

CARVE AN 18TH-CENTURY-STYLE BALL-AND-CLAW FOOT

wood CARVING

The nature-inspired
carvings of
Janel Jacobson

Iain Whittington
carves an acanthus
pattern on a box lid

Andrew Thomas
explores the subject
of woodcarving knives

Steve Bisco's
Tudor-inspired
'Heraldic beast'
bookends

Carving hair & fur
with Peter Benson

John Vardon's
beginners' series:
leaf-shaped bowl



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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.

Self-criticism

It is not often that a lot of debate ensues
on a given subject, but one of my recent
blogs on The Woodworkers Institute
– www.woodworkersinstitute.com – has
caused there to be a lot of discussion.
I decided to place here what was written so
all the readers of the magazine can see it.

Negative comments

If I hear another person say their work is
'not very good' I am going to scream! It is
often said within the first few sentences
when I ask someone about their work. Why
do people need to comment in such a way?
It is like an automatic defence mechanism
kicking in in readiness for the incoming
unknown comments. It is such a shame
that this happens but in truth, I remember
myself saying the exact same thing.

I love seeing other peoples' work and
love to see what people are up to and, if
I see them regularly, how their work changes
over time too. I find it quite amazing to see
people develop and gain confidence. I think
a lot of the comments about 'work not being
very good' is down to a person's confidence
and also an unrealistic comparison with
others' perceived might and exalted works.

The 'great artists'

Everyone has to start somewhere and while
we all admire and seek inspiration from the
'great artists' in our chosen field of working,
it is sad that people feel as though their
work is 'not very good' as a starting point
for conversation. What are you judging or
comparing your work against? If you are just
starting out, how can you compare something
to Michelangelo? If you are comparing your

work against fellow carvers
in your club, then there is
mostly likely someone in
their further along in their
experience than you. But
bear in mind that someone
with 15 years' experience
who only creates two or
three pieces a year isn't
necessarily more advanced
or more able than someone who only has
18 months' experience but is working at
something every day. So be wary of making
comparisons – a lot of it is perception.

It is right that we should be self-critical with
our work, techniques and all that it entails.
We should be able to analyse and see what
we do not like and what we do like about
something. We also should think about if
there are any areas to improve, but this is a
continual thing as we work. And trust me, the
further one is along in experience, the harsher
we become with our own work.

Our own harshest critics

I am my harshest critic but what I think are
faults, others may not. If I find a fault, I will
do everything I can to rectify it and alter it
according to my tastes.

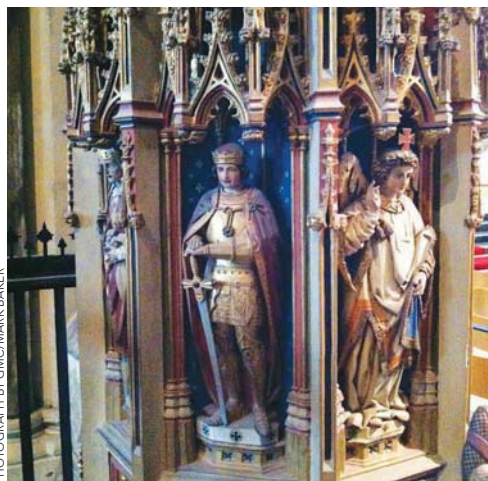
Every piece you make has a value. You
may create something solely to learn from,
and I treat all pieces like this anyway. It may
be that you wish to try a new technique. It
could even be a desire to create something
that you have thought about making for a
long while or even just for fun – everything
you do is of value.

The key things I ask of the work I create
are as follows:

- Have I learned something during the process?
- If I made another would I change something?
- Have I done the best that I can?
- Have I enjoyed making it?

The last one is the most important. Always
remember to have fun. I know there will
be frustrations, that is part and parcel of
learning, but if you don't have fun, then
find something else to do where you can.

Mark Baker
Editor of Woodcarving



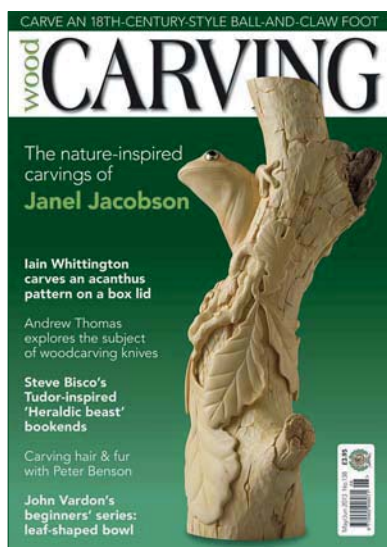
PHOTOGRAPH BY GMC/MARK BAKER

*A glorious carving in Canterbury Cathedral had me
enthralled and humbled at the beauty of the craftsmanship,
but spurred me on to do better and try new things*

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.

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Front cover image by Janel Jacobson

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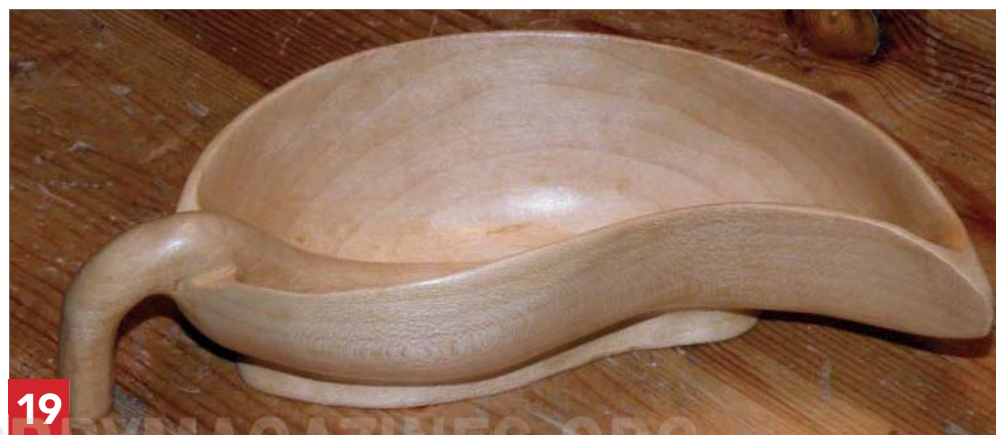
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The Woodworkers Institute web forum



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

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Woodcarving Round & About

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

BWA: Variety is the spice of life



BWA – inspiring generations

The two main obvious pieces of advice for woodcarvers: be patient and keep fingers behind the blade. We must, because the wonderful thing about being in the BWA is that we have support to help keep our tools in great shape. Some of us have been trained over and over to sharpen our tools, yet continue to struggle. But that doesn't matter, because there will always be someone in the group who loves sharpening tools and is happy to help out, setting us on our creative way again.

We all probably have just a few favourite chisels, yet our vice – excuse



Michelle encourages Silas – meaning 'Man of the Wood' – showing early woodcarving abilities!

the pun – is to keep collecting others – because we can! They may be special because they handle nicely or because they have sentimental value. Our members all have a story to share about where our tools came from and 'variety' will always be the spice of carving life.

Carving on a bridge

What have we been up to? Look out for a green oak (*Quercus robur*) carving on a bridge built by volunteers over Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve in Thame. Carved by Gill Deacon of the Herts Region, her BWA regional leader guided her through the project. Harry Tams, of North

Staffordshire Woodcarvers, completed a carving for a school in Manchester for children with severe learning difficulties. The sculpture, carved from larch, is of a pair of helping hands – their school logo. The finish is extremely smooth since touch is very important for these children and for many, the only way in which they can access the world.

It is interesting to note the position of the thumbs; the hands can only be two separate left hands. The children in this project need the support of a helping hand if they are to achieve the very best in life. The left hand is of course, the hand closest to the heart.

Great examples of skills learned in the BWA benefitting and inspiring the wider community. There's so much more to this hobby than the finished item. Do join us!

Dates for your diary

7–8 May, 2014: Hamlet Wood Carvers, Maidstone: South East Woodworking & Power Tool show, Kent County Show Ground, Detling Hill, Detling, Maidstone ME14 3JF

8–11 May, 2014: Hertfordshire Region: Living Crafts at Hatfield House, Herts AL9 5NQ

Date TBC: Durham Region: Darlington Green Fair DL1 5TG

15 June, 2014: Hampshire Region: Bursledon Brickworks Spring Steam Up Carving Display SO31 7GW



The sculpture, carved from larch (*Larix decidua*), is of a pair of helping hands – their school logo

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAULA NOBLE

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

BDWCA: judging the 'Working Decoy' category on the River Wye



Long-tailed duck decoy by Dave Clews, Winner of the 'Working Decoy' competition

Conversion chart

2mm	(⁵ / ₆₄ in)
3mm	(¹ / ₈ in)
4mm	(⁵ / ₃₂ in)
6mm	(¹ / ₄ in)
7mm	(⁹ / ₃₂ in)
8mm	(⁵ / ₁₆ in)
9mm	(¹¹ / ₃₂ in)
10mm	(³ / ₈ in)
11mm	(⁷ / ₁₆ in)
12mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
13mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
14mm	(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 ¹ / ₈ in)
32mm	(1 ¹ / ₄ in)
35mm	(1 ³ / ₈ in)
38mm	(1 ¹ / ₂ in)
40mm	(1 ⁵ / ₈ in)
45mm	(1 ³ / ₄ in)
50mm	(2in)
55mm	(2 ¹ / ₈ -2 ¹ / ₄ in)
60mm	(2 ³ / ₈ in)
63mm	(2 ¹ / ₂ in)
65mm	(2 ⁵ / ₈ in)
70mm	(2 ³ / ₄ in)
75mm	(3in)
80mm	(3 ¹ / ₈ in)
85mm	(3 ¹ / ₄ in)
90mm	(3 ¹ / ₂ in)
93mm	(3 ² / ₃ in)
95mm	(3 ³ / ₄ in)
100mm	(4in)
105mm	(4 ¹ / ₈ in)
110mm	(4 ¹ / ₄ -4 ³ / ₈ in)
115mm	(4 ¹ / ₂ in)
120mm	(4 ³ / ₄ in)
125mm	(5in)
130mm	(5 ¹ / ₈ in)
135mm	(5 ¹ / ₄ in)
140mm	(5 ¹ / ₂ in)
145mm	(5 ³ / ₄ in)
150mm	(6in)
155mm	(6 ¹ / ₈ in)
160mm	(6 ¹ / ₄ in)
165mm	(6 ¹ / ₂ in)
170mm	(6 ³ / ₄ in)
178mm	(6 ⁷ / ₈ in)
180mm	(7in)
185mm	(7 ¹ / ₄ in)
190mm	(7 ¹ / ₂ in)
195mm	(7 ³ / ₄ in)
200mm	(8in)
305mm	(12in)
405mm	(16in)
510mm	(20in)
610mm	(24in)
710mm	(28in)
815mm	(32in)
915mm	(36in)
1,015mm	(40in)
1,120mm	(44in)
1,220mm	(48in)
1,320mm	(52in)
1,420mm	(56in)
1,525mm	(60in)

For the first time at our Annual Show in Bakewell last September we were able to judge the 'Working Decoy' category of our annual competition on the River Wye. This category requires that the carving of a duck or goose must float and self right – they are thrown in upside down to confirm this.

The River Wye at Bakewell is quite fast moving, and has a large population of geese and ducks, and it was interesting to note the reactions of these to the visiting wooden ducks. There were some aggressive approaches from the mallards, but they veered away

as they got close to the decoys, while a red-breasted merganser ignored them and just carried on fishing. The geese just watched the strange behaviour of humans and decoys from a safe distance.

To ensure a good display on the river, we invited carvers to bring

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

decoys which had been entered in previous competitions – they were, of course, excluded from the judging – and these included a pintail hen, carved by Tom Newell, which I had won at auction a few years earlier while visiting the California Open in San Diego.

As I write this article I am again visiting the USA and attempting to carve a decoy of my own – my first – while I am here. If I succeed – and so far I can confirm that it does float and it does self right – I will be floating it on the River Wye this September!



Decoys floating on the River Wye, watched by the local geese and ducks on the river and the general public on the bridge



BDWCA member Steve Toher 'throwing' a decoy into the river

LETTERS

Carving on turnings

Hi Mark,

Regarding your leader in issue 134 in respect of carving on turnings, I was a potter before taking up turning and as a result of trying to replicate some of my ceramic pieces I started to carve on my turnings. This involved colouring, texturing, relief carving on platter rims and bowl sides in the round sculptured carving of my turnings. Here are some photos to illustrate the use of carving to enhance turned pieces. These are all turned and carved from one piece.

Regards,
Gwilym Fisher



'Clematis' vase



'The Guardians'

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GWILYM FISHER

Carving by numbers

Mark,

I am writing in response to John Francklow's comment about the content of the magazine. At 76, I am a seasoned woodworker who is losing the use of my legs. A few years ago, knowing of my impending future and at the same time my love for wood, I started preparing to learn woodcarving by buying some top quality magazines on the subject and taking a course at a local junior college on drawing.

There is a difference in the quality of available publications on the subject of woodcarving and I consider your magazine to be one of the best. Being an advanced cabinet and furniture maker, I understand John's desire for a concentration of advanced material, but I also understand the need for

woodcarving beginners like me to learn from good resources the basics of the art of woodcarving from folks like John. I have learned much and really appreciate the 'carve by numbers' material in your publications. After all, those of us who are advanced woodworkers of one type or another need to do our part in passing on the skills to new 'wannabes' if we are going to keep the arts alive. Maybe there needs to be an additional publication containing just the advanced stuff without the elementary basics and count by number articles.

And by the way, I would like to know more about how John designed and carved his 'Mobius Strip.'

Regards,
David W. Hylan

International Woodcarvers' Congress

For over half a century, the Affiliated Wood Carvers have sponsored the International Woodcarvers' Congress, which is the longest running, competitively judged woodcarving show in the United States. Held on the second week of June, the show and competition are just a part of the festivities held during 'Congress Week'.

Competition

The event offers over 85 separate categories in the judged competition. Cash awards and prizes have exceeded \$20,000 in the past, thanks to a number of very generous sponsors.

The competition is judged each year by a trio of judges who are selected from professional artists from around the world. Unique to the IWG are the judges Critique Sessions, which provide an insight into the judging process.

Education

Each year, AWC hosts a variety of interesting and informative seminars taught by some of the foremost carvers in the world. Classes range from one day to five-day seminars. Topics include woodcarving, clay sculpting, painting, pyrography and more. They also include classes for the non-carving participant.

Fellowship

The Annual Awards Banquet is held on Saturday evening of Congress Week, and offers a prime opportunity to meet new friends and renew old friendships.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JOSH GUGE

'Family of Rubies' by Josh Guge, won first Runner Up overall and won in the Birds category

A number of competition awards are presented to the proud recipients during the banquet. There are raffles for prizes and classes donated by the generous sponsors.

DETAILS:

When: 8-15 June, 2014

Where: Jackson County Fairgrounds, 1212 East Quarry Street, Maquoketa, Iowa 52060, USA

Contact: Affiliated Wood Carvers Ltd

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Carved cabriole leg

– part 1

Dennis Zongker shows you how to carve an 18th-century-style ball-and-claw foot

Looking back through the history of furniture, it always amazes me how the craftsmen were so masterful with the execution of wonderful details, achieving a standard not often seen today. For me, carving a cabriole leg onto a custom furniture piece adds both elegance and style. The carving design on this coffee table is based on a lion's front foot, with some similarities to the 18th-century ball-and-claw style.

To begin the design process I researched the bone and muscle structures of a lion's foot. The front foot has five toes, of which one toe is smaller, like the thumb on a human hand. This toe is set back and is used mostly for grabbing prey and while eating. When the lion is walking or running this toe doesn't show up in the footprint.

When designing the lion's foot I wanted the claws to sit above the ball to show that the whole foot was gripping the ball. This would also give the heel of the foot a more lifelike appearance by setting it below the arch of the foot and having the weight of the lion standing on the ball.

Before carving into wood my first step was to make a full-scale clay model to help me visualise the dimensions of the carving piece. I made an armature similar to the shape and size I was looking

for using wood and aluminium sculpture wire. Then, using clay, I shaped the complete cabriole leg with the lion's foot and acanthus leaf. It is a good idea to make a clay model before you start cutting the wood on furniture where you will be making four matching legs. It is also very

important to use templates and measurements to keep the correct size and proportion.

Click here for extra images



Things you will need...

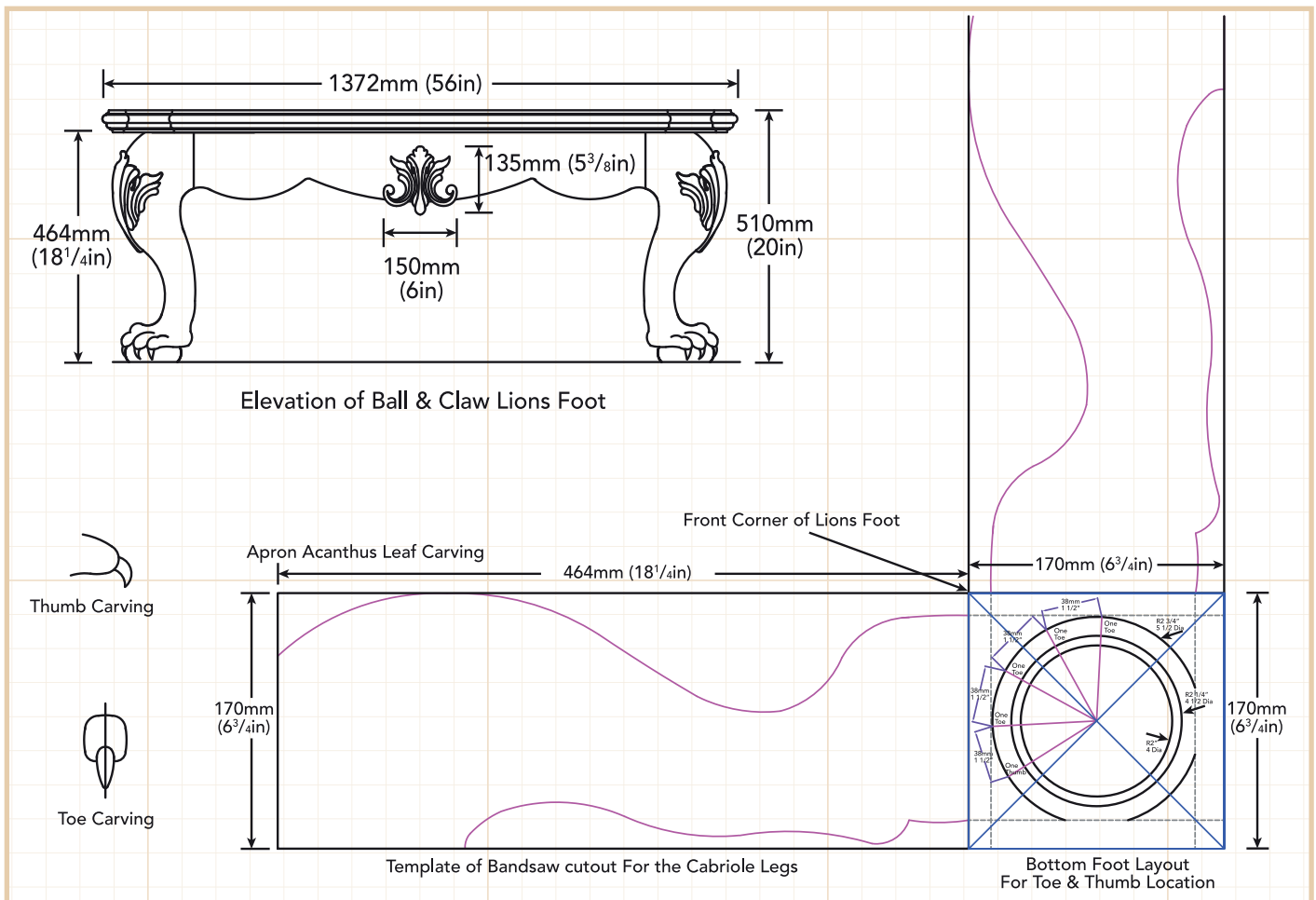
Gouges:	Plywood for armature
No.2, 5mm	Sculpture wire
No.2, 8mm	Modelling clay and modelling tools
No.2, 12mm	Mahogany (Khaya ivorensis) 19mm thick x 405mm square for top and bottom plates, 55mm wide x 466mm tall for the armature
No.2, 20mm	Paper/cardboard and pencil
No.2, 22mm	80 grit sanding block
No.3, 5mm	Glue and bar clamps
No.3, 8mm	Bandsaw
No.3, 12mm	Medium wood rasp
No.3, 16mm	Pair of compasses
No.5, 8mm	Hand saw and mallet
No.5, 12mm	
No.5, 16mm	
No.8, 4mm	
No.9, 3mm	
No.9, 10mm	

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dennis Zongker has been a professional custom furniture maker for over 28 years and is co-owner of Zongkers Custom Furniture in Omaha, Nebraska. He teaches woodcarving and marquetry classes at Midwest Woodworkers. To see more of Dennis work visit www.zongkers.com



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DENNIS ZONGKER



1 To make the armature out of wood and wire, cut two pieces of plywood to represent where the top will be placed to the leg. Draw a 170mm square for the location to screw the wooden armature and placement of the sculpture wire; this is the size of the glued up mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*) block before cutting and carving

2 Oil-based modelling clays stay soft and workable: they never harden or dry. Start applying the clay onto your armature and use modelling tools to shape the location of the claws and the radius of the ball. Using clay for the winged acanthus leaf will also help you to proportion its size to the cabriole leg

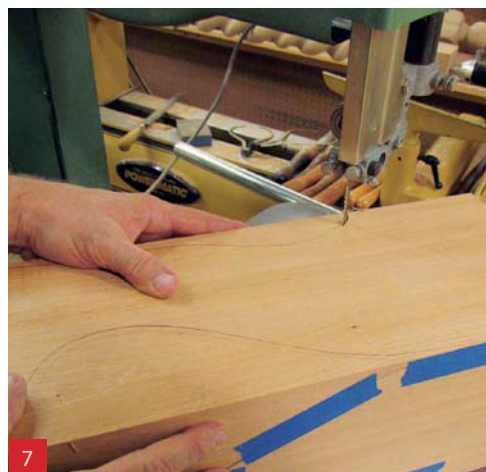
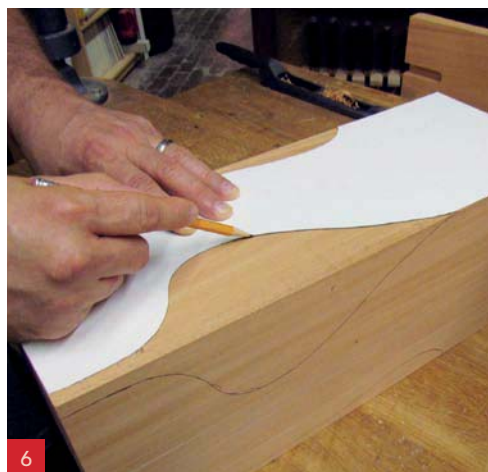
3 After completing the clay model of the cabriole leg, place a piece of thick paper or cardboard at 170 x 466mm tall just behind one side. Then, using a pencil trace around the outside edges, extending outwards by approximately 12mm. This will leave the extra wood needed for carving the foot and acanthus leaf. This template will be used to trace the cut lines on the glued up block of wood

➔ **4** Each leg will need to be glued up into equal 170mm square x 466mm tall blocks. Use kiln-dried 50mm-thick mahogany – four pieces for each leg at 36mm thick x 170mm wide x 466mm tall. Cut each leg out of the same larger board in order to match up the wood grain direction. To get a better glue bond, scratch up each surface being glued with an 80-grit sanding block. Roll yellow glue onto each face that is being glued together, then use several bar clamps and smaller wood blocks on the ends and corners



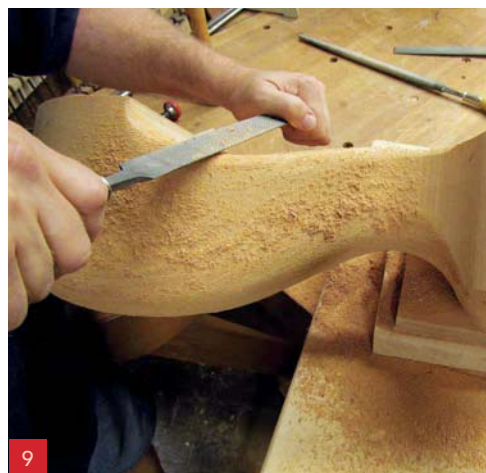
5 The best time to cut the mortise into each leg is now because the leg is square. I use a router table and bit but any method you prefer will work, such as a mallet and a chisel

6 Place the paper template on top of one face of your block of wood and trace a pencil line following the edges. Then roll your block over once and draw in the next pattern. Make sure that the foot and upper arch meet together at the front corner



7 Use a bandsaw to cut out the back and front lines of the leg. After you have cut out one side, tape back on the waste material to give you back the pencil line

8 Mount the leg to your carving bench using a carver's vice and screw to the top of the leg. Then, to support the foot, place blocks of wood for it to rest on and clamp down where needed



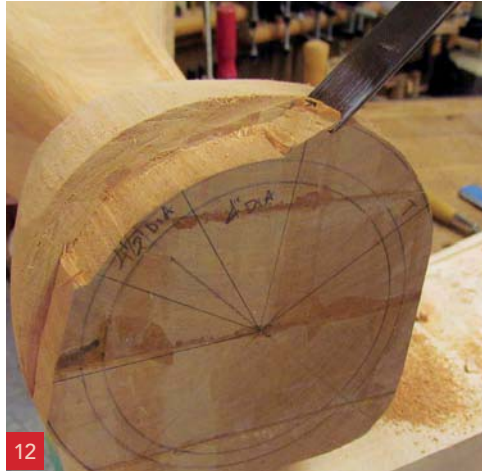
9 To shape the leg, use a medium wood rasp to round the front corner and blend it into the sides with approximately a 38mm radius from the top of the left corner to the foot. For the two inside corners of the leg, shape approximately a 25mm radius starting right under the apron section and blend it down the foot

10 One of the most important steps for carving the foot is to set out the spacing between the toes. First, draw in three different circles on the bottom of the leg using a compass. The centre point of the compass is centred to the 170mm square or 85mm in from both front edges. Note: for the outside circle set your compass at 70mm radius to equal the 140mm diameter. This circle is the outside face of the toes. The middle circle at 115mm diameter is where the widest section of the ball and the





11



12

tip of the claw will start. The inner circle at 100mm diameter will be the smallest diameter of the ball at the bottom of the foot. For setting out the distance between each toe and thumb, see the layout drawing. Make two left and two right feet, with two where the thumb faces inwards and two where they face outwards. Finish rasping the foot following the 140mm diameter circle on the sides and front. Measure 20mm up from the bottom of the foot, then with a pencil draw a line around the front of the foot. This line is where the claw nail point begins



13



14

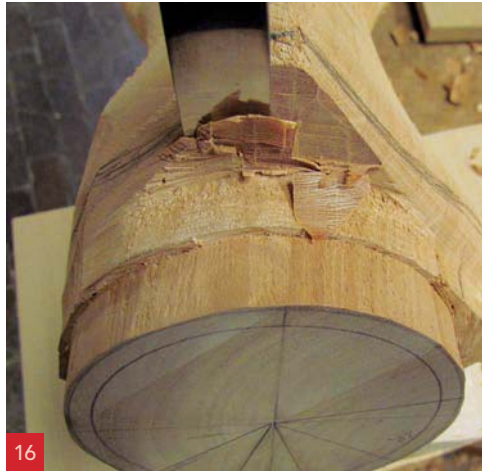
11 Next, use a hand saw with a piece of tape stuck to the side of the saw to cut into the foot 12mm deep. Cut around the outside following the pencil line

12 Using a mallet and a No.2, 22mm carving gouge, you can now cut down to the 115mm diameter pencil line around the circumference of the foot

13 Extend the pencil lines from the bottom of the foot to the front face of the foot to where the claws will be located. Next, using the templates of the claw toe and thumb as guides, draw a pencil line following the template edge



15



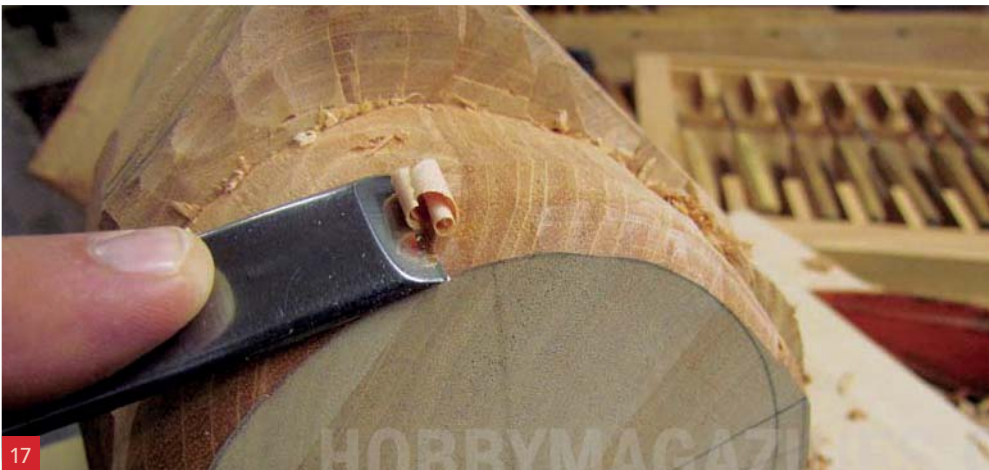
16

14 To create the knuckle of the toe, freehand draw in the upper section of the lion's foot, making it slightly wider at the section by the toe with a slightly thinner space closer to the ankle of the leg

15 Using a mallet and No.2, 12mm and No.5, 8mm carving gouges, stab cut around the claws and toes. Angle the gouge slightly outward around the toe section – this will make the toe a little larger, giving some extra room

16 To remove the waste wood at the heel of the foot, draw a line 50mm up from the bottom of the foot. This is approximately where the heel will rest. Use a No.2, 20mm carving gouge with a mallet cut straight into the heel, then remove the waste by carving up with the gouge flipped over to match the arch of the ball

17 Once you have the ball and heel close to its final depth use a No.2, 20mm gouge upside down to shape the bottom of the ball by following along the 100mm diameter circle. It is important to leave the centre of the ball at its widest 115mm diameter



17

➔ **18** On the side of the foot where the thumb claw is located, draw in the arch of the thumb approximately 12mm higher than the heel. Then use No.3, 16mm and No.5, 16mm carving gouges to remove the waste wood. Shape the ball by using a No.2, 12mm upside down and carving in deeper into the ball up by the foot. On the opposite side of the thumb there is more open space with a larger arch. Again, here you will need to draw in the arch freehand. Try to blend the front toe into the heel. Leave the heel lower to give the appearance that the lion's weight is resting on his heel. Use a No.3, 16mm and a No.2, 20mm to remove the waste wood by stab cutting along the pencil line. Then relief cut up to the stab cut



19 To carve the toes and claws of the lion's foot, keep stab cutting into the ball around each toe, knuckle and claw, and shape them by using the gouges upside down. It is very important to carve deeper into the ball by the knuckle giving it its rounded shape and at the tip of the claw leaving the largest diameter



20 Use a No.9, 3mm carving gouge to begin shaping the knuckles and carve a small radius between each knuckle down into the ball

21 Use a No.3, 12mm and a No.5, 12mm carving gouge upside down to round and shape the radius corners of each knuckle

22 When carving the claw, keep in mind that the shape is wider at the top and thinner towards the tip. There is also an arch on the front of the claw which helps give the appearance that it is grabbing the ball. Use a No.3, 8mm carving gouge to carve close to the claw's finished size



23 Use a No.2, 5mm gouge to shape the tip of each claw, carving them so that it looks like the claws are gripping the ball

24 To start shaping the upper section, use a No.9, 10mm gouge with a wider cut at the knuckle, changing to a narrower cut as you carve up the ankle section



25 To give the claws clean, sharp details, you need to stab cut into each toe at the upper radius of the claw using a No.2, 5mm and a No.3, 5mm gouge



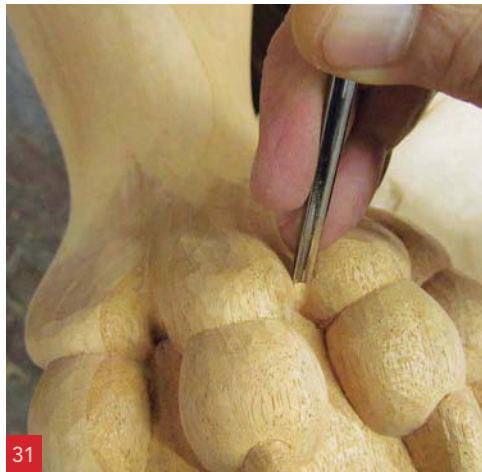
26 Then with a No.2, 8mm gouge cut a clean line between the claw and toe and shape the lower section of the toe by cleaning and blending up the carving gouge marks. You now need to repeat step 25 on all five claws, toes and knuckles

27 Use a No.2, 20mm carving gouge upside down to shape the round part of the ball. Also at this time I round over both sides of the thumb and the opposing toe and knuckle back towards the heel using No.3, 16mm and No.5, 16mm gouges



28 To clean up the detailing of the lion's foot, stab cut around each toe and claw. Lightly tap the gouge with a mallet

29 Then, using No.2, 8mm; No.2, 10mm; No.2, 12mm and No.2, 20mm carving gouges upside down, carve up to the stab cuts all around the lion's foot. You will need to rotate the carving gouges to match up to the profiles



30 The thumb arch of the lion's foot is set back with a larger spacing. Use a No.8, 4mm gouge to carve into the arch to get the shape between the thumb and toe. Then, with a No.3, 12mm gouge, smooth carve out all the gouge cuts and marks

31 Use a No.9, 3mm carving gouge to clean up between the knuckles of the foot section, making sure the ball and knuckle are cut clean to each other

32 To do the very last touch ups to the carved cabriole leg, shape and clean up any gouge marks using all the gouges used throughout this section

33 Once all the carving and finishing is done, the carved cabriole leg should look like this ▶



Top tips

1. The cabriole leg sits at a 45° angle facing outwards to the corner of the table top. Adding 12mm to your template will give the extra wood needed for carving in the details. The side profile can be misleading to what the actual size needs to be
2. Mark on one side of the long edges with a 'V'; this will allow you to keep track of matching up the grain

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Michael Painter Diary of a professional carver

Allowing the left to be the right

In the final part of this series, Michael Painter discusses the topic of right-hand versus left-hand tool use, tool sharpening and the importance of traditional carving skills

As carvers it is advantageous to be ambidextrous; this allows you to attack the grain from both directions while sitting or traditionally standing, adjusting your body weight to persuade and manoeuvre the chisel. Being ambidextrous overcomes the inconvenience of turning the work round or upside down – which is not always possible – or amusingly inverting yourself trying to navigate the grain! Using both hands holding the traditional two-handed chisels isn't as confusing as it seems because your dominant hand is always being used. Two-handed chisels also offer greater tool control coupled with safety having both hands behind the cutting edge.

Left versus right

On the other hand – forgive the pun! – holding a mallet with the left hand if you're a 'righty' can result in a little hilarity as, for some reason, the mallet fails to locate the end of the chisel's handle held by the right hand. To initially correct this problem, hold the mallet not by its handle but by the head in the palm of the hand; this gives greater guidance until constant practice will allow you to hold the handle as normal. Of course, if you are naturally left-handed, you have the advantage of living in a right-handed world and are usually ambidextrous. All the 'righties' should persevere as it does get



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Painter has 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

Carved in York stone this is my 'apprentice piece', although I wasn't informed of this until I had completed the work. The photograph is old but my appearance over the years hasn't changed! The procedures of carving wood and stone are the same but the techniques of removing the material is slightly different



Replacing mouldings on a frame for Windsor Castle; you may discern traces of the fire damage? Notice all the plaster casts at the back of my bench serving as future references. The 12 chisels facing me create all three differing moulds

- ➔ easier and is beneficial in the end. Both hands holding the chisel furthermore means that you cannot hold your carving in your hand or rest it on any other vital body parts, such as legs or chest; this has the advantage of restricting any red liquid leaking from your body. Obviously the carving is traditionally held by other means: on the bench with dogs, holdfast, carver's screw or on a carver's post and bracket, as mentioned in previous articles.



Having finalised the front view, the excess wood from the back can be sawn off. I've repositioned the spare timber to indicate the margin of error I originally included for correcting any mistakes – which obviously never happens!

Tool sharpening

Traditional commercial carvers are efficient in sharpening their chisels: this is because time is money and you would be chastised for taking too long in a large workshop environment. As an apprentice joined the workshop, they would be loaned chisels by the company or by the carver charged with their training. These would not be the carver's best chisels but called his 'nails', meaning well-used tools of little value used for reshaping on the forge to access difficult shapes.

The trainee can then immediately apply themselves to creating work, earning their wages by eliminating wasting time sharpening chisels. Instruction in tool sharpening would be given later and expected to be perfected out of work time. This is the approach I use when teaching where 'quantity carving time' is essential, so tools are provided for immediate use; instruction in sharpening can come later after the excitement and exuberance has waned a little. A few carvers, usually the 'tool-a-holics', become obsessed with achieving a painstakingly sharp cutting edge and pay little heed to the execution of carving! I do recognise that chisels need to be sharp but some instruction, in my opinion, is being instigated from a joinery perspective.

There is a grey area between the two professions where it is advantageous to have joiners seeking to apply themselves to carving, but they still have the instincts of a joiner when sharpening and executing their work. Spectators observing me at work sometimes imply that chisels are only sharp when able to shave the hairs on their arm, my reply is: "I'm not a barber!"

Master Carver

The title of Master Carver is bestowed upon you by your contemporaries who have deliberated over your competence and catalogue of work. It implies that you are able to execute all aspects of carving in all styles, but we all have our strengths and weaknesses. Being part of the restoration profession, you soon learn you cannot be an individual and require the intervention and guidance of other crafts enabling you to execute your work. Fortunately, I have worked alongside many excellent craftspeople and, without their insights and judgements, the career I've undertaken would have been more difficult to achieve. They include: carvers (wood and stone); stonemasons (fixer and banker); joiners; carpenters; machinists (wood); bricklayers; plumbers (workers of lead); and many more, with the occasional interference from managers!

A final soap box moment

Now with the aid of a triple extending ladder, let's climb onto the loftiest soap box! It's infuriating when instructors demonstrate their inadequacy regarding the procedures within the traditions of the carving profession. One misdemeanour in both wood and stone is cutting behind the designated front view of any form you're creating until the design has been finalised – be it relief or in the round – countermining procedures that have been passed



This inquisitive onlooker wonders why I have a handsome crest of a dog on my head

down for thousands of years! This highlights their incompetence while undermining the fundamental rules that assist traditional carvers with the execution of their work. Consequently this means that 'part-time' carvers are being given incorrect guidance, creating insecurities that inhibit their confidence and achievements. It's usually instigated at the bandsawing stage where it is insisted that four sides of your work are cut before you start carving; traditionally we cut three sides but never the back. The importance of this method becomes clear when explained and provides a secure framework to counteract the errors, 'happy accidents', we all make. I have seen only one modern day publication highlighting the correct procedure, which focuses on the instruction given at the Geisler-Moroder school in Austria, following traditional rules.

Goodbye for now

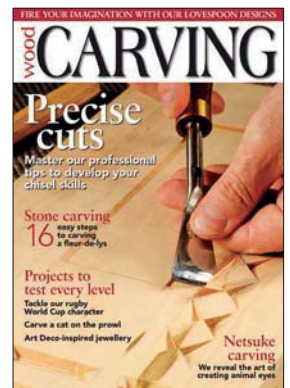
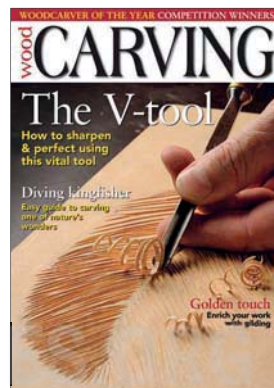
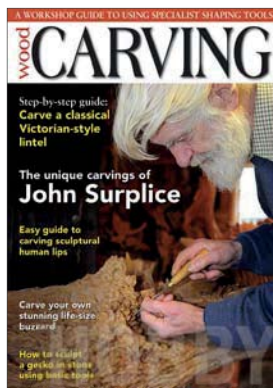
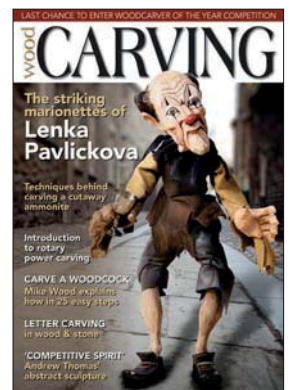
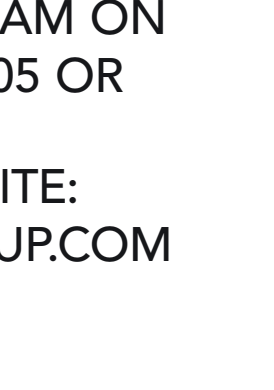
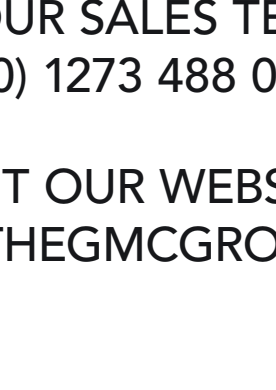
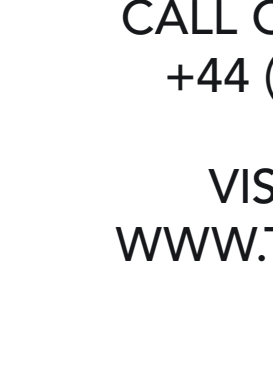
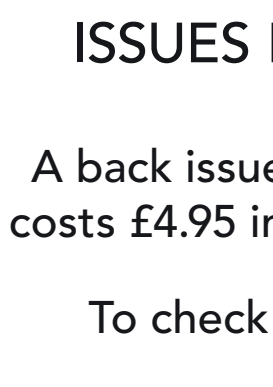
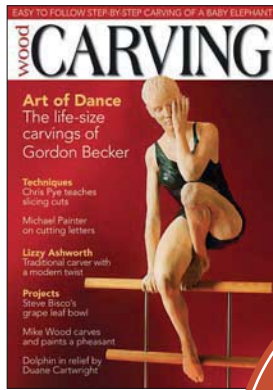
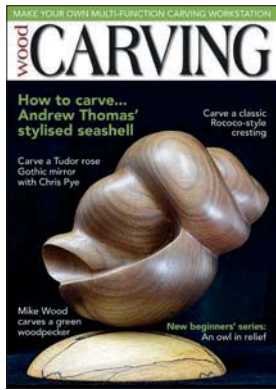
I hope that all the facts covered in these articles have assisted you and that I have substantiated their logic with a practical approach and common-sense and if anyone wishes to throw down their 'anti-slash gauntlet,' then I'm willing to pick it up. At the heart of my training is a craft-based skill that enables efficiency with my work while overcoming the mistakes I 'never' make! Now it's time to place my feet back firmly on terra-firma – how inconsiderate, the ladders have been removed! ▶



Creating a heraldic lion in oak following the traditional rule of never cutting behind the designated front view



Many people refer to this type of work as sculpture; I don't agree as they are produced by extracting the material therefore are carvings. This interpretation is a grey area but I'm a carver and proud of it not a sculptor who often applies the material



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Leaf-shaped bowl

In the second part of his series, John Vardon carves a simple leaf-shaped bowl



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN VARDON

This, the second article in my new series, is a simple leaf-shaped bowl to introduce beginners to woodcarving. The idea is to introduce a carver to use a few basic gouges, thinking in three dimensions and holding the carving securely. The carving should take about a day to carve. The gouges referenced in the box opposite are those used but any suitable gouge could be used; some alternatives are indicated where appropriate. It is always recommended to use as big a gouge as practical. Ensure your gouges are sharp throughout the carving, as this will help you yield the best results.

The idea is for the beginner to enjoy carving. However, there are some basic safety rules which the carver should adhere to. Primarily, keep your work space tidy, secure your carving, keep your hands behind the sharp edge of the gouge, never carve towards yourself, and lastly, never try to catch a falling carving gouge. Sharp tools are safer than blunt ones as more effort is required with a blunt tool and this may result in the gouge slipping.

Things you will need...

Tools:

No.2, 25mm – straight or fishtail
No.5, 12mm – straight
No.8, 19mm – straight or fishtail
No.11, 6mm – straight
No.11, 12mm – straight
No.38, 12mm spoon gouge
G-clamp or a vice
Mallet

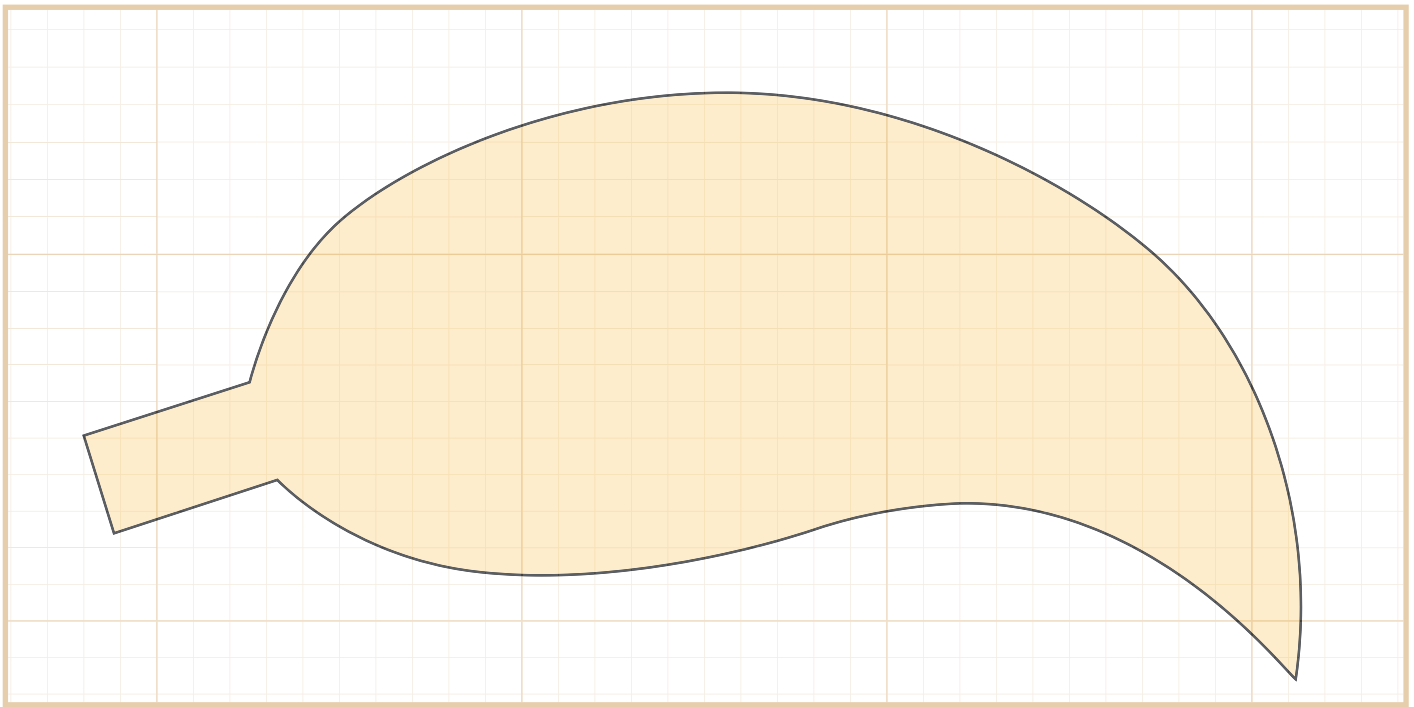
Wood:

Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*): 175mm long x 75mm wide x 50mm deep

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John has been carving for the last 19 years. He is an enthusiastic amateur and likes to carve mainly in relief. John is a member of the Solent Guild of Woodcarvers and Sculptors and is currently its Secretary. John also demonstrates once a month, together with other carvers, at the Weald & Downland Open Air Museum near Chichester. Together with Jess Jay they run two carving courses at the Museum.

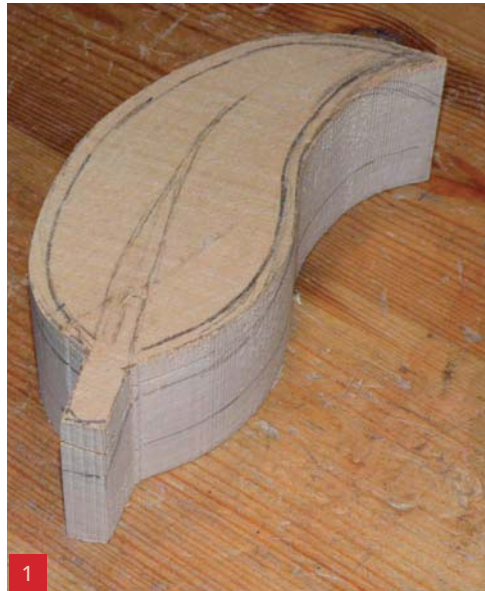




1 For this project, you will need a piece of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*). The piece used was 175mm long x 75mm wide x 50mm deep. The actual size and shape can vary to suit the wood available. Scale the drawing to the required size. Use a bandsaw to cut the leaf out. On the top surface mark a line about 5mm in from the edge for the initial inner boundary of the bowl; this thickness will decrease as the bowl progresses. Mark the location of the stem, although this marking will be removed during the initial carving but should be redrawn at frequent intervals

2 Use a vice to hold the wood safely; placing a block of wood underneath the blank would give it better support and raise it above the top of the vice. Using a No.11, 6mm straight gouge, carve a groove around the inside of the line. It does not have to be exact as at a later stage the walls of the bowl will be reduced in thickness. Using a No.8, 19mm straight gouge with a mallet, hollow out the bowl to the required depth and shape. Keep marking the stem in and note the use of non-slip material on the bench

3 Using a No. 5, 12mm straight gouge, rolling the gouge as you cut – or a No.38, 12mm spoon gouge – may help to get a curved shape at the bottom. Remember to leave the basic shape of the stem in the bowl. Do not go too deep as you need to leave some wood for the bottom plinth. As you continue to refine the inner



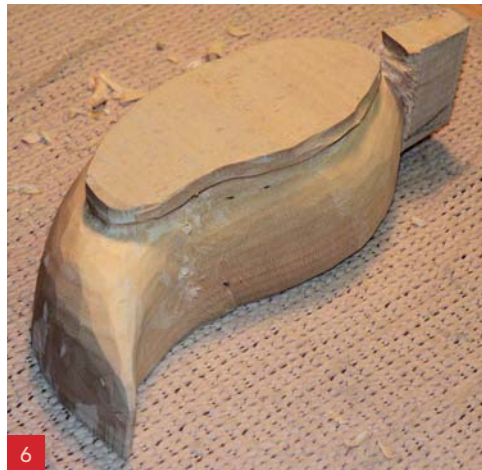


surface there is the tendency to allow the gouge to dig in at the bottom and thus necessitate the removal of some wood at the base, which may result in a hole

4 Once the inner surface has been roughly defined, turn the block over and mark the initial shape of the plinth. This shape may change as the carving progresses. In this example the shape is parallel to the outer surface and about 12mm in from the sides and 12mm deep



5 Holding the wood safely, use a No.11, 6mm straight gouge to carve a groove around the outside of the plinth line. Using a No.2, 25mm straight gouge upside down, shape one side of the outer surface reshaping the plinth to a deeper depth if required. Note the stem at the back has been left at this stage



6 Continue to shape the other side. In this example, the leaf shape has a slight curl-in at the stem end. Depending on the shape of the plinth required, you may, using a No.5, 12mm straight gouge, need to run around the side of the plinth. This will, in effect, give a curved or undercut shape to the plinth and allow the bottom to be shaped in towards the centre of the bowl. Using a No.2, 25mm straight gouge, the underside of the leaf point can be shaped. This may result in the reshaping of the plinth at this end



7 Turn the leaf back over and refine the inner surface. If you hold the leaf in a vice, do not close it too tight as the leaf sides are now much thinner and weaker. Thin the sides as required, using the No 8, 19mm straight gouge. A No.11, 6mm straight – or curved – gouge may be needed on the inner surface at the pointed end, a No.11, 12mm straight – or curved – gouge in the region of the stem. Ideally the wall thickness should be uniform and about 2mm, however from a practical point of view the thickness will probably increase moving from top to bottom



8 Shape the stem running along the bottom of the inner surface. Shape the top surface of the bowl if required. Where any wood has been removed from the top the wall thickness may increase and thus further removal of the inner and outer surface of the bowl in that area may be required

PROJECT

Beginners' series

➔ **9** The external part of the leaf stem can now be shaped. In this example, it has been shaped so it is hanging over the leaf and drops down vertically. Note that this creates a weak point due to the short grain, so care must be taken. You will also need to redefine the back of the bowl so the stem sits more realistically, and not over the leaf. It is up to the imagination of the carver

10 Now go over the complete carving and clean-up as much as possible with gouges. Sometimes using a gouge as a scraper will help to remove some bad areas but be careful that the corners of the gouge do not 'dig-in' and create even more areas to clean up. To overcome this 'shaping' the cutting edge of the gouge will help – see Mike Painter's article in *Woodcarving* issue 137. Then using various grades of abrasive media, the bowl should now be sanded down to provide a smooth inner and outer surface. Traditional sandpaper should be avoided as it may leave grit on the carving and damage a gouge if any recarving is required

11 Once sanded, the bowl can be finished with a sealer and wax, or a vegetable oil could be used, especially if the bowl is to be used to hold food items like peanuts

12 The completed bowl should look something like this ▶

Top tips

1. When 'marking' the outline of your carving use a U-shape – No.11 – gouge or a veiner to scribe the outline, i.e. use the gouge as a 'sketching tool'. This is preferable to 'stabbing the outline' as the gouge effectively becomes a wedge and compresses the fibres of the wood
2. When applying a finish to a carving, carvers often use waxes or mineral oils, such as Danish oil, but there are many more available to you. Where a carving comes into contact with food, it is worth considering using a vegetable oil, e.g. sunflower oil, as mineral oils may have the effect of tainting the food. However, the disadvantage of this method is that vegetable oils do not provide the same hardness to the finish as mineral oils



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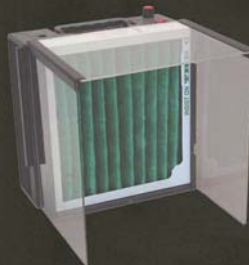


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Surface finishing *with carving tools*

Chris Pye looks at surface finishing using a variety of carving tools



It's something we don't often think about. There *must* be surfaces where any object, let's say your carving, meets the surrounding air. And *the surface is what you only ever actually see*. Cut away wood and you have another surface. In fact, by definition, your finished carving consists of wood that you *haven't* touched with your sharp tools. If you had, that bit would be on the floor!

This reflection is important – and it really is – because surfaces are one of the main things that you, as the carver, have to deal with. It's what the viewers of your work directly look at. How you have treated the surfaces of your carving, skilfully or unskilfully, will make a huge difference to how your work is appreciated. Yes, there's the form,

the story, the drama and so on, but overlying everything is that surface. And like artists with their brushes, you need to handle it; make conscious decisions about its 'textures', its appearance, patterns and the way it 'works'.

Putting aside colour, there's a whole range of things you can do to surfaces. A good way to consider 'texture' is like a spectrum, from heavily textured to very smooth. Each level of texturing generally needs different tools and a different set of skills. Of course, you'll likely have a variety of surface textures throughout your carving both discrete and merging, every one of which will be your choice, your joy and responsibility as a carver.

In this three-part series, I want to give you some options and suggestions. Part

two deals with rasps and punches; part three with scraping and sanding. Here, in part one, we start by looking at the effects of carving tools.

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



Textured ++	Textured +	Textured O
Carving Tools	Rasps & Punches	Scrapers & Sanding

Actual carving

In this lectern eagle, the whole body surface is covered with carved detail. 'Actual carving' counts as a surface! It's not always necessary to uniformly cover a whole bird, say, with feathers; sometimes it's better to leave areas more 'implied'. But when you do, think about different sizes, depth and orientation of the feathers. And, of course, carve them as well as you can.



Think about surface when you are carving. What areas actually have to be carved?

Hair



The carved hair contrasts with the smoothness of the face

The deliberate carving pattern stylises the subject, the hair, contrasting with the smoothness of the face. There is an energy and flow in the ridges or lines of shadows on the surface as they build up to an effect. 'Tuning' your lines is an important carving skill.

Three indispensable bits of advice

1. Critique your surfaces! Both as you carve and when you think you're finished carving, be aware of the surfaces. Ask yourself: Does this area, this surface, really 'work'? – i.e. sanding hair smooth? Can I find something better, visually? – i.e. simpler or stronger? Could I do it better, technically? – i.e. sand to a better finish.

2. Don't practise on your carving! Try things out, test your surface skills on a spare piece of similar wood first: that detail, those gouge cuts, frosting with punches, sanding and so on. If things go wrong you might find yourself cleaning away wood you really should be leaving!

3. Look around you. Look at what other carvers have done with their surfaces. Do you agree? Do you have a better idea? Was it well done? Could you do it better? There's a library of work – real and as pictures for you to explore.

Direct impact

How simple carving tools affect a surface gives you many options. Your choice. Simple stab cuts make the scales. But perhaps carving individual scales is better? Stylised fins, but perhaps something looser is better? You need to decide – it's your carving. In that freedom lies both the challenge and the joy of woodcarving.

Learn with Chris

You can see a video of Chris demonstrating different approaches to surfaces on www.woodcarvingworkshops.tv



The carving tools you use can affect the surface in many different ways

➤ Rough facets



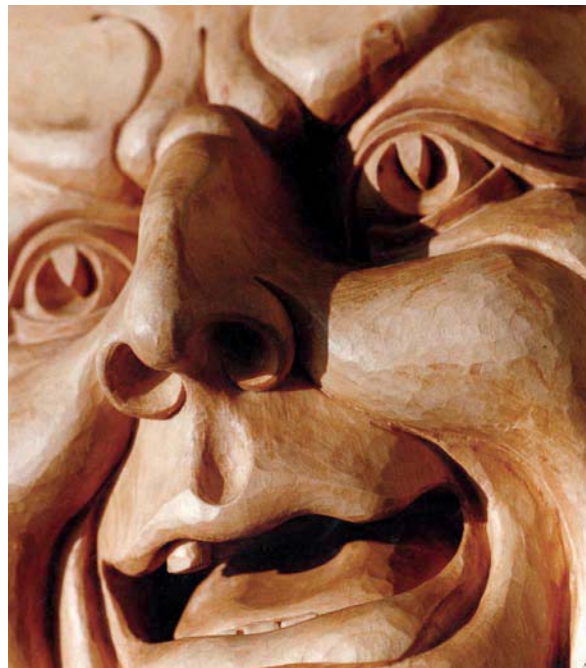
Rough facets in your carvings can be used to express many different subjects

Feel the inchoate emotion that comes from the vigorous use of a deeper gouge, and the contrast with the smooth surface and pure line of the spiral. For me, 'emotion' is one of the things that is lost when a carving is

sanded, which is not to say that something might also be gained. You could use variations of cut to express many different subjects: choppy seas, rocks, a lowering sky or background energy or movement.

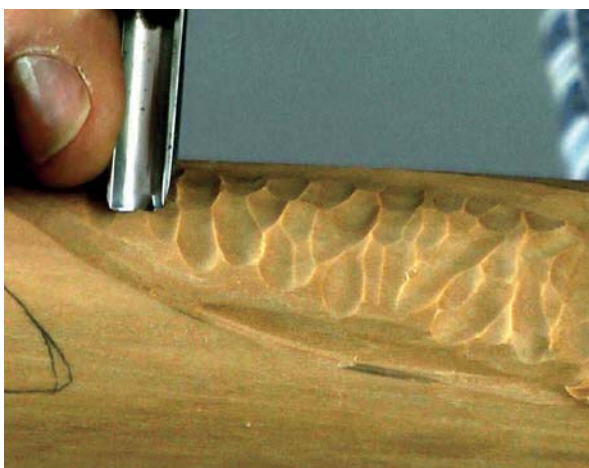
Light facets

A mask in limewood (*Tilia vulgaris*) reveals the subtle 'straight from the chisel' finish you get with slicing cuts from sharp flat gouges. The emotion here is calm; the light ripples softly over the surface, so very suitable for soft surfaces like skin and fabric. Beware of defaulting to sanded surfaces, however, as these can look, inappropriately, like eggshell, hard and shiny.



Using light facets has the effect of creating a 'straight from the chisel' finish

Mixed facets



Overlaying cuts, varying depth and variations all adds to the final surface finish

Overlaying one cut with another, varying the depths, varying the directions and, voilà – the inner surface of a baguette. All it needs is a touch of colour, which is a whole new level of surface finishing. So it's not just enough to think about the effect of your carving tools; what is going to happen when you add colour, oil or wax? This is where the spare bit of wood and the testing come into their own.

Making it up

A church organ screen relief, seen from the side and showing a mixture of textures to suggest the fields and hamlet. Burrs from a power shaft; cuts and lines from carving tools; punches; a rake-

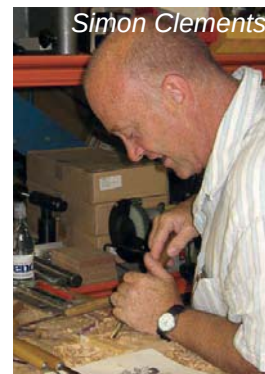
like scratch tool that I made from an old blade and dragged over the wood – all to be seen from a distance. It IS like being a painter, working the surface and being conscious of the result... ▶



Sometimes a mixture of textures really works



Peter Berry



Simon Clements

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'Heraldic beast' bookends

Steve Bisco looks back to the Tudors for inspiration



PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE BISCO

Books and woodcarving are two of the great joys in life, and what better way to combine them than by carving some ornamental bookends. To enhance the pleasure further still, I am indulging two more interests which, to me at least, are also joys to gladden the heart of a decorative carver – history and heraldry.

The purpose of bookends is to support books, and they need to have some weight behind them, so I have designed the base and uprights to represent good solid leather-bound books. For decorative support I have turned to the world of heraldry which, from the 12th century to the present day, has been a fertile field for carvers. In heraldry, creatures called 'supporters' stand each side of the shield in a coat of arms to 'support' the shield, and they can perform the same service with these bookends.

The 'heraldic beasts' which adorn these

bookends come to us from the Tudor period five centuries ago. When Henry Tudor seized the throne of England from Richard III in 1485, and became King Henry VII, he adopted the English royal arms on his shield. He used as supporters the dragon of Wales, and his own Tudor greyhound. His son Henry VIII replaced the greyhound with the lion of England, and subsequent Tudor monarchs – Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I – continued to use the English lion and Welsh dragon.

From the carving point of view, the soft and hairy features of the lion contrast with the angular and scaly features of the dragon. In keeping with the Tudor theme, I have used 'green' oak (*Quercus robur*) – air-dried for one to three years – finished with a light brown wax polish. I have kept to a 'tooled' finish rather than a sanded finish, as this looks livelier and fits better with the Tudor style.

Things you will need...

Tools:

No.3, 20mm fishtail gouge
No.3, 10mm fishtail gouge
No.4, 6mm fishtail gouge
No.3, 10mm gouge
No.8, 8mm gouge
No.5, 7mm gouge
No.5, 5mm gouge
No.5, 3mm gouge
No.9, 3mm gouge
No.9, 16mm curved gouge
No.5, 13mm curved gouge
No.8, 8mm curved gouge
No.3, 5mm bent gouge
12mm back-bent gouge
Straight 'V'-tool
Curved 'V'-tool
2mm veiner
25mm flat chisel
10mm skew chisel
3mm chisel
2mm chisel
Coping saw
Bandsaw and/or jigsaw

Wood:

A piece of oak (*Quercus robur*) measuring 50mm thick

There are several options for the overall size, but a block of wood 1,000mm x 125mm will provide the six pieces required.

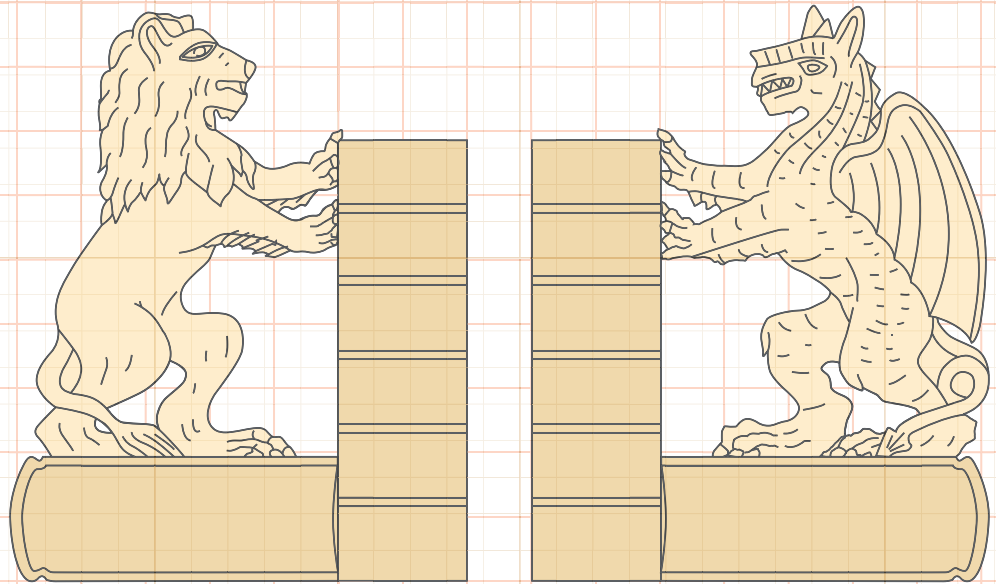
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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'.



Using the pattern

Each bookend is made in three parts: an oblong vertical 'book', a square horizontal base 'book' and a carved heraldic beast. For convenience I have designed all parts to be made from wood 50mm thick x 125mm wide. The pieces for the vertical books and the beasts should each be 180mm high. The horizontal books are 125mm square. If you copy the drawing into a computer using a scanner or digital camera, and print out each bookend onto an A4 page, you should be able to make the parts correspond to the measurements given above. Whatever size you make it, check that the beast's top claw sits at the top of the vertical book.



Preparations

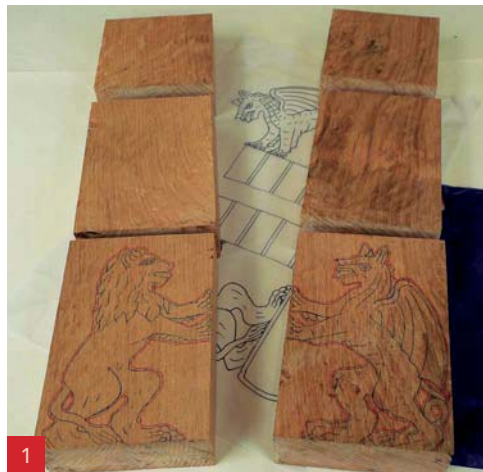
1 Start this project by taking a piece of 'green' oak measuring 1,000 x 125 x 50mm, and make a full-size copy of the drawing. Cut four pieces 180mm long, for the upright books and the beasts, and two pieces 125mm long, for the two horizontal books. Trace the lion and dragon pattern onto the wood using carbon paper, and mark your cutting lines in red

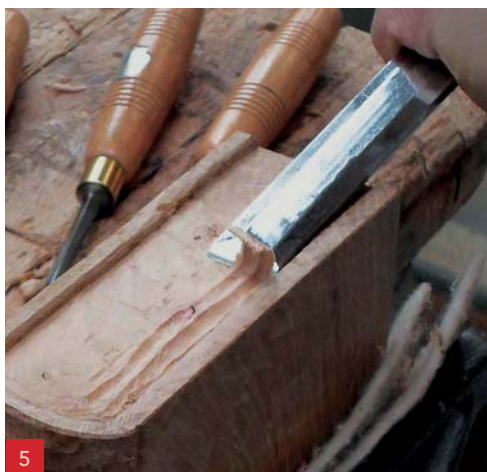
Carving the books

2 Start the upright books by making sure the edges are square, so they will stand upright. Plane the 'spine' edge into a shallow bullnose moulding

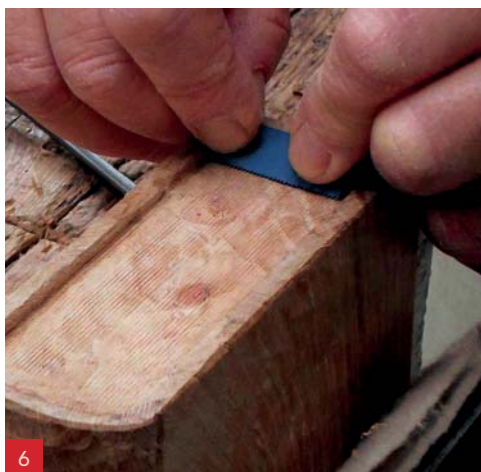
3 Carve the five 'stitch' lines across the spine. Look at some real leather-bound books to see the effect you are aiming for. Lower the level of the spine, between the stitches, by about 1.5mm. Carve it to a smooth tooled finish to create a surface similar to old leather

4 The next step is to use a veiner to carve a narrow groove, where the spine meets the front and back cover boards





5



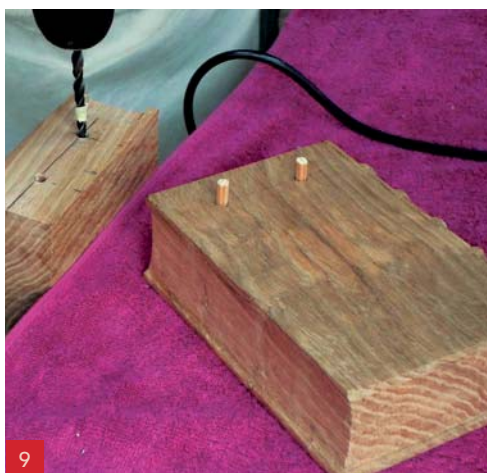
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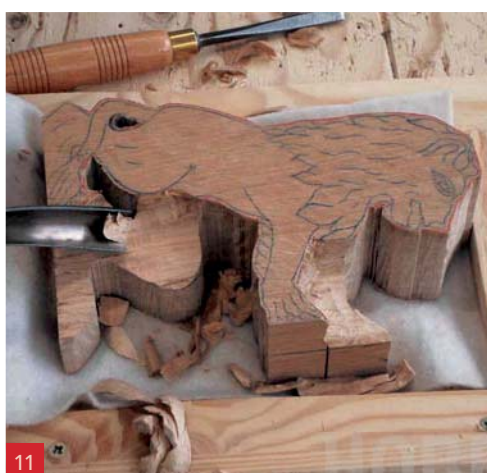
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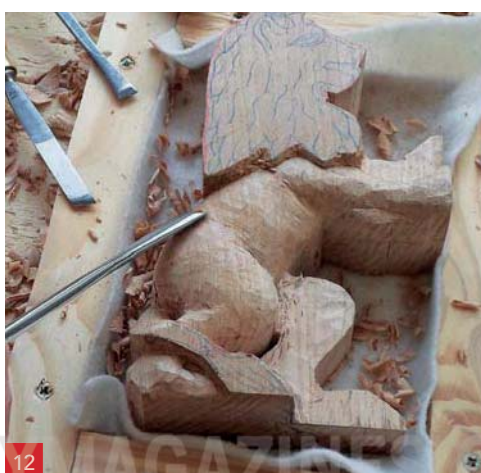
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5 On the top edge, lower the level of the 'pages' by 3mm, and create a 4mm thick edge for the top of the spine and cover boards

6 Next, use a piece of hacksaw blade to scrape narrow parallel lines along the top, to give the illusion of the pages

7 Use a shallow gouge to create a similar, but slightly concave edge for the pages along the back of the book

8 Repeat the process for the two horizontal books, but note that the top edge of the book faces the front, the spine is on the outer edge – only 125mm long with just four 'stitching' bands – and the edge which joins the upright book must be flat and square except at the very front

9 Fit 6mm dowels, to give extra strength to the join of the upright and horizontal books. Position the drill holes carefully

10 Use PVA glue in the dowel holes and along the joint, but avoid squeezing glue out onto the exposed surfaces. Check that the glue joint is tight, and the angle between the vertical and horizontal books is 90°

Carving the lion

11 Start the 'beasts' by cutting out the void between the creatures' legs, using a drill and jigsaw, and cut round the outside with a bandsaw or jigsaw. Draw a centreline around the outside edge, and cut down the surface of the lion's two left legs to this centreline. Take care where the legs and feet extend across the short grain

12 Rough out the shape of the lion's body up to the mane, leaving the tail curling across its right leg. A lion's rump tends to be slimmer than its shoulders

Workholding

Most of the work on the 'books' is best done in a bench vice. Workholding is more problematic with the 'beasts'. Fix battens to the bench and use non-slip mat to stop the work sliding around when laying flat. For working on the sides, use a bench vice or clamp the piece between two boards.

➔ **13** Mark the centreline for the head – which turns 15° towards the front – and draw the position of the nose, eyes and ears, looking from above. Rough out the shape of the head and the mane

14 Finish off the roughing out, by rounding over the rear side and roughly shaping the legs and tail. Leave the front legs quite thick for now, as they will be vulnerable to being broken during the detail carving. Use blocks and wedges to brace the legs when necessary

15 The head is small and has little room for fine detail, so make bold 'Gothic' cuts for the nose, mouth and eyes. The face is framed by the mane, which spreads outwards over the ears and around the throat

16 Use a No.8 gouge to form the mane into flowing curls, and a 'V'-tool to subdivide the curls. Carve a jagged 'fringe' where the mane ends

17 Carve the front feet and legs, with the paws splayed out and two claws projecting above the book. Thin down the legs as far as you reasonably can, without breaking the short grain

18 Refine the shape of the body, and carve the detail on the lower legs and the tail. The right foot is covered by the 'brush' of the tail, which is carved into hairs with a 'V'-tool. The feet are oversized to suit the Gothic style and to retain some strength in the short grain. The lion is now finished

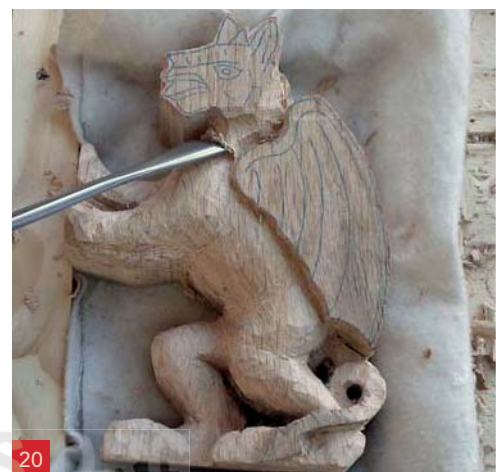
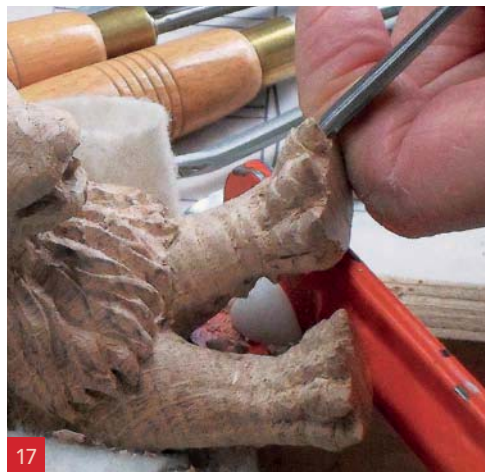
Carving the dragon

19 Start roughing out the dragon by cutting the surface of its two right legs, down to the centreline

20 You can now rough out the general shape of the body – which is slimmer than the lion's – and the legs and tail

Top tips

1. When working with oak, especially in period styles, resist the temptation to use abrasives when finishing. A good 'tooled' finish will look livelier and more authentic. Abrasives take all the life out of oak and no amount of polish can put it back. Be bold and trust your tools! You will get better results

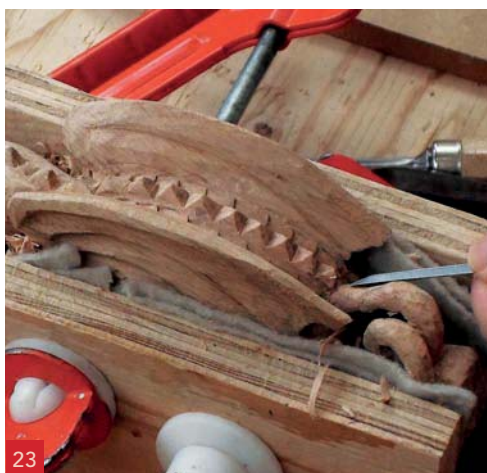




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21 Rough out the head, which is also longer and thinner than the lion's, and has a 20° turn to the front and a slimmer neck

22 Shape the wings by carving a broad hollow down the outer half of the wing, then cut deep curving grooves with sharp edges which end in a point at the lower edge. Repeat the process on the other wing, even though it will rarely be seen

23 Open out the area between the wings, to shape the back of each one. Form a dorsal ridge down the middle, and divide it into pyramid-shaped ridge scales. Extend the tail into the gap

24 Carve the detail on the head. It is heavily encrusted with scales on the top, with a pointed 'beard' scale under the chin and long pointed ears

25 Carefully carve the legs and feet – similar to the lion's – taking care with the short grain. Finish the tail, which has a double curl, and ends with an 'arrow' point on the left foot

26 Finally, carve armoured scales all over the body and legs, following the contours of the body. The dragon is now finished, and the beasts are ready to be fixed in place

Finishing

27 Carefully glue the lion and dragon onto their respective books. Use a good wax polish to bring the surfaces up to a soft golden sheen, leaving the 'page' edges of the books unpolished to retain a 'papery' appearance. The 'Tudor Beasts' are now ready to support your best books



27

Top tips

2. When you are gluing two pieces of a carving together where the join is likely to come under strain, you can strengthen it by fitting hidden dowels into the joint. To do this, carefully measure and make drill holes in the joining surfaces and fit short lengths of dowel of the same diameter as the drill. Put glue in the dowel holes as well as on the joining surfaces. The good thing about this method is that it is not visible to the viewer

20 minutes with... Paula Noble

Paula Noble talks about her lifetime love of woodcarving

When did you start to carve?

From a young age I used to love tidying up my Dad's shed and sweeping up wood shavings to savour their sweet smell. We had many old apple trees in our garden. I wanted to make wooden toys, but I only had the skill to chip away at small fallen branches with a hacksaw or a hand drill. I eventually ended up embellishing

my creations with washers bashed in with nails. The results were pleasing as I had a great imagination. I didn't know about carving, but I knew I loved wood.

What made you continue carving?

I visited my first 'Living Crafts Show' at Hatfield House a year later. My Dad lifted me up above the crowds of heads to watch Ralph Hentall demonstrate love spoon carving. Completely mesmerised, I realised that my crude efforts to date were just the beginning of a lifelong hobby of endless possibilities. I asked for a penknife for Christmas and have been whittling away ever since. Surreally, now I exhibit and demonstrate carving to visitors at that same show with the British Woodcarvers Association. Hopefully, young children visiting our stand will have been just as encouraged as I was to give our craft a try.

What inspires you when you carve?

I have carved for friends and family, so their subject requests and my love for those people have inspired the subjects and the passion to do my best work.

Can you tell us about the piece you are currently working on?

Using tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) wood, I was attempting my first relief scene – which was supposed to be ready for last Christmas. Now the festive season has passed, I've stored it away for a joyful reunion later this autumn! My current project has been inspired by *Lark Rise to Candleford* by Flora Thompson. Her book has an illustration of a young maid talking to a young woodman, in a woodland with turkeys strolling around them. Childhood memories of playing in the woods awoke when I saw this picture. I could smell the forest aromas, feel the textures of leaves, weeds and soil and hear the rustling of wildlife. Life was tough back in Flora Thompson's day, but I long to go back in



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAULA NOBLE

The totem pole carved for the school

time to when there were fewer choices to be made and life was less hectic. When I am carving the young maiden I'm imagining what life would've been like for her.

Which tool wouldn't you be without and why?

It's an old Herring Brothers tool – No.5 – that I picked up from an antique tool market stall. The handle sits nicely in my hand and the slight curve seems to fit the bill for most of my needs. I also find old dentist's tools very handy for the removal of flakes of wood in seemingly inaccessible places.

Which is your preferred style of carving and why?

I would say the method is 'slow and steady' – I'm told I chat a lot! The results are usually small so I can whittle them by hand; the theme is generally to do with the countryside where I always long to be. Carving chains and balls is thrilling, as the links fall away, but the wood is still as one. Magic! I do less penknife carving now, with preference to chisels.



What do you think has been your biggest carving achievement?

That would be carving a totem pole for our village school. I had never tackled anything like it before but being a school governor, it was something else I could contribute. I was lucky to have the wood donated by a landscape gardener. Carved with animals and birds, which were drawn by the five and six year old schoolchildren, the pole has a 'mythical creature land' look about it.

Whose work do you most admire?

Equally, Ralph Hentall for opening my eyes to the romance of love spoon carving and my old friend Stan Kimm, who showed me the techniques needed to fashion wood. I met Stan at British Aerospace in Hatfield many years ago. We used to whittle together at lunchtime until being made redundant – following the closure of the site. I then stopped carving altogether. Then one remarkable day 14 years later, I took my family to the Woodfest Show in Marston Moretaine to try to kick-start my passion for the craft. I got talking to carvers from the British Woodcarvers Association. They were not a local group, but said that my nearest group would be the Hertfordshire region and pointed towards the other end of the marquee. Low and behold there was Stan, who was now their Regional Leader. Needless to say I joined their group right away and they have made me most welcome.

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

I have carved for such a long time; it's difficult to imagine not being a carver. It feels such a natural thing to want to do. I realise there is much room for improvement, so therein lies the lifelong challenge!

Describe the view from your workbench

I carve in my kitchen – most of the time with my tortoise sitting on my foot – with a view of the veggie patch! My most indulgent view can only happen when the family has gone out. I can't resist dragging my bench from the kitchen, along the hallway and into the lounge to set up in front of the television and have a romantic drama to watch as I whittle.

Who would you most like to carve for?

I have carved many things in the past for others but recently I have most enjoyed carving for myself. I really enjoy revisiting my work, feeling the curves, thinking about the techniques used, remembering where I was in my life when I carved them and what was going on for me then. Many items could really do with tidying up – flaky edges etc. but I can't bring myself to do that because then it would somehow distort the memory of my carving ability of that time. My carvings represent ages in my life, stirring memories that can stay a secret. A mysterious answer!

What do you listen to while carving?

If I have managed to nab the lounge then a romantic drama, any soap opera, *Time Team* and *Countryfile* are my favourites. If I'm in the kitchen my tortoise and I enjoy the local radio station or Classic FM.

What are your interests outside of carving?

Writing! I love words! I wish I could remember them in conversation. However, this is why writing suits me so well. There is time to ponder on sentences, to chew over phrases, to create a visual world with words, to attempt to make it possible for the reader to see exactly what you have in your mind's eye. Fortunately, I have opportunities to write for the British Woodcarvers Association as their Publicity Officer. Writing a 3,000 word essay entitled 'How would you bring Japan and Europe together as we head towards the 21st century?' won me a fabulous



A few examples of carved love spoons

two-week VIP trip to Japan. What an amazing trip that was because it was on board the outbound plane that I first met my husband! Learning Japanese is another interest, helping me to empathise with my Japanese students who are learning English with me.

As Manager of the Cowper and Newton Museum in Olney, Bucks, I am surrounded by fascinating literary works and fantastically supportive volunteers. I feel so privileged to be involved in the running of this popular 18th-century heritage building, where William Cowper – a poet and letter writer – once lived and was regularly visited by his neighbour and close friend Reverend John Newton, who wrote the internationally known hymn 'Amazing Grace' and helped William Wilberforce to abolish the slave trade.

I'm a keen gardener, invaded with ground elder! Cheerily, this year's invasion will be far less bothersome as I've found several soup recipes to solve my problem – if you can't get rid of it, eat it! 🍲

Contact

paula-me@hotmail.co.uk

LEFT: A carving in progress

RIGHT: Some of Paula's carving tools





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PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANEL JACOBSON



Janel Jacobson

Janel Jacobson takes inspiration from nature, pointing out the little things around us that we may not see, or take for granted. Briony Darnley finds out more

In 1972 Janel graduated from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa with a BA Degree in Art. By then, she had been a student of pottery-making for two years and had been a student assistant in the ceramics department for one and a half years. Janel was committed to forging ahead in the world as a potter. The first summer after her graduation, she studied



The first significant carving from wood in 1995: 'Tree Frog & Spring Apple'

with Bauhaus Master Potter, Marguerite Wildenhain at Pond Farm in Guerneville, California, focusing on throwing, hand building and drawing. She attended classes at Pond Farm three times during the summers of 1972, 1974 and 1977.

"The rest of what I know and have done, and am doing now, has been an ongoing journey of self-education, learning from each subsequent piece," Janel tells us.

In the beginning, Janel drew on pots with a paring knife, but those line-drawings were simply not enough for her: "I needed more from the lines and shapes, beyond filling in areas with colour or texture." What followed and continues to this day, is the exploration of form that grows out of simple lines with shading: from drawing to three-dimensional expression which the sketches engender.

Janel began carving wood on a small scale after a period of exploration that grew from shallow relief carving on porcelain, lidded boxes to small porcelain sculptures, which were of similarly sized subjects and that were three-dimensional. The problems and restrictions of porcelain carving in 3D

drove Janel to begin carving wood. The change to wood was a natural step that only needed new tools – from bamboo porcelain carving tools to steel tools. Janel feels that the wood taught her how to carve it, by listening to the tool's interaction with the wood and by how it felt as she carved.

Janel feels that wood as a material for carving offers more to the development of each piece than when she used clay: "Wood has warmth and depth; the ability to retain fine detail; it also can offer its own textures and grain patterns to design around. It is wonderful to hold." Other materials that Janel feels lend themselves to being carved, as individual pieces or as inlay, are: tusk, antler, bone and amber, although there are many materials that could be added to this list. They have also been part of her non-clay carving experience. "Whenever I return to the bench and the tools begin to cut the wood, I enjoy the sensation of holding the wood and the feeling of the sharp tools doing their work as I guide them, watching as thoughts are being realised."



'Twilight Meeting' between a young frog and an old frog, a piece completed during the year of Janel's father's death, having begun the piece when he was alive and completed afterwards when all was settled

➔ From the beginning

Some of Janel's childhood memories include picking up June bugs and other insects to examine them more closely; she had a long-held fascination with tadpoles, frogs, toads and other small creatures, all part of a habit born of curiosity that persists even now.

A guiding concept for Janel has been to 'see' what she is looking at, to learn a form and its characteristics and then interpret the subject in the drawing or carving. From her earliest years of being a potter, drawing outdoors has been a source of inspiration. Some of these subjects were drawn onto pots and

tiles with a paring knife as simple line drawings. Some were enhanced with coloured slips and glazes, and others were carved with her early exploration of shallow-relief carving.

Throughout her creative journey as a carver, Janel's goal has been to learn and to grow with each piece, a commitment that started in her earliest years as a student potter. Such a goal and the overall continuum of the pursuit of carving exploration has been present with each major change, from making pots to carving clay, to finer carving of porcelain and through the decades of carving wood.

There are significant pieces in Janel's work that illustrate the progression of carving throughout her career. Nearly every piece she carves is a favourite, though some endure as more significant to Janel for various reasons.

Janel has been nominated and won many awards, such as: the Enduring Vision Award – Bush Foundation 2008–2012; a five-year fellowship – with a substantial monetary award given to older artists who have worked 25 years or more as artists; a nomination for United States Artists Fellowship 2008; The Minnesota State Arts board artist initiative grant 2004; Individual Artist grant: East Central Arts council 2000 and The Minnesota State Arts board fellowship grant 1998; Individual Artist grant: East Central Arts council 1995; The Minnesota State Arts board fellowship grant 1991. For both her wood and porcelain work, Janel has received numerous awards from competitive shows and exhibitions.

Formative experiences

Janel attended drawing classes at Pond Farm with Marguerite Wildenhain. Every Wednesday afternoon the group would meet around a big, outdoor table for drawing. The exercises covered in the class have been important to Janel's later work as a carver. Marguerite put before the class a variety of items, each with its own challenges: pairs of objects such as a potato and a potato-shaped stone; a peach and a plum; a tangle of wire and another of binding cord. Some were individual items such as seashells; or wine bottles of different shapes to be drawn singly, to practise drawing with symmetry, or grouped in a line to capture one side of each bottle in silhouette in a row on the paper. The challenge was to 'see' what is characteristic of the object



Raised bumps on the skin of the frogs results from compressing of the wood, shaving/sanding down to the finished depth, then raising with an application of hot water



Janel's workshop and carving area

and to be able to express that in the drawing of it, and eventually for Janel, in the carving of it. One exercise from those classes, the drawing of an ageing and ailing chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) tree, is an often-used concept. Janel explores the contrast of vitality and decay in her sculptures. Leaves, whether fresh and smooth, showing insect damage or dried and curled; and bark, whether intact or having fallen off in places to expose the wood beneath, all convey a sense of the endurance through decades, or centuries, and the survival of the tree.

Working ethos

When approaching the subject of her work ethos, Janel tells us: "I pay great attention to detail. The work is done slowly, with intention rather than with the speed and inaccuracy of power tools," she says. "Each shape in a composition, to the smallest detail, is deliberately formed and judged against its neighbours for its contribution to light and shadow, textural balance or contrast, directionality and weight. A few among many considerations."

The most complex pieces might take as long as two months or more to carve, as the subjects and details emerge from the chosen wood. Its evolution from original wood to sculpture cannot be hurried or rushed. Janel tells us: "I sometimes think of the complexity of intertwined musical notes that create a



'Tulip Pod Peeper' brooch, 2013, boxwood, mammoth tusk, 97 x 16 x 13mm



'Juniper Toad', 2008, juniper from Ukraine and eye inlay in Baltic amber, 57 × 46 × 33mm

➔ mood or a feeling being analogous to the interconnected, visual components of the complex and detailed small sculptures." Part of becoming familiar with her small sculptures is handling them. She believes that to feel the shape and texture, while sensing the weight and warmth of the wood is, in a way, seeing the piece with one's fingers.

Janel has watched as people have discovered a quiet place within themselves while holding a carving: "If my work directs attention towards the hidden treasures under a leaf, or helps one to discover what is disguised in full sight, I am happy. To bring calm and quiet into an individual's busy day brings me contentment." Janel prefers to create small sculptures from the more dense and fine-grained hardwoods.

Inspirations

In Janel's first years of carving porcelain, it was the early Chinese and Korean work in museums that fed her imagination with the beauty of celadon enhanced carved porcelain. Her own carving style and subjects grew from her drawings and sketches of branches and leaves, flowers and buds, insects, frogs and toads. Many of those sketches became shallow relief carvings in porcelain, enhanced with celadon and pale blue glazes. "I did not become a copyist of earlier porcelains: my ambitions then were to use my own designs in the beautiful porcelain and glazes of older pieces," Janel tells us.

Before carving became a significant exploration for Janel, she saw netsuke for the first time at an exhibition of the marvellous small sculptures at the de Young museum in San Francisco. Ten years later their concept became relevant to Janel's explorations when carving in porcelain, and then later in wood. Her work now focuses on small sculptural wood pieces, with a netsuke carved occasionally.

Since Janel began attending the International Netsuke Conventions in the early 1990s, observations and comments from Komada Ryushi – a prominent Japanese netsuke carver and teacher – have been shared with her. His daughter and Janel's friend, Komada Makiko, serves as translator for him. The drawing classes with Marguerite Wildenhain have been significant to Janel's work.

Approach to carving

Carving for Janel is a focused, intense, meditative and timeless activity. It is a conversation without words and structure between her mind, her hands, the tools and wood. Even away from the bench at any time of day or night, Janel tells us that her mind continues to reflect on what is happening with the piece on the bench.

Janel uses hand tools for the majority of her carving, from the diameter of a sewing needle to less than 10mm. They permit sensitivity to the direction of the grain of the wood. The slow speed of hand tools allows her mind to focus on the actions of the moment, as well as to think ahead to what needs to be done next and with which tools.

There are so many intersecting shapes that must be considered for depth or height, whether sharply defined, concave



'Ice Walkers', porcelain. Prior to 1995, the sculptural segue years prior to carving wood. Janel made the switch to carving wood in mid-1995



'Nicandra Pod & Leaf Brooch', white ivorywood and sterling silver, 62 x 48 x 33mm

or convex areas, or the undercut whether slightly or a great deal, when to perform the eventual final detail such as edges of leaves, or how shadows play when light comes from various angles on the trunk of the 'tree' before the bark detail is executed. There is an almost infinite list of other relationships and steps that need to be considered, in a sequence from the first drawing of the forms on the wood and roughing out, to the coming alive moment when eyes are inlaid, to the final removal of excess oil with cotton swabs or tissue on pointed skewers when the finish treatment is completed.

The future

Janel is currently working on a 'big' piece of boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) that is 160mm in height. It is a commissioned, comparable piece to the one that she

has just completed. "I am imagining working on even larger pieces of boxwood, and I am wondering if it might mean creating or purchasing larger carving tools and learning how to fix a carving to a support and using a mallet," Janel tells us. She plans on doing larger pieces, but also wants to go back to netsuke. In recent years Janel has made a few 'wearable wood' brooches and pendants, so her future work may include exploration in that direction as well. ▀

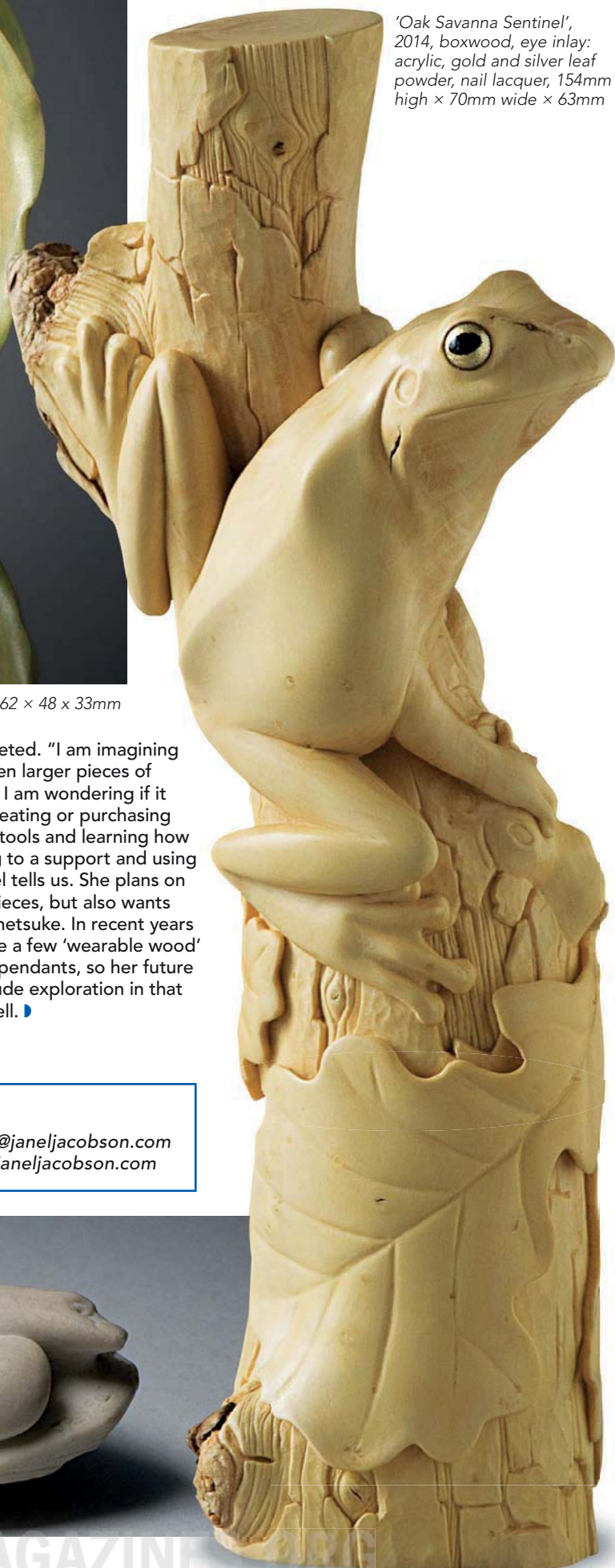
Contact

Email: janel@janeljacobson.com

Web: www.janeljacobson.com



Underside of 'Ice Walkers'

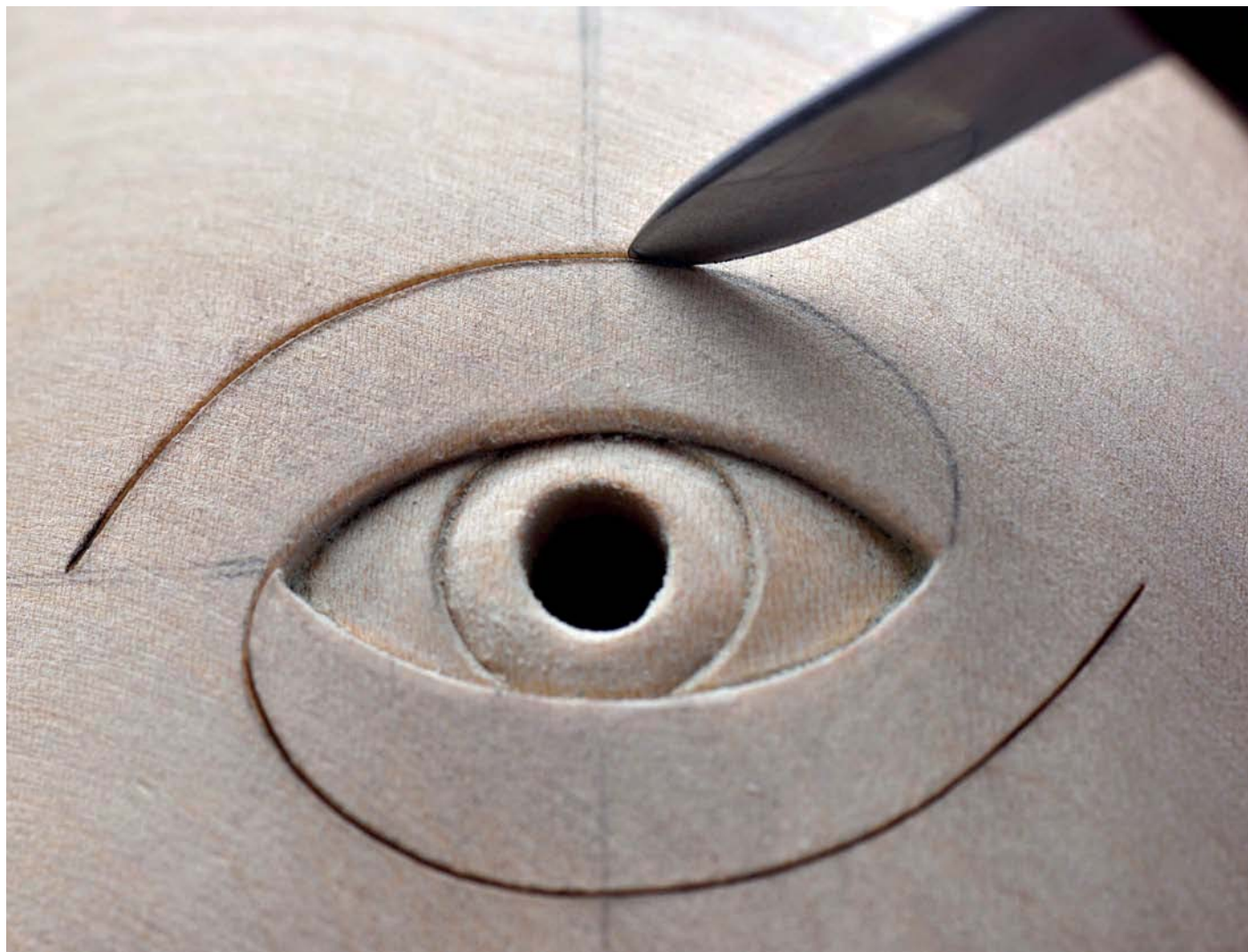


'Oak Savanna Sentinel', 2014, boxwood, eye inlay: acrylic, gold and silver leaf powder, nail lacquer, 154mm high x 70mm wide x 63mm

The woodcarver's knife

– an introduction

Andrew Thomas takes a look at carving knives, their many benefits and just what they can be used to create



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW THOMAS

The woodcarver's knife is an extremely useful and versatile tool, which can be used very effectively for any number of technical applications. For example: cutting complex curves, deep wrinkles, creases, separating volumes of mass, cutting into awkward corners and producing infinite cuts, which would otherwise require a variety of gouges of varying sizes and sweeps to achieve. It is therefore in the interest of every learner to start getting to grips with this valuable tool, in line with their gouges and chisels, as soon as they take up the art of carving.

Knives are, however, one of the more difficult carving tools to master due to the fact that they are predominantly held

in one hand. Also, the nature of their blade and how it is technically applied to the medium of wood is very different from any other tool, which can put off the learner. They have a high tendency to slip if not used correctly, or at the right angle, and kept in razor sharp condition, which can obviously be very dangerous. It is therefore vital for the beginner carver to apply themselves to learning how to use the tool safely and effectively, adopting a code of good practice by following several fundamental rules as outlined in this article. This will facilitate progressive and safe advancement and the ability to extract the full potential of this highly valuable versatile tool.

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.



Purchasing the right knife



Just some of the carving knives I own



For a first knife, I would recommend the Pfeil Small Schaller knife

There is a huge choice of woodcarving knives that are available from specialised tool manufacturers and dealers, which can be found in a variety of shapes and sizes for numerous applications. Many of these are quite useless for beginners unless you intend to use them for the practice of whittling, which is not the intention of this article.

We are of course all very different in terms of the fine anatomical structure of our hands, so essentially what handle or blade length suits one person won't necessarily suit another. However, I have observed through my experience of teaching over the past two decades

that a very high percentage of learners advance very quickly using the shortest blade length knives. My theory is that the nearer the cutting tip is to your finger grip on the handle, the more directional control you will have over the cut or slice that you are making. Therefore my recommendation for an appropriate first knife to purchase would be the Pfeil Small Schaller knife – 30mm blade – or similar. This has excellent balance in use, a beautifully designed ergonomic handle and a rounded back edge on the blade – crowned – which further facilitates the accurate directional control of cut through the grain.

Grip – developing your own style



Hold a carving knife as you would a pencil



Curve the blade from side to side in the air as if you were drawing a continuous 'S'

It is my belief that we all naturally develop our own way of holding and working with our tools and is certainly something that I encourage as a tutor. However, it is also very important for students to initially learn the orthodox methods from day one, so that they have a good understanding of how to control them effectively and safely, and then develop their own individual style and

techniques from this grounding.

As fortune would have it our senses are already very well calibrated with the technique of directional control, which we learned to do from our early childhood when we were introduced to drawing and writing with pencils and pens. This directional control is essentially the same technique as we use for slicing into wood with a knife,

albeit a much smoother process with a pencil. Therefore the same method of holding the knife should be adopted when making cuts and slices into wood.

Practice this by gripping the handle as near to the blade as possible in the same way as you would hold a pencil, and then curving the blade from side to side in the air as if you were drawing a continuous 'S'.

- Fundamental rules



Hold the fourth finger and little finger in combination together, splayed apart and pressed firmly into the wood



The side of the palm and/or edge of the wrist resting on the surface of the wood

No.1: 'balance and control'

When working with the knife you must always ensure that part of your hand is in direct contact with the surface of the wood at all times. This is vitally important for your safety, and equally crucial for optimum balance, control and accuracy over the cut you are making.

There are two main techniques for this hand contact that work effectively in most situations: the first, with the fourth and little fingers in combination together, splayed apart and pressed firmly on the wood; the second, the side of the palm and/or edge of the wrist resting on the surface of the wood.

No.2: 'initial cut – tramline'

Always make your initial knife cut fairly shallow as this will mean that there is far less chance of it slipping. It is also much easier to follow your design line with directional control if you are not pressing too hard. This initial cut is what I call a tramline, which can then be followed much easier by subsequent cuts with increased pressure if necessary to produce the detail that you wish to create, but with a far reduced chance of the blade slipping out of this tram/design line.

No.3: 'slicing over a curved surface'

When using the knife to slice over a curved surface, it is essential to keep the cutting point of the blade at the

same angle as you work over the contour. This is achieved by raising or lowering your hand/wrist/arm at the same degree as the contour rises or falls, which ensures that the cutting point of the blade remains safely in control and in contact with the surface of the wood. If the angle of the cutting point is raised too high when under pressure, then it will slip in a blink.

No.4: 'sharpening'

Knives and V-tools are arguably the most dangerous tools to use by far, as the nature of their design and application have a much higher risk of 'slipping' when in use, especially if they are not razor sharp. It is therefore vital that the blade must be stropped each and every time after you make a cut so that this risk is minimised. If you routinely adopt this rule of good practice then it will not only keep you safe it will also quickly help you to advance your skills and confidence as you will be able to extract the full potential from this extremely versatile tool.

Stropping the knife blade, in effect, is polishing the cutting edge to a very fine, razor sharp finish, which is essential for all carving tools and a continuous practice that must be undertaken in order to ensure that they are kept in top condition for use. Most new knives come ready sharpened when you buy them but it is still good practice to give



Keep the cutting point of the blade at the same angle as you work over the contour

them a quick strop before you start any work with them. The strop itself is simply a piece of leather, preferably A4 in size, by 1.5-2mm thick, bonded onto a flat piece of wood using PVA glue, with the suede side up. The leather is then 'dressed' with a very fine abrasive paste or soap – 'strop paste' – which is rubbed generously and evenly into the grain of the leather with a cloth. This should last a good few months between applications. These compounds are very inexpensive and can be bought from many specialist dealers, with Alec Tiranti being one of them in the UK.

The knife is one of the simplest tools to sharpen as it has no sweep – curve – along its blade. The theory being to ensure that the wear is kept evenly on both sides of the blade along the cutting edge. Hold the blade on the strop at the same angle that the side of the blade slopes down to the cutting edge (a few degrees) so that the cutting edge is resting evenly on the leather. Rub the blade edge 10 times along the full length of the strop at this angle, then turn the knife over to the opposite side of the blade and repeat the procedure on this side, thus keeping the wear even and producing a razor sharp edge.

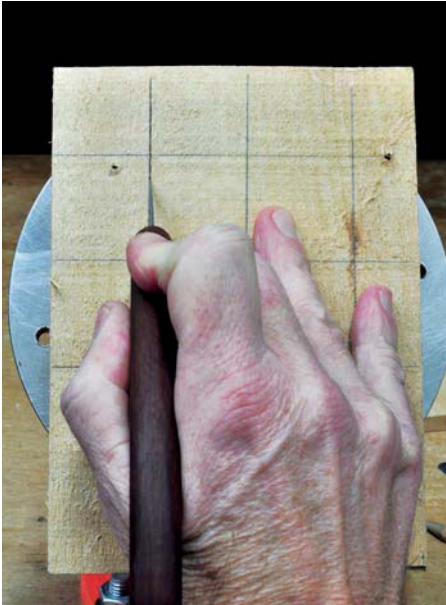


Stropping the knife blade, in effect, is polishing the cutting edge to a very fine, razor sharp finish

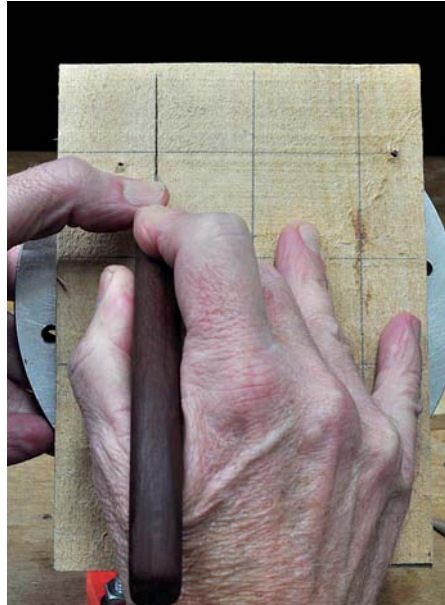


The knife is one of the simplest tools to sharpen as it has no sweep – curve – along its blade

Exercise



Hold the knife firmly between your fingers as you would a pen



Cut into these tramlines again but this time adding a little more pressure to deepen the slice



The surrounding area either side of the knife cut can now be pared over into this slice

Select a flat piece of wood, preferably lime as it is quite a soft species to practice with. Either secure this to your carving vice or clamp it safely to your bench. Draw several straight vertical lines running in the same direction as the wood grain, and several horizontal ones running across it.

Hold the knife firmly between your fingers as you would a pen; just above the position where the handle joins the blade, and make a shallow cut along the line as accurately as you can by drawing the knife from top to bottom. Do this

on each of these lines remembering to stop the blade in between each and every cut. Notice how different the cut feels going 'with' and 'across' the grain?

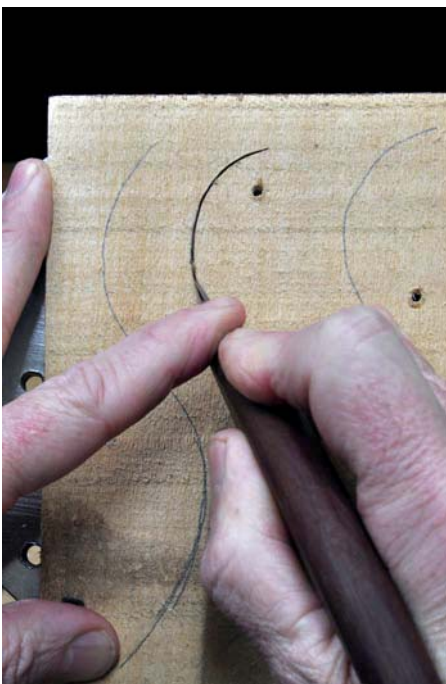
When making subsequent cuts into the initial tramline, you can use your thumb or the index finger of your opposite hand to help add pressure to the cut by pressing down on the handle or back of the blade. Now cut into these tramlines again but this time adding a little more pressure to deepen the slice. Notice how much more control you have over the cut working in the tramline?

The surrounding area either side of the knife cut can now be pared over into this slice which will facilitate the ability to produce a deeper crease. These procedures can then be repeated as many times as you choose.

Next, draw several wavy lines onto your wood but not too tight in their curvature. This time use your opposite hand as well to make the initial cut, but not to add pressure, just to aid your balance and directional control. Use the same technique as outlined above to cut these lines but stopping to reposition your hands as soon as it starts to become awkward to follow the design line smoothly.

The surrounding areas either side of the knife cut can now be pared over into the slice again, but this time they will be more difficult to carve evenly due to way the design line curves from side to side, across and down the grain. This will require you to keep changing your direction of cut, working to and from the horizontal lines that I have drawn on the wood, following the direction of the arrow markings, which will also give you a valuable exercise in how to approach the wood grain.

Keep practising these techniques over several different sessions until your confidence grows, then try the same exercises but over a curved surface, not forgetting rule No.3 during the process. When you reach the stage that you feel inspired to experiment independently with what you have learned then I would very much encourage you to do so. You will then be reaping the rewards of your practice, expanding your technical and problem-solving skills and stimulating your own creative innovations which is exactly the right direction to head for.



Draw several wavy lines onto your wood but not too tight in their curvature



The surrounding areas either side of the knife cut can now be pared over into the slice again

➤ More examples

Here are some more examples of the techniques and applications that you will be able to employ on your projects as you progress:

Carving detail

The knife is used effectively on the detail of the mouth for creating the deep separation line at the position where the lips meet.

Creating visual illusion

When trying to produce a detail such as this rabbit's ear lying over its body, the knife is used to create the visual illusion of separation between these two volumes.

Making cuts in awkward areas

Occasionally there are cuts that need to be made in awkward areas where a full length gouge or chisel cannot access. The knife being much smaller and having the ability to deliver a cut from the side of this sculpture was the perfect solution to this problem.

"The knife simply 'draws' around the design to create these even flowing lines"

Forming shaped corners of eyes

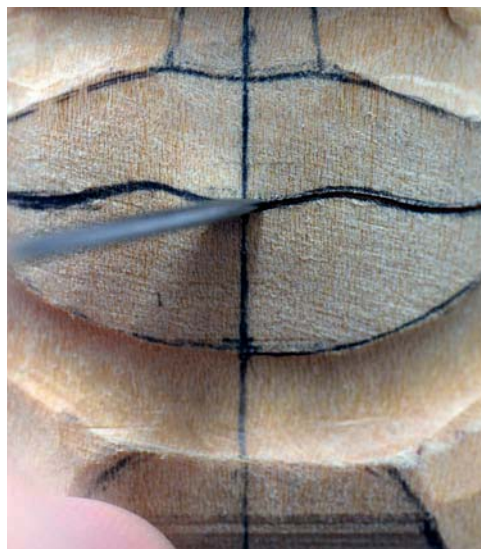
The inner/outer triangular shaped corners of eyes and other similar details can be quickly formed with the pointed blade of the knife, as opposed to using the skew chisel, which I personally find to be a more efficient method of shaping this detail.

Using the knife to 'draw' around the design

Complex curves can require the need to swap between several different gouge sweeps to produce the desired line, which can also prove difficult to accomplish evenly. The knife simply 'draws' around the design to create these even flowing lines.

Creating tight clothing folds

The tight clothing folds around this figurative sculpture work really well with the deep crease cuts which greatly enhance the shadows generated over the surface of the finished piece. ➤



The knife is used effectively on the detail of the mouth



The knife is used to create the visual illusion of separation between these two volumes



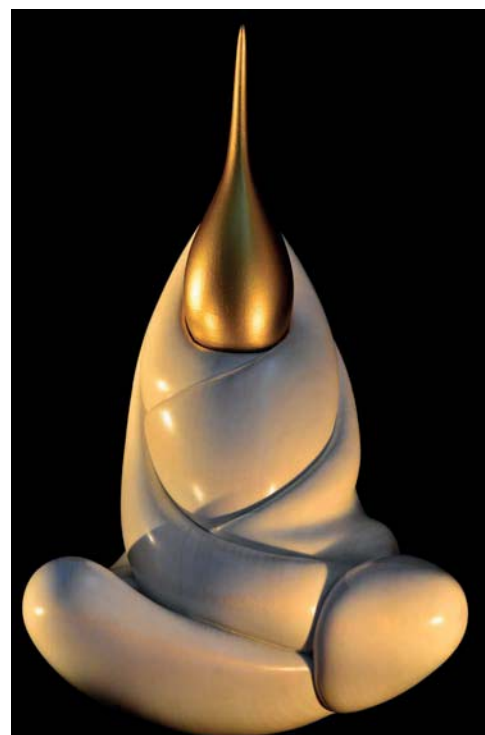
The carving knife is ideal for accessing areas where a full length gouge or a chisel cannot reach



Small details can be quickly formed with the pointed blade of the knife, as opposed to using the skew chisel



Instead of swapping between different tools, the knife can be used to 'draw' around the design and create flowing lines



Using a knife here enhances the shadows generated over the surface

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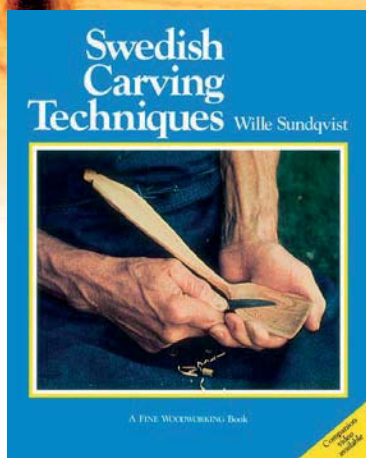
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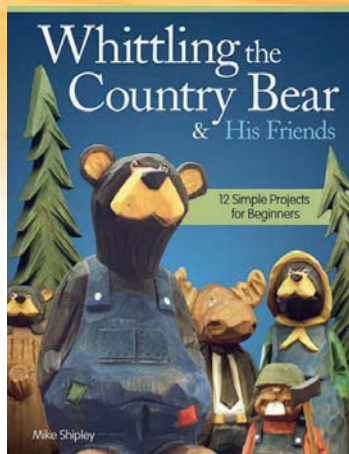


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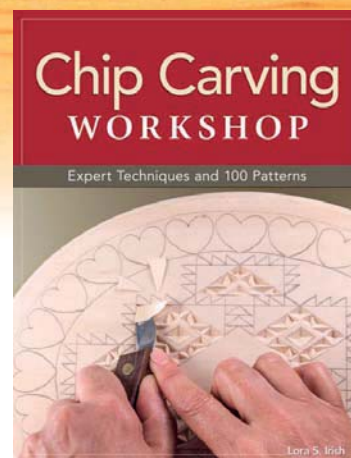
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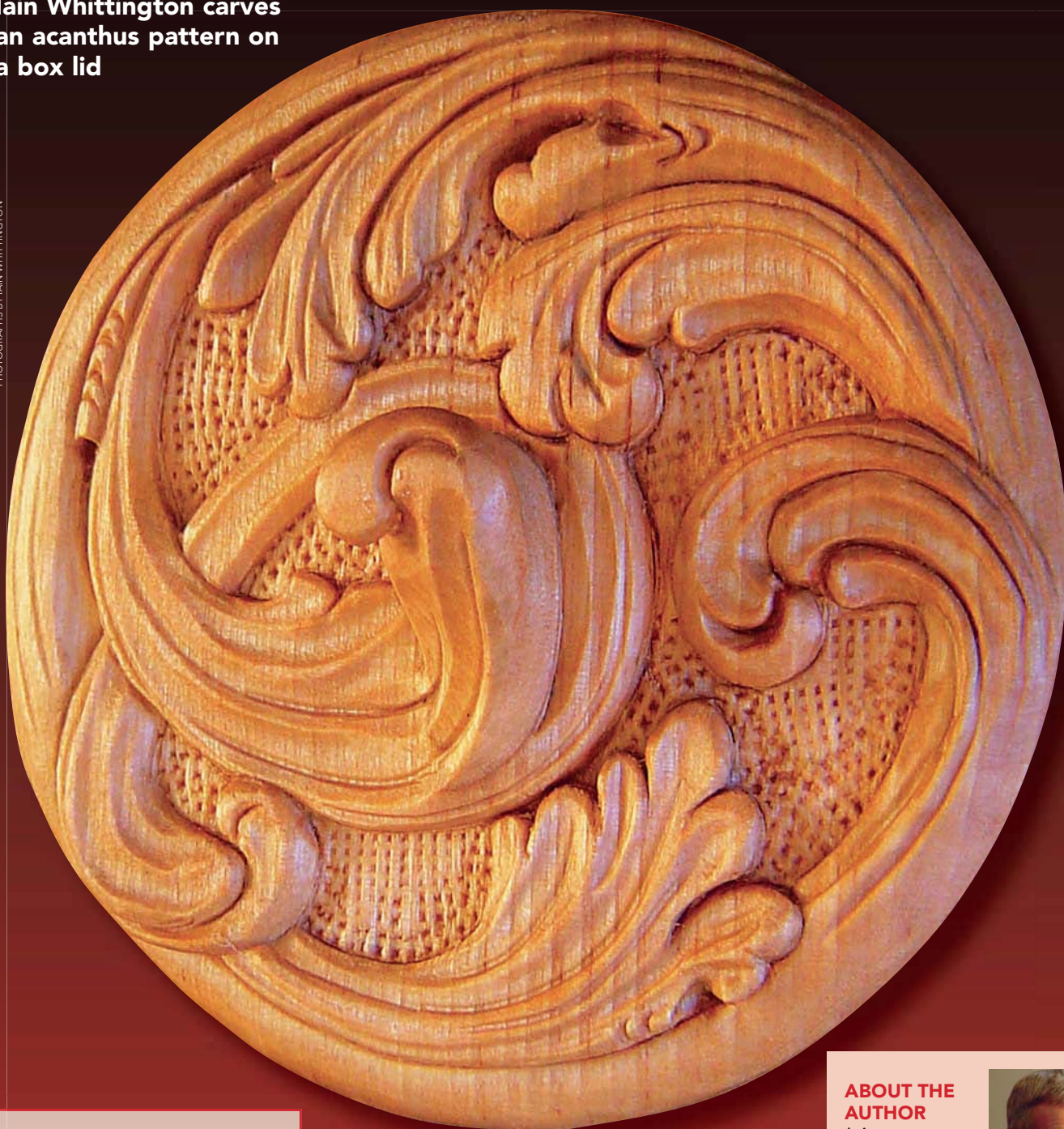
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Acanthus box lid

Iain Whittington carves
an acanthus pattern on
a box lid

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAIN WHITTINGTON



Things you will need...

Tools:

No.3, No.4, No.5, No.6, No.
7, No.8 carving gouges
Fishtail chisel
'V' tool
Bandsaw
Walnut oil

Wood:

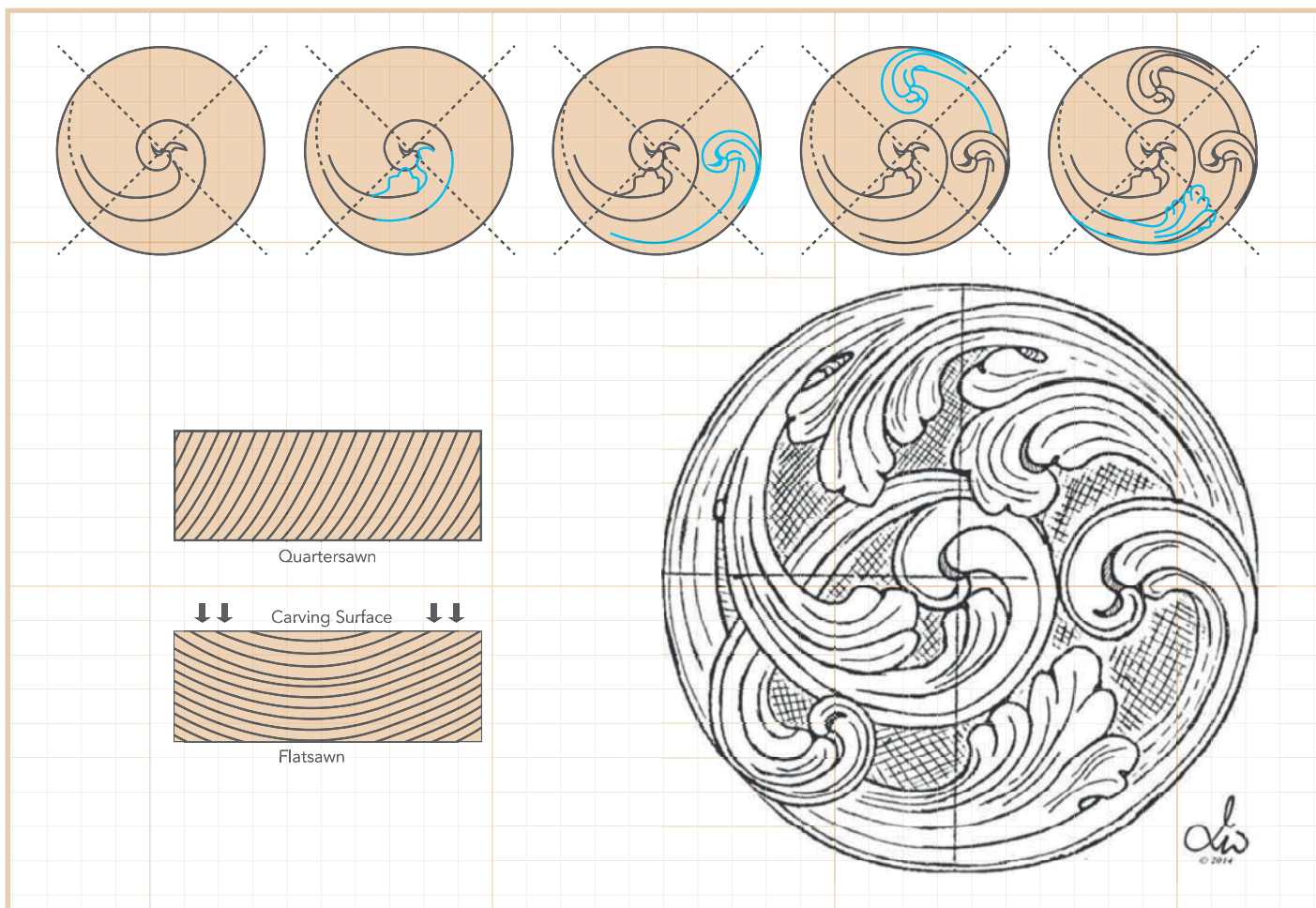
10mm-thick European birch
(*Betula pendula*) blank

This is a design for a round box lid decorated with an acanthus pattern. In my case, the size set the diameter of the box, but, as it is a circular design, it can be scaled as necessary. Acanthus is a good pattern for decorating a circle, as the basic leaf is drawn on an arc – akin to the shape of a lucky fisherman's rod with a large fish on the end of ➔

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Iain Whittington is a retired army engineer who started woodworking as a lifelong hobby under his father's guidance in the family's garage. Iain has shared some of his experiences by writing about woodworking, restoration and carving for a number of magazines.





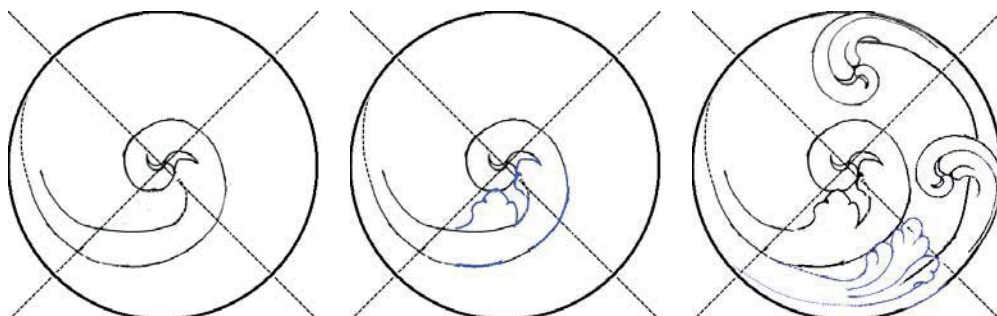
1 The primary leaf curls can be carefully arranged around the required circle and then embellished with secondary leaf structures as in-fill. This sketch shows the starting circle with the preliminary arc running away from the centre point

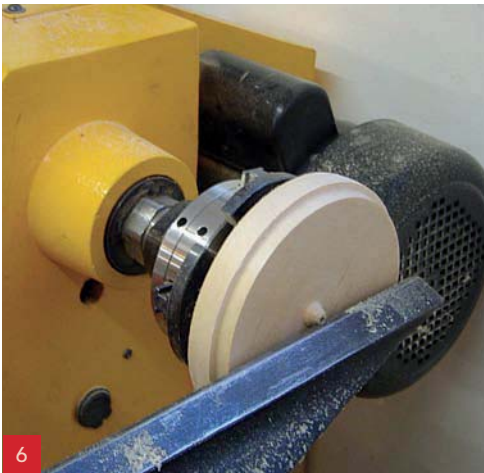
2 The secondary leaf is then added to the first primary leaf curl

3 You can then 'step and repeat' to add the other primary and secondary leaves around the circle

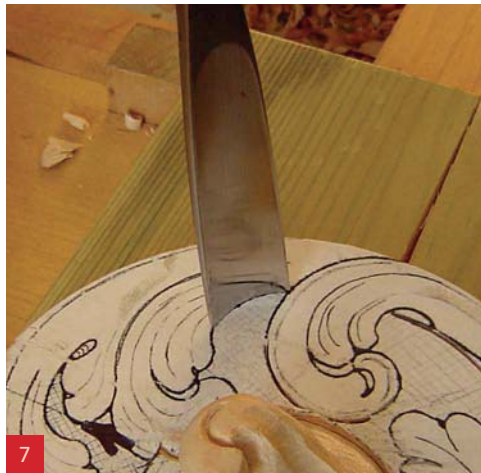
4 The design can be scaled as required – mine was enlarged to a diameter of 117.5mm. It can then be printed onto paper and glued onto the blank

5 Use an offcut of European birch (*Betula pendula*) about 10mm thick, nearly quartersawn. The circular shape for the blank can either be produced using a tank cutter mounted in a pillar drill, or, as I did, on a lathe. Either way, unless it's quartersawn, the grain has to be setup correctly, with the carving undertaken on the side towards the heart of the tree. Roughly cut the blank circular on a bandsaw

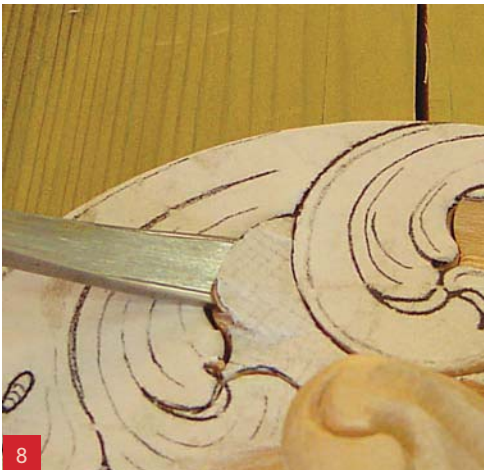




6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13

6 You can then move onto the lathe to turn the blank round with a lip to fit inside the box. You need to recess the underside, then turn it over and slightly dome the carving surface – all to try to limit the potential for the lid warping later. While the inside surface is best finished on the lathe, remember not to sand the carving surface as grit will inevitably remain in the grain, with predictable bad results in shortening the life of the finely polished edge of any carving tool subsequently applied to it

7 At this point, the carving can begin with the 'bosting-in' of the pattern, or, in plain English, reducing the background by a couple of millimetres to leave the pattern proud. Start with a vertical stop cut using a suitable curved gouge, like the No.5 gouge shown here, all along the appropriate pattern edge, which then can be gently eased to free the chip...

8 ... before carefully cutting back towards this edge with a bent fishtail chisel

9 'Best practice' recommends that this bosting-in be undertaken for the whole pattern area so that you can clearly see the area to be carved standing proud

10 With the background removed, you can now start carving the detail by setting-in the edge of the pattern with a slicing cut, powered by the thumb. With the curve of the pattern in mind, this can start with a No.3 or No.4 gouge at the outside edge, progressively followed with a No.5 and No.6. Alternatively, if you have a limited number of tools, the transition from a No.3 to No.5 can suffice, with a little dexterity

11 With the edges defined, the adjacent leaf stem, which runs underneath, can be cut back with a No.5 gouge ...

12 ... before inverting the tool and running a smooth curve along the outside edge all the way to the end

13 It is now time to round the end off with a small No.7 gouge. When rounding the outside edge, you need to take into account the grain direction; you should be working with the grain, as cutting against it will cause the tool to dig in and ruin the smooth curve with a 'ding'

➔ **14** Approach from both ends; this will allow for change in grain direction round a long curve

15 Using the No.5, now start on the inside edge of the leaf, first with the lower terrace ...

16 ... you can then use the same method on the higher terrace with a No.7 gouge

17 Take both these curves to the end with a single smooth sweep of the gouge, which can be made easier if a portion is removed from the end before taking the final cut in a single motion

18 You can now move on to the outside edge, running a reversed No.5 gouge round the outside to provide a smooth convex curve tangential to the box's circumference

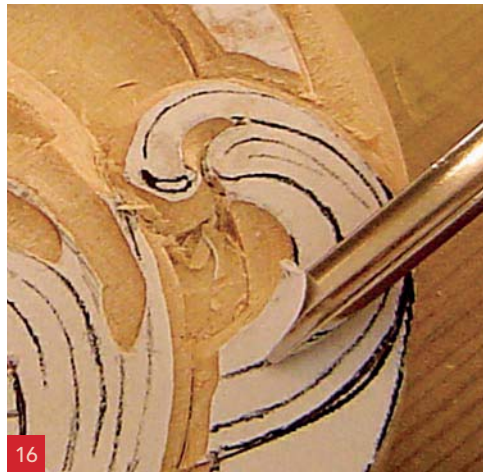
19 The inside edge of this curve provides the 'watershed', i.e. the highest level on the pattern, with finished surfaces sloping in two directions – in towards the centre of the lid and outwards to the rim

20 The top of the leaf then needs to be defined, starting with a slicing stop cut along this 'watershed' line with a No.3 gouge, before the length of the feature is defined with a reversed No.5 gouge

21 When you get to the end of the sweep, it can be cleanly rounded over with the No.5 gouge, before you turn it up the right way again to run back along the top, lightly recessing it so that it slopes in towards the centre and down along the stem. The finished leaf is shown here

Top tips

1. The final photo – step 26 – shows the project with a carved knob, which you can see more clearly in photo 25. The key to a smooth transition between the knob and the lid surface is the careful alignment of the two grains when you glue the knob blank on. The 'ski slope' side of the knob is finished with a smooth downward cut, so the gouge needs to be able to move from the vertical to the horizontal without a dig-in – only possible with common grain direction





22



23



24

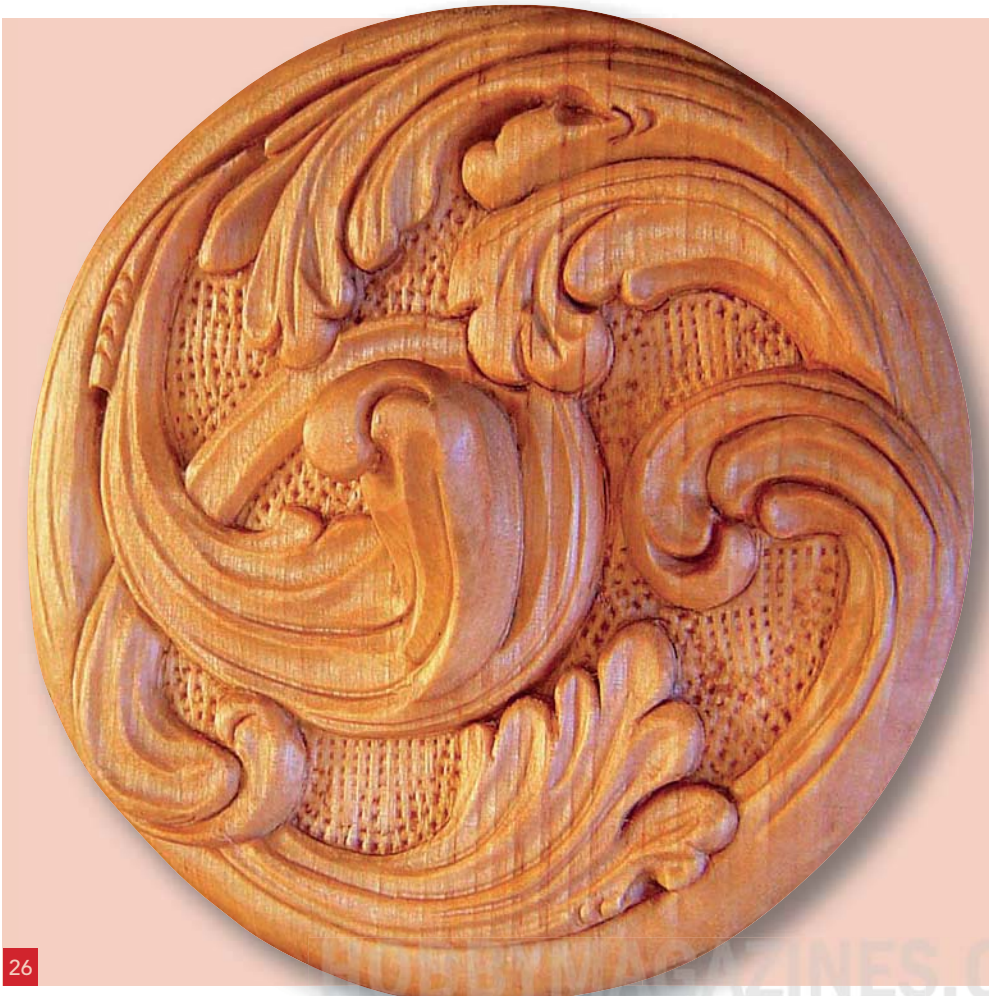


25

22 A similar technique is deployed in a 'step and repeat' around the lid to define and carve the whole pattern, before finally turning to the outside edge of the lid, the whole of which has to be carefully rounded over using a reversed No.5, taking care to adapt your direction of attack as the grain changes

23 After you have completed all the carving, you may have to go back and clean up any 'dings' that have appeared in the otherwise uniform background level, before giving it depth by accentuating it through a random pattern of punch marks. These marks may, initially, seem to add very little to the presentation, but after a coat of finishing oil has been applied, they will greatly add to the 'depth' of the finished product

"To bring out the background and the fine detail, a liberal application of finishing oil is recommended..."



26

24 Add the fine details, such as leaf notches – made with a couple of careful stab cuts using a small No.8 – and leaf veins – take a 'V' tool and trace the curve from the leaf base out to its end to make these. I do not use any abrasives to 'finish' a carving, as I believe it takes away fine detail, but that's your own choice. To bring out the background and the fine detail, a liberal application of finishing oil is recommended, but as this is a lid, where the inside surface finish could taint the box contents, I used walnut oil. A light application of wax followed by generous buffing completes the job

25 A lid may need a knob to make manipulation easier, so I included one. The easiest solution is to turn a matching knob and fit it through the hole left by the screw chuck. An alternative is to include it in the carving by gluing an offcut from the blank to a dowel placed in the hole in the centre. This can then be carved and rounded to suit the centre leaf pattern

26 The completed acanthus lid in European birch should look something like this ▶

I like to use the timber in its green state allowing for the work to move as it dries.

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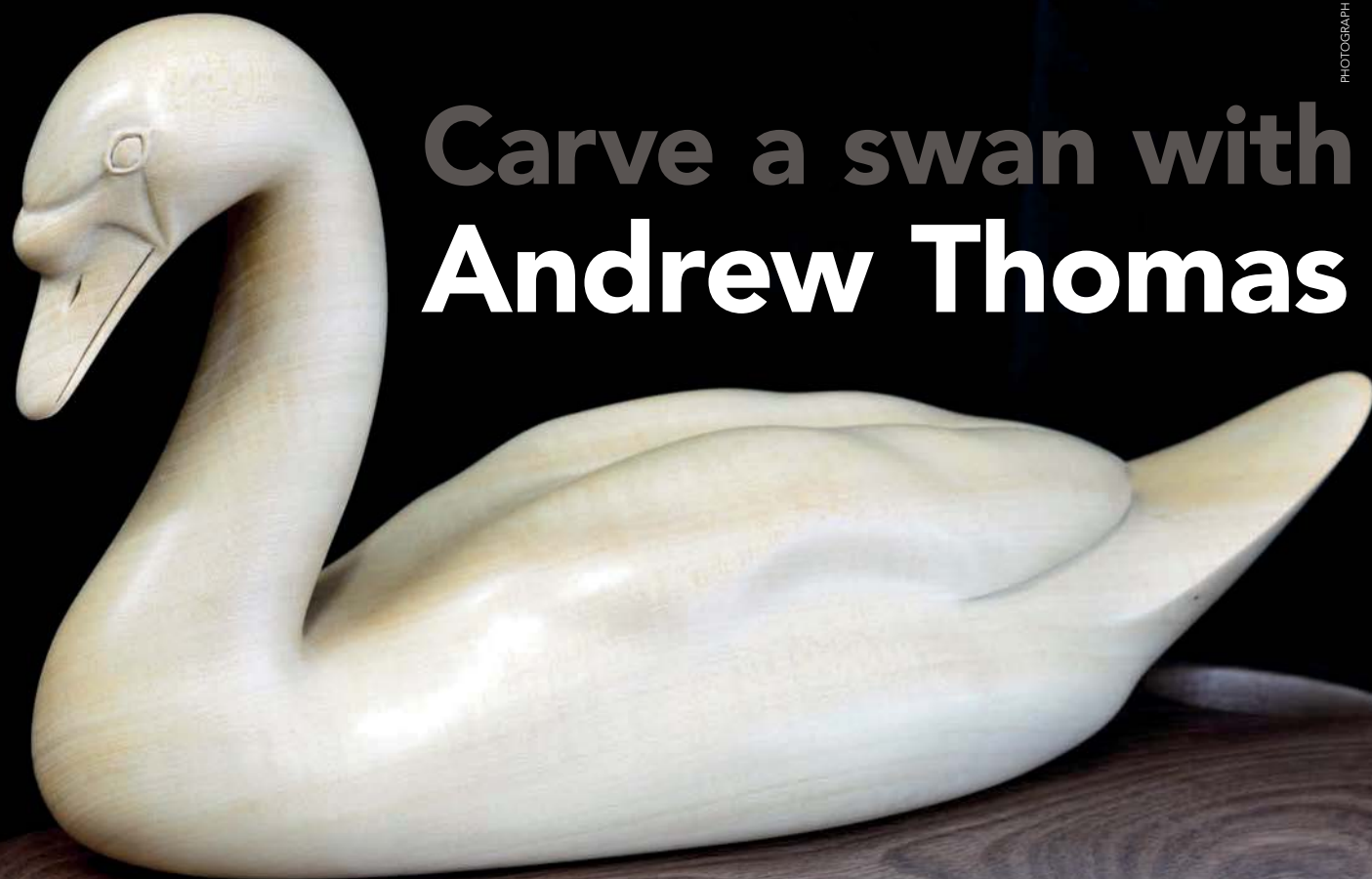
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wood CARVING

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW THOMAS



Carve a swan with **Andrew Thomas**

In part two of his article,
Dennis Zongker carves the
acanthus leaf onto
the knee of the leg

**Iain Whittington carves
a simple end pattern**

**Chris Pye shows you how
to carve an apple in the
round**

Steve Bisco shows you
how to turn rough rocks
into stone carvings

Issue 139
Jul/Aug 2014

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Green Man mask

Duane Cartwright carves a mask based on the traditional image of the Green Man



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DUANE CARTWRIGHT

This Green Man is loosely based on a mask, but could easily be carved as a shallow bas-relief. Or, using a thicker block of wood, it could also be carved as a full mask. I used American black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) for this project for its warm colour, plus it is one of my favourite woods to carve. Before you start to carve, you'll need to print out the design at the required size for the piece of wood you wish to use, then transfer the design to the piece of wood. For this, I used an artist's 6B carbon stick and rubbed it all over the back of the printed design, then, using masking tape, I taped the printed design onto the piece of wood so I could trace over the design with a ballpoint pen, transferring the design to the wood. You could also use carbon paper or even glue the printed design onto the piece of wood.

As I mention later, I chose to sand the front of this project and leave the back tooled. The decision to sand a carving is a personal choice, however. Before sanding it's important to finish the carving to a state that it could be left tooled if chosen. Start at 150 grit

and going with the grain, sand through the grits until the sanding is complete, then brush down and apply a coat of sanding sealer. Once the sealer is dry, check over the carving and touch up any areas that may have been missed. Once you are happy with the carving, cut back the sealer with 400 grit abrasive and apply your chosen finish.

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...

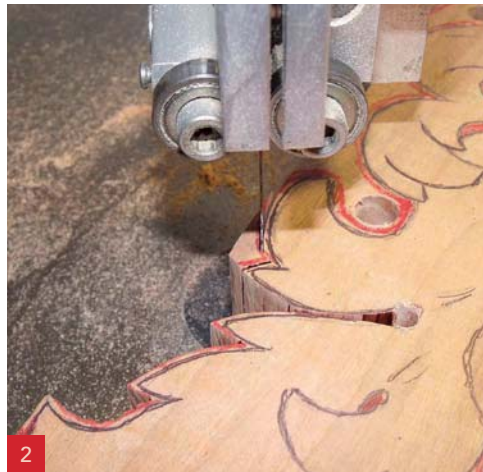
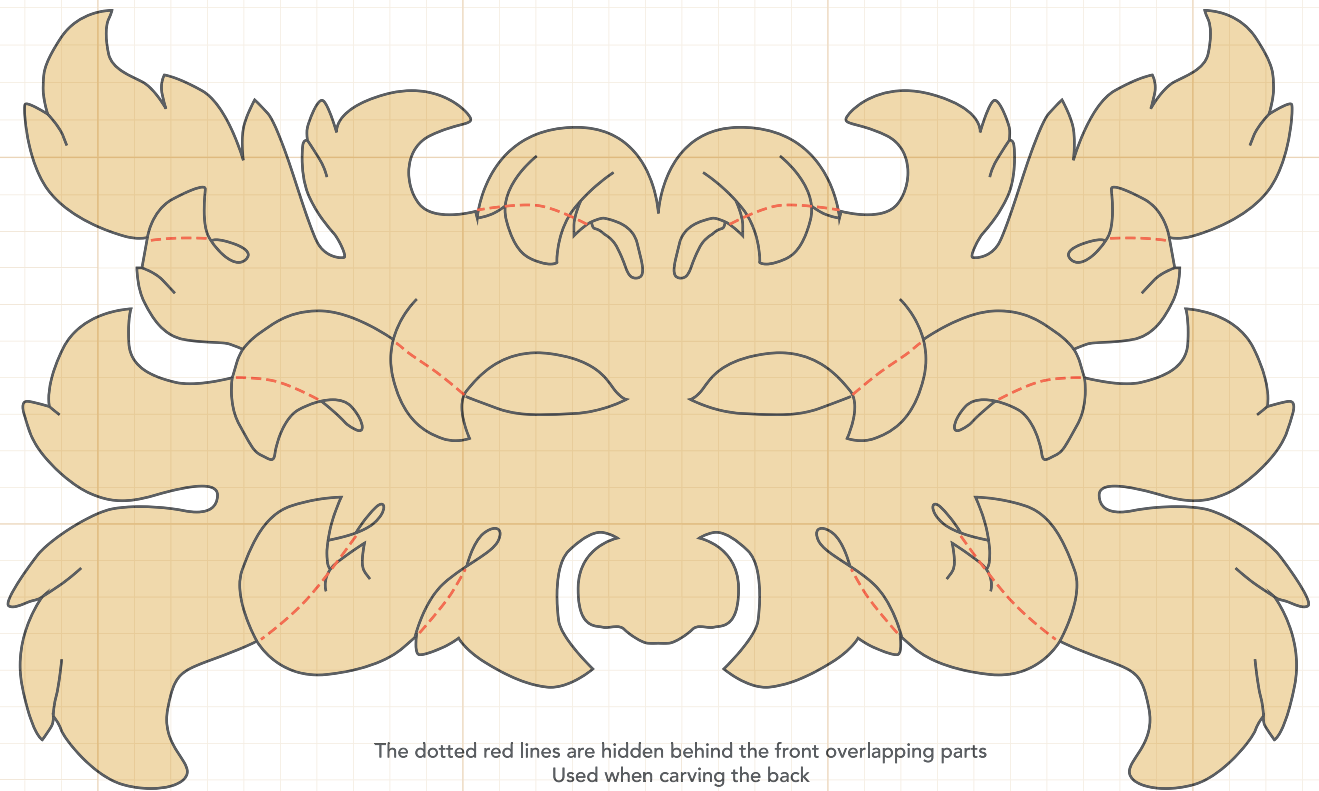
Tools:

No.9 sweep gouge 5, 8, 14mm
No.6 sweep gouge 8, 14mm
4 sweep fishtail 10mm
No.3 sweep gouge 8, 14mm
No.7 sweep gouge 10mm
11 sweep gouge 3mm
Hooked skew
150 grit, 240 grit, 320 grit and 400 grit cloth-backed sandpaper
Sanding sealer and friction polish
Picture frame hook and small screw
Bandsaw – a coping saw/jigsaw will do just as well
Pillar drill – hand drill will do just as well

I've listed the carving tools I used as a guide but I recommend you use the carving tools you have that will make the required cuts as efficiently and cleanly as possible. The sweeps on my gouges here are all from different manufacturers.

Wood:

American black cherry (*Prunus serotina*): 290mm wide x 170mm high x 27mm thick



1 Once the design has been transferred on to the wood, start to drill out the outer leaf/lobe eyes and the pupils

2 Use a bandsaw to cut out the profile. Draw a red line around the outside of the design; this will improve visibility while cutting out on the bandsaw

3 For the heavy bolstering work, secure the project to your bench using the bench vice and bench dogs with some scrap wood for spacers between the bench dogs and the carving – the scrap wood protects the carving and the chisels. After the bolstering is done, mount the carving onto a peg board that is fitted onto a ball vice, which gives you easier access to carve. However, you could carry on with the bench dogs if preferred. Before I started this carving, a friend asked me how I knew how deep each area was going to be carved. The answer is that I numbered the high and low spots, 1 being the highest areas and 5 being the lowest. With the carving secured, I used a 8mm 9 sweep gouge and started marking in, separating the high areas and taking down the lower areas

➔ **4** Once you have marked in, use the 8 and 14mm No.9 sweep gouges and carve down the lowest areas first, carving from the side of the nose and across the cheeks, shaping the leaves. Use deep gouges to bolster in. When carving down the lower areas, remember to keep checking the wood's thickness. As you get down to the required depths, round over and blend in the high areas. Turn the gouge over and round over the high spots

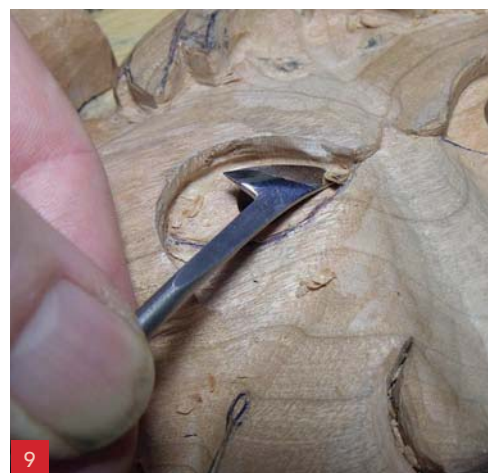


5 If you carve down one side first you can use the markings on the other side as a reference and easily transfer them over. When shaping, keep it flowing as each part needs to blend and flow into the next. After the bulk of the shaping is done, move on to the nose. Start by carving across the bridge with a 5mm No.9 sweep and up from the bridge between the brow along the centreline



6 Using a medium No.6 sweep gouge, shape the nose, firstly by sloping it back from the tip to the bridge, then down both sides giving it shape and blending it into the cheeks. Turn the gouge over and round over and finish shaping the nose

7 Redraw the detail of the leaf shapes using dividing callipers to transfer the measurements. Then cut in around the overlapping leaves and the curled leaves. Only cut in when you're sure you're not going to move that particular area



8 Redraw the bottom part of the eyes, making sure the outer corners follow the red dotted lines. Use the best-fitting gouge for the sweep required and cut in

9 Use a shallow fishtail gouge and cut back the eye just deep enough that the stop cut is prominent. Use a hooked skew to clean up

10 After cutting in around the curled up areas, use a No.6 medium sweep gouge upside down to shape the curls. For the top curls, use a No.11, 3mm sweep and carve two grooves over the top of the curls. Round over the sides you have just carved, paying attention to grain direction



11 Use a No.9 sweep gouge to undercut the overlapping curls. Undercut just enough to tidy up and create some shadow, keeping the flow of the leaves as they blend and overlap each other



12



13



14



15



16



17



18

12 With the cutting in done and the curls carved, redraw the leaf eyes inside the curls and where the leaves overlap. Once happy with their placement, use a hand drill to drill through the eyes

13 Using a hooked skew, carve in the drilled eyes where the leaves overlap each other. For the eyes that go into the curls, use the best-fitting gouge and cut in. When cutting in the eyes, only carve through enough to tidy up the front, carve all the way through when you carve the back

14 Redraw the detail in place and then use the No.11, 3mm sweep to separate the lobes from the rest of the leaf. Only carve halfway down each lobe and then level off the leaf up to the lobes

15 Using a No.7 sweep medium gouge, carve the lobes at an angle to the rest of the leaf, leaving a clean gouge shape to each lobe

16 Once the front is carved, mark out the back using the red dotted lines. Mark three circles on the back; these areas are thin so be careful not to carve there until you've finished carving the back

17 Secure the mask to the bench by placing it on an old pillow and use cord wrapped around and through the bench dog holes and twist tight to hold the carving. Use a No.9 sweep gouge and mark out. Then, starting at the nose and moving out, carve down the back, following the leaf contours of the front. While carving the back, keep checking the thickness and try to keep an even thickness throughout the carving. I carved mine to roughly 5mm thickness. Also remember that the curls need to round over from the back. When the back has been roughly taken down to the required depth, use a shallow No.3 sweep gouge to smooth out and tidy up. Carefully blend in the three circled areas with the surrounding area

18 Use a hooked skew to clean up the leaf eyes from the back. Go around the edges and clean up any saw marks or any other areas. After sanding the front through the grits and after cutting back, give the whole carving a coat of friction polish and buff it with a nylon bristle brush. Attach a picture hook to the back and screw into the thickest part of the wood. Use a small screw that will not go through to the front ▶

Technical know-how: Carving hair and fur

Peter Benson provides us with some helpful hints and tips on carving hair and fur, which will make your carvings much more realistic

How you go about this and, in fact, whether you do this at all will depend on the size of your carving. You must remember that you are trying to represent hair or fur and, if the carving is too small, this can be almost impossible to do effectively and it might be better to do nothing at all. Someone once asked me what all the scratches were on one of my netsuke carvings and I replied that they were meant to be fur. He then asked if they looked like fur and I couldn't do anything but reply that they didn't. His response was to ask why I had done them at all then. There was no answer to that.

Carving hair

As most head carvings that are produced are much less than full size there is necessarily a need for a degree of stylising in any hair carving that is added. What the carver is actually aiming at is to give the impression of hair rather than to make it realistic.

There are many ways to achieve this and all of them work so it is really just a matter of choosing the method that works best for you. For the smallest heads I tend to use different sizes of parting or 'V' tools and, for the larger heads, I would add a small veiner or even a macaroni. These will give a softer



This photo of a practice head shows detail done with a small 'V' tool at the top. Below the headband was done with a very small veiner and gives a softer effect

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER BENSON

look and can also produce a layering effect. If you are carving full size or similar you might like to use a variety of bullnosed gouges working in a sideways, slicing motion to give you the various sweeps of the hair. This can be very impressive and can result in some really dramatic hair effects but does need a considerable amount of practice to get it right. The smaller the head, though, the more difficult it is to do.

Softening the effect

Once I am happy with the initial blocks I have formed I go over them with a finer tool until it looks right. Sometimes the result gives a hard effect and, if this is the case, I will go over it with a very fine veiner to soften the cuts. I would recommend, if you are not sure how it will look, that you practise on a spare piece of wood. I have a collection of part-carved heads that I use to practise carving eyes, noses, mouths and hair. It doesn't take long to do one of these in something like jelutong (*Dyera*

costulata) and it can save you a lot of frustration and heartache when carving your 'masterpiece'. The main rule about carving hair is that you don't want any straight lines, each cut should be an elongated 'S', in either direction. Don't be worried if they overlap each other. This will actually add to the effect.

Carving fur

This is not too different from carving hair except that the whole surface is much smoother, generally without the clumps of hair that you would carve on a head. Your cuts should still be the elongated 'S' shape but may well be very much shorter. For very short-coated animals you may even just cut short, almost straight lines. You will mostly use a very small 'V' tool or veiner for this. You will need to be aware of the grain direction throughout the process and, ideally, you want to be carving from the base of the fur to the outside as this will give a finer finish but this will not always be possible. Always take care that the



The first basic cuts to set out clumps of hair



A simple hair effect on a finished carving, completed mainly using veiners



Fur effects achieved using a 'V' tool on a piece of basswood

corners of the 'V' tool don't get buried in the wood – sometimes you may be better using a larger tool with a shallow cut than a smaller one.

Important points

There are, however, two important things to remember. Firstly, you need to prepare the surface before you start carving the fur. It needs to be carefully finished to the final shape that you require – once you have carved the fur you cannot do anything else to the carving. Don't leave it rough under the impression that carving the fur will put it right – it won't. Many carvers I know will actually sand the finish before texturing it but I think that careful tooling is generally enough. Whichever you choose, do make sure it is clean.

The second point is that all animals have a correct hair tract. This means that the hair goes in a specific direction around the body with little spirals in certain places where changes of direction occur. You must study these before starting to texture. Look at your dog or cat, stroke it and feel which direction the hair goes and you are well on your way. Many animal carving books will show you the correct hair tracts – study these if you can. There is nothing worse in a carving than to see a lot of straight lines carved in totally the wrong direction supposedly representing fur.

Other methods

I recommend that you first establish the hair tract pattern with a small veiner going over it with progressively smaller 'V' tools until it looks right. It can be a long drawn-out process but will be worth it for the end result.

If you are more interested in carving netsuke or other miniatures you can get a very effective hair or fur effect with a pyrography tool. This needs to be the small scalpel type blade that the bird carvers use to produce feathers. If the heat is turned right down, a very fine cut is produced that won't close up as it would if done with a scalpel. By following the same lines as with the 'V' tool you will end up with a similar effect but much finer. As mentioned earlier, the harder the wood the more effective the result.

As with all skills, for success you need to practise – you cannot hope to get it right first time. ▶



Fur detailing carved on a fox

Top tips

1. One small tip here is that it is much more difficult to get a smooth tidy hairstyle on a carving than it is to produce an untidy or curly style. Trying to produce straight hair can often result in it looking like straw or as if the subject is wearing a motorcycle helmet
2. The most obvious way to get the pattern right for the style you wish to carve is to draw it onto the head and then use this drawing as a guide for carving. Unfortunately this can result in some of the pencil lines remaining when you have finished. Also the graphite from the pencil can make the whole carving very dirty. Although you can avoid this by using something like a ball pen instead of a pencil, you can still have some lines left at the end. I recommend that you try to carve the hair without doing any drawing at all. Once you 'get into the flow' you will not find this too difficult
3. In doing very small heads I use a series of small 'V' tools down to 1/32in. I do the initial shaping with a larger tool carving a series of 'blocks' of hair, something like the shape of the tiny little pieces that make up the segments of an orange. With larger heads the basic principle is the same but you just use different or larger tools depending on your individual preference
4. Every head that you carve will have some kind of hairstyle and you need to decide this before you start. You need to be aware of where the hairline is, where the crown is and in what direction the hair lies on the head. Also, remember that the parting in any hairstyle will show the scalp and thus will follow the lines of the head. I have seen many heads with the parting way off the surface of the scalp and it results in the appearance of a very badly fitting wig

Introducing... The Solent Guild of Woodcarvers and Sculptors

Club secretary John Vardon tells us about this club, which dates back to the 1970s

The Solent Guild of Woodcarvers & Sculptors inaugurated in 1978 was the result of an idea inspired by James Bell and encouraged by Vic Flower, Bill Judge and Stan Callan who felt that woodcarving should be better promoted and encouragement given to the craft especially in the Solent region.

The initial meeting was attended by 20 people and membership steadily grew to over one hundred but now comprises 58 members of both sexes. The objectives of the Guild are to further the interests of woodcarvers and sculptors and to encourage newcomers to the craft. Regular talks, exhibitions, outings and practical meetings take place to further these objectives.

Recently a granddaughter of founder Member Bill Judge came across a photograph of some members taken in the mid-1980s. Regretfully, many of these Members are now deceased but several are still alive and have remained active Members of the Guild to the present day.

Guild members

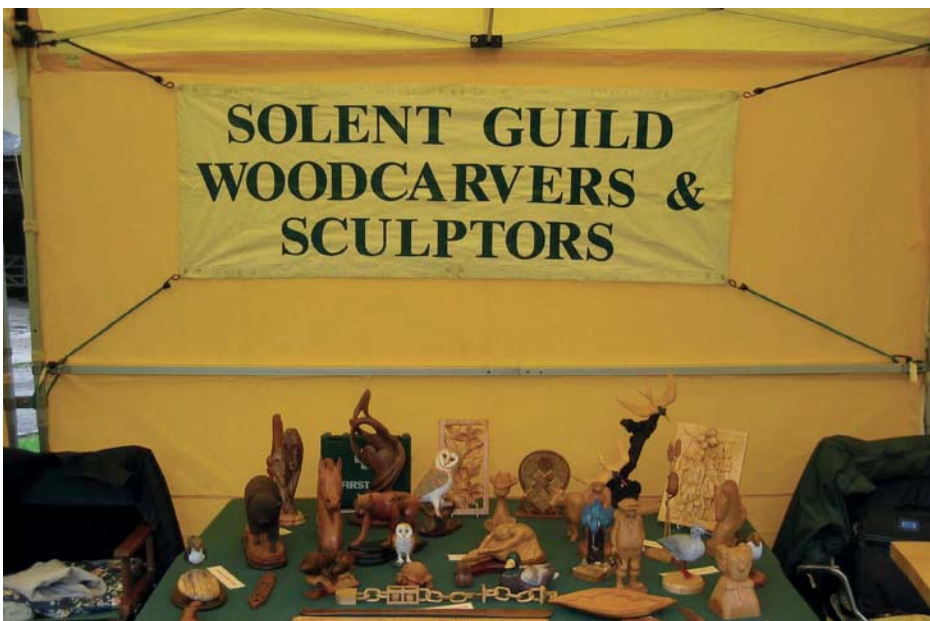
Members, whose ages range from 16 to 90 years, are mainly from the Solent area but some come from as far as Petersfield and Selsey. The whole range of carvings is covered with some members specialising

in relief, some in 'human form', and others in birds, fish, etc. Although the Guild does not provide formal tuition, the more experienced members help and encourage others. Like other woodcarving clubs, we find it difficult to encourage

young blood and convince the younger ones that carving is for all ages and both sexes.

A lively group

The Guild is very active throughout the year. During the autumn and winter the Guild holds full day group carving sessions once or twice a month on Saturdays at Portsmouth Grammar School. These carving sessions are interspersed by monthly social evenings where a talk, not always related to woodcarving, is given, a quiz, skittles or other social event is held. In the spring and summer months, the Guild attend about 11 external events, e.g. arts trails, country park shows, wood-related shows and local outdoor museums. At these events, under our distinctive yellow tents, we demonstrate woodcarving and display carvings completed and hopefully encourage members of the public to become interested in woodcarving and possibly join the Guild. There are times when we are encouraged to attend as we are considered a valuable attraction at the event. The Guild publishes a newsletter several times a year and a yearly programme.



Display of carvings at a demonstration

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN VARDON



More examples of the club's fine work



Grumpy old men!



Trafalgar carving

Members' work

One of our members offers private tuition for those who require it. Two members are providing tuition at a one-day and a two-day course at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, near Chichester, for participants to learn the basics of woodcarving. Some of our members also use their carving knowledge to carve in stone or other non-wood materials. Other members give talks on woodcarving related topics to other organisations.

Several of our members have attended carving courses run by Mike Painter at his own studio or at Westhope Craft College in Shropshire to enhance their skills and to pass on knowledge gained to other members. Some members have joined up with other carvers in the area and demonstrate once a month at the

Weald & Downland Open Air Museum near Chichester.

Competitions

Once a year we hold a competition where we invite the public to judge members' carvings completed in the last two years. Five trophies are competed for, including one for non-wood sculptures. This competition is held at one of the early demonstrations and for the last couple of years has been held at the Amberley Museum & Heritage Centre, near Arundel in West Sussex. In addition, a further competition is held at the Guild's Annual General Meeting where Members only judge the entries. Awards for these competitions are made at a summer social event. At this event there is a further competition for novices, i.e. those who have not won a competition before.

Carving projects

Occasionally, members of the Guild carry out a major project for a particular local organisation. In 2002 the Guild completed a carving for Havant Borough Council. In 2005, we were asked by The Friends of the Royal Naval Museum and HMS Victory to design and carve a carving to celebrate the Bicentenary of Trafalgar. The carving, designed by myself, was based on the midship section of HMS Victory and comprised six individual carvings by Jess Jay, Ray White, Bert Cox, John Tappy, Alan Crockford and Andrew Huebler. One half of the carving depicts the Navy in the days of Admiral Lord Nelson and the other half depicts the navy of today. The resulting carving is on display at The Royal Naval Museum.

In addition, members are often asked to carry out projects for local schools and some carry out commissions. One example is a totem pole carved by Jess Jay for Rowner Junior School in Gosport. The Pole is carved in a birch (*Fagus sylvatica*) log, which was supplied by the head ranger at Holly Hill Country Park.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone interested in woodcarving and may be obtained by seeing details below. ▶

Details

Contact: Jean Cripps

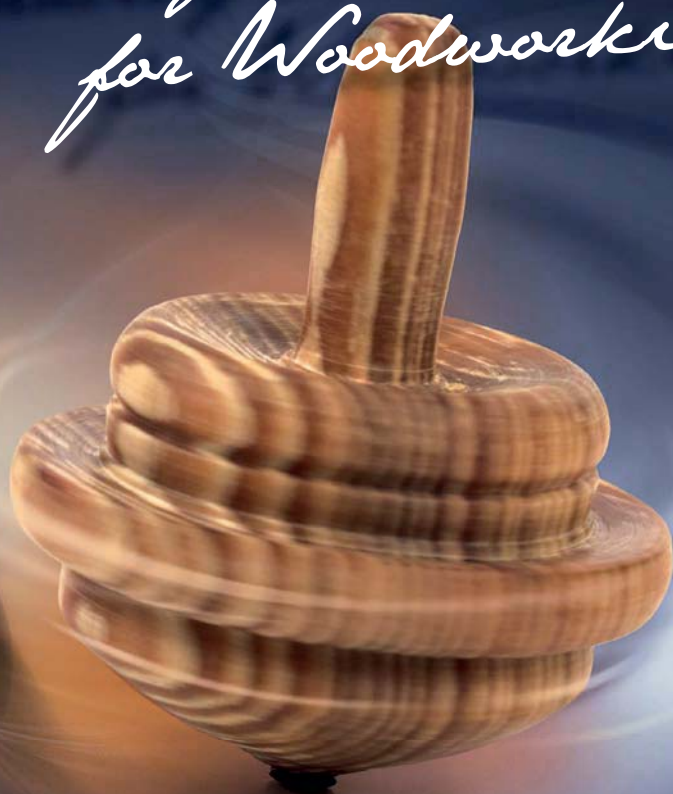
Address: 72 Stubbington Lane,
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Wall-mounted kingfisher

Mike Wood carves and paints this striking wall-mounted kingfisher



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKE WOOD

The distinctive, brightly coloured kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) is found by still or slow-flowing water, such as lakes, canals, rivers and sometimes garden ponds. These small birds fly low over the water, sometimes hovering just over the water's surface, as they hunt for fish. They nest in tunnels dug into the water

bank. Kingfishers have a bright blue-and-orange plumage, with little difference between the male and female. They are found throughout the world's tropical and temperate regions, with the Common Kingfisher being especially widespread in central and southern England. Here, I will show you how to carve and paint one.

Things you will need...

Wood:

Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*)
Dimensions: 180mm long × 60mm wide × 50mm high for the body
110mm long × 60mm wide and 20mm thick for the wings
A piece of branch or driftwood for the base

Materials:

Plastic wood
Artificial eyes
Artificial feet
Mirror plate
Brass for leaves (optional)
Steel rod
Black and white gesso
Paint: turquoise, orange, black and green for leaves (optional)

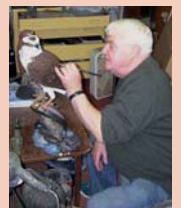
Tools:

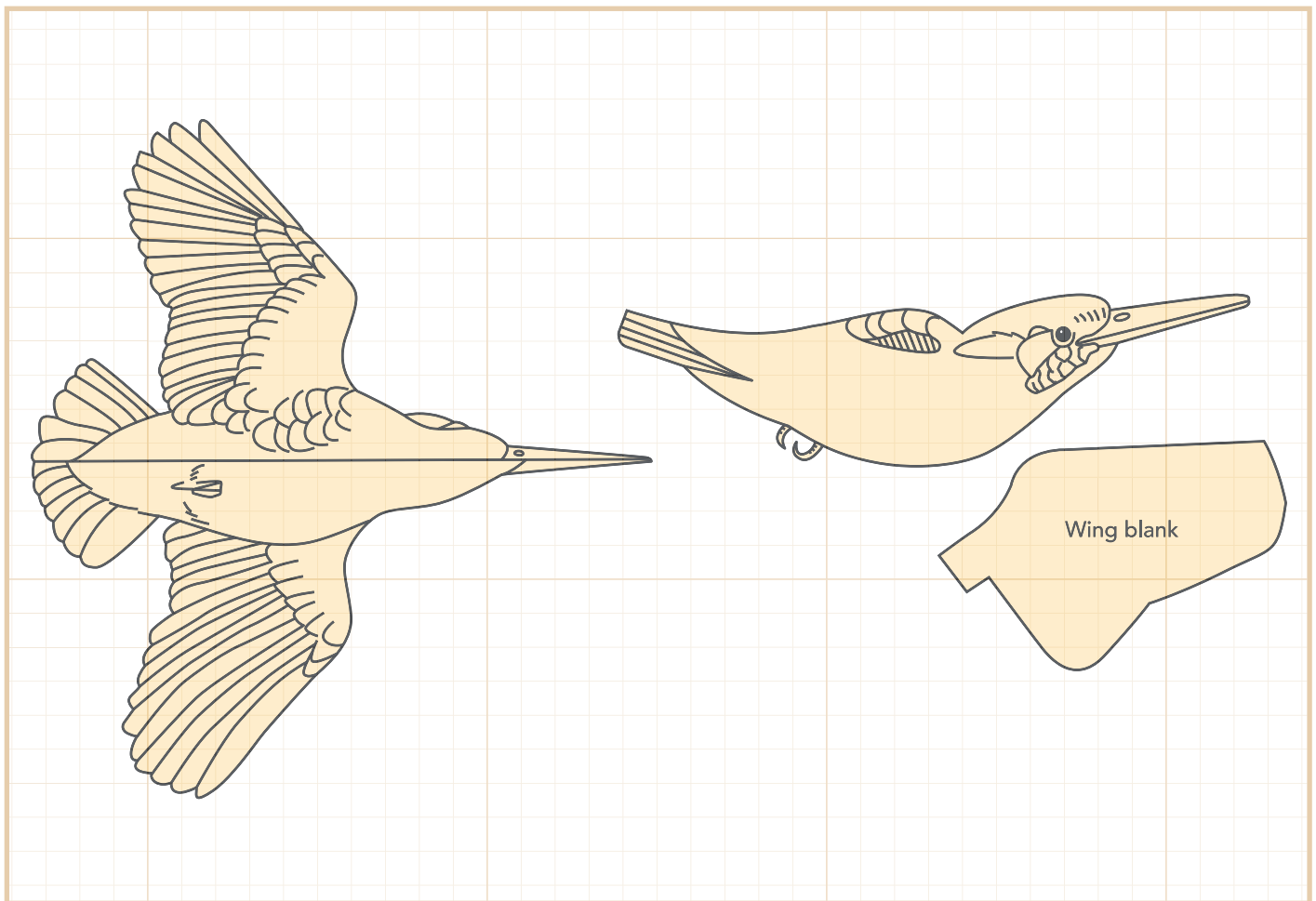
Rotary carving unit
Medium-toothed burr
Sanding burr
Pen for marking feathers
High-speed grinder
White stone
Ruby taper
Small tapered burr
Bullnosed stone
Pyrography machine
Paintbrush
Airbrush

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





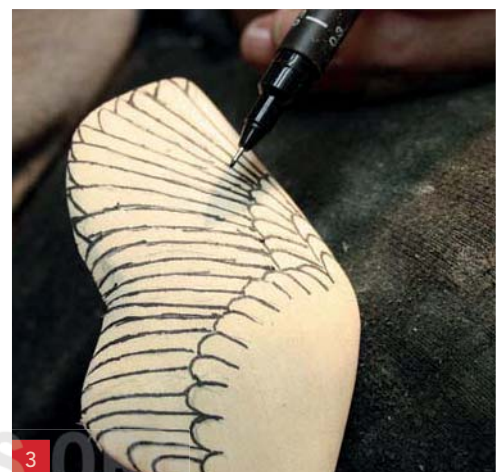
➔ **1** Start by creating the separate components for the bird. The parts for the kingfisher are made from lime (*Tilia vulgaris*). The body measures 180mm long x 60mm wide x 50mm high, and the wings are 110mm long x 60mm wide and 20mm thick. Note the direction of the grain. It runs from tail to beak and also from the back of the wings to the front of them. You do not have to bandsaw any parts, but it certainly helps and you have to do less shaping later on if you do bandsaw them to roughly the shape required



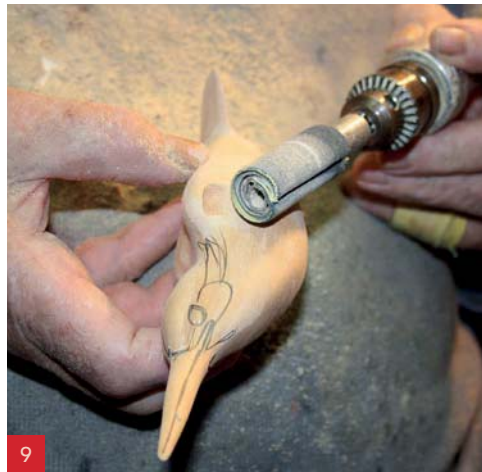
2 Use a rotary carving unit with a medium-toothed burr – a cone/taper-shaped one will get in all the areas needed at this stage – to rough shape the wings. Once shaped, sand the wings smooth using a sanding bobbin with a medium grit grade abrasive – 180-240 grit will work fine



3 Draw in all the feathers on the wings ready for carving. I use a fine-tipped permanent marker pen, then use a high-speed grinder with a white cylinder-shaped grinding stone to cut in the feathers, starting at the top and gradually reaching down to...



PROJECT Wall-mounted kingfisher



4 ... the feathers at the bottom of the wings. Using a ruby taper in the high-speed grinder, shape the ends of the wing feathers at the top and bottom

5 You should now trial fit the wings before you begin to carve the body

6 Next, use a small tapered burr to cut the holes for the wings in the body

7 Use a rotary carving unit with a medium-toothed burr to rough shape the body

8 Next, cut in the recess for the eyes using a high-speed grinder with a small taper

9 Use the same tool and bit shape to carve the mantle – the feathers on the back – and use a sanding bobbin to sand this area...

10 ... continuing on to sand the body smooth

11 Next, carve in the feathers on the back of the bird using the high-speed grinder

Life cycle

Kingfishers breed in their first year, and pair-formation usually starts in February. Both birds excavate the nest burrow into the stone-free sandy soil of a low stream bank. The birds choose a vertical bank clear of vegetation, since this provides a reasonable degree of protection from predators. Two to three broods are raised in quick succession, normally in the same nest.

The first clutch of six to seven eggs is laid late in March or early in April. Both adults incubate the eggs, and the chicks hatch 19-21 days later. The chicks are normally ready to leave the nest when they are 24-25 days old, but if the fish supply is poor, they can take up to 37 days. Once out of the nest, the young are fed for only four days before the adults drive them out of the territory and start the next brood.

Sadly, kingfishers are very short-lived. It is thought that only half of the fledglings survive more than a week or two and only a quarter survive to breed the following year, to maintain the population.

➔ **12** You can now use the high-speed grinder fitted with a tapered cutter – a medium diamond one will work well – to add details to the bird's head

13 Using the same cutter as before, you can then carve in the feathers on the top and bottom of the tail...

14 ... and then carve the feathers onto the bird's back. Next, swap the diamond cutter to a fine-grit small tapered white stone and smooth over/clean up the bird's head and back feathers. At this stage, cut the eye hole with a small-tipped cutter

15 You can now roughly place the eye in position and adjust to suit if required. Once happy, switch to a medium or fine-grit bullnosed stone to add grooves to the side of the body

16 Now it is time to fully secure the eyes in place using plastic wood. Once fitted, remove the excess adhesive/filler, then use a brush to blend and smooth out around the eye

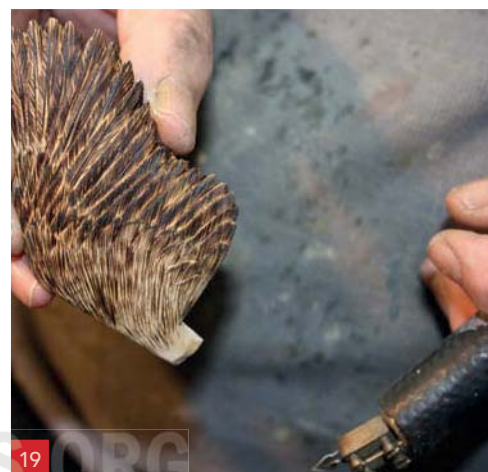
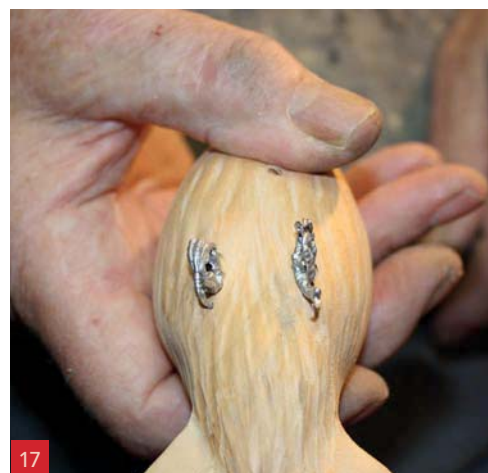
17 The next step is to drill holes of the appropriate size and fit the bird's feet into the base of the body. Secure them in place with adhesive or plastic filler

18 You are now ready to begin burning the feathers on the wings. A scalpel/chisel-edged pyrography tip is the best tool for this job. This is the part that takes the most time, but is vital to get the look of the feathers right

19 Note how the angle of the striated-burnt lines vary according to the feather being worked on. Once the burning stage is completed, the feathers should look like this

Legal status

The kingfisher is amber listed because it is vulnerable and needs protection. It is also accorded the highest degree of legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981. It is an offence to take, injure or kill a kingfisher, or to take, damage or destroy its nest or eggs, or to recklessly disturb the birds close to their nest during the breeding season.





20



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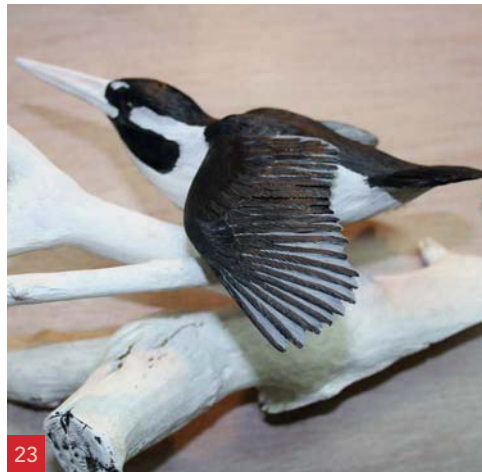
20 Continue burning the feathers on the bird's back, head and the sides of the body. Again, pay attention to how the feathers run and flow over the body on your reference material and mimic these closely

21 At this stage, the bird should look like this

22 Attach a mirror plate to the bottom of the chosen branch. I made some brass leaves to add some extra decoration to the branch. Insert a steel rod into the branch; the kingfisher will be attached to this rod



22



23

23 Cover the whole bird with a light coat of white gesso. Once dry, you need to cover some areas with black gesso as shown here, then leave to dry

24 Next, mix the black and white gesso to make a grey undercoat for the bottom of the wings and leave the whole thing to dry

25 You are now ready to paint the bird

26 Next, use a rigger and some white gesso to edge all the feathers on the kingfisher. Next, start adding the colour in layers to achieve the desired effect. The reference material is key to being able to see what colours and tones go where. It doesn't matter if you start on the underside. Add several thin glazes of turquoise paint to the top of the bird; this will allow you to achieve the desired effect. Then using an airbrush, spray black paint onto the bird's bill and the tips of the wings



24



25

27 Once painted, the kingfisher should look like this and it is now ready for mounting on the wall

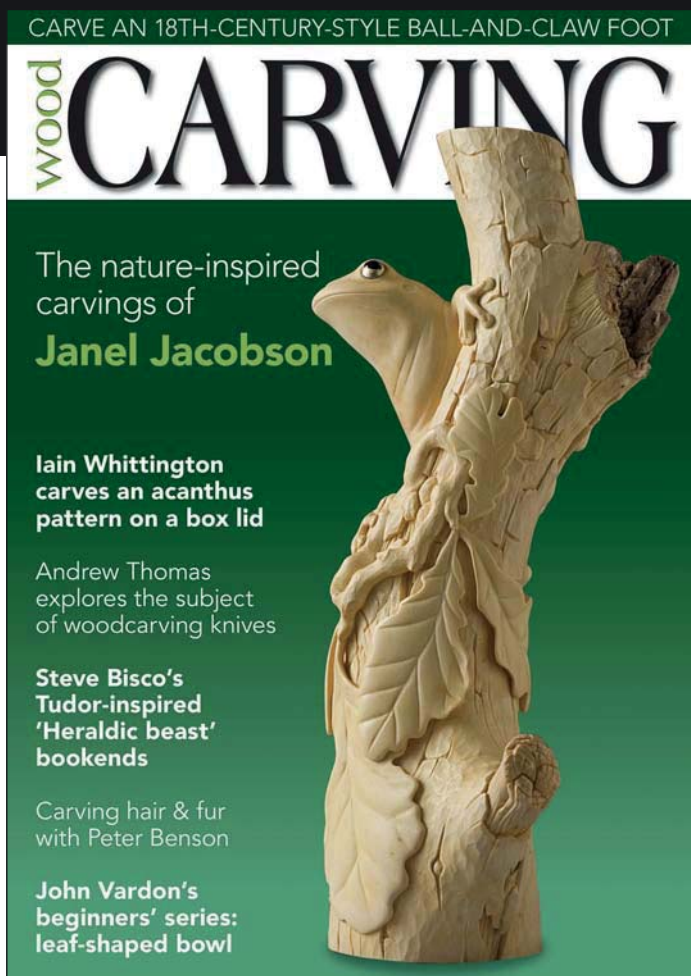


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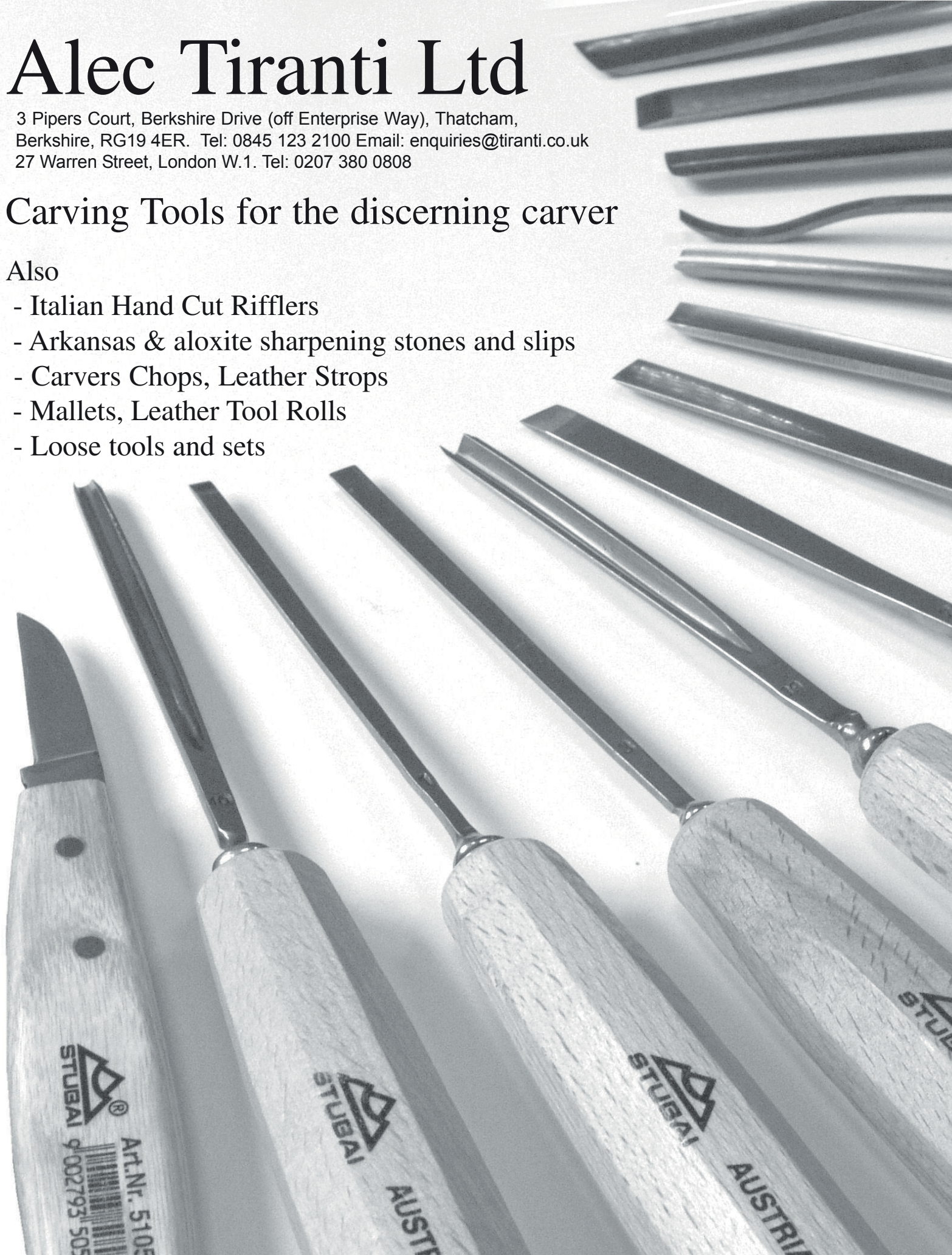
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HoneStar

This tool was designed for a number of applications, but the shape already indicates clearly its suitability for honing flutes of gouges or carving tools. The rods of the two long sides measure 2.7mm and 6mm respectively. The long flat surface measures 145 x 40mm and enables you to hone the outside of gouges and a variety of other tools. It fits solidly into your hand and is therefore easy to control and use. The manufacturers recommend that the tool is used with a few drops of lubricating and cleaning liquid, or, it can be used with water but ensure you clean off any steel particles and dry thoroughly. The HoneStar is unbreakable and consists of a steel base coated with

a super abrasive CBN grit. This grit, which is widely used in the metalworking industry for the grinding of hard steels, is almost as hard as diamond but better suited for working on steel. The grit size is 800, which is perfect for honing.



£25

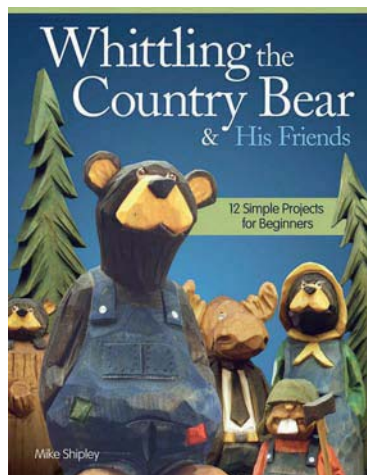
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BOOK REVIEWS

Whittling the Country Bear & His Friends by Mike Shipley

Whittling the Country Bear & His Friends is a perfect guide to whittling and carving for a beginner or a young woodcarver. Resulting in a group of fun forest friend models, the guide is easy to follow thanks to the larger than average text and number of photographs provided throughout the book. This is certainly ideal for children who want to dive straight into the whittling process, as there is not too much background information provided to lead them into the making. The guide instructs on 12 different models to be made, providing to-scale carving patterns from the front, side and back views. Having finished the carving process, Whittling the Country Bear & His Friends goes beyond and instructs on the professional painting and finishing methods that may be applied to the models produced.



Briony Darnley

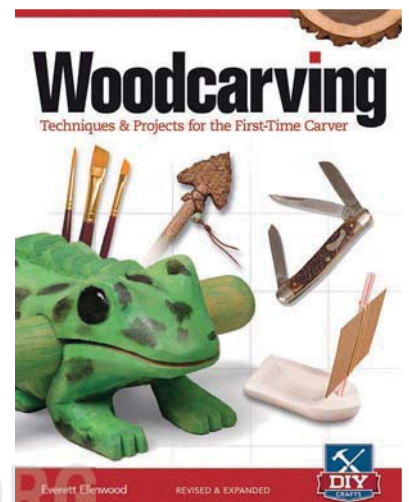
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Woodcarving: Techniques & Projects for the First-Time Carver by Everett Ellenwood

Everett Ellenwood promises to raise your confidence in your woodcarving skills in his quick and easy guide Woodcarving: Techniques & Projects for the First-Time Carver. Focusing on a younger audience, the guide has large text and lots of images to look through. The book aims to introduce a lifelong skill to a younger audience by easing them into the craft through projects, such as a 'soapbox', 'wooden whistle', 'name plaque', 'musical frog' and a 'five minute owl'. The author also includes various hints and tips throughout the guide. This is a simple, glossy page guide, which will educate the reader in all the necessary areas of woodworking, such as 'anatomy of a tree', 'inside the tree', 'vessels and grain' and skills, such as 'transferring patterns'. This is a brilliant book for first-time woodcarvers of a younger age.

Briony Darnley

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Arbortech Mini Turbo

Peter Benson looks at this handy machine, which is compatible with most 100mm and 115mm angle grinders

I have tried just about every type of angle grinder based rotary cutter on the market and have come to the conclusion that none of them holds a candle to those produced by Arbortech. I tried using the Mini Turbo fitted directly to the angle grinder with the extension shaft supplied but found it nothing like as good as its big brother. There were no apparent advantages when working on a flat surface but it really comes into its own when it is required to cut deep into the surface, as one would with a router. You can use all types of template if required to produce deep, shaped depressions as it doesn't cut on the side.

In use

If you wish to remove large amounts of waste material from the centre of bowl blanks then this setup is ideal, allowing you to go down about 100mm quickly and safely with the ability to produce vertical sides if required. This takes a bit of getting used to as the disc can skid across the surface of the timber until you get the hang of knowing which way to move it to cut as you wish.

I can see that there will be numerous applications where this tool is invaluable with a variety of guides and templates. Also in the kit are sanding discs that fit directly on the extension shaft with the cutter removed and these are a very effective addition. Using these in conjunction with each other will result in an excellent finish.

Once fitted to the mini Arbortech attachment on the angle grinder, it was a completely different tool. Although you can't cut deep into the wood, it will get into otherwise inaccessible spaces and gives an altogether superior finish to the mini cutters usually fitted. It is easy to use and removes wood at a

rapid rate – how heavy handed you wish to be is only limited by the durability of the rubber drive belt.



The Mini Turbo attached to an angle grinder



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER BENSON

When really pushed the belt on my unit did eventually give up the ghost but, to be honest, I don't think anyone in his right mind would normally push it to that extent.

Safety first

As with all tools of this type it is most important to have the appropriate safety and protective equipment in use: goggles, dust mask, ear and head protection. Most people will happily wear goggles and mask, but this tool will project bits of wood into your ears with no problem so a woolly hat or ear protectors are a must. The individual cutters can be rotated if they lose their edges and I imagine that they could be sharpened on a flat stone if desired. Replacements can be purchased quite reasonably so this is not really an issue.

Verdict

Would you buy one of these? This really depends on how you feel about power cutters – some people love them and others hate them. If you have a job where you need to remove large quantities of wood in hard to reach places and have difficulty doing this with a gouge and mallet, then this is the tool

for you. Anyone intending to purchase one of these tools needs to be aware that this is the little brother of the power plane and only cuts on the flat surface – you cannot plunge it in edgeways like the standard or mini Arbortechs. If you are careful about

Specifications

Manufacturer: Arbortech

Model: Arbortech Mini Turbo – will fit the Arbortech Mini Carver and most 100mm or 115mm angle grinders

Price: £109.94 (inc VAT)

Contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery

Tel: 03332 406 406

Web: www.axminster.co.uk

working with the grain you can get quite respectable shavings from it but, if used across the grain you will still have the same problems with chips and dust that get everywhere. It is certainly much better than anything else similar that I have tried and worth adding to your toolbox. ▶



The Mini Turbo kit

Super Detailer NP3(S) & Super Detailer NP5 micromotors

Peter Benson compares these two powerful micromotors from Woodworks Craft Supplies

I have used machines similar to these for more than 10 years. I bought mine from the USA as I was not aware then of any suppliers in the UK. Since then they have been made available through online suppliers, but are mostly sent from the Far East. The initial attraction of these two models is that they are supplied in this country which could, therefore, make them more desirable to the average enthusiast.

In comparison

On first inspection they appear better than their American counterparts in that there are no moving parts at the 'business end'. Others tend to have the ends of the collets protruding from the casing. That can be very uncomfortable if the user's fingers happen to slide to the end of the hand piece. The cheaper model runs at 35,000rpm and comes with a single hand piece, with a choice of collet size – 3mm or 1.5mm already fitted. If you wish to work with one handpiece and change collets as needed, this can be done with a little practice. As the collets are around £15 each and a second handpiece can be supplied with your initial purchase of this model for £60, I would tend to question the wisdom of bothering to go through the process of changing collets every now and again.

Putting it to the test

I asked some of my students to try these tools as they had not used anything like this before and they would be likely to notice problems that maybe I would overlook. The general opinion was that they were much quieter than they expected and much easier to use than the products they had tried before, with



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER BENSON

considerably less vibration and dust and were also much easier to handle.

We tried them both with a Typhoon burr, sintered carbide cutter and rotary chisel on lime and boxwood, removing quite a lot of waste at a time. My experience of the rotary chisel on other larger power units has been somewhat scary, but with these units it was a totally different tool capable of removing quite large amounts of waste material without the expected 'chatter'.

The finish was more than acceptable and certainly better than many other power cutters that are readily available.

Where they really come into their own is when using fine dental type rotary burs. The control you have is remarkable and the finest work can be done with the minimum of fuss, dust and inconvenience. I have tried them on hardwoods, horn and antler as well as on ivory snooker balls – these are the only kinds of ivory I am prepared to use as they are dated pre-1947.

They can be very difficult to hold and, consequently, if there is any vibration with a power tool the cutter can skid on the surface – there was no sign of this whatsoever and full control was possible



The Super Detailer NP3 packs quite a punch

The NP5 is even more powerful and is a great tool

at all times. If your only experience of power carving has been with the more well known tools you will be amazed at the difference with equipment such as this. Both tools are quiet to use with almost no vibration at any speed. At slower speeds you might even get away with using them indoors with the TV on! Which one you choose is really up to what you require, how much you would use it and how much you want to spend. Whichever you decide I am sure you will wonder how you managed without it.

My opinion

I tried the smaller unit first and, personally, I found the grip of the handpiece rather thick and uncomfortable after using mine with a narrow nosed grip but I suppose you could get used to it. For very fine work, such as miniature carving and netsuke work, this grip would be a decided disadvantage.

On speaking to the supplier I understand that he has the intention of making a narrow nosed handpiece available in the future. It should be noted, however, that this only comes with the 1.5mm collet and cannot be changed. I must admit that in all the years that I have used this type of handpiece I have never felt the need to have a larger capacity collet. I am told that the Typhoon burrs, supplied by Foredom, come with an 3mm shank in the coarser grades and only the finer ones come in 1.5mm – the choice is obviously up to individual needs.

If you are buying a replacement for an old unit and you already have different sized bits then you would be advised to get an extra handpiece. This would still be considerably cheaper than the larger unit. Other than this personal observation I found the whole thing of good quality and convenient to use. It should be noted that the foot pedal supplied is only an on/off switch, it is not a variable speed control. There is also no provision on this unit to fit a variable speed foot control.

The larger unit appears to be an



Using a dental burr on a miniature in boxwood

altogether better piece of equipment and covers all bases – at a cost. Although it is advertised as being for two handpieces, the buyer should be aware that it actually comes with only one handpiece as standard but a second one can be bought at a reduced cost of around £75 instead of the normal £105. It does, however, have a full speed control on the foot pedal, provision for two handpieces – these can only be used one at a time, not by two people at the same time – running at up to 40,000rpm and like the smaller model, is reversible.

As I have never found it necessary to use my unit at its full 35,000rpm capacity I am not sure whether the extra 5,000rpm is any advantage, but others may think differently. I assume that the larger unit is more heavy duty – and it does have a full foot control included – and may be more suitable if it is going to be used for long periods, but if money is an issue you could get the smaller unit with two handpieces for around £175 less. You could actually buy two complete smaller units and still be in pocket. What you save could buy an awful lot of burrs and cutters. If you are happy with just one handpiece you could save another £60 or so.

Verdict

Whatever route you wish to go, in my opinion you couldn't go far wrong with either of these units, they are both good quality and will make small detail work in any suitable material a real pleasure.

Specifications

Super Detailer NP3(S)

The kit contains:

- NP3(S) control box
- NH2 handpiece comes with either a 2.35mm or a 3.18mm collet
- NP3SHC handpiece cradle
- Spare pair of motor brushes and a collet changing wrench
- Foot operated switch

Handpiece specifications:

150mm overall length
16mm grip diameter
27.2mm motor diameter

Price: £135

Super Detailer NP5

The kit contains:

- NP5 control box
- NH1 handpiece comes with either a 2.35mm or 3.18mm collet
- NP5FC foot operated speed control
- NP3SHC handpiece cradle
- Spare pair of motor brushes and a collet changing wrench

Handpiece specifications:

152.5mm overall length
16mm grip diameter
27.2mm motor diameter

Price: £295

Contact: Woodworks Craft Supplies

Tel: 01633 400 847

Web: www.woodworkscraftsupplies.co.uk



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The Four Crowned Saints

We take a closer look at the statues that stand along the walls of Orsanmichele, Florence

On the centre-west pilaster of Orsanmichele's north façade stand the 'Four Crowned Saints', or 'Quattro Santi Coronati'. Commissioned in 1409 by Maestri di Pietra e Legname – Stone Masons and Woodworkers Guild – the original monumental statue sadly no longer stands on the exterior wall, as a replica takes its place. Having been taken away for restoration, it is one of many statues that have been removed from the Orsanmichele's walls, with the originals now standing in the Museo di Orsanmichele – the museum within the Orsanmichele. The other half stands as a church. The Orsanmichele dates back to the 8th century, its purpose changing numerous times over the years, from a market to a place for the sale of grain. The building is decorated with statues, within its niches on all four walls, all of which were commissioned by various guilds of Florence. The statues' creations all date between 1340–1602. Some of these guilds include blacksmiths, bankers and silk workers: there are 14 guilds in total represented around the building.

It is the 'Four Crowned Saints' that we look at specifically. Carved by the son of the Stone Mason Antonia di Banco, Nanni di Banco, along with his two longer-lived carving counterparts Ghiberti and Verrocchio, introduced a new style of carving to Florence, within the walls of Orsanmichele. Banco, Ghiberti and Verrocchio were the three most prominent carvers who contributed to the decorative sculptures. Their new style of carving was much more realistic than their predecessors and they all had their individual expressive styles. Although they introduced a new style of carving, of the three, Nanni remained the most faithful to ancient Roman precedents in his sculpture. It is said that these statues were the first fully realised works of the Renaissance.

The 'Four Crowned Saints' is impressively carved from only three marble blocks, with the two rightmost figures carved from one block. Through the years they have been on display, the statues have not had a smooth run. It is believed that during a restoration period in the late 18th and mid-19th century the statues were coated with a dark, pigmented oil. This left them with a bronze-like patina: this, as well as pollution accentuating the dark surface of the statues, has left them looking quite different from how Banco designed them to look. The statues have sadly lost their gleaming white and gold skins.

Although given the name the 'Four Crowned Saints', in their marble relief at the base of their niche in which they are identified with their Guild, they are depicted as masons, carvers and sculptors, and not as martyrs. The profession of the Guild is portrayed as of a higher importance than their faith. ▶



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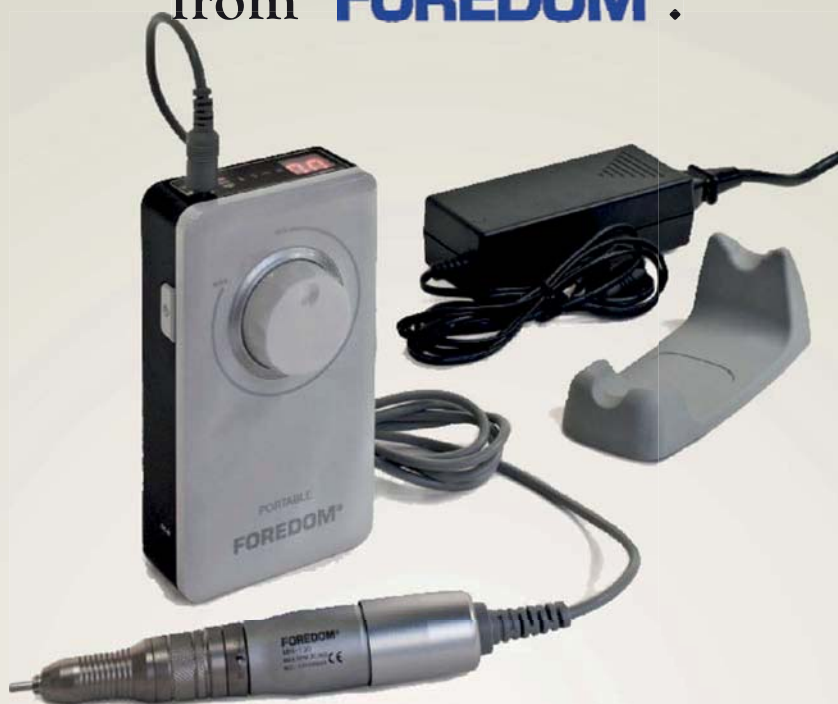
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