

TIPS & TECHNIQUES FOR CARVING A WELSH LOVESPOON

wood CARVING

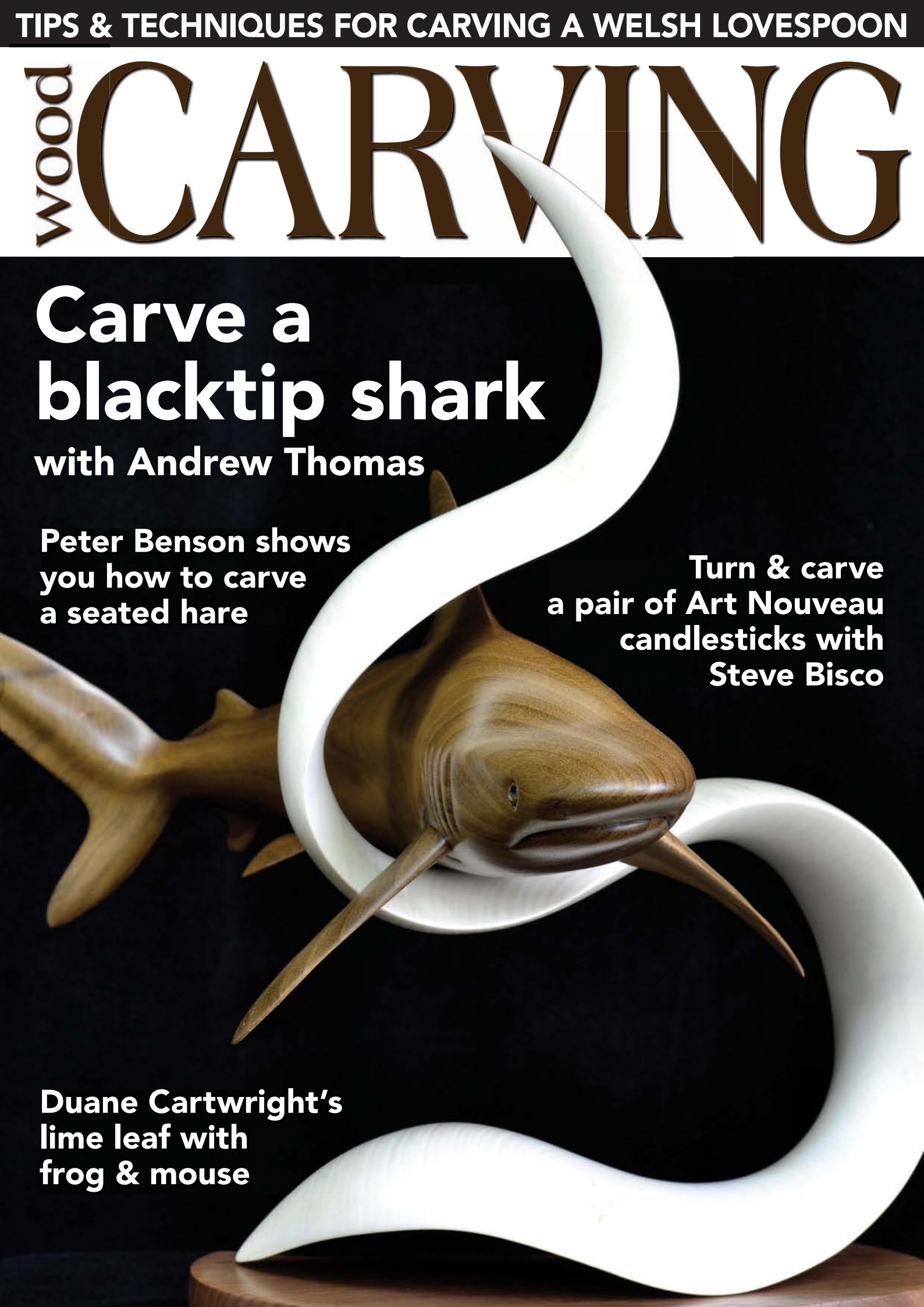
Carve a blacktip shark

with Andrew Thomas

Peter Benson shows
you how to carve
a seated hare

Turn & carve
a pair of Art Nouveau
candlesticks with
Steve Bisco

Duane Cartwright's
lime leaf with
frog & mouse





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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.

The evolution of carving techniques

Having been using routers lately,
not only to look at enhancement
techniques on turnings, but also
bosting in on carved work, such as relief
carvings etc., I am going to ask how many
of you carvers use them in your work?

I know they can be noisy and dusty –
sometimes even with extraction systems in
place not all the dust and debris is caught,
but they are quick and efficient at some
jobs. OK, if you do not have a workshop
per se and therefore work in your house,
even in the kitchen – as some have written
to me lately saying – then a router or power
carving unit might not be a wise thing for
you to use in those circumstances. Many
will eschew using anything powered when
it comes to their carving and that is OK;
whereas others want to get on with it and
try to find time to do more carvings or want
the bulk roughed before quickly moving on
to the hand-refinement. In truth, for some
panel/flat work, the use of the router – or
similar – to remove waste as fast as possible
is an ideal choice before the hand-carved
refinement comes in.

Time is not always important with some
people while others are chomping at the bit
to get on, so there is no right or wrong way
– just make sure you get to where you need
to get to safely. I was counting up how many
different makes of hand-held rotary carvers
I could find the other day and it totalled 38,
but I am sure I missed some others. These
are effectively mini single-hand routers of
sorts, which can be easily manipulated due to
their small size and can take myriad forms of
cutters to suit different materials and designs.

I am going to ask that if you do not use

large routers, do you use smaller ones
such as these? Their use is certainly on the
increase and I wonder how long before we
have variants of things like small hand-held
3D printers where we can sculpt with those
– OK, the term carving might not fit, but
the term sculpting would.

I do not for one minute think that hand-
carving as a reductive process, where a
block of material is then refined down to
a finished form, will be done away with.
That said, sculpting is a creative process
that requires skill and might allow even
more forms to be created where there are
problems encountered with the standard
reductive process. Of course, no matter
how we shape things there are problems
to overcome. Some of them – aside from
the technical elements – are no doubt
going to be societal and peer pressure as
well as perception as to value, worth and
validity of a process. Just think how many
times people say such things as ‘... that
is not real...’ – put in whatever you need
to there. We have all heard such things
and maybe even said something to such
effect. The desire to make and create is so
strong in many of us that
the creative process will
ever continue to evolve
as our tastes, desires and
technology advance.

Have fun,
Mark

Mark Baker
Editor of Woodcarving



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GMC/ANTHONY BAILEY

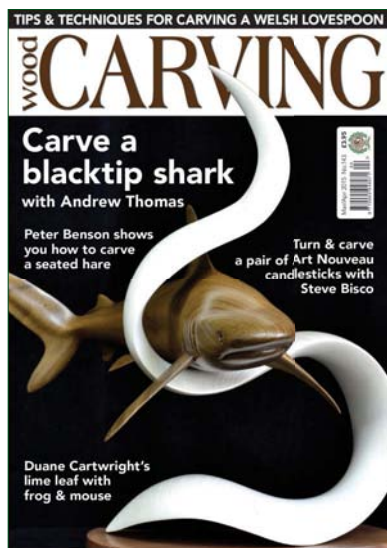


Cleaning up after a router has been
used to decorate the bowl

Copper effect metalised and patinated
bowl with some hand-carved details

Problem finding Woodcarving magazine?

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



Carve a blacktip shark with Andrew Thomas – see page 8 for the step-by-step guide. Front cover image by Andrew Thomas

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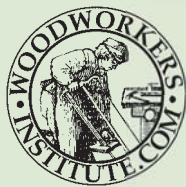
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Zoe Gertner carves a wooden version of her pet tortoise

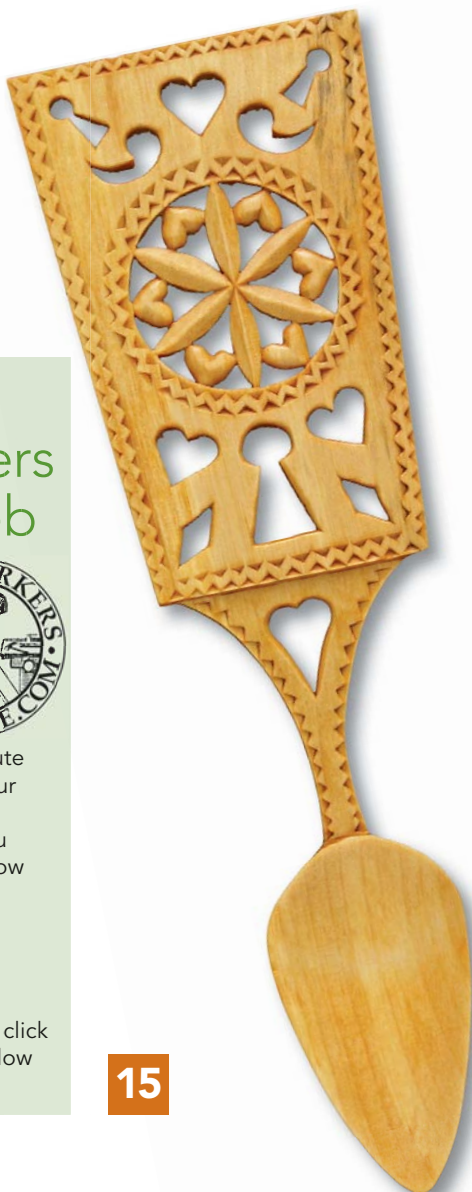


The Woodworkers Institute web forum



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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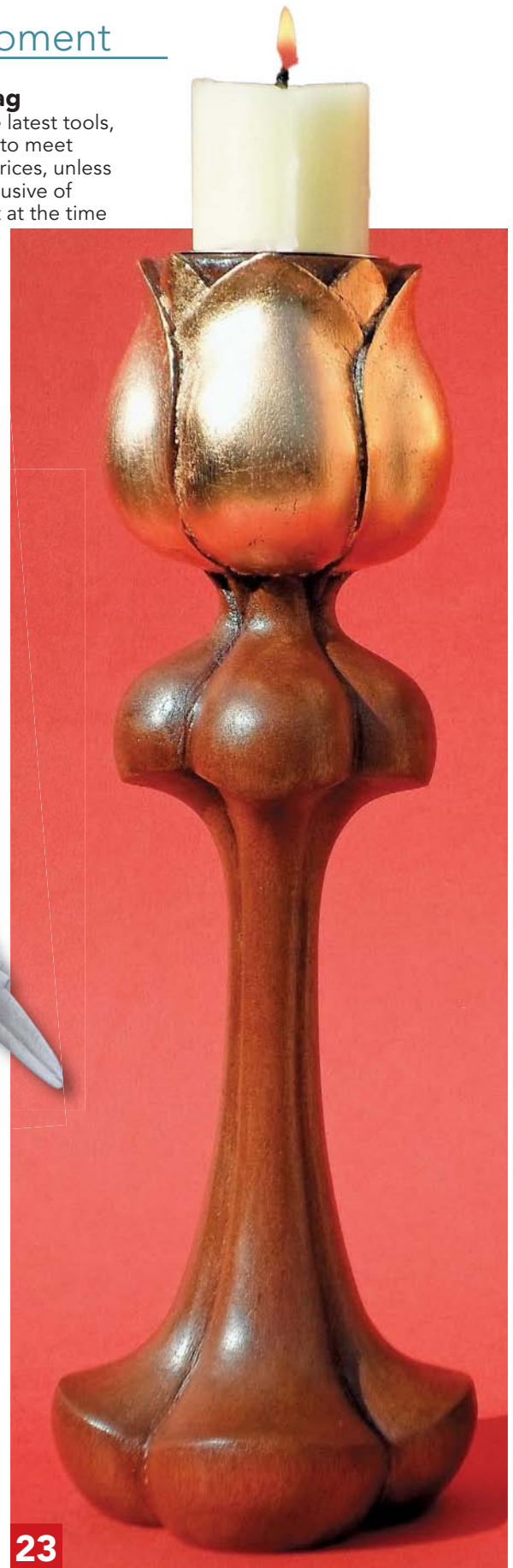


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Bringing you all the latest tools, machinery and products to meet your carving needs. All prices, unless otherwise stated, are inclusive of 20% VAT, and are correct at the time of going to press



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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 – members of the Cleveland club



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID SHIRES

Mathew Ness' bird relief carving



Katie Love's relief 'Celtic cross'

The first news of the year sees us with success for one of our newest regions, Cleveland. A large proportion of the members are new to carving and progress is very good.

Katie Love is a young firefighter who started carving in September, 2014. Her first piece was a simple leaf and her second piece is a relief Celtic cross, which gives us a clue that she will be a carver to watch in coming years.

Mathew Ness is another Cleveland member with a little more experience, as his relief carving of the bird shows. However, he is another young person with youth on his side. It is encouraging to see more young people making a success of the carving discipline.

Remembrance project

An update on last year's project for the remembrance of

World War I continues its journey round the country. In the last issue, it was reported that the display would go from the North of England Woodworking & Power Tool Show at Harrogate to North Wales and Borders

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

region. However, there was a last minute change and this didn't happen because it was needed elsewhere to fit calendar events to best advantage. In fact, Essex region have been very active in promoting the display. Apart from having been shown at regional events, it has also enjoyed a stay in a supermarket and five schools in Hornchurch. It would seem that this display will continue to travel round the country for quite some time and wherever it goes, will promote woodcarving with continuing success.

The year ahead

This year shows a lot of promise for carving in the community. Essex report that they have 22 shows to attend and that does not include the little events that sneak in between.

Another mammoth task faces North Wales and Borders and that is their annual visit to Chirk Castle later in the year. This event lasts for three weeks and requires carvers to be present every day.

At the National AGM in May, two members of the National Council come to the end of their tenure and retire from office. Therefore, there will be vacancies for the posts of treasurer and secretary. The present incumbents are happy to explain their roles to interested parties and applicants can find their contact details on the website. Any further information can be supplied by the National Chairman.

BDWCA 2014/2015 competition



Trent Valley Group wagtails – second in the regional group competition



'Wagtail' by Dave Clewes, winner of 'Best Individual' in the regional group competition



Cheshire Group wagtails – winners of the regional group competition

The subject for the 2014 regional group competition at the BDWCA Annual Show last September, which was selected by the previous year's winners, the Cheshire Group, was the wagtail – with a choice of pied, yellow or grey.

A record number of 78 carvings graced the table, entered by nine of our regional groups, and all three sub-species were well represented. Cheshire Group – with 10 carvings – once again took the award, with Trent Valley in second, just beating Northern Ireland into third place. Dave Clewes, competing as a member of the Cheshire Group, took the award for the 'Best Individual Wagtail'.

So once again, Cheshire Group had the responsibility of choosing the subject for the 2015 competition, and after much

discussion chose the smallest bird yet, the wren – or winter wren as it is known internationally. This tiny bird is very appealing and very easy on timber stock, but can be quite challenging to carve. I understand that there are quite a few already started – and a few already finished – so it will be very interesting to see them all in September, 2015, and to see if the 2014 record will be broken again.

The group competition was started to encourage group members to work as a team and also to encourage newer members to take their first steps on the competitive ladder. It also encourages the carving of a species that might otherwise not be undertaken. Looking around the main competition tables it was great to see novice carvers who had carved a knot – which was the 2013 subject – and special

mention should go to Harold Wibberley and John White who were both awarded silver for their knots.

Contact the BDWCA

For further information on the BDWCA, as well as membership details, visit www.bdwca.org.uk. Membership includes three issues of our 28 page full colour magazine, Wingspan.

Tel: 01442 247 610

Email: pam.wilson@bdwca.org.uk

Or contact membership secretary: Mrs Janet Nash, 26 Shendish Edge, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire
Tel: 01442 247 610
Alternatively, please email: pam.wilson@bdwca.org.uk

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



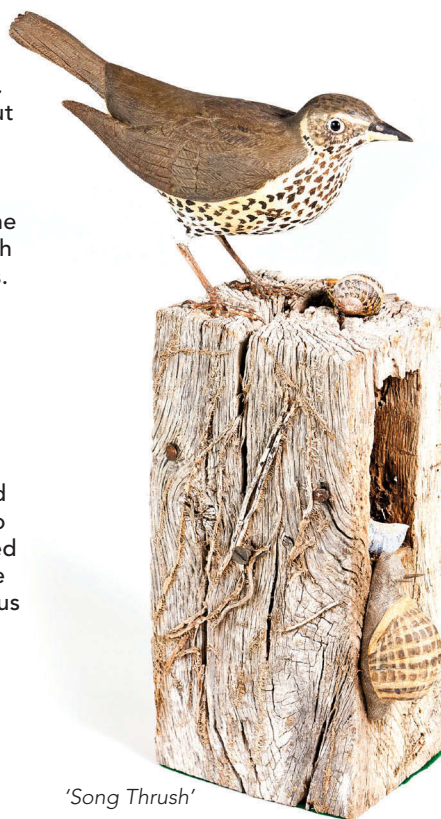
Bentley Wildlife Carvers

This group has been meeting for 15 years at the Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum in Halland, East Sussex. They started as a bird carving group but soon found out that there was more to carving than birds and they now have members who excel in other types of woodcrafts. Several members have gone on to win competitions and achieve high acclaim through the woodcarving press. One such member is Fred Marchant, whose fine unique chess set is soon to be featured in the magazine. The club have admired his effort throughout the challenge and enjoyed seeing his progress each month.

The group has always encouraged new members to share experiences and resources, especially those who want to learn to carve. Members have supported adult education classes, including those for the visually impaired, in which various



'American Golden Eagle'
– Gold winner



'Song Thrush'

members have been tutors for very keen students. They run a weekly evening class in a local school where a group of 10 members makes great progress on a variety of carvings.

Over the years, the club has enjoyed exhibiting their carvings at many local, national and international events and new members are always being encouraged to join. Events are treated as great social occasions wherever they are held and the club takes their marquee or gazebo to help them display and demonstrate work to suit the show. Their home at Bentley holds its Woodfair each year and the club are very proud to have attended every one since its initiation. Members create birds for the

Woodcarving Round & About

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIMCANTHONY BAILEY



'Kestrel' – Silver winner

BDWCA annual show and have enjoyed some excellent results.

To expand the scope of their group meetings they are planning to hold additional monthly meetings at the WWT Arundel wildfowl centre where they will be carving and showing the public examples of their skills, with the intention of developing group meetings for those local to the area.

The club has recently launched a website. Should you wish to join any of their meetings, contact them via the website.

DETAILS:

Contact: Bentley Wildlife Carvers

Web: www.bentleywildlifecarvers.uk

Passing carving on

Mark,
I recently received the latest copy of *Woodcarving* – 141 – and wanted to make a comment or two concerning your leader. You stated: "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?"

Even though it appears the younger generations are not as interested in the fine art of woodworking, including the art of carving, it is my contention that we who are in those crafts should continue on without letting the negative drag

us down. The challenge is before us to stay faithful to the craft and use every opportunity we have to get family and friends involved, including our children and grandchildren. The more we are able to carve at public events and publicly display our craft, the more interest we will get. So, it is up to us to pass it on. Who knows, a few architects just might take interest and we could see some carving increase on our buildings.

Another statement you made was: "If people do go – to club meetings – what do they want from them and can the

clubs and organisations supply it?" You are right in that it is a 'tricky' question, especially when you think of the unwritten principle: "if people don't get what they come for, they will not come back." That principle applies to any event, organisation or situation. So, we simply need to be diligent in our efforts to discover what people do want to get when they come to a club meeting. Like you, I wish I did know the answer to that question.

So for now, keep up the good work.

David Hylan

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Blacktip shark – part 1

Andrew Thomas carves this blacktip shark



Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to go snorkelling with blacktip sharks off a reef in Phi Phi Island, Thailand, which was an incredible experience and one that inspired me to study the creature with the intention of carving one. With this project, I have tried to capture every detail of their anatomy across their beautiful sleek bodies and fins, plus the important movement that adds dynamic energy to the composition, which was really a lot of fun to create.

The fundamental rule when working with a real-life subject is to research thoroughly and understand precisely what you are trying to create before you start working on it, otherwise it is all too easy to get a little lost and frustrated. This involves gathering as much reference material as possible to study the exact details you are trying to reproduce. I have supplied as many stage images as I can, but even with a two-part article you will still need to do your own research and problem solve quite a few areas yourself. With regards to the shark's mount, I will be supplying a template of it in part two, but not instruction on how to make it – there simply isn't room. I would, however, encourage you to design and make your own, which will be

a valuable exercise, and of course personalise your carving.

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

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.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW THOMAS

Things you will need...

Tools:

- No.2, 20mm
- No.2, 5mm
- No.5, 20mm
- No.9, 10mm
- No.12, 8mm
- No.11, 1mm
- No.11, 2mm
- No.5, 8mm
- No.2, 10mm
- Knife

Wood:

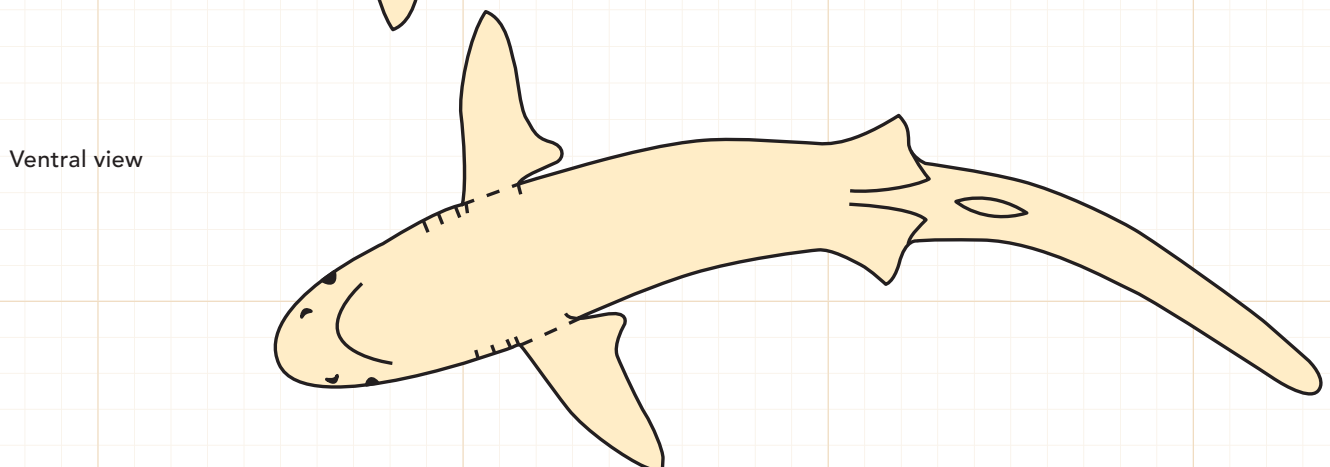
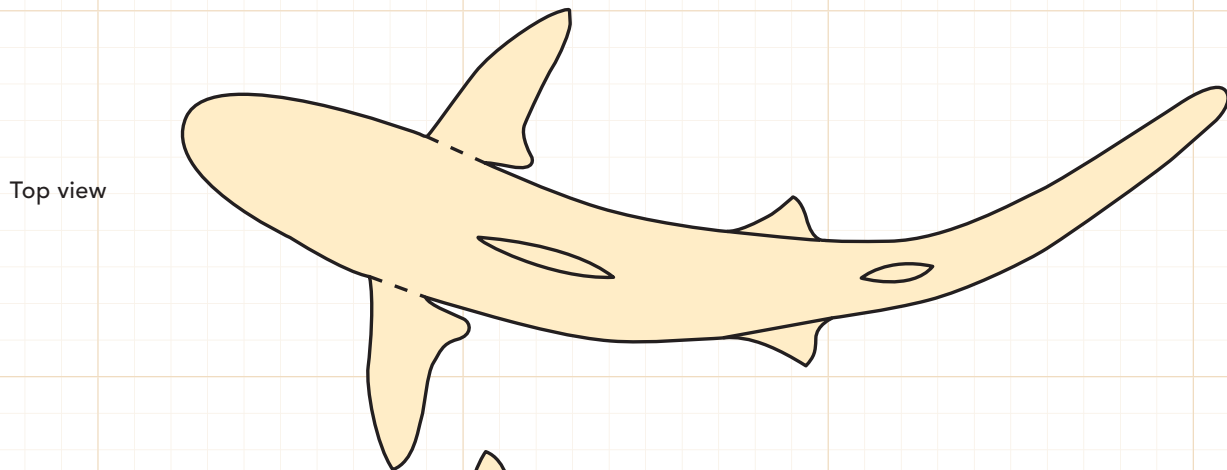
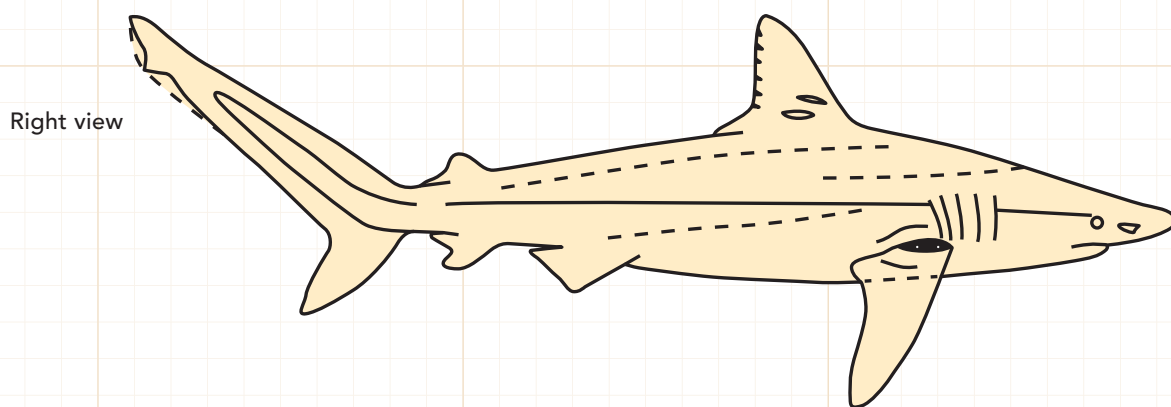
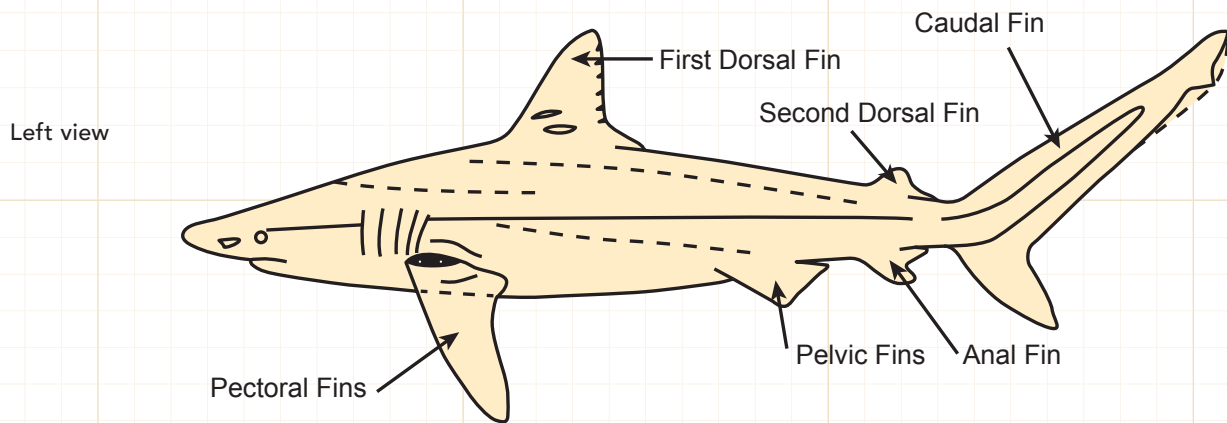
Tulipwood (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

Body dimensions:

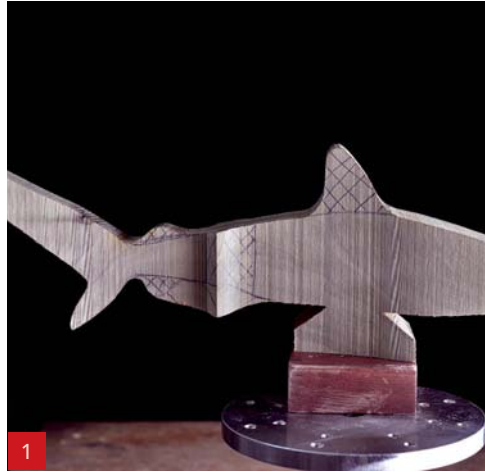
360mm long × 110mm high × 100mm dia.

Pectoral fin dimensions:

Two pieces at 70mm long × 45mm wide × 25mm dia.



➔ **1** Scan or photocopy the scale drawings provided, enlarging them to suit your wood, then print them out to use as templates. Transfer both the side and top view onto your square block, ensuring that they are in precise alignment with each other and that the grain is running horizontally. Leave an area of wood directly underneath the shark to secure it to your faceplate. Cut out both profiles, following the broken line around the caudal fin and along the underside. Do not cut around the pectoral fins on the side of the body – these will be made separately and joined to the body

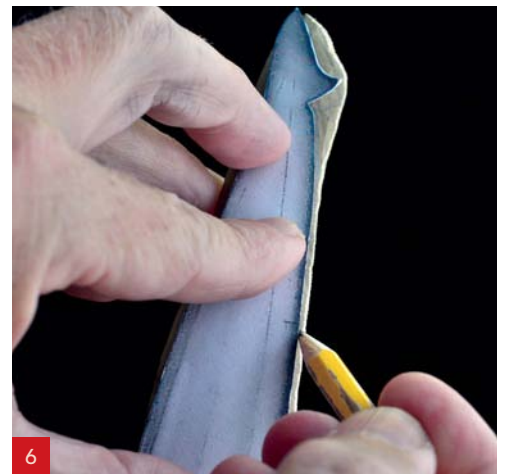


2 Measure and draw a centreline all the way around, including the large caudal fin. Draw all the fin details onto your wood, then cut the hatched areas squarely back to their lines on both sides



3 The line along the side of the body represents the widest position of its mass, meaning that the top of the shark curves down and out to this point, and then back inwards as it curves down to the belly and underside. Draw this line on both sides of your shark

4 Using a No.2, 20mm, start with the top of the shark on both sides to create the natural curve of the body, from the centreline on the top, down to the widest position on the side. Repeat along the lower section on both sides. When you reach the faceplate block, use a 'V'-tool to cut this back inwards, underneath the line of the body on both sides, until you are around 15mm from the centreline

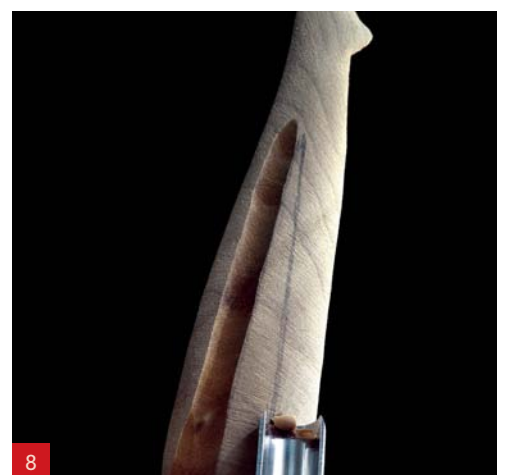
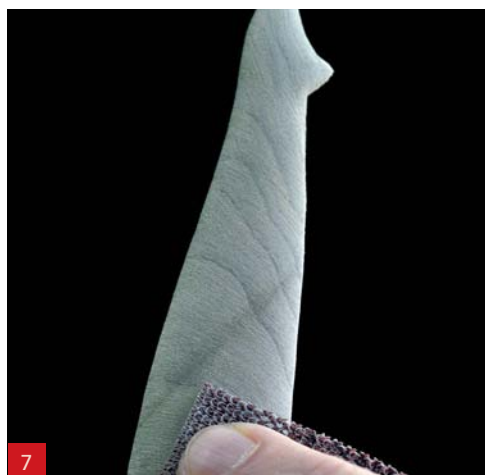


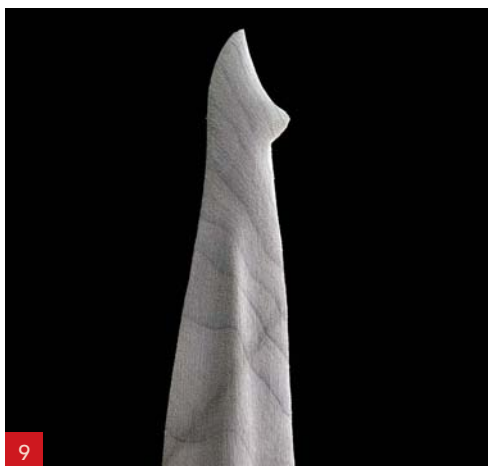
5 On the caudal fin, pare the wood away from the centre mass of the fin, outwards to the edge and down to the centreline, producing an even and sharp line all the way around the edge

6 Place your template in position on the fin and redraw its exact shape on to the wood

7 Carve the fin squarely back to this line and blend the depth from the centre mass again, out to the edges to produce the sharp line. Sand with 100 grit

8 Draw the shape of the surface anatomy of the caudal fin onto the wood. Use a No.9, 10mm to carve cut directly along the outside of the line. Blend the gouge cut evenly into the surrounding areas





9



10

9 Use a piece of 100 grit abrasive, working over the entire surface to blend all the details naturally together and to produce the sharp line all the way around the edge of the caudal fin

10 Moving to the pelvic fins, which are located on the underside of the shark's body on both sides, the first job to do is to pare away the wood on the underside between the two fins, until you reach the shark's body-line in the centre



11



12

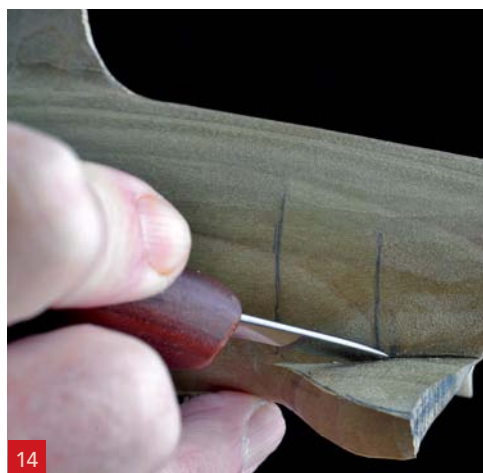
11 Next, draw a line on the back edge of the fins at the natural angle you wish them to project from the body. Carve the top of the fins down to within 3mm of the line

12 The inner side of the pelvic fins extend right underneath the body of the shark and lay on top of the surface – see step 20. To produce this detail you must start by using a 'V'-tool to cut inwards, following the natural angle of the body as it curves down and around to the underside

13 The next step is to use the No.2, 20mm to shape the body into the 'V'-tool cut



13



14

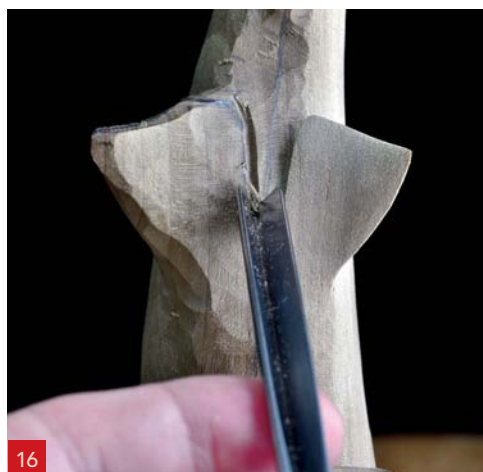
14 When the fin is in line with the lowest edge of the body, switch from the 'V'-tool to a knife to cut a slice inwards along the line of the body

15 Use the No.2, 20mm again to curve the side of the body underneath towards the centreline. Repeat steps 14 and 15 until both sides of the body flow naturally into each other on the underside

16 Draw the shape of the pelvic fins onto the underside of the shark and use the 'V'-tool to form their basic shape



15



16

Top tips

1. When carving any details, such as the pelvic fins, the aim is to create the visual impression that it is separate from the part that it is connected to. This can be achieved using a combination of V-tool and knife, or even just the knife, to slice a deep undercut into the main part, which will hold the shadow and appear to be a separate volume

➔ **17** Use a No.2, 5mm to pare the wood away from the centre of the body into the 'V'-tool cut

18 Swap the 'V'-tool once more for the knife, using it at an angle to slice towards the cut made earlier on the side of the body – in step 14. Repeat steps 17 and 18 until the knife cuts on the underside and side almost join up, giving the visual impression that the fin is resting on, and projecting from the body

19 The fins can now be made much thinner and given a slight concave curvature to them, which should follow the convex angle as the upper side. Do this with a No.5, 20mm

20 The last job is to sand the fins with 100 grit to blend all of the details naturally together. Sand these to a sharp edge

“... sand the fins with 100 grit...”

21 The anal fin is located directly behind the pelvic fins and is a fairly simple form to produce. The position it emerges from the line of the body is approximately 6mm thick and tapers down to a sharp edge. Sand the area with 100 grit, carefully using the abrasive to form the overall thickness of the fin. Then, draw the shape of the fin onto the wood in its correct position and either sand the 'hooked' form to shape or delicately carve it and sand it sharp

22 At the top position of the anal fin – where it emerges from the body – it has a very small, fine, spine-like piece at the rear end of it, as do the first and second dorsal fins. Once again the aim here is to create the visual impression that it is separate from the body. Use the knife to cut along the line of this little spine

23 Use the No.2, 5mm to pare the wood above and below the knife cut, naturally into the knife cut. Repeat steps 22 and 23 until the spine gives the impression it is resting on the body. Sand these areas together with 150 grit

24 The second dorsal fin – located directly above the anal fin on the top side of the body – has a slightly different shape. Form the fin using the same techniques as outlined in steps 21-23





25



26



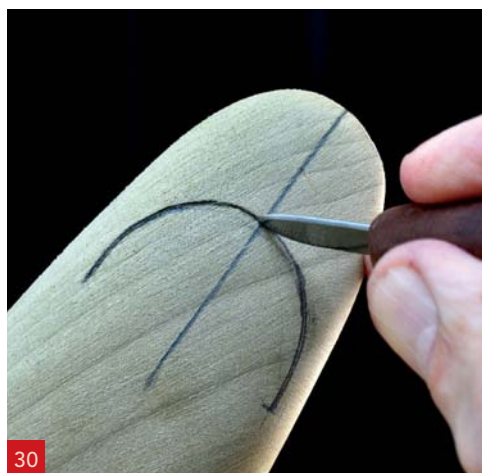
27



28



29



30



31



32

25 The first dorsal fin has a sleek sharp outer edge with a thicker mass in the centre and is the first detail to be carved. Use the No.2, 20mm to shape the form and sand with 100 grit. Create the little spine at the trailing edge using the same techniques as for steps 21-23

26 The first dorsal fins of a real-life blacktip shark appear to have almost muscle-like grooves along their surface anatomy. Draw these into position and carve a groove along each one with a No.9, 5mm, then blend into the surrounding areas completely with 100 grit

27 The rear edge of the fin on the real-life shark can often be found with tiny creases along it. These are also a simple detail to produce, using a combination of No.11, 2mm, to produce the original groove, followed by a No.11, 1mm to deepen it. Sand using 150 grit

28 The surface anatomy of the shark's body clearly shows muscular ripples that flow from the head through the trunk, down to the tail section. These add a huge amount of realism to the finished piece. Using the designs supplied – the broken lines on the body – measure and draw these muscle lines onto both sides of the body. Use the No.9, 10mm to carve deep grooves along these lines, followed by the No.2, 20mm to blend the edges of the gouge cuts into their surrounding areas

29 Sand the gouge cuts with 100 grit to shape and blend them into their surrounding areas

30 Before you cut the line of the mouth, ensure that the complete area of the head is symmetrical on both sides of the body. Next, sand it over with 100 grit and redraw your centrelines. Measure and draw the mouth and check again for symmetry from every angle. Use the knife or gouges of the correct sweep to carefully cut along the line of the mouth

31 Use a No.2, 10mm or similar to pare the surrounding areas into the knife cuts

32 Repeat steps 30 and 31 until you have reached a depth that reflects a realistic result. Smooth the surrounding areas into the knife cuts with 150 grit and make one final cut to retain the realism of the mouth separation line ▶

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Carving a traditional Welsh lovespoon

In the first of a new series on lovespoons, Dave Western starts by looking at the history of the Welsh version



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE WESTERN

The lovespoon has become something of an icon of Wales and is a favourite project among woodcarvers. With origins dating back over 350 years, lovespoons were carved throughout Europe for a range of romantic purposes. From 'testing the waters', to courtships to wedding celebrations, ornately decorated lovespoons were given as a way for young men to demonstrate both the intensity of their ardour and their ability as craftsmen.

Although the carving of lovespoons for their original purposes had largely died out throughout most of Europe, it is experiencing something of a revival as woodcarvers and romantics once again enjoy the challenge of carving them. They are now presented and enjoyed at a range of celebrations, such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays and Christenings, which mostly fall beyond the original borders of the tradition.

Sadly, a great deal of internet misinformation and the overwhelming presence of souvenir industry spoons has resulted in the vast majority of modern lovespoons being pale imitations of their historical ancestors. Without an understanding of the meanings, purpose

and craftsmanship of the lovespoon, it is difficult for contemporary carvers to create evocative lovespoons which carry on the tradition in a worthwhile fashion.

Having a grasp of traditional methods and design will go a long way towards helping modern day carvers create lovespoons, which will carry on the lovespoon's rich tradition of elegance, skill, romance and symbolism. In the following series of four articles, I will examine the stylistic differences, the varied carving techniques and the unique romantic purposes of lovespoons from a number of European regions.

A Welsh tradition

Probably the best known of the lovespoon carving countries is Wales and it is there that we will begin our study of traditional lovespoons. As the only country where lovespoon carving continues in an appreciable way – quite possibly due to the same souvenir industry, which ironically has smothered inventive design and stylistic beauty – Wales is fortunate to have a number of excellent museum collections for study and a number of excellent practising craftsmen who keep the tradition alive and vibrant.

Welsh lovespoon carving was romantic, dynamic and somewhat eccentric. Nowhere is this borne out more clearly than in the broad handled 'panel' type spoons, which were developed by carvers seeking a more expansive palette on which to display their skills. While not a strict historical copy, the panel spoon we are using as a pattern here is an amalgamation of several similar antique lovespoons and is an accurate representation of the style.

Understanding Welsh lovespoons

Welsh lovespoon carving is generally a much less conservative endeavour than its Continental counterpart. With a wider variety of symbols and a much more eclectic range of styles, the Welsh lovespoon often appears to be much more passionate and much more readily wears its heart on its sleeve. Styles range from simple panel spoons, such as that in our

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave Western is a professional lovespoon carver and the author of two books on the subject. He carves to commission order and also teaches carving classes. His books, *The Fine Art of Carving Lovespoons* and *History of Lovespoons* are both available through GMC Publications. You can find out more about Dave and his woodcarving by visiting his website: www.davidwesternlovespoons.com



example, up to masterworks of chain-link and balls-in-cages crowned by ornate swivels, anchors or even working whistles. Judging by the level of effort which seems to have gone into most of the historical examples still in existence,

these spoons were given with serious intent and most probably when the response was liable to be positive. However, there's no evidence that the acceptance of the spoon by the young lady constituted a 'betrothal'; most

likely, it simply gave the young man a green light to initiate a relationship. Even though this simple panel spoon displays only a small number of symbols, it nevertheless imparts a good deal of romantic information.

Keyholes – indicates the offer of security or protection or 'you have the key to my heart'

Chip-carved borders – although there are suggestions that there is meaning in these borders, it is most likely they appear as often as they do because of their relative simplicity. Their simple, repetitive patterns added a level of sophistication and finish to the basic designs

Hearts – the universal symbol of love and one of the few symbols which appears on virtually all European lovespoons



Comma shapes – although modern lore has it this symbol is a 'soul symbol' from ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, it is far more likely to have come from the Continental symbol for rain and so was a fertility symbol

Circular patterns – may indicate the wheel of life or the notion of eternity and eternal love. The addition of a floral pattern may indicate the idea of growth or fertility

Diamonds – likely a promise of prosperity. They may have indicated that the young man was prepared to work for his bride and to provide life's essentials for her

Historical examples

Welsh lovespoons do not appear to have evolved in an orderly linear progression from simple to difficult. The oldest known example – dated 1667 – is an extremely sophisticated piece, which features ball-in-cage carving, while some more recent

pieces appear much cruder in craftsmanship. Two distinct 'types' of spoons seem to exist, though: narrow, open spoons, which often feature ball-in-cage or link carving and the broader panel spoon, like our pattern example.

This narrow-handled lovespoon is a masterpiece of craftsmanship. Although badly damaged, the spoon is elegant and very skilfully carved, featuring a delicate four-chamber ball-and-cage arrangement. Its sophistication, extreme technicality and the fact that at least three identical versions of this spoon are known to exist, indicate that this lovespoon was very likely the work of a professional woodcarver.

The same spoon shown 'side-on', clearly shows the elegance of the design. Simple, but effective chip patterning further refines an already marvellous spoon



The panel style spoon was developed as a way by which carvers could increase the area available to them for their displays of skill and passion. Many of them are, like this sample, quite straightforward – with symbols such as the hearts for love, the wine glasses for celebration or 'plenty' and the six-pointed flower wheel of eternity – but later, when fretting became fashionable, became extremely ornate and lacy

A later example of a small panel spoon – likely late 19th century – is wonderfully balanced and evocative despite its simplicity. Spoons such as this would have been carved by lovestruck young men using very basic tools. Even the crudest spoons show evidence of having been carefully and conscientiously worked. Note the graceful bowls common on all these spoons



In this example, the panel has been taken to extremes and a second bowl has been added. Said to indicate 'we two are as one' or the union of two souls, the double bowl spoon sometimes appears on the Continent at wedding celebrations. Then, the idea was for the young couple to eat their first meal together using the same spoon. There is no known evidence that this was the case with Welsh double-bowled spoons, though. The curious squared tips of the bowls are not a design statement. Lovespoons would have been hung on a wall for all to see and admire and would occasionally fall to the stone floor below. When the bowl contacted the ground, the tips would be broken away and a straightforward fix was simply to square the end of the spoon. Throughout museum collections, many spoons illustrate this type of damage and repair

Lovespoon collections

You can learn more about Welsh lovespoons by visiting the wonderful collections housed at a number of museums throughout Wales and England. Most notable are the collections housed at:

St. Fagans Welsh National History Museum

Web: www.museumwales.ac.uk

Brecknock Museum – closed for refurbishment until 2016

Web: www.brecknocksociety.co.uk/news.html

Swansea Museum

Web: www.swanseamuseum.co.uk

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery – home of the Pinto Collection

Web: www.bmag.org.uk

Making the spoon

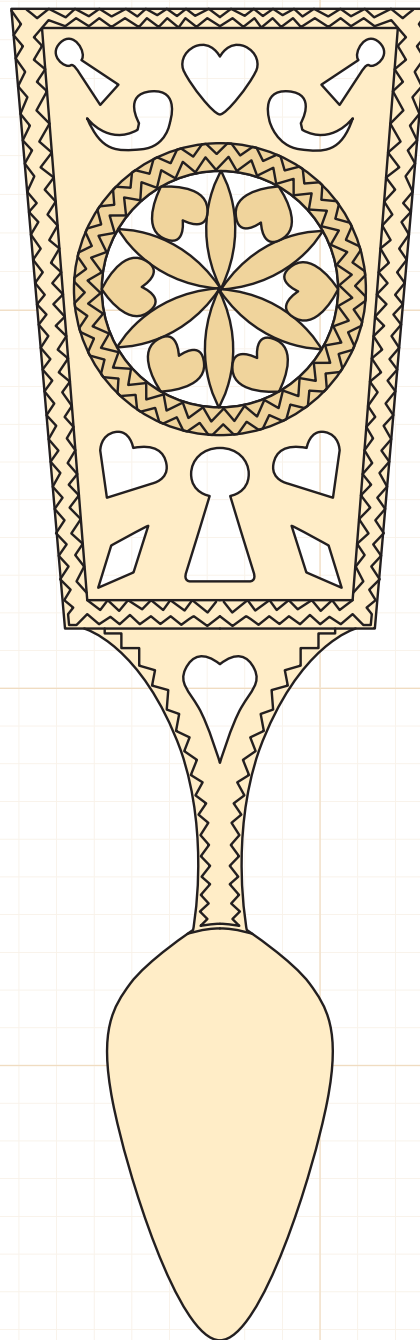
Things you will need...

Tools:

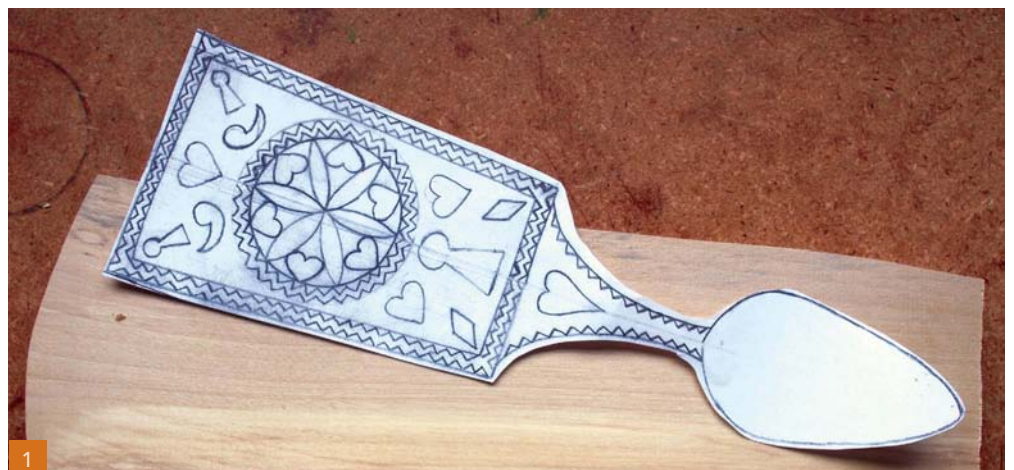
- Axe, coping saw or scrollsaw for rough shaping and fretting
- Drill for starting fretwork
- Straight knife – 20mm or 38mm blades are ideal
- Bent knife for shaping bowl although you can use gouges to do this
- Small hand saw for notching handle/stem and thinning handle
- 150 grit cloth-backed abrasive
- 20mm straight chisel – for chamfering bowl and handle backs
- Needle files for cleaning fretwork
- Small hand scraper – optional
- Selection of fine abrasive papers for final finishing
- Disposable paintbrush
- Clear Danish oil – or similar
- Beeswax polish

Wood:

Birch (*Fagus sylvatica*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) or similar light toned hardwood measuring 115mm wide × 355mm long × 20mm thick

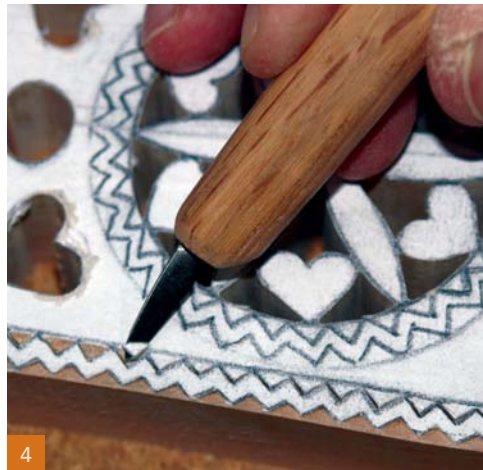


1 The first step for creating your own Welsh lovespoon is to start with a clear piece of timber, which measures approximately 115mm wide × 355mm long by 10mm thick. If you are a beginner, you might want to use a 10mm-thick piece and avoid the swan-neck bend, which the following step-by-step illustrates. The next step is to photocopy the design shown above. I like to glue a photocopy of the spoon – you can adjust the size to suit – and work directly from that. The paper helps you stay on line and it also offers a bit of protection to unworked areas





2 A number of methods can be used to rough shape the lovespoon blank. If you have a scroll saw to hand, that is the quickest and most accurate method. Alternatively, you could also use a jeweller's saw or go 'old school' and rough shape with an axe – the choice is yours. If you do choose to use an axe, don't forget to hand saw a couple of cuts into the bottoms of curves so that you don't chip out precious wood you want to keep!



3 With the blank now shaped, you are ready to clear out the fretted areas you have marked out. Again, a scroll saw is the quickest tool for the job, but you can use a drill to clear the bulk of material before cleaning the areas with a narrow straight knife. Using a variety of drill bit sizes will enable you to clear away a good deal of the unwanted wood



4 While the piece is full thickness, clamp it securely to the bench and carry out the chip-carved bordering patterns. This is a simple knife operation, which may also be quickly done with a veining or V-chisel. If you use a knife, cut straight down on two sides, adjusting the depth of cut from nothing at the wide end of the triangle to about 1.5mm deep at the pointed end. Then turn the knife sideways and take a slicing cut following the depth of the straight cuts; this will pop out a neat and very effortless little pyramidal chip. Avoid the urge to cut too deeply at this stage. Leave the remaining paper on for now; this will act as a protective cover against any dirt and light abrasions



5 After the handle carving is complete, it is time to begin shaping the bowl. Begin by cutting a shallow notch – approximately 5mm – to delineate the handle from the swan-neck, then use a bandsaw, hand saw or axe to shape the top of the swan neck curve and the taper of the bowl

6 If you are clever, you can peel the paper back off the cutaway and reuse it on the swan-neck, or simply redraw the lines with a pencil. Shape and smooth the neck with a knife or chisel, then carry out the chip-carved pattern

7 As you can see here, to clearly define the crest of the bowl, keep it slightly higher than the top surface of the swan-neck

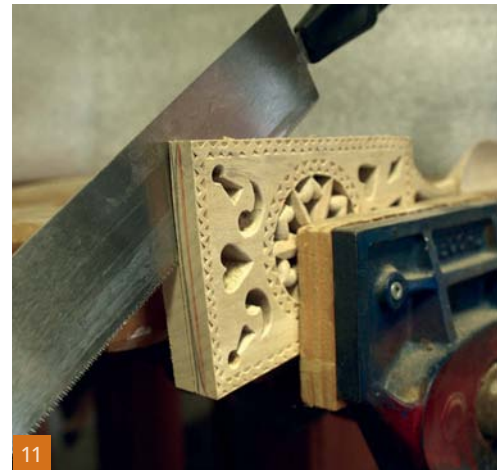
➔ **8** I like to use both gouges and bent knives to hollow out the concave aspect of the bowl. With the spoon clamped securely to the bench, you can use a lot of force and remove material quickly with the gouges and then tidy up and finish shape with the more delicate bent knife. If you use a bent knife, hold it with the fingers rather than across the palm. Exercise extreme caution, here. I suggest all beginners consider making use of a thumb guard



9 For sanding, I use 150 grit cloth-backed abrasive torn into long, thin strips for both concave and convex curve shaping. To smooth the bowl, draw the abrasive under the thumb – cutting side down – and use the shape of the thumb to smooth out bumps or hollows. Don't sand too long in one spot or you will create hollows. The same abrasive can be used to smooth and round-over edges



10 Once the bowl has been hollowed, it is time to carve the outside surface. A quick and accurate way to hand-shape this section is to make use of multiple chamfers. I draw out a series of chamfers, which I repeatedly halve until the bowl begins to become rounded. The bowl is probably the area where most carvers fall down. Many treat the bowl as something of an afterthought and leave it looking heavy and crude. However, even the simplest historical spoons show a great deal of effort went into the carving of the bowls and the vast majority are very elegant. The bowl is a crucial counterpoint to the busy handle and is an equally important showcase of your skill and determination as a carver



11 The back of the handle can be trimmed to size and the back of the swan-neck shaped. This can be done on a bandsaw or by hand. The black lines delineate the actual thickness of the handle and neck; the red line indicates where the back can be tapered to create the illusion of a thinner handle



12 I like to finish the back with some detail carving and nicely tidied edges. Once the spoon is tidy, apply 3-4 coats of Danish oil – with a wet/dry paper sanding of 600 grit – on the third and fourth coats. Finally, give the spoon a buffing with some beeswax polish

13 The completed lovespoon should look something like this ▶



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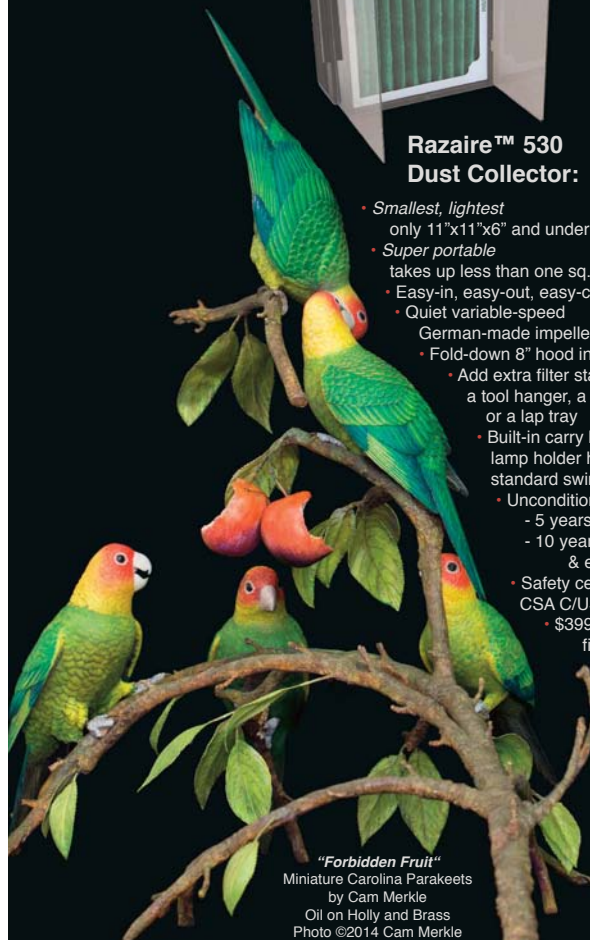
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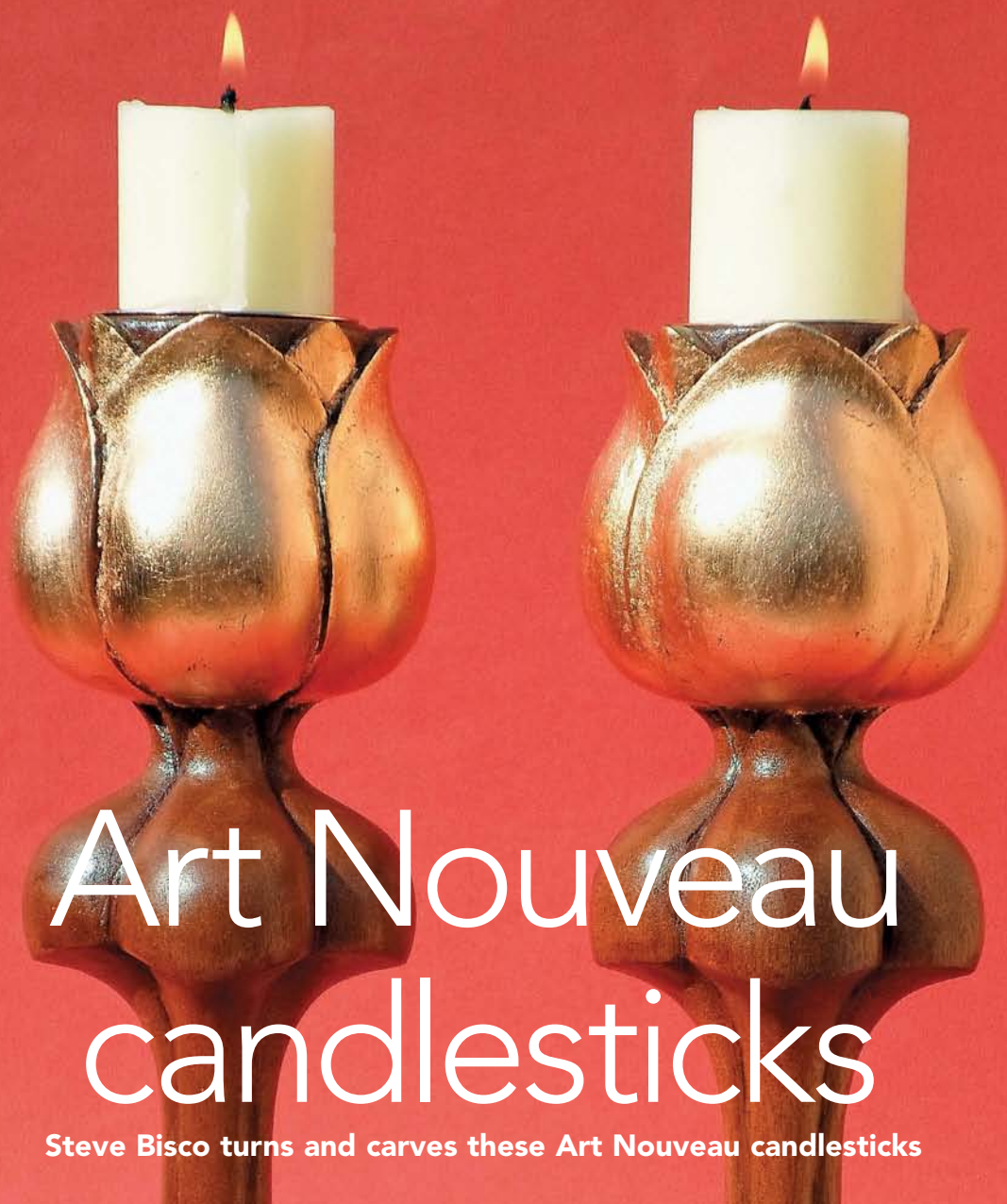
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Art Nouveau candlesticks

Steve Bisco turns and carves these Art Nouveau candlesticks

The Art Nouveau style, which developed around 1890 and dominated the decorative arts until World War I, was unlike anything that went before, or indeed came after it. These 'lotus flower' candlesticks are based on an illustration in the *Manual of Traditional Woodcarving*, published in 1911 and is still available today from Dover Publications. The designer is identified, with Edwardian formality, as 'Mr W.S. Williamson'. William Williamson (1871–1939) was a respected teacher artist and designer, and a leader in the teaching of woodcarving in the early 20th century. During the Great War he taught woodwork to convalescent soldiers in addition to his school teaching. He was highly skilled in all historical styles and his classes at Taunton notably produced a number of talented young women, whose carvings were used in the

restoration of Wells Cathedral. He also designed pieces in the 'modern' style current at that time, which we now call Art Nouveau. He deserves to be remembered by carvers, which we can do by making his candlesticks.

I have slightly adapted the base on Mr Williamson's design to add a bit more carved detail. To enhance the Art Nouveau effect I have used the mahogany-type wood sapele (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*), finished with French polish and I've decorated the lotus petals with copper leaf. Copper was widely used with the Art Nouveau style and also with its close cousin the Arts & Crafts style.

For this project, you need to use a woodturning lathe to form the outline shape of the candlesticks before the carving starts. If you don't have a lathe, or access to one, you could either take up woodturning as a

second hobby, as many carvers do, or you could seek help from a friendly woodturner. If you are a member of a carving club, then there will probably be a turner or two among the members who will be able to help.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



→ Things you will need...

Woodturning tools:

- Spindle roughing gouge
- Side-cutting scraper
- 25mm straight scraper
- 25mm round-end scraper
- 12mm round-end scraper
- Parting tool
- Callipers

Woodcarving tools:

- No.3, 20mm fishtail gouge
- No.3, 10mm fishtail gouge
- No.5, 7mm gouge
- No.5, 13mm curved gouge
- 12mm back-bent gouge
- Straight 'V'-tool
- Curved 'V'-tool
- 10mm skew chisel

Wood:

Sapele (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*) – two pieces @ 330mm long of '100mm square nominal'

Materials:

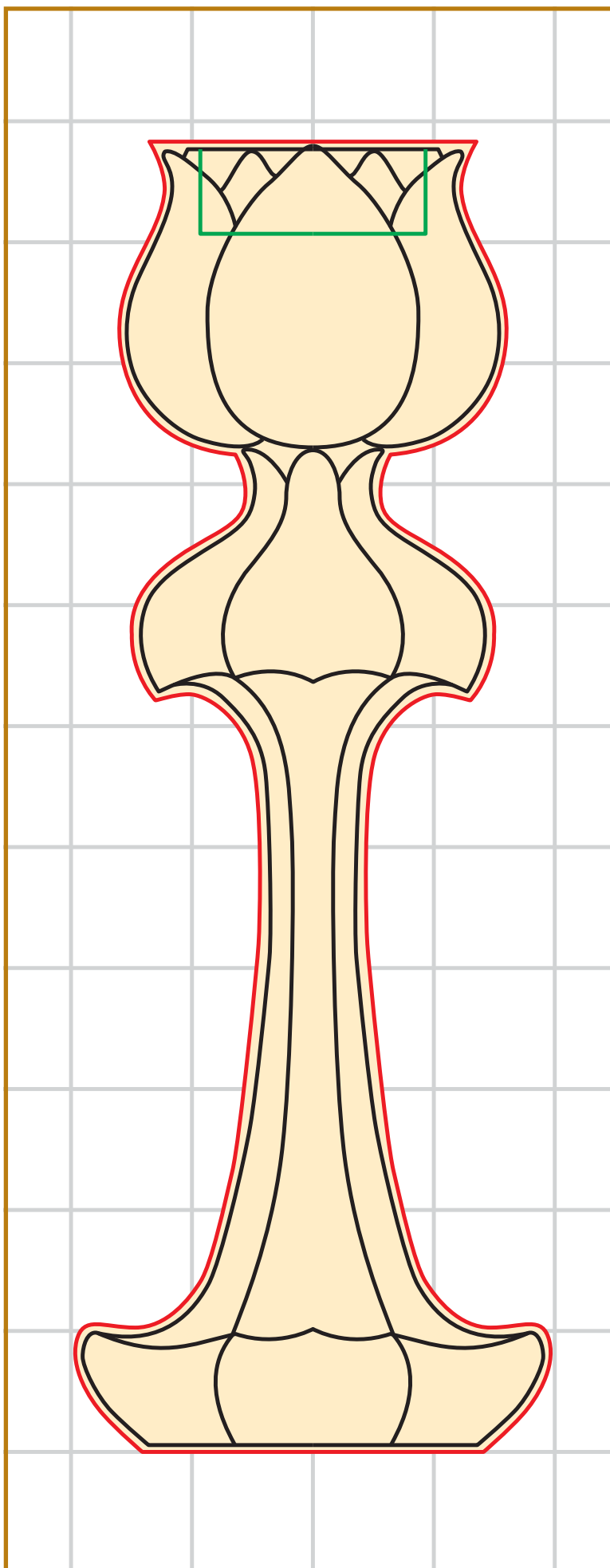
40mm copper candle/tea light cups
French polish – Liberon garnet polish
Copper leaf
Gilding size

Using the pattern

You can enlarge the pattern to any size that suits you, but I made my candlesticks 275mm tall. If you make a digital copy of the drawing on a computer, using either a scanner or a digital camera, you can print it out full-size on an A4 page simply by cropping the drawing close to the top and bottom of the candlestick. Check that the candlestick is about 275mm tall on your print out and use the drawing for measuring off the diameters and the relative positions of the various features.

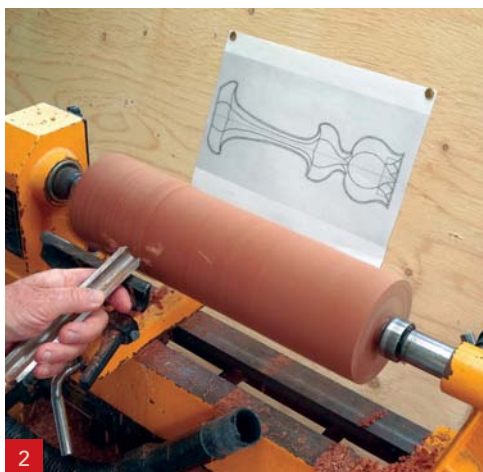
Easier woodturning for carvers

There are many carvers who also turn and many turners who also carve, but usually with a difference of emphasis in the type of work produced and the type of tools used. Woodturners like to use skew chisels and spindle gouges for their lathe work as they are quick and efficient, but they can be difficult for beginners to master. For carvers who just need to produce occasional turnings as a basis for carving, you can avoid these difficult tools and do what you need to do with the flat tools known, somewhat confusingly, as 'scrapers'. Scraper tools rest flat on the toolrest of the lathe and are less likely to produce the 'catches' that can ruin a nearly completed job. They have a cutting edge that can be straight or curved to suit the shape of the work. By all means use skew chisels and spindle gouges if you can master them, but don't be put off woodturning if you cannot. Just use the simpler 'scraper' tools





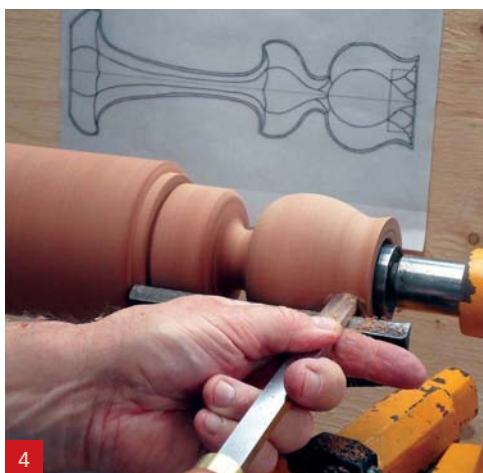
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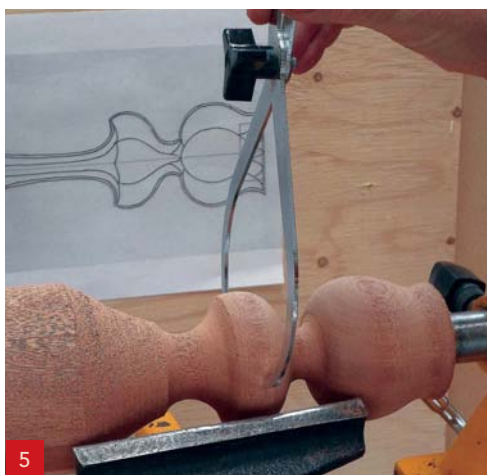
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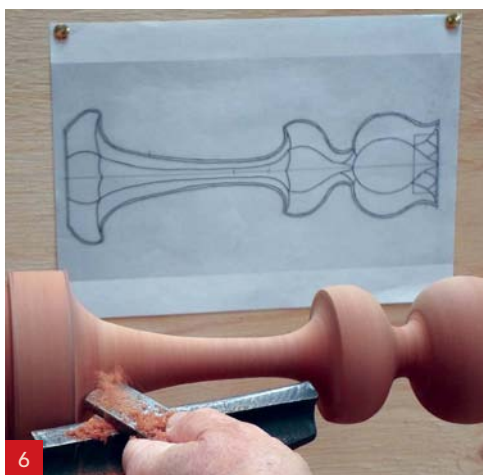
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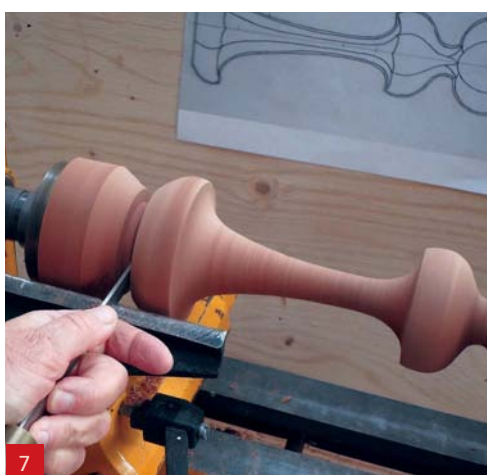
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Turning the outline shape

1 Make a full-size copy of the drawing so the candlestick is 275mm long. You will measure diameters and lengths from this, so make it the right size. Get some sapele '100mm square nominal' – actually about 94mm when bought planed – and cut two pieces 330mm long. This includes some waste for fixing a faceplate with long screws

2 Mount a piece between centres on the lathe, square off the ends and turn it to a cylinder of 95mm diameter. Don't worry if this leaves some flats on the sides – these will be dealt with in the carving later

3 Fix a faceplate to the squared off bottom end using 50mm screws to give a secure fixing, as the piece will only be held by one end. Make sure the faceplate is centred exactly. Mount it on the lathe and carefully cut a hole in the top end to fit your candle cup. It must be an exact fit so try it in place. I used copper cups that fit a 40mm candle or tealight

4 Put the tailstock back in place to steady the piece and shape the 'cup' that will become the flower petals. Mark the distances from the top of the candlestick, measuring off the drawing, as you work towards the base

5 You can now begin to continue onto the downward curves of the 'leaves'. Keep checking the diameters with callipers against your full-size drawing

6 Now to shape the long curve of the stem. The narrowest point, which is near the top, is only 20mm diameter

7 Form the shape of the base before separating the candlestick from the waste wood containing the baseplate screws. Push in the parting tool at a slight angle to give the base a very shallow concavity, so the candlestick doesn't wobble when stood up. When there is just about 6mm of wood remaining, stop the lathe, snap off the join and cut away the nib with a carving gouge

8 Repeat the process on the second candlestick, checking all your measurements against the first one as well as the drawing. You should then have two identical turned forms to carve on

→ The carving stage

9 Make up two brackets to hold the work for carving. At the bottom end you need a central screw to hold the base and a couple of side screws to stop it rotating. At the top end you need a central screw through a plug that fits into the candle hole

10 Divide the circumference accurately into eight equal parts around the base and draw eight straight lines from the base to the top; these mark the alternate ridges and gulleys. Use them to set out the four petals, four leaves and four 'root' divisions. Note: two of the petals overlap the other two and there are four little petal tips, which altogether form a ring of eight petal tips around the candle cup

11 Cut out the gaps between the root divisions and shape the four root ends into semi-circles

12 Carve four grooves along the stem with a 'V'-tool to continue the root divisions up the stem. Put a supporting block under the stem as it is fairly thin

13 Shape the roots into a smooth and bulbous Art Nouveau style and merge them into four quadrants along the stem. A shallow back-bent gouge is very useful here

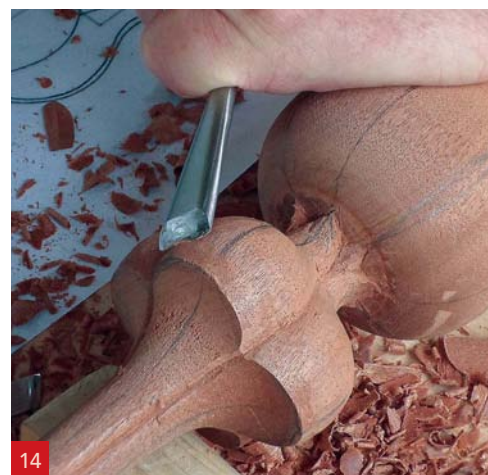
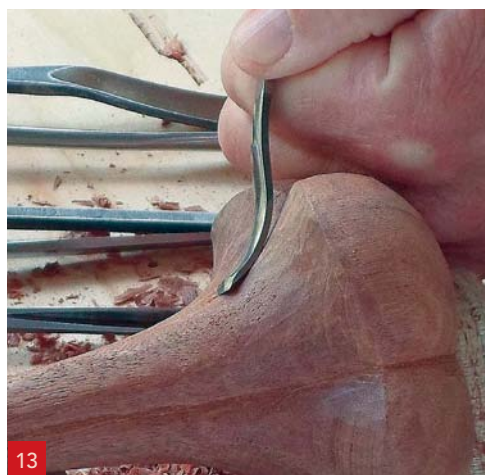
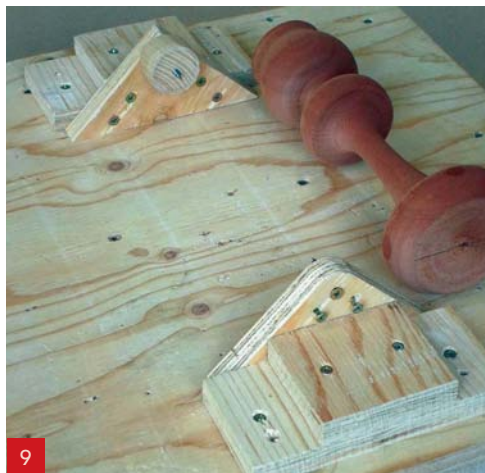
14 Form the four bulbous 'leaves', which are semi-circular underneath. Each leaf has a little tip at the top under the base of the flower

15 The underside of the bulbous leaves has to be sculpted into the stem. Follow along the stem with the back-bent gouge to create four rounded sub-stems

16 Now, move to the very top and separate the four main petal tips and the four mini leaf tips from the edge of the candle cup, so the cup appears to nestle between the tips

Top tips

1. To divide a circumference into equal divisions, fix some masking tape around it and mark where the ends overlap. Refix the tape onto a ruler and divide the total length by the number of divisions to get the unit length. Mark these units along the tape, refix it to the carving, and mark off the divisions on the wood





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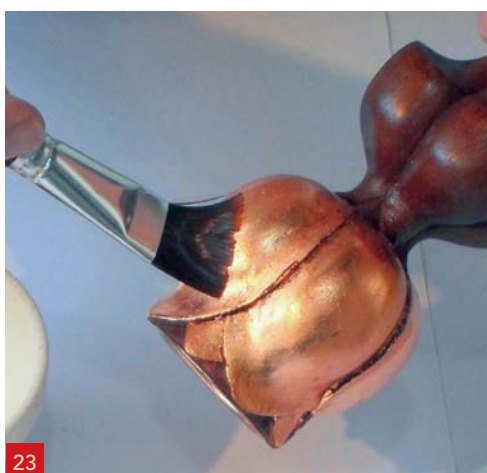
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17 The petals of the lotus flower are also bulbous, but with a shallow concave hollow that flows around the edges up into the tips and down into the underside. Two petals overlap the other two

18 Repeat each step on the second candlestick as you go. The copper gilding and French polish will highlight any defects, so thoroughly smooth all the surfaces with abrasives. You should now have two identical carved pieces

Finishing

19 French polish is a traditional finish for mahogany-type woods. Apply it thinly with a fine soft brush. Work fast as it dries in seconds and avoid going over the same bit twice as you may build up a 'muddy' patch. Wash your brush in methylated spirit. Leave the first coat to harden overnight, give it a light sanding with 400 grit abrasive, then apply three more coats leaving about half an hour between coats. Finally, buff it up to a soft shine with a dry cloth

20 Get some copper leaf – sold quite cheaply in most art stores – and also some gilding size, a brush to put it on with and a soft brush to press down the leaf

21 Apply some gilding size thinly to the petals. Leave it about 10 minutes until it is dry, but slightly tacky to the touch. The leaf will stick exactly where you put the size, so apply it carefully

22 Use a folded piece of paper to pick up a piece of copper leaf, then slowly and carefully place it on the sized area. Press it down gently with a soft brush and brush away any loose pieces of leaf. Continue over the whole area and go over any gaps with more leaf

23 The copper leaf needs a sealer to stop it tarnishing. You can use French polish again for this to give it an 'antique copper' finish

24 With the copper candle cups in place the pair of candlesticks is finished

Top tips

2. When you are making things in matching pairs, it is easier to keep them both the same if you complete each stage on both pieces before moving on to the next stage

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Lime leaf with frog & sleeping mouse

Duane Cartwright shows how maquette models can be used effectively to create this charming leaf carving, complete with some animal additions



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DUANE CARTWRIGHT

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.

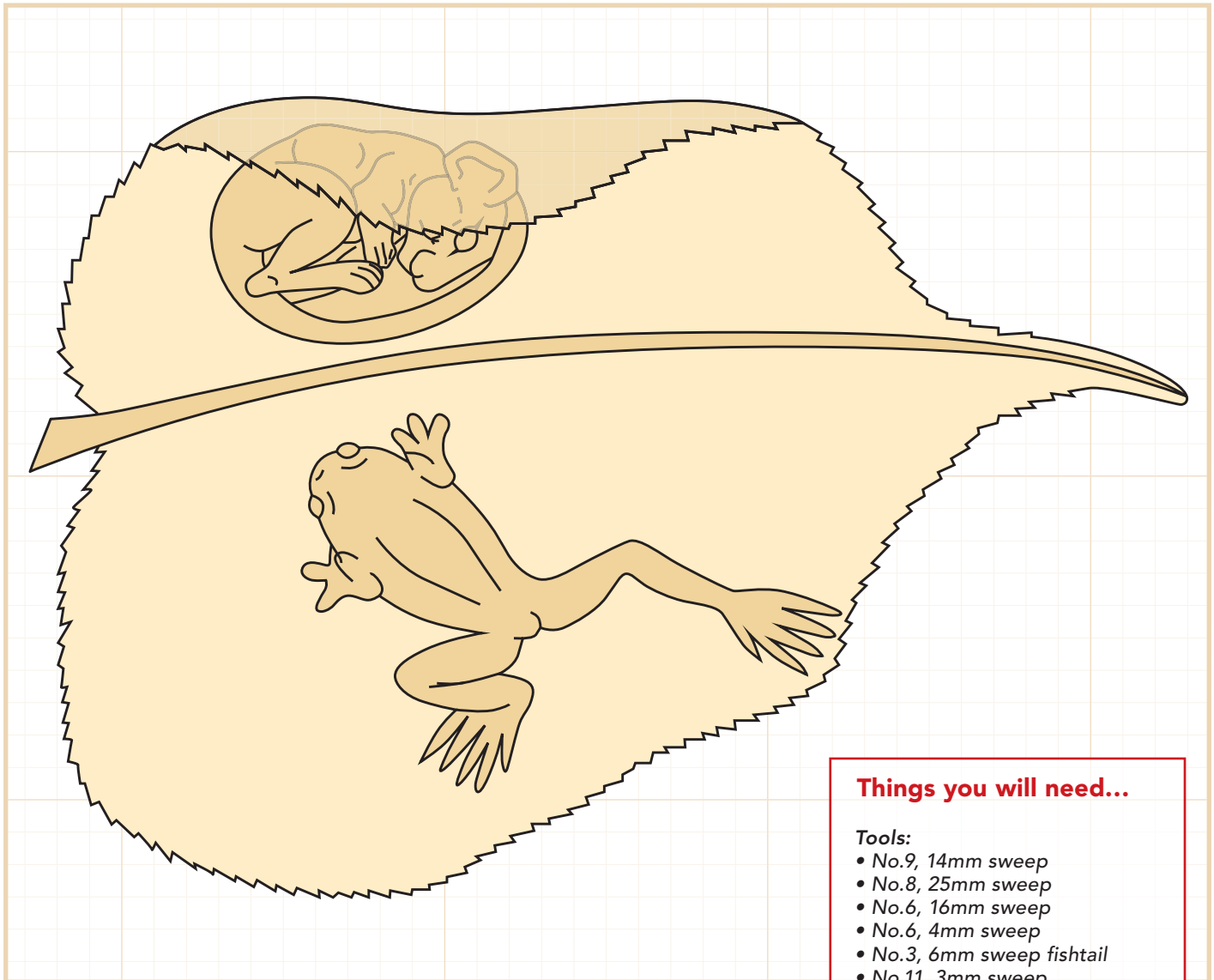


In making this project, a lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) leaf with frog and sleeping mouse, I encountered a lot of challenges, mainly holding the project securely while carving it, plus the use of maquette models.

I chose to use a lime leaf for this project to tie in with the timber being used and also because the lime leaf is a large broad, irregular heart shape, which gives a lot of freedom in terms of the

finished shape and how the leaf folds over. I've stylised the frog and mouse but you could carve a particular species if you wish.

The carving tools listed are a selection of those I used but are listed only as a guide. For this type of carving, the size and sweep needed is not so important; it's more about using the chisels you have to make the required cut as cleanly and efficiently as possible.



Things you will need...

Tools:

- No.9, 14mm sweep
- No.8, 25mm sweep
- No.6, 16mm sweep
- No.6, 4mm sweep
- No.3, 6mm sweep fishtail
- No.11, 3mm sweep
- Plasticine for making maquette
- Bandsaw
- Carving vice
- Hooked skew
- Thin carving knife

Wood:

Block of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*):
240mm long × 170mm wide
× 76mm thick

Offcut for the mouse maquette:
80 × 50 × 30mm

Scrap piece of wood to
temporarily attach to the carving

Maquette model

1 The first step is to make a leaf from Plasticine. Use some wire in the centre of the leaf vein; this will add strength and help you to hold the shape of the leaf. Once finished with the rough shape of the leaf, fold/bend a quarter to one-third of it over. Remember that the leaf bends down where the frog's feet will be and the leaf curls up where there is no weight on it. This leaf maquette will help when shaping the carved leaf



2 You also need to make maquettes of the frog and mouse. With the frog, make sure the legs are of equal size and length and place them in the position you want it to sit on the leaf



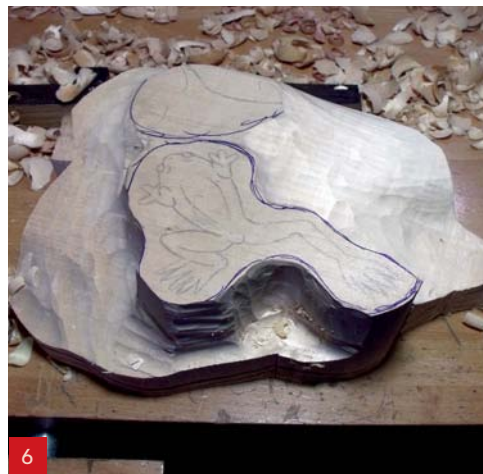
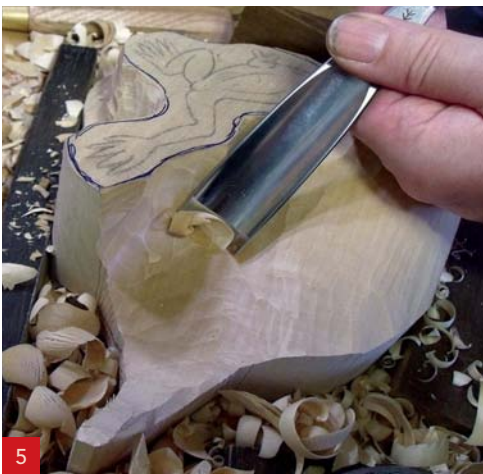
3 With the mouse, I couldn't get the Plasticine maquette to look how I wanted so I carved a maquette using the sketch. I then transferred the pattern to a piece of lime and whittled the mouse. If you choose to carve the mouse as a model and you are happy with it, you could use it and fix/glue it into the inside of the leaf's curl when finishing the carving





Transferring & cutting out

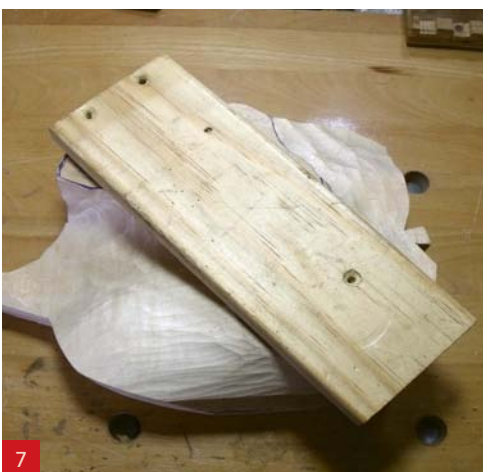
4 Print out the design at the required size for the piece of timber you wish to use and transfer it to the wood. I use a carbon stick and rub it over the back of the printed design, then trace over the design. Alternatively, you could transfer it to the wood, carbon paper or glue the design to the wood. Once the pattern is transferred to the wood and you are happy with its placement, use a bandsaw to cut it out. If you don't own a bandsaw, the bulk of the waste wood can be removed with a hand saw and then cut in with gouges. With the shape of the leaf cut out and using the leaf maquette as a guide, draw a rough line around the edge of the leaf carving where you want the leaf's edge to be. You want the leaf curling around where the mouse is sleeping – the stem is about half way. Remember that the leaf curls up where there is no weight on it. Also, draw a rough circle around the high spot of the leaf above the mouse and draw around the frog. These areas are to be left flat for securing the carving later. Use bench dogs and a vice with some scrap wood as spacers and clamp the carving to the bench. G-clamps or a Workmate could be used instead



Bolstering in

5 With the carving secure, use a deep gouge and start carving down the leaf, around the frog and high spot to about 5-10mm above the rough leaf edge line drawn earlier

"If you don't own a bandsaw, the bulk of the waste wood can be removed with a hand saw..."



6 With the top of the leaf roughly bolstered in, it's time to use paper and glue and clamp a scrap piece of wood onto the carving

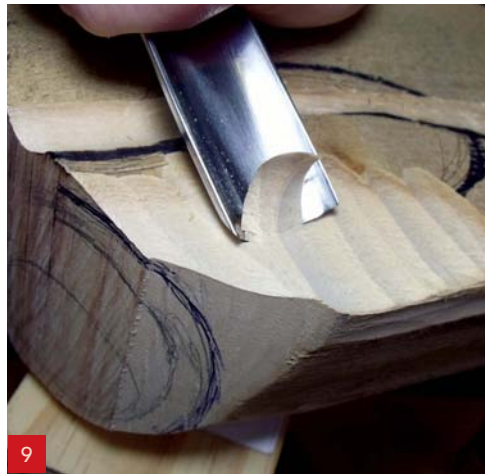
7 Glue the piece of wood onto the flat areas of the frog and high spot and once the glue is set, attach it to your carving vice

8 With the carving mounted in your vice, draw the placement of the edge of the curled leaf and an oval shape for the mouse as a guide

➔ **9** Then, using a large deep gouge, round over the outside curl of the leaf. Leave the area above the mouse flat as you will require this to clamp on to later

10 Carve around the mouse going down the leaf to the edge of the profile line drawn earlier, then start carving in the profile/shape of the leaf's undulations

11 While carving the underside of the leaf, occasionally check to see how it will sit on a flat surface. Make adjustments until you are happy with how the carving sits



Carving the mouse

12 If you carve a maquette mouse and you are happy with it, you could carve out the underside of the curled leaf and glue/fix your carved mouse in place. You could also carve the mouse separately and glue it in place. Carving the inside of the curl separately and fixing the carved mouse would be easier to carve, as carving the mouse into the leaf curl requires you to cut against the grain using slicing cuts. Using the design with a set of dividing callipers, transfer the mouse onto the leaf. Drawing the hidden part of the mouse onto the overlapping part of the leaf will help to keep the mouse proportion as you carve

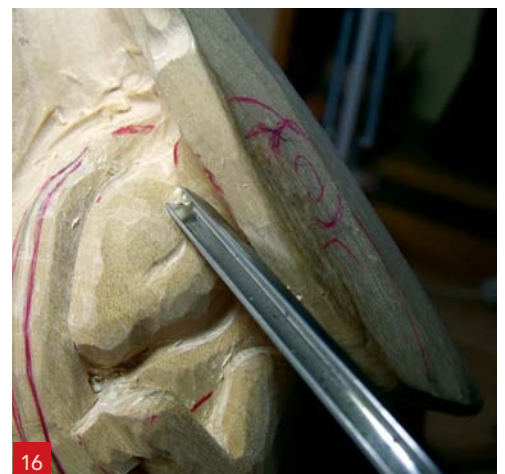


13 Using a veiner and deep gouge, start marking out the high spots of the mouse separating the back leg, the head and tail, giving the mouse its rough profile

14 As the mouse starts to develop, draw the ear in place, then undercut the leaf, using a veiner around the mouse's ear. Using the veiner will prevent breakages and make it easier to adjust and change the ear shape

15 Continue shaping the mouse's body and slope the back ear. Only undercut the leaf deep enough for now; this way you will be able to continue carving the mouse. If you're not happy with how your mouse looks, there is plenty of wood to carve back. Redraw the major parts of the mouse back in place – eye socket and cheek, etc.

16 Using deep gouges, carve around the closed eye, cheek and ear and blend in the facial features. Also shape the shoulder and legs. Where the tail touches the head, use a V-tool to keep a crisp join where they meet





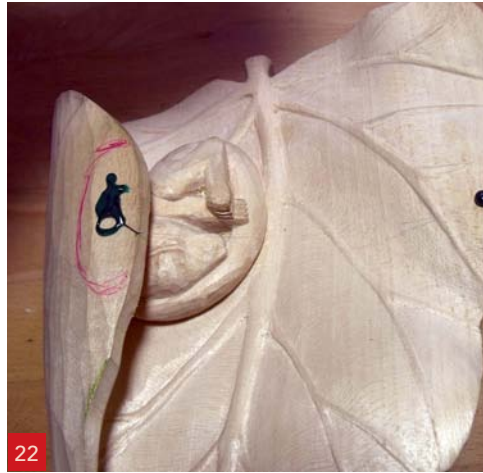
17 Before carving the tail area and the back, draw the centre leaf vein and use a deep gouge to carve down both sides of the vein. Take down the surrounding leaf and clean up the leaf to the tail and back. Next, use a hooked skew with slicing cuts to carve in the back of the mouse and tail

18 If you carved the mouse with its back to the leaf, miss this part. I hollowed out behind the mouse so with the mouse bolstered in, carve the inside of the leaf curl. To help gain access behind the mouse, drill a hole behind the ear. Drill partway from one direction, then from the other



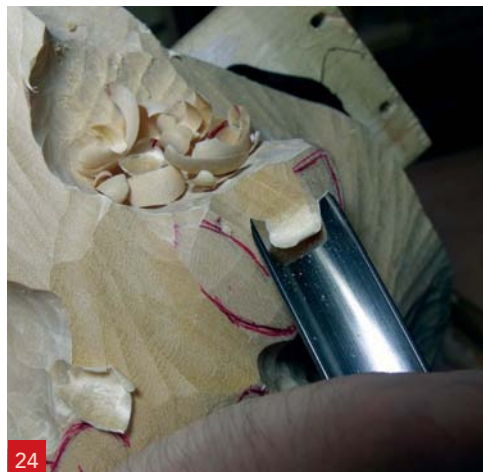
19 After drilling out behind the mouse, continue carving the leaf curl and the mouse's back. Next, draw the eye and toes in place. Use a shallow No.3 sweep gouge and stab cut in the eye. Using a fishtail or skew, cut in the corners of the closed eye and using the skew, carve in the mouse's toes

20 Use a real lime leaf or a photo as a guide and draw the leaf veins in place. Once you are happy with their placement, use a viner No.11 sweep gouge and carve down both sides of the veins. Using shallow No.3 sweep gouges, carve down the surrounding leaf and finish off the underside



21 With the underside of the leaf and its veins carved, finish rounding the tail of the mouse and slightly undercut the tail to create some shadow. Sand the mouse and underside of the leaf

22 Using a paint scraper or spatula, prise the carving away from the scrap fixing block. I used hot melt glue here. Glue and clamp the scrap block onto the overlapping part of the leaf and the underside edge of the leaf and remount once the glue has set

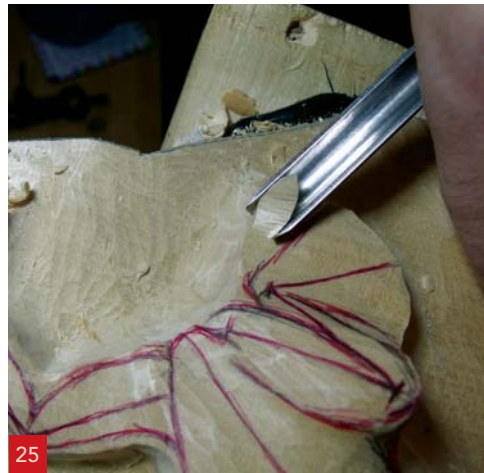


23 Using a large deep gouge, take down the top of the leaf following the leaf contours on the underside. Carve the leaf to about a 5mm thickness for now, using your finger and thumb to feel as you go. Start to cut in around the frog to create its outline

Carving the frog

24 Start to bolster in the frog. Slope back the stretched out leg and carve around the raised knee so the top of the knee is higher than the back of the frog

25 Where the frog meets the leaf use a deep gouge or veiner for the joining area for now; this way it's easy to change/adjust if needed. With the frog taking shape, draw a centreline down the frog's back and using some dividing callipers, draw equal centre/bone lines on the legs from the hip to the knee to the feet; this will ensure that both legs are of equal length. You can then continue shaping the frog



26 Draw two blue lines where the frog's eyes and side body ridges go. Then, using a deep gouge, carve down the outside of the blue lines and across the front of the eyes where the mouth will be; this will create the eye sockets and the side ridges



27 Then, using the same gouge, carve down the inside of the blue lines on either side of the centreline; this will create a centre ridge on the frog's back. Now, using a deep gouge and a hooked skew, cut in the sides of the frog. Using the deep gouge, carve down the sides of the front legs and undercut the raised knee.



28 Next, draw around the inside of the eye socket and roughly where the mouth will be. Then, using a veiner gouge, carve around the drawn lines and round over with a reversed shallow gouge. Once you are happy with the bulging eye sockets, use a shallow gouge and cut around the mouth



29 Next, draw in the mouth and once you are happy with its placement, use a V-tool to carve in the mouth. Then, using a shallow gouge, undercut the mouth area around to the front feet



30 With the bulk of the frog carved and before carving in the detail, start to draw in the leaf veins. When drawing the top of the leaf veins, use your finger and thumb to help line up the veins carved on the underside. While drawing the leaf veins also draw the frog's toes



31 Once you are happy with the placement of the veins and the frog's toes, use a veiner or V-tool to carve them in, keeping an eye on the thickness of the leaf. Next, using a shallow gouge, blend the leaf into the veins and cut in around the frog's body and toes. Thin the edges of the leaf to a uniform thickness of about 3mm

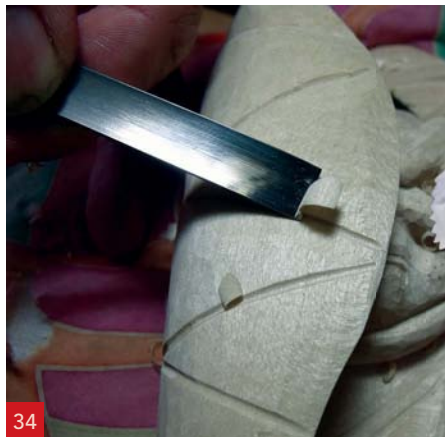


32 With the leaf veins carved, continue finishing off the frog. For the eyes, use a No.6, 4mm sweep gouge to cut in. Create a circle for the eye, then carve in and round over the eye





33 Once you are happy with how the frog and leaf are looking, you can then begin to draw equal sized serrated leaf blades around the edge of the leaf; this will help to give a truly realistic appearance. It is important for steps such as these to use actual leaves or photos of your subject matter; this will ensure that they are as close to lifelike as possible. Then, use a hooked skew or similar to cut in the leaf blades. When cutting in the leaf blades beware of the wood grain direction and create a stop cut across the grain, then cut with the grain direction to the stop cut and create the serrated leaf blade



34 Now gently prise the carving away from the scrap fixing block. If you used hot melt glue, a second at the most in the microwave will soften the glue enough for you to be able to easily pull it apart. Next, use a sand bag or pillow/cushion to rest the carving on and use a bootlace to tie and hold the carving in place while you are carving the curled part of the leaf. Draw the parts of the leaf's veins which go around the curl, then, using the veiner or V-tool as before, carve in the veins, then blend them into the leaf using a shallow gouge. Finish off by carving in the serrated leaf blades with the hooked skew



35 With all of the carving completed, have a check over and once you are happy, start with 150 grit abrasive and going with the grain, sand through the grits. Give the carving a good brush down before moving on to the next grit size. Once the sanding is complete, give the carving a coat of sanding sealer and check over again as the sanding sealer will help to show up any imperfections at this stage. Next, cut back the sanding sealer with the finest abrasive you have available and finish with your chosen finish. I used a microcrystalline wax for its hard-wearing durability. The carving is now complete ▶

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The carvings of Veit Stoss

Andrew Potocnik visits the Krakow Basilica, Poland to see the work of Veit Stoss for himself



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW POTOCNIK

Every city in the world has its iconic building, each with a different story to tell and so in Krakow, Poland, the central square is dominated by St. Mary's Basilica, a Gothic church constructed between its inception in approximately 1221 and its completion early in the 15th century. With two towers reaching 69m and 81m high, the Basilica poses an impressive presence in the city's central Grand Square.

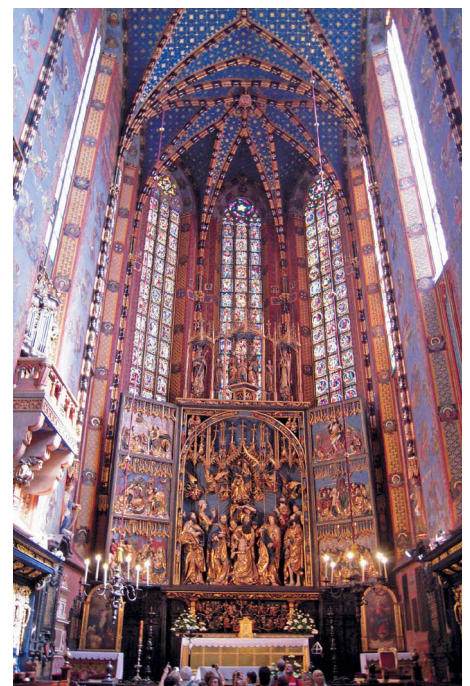
The Altar of St. Mary

Stepping inside, one realises there's more to this building than its beautiful architecture, for it houses one of the most magnificent examples of Gothic carving surviving in Europe today. The Altar of St. Mary consists of a series of panels assembled to form a triptych with hinged doors, which when opened fully span 13m wide and 11m high. Sculpted by renowned German carver Veit Stoss, the painted and gilded figures in the central panel stand 2.7m tall, each carved from a single tree trunk of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) wood. Other parts are

made of oak (*Quercus robur*) and the background is of larch (*Larix decidua*).

Divided into several panels, the figures depict various stages of the Virgin Mary's life, with the main section showing her dying in the arms of an apostle. Above, one can see her ascension into heaven and her Coronation by the Holy Family. At the base of the altarpiece you find carved figures representing her family tree, while the winged panels have relief scenes from the life of the Holy Family on the inside, but once closed one can see 12 scenes of Mary's suffering.

Wandering around the Basilica, one is bewildered by the vast array of carvings, gilded and painted holy figures, grotesque creatures staring down from high places, or simply ornate pews. A woodworking enthusiast could spend days exploring this building and still find more details that escaped initial attention, such as another altar also carved by Stoss, which depicts six scenes in the life of St. Stanislaus, patron saint of Poland and the first native countryman to be canonised.



The Sanctuary and High Altar



Mary dying in the arms of an apostle



Scenes from the life of Christ



Church pews



Carved figures on pulpits

Restoration

Around 1941, while under German World War II occupation, the main altar was dismantled and moved to Germany, where it stayed until it was finally found again in 1945, hidden in the basement of the heavily bombed Nuremberg Castle. The High Altar underwent major restoration before being returned to the Krakow Basilica some 10 years later.

Veit Stoss

Stoss was born in Nuremberg, Germany around 1440, but later moved to Krakow where he established a large workshop, employing suitably skilled fellow carvers, painters and gilders, who could help him complete some of his major undertakings. He lived and worked here for 19 years, 12 of which – 1477–1489 – were devoted to the creation of what is considered by some to be his greatest work, the altar of St. Mary. When he eventually returned to Nuremberg, Stoss went on to create other major commissions; however, only some of the vast array of carvings attributed to him were his work.

No doubt there are works attributed to him that may well be products of his workshop's assistants, as was the way of the time. However, there are also intricate finely carved pieces that are evidence of this great master carver's skill that cannot be ignored, grand or small and who knows how many more examples of this master's ability there are hidden away in places yet to be celebrated? ▀

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Carving a seated hare

Peter Benson carves a seated hare in walnut

The hare is one of the most popular subjects for carvings rated up there with pigs, owls, otters, frogs and horses. Most carvers have tried one or more of these with varying degrees of success and the choice is generally made solely on the degree of difficulty that each one entails.

I live among farmland and regularly see hares in the fields but I have found it almost impossible to produce a suitable series of photographs to use for the basis of a design and copyright regulations prevent you from using other people's material if you wish to exhibit, publish or sell your work. There are, however, sources of non-copyright material available on the internet and, if you wish to go down that route, make sure you check that what you are using comes under that heading. Fortunately there is a huge range of models of hares about, mostly in bronze or cold cast bronze, in shops and galleries from which you can get ideas as long as you don't get tempted to copy any of them.

There is nothing to stop you using any material you wish, purely for reference to check detail accuracy, but if you need help sorting out a basic pose, have a look around the shops or look through something like Google Images to find one that you like or that is at least close. You

can then use this to sketch a similar pose making sure that it is suitable to carve. Any picture or pose will need to be carefully examined and modified in order to avoid difficult areas that might be inaccessible with carving tools. There will almost certainly not be all the information that you require in one picture so you might end up using several.

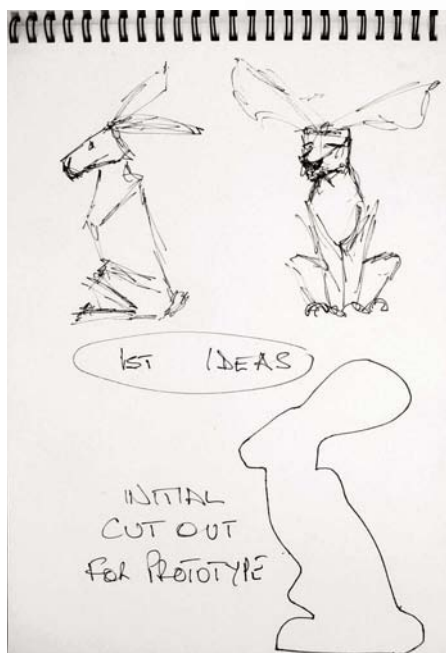
Once you have sketched out your possible pose you can check through as many photographs as you like to make sure that your anatomy is accurate.

The usual cry when something like this is suggested is 'I can't draw'. Of course you can draw, as can everyone else. If you can write your name, you can draw. The problem with most is that they don't know enough about the subject that they wish to draw. Learn about that and you will find it all much easier. Or, try turning the subject you wish to draw upside down and try again.

The important thing is that you have a pretty clear picture in your mind of what you are hoping to carve. The more information about your subject that you can collect, the more successful you are likely to be. Even a simple stick drawing will do for a start.

The photo of my sketchbook page shows my initial sketches to get the idea of the pose I wanted for the carving. At this stage I didn't need any more than this. It was sufficient to make up a rough pattern, looking from the side, that I could use to start my prototype from which I could make my final patterns. These would be needed if I was going to repeat the carving or use it as a future project in my classes.

Obviously the carving is generally much easier if you have a pattern from the front and side but this does limit the possibility of modifying the pose as you go along or if something breaks. If you wish to do this you would need to



My initial sketches for the hare

make a maquette from Plasticine or clay first and use that to get your patterns. For the purposes of this article, I have used a cutout that has been made from a front and side pattern – these were taken from my finished prototype.

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.



Things you will need...

Tools:

You will need a good knife with a slim blade to get into the corners and one or two small gouges. I suggest a No.9, 3mm palm gouge and something similar in a No.3 sweep, but you can use whatever you have available that will get into the difficult areas that you can't manage to get at with a knife. Make sure that whatever you use is kept really sharp as you are much more likely to end up breaking bits off if you are using blunt tools

Timber:

You can use anything that you have available – I used American white walnut (*Juglans cinerea*) – more commonly known as butternut – as it is not too hard, making it easy to carve with a knife, and it has an attractive grain pattern

1 You will need a rectangular block measuring 150 × 60mm. Next, using the patterns provided, draw your two outlines. Make sure that you get the patterns the right way round or you might have difficulty following the pictures. You can, of course, scale the carving up or down if you wish

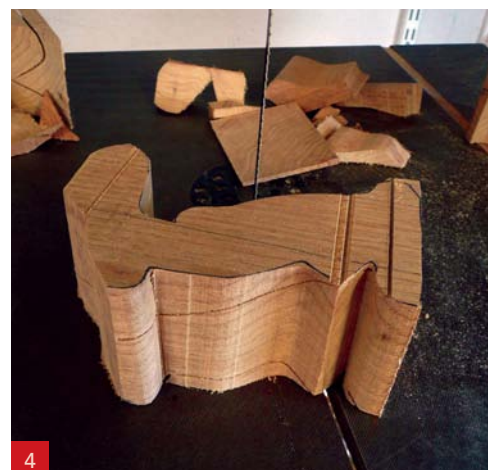
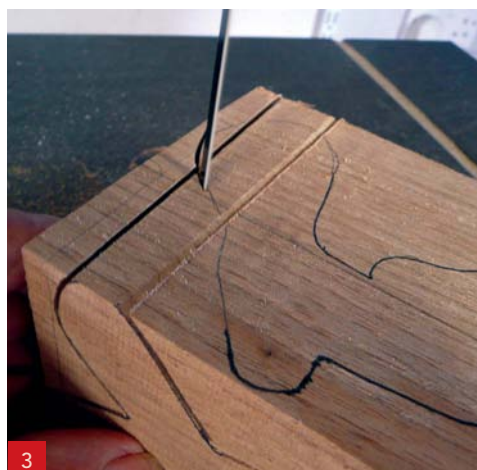
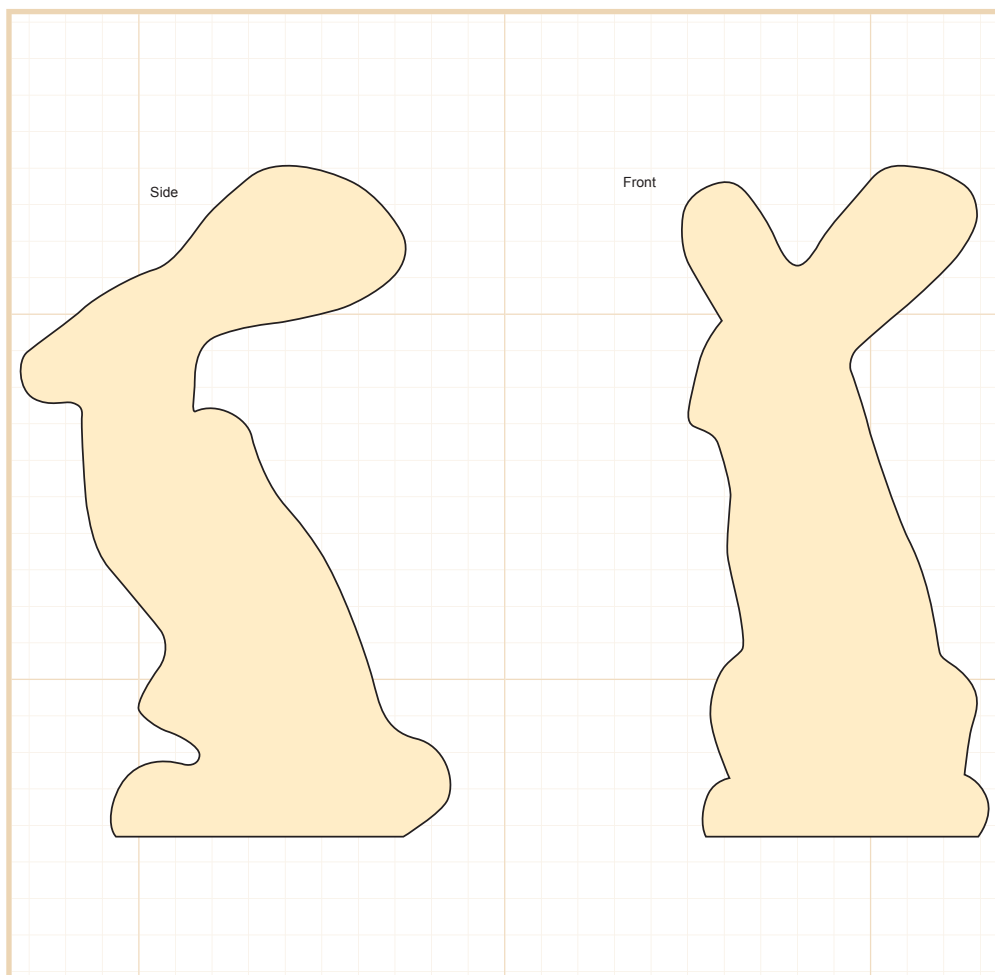
2 These are the cuts you need to make without completing each of them; this will ensure that the waste stays in place

3 Bandsaw the second side. The waste from the first side is still in place

4 You then need to cut out the block before removing the waste from the first side

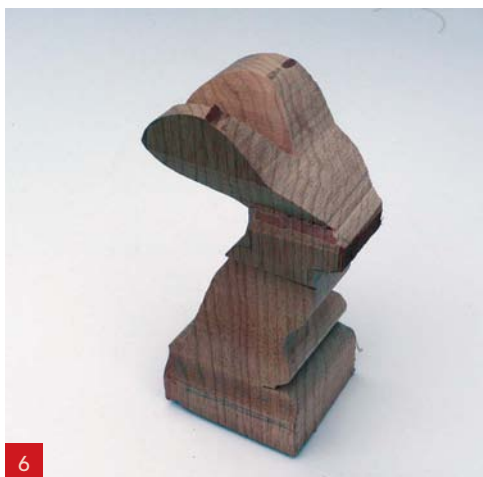
Top tips

1. One of the problems many carvers have is being able to 'see' the subject in the wood or cut out. Try sketching your subject as a stick figure, getting it as close to the desired pose as you can. This way you can check the pose and symmetry much more easily than trying to look through all the outer covering of fur and muscle, etc.





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5 The next step is to remove the rest of the waste with a knife

6 Once you have cut out your basic shape and have removed the waste, you need to look carefully at the resulting shape to be sure you understand where everything goes – this can be very confusing. Don't be afraid to draw all over your block if it helps you to see where each individual part is situated. You will have all sorts of peculiar angles as a result of the cutting out and it might be difficult to understand which bits of the hare go where. It is worth taking your time at this stage



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7 Draw a rectangle at the angle you want the head to be and remove the waste. Draw in the centreline and the line of the eyes

8 You will see here that the top of the head is at an angle due to the bandsawing. This needs to be flattened before proceeding

9 Remove the angle to establish a flat top to the head ...

10 ... and you can then redraw your lines



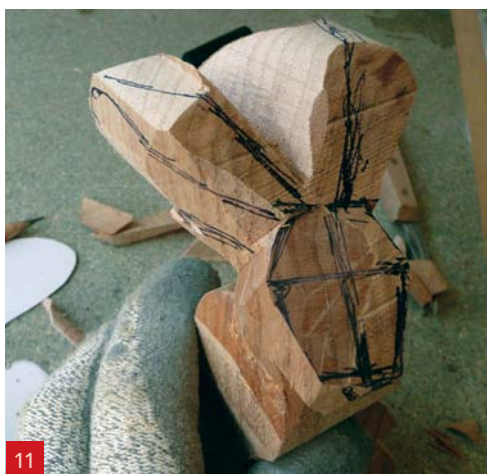
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11 Reshape the head to the lines you have drawn and then mark in the rough position of the ears. The waste between the ears is still in place here. I intend to remove this but you can leave this until later if you prefer

12 Removing the waste between the ears leaves an oversize ear shape for refining later



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Top tips

2. If I could give just one piece of advice to a carver I think it would be 'simple is best'. I know this might seem strange coming from someone who carves Netsuke, which are complicated for the sake of it, but what I mean is that you should concentrate on getting the form or overall shape of your carving right with only as much detail as you are confident of getting right

3. Bones of the legs and arms are generally pretty straight and are of equal length side to side – keep checking and measuring them as you carve

➔ **13** Once happy with the head position, start to mark in the positions of the other body parts

Carving the body

14 The waste between the hind legs at the front of the carving can be removed now to establish the line of the front legs

15 You can then begin to outline the hind legs

16 Start to round off the body, getting rid of any saw cuts that remain as well as the flat planes

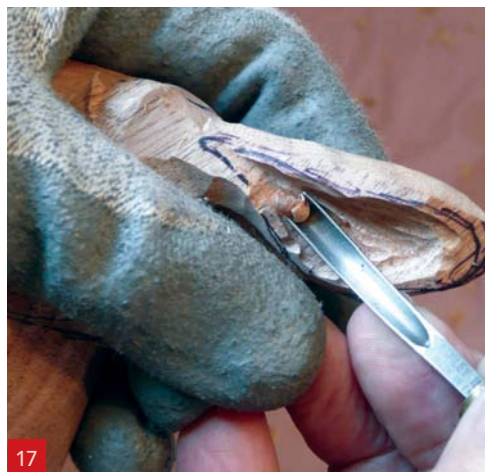
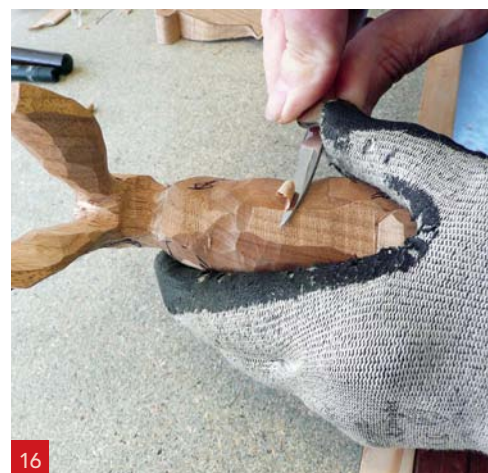
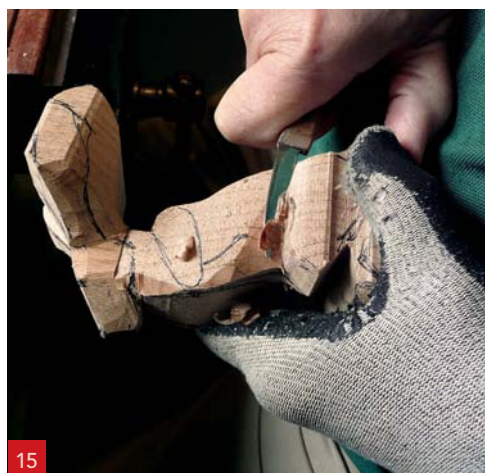
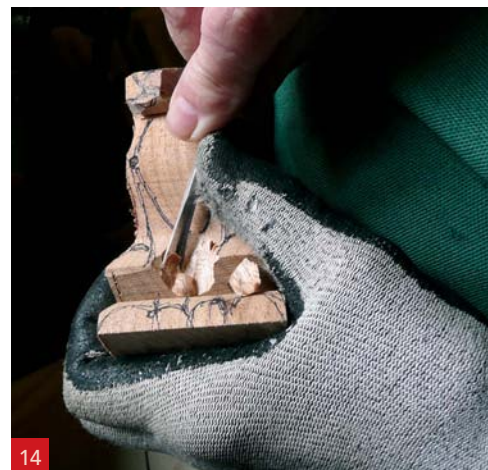
17 Start shaping the inside of the ears to get the basic shape. If you start with the outside you run the risk of the edges breaking away when you carve the inside

18 Go back and check the location of the various parts of the body. Mark in all the important areas of the carving – the shoulder blades, pelvis, spine and each of the bones in the legs. It is most important that you are very clear where all the joints are likely to be at all times so, if you remove the lines, replace them straight away. Do not be too heavy handed, particularly as you approach the end of your carving, as you don't want to have marks that are difficult to remove. Don't forget that the animal is symmetrical – everything on the right side is repeated on the left

Refining

19 I have stylised this hare a little as I think this gives it a bit more character. The ears and legs have been lengthened and it has been given a bit of a twist. When you are satisfied with the overall shape, set it on one side and go back to your reference photos. While you can simply copy the head that I have carved, don't assume that this is absolutely accurate, check for yourself. You might even like to make a practice head in Plasticine – remember that, if you get it wrong on your carving you may not get another chance. Narrow down the muzzle and leave plenty of wood for the eyes. The hare has a longer nose than a rabbit so don't try to make it too cute

20 It is important to support the ears at all times while you carve them and check that your tools are very sharp – this will prevent nasty surprises





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21 The rest of the shaping is about slimming the whole thing down as far as you wish to go and carving the tail. Don't make the hare too thin. The legs are very thin and if you make them realistic they will almost certainly break so give yourself a bit of artistic licence here

22 Both back and front feet are long and pointed with the back larger than the front

23 It is this refining process that gives you the opportunity to add the little things that make the animal what it is, in this case the bulging eyes and prominent withers at the top of the shoulder blade are key features, also hares have very bony back legs

24 Now add the final detail to the ears. These are remarkably thin, almost transparent, and great care is needed to achieve this effect. Always start with the tip of the ear and work down to the base

25 You can then begin to slim down the points where the ears meet the head

26 Add final detail to the features. Use a small 'V'-tool to outline the eye and smooth the inside with a knife or small gouge

Finishing

27 You could leave the carving here and, if your cuts have been clean and neat, it will look very good as it is. This leaves the other important question – are you going to sand it or are you going to leave it textured? This is purely a matter of choice. You will need to get your knife and gouges super sharp and then go over the whole carving to remove any 'fuzzies' or ragged edges. Sometimes a scalpel is better for this as you may find that difficult to reach areas are better scraped with the scalpel

28 When you are happy with the result, I recommend finishing with any good oil finish, following the instructions on the tin. People will want to pick up the carving and, if you wax it, there is a possibility of it getting dirty very quickly. You can deliberately reverse one or other of the patterns to vary the design. Here is my finished carving together with one where the front pattern was reversed to show how this can change the whole carving ▶

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKE WOOD

Carve & paint a Brambling

Mike Wood shows you how to carve and paint a brambling, which is a member of the finch family



The brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*) is a small passerine bird in the finch family *Fringillidae*. The common English name is probably derived from Common West Germanic 'brâma', meaning bramble or a thorny bush. It has also been called the cock o' the north and the mountain finch.

The brambling is similar in size and shape to a common chaffinch and the male has a black head in summer and an orange breast with white belly. In flight it shows a long white rump. It is gregarious in winter and they are known to form flocks of many thousands, often joining with chaffinches. Numbers can vary between winters depending on food supplies. Breeding-plumaged male bramblings are very distinctive, with a black head, dark upperparts, orange breast and white belly. Females

and younger birds are less distinct and more similar in appearance to some chaffinches.

The brambling's wheezy song is similar to that of the greenfinch, but its pitch varies less, and is rarely heard in Britain.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Wood has been carving all his life and professionally since 1986. Carving mostly birds, he is self-taught and takes great inspiration from the American bird carvers. To see more of Mike's work, visit: www.mikewoodbird.co.uk



Things you will need...

Tools:

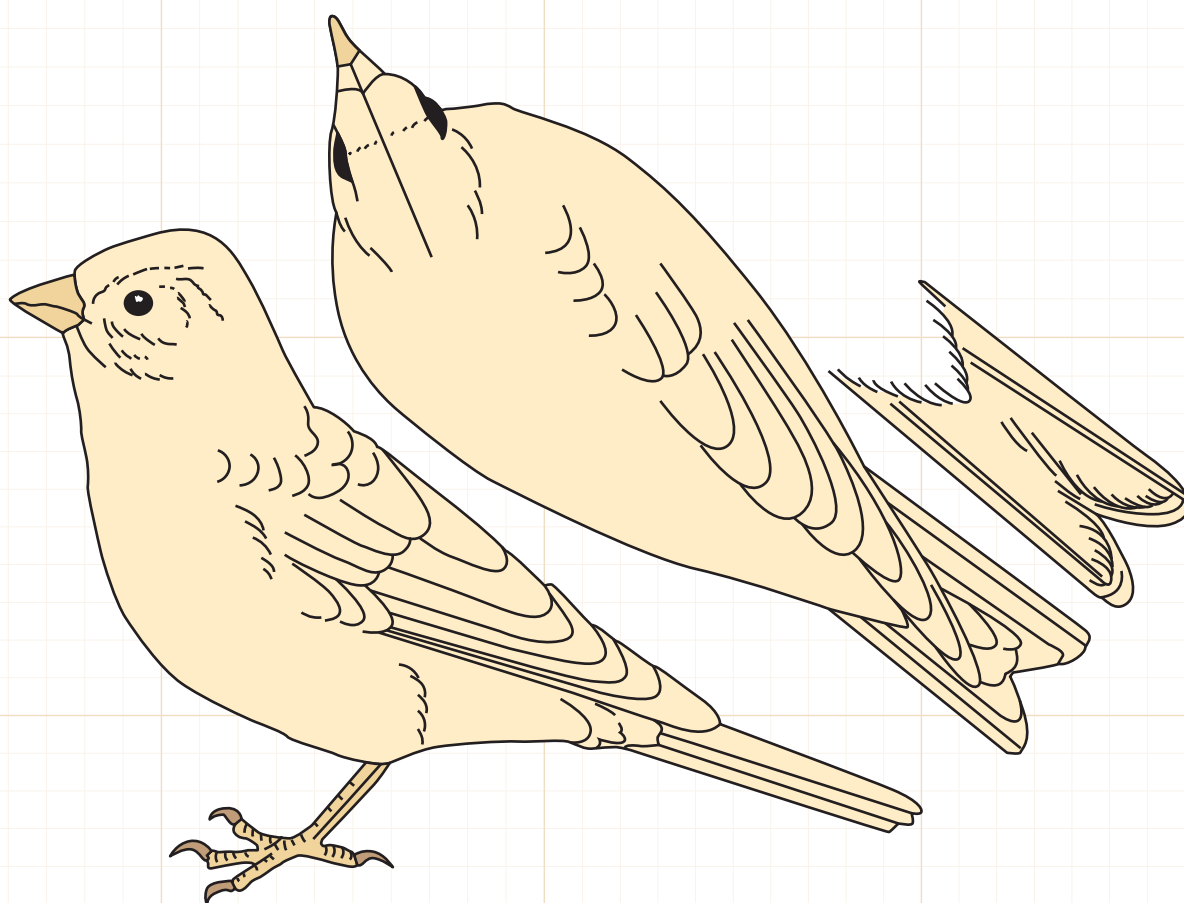
- Rotary carving unit
- High-speed grinder
- Taper burr & ball-end cutter
- Sanding bobbin
- Small stone attachment
- Plastic wood
- Fine white stone cutter
- Pencil
- Plastic eye
- Pyrography unit
- Airbrush
- Rigger paintbrush
- Matt varnish

Paint:

- White gesso
- Black gesso
- Orange

Wood:

A piece of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) measuring 60mm wide x 170mm x 80mm high



1 The first step is to take the pattern and trace this onto your chosen block of wood. I chose lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), but other woods are suitable

2 The first step, using a rotary carving unit with a taper burr, is to rough shape the body of the bird

3 Using the same unit with a sanding bobbin, sand the bird until it is smooth all over

Habitat

In winter, the brambling likes beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) woodland and farmland fields near woods. These birds can most commonly be seen in flocks of chaffinches and other finches. In autumn, look along east coast woodlands and fields. In the winter, the brambling is known to visit gardens, but the best time to see them is from mid-September until March and April, although occasionally, birds will stay into May or even later. In terms of their diet, these birds eat seeds in winter and insects in summer





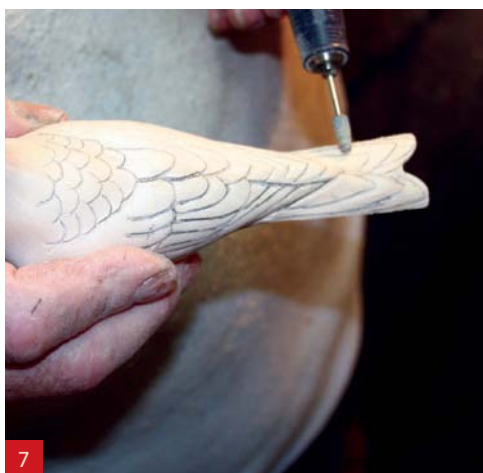
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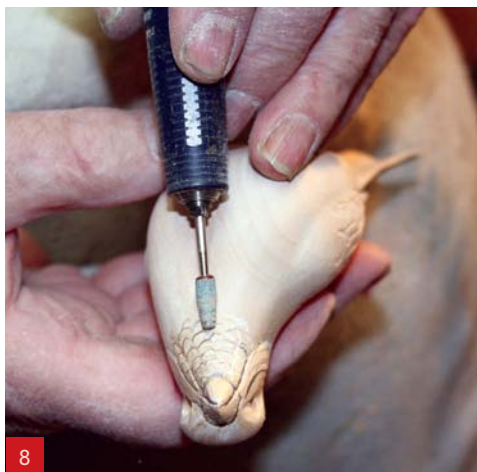
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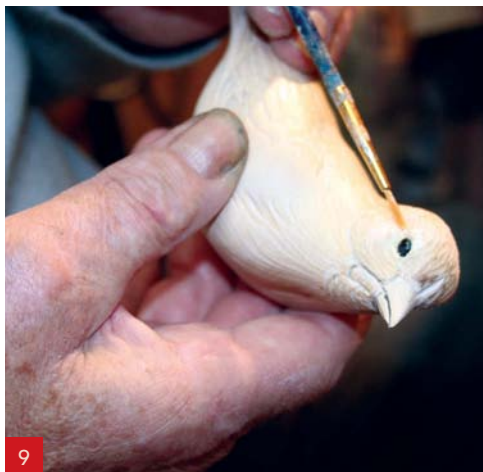
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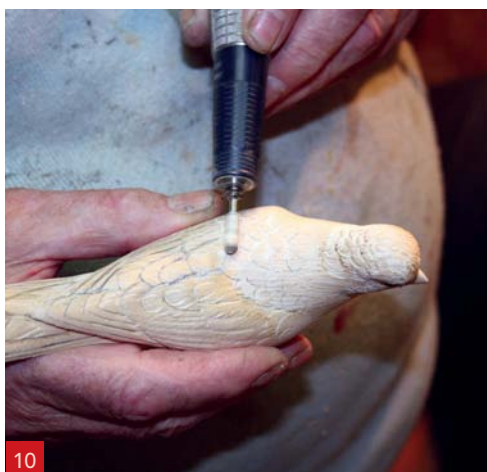
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4 To get the right shape you have to study what you are making. Research is key, but don't just rely on photographs – look online and see if there are any videos. You must get the subtle differences of body form right. The next step is to draw in the eye and bill detail

5 Next, using a high-speed grinder, cut the holes for the eyes

6 You are now ready to draw in all the feathers on the wings and tail, using a pencil

7 Using the high-speed grinder and a small stone, begin to carve in the wing and tail detail

8 Using the same stone attachment, carve in some small feathers on the bird's throat

9 Use plastic wood to fit the eyes

10 Using a high-speed grinder and a white stone, go over all of the back of the bird and head, softening the feathers

11 Using the same stone, go over all of the underside; this will help to give the bird texture

Distribution and habitat

This bird is widespread throughout the forests of northern Europe and Asia. It is migratory, wintering in southern Europe, north Africa, north India, northern Pakistan, China and Japan. It regularly strays into Alaska during migration and may continue as far south as the western United States. The brambling favours open coniferous or birch woodland for breeding. In Europe, it forms large flocks in the winter, sometimes with thousands or even millions of birds in a single flock. Such large gatherings occur especially if beech mast fruit is abundant. Bramblings do not require beech mast in the winter, but winter flocks of bramblings will move until they find it. This may be an adaptation to avoid competition with the chaffinch. Bramblings mostly eat seeds, but unlike most finches, their young are fed largely on insects. It builds its nest in a tree fork and decorates the exterior with moss or lichen to make it less conspicuous. It lays 4-9 eggs

➔ **12** Use the same process on the tail of the bird. It might seem like a pain cutting in and then smoothing out all this detail, but it is necessary to get the detail if you are going down the route I show here. Of course, if you choose not to colour and go for a stylised bird, then your form is even more important as you only have that to show the difference between this brambling and or say a chaffinch or robin. This is why research is important. The shape and proportions and how the feathers lie are key to getting things looking right



13 You can then move on to burning in the feathers using a pyrography machine. As with previous articles, I use a chisel-edge tip to create the incised detail so it shows through when coated with a thin layer of gesso. If you prefer, you can use very thin wire here, but the detail is not as crisp and clear



14 Once you have completed this step, your bird should now look something like this. Now drill the holes for the feet and fit them

15 Once the pyrography is complete, the bird can be undercoated with a layer of white gesso followed by black gesso in the appropriate areas. You can then block colour the areas orange as needed

16 The next step is to refine and paint the throat of the bird and chest area orange

17 Using the dry brush method, you can then begin to edge all feathers on the back...

18 ... followed by those on the head. Your carving should now be taking shape



Top tips

1. You can buy pre-coloured gesso, or buy white and then tint it with paint of the right type to get the colour you need. Mind you, I would suggest buying black if you need to because getting a pure deep black is hard to replicate yourself

2. Many light washes of colour are better than applying one thick coat. The ability to create subtle colour changes over an area is very important for achieving the desired effect





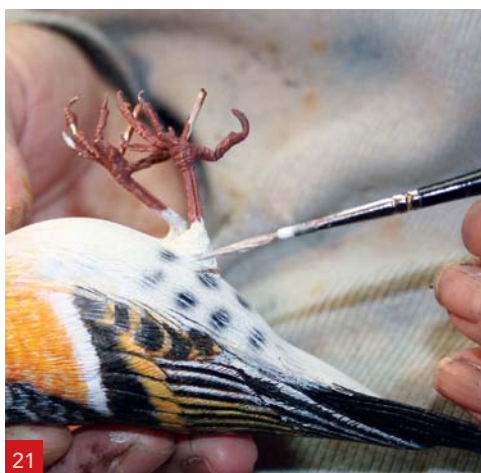
19 Using a thinned-down wash of orange, paint the edges of the wing bars

20 The next step using an airbrush, is to add some black spots to the bird's flank

21 Now move on to using the white gesso and a small rigger to drag through the black spots you have just made. You can then paint the undertail area black, as shown here

22 Before attempting any painting of the bird, it is important to study as much reference material as you can. In the final washes of colour, I add some matt varnish, but only a small amount to the colour wash so it acts as a sealer. You can, if you choose, lightly coat the bird with a thinned down matt varnish wash or matt lacquer spray. I think adding it to the paint as you make the final washes gives a smoother and better finish. Of course, if something requires a shine, then use a gloss varnish, but gently does it here

23 The finished bird should look something like this ▶



Top tips

3. I use a combination of an airbrush and brush when I am painting my birds. You can do everything using a brush – you just need to be more careful when building up the layers of colour wash. I use the brush for the final micro adjustments of the colour scheme or for highlighting particular features that will add that certain something to the project

4. Take it easy and enjoy yourself. Making something is not a race

5. I haven't mentioned the base in the making of this, as everyone will have an opinion as to what is best, but this naturalistic one suited it well

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Bunny box

From Cyndi Joslyn's *Easy Woodcarving*, this project is perfect for Easter



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FOX CHAPEL PUBLISHING

Incorporating a few more carving techniques, this project is a bit more difficult than some of the other projects featured in the book. It also illustrates a simple way to embellish a manufactured box. I chose this project because carved boxes are so popular and there are all kinds of uses for them. Hopefully, after completing your first bunny box, your creative juices will kick in and inspire you to develop other hand-carved designs for wooden boxes.

I chose to use my scrollsaw to cut out the two bunnies and the flower on the top of this box. If you don't own a scrollsaw, simply purchase several pre-cut shapes at your local craft store or online. If you use cutouts, make sure they are made of wood, not plywood. When you transfer the pattern for the box top, substitute your bunny and flower cutouts for the ones I've included on the pattern.

Things you will need...

Carving:

- 200 × 135 × 75mm purchased basswood (*Cornus florida*) box
- 10 × 75 × 255mm piece of basswood or pre-cut bunny and flower shapes
- Graphite paper
- Stylus
- Transparent tape
- Clear flexible ruler
- Tag board or template plastic
- No.3, 22mm or No.3, 16mm gouge
- 1mm 'V'-tool
- No.7, 4mm gouge
- Detail knife
- Quick grip all-purpose adhesive

Painting:

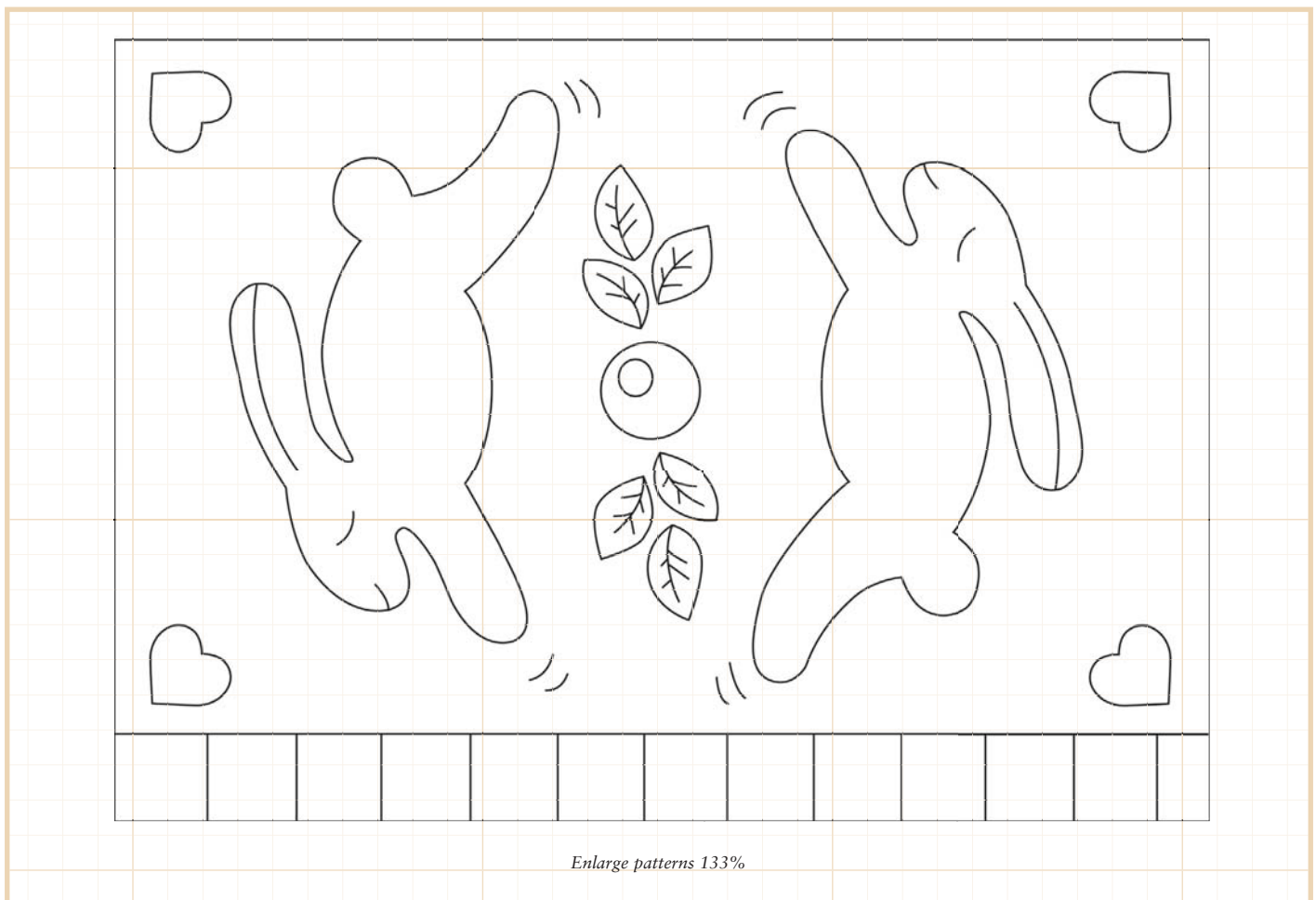
- No.2, No.6 & No.8 shader paintbrushes, such as Loew-Cornell
- No.730 20mm wash brush, such as Loew-Cornell Series No.4550

- 2oz bottles of acrylic paint in the following colours – I used Delta Ceramcoat: Santa Fe rose, Moroccan red, Black, Opaque yellow – Americana, Jubilee green, Light ivory, Tomptre red & Pink frosting

Finishing:

- Water-based satin interior varnish, such as Delta Ceramcoat antiquing
- Antiquing medium and retarder, such as Jo Sonja's
- Brown iron oxide acrylic paint
- Worn-out flat brush
- Old rags
- Cotton swabs

Antiquing solution is made with Antiquing medium and retarder, one part, Brown iron oxide acrylic paint, one part

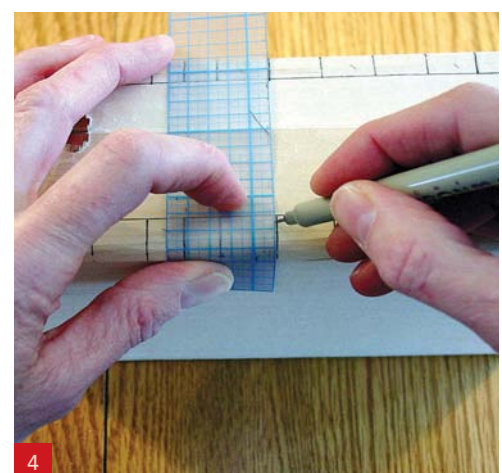
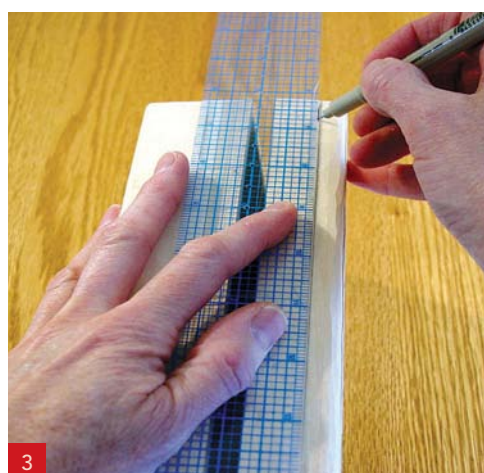


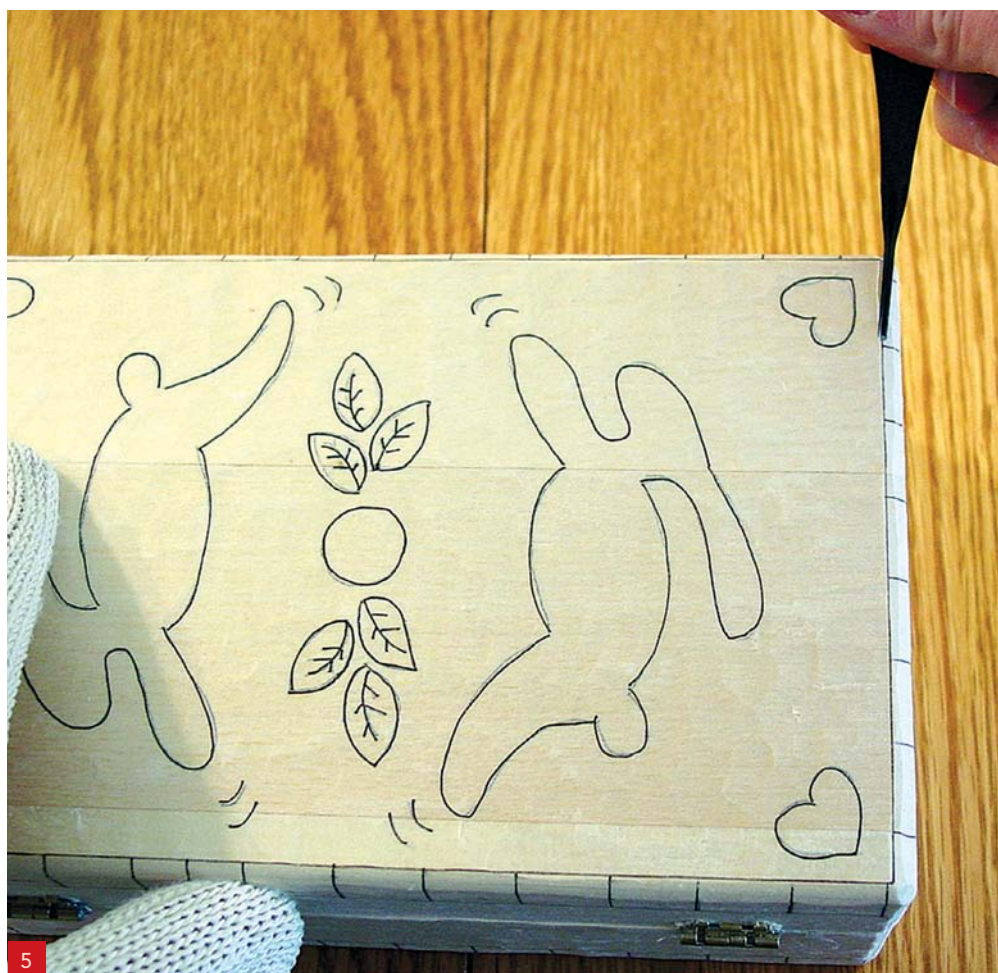
1 The first step is to shave off the sawed faces on all sides of the box with a No.3, 22mm gouge

2 Centre the pattern on the box top and tape it in place. Use graphite paper to transfer the hearts and leaves, following the pattern lines exactly. Trace the bunnies and the flower slightly inside the pattern lines if you're scrolling the shapes. If you're using pre-cut shapes, trace them instead. Remove the graphite paper, then, place dots at each corner of the pattern and connect the points to form a border

3 On the box top, measure up 20mm from the opening on the side. Draw the line around all sides of the box. On the box bottom, measure down 35mm from the opening on the side. Draw a line around all sides of the box. This creates 12mm bands at the top and bottom of the box

4 Starting on the side with hinges, divide the bands into 16mm sections using a clear flexible ruler. The final section may be a bit longer than 16mm. Make sure there is an even number of sections on each band. If you end up with an odd number, divide the longer section in two sections to arrive at an even number





5 Using a 1mm 'V'-tool, carve all of the straight lines on both of the border bands

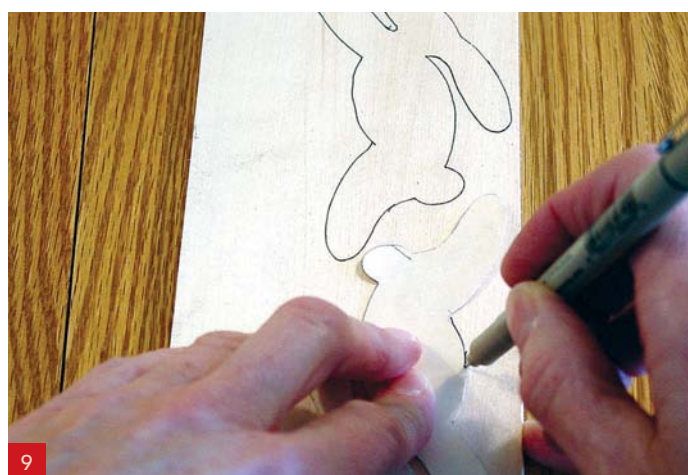
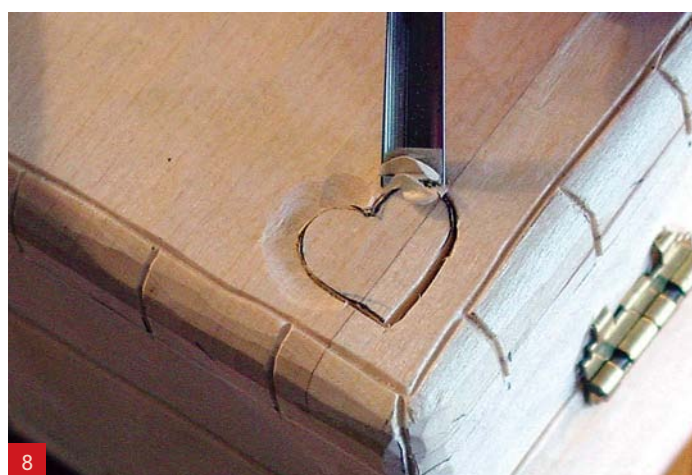
6 With the 1mm 'V'-tool, carve the outline and vein lines on each leaf and the motion lines under the bunnies' feet. The box will be painted later, so there is no need to worry about any remaining pattern lines showing on the finished project

7 Score around each heart with the detail knife

"With the detail knife, carefully round the edges of the hearts"

8 Using a No.7, 4mm gouge, carve around each heart to add depth and highlight the heart. With the detail knife, carefully round the edges of the hearts

9 If you're scrolling your own bunny and flower shapes, make templates of the bunny and flower patterns. Transfer the patterns to the 10mm piece of basswood



➔ **10** Using a scrollsaw, cut out two bunnies and one flower or use pre-cut shapes. Wood in the shaded area will be rounded with a detail knife

11 With the detail knife, carve away any saw marks on the edges of the bunnies and the flower

12 Use the detail knife to shape the body of the bunny

13 Use a No.3, 16mm gouge to further round and shape the bunnies and the flower

"Draw the details on the bunnies and carve them with a 'V'-tool or the detail knife"

14 Draw the details on the bunnies and carve them with a 'V'-tool or the detail knife

15 Glue the carved appliques to the box using quick grip glue after the box and the appliques have been painted

16 The finished box top design features carefully incised designs and add-on appliques. Remember that the painted appliques will be glued to the box, then, the box will be varnished and antiqued ▶



Easy Woodcarving by Cyndi Joslyn

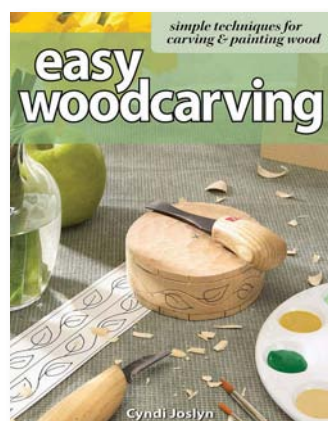
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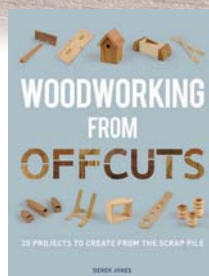
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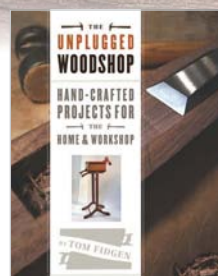
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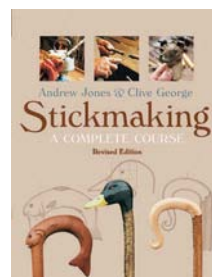
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Carve a chess set with Fred Marchant

Carving Scandinavian
lovespoons with Dave Western

Create a realistic cat in
relief with Vladimir Rusinov

Steve Bisco looks
at steam-bending

Duane Cartwright carves
a simple running hare

Welcome to Aladdin's cave!



Flexcut - the new kids on the block with some original ideas



We're sure that Aladdin would agree with us, that all carver's have one thing in common - they're all different! They each have 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.

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Robert Sorby



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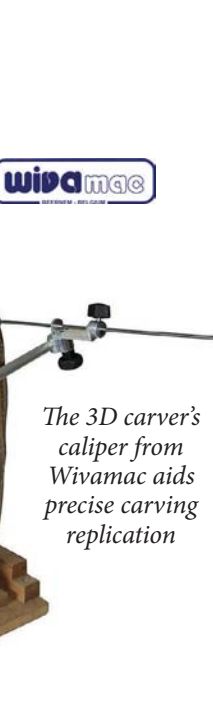
Of course we don't just supply the needs of the traditional carver as we appreciate that power carving is, today, an important facet of the art. Among our range of products for the power carver, we are pleased to include the superb Saburr carbide rotary burrs, manufactured in the USA and which we distribute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

NEW

We also understand that there are always other bits and gizmos that go to make up the woodcarver's armoury so we keep a good range of essential accessories such as carving clamps, sharpening equipment, abrasives, finishes etc. in stock too.

To that end we have just been appointed as the UK supplier of the Spencer-Franklin PowRlock Hydraclamp range to the woodcarving market.

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sharing expertise



Jason Townsend

in profile

We meet self-taught woodcarver Jason Townsend

Having studied computer science at university, the question of how Jason Townsend got into woodcarving springs to mind. Having been carving for five years now, Jason was always fascinated by wood and woodcarving. However, while at school Jason and his fellow students weren't allowed access to real wood, only using MDF in their design and technology classes, so Jason had no experience in working with tools and how to use them properly. Even now, Jason explains: "Learning what tools to use and how to use them is a journey that will take me a while yet."

It was because of his girlfriend that Jason first looked into the craft of woodcarving; as he tells us, she often likes to wear her hair up, using hair sticks to hold her hair in place rather than clips and bands. This provided Jason's initial inspiration, with the idea of making a hair stick for his girlfriend, rather than having to buy Far-Eastern imports from Camden.

Not long after making his first hair sticks, Jason was invited to a friend's wedding. As a wedding gift to the couple, Jason took inspiration from some Welsh lovespoons he had seen near the time. Jason had now taken his first steps in woodcarving, but he tells us that his early attempts were 'crude'. After carving a few pieces and a few mishaps, he quickly found himself bitten by the woodcarving bug.

Favourite carvings

"As an art-form, woodcarving can be quite daunting when you look at some of the incredible work done by the many talented woodcarvers out there," he tells us. Most of Jason's carvings are simple and a great many of them are hair sticks and hair forks, which he sells online and at craft fairs. Humble about



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JASON TOWNSEND, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

his talent, Jason tells us it still surprises and delights him every time someone buys one of his items.

One of his favourite carvings thus far is a wavy hair stick, which he designed a few years ago. The design proved to be very popular and Jason has now carved the same design in at least 20



Jason's lovespoon design – a wedding gift to his sister and her husband



Jason's many varied hair fork carvings



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARC FEATHERLEY

Jason's winning piece at the 2014 International Woodcarvers' Congress

different types of wood. When looking at transferring his work to a larger scale, Jason explains: "I struggle when it comes to scaling up my carving, so I find it very challenging to make larger items, such as lovespoons." However, Jason was very happy with a lovespoon he carved for his sister's wedding last year. It was approximately 430mm long and "had quite a contemporary feel about it," as Jason describes it. To personalise the piece, he included in the design the first initial of his sister's name and her husband's name, a pair of martini glasses – "because they like drinking cocktails," he tells us – and a pair of palm trees, to represent their ceremony, which took place in Aruba. Jason also decided to include a pair of, what he had intended to be, swans. "Unfortunately, at some point when designing the spoon they got a little mixed up with doves, so their necks seemed too long to be doves and too short to be swans," he explains. Nevertheless, he was pleased with the result and felt the piece of silver birch (*Betula pendula*) he used to make the spoon looked great.

Awards

"My carvings are so small and simple – for the most part – that I'm not sure they are particularly suitable for competitions," he tells us. He did, however, win a blue ribbon in the 2014 International Woodcarvers' Congress in the 'Jewellery' category. Jason's winning piece was a necklace he had carved from a piece of plum (*Prunus spp.*) wood "that had some wonderful purple figuration in it." On paper, Jason thought his design looked quite interesting and had

intended the necklace to look like a piece of crumpled and twisted metal. As with many of his projects, he found the translation of 2D design into 3D work rather difficult. "I often forget to think about the 'sides' of a carving or the 'back' and this leads to significant problems when working in-the-round," he comments. "In the end the necklace looked OK and reminds me of a piece of Plasticine with different coloured streaks running through it." As Jason learns to tackle larger and more complex projects, he hopes to enter more competitions.

Work ethos

Jason feels the design of a piece is the most important consideration when starting a project. He tells us: "I like my woodcarvings to have a contemporary feel to them and I try to avoid using other people's designs. There are so many people who are much more talented at woodcarving than me, so I try to make my carvings a little different so that I might be in with a chance of standing out from the crowd."

Jason tells us he has come unstuck several times by not thinking the design through carefully enough before starting a project. Working out how the design will work in 3D is still a challenge for Jason.

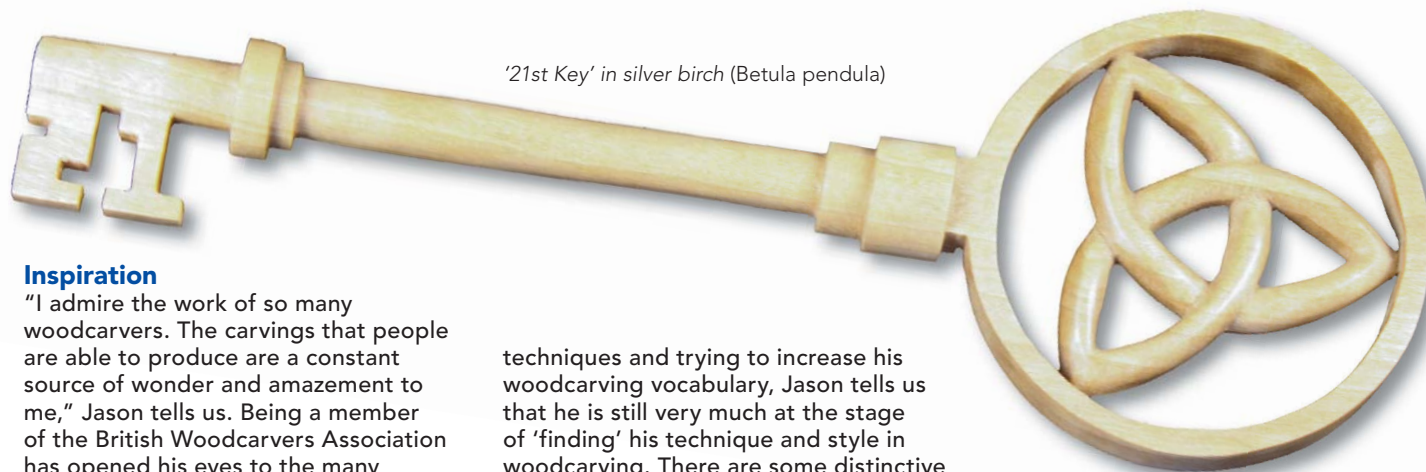
A perfect example would be the palm trees on his sister's wedding spoon, which looked good on paper – the fronds were drawn at angles so that you could see they were palm trees. On the actual carving, though, he soon realised that the fronds ought to be carved quite differently when in 3D. Having already used a scrollsaw to cut out the design, he had to cope with this mistake as best he could, but he points out that a bit more thought about the design "would have created a much better carving."

Jason is self-taught and is still learning all the time, subsequently his approach to carving is constantly evolving. He is fascinated by wood and trees and loves to try carving different types of wood. He admits that early on he didn't think too carefully about the properties of a wood before trying to use it in a project, but this led to him spending a lot of time on carvings that did not turn out as planned, because of his choice of timber.

One piece of his work that Jason is pleased with is a 430mm lovespoon he carved from mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*), that depicts the Guildhall in Thaxted, Essex. However, this wood – possibly sapele (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*) – couldn't hold the detail that he wanted to carve into it, so the result was therefore disappointing. He also tried carving a few lovespoons from a plank of elm (*Ulmus procera*). While the plank looked nice, Jason soon found that elm was not ideally suited to the carvings he was trying to do, as the grain of the elm and some punky areas from spalting meant that he couldn't get the detail he wanted or a nice finish, telling us: "They looked crude." Jason now makes sure to pay careful attention to the wood he chooses for a project, because each project is a significant investment in time.



Lovespoon in mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*)



'21st Key' in silver birch (*Betula pendula*)

Inspiration

"I admire the work of so many woodcarvers. The carvings that people are able to produce are a constant source of wonder and amazement to me," Jason tells us. Being a member of the British Woodcarvers Association has opened his eyes to the many possibilities out there, but also to the "staggering array of talent" that people have. Jason is a great fan of Dave Western's lovespoons, saying: "I really like his contemporary approach to the subject. If I could carve lovespoons half as well as that, I would be very happy!" Jason has found Dave Western's books on the subject to be quite inspirational.

Since school, Jason has been a big fan of Analytic Cubism from the early part of the 20th-century, by the likes of Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. He also mentions liking Andrew Thomas' carvings and is a particular fan of a series of cubist musical instrument carvings Andrew made. In another area of carving, Jason tells us: "I really admire carvings that are incredibly intricate or are on a very small scale, so I like a lot of Netsuke pieces."

Distinct carving

"I'm not sure that I have yet developed a distinctive approach to my carving," Jason wonders. Always experimenting with new design elements or

techniques and trying to increase his woodcarving vocabulary, Jason tells us that he is still very much at the stage of 'finding' his technique and style in woodcarving. There are some distinctive elements to his carvings, though: "I use a lot of different woods and am always experimenting with different kinds. I also like to sand my carvings; I like to be able to see the details of the grain and I feel that an item is incomplete until it has been sanded." Having said that, he hates the process of sanding, saying: "It takes me forever and can bore me to tears." Although, as Jason points out, if he's carving an item to go in someone's hair, he can't really get away with not doing it. Jason tends to mainly use knives in his carving, but that is most probably due to the small scale of most of his work rather than a preference. He tells us that he can't really work on small items like hair forks in-the-round with anything other than knives.

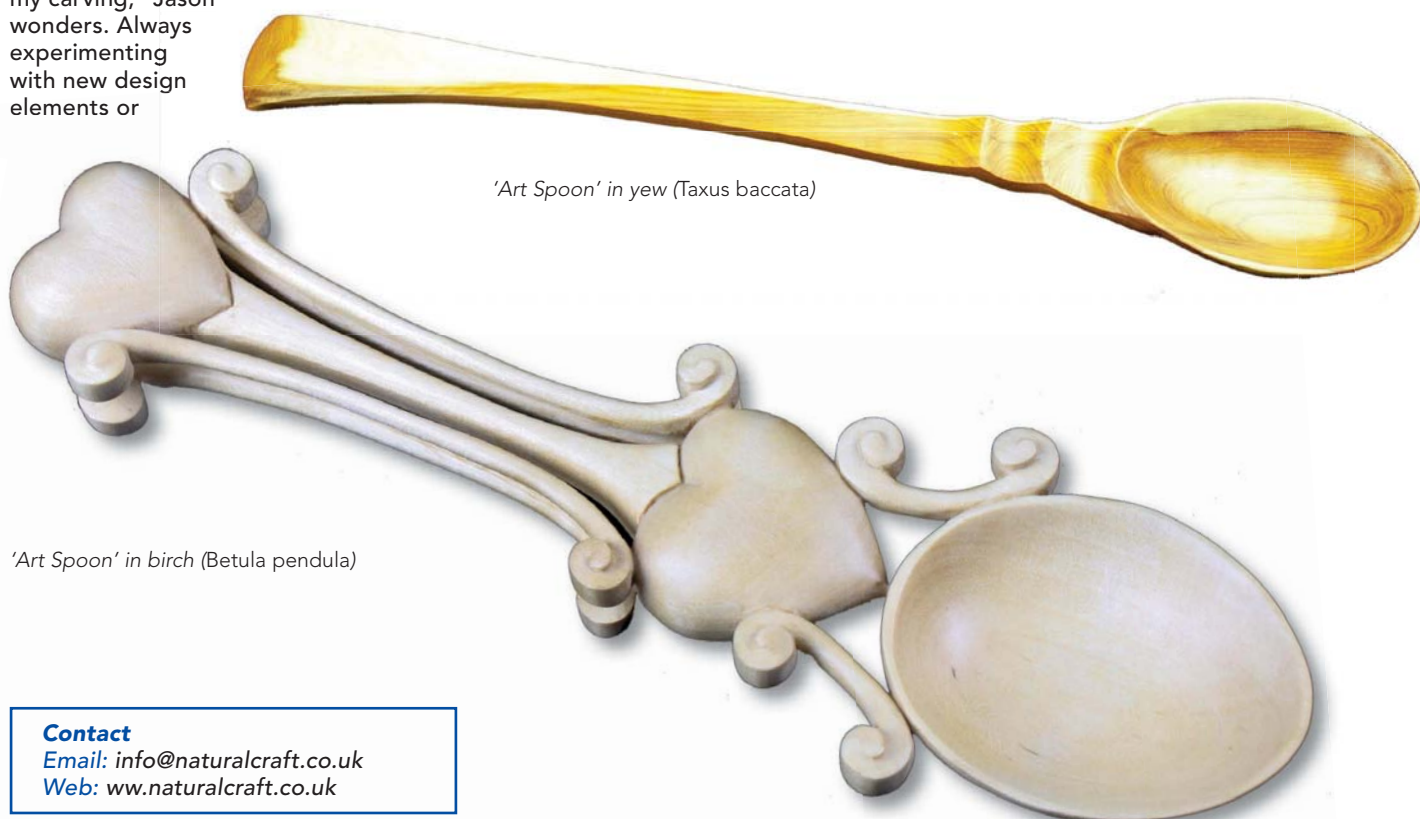
The future

Jason tells us he has many carvings waiting for him to sand down and many more carvings in progress. He works on a steady stream of hair sticks and hair

forks and has currently finished nearly 500 hair sticks so far! "Repetitive items," Jason tells us, "give me a chance to refine some of my skills."

Other projects he has on the go include a variety of lovespoons and art spoons at various stages of completion. Jason is also trying his hand at a series of sculptural pieces using London plane (*Platanus hybrida*) and burr elm. The sculptural pieces are quite a challenge for Jason, because he has had to scale up his carvings, but it has certainly been a learning curve for him.

Jason would like to try tackling larger carvings, with greater details in the future: "I like to be challenged, so I am always looking to undertake more and more ambitious projects," he explains. He is hopeful that he will have been able to carve some items for the next International Woodcarvers' Congress and the BWA carving competition at the 2015 European Woodworking Show. ▀



'Art Spoon' in yew (*Taxus baccata*)

'Art Spoon' in birch (*Betula pendula*)

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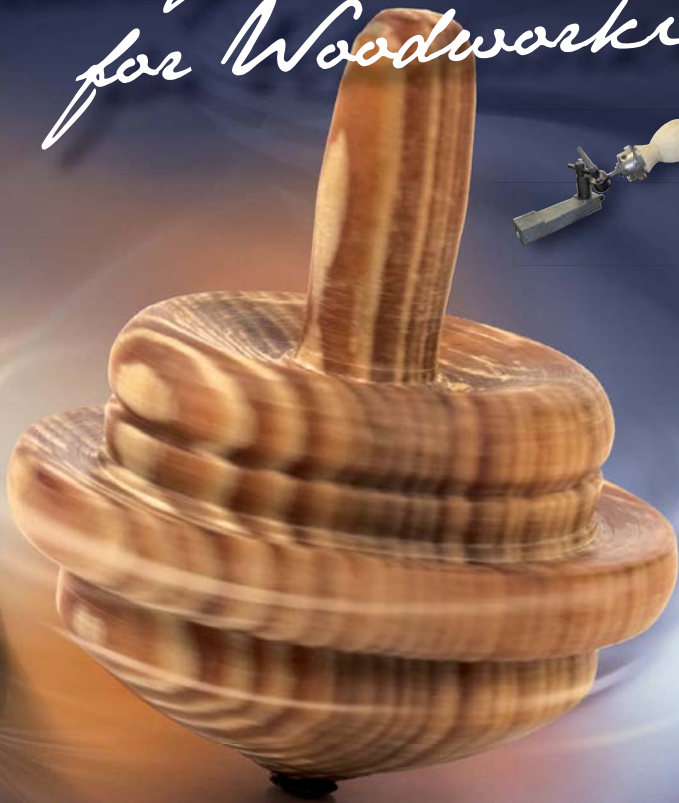
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Tommy the tortoise

Zoe Gertner carves a wooden version of her pet tortoise



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- Axe and heavy hammer
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- 20mm, No.5 gouge
- 20mm, No. 3 gouge
- 12mm, No.3 gouge
- 6mm or 3mm, No.3 gouge
- 3mm, No. 9, 10 or 11 gouge
- Surform or microplane
- Plane or spokeshave
- Scraper

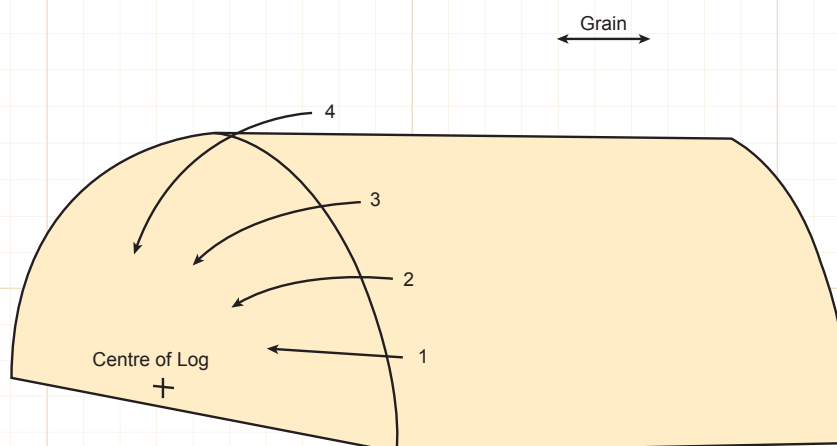
How can you tell the age of a tortoise? Living a quiet life in Devon, our Tommy Tortoise is now elderly and no one in the family knows exactly how old he is, but it's rumoured that he once belonged to a great aunt back in 1932, so he must be at least eighty years old by now. However, if you count the number of annual rings, each one representing a year's growth, before you start working on

the section of log used for your tortoise, you'll be able to tell everyone how old your 'Tommy' is when you've finished carving him.

Diagram 1 - Rounding the Ends

Aim all your cuts towards the centre of the log. You should be cutting outwards at all times.

Cut 1 is short and straight, across the edge of the log.
Cut 2 is longer, and you lift your gouge hand over the edge.
Cut 3 is a shorter steeper cut along the ridges left.
Cut 4 begins further back, and you lift your gouge hand to round over the end.



Aim all your cuts towards the centre of the log. You should be cutting outwards at all times.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



Stages for making the tortoise

Diagram 2 - Starting the Head, Legs and Tail

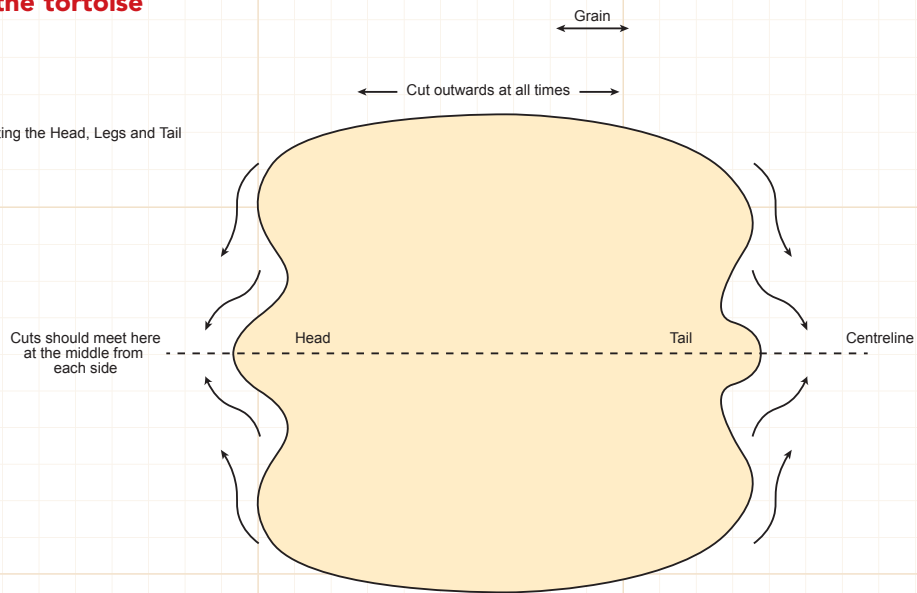


Diagram 3 - Starting the Shell

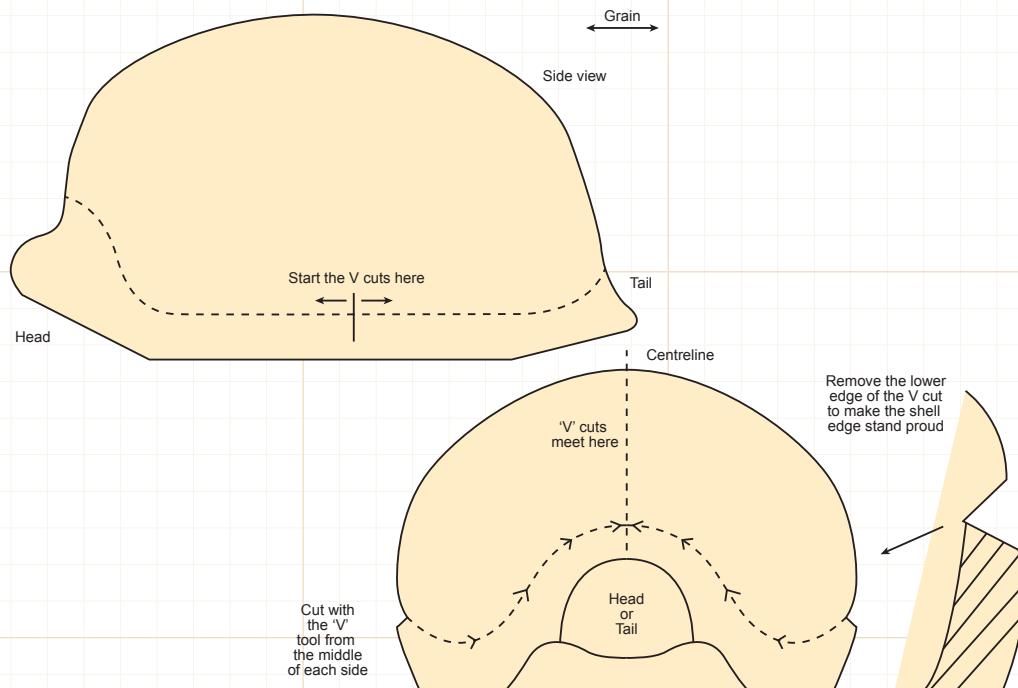


Diagram 4 - Starting the Legs

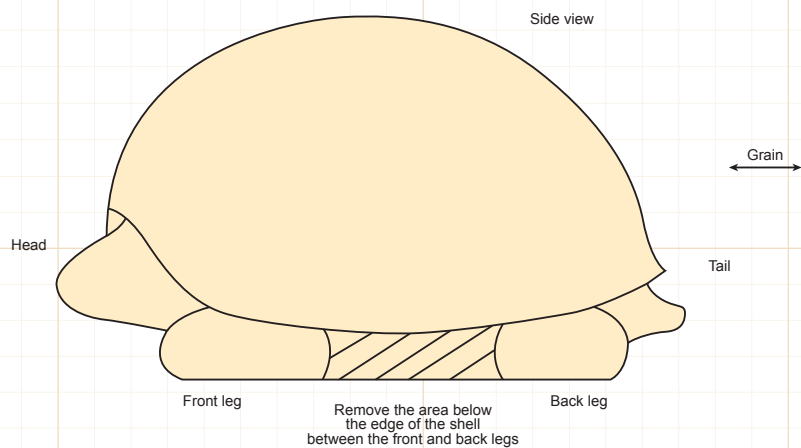


Diagram 5 - Raising the Belly

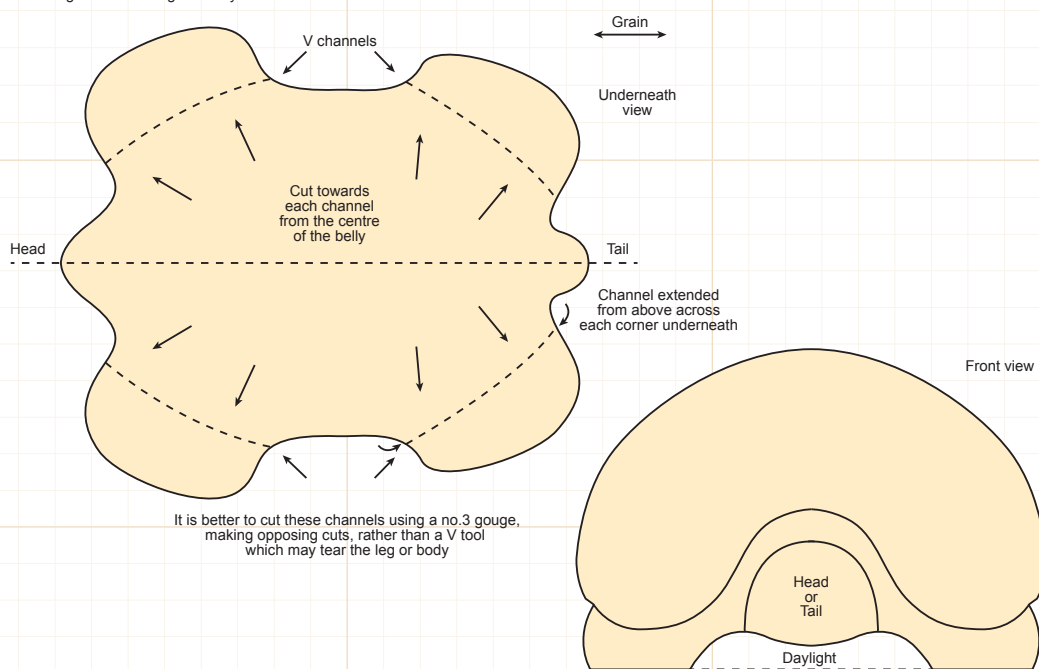


Diagram 6 - The Head and Neck

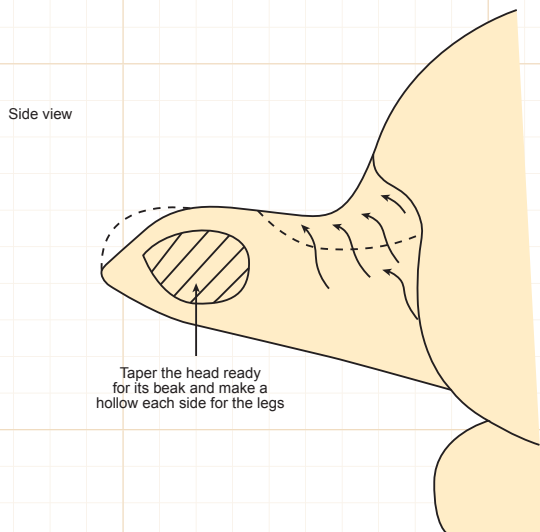


Diagram 7 - The Features

From each side, scoop forwards from beneath the edge of the shell and reduce the neck behind the head to extend it

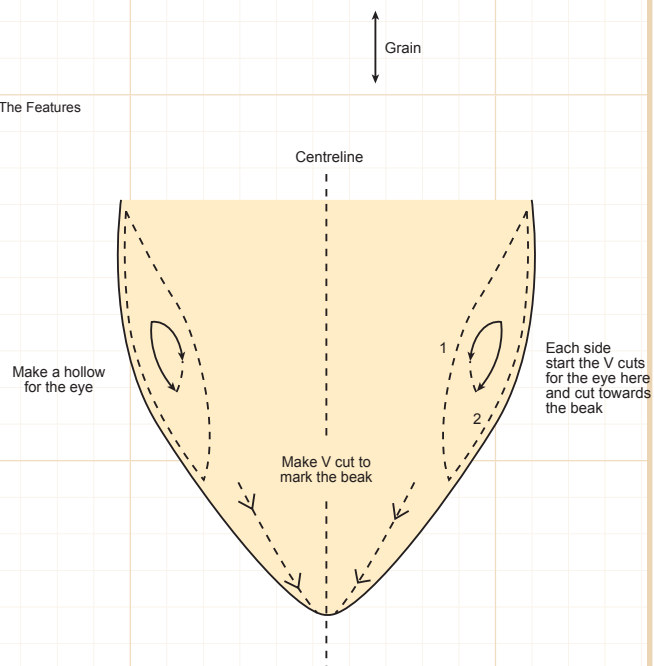
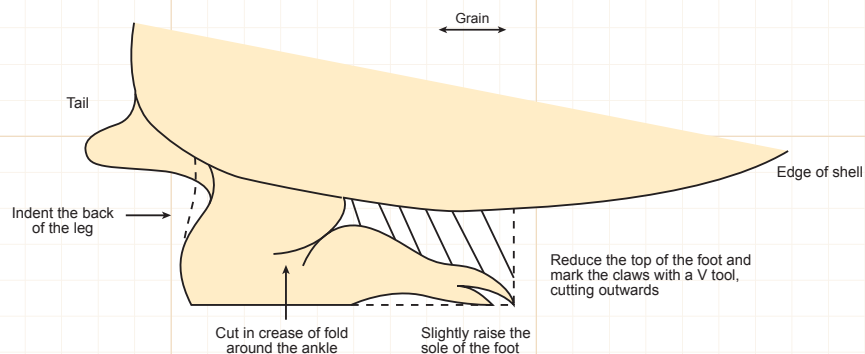


Diagram 8 - The Feet and Legs



➔ **1** Your tortoise can be any size and species of timber as long as it is sound and straight-grained. I used a laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*) log about 200mm long. Split your log lengthwise to a section about 125mm deep. For a more domed shell, split off a deeper section. Remove the bark and sapwood down to the dark heartwood



2 Using a No.9, 12mm gouge then a No.3, 20mm, gouge, Surform or plane, flatten the base. Draw on the body outline, limbs, head and tail, grip firmly in the vice and round over both ends. Use a mallet and the No.9 gouge here



3 Start rounding by making short cuts across the edge, then along the ridges produced by the previous row. Lengthen cuts so they overlap the previous row – see diagram 1. Aim each cut towards the centre of the end



4 Continue until both ends are rounded then smooth the surface using a No.3, 20mm gouge, Surform or a spokeshave, and draw a centreline from head to tail over the shell



5 Underneath, use the No.9, 12mm to cut outwards at each end of the log, removing the areas each side of the head between the front legs, then between the tail and back legs. Each hollow should be about half the depth of the log – see diagram 2



6 On the upper surface reduce the legs, head and tail, merging the curve of the shell into the indent each side. Draw the outlines of the head/tail on the ends of the log, then remove between the head/tail and the front/back legs into the indents underneath using a narrow gouge



7 Reduce underneath the head and tail so they slant upwards from under. Using a No.3, 12mm gouge start at the tip and make a series of short cuts outwards, extend successive cuts overlapping the previous row and the head/tail will rise upwards



8 To project the head further, reduce the front of the shell but retain its shape. Reduce the limbs and cut outwards along the sides of the indents between the legs and the head/tail, and both inner and outer surfaces of the legs, rounding their edges. Cut behind the legs on the underside later





9



10

9 Shape the tail into a blunt point, tapering it more than the head and remove deep gouge cuts

10 Draw the shell edge around the tortoise and over the neck and tail. Cut along this with a 6mm V-tool. On each side, start at the middle and cut towards the centre of the ends. Finish the four cuts at the top of the neck/tail from each side – see diagram 3



11



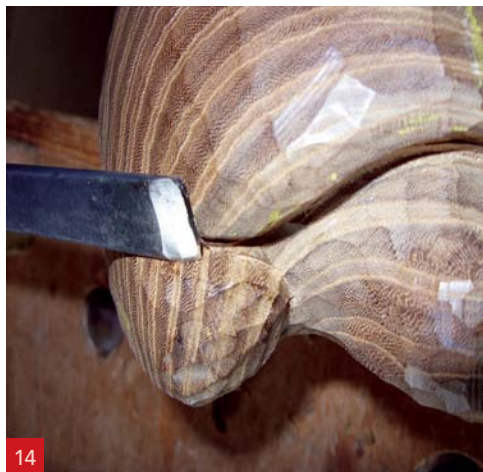
12

11 Start above the head/tail. Cut outwards, tilt the corner of a No.3 or No.5 gouge and remove the lower edge of the 'V' channel making its upper edge proud. Continue to the middle of that side, turn the carving and repeat from the opposite end back to the middle, joining up. By aligning the V-tool blade along the edge of the shell and removing beneath the cut, the edge of the shell can be made substantial

12 Make opposing cuts below the shell edge at the middle of each side and cut a shallow channel. Extend these cuts to remove the areas between front and back legs – see diagram 4



13



14

13 Cut along the back of the front legs, then the front of the back legs. Along both sides reduce below the shell edge so that the legs protrude, then blend the lower edge into the belly

14 The inner edges of the legs are shaped by cutting from the upper and lower surfaces with a V-tool or a narrow deep gouge. Inverting the No.3 gouge and cutting around the curve of the knee/back of the front legs, pare the inside edges so they emerge from under the shell edge. The triangular area between leg and shell is accessed using the point of the skew chisel or No.3, 3mm gouge. Above the head, tail and legs, cut under the edge of the shell and remove the lower edge of the groove, making the head/tail continuous from under the shell edge. Adjust the shell curvature using a No.3, 12mm gouge



15

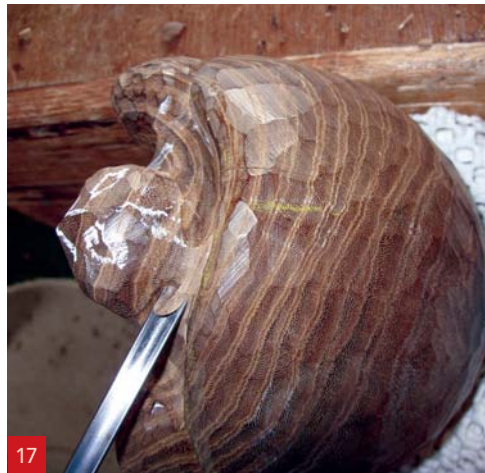


16

15 Draw the inner outline of each leg on the belly and cut a 'V' channel marking it by making opposing cuts

16 Cut into the channel with the No.5 gouge and extend the cuts to the middle of the belly and reduce it until your tortoise stands on all four feet with daylight underneath. Smooth the belly with a scraper

17 Cut a shallow groove around the back of the head separating it from the rest of the neck, working towards the top and bottom of the neck from each side. Blend the hollow into the underside area of the neck and smooth the surface ready for the features



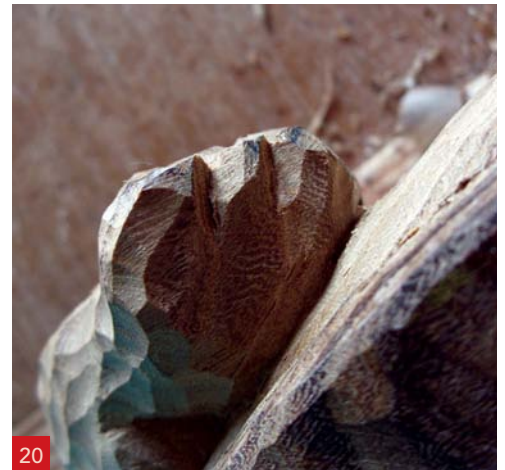
18 Draw a centreline along the head and taper it into a point for the 'beak'. Mark this with the V-tool, cutting outwards from each side – see diagram 7. Hollow eye sockets each side and draw in the eyes. Cut round each using the 3mm V-tool, the upper curve before the lower to avoid damage. Invert the No.3m, 3mm gouge, round over the inner edge of the 'V' cut and remove the adjacent surface so it stands proud



19 Using the 6mm V-tool on the upper and lower surfaces of each leg, cut the crease formed by the bend of the leg. Remove the area between the body and the leg and that in the bend or crease of the leg. Pare each leg rounded



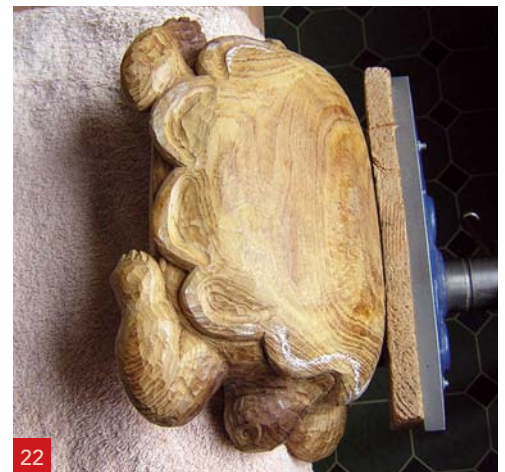
20 Reduce the ankle and thickness of the foot, taper the foot and mark claws with the 6mm or 3mm V-tool – see diagram 8. Mark the pad on the sole in the same way. This can stand proud by using the No.3 gouge to remove the outer edge of the 'V' channel. Undercut the edge of the shell where the leg emerges from it



21 Smooth off the shell and using a deep gouge, cut a groove around the edge, working towards the head/tail from the middle of each side. Remove the upper edge of the groove to create a curl along the edge of the shell



22 An alternative shell design would be to decorate the edge of the shell by cutting the scallops above the head and tail with the V-tool. Reduce the small triangular surface between each scallop to the surface of the neck/tail, leaving the edge of the shell proud. At the sides, make opposing cuts with the gouge to cut the scallops, then round over the edges of each using an inverted No.3 gouge. Using a deep gouge, cut a groove around the inside of each scallop, hollow within and adjust the curve of the shell, so curling the scallop edges



23 Remove any sharp edges, then apply a colourless wax polish, then use 320 grit abrasive. Finally, buff with a lint-free duster



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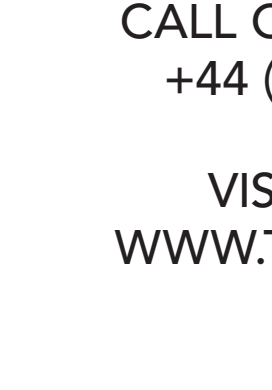
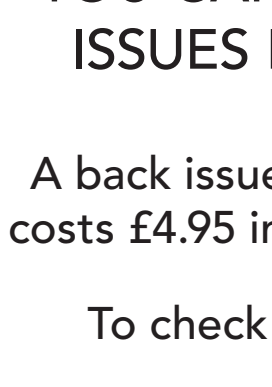
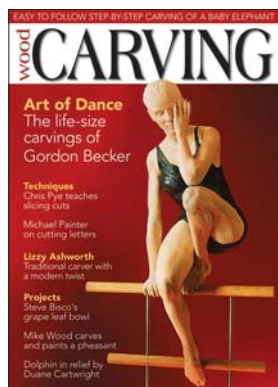
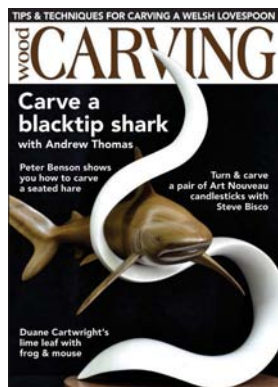
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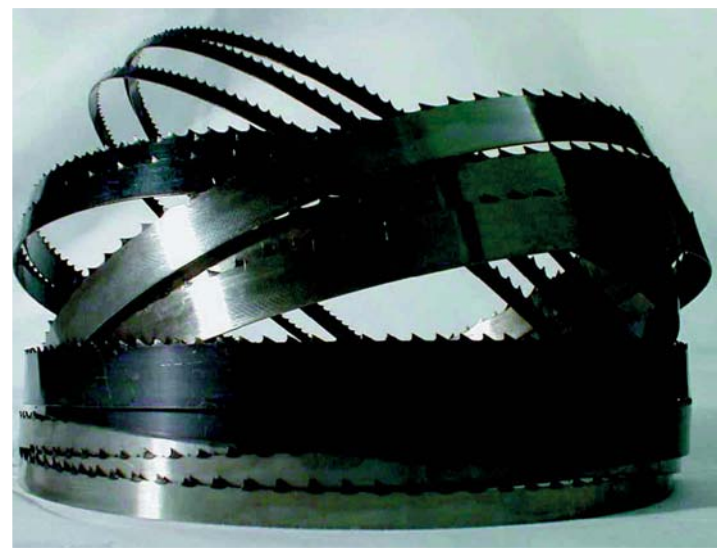
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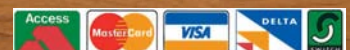
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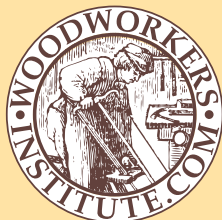
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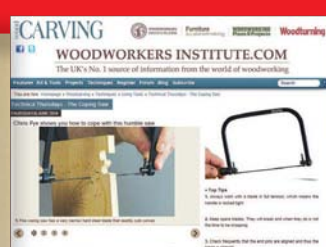
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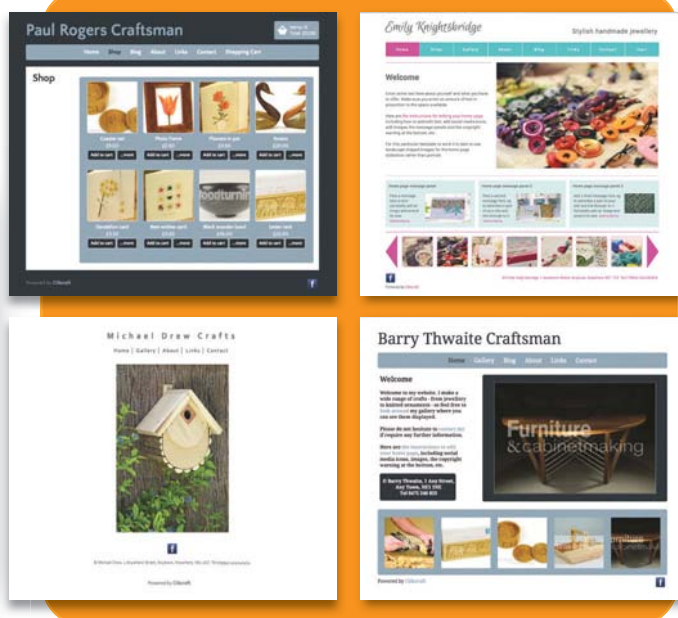
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Basilica della Santissima Annunziata del Vastato

We take a closer look at the stunning interior of this 17th-century Genoise basilica



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK BAKER

The interior of the Basilica della Santissima Annunziata del Vastato

The Basilica della Santissima Annunziata del Vastato's décor was inspired by the surrounding baroque studios and artists in 17th-century Genoa, northern Italy. The Catholic cathedral was built in 1520, on a site previously occupied by a small church – the church of Santa Maria del Prato. This small church had belonged to the Humiliati – an Italian religious order of men, formed in the 12th century.

In 1537, for unknown reasons, work was stopped on the cathedral, but, in 1591, the Lomellini family began work on the building. This era of the build was led by Taddeo Carlone, an Italian-Swiss sculptor and architect.

In the early 17th century, Andrea Ansaldo was put in charge of completing the cathedral – in particular, the building's dome. Under the guidance of Ansaldo, an Italian painter mostly active in Genoa, the cathedral gained an intricate baroque interior, with detailed carvings and paintings covering the walls and ceiling.

Alongside the incredibly detailed dome, another prominent feature in the cathedral are the naves. A number of artists contributed to the decoration of the naves, including Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione with his depiction of St. James defeating Moors; Giovanni Bernardo Carbone with St. James opening the Coimbra gates to King Ferdinand; Valerio Castello with the Martyrdom of St. James and St. Peter christening St. James; Giovanni Domenico Cappellino with Preaching the apostle; Domenico Piola with Martyrdom of the saint; Giovanni Lorenzo Bertolotti with Aurelio and Giovanni and Aurelio Lomi with Daughters of Zebedee introducing Jesus and saints.

Through the great mixture and the combination of various artists, architects and sculptors who worked on the Basilica della Santissima Annunziata del Vastato, it is a beautiful sight for woodcarvers' eyes. ▶

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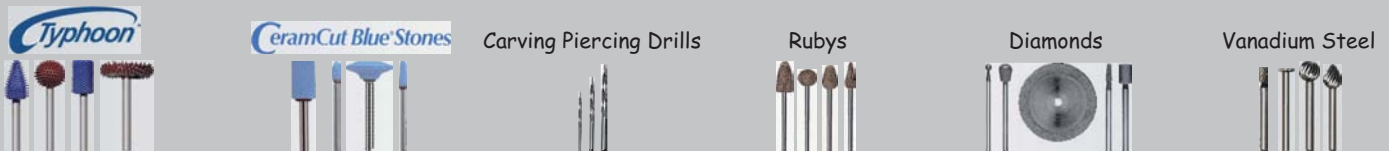
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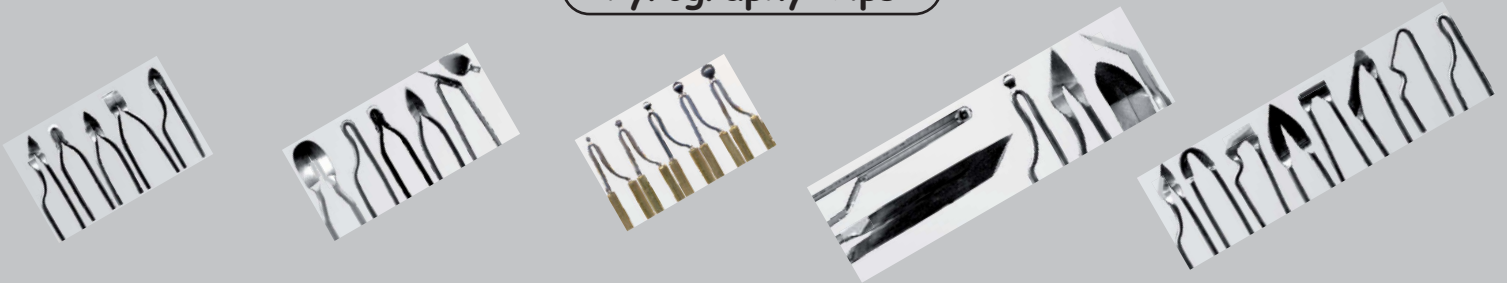
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