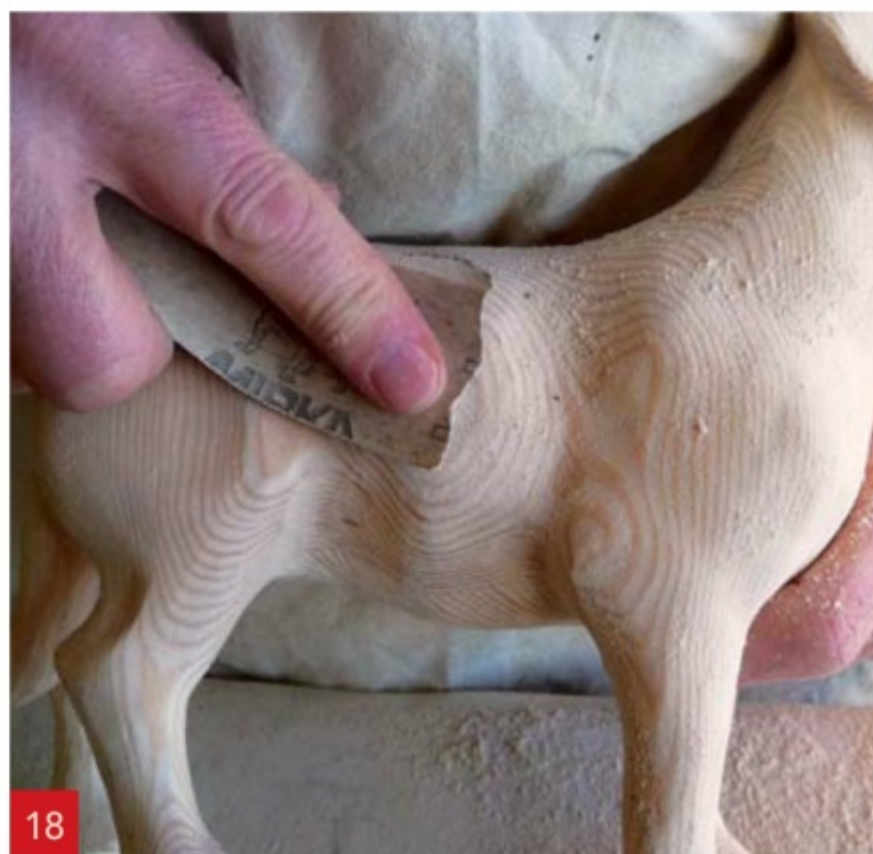
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13 Use shallow gouges and sweeps to smooth out the gouge marks. Beware of the grain direction, especially on the legs

14 Replace marking-out lines if they are removed during the carving process. Note the clamp holds the work firmly during the roughing out process

15 Continue to refine the shape using carving tools, or if you prefer, use a large ball-ended, coarse tungsten carbide cutter for cleaning off tool marks and refining the general shape of the dog. Smaller details around the face and feet will need a 9mm ball-ended tungsten carbide cutter to create smaller shapes

16 Once the general shaping is completed, further refinement to the surface can be achieved with the use of abrasives. A useful tool is a 12mm drum sander with a coarse loading and 80 grit aluminium oxide paper for hand sanding on areas that are difficult to access. Leave some extra wood around the neck to allow for carving the collar at a later stage, but smooth the surface

17 The more delicate areas of the head and around the paws can again be sanded with the 12mm drum sander and also a 9mm version for areas around the eyes and ears. At this stage, don't create too much detail, but try to achieve a smooth, even surface, making sure that both sides of the head are symmetrical, especially around the eyes

18 Although the drum sanders do an excellent job, there will still be areas that will need to be hand sanded. Either use the abrasive folded or for awkward areas, wrap the abrasive around short lengths of dowel. Start with 100 grit and finish with 150 grit

Making the baseboard

19 Take the baseboard as in the template section, and place the dog on it. Using a 16mm drill, cut holes for the foot dowels. Fit the dog onto the baseboard so the dowels protrude through. Mark the excess and cut them flush

Marking out the eyes

20 The eyes are 6mm glass, easily available from online auction sites. Mark out the position of the eyes, measuring from the centreline and ensure the eyes are on the same level

➔ **21** Mark out the position of the nose and mouth and re-establish the ear shape. Notice the line running between the eyes to ensure they are level

22 Use a 3mm high-speed cutter to hollow out the eye sockets. Check to make sure the glass eyes are a snug fit, but allow room behind the eyes to be able to bed them in later using epoxy putty

23 Use the same 3mm cutter to refine and shape around the ears, slightly undercutting the edge to give the impression of it as a flap

24 Make a groove for the mouth and blend the edges to give it a soft flowing shape

"Notice the line running between the eyes to ensure they are level"

25 Use the template supplied to mark out the position of the collar and buckle

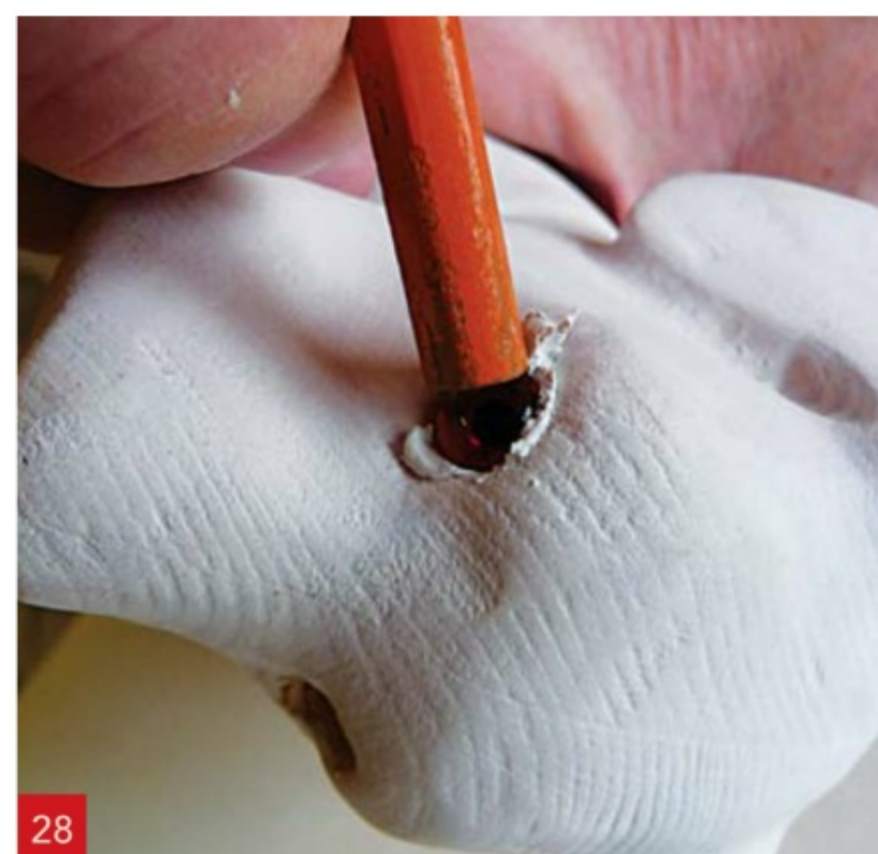
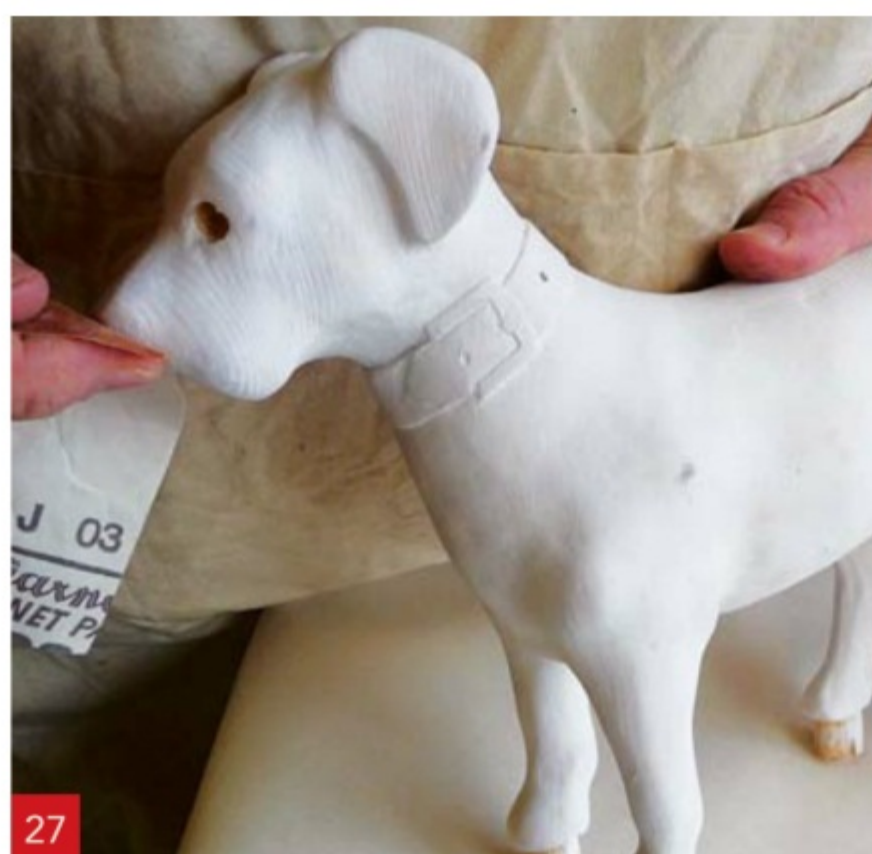
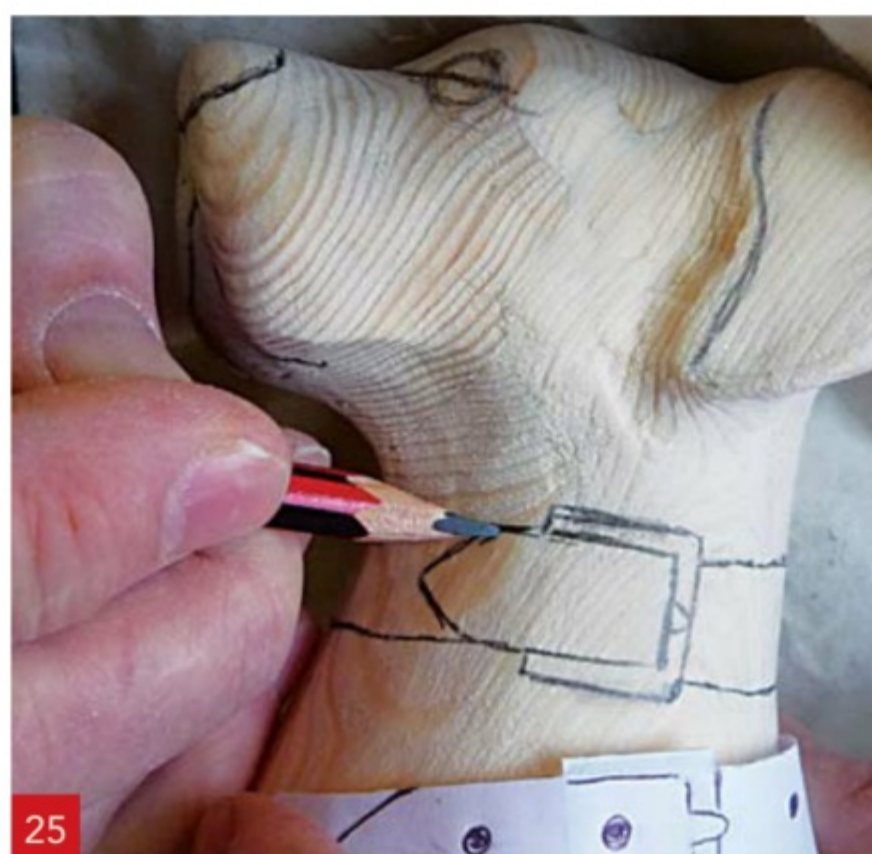
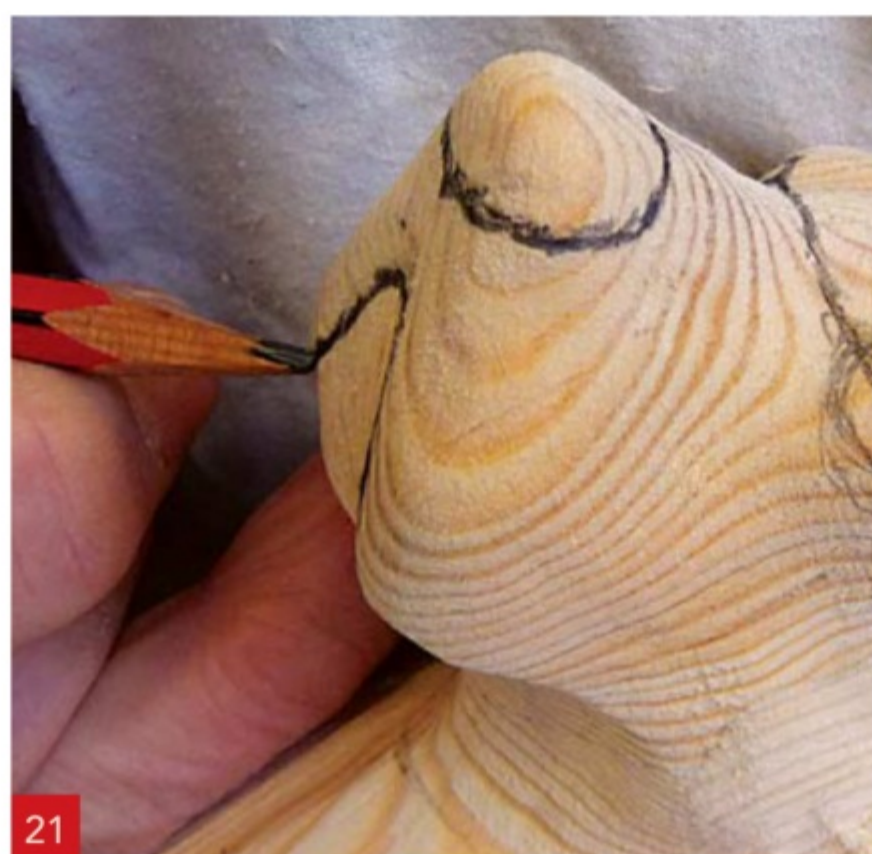
26 The collar is only about 1mm thick. Use a small straight chisel to set in at right angles along the edges and around the buckle. Carefully remove a small shaving of wood, leaving the collar standing proud. Sand with 150 grit paper to soften the edge. Soak the whole carving in water, leave it overnight to dry and then sand off any rough spots with 150 grit sandpaper

Painting

27 The wood is sealed with three coats of acrylic gesso, each one thinned to a milky consistency and allowing plenty of drying time between coats. After the final coat is dry, lightly sand the whole surface with 180 grit paper to remove any nibs

Fitting the eyes

28 The eyes are fitted before the final painting. Use a small amount of two-part epoxy putty to line the inside of the eye sockets. With the blunt end of a pencil, gently push the glass eye into position. Some epoxy putty will be extruded, this can be cleaned off with a sharpened matchstick and the area around the eye blended with a wet cotton bud or paintbrush. Buff the eye itself with a dry cotton bud to clean and polish the glass

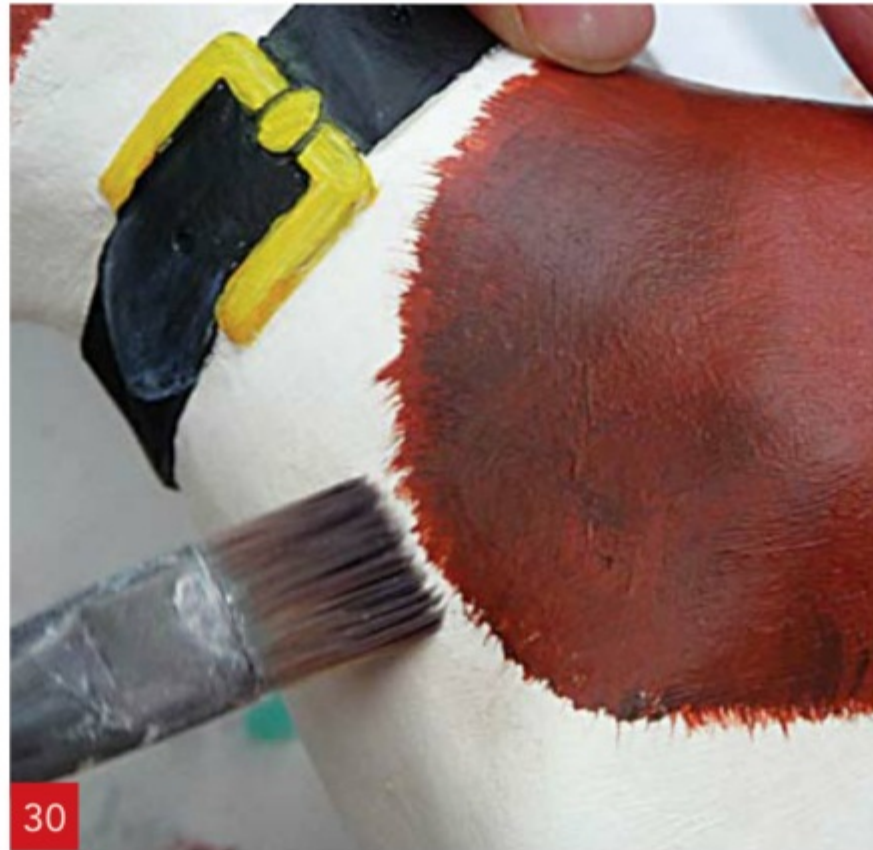


PROJECT

Pull-along dog toy



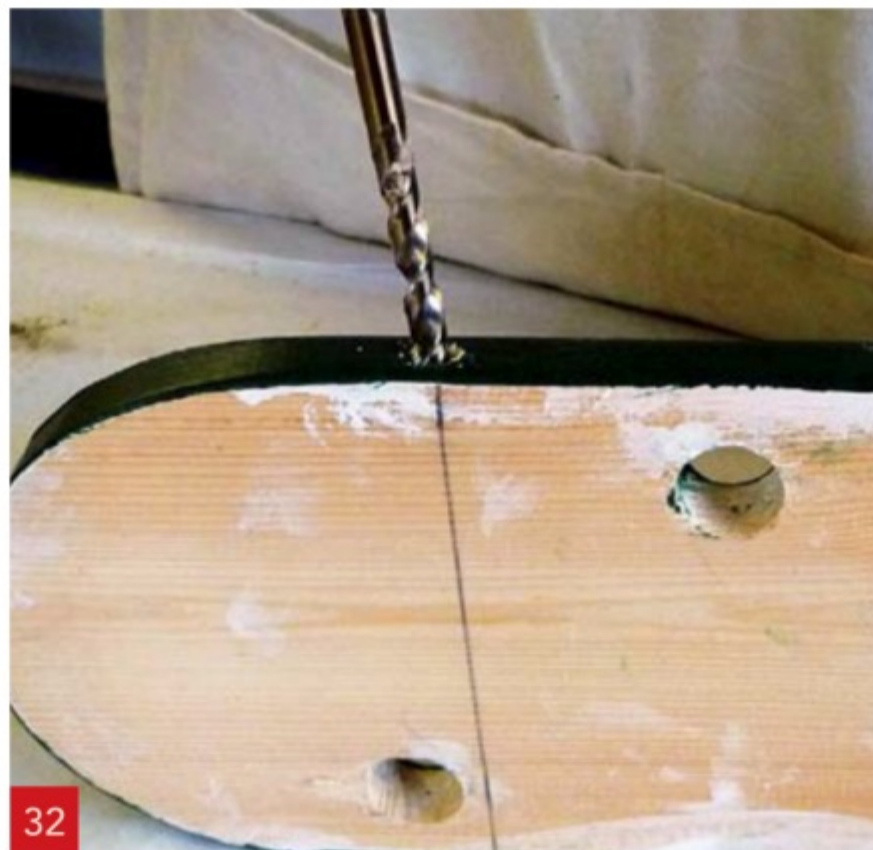
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29 Decorate the dog with acrylic paint and two coats of white for the body. The brown patches on the coat are opaque burnt sienna and the nose, collar and ear tips are black. Paint the buckle yellow. Paint the base with three coats of olive green acrylic paint

30 To give a realistic appearance of fur on the body patches, use a fairly coarse brush to feather out the colour along the edge

31 After painting the head, clean off the paint that has gone over the glass eyes with a cocktail stick

"The brown patches on the coat are opaque burnt sienna and the nose, collar and ear tips are black"

32 The wheels for the base of the dog toy are wooden and measure approximately 50mm in diameter. Refer to the template of the base which shows the line of the axle and drill the appropriate size hole for the axle in the centre of the edge

33 The wheels are painted with three coats of black acrylic paint and left to dry

34 A close up of the pull-along dog's head showing patch shapes and collar details

35 The finished toy. In the front of the base there is a brass screw eye for a lead or cord to be attached

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.



Little OWLS

Mike Wood carves and paints two little owls

The little owl (*Athene noctua*) is one of the most widely distributed species of owl, native to warmer parts of Europe, North Africa, and Asia east to Korea. It was introduced to Great Britain in the 19th century, and to southern New Zealand in the early 20th century. As the name would suggest, it's not the largest bird, measuring from 230–275mm in length. It is recognisable by its white speckled brown plumage, large head, long legs, yellow eyes and its distinctive white 'eyebrows' which give it a somewhat stern expression. The little owl is partly diurnal, so you don't have to go out under cover of darkness to find one, often in mixed farmland and parkland.

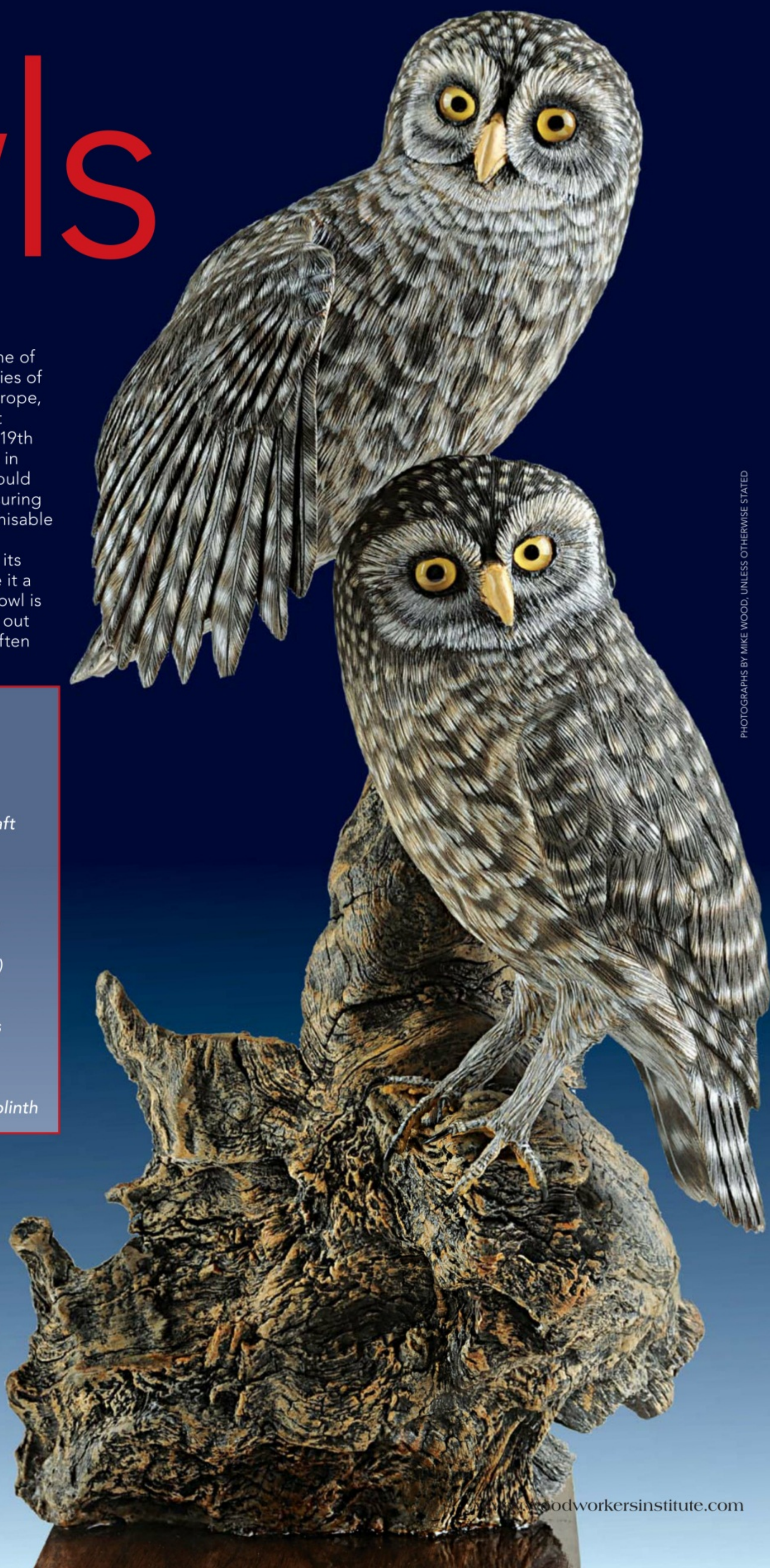
Things you will need...

- Wood: jelutong (*Dyera costulata*)
- Dimensions:
For owl No.1: 250 x 110 x 110mm
For owl No.2: 140 x 140 x 260mm
- Rotary motor unit with flexible shaft and handpiece
- Drum shaped burr/sander
- Coarse & medium grit taper burrs
- 6mm medium grit straight burr
- Fine grade Ruby flame burr with a diamond point
- Two ball-nosed stones (14 & 12mm)
- PPE: facemask, dust mask and extraction
- Abrasives, including drum sanders with grit grades down to 240 grit
- Acrylic paints
- Airbrush
- A suitable piece of timber for the plinth

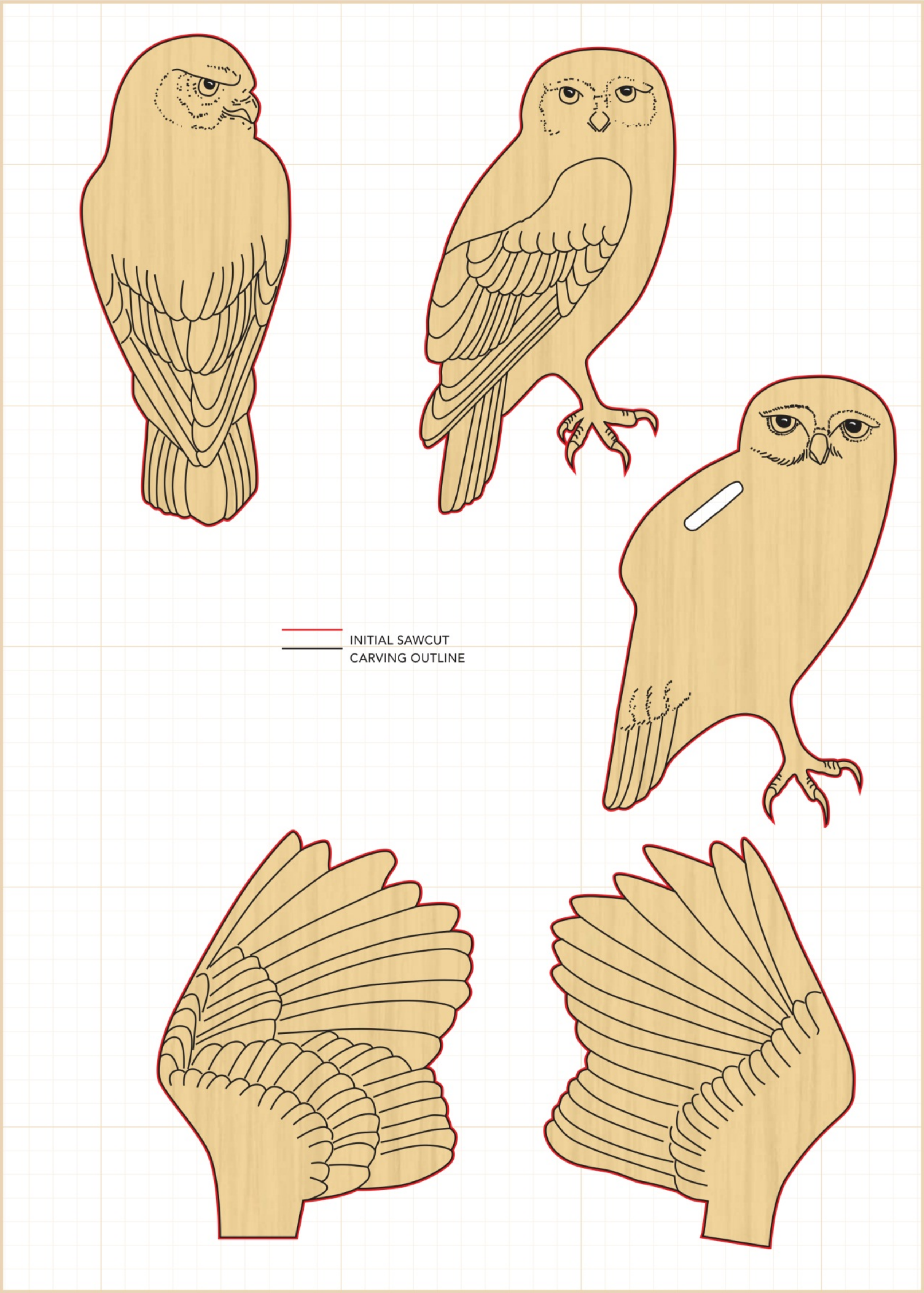
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKE WOOD, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED



➔ **1** Here you can see the prepared sections for the bird with the outspread wing. I used jelutong, but you can use lime or basswood. These timbers are easy to work and hold detail well, but jelutong seems to work best for me when I make birds

2 The birds use a similar production method and I use power tools where ever I can for the shaping and detail. Of course, not everyone likes using power tools as there is a lot more dust produced which means you have to have extraction and wear face protection/dust masks to minimise exposure to dust. However, it is a very effective way of working. As with this wing, the initial shaping is completed using a coarse or medium-toothed cutter – in this case a cone-shaped one is used here – and once shaped it is sanded smooth down to 240 grit

3 Now take a pencil and draw in all the feathers on the top and underside ready for carving

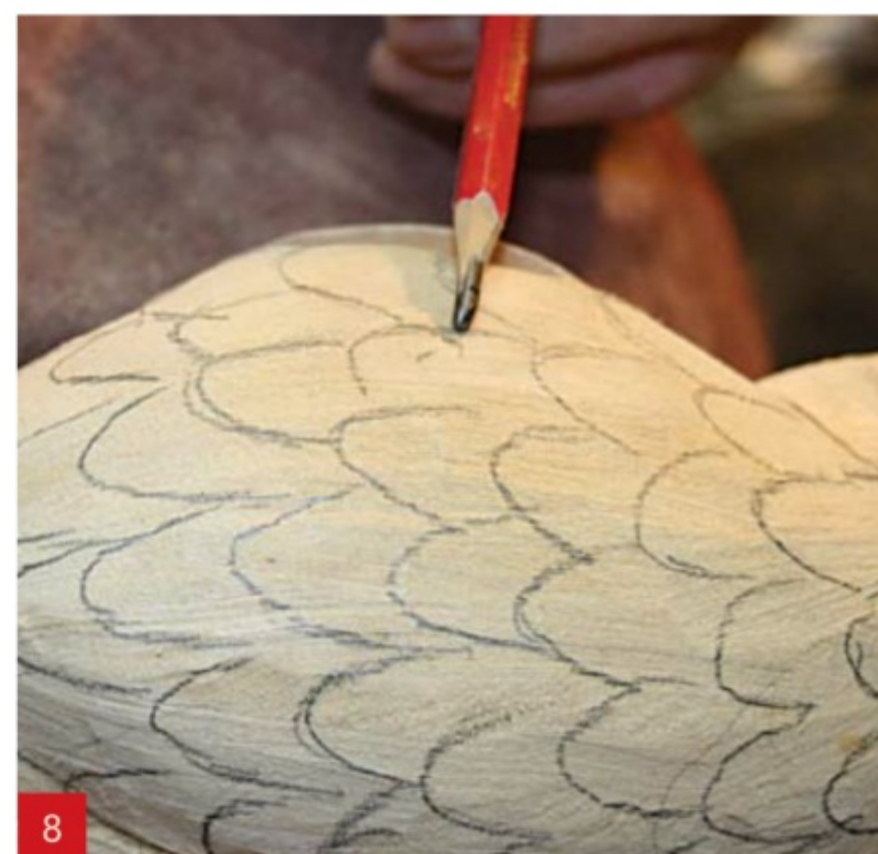
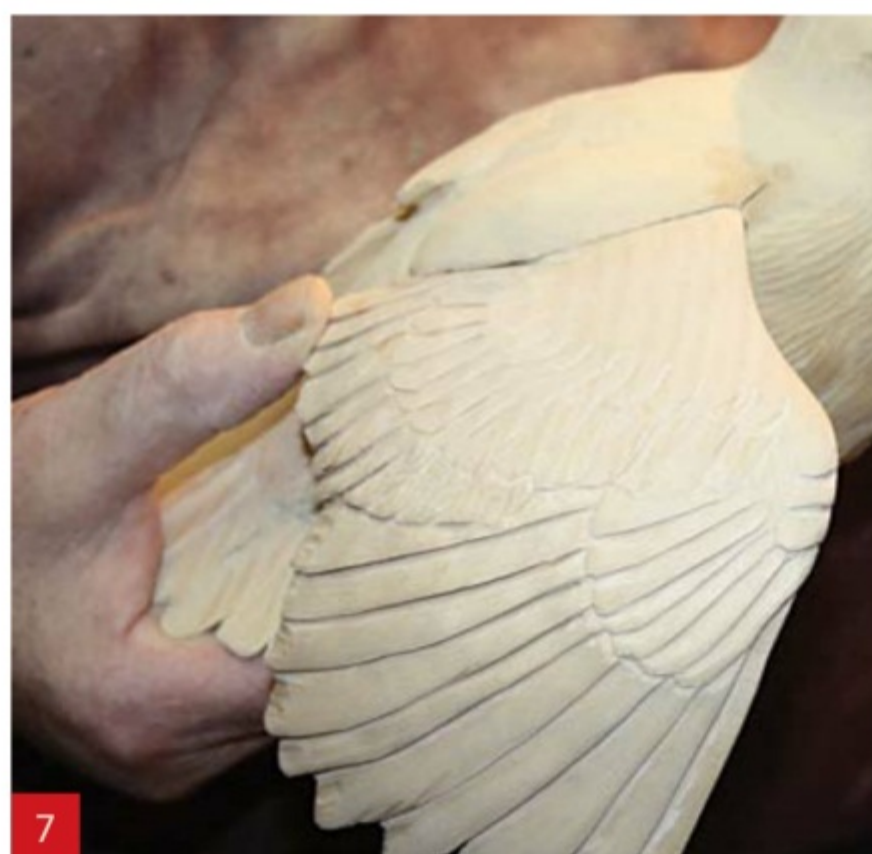
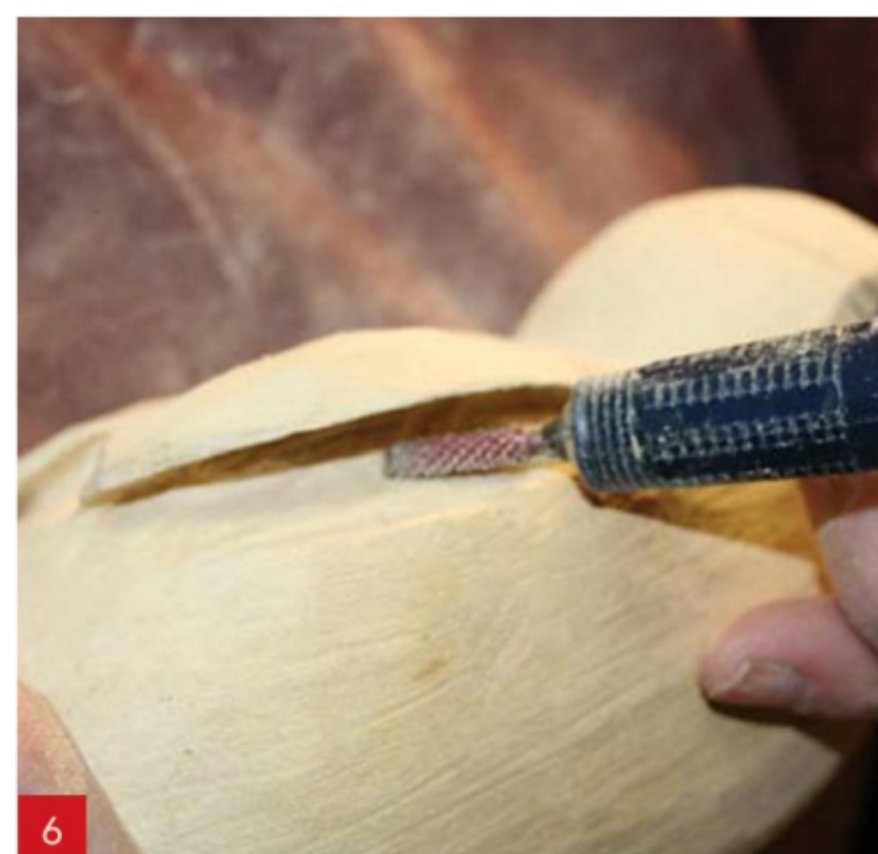
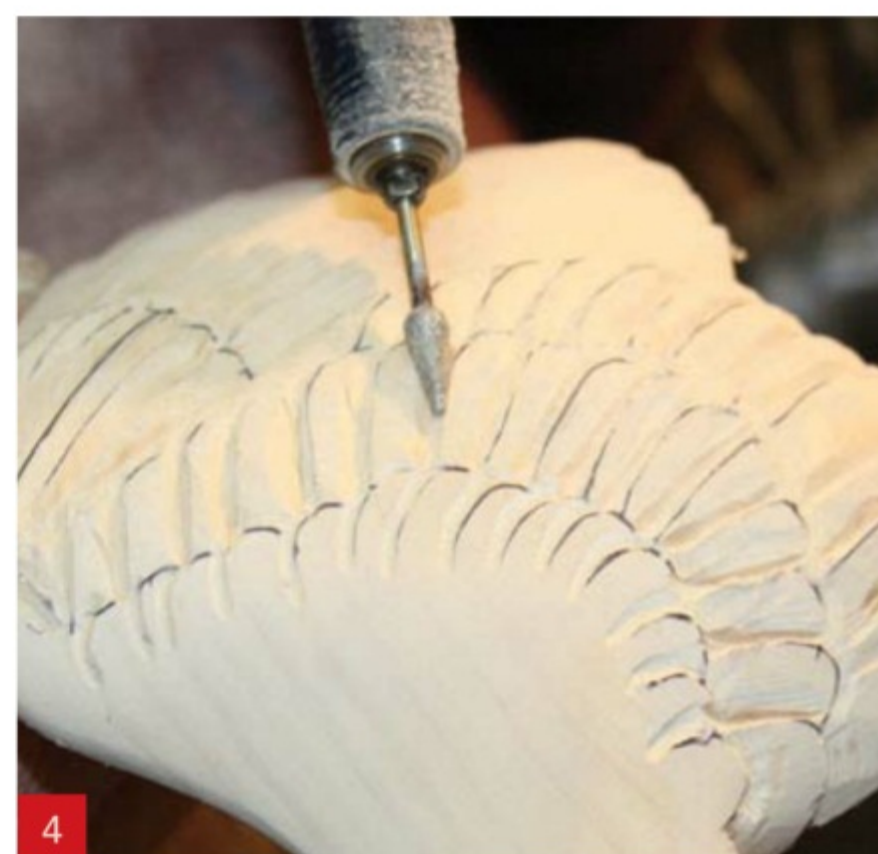
4 Use a square-end cylinder burr/ drum shaped burr to block in the feather shapes and then finish off with a fine-grit Ruby carver. Now sand everything smooth

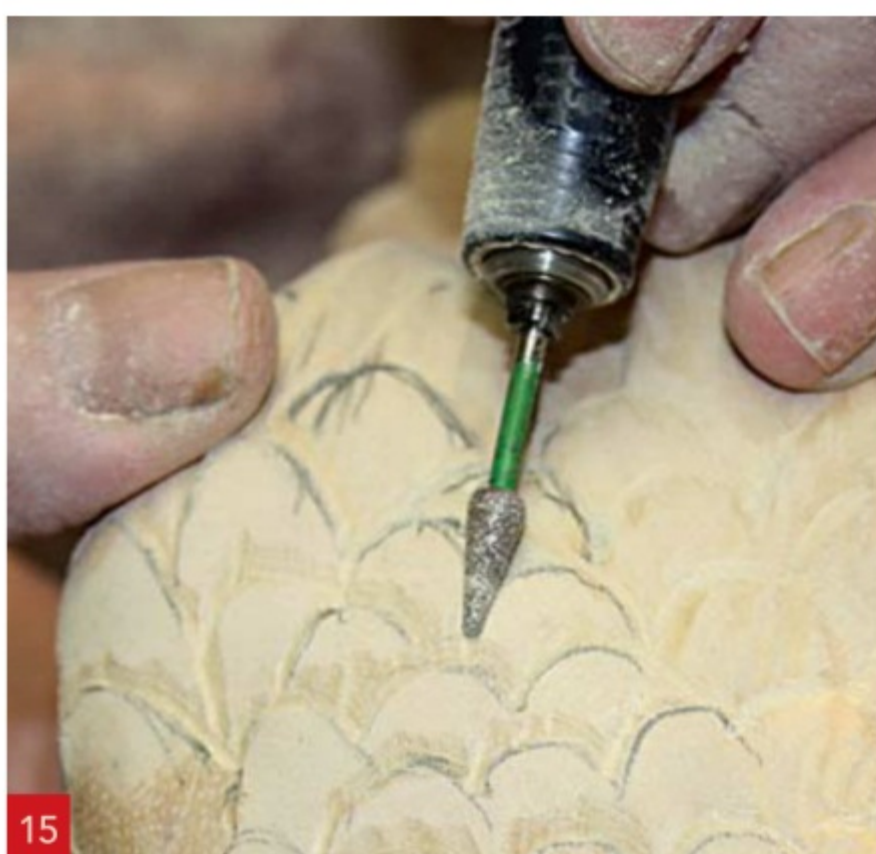
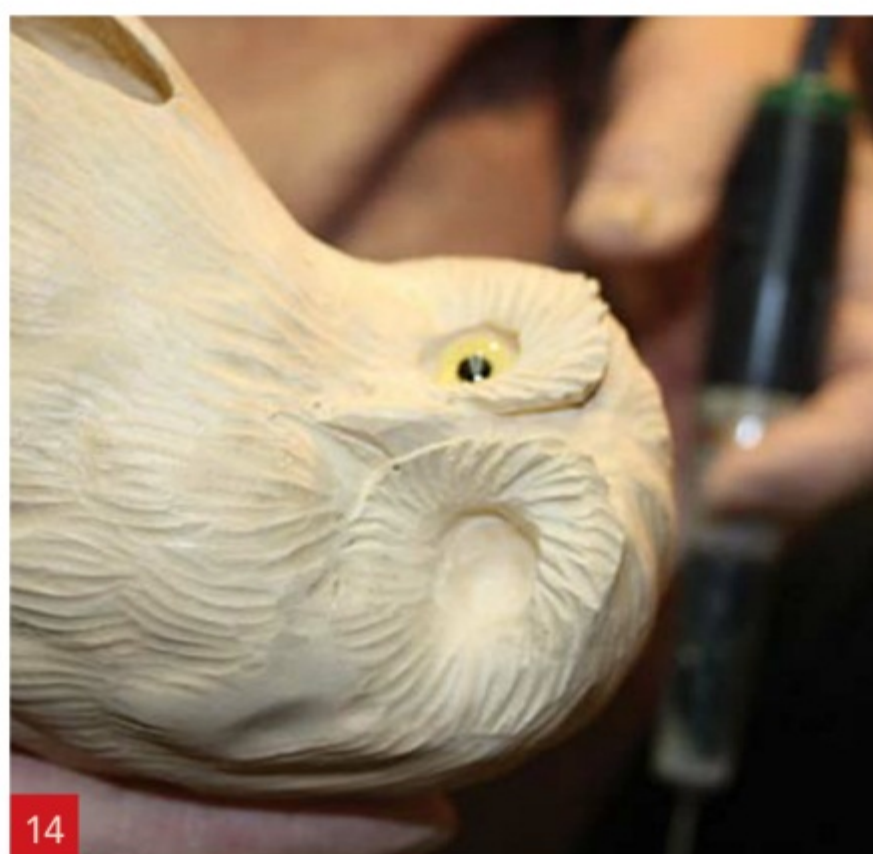
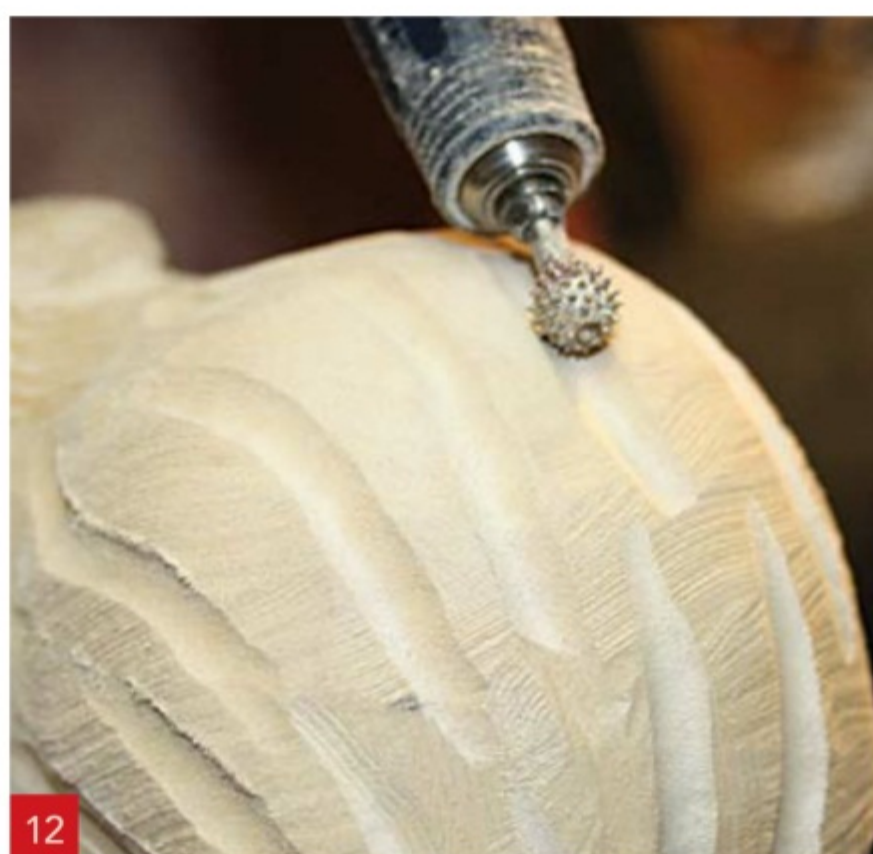
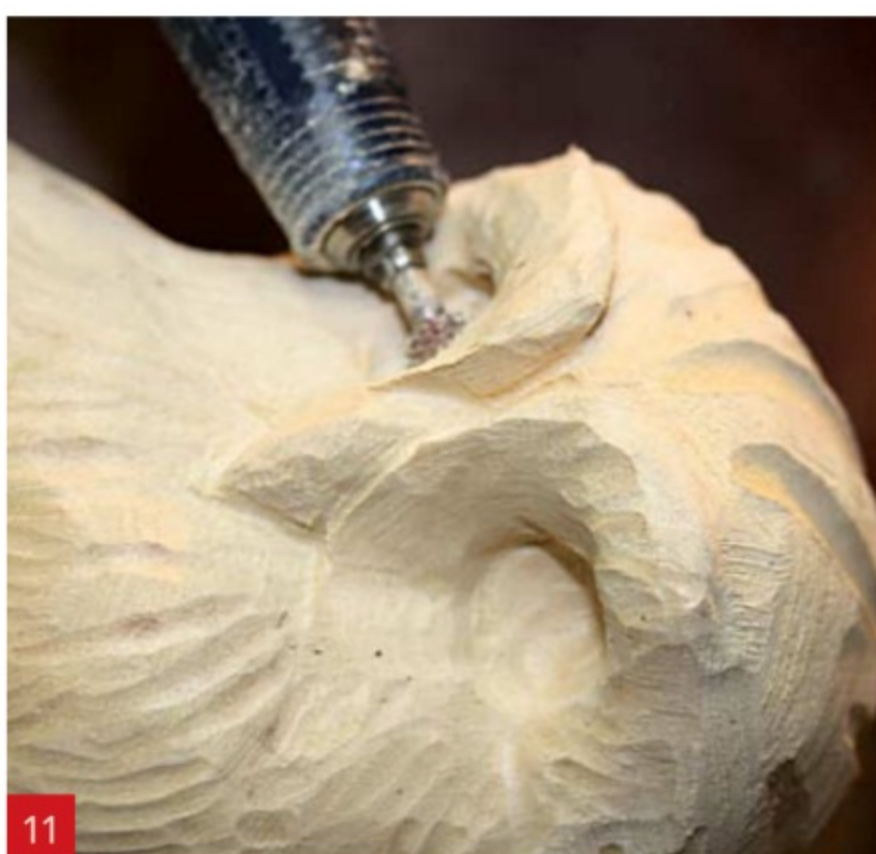
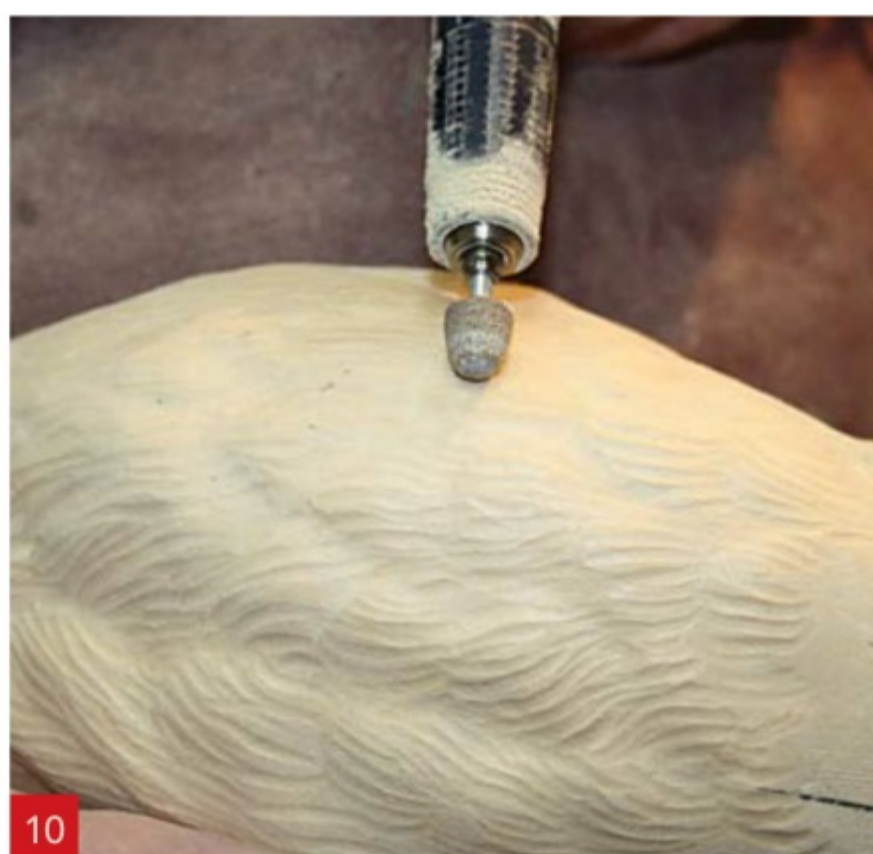
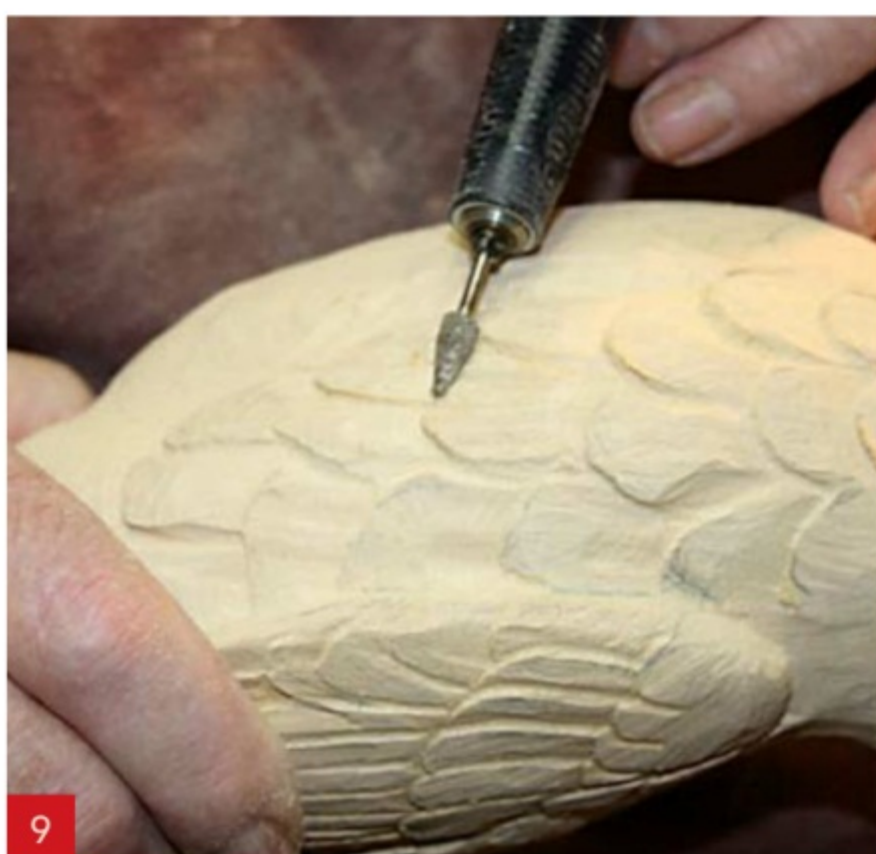
5 If everything has gone well you will end up with a wing that looks like this

6 Use the cone-shaped burr seen earlier to shape the main body blank and then use a medium grit straight burr to cut the recess for the wing

7 You need to check the wing for fit regularly and adjust as necessary. Once you have a nice tight fit, refine the body shape a little further. If you choose not to colour this bird, then you need to have the wing fit absolutely perfect to minimise the risk of the join being seen. Whilst the wing will not be glued in place until later, a tip is to sand the join whilst the glue is slightly wet; this will allow the dust to mix with the glue and form a natural 'filler' which is hard to see once the bird is finished

8 Now draw all the feathers on the body ready for carving. You must study the bird you choose to carve closely to get the correct shapes of the feathers. Experts will spot if something is not right and that is not good if you intend to sell or display your work





9 Once the body detail is complete you can block in the shapes of the feathers on the folded wing and then use a small taper burr to refine the feathers further. When this is done you can sand them smooth

10 Now carve all the feathers on the breast. After the shapes are carved in you need to use a sanding drum to sand all the breast smooth. Next, use a bull-nosed stone to carve in the feather flow. The breast feathers are fluffy and pillowy looking and not as severely delineated as the wing feathers

11 Use a medium burr to block in the shape of the face and bill, then use a small round burr to carve in the eye sockets

12 Using the same cutter, cut in some grooves on the top of the head where the feather detail needs to be

13 Soften the grooves and use a taper burr to carve in more refined feather detail, then use a bull-nosed stone to smooth the head of the bird. Use a Ruby taper to start carving in the bill area and around the eyes

14 Use a diamond taper to refine the bill area and round the eyes. Now test the eye piece to make sure it fits, then remove it – it will be fixed in place later on

15 Next, draw the feathers, back and cape, and carve them in using a small tapered diamond or Ruby burr

16 Using the same tool, carve in the tail feathers from the top of the bird to the bottom used to go over the rump and upper tail coverts and tail to create texture. This texture is not so deep as to become hard edges, but is defined enough to show through the Gesso and help with the feather detail later

History of the little owl

This small owl was introduced to the UK in the 19th century. It can be seen in the daylight, usually perching on a tree branch, telegraph pole or rock. It will bob its head up and down when alarmed. In flight it has long, rounded wings, rapid wingbeats and flies with a slight undulation

➔ **17** Use a small bull-nosed stone to go over the rump and upper tail coverts and tail to create texture. This texture is not so deep that it creates hard edges, but is defined enough to show through the Gesso and help with the feather detail later

18 Now it is time to fix the eye in place; plastic wood is ideal for this. Put a small amount in the socket and then push the eye in place. You have time to align the position of the eye – not only how it sits, but also where the eye is looking. Make sure both point and sit correctly in relation to each other. Now leave them to set. Again, using plastic filler, create the eye rings and then blend out the filler to create the required detail. At this stage, stop and continue with the second owl

Owl No.2

19 Here is the roughed out blank. The shaping method is effectively the same as for the other bird, but you do not have a separate wing to fix in place, so this one is a little easier to make

"Use the Ruby taper to shape the bill and eye area"

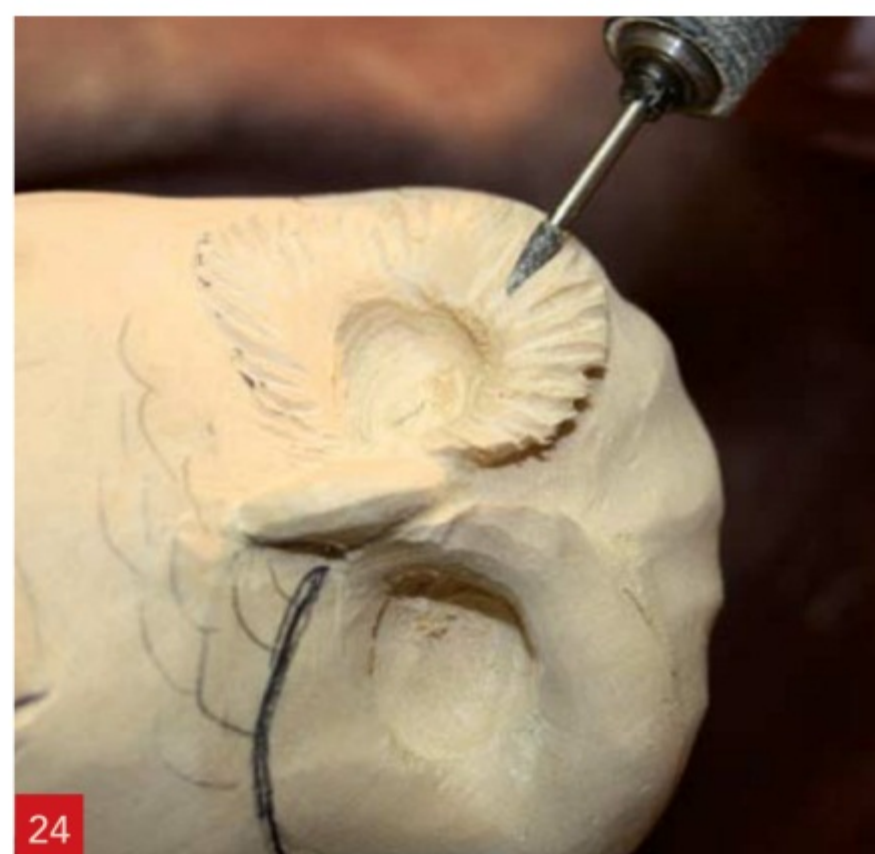
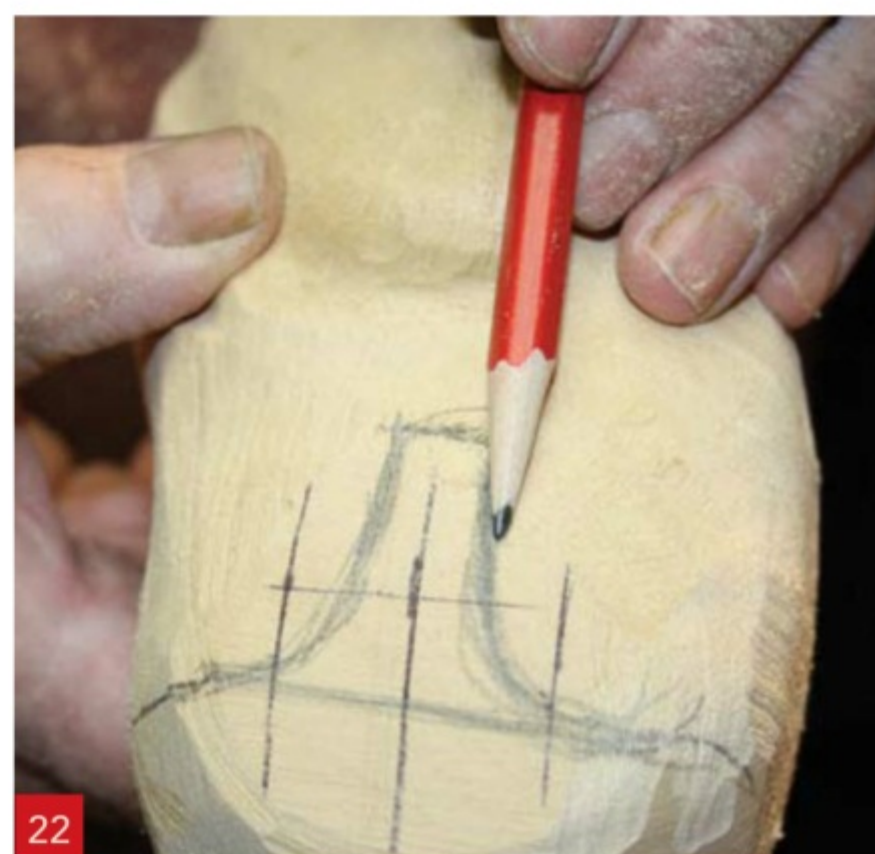
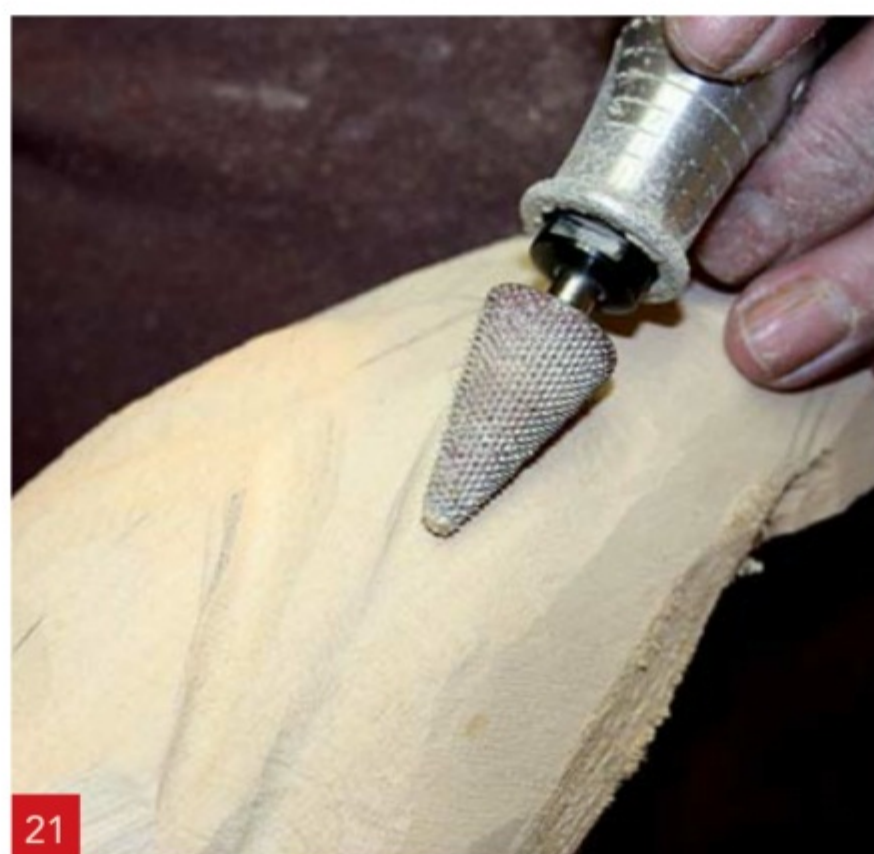
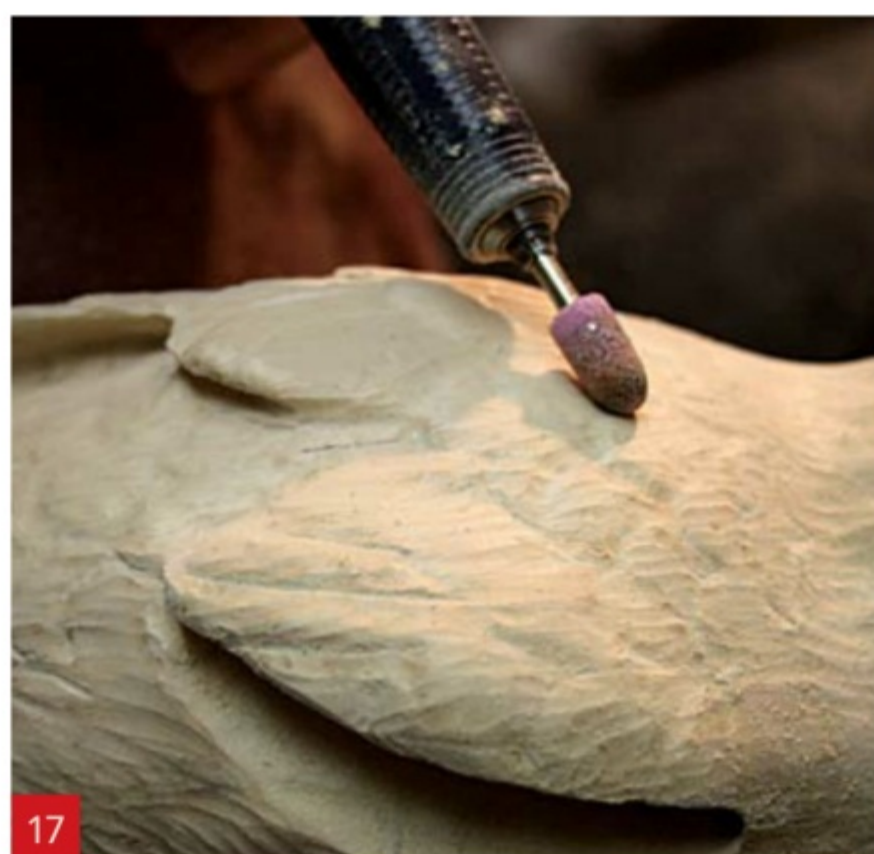
20 Using the ball or coned-shaped cutter, put some grooves in to show the flow of the feathers and add some grooves to the head

21 The next phase of shaping is carried with the the cone-shaped toothed cutter

22 It may sound tedious but the drawing in of the face needs to be done and also done well. The proportions have to be correct. Once drawn, rough shape the facial features and then...

23 ... you are ready to cut in the holes for the eyes

24 Use the Ruby taper to shape the bill and eye area. Next, using a sanding bobbin, smooth out the grooves of the head. Take a high-speed grinder and a small diamond point and put in detail around the eyes. These radial grooves are important so note the position and the angle. How many you add will have an impact. Do a bit of studying to ensure you get this right

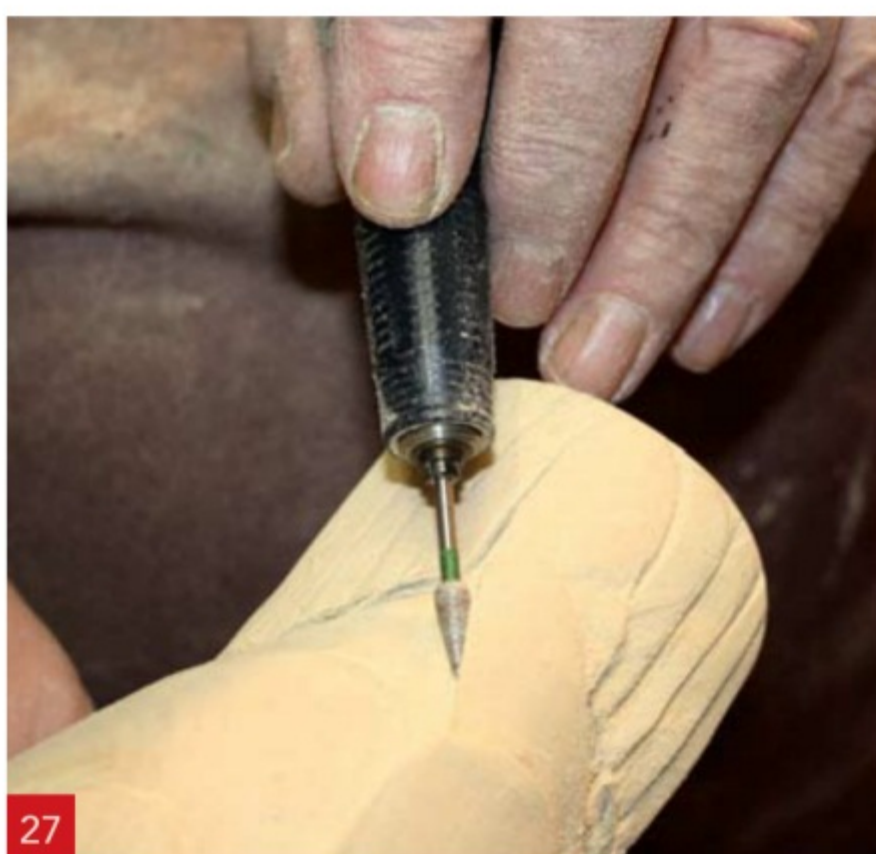




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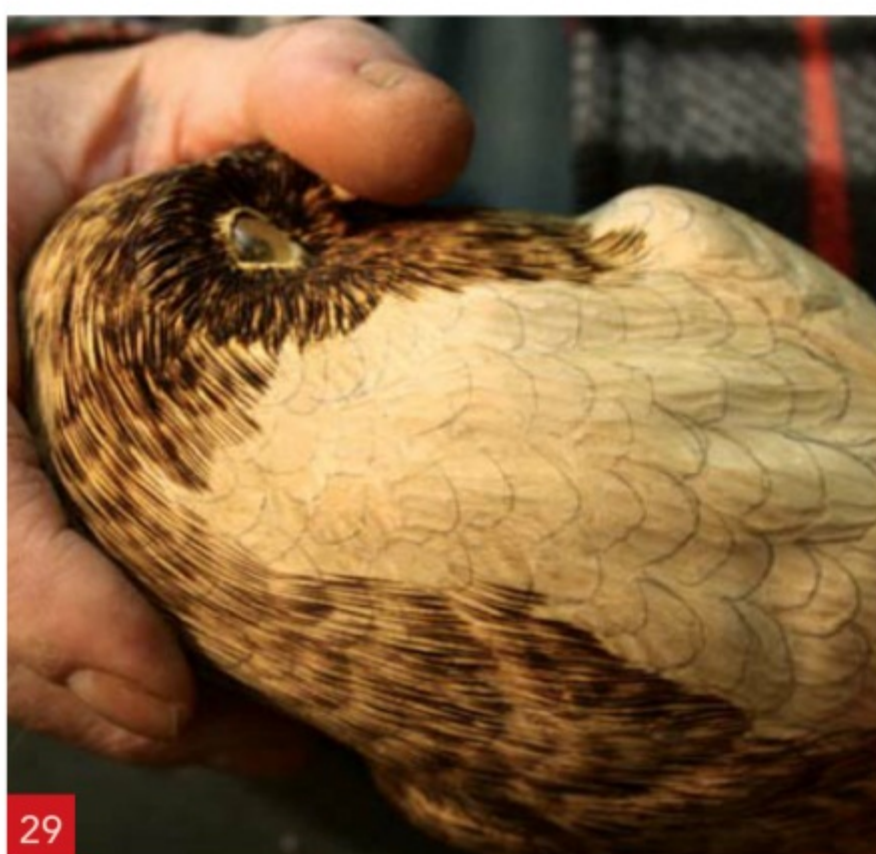
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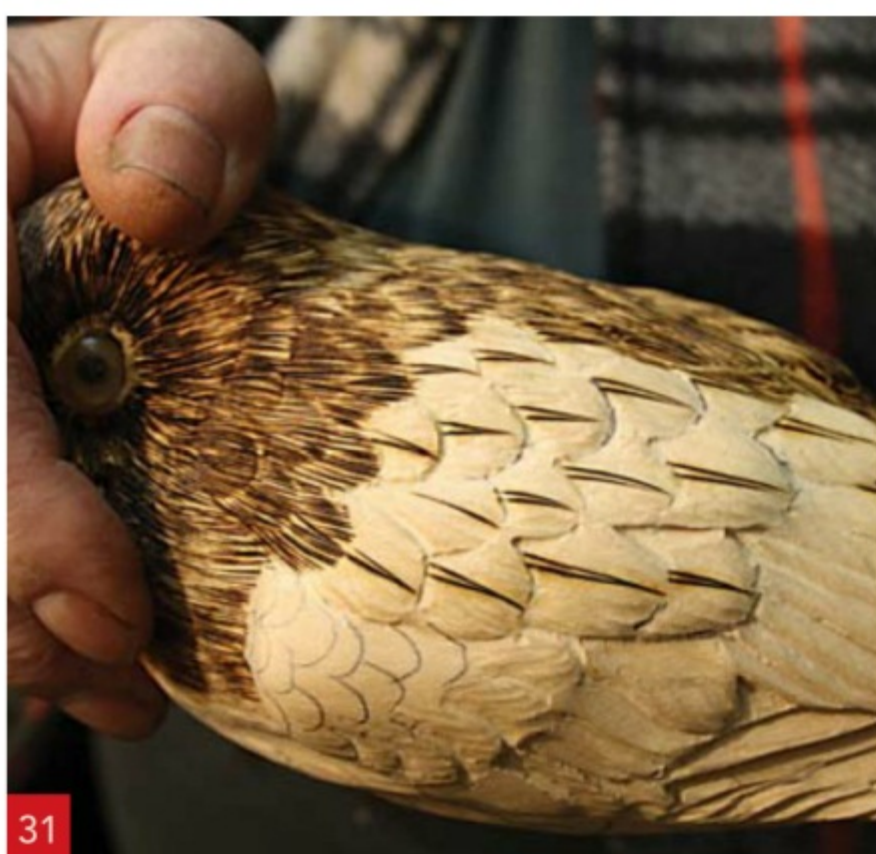
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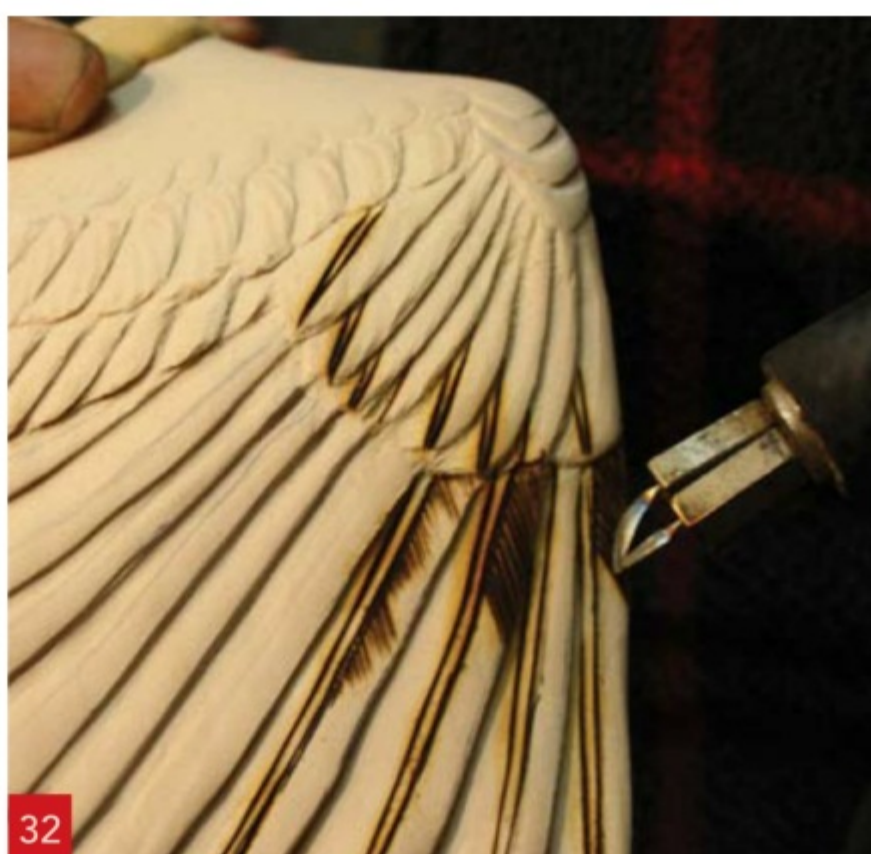
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25 After sanding out the grooves on the body, draw in the feather flow. Using a bull-nosed stone, start from the outside of the feather, carve inwards to make soft feather edges

26 Draw in the wing feathers ready to carve, then use the Ruby taper to carve in the wing feathers

27 Use a small Ruby taper to carve in the tail feathers. Again, use the same tool to carve in primaries. Once complete, make sure the bird is smooth and then you will need to use a pyrography unit to burn in the detail

Pyrographing detail

28 Irrespective of which bird you are working on, the typical stages are as follows: Burn in the head and face feathers. A chisel-edge or scalpel-edged pyrography blade is ideal for creating the incised fine detail. The narrow edge on the tip is great for creating shallow or deep detail and this type of tip can also be used on its side so you can shade using the wider flat face. You can also burn in the detail further down the back of the bird, too

29 Draw in breast feathers down the under-tail coverts...

30 ... and then burn in all drawn in feathers. Note how the incisions are further apart than those on the head

31 Now burn in all feather shafts and then carry on burning the back feathers. These are important as all the incised lines radiate from these

32 You can then move on to burning the feathers on the wing using the pyrography pen

More about the bird

The little owl (*Athene noctua*) hunts small mammals and birds, beetles and worms. They are found in England and Wales with a few in southern Scotland. They like lowland farmland with hedges and copses, parkland and orchards and are most common in central, southern and south eastern England, and the Welsh borders. These charming birds can be seen all year round, during the day. The little owl hunts at night and dawn

➔ **33** This photo shows the wing burnt on the top and bottom

34 Next, outline and then burn the tail feathers...

35 ... then do the same to the under-tail feathers. Once the whole bird is completed, it is now time to turn your attention to the owl's feet

Making the feet

36 The feet are cast using pewter and the legs are made from thin copper tubing and copper-coated steel rods. I make my own so I can control the shape, size and ultimately the look of them to suit each bird I work on. You can buy cast and sculpted feet ready made, so check the catalogues and the Internet if you do not wish to make your own

37 I normally coat feet with epoxy sculp or Milliput, which you can texture before it dries. You can also use a burr on this area when dry to refine the detail and also apply colour later on to finish it off. Next, the body of the bird can be drilled and the legs then glued in place

The base

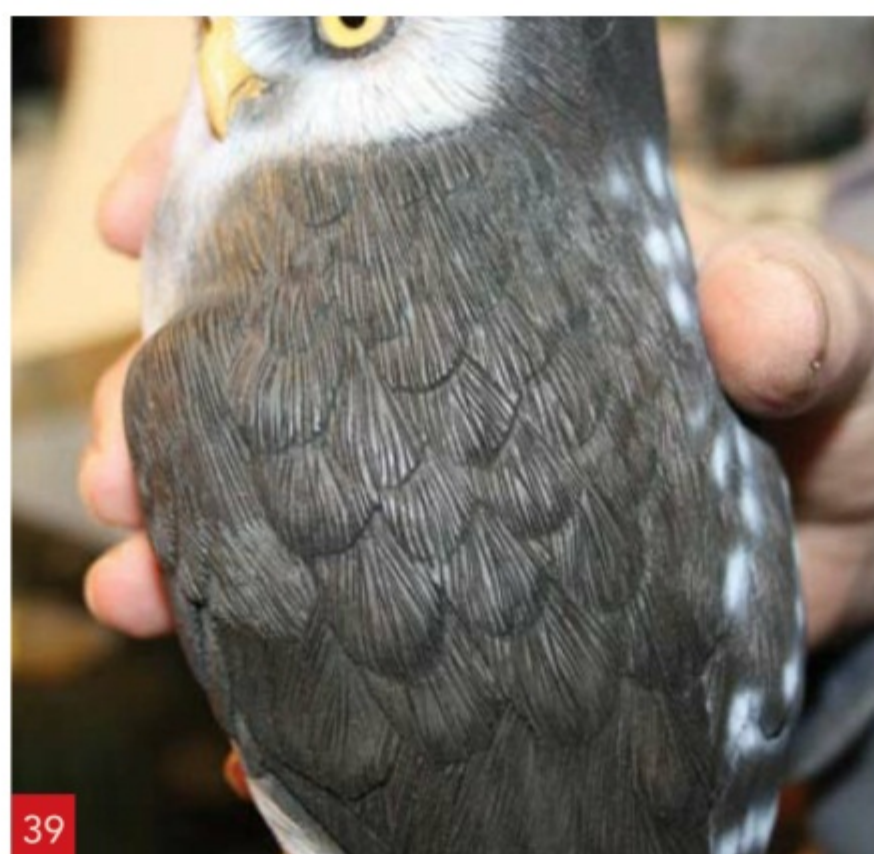
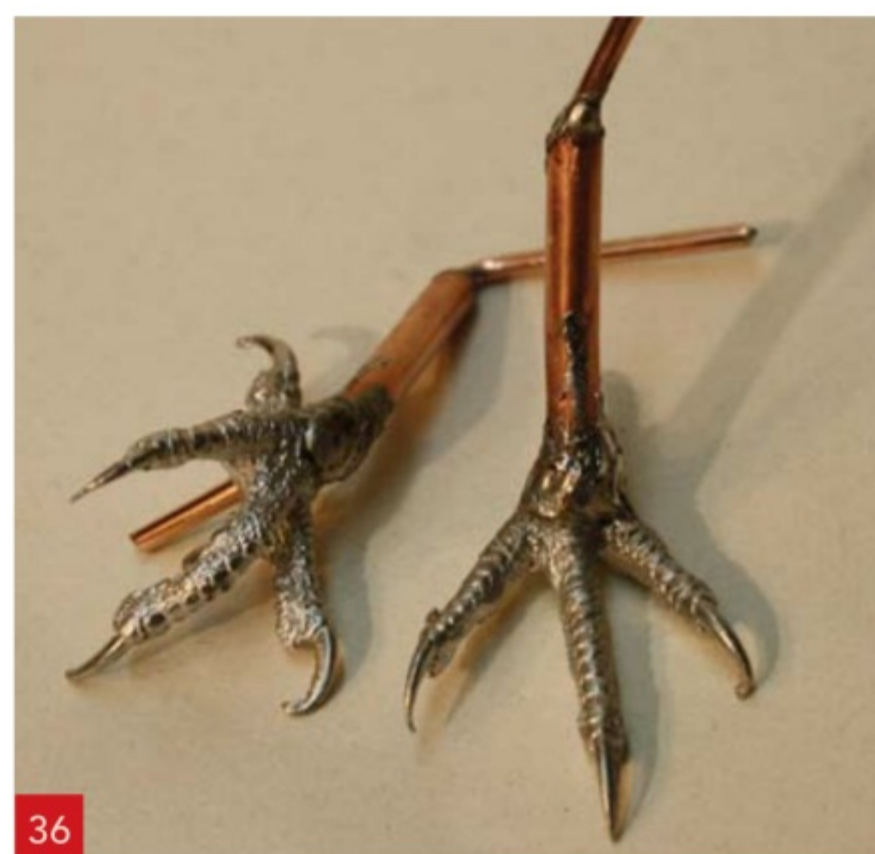
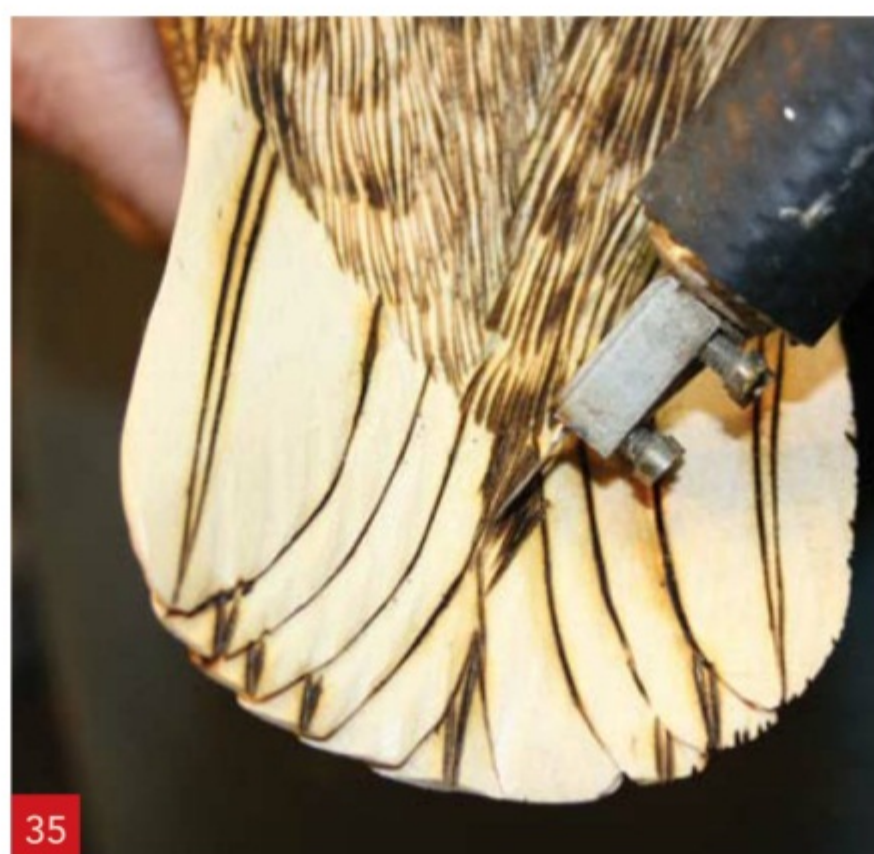
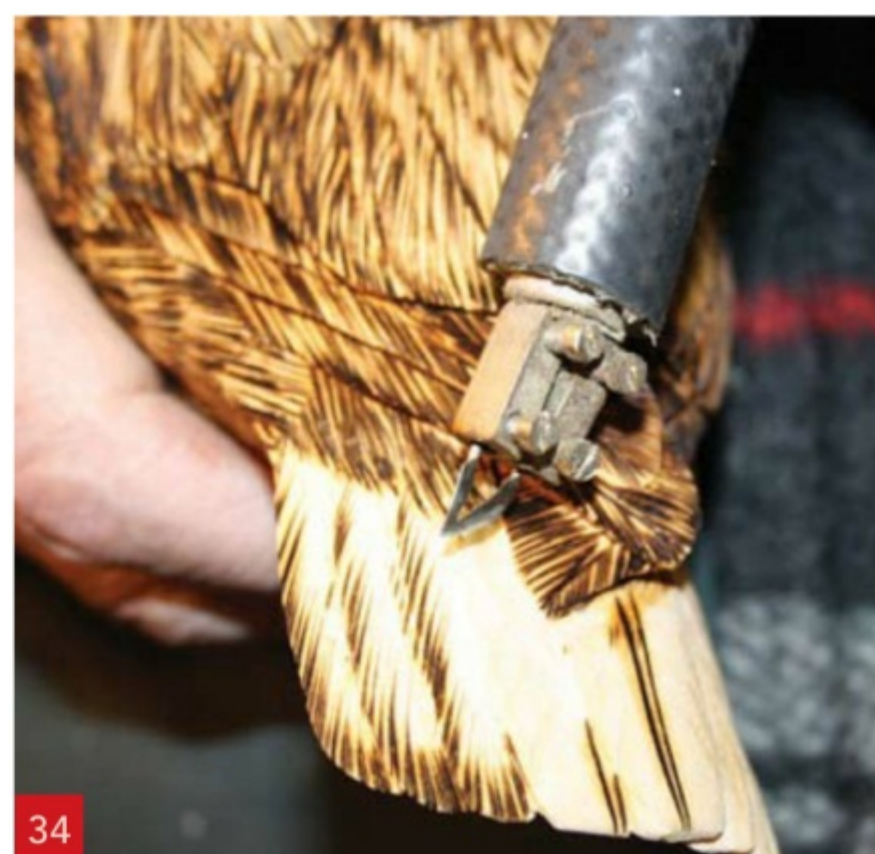
Note how photo 37 shows the feet fitted in holes in the base. The gnarly section of wood is a piece of bog oak which was dry. The base can be shaped further or altered from its original state by using a selection of burs. If you wish you can then sand blast or wire brush the base to accentuate the ruggedness of it. Once you are happy with how the birds fit on the base, you can then paint them with acrylics. The highlights shown in the main photo are created using a dry-brush method which involves brushing over the high spots with very little paint applied to the brush. I eventually placed the piece of bog oak on a block of walnut

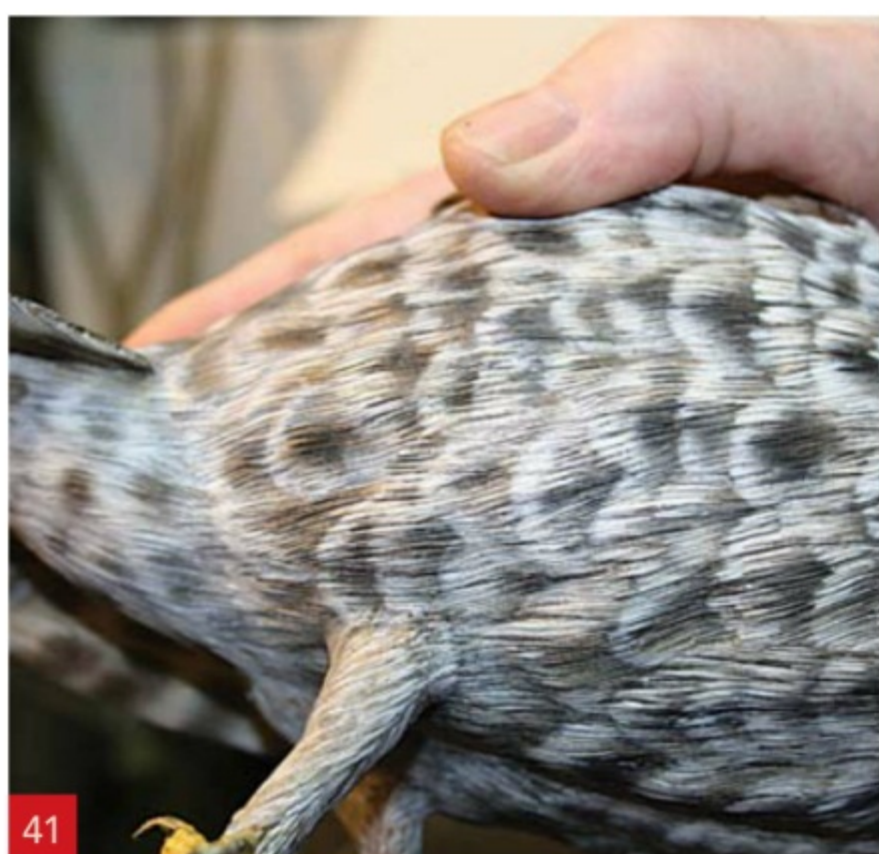
Gesso and painting

38 Undercoat the face and all under parts with white gesso. Using an airbrush and dark brown mix, which is burnt umber and Paynes Gray, put in dark markings following the feather flow

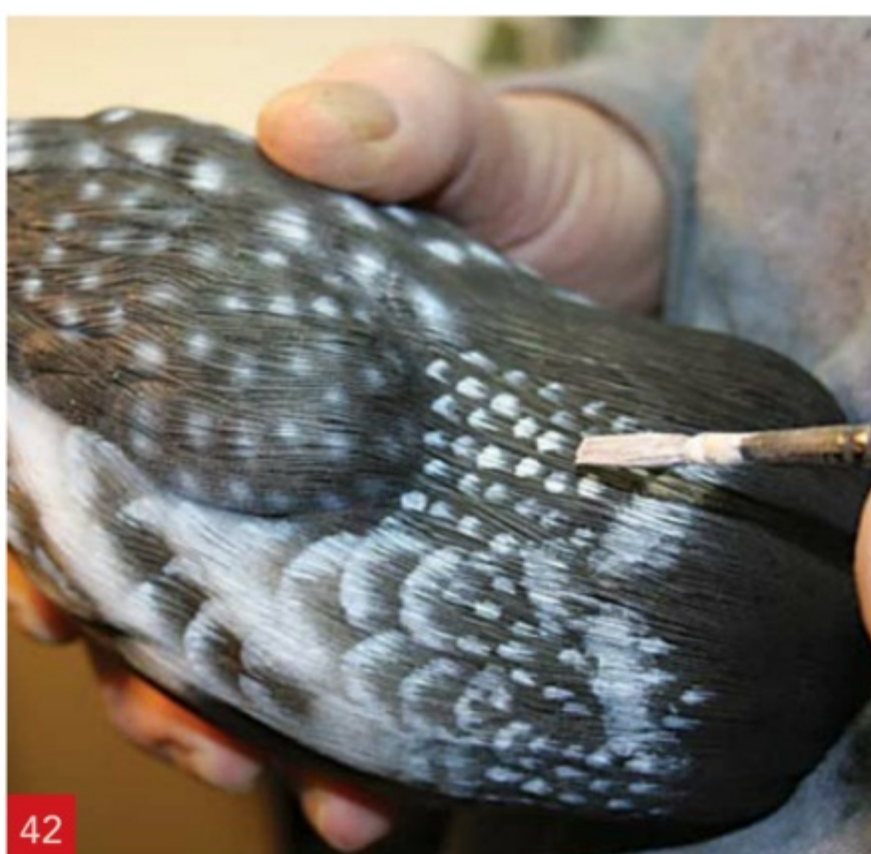
39 Using the same dark brown, paint the back and top of the head

40 Using a rigger paintbrush and white gesso, starting from the outer edge of the feathers, and paint the edge of the feathers in





41



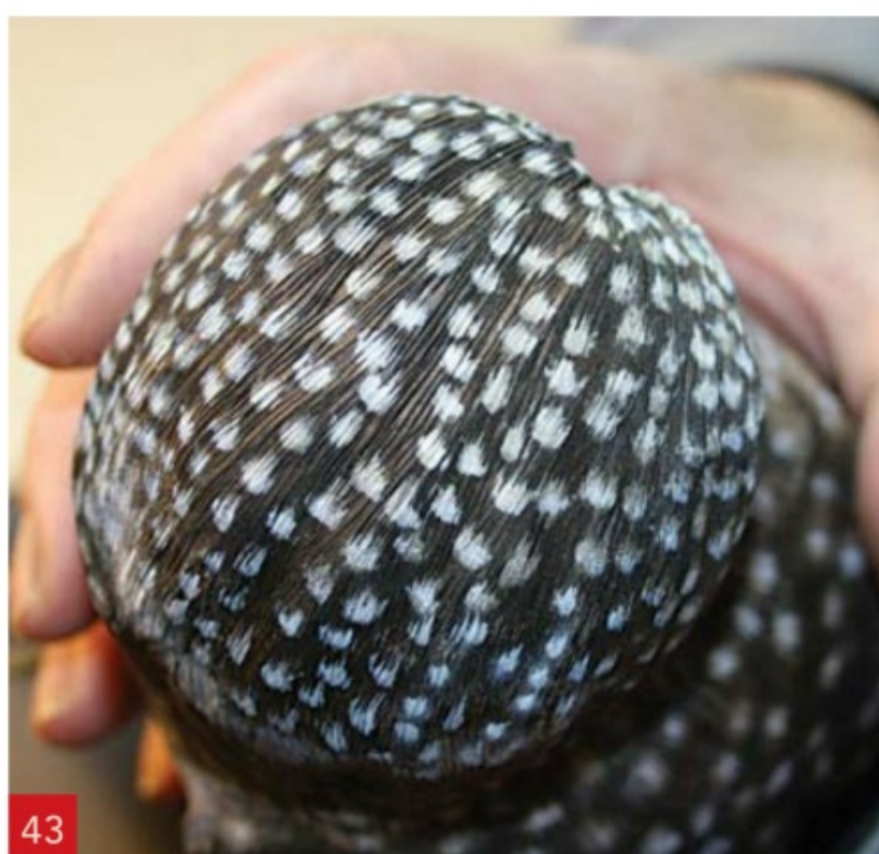
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41 Be sure to go over this area several times using dark and light until you achieve the effect you're looking for

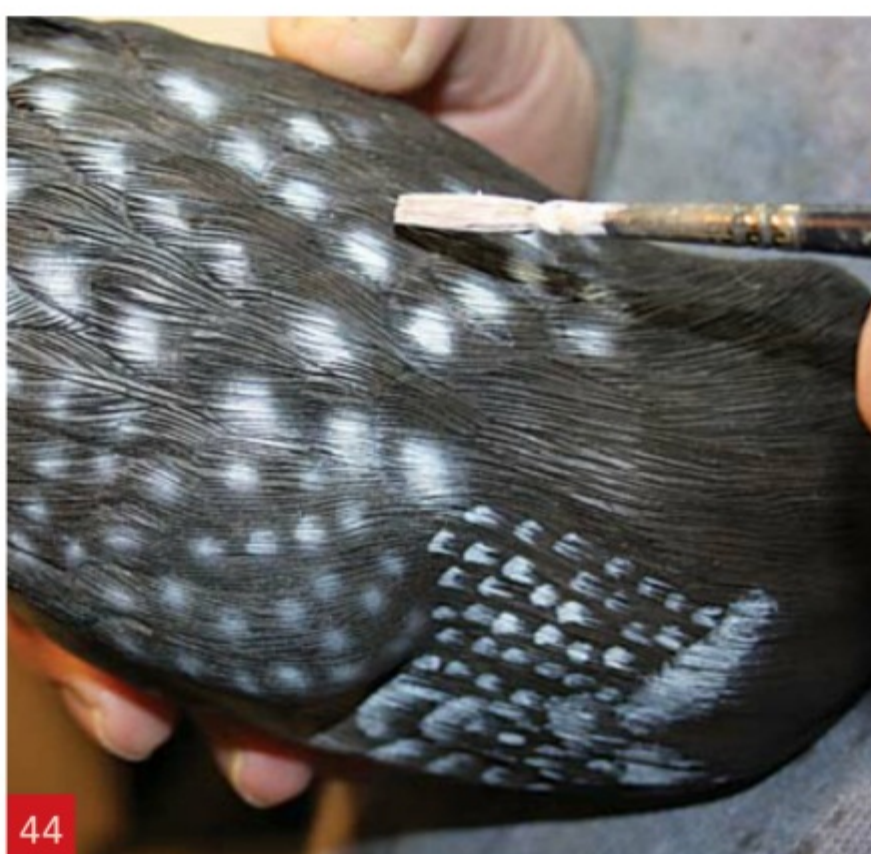
42 Using a small rigger and white gesso, put in all the small markings over the head

43 This photo shows you the effect I am trying to achieve

44 Use an airbrush and white paint to put in the light markings on the back wings and the tail. Then, adjust this further with a brush as required



43



44

45 Using a rigger and white paint, highlight some of the white markings. With a fine-liner and a dark mix, put in some splits. You can see the underside of the loose wing clearly showing the necessary detail...

46 ... and here you can see the top face of the wing painted and ready to be inserted

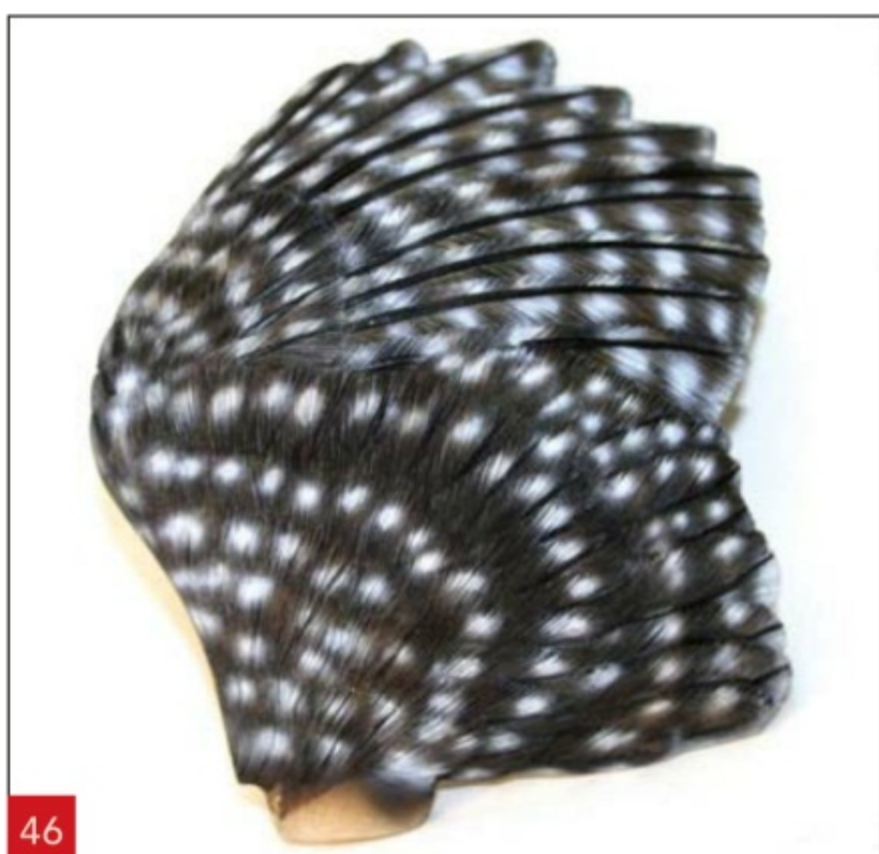
Assembly

The top bird needs to have its wing attached and glued in place. Once the glue is dry, a small amount of paintwork is required to disguise the join. The base also needs to have the dry brushwork added. Be sure to allow plenty of time between drying time and fitting the birds and base together. Once everything is dry, the lower bird can be fitted in place and then the open-winged bird can be fitted on the top section of wood above the lower bird, shielding it with its wing. Of course its position is vital to make this carving work – it is the difference between creating a feeling of protectiveness or just showing the owl having a good old stretch! Anyway, think about the placement carefully

47 Here is the finished carving showing both owls in situ ▶



45



46



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Top tips

1. PVA or carpenter's glue is ideal for fixing the wing in place. These are very easy to remove if you get any squeeze out, so you do not run the risk of ruining your work

2. Cotton buds are handy to have in the workshop. These can be moistened and used to clean up any glue squeeze out without any fuss

ToolPost Spring Open House

Friday 7th & Saturday 8th June 2013

Show open 10h00 'til 17h00 daily

Access to demonstrations is free of charge as are light refreshments, parking and entry to the show

Also featuring woodturners Robert O'Connor from Ireland (upper) and Nick Arnall from Norwich (lower)



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Sleeping cat



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ZOE GERTNER

Zoe Gertner carves this rustic sleeping cat as a project to be completed over a weekend

I recently experienced a heart-stopping moment: searching for a specific piece of timber in the redundant pigsties where I store my carving wood, something rustled in a dark corner above my head. I froze, looked up and caught the bold stare of a small, stray ginger cat settled on top of a stack of timber. Each time I went in, Puss was not inclined to move. At first, I tried to shoo him away, our hens being uneasy with a feline presence, but Puss was having none of that. Now that feather and fur have become used to each other, I've found Puss an old cushion to sit on and he performs his rodent-control duty in comfort. So, maybe the saying is true: 'A cat will choose its owner!' ➔

Things you will need...

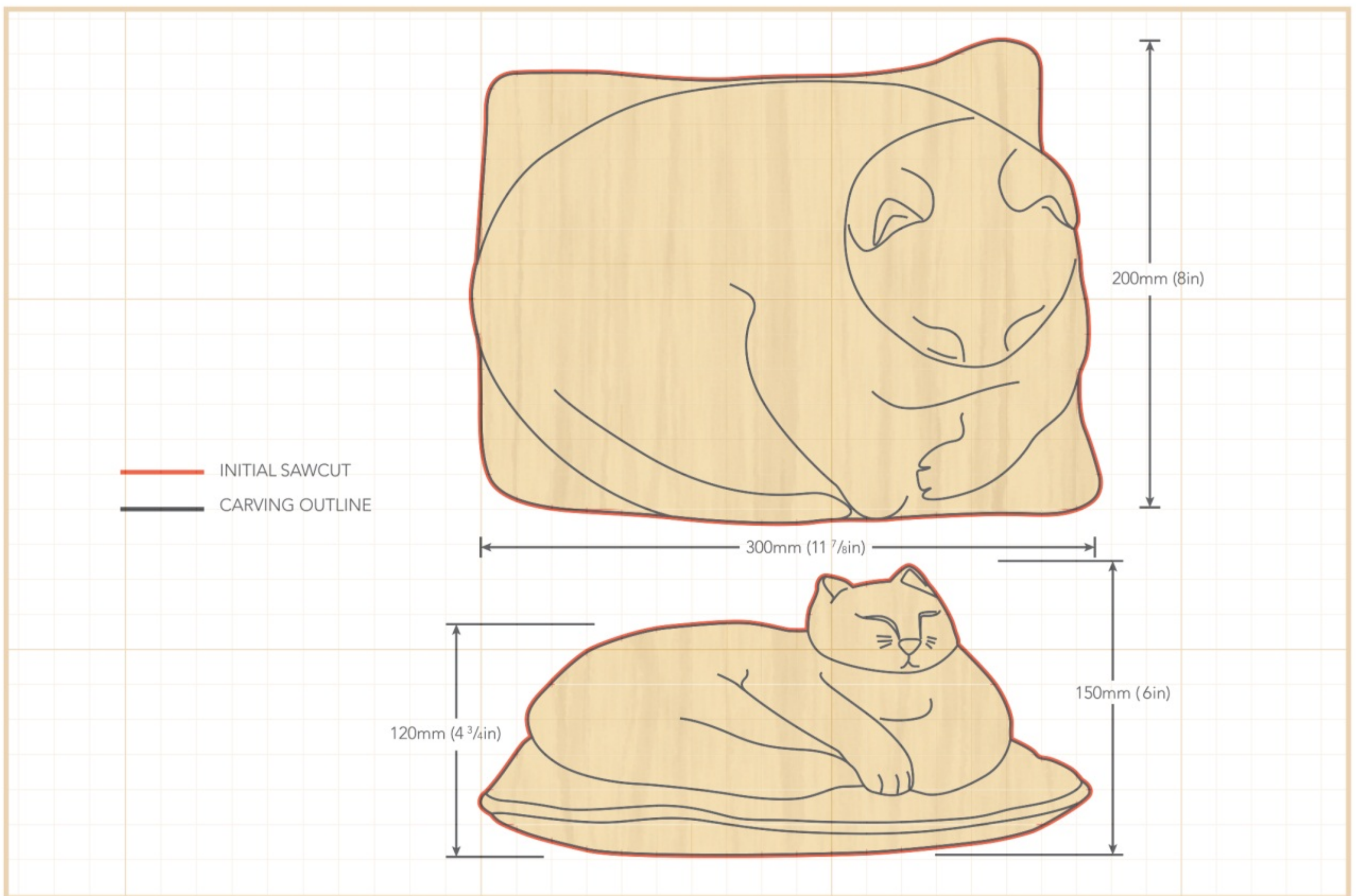
- Axe and lump hammer
- 25mm or wider No.3 gouge and mallet
- Surform or plane
- 16mm, No.8, 9 and 10 gouges
- 10mm or 6mm, No.9 gouge
- 12mm, No.5 gouge
- 12mm, No.3 gouge
- 6mm, No.3 gouge
- 3mm, No.9, 10, or 11 gouge
- 6mm, 60° V-tool
- 6mm skew chisel
- Cabinet scraper

Wood: Cedar (*Cedrus libani*)
Dimensions: 300 x 200 x 150mm

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zoe Gertner specialises in teaching woodcarving and sculpture, and is a fully qualified teacher and Adult Education tutor who studied anatomy and physiology as part of her university degree. Zoe is experienced in teaching and practising all aspects of woodcarving and wood sculpture and has been working professionally since 1980. See her website here: www.zoegertner.co.uk



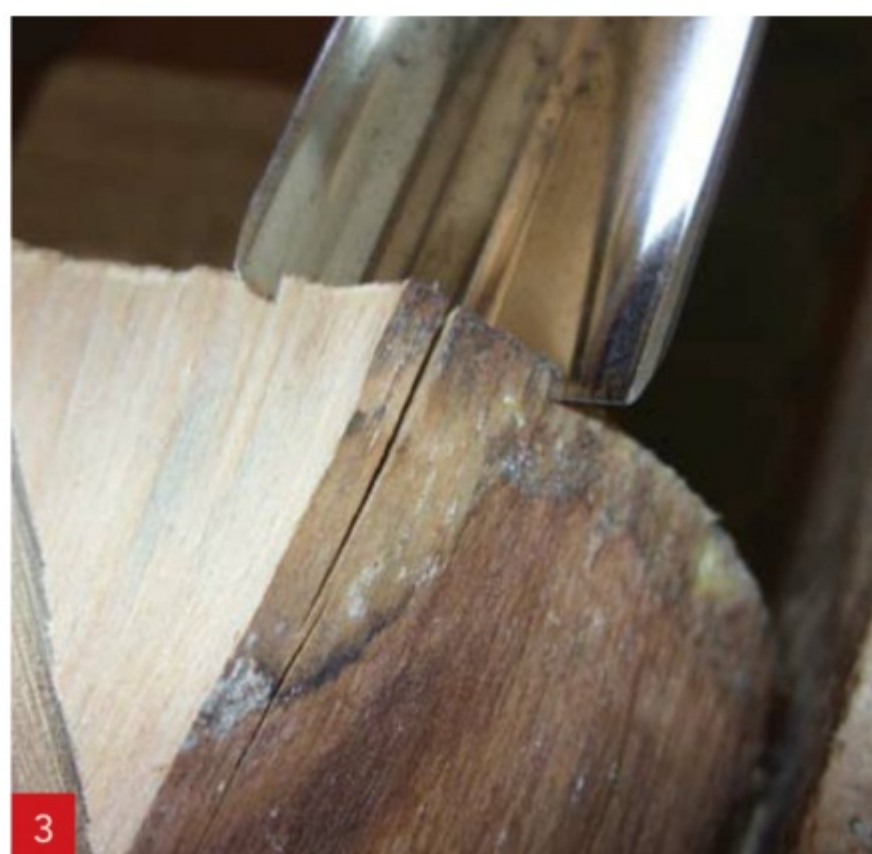


➔ **1** The first step, using a No.3, 25-38mm gouge and mallet, or a surform/plane, is to remove any loose fibres or splinters and flatten the surface with a wide No.3 gouge, surform or rasp until it stands steadily without rocking. When this is completed you can then remove the bark from the rest of the timber

2 With a piece of chalk, draw an approximate outline of the cat shape as seen from above and using a hand saw, make a saw cut across each of the four corners down to the level of the cushion which the cat will be sat on, leaving approximately 38mm for this to be the base of the carving

3 Each of the four triangular sections can now be removed, either by sawing horizontally along the grain or by carefully working towards the sawcut using a wide gouge and mallet; this method will allow you to split off shallow slivers along the grain

4 Having removed the corners, round over both ends using a deep gouge such as a No.8, 9 or 10, 16mm working from above and from the sides of the timber





5



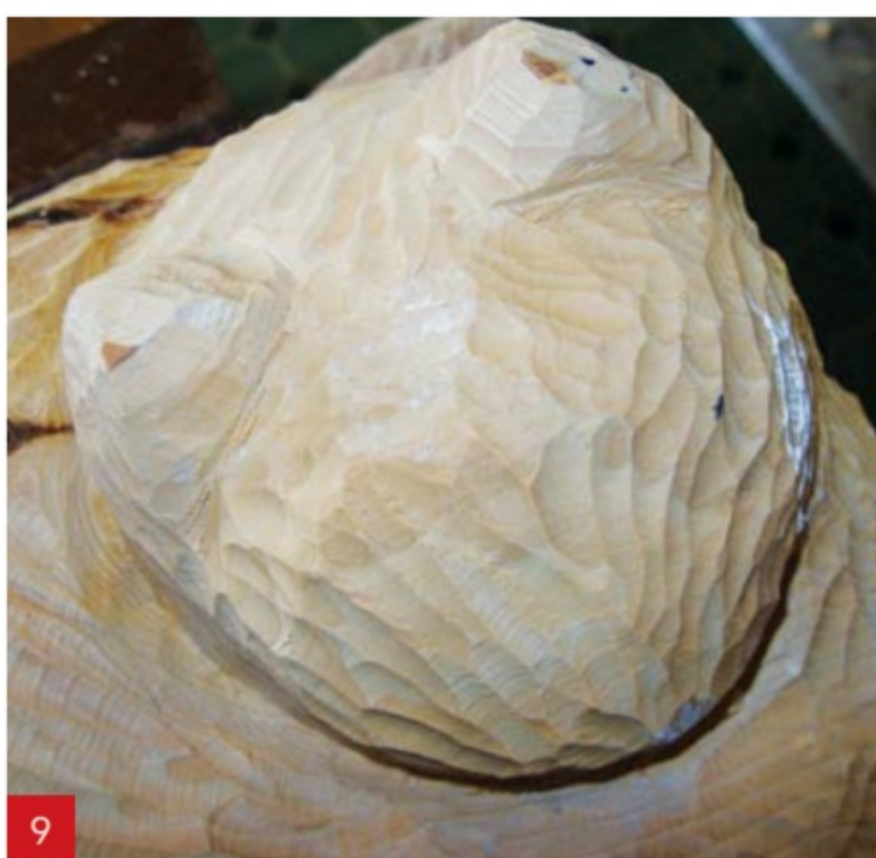
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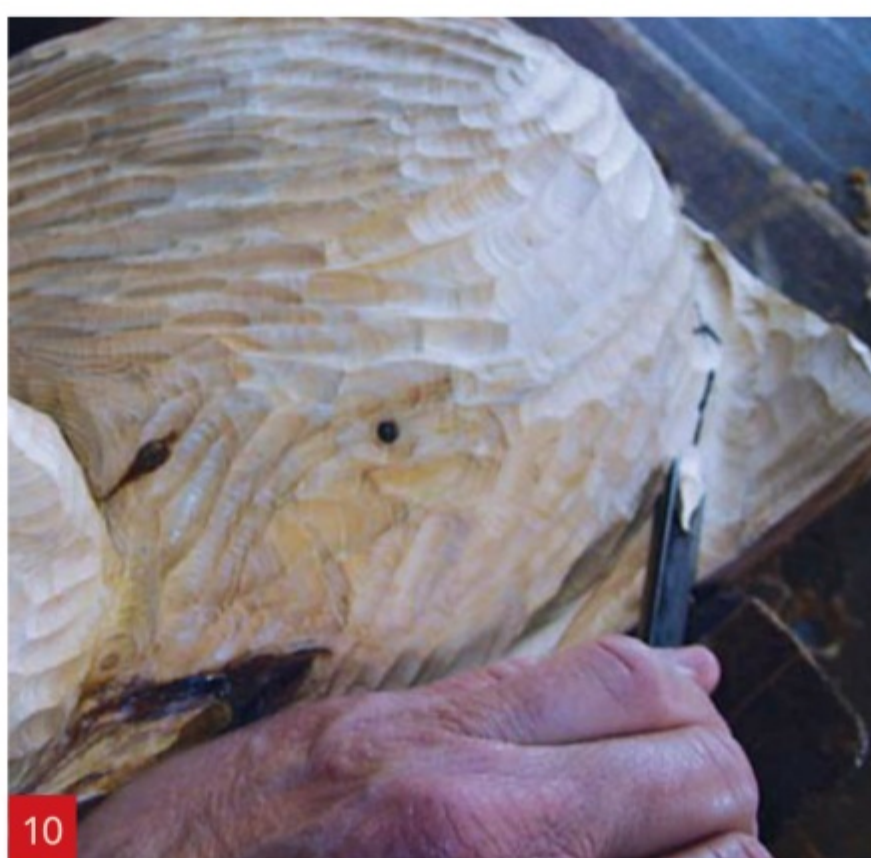
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5 Cut the base of the tail at one end and the base of the front leg at the other end until no trace of the sawn surfaces remains

6 End grain can be very hard to cut so use a narrower gouge, and wear eye protection if necessary

7 Cut a groove or channel alongside the head and reduce the depth of the body by cutting towards and into the channel, then towards the tail, removing and lowering the body so that the head area stands proud. Extend the channel towards the back then underneath the chin

8 Reduce the area in front of the chin, until you have formed a curving slope to accommodate the chest and paws, making the head approximately heart shaped. Remove the area between the ears. Using a No.3, 12mm gouge with opposing cuts, make a curving channel around the inner edge of each ear, cutting towards and into each channel to remove the area between the ears without damaging them. Carve them into a half-cone shape, both symmetrical and taper the tip of each to a blunt point. Now draw the face as a guide...

9 ... and reduce the size of the head by cutting outwards from the centre – with the grain – along the length of the nose, lowering the nose and removing more of the chest if the head appears too flat

10 Cut along the line of the edge of the cushion with a V-tool on the base of the tail, on the front of the cat, along the lower edge of the tail resting on the cushion, joining this to your first 'V'-cut at the base of the tail

11 Tilt the corner of the No.3, 12mm gouge across the upper edge of the 'V' channels cut and scoop outwards, with the grain. Repeat these V-tool cuts until the tool will no longer fit in the deepened edge between cat and cushion. Now undercut this join from both sides then tidy up the meeting edges of cat and cushion and remove any flaws

12 Create the triangular depressions between the haunch and back leg and across the chest between the forelegs using the No.9, 10mm gouge until the outer edges merge into the shoulder and haunch (A) and the inner sides of the forelegs (B)

➔ **13** You can now deepen the lower part of the chest, reduce the cat's back towards his tail, then slope the back leg down towards his front paw

14 The next step is to reduce the tail towards its tip and mark its edge by cutting a groove along the inner edge towards the front paw. On the foreleg, reduce the elbow into the fold of the back leg and belly

15 Deepen the lower section of the triangular area between the front legs to make a ruff across the chest just below the chin. Here you may find it easier to cut a channel along both inner edges of the forelegs with a No.3, 12mm gouge using opposing cuts and then by cutting away from the middle of the chest towards each channel; the resulting mound between can be shaped into the ruff

16 Continue reducing the haunch towards the foreleg and finish by shaping the rear end at the base of the tail into a blunt point. Finally, using the No.5 gouge, cut a gentle hollow behind the head and work over the whole carving, softening any sharp angles and edges

17 Smooth off the surface of the head, making sure it is symmetrical, draw a centreline from between the ears to the tip of the nose and mark the eyes and nose in place. Flatten along the length of the nose, redrawing the centreline on the fresh surface and carve a hollow between nose and cheek pouches each side

18 Reduce the lower jaw area beneath until the tip projects forward and is now prominent. Carefully hollow the triangular area between the brows by cutting away from the centreline and gradually reducing the depth of your cuts on the outer ends of the brow ridges

19 Using the 'V'-tool, mark both sides of the nose to the outer corner of the eyes. Begin each cut from the nose tip as far as the inner corner of the eye, then curve it round to the outer corner

20 Then using the No.3, 12mm gouge, deepen the sides of the nose and both inner and outer corners of each eye, then round over the surface of each eye to form the shallow convexity of the underlying spherical eyeball





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21 Mark the outline of the nose and nostrils on the nose tip and cut the central cleft running down to the mouth. Round over each side of the upper lip into the division by inverting the No.3, 12mm gouge and shaving the edges of the groove into the cleft

22 You can mark the mouth with the V-tool by cutting away from the cleft in each direction, unless, like mine, it is conveniently buried in the depths of the ruff around the neck. The whiskers can be shown by using the V-tool to make three or four lines on the cheeks

23 Reduce the elbow into the fold of the belly, the back leg and shape the ankles, toes and ends of both paws, deepening the inner sides and the chest and cut a slight hollow above the toes, indenting slightly between each toe. With the V-tool, continue the cuts along each side of the tail, tapering it towards the front paw, and round it to a blunt point at the tip. Then reduce the back leg, losing it beneath the tail and the front paw

24 Chamfer the ends/corners of the cushion so that they curve towards and meet the opposite side then smooth them off with a flatter gouge. Draw a continuous line around the cushion. Chamfer both the longer sides to a blunt ridge linking the corners and running around the whole cushion, then smooth off the surfaces as before. Finish the edge of the cushion with the V-tool and mark both sides of the piping covering the seam

25 The outer edges of the piping are finished by using the corner of the No.3, 6mm gouge, held inverted and by slicing sideways from either side, to the highest point ...

26 ... thus rounding it over from both sides

27 The ears have a little fold on the outer edges. Pare the outside surfaces smooth, shape the fold, and round over the outer edges of both ears

28 Remove any pencil marks with an eraser then pare and remove any nicks or tool digs, checking all meeting edges are cleanly cut. Apply colourless wax polish, using an old toothbrush to work it well into crevices, then buff to a sheen with a lint free duster

The bird artist



Bob has been carving since 1972

Simon Frost speaks with Bob Guge, a bird carver with a lifelong passion for his subject

For Bob Guge, carving is an activity immersed in family and in nature. From a young age, Bob would go bird watching and hunting with his father in the Fox River Valley of northern Illinois. Roy Guge was a hunter who began by carving duck decoys, and as his carving became more detailed and sophisticated, he moved on to songbirds and game birds. With this early fascination and education under the influence of his father, Bob's journey into carving birds was

perhaps inevitable.

In the 1970s, while on holiday with his wife Jody at a National Wildlife Refuge on Chincoteague Island, Virginia, Bob sought out the workshop of renowned decoy carver Delbert 'Cigar' Daisey. He had seen Daisey's decoys in *North American Decoy* magazine, and knew that he lived in the area. Surprisingly, Bob found out from an information booth in town that there were several different carvers by the name of Daisey in the area; but when

he and Jody arrived at the last address, a home on the water with marshland surrounding it, to find a man sitting with his feet up at a big desk, smoking a huge cigar while carving a duck decoy, he knew this was the one he was looking for. "That's what I want to do," he said to his wife. "I still don't smoke cigars, but he sure did influence me on being a bird carver!" Bob tells me, and once he started carving, he never wanted to stop.



A pair of orioles (Oriolidae)

The work

Bob works in jelutong (*Dyera cistulata*) imported from Malaysia, and tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*), from the swamps of the southern U.S, as well as acrylics. Admiring one of Bob's perched American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) or, his favourite bird to carve, the Henslow's sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*), the brain takes some convincing that the bird is not about to spring into flight or chirp its tune. Inspired by the tradition of decoys by Daisey as well as

Miles Hancock – another famous Chincoteague carver – the authenticity of Bob's carvings has an arresting charm.

Beyond de facto realism, his eye for the dynamic positioning of birds on a branch give his carvings a further artistic quality, augmented by his reverence for the beauty of these creatures. "My favourite pieces are some of the smaller birds I have carved, particularly small



Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*) in winter

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOEL BROWN

Lazuli Bunting
(*Passerina amoena*)



Yellow-throated warbler (*Setophaga dominica*)

➡ sparrows and finches, because of the intricacy in their colour patterns and unique coloration." Bob's main goal is always to capture the essence of a particular species of bird, whether he is carving a detailed bird or a smooth decoy. "I think the most important aspect in wildlife art is knowing your subject. If you are familiar enough with your subject, it is possible to reproduce it without reference," he says. Other considerations when starting work on a piece include the bird's habitat, the size of the piece, length of time it will take, cost, and if working to a commission or for a competition, the outlined criteria. "I never know exactly what the next project will be," he says, "because quite often they are commissions, but if not, an inspiration will surface."

And inspiration is never far from home; a large population of birds migrate through his hometown area in Gilberts, Illinois, allowing him to study a wide variety of birds. He notes that, as many carvers find as the years advance, his fine motor skills are not as sharp as in the past. But far from



Kestrel (Falco sparverius)

seeing that as a reason to stop carving, Bob instead evolves his carving and painting techniques to adjust to these changes.

Influences

Artistic influences for Bob are not limited to carvers such as Cigar Daisey, Miles Hancock and Harold Haertel – he also cites painters like the Canadian realist wildlife artist Robert Bateman; “His paintings always looked very complete and highly detailed, but also very soft and feather-like. I wanted that effect on my carvings,” he explains. “Another bird painter I really admired was Larry McQueen, who would paint perfect birds with simple strokes of the brush. The birds he painted always looked alive,” a quality which Bob has pursued himself with great success.



Juncos (Junco hyemalis)

Acclaim

Bob's work has earned him worldwide acclaim and many awards, winning the World Championship World Class Miniature Division an incredible five times, and many best of show awards at competitions across the United States. ➡

Contact

www.wingsinwood.com
www.gugeinstitute.com

FEATURE

Profile on Bob Guge



A Henslow's sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*)

In November 2012, Bob was diagnosed with stage four brain cancer. He has had the majority of a brain tumour removed, and is undergoing chemotherapy, radiation and a trial drug. His children have set up a website with regular updates on Bob's condition, as well as the facility to send Bob messages of support, and donations to help with the great expense of his treatment. The family are also arranging a benefit locally in Elgin, Illinois on June 29, 2013. Please take the time to visit the website at www.thebobgugebenefitfund.com. The Woodcarving team wish Bob the best of health and strength in this difficult time.



Tennessee warbler (*Oreothlypis peregrina*)

➡ In 2007, Bob received the Ron Ryan Award, which is presented to people who "exemplify the ideals of giving oneself, expressing goodwill, and exerting the extra effort needed to promote woodcarving throughout the carving world." His carvings are included in the permanent collection of the North American Wildfowl Art Museum in Salisbury, Maryland; the prestigious Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin and in many private and corporate collections around the world.

Spreading the talent

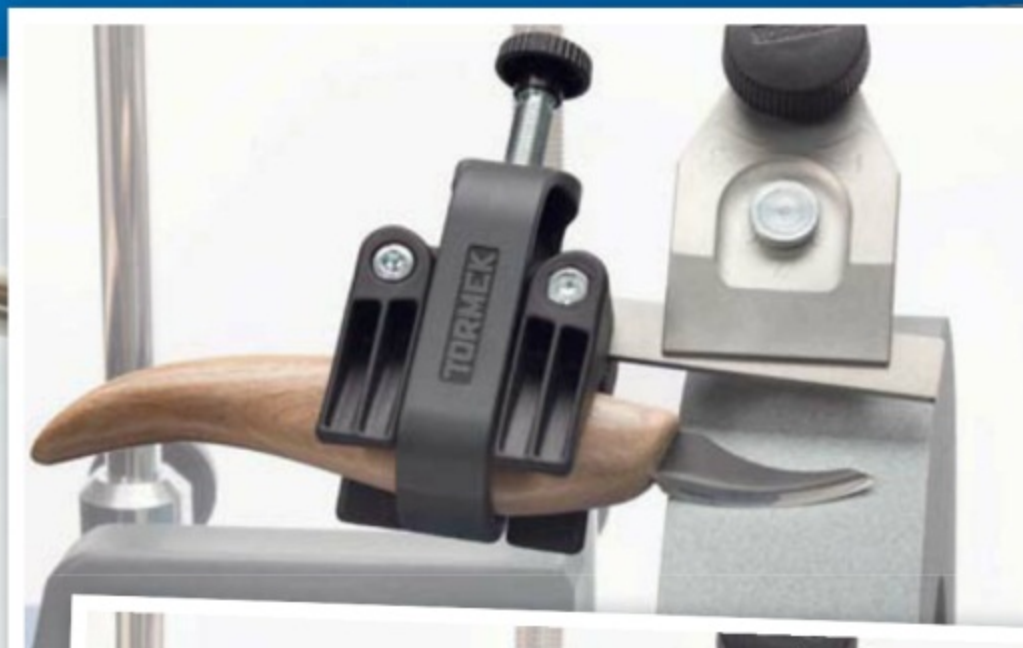
The Guges' eight children, born between 1975 and 1994, have all joined Bob in the workshop over the years: "All of our children have done art in some way, shape or form. Many times they would work with me in my shop and carve or paint their own things. It has been an absolute privilege to have been a part of this.

There were many good times

where I was able to bond with my children and pour into them what I had learnt over the years. I believe it is important to pass on the genuine passions and enjoyment of our art to the next generation, that it may not be lost." While most of Bob's children have taken up other art forms such as music, painting and graphic design, Bob's son, Josh, has followed in his father's and grandfather's carving footsteps, though the subjects of his work are not found in the sky, but beneath the water – there will be more on the third generation of carving Guges in the next issue of *Woodcarving*. Along with pyrographer Sharon Bechtold, the father and son team run the Guge Institute of Wildlife Art, where students from all over the U.S. flock all year round for the Guges' professional instruction. It is pleasing to see a passion passed not only through a family, but shared with the wider public too; look out for students of the Guges in years to come. ▀

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Blue edges

Chris Pye offers some preventative advice on keeping blue edges at bay

You turn on your high-speed grinder. You offer up the bevel of your carving tool to the spinning wheel. Sparks fly. All's going well, then – oh no! Suddenly, before you can react, a part of the cutting edge turns blue...

Bluing edges is a calamity: the blue colour marks where the temper – the hardness that the manufacturer imposed on the blade – has been destroyed. The blued part of the cutting edge is now soft; it will dull very quickly, even bend, next time you carve.

What can you do?

Other than re-temper your carving tool, nothing – except grind the blade back beyond the blue colour into fresh metal, re-shape and re-sharpen. And that's a lot of work. You definitely don't want to blue your edges!

Physics 1

The blue colour means the temperature in the metal has risen too much. The temperature rises because of heat entering the metal.

Heat enters the metal because of friction, and friction arises for any or all of several reasons. Pressure: Pressing too hard onto the fast moving surface. Time: Leaving the blade in contact too long before cooling. Speed: A standard 150mm grinder rotating at 2850rpm passes around 23 metres of surface across your blade every second. Wheel surface: A finer wheel presents less air and more surface grit across the blade than a coarser wheel.

Physics 2

Besides friction, the other factor that leads to a rise in temperature is the mass of metal. There is far more heat in a hand-warm dinner plate than in the tiny fragment of a spark, even though the spark has a much higher temperature. The upshot is that the thinner the metal – the less mass – the faster the rise in temperature from the heat of friction.

Thus it is that bluing happens to corners and thin edges. The point of a skew is particularly vulnerable.

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





You offer up the bevel of your carving tool to the spinning wheel. All's going well, then before you can react, the cutting edge turns blue!



A finer wheel presents less air and more surface grit across the blade



A coarser wheel presents more air and less surface grit across the blade



Bluing happens on corners and thin edges because the thinner the metal, the faster the rise in temperature

How to avoid bluing your edges

In a nutshell, you have to keep the blade cool. A water-cooled, slow-speed grinder is the obvious way to achieve this, but these machines are quite expensive compared to the simple high-speed dry grinders that most carvers use.

I've used a high-speed grinder for years without ever bluing my edges – well, hardly ever. From experience I know that if I blue the metal I'll spend a lot more time repairing the damage, so this is what I do to avoid it.

I grind in the normal fashion, but follow this practice. Fixed close to the grinder, at both ends, are lidded jars of water. I hold the

blade in my fingers, which in turn lie on the toolrest. Frequently, and I mean every few seconds, or less, I slide the blade back into my fingers and check the temperature.

If the blade is warm, or if I even think the blade might be warm, or even just out of habit, I dip the blade in the water and stir it quickly about. I don't wipe the water off but go straight back to the grinding.

A summary

- Check the temperature of the blade often and regularly
- Do not let the metal get above warm before dipping. Dip even if you are unsure whether it's warm or not

- Be patient!
- Have a light touch; lay off the pressure
- Take your time. It's much faster than a benchstone, whatever!
- As the bevel metal gets thinner and you approach the finished edge, take even more care
- Check the temperature even more often
- Use the coarser wheel
- Buy a slower speed dry grinder if you can. ▶

You can see a video of Chris demonstrating how to avoid bluing your cutting edges on the Woodcarving Workshops website. Visit www.woodcarvingworkshops.tv



I hold the blade in my fingers, which in turn lie on the toolrest



I frequently slide the blade back into my fingers and check the temperature



If the blade is warm, I dip the blade in the water and stir it about quickly

Fluted bowl

Nic Westermann creates a freestyle fluted bowl from unseasoned birch



PHOTOGRAPHS BY NIC WESTERMANN

My background in green woodworking means I take a relatively unplanned approach to my carvings; this became more apparent to me as I tried to record the process for this article.

For me, carving is about using the wood I have available, which means my starting point is a log still with the bark on. In this case as it had been outside for just over a year it was starting to spalt. This made for a more interesting grain pattern, but again meant I had to adjust my design to suit what I found as I progressed. However, if you prefer to use sound, planed, seasoned timber then the process would still be very similar.

An Arbortech and/or bandsaw

could also be used instead of the axe and adze to rough out the bowl. I don't feel there is any right or wrong way to work; whatever feels safe and enjoyable. However, for me, this means using hand tools, removing as much of the waste with the axe and adze as possible before moving on to knives for the finishing cuts. I keep my tools very sharp and aim for a smooth but faceted tooled finish with no sanding. Also, if a piece doesn't work out as expected, I tend not to rework it, preferring to start a new piece. This may be a hangover from my blacksmithing work. With forgework it is better to work quickly and boldly, completing a piece as efficiently as possible; mistakes can rarely be rectified completely.

Things you will need...

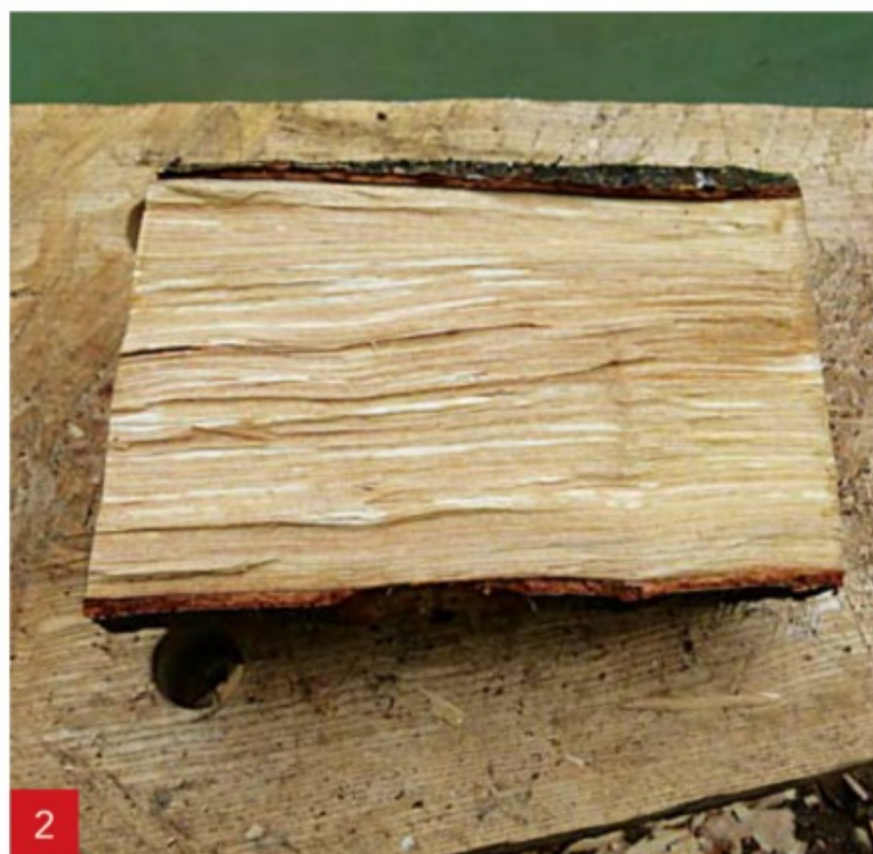
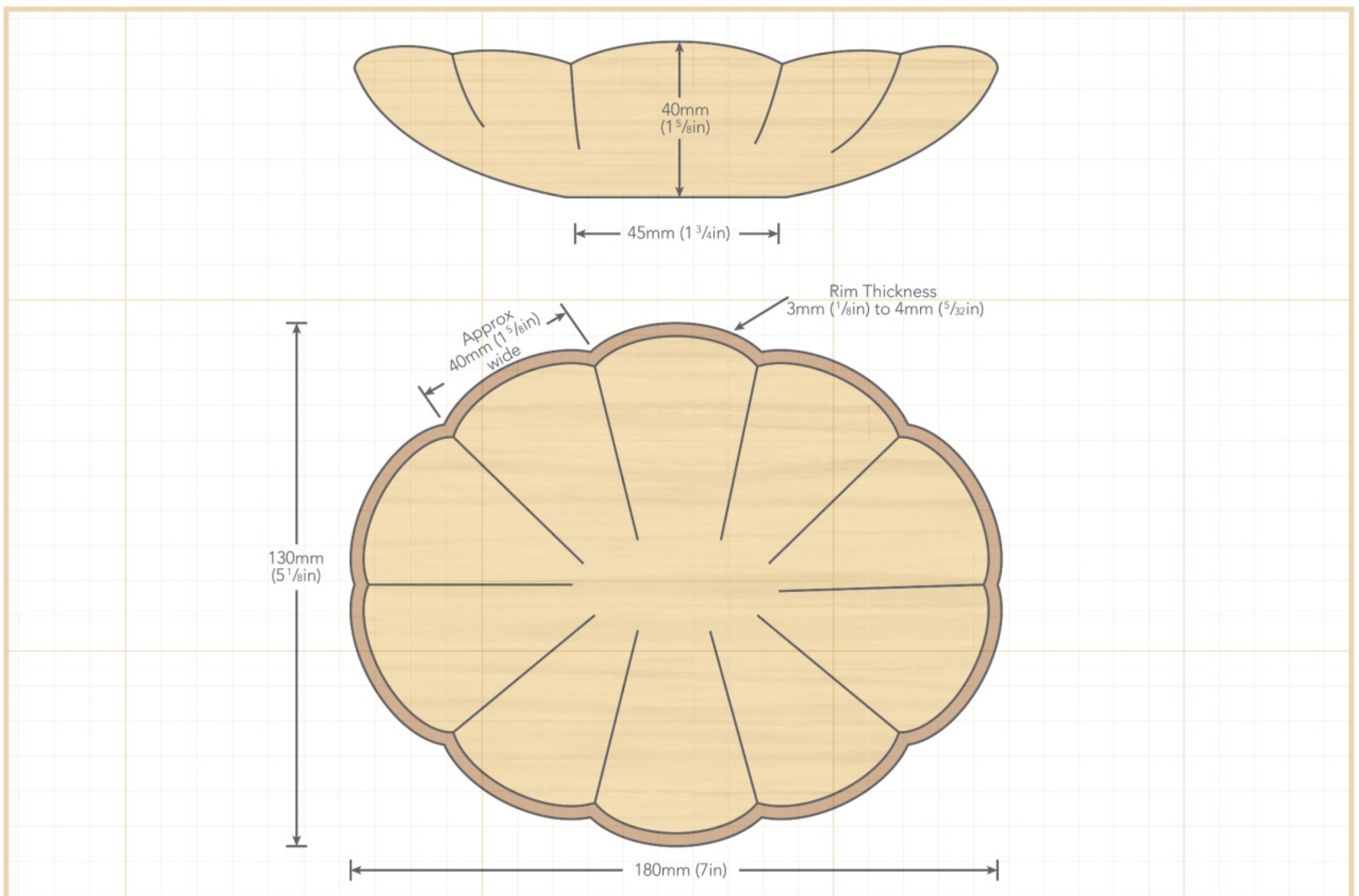
Wood: birch (*Betula pendula*)
Dimensions: 300 x 175mm

- 300mm froe
- Carving axe
- Adze
- 50mm-diameter bowl adze
- Bowl gouge or bowl knife
- Laminated carving knife
- Detail carving knife

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

After 12 years as an ornamental blacksmith Nic Westermann made the leap into toolmaking; initially specialising in green woodworking tools. Needing to know if the tools were up to scratch Nic rigorously tests them





➔ **5** Wedge the bowl blank in a bowl block, or whatever holding device you have available. In this case some waste wood was wedged underneath to raise the bowl up to allow easier access

6 Use an adze for the initial shaping, working from the centre outwards; I find that flutes tend to form naturally and it is just a case of enhancing them rather than trying to remove them. However, it may well be easier to mark out roughly where you want them to be. At this point you can see some of the flutes developing

7 As you get close to the edge of the log, if you are unsure of your accuracy when swinging an adze, this unconventional method of cutting may be a useful way to refine the flutes

8 Here you can see the level of finish possible after using the adze

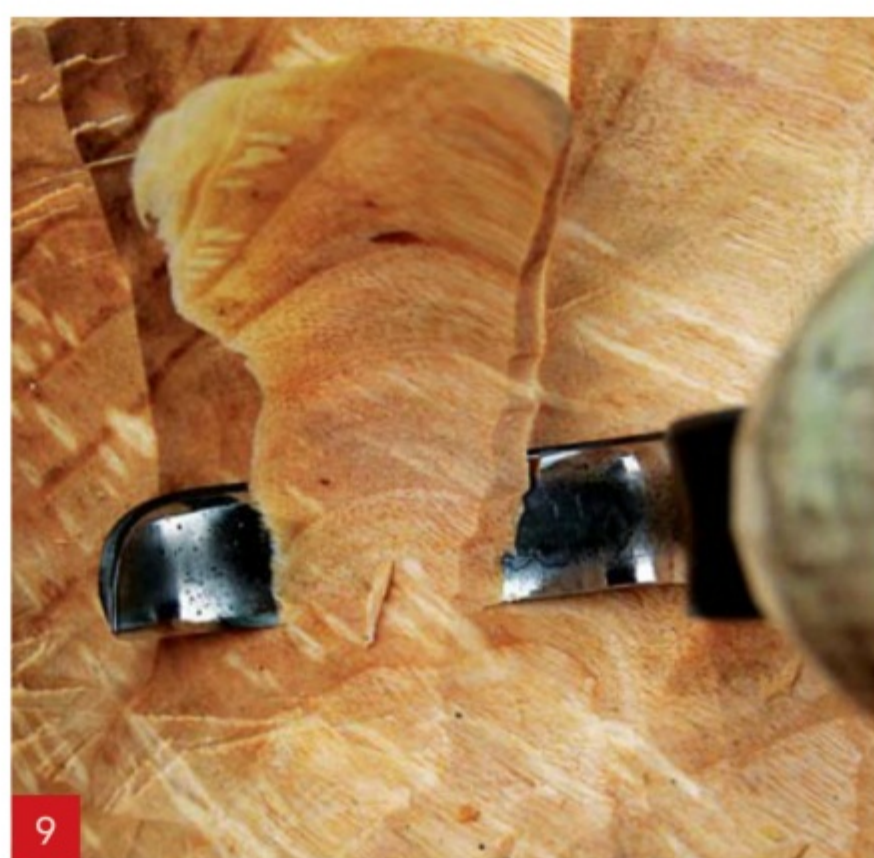
“Wedge the bowl blank in a bowl block, or whatever holding device you have available”

9 Use a bent knife – or twca cam – to further clean up the flutes. A curved gouge could be employed here to equal effect; what is most important is that whatever tool you choose matches the radius of the adze. At this point I got carried away trying to get the perfect photograph of a finishing cut into the end grain of the wood. This has the unfortunate effect of making my already slightly too narrow bowl even longer

10 This is the level of finish possible with a twca cam. It is quite tricky do the centre; I tend to let the ridges fade out rather than have a complex intersection right in the middle of the bowl

11 You can now remove the bowl. In my case, as I had gone quite deep the thinnest spots were marked with a pencil. I stayed clear of these with the axe

12 Firstly, reduce the wall thickness of the bowl to be roughly the same as the thin spots marked with pencil – I did this by guessing that towards the base the thickness was less than 10mm





13



14



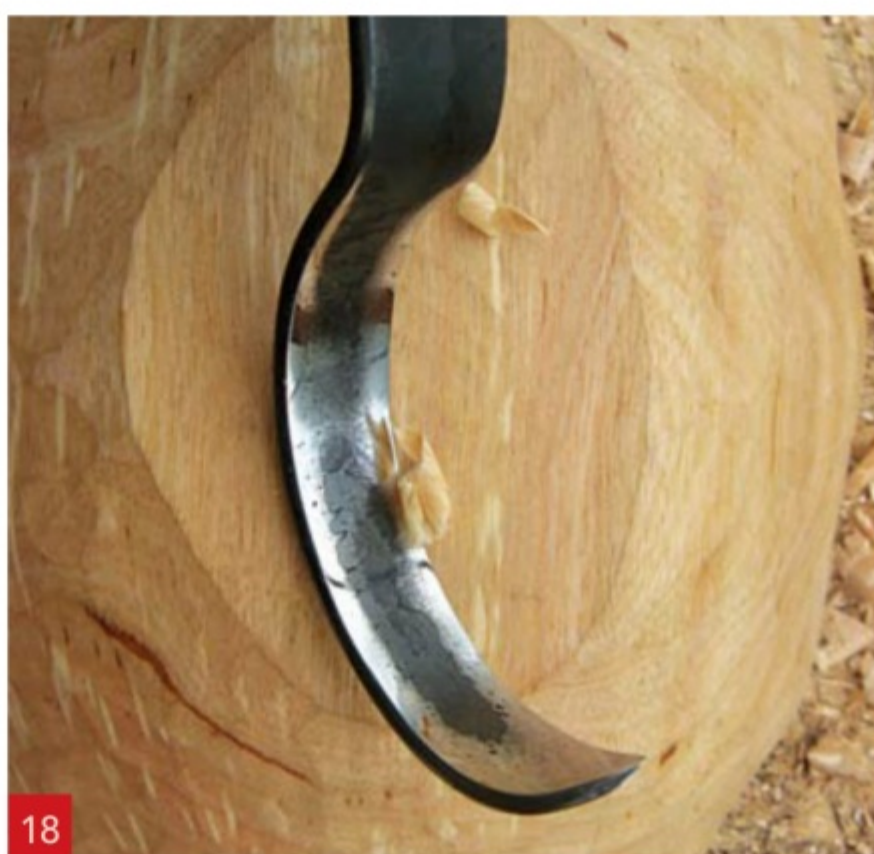
15



16



17



18



19

13 You can now roughly hew the bowl to size. It is viable to finish with a knife at this stage. You can also check that the bowl sits level. If it doesn't, remove wood from the base until it does

14 With care, use an axe to remove the wood here, as when used properly, it can be a very accurate and efficient way to remove wood. I was able to cut the external flutes to save time, removing a lot of wood with a knife. It is easy to go too far with an axe and it is infinitely better to change down to a knife sooner rather than too late

15 Here is a top view of the final finish possible with an axe

16 Take finishing cuts with a larger carving knife; I work the entire outside surface of the bowl aiming to keep the wall thickness at the natural edge to 4mm. Gently blend in the flutes on the outside rather than take them all the way down to the base

17 Cut the sharper inside returns with a narrower detail blade, which turns much more easily. Your aim is to finish the bowl at this stage so that sanding is not required. However, if the bowl does need sanding, I would hold off for the time being

18 Finally, hollow the base slightly. The wood is still wet and may move slightly on drying. You will find it is much easier to re-flatten a hollowed surface

19 The bowl is now ready to be dried. A problem I struggle with is dirty finger marks. A tip I picked up from Peter Benson is to wash the bowl in soapy water with a nailbrush. It won't raise the grain on cut wood. Dry with a paper towel, then wrap in two sheets of newspaper and leave to dry indoors. Unwrap after the first couple of days and if there is any hint of cracking, soak the bowl in Danish oil. Keep wrapped for a week or until you feel it has dried, which will depend on the species of wood. This bowl dried with no cracking or warping; spalted wood seems to have less tension in it and rarely gives problems. Lightly sand with fine abrasive for a final clean up followed by a couple of coats of Danish oil to finish it. My bowl didn't quite turn out as I wanted, but there is always the other half of the log if things go completely pear shaped ▶



Maquettes

part 4

**In the final part of his series on maquettes
Andy Hibberd looks at casting and carving**

Although traditionally trained, Auguste Rodin managed to upset the establishment of his day with lifelike clay maquettes and models, which didn't conform to the more traditional methods used at the time. By 1904 though, having just enlarged 'The Thinker', one of his most popular pieces, he had become world-renowned as a major force in sculpture. He would quickly capture the essence of a sculpture in lively clay maquettes, which would then be worked on and improved or altered before being cast into bronze or carved in stone. Rodin had an assistant called Henri Lebossé who under supervision would carry out most of this work, 'The Thinker'

included. To enable this transfer from artist to skilled assistant to take place, several methods and devices were employed by Rodin. One technique he used was to use a pointing device. Permanent location marks or pins of some description were positioned onto the plaster cast in set positions. The piece of stone to be carved would then have drill holes made in corresponding positions as dictated by the pointing device. Many other devices and methods were used in the reproduction of his work. More detailed explanations of such techniques can be found in the plethora of old books gathering dust in backstreet bookshops.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Hibberd trained as a woodcarver at City & 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

Stage one: Casting the head



Apply in layers – here you can see that the next coat is ready



A casting was pressed into wet plaster

The reason why Rodin and many other sculptors have taken plaster casts of their clay maquettes is because clay as a material has its drawbacks. It will shrink and crack, it is quite fragile and generally

takes considerable maintenance to keep it in tip-top condition. Moldsil supplied by Jacobson Chemicals was again used to construct the mould. When this had hardened it was supported by a plaster

backing and several castings of the head were then taken. I used a substantial piece of blonde walnut (*Juglans regia*) that I have been saving for a project such as this, and the casting in.

Stage two: Preparation of the wood before carving

The piece of walnut and the plaster cast were positioned side-by-side on a piece of 12mm-thick plywood. With the addition of another piece of ply underneath the block of walnut, I was able to match the heights of the highest point on the casting – the tip of the nose – with the surface of the wood. Using a tri-square, the positions of the centre of the eye, the high point on the upper lip

and of course the centre of the tip of the nose were all transferred across as parallel lines onto the surface of the wood. The next step, centring the pieces, is important. Draw a centreline on the cast running down the face, locating the 'X' mark dead centre at the tip of the nose and through the middle of the lips.

Positioning the centreline

The position of the centreline on the wood is determined by the particular piece of wood you are using for the carving and your own judgement as to its location. When completed, this links the positional points on the cast and on the wood together. With a few simple calliper measurements from the centreline of the cast to the outside edge of the head, draw a corresponding rectangular pencil line on the wood. This of course is your outside dimension. It is probably advisable to allow a little extra just in case! Lastly, take a measurement from the base of the casting – the lowest point – up to the tip of the nose – the highest point – marked onto the side of the timber; this sets the depth of the carving. After all

this preparation we have reached the stage where we can start removing some of the timber.

The removing of this step of timber surrounding the head will instantly project you into the carving. I was unable to use the bandsaw because of the thickness of the walnut, so instead, the trusty old tenon saw came out of hibernation. Having saw cut down, I quickly split off the timber using a large Addis, just off the flat chisel. Obviously I could have used the saw for the whole of the job, but decided to indulge myself.



Measured up ready for timber removal



With care, large chunks can be removed

→ Stage 3: Profile solutions and timber removal



Sawing the profiles

In one of my earlier articles, 'Deco Gecko' which was featured back in *Woodcarving* 125 (Mar/Apr 2012), I was extolling the virtues of direct carving methods. There's a minimum of preparation and the carving is dictated by the experience of the carver and the sensitivity to the material. Here however, we are engaged in a more logical process; identifying what timber needs to be removed, and then quickly removing it using the necessary tools.

Using thick card, I made a series of profile gauges. The right-hand gauge, produced by trial and error and a pair of scissors, needs

to glide over the plaster casting without being obstructed by any part of the face. After marking this line on the timber, you can safely saw cut down and remove it. You will need to produce another similar profile for the side of the head and again you can safely remove all the timber above the line. The profile gauge is more finely tuned, however. It will only fit over a certain amount of the plaster cast, so care has to be taken so you know exactly whereabouts you are in relation to the carving positionally, before inadvertently chopping off too much wood.

Stage 4: Modern pointing and positional awareness



Calliper measurements being taken of pointing locations



Quick and precise wood removal

Using a set of callipers, check your measurements on the plaster cast and then transfer them onto the wood. Before proceeding to the next practical stage I decided to re-familiarise myself with the original photographs, drawings and ideas that had influenced me in the early stages of the modelling. Drawing a head from different positions – as shown in the photograph – did help with the understanding of the curves and shapes and the changes of plane that make up the structure of the face. This revisit also helped me to remember a tip that I was shown several years ago which speeds up the measuring process during carving.

Firstly draw a vertical line on

the page and mark with a pencil line the calliper measurements of the face, from chin to forehead. Next, measure across the face, the width of the nose, the distance between the centres of the eyes, etc. and add these dimensions to the chart. This time though, using a horizontal line, positionally related to the first measurements. During carving, this chart can be constantly and quickly referred to without interrupting the flow of the carving which would probably occur if you are frequently stopping to check the cast for measurements.

Other measuring devices shown are a commercially produced depth gauge and a homemade depth gauge and

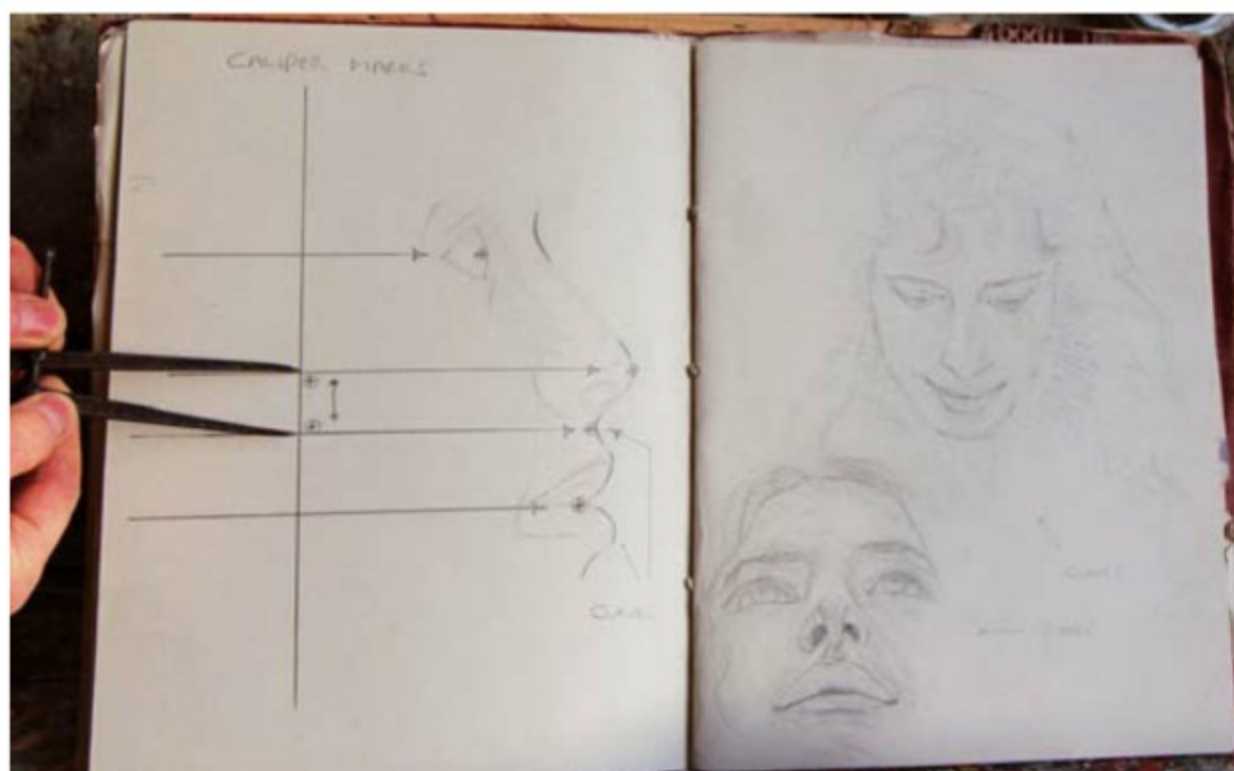
marker measuring device knocked together out of three pieces of wood, a few drill holes and a pencil.

Carving with a machine

A few months ago I was fortunate enough to purchase a second-hand Wivamac carving machine. I had not had a chance to try it out properly so decided that this project would be the ideal opportunity to do so. In effect, this could turn out to be my own personal mechanical Henri Lebossé, supervised and under hand control.

As part of my health and safety ethos and as it was obviously many years out of warranty, I had it professionally checked over

Stage 4: Modern pointing and positional awareness – cont'd



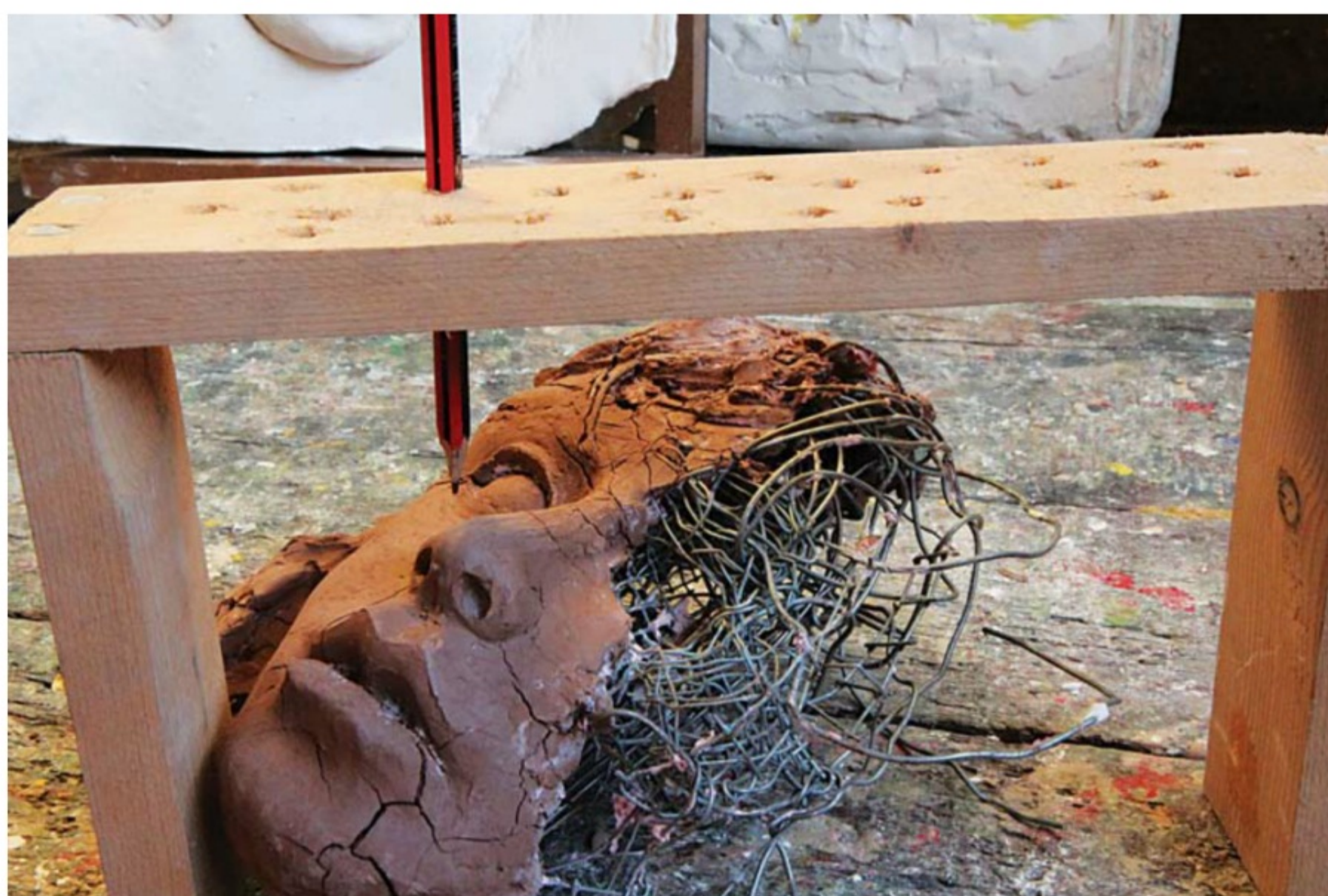
Instant calliper measurements for continuity



Depth measurements and checks

and passed for electrical safety. The plaster cast and the piece of walnut were placed side-by-side on the machine, a stylus is then placed on one of the known positional marks on the plaster casting and the router with a similar sized router bit is placed upon the corresponding mark on the piece of walnut. By moving gently over the plaster cast, the router cuts out the profile onto the wood.

As I suspect most of you are not fortunate enough to have one of these machines, I am afraid it will take you slightly longer to reach the next stage. A couple of tips, though. A pillar drill can be used in setting depth holes into the walnut after having presented it to the plaster cast first. It is possible by linking up these drill holes to almost honeycomb a piece of wood, thereby chipping off very easily. If you leave the marks of the bottom of the drill hole on the piece of wood you end up with a series of profile marks, very useful when you come to carving with a chisel to help you locate where you are.



A homemade pointing device



Pointing with a pillar drill

→ Stage 5: Carving



Carving the features



Use broad chisel strokes

I selected the chisels I felt would be best suited for the job of modelling this face; mostly Addis or Herring Bros. antique tools I have collected over the years. One tip I have picked up is to carry around a small piece of wood with stab marks and comments written upon it, describing the many tools you hope to come across on a foraging expedition. These marks can be taken from the chisels of carver friends and colleagues who wouldn't be parted from them at any cost! This becomes a very valuable piece of wood, stopping you buying duplicates of tools you already have and allowing you to have confidence in tools you buy.

The measurements are in millimetres; F/B means forward bent and SM means 'Swiss made' with its code beside it. This was one of the two modern chisels used on this carving. Another was the Addis, which produced the 20mm stab mark.

Starting to carve

Hopefully without too much pain and consternation you too will have removed enough wood, by whichever method you decide to use, to tackle the modelling stage for yourselves. I particularly enjoyed this part of the carving, but it can still fill you with a slight feeling of dread. What if all the previous work is wasted and I have to start over again? This kind of stage fright is not a bad thing, because complacency can be a lot worse. I like to take quite a bold approach to carving. My own preference is not to 'nibble' at the work, but to cut cleanly with as large a tool as possible.

Finishing

As the last stage is quite personal, I feel you should tackle it by whichever method you feel most comfortable.

Because this carving is part of a technical exercise and not a

commission destined for either a customer or a gallery I decided to leave it at what I considered a suitable point of completion. It was finished directly from the chisel, not sanded down, or finished off with any oil or varnish. I liked the effect achieved, and am pleased with the resultant carving that has been produced.

This series has been extremely gratifying to write and hopefully will be useful for my fellow carvers. If any of you produce work using the methods described, please send photographs; it would be great to see some of your work. ▶



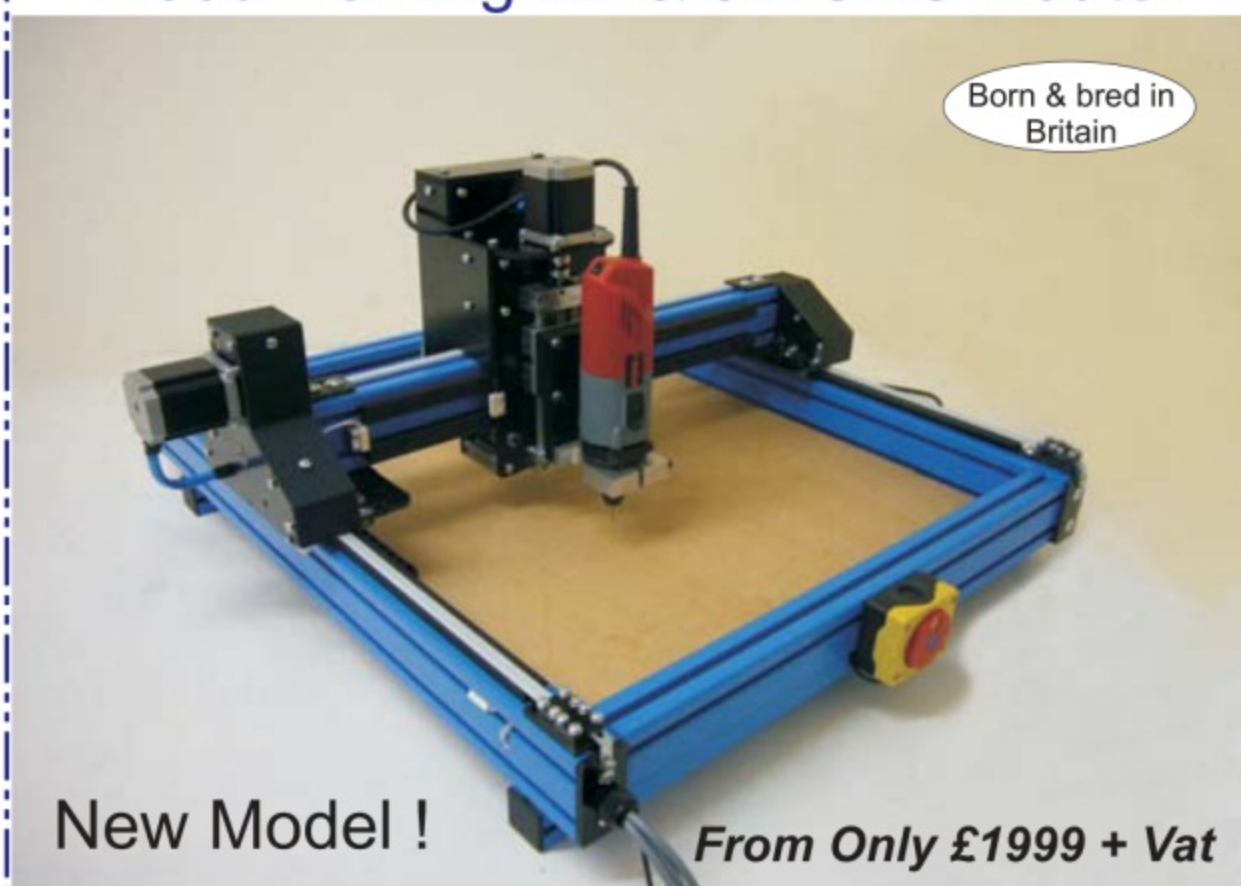
The study completed



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From the Workshop

Ben Hawthorne shares a few well-used tips on the many methods of finishing

We occasionally have visiting speakers at our woodcarving club and they are usually very informative. Having belonged to other clubs with a wide variety of activities I have listened to a range of different topics and sat through a lot of these that could easily have been prescribed as a remedy for sleeping problems. I must admit that all those that have been organised for the carving club have certainly not fitted into this category. There are some very knowledgeable people out there and all clubs could do well to have some of them visit.

Notes on finishing

When clearing out a cupboard in my workshop the other day I came across some notes that I collected a year or so ago when we had a visiting speaker talking about finishing. As I remember, it was a very interesting talk covering all aspects of finishing your carvings – how to get a good finish first of all and then what to do to preserve the fine surface you have managed to achieve. All the options had been used on sample boards with a description of how this had been achieved and we were given a worksheet covering all of the different methods. I can't remember who gave the talk – something to do with age I



Using various finishes on sample boards allows you to see the effect a finish has on a piece of wood

suspect – but I have tried most of the ideas that are on the sheet.

On re-reading the worksheet, I realise that times have obviously changed and some of what was described now seems out of date, but the general details may be of interest.

Preparation

I remember the emphasis being on making sure that the surface was properly prepared before any sort of finish is applied. This means that all tool marks must be clean and smooth and, if the

piece is to be sanded, all scratch marks are removed by going through all the grades of abrasive to the finest grit available. Whichever you choose, great care is necessary and it will be very time consuming. I have found that both methods can take the same amount of time to get right. With some woods, it is very difficult to remove scratches, even with very fine abrasive and you might like to try scraping with a proprietary scraper, or even a knife or scalpel.

If the wood you are using is hard- or close-grained, you could even wax or oil at this stage, but a better result is achieved by using some kind of sealer first. I always used sanding sealer, but this used to raise the grain and needed rubbing down before polishing – difficult with relief carving!

The speaker recommended using oil first as this doesn't raise the grain, and once dry, finishing with wax. As most people have an irresistible urge to handle carvings he recommended applying several coats of oil, wiping down between coats and burnishing the final coat. This way you can always clean and add more oil if the carving gets dirty.



These boards only show an oil and a hybrid wax oil finish but you can use any finish

Relief carvings

The same principle applies to relief carvings, completely eliminating the necessity to sand the carving which can easily reduce the sharpness of the cuts.

I have found that the use of any of the finishing oils can, with time and exposure to daylight, tend to darken the wood so, if you have carved in a very light wood and want to keep it that way, you will need to use something else. He suggested that you use something like a clear acrylic spray as a sealer and then wax with a white wax. I have tried this and it works very well on woods like lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), holly (*Ilex spp.*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). Even after a year or so they still haven't darkened.

If your work is going outside, there are many different finishes you can buy that will give a good finish but, generally an oil applied regularly is as good as anything.

Mahogany

One thing that was mentioned that I hadn't heard of was a way to finish mahogany (*Khaya ivornesis*). This can look really bland when finished because it is usually stained when used in furniture and without staining can look rather pink. A really deep shine can be achieved by soaking the wood in white spirit and while still damp, applying a thick coat of wax. This should be left overnight and by the morning much of the wax will be absorbed by the wood. After a good polishing you would be amazed at the finish you can get.

Other methods

These are by no means all the different methods – we have wood stains, varnish stain, varnish, French polish and many other types of finishing products that I have no doubt many of you have used very successfully. These are just the ones I have found very effective and may be worth trying.

It's interesting giving these things a try and the winter months when you can't do much outside is the ideal time to experiment.

Even with the stove in my workshop it has been very cold this winter and I haven't been out there very much so I have been catching up on Mary's 'to do' list indoors. All the workshop jobs can wait for now. That's one advantage of being retired. There are still plenty of jobs that need to be done, but there is not the same urgency to finish them. ▀



Make sure you leave the boards to dry and then compare the effects. It is quite surprising how much of an impact the colour change due to an applied finish can have

Bandsaw set-up

Alan Holtham shows us what's involved in getting your bandsaw set up and working correctly

Unlike most other woodworking machines, the set-up of a bandsaw is actually very simple, and apart from one adjustment, nothing's really that critical. What is important, though, is that you use a good quality blade and that it's sharp, or you're wasting your time.

There are five operations that have to be carried out every time you change the width of a blade and they should also all be checked, even if you change a blade for another of the same width. The adjustments are quite simple, but must be carried out in the following order:

- Set the blade tension
- Adjust the tracking
- Set up the thrust bearing
- Align the guides front to back
- Align the guides side to side

Tension



This particular setting seems to be the one that causes the most problems for the newcomer to bandsaws. In my experience many users over-tension the blade, which can actually cause damage to both the machine and the blade. Excess tension will crush a flat spot on the rubber tyre of the wheel if the machine is left at rest for any length of time.

This then generates a distinct vibration when you run it, very much like a flat spot on the tyre of an F1 car. Secondly, blades that are over-tensioned will fatigue much quicker and you'll see stress cracks developing from the bottom of the tooth gullets. Finally, too much strain risks damaging the tension adjustment mechanism, particularly on the lighter duty bandsaws, where it's very easy to strip the thread on the rise and fall spindle. You may also harm the vital tensioning spring, which provides a cushioning movement for the wheel as it rotates through material at different grades of hardness, and ensures the smooth running that prolongs blade life.

In fact, the tension is not that critical and only needs to be sufficient rather than precise. People who are struggling with the tension are usually trying to get a wayward blade to cut straight. Winding up the tension

will have absolutely no effect on this whatsoever. If a blade doesn't cut straight there's only one remedy; change it for one that does. However, some tension is necessary to give the thin, flexible blade its rigidity. Engineers call this beam strength. Narrower blades, as opposed to thinner ones, also require less tension than wider ones.

Tighten up

Start the set-up procedure by moving all the guides well away from the blade, both above and below the table. Then set the blade guide holder about halfway down its travel and lock it securely. This is essential as the whole assembly will often move significantly as it's tightened up, so you need to set up the blade with this in its working position. Lower the top wheel until the new blade slips on, centre it on the wheels and then wind up the top wheel until the blade starts to become tight. Now rotate the wheel slowly by hand as you continue to raise the wheel, which helps to distribute the tension evenly.

So how do you know when you have the correct tension? There are lots of ways to check. Some machines have a tension indicator but these are often crude, unreliable and may also rely on the blade being a perfect length. Others are more sophisticated and measure the actual tension, but there are still too many variables for my liking. Some people check the amount of deflection you can get by pushing sideways on the blade, but this is very subjective. If you have a musical ear you may be able to pluck the blade and tune it to a particular note. However, it really isn't that critical, and you'll soon get an instinctive feel for the



Over-tensioning can damage the adjustment mechanism as well as shortening the life of the blade. Apply tension to the blade gradually while you rotate the wheels by hand

correct tension.

Remember that you need enough tension to stretch the blade taut so that it doesn't slip on the wheels, but not a lot more. This is where the new generation of thin gauge blades like the Tuff saw range are so much better, as they require comparatively less tension, particularly on the wider widths. Conversely M42 blades require a lot more tension than a standard blade, making them better suited for the more robust machines.

If blades start fatiguing and breaking well before they're blunt, you're over-tightening. If the blade wanders during a cut and you can't follow a profile, or it bows over a

Top tip

One trick that works well on bigger machines is to actually run the blade as you tighten up. Initially you'll see it flapping about a bit, but then as the tension increases it will suddenly snap into a perfect straight line at the correct tension. Sadly this doesn't seem to work on the smaller machines



Tension indicators do not give an exact reading as there are a number of variables. Blades of the same width may not necessarily be the same length

➤ Tension – cont'd



A simple sign acts as a warning to other users as to the state of the machine



The new generation of bandsaws often come with a quick tension release mechanism

deep cut, then it may be too slack, but it's more likely to be blunt.

I'm often asked whether you should slacken off a blade when the machine is not in use. The answer to this depends on the type of blade and how long it's going to be left unused. Normally I leave my machines tensioned, as they're used regularly and are not over-tight anyway. However, if I'm likely to be away for any length of time – weeks – I will slacken them off, particularly if I'm using an M42 blade. Do remember to tighten

them up again when you come back or you'll ruin the tyres and the blade if you switch the machine on with it loose. You'll only do that once. I now hang a sign on the machine as a reminder.

Slackening off the tension is now so much quicker and easier if you have one of the new generation machines with a cam lock tensioner. So there's really no excuse, but again keep in mind that this relies on the blades being the same length, which isn't always the case.

Tracking

This is an easier adjustment to make, as you can physically see if it's right or not. It entails tilting the top wheel backwards and forwards until you get the blade running where you want it on the tyre. There's some debate as to where this should be, but I

prefer to track it in the centre as it makes the blades more stable in use, particularly if you start backtracking where there's a risk of pulling the blade from the wheels.

The blade may or may not run in the same position on the lower wheel but this is unimportant provided it's not too far out. The rubber tyres of modern machines don't do any harm to the set of the blade, which was always the argument for running them with the teeth hanging over the edge of the wheel, particularly when the blades were soft carbon steel.

Tracking adjustments should be carried out as the wheels are spun by hand. If you want to move the blade forwards, tilt the wheel forwards by slackening off the tracking knob, and vice versa. The adjustment is very fine, so go steady and spin the wheels a fair bit after each alteration to allow the blade time to move before you alter it again. If you go too mad with the tracking knob



you'll spend some frustrating hours trying to catch up with the blade as it races backwards and forwards across the wheel, and then eventually runs right off the front or back with a loud bang. Small adjustments are all you need, then when it's right, remember to tighten up the lock nut on the tracking knob or vibration may cause it to alter as you work.

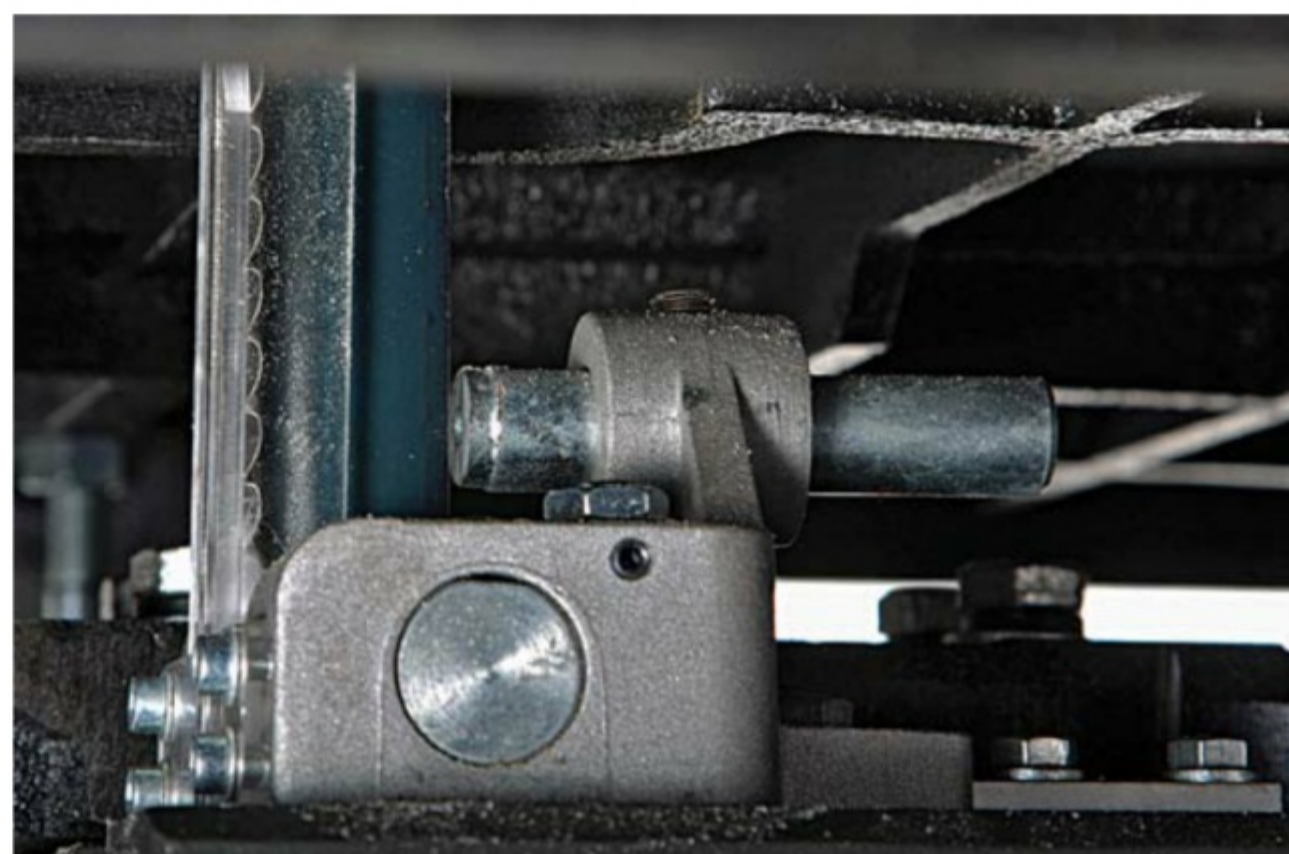
If you find that the blade is not responding to your tracking adjustments it may be that it's over tightened, so slacken off the tension a little and retry.

When the top wheel has been set, remember to lock the setting



By tilting the top wheel backwards or forwards the blade can be tracked to run in the centre of the tyre

Thrust bearings



The most common type of thrust bearings are the ball race type – shown on the left – and hardened pads – shown in the photo on the right

Once the blade is tensioned and tracked correctly you can set the back thrust rollers. These are usually either ball races on their side, or just hardened pads, which are designed to counteract the backward pressure of the blade as you apply a cut.

The bearing should be set so that it's just clear of the blade when it's free running. A gap of about 1mm is ideal, but you may find that the blade has been welded up slightly out of true so there's some to-and-fro movement as it revolves. In this case set the

bearing to be clear at the point of maximum rearward movement. Again, make sure the locking screws are tight when you have completed the adjustment; there are a lot of things to tighten up on the guide system and thrust rollers have a nasty habit of gradually moving backwards in use unless they're really secure.

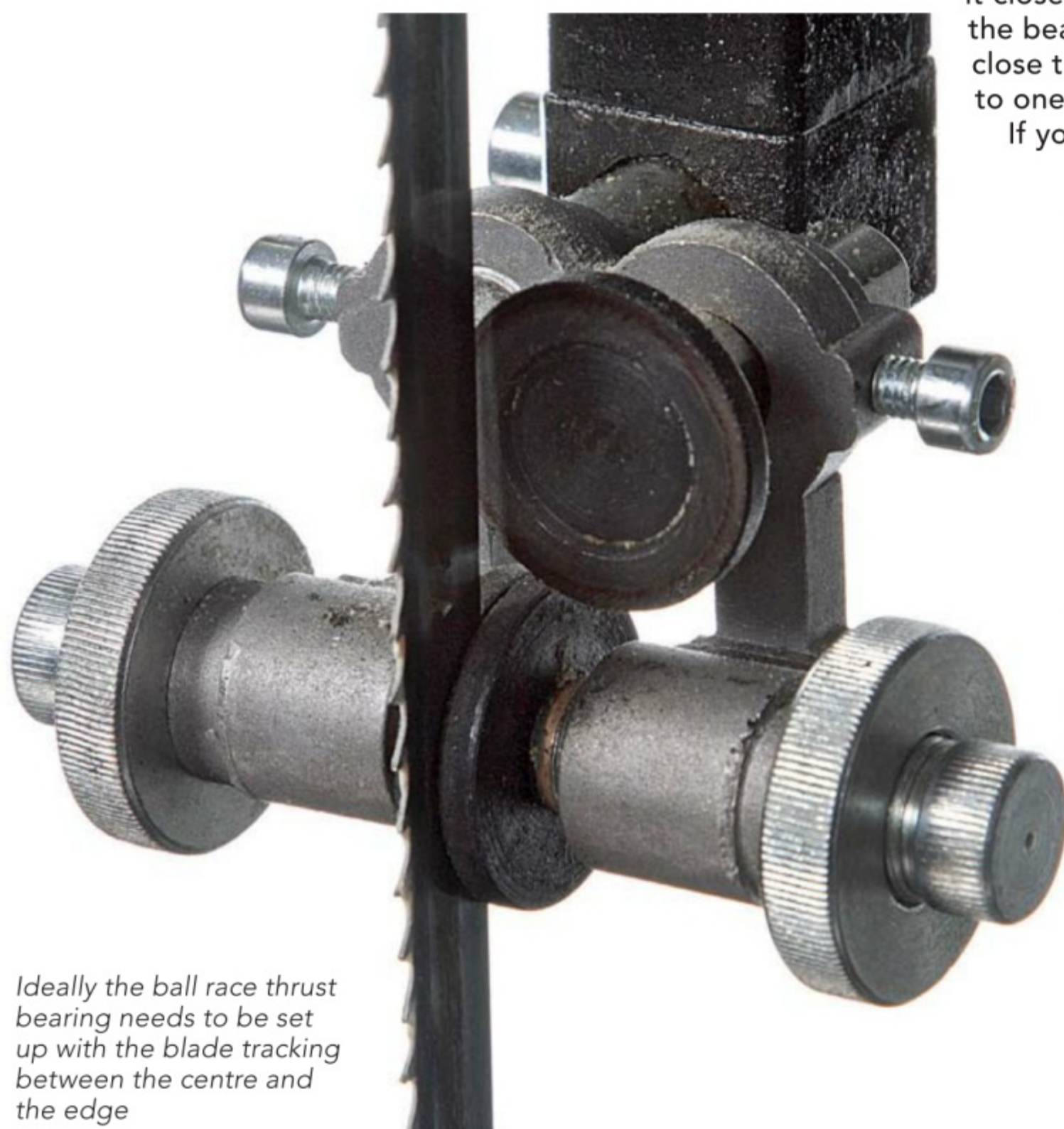
You may find that the bearings are mounted on a cam pattern spindle and that by rotating this spindle you can vary the amount of bearing surface in contact with the back of the blade. Ideally run it close to the edge of the bearing, but not so close that it pushes off to one side.

If you run it too

near the centre the bearing will not rotate and you'll grind a groove down the face. As a non-engineer it seems far more logical to me to run the thrust bearing on edge, but for some reason you rarely see this in practice.

Keep these bearings in good condition, as they will help to prolong blade life. Remember that at full cutting speed they do a lot of work and will wear out, so you should be prepared to replace them occasionally.

Don't forget that the guide system is usually repeated under the table as well and both sets must be adjusted together. It's often easier to access the under-table guides if you tilt the table to 45°.



Ideally the ball race thrust bearing needs to be set up with the blade tracking between the centre and the edge



My preference is to have a thrust bearing running on edge

Reference

www.tuffsaws.co.uk
www.starrett.co.uk
www.recordpower.co.uk
www.axminster.co.uk

Alignment: front-to-back

The side guides keep the blade running true and stop it twisting during the cut, and their alignment with the blade front to back is the only really critical setting on a bandsaw. You must ensure that the actual teeth can't end up between these hardened guides, or you will knock the set off in seconds and the blade is ruined.

For maximum effect they should be set to provide support right up to the gullet of the blade teeth, allowing for the small backward movement as the blade is pushed against the thrust bearing. If you then change the blade width,



The position of these side bearings will soon render the blade useless as the teeth make contact with them

these guides will have to be reset. If you've just bought a new machine, these may not be set up correctly out of the box.



The correct setting will have your teeth proud of the side guides

It only needs one revolution of the blade through the guides and it's ruined, so check this carefully before switching on.

Alignment: side-to-side



A small gap is required between the blade and the side guides

These may be plain blocks or bearings, but move them in until they are just clear of the blade. The thickness of a piece of thin paper is about the right clearance, but once again the setting isn't critical provided the blade is in good condition. I often demo cutting veneers with the side guides removed to show how non-critical this setting is, provided the blade is good. They only really come into their own for profile cuts; no need to mess around with feeler gauges trying to get thou clearance.

Like the thrust bearings, the side guides should remain clear of the blade unless you're actually cutting. The only exception to this is if you have ceramic guides or

cool blocks which can be run in permanent contact, though I have never found these to be worth the initial extra investment; the ceramic guides in particular are very expensive. Make sure the top and bottom guides line up vertically or the blade will be deflected.

All these adjustments actually only take minutes to complete and are far less complicated than this written description implies, but they are important and must be set accurately if you're to get the best from your machine.

Running in

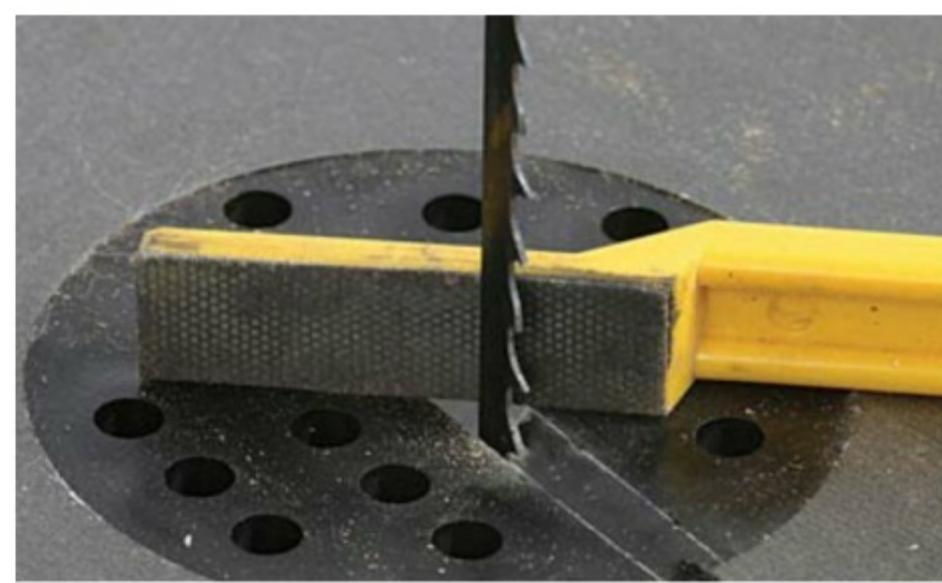
There's some debate as to whether a brand new blade needs to be 'run in' before use. This is more relevant to metal cutting than wood, but a sharp new blade often doesn't cut as well as one that has been used for a while. I tend to minimise the feed pressure for the first 10 minutes or so, until some of the sharpness has been reduced, and then tweak up the tension a fraction.

If you cut a lot of wet or resinous wood, make sure the wheel brush is set up correctly. This gently cleans the bottom



It's also important to make regular checks of the brushes in the lower case

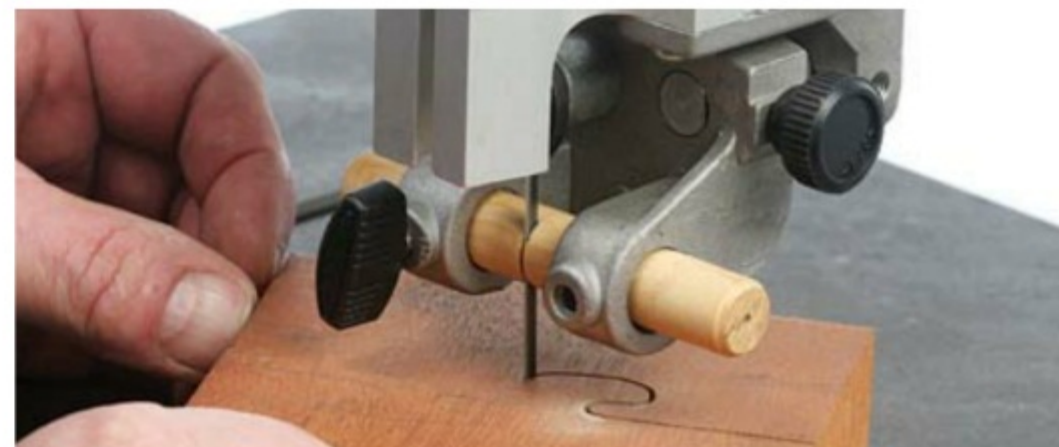
Top tip



Once you have your new blade installed and tensioned properly, a good tip is to smooth off the back and slightly radius the corners. Use a diamond lap on a handle applied gently to the back of the blade as it's under power

wheel as it rotates and prevents build up. If you're having problems with a blade tracking out of line, check that the tyres are clear of accumulations of resin.

For really narrow blades like a 1/8in, there's no way you can set the guide system as described above. In the absence of specialised guides like you used to get with Inca machines, the solution is to make your own by burying the blade in a piece of hardwood fitted in place of the regular guides. This eventually wears, but lasts longer than you'd think and is easy to replace. ▀



'Shop-made' guides can be made from a suitable hardwood for narrow blades

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GMC Publications in conjunction with Triton Precision Power Tools are proud to announce the Triton Woodworker and Triton Young Woodworker of the Year competitions 2013

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Triton Precision Power Tools in conjunction with GMC Publications are again looking to unearth a wealth of woodworking talent up and down the country. We know you appreciate quality because you buy this magazine and we also suspect that you make some spectacular pieces but are too shy to show them off. But that was then. Now, with a prize pot of over £5,000, we are hoping to tempt you to show us what you are making. So enter and you will be in with a chance of winning a handsome amount of Triton tools and cash too. There are effectively two competitions: Triton Woodworker of the year and Triton Young Woodworker of the Year.

The Triton Woodworker of the Year category is open to absolutely everyone, no matter what discipline you work in, so long as the piece or structure you submit is made predominantly of timber.

Triton Young Woodworker of the Year is open to any woodworker aged 21 years of age or younger. All you need to do to enter is submit sufficient photographic evidence of your work – see photographic requirements and guidelines opposite – by 31 October, 2013 and then just sit back and bite your nails. A shortlist for each competition will be drawn up from all the entries, and our team of expert judges may well call you/make a visit to see the piece or request extra information from you as required. Finally, first, second and third place winners will be decided and announced by the middle of February 2014, and the prizes awarded at a special ceremony – the date of which is yet to be set. So what are you waiting for? It's time to get woodworking!

Judging

The entries will be judged by *Furniture & Cabinetmaking* editor Derek Jones, sister title *Woodworking Plans & Projects* editor Anthony Bailey, plus two Triton-nominated judges, who will decide the winners from a shortlist of six in each category.

In the Students & first year graduates category, Chris Funnell made this Krenov-inspired cabinet on a stand while studying with Marc Fish

In the Amateur category, Andrew Beaumont made this Ruhlmann-style display cabinet



The Triton Woodworker of the Year 2011, Luke Miller's winning piece, a table made from iron which was influenced by the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland

Triton Woodworker of the Year

1st prize – £1,000 tools (RRP ex VAT) + £1,000 cash

2nd prize – £500 tools (RRP ex VAT) + £500 cash

3rd prize – £250 tools (RRP ex VAT) + £250 cash

Triton Young Woodworker of the Year

1st prize – £500 tools (RRP ex VAT) + £500 cash

2nd prize – £300 tools (RRP ex VAT) + £300 cash

3rd prize – £200 tools (RRP ex VAT) + £200 cash

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The winners of the last Triton Woodworker of the Year Competition with their awards

How to enter

To enter, all you have to do is send us the package of items as mentioned in the **Photographic, entry requirements & guidelines**, along with the name of the category you are entering, your name, address, daytime phone number and email address. Closing date is 31 October, 2013 but we would of course like to see entries as soon as possible in order to feature them in the magazines in the run up to the final. Label the relevant package and send it to the following address:

FAO Karen Scott
Triton Woodworker of the Year
or Triton Young Woodworker of
the Year competitions
86 High Street,
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1XN

Competition rules

The competition is open to UK residents only. Only completed entries, received by the closing date, 31 October, 2013, will be eligible. No entries received after that date will be considered. No cash alternatives will be offered for any prize. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. Employees of GMC Publications, Triton, their associated companies and their families are not eligible to enter. Entries will be forwarded to Triton Tools, which alone is responsible for providing the prizes. By entering the competition winners agree that their names may be used in future marketing by either GMC Publications and/or Triton Tools. Competition entry rules and photographic guidelines and requirements will also appear on the Woodworkers Institute website: www.woodworkersinstitute.com.

Photographic, entry requirements & guidelines

Good photography is essential in order for your work to be accepted for entry into the competition

1. Minimum photography requirement:
 - Front view • Back view • Left side view • Right side view • Top view (if possible) • Detail views. Please also send as many other views from different angles as you like.
2. Photos should be taken in good natural light but not in direct sunshine – strong shadows will obscure detail – or in professional studio conditions. Beware of excessive glare from shiny surfaces. Use a tripod if available.
3. If at all possible, use a zoom to help avoid distortion: position yourself as far away as possible while still nearly filling the frame with your work. Check the minimum focusing distance of your camera before shooting macro.
4. All of the stipulated views above should be taken on a white, grey or black background. Be aware that light-coloured objects photograph best on a dark backgrounds and that a white background is likely to under-expose a workpiece – particularly if it is made of dark timber. Also, dark objects should not be placed on a black background.
5. Do not use your camera's flash unless an angled diffuser is utilised on an external flash. Switch off the flash on a digital camera; if a built-in flash goes off while you are taking a photo with a film camera in natural light, there is unlikely to be enough light for suitable results.
6. Photographs should be taken using digital cameras of six mega-pixels or more, if possible, with the camera set on maximum image size. If a film camera is used the image must be scanned to a digital format.
7. Having sorted out the pictures - all of which must be placed on a CD for us - also include / enclose in the package to be sent to us a description of the work including timber used, a sketch / drawing of the piece including dimensions, your inspiration and how long the piece took to make as well as photographs of the finished item. It is also worth including any relevant pictures, information or drawings of processes you think important for us to know about and also mention any woodworking or related training and qualifications you may have.

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Carving know-how: Starting relief carvings

In the second part of his article on relief carving, Peter Benson looks at the subject of adding detail and correcting mistakes

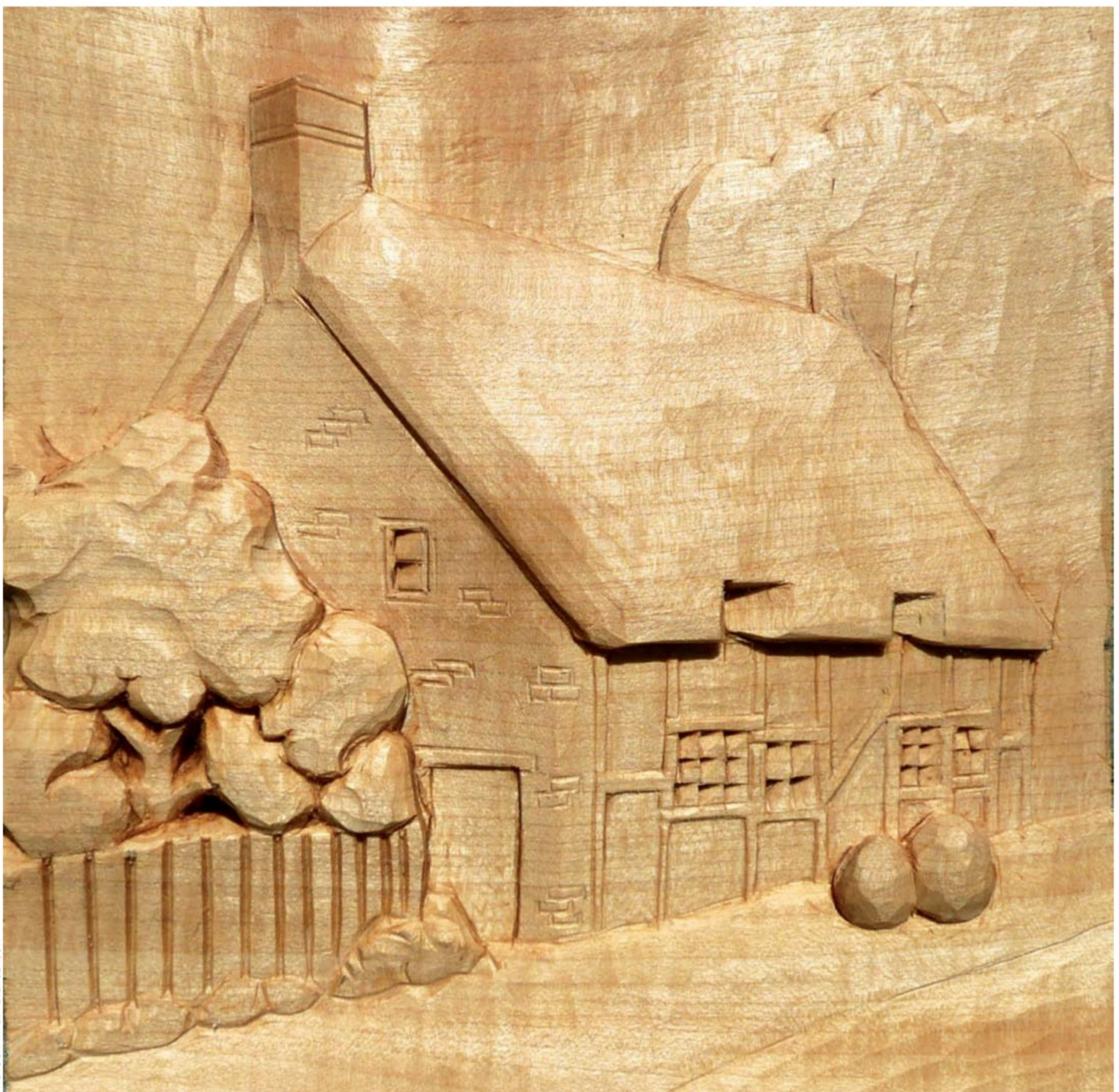
part 2

Once you are happy with your basic design and angles, you can start adding the detail, keeping in mind at all times how much of

an illusion you need to include in order to get the effect of depth and distance.

One problem that will inevitably rear its ugly head at this stage is

that if there is any ground visible in your design, it will almost certainly be rising as it disappears towards the back of the carving. Also, anything that is vertical

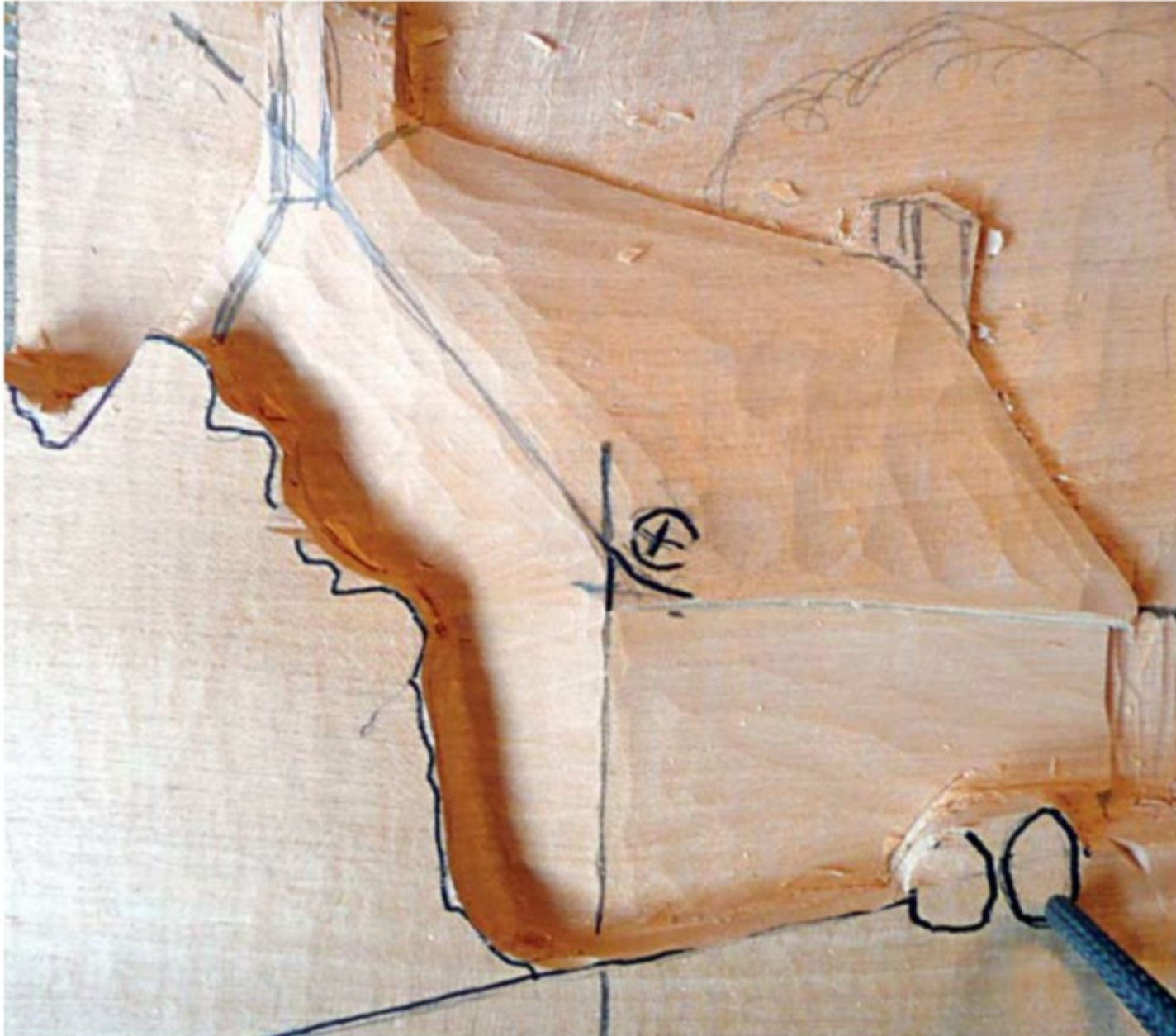


PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BENSON

like trees, telegraph poles, posts and standing people will look as if they are falling over backwards because of the angle with the ground.

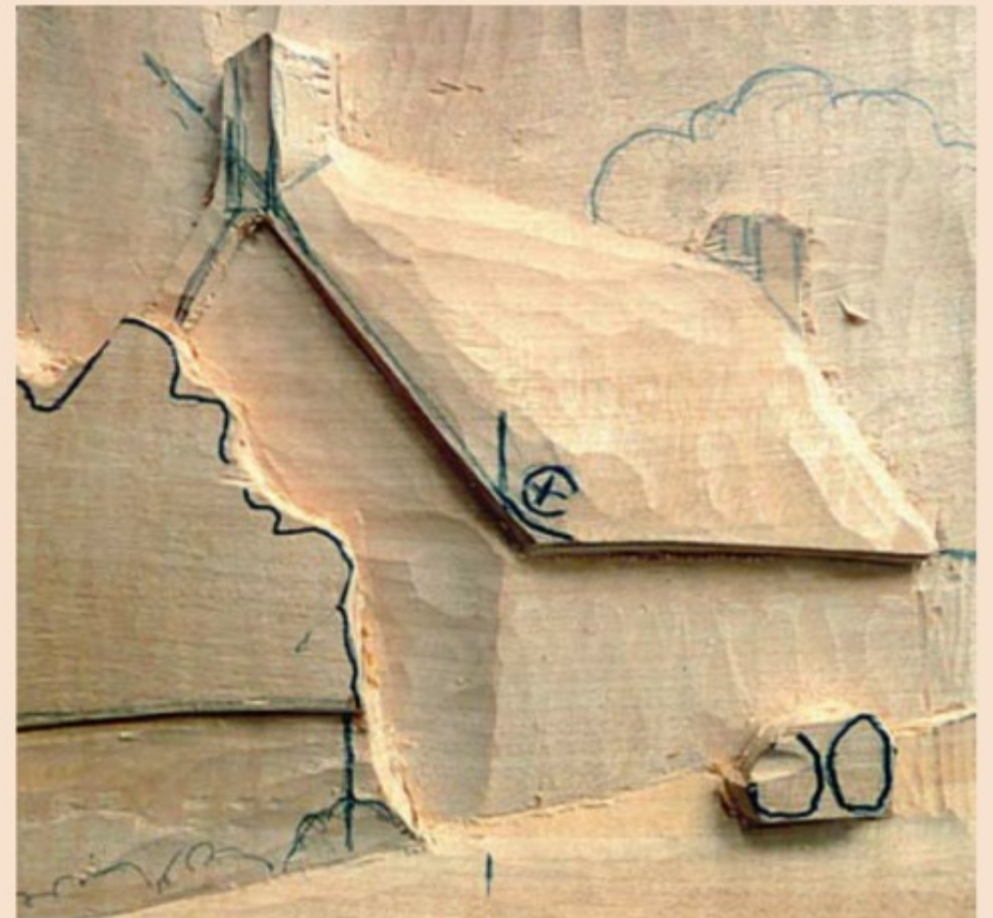
One way to overcome this problem is to set back

the bottom of all verticals between 6-13mm so they lean forward quite a way at the top. This will also have the effect of increasing the amount of foreground you have available for detail work.



If there is any ground visible in your design it will almost certainly be rising as it disappears towards the back of the carving

Finishing



Verticals cut back at the bottom to create depth in the foreground

One final point about this type of carving is that, in order to maintain the crispness of the cuts and create clean shadows I don't advise the use of any kind of abrasive to get a good finish. If your tools are sharp and your technique careful, the finished piece should not need any sanding. I also advise the use of a finishing oil of some kind as opposed to sanding sealer or varnish as this doesn't need any rubbing down and can be waxed when dry. You can, of course, finish with a colour wash if you prefer; I find acrylics best for this approach

Dealing with common problems



My philosophy is that if something breaks off I change the design if I possibly can, as it is very difficult to hide glue lines

My closing observation is that many carvers think that relief carving is easy – don't believe them. It is easy to do it badly, but difficult to do it well.

I did mention before that I would cover how to deal with common problems and, in fact, this is really very simple. As I have already mentioned you will need to give yourself escape routes and protect vulnerable areas, but no matter how careful you are, things can still go wrong. These little disasters can often end up with an improvement in the end product as long as you don't start sticking pieces back on. My philosophy is that if something breaks off I change the design if I possibly can, as it is very difficult to hide glue lines. Remember a simple point: the solution to nearly every carving problem is to simply take off more wood. All you need to do is work out whereabouts you need to remove it!

If legs or ears break off animals, you have little option but to glue or reject, but with humans – excluding nudes – broken arms, legs, feet, hands or heads can usually be transplanted, hiding the join in clothing. Even with nudes there may be the option of adding armbands or necklaces before adding new parts. One consideration that will minimise the likelihood of disaster is to carve the most difficult parts first so, should anything go wrong, you haven't wasted a great deal of time on your piece.

The final point is to bear in mind that every carver that there has ever been has made mistakes at some time or other – this is not a reflection on your ability, so don't cry in your beer. Take care when you work and if something goes wrong, have a good swear and put it right. The chances are you will be the only one who will ever know anyway! ▀



Reader's showcase

Graham Biggs

We catch up with *Woodcarving* reader Graham Biggs to find out more about his life in carving

I have been carving for over 20 years. My love for working with wood starting when I did woodwork on the house extension, then the internal cupboards and shelves, then the tables and chairs and DIY for the family. I sold my garage business in the late 1980s and began working for a large distribution company. For the first time in over 20 years, I had time on my hands at evenings and weekends. I felt I had done all the utility jobs and family presents and I wanted to do something for myself that was just decorative.

I looked around and at that time some evening classes

were offered by Glyn Mould – a professional woodcarver – in a village near my home. I joined and as they say, the rest is history. Glyn is still my mentor today.

My first carvings were all small and I found I had an aptitude for this hobby. I was completing a carving every few weeks. It was good fun; the tutor and the other pupils were good company.

In an issue of *Woodcarving* a small piece of wood was attached to the cover and they asked readers to carve it. I did and got a mention with my 'Ghostly Faces' carving. I think the comment was: "A good use of the grain and figuring."

The BWA

I joined the BWA and started to carve an exhibit for their competition, 'View Over the Welland Valley', an image from a 150mm cube of wood. Suffice to say, I did not finish it in time, but I found the result was a good effort. It is a favourite of mine and always creates much interest at local shows.

The carving classes I was attending were growing in popularity and number and with a few friends I started the Rockingham Forest Carvers region of the BWA and stayed as their leader. This widened my horizons and I met other



'Horse Head Bookends'



Graham at work on one of his carvings

woodcarvers. I improved my technique and expertise having been coached by Peter Benson, Dick Onians and attended West Dean College for two summer schools.

Rutland Open Studios

At a local art and carving exhibition I got talking to an exhibitor who was looking to start Rutland Open Studios. I was invited to join and have exhibited ever since, always getting at least one carving accepted for the annual exhibition. One year my 'Betsey' carving was voted as the most liked. Rutland Open Studios currently is about 80-strong. One of their initiatives is for each artist or group to open their studios each weekend during June. Through this display of my work I was invited to join the Welland Valley Art Society and was accepted as an exhibiting member. I have always had at least one carving exhibited at their annual selling show.

During my time I have carved some trophies and mementoes for friends and family. The bookends above were for a family friend.

Style and inspiration

My icons are Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson. All my carvings are from my own ideas or my own interpretation of a particular image. I then create the final piece as I carve the wood. Currently I am creating some very abstract works.

At present I do not have a style

of carving but am leaning towards impressionism. I have carved a wave inspired by Japanese icon Hokusai.

I am very lucky that I have a large space in my garage which I have converted into a dry, warm and insulated workshop with all my tools to hand.

Regarding tools, I have collected over 100 different gouges of all shapes and sizes. Nearly all old ones. Whilst I do not have a favourite, I find that often when working on a piece I use only a few gouges to carry out the majority of the shaping. When I think it is appropriate, I use power tools to speed up the process.

Other interests

I have a large garden and some years ago took a course in garden design and redesigned the garden which I open to the public for charity. I am a founder member of Rutland sailing club and participate

fully, being a senior sailing instructor and qualified offshore yacht skipper. I have taken a number of groups sailing in the Mediterranean. I also race my own yacht every week during the season and have won a number of trophies. I am also the archivist for the village where I live. ▶



'Betsey'

Contact

biggswoodcarver@uwclub.net

NEXT ISSUE

wood **CARVING**

Steve Bisco's gothic tracery boss project

Issue 133
Jul/Aug 2013

ON SALE 27 JUNE

Peter Clothier hand carves a teddy bear

Andrew Thomas creates a stylised owl

Chris Pye's ribbon and bow project

Profile on Josh Guge



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BISCO

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Tooltec Click 'N Carve CNC engraving machine

This all new Tooltec CNC engraving machine has virtually limitless applications, with easy-to-use software which allows complete novices to create carvings from pictures in minutes. The flexible edit software allows the modification of pictures to create the ultimate in high quality images in almost any material, including wood, ABS, foam, modelling wax, styrene foam and epoxy tooling board. For the advanced, commercial or enthusiast, additional software can

be used to create true 3D solid models with amazing replication and accuracy. At time of print the price is yet to be confirmed, but will be from under £2,000.

Contact Tooltec
Web www.tooltec.co.uk

From under £2,000



Tormek Small Knife Holder SVM-00

The new Small Knife Holder SVM-00 from Tormek can handle those really small knife blades which up until now, have been difficult to sharpen. Normally they have been sharpened free-hand but every time it was a challenge to get a consistent shape and almost impossible to control the edge angle.

The new holder works in conjunction with the Tormek Knife Jig SVM-45 and opens up the ability to work with complete control on a much wider range of small knives.

You can now sharpen knives of different shapes for whittling, chip carving and detail work. The SVM-00 can also handle narrow chef's knives like boning or fish filleting knives. Even folding pocket knives can be sharpened with perfect control.

Contact BriMarc Tel 03332 406 967
Web www.brimarc.com



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Makita sanders



From £175

Both of these sanders from Makita are great for helping out with your power carving. The 9031 30mm multi-purpose sander features a variable speed trigger and the belt speed can be adjusted for sanding a wide variety of materials. A lock-on button allows for continuous operation and the multi-position side handle makes for easy and comfortable operation whilst working.

The 9032 filing sander is perfect for accessing hard to reach places and the multi-position sanding arm

pivots 100°. There is also a 500W variable speed motor and dust-sealed bearings. The sander also benefits from adjustable belt tracking, trigger switch and replaceable carbon brushes.

Contact Makita
Tel 1908 211678
Web www.makita.co.uk



Brass Carver's Spoon Plane

Also known as a 'spoon plane', carver's spoons are a very useful tools for hollowing out your work. The tool itself is made of solid brass, then coated with titanium nitrate for a really smooth finish. You will find a tremendous range of uses for this tool. The cutter is high carbon steel with a concave face blade to allow shaving easy.

Working on the pull stroke, it's easy to control and quick cutting; the spoon plane quickly and easily makes hollow or dished-out cuts. Perfect for spoons and bowls, it can also be used to smooth the surface of large carvings. The tool measures 38mm wide x 156mm long and requires honing before use.



Contact Toolman
Web www.toolman.co.uk

£13.95

Hitachi CS33EB standard handle chainsaw

This lightweight, easy to use chainsaw from Hitachi is well suited to chainsaw carving and the 355mm guide length is ideal. The CS33EB features a compact and lightweight design and the new PureFire engine meets European Stage 2 standards for low emissions. There is also a priming bulb and an auto-return choke. Standard

accessories include chain, chain bar, bar cover and box wrench.

Contact Hitachi
Tel 01908 660 663
Web www.hitachi-powertools.co.uk



£209

Elmer's All Purpose Glue-All Max

If you want the strongest most versatile wood glue possible then Elmer's Glue-All Max is probably the one for you. It claims to bond not just wood but stone, metal and other materials. It is an opaque light brown PU – polyurethane – low-foaming glue making it ideal for minor gap filling. It is waterproof in common with other PU adhesives and works best if the surfaces are slightly damp. Clamping time is one to four hours, but bear in mind some degree of expansion may occur so clamping is essential; it then cures fully in 24 hours. You can clean up wet glue with acetone or mineral spirits but I always let these adhesives dry and then clean them off. Wearing a pair of gloves is a good idea; this will save you from getting sticky hands. Definitely one to keep handy for awkward jobs no regular glue will tackle, especially in the rain.

Contact Elmer's Web www.elmersglue.eu



£9.89

MINI TEST: Microclene MC280



For anyone wanting a point of source ambient air filter the Microclene MC280 is an excellent option, says Richard Kennedy

Microclene have long been recognised as manufacturers of good quality ambient air filters. Designed to filter some of the most dangerous particles out of workshop air, they have an important job to do. To this range Microclene have introduced the MC280. Designed to be suspended from the ceiling or hung from a homemade stand, it has a slightly different design and purpose from other filters in the range. This machine works over a bench and removes the fine dust created when texturing or power carving, or, with the optional carbon filter, smoke from pyrography.

What it is

The machine consists of a main body which contains the fan assembly and two rows of LED lights. There are four metal plates which, once attached to the main body, create an angled hood which is designed to help direct the dust into the filter. Finally, two lengths of chain are attached by key rings to the main body from which the unit is suspended. The assembly took about five minutes. Due to the shape of my workshop roof, I built a stand from which to hang the machine. The filter attaches with wing nuts and is easy to take out for cleaning or replacement.

Verdict

Overall, the MC280 looks well made, with a good paint finish and everything feels solid and of good quality. Microclene have a good reputation for build quality and this unit doesn't disappoint.

Specifications

- Manufacturer: Acrol UK
- Model: MC 280
- Size: 730 x 480 x 200mm

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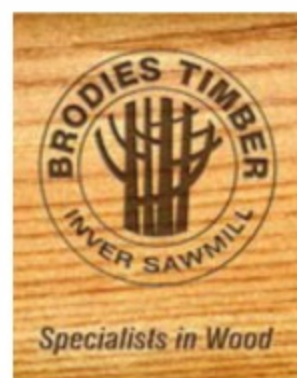
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Statuary of the Trinitarians

We take a look at one of the 30 incredible statues which line the Charles Bridge in Prague

Ferdinand Maxmilián Brokof's 'Statuary of the Trinitarians' was donated to the Charles Bridge by Jan František Josef, Count Thun

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

This sandstone statuary was created by Czech sculptor of the late-baroque period, Ferdinand Maxmilián Brokof, in 1714. It is situated on Prague's famous Charles Bridge, the balustrade of which is home to 30 statues and statuaries; this is one of the most popular, the largest and most expensive of them all.

The Statuary of the Trinitarians depicts the French founders of the Trinitarian Catholic Order; St. John of Matha and St. Felix of Valois; as well as the Slavic patron St. Ivan, whose presence in the statuary remains a

subject of debate. The Order, founded at the end of the 12th century, were known for raising money to emancipate Christian slaves from their captors during the Crusades. At the top stands St. John on the left, with the chains of a freed captive, money for their freedom and a Bible. Kneeling beside him is St. Ivan with a crucifix. Below, St. Felix of Valois holds the cartouche with one hand, and with the other, helps a freed prisoner loosen his bonds. The slain stags symbolise the three saints' hermit status, as well as the story of

St. John's vision of a white stag with a red and blue cross between its antlers, which subsequently became the Trinitarians' emblem.

The base consists of a caged prison with two despairing Christians within, guarded by a Turk and a dog. During times of political changes in Czechoslovakia in 1945, 1968 and 1989, the bars of the prison cell were ripped out as a symbol of freedom. If you're ever in Prague, the Charles Bridge is a must-see for the many inspirational sculptures, each rich in history, symbolism and masterful skill.

The logo consists of the letters 'SF' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a black rectangular background. This background is centered within a larger, stylized orange and yellow shield-like shape.

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