

wood CARVING

Johan Roudy on
**carving
capitals**

How to make
tailor made
leather strops

Practice 'still life'
carving with Chris Pye

Create an Art Deco
seahorse in limestone

Carve a snail
with Jean Grace

How to make
a simple portable
carving bench

FEATURE

The Forget Me Not
Children's Hospice's
magical moving
wooden panel





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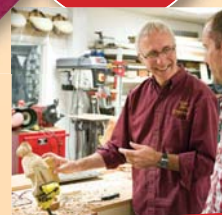
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Woodcarving is an inherently dangerous
pursuit. Readers should not attempt the
procedures described herein without
seeking training and information on the safe
use of tools and machines, and all readers
should observe current safety legislation.

A rich heritage

We carvers and sculptors, as part of the wider woodworking and crafts community, have a rich heritage not only in this country, but other countries too. Just look at the buildings and sculptures around to see what has been done over the millennia and one cannot help but marvel at what has been created – the array and diversity is simply breathtaking and it has enriched our lives. Imagine buildings without such carved items, no public sculpture or no personalisation of items we use, no decorative ornamentation. We have a rich and vibrant heritage indeed, but – and here is a question for you all – I have been asked many times recently if what we do is in terminal decline, or at least at a slow walk into senescence and obscurity?

The jury is out as far as figures are concerned. I can attest to readership levels being healthy and stable, but that is not the case for some carving clubs, associations or other publications. The advent of information being made available from so many different sources means there is not necessarily the need to travel far, so belonging to clubs might not be necessary for many people and if people do go, what do they want from them and can the clubs and organisations supply it? That is another tricky question indeed! I do not know the answers, but they are hot topics at the moment from not only the UK, but also elsewhere in the world. What are your thoughts?

Lack of appreciation?

I do have a gripe that many people, as with other disciplines of woodwork, just do not appreciate carving or value it and if people do not value it, it is tricky to get people interested and give something a go, or part with some hard earned cash to buy what we make.

That said, Christmas is upon us and Christmas craft fairs are always popular. It is one of the times when people do buy carved and crafted items – typically folksy, whimsical and decorative things – many of which are fun to look at and make. I am all for carving something that makes people smile – maybe they are recalling childhood memories, stories or folktales passed down through the generations. Certainly, they are buying something handmade and that is all good. Can we convert them to the wider possibilities of what can be done and show them what has been done, possibly without them realising what is about them in everyday life?



Mark Baker

Mark Baker
Editor of **Woodcarving**



PHOTOGRAPH BY GMC/MARK BAKER

A carving in granite in the harbour of Honningsvåg in Norway – not far from the North Cape

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for extra app pictures

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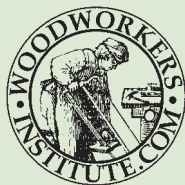
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The Woodworkers Institute web forum



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: carving out success



Members of the Bedfordshire region club



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE BWA

Examples of carvings made by the service personnel and veterans from the Help for Heroes Phoenix House Recovery Centre

BWA future

As we enter the New Year, what of the future? Well, the future is better than bright. More people seem to want to try carving for themselves. The place to do that is with the BWA. At hobby level there is no better place to enjoy carving. Each region is a family within a family and a friendly atmosphere prevails throughout. One region proclaims that there are no strangers, just friends we haven't met yet! The New Year is full of exciting promise for the BWA. There is now only two short years to the association entering its third decade. There is much to do. However, there is a good team to guide the association into that phase, which is full of new ideas while still being

mindful of the past. Some junior members who have had to endure a hiatus while their studies have taken them away from their hobby will undoubtedly be back and hopefully with a voice to be heard about the future of carving.

Regions

The BWA welcomes a new region, which is to be known as Cleveland Carving Club. The catchment area serves the A19 corridor from Northallerton in the South, to Sunderland in the North and the area out to the coast. The club meet on Thursday afternoon 1-3pm in St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Cleveland.

The regional leader is Vince O'Donnell who has responded to the interest shown in carving at the shows he attended while demonstrating with Coniscliffe Carving Club – Durham and North Yorkshire region. New carvers to this region will enjoy the benefit of having Barry Howcroft as a founding member. Barry is a retired carving tutor from the area's College of Further Education. Another founding member is Peter Downham who was the winner of Woodcarver of The Year in 2010.

Bedfordshire is another fledgling region, with 12 members under the leadership

of Terry Nokes. As they could not find a suitable place to meet, Terry constructed a rather large shed at his home to form the region. That dedication paid off and to date, has seen visits from Stan Kimm and Eileen Walker.

Terry recently entertained members from the Royston Woodworkers group – not a carving group – who lavished high praise on his work and presentation. Next year they plan to join two other regions carving at Hatfield House.

An unusual venue to display and demonstrate for Coniscliffe Carving Club was at a model railway fair. This was held in Shildon Railway Museum and was really for model railway enthusiasts. As the only wood-orientated pursuit in the museum it generated huge interest in carving as a hobby and left a lot of people wondering about trying it out for themselves. Some of those people will find they need to scratch that particular itch and some will even carry on carving.

The region has been mentoring army personnel returning from active service and engaged in resettlement through the Help for Heroes programme held in Catterick Garrison. The progress and carvings made by these guys is impressive.

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: promoting bird carving



View of the BDWCA stand before the show



Wildlife Artist Bruce Pearson presents the raffle prize to the winner, Luke Curno

For many years now the Association has exhibited at the British Birdwatching Fair, which is held at Rutland Water Nature Reserve. Held in the month of August each year, this year was the 26th Anniversary of the Birdfair, which has received the support of many thousands of visitors, who have helped to raise over £3 million to support international conservation initiatives.

The BDWCA has, in recent years, had a large double stand at the main entrance to the Art Marquee. One of our constitutional aims is to promote interest in the art of bird carving, both nationally and internationally, and the Birdfair provides an ideal opportunity to further these aims. The attractive display, showing many carved species of bird, is a huge attraction. Many visitors could not believe that they were created from wood or that there is an Association devoted to carving them.

Imagine how pleased we were this year when, on Saturday

evening, after two days of the three day show, we were presented with the award for Best Stand in the Arts and Crafts category. What made this even more special for us was that this award was not just given for the appearance of the stand, but also for the way we had been interacting with the public! Apparently, judging committee members had been circulating, unknown, around the marquees observing!

On Sunday afternoon we drew the raffle. This year it was of a Great Tit, which had been carved by 2013 British Champion, Steve Toher. Wildlife Artist Bruce Pearson drew the winning ticket and was then able to present the Great Tit to the lucky winner, Luke Curno. Luke, a member of the South West Peregrine Group, was an exhibitor at the Birdfair and had bought his ticket while helping out as a Birdfair Volunteer – we were so pleased.

We talked to many interesting

people, had five new members join the Association – the youngest aged 15 and the oldest 80+ – and achieved our main objective to introduce our art form to a wider audience!

Dates for your diary
8–9 November, 2014 – the Northern Group of the BDWCA will be holding their Annual Bird Carving Exhibition at RSPB Leighton Moss, Storrs Lane, Silverdale, Carnforth, Lancashire LA5 0SW.

See www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/l/leightonmoss

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



'Great Tit' carved by 2013 British Champion, Steve Toher, for raffle at the Birdfair

PHOTOGRAPHS COPYRIGHT PAM WILSON FOR THE BDWCA

Conversion chart

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

LETTERS

Art of carving

Good morning, Mark
I was really pleased to see the back page of *Woodcarving* this month – the idea was brilliant from the start and filling the niches with modern day martyrs in the 14th-15th century style was great. But even better was that four British carvers, well their names seemed to be right, could do such great work and look really

15th century. Keep up the photos from other parts of Europe. Beverley Minster – turn right at the Humber Bridge, head for Beverly/Bridlington – did not suffer under the Reformation. It was not a cathedral; the front is covered in stone carvings and inside there is much stone work, woodcarving and helpful stewards. The Percival stonecarving is

the best in Europe so they say! I did my apprenticeship in hot metal and I sometimes wish I had known about carving then, but for now I will have to rely on Paul Bignell to try and do better – it's a good job he has patience!

*All the best,
Ken Willoughby – Essex Carvers*

Carved Santa

Hi Mark,
My name is Kjell Musland and I am 62 years old. I come from a place called Seimsfoss on the west coast of Norway. I started carving in 1978. My first work was a horse, which was not the easiest thing to begin with.

These small sculptures of Nisse – Santa Claus – are made from limewood (*Tilia vulgaris*), which measures around 120-150mm high. These are very popular

Christmas gifts and are made using a bandsaw, a Merlin carving blade followed by a small knife.

I have made thousands of small different sculptures and also bigger ones using a chainsaw. I went on the Norwegian Woodturning Cruise this year – it was my fourth time attending and it was a great experience.

*Regards,
Kjell Musland*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KJELL MUSLAND

*Kjell's Norwegian
Santa Claus*

Knife & power tools in carving

Hi Mark,
I was interested in your editorial regarding the discussion and usage of the knife and power tools in carving.

Carving wood goes back into the mists of time and the variety and shapes and sizes of carving tools have evolved to meet the needs of the carvers who made the exquisite and intricate decoration we see in our churches and old buildings.

A knife is a flat straight blade, held in a different way, and probably used in a more limited way, but it is still used by

hand to incise wood decoratively. Surely, then it must be a carving tool? However, electricity is with us and as human endeavour over the years is to make life easier and quicker, the power carving tool was inevitable.

Sheffield plate evolved as an inferior and cheaper alternative to solid silver and the end product looks the same. Methods of gilding have become cheaper, easier and look almost identical to gold leaf, which is the ultimate in gilding. At the end of the day, let us

have plain honesty in describing work on display or for sale so that articles can be evaluated on merit.

In the past, so many handcrafts have disappeared – Celtic and Saxon artwork is now being studied to find out how it was done! – so perhaps it is not only those practising pure hand carving who are keeping alive a craft that could soon be lost, but also the craft of the hand tool-makers.

*Yours sincerely,
Sonia Rudge*

ALL ROADS LEAD TO HARROGATE!

The North of England Woodworking & Power Tool show, or, the 'Harrogate' show as it is otherwise known, takes place at the Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate from 21–23 November, 2014. This event is the largest retail woodworking and power tool show in the country and is now in its 22nd year. For those who attend, you can expect a great day out as more than 30 top demonstrators are taking part. There are four 'mini' theatres, a woodworking clinic and over 70 of the leading companies in the industry will be exhibiting.

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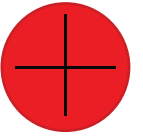
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Carving capitals

Johan Roudy shows you how to create these elaborate capitals

Capitals are one of the most classical features of architectural carving. Since the 13th century BC, right up to today there have been an infinite variation and evolution of forms and styles. This example comes from a 19th-century model. Forming part of a piece of church furniture, the original was quite small – about 120mm wide – which explains its simple shapes. It was obviously designed to enhance the furniture in a straightforward way. I found it interesting that at a larger scale, it looks as much traditional as it does stylised.

This particular capital is 330 x 330 x 245mm and has only three sides carved as it will be fitted on a church organ. The prepared block of wood is a glue-up of 40mm thick boards, with the grain running vertically. It could have been a plain cube, but in order to save some wood, it was made at 280mm width and extra parts were added for the volutes to reach the 330mm needed at the top. Before starting to carve, the first steps will consist of roughing out the basic shapes on both sides and the angle view.

The patterns are more a reference guide of sizes, shapes, guiding lines and depths than a whole design to decorate the wood. You can also use them to make cardboard templates where you need profiles or shapes.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHAN ROUDY

Things you will need...

Tools:

Gouges:

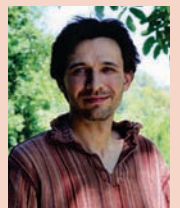
- No.3, 30mm
- No.3, 40mm
- No.5, 16mm
- No.5, 30mm
- No.5, 35mm
- No.5, 40mm
- No.6, 16mm
- No.6, 25mm
- No.7, 25mm
- No.8, 25mm
- No.8, 35mm
- 'V'-tool 60°, 10mm minimum
- 30mm straight chisel
- Saw

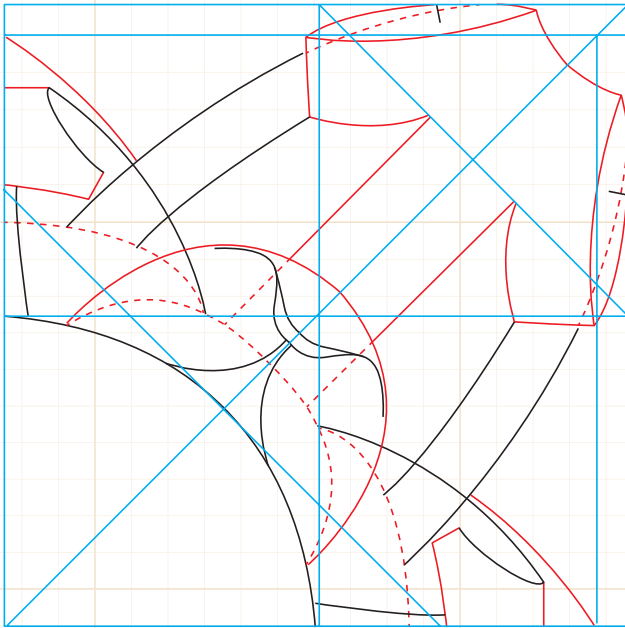
Wood:

Laricio pine (*Pinus nigra laricio*)
Many light coloured and straight grained woods, such as limewood (*Tilia vulgaris*) would be suitable
330 x 330 x 245mm

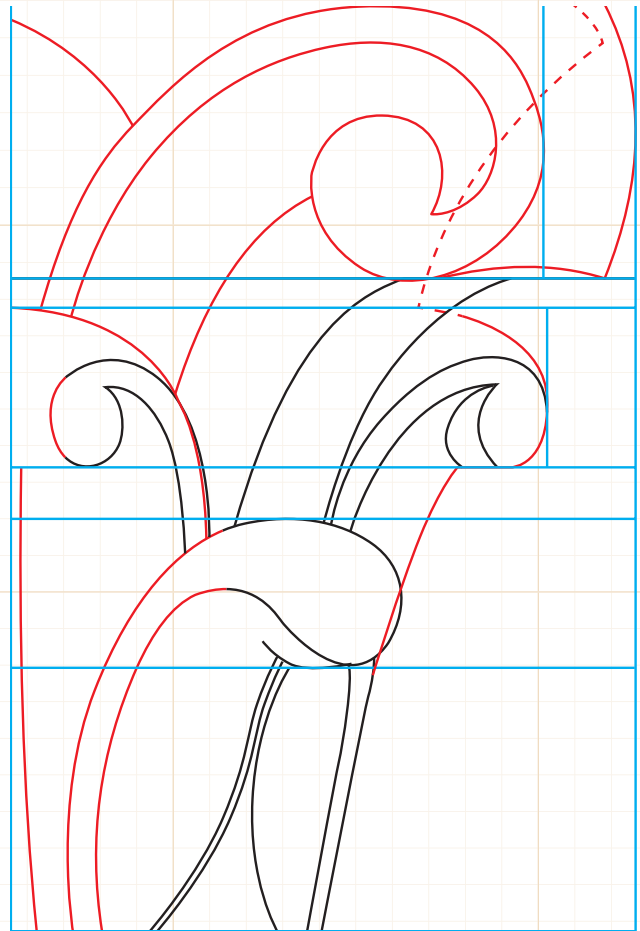
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Johan is a French carver who started woodcarving in 2005 as a hobby, but turned professional in 2012. Self-taught, he is inspired by nature and has a great interest in ornamental carving. See more of his work here: johan-roudy.overblog.com

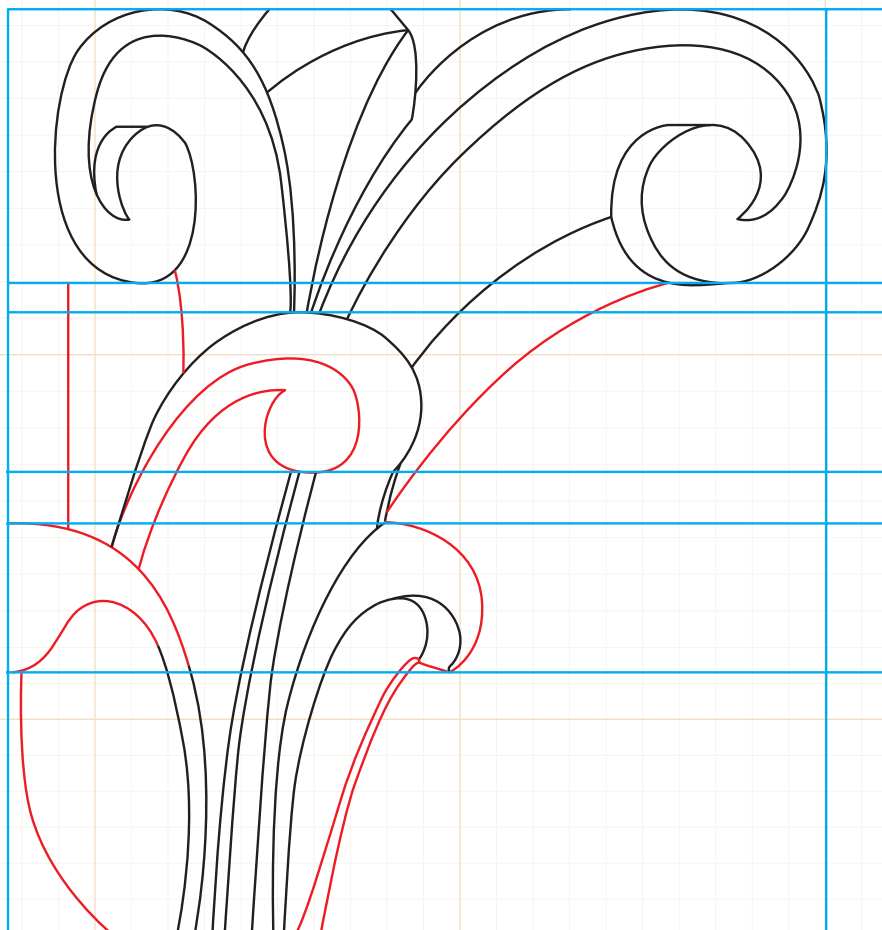




Top and bottom view



Front view



Angled view

➔ **1** Mark the height of the top and bottom of the leaves and volutes on the sides and draw vertical lines in the middle of each. On the top and bottom draw the centrelines and diagonals and a 165mm circle in the middle. Along the circle, draw a square parallel to the sides and a diamond so that you get an octagon. Note: each step should be made on each side of the capital before moving on to the next

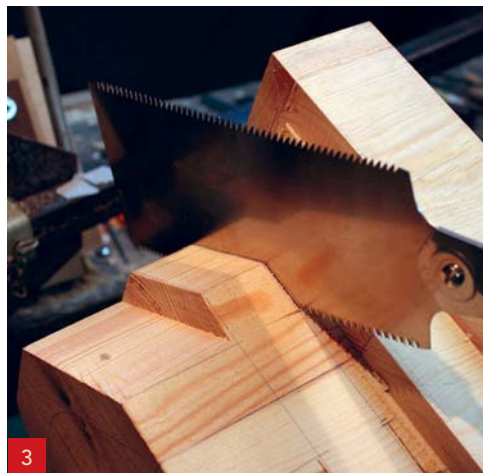
2 Cut 25mm deep at the bottom of the volutes on each side and cut the bottom protruding part of the upper leaves at the depth of the tip of the leaf. Make a 45° cut on the angles at the top of the lower leaves and another small one just under the volutes. Draw a vertical centreline on the angles. Remember to mark the guiding lines again after each cut

3 Cut the bottom of the protruding part of the leaves and extend the cut at the top of the lower leaves to their definitive depth. Remove the waste under the leaves

4 On the angles, carve the curved profile under the volute. Start with a No.8, 25mm gouge across the grain to remove most of the wood, moving to flatter gouges to clean. Then use a No.3, 30mm across and down the grain. Use the first one as a reference to make the others. Under the upper leaves, lower the bottom until you reach the circle. Draw the volutes 24mm away from the edge. Use a straight chisel to remove the angle and cut the profile of the volute

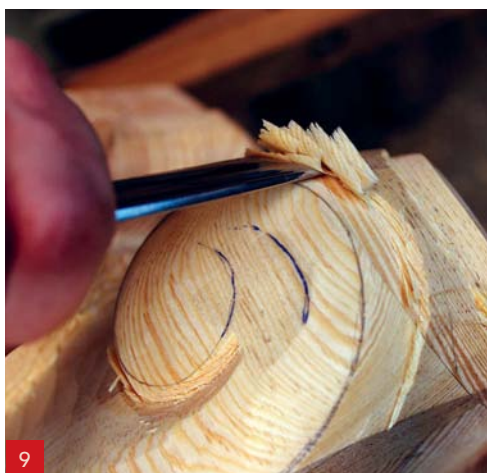
5 Using the No.6, 25mm and the No.5, 30mm gouge, stab the inside of the volute up to the top of the 'eye'. Keep extra wood around the line for refining. On the corners, draw the vertical lines of the flat central 'stem' under the volute, then lower the area above the upper leaf. In the middle, use the No.8, 35mm to carve a straight groove from the top, where the central leaf will be set, and two grooves following the lines of the volute's fillets. Pare back to the depth of the grooves, evenly turning around the volute

6 Using the No.3, 40mm gouge, stab a curve on the top of the upper leaf to allow you to carve downward around the volute and up to the line of the central stem at the angle. Keep removing some wood above the upper leaf to get 3.5cm depth in the middle





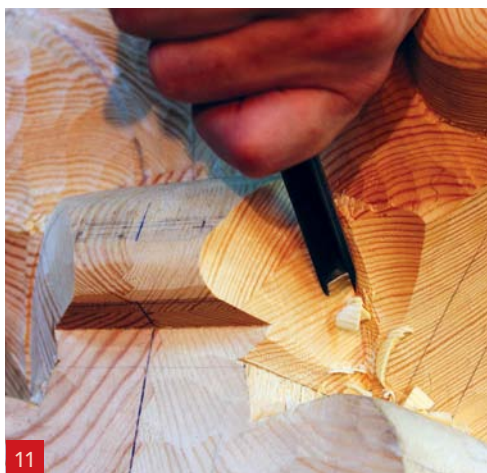
7 On the protruding part of the leaves, draw a line where the most prominent point should be. Round the profile of all the leaves across the grain, starting from the sides toward the centre, progressively approaching the line. Use the No.3, 40mm then the No.5, 40mm gouge. Try to make the profile as close to the pattern as you can on the lower leaf, but just lightly round the upper leaf



8 Set in the shape of the volute closer to the drawing, almost to a square angle, and use the No.3, 40mm gouge or a flat chisel to round the eye, mostly at the bottom and the inside, taking care of the grain direction. Round the top and evenly connect the volute to its stem. The highest point of the spiral, just lightly rounded, should be located at the angle

9 Once rounded, redraw the spiral and tighten the angle between the volutes with the same gouge using slicing cuts

10 Clean the centre with a No.5, 35mm gouge until you match the previous cuts in a clean hollow. Switch to the No.3, 40mm for the top and the bottom and shape the upper leaves, then...



11 ... using a flat gouge, remove some material on the sides of the leaf, aiming the lower leaf cut. Dig the outside edge of the leaf with a 'V'-tool and remove the waste on the volute's stem. Use a cardboard template to draw the side of the leaf to see where more wood has to be cut off

12 Repeat the last step until the template fits on the sides of the leaf. Use the saw cut below as a mark to position the template

13 Carve the profile of the top of the leaf with the No.3, 40mm and No.5, 35mm gouges, following the pencil lines and flattening the top



14 Redraw the inside edge of the volute fillet. Starting from the spiral with the wing flat, run the 'V'-tool along and twist to reach the top of the leaf in a vertical position. Go deeper, paring the sides of the central leaf with a flat gouge, until you can draw the fillet at the same width that's at the top of the volute. Remove 10mm at the top of the central leaf to reach the same depth that's at the top of the spirals. Carve the light curve going from the tip of the leaf to the beginning of the fillets

➔ **15** Draw a line halfway between the central stem and the fillet. It should follow the curve of the whole stem and look almost vertical from the angle. Use a No.6, 25mm gouge to carve the first hollow of the stem, following the inner line of the fillet. Refine the curve of the central flat stem



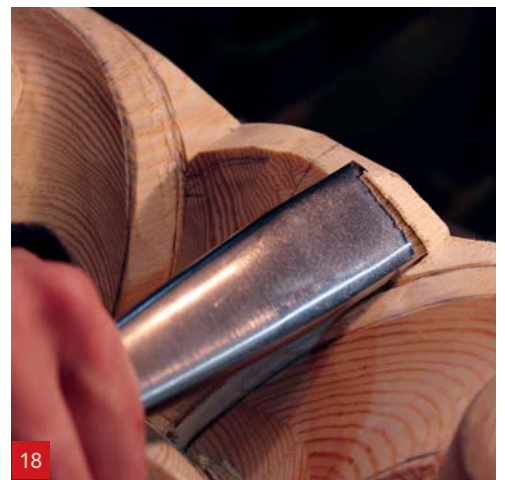
16 Carve the second hollow downward, from the side, with the No.5, 30mm gouge. Carefully approach the line of the central stem and the edge of the first hollow. At the top, use slicing cuts on the wall of the volute to get the groove deep enough. Set in the outline of the upper leaf and clean its connection to the hollow



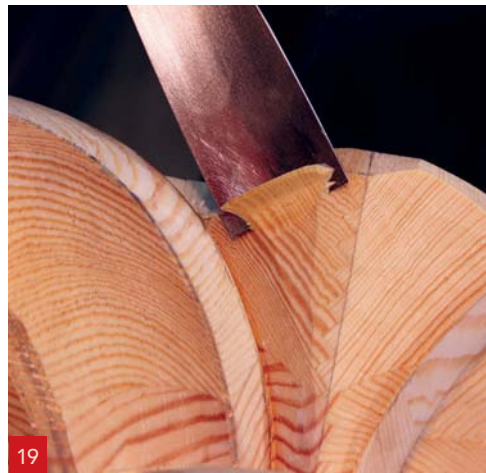
17 With several slicing cuts, use the No.5, 30mm gouge to set in the rest of the eye. In order to get an even increasing depth as it goes to the top use the No.6, 25mm or No.7, 25mm gouge to carve the recess of the spiral. Start from the bottom to the centre of the curve, then go back from the top to the centre



18 Draw the edges of the central leaf and remove some excess of wood with the No.3, 30mm gouge. Set in the outside of the fillets – they will be deeper at the top than at the bottom



19 Clean the sides of the leaf with the No.3, 30mm gouge to match the middle line and the stab cuts of the fillets. Set the definitive outline of the leaf with the same gouge at about a square angle from the surface of the leaf. Deepen the back of the fillets and the back of the leaf and carve a flat surface along the grain in the background



20 Back on the leaves, using a flat gouge, give a sweet curve to the sides, on the upper leaves and then on the lower leaves



21 Draw the outline of the lower leaf on the side and begin to round the angles on the protruding part using the No.3, 30mm gouge, approaching the outline on the side. Clean the connection between the upper and the lower leaf



22 Draw the stem of the upper leaf. Using the 'V'-tool, outline the stem and the lower leaf along the pencil lines. The top of the stem will be set in with a flat gouge, as the tip of the leaf doesn't allow the 'V'-tool to reach the corner





23



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23 With a No.5, 16mm gouge, carefully set in the small volute of the leaf with slicing cuts, removing the waste downward from the side. Use a No.8 or 9 gouge to carve a groove along the inside line of the leaf fillet

24 With the No.3, 30mm gouge, begin to flatten on either side of the stem and round the leaf towards the groove



25



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25 Round the tip and the top of the lower leaf using the No.3, 30mm gouge and No.5, 30mm gouge. Refine the profile if necessary and draw the curl

26 Carve a groove along the inside line of the fillet – as in step 25. Pare the bottom of the leaf to match the circle on the underside and the grooves. Carve the stem and round the inside as on the upper leaf

27 Deepen slightly under and around the curling part of the leaf, giving a bit of undercutting under the tip with a flat gouge

28 Carefully round the corners so that the fillet has an even width and melt in one surface at the top. Refine the outline of the leaf to its 'U' shape



27



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29 Clean all the connections between the different elements. A moulding or 'abacus' should be made to cover the top. Its size should match the width of the top of the volutes

30 Your final piece should look something like this ▶



29



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Christmas fun



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GMC/ANTHONY BAILEY

Peter Benson shares some fun ideas for Christmas carving projects

Over the years, in this magazine, we have seen projects and carvings from some of the best professional and hobby carvers around. Those of us who fall into the category of semi-professional or hobby carvers strive to achieve the excellence shown by the many professionals in this country and worldwide. Sometimes, though, I think we take ourselves a little too seriously and run the risk of losing the

very reason that we carve – to have fun and to achieve something. If we are not enjoying the process, are not achieving what we want to achieve and are not giving anyone else any pleasure, then why are we carving at all?

Christmas workshop

While most of my students take their carving very seriously and strive to do better, this doesn't apply to all of them. Many attend classes for the companionship and pleasure they get from sharing their hobby. With this in mind we have developed a custom in all the classes that once a year, in preparation for Christmas, we carve something purely for fun. I am required to produce different patterns each year for them to work from. Some will copy, some will make their own variations and others will simply use the blank or block as a basis for their own design. For a few weeks the classroom or workshop resembles a sweatshop as they are trying to produce enough of these to satisfy the demands of their friends and families. We now have family gatherings where all the children and grandchildren

meet around Christmas time to paint the carvings that Grandpa or Grandma have carved.

What is very evident with these sessions is that much of the stress that trying to carve a 'masterpiece' usually produces is totally lacking. The carvers still set themselves high standards but in a very different way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Benson has been carving since he was 11, making planes with his pocket knife. He became a P.E. teacher before teaching children with special educational needs. Since retiring, Peter set up the Essex School of Woodcarving in his studio home, tailoring his courses to the requirements of the individual.



One of the carved Santas



Two different views of the snowman

Making the pieces

There are three main ways you can set about carving Christmas characters:

1. You can sort out a basic pattern by carving or modelling a prototype and then cutting it out with a bandsaw or coping saw. You then carve as near as you can to your original, making any adjustments as you go along.

2. The second method is to start with a fixed shape block from which any different subjects will be carved. This was done with the nativity set and has advantages in that you don't have to stick to a set design – it just has to fit into the basic block. The 'copy carvers' find this a little more difficult, but it is a very good way to wean them off copying and produces some very good results quite quickly. If they are really reluctant to change, I show them a variety of options that are possible from the basic block and they can go from there. Sometimes it is better to just go with the flow.

3. The third option is to use random shaped pieces of wood and get them to make up their own subjects. This can be a bit scary at first but if the block has come from the waste bin, the carvers don't see it as much of a disaster if it all goes pear shaped. They don't have to know that you probably cut out the random shape in the first place!

As all these pieces tend not to be carved in isolation, the design process is ongoing. Each carving is a development of the one before with new skills and additions being added as you go along.

Once you start with your designs you will be amazed how your mind starts to get carried away, adding new elements to each successive carving. We have had carol singers with mobile phones, bottles of drink, snowballs, lanterns, catapults, bells, trees, and the list goes on!

As a result, one problem with carving small pieces like these is that you get tempted to include too much detail. The design should be kept as simple as possible with detail kept at a minimum. Much can be shown by body language or even by painting, if that is what you want to do.

Cut out from pattern

The snowmen, elves – or Santas – on the first page and the small carol singers

Tools and timber

I have included a selection of some of these projects that have been made over the last few years and you may find them worth trying or not, depending on your viewpoint. If they are not for you, that is fine but don't dismiss them out of hand. If you are a member of a club, then show them to your fellow members, particularly the beginners as they may well like to give them a try.

Each piece has been carved using little more than a knife and maybe a small gouge and 'V'-tool. I have used jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) as this is generally not too difficult to get hold of, is much cheaper than lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) and will take fine detail, as long as your tools are sharp. The standards of work can be what you wish, as long as the fun element is not compromised.

have been cut out from a pattern, as in option 1. This I cut out from one side view or front only and does give the carver a rough idea of the basic shape but doesn't prevent simple changes from being added. The choristers and penguins come from a very basic rectangular block and the nativity set came from a simple curved cone shape cut from a block measuring roughly 100 × 50 × 50mm, with even the pieces cut from the sides being used to make small hanging Santa heads – see photo. The choristers came from a block measuring 125 × 38 × 38mm or thereabouts and the penguins and other small pieces came from whatever was lying around. Very little wood was ever wasted with these projects.



The carol singing kids are roughly 75mm high and can be freestanding or used as hangers



Basic block with waste pieces shown. These will be used for hangers



Basic block marked out together with Santa head hangers made from waste



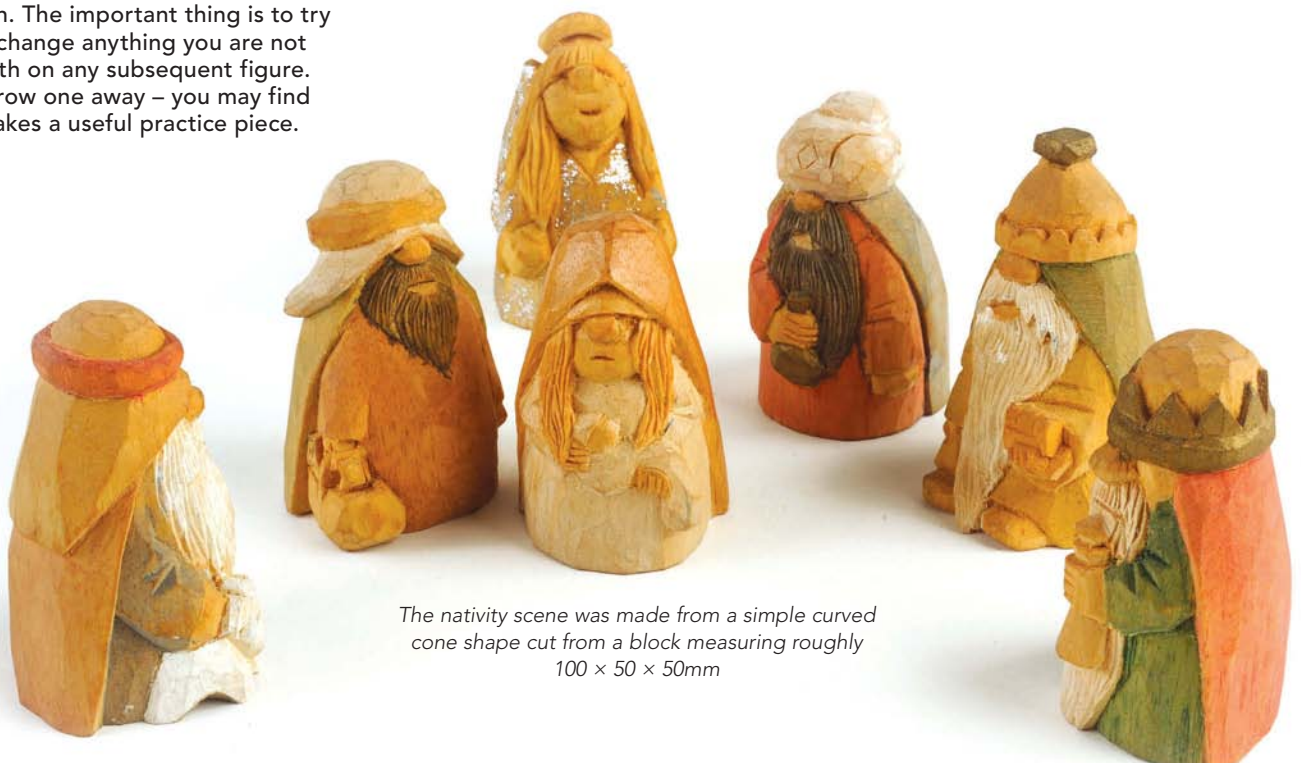
The figure carved diagonally across the corners to give more bulk



These four steps show the first stages of the carvings – in this case the shepherd – working on the head first

Adding design and character

The actual carving process is much the same for all the different designs I have shown here. I recommend that once you have decided roughly where the arms, legs, hands, etc. are to be placed, that you then start by carving the head. This will set the character of the carving, as it is likely to be the most difficult and important part of the carving, if it goes wrong, then you haven't wasted a lot of time doing the rest of the body. You may find that you give yourself a bit more wood to play with by carving your figure on the corner of the block rather than square on. The important thing is to try one and change anything you are not happy with on any subsequent figure. Never throw one away – you may find that it makes a useful practice piece.



The nativity scene was made from a simple curved cone shape cut from a block measuring roughly 100 x 50 x 50mm



These are no more than 50mm high but can be any size or shape that you wish – they don't even have to be accurate penguin shape. The colour will do the trick

All these carvings have been painted with acrylic water based paint. I tend to coat the carving with a mixture of boiled linseed oil to which a small amount of raw sienna oil paint has been added and then paint with very diluted paint giving the carving a tint rather than a bright colour. For Christmas you might

prefer brighter colours, in which case apply the paint undiluted to the bare wood – the choice is yours.

These carvings will certainly not change your life, they may not even be right for you, but they should at least make you or someone else smile and I think they are worth trying just for that reason. ▶



When it comes to choosing the individual designs, let your imagination run wild! After all, carving is all about having fun



These figures are infinitely variable – the cassocks can be any design or colour and the character of each piece can be what you make it. If you don't fancy carving eyes, then give your figure a long fringe. As they are all supposed to be singing, a round mouth is ideal. Again, as with the nativity figures, I advise you to get the head carved to your satisfaction before you start the body. Keep in mind that choristers appear to be little angels but there is mischief lurking underneath – so try to incorporate that in your carving

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"Forbidden Fruit"
Miniature Carolina Parakeets
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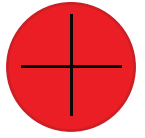
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Gloves & book



Chris Pye takes inspiration from a pair of white ladies' leather gloves to create this 'still life' carving



Learn with Chris

You can watch Chris carving these gloves at www.woodcarvingworkshops.tv

A pair of discarded, never-to-be-used-again, white ladies' leather gloves that I found in a charity shop was my inspiration for this 'still life' carving. Someone has been reading outside, come in – perhaps for tea – and set down her gloves and book.

Well, that's what I hope this carving fools the viewer into thinking, at least for a moment. And it's important to remember: this is not a pair of gloves and a book, but a carving of a pair of gloves and a book. While simplifying to suit the carving process, we need to keep important details that convince the viewer.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS PYE

Things you will need...

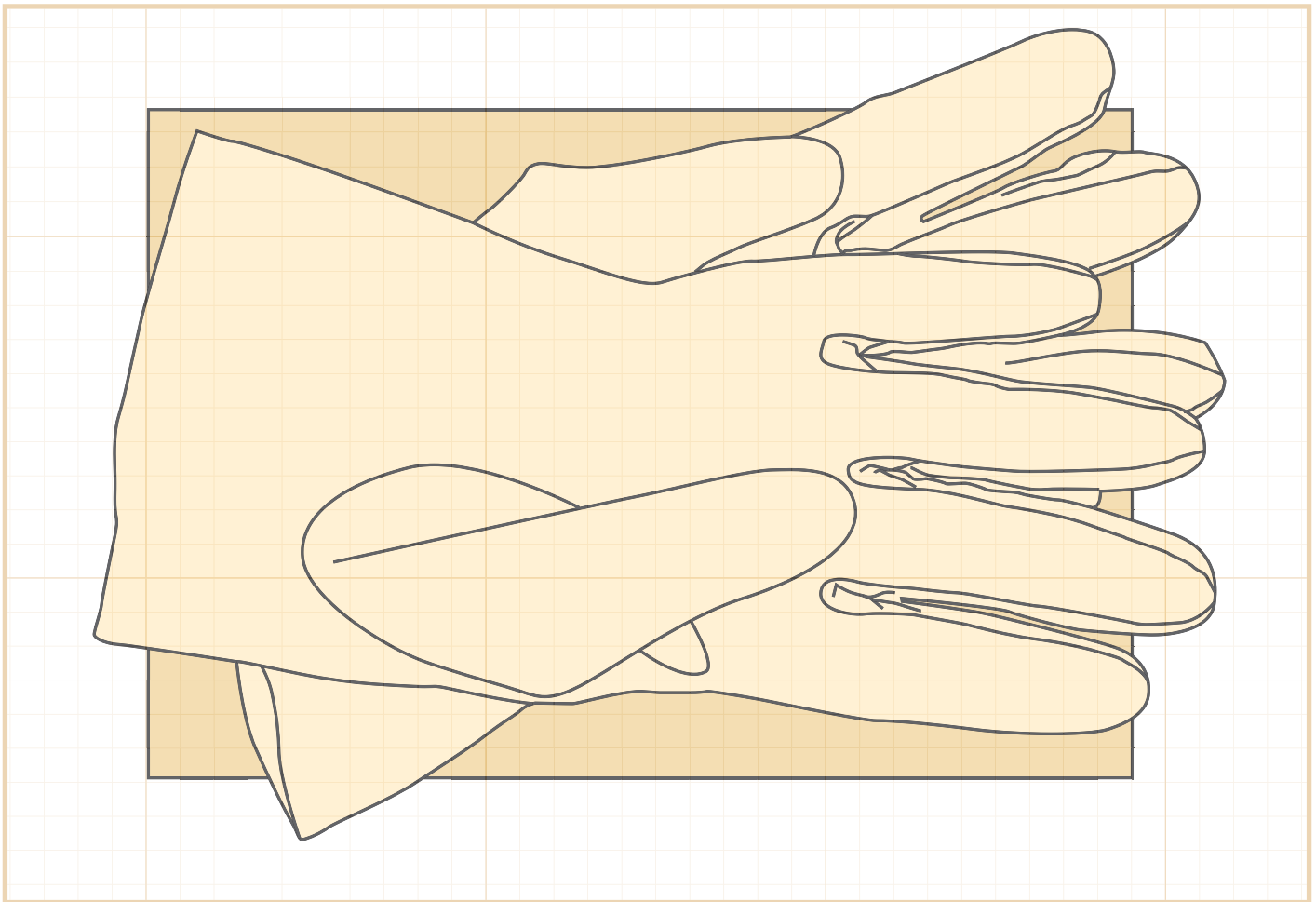
Tools:

No.3, No.6 & No.14, 20mm
No.6 & No.14, 20mm
No.9, No.3, No.6 & No.14, 20mm
'V' tool – 60° x 10mm
No.3 & No.6, 5mm
No.9, 3mm
Left and right skew chisel – 3mm
No.1, 25mm straight chisel
No.2 & No.3, 10mm skew chisel
Rasp

220mm half-round medium tooth – 10 grain

Wood:

A piece of European oak. Walnut will give a similar dark colour. For pale/white, use limewood or sycamore. For red, use Brazilian mahogany. Starting block dimensions: 260mm long x 200mm wide x 65mm dia.



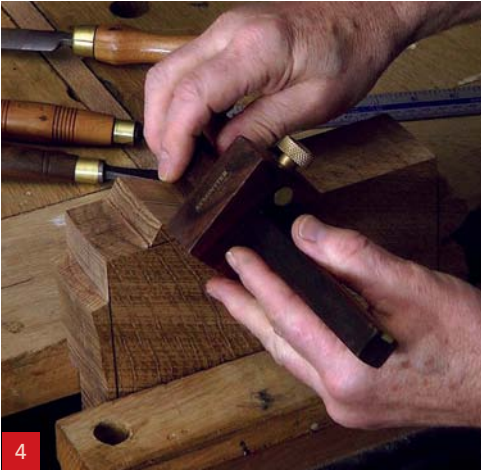
→ Preparation

1 The first step is to stiffen your gloves with wood glue and arrange them on a suitable book, allowing bits to overhang a little at various points. 'Thumbs up' is most interesting, with an attractive fold in the upper glove. Take a digital photo directly from above your arrangement. Print in high contrast to actual size. This becomes your working drawing

2 Use two set squares to establish the highest point of the model and thus the thickness of the wood you'll need. The plane of the underside of the book – the 'back' – is a constant reference point from which to check depths. Another reference is that initial high spot, here on the thumb, which will lie on the surface of your starting block

3 Orientate your wood so the grain strength lies along the weak overhanging fingers. Glue a copy of your working drawing to the surface and bandsaw out accurately – don't forget the book! You now have your starting block, corresponding with your model, and are ready to begin carving





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4 Hold the block in a bench vice. Mark the thickness of the book with a marking gauge by scoring a line all around from the back

5 Reveal the sides of the book by removing excess wood. Flatten the book edge with a medium rasp. Remember that wherever the fingers overhang, they will drop a little below the book with gravity, so allow a little extra wood here for that extra convincing touch

6 Begin to remove wood around the gloves down to just above the book's upper surface

7 Clean up the book and set in the outline of the gloves with flat gouges. Keep the glove sides square. Be very careful not to stab into the book – in fact leave waste wood at the junction as a buffer. At the end of this stage, the gloves look cut out and sitting on a block. Don't attempt to carve the book further at this point

8 Take time to look at the gloves. Look at the model and talk about it to yourself: which are the high spots where you won't take wood away? And lowest? Note the folds and valleys. What are the important details? Be clear about the relationship between upper and lower glove. How do they overhang the book? Mark the high spots in red. Outline the upper glove with a 'V'-tool and lower the glove behind with a deep gouge, working across the grain. Keep looking at the model. Check your depths and work on both sides of the upper glove

9 Work downhill from the high spot on the upper thumb towards its base. As you follow the line and angle of the thumb, you may need to reduce the lower glove further

10 Turning to the opposite side of the upper thumb, find the main shape of the glove. The hill-like fold is another 'high spot'. Keep an eye on the thumb of the lower glove, which lies beneath the edge of the fold – you can see it in the model in the background. This part of the carving looks complicated but is really nothing other than a series of layers with extensive undercutting

11 At this point, the gloves should start to have a crude resemblance to the model. Check points and dimensions between the two with dividers and callipers. Draw in the fingers accurately

➔ **12** Separate the fingers of the top gloves with a 'V'-tool and shape them. Lead the surface around the form and into the gaps. Draw in the fingers and thumb of the lower glove and begin dividing them also

13 After this 'first pass' across the gloves, the overall, main surface should lie close to its eventual finish. You should be able to sense the ghost of the gloves with their fingers lying clearly on what will be the book

14 An adjustable workholding device works well from now on. Keep matching the position of the model with that of your carving. Bring the surfaces around the carving and 'set in' the edges of the upper glove. As you reach the lower glove, set its edges in as well, including the fingers. Undercut only when you are happy with the shapes and outline

15 Carving between the fingers is one of the trickier parts: some of the cutting must be against the grain; you need to undercut quite deeply to create shadow; and beneath these spaces will lie either the glove beneath or – from the lower glove – the book

16 As you get deeper in between the fingers, switch to a narrow skew chisel and cut lightly. From the fingers work your way all the way around the gloves following the forms around the edges and into the undercutting. Be careful here – it is easy to stab into the surface of the book by accident

17 Notice how the model has been simplified. Deep shadows have arisen as the surfaces of the lower glove pass beneath the fold and fingers of the one above

18 The end view shows the glove cuffs separated and undercut. I've taken the heights of various parts from the model. Finish off all undercutting and make sure the junctions between each glove, and between the gloves and the book, are clean and tidy. Sand the upper surface of the book very smooth around the gloves, but not the gloves themselves

19 Now for the surfaces and details. Refer to your model and make final refinements to their shape. Look for seams and changes in plane and how the thumb is stitched on. Use callipers to measure if you need to





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20 Small details, such as these seams around the edges of the fingers, stop the gloves looking like a pair of rubber ones. So too does the lightly tooled surface, which conveys a cotton or leather softness and contrasts with the book. I strongly advise against sanding the gloves; it will only make them look shiny and rubbery

21 Look at your book as closely as you studied the gloves. For example, note how the ends of the pages between the hard covers lie hollow. Round over the spine and sand it smooth. Sink the pages back from the cover boards and up to the spine. True up the inside edges of the cover board with a fine rasp

22 This groove along the spine makes for the hinge. Run it right under the gloves with a narrow, deep, shortbent gouge

23 I chose to add a wash of colour to the book to differentiate the book itself – cardboard – from the gloves – leather – a little more. The book isn't painted; the viewer can clearly see the grain beneath its surface. I used casein-based, old-fashioned 'milk paints', wiping off when dry with fine wire wool and a colour called 'Barn Red', which goes well with the brown of the oak. The result is a nostalgic sort of feel to the carving. Thin watercolours would be another alternative here. The gloves themselves are finished with a simple covering of beeswax. Caution! Always experiment on spare wood first and remember that the final colour will be a combination of the wood showing through and the thin paint

24 The completed project should look something like this ▶

Top tips

1. I cannot overemphasise the importance of the model for getting a convincing look to the carved gloves, the book and how they all lie together
2. Orientate your carving to the model and constantly compare the two. Take measurements with dividers and callipers if you need to
3. The light and shadow of white or pale gloves give you a clear sense of form. Dark or black gloves are far more difficult to 'read'

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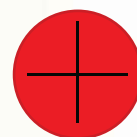
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Carved snail

Jean Grace creates a carved snail in her first project



Having been a member of the Sussex Woodcraft Society for a couple of years with my woodturner husband Chris, I thought I would like to have a go at carving. What would the inspiration be? I had received a bronze snail as a present some time ago and thought that would be an interesting project; little did I know what was ahead. Chris suggested I make him fairly large so that it would be easier to carve. I examined the snail carefully and measured my selected blank, which was about four times his size, so scaling up for the drawing was relatively easy. Just when I had finished the paper drawing, somehow it came as a surprise to me that I had to do it all over again on the wood block and from several directions!

You will need...

Tools:

Bandsaw
Coping saw
Pullsaw
A selection of carving gouges
Foredom flexi-shaft machine
Kutzall 19mm carbide burr
Mallet
Abrasives – Micromesh from P120-P800
Carving clamp
Cut resistant glove
Optivisor
In hindsight, proportional callipers would have been a great help

Wood:

Block of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) measuring 270 x 150 x 100mm

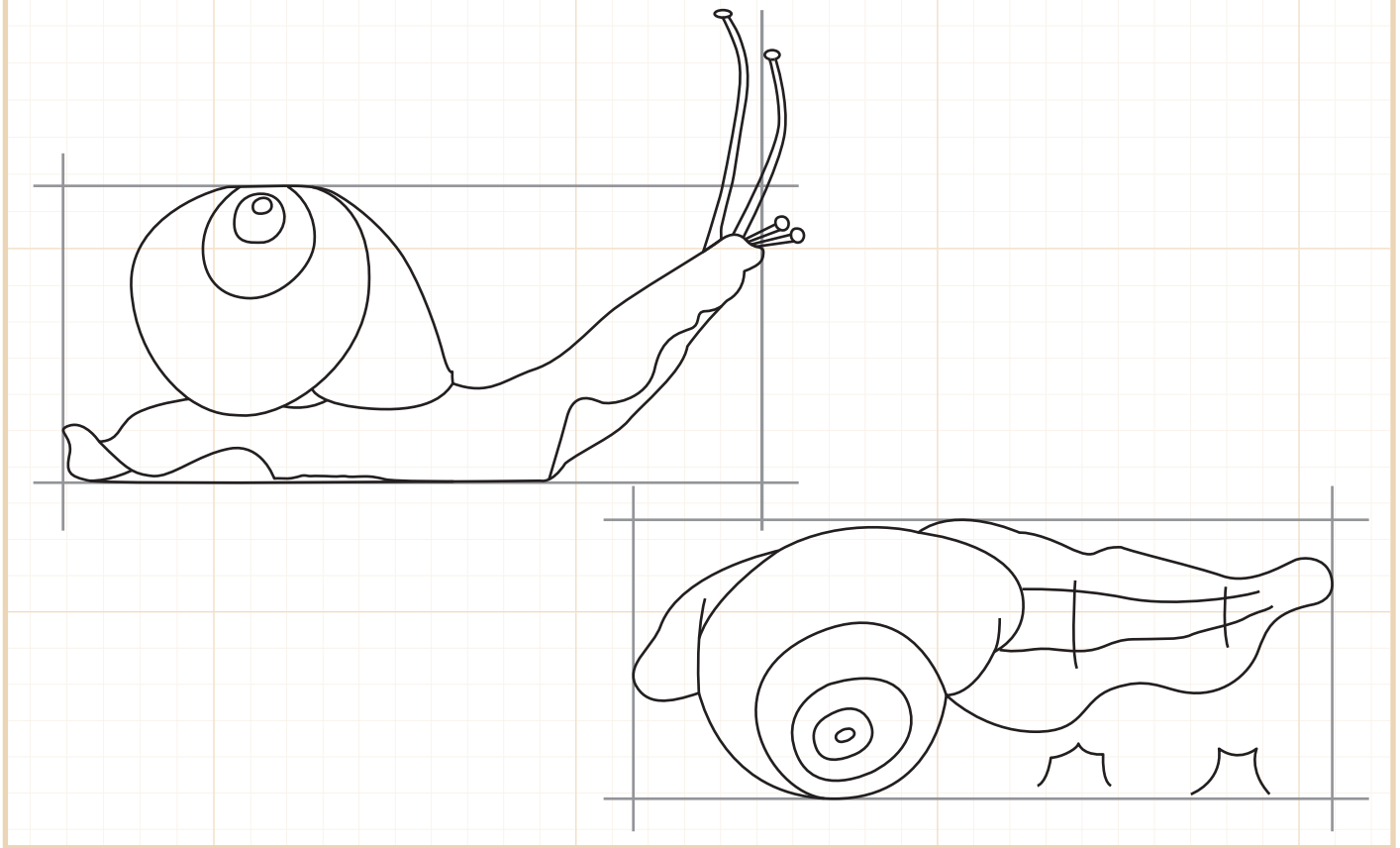
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS GRACE



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jean Grace is a member of the Sussex Woodcraft Society. This, her first project 'Brian', won her first prize in the society's annual competition within the 'beginner' category.





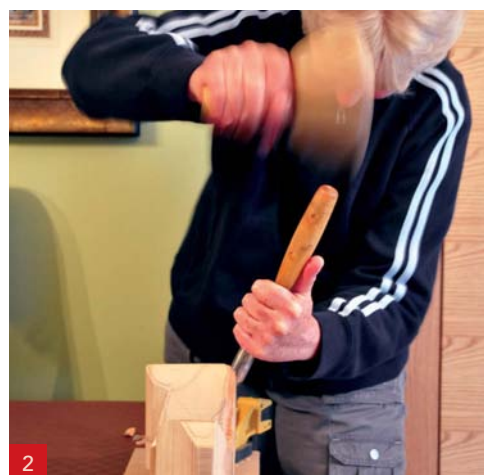
➔ **1** The first step is to cut out the blank. As this was my first project and as I had never used a bandsaw before – and was rather nervous of it – I accepted my husband's offer to cut it out. I then mounted the embryonic snail on a protective piece of MDF shown here with the small bronze and the initial scaled up drawing

2 Next is the roughing out stage. Initially, I found this part daunting, but it turned out to be good fun with the shape improving all of the time – though I was nervous about potentially bashing off a bit that I would need later! For this step, use a shallow gouge and a small one piece mallet to do the roughing out

3 As all of the original drawing should have disappeared at this stage, redraw it on again, but this time on a 3D surface. It acts as a guide to help you see what you should cut away next, or more importantly what you should leave until later. As you progress, try to cut away under the shell. This should reveal its true outline

Top tips

1. If there is a chance of overshooting with your gouge onto the dining room table or metal carving clamp, secure your work to a sacrificial barrier

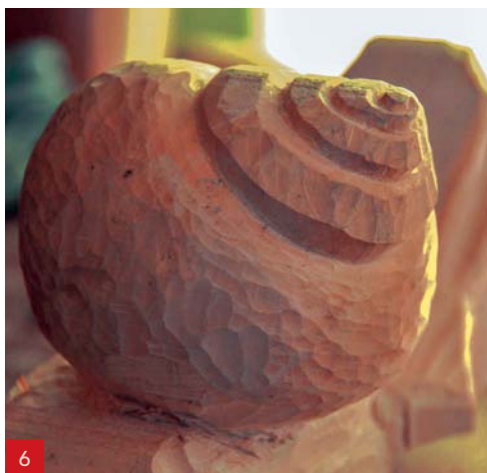




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4 Continue to shape the shell and then draw on the spiral pattern you need

5 Then, follow the line you have drawn on, using a 'V'-tool to gradually start to reveal the spiral of the shell

6 Refine the shape further and as the shape of the shell becomes more refined...

7 ... you can switch to using a smaller gouge. I realised I liked the texture of the small tool marks on my snail, so decided to keep them in the finished carving

8 Having gone as far as you can with the shell of the snail, move onto working on his back. First, draw a centreline ridge, then move onto the top of his back and finally, the position of the skirt. Now you should be able to start shaping his back

"I realised I liked the texture of the small tool marks on my snail..."

9 One of the most useful devices that will help you access all areas of the carving is a Hydraclamp carving vice, which once locked, is extremely solid. Being able to quickly place the carving at the correct angle so that you can see and access the area you are working on makes life much easier. Once you have finished the top, all that's left is his 'face', which I personally just couldn't visualise

10 As I found it hard to visualise the face, I switched to making him some tentacles instead. I was given a small amount of bone and found it hard to carve, so I used a belt sander. This was almost too quick, but I soon got the hang of quickly turning the tentacle as I shaped it

11 The snail needs eyes on the end of each tentacle, which you can shape by hand or with power tools. Once shaped, sand the bone using all the grits up to 800. I had sufficient bone to be able to do the tentacles in pairs back to back, so I held one while shaping its pair. So as not to damage the tentacle an MDF block was made with a hole and slit to hold them and as a guide while carefully cutting them square

➔ **12** The same jig can be used to hold the tentacles in a vice, where you are able to drill a small hole for a magnet to attach them to his head. Use some small neodymium magnets – 3mm diameter – to secure the tentacles to the head. As they will be vulnerable you can then use the file to create small flats on the snail's head where the tentacles will sit so that you can carve up to and around them

13 The magnets can come in handy for visualising the correct position and angle. You can hold them on a small file against the flats created, before progressing to the next stage

14 Drilling perpendicular to the flats is easy with a Hydraclamp or tiltable table, as it enables you to position the snail exactly at the right angle in all directions for the delicate drilling operation. I recommend you drill a test hole in a piece of scrap to ensure the magnets will be a tight fit

15 The magnets are so small and slippery that, after dropping several times, I found the easiest method – and one that would ensure I got them the right way round. Stick one magnet to the tentacle and use that to press them into the snail's head

16 You may have to use a hammer and small punch to push the magnets firmly home. Now you can finally finish the 'face'

17 Next, you need to saw off the chin, making sure to look from both sides, so as not to cut any more off than needed

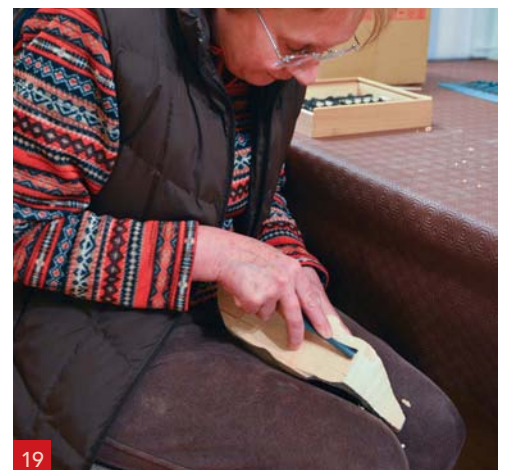
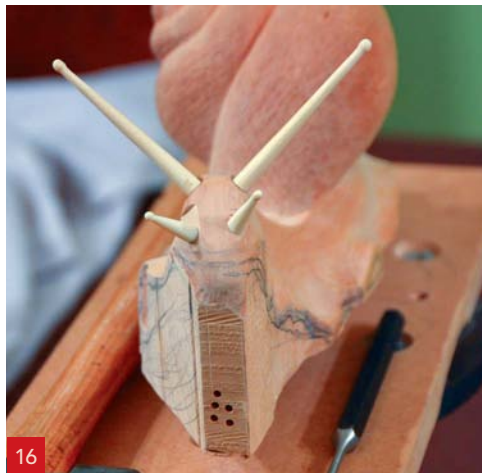
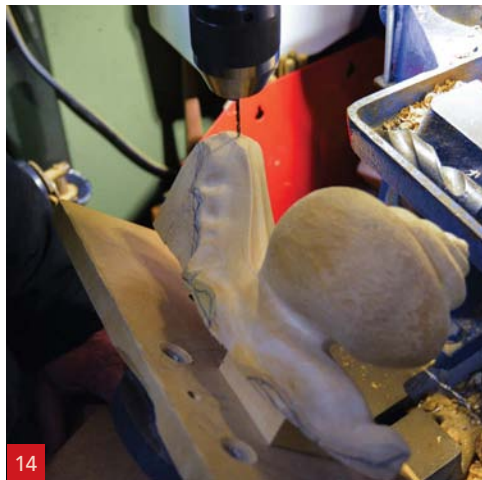
18 Cut the snail loose from the mounting block with a pullsaw; this allows access to the underside

19 You can then begin carving the foot

Top tips

2. Good lighting is essential: on my drill press there are two lights; this makes it easy to line up the two shadows of the drill on the exact point on the work where you want the hole

3. For viewing fine detail, using some form of magnification may help. My Optivisor is comfortable and allows me to use both hands





20



21

20 Using a 19mm diameter, fine Kutzall burr in a Foredom flexible drive handpiece, you can literally erase the wood you don't need. However, it's a dusty process and you will need a form of extraction

21 By now the skirt is quickly starting to take shape and you are able to create the undulations you want to make the snail come alive

22 After some further hand carving, when you are happy with the overall shape...

"By now the skirt is quickly starting to take shape..."



22

23 ... you can start the process of smoothing off with a flatter gouge. Finish off the entire foot with Micromesh abrasives up to 800 grit

24 For me, the snail's bone tentacles turned out to be a very light colour compared to the body, so I dyed them with a solvent-based wood dye, which allowed me to tone them down. The best technique seemed to be to put some on and quickly wipe it off. Finally, give the snail a coat of sanding sealer followed by a buff with microcrystalline wax; this leaves the texture on the shell, which helps to represent the mottled colour of snail shells and also gives the body a soft sheen

25 The final piece should look something like this



23



25



24

Top tips

4. It makes life so much easier if the carving is firmly clamped to a stable base
5. Using a coping saw and regularly looking at lines on both sides of the carving enables you to steer the blade through the irregular shape
6. A gutter drain hopper makes a great chute for a 100mm extractor hose to catch as much dust as possible
7. If you don't have the correct shade of dye, just thin it down and build up the colour to the desired shade
8. Leave the wood under the snail's chin; this will provide support to the vulnerable head while working with a chisel and mallet

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Cat-shaped clock

Duane Cartwright shows you how to make this cat-shaped clock from a piece of oak

For this project I chose to use oak (*Quercus robur*) because of the tangential wood grain of this particular piece of wood. I used a 69mm clock insert on the project, but you could use a different sized clock or a quartz clock movement, in which case you'll need to carve numbers or some kind of mark on the clock face. I designed and carved this project as a gift – for someone who works for the RSPCA – so I wanted to try and convey a cartoony sad cat who needs adopting. Use the design provided at the required size for the piece of wood you wish to use. Once you're happy with how the design fits onto your chosen wood, then transfer the design – I used a 6B carbon stick.

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.



You will need...

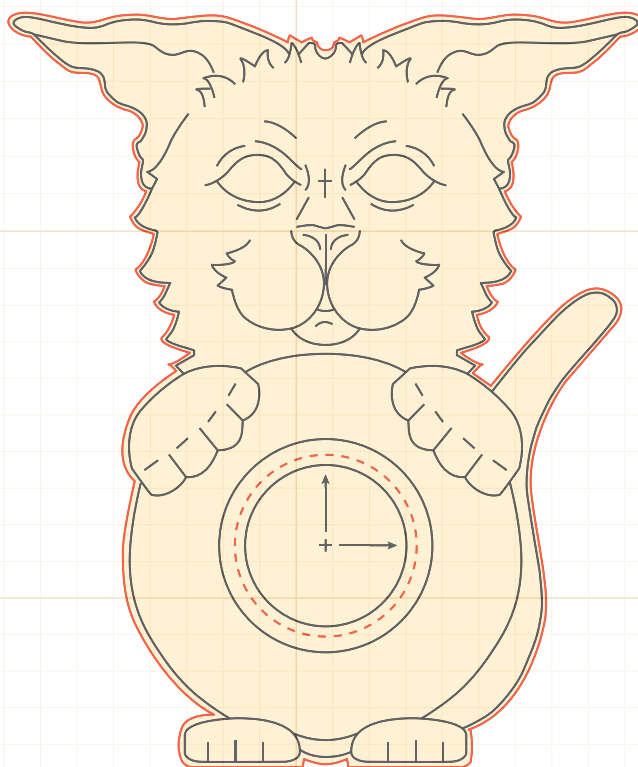
Tools:

- Hooked skew chisel
- No.6, 6mm sweep
- No.9, 8mm sweep
- No.8, 16mm sweep
- No.2, 20mm sweep
- No.3, 10mm sweep
- No.3, 20mm sweep
- No.11, 3mm sweep
- No.11, 2mm sweep
- No.3, 6mm fishtail sweep
- Bandsaw, coping saw or jigsaw
- Pillar drill, hand or cordless drill
- Laser level
- Sanding sealer and wax

Wood:

Oak: 240 x 200 x 20mm

69mm clock – 56 x 19mm hole



➔ **1** The first step, with the design transferred, is to cut out the profile. For this use a bandsaw, but a coping saw or jigsaw will also work

2 Once the profile has been cut out, use a drill with a hole saw blade fitted to cut out the clock recess. If you don't have a hole saw then you can cut the hole with a coping saw or jigsaw. If your hole is too small, carefully enlarge it with a gouge or – 3,2mm rotary tool – sanding drum. If your hole is a bit big and your clock moves or falls out, then a bead of silicon around the edge of the clock when finished will hold it securely. If you use a quartz movement you only need to drill a 8-10mm hole in the centre and then carve out a 55-60mm square recess in the back for the clock movement

Begin carving

3 With the profile and the clock area cut out, the carving can begin. Use a peg board mounted on a ball vice to hold the project while carving – glue and paper would also be a good way to secure the project. With the carving secure, use a No.9 sweep gouge and mark out around the paws and under the cat's chin and tail areas. Continue carving down the clock face and tail by about 5mm, then switch to a No.3 sweep and level off the clock face



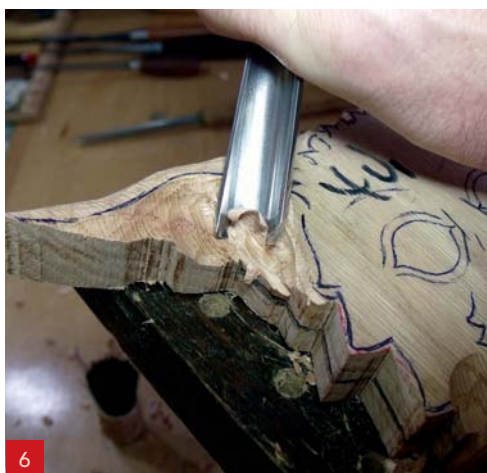


4 Now the clock face is flat and level, redraw the circumference of the clock and then cut in around the clock with the best fitting gouge for the curvature required. Next, carve down the tail area and under the chin and cheeks, so the cat appears to be behind the clock

5 Using a No.3 sweep gouge reversed, round over the paws from the back of the knuckles giving them their rough shape

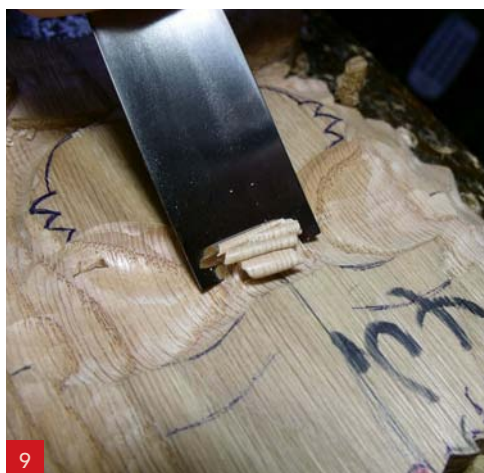
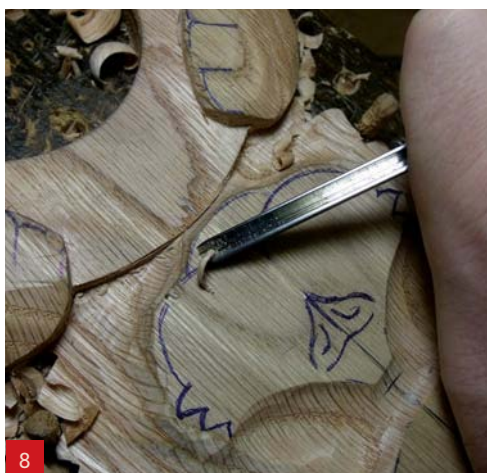
Shaping the ears

6 With the clock face, paws and tail roughly carved/bolstered in, it's time to move onto the head. Start by shaping the ears using the No.8 sweep to round over the outside of the ear and hollow out the inner parts of the ears



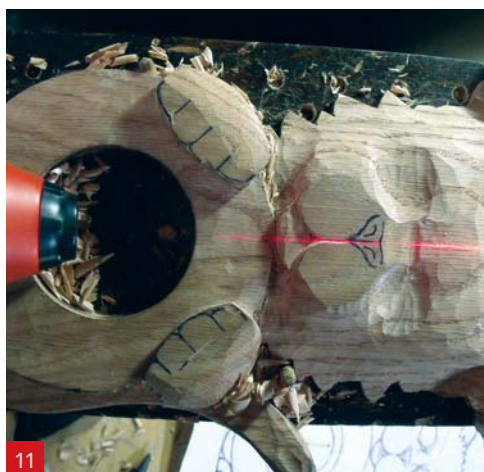
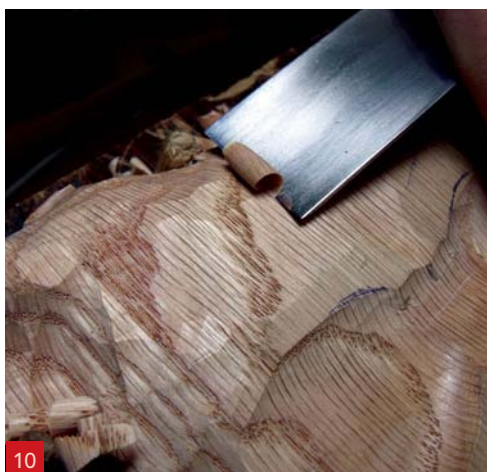
Bolstering in the face

7 Using the No.9 sweep gouge, carve from the inside of the eyes out across the cheeks and then across the bridge of the nose. Then, with the No.8 sweep, continue hollowing out the eye sockets and carving down the sides of the head, giving it its shape. When carving the sides of the head, and to prevent breakages, carve from the edge inwards, rather than down and out across the edge



8 Using a No.11 sweep veiner, mark out the mouth from the cheeks, then using the best fitting sweep cut in and roughly shape the mouth – using the veiner to mark out before cutting in will prevent breakouts

9 Using a shallow No.2/3 sweep, carve back the nose. Start at the tip of the nose and cleanly carve back to the bridge of the nose



10 Then with the same shallow gouge carve and shape the forehead, rounding off the sides of the head and cheeks, blending all the areas of the head together giving the head its shape

11 When you're happy with the overall shape of the head, redraw the eyes and other details back on. For this, I used a cheap non-branded laser level to help show the centrelines. Then, using the design and a set of callipers, copy the details onto the carving. This is where you can make any changes, e.g. difficult grain direction, or the porous grain won't hold the detail

➔ **12** With the detail in place, you can now start with the No.11 sweep veiner and carve down each side of the nose, joining in the centre and down to the mouth, then using the shallow gouge reversed, round over the cheeks and carve in the mouth

13 With the cheeks and mouth of the cat carved, you can now redraw the tufts on the side of the cheeks – whiskers – then using the veiner again, carve them in and level the surrounding area with a shallow gouge

Eyes

14 Once you've drawn the eyes in and you're happy with the shape and overall look of them, use a No.11, 2mm sweep veiner or similar and from the top centre of the eyelid carve down each side of the eye, creating the top eyelids. Then using a shallow gouge, carve from the eyelid straight down to the cheek area. Redraw the bottom eyelids back in place and using the veiner again, carve in the bottom eyelids. With a hooked skew chisel, finish carving the eyeball down to the bottom eyelid. With the eye carved, use the veiner and carve a groove a few millimetres outside the top and bottom of the eyelids; this will help to finish off the eyes

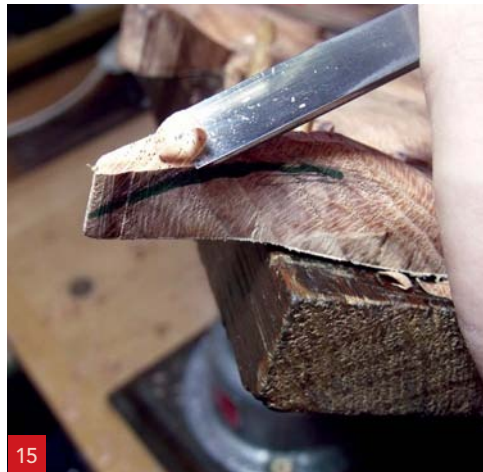
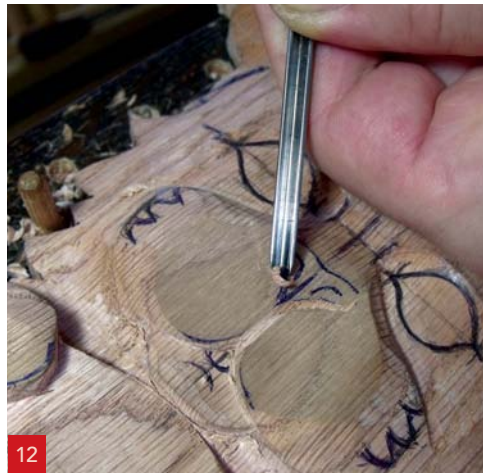
Ears and fur

15 Using a shallow gouge, carve back the corners of the ears, so that they slope backwards. If the wood grain is too weak or it seems like it will break, then just round over the ears

16 Roughly draw the tufts of fur around the ears in place, then using the veiner, mark out around the tufts. If a corner or particular piece breaks/chips off, then reshape it to be stronger with the veiner. Using a No.9 sweep, carve the inside of the ear; slightly undercutting it will help to add shadow and give it its final shape

Mouth and chin

17 Using the fishtail gouge, cut in from the cheeks around the mouth, then using a No.6 sweep, cut out the mouth. Then, under the mouth, carve a groove with the veiner, separating the mouth from the chin. Then, take a shallow gouge reversed and continue shaping the chin and tidying up any areas which need attention





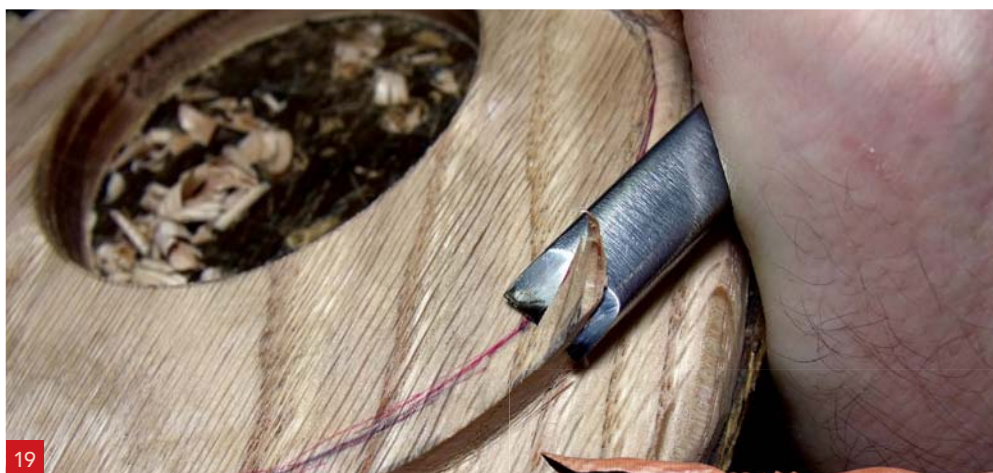
18

Paws

18 Start by separating the toes with a veiner or V-tool, then using a shallow gouge reversed and using the corner of the gouge running down the groove you've just created, round over the toes giving them their shape. The middle/inner two toes are slightly higher than the two outer toes, plus the outer toes need to be cut back a little

Rounding the clock face

19 With the paws carved, clean up the clock face if required and then draw a line about 5mm in from the edge around the clock face. Using a shallow to medium gouge reversed, round over the edge of the clock – if you have a back-bent gouge, then you could use it here. Where the clock meets the paws, or the wood grain is difficult or going in the wrong direction, use a hooked skew or skew gouges with a slicing cut to carve and clean up the area



19

“Turn the carving back over and finish rounding the tail”

The tail

20 Before finishing off the tail area, turn the carving over and cut back the top part/half of the tail; this will create shadow behind the tail, bringing the tail forwards. Turn the carving back over and finish rounding the tail. You can then go over the carving and tidy up any areas you're not happy with and finish off



20



21

21 The completed cat clock should look something like this

Sanding and waxing

When you have finished the carving you have the dilemma of whether or not to sand. Whether you sand or not, you should have the carving at a finished state; it could be left tooled if required. I sanded the clock face and left the cat tooled; this adds a contrast in texture to the carving, plus sanding the clock face first may also help you to decide on whether or not to sand the rest of the carving.

When finished, the carving needs to be sealed using a spirit-based sanding

sealer. Give the carving an even coat, making sure to wipe up any excess. Once the sealer is dry, cut back with 400 grit fine abrasive, then brush down and clean away any dust. I chose to use soft clear wax for the finish. I used an old toothbrush to work the wax into the inaccessible areas, making sure to get any excess or build up out of any corners, etc. as when the wax dries, it will leave a hard whitish build-up. Then, using a soft cloth and a brush, buff the wax finish to a nice

shine. I also use a 3.2mm rotary tool nylon brush to help buff the hard-to-reach areas. A toothpick can also be a handy tool for picking out any wax that builds up in inaccessible areas. If you notice a wax build after the wax has dried, then you could use a hair dryer to soften the wax again, then pick it out with a toothpick and buff to a shine again. The final step is to attach a picture hook to the back of the carving, attach the clock and you're done ▶

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Vitaly Garcia Sigoenko

in profile

Vitaly Garcia Sigoenko tells us about his woodcarving career

Woodcarver Vitaly Garcia Sigoenko was born in the city of Lviv, Ukraine, USSR in 1968 to his Cuban father and his Russian mother. From childhood Vitaly loved moulding clay, drawing and making wood crafts with his cousins and, living where he did, Vitaly had great opportunities to visit well-known art galleries in St Petersburg and Moscow. Some of these included the Hermitage and the Tretyakov Gallery.

As a young child, Vitaly's family moved to Cuba, where he would spend his childhood. During his years at college, Vitaly loved to make models and integrate sculptural designs in all of his projects. In 1994, he graduated with a degree in architecture,



'Regalando Sueños', 2005

acquiring great skills in developing models. During those university years he started to create his first woodcarvings. Although they were small scale – 'thumbnails' – Vitaly was motivated by a set of small tools that had been sent to him from his cousin from the former

USSR. Vitaly also felt an influence and encouragement from his mother, who always inspired him to love the arts.

After graduation, and with a few years of practice as an architect, Vitaly devoted himself entirely to sculpting. He is primarily self-taught, but over

the years has received various snippets of advice from two professors at the Higher Institute of Arts in Havana, Cuba: one, a painter, Iris Leyva and a sculptor Panfilo Cañizares. Vitaly has also taken some courses and workshops in drawing throughout his sculpting career.

Favourite pieces

"This is quite hard to answer," Vitaly tells us when we asked what his favourite piece of his own work is: "It's like having to say who my favourite child is. I can tell you that the themes of my work are very broad, encompassing figurative contemporary linear, portraits, miniatures, among others."

Vitaly soon picks a number of pieces to tell us about. His first chosen piece is titled 'Friends...why not...', which for Vitaly symbolises why the weak – in society's eyes – and the strong – in society's eyes – cannot live together in harmony. He believes that the strong always end up depending on the weak. The piece was inspired by a visit to the southern coast of Havana, Cuba, with his wife. The southern coast is filled with mangroves, crocodiles, fishermen and hunters, who told Vitaly a number of anecdotes about their lives.

The second piece that Vitaly chose to talk to us about is his 'World of Races'. Vitaly describes it as a 'utilitarian work'. The piece uses portrait pipes to represent the four races which inhabit the Earth – based on the ancients' view of the world. In the piece Vitaly uses four elephants to represent the number of races and the round Earth contains the cut of the pipes.

After his first two chosen pieces, Vitaly moves onto some of his other works, which are much more straight-to-the-point in their meaning and portrayal. Vitaly's 'The Guardian' represents an elf guardian of nature, with elements of current technology mixed in. His 'Giving Dreams' and 'Fine Cubita' represent the 'beauty' and 'sensuality' of Cuban women in traditional costumes.

One piece, 'Untouchable' is a self-portrait, but of Vitaly as a child. The minister carving is sat inside a wooden replica of Vitaly's hands. It is inspired by a photograph taken of Vitaly as a child, playing in the sand on a beach, when he would build stuff with pieces of wood.

A theme that has inspired some of Vitaly's pieces is the theme of Don Quixote. He explained: "I always had a great interest in the literature of Cervantes, the Quixotes made with different woods and using different styles, always looking for the expressiveness and his adventurous spirit. I should also mention his squire Sancho Panza, Dulcinea and the portrait of Cervantes as part of this set."

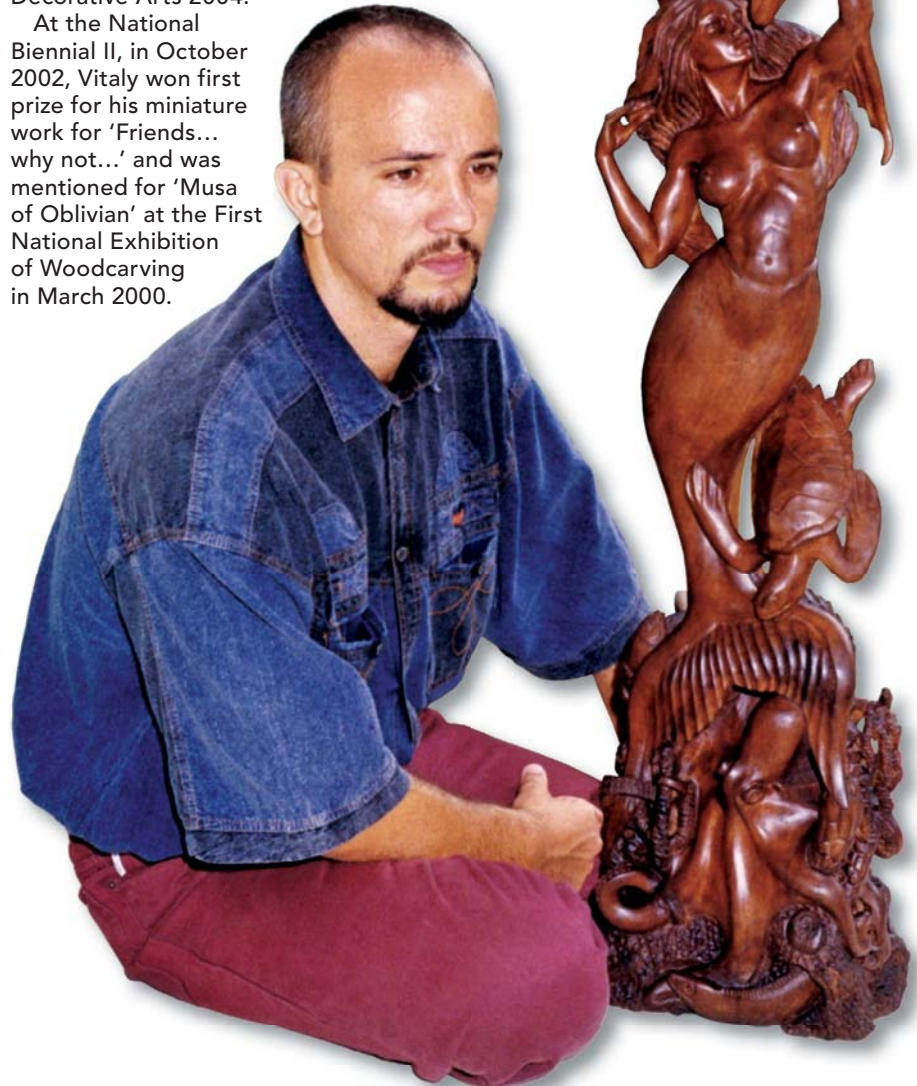
Vitaly's final piece is 'The Muse of Forgetting', a critique of commercialism of the markets in Cuba, where Vitaly believes "the creativity of many of the carvers is motivated by money and they quickly fall into oblivion."

Awards

Vitaly has been nominated for and won a number of awards over the years. Some of these include: second place

in the category of 'No partners' in the 'First Day of Wood' competition, held in Lugones Asturias, Spain in July, 2012; Vitaly was mentioned with his 'The Guardian' work at V Biennial Carving ACAA – Cuban Association of Artisans Artist – held at the National Museum of Decorative Arts of Cuba in July, 2008. Vitaly won second place in the Third National Biennial Carving ACAA, held at the National Museum of Decorative Arts 2004.

At the National Biennial II, in October 2002, Vitaly won first prize for his miniature work for 'Friends... why not...' and was mentioned for 'Musa of Oblivian' at the First National Exhibition of Woodcarving in March 2000.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY VITALY GARCIA SIGOENKO



'Eterna Tentación', 2012

It was held in the International Press Center, Havana, Cuba.

Work methods

Vitaly's work can vary in theme and purpose, listing 'figurative contemporary linear, sometimes fused with realism', 'fantastic realism', 'figurative' among them. These all depend on the objective to be achieved in his work. Most of them reflect the dynamism of life, which is rarely static. "Although I often seek to synthesise the shape of the figures in the figurative contemporary linear line of work, facial expressions is something I always intend to express, because faceless figures, to me, are as if they had no spirit or no reflection of their 'me' inside of them," Vitaly explains.

➡ Before Vitaly's work begins, he can take days to conceive it first in the mind, then he makes sketches, but the final decision is left to the material, in this case, wood. Vitaly tends to improvise most of the elements, but lets the material guide him to the final result.

Vitaly tells us: "My work is based on traditional carving techniques, but I also use an electrical powered Dremel tool to achieve certain effects and some cleanness." In his work, Vitaly tries to achieve a visual balance with the shape and the different shades of the wood. The figurative contemporary linear is also crucial to ensure the continuity of the lines, volumes, or sometimes break one or more elements to highlight an action. Vitaly's pieces are mainly decorative, but sometimes also functional, especially those related to tobacco.

Influences

Many Russian sculptors have influenced Vitaly in his work, but mainly Soviet sculptors Lev Efimovich Kerbel, Vera Mukhina and I. D. Shadr, in addition to Italian sculptors Gian Lorenzo Bernini and Michelangelo Buonarroti, and Cuban sculptor and Vitaly's friend José Duverger Aliaga.

The future

Right now Vitaly is focused on preparing a place to work more comfortably and where he also plans to teach carving. He wants to revisit the issue of creating hands, which he really enjoys, because he feels they are the part of the body that can be used to express the most messages if accompanied by other elements.

Vitaly's work transmits his own life experiences or his own impression of the issues and the people of today's collective society, or even his own. "My work does not have a defined line, it flows from different ideas, always changing and adapting, just as my own life is," Vitaly tells us. Besides the stories of elves and fairies, which fascinate him, Vitaly prefers the reality and the greatness of life itself. In summary, Vitaly wants to work on anything that calls his attention, to reflect it in his work. ▶

Contact

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Web: www.sigoarte.es



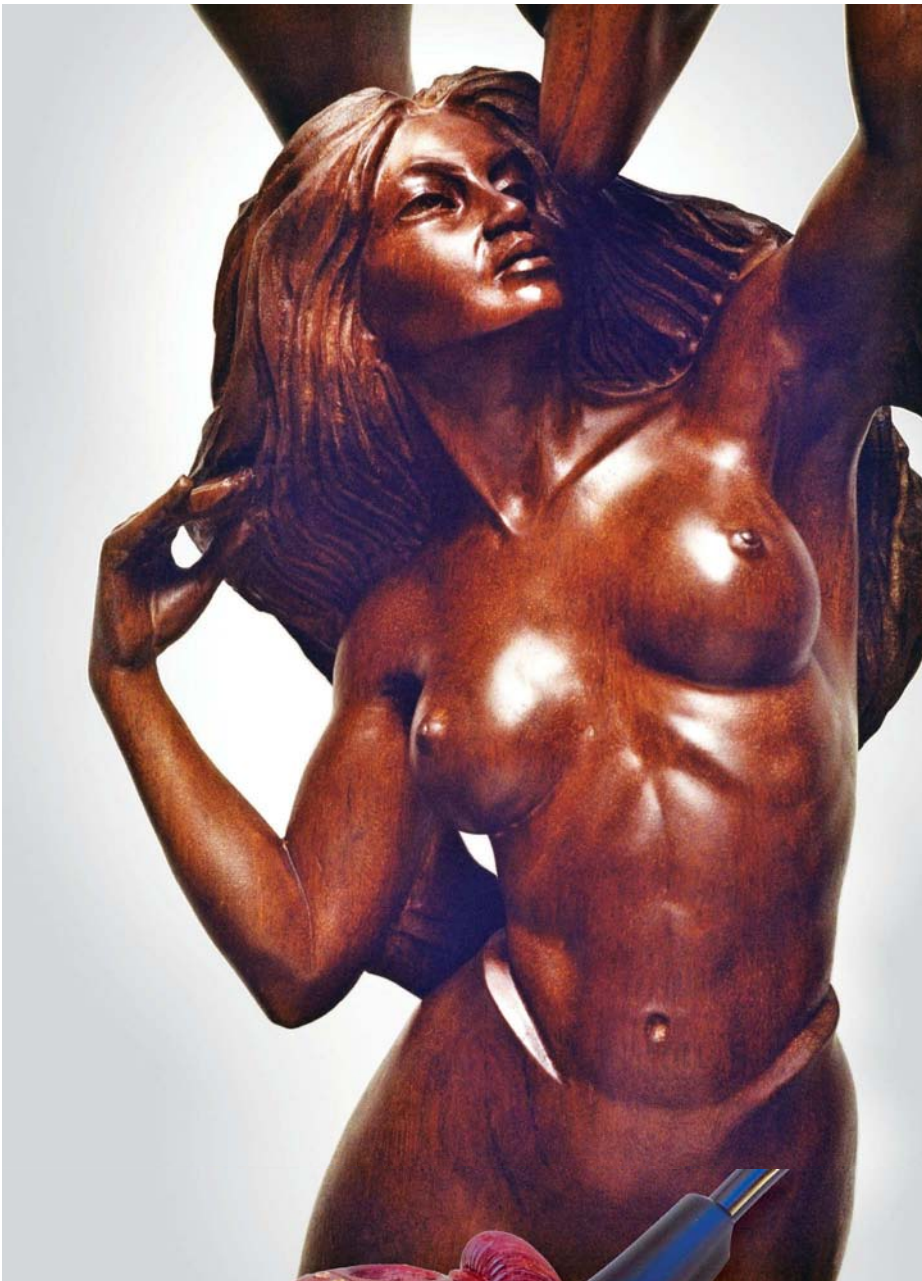
'Cervantes', 2003



'Amazona Tropica', 2000



'Brisa Tropical', 2001



'Amor profundo', 1999



'Azteca', 2011

A letter from Rafael Morales Queneditt

These are the words written by Vitaly's past president of the manifestation of carving of the Cuban Association of Artists Artisans, of which he was vice president:

Careful, be not mistaken, you are not in the presence of a cold and calculating scholar, although it may seem so at first glance. Even when his work takes us to the authentic school of human renaissance, Vitaly is a true creator of his images. We can bet he has the power to penetrate in the unimaginable world of dreams in order for us to discover, in each of his works, what is obviously hidden in appearance and, in essence, portraying joy, pain, longing and memories, reminding us of a deep and enigmatic Leonardo Da Vinci; the more you look at the Mona Lisa, the more it challenges you and immerses you in her mysterious universe.

The perfection of its shapes, the fine finishing and the cleanness of his execution, tell us that we are in presence of a master who has transcended his time and, in these turbulent times of anguish and despair, he invites us to peace and contemplation.

In his priesthood, he reminds us of past times that never fade because they contain footprints of the men of those times and he establishes an important continuity. He has the power to dominate and build; he does not diminish, but increases and enriches the value of the material, forming images, like a god, extracting from a deep and hidden mystery box, that which is hidden from our eyes.

I do not want to point to any particular work, because I would be leading you by the hand down the wrong path. You have to discover for yourself the vibration, the charm, the magic and pain, because every stroke is a tear where light emerges.

I praise your courage, miss his presence, never absent and, as the poet Antonio Machado stated: "a new journey begins by walking the trails that culminate in glory and the deserved recognition."

You, Architect of shapes and dreams, keep filling our spaces with the magic flowing from your hands. Continue walking because that is the only true journey. Do not stop, because the doors will open sooner rather than later.

Yours sincerely,
Rafael Morales Queneditt

Welcome to Aladdin's cave!



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We're sure that Aladdin would agree with us, that all carver's have one thing in common - they're all different! They each has their own needs, wants, hopes and ambitions. That's what we at The ToolPost try to match. We don't offer a Hobson's choice of products, we offer a real choice. Of course, we only offer trusted, proven and reliable brands, from the world's "top drawer", but where we can offer a choice, we do: where we can't, we simply offer the best. Equally we appreciate that some carvers are whittlers - and some whittlers carve. Some like to use bench tools, with fixed handles, whilst others like the convenience of interchangeable handles. Some use power carvers and some wouldn't go anywhere without a knife in their pocket. They're all different, but they are all "right" and that's why we are happy to go the extra mile to supply their diverse needs and wants.

Henry Taylor and Robert Sorby each have generations of expertise in the manufacture of carving tools



Robert Sorby



Of course we don't just supply the needs of the traditional carver as we appreciate that power carving is, today, an important facet of the art. Among our range of products for the power carver, we are pleased to include the superb Saburr carbide rotary burrs, manufactured in the USA and which we distribute in the UK. This huge range has styles to suit most needs and they're economically priced too - and are virtually indestructible.

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Wonder of wonders we even stock timber! So if you need a piece of lime, sawn to your needs (approximately!) then we are ready and waiting to help with that too.



The 3D carver's caliper from Wivamac aids precise carving replication



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Art Deco seahorse

Steve Bisco goes to the seaside with this Art Deco seahorse carved in limestone

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE BISCO

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Steve Bisco has been carving for 30 years specialising in decorative carving in period styles, first in wood and more recently in stone. His latest book *Stone Carving for the Home & Garden* is available from GMC Publications.

Tools and materials

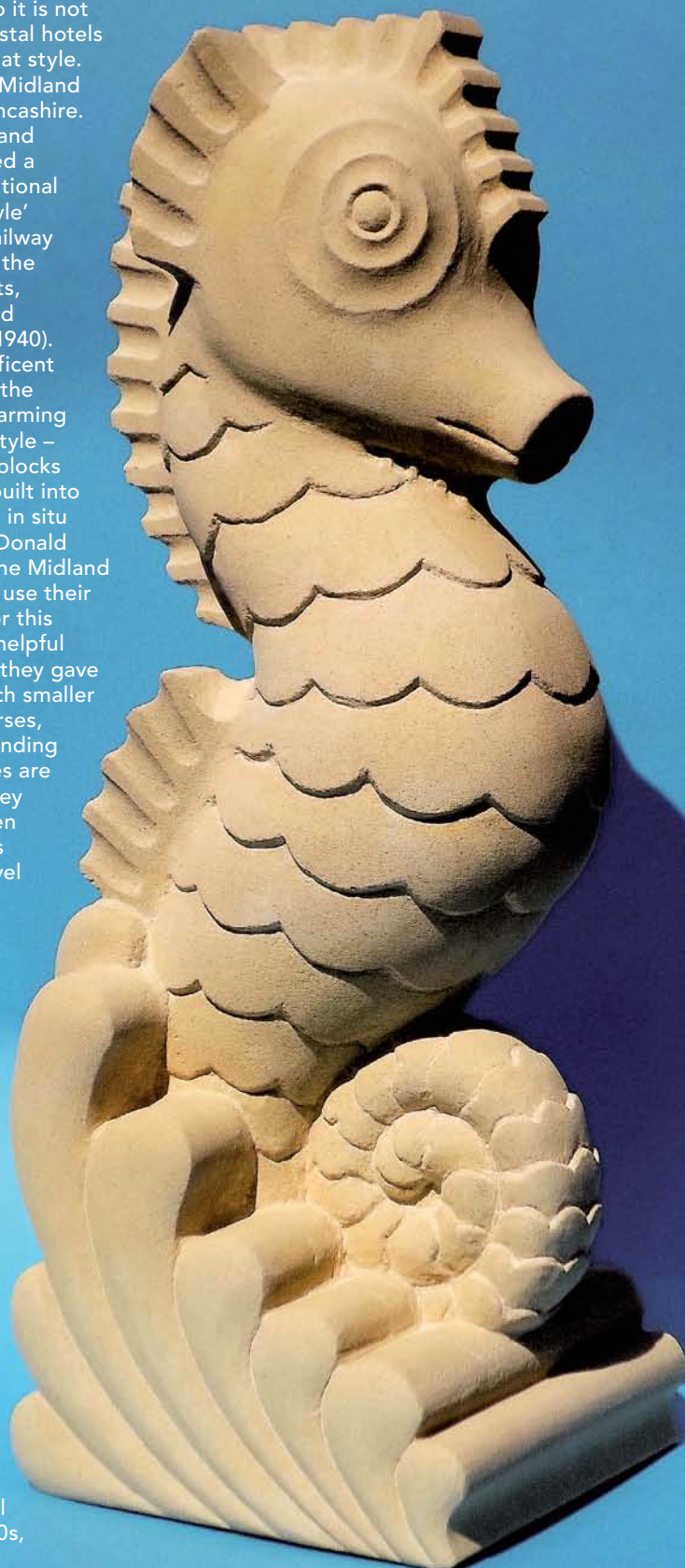
Tools:

- 655g dummy mallet
- 1,175g club hammer
- 20mm claw chisel
- 50mm bolster
- 6mm chisel
- 13mm chisel
- 20mm chisel
- 6mm gouge
- 13mm gouge
- 20mm gouge
- Stone rasp
- 10mm round file
- Stone/concrete saw

Stone:

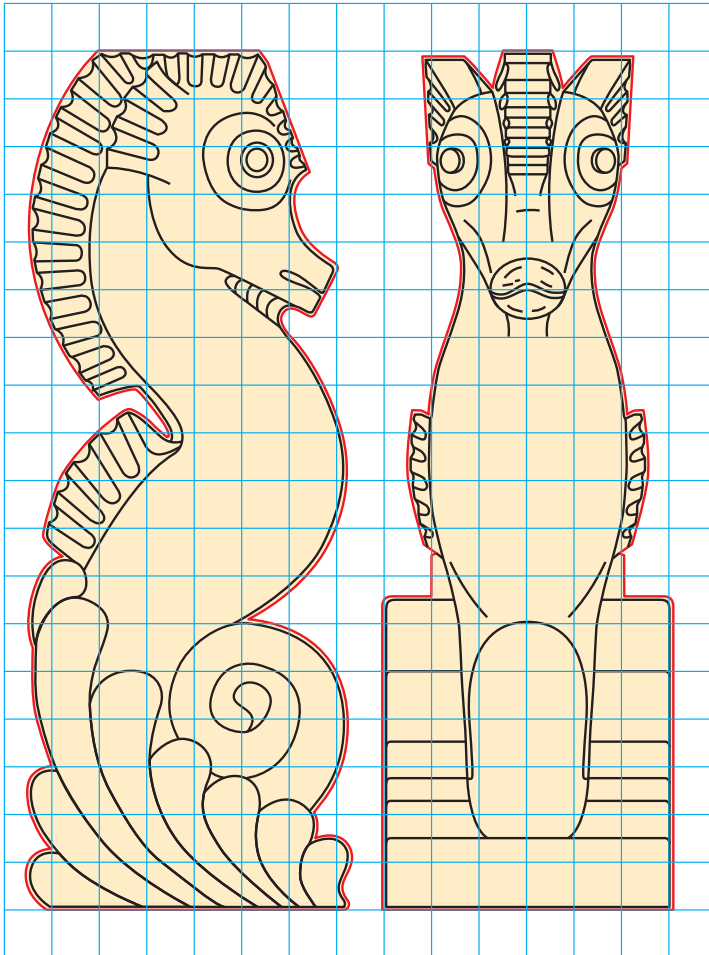
Good quality limestone (Caen stone is best). 155 x 170 x 457mm high. It weighs around 30kg so take care with lifting!

The Art Deco style of the 1920s and '30s coincided with the peak in popularity of the seaside holiday, so it is not surprising that many coastal hotels and lidos were built in that style. One fine example is the Midland Hotel in Morecambe, Lancashire. In 1932 the London Midland & Scottish Railway wanted a seafront hotel 'of international quality in the modern style' near their Morecambe railway station so they engaged the best architects and artists, including the sculptor and designer Eric Gill (1882–1940). Gill designed two magnificent seahorses to tower over the front of the hotel in a charming and beautiful Art Deco style – see photo below. Large blocks of Portland stone were built into the structure and carved in situ by Gill and his assistant Donald Potter. I am grateful to the Midland Hotel for allowing me to use their seahorses as the basis for this project and also for the helpful background information they gave me. This carving is a much smaller version of the Gill seahorses, adapted to suit a freestanding sculpture. Gill's seahorses are supported by the wall they are built into and are seen from below, whereas this carving is seen at eye level and has to be supported by its base, so the centre of gravity – both visually and physically – needs to be moved downwards. Real seahorses – a species of pipefish – provide us with a design solution as they swim about in a vertical posture with their tails curled up in front of them. By adopting this pose, and adding a wave-like base in the Art Deco style, we can give the tall narrow carving some structural stability. Apart from these adaptations I have tried to keep closely to the spirit of Gill's original seahorses with their 1930s, seaside holiday charm.



Eric Gill's seahorses, Midland Hotel, Morecambe, Lancashire





Working from the pattern

This drawing shows the front and side views on a grid, which equates to 25mm when blown up to full size. Ideally, make a digital copy on your computer using either a scanner or a digital camera. Crop it into sections of 11 squares by 8 squares, print it out on A4 pages, and it should come out full size. Make sure all the pages have the squares to the same 25mm scale and stick them together to make the statuette 457mm high. Trace or paste it onto card to make full-size templates for the front and side profiles

Art Deco style

The Art Deco style came to prominence in the 1920s and '30s and was the forerunner of Modernism. The sculptures of the period are strikingly stylised with bold sharp lines. It was a truly international style closely associated with the cinemas, skyscrapers and ocean liners of the period. 80 years after its heyday, it has once more become appreciated and many Art Deco buildings are now preserved for posterity

Preparation

1 Start with a block of limestone measuring 155 x 170 x 457mm tall. This will weigh about 30kg so take care with lifting. Make a full-size copy of the drawing and trace and cut out stiff card templates of the front and side profiles

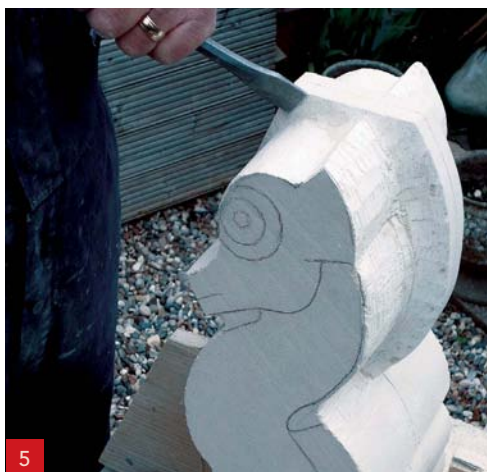
2 Transfer the pattern onto the sides of the block, preferably with carbon paper. If the carbon paper doesn't show up, draw round the cardboard template and mark in the key details. Scratch in the lines with the point of a chisel so they don't disappear while working, and go over them with a pencil

Roughing out the profiles

3 Use the saw, claw, chisels, bolster and rasp to shape the rear profile down to the exact line of the tracing. The back of the 'waves' on the base section will be the finished surface, so carve it neatly

4 Repeat the process on the front profile, but don't cut out the full depth of the 'V' under the belly just yet as it may weaken the block. The small 'wave' at the front of the base should be carved to its finished surface





5 Draw a centreline down the front and back and mark in the 25mm width of the 'mane'. Carefully cut away the stone either side of the 'mane' back to the line of the head and body

6 Carefully mark out the front and back profile using the template as a guide. This is not straightforward as the surface is now convoluted, so check the measurements are the same on both sides of the centreline

7 Remove the surplus stone back to the profile line. If you can use the saw, at least around the head and neck, it will cut down on the heavy hammering. Leave the base section for now as the bulk is needed to support the piece while you work on the top part

8 Use the claw and chisels to rough out the shape of the head, body and fins, working down as far as the top of the base. Leave at least 5mm surplus on all surfaces so you don't remove stone you may need later

Carving the head and upper fins

9 Refine the shape of the head and the pectoral fins, checking the dimensions against the drawing. Keep redrawing your centreline so you can make both sides the same

10 The eyes with their concentric rings are a significant feature of the carving, so carve them carefully using 13mm and 20mm gouges to form the hollows in the rings. Make sure both eyes are lined up in exactly the same position. Refine the shape of the head so the eye rings stand out

11 Carve the fin-like hollows under the chin, then tackle the detail of the 'lips' and the slight hollows in the end of the nose

Top tips

1. If you accidentally break a piece off a stone carving, don't despair. Clean breaks can be glued back together using diluted PVA adhesive. Larger cracks and holes can be filled with a limestone mixture. Save the limestone powder you create when using the rasp or saw and keep it in a jar. You can use this as a filler by mixing it with builders' lime – three parts stone dust: one part lime – or with diluted PVA adhesive

- ➔ **12** Carve the 'flutes' in the pectoral fins and the 'mane', and the coves linking them from side to side, with a 13mm gouge. A 10mm round file is useful for finishing the cross-coves

Carving the body & base

- 13** Use the front template to mark out the width of the lower body and tail. Cut away the surplus stone between the body and the 'waves' of the base

- 14** Cut the waves cleanly to their finished surface up to the roughed-out body and tail. Make sure their lines are neat and dead straight horizontally. Check they line up perfectly on each side

- 15** Refine the shape of the body down as far as the tail, leaving the 'V' of surplus stone under the belly for support. Carve the dorsal fins and cut away the stone between the fins at the back. Cut the ends of the uppermost wave in by 25mm each side so it just supports the back under the fins

"Draw the layout of the scales"

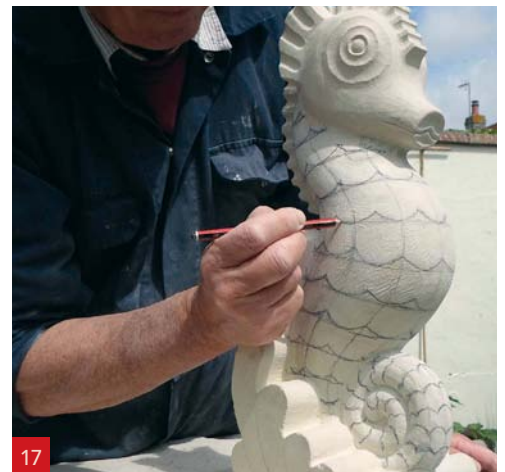
- 16** With the heavy chiselling of the upper body finished, you can now cut away the 'V' of surplus stone under the belly and form the shape of the tail. Keep checking the drawing to get the curves flowing smoothly from the lower body and round the curl of the tail

Finishing the details

- 17** Draw the layout of the scales. They are quite large and widely spaced but get proportionally smaller as the body gets thinner at the tail, so set them out carefully by drawing 'contour' lines vertically and horizontally over the body.

- 18** The scales alternate in position at each level and they all need to be neat and sharp to achieve the full effect. Refine the body so the scales appear to overlap the ones below

- 19** Finish the waves on the sides of the base. Cut a 'V' about 3mm deep along the curved line separating each wave. Round over the edges into a smooth curve reflecting the Art Deco style. Put a chamfer along the lower edges of the base to finish it neatly





20a

20 The Art Deco style suits a smooth finish so go over the carving with fine abrasive, taking care not to dull the detail. Wash off all the dust and your seahorse is ready to bring a breath of sea air to your home or garden. Photos 20a-20d show the front, back, side and angle views to refer to when carving ▶



20b



20c



20d

Sourcing stone

The best place to look for good quality carving stone is at the yard of an architectural stonemason. Look on the Internet for your nearest supplier. Try to get Caen stone, which is a beautiful creamy limestone from Normandy; or Portland stone, which is a slightly greyer limestone from Dorset. The stone carves easily when recently quarried but hardens after a few years of exposure to the elements

Top tips

2. When working on a thin upright piece of stone like this, make some wooden braces to support it when working on the top part. It is best to finish the top half while the bulk of the stone in the bottom half is still in place
3. The edges of the base of a carving are inclined to crumble under pressure from stone chips while carving. Use a 'softener' such as a cork mat on the bench to avoid this



Forget Me Not Children's Hospice

Janet Smith finds out about the idea, build and result of a magical moving wooden panel at Forget Me Not Children's Hospice



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GRAHAM LOCKWOOD

A magical, talking, moving, carved wooden panel takes pride of place on the wall of a children's hospice in West Yorkshire. Lit from above and carved in warm, buttery lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) it is there to bring a cheery moment to children with life-limiting illnesses and their families when they need extra care and support. The 40 beautifully worked carvings that make up this panel for the Forget Me Not Children's Hospice in Huddersfield have been produced by the members of the West Riding Woodcarvers' Association.

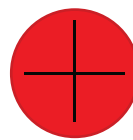
Not your average woodcarving

At 2.95 x 1.42m, it is the sixth panel that the Association has constructed. However, this is the first to use automata

and sound – a great combination that brings the carvings to life and delights the children. This was carefully thought through with the club's own experts so that children with disabilities, limited movement or co-ordination would be able to interact with the panel, pressing mushroom-head switch buttons to make the figures move or make sounds. 'Fantastic!' and 'what an achievement!' were two of the comments from Ryan Grint, marketing and PR assistant at the children's hospice, who told me of the many compliments from visitors about the eye-catching piece.

Although the club has managed to get funding for the previous panels they have made, this time it was not so easy. The hospice is located to serve three

local areas – Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield – but gaining funding from one area to support another became extremely complicated. The club missed out on National Lottery funding because their activities were 'connected with fundraising for another organisation' – albeit a children's hospice. So, after several efforts the club decided that they would go ahead and fund it themselves. Sales of booklets with details of one of their previous projects along with monthly club raffles, giving talks and even 'pea and pie suppers' brought in about £4,500. However, the printing of the booklets and the £750 used for construction materials made a decent hole in that amount. But there was still £2,000 to be donated to the



'Windmill' by David Kent



'Three Billy Goats Gruff' by Graham Lockwood

hospice at the end of the project. The money continues to roll in every time one of the hospice booklets is sold. These include a pull-out section with a sketch of each carving, which can be used as a colouring book for children.

The idea

The tale begins way back in 2007 when fund-raisers for the yet-to-be-built hospice saw the magnificent panel which the club members had carved for Overgate Hospice, in nearby Elland, West Yorkshire. It was a panel of 41 individual relief carvings depicting scenes around Calderdale. It was nearly six years later that the hospice fund-raisers were able to see their work come to fruition, when the new building was

opened by HRH Princess Beatrice in 2013, complete with the carved panel.

Accompanying her royal highness on that day was Dr Ingrid Roscoe, Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire who, coincidentally, is the patron of the West Riding Woodcarvers' Association and a fierce supporter of the tremendous work the club undertakes.

The initial plans for the 40 plaques – to make up the complete panel – were to depict well-known commercial figures from the likes of Disney and Warner Bros, such as Mickey Mouse and Harry Potter. Unfortunately, copyright restrictions meant hours of work had to be thrown in the bin. Back at the drawing board the artists in the group came up with delightful scenes and

pictures with the themes of fairy stories, nursery rhymes, animals and historical events – everything and anything to delight the children.

The making

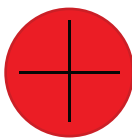
A master plan of the individual plaques was initially drawn up on paper, working randomly and asymmetrically, so long lines were broken to give an aesthetically pleasing composition. Before the carving could begin, however, each member was given three copies of the individual picture to be carved, along with a block of lime wood cut to the exact size of the paper master plan. "We used lime because of its carve-ability," said a club spokesman. "It holds detail well and it is forgiving to carve."

With instructions to carve deep, to create shadow and to keep fine detail away from the edges in case the size of the plaques had to be altered, the task began. The three classes of the club – in Elland, Huddersfield and Wakefield – became extremely busy as carvings of steam engines, horses, chess pieces and a pirate began to come to life. The three tutors from the clubs allocated the carvings to the members according to ability. People worked in the classes, at home and at periodic meetings to discuss progress and to offer help. "We tended to find that there was no need to police the quality of the work as everyone concerned wanted to be sure their carving was as good as everyone else's," said the club spokesperson. It was 4,000 carving hours later that the plaques were finished and ready to be fitted into the master plan.

Next, the automata and electronics – masterminded by club members



HRH Princess Beatrice opening the new building in 2013



'Musical instruments' by Trevor Metcalfe



'Koalas' by Jim Longbottom

Graham Lockwood and David Hey – had to be fitted into the panel behind the carvings. And of course a frame had to be made, in birch (*Betula pendula*). This was undertaken by Derek Adams and Trevor Stanley. The control panel was fitted to the front of the panel itself, with a series of buttons mounted into the wood.

Before that, however, Graham Lockwood made working models of the moving figures on the carvings that were selected. The models helped the carver to visualise the finished item while enabling him or her to remove areas of wood, to create a clear passage

for the moving parts. Holes for spindles had to be drilled through the main carving at a precise 90° angle to ensure that the moving parts did not become obstructed by the surrounding timber. All the individual moving parts were separately carved in lime to match all the other carvings.

Making it move

The movement of the figures within the carvings were controlled by a series of plastic pulleys, links, levers and cams supporting flexible circular belts, all driven by a 12V combination motor and gear box. All the electronics for the

movement and sound were located in a separate purpose-built control unit that on completion was fitted onto and blended into the bottom of the panel frame. The control unit housed in total some £250 worth of electronics including potentiometers, switches, timers, sound cards, capacitors, diodes, relays and many yards of cable and dozens of connectors.

A complicated electronic circuit controlled time limits on the motors and sound cards when the switches were activated. All 10 sound cards – with a time limitation of 20 seconds – had to be recorded individually to suit the story



'Newts, Frogs, Fish & Tadpoles' by George Crawshaw



'Donkey Ride' by Bryan Hodgson

of the carving. Humpty sang, the train puffed, the woodpecker pecked and so on. To eliminate the need for battery replacements the electronics were designed to work off 240 mains voltage with the motors and electronics reduced to 12V and the sound cards down to 5V. Safety of the children and other users was another factor that had to be taken into consideration.

Before the panel was placed at the hospice, the club showed the piece at four venues: Halifax Town Hall during Heritage Week, Huddersfield Parish Church, Wakefield Cathedral and Halifax Agricultural Show. This wasn't without

magnificent effort as the finished panel was particularly heavy and cumbersome to transport. "It is extremely difficult to move," explained the spokesman. "And that was a problem. Finding six strong men willing to risk a bad back was not easy! We decided to make a trolley for it but we always had to call out for at least six men when we needed to shift it as it had to be lifted into a van and up and down inevitable steps, into and out of awkward places. Not easy."

The biggest success was the day at the agricultural show where hundreds of children took great delight in pressing every single button over and over again

until by 4 o'clock, when only Hickory Dickory Dock and the windmill were still working because they had burnt out the motors.

Some quick repairs restored the panel to its former glory and then it was placed in its final home, at the children's hospice, where it continues to delight and amaze children, their families and visitors alike. ▶

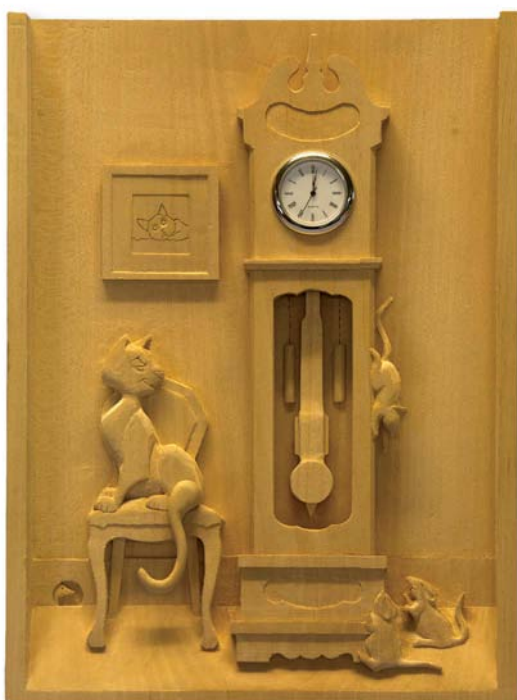
Contact

To order one of the booklets, which features all the carvings, see details below:

Contact: Janet Smith
Email: janfran@blueyonder.co.uk
Web: www.wrwoodcarvers.com

Booklets cost £5 each (inc P&P) and all monies go to the Forget Me Not Children's Hospice, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.

To make a donation, contact the Hospice at: contact@forgetmenotchild.co.uk, or send a cheque to Forget Me Not Children's Hospice, Russell House, Fell Greave Road, Huddersfield HD2 1NH



'Hickory Dickory Dock' by Colin Pratley



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Portable carver's bench



Bernard Rogers explains how to make a simple portable carving bench

A portable carving bench is a very useful item if you wish to carve outside in your garden or give a demonstration of carving at a craft show, etc. The bench illustrated here is an inexpensive DIY project made of softwood with a ply top – two layers of ply glued together – to make a top 40mm thick with a timber edging. The top has a centre hole for the bolt to hold a carver's chop vice, also three screwed metal inserts for fixing a Hydraclamp carving jig, 'G' clamps or similar can be used to hold flat items when making a relief carving, etc. The bench is designed with three legs to enable it to stand firmly on uneven surfaces without wobble. The legs are of a triangular design to allow the lower stretchers to be fixed easily to the legs. You will note that the stretchers are screwed to one leg but free to rotate and the other end is just fitted into a timber clip.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bernard started carving approximately five years ago, shortly before retiring from design engineering. He first made a rocking horse and then began taking lessons from Peter Benson, later joining the BWA and going to the Essex group meetings once a month.

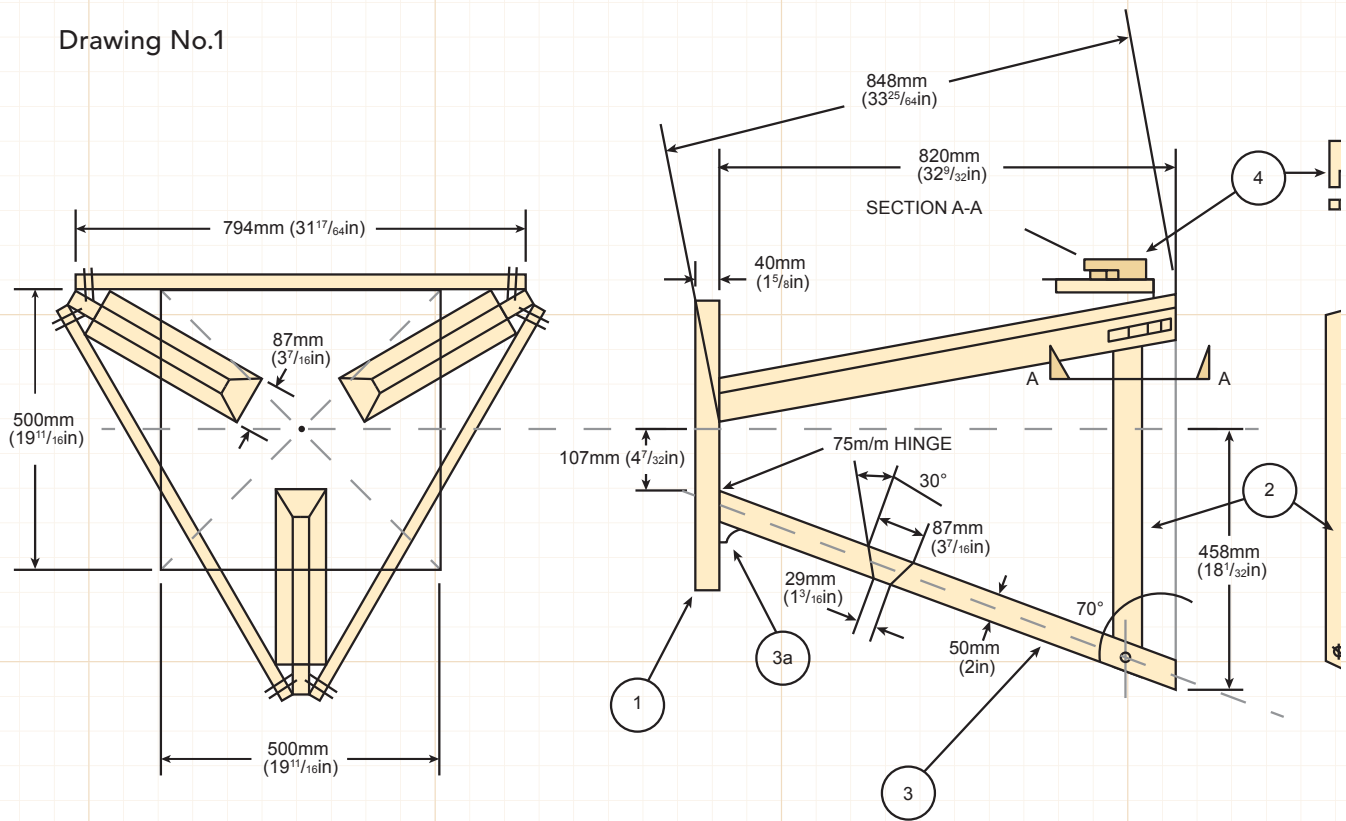


PHOTOGRAPHS BY BERNARD ROGERS

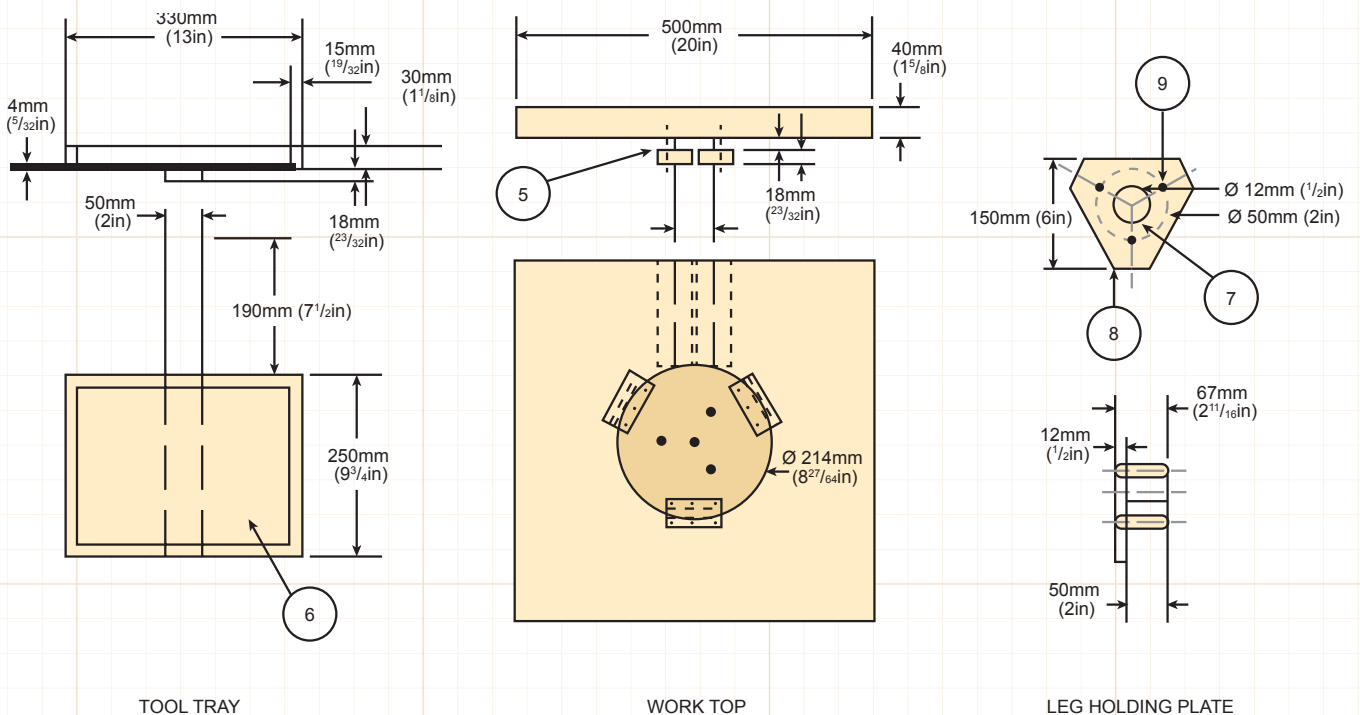


Assembly

Drawing No.1



Drawing No.2



Leg assembly

Start by cutting the legs – see drawing No.1, item No.3 – from a piece of 90 × 50mm timber, which measures 900mm long, using a bandsaw or a tablesaw. Cut the ends to 70°, then fit part No.3a and the holding clips part – see drawing No.1, item No.4. You can then set aside – see drawing No.1.

Worktop & bench assembly

For the worktop – see drawing No.1 item No.1 – glue two pieces of ply together and glue the edging on. You can then mark the leg positions on the underside – see drawing No.2. Next, screw the hinges into position. If the tool tray – see item No.6 – is to be fitted, then the slide section – see drawing No.2, item No.5 – should be fitted. Put the first leg in its working position with the leg end tight against the worktop and screw to the hinge. Repeat the same procedure for the remaining legs.

Turn the bench over and place with the legs on the floor, set in their working position and pull out



Carver's bench showing tool tray

so that the bench is solid without movement. Next, screw the three lower stretcher holding clips in the correct position on the leg – see drawing No.1.

The stretcher – see drawing No.1, item No.2 – can now be set in position on the holding clip and the other end

screwed into position. Note that the stretchers must be horizontal. When all the stretchers have been fitted, turn the unit over and align the lower stretchers with the leg, using a cord to hold them in place, which can be stapled to the back of the leg – these can be seen in the photo above.

Breakdown & transportation



The leg holding plate – top

The leg holding plate is designed to hold the legs safely when the legs are in the storage mode or for transport. The triangular plate – see item No.8 – measures 12mm thick and has a centre bung – see item No.7 – 50mm diameter screwed to the centre point; this is for the legs to rest against when in storage position. See drawing No.2 for the leg holding plate.

The bench should be arranged with the worktop on the floor and the legs set touching each other. Set the holding plate complete with the 50mm bung on the leg ends, then set touching each leg and tie the legs together. Drill a 12mm hole – see item No.8 – through the holding plate into the leg, fit a 12mm dowel in the hole, drill the next hole and fit a dowel. You can then drill the last hole and mark the holding plate and a leg so they can be refitted in the same position; this will save problems with drilling errors.



Side view of the leg holding plate – fitted

Remove the holding plate and fit into the holding plate using 12mm pegs – see item No.9. Ensure the dowels are long enough to fit into each leg end – see item No.3. Drill out the leg dowel holes to give the dowel a slide fit.

When the bench is closed up, a piece

of cord should be used to prevent the holding plate from being dislodged. Tie this down to the stretcher holding clips.

The drawings show construction detail and the photos will assist and hopefully be of help. After all, a picture is worth a thousand words! ▶



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Leather strops

Andrew Thomas makes some leather strops: a flat one for the bevelled edge on the underside of the blade and a selection of curved ones for the flute



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.



Stropping is the final process of 'setting up' a chisel or gouge, which deburrs and polishes both the bevelled cutting edge and flute of the blade to a mirror finish. It is also an essential ongoing practice for keeping the tools in a top, razor-sharp condition. The important rule to adopt from the moment that you start your carving is to make your tools sharp – 'set them up' – and then keep them sharp! Never let them go 'dull'! So to put this into practice; as soon as you feel the slightest slipping of the tool when working under pressure, you should stop carving and give it a quick strop to bring it back up to a 'keen', razor-sharp edge again, which is approximately every 10-15 minutes of hard work, depending on the species of wood that you are using.

Two types of strops are necessary for this practice: a flat one for the bevelled edge on the underside of the blade and a selection of curved ones for the flute, which match the radius of the sweep on the upper side of the blade.

You will need...

Flat strop dimensions:

Approximately 200 × 300 × 20mm – MDF, plywood or any other type of wood/board

Leather

Strop paste

Adhesive

100 grit sandpaper

Slip strops: four blocks of wood, preferably of a carvable species

Dimensions:

25 + 30mm slip strop: 100mm wide × 75mm high × 30mm dia.

15 + 20mm slip strop: 100mm wide × 50mm high × 20mm dia.

8 + 12mm slip strop: 100mm wide × 45mm high × 12mm dia.

2 + 5mm slip strop: 100mm wide × 40mm high × 5mm dia.

2 strips of wood: 100mm wide × 30-40mm high × 5mm dia.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW THOMAS

→ Leather

Sourcing leather is not difficult; you will find many sellers on eBay who supply it in various sizes and colours at very little cost. Alternatively, shoe menders and saddlers may have offcuts or sections that can be purchased, plus furniture shops often have old leather swatches that are obsolete and therefore worth enquiring about. It is important to ensure that the leather you purchase for your strop is quite thin – 1-2mm is ample. Thicker leather creates a cushioned surface to work on, which is more prone to wearing the edges off your tools over time, leaving a bull-nosed cutting edge, which will need to be re-ground square again.



Sourcing leather is not difficult

Making a flat strop

Cut your piece of wood to the exact size of your strip of leather. Sand the surface of the board with 100 grit abrasive, so that the leather will key onto it firmly. Remove all dust – **step 1**.

The leather will be bonded onto the block with the suede side up, so if it has a smooth or shiny surface on the underside that will be in contact with the wood, give it a quick rub over with abrasive to rough it up; this will help it to bond more effectively – **step 2**.

Pour either PVA, epoxy resin or whatever adhesive you choose to use, onto your wood and use a spreader to cover the complete surface with a thin layer. I made my spreader from a dense piece of cardboard – **step 3**.

Carefully place the leather onto the wood and then smooth it out firmly, from the centre to the edges, being careful not to get any adhesive on the leather surface – **step 4**.

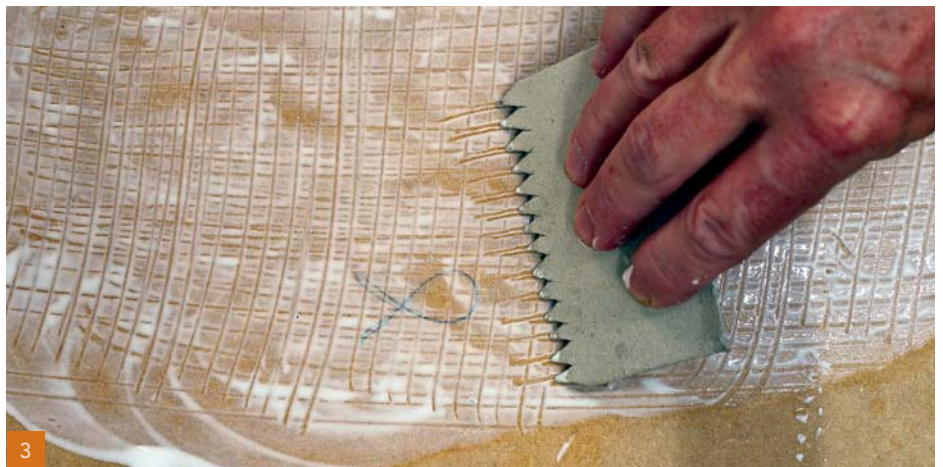
Place another flat piece of wood on top of the leather side and either gently clamp them together or place some heavy objects on top. Wipe off any surplus adhesive immediately and then leave it to bond until dry – as per the instructions on your adhesive – **step 5**.



Cut your piece of wood to the exact size of your strip of leather



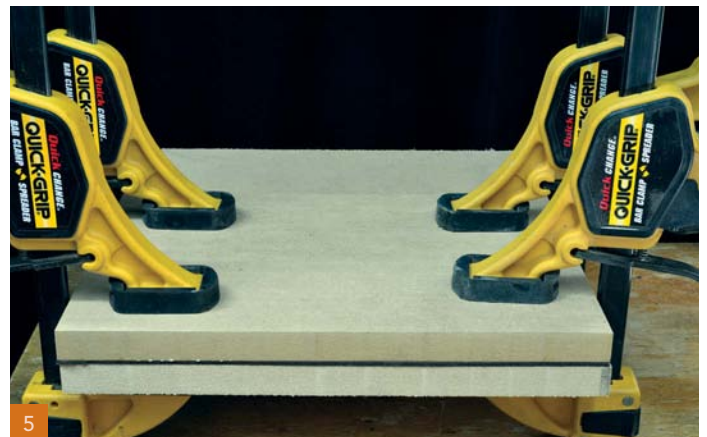
The leather will be bonded onto the block with the suede side up



Using a spreader, pour either PVA, epoxy resin, etc. so it covers the complete surface



Carefully place the leather onto the wood and then smooth it out firmly, from the centre to the edges



Place another flat piece of wood on top of the leather side and either gently clamp them together, or place heavy objects on top

Slip strops

You will initially need to make four slip strops, each one with a different sized curved edge along either side of the blocks: 25 × 30mm, 15 × 20mm, 8 × 12mm and 2 × 5mm. These should meet nearly every sweep and size that you use apart from very small No.7, 8, 9, 11 and 'V'-tools, which I will cover later.

Cut the four blocks to size as specified on page 57. Measure and draw a centreline along both ends of each block of wood. Starting with the largest block, place a drawing compass on the centreline and draw a 30mm circle on one end and a 20mm circle on the opposite end. Draw two lines to join the circles together. Repeat these steps on the opposite side. Repeat the same procedure on the other blocks, but making the circles 15 + 20mm, 8 + 12mm and 2 + 5mm – **step 1**.

There are three ways you can shape the blocks. Firstly, if you have a bandsaw, then use this to carefully cut along and around the outside of these lines. Then, use a piece of 100 grit abrasive to sand the complete surface evenly – **step 2**.

If you do not have a bandsaw, secure them safely in a woodworker's vice and carefully carve them back to the lines,

working from one end to the other, accurately following the radius of the circles along each edge. Sand them evenly with 100 grit abrasive – **step 3**.

If you have a belt sander, carefully sand the excess wood back to the lines, frequently swapping ends to ensure that you are not taking more wood away from one end than the other – **step 4**. Your blocks are now ready for the leather to be applied – **step 5**.

The leather for the sides of the strops can either be applied as one piece wrapped all of the way around them or two pieces: one wrapped over each curved side. Measure your strips of leather and use a knife and a straightedge to accurately slice through the material – **step 6**.

The leather must again be bonded with the suede side up, so if the opposite side of your leather has a smooth surface, give it a quick rub over with 100 grit abrasive – **step 7**.

Use a strong and fast drying adhesive for bonding the leather to the blocks, so either epoxy resin or a good quality, thick viscosity cyanoacrylate adhesive is recommended. Apply this generously to the surface of the blocks and pull the

leather tightly around the surface – **step 8**. Place a thin strip of wood over the position where the leather joins itself and clamp it very tightly. Leave this to dry as per the instructions on the adhesive label – **step 9**.

The adhesive has now fully dried, which will leave the leather firmly bonded to the surface of the wood. It is now ready to be dressed – **step 10**.

Stropping the tiny inner flute of the 1 and 2mm, No.7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 'V'-tools has always been somewhat of a difficult procedure. For these tools, I designed a simple solution by shaping a piece of wood 100 × 40 × 5mm into a wedge shape. A thin strip of leather is bonded onto one side of it with an overlap of 2mm at the pointed end of the wedge. This is then dressed with strop paste and can be used effectively to reach into the tiny flutes of the blade and along the straight sides of the 'V'-tools – **step 11**.

The same wedge-shaped piece of wood can be made for the 3 and 4mm, No.7, 8, 9, 10, 11, but instead of bonding a strip onto just one side of the block, bond it all of the way around the sharp edge – **step 12**.



1 Cut the four blocks to size as specified in the 'you will need' box



2 You have a choice of three different ways in which you can shape the blocks



3 If you do not have a bandsaw, secure them safely in a woodworker's vice and carefully carve them back to the lines



4 If you have a belt sander, carefully sand the excess wood back to the lines



5 Your blocks should now look like this



6 The leather for the sides of the strops can either be applied as one piece wrapped all of the way around them or two pieces



7 The leather must again be bonded with the suede side up



8 A strong and fast drying adhesive is a good choice for bonding the leather to the blocks



9 Place a thin strip of wood over the position where the leather joins itself and clamp it very tightly



The adhesive has now fully dried leaving the leather firmly bonded to the surface



Stropping the tiny inner flute of the 1 and 2mm, No.7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 'V'-tools has always been somewhat of a difficult procedure



The same wedge shaped piece of wood can be made for the 3 and 4mm, No.7, 8, 9, 10 and 11

Dressing the leather strops

Strop dressing is a very fine abrasive, which usually comes in the form of either a paste or soap. These compounds are inexpensive, last for many years and are available to purchase from specialist dealers. The one in the example is called 'Scopas

Strop Paste' and is available from Alec Tiranti, London.

Use a cloth to work the paste generously and evenly into the grain of the leather, over the complete surface. One application should last several months, depending on how

much stropping you do on a daily basis, but you will clearly see when it needs to be re-applied.

The slip strops only need the paste applied along the curved sides that come in contact with the gouges.



Use a cloth to work the paste generously and evenly into the grain of the leather, over the complete surface



The slip strops only need the paste applied along the curved sides that come into contact with the gouges

How to use the flat strop

Important! For your own safety, ensure that the flat strop is either placed on top of a non-slip mat or carefully secured by some other means, so that it does not move in the slightest while you are stropping your tools.



Ensure that the flat strop is either placed on top of a non-slip mat or carefully secured by some other means

No.1 – flat chisel

Place the tool at the far end of the strop and hold it at the precise angle of its bevel. Draw the tool towards yourself, all of the way down the length of the strop. Lift it off the strop, place it back at the top and repeat this another nine times. Turn over and repeat this procedure on the opposite side.



Place the tool at the far end of the strop and hold it at the precise angle of its bevel

No.2 Sheffield – flat skew chisel

Place the tool at a parallel angle with the top edge of the strop, with the cutting edge in a horizontal position. Use the same technique to strop it as the No.1 chisel, but be very careful to keep an even pressure as you draw it towards yourself so that the tip does not become unevenly worn.



Place the tool at a parallel angle with the top edge of the strop, with the cutting edge in a horizontal position

'V'-tools

The 'V'-tool is by far the most difficult tool to sharpen and strop due to its complex anatomy. Contrary to what you may initially think, the 'keel' – which is located at the base of the 'V'-tool – is actually rounded like a very small gouge and not actually a sharp point. It has to be curved so that it can slice through the wood smoothly and evenly. If it was sharpened to a point, then at best, it would just tear through the grain of the wood and be of no use whatsoever. Therefore the 'V'-tool, in effect, has three cutting edges and should be sharpened and stropped as two flat No.1 chisels, one on each side of the tool and a tiny gouge in the centre. To add to its complex structure, the metal at the keel is thicker than the two flat sides, so this area wears less than the two sides. In practice, this means that you need to strop the keel more than you do the sides. A method that has worked successfully for me over the years is to strop the keel twice as much as I do the two flat sides, thus keeping the wear even and preventing a 'beak' from forming.

No.2 – No.3 Sheffield – to No.11 – all gouges



Place the gouge at the far end of the strop and hold it at the precise angle of the bevel on the cutting edge



Place the tool at a parallel angle with the top edge of the strop, with the cutting edge in a horizontal position

Place the gouge at the far end of the strop and hold it at the precise angle of the bevel on the cutting edge, and on the left shoulder of the blade. Draw it vertically towards yourself and as you do this, slowly roll it over to the right shoulder in one full length of the strop. Then, repeat the process, but start it on the right shoulder and draw it towards yourself, slowly rolling it over to the left shoulder. Make sure that you keep alternating between left to right and right to left, so that you maintain even wear along the edge. Repeat this 10 times.



The 'V'-tool is by far the most difficult tool to sharpen and strop

How to use the slip strops

The tool to be stropped with the slip strop should always be placed firmly onto a surface and not done by holding it in the air. This is to ensure that the cutting edge does not become unevenly rounded over time by this unorthodox practice. Choose a slip strop with a suitable radius for the tool's sweep, place it flat in the flute of the blade and simply slide it over the cutting edge without lifting it at all. Work it in one direction; outwardly over the cutting edge, and then lift it off the blade, put it back into position and repeat the procedure, methodically working from one side of the cutting edge to the other. This should only require about 10 or so movements. Note: if you have set up your tool with an inner bevel, you will have to tilt the slip strop to the exact angle that you have set this bevel! ▶



The tool to be stropped with the slip strop should always be placed firmly onto a surface and not done by holding it in the air

NEXT ISSUE

wood **CARVING**

**Susan Alexander
reports from the 48th
Annual International
Woodcarvers' Congress**

Duane Cartwright shows
you how to carve a koi carp

Andrew Thomas carves
an abstract sculpture

John Samworth outlines
the planning and carving
processes for making
a bonsai tree

John Vardon carves
five loaves & two fishes



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK FEATHERLEY

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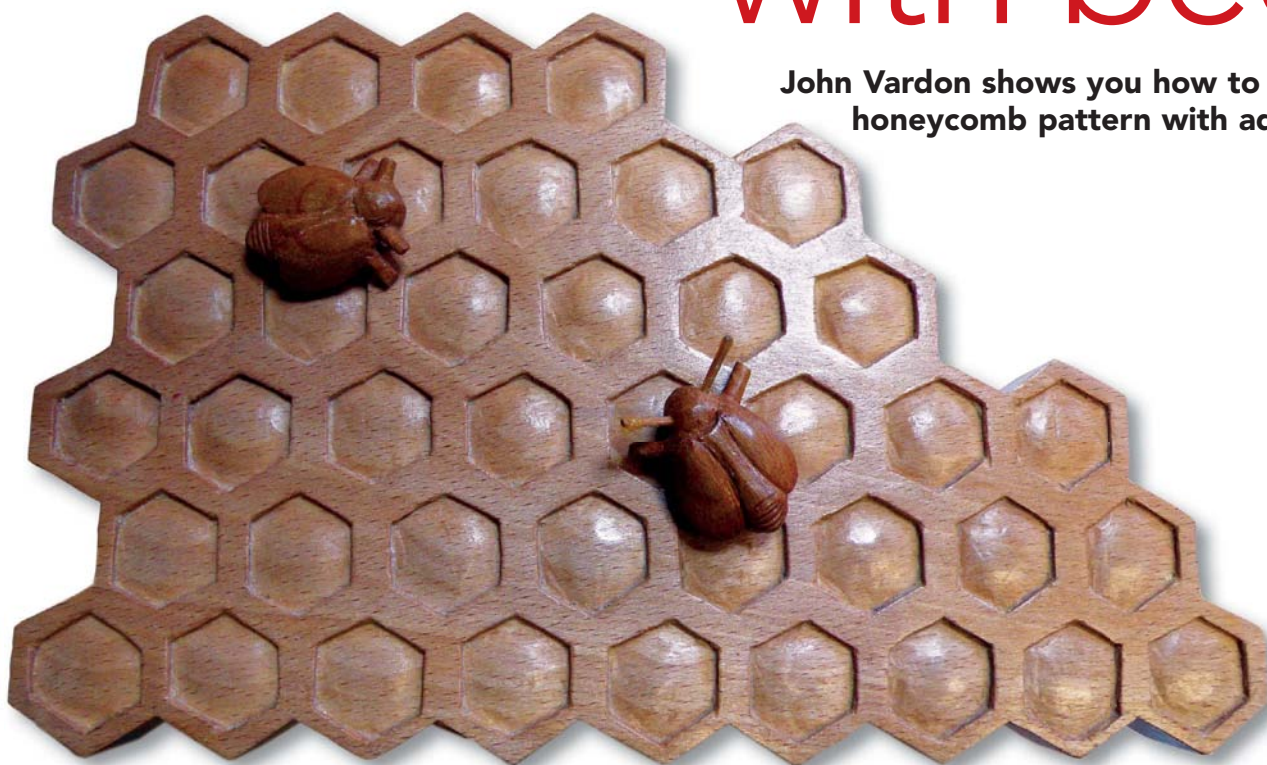
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Honeycomb with bees

John Vardon shows you how to make this
honeycomb pattern with added bees



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN VARDON

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.



A honeycomb is a mass of hexagonal wax cells built by honey bees in their nests to contain their larvae and stores of honey and pollen. This leads to a simple relief carving for the beginner woodcarver. Although simple, it still requires a reasonable amount of skill to

ensure the hexagons are accurate and consistent as there is very little room for error. In reality the inner shape is more circular – as shown overleaf – but for simplicity we will keep it as a hexagon. To add interest to the carving, a couple – or more – ‘bees’ can be carved as separate items and then attached. This carving has proved very popular with bee keepers and the public at displays. Only a few basic gouges are required. The carving should take about two days. The gouges referenced in the following steps are those I used, but any suitable gouge could be used. Ensure your gouges are sharp at the beginning and throughout the carving.

For this project maple (*Acer campestre*) was used, but any light coloured hardwood would be suitable. Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) may be a better alternative for the beginner. In this project the piece was 246 × 152 × 20mm. The actual size of the relief can vary to suit the wood available and the shape of the honeycomb desired. It doesn't matter which way the grain is running.

Things you will need...

Tools:

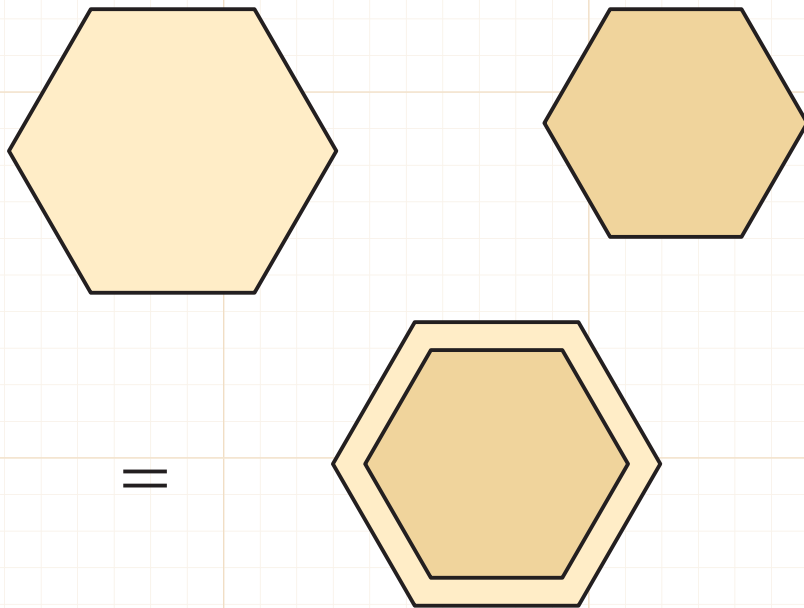
- No.1, 14mm straight gouge
- No.4, 12mm straight gouge
- No.3, 7mm straight gouge
- No.11, 1.5mm straight gouge
- 6mm skew gouge
- Mallet
- G-clamp or vice
- Range of abrasives
- Sealer and beeswax

Wood:

Maple (*Acer campestre*), or any light coloured hardwood, e.g. lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), measuring 246 × 152 × 20mm for the honeycomb

Cherry (*Prunus* spp.), or similar fine grain wood, for the bees, measuring 30 × 10mm length as required

Maple, or similar, for the back stand with a hinge – if required – and sized to suit the honeycomb

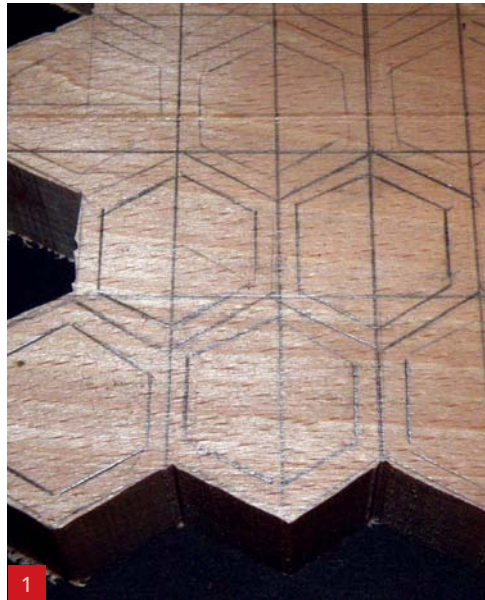


1 The only design required is the shape of the cells and the bees. The cells are regular hexagons at 25mm face to face for the outer cell and at 19mm face to face for the inner cell. The two hexagons should be drawn on a piece of card, cut out, and then you need to draw extremely carefully a grid of cells similar to that shown. A set of grid lines going through the flat faces and points will help to ensure regular arrangement of the cells. The photo shows the left-hand bottom corner with the grid lines and hexagon shapes drawn

2 Cut out your desired outside shape using a bandsaw or other means. The photo shows the shape used in this carving with the grain running horizontal

3 As it is a geometric pattern, one mistake and you will need to consider restarting. Ensure the carving is safely clamped to the bench. Using a No.11, 1.5mm straight gouge with a mallet and light hits, carve around the inside of each inner hexagon to a depth of about 1mm. Don't use your hand as a mallet! If you did not use a mallet and 'pushed' the gouge there is the danger of the gouge slipping beyond the end of the hexagon side

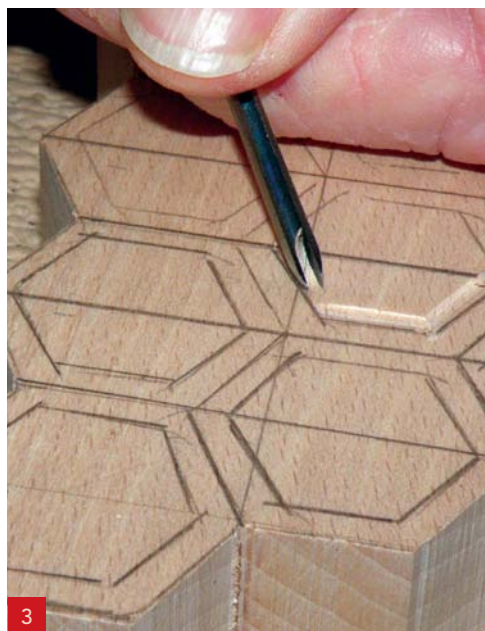
4 An alternative at this stage is to 'stab' the outline of the hexagon using a No.1, 14mm carver's chisel or a joiner's chisel. As we are only stabbing to a depth of 1mm this should not be a problem compressing fibres, as suggested in previous articles



1



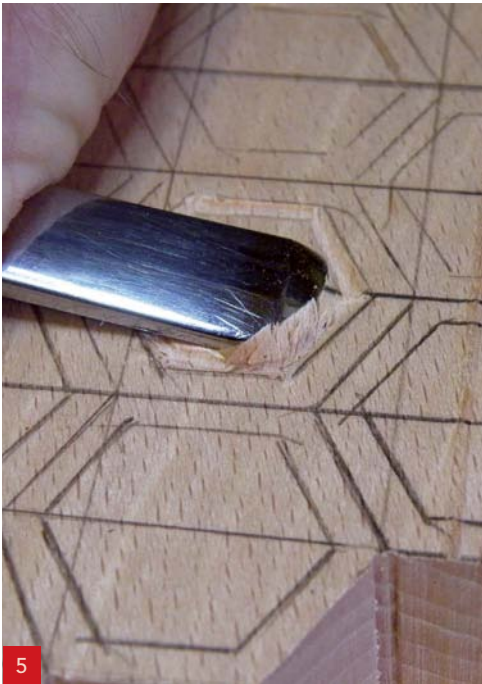
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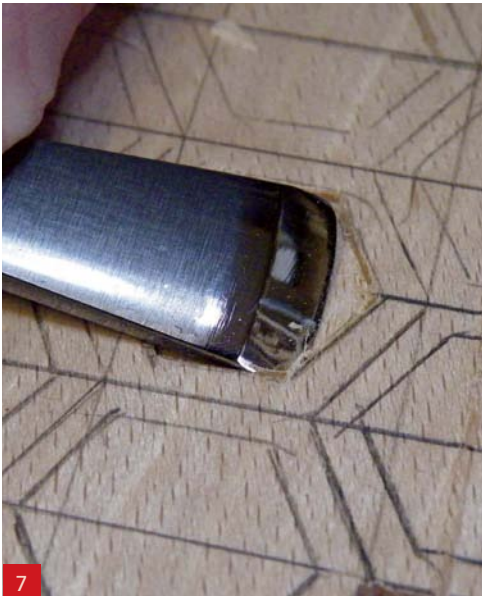
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5



6



7



8



9



10

5 You can now begin to round over the inner hexagon using a No.4, 12mm straight or fishtail gouge upside down to form a dome. The latter will allow the gouge to get into the corners better. The width of the gouge should not be greater than the width of the hexagon, otherwise you will end up carving the edge of the hexagon. Start at the edge of the hexagonal carving towards the edge and working back towards the centre

6 Marking the centre of each hexagon may help. Make sure the top of the dome is just below the surface of the carving, otherwise when you come to clean up the top surface, you may also flatten the tops of the domes and will need to reshape them. Be careful removing the waste, e.g. by 'flicking the chips', as you may break off parts of the top surface. If you do, then you can cover it with a bee!

7 You may need to rotate the gouge slightly to prevent the gouge corner 'digging in', especially if the curvature of the gouge is greater than the curvature of the dome. Note: the depth of the dome at the hexagon corners is greater than at mid-length of the sides, as you are further away from the centre. Don't rush as mistakes will be very difficult to correct

8 Be methodical when carving the hexagons, otherwise you may forget which one you are shaping

9 Using a 6mm skew gouge, straighten the edges and tidy the corners of the hexagon. This is necessary if you used the No.11 gouge to carry out the initial definition as the sides will be slightly concave. The skew gouge is used as it allows the corners to be tidied up. Undercut the edges if you wish but it is not necessary

10 Alternatively, you could use the No.1, 14mm carver's chisel – or a joiner's chisel – but you would need to be careful at the corners as you would need to tilt the chisel and damage to the sides of the hexagon is possible. Note: the No.1 carver's chisel has bevelled edges on both sides so you will need to 'tilt' the gouge away from the vertical in order to obtain a vertical cut. If you decide to use a joiner's chisel, then there is no problem as there is no bevel on the back face

11 Rub down the top surface and check if any tops of the domes are flattened; if so, reshape them

12 Using appropriate abrasives, clean up the carving including the domes and sides. Use of 'detailed sanders', Abranet – which is flexible – and/or needle files will help cleaning up the domes, otherwise just use small pieces of abrasive. Using a No.1 carver's chisel or joiner's chisel may help in removing any saw marks of the outside of the overall carving before using abrasives

13 Now comes the carving of the two or three look-alike bees. Although small and fiddly, they will probably take the same amount of time as carving the honeycomb. The design is simplified and is similar to that shown in the photo at the beginning of the article. If you don't feel competent in carving the bees you can always buy some artificial ones! The middle and hind legs will not be seen as they are more or less under the wings

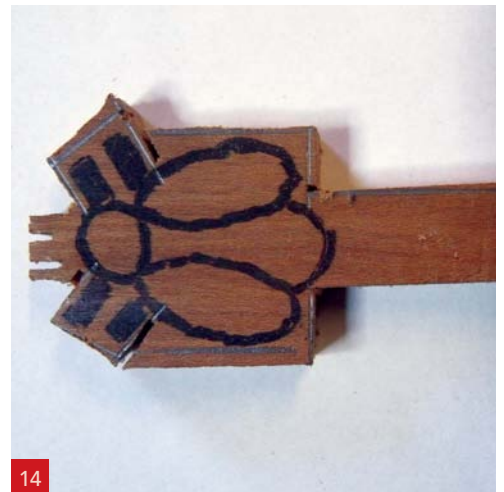
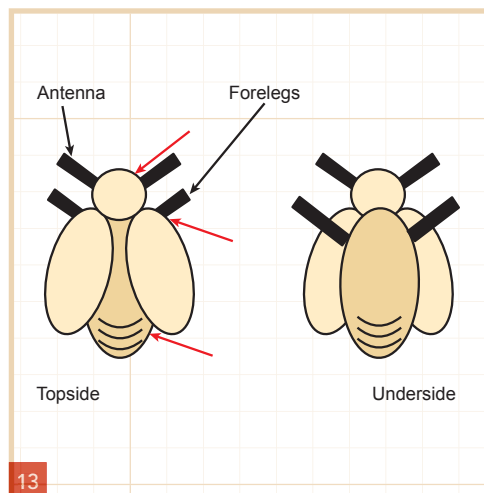
14 Use a scrap piece of fine grain wood, e.g. cherry, 10mm thick and 30mm wide with the grain running along the length. Draw the design – top side – on the wood and carefully make saw cuts at strategic places, i.e. back of wings, back of forelegs and front of antenna, as shown in red in the design. Cut out the outline, but leave a piece, about 40mm long, attached at the back for holding while carving

15 Holding the bee securely, carve around the wings – on top – using a No.11, 1.5mm gouge

16 Shape the side edge of the wings using the No.4, 12mm or a fairly flat gouge. Be careful not to let the gouge dig into the area of the forelegs as it will weaken them. If you are going against the grain, then rotating the gouge as you carve will help

17 Using the No.4, 12mm gouge shape the top surface of the wings so that the back and outer edge are lower than the front and inner edge respectively by about half the thickness of the wood

18 The surface should be slightly convex. Use a narrow gouge to round the body over. You may need to remove some of the holding piece





19



20



21



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23



24



25

19 Draw the body shape on the underside and using the No.11, 1.5mm gouge carve around the outside of the body. Using the No.3, 7mm, lower the bottom surface of the wing to a thickness of about 1mm working from the outer edge inwards. Any thinner at this stage and they will become very fragile

20 Remove the waste wood in front of the head and round the head over. Make a saw cut between the antenna and fore legs. Be very careful not to break any of them off. Work away from them as much as possible. Reduce the thickness of them in such a way to leave the antenna pointing up and the legs down. Round them, making them as thin as you dare. This is where you may break off an antenna; if you do, see the alternative given below

21 The black/orange stripes at the back – see design on page 66 – are simulated by a series of gouge marks around the body. The wings, in particular the edges, should now be thinned but keep them attached to the body. The piece of waste wood used to hold the bee should be removed and the rest of the body tidied up and sanded

22 An alternative for the antenna is to use a small sliver of bamboo and insert it into a hole drilled in the bee. Dipping the end into a glue creates a nice blob at the end. You will need to do this – on both sides – if you break one or both of the antenna off. Go around the whole carving, honeycomb and bees, and tidy up where necessary. Carry out final sanding and then finish with a sealer and beeswax

23 To attach the bees to the honeycomb a small nail – 12-18mm – is used. Drill a hole, the diameter of the nail, in the bottom of the bee and in the honeycomb. Push the nail into the bee and then onto the honeycomb. If you want a more permanent fix, dab a bit of glue to the nail. However, leave this attachment until you have finished waxing the carving. If you have made any mistakes, consider placing the bees over the mistake

24 For displaying the carving, making a stand attached to the back with a hinge is useful

25 The completed project should look something like this ▶

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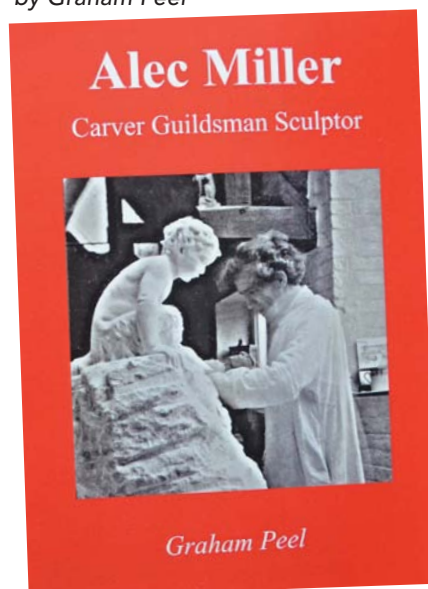


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Alec Miller – Carver Guildsman Sculptor

by Graham Peel



Alec Miller (1879–1961), who started life as one of a poor family living in a small tenement in Glasgow, served an apprenticeship in a small woodcarving studio and became a skilled journeyman decorative woodcarver. He then moved to Chipping Campden to work with CR Ashbee and the Guild of Handicraft for six years. When the Guild closed he continued to run the carving workshop as an independent business until 1939 when he emigrated to the USA, living and working in California until his death on a final visit to England. During his years with the Guild he began to carve both decorative and figurative work for churches, and also work in stone. All his work in both wood and stone was made by direct carving. As work for churches declined during and after World War I he made over 70 War Memorials but also began to develop portraiture in wood. For the rest of his career portraiture became a dominant part of his work and he eventually carved over 600 portraits in the UK and the USA. He was also a sought after lecturer in the UK and on lecture tours to the USA and he wrote two books. This biography contains 300 illustrations and is a wonderful account of his life and career.

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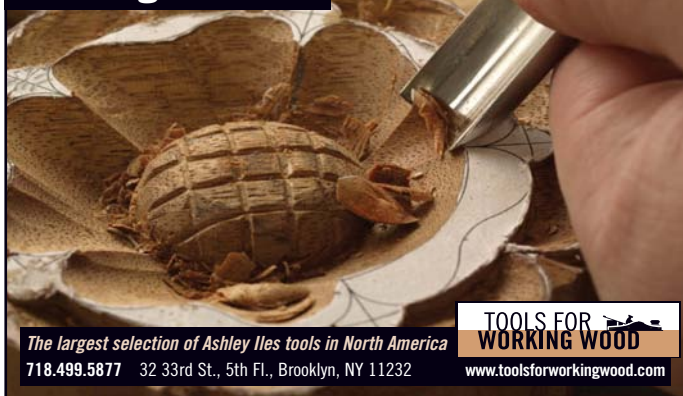
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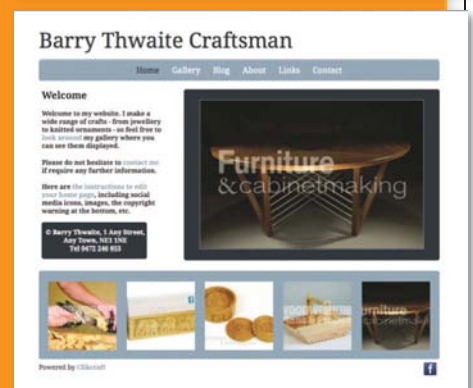
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'The Franklin Tree'

Ron Fleming shares his turned and carved vase, inspired by the Franklin tree

Woodturner and carving enthusiast Ron Fleming was asked to turn and carve a piece that represented 'gardens'. His inspiration for the piece came from the Franklin tree.

The Franklin tree was discovered along the banks of the Altamaha River in the mid-18th century and was last recorded in the wild by a nurseryman and plant collector in 1803. All known specimens today are in cultivation.

The Franklin tree, or lost camellia (*Franklinia alatamaha*), is an unusually beautiful tree. Once native only to Georgia, it is also one of the rarest trees in the world. John Bartram and his son William discovered the Franklin tree growing along the riverbanks, near Darien, in McIntosh County, Oklahoma in 1765. In his book *Travels*, William Bartram describes it as 'a beautiful shrub that appeared to be related to *Gordonia lasianthus* – loblolly bay – but with larger and more fragrant flowers'. They named the tree in honour of their friend Benjamin Franklin and the river beside which they had found it – the species name, *alatamaha*, reflects the Bartrams' variant spelling of Altamaha.

This piece was a challenge for Ron, as the log was cracked to the pith in roughly six places. He says of the piece: "I had to literally design it around the cracks, which was really too bad because it controlled the design." The vase was turned and then carved in a stylised manner to resemble the Franklin tree. ▀

Contact

Email: ronfleming@mindspring.com

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'The Franklin Tree', named after Benjamin Franklin, magnolia and bleached flowers, 355mm high x 180mm dia., 2003



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON FLEMING

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