

EASY TO FOLLOW STEP-BY-STEP CARVING OF A BABY ELEPHANT

wood CARVING

Art of Dance

The life-size carvings of Gordon Becker

Techniques

Chris Pye teaches slicing cuts

Michael Painter on cutting letters

Lizzy Ashworth

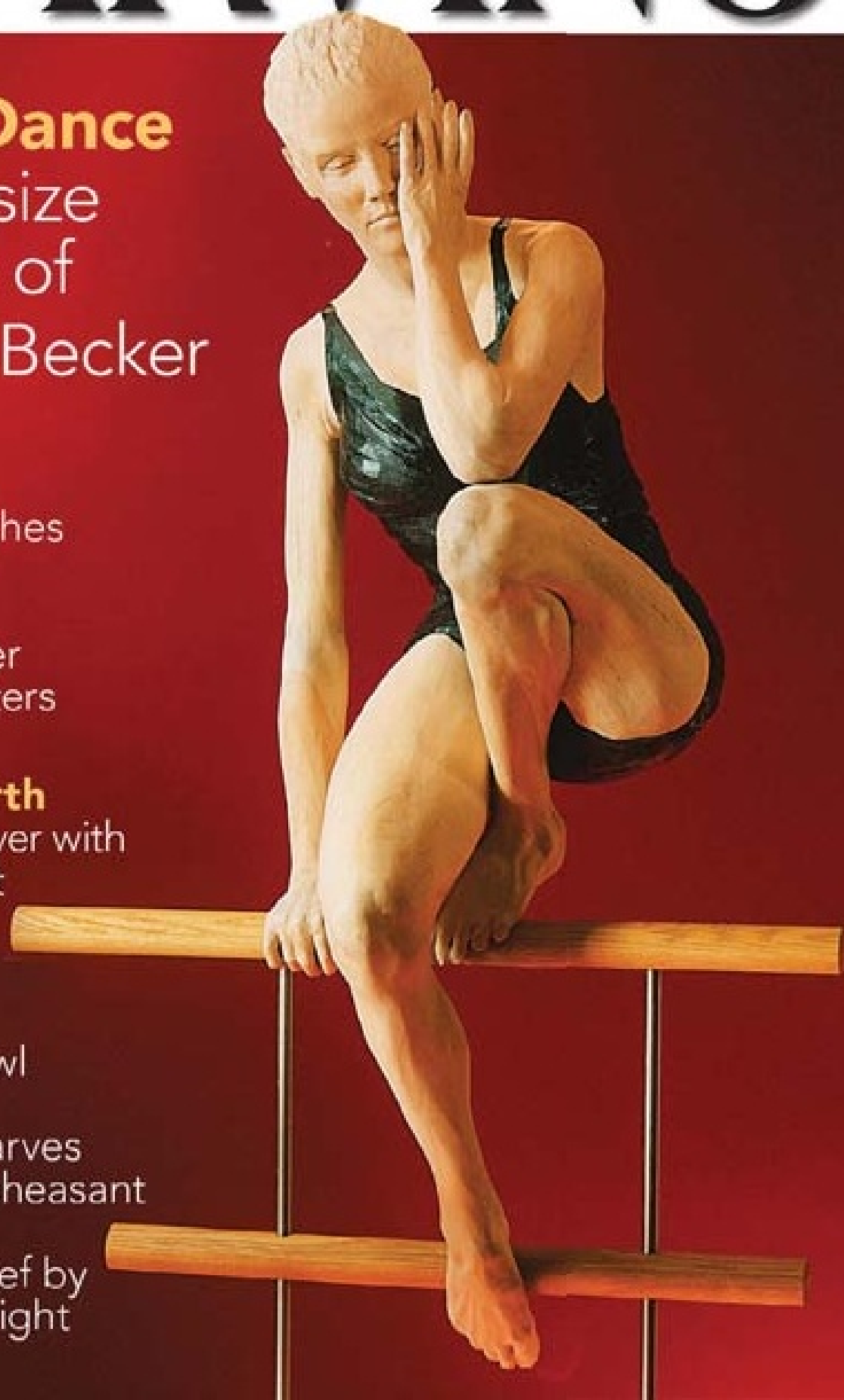
Traditional carver with a modern twist

Projects

Steve Bisco's grape leaf bowl

Mike Wood carves and paints a pheasant

Dolphin in relief by Duane Cartwright



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

Resolving to find time

The New Year brings some challenges for us all in as much as there are always bills to pay. Some of those relate to Christmas, but let's face it, bills only ever seem to go up not down, so that is one juggling act that impacts on our daily lives. Another challenge may be that of time. Time is elusive, elastic and relative all at the same time. There are days when so much can be fitted in and others where it seems time goes by so quickly that nothing that was planned seems to have got done.

One casualty of this sort of day is workshop time. I went in the other day with the good intention to do this and that, and ended up getting caught up in something completely different. It started with my putting something away, then thinking I had lost something, which when I set about looking, I found that I had put away in a safe place. At that time, I nearly tripped on something I had moved so decided to tidy up a bit – which ended up with my reorganising one aspect of the workshop.

That, in turn, caused me to find some woodworm in the woodpile, which necessitated a full check of what was contaminated and to implement more regular checking regime. Then it was time for food. So, my day of wanting to work on a project ended up being eaten away by this and that and I got nothing done that I intended to... and in truth, the workshop still needs a major clear up. I am sure everyone has had days like that and this is one such challenge we all face – of productive workshop time. I have mentioned it before, but juggling work, travel and family commitments and everything else can have an effect on us. Some just call it life, but whatever you call it, I want more time in the workshop!

I have so many concepts, ideas

and processes in my head that need to be made and worked out that I need workshop time for. Some of it is to work out how to best show what people have requested. If I can't work it out, how can I best commission items? So, as last year's resolution of something similar failed so abysmally, this year my New Year's resolution is to have some clout so I can bring this about. I will let you know how I get on.

Happy New Year and all the best for 2014,


Mark Baker
Editor of Woodcarving



PHOTOGRAPH BY GMC/ANTHONY BAILEY

I would like to tackle more carving projects this year

Problem finding Woodcarving magazine?

It can be ordered at any newsagent, or call Tony Loveridge, our Circulation Manager, on 01273 477 374 or email him at tonyl@thegmcgroup.com. Alternatively, save 30% on the cover price by subscribing. See page 36 for details.

Contents

Projects



Impressive life-size dancing figures as carved by Gordon Becker – see page 19.
Front cover image by Gretchen Howard



8 Baby Elephant
Steve Heath returns with this charming elephant project

27 Dolphin Relief Panel
Duane Cartwright brings us his first project, a dolphin in relief with a chip-carved border

45 Grape Leaf Bowl
Steve Bisco takes inspiration from the Baroque period to carve a decorative bowl

53 Sea Lion: Part Two
Andrew Thomas concludes his fantastic sea lion project

62 Common Pheasant
Mike Wood carves and paints this most elegant of birds

Features

15 Diary of a pro carver
Mike Painter discusses some dos and don'ts when lettering...

19 Dance in Wood: Gordon Becker
Sheila Campbell pulls back the stage curtains on Gordon Becker's exquisite carved dancers

39 Lizzy Ashworth
Simon Frost meets an upcoming carver-designer whose work unites the past with the future

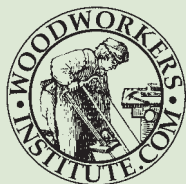
50 20 Minutes with Martin Preston
We speak to Dorset woodcarver and bronze sculptor Martin Preston

80 Art of Carving
Simon Frost finds out about the grandiose Gefion Fountain in Copenhagen



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.



Community

1 From the Editor

Mark Baker discusses the issue of time and how he hopes 2014 will allow him to spend more time in the workshop

4 Round & About

With news from the BDWCA and BWA, dates for your diary and letters; we bring you the latest from the woodcarving community

60 Reader's Showcase

We meet Werner Groeschel, a woodcarver who lives in Canada who has been carving for over 20 years

70 Club Profile

Meet Farnham Sculpture, who recently celebrated their tenth year

75 Next Issue

Can't wait to see what's coming next time? Here's a teaser to whet your appetite

Techniques

34 Technical Know-how:

Peter Benson offers some tips on carving the fastest of all land mammals

36 Slicing Cuts

Chris Pye shows how to make keener cuts with less effort

Tests

72 Carver's Toolbag

Woodcarving brings you the latest in tools and machinery selected to meet your carving needs



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 Tegan Foley at Woodcarving, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN or to teganf@thegmcgroup.com

BWA: New Year's resolutions

A completed carving is more than an object. It tells us the story of a journey, of new friends made and fresh ideas learned, and leaves you with an improved skillset for your next project.

Across the nation, my BWA friends have been as busy as ever. BWA Essex has been carving fruit to fill a vast fruit bowl. Inspired by Andrew Thomas's stylised owl featured in *Woodcarving* 133, Sarah Lawrenson of BWA Lancashire carved a version in lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), adding gold eyes.

BWA West Midlands ran a carving competition – 'Wildfowl in Relief'. The standard was excellent, considering that some of the carvings were done by newcomers to woodcarving. The winner was John Holiwell with his piece 'Owl Landing on a Tree'.

Gill Deacon of BWA Hertfordshire has been working on restoring an old toy dray inherited from her father, dating back to the 1900s. She has been carving a cart horse to pull the dray – a challenge, as there are never photos



Gill Deacon of the BWA Hertfordshire with her cart horse and dray



The Hertfordshire BWA group meets at the Marlborough Science Academy in St. Albans

of the underneath quarters or what happens behind the tail!

Did you know that at Westonbirt's Treefest last year we were thrilled to be awarded a certificate for 'Most inspiring and original use of wood'? We will be hosting exhibitions and demonstrations throughout 2014 – do keep an eye on our website to find one near you.

Huge thanks go to BWA Essex for organising the BWA display of carvings submitted for the 'Cressing Temple Trophy' competition at the European Woodworking Show, prizes for which were kindly donated by Classic Hand Tools. "How did they carve such intricate detail?", "How can we possibly choose just one carving?" and "The standard is most impressive" were just a few of the praising comments. Peter Paces of BWA Essex was winner of the first prize of £750 with his carving of a medieval gentleman, and Gerry Guiver, also of BWA Essex, won the second prize of £250 with his tribute to Grinling Gibbons.

A New Year's resolution could be less nattering, more chipping! However, this is a social club – we can natter and chip at the same time! So if you haven't made

your New Year's resolution yet, join the BWA and let's be inspired to enter our carvings for competitions in 2014!

Dates for your diary

Wildlife woodcarving course

7–9 March, 2014

Higham Hall, Bassenthwaite Lake
Cockermouth CA13 9SH

Web: www.highamhall.com

Yandles Woodworking Show

11–12 April, 2014

Yandle & Son Ltd, Hurst Works
Hurst, Martock, Somerset TA12 6JU
Web: www.yandles.co.uk

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



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RAY LOUGHLIN FOR THE BDWCA

'Three Knots' by Stewart Langworth

BDWCA at the Festival of Bird Art

On the second weekend of September, 2013 the BDWCA held their Annual Show and Competition – the Festival of Bird Art – in Bakewell, Derbyshire. 250 carvings graced the tables, ranging from tiny miniatures to full-size birds of prey, and everything in between. Skill levels ranged from novice through intermediate to advanced, and one of the pleasing things was that there were a lot more carvers exhibiting than in previous years. Congratulations to all, and commiserations to the judges who had a very challenging job!

A special mention must go to Steve Toher, who in only his second year competing at the advanced level, became British and BDWCA Champion. Other advanced level trophy winners were Maggie Port, Dave Clews, Lennart Pettersson, Mark Richards, Stewart Langworth, Gerry Sanger and David Askew.

Encouraging moves up through the levels were seen with Anne Palmer, who won Best Intermediate in only her second year at that level, and James Langford, winner of Best Youth in 2011 and 2012,

who took Best Novice in his first year competing at that level – we look forward to seeing what they produce next year! This year also saw a new competition – Innovative Wildlife Sculpture – which encouraged a more 'outside the box' approach, and was won by Stewart Langworth with his 'Three Knots', which incorporated newsprint, mosaics and ingenious 'knotted' legs.

It was, as always, a very enjoyable show, and we are already looking forward to next year!



'Red-legged Partridge' by James Langford

Conversion chart

2mm	(⁵ / ₆₄ in)
3mm	(¹ / ₁₆ in)
4mm	(⁵ / ₃₂ in)
6mm	(¹ / ₄ in)
7mm	(⁹ / ₃₂ in)
8mm	(⁵ / ₁₆ in)
9mm	(¹¹ / ₃₂ in)
10mm	(³ / ₈ in)
11mm	(⁷ / ₁₆ in)
12mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
13mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
14mm	(⁹ / ₁₆ in)
15mm	(⁹ / ₁₆ in)
16mm	(⁵ / ₈ in)
17mm	(¹¹ / ₁₆ in)
18mm	(²³ / ₃₂ in)
19mm	(³ / ₄ in)
20mm	(³ / ₄ in)
21mm	(¹³ / ₁₆ in)
22mm	(⁷ / ₈ in)
23mm	(²⁹ / ₃₂ in)
24mm	(¹⁵ / ₁₆ in)
25mm	(1in)
30mm	(¹ / ₈ in)
32mm	(¹ / ₄ in)
35mm	(¹³ / ₈ in)
38mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
40mm	(¹⁵ / ₈ in)
45mm	(¹³ / ₄ in)
50mm	(2in)
55mm	(² / ₈ - ² / ₄ in)
60mm	(² / ₈ in)
63mm	(² / ₂ in)
65mm	(²⁵ / ₈ in)
70mm	(²³ / ₄ in)
75mm	(3in)
80mm	(³ / ₈ in)
85mm	(³ / ₄ in)
90mm	(³ / ₂ in)
93mm	(³² / ₃ in)
95mm	(³³ / ₄ in)
100mm	(4in)
105mm	(⁴ / ₈ in)
110mm	(⁴ / ₄ - ⁴ / ₃ in)
115mm	(⁴ / ₂ in)
120mm	(⁴ / ₃ in)
125mm	(5in)
130mm	(⁵ / ₈ in)
135mm	(⁵ / ₄ in)
140mm	(⁵ / ₂ in)
145mm	(⁵³ / ₄ in)
150mm	(6in)
155mm	(⁶ / ₈ in)
160mm	(⁶ / ₄ in)
165mm	(⁶ / ₂ in)
170mm	(⁶³ / ₄ in)
178mm	(⁶⁷ / ₈ in)
180mm	(7in)
185mm	(⁷ / ₄ in)
190mm	(⁷ / ₂ in)
195mm	(⁷³ / ₄ in)
200mm	(8in)
305mm	(12in)
405mm	(16in)
510mm	(20in)
610mm	(24in)
710mm	(28in)
815mm	(32in)
915mm	(36in)
1015mm	(40in)
1120mm	(44in)
1220mm	(48in)
1320mm	(52in)
1420mm	(56in)
1525mm	(60in)

Contact the BDWCA

Tel: 01442 247 610

Email: pam.wilson@bdwca.org.uk

Web: www.bdwca.org.uk

Or write to: Mrs Janet Nash,
26 Shendish Edge, Hemel
Hempstead, Hertfordshire

LETTERS



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BISCO

'Möbius Strip' by John Francklow

Hi Mark,
I am writing in response to your editorial in *Woodcarving* magazine regarding woodturning in carving. I have used turning in three of my pieces as a way of establishing a basic shape from which to carve rather than carving a decoration on a turned piece.

The globe of the dung beetle was my first attempt at turning, for which I made a pole lathe. For the 'Möbius strip' I turned a donut shape, again on the pole lathe, which gave me an accurate geometric shape on which I could accurately scribe the spiral of the Möbius strip. Turning the outer vase of my 'Tree Group' proved beyond my skills and equipment so I had the cylinder turned professionally and then carved the piece from the hollowed-out yew log.

Finally, an observation on the content of the magazine. Despite having written one, I am not a fan of the step-by-step articles of 'how to carve a ...'. To me it seems too much like a 'paint-by-numbers' approach which, although fine for a beginner, seems rather basic for most of your readers who I assume have passed that stage earlier in their career. I would much rather see more, shorter articles, about interesting pieces with tips on how to overcome specific problems which would be of interest to the improving carver. Despite that

minor criticism I enjoy the magazine which keeps me up to date, stimulates ideas and reminds me that I still have a long way to go.

Regards
John Francklow

John,
Thank you for the email. What lovely work you have produced. Rest assured, there are more 'short' tech articles coming in the New Year – in the March/April issue you will see these start. Though the projects are widely enjoyed by readers, I am introducing projects that are just plans and brief descriptions and not step-by-steps. People often only need plans and not the full 'how to' aspect, so this may well address part of the issue you mention.

One of the main issues I have is one of creating an acceptable balance for readers in the magazine. By far the majority of readers say they are beginners and want more detail not less. That said, beginners do become improvers and move on somewhat in their likes, skills and suchlike, so the goalposts are always moving. Please let me know specifically what you would like to see and I will weave it into the fabric of the magazine.

Best wishes,
Mark Baker

EVENTS FROM NELTON EXHIBITIONS

Fourth year for the South East Show

Nelton Exhibitions, the organisers of the much-loved North of England Woodworking & Power Tool show – affectionately known as the 'Harrogate Show', will be organising the fourth consecutive The South East Woodworking & Power Tool Show, which takes place from 7–8 March, 2014. The event, as always, will be a mix of demonstrations, personalities, trade stands, advice and fun, all within a convenient and easy-to-reach location. Termed as 'probably the most enjoyable woodworking event of the year', this is a show not to be missed. Further details will follow in a future issue.

DETAILS

When: 7–8 March, 2014

Where: Kent County Showground, Detling Hill, Detling, Maidstone ME14 3JF

Contact: Nelton Exhibitions

Tel: 01474 536 535 **Web:** www.nelton.co.uk

New Midlands show

A brand new show, 'The Midlands Woodworking & Power Tool show' has come about following requests from exhibitors at other Nelton events for a 'Midlands' show. This much-anticipated event will take place for the first time in March at Newark Showground, which is conveniently situated just five minutes from the A1. Nelton's ever-popular shows will now be accessible to even more woodworkers and, as usual, this event will feature a whole host of demonstrators from a range of woodworking disciplines, as well as a mix of trade stands.

DETAILS

When: 28–29 March, 2014

Where: Newark Showground, Lincoln Rd, Winthorpe, Newark-on-Trent, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 2NY

Contact: Nelton Exhibitions

Tel: 01474 536 535 **Web:** www.nelton.co.uk

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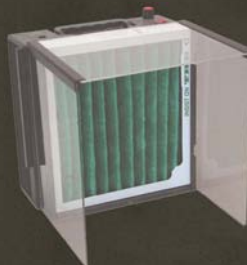


"Into The Light"
Miniature Labrador Ducks
by Cam Merkle
Oil & Acrylic on upelo and Jelutong
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African elephant calf

Steve Heath returns with this wonderfully characteristic African elephant carving



FINISHED PHOTOGRAPHS BY GUY HAGEMAN, ALL OTHERS BY STEVE HEATH

Things you will need...

- Bandsaw or coping saw
- No.5 palm gouge, 3mm
- No.7 palm gouge, 10mm
- No.9 palm gouge, 5mm
- No.5, 18mm
- No.7, 18mm
- No.12 'V' tool, 1mm, 5mm, 8mm
- Carbide tooth cutter
- Rotary cutter
- 100, 150, 240, 320 & 400 grit cloth abrasive
- Finish of choice

Wood

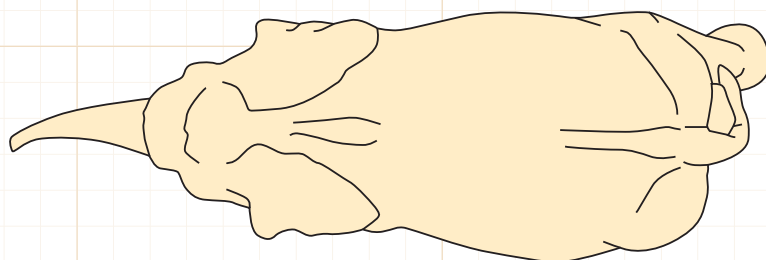
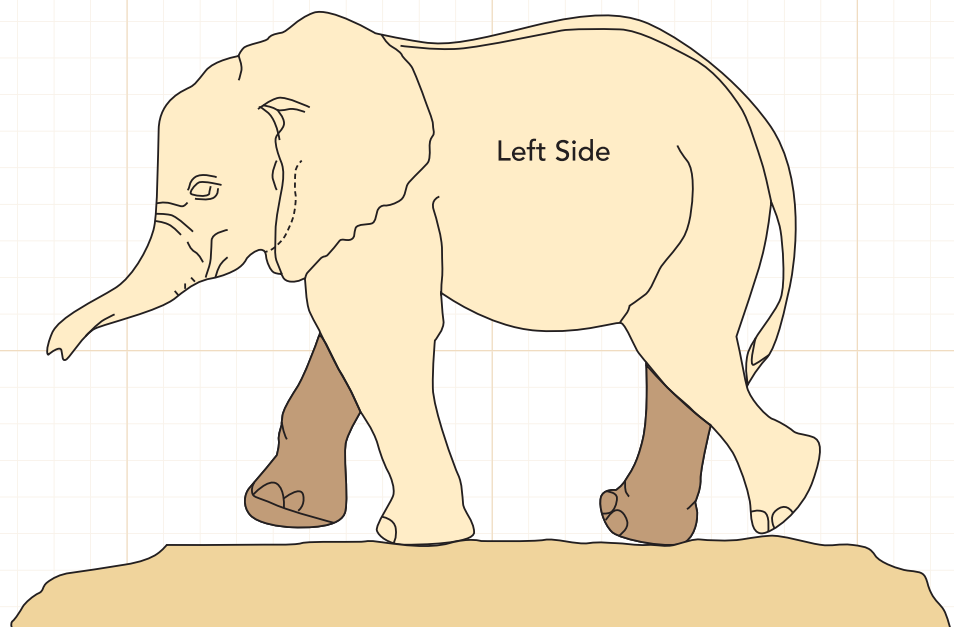
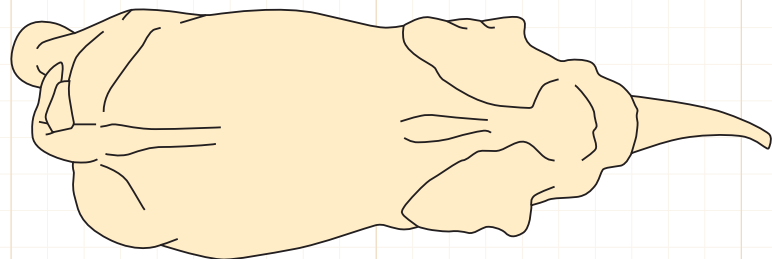
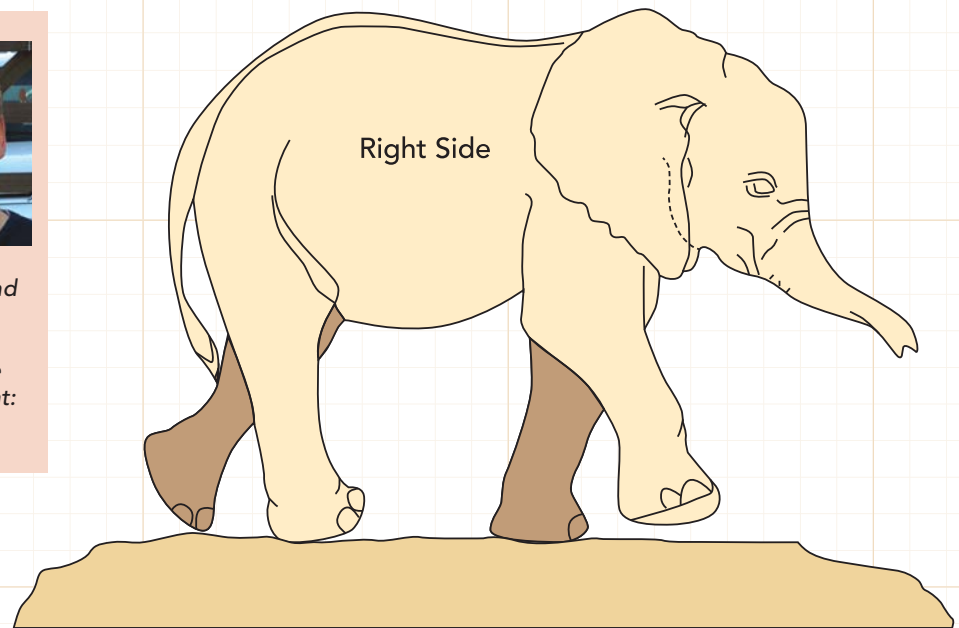
- A close-grained timber such as lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) or jelutong (*Dyera costulata*)

The group of animals described loosely as pachyderms, or 'thick skins', are a wonderful subject for carving. Their thick, loose hides crease and fold like heavy robes, and their expressions and body language are subtle and highly variable. With this carving I aimed to convey the clumsy, loose-legged determination of a young African elephant. As always, I start a wildlife carving with research. Ideally, I would use my own photography and sketches from life, but a distinct lack of elephants in North Lincolnshire meant I had to access other sources. A combination of books, magazines and web searches yielded pictures of young African elephants from all angles. I created a 2D image in pencil and a 3D image in Plasticine, using a composite of several images. This process familiarises the brain with the unique architecture of a subject, helping you to understand how features relate to one another, so the

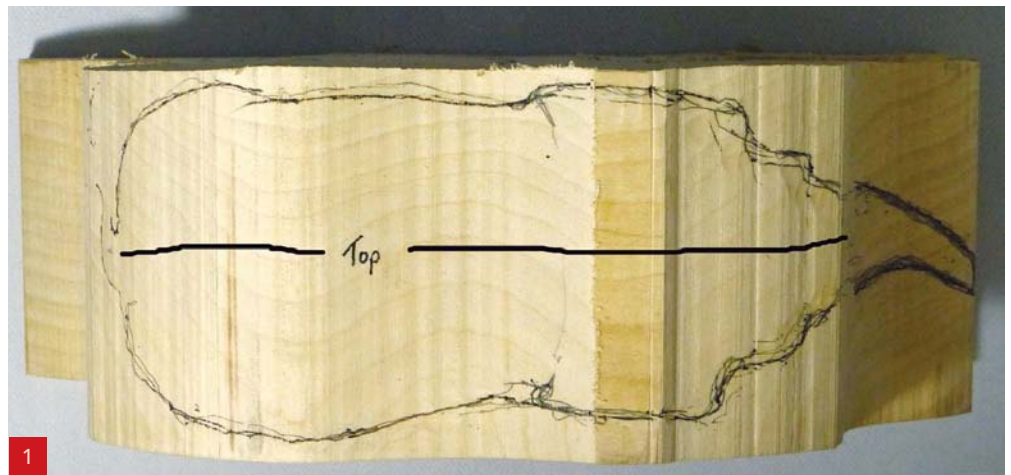
creature can be visualised within the wood. Don't worry if you are not practised at drawing – simply tracing images, observing at wildlife parks and reserves and watching film can deepen your understanding of your subject's morphology. I had hoped to have the ears forward and the tail erect, but the piece of timber I had chosen was too narrow and short. I could have carved the ears and tail separately and added them as inserts, but I was keen to complete the piece from a single block of timber, so elected to carve the ears flat to the head and the tail curving downwards. My research culminated in plan view and left and right side view templates. Enlarge or reduce these electronically to suit your blank. The tools I used are more a product of habit and familiarity than necessity. It's best to find your own 'go-to' tools, which will probably evolve from the ones you started with.

**ABOUT THE
AUTHOR**

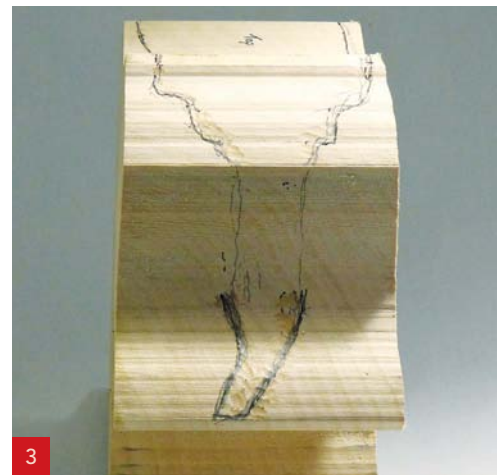
Steve Heath works as a clinical nurse specialist in an acute NHS hospital. Steve has been carving in wood and stone for around six years, specialising in wildlife. He has drawn and painted since childhood. See his website at: steveheath.artweb.com



➔ **1-2** Use a pencil to outline the left and right side views on your timber, ensuring the templates match up exactly. I used an unbreakable bendy ruler to align the templates, drawing two parallel lines across the top of the blank, joining corresponding features from each side; trunk tip to trunk tip, tail base to tail base. It is important that all four legs are drawn on each side of the timber block for when you come to drill a hole through from left to right. Use a bandsaw or coping saw to cut out the side view. Draw a line from the base of the trunk to the base of the tail along the top view of the blank; this will help maintain a rough symmetry. I tend not to use the top view template but draw the shape freehand as a guide, adjusting the outline as the carving takes shape. If you decide to use the template provided to pencil in the top view, ensure it is not pressed flush against the blank – which will shorten it – but held flat and horizontal above the blank as you use it to pencil the outline, to maintain alignment with the side view



3 You will need to draw the trunk below the forehead, which does makes it appear disembodied...



4 ... But this ensures it lies in the correct position in relation to the face. Now use a medium gouge, such as a No.5, 18mm, to rough out the trunk by removing wood from either side



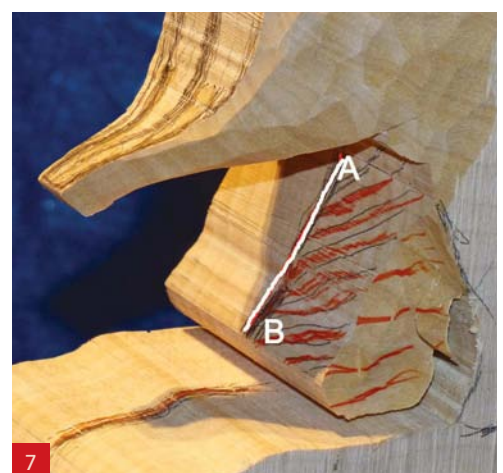
5 Drill a hole from the side, through the middle of the space between the rear and front legs. I used a 13mm flat bit, which created a hole large enough to allow the space between the front and rear legs to be enlarged with a No.7, 18mm gouge



6 Expand the hole until you have cut back to the outline of the legs



7 Having created the space between the front and back legs it is time to define and separate the front legs from one another, as you begin the process of creating the elephant calf's stride. Draw the vertical line A-B up the middle of the front legs, from base to chest, and remove wood from in front of the elephant's left leg



8 Now cut away unwanted wood from behind the right front leg, defining the gait of the front limbs. Finish separating the front legs by carving along the vertical



line A-B from front to back. I used a power carver with a carbide tooth cutter of 2.35mm shank along with No.7, 10mm and No.9, 5mm palm gouges

9 Repeat the process in step 7 for the rear legs and use a deep gouge, such as a No.9, 5mm palm tool, or rotary cutter, to define the curve of the tail. You will now have four rather boxy legs and a sense of the elephant's walking action

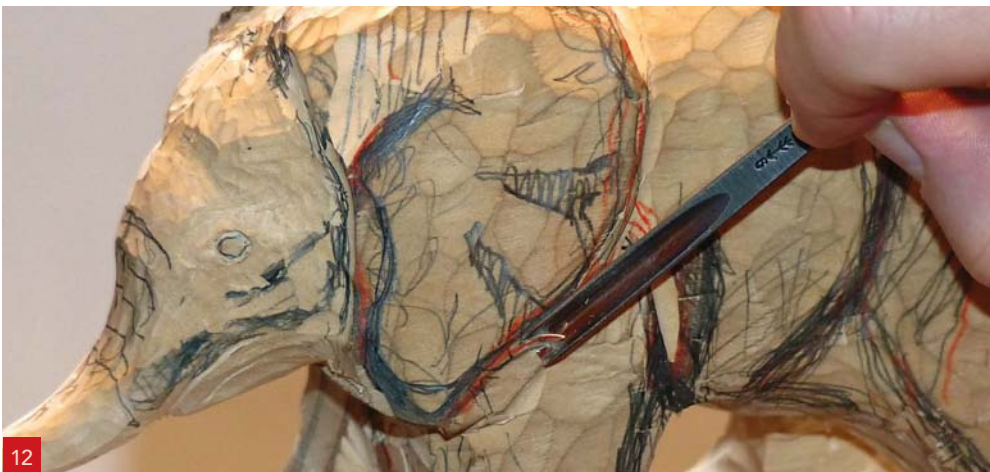
10 Time to begin the process of defining key elements such as the eyes, trunk and ears. Loosely sketch in the eyes and forehead as a point of reference; these features are essential to ensuring facial symmetry and proportion as your carving progresses. I use a set of dividers to measure from the front corner of each eye to the centreline – a technique I will expand on later



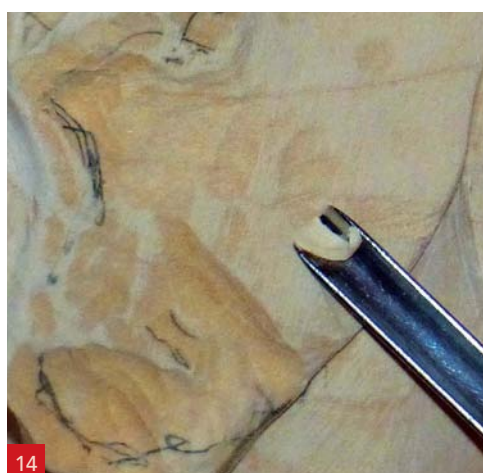
11 Further define the trunk, merging the base into the face and rounding out the upper surface. Note from your reference material and the drawings that the base of the trunk is at its widest where it meets the face, before merging into the forehead

12 Like the tail, the ears are, in effect, relief carvings. Use a No.9, 5mm palm gouge to rough the ears out

13 Use a No.12, 8mm 'V' tool to undercut the edge of the ear, at the point it meets the shoulder and front leg



14 Using a No.9, 5mm palm tool, similar deep gouge or rotary carbide cutter, add some folds or fluting to the ears to create the 'flappable' quality. Further undercut the ear with a 'V' tool, making shallow cuts where a fold of ear skin is pressed to the hide and deeper cuts where the ear skin folds upwards, away from the skin, for a rumpled appearance



15 Look carefully at your reference material and begin the process of rounding out the carving. At this stage, I shade an area on the blank in pencil, such as where the abdomen meets the leg, then carve the shaded area away and reassess, turning the piece frequently and referring to reference material. This is a slow process, but I find I can maintain balance in the whole piece. I like to think of it as sketching with a gouge or power tool

➔ **16** Round the legs and characteristic oval feet. Note that the right rear and front leg turn outwards slightly, and the right front leg is clear of the ground, while the rear left leg is poised on the tips of the toes. These small details give life to your carvings

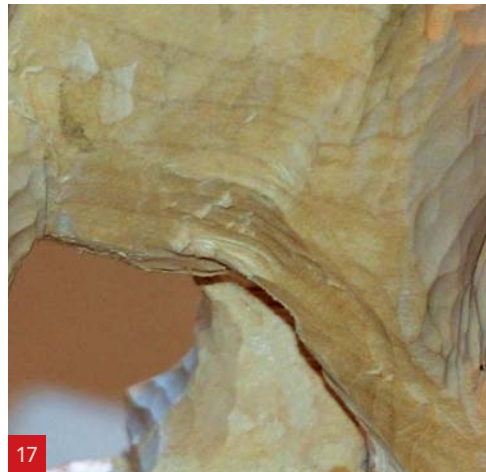
17 Carve a flap of stretched skin between the leading edge of the leg and the abdomen, ensuring it is slightly concave, conveying the sense that an elephant's skeleton moves in a baggy skin, as if it were wearing a wrinkly onesie!

18 As the rear right leg moves forward and the front left leg moves back, the baggy skin concertinas, like bellows. This effect can be reproduced by carving vertical grooves with No.12, 8mm and No.12, 5mm 'V' tools. These harsh grooves can be softened with folded and glued cloth-backed abrasive, a very useful technique I describe in step 25. Another aspect of the legs that is hard to convey in a photograph is the shape of the inner thighs and inner front limbs. These do not simply rise as columns to join the abdomen but widen at the buttock and shoulder, while becoming more slender from a front view, joining the abdomen and chest to form concave hollows – the groin and armpit. This gives the chest and abdomen a rounded quality. It can be helpful to feel these anatomical features on a pet dog or cat, as they are, in very general terms, common to all mammals

19 Carve the spine as a rounded, slender ridge along the back, from between the shoulders to the tail. Unlike the Indian elephant's convex spine, the spine is concave

20 Use a No.5, 18mm gouge to round off the flanks and a No.12, 5mm behind the right front leg

21 I used a No.12, 8mm 'V' tool to define the folds of skin that fall vertically down from the buttocks to the inner thighs. Note the curve and proportions of the tail. Now carefully carve away the wood connecting the middle section of the tail to the left leg, using a fine rotary carver or, as I did, a No.12, 5mm 'V' tool. Be careful to ensure you leave the end of the tail connected to the left leg for strength. Try to give the impression of a whip-like tail without making it too thin, increasing the risk of it snapping





22



23



24



25



26

22 Time to refine the facial features further. If necessary, re-draw the eyes, ensuring they are level and equidistant from the centreline running from the trunk tip to the tail base. Use dividers to measure from the centreline to the inner or leading corner of the eyes. Make a mark and then draw a line back, rising upwards slightly towards the ears from this point. Repeat the same for the other side and check in a mirror to ensure the lines appear level; adjust as necessary. The eyes are almond-shaped and lay on this line. You can make yourself a tiny template out of card to ensure your eyes are the same. Check in the mirror to make sure they remain level; adjust as required

23 I now use a No.5, 3mm palm gouge to carve out the dome of the eye, ensuring the inner corners look slightly inward, towards the trunk, compared to the outer or trailing corner of the eye. If you are confident with detailing on a small scale – and you have a close grain timber such as lime or jelutong – you can carve in the eyelids too. This will be much more challenging, if not impossible, with a more open grained wood like ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) or pine (*Pinus spp.*), especially if your elephant is small

24 Carve a concave area beneath the eyes, at the base of the trunk. Note the shape of the mouth, which I carved with a No.12, 5mm palm 'V' tool. Shape the trunk, narrowing towards the tip. The trunk end is oval shaped with an upper projection, like a highly articulated finger

25 I used a No.12, 1mm 'V' tool to carve around the half-moon-shaped toenails, softening with a square of 240 grit cloth-backed abrasive folded over and glued back to back with cyanoacrylate adhesive

26 I finished the piece by sanding with increasingly finer grades of aluminium oxide cloth-backed abrasive – 100, 150, 240 and 320 grit – brushing boiling water over the carving between each grit to raise the grain, then allowing to dry before proceeding to the next grit. I applied two coats of antique oil and, once this was thoroughly dry, a coat of beeswax, and polished to a soft sheen. I mounted the elephant on a block of pine, signed my name and gave it as a Christmas gift

Is Bigger Really Better?

For a woodcarver, making your mark on the world is an essential part of the activity. But sometimes, those marks, however brilliantly executed, can only be seen by the privileged few who can get sufficiently close to examine your handiwork. Perhaps that's why many carvers like to push the boat out once in a while and create something that has real impact, not only at the emotional level but physically too. Crisp winter days, with the possibilities of working comfortably outside, can help to make such ideas a pleasant reality.



Here at The ToolPost we stock a range of tools and equipment that will contribute to making sculptural-scale carving a pleasure at the time of execution as well as in quiet reflection. You may choose to approach your project using traditional carving gouges from our extensive range of carving tools by Henry Taylor, Robert



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The One Oak Memorial
in Bladon Heath Woods

by Simon Clements, of Long Wittenham, Oxon,
showing the story of the oak tree from which the
halved and carved bough was taken

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sharing expertise

Michael Painter Diary of a professional carver



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKE PAINTER

Don't have a stab at lettering!

Mike Painter discusses some dos and don'ts when lettering...

The shapes and forms a carver produces are curved. It is not our speciality to produce flat surfaces; this is the skill of the cabinetmaker, joiner or carpenter. Professional carvers rarely use flat chisels, except for cutting the straight lines and serifs of letters.

The carver's bevel

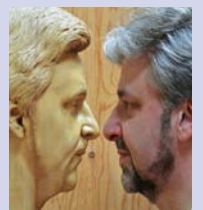
The flat chisel of a carver has a bevel each side of the blade so the cutting edge is in the centre, unlike a joiner's chisel, which has the bevel on one side only. There is always a practical reason for our actions; in this case it is essential when executing an inscription for your head to be static above the letter you are cutting. This enables you to correctly observe the angle of the cut created by the chisel, usually at 60° to the surface, though this differs according to the applied decoration of the inscription. Constantly turning a chisel around to present the flat side – as with a joiner's

chisel – encourages your head to move. Using the carver's double-bevelled chisel ensures you don't have to keep turning the tool around, therefore it is more efficient and helps your head to remain central above the letter. This helps explain why you will never find a traditionally trained carver using a joiner's single-bevelled flat chisel.

It's essential for a commercial woodcarver to be ambidextrous, as we have to navigate the orientation of the grain; turning a block of wood around or upside down is not an option. To cut letters professionally, the mallet needs to be wielded left- and right-handed. All the 'righties' find it hard to use their left hand, while the 'lefties' live in a right handed world so have an advantage, though in ancient times they were thought to be possessed! Being ambidextrous has an advantage, though not essential when stonecarving, because the beds – grain – may, within reason, be ignored. But stonemasons in olden days were always ➔

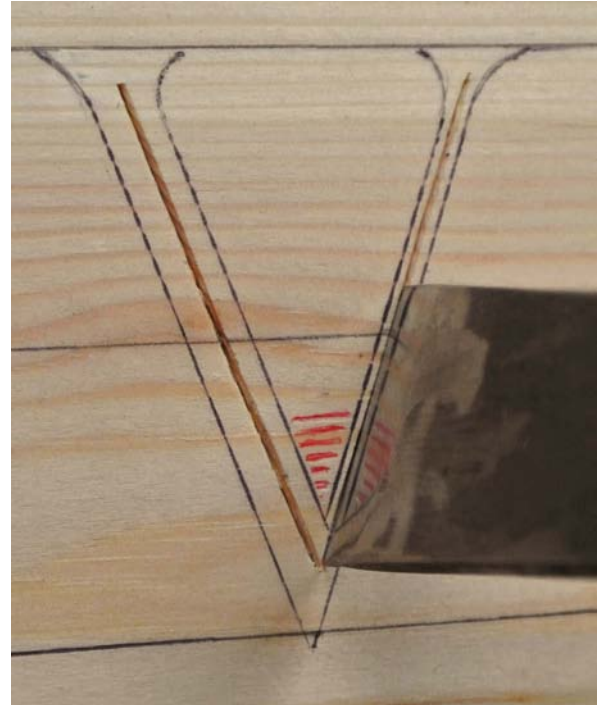
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Painter specialised in traditional wood and stonecarving 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





Stabbing each side of the stem will create a weakness, as will stabbing around the points of the leaf



Stabbing between converging lines creates a weak area shown by the hatched red lines

→ encouraged to be right-handed, ensuring the wasted stone and rubbish that was removed from the stone block always fell towards the same side of the line of bankers – stone benches – allowing the labourers to access and remove it easily.

Don't disturb the grain

Now let's have a little physical exercise and jump on a fairly high soapbox! Forcing a chisel square

into the surface of wood at any time – usually with the blow of a mallet – will disturb and dislodge the grain either side of the cut. Chisels are wedge-shaped in section no matter how thin they are, with some being extremely thick and chunky. Repeating this action – especially cross-grain – perhaps to stab each side of a stem or vein in foliage work, moves and dislodges the grain twice between the cuts, creating

a weakness that results in the stem breaking away from the background. In all carvings many features have weaknesses that will be displaced and break off if you pursue this action, for example, the stabbing of each side of the points of a leaf. I would advise the 'part-time carver' not to attempt this procedure, especially when cutting fibrous, loose-grained timbers. Better to relieve the feature both sides with a fluter before stabbing; this removes the waste sensibly without disturbing the grain, leaving the carved element strong.

Applying the same logic, why force a deep vertical cut in the centre of an incised letter? The belief is that it provides you with a guiding cut that hopefully becomes the bottom of the 'V' cut. Well, it might, but at what cost? Inscriptions that are cut along horizontal grain are particularly vulnerable – church inscriptions usually have vertical panels, so the grain is usually upright – as are those applied around a curve where the orientation of the grain constantly varies. Repeatedly stabbing vertically down where lines converge – as with the points of the letters W, M, N, A, V and Y – has the consequence of developing an area of weakness that can break between these converging lines, particularly with smaller letters.



The first cut should be away from the weakness, slightly inside the line, with the second cut on the other side of the leg



The third cut should be away from the weakness on the connecting leg, slightly inside the line, with the fourth cut on the other side of the leg



Apply the same sequence but with precise cuts on the lines

If I cut larger letters – 100mm plus – I would relieve the timber between the lines with a fluter before cutting the 60° incisions. An exception to this procedure is chip carving, where the geometric shapes created very often have wider angles to the cuts – greater than 60° to the face – so forcing your cutting edge into the timber isn't so crucial.

Essential rules

There are two rules essential to woodcarving: work with the grain as much as possible and always work away from the weakness. Hence, as mentioned in a previous article, you can't use a parting chisel to cut letters, as one wing always cuts against the grain.

Adopting this stabbing procedure usually initiates physical exercise, kneeling on the floor trying to locate the missing piece amongst many other similar pieces that have fallen. Making errors in a large workshop with other carvers around teaches you not to draw attention to the situation by any action or sound, since the taunting and recrimination can be relentless if discovered! Obviously, this absolutely never happens to me – I'm devoid of making mistakes! It's strange; these remarks focus my thoughts on the fictional woodcarver Geppetto and his magical carving of Pinocchio. I've noticed they are often punctuated by my nose aching and increasing in size... how odd? 🐼



The finished 50mm high pine (Pinus spp.) letter with all the cuts at 60°, including the serifs



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Dance in wood

Carvings by Gordon Becker

Sheila Campbell pulls back the stage curtains to reveal this Canadian carver's exquisite dancers

If you ask an artist why he or she chose the medium they use most frequently, the reply usually is that the medium chose them. That is certainly the case here, as Gordon Becker decided at age 11 that he wanted to be a woodcarver. Many years of experience and adventure later he was finally able to accomplish that goal, and all the intervening steps helped to form the work that he now creates.

It took time, and the accumulation of a variety of skills, to work out how to move beyond the limitations of 'the log'. In order to carve the human figure, especially in active poses, there has to be accommodation for

points of weakness in the material. This is clearly evident in the history of sculpture when we look at Egyptian carvings, where the figures, in wood or stone, are confined to cylindrical shapes, and do not have extended limbs.

In ancient Greek art, this gradually developed in stone sculpture, and the figure was released from the cylindrical form. But even there an extended arm, for example, usually required some sort of support, as the horizontal limb in stone cannot support its own weight. Hence the inclusion of a spear, a shield, or drapery falling to floor level, as support. In the woodcarvings of the Middle Ages, limbs were made of separate pieces, fastened together with metal or wood dowelling, and the joints covered with gesso and paint. But extreme positions were just not attempted in carving in the round.



'Maroon' (2013), black walnut (Juglans nigra), spruce (Picea abies) and ebony (Diospyros spp.) with steel and hard maple base, urethane and automotive enamel finish. 1,551 x 876 x 229mm



The man behind these evocative full-scale woodcarvings

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GRETCHEN HOWARD

'Dance of Generations'
(2002), white maple
(*Acer macrophyllum*),
white pine (*Pinus spp.*),
limestone base, with a
urethane and enamel
finish. 1,956 x 813 x
560mm



→ Defying the limitations

For almost three decades, Gordon Becker has concentrated on a series of dancers in which he literally defies the limitations of wood. His figures are ethereal and expressive, implying action and motion, inviting the viewer into their world. In describing this series Gordon has said: "I began carving dancers in 1984. I see in the effort, brevity, pain and exhilaration that is the spirit of dance, the most poignant expression of the dream of flying, of becoming the arrow of our longing. The arrow on the rock wall is in eternal flight. My dancers reach with their bodies and hands into a moment of transformation."

Let us look at some examples in this series. 'The Red Dancer' (1994) is caught in the middle of a twirl. Her skirt, which is made of a series of partially shaped flat pieces of wood, flares out around her. The same technique is used for the torso and arms, adding to the sense of movement. Her hair, a wild tangle of distressed yew, follows the flow of the body and drapery. She is in full flight, entirely caught up in her own expressive movement.

The 'White Dancer' (1995) is caught in a very athletic pose, every part of the body throbbing with effort and lifting motion, and her hair made of hawthorn branches equally expressive. 'Japanese Dancer' (1999) is suspended in mid-flight, her arms still lifting her body towards the heavens, her sedate costume exposing the details of her body as it is plastered against her by



Right: *'Japanese Dancer'*
(1999), basswood (*Tilia americana*), selected
white pine (*Prunus spp.*),
bleached with urethane
finish – 30 coats

the rush of air. 'Persephone's Dance' (2001) is a suspended figure, here holding a pose again in mid-flight. She has more drapery than the others, and once again the flowing drapery contributes to the impression of unbridled movement.

'Blue Dancer' (2002) is caught at the end of a leap, just landing, her hair flying about her head, still catching up to the body, skirts going in all directions, her face telling her own story of the dance. 'Black Dancer' (2002) is fully suspended by cables. Here, the figure is completely stretched out, defying gravity, her spiky hair almost like a crown of fire, the face full of concentration and introspection, all four limbs extended in different directions.

'Dance of Generations' (2002) is a more introspective figure, caught in the act of climbing over a fence, moving slowly from one place to another. In this case, the hair is also calmer than the other dancers, as she is illustrating a different aspect of the dance of life, thoughtfully moving from one stage to another rather than in vigorous action. 'Maroon' (2013) is the most recent work. ➔



'White Dancer' (1995), basswood (Tilia americana), red pine (Pinus sylvestris), hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) with urethane and Duco finish. 1,320 x 660 x 812mm

"I see in the effort, brevity, pain and exhilaration that is the spirit of dance, the most poignant expression of the dream of flying"



'Black Dancer' (2002), basswood (Tilia americana), red pine (Pinus sylvestris), white maple (Acer macrophyllum), with a urethane and Duco finish. 1,017 x 712 x 1,753mm

*'Blue Dancer' (2002), basswood (Tilia americana),
white pine, blackberry brambles, with a urethane and
automotive enamel finish. 1,600 x 1,219 x 965mm*



- ➔ She flies through the air with the appearance of effortless motion. Her arms are almost in the position of an archer releasing an arrow, as described in the quote on page 20.

Capturing transitions

All of these dancers have individual stories, and are inspired by the artist's own experiences of strong women in his life, not all of whom were actual dancers. Each of the dancers is caught in a fleeting moment of transition, about to change pose the next second.

They are superb specimens of physical power and control, professionals who have achieved a level of perfection beyond the limitations of ordinary mortals. All are striving for physical expression in the art of dance. We, the viewers, forget for the moment that they are made from wood – that solid, heavy material which here has been made to seem light, airy and completely malleable. How is this achieved? The figures are life-size, with the exception of 'Persephone's Dance' and 'Maroon', which are both three-quarters life-size. In order to reduce the weight of the figures, the large elements such as heads and torsos are hollowed out, and where necessary for display, steel rods are inserted into the limbs to allow them to be self-supporting. Some dancers are suspended, others stand on the ground. The torsos are made of multiple thin slabs of wood, often left minimally carved, to suggest the motion of the dancer and the fabric.

These rounds also suggest vertebrae which allow the body to move and twist as required by the dance, implying that the figure can and will change position momentarily. The limbs are made up of multiple pieces of wood, cut into wedges and glued together so that with every change of plane the grain of the wood flows with the anatomy.

So, for example, an arm may consist of one piece for the upper arm; the forearm may be of two or three wedges in order to keep the grain flowing in the same direction as the musculature; the fingers will also be carved from a wedge, which allows the artist to carve with the grain to maintain the strength of the wood. It is a tedious process but one that allows for the maximum amount of strength and expression for every part of the figure.

Carving in colour

A brief comment about the use of paint. Some people believe that woodcarvings, with the exception of birds, fish, Santas and caricatures, should not be painted. But the whole historical tradition of woodcarving is filled with painted figures. From ancient

Egypt through to the Renaissance and beyond, wooden carvings were painted, partly to make them more legible from a distance, but also because they would be considered unfinished if they did not have colour.

The ancient Greek stone carvings were also painted, as ➔



'Persephone's Dance' (2001), white maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), white pine (*Pinus spp.*), with a Duco and urethane finish, 864 x 864 x 610mm

“Some people believe that woodcarvings should not be painted. But the whole historical tradition of woodcarving is filled with painted figures”

→ were Romanesque carvings. Our aesthetic of unpainted surfaces has come about simply because these works have either lost their colour through weathering, or through excessive cleaning.

Woodcarving as art

All of the preceding discussion demonstrates that the limitations of a medium may not be as great as we think. With imagination we can extend the boundaries. But to those who say that the way to extend the limits of a medium is to ignore all tradition and teaching in the field, I must say no. It is only by knowledge of, and having expertise in, the full extent of traditional applications of any medium that we can push the limits to new boundaries.

There is clearly a distinction between craft and art. Gordon Becker's work in wood is definitely art. Woodcarving did once hold a high position in the arts in a time before we made the distinction between art and craft. For a long time, woodcarving has more or less fallen into the category of folk art. But slowly, especially as figurative work is gradually returning to favour in other media as well, such as painting and prints, woodcarving is starting to regain a niche and recognition in the realm of fine art.

In these works we see the combination of two art forms, the art of dance and the art of woodcarving. Gordon Becker has said that when he first began carving these dancers, he kept hearing Stravinsky's 'The Rite of Spring' running through his head. With this group of figures, each viewer will be inspired to supply the appropriate music in his or her own head to accompany the dance. And hopefully these images will inspire other woodcarvers to expand their horizons and think more broadly about the possibilities of the art of woodcarving. ▀

'African Dancer' (1997), basswood (Tilia americana), selected white pine (Pinus spp.) and ebony (Diopsiros spp.), with urethane and automotive Duco finish. 1,270 x 635 x 118mm



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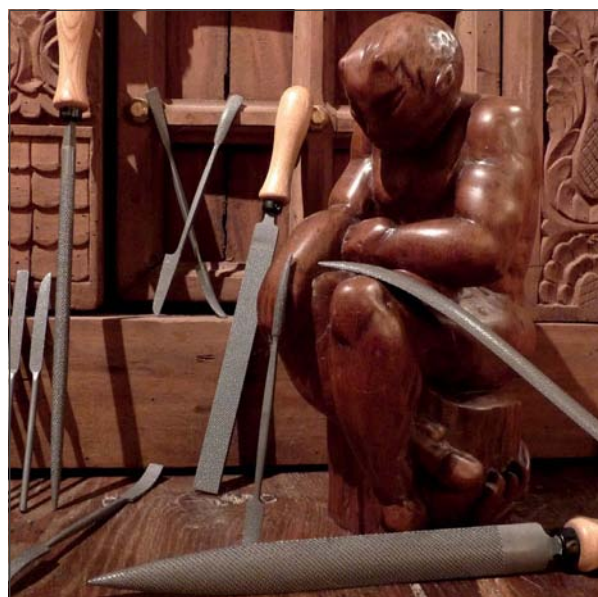
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Dolphin relief panel

Duane Cartwright carves this dolphin in relief, with a chip carved border and stippled background



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DUANE CARTWRIGHT

I designed this project so it could be carved with different outcomes. Where I've given this carving a chip-carved border you could use a different chip-carve pattern, leave it plain or have no frame at all. I've also given it a stippled background, but you could leave it tooled or sand smooth. You could even cut out the dolphin profile and carve it, in which case you

don't need a frame or background. I've used American black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) for this project but you could use any hardwood such as lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), oak (*Quercus robur*) or walnut (*Juglans regia*). The piece of wood I used was 320 x 230 x 25mm, but you can, of course, print the design out at whatever size required for your chosen piece of wood.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

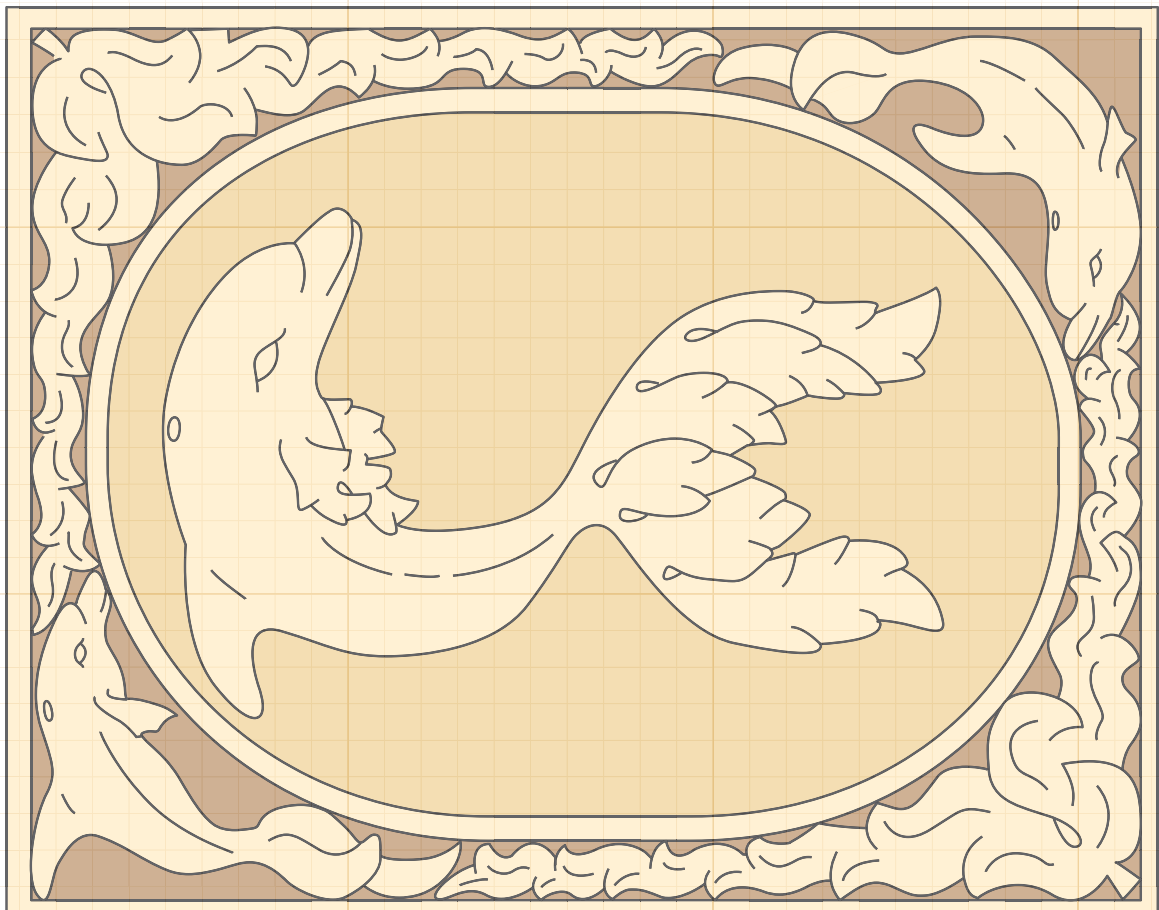
Duane Cartwright is a self-taught woodcarver based in Hartland, North Devon. He has been carving on and off for about 15 years. His interest in carving began while undertaking an apprenticeship in antique furniture restoration. His work can be found in the UK and as far away as Australia. To see more of Duane's work, visit www.duanescarving.blogspot.co.uk



Things you will need...

Tools and materials:

- No.3 gouge, 8mm, 14mm
- No.6 gouge, 8mm, 14mm
- No.9 gouge, 8mm, 14mm
- No.11 gouge, 3mm
- 10mm 'V' tool
- Hooked skew
- Chip carving knife
- Background punch
- Cabinet scraper (optional)
- Artist's 6B carbon stick
- Sanding sealer or clear wax and white spirit
- Various grits of sandpaper



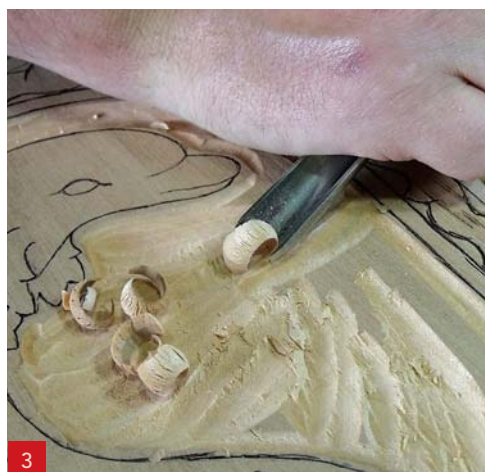
1 Print the design at the required size for the piece of timber you wish to use. On the back of the printed design, use an artist's 6B carbon stick and rub it all over the back, then tape the design onto the wood and, using a ballpoint pen, firmly draw over the outline of the design. Remove the pattern and the design should be transferred to the wood; go over it again with a pen. You could also glue the pattern onto the wood or use carbon paper

2 The next step, using a 14mm No.9 gouge, is to begin carving around the edge of the dolphin and inside of the frame

3 After marking out the outline with the No.9, begin taking down the background, checking the depth as you go. As the background gets to the required depth, use a medium sweep gouge to level it off, keeping the edge of the background rounded as it meets the border

Cutting in

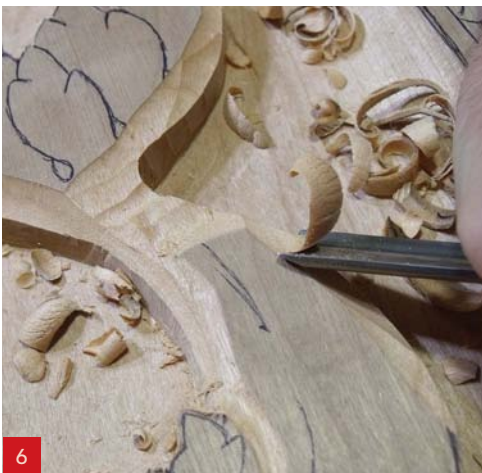
4 Once the background is at its required depth it's time to start cutting in around the dolphin.





I used a shallow gouge and cut in around the edge of the outline, keeping the angle straight as I cut down. Where the cut down joins the background I used a 3mm No.11 gouge to carve the join, which keeps the join area clean and tidy and makes it easy to change if needed; it also prevents nasty stop cut marks from occurring, which would show up when the piece is polished

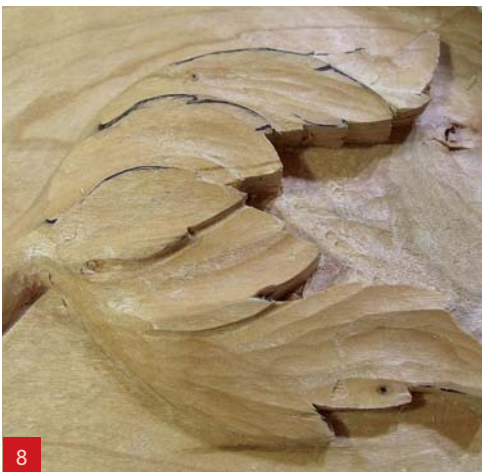
5 When cutting in around the tail and fins, cut down on the cross grain first and then with the grain, as this stops the wood splitting and the corners chipping off. I also use a hooked skew to get into the corners and around the inaccessible areas of the tail



6 Start shaping the dolphin using a shallow No.3 to medium No.6 gouge, carving and bolstering the dolphin's body and tail. Be mindful of the grain changing direction where the body meets the tail



7 While carving the body area use the No.9 gouge and carve around the eyeball area to give it a rough profile, then continue using a shallow No.3 gouge to finish off shaping the body



Tail leaves

8 Once the body and tail are roughly shaped, redraw the leaf shapes on the tail. Using a veiner – I use a 3mm No.11 – carve down the outside of the drawn lines, marking out the individual leaf parts, and then, using the 14mm No.9 gouge, carve in the flutes of the leaves



9 Where one part of the leaf joins the next, use the No.11 gouge to stop cut the eye



10 You can now follow the stop cut by cutting in down the side of the adjacent leaf. Then, carve in and tidy up the overlapping leaves. Once the tail is carved and you're happy with it, you can then undercut the bottom part of the tail, being careful not to go too deep – you just need to create a little extra shadow



Flipper

11 Start cutting in around the flipper with an 8mm No.3 gouge, making sure the joint between the flipper and the body is clean and tidy. Then, make a couple of stop cuts on the overlapping part of the leaf

➔ **12** Using the 14mm No.9, start to carve the flutes of the leaf/flipper

13 When the front flipper is carved, it's time to carve the back flipper and undercut the front one. The back flipper needs to be carved with a convex profile as opposed to the concave of the front flipper

Eye and nose

14 After redrawing the eye and mouth, start carving the eye with a medium No.6 gouge by cutting in a stop cut, then use a hooked skew to round the eyeball

15 Once the eyeball is carved, use an 8mm No.9 and carve a groove under the eye area before moving onto the nose. For the mouth/nose I use a 10mm 'V' tool to carve along the pre-drawn line of the mouth

16 Use an 8mm No.3 upside down to round off the mouth

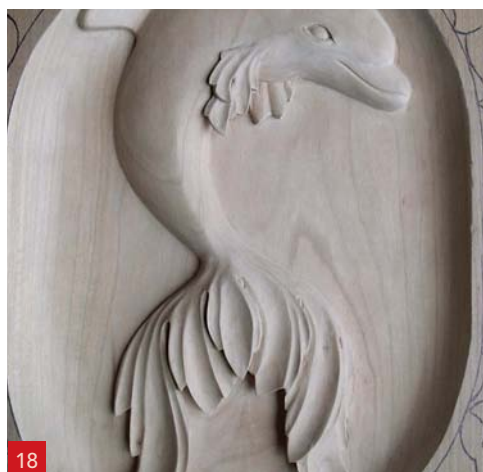
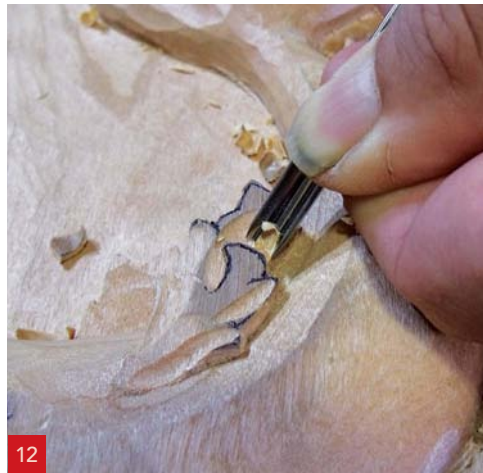
17 Once the eye and nose areas are done it's time to move onto the blow hole. For this I used an 8mm No.9 gouge and cut down, then used a shallow gouge to cut away the chip

Sanding

18 Once the carving is complete it's time to double check and tidy up any areas that may need attention. Once you're happy with the carving it's time to sand, starting with 150 grit. Going with the grain, sand the background well, being careful not to sand away any of the detail. Work through 240 and 320 grit and finish with 400 grit, making sure to give the carving a good brush down before starting with each new grit

Stippling the background

19 After sanding start texturing the background. You could leave the background with a tooled finish if you wish, or you can leave it smooth and sanded to show the grain of the wood. For this project I used a punch – I've used a manufactured punch but you can make them quite easily with a nail and file. With an even tap of the hammer, I punched all over the background. Once the whole of the background was stippled I gave the entire carving a coat of sanding sealer and carefully wiped away any excess. When using sanding sealer I also gave





the border area – which still has to be chip carved – a good coat to help prevent the wood stain from bleeding

Chip carving

20 I carry out most of the chip carving with a chip-carving knife, but it can also be done with chisels. With woods like lime and cherry I prefer to use a knife, but for harder or more brittle woods I use chisels and gouges for chip carving. Start with the knife going across the grain, then, keeping the knife at the same angle, cut the opposite side of the chip to be removed; the chip should pop out

21 The few times I use a gouge is when two cuts join and need to be rounded, such as behind the dorsal fin – this leaves a clean join

22 Once all of the main chips have been removed, draw the leaf vein lines on. Once you're happy with their placement, carve them with the 'V' tool

Staining

23 Once the chip carving is complete it's time to stain. Select a dark wood stain – I used a spirit stain – and use a small artist's paintbrush to carefully paint the wood stain into the chip-carved areas, making sure that you wipe up any excess with a rag

24 When staining is complete and dry, use a cabinet scraper to carefully scrape away the coat of sanding sealer applied before the chip carving, going with the grain. Scraping keeps the edges and detail crisp, whereas too much sanding will round the edges and blur the detail. Once the scraping is complete, sand the chip-carved frame through the grits, being careful not to sand away any detail. Once the frame has been sanded, cut back the sanding sealer on the dolphin and background with a very fine grit sandpaper and then give the whole carving another coat of sanding sealer. Remember to give the carving a good brush down between each sanding grit and before coating in sealer. Once the sanding sealer is dry it's time to wax. Before applying the wax I thin it with white spirit to the consistency of thick cream then apply the wax, making sure to work it in, and to wipe up any excess. Finally, using a soft cloth and brush, buff it up to a shine

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Technical know-how: Carving the cheetah

In the first of a new series, Peter Benson offers some tips on carving the fastest of all land mammals

There are many considerations to bear in mind to carve something like a cheetah.

Just because a big cat has spots, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is a cheetah or a leopard, as there are many spotted cats and they are all different. Also, your carving will give no idea of actual size and, unless you paint the finished piece you won't be able to show spots.

Although you have a pattern to go by you will need to spend some time acquainting yourself with what a cheetah actually looks like. You will need not only to capture the shape of the animal but also its essence or character if you are to be successful. There are many books and thousands of photographs on the internet that you can study at your leisure.

One picture that will be invaluable is that of the skeleton. From this you can work out the proportions of the animal – I usually do this by translating each dimension into 'heads'. I measure the head and then check this against all the other dimensions, bearing in mind where each joint is situated so that I can check these against my carving. The following diagram gives you the relative dimensions for the cheetah. Once you understand the basic structure you will see that the same bones and muscles are shared by all four-footed animals and you just need to see how these vary in length and proportion for any one that you may wish to carve.

Preparation

Very often, by slightly exaggerating some of the features, you can make it easier to see the difference. One of the common features of the cheetah is it sits very tall and stretches its neck out to search for possible enemies. I have very slightly increased the length of the back and neck to emphasise this feature. If you don't like this you can stick rigidly to the correct proportions.

Once you have done all your homework I recommend that you make a very basic maquette from clay or Plasticine. I have known carvers who make their maquettes from soft wood like jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) – the choice is yours. This doesn't have to be detailed but, by using the patterns given, you should get the basic shape and lines of action of the cheetah. This will give you a good basis to work from when you have transferred the patterns to your block.

I have used a piece of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) 150 x 150 x 100mm for my carving. If you

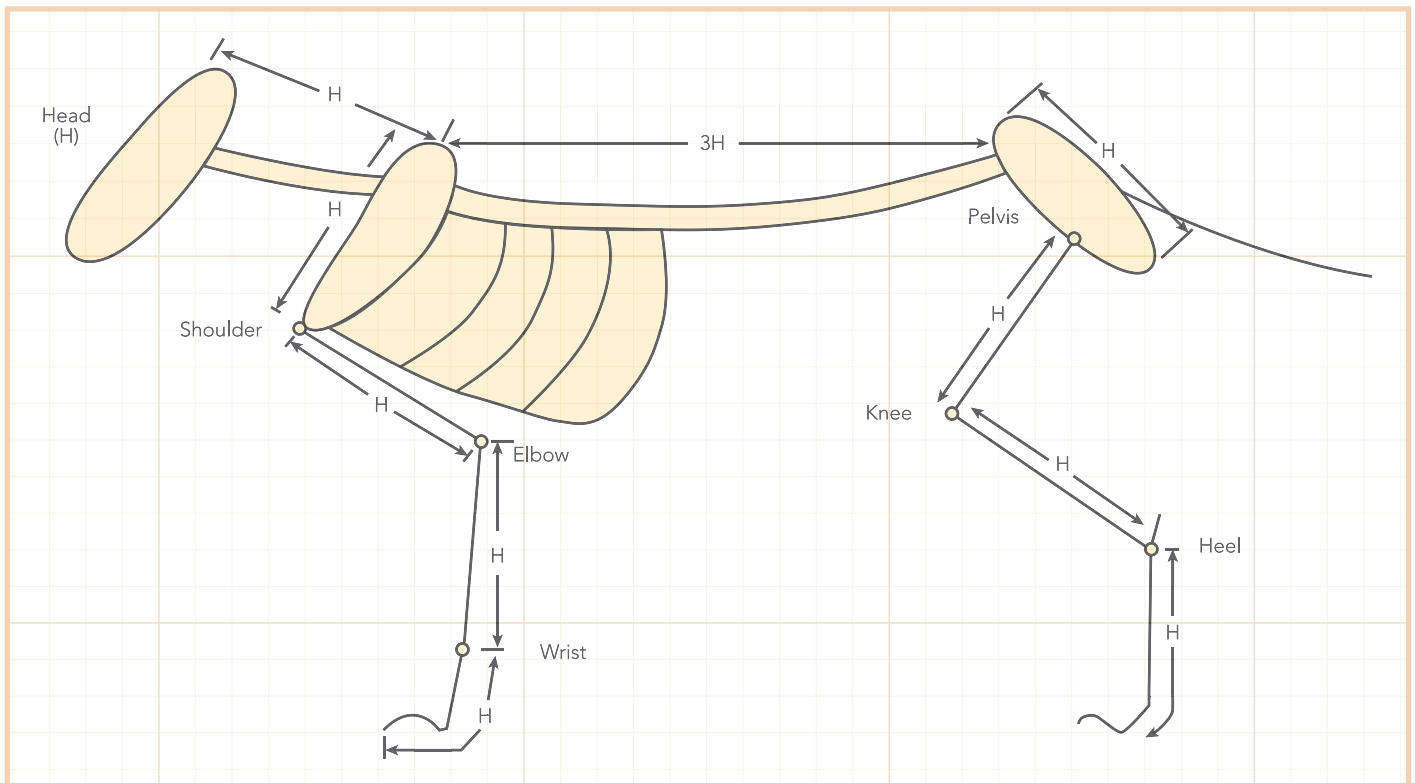
have a bandsaw, you should be able to cut out the outline from the side, but you may not be able to do the same with the rear outline. This could be cut with a coping saw or even attacked with a mallet and gouge.

This is not a step-by-step project as each of you will have your own way of carving it but you may like to consider some of the following tips.

Showing the rear, side and top views of the cheetah



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER BENSON



Top tips

1. Don't 'practise' on your carving – this is what your maquette is for. If you are not sure of anything, try it on your maquette first. I like to develop the maquette as I progress with the carving – if an idea doesn't work on the maquette, it won't work on the carving.

2. Keep your pencil handy – it is your most valuable tool – and draw what you intend to carve before cutting wood.

3. Before you cut any wood, make sure you mark in the position of the head and neck, remembering that the head cannot bend even if the neck does; it is a solid block.

4. Rough out the head before you attempt anything else and then try to get the rough form of the animal before attempting any detail.

5. Throughout the carving, keep the centreline marked in with the position of the pelvis and shoulders drawn for reference. Remember that a line drawn from the left shoulder to the right, or from points on the opposite sides of the pelvis, will always cross this centreline at a right angle, no matter

how much the centreline curves or bends.

6. Keep measuring the limbs, as it is very easy to carve 'by eye' and not get the lengths right.

7. Just because you are carving a specialised animal like the cheetah, you should not overlook other reference material that is close at hand. If you have a dog or cat, especially greyhounds, whippets or Siamese cats, you can easily see muscle forms that are very close to those needed for your carving and that can be checked regularly for accuracy.

8. Don't forget that the big cats have very loose bellies that expand and contract hugely depending on whether they have eaten or not. When sitting, this will hang quite low, giving quite a deep body outline.



The finished cheetah viewed from behind

Finishing

I have left this carving with a tooled finish, but you may wish to sand yours. Remember, though, once you start sanding you are doubling the time spent on the piece if you are to get a good finish. Even to get a good tooled finish takes quite a time as it is not just a matter of leaving tool marks; the finish has to be clean and sharp without 'fuzzies'. I find that the best finish to use with a tooled carving is Danish oil followed, if you wish, with a final polish with wax. Don't forget to wipe off any surplus oil before it dries or you can get a rather blotchy varnish-like finish.

This project may look difficult to some carvers but, if you do your research and produce a reasonable maquette, a fairly capable hobby carver should complete this piece in less than 20 hours of carving time. Don't be disappointed if it takes longer, as you will learn a great deal about carving animals in general. ▶

Recommended tools

Because I like to do most of my carvings like this holding them in my hands, my choice of tools will be a little different – I use shorter tools – but the sizes and sweeps will generally be the same.

- 19mm or 16mm No.6 for roughing out
- 3mm and 6mm No.9 palm gouge
- 19mm or 8mm No.3 and No.5 palm gouges
- 3mm No.3 or No.4 palm gouge for the eyes and mouth

Slicing cuts

The cut of the carver

Slicing cuts provide you with a keener cut and a cut needing less effort, as Chris Pye shows here



Many of the cuts you can make with a gouge have names: 'running' cuts for long grooves and 'stab' cuts when setting in, for example. However, more than any other, one cut epitomises woodcarving

gouges at work: the 'slicing' cut.

So important is this slicing cut that you could call it the 'cut of the carver'. If I'm not running or stabbing cuts, then it's rare for me just to push my gouge straight across or into the

wood; I slice my cuts – a fully ingrained habit that has enormous benefits. Let me demonstrate how to make slicing cuts with some examples and then I'll explain why it's really such an extraordinary technique.

Exercise 1

Take something like a No.6 or 7, 16mm gouge and a flat piece of carving wood. Use what I call the 'low angle grip': the braking hand grips the blade and its heel rests on the wood; the other – the pushing hand – holds the handle. Keep your elbows in. Work across the grain.

Step 1

Start a shallow, scooping cut over to one side of the cutting edge, keeping the corner clear...

Step 2

As you push forward, rotate the back, handle hand: the cutting edge slices across as it advances so the shaving is now being removed with the middle of the blade...

Step 3

Keep rotating your back hand as you drop the handle a little and exit the cut towards the opposite side from which you started, without digging in the corner.

If your edge was sharp and you kept your corners clear, the cut

should be completely clean. Put the bevel of the gouge in the facet and you'll see it fits perfectly: the cut and the consequential facet follow the sweep.

Practise with different sweeps and widths. The deeper the gouge, the more you need to rotate or 'rock' the tool through its cut. Also practise slicing both clockwise and anticlockwise, doing your best not to dig in with the corners. Eventually, you'll work the movement into short, quick, clean and efficient slicing cuts.



Exercise 2

Using the same grip and wood, take up a flat, No.3, 20-25mm gouge. Work across the grain.

Step 1

As before, start the cut to one side of the gouge, keeping the corner clear.



Step 2

Now, because the gouge is so flat, you cannot rotate it as previously. As you push forward, you must 'drift' the edge across the shaving with your front hand. Dropping the handle towards the far side releases the shaving from what is a very shallow facet.

With a flat gouge there can be no rotation at all; it's more of a paring action that takes away a thin shaving of wood. You can pare or slice from left to right or right to left and, with a sharp edge and free corners, you should have a nice, shallow shiny facet. Once mastered, this slicing action is the way to finish off surfaces 'straight from the chisel'.



The secret of slicing



Why is slicing such a skilful and effective practice? Slicing effectively lowers the cutting angle of your gouge. In other

words, your gouge apparently acquires a longer bevel – with all the benefits of a keener cut with less effort.

There is a geometric reason, relating to inclined planes, but I confess I needed the following little demonstration to really understand.

Make yourself two identical wedges, around 30°; these represent the bevel and cutting edge of a chisel or gouge. Cut one in two halves, down the wedge – in the photo on the left. The gap here represents the line a wood fibre would follow if you pushed a chisel straight into the wood, like a running cut.

Cut the other wedge diagonally across the thin end – in the photo on the right. The gap here represents the line a wood fibre would follow if you sliced the chisel to one side as the blade

moved forward. Now compare the wedge angles within the gaps. The running cut wedge – top in the photo below – is still the 30°, but the slicing cut wedge – bottom in the photo below – is significantly less. An effectively narrow wedge of metal will be keener and less work. The difference gets greater the more acute the slicing.

This, to me, is a very convincing demonstration. First, slicing, wherever possible, must always give you a keener cut, which is wonderful where wood fibres lie awkwardly. Second, it gives a cut needing less effort – you can even twist your gouge as you hit it with a mallet. But convince yourself. Don't just push. Slice! ▀



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



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Lizzy Ashworth

Simon Frost meets an upcoming carver who's not afraid to embrace the digital age...

Where does woodcarving fit in with contemporary design? Perhaps Lizzy Ashworth has the answer. An exciting young carver, designer and craftswoman, Lizzy's work embraces the ornamentation of the past and unites it with the present day, combining decorative, Rococo-influenced artistry with modern

design and technologies to create pieces of beauty balanced with utility. I caught up with her to find out more.

Whittling twigs

Born in Preston, Lancashire, Lizzy grew up in Yorkshire, and traces her interest in woodwork back to a film that captured her imagination

as a child. "I remember watching a film called *Treasures of the Snow*, which involved an old man who had a workshop in the Swiss Alps. A young boy caused an accident and was cast out of the village. The old man took him under his wing and taught the boy to carve, and using his new skill, the boy tried to earn forgiveness. The carving



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIZZY ASHWORTH



*'Layers of Time',
Finnish birch
(Betula pendula)
with oil paints,
600 x 450 x 80mm*

➔ wasn't the main point of the film, but it stuck with me and sparked my interest in woodwork." From that point on, Lizzy was captivated. Whittling sticks and twigs from the garden with a blunt kitchen knife may not have produced the best results, but her parents and teachers noted her interest and encouraged her to develop it.

"In high school I really got a taste for furniture making and made my first piece – a piano stool." And, recognising her passion for woodwork, Lizzy's DT teacher, Dave Thornton, also introduced her to woodturning, allowing her to work through break times on the lathe. But it wasn't until her second year of

university that Lizzy applied her woodworking talents to embark on a journey into carving.

Starting when she Finnish-ed

In the first year of her BA (Hons) Degree in Furniture Design and Craft at Bucks New University, Lizzy was offered the opportunity to take part in a three-month Erasmus exchange programme

the following year to train in decorative woodcarving in the small town of Jurva in Finland. "I jumped at the chance and signed up," she says. "When I got home, I had to check the map to see where Finland was!"

*'Layers of Time',
showing the full
depth*





Relief carving of Scargill House Chapel, North Yorkshire, in lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), 310 x 240 x 50mm

In Jurva, Lizzy discovered a love for carving, and even extended her exchange for the full academic year. Far from dipping her toes in the shallow end of the carving skillset, her training began in the notoriously challenging Rococo style: "It's one of the most difficult styles to carve in and gives a good grounding, so that's what I began with," she explains. In fact, Jurva's College of Crafts and Design is one of the few worldwide to teach a particular technique that doesn't use a mallet, which means that the chisel's blade can be sharpened to a shallow angle of about 17°. This shallow angle allows the carver to take a bigger cut and finish with a smooth surface – when you master the technique, you can finish a piece without the use of abrasives.

"I'm keen to perfect this method of working and I really enjoy it, as you are so in touch with the curves you're carving – the control over the tool feels like it's an extension of your arm. I've tried to use a mallet but it just doesn't feel natural or comfortable for me after carving like this." Lizzy's

go-to tools are a set of around 30 Dastra chisels, the 10mm No.3 being one she often reaches for, and she carves mostly in Finnish birch (*Betula pendula*) and that most loved timber for carving, lime (*Tilia vulgaris*). "Lime is the most pleasant to work with as it's so consistent, but birch offers a stronger alternative when doing structural or very fine detail work."

Natural progress

The Rococo influence is apparent, but Lizzy's work certainly isn't limited to its boundaries. "My style naturally developed through adapting the Rococo style and trying new shapes and derivatives," she says. "During my time at the school it was great to be able to carve without an agenda, so I was able to try sculpture and relief carving too. I am keen to explore new avenues and not stay within the confines of a set style."

Not only was the tuition at Jurva's College of Crafts and Design invaluable, its location in the Finnish forest also provided



Lizzy's treasured Dastra chisels

'Passementerie', birch (Betula pendula) and black walnut (Juglans nigra) veneered hands, 630 x 320 x 80mm



the ideal environment for a carver who cites nature as her greatest inspiration. "I find that it feeds my imagination and creativity. Even if I'm not carving flowers or leaves directly, I still like to be surrounded by nature. In Jurva I could always get the peace I needed to recharge."

Clocks

So taken was Lizzy by the school and its surroundings, she arranged a return to Jurva in 2011, being awarded a bursary from the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers to spend a further four months at the school. "I felt I

needed more time to develop and practise the craft," she explains, and with the coupling of beauty and function running through her work, what better route to take than clock case making? "They are something made for looking at, so they should be beautiful – a perfect canvas for me to express my artistry!" And it's a canvas she makes superb use of; the piece that introduced me to Lizzy's work was her 'Layers of Time' clock, which stood out among an array of ingenious pieces of furniture and homewares by talented young designer-makers at the New Designers graduate show.

At first glance, it is a beautiful piece of decorative carving – a gracefully flowing, layered arrangement of flowers, leaves and berries. But there's more – within the two largest flowers are hidden a discreet clock face and second hand. "The only clue is the quiet ticking that can be heard from beneath. I hope that those who know its secret can feel an attachment and connection with the piece," she says, with that inimitable design vernacular, less encountered in the carving world.

Her clock cases vary greatly; 'Ocean Leaves' is a swirling oceanic arrangement of seaweed forms executed with an apt sense of fluid movement; its style closely resembling her Rococo origins. Further removed is 'Passementerie', a cleverly layered piece combining foliage and cellular imagery, wonderfully utilising the natural figure of the wood and its depth, a trait that can be seen in much of her work. "I think it's important not to be afraid to make levels and carve the depth of the wood – be brave!"



Close-up of 'Passementerie'; Lizzy is adept at carving in layers



Cheetah sculpture in birch (*Betula pendula*), 280 x 130 x 45mm



'Ocean Leaves', birch (*Betula pendula*), 600 x 350 x 70mm

Hand in hand

It's not only clocks that Lizzy turns her carving flair to, and, alongside traditional hand carving, she's not afraid to make modern technology her friend. Take her 'Connect' screen, for example; the screen's elegant background is CNC-cut and can be transformed into numerous configurations, making it adaptable for a huge variety of settings. It is adorned with carved elements – as many or few as the customer likes, making it further customisable. The screen somewhat resembles a garden trellis with climbing plants, and could be equally suited to the home or commercial environment, bringing a light, natural atmosphere to either setting.

"I want to utilise the best of both traditional handcraft and modern technologies – the repetition of computational design mixed with the soul and warmth of woodcarving," she says. In the steep rise of the digital age, it's encouraging to see such a talented and dedicated carver integrating decorative carving with modern design and technologies. Lizzy's work is a reminder that traditional craft and digital technologies are not mutually exclusive; rather than competing with the perpetual advances in technology, craftspeople can embrace, adapt and combine methods to make something new.

As well as contemporary woodcarvers such as Kaj Lindgård and Hannu Kumpula, Lizzy takes inspiration from such digital

designers as Michael Hansmeyer and Marc Fornes, both of whom work in computational architecture to create designs that would be unachievable without digital technology.

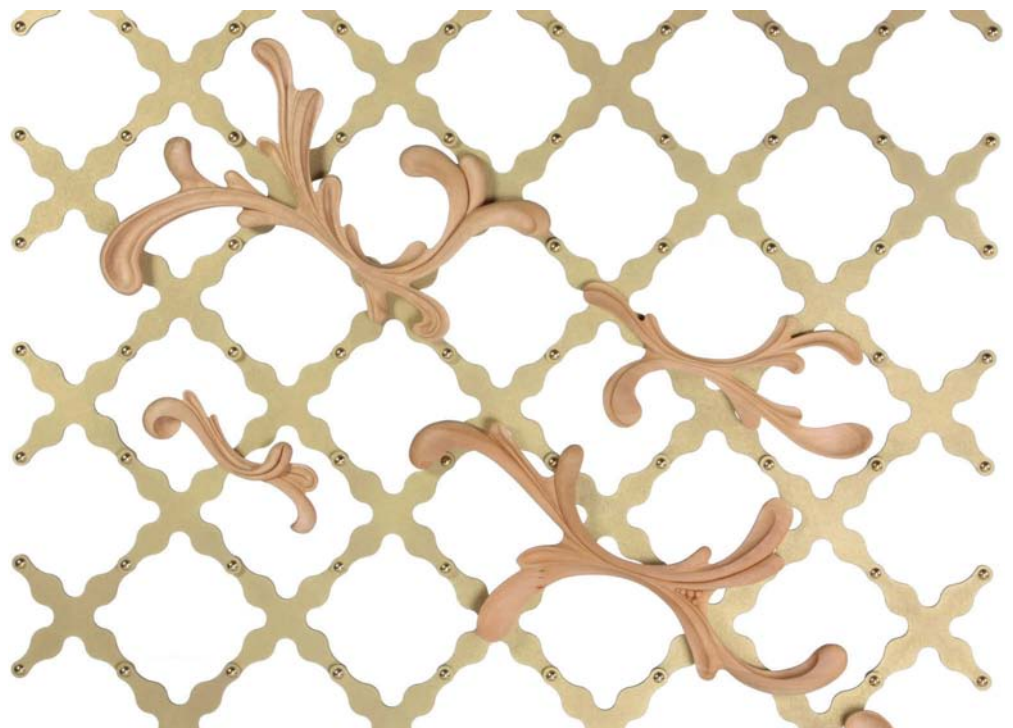
"I am often overwhelmed and threatened by what can be created digitally" – a fear that many carvers may well share – "but I remain confident that these technologies will never replace hand carving, as it offers a special quality and aesthetic that just can't be replicated digitally. Using both of these skills together to create the unimaginable is an

exciting thought." With a forward-thinking attitude, innate design savvy, refined carving skills and pure dedication to creativity, you can bet that Lizzy Ashworth is a craftswoman with a very bright future. ▀

Email: solizzydesign@gmail.com

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'Connect', an adaptable CNC-cut screen adorned with carved decoration



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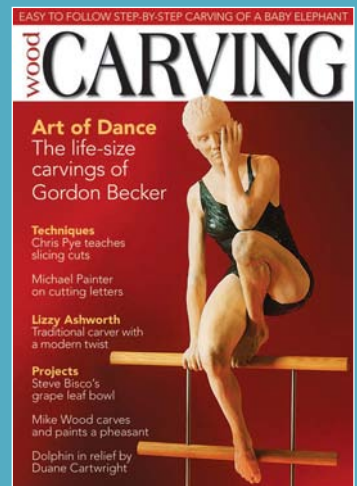
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Grape leaf bowl

Steve Bisco carves this Baroque-inspired decorative bowl



PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE BISCO

Wooden bowls are generally seen as the province of the woodturner. This bowl, however, is very much a woodcarver's bowl. It is deeply carved in a high-relief naturalistic style reminiscent of 17th-century Baroque. It is irregular in shape and is carved from a square block without any help from a lathe.

Bowls with high-relief decoration have been used extensively in ceramics, glass and silverware for centuries and it is surprising that woodcarvers don't make more use of them. A richly carved bowl makes a beautiful ornament to grace a table or sideboard, whether or not you put anything in it.

The grape leaf is particularly well suited to being made into a bowl. The grape vine, associated with fruitful abundance and the heady pleasures of wine, relies

for its decorative effect on four elements: the cloud-like billows of the grapes, the large indented five-lobed leaf with its deep 'eyes', the little curling twists of the tendrils, and the rough spiralling bark of the sinuous vines. These are all incorporated into this design, adapted from one I originally produced for a stone-carving project.

A decorative bowl deserves to be made in an attractive wood. I have used English walnut (*Juglans regia*) cadged from our Editor, but any attractive wood will do if it has good carving qualities. Walnut can be hard work physically as it is quite tough, but it holds detail well and is usually attractive both in colour and figure. Sourcing a piece 90mm thick, as I have used, may be a challenge and a supplier of woodturning blanks may be your best source.

Things you will need...

Tools :

No.3 gouge, 10mm
No.3 fishtail gouge, 10mm & 20mm
No.5 curved gouge, 13mm
No.8 gouge, 8mm
No.8 curved gouge, 8mm
No.9 gouge, 20mm
No.9 curved gouge, 16mm
5mm bent chisel
6mm back-bent gouge
12mm back-bent gouge
Straight 'V' tool
Curved 'V' tool
25mm flat chisel
16mm hooked skew chisel
10mm skew chisel
10mm skewed spoon gouge
Coping saw
Bandsaw or hand saw

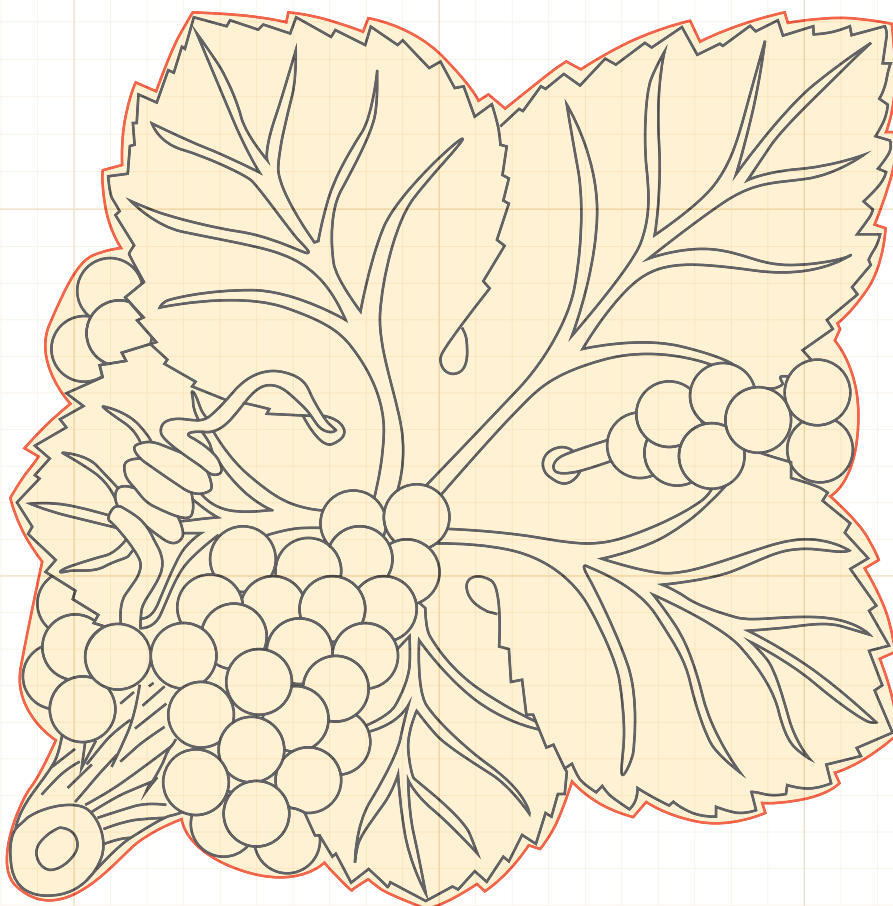
Wood:

European walnut (*Juglans regia*) 270mm square x 90mm

Using the pattern

This pattern sits in a square which you can make any size big enough to work with, but I have made it for a 270mm square bowl.

The easiest way to make a full-size copy is to transfer the pattern to a computer using either a scanner or a digital camera. Crop the drawing in half down the centre, with some border top and bottom, and print one half on a full A4 sheet so the pattern area – excluding the border – is 270mm top to bottom. Repeat the process with the other half and join the sheets together.



Preparations

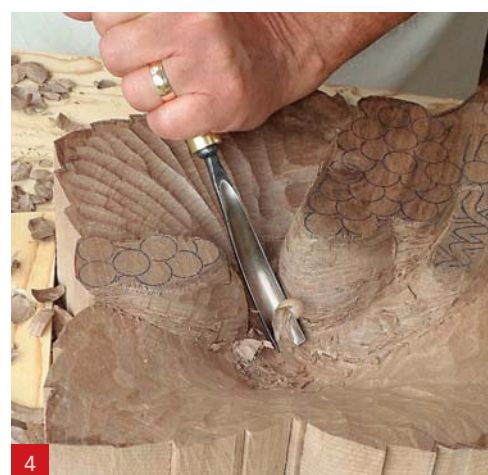
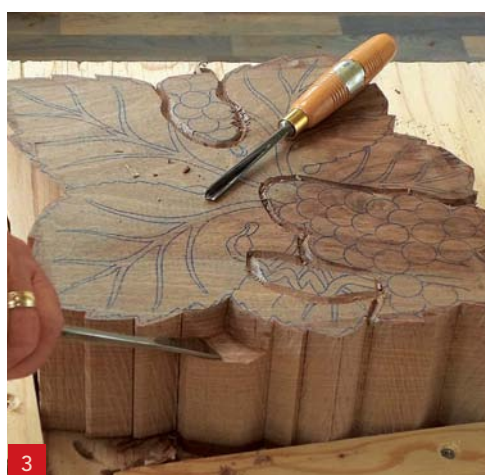
1 Get a square block of an attractive carving wood of a suitable thickness – mine is European walnut, 270mm square by 90mm thick – and produce a full-size copy of the drawing to fit it. Trace the pattern onto the wood and mark the outer cutting lines in red. Mark the centre point of the block on the underside for reference later

2 Cut away the surplus wood outside the pattern, preferably with a bandsaw if you have one. If not, make several cuts up to the line with a hand saw, then cut away the waste with a sharp chisel

Roughing out the bowl

3 Mark around the upper grape bunches and the tendril with a 'V' tool. Reduce the top of the bunch of grapes that sits outside the left-hand leaf by about 20mm

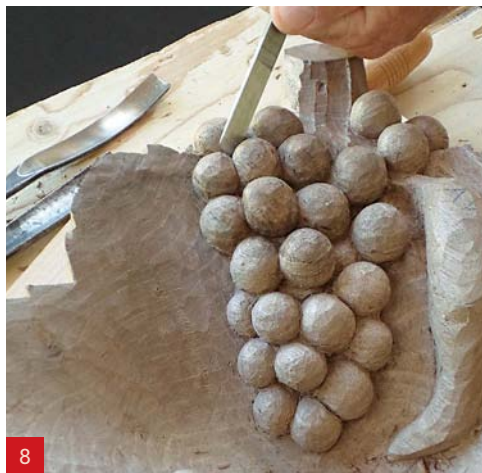
4 Leaving the grapes and tendril untouched for now, excavate the bowl with a large curved gouge. This involves several hours of hard work with the mallet, so use a suitable power tool if you prefer





5 Use a shallower gouge to shape the leaves into an open bowl, leaving about 18mm thickness at the base. Note that the junctions of the leaf lobes are about 15mm lower than the leaf tips, and the lobes nearest the stem end are lower than the rest

6 Rough out the shape of the grape bunches, the tendril and the stem. The grapes should appear to form natural-looking bunches that tumble down into the bowl and out over the sides under the influence of gravity



Carving the detail on the upper surfaces

7 Carve the small bunch of grapes that emerges on a stem from one of the leaf 'eyes' and runs up and over the edge of the bowl. Use a gouge with the same curve as the grape surface to give each grape a smooth rounded shape, rolling it over the grape in line with the grain. Use a skew chisel to sharpen up the gaps between the grapes. Undercut the grapes so they appear to sit on the leaf and tumble over the junction of the lobes

8 Form the grapes at the stem end into a large irregular bunch with lots of peaks and hollows



9 Carve the tendril into an extended curl, snaking down into a leaf eye. It is quite thin across the grain in places, so take care. Undercut to make it seem detached from the leaf, and carefully create a couple of gaps between tendril and leaf

10 Draw in and carve the overlapping edges of the leaf lobes and the remaining two 'eyes'. Reshape the leaves to fit the overlap



11 Draw in the leaf veins, cut a groove each side of them using a 'V' tool and form them into a convex ridge with a small gouge. Use a shallow gouge to carve smooth hollows between the veins, in the same directional flow as the veins

12 Cut away surplus wood under the main stem, and slope the end into the traditional 'pruned' cut with a slightly hollowed pith. Create sinuous sub-stems linking to the grapes and tendril. Use an 8mm No.8 gouge to carve the spiralling rough bark twisting around the stem

➔ Roughing out the underside

13 Using the centre point marked at the start, draw a circle of 140mm diameter for the base. Mark the areas of the underside that will be grapes and start cutting away the remaining areas under the leaves. Use saws as far as you can to reduce mallet work

14 Shape the edge of the base circle to a thickness of about 18mm and carve away the surplus wood at the underside of the leaves to give them a thickness of about 8-10mm. You can reduce the mallet work by using a curved gouge to 'scoop' the wood away with a levering and twisting motion. This is hard and tedious work, so if you have a power carver this would be a good time to use it

"Use saws as far as you can to reduce mallet work"

15 Rough out the shape of the grape bunches so they will hang naturally beneath the leaves. There is also a small stem connecting two bunches under the left side

Carving the underside detail

16 Working with the piece the right way up or upside down as necessary, and starting with the small bunch of grapes that comes up from the inside, carve the grapes so that they will tumble over the edge and appear to fall under the influence of gravity beneath the leaves

17 The large bunch to the right of the main stem falls right down to 'ground level'. A skew gouge, if you have one, helps when rounding over the end grain

18 The bunch to the left of the main stem has a small stem connecting it to another bunch on the same side

19 You can now shape the base into an 18mm bullnose moulding, then carve the spiralling bark all the way around it with an 8mm No.8 gouge. The main stem flows into it at the back

20 Carve the leaf veins on the underside to match those on the top. Be careful not to cut through the wall of the bowl





21



22

Finishing touches

21 Carve serrations around the leaves and tidy up all the edges so they are 6-8mm thick and rounded into the underside. The grapes will need to be sanded smooth with 120-400 grit abrasives. Give the leaves a lighter touch to soften the edges and smooth the veins, but don't remove the texture

"Work the wax into the crevices with a brush then buff it up to a soft sheen with a cloth or a rotating brush"



23



23b

22 Polish the finished carving with a good wax polish. Work the wax into the crevices with a brush then buff it up to a soft sheen with a cloth or a rotating brush

23 The bowl is now finished and ready to grace your table. These photos show it from the top, bottom and sides. Use these for reference when carving



23c



23d

Workholding

Workholding is problematic on a three-dimensional piece like this. Fix battens to the bench to stop it sliding around. When upside down, fix a domed piece of wood to the bench to support the middle and reduce pressure on the leaf tips and use thick padding, such as a towel, to protect the parts already carved

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Bisco has been carving as a hobby for over 25 years, specialising in decorative carving and period styles. He is inspired by a love of historic buildings and aims to capture the spirit of a period in pieces for display in the 'home gallery'. He has written a woodcarving book and a stone carving book, both of which are available from GMC Publications.



20 minutes with...

Martin Preston

**Dorset woodcarver and bronze sculptor
Martin Preston lends us 20 minutes of his time...**

Artistic since a young age, Martin Preston has been carving for around 15 years. His love of art remained a hobby while he pursued his keen interest in the sciences professionally, and he now creates sculpture in both wood and bronze. His first commissioned piece in bronze was for a bust of the novelist and screenwriter Julian Fellowes. He lives in Dorset with his wife and two children.

How did you start carving?

I started carving in the early 1990s. Back then, I used to paint

botanical watercolours and my wife's mother suggested that I might like to try carving. I bought a piece of lime from my local wood merchant, chose a hand as a subject so that I would never be without a model and began with a couple of mortising chisels.

Why do you carve?

I've always drawn or made things. Recording and translating the things I see is just an integral part of who I am. Carving appeals to me for the naturally warm and tactile properties that wood brings to a sculpture – properties that bronze doesn't have. Carved pieces seem to draw people in. Something in the nature of wood makes them want to get in close and interact in a way that they don't with metal.

How did you learn your skill?

Anything I know about carving has been learned through trial and error. When it comes to practical skills, I've never been shy of trying something new. I like to think that you don't really know what you can't do until you've failed, so why not have a go?

What inspires your carving?

Things that I see around me. I'll see the attitude in a flower or catch a fleeting pose in our collie

and something inside says 'that would make a nice sculpture'. Some of these moments persist and some fade, but all of them get stored up somewhere in the subconscious to later inform something I am creating.

What are you currently carving?

I am working towards a series of two or three figures where I will carve the figure in wood and combine it with a lot of detail cast in bronze. I am hoping the contrast between the clean lines of the figure and the complex detail in the bronze will make for a pleasing effect.

Which tool could you not be without, and why?

I have a lovely 2mm, yew-handled J. Addis & Sons straight chisel. It's not the most useful by any means, but I'm very fond of it. It has an elegance and balance that appeals to me and I can still pick it out on the bench when I am carving without mistakes on!



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN PRESTON



*'Swan Rising',
sycamore (Acer
pseudoplatanus),
ebony (Diospyros
spp.) and jatoba
(Hymenaea
courbaril), 460 x
530 x 450mm*

What is your favourite style of carving to do, and why?

I like to carve naturalistically and in the round. I also like to finish a piece so that the grain is really brought into its own. I always think that it's a sin to carve wood and ignore the reason wood is so beautiful.

Whose work do you most admire?

The pre-Raphaelites are a great favourite of mine, especially Waterhouse. I am also in awe of some of the great Italian marble carvers. I remember seeing a statue by Michelangelo – there was just something about a hand lying against a leg that made me stop and think, 'I'd like to do that'.

Describe the view from your workshop

My workshop is in my attic and so commands lovely views over the beautiful Dorset countryside. I have a window looking south through oak (*Quercus robur*) trees and across fields to the Wessex Ridgeway and another looking north towards Sherborne across a farm with a typical patchwork of small high-hedged fields and oak woods. As I write, this year's lambs are frantically racing around the field in the late spring sunshine.

Who would you most like to carve for?

I am delighted to carve for anyone for whom it brings pleasure. Keats said that 'a thing of beauty is a joy forever'. To create something that someone else finds beautiful is pretty special, irrespective of who they are. ▀

Web: www.martinprestonsculptures.com



'Finishing Touches', lime (Tilia vulgaris), maple (Acer campestre), yew (Taxus baccata) and walnut (Juglans regia), 760 x 740 x 400mm



'Hylas', lime (Tilia vulgaris), olive (Olea europaea), apple (Malus sylvestris), yew (Taxus baccata) and walnut (Juglans regia), 400 x 410 x 390mm

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Sea lion

part two

Andrew Thomas carves the flippers and kelp mount to complete this sea lion project

In the last issue of *Woodcarving* I described how to make the body of a realistic sea lion, depicting dynamic life and movement within the design. We continue now with part two of the project: how to make the front flippers and join them to the body, and how to make the kelp mount and attach the sea lion to this. I used American cherry (*Prunus serotina*) for the kelp mount, but any complementary and contrasting wood could be used, as long as it is fairly strong.

Before you start working on the project, read through the complete step-by-step guide and study the images to see how the carving develops.

Things you will need...

Tools and materials:

Swiss:

No.2, 5mm, 20mm

No.7, 6mm, 20mm

No.8, 4mm

No.11, 1mm, 2mm

Sandpaper, 100 to 400 grit

Steel pins

Carving knife

Scissors

Pliers x 2

Vernier callipers

Power carver

Conical carbide cutter

Wood:

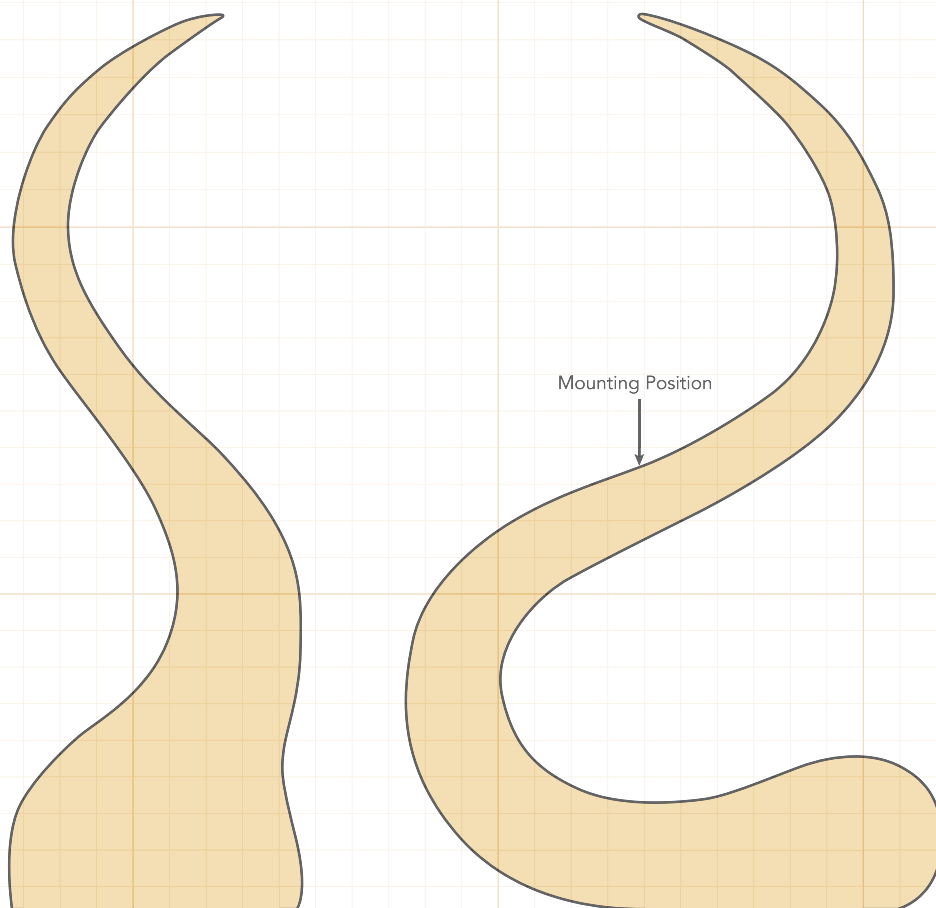
Flippers: American black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), preferably from same block as body, 45 x 30 x 35mm

Kelp mount: American cherry (*Prunus serotina*) 235 x 140 x 75mm

The sea lion can be mounted either facing in towards the upper curve of the kelp or away from it

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW THOMAS

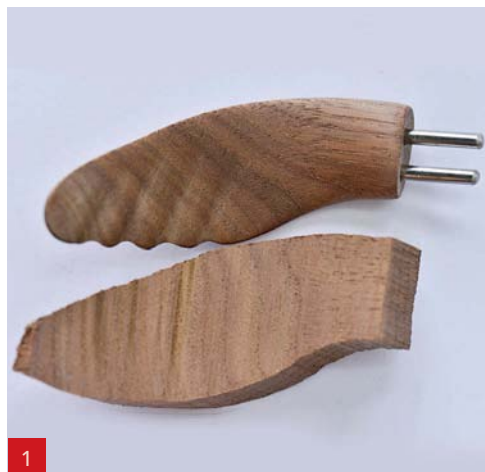
The templates provided are for both the left and right flippers. The bandsawn flippers are 45 × 18 × 8mm, and they are joined to the body with their concave curvatures bending in towards each other to enhance the motion within the composition. See the finished-piece images for a visual clarification.



Front flippers

1 Scan or photocopy the scale drawings provided, enlarging them to the correct size for your wood. Print them out onto card to use them as templates to transfer their profiles directly onto the correct sides of your perfectly square, prepared blocks, ensuring they are in precise alignment with each other. Cut both profiles out

2 Due to their size and shape, the flippers have to be carved hand-held. I used a flexible power-carving unit with a small handpiece and a conical carbide cutter to create the fine shaping across the surface. You can achieve the same effect with a razor-sharp knife, with your thumb placed carefully underneath the wood. Gouges can also be used, but you must cut away from your body. Work across the upper and lower surfaces, removing as much mass as necessary to create a lifelike flipper with a very fine, thin edge all around, similar to the back flippers in part one. The end that will join into the body doesn't need any tool work; this area can simply be sanded to the required elliptical shape. Use 100 grit





sandpaper for this, then continue over the complete surface of the flipper

3 Use your reference material and this photo to help you mark the position of the grooves along the flippers on both the upper and lower sides. They should be about 6mm apart. Use a No.8, 4mm gouge to carefully carve the grooves along these lines

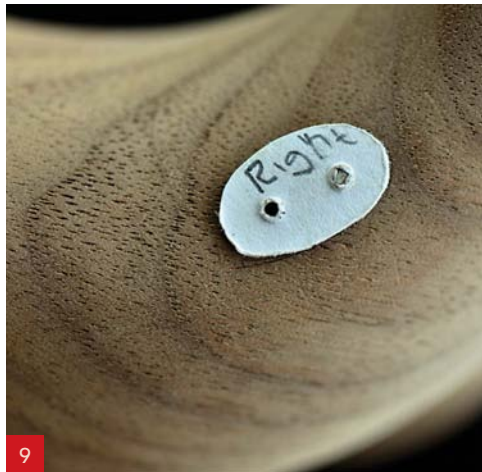
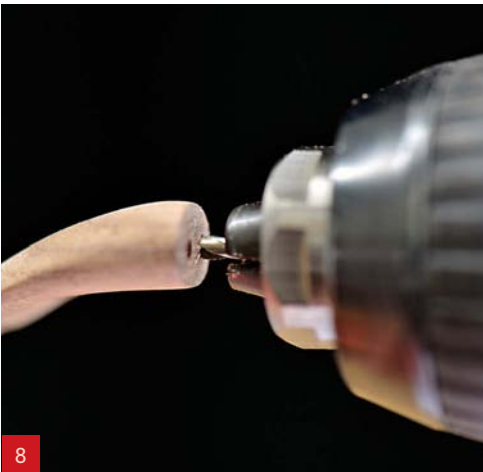
4 Use a piece of rolled-up 100 grit sandpaper to blend the grooves finely together and into their surrounding areas



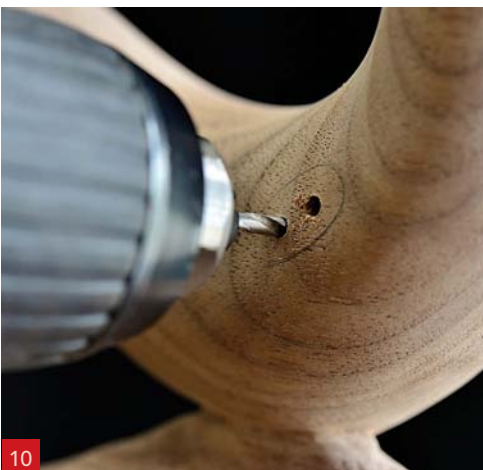
5 Remember that each flipper requires its own template! Hold each flipper firmly on a piece of card and use a sharpened pencil to draw around the end that will be joined into the body. Cut out accurately with a pair of scissors

6 Draw a centreline through the elliptical templates, then measure and mark approximately one-third of the length in from both ends

7 Carefully place a template in position on the end of each flipper and use a bradawl to pierce through these at the positions you marked in step 6



8 For this step, you will need to use a drill bit that is the exact size of the steel pin you will be using to attach the flippers to the body. The one in the example is 2.4mm. First measure how far you can drill into the end of the flipper without risk of it coming through the side; 8 to 10mm should be easily accomplished. Either mark this depth on the drill bit or, preferably, set the drill bit into the chuck with only this length protruding to eliminate any risk of damage. Hold the drill level from the side and top views and slowly start the drill. Stop every few millimetres to check that you are still level from both angles until you reach the required depth



9 Place the same templates where the flippers will project out from the body, making sure that they are the correct way around and up. Use the bradawl to mark the drilling positions on the body

10 Drill the holes using the same techniques as in step 8, but to a depth of approximately 15mm

11 Cut two steel pins of the same diameter as the drill bit to the length of both drill-hole depths

→ added together (25mm) minus 2mm for the recess that you will create in step 13 – approximately 23mm in this example. Insert the pins into the body first and then slide the flippers onto them. If the flippers don't quite fit properly, you can correct the angle of the pins by bending them slightly where they project from the body using two pairs of pliers

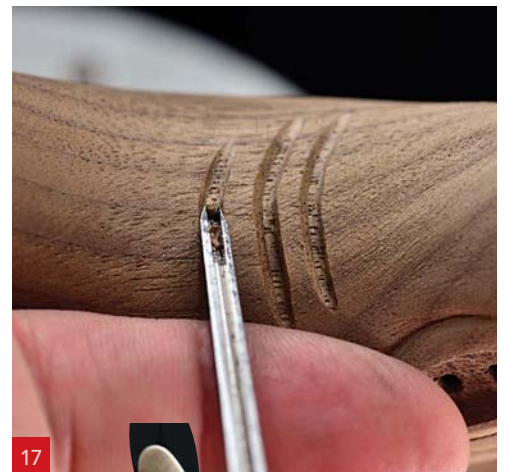
12 Slide the flippers along the pins to meet the body and use a pencil to draw around the elliptical ends onto the body. Remove the flippers and pins from the body

13 Cut accurately around the elliptical pencil line using a knife or gouges that match the curvatures of the profile. Use a No.2, 5mm or similar to cut into the body, starting in the centre of the ellipse and working carefully towards the profile cuts you've just made. Repeat this process until the recess is approximately 2mm in depth. Fit the flippers to the body again and push them into the recess. If there are any areas of the recess that are preventing the flipper from inserting properly, mark them with a pencil and carefully pare them back a fraction

Surface anatomy

14 There is room here for artistic licence as sea lions vary in the detail of their surface anatomy, especially in various positions of movement. Study your reference material and you will notice the muscle on the body where the flippers emerge. This subtle detail can be achieved by creating a variation of depth at this position to produce a visual impression of the bulging muscle next to the flipper. Use a No.7, 6mm gouge or similar to carve a fairly deep groove into the body, approximately 8mm from and around the elliptical recess. Use a No.2, 20mm gouge to blend this groove into the surrounding areas of the body. Sand over with 100 grit sandpaper and observe the result. If it needs further work, repeat the process

15 The areas directly above and below the flippers often have small slits or folds around them. This detail is important to add as it takes the eye away from the elliptical joint and, of course, adds realism to the form. Draw these curves onto the body and cut along them with a knife





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16 Pare the wood into these slits either side of the knife cuts. Repeat again if necessary and then sand with 150 grit

17 A real-life sea lion in this position would show wrinkles of blubber at the centre of the curve where the body is compressed. Create these by using a No.11, 2mm gouge to cut an initial groove, followed by a No.11, 1mm to deepen this cut. Use 150 grit sandpaper to smooth these grooves into one another and their surrounding areas. Such wrinkles are also to be found at the back of the head where the skull joins the neck; you can add them here as well if you wish to

18 Your sea lion should now look like this and can be sanded through the remaining grits of 150, 240 and 400

19 Cut the sea lion off the faceplate base and use the No.2, 20mm gouge to tidy up this lower edge, blending the depths evenly together. Sand through the grits

Kelp mount

20 Cut both profiles of the kelp mount and secure it on your faceplate

21 To create a natural, flowing curvature along the length of the wood, you need to remove mass from the opposite sides and edges of your bandsawn profiles. Use a No.2, 20mm gouge to remove the square edge on the left side of the wood, creating a delicate contour from the rear right edge to the front left edge

22 Follow the line of your cut down through the form and over the base, rounding all edges evenly into each other

23 Continue this contoured line around the base to the opposite side. Use a No.7, 20mm gouge to sweep the curve in towards the centre, which breaks the square appearance and adds visual energy to the form

24 Continue the angle of cut up the front side, again removing the left square edge and creating a contour in harmony with the one that you shaped on the opposite side. When you reach the tip, study the overall flow of the form and fine-tune any areas that need to be balanced. Sand through all the grits

PROJECT

Sea lion: part two

➔ **25** Study the side-view template and photos of the finished sea lion to see the position where it is mounted on the kelp; this is roughly in line with and underneath the top tip of the kelp. Mark this position on your wood. Use a Vernier calliper or similar to gauge the thickness of the wood at this position

26 Set or mark your drill bit 2mm shorter than this depth of wood. Drill a hole squarely into the mount, at the correct position, to this depth

27 I drilled this sea lion at a position that allows it to be mounted and displayed either facing in towards the upper curve of the kelp or away from it. Place your sea lion onto the drill hole on the kelp at the angle you would like it to be mounted, and mark the precise point on the body that is touching the drill hole. Drill squarely into the body at this position to a depth of 15mm

28 Measure the depth of both drill holes and cut a pin approximately 1mm shorter than both of these depths added together. Push the pin into the body first and then mount the sea lion onto the kelp. If the pin is at all visible, you can bend it slightly using the same technique as outlined in step 11. Stand back and admire!

Finishing

29 To finish both the sea lion and the kelp mount, I used one application of boiled linseed oil followed by several applications of a dark wax polish. The sea lion and kelp mount are complete ▶

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



25



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- Catch up with the IWC
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- The tree carvings of John Surplice
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- Tips for carving the human face
- Carve a house sign with foliage
- Titanic-inspired boiserie
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Issue 127 July-Aug 2012

- Lenka Pavlickova feature
- Ammonite carving
- Abstract athletic winners' podium
- Carve and paint a woodcock



Issue 128 Sept-Oct 2012

- Pierced Art Nouveau panel
- Carve a New Forest pony
- We speak to David Esterley
- Chewton bunny carving



Issue 129 Nov-Dec 2012

- A tribute to Patrick Conoley
- Chris Pye's frog bowl
- Carve and paint a greenshank
- IWCOTY winners



Issue 130 Jan-Feb 2013

- Art Deco stylised bust
- Carve an angelfish
- Making maquettes part two
- English rocking horse



Issue 131 Mar-Apr 2013

- The figure carvings of Guy Reid
- Carve a Georgian doll
- Make your own black-necked grebe
- Modelling with maquettes



Issue 132 Jun-Jul 2013

- Carve a pair of little owls
- In profile: Bob Guge
- Pull-along dog
- Chris Pye on blue edges



Issue 133 Aug-Sept 2013

- Josh Guge in profile
- Carve a Gothic boss
- Michael Painter on 'V' tools
- Female face by Ian Norbury



Issue 134 Nov-Dec 2013

- Ian Norbury 'Paradise of Fools' exhibition
- Carve a Gibbons-esque festoon
- Planning projects with Andrew Thomas
- Carve a pair of white-beaked dolphins



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- Carve an oystercatcher
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Werner Groeschel

Werner Groeschel has been carving in an environmental theme for over 20 years

I started carving about 20 years ago while on a camping trip with my family in beautiful British Columbia, Canada. I was sitting at the campfire, whittling away on a piece of firewood with my pocket knife. The piece of wood was red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), which is a big tree, growing on Canada's west coast. The distinct red cedar smell coming off the wood and the feeling of the knife's steel slicing through it started my love of woodcarving that evening.

Back home I took a beginner's carving course, which was offered by Edmonton Continuing Education. It taught the basics of relief carving and carving in the round. I bought a beginner's set of medium-size woodcarving

chisels and made myself a couple of carving knives from used industrial-type hacksaw blades. I then joined the Northern Alberta Woodcarvers Association, which is a local woodcarving club here in Edmonton, Alberta. The rest is history, as the saying goes.

Inspiration

I am an outdoor enthusiast and nature lover. I spend a lot of time in the great Canadian outdoors, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and canoeing. I always have my camera and binoculars with me when hiking or canoeing and take pictures of landscapes and plants and animals in the wild, whenever there is an opportunity. A good part of my carving inspiration comes from



'We All Share Planet Earth', 480 x 800mm, basswood (*Tilia americana*) with oak frame



'Canada West-Coast First Nations Style Carvings'. This totem pole is 1,200mm high, yellow cedar (*Callitropsis nootkatensis*), red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) and red alder (*Alnus rubra*)

what I see on my trips in the Canadian wilderness. I also have a strong interest in environmental issues and have an educational background in the environmental sciences. I spent most of my professional career working in the environmental field. Naturally, many of my woodcarvings have an environmental theme.

I am also inspired by the art of the First Nations People on Canada's west coast. I especially like the carving style of the Haida First Nations People. The Haida live on Haida Gwaii, former Queen Charlotte Islands. Another carving inspiration comes from my outdoor sports activities.

Likes & dislikes

One of my main interests is carving wildlife in relief and in

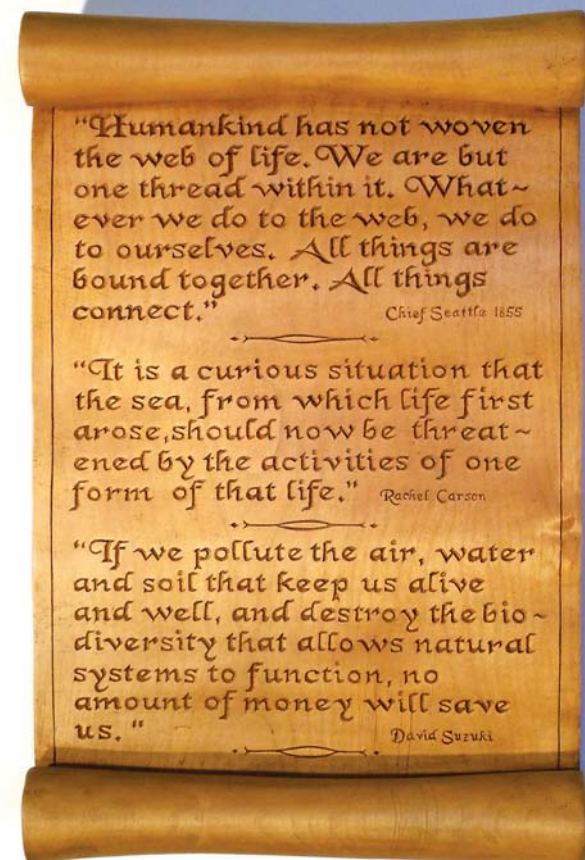
the round. This interest does not include the specialties of bird and fish carving and the detailed painting undertaken with these types of carvings. I carve mostly larger Canadian mammals and use stains, oils and waxes to give my carvings a natural appearance. I always make a Plasticine model when I start working on an animal in the round.

I only use chisels and knives when I carve. I am somewhat of a traditionalist in that regard. I do not use any rotary carving or sanding tools; the only power tool I use for my carvings is a bandsaw for cutting out blanks.

Because of my environmental awareness and concerns, I am not using any carving wood originating from tropical forests. I almost exclusively use wood from trees growing in Canada such as poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), birch (*Betula pendula*), basswood (*Tilia americana*), yellow cedar (*Callitropsis nootkatensis*), red alder (*Alnus rubra*), willow (*Salix spp.*), oak (*Quercus robur*), pine (*Pinus spp.*) and some of the fruit tree woods.

Workshop & tools

My carving workshop is a converted one-car garage which is attached to our house. Shortly after buying the house we replaced the garage door with a large bay window, which allows for plenty of light to enter the room. The workshop contains a sturdy workbench and a rack to hold the carving knives and chisels. Most of my carving is done on a home-made special woodcarving stand made out of heavy-duty steel with a height-



and tilt-adjustable work platform. Other items in the carving studio are a magnification light for carving fine details and a light table – very useful for tracing designs onto paper.

As mentioned before, I started out carving with a beginner's chisel set and a couple of home-made carving knives. Over the years, I have accumulated approximately 40 chisels and a number of knives, including chip-carving knives. I now always buy good-quality chisels individually. I sharpen all my chisels and knives by hand, using oil and water sharpening stones with different grades of grit and a buffing and honing wheel. Other tools I am using are three mallets of different sizes and weights and various hand saws, including a scrollsaw.

Currently I am working on a relief carving, showing an old trapper in a birch bark canoe, navigating through rapids. This carving will be donated for sale in a silent auction, which is being organised by a friend to help raise funds for building a new paddling centre here in Edmonton. ▀

'Environmental Quotations', 270 x 410mm, red alder (*Alnus rubra*)



'Mountain Goat Mom and Kids', approximately 350mm high, basswood (*Tilia americana*) with maple (*Acer campestre*) base

CONTACT:

Email: groeschel@shaw.ca

How to carve a Cock pheasant

Mike Wood carves and paints that most distinctive of game birds

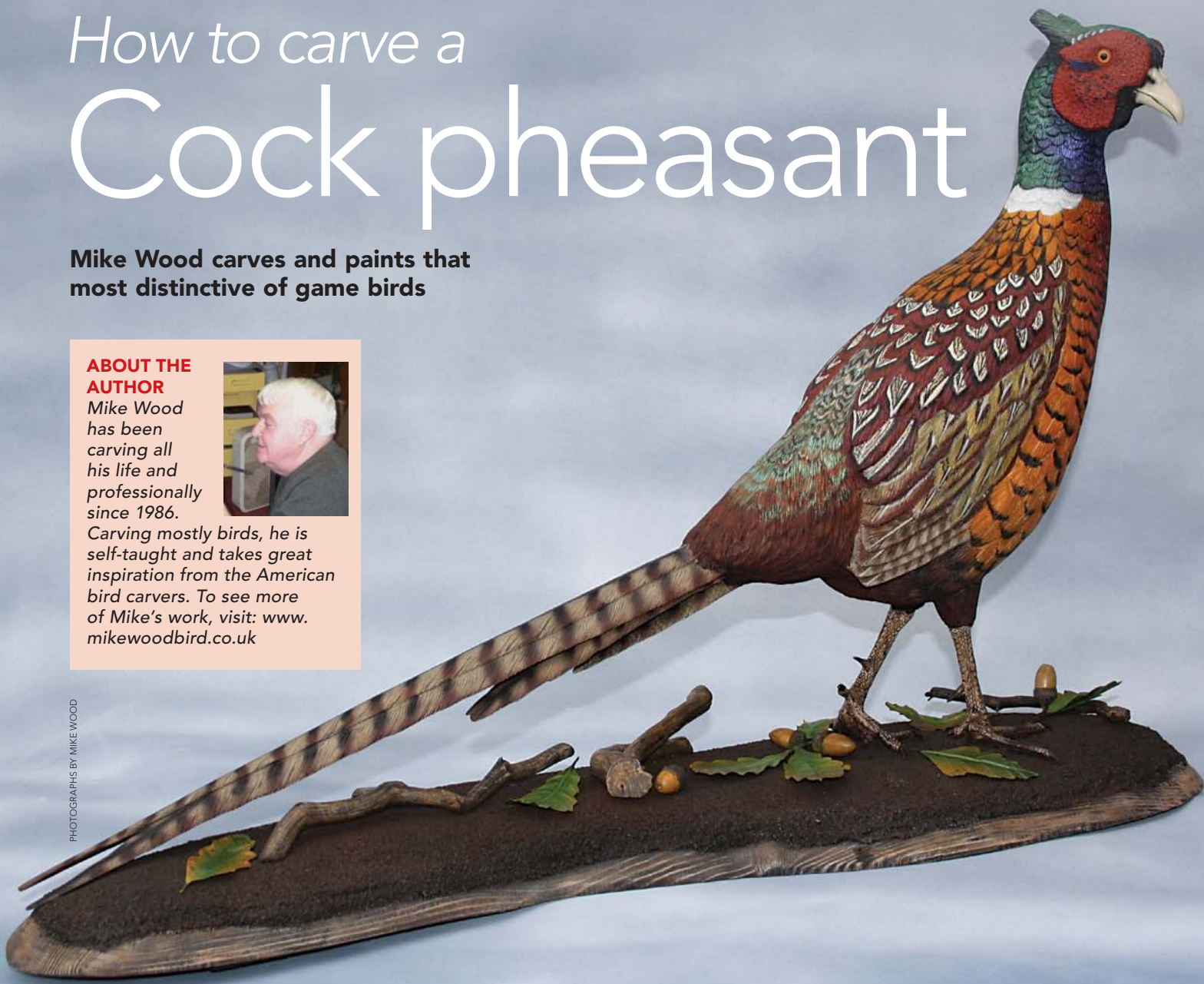
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



The common pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) is a member of the family Phasianidae. It is thought that the pheasant was introduced to Britain as early as the 10th century but became locally extinct by the 17th century.

It was reintroduced on a large scale as a game bird in the 18th century and it is estimated that over 30 million pheasants are now released in the UK each year on estates where shooting attracts large amounts of revenue. Ubiquitous as it is, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the pheasant was native to our shores, but, much like a cup of tea, the pheasant has been imported into Britain and absorbed into the culture from its native Asia.

Its distinctive call and colouring make it one of the most eye-catching birds in the UK and while it may look difficult to carve, by breaking it down into a few key stages it can be constructed quite easily.

Things you will need...

Tools:

High-speed grinder
Ball-head cutter
Rotary carving unit
Sanding bobbin
Ruby taper
Bull-nose diamond cutter
Grit wheel
Pyrography unit with scalpel and ball-end (or similar) tips
Writing tip
Wood glue
Black gesso
Matt varnish
9mm pheasant eye
Plastic wood
Mini angle grinder or mini-grinder attachment for your rotary unit fitted with a toothed grinding wheel/sanding wheel
Metal feet

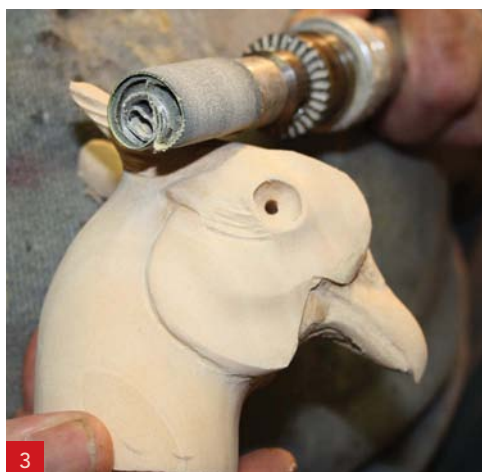
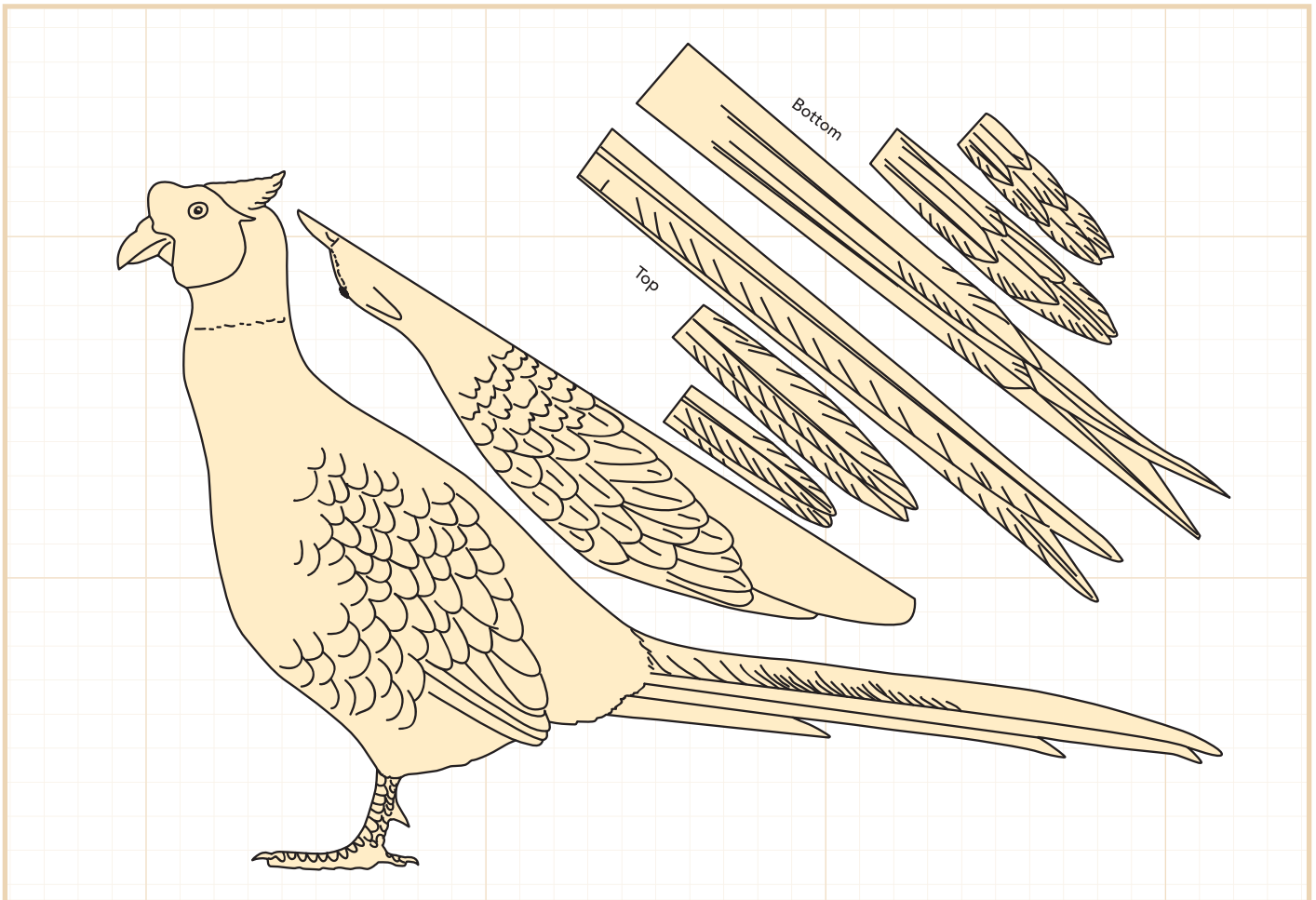
Paint:

Airbrush/brushes
Golden yellow
Red oxide
Grey
Phthalo green
Red iridescence
Red oxide
Raw umber

Wood:

Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*)
dimensions:
Body: 300 x 150 x 150mm

Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) dimensions:
Head: 120 x 50 x 110mm
Second tail section:
180 x 40 x 20mm
Third tail section:
120 x 500mm



The head

1 The first thing to do is build up the main elements that make up the bird. The jelutong body measures some 300 x 150 x 150mm, and the lime head is 120 x 50 x 110mm. We will come to the tail feather pieces later. Do not glue the pieces in place yet as this will initially make shaping the relevant parts difficult. Use a rotary carving unit with a medium-toothed burr to roughly shape the head

2 Using a high-speed grinder – or your rotary carving unit, using the fastest speed setting you have – in conjunction with a fine ball-end cutter, create the eyeholes. Once shaped, try the 9mm pheasant eye for size and adjust as necessary. With the same tool, shape the main head detail

3 Using a rotary carving unit and a sanding bobbin, refine and clean up the head, working through the grits until smooth. Be careful not to sand away the detail you need. Depending on the sanding bobbin you use, you may need a few sizes to get the required result – a variety of hard and soft is handy

➔ **4** Now it is time to create the finer detail. Use a high-speed grinder with a ruby taper, or similar, to put in some bill details

5 Using a combination of the taper and bull-nose cutters, create the finer detail on the head, the wattle, around the eye and also the rear tuft of feathers. As with all stages of the carving, it is essential to consult reference photographs found on the internet and in books to achieve realistic detail. When you have the basic texture you need, fit the eyes in place using plastic wood. Remove the excess when wet and use a brush to blend the remainder into the right shape around the eye

6 When the eye is set use a bull-nose diamond cutter to refine further the detailing on the pheasant's wattle

7 Then, use a ruby taper to refine and accentuate further the feathers on the head

The body

8 Use either a mini-grinder or mini-grinder attachment with a toothed wheel-shaped cutter or a coarse sanding disc to roughly shape the body

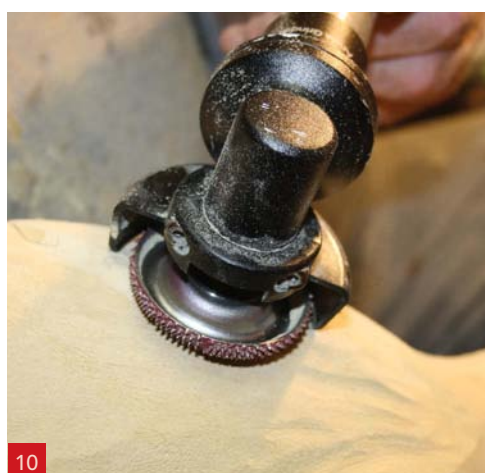
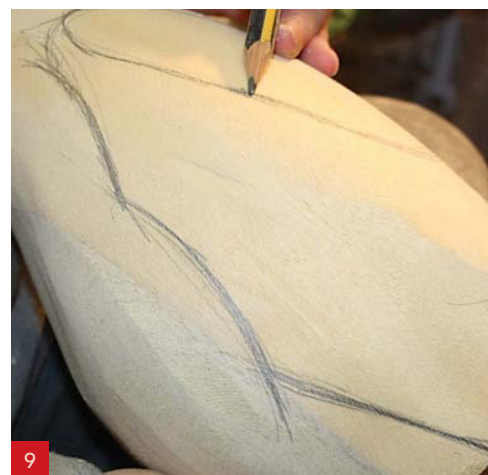
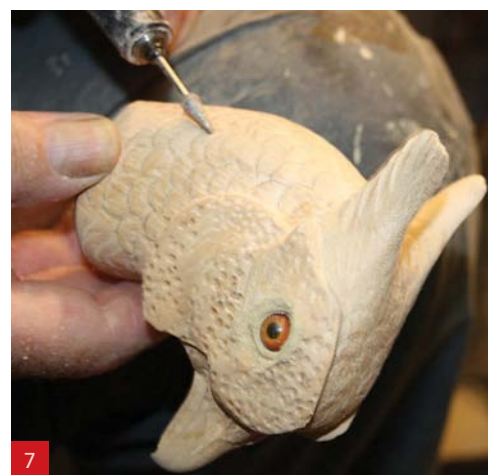
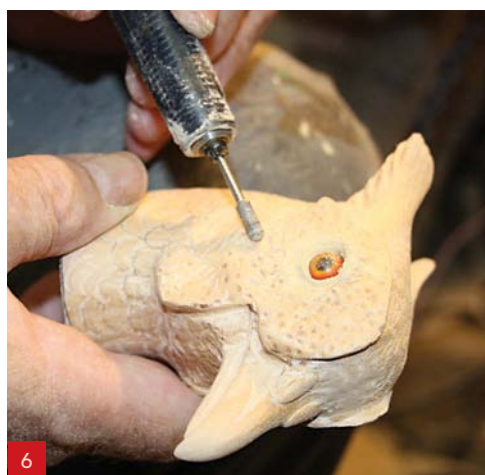
Safety warning

I like using a mini-grinder or such an attachment to fit a rotary carving unit for this type of work as they are light and easy to manipulate, the low speed and the fact that they can be used one-handed, leaving your other hand to hold the work. Wear a leather glove that affords you a lot of control. Standard angle grinders are heavy and have a lot more power, so require a two-handed operation to use them safely, which would also require the work to be held securely in a vice while it is being worked on

9 You then need to draw in the main feather groups. Again, check the reference material you use to make sure you get this right. If something is out of place you will most likely be able to see the error

10 Create the definition of the main feather groups by removing the excess material to create the body undulations

11 Now draw in the feathers ready for carving and then carve them in using a ruby taper





12 With the same taper, carve in the primary feathers. Then, using a bull-nose cutter, carve in the soft feathers on the rump and the back. At this stage you need to put a groove in the rump ready to insert the tail feathers

13 Now it is time to cut, shape and refine the three pieces that comprise the tail cluster. Follow the template for the shapes and, using a combination of cutters and sanding bobbins, create the required effect. The feathers are quite thin and refined when shaped, so be careful and don't use too much pressure



14 The three tail-feather pieces will look something like this when ready for burning – in this picture a little has already been done to define the central spine of the feather and block in some detail on the smaller one

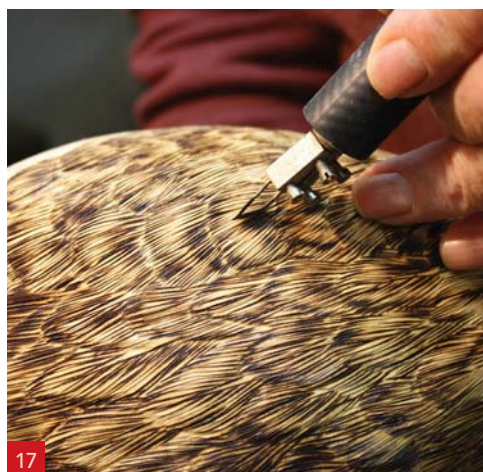
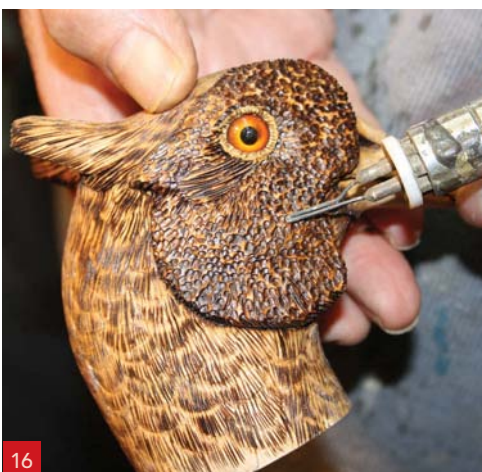
15 Glue the feather sections together and let them set. Now, using photographic references as a visual aid, and a scalpel/chisel-edged tip held in a variable-heat setting pyrography unit, define the detail on the feathers

The head



16 Now it's time to burn in the head feathers, then, with a fine ball-end or writing tip, burn in detail on the wattle

17 Once the head detail of the bird is finished, you can then burn in all of the body feathers. Again, check your reference material to see what the feathers look like, their alignment and how they overlap ➔



Distribution & habitat

The pheasant's indigenous range extends from between the Black and Caspian Seas to Manchuria, Siberia, Korea, mainland China and Taiwan. However, the species has been introduced extensively since at least Roman times and can be found across the Northern Hemisphere. Pheasants feed solely on the ground and roost in sheltered trees at night. They eat a wide variety of foods, from fruits, seeds and leaves to invertebrates, small vertebrates and even, occasionally, other birds.

- ➔ **18** Once all the detail has been burnt in, check everything for fit and glue the head and body sections all together. I forgot to mention that you should be checking the mating sections as you shape them to make sure they fit and blend in with each other as you go. It is easy to forget to do this and forge ahead only to find you have to refine the shapes later and redo aspects of the detailing, pyrography and suchlike. Once set, your pheasant is ready for having the feet fitted in place. I make mine, but metal bird feet can also be bought from many sources. Once fitted, you are ready to start painting

Painting

19 The body of the bird has base colours of golden yellow, red oxide and grey painted on the relevant areas and the head...

20 ... plus a coating of black gesso mixed with phthalo green. Once dry, paint the wattle red

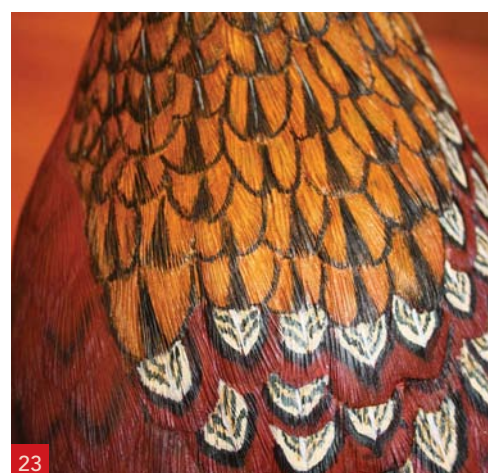
21 Paint the top part of the wing grey, and airbrush some dark markings on the wing. You can, of course, use a brush for this too

22 After several coats of golden yellow, add a final coat of iridescent gold. With a lining/thin brush, paint in the dark edgings

23 Use the same golden yellow paint in the nape and add the dark markings with the same lining brush. Add some red iridescence, then the red oxide paint and apply thin glazes over the scapulas. Paint in the white detail and dark markings

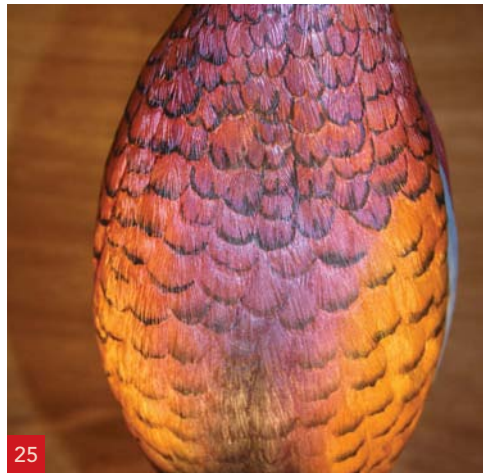
Colouring

A large, long-tailed game bird, the male pheasant has rich chestnut, golden-brown and black markings on his body and tail, with a dark green head and red face wattling. The tails of both sexes are brown with dark lateral stripes. Males have colourful plumage with striking markings including a red eye patch, metallic green colouring on the head and neck, and reddish and copper brown colouring on their bodies. Females are more uniform yellowish brown in colouring with some darker streaked patterning.





24



25

24 The rump is then built up with several glazes of green iridescence and turquoise. This paint is available in many colours and creates that wonderful shimmering sheen you see on feathers where it changes colour as you look at something from different angles. Then, with a fine lining brush, paint in the detail

25 Airbrush or paint the breast using red and purple iridescence, then add in all of the dark markings. 'Drag' some of the golden yellow through the dark markings using a fine liner. The finished nape should look something like this

"Airbrush or paint the breast using red and purple iridescence..."



26

26 Here you can see a side view of the bird, showing the finished wing detail

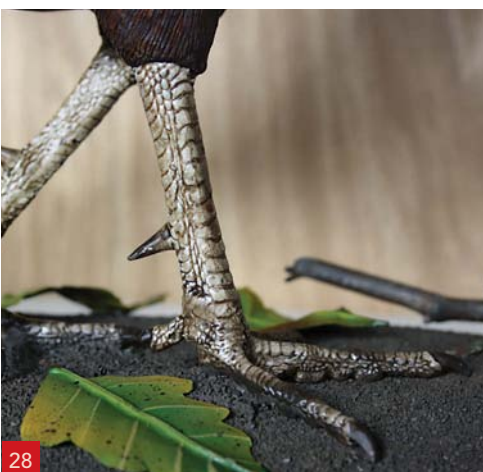
27 The finished tail pieces, which are finished with a mixture of brown and grey creating the relevant banding detail. The tail pieces are fitted and glued into the rump and blended in with the under-tail coverts



27

28 Finish the feet with several glazes of raw umber and matt varnish. I also carved some acorns to decorate the base. The base was made of reclaimed pine and painted with white wood glue, covered in sand and sprayed earth colour

29 The finished pheasant and base ▶



28



29

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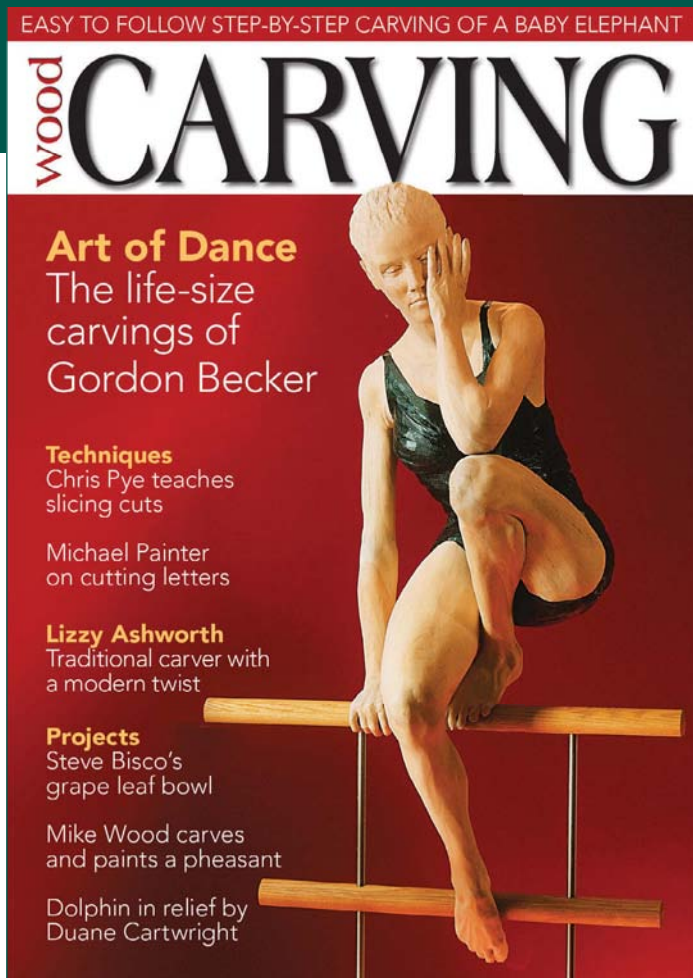
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Introducing... Farnham Sculpture

Robert Bayley introduces us to Farnham Sculpture, which recently celebrated its tenth year



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIZ THOMAS

Some of Farnham Sculpture's members at their base in Wrecclesham

After the wood and stone carving adult education classes in Farnham were discontinued in 2002, a group of students started the search for a home of their own. In 2003 Farnham (Building Preservation) Trust offered the group the garage at the Farnham Pottery at Wrecclesham.

The seven founder members refurbished the garage – which involved laying a false floor,

decorating and installing electrics – and for two years this was the first studio for the newly named Farnham Sculpture.

Two years later, the Trust offered the group a much larger space in part of the main building, and with an enlarged membership, it was pleased to move in to its new studio, adjacent to the West Street Potters, well known for its pottery and ceramics.

The Pottery is a Grade II

listed site, founded in 1873 by a local potter, Absalom Harris. Five generations of the family continued the work, and Farnham Greenware is still much sought after. The site is now privately owned and is being renovated and refurbished by the new owner and the Farnham Pottery Trust.

The members

Members of Farnham Sculpture come from southwest Surrey,



'Falcon' by Nic Nicklinson



'Head' by
Robert Bayley

West Sussex and northeast Hampshire. They pay a monthly fee, which provides unlimited use of the studio and free beverages. Tools, mentoring and instruction are available for beginners to try their hand. In September 2005, evening sessions were introduced for beginners. These Thursday sessions run from September to May, and include people who work during the day, who do not have work space at home, or who just like the company of like-minded folk.

Exhibitions of the work of the group are held from time to time, in particular during the English Heritage weekend in September. Visits are arranged to sculpture venues, and a social event is held each summer.

Not just wood

The majority of our members work in wood – anything from jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) to reclaimed oak (*Quercus robur*), though for beginners, as you would expect, lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) is preferred. Our stone carvers work in

limestone, of which Portland seems to be the favourite, but alabaster, serpentine, soapstone and sandstone appear from time to time.

The output of work is eclectic, and the variety of sculpture forms produced ranges from relief carvings to figurative and abstract creations. Members' work has featured at the exhibitions of the Farnham Art Society, the Surrey Sculpture Society and The Lightbox in Woking.

New members are always welcome to come and try their hand at this creative activity in the company of a friendly group. ▶

Contact:

Liz Thomas:

Email: liz_thomas118@yahoo.co.uk

Robert Bayley:

Email: randrbayley@talktalk.net

Web: www.farnhamsculpture.4t.com



'Owl' by Mary Simms

The carver's toolbag

Bringing you all the latest tools, machinery and products to meet your carving needs

All prices are inclusive of 20% VAT, and are correct at the time of going to press. Photographs courtesy of the manufacturers

Dremel 4200 with EZ Change

This is the world's first multi-tool with EZ Change, an integrated, keyless, quick-change system that allows the user easy and fast accessory changes without the need for a collet or wrench. Simply pull back the two blue bars at the front of the tool simultaneously to remove one accessory and fit the next, then let go of the blue bars and the accessory is securely fixed; switch it on and the accessory will tighten as the tool spins faster. Use it to clean, polish, grind and sharpen even in tight spaces,

make fast and precise cuts, expedite fast material removal, enhance drilling and sand where extreme control and a high-quality finish are required.

Contact: Dremel
Tel: 08447 360 109
Web: www.dremel-direct.com



£139.99

Axminster Japanese Woodcarving Knives

These hand-forged knives are excellent for carving, whittling and a variety of other crafts. The straight edge examples make superb marking or veneer-cutting knives. Each blade is laminated using a mild steel backing, forge-welded to high carbon blue steel, which forms the edge. Tempered to HRC 64-65, this steel takes a fantastic edge and holds it like no other. The handles are beech, shaped for comfort and control. The single bevel knives have one side slightly hollow, similar to Japanese chisels, making sharpening much easier. Each knife is supplied with a synthetic leather blade cover. Overall length is 200mm; blade length is 55-60mm.

Contact: Axminster
Tel: 03332 406 406
Web: www.axminster.co.uk

£20.40



502215 Yoko

502216 Maru

502217 Keiryu

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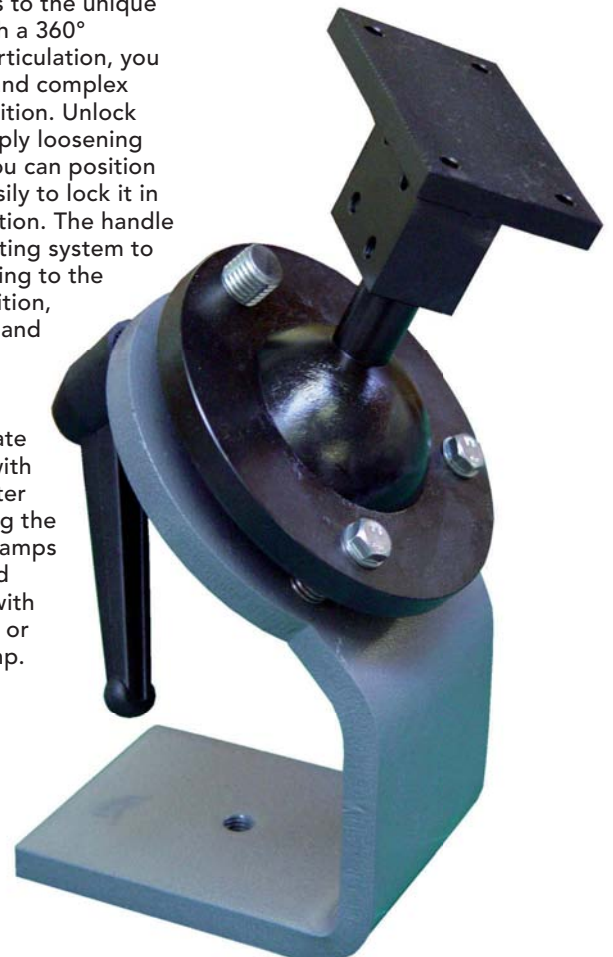
502219 Mikazuki

502220 Moroha

Wivamac Woodcarver's Ball Swivel Clamp

With its ball swivel mechanism, this clamp provides full access with a single lever operation. Thanks to the unique clamp system with a 360° omnidirectional articulation, you can carve heavy and complex shapes in any position. Unlock the device by simply loosening the handle and you can position the workpiece easily to lock it in any required position. The handle has a position setting system to enable repositioning to the best working position, minimising effort and maximising ease of use. The clamp comes complete with mounting plate – 105 x 60mm – with 4 x 6.5mm diameter holes for mounting the workpiece. The clamps can easily be fixed on a workbench with a screw, M12 bolt or strong wood clamp.

Contact: Willy Vanhoutte
Web: www.willyvanhoutte.be



€258.48

Kirjes Orbicut

Orbicut is a new tool from Swedish manufacturers Kirjes. Designed to be safe and efficient, it has two HSS cutters inserted into a ball which project about 0.1mm. This small amount of projection makes the tool easy to control while producing thin shavings instead of dust. The 20mm diameter head has a 6mm shank. The Orbicut works fast and efficient at a low speed, with a maximum RPM of 5,000. It stays sharp for a long time thanks to its two HSS cutters. Easy to control and giving a cleanly cut surface, the Orbicut can be used in many types of rotary tools.

Contact: Classic Hand Tools
Tel: 01473 784 983
Web: www.classichandtools.com

£49.94



Kreg Rip-Cut

This incredibly handy tool attaches to most circular saws – right or left blade – and accurately cuts narrow and wide workpieces, up to 610mm wide. Plywood panels can be sliced in half in one simple cut, making the Kreg Rip-Cut an essential tool for any major woodworking project.

No measuring, marking or chalk lines are required and the Rip-Cut provides complete guide support through the entire cut, plus the accessory doesn't need to be removed when making cross-cuts. It features a solid aluminium guide rail, an easy-to-read adjustable scale and a reversible guide arm, and it can be adjusted for left-hand and right-hand use as required. Lightweight yet sturdy, the Rip-Cut is a no-nonsense accessory for most circular saws and indispensable in any workshop.

Contact: Kreg
Web: www.kregtool.eu



£41.82



£299

Microlene MC280

The MC280 was inspired by demonstrators at woodworking shows, all of whom had a lamp to one side shining on the work, creating unwanted shadows. Microlene's design uses two strips of 30 bright white LEDs to create an almost shadowless effect with natural colours. The motor can move 280 cubic metres of air per hour through the filter. The filter

medium is fire resistant and filters out particles down to 0.4 of a micron. Motor life is an expected 40,000 hours of running time. A pack of four filters can be bought separately for £8.

Contact: Acrol UK Ltd
Tel: 02392 502 999
Web: www.acrolltd.co.uk

Review: Carving a Face with Character video series by Ian Norbury

Woodcarving video instructions are few and far between, but Chris Pye and Ian Norbury are two names that come to mind in relation to consistently producing top-notch series. Ian Norbury has recently set the bar at a new height with the online instruction video series, 'Carving a Face with Character'. At a stunningly low £1 per video, with 15 videos, this series totals nearly three hours of film. Instructions are not aimed at complete beginners, but they are the closest thing you will ever find to being in a shop with Norbury himself. There are no fancy graphics or special effects at work here, just a straightforward bird's-eye view of stunningly detailed carving

techniques. Terrific plans and photos are included, and the video series shows the whole process with little editing. Areas of carving for which the series provided fantastic insight for my level of carving included sanding techniques, creases and folds in the skin, using precise measurements, using burrs and finishing the piece. The series suggests carving one's own face for the project. I didn't have detailed drawings – and can't produce them – of my own face, so I loosely used Ian Norbury's instructions and drawings. All in all, a wonderful instruction series from a master, and highly recommended.

Marc Belliveau

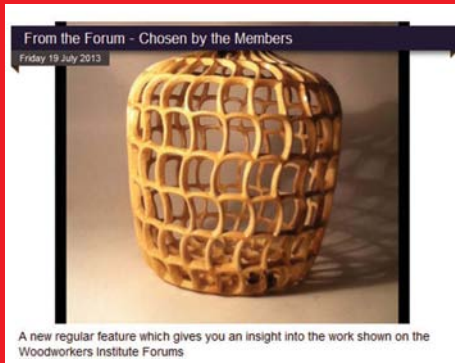
Contact: Ian Norbury
Price: £15
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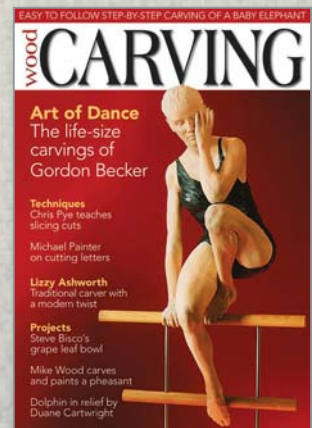


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on carving an owl
in relief

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carves Georgian
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Carve a green
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PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS PYE

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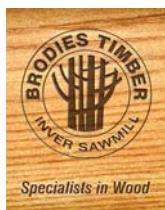


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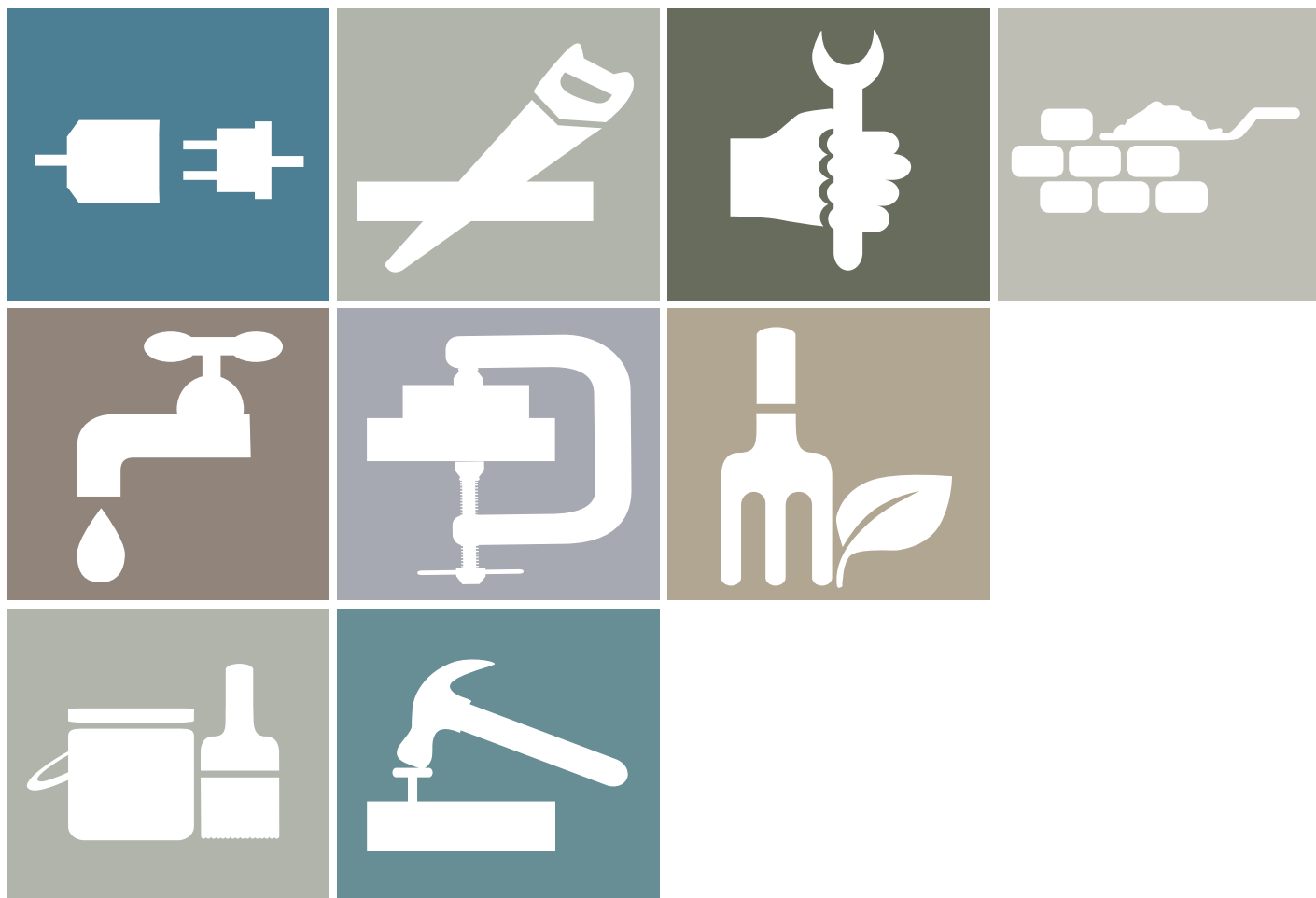
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The Gefion Fountain

Simon Frost takes a look at this grandiose fountain in Denmark's capital



The Danish sculptor Anders Bundgaard was inspired by Nordic mythology when he created this bold, powerful bronze for the Gefion Fountain of Copenhagen in 1908.

The legend goes that the Swedish king Gylfe was seduced by the goddess Gefion, so offered her as much of Sweden as she could plough in one day and one night. By her divinity, Gefion transformed her four sons into mighty oxen to pull her plough; when her time was up, Gefion and her oxen sons had ploughed so deep into the ground, she could lift the land up and drop it into the sea, and into Danish waters, between Sweden and Denmark's Funen Island, creating Zealand Island – on which Copenhagen is situated – and leaving Sweden with Lake Vänern in its place.

It's easy to see how the myth came about just by comparing the size and shape of Lake Vänern and Zealand Island on a map – perhaps an excuse for the Danes to take a swipe at their Scandinavian neighbours. However, the original myth goes that it was Lake Mälaren that Gefion took the land from, so at least one of those stories has to be wrong! In any case, it's a wonderful tale to inspire a bombastic work of public art. Gefion's robust, commanding pose identifies her as the embodiment of formidable, godly femininity.

The sense of movement is masterfully

conveyed by the oxen's varying positions in a tangle of exertion, coupled with Gefion's windswept robe and expertly animated whip, which curls behind her back as it swings for surely the 1,000th time. The spray from the fountain adds to the agonising drama of the piece, equally evoking the sea spewing from the earth and the sweat and steam cascading from the oxen in their titanic effort.

Copenhagen's largest bronze monument, the Gefion Fountain stands just a few hundred feet from The Little Mermaid, perhaps the city's most famous resident, which was unveiled five years later. However, recent testament from visitors to The Little Mermaid suggest that they are often equally or more impressed by the Gefion Fountain than its better-known neighbour. The fountain was opened in celebration of the Carlsberg Brewery's 50th anniversary.

These days, it seems Carlsberg doesn't do fountains; but if they did... ▶

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