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a mallard drake
with Mike Wood**

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REALISTIC
EYES**

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the work of
Don Powell**

**Fred Marchant
shares his tips
on making a
hand-carved
chess set**

**Create a
running hare
with Duane
Cartwright**

**Vladimir Rusinov's
realistic cat in relief**

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lovespoons with Dave Western**





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EDITOR Mark Baker
Email: markb@thegmcgroup.com

DEPUTY EDITOR Tegan Foley
Email: teganf@thegmcgroup.com

DESIGNER Oliver Prentice

**GROUP EDITOR – WOODWORKING
MAGAZINES**
Mark Baker

PUBLISHER Jonathan Grogan

CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER Anthony Bailey

ADVERTISING SALES EXECUTIVE
Russell Higgins
Email: russellh@thegmcgroup.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER Jim Bulley
Email: jimb@thegmcgroup.com

PRODUCTION CONTROLLERS
Rebecca Howard & Amanda Allsopp
Email: repro@thegmcgroup.com

CIRCULATION MANAGER Tony Loveridge

MARKETING Anne Guillot

SUBSCRIPTIONS HOTLINE
Tel: 01273 488 005, Fax: 01273 402 866
Email: pubs@thegmcgroup.com

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Guild of Master Craftsman Ltd 2015

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.



PHOTOGRAPH BY GIMCANTHONY BAILEY

Tools: opinions & preferences

*There are 11 makes of chisel used in the GMC workshop
but only some of them are racked on display, whereas
others are stored nicely in boxes and drawers, ready for use*



I have to admit to being
somewhat irked at the
moment. All too often,
I hear someone say that
this tool – brand – is better
than that. Such comments
are usually generalisations
with no qualifiers. Now,
if someone said they

prefer this make because – you can now
insert a lot of comments, such as size and
type of handle, thickness of blade, style
of blade, edge retention, etc. – then you
have someone who is expressing a qualified
opinion. I have had several calls lately from
people – usually those new to carving
or woodworking – who have ‘... heard
someone say that ‘X’ is better than others
and I don’t know what to buy.’ Unqualified
opinions are unhelpful and confusing for
people. If you want to say something
about a subject, then give all the pertinent
information and qualifiers to your comments
so people understand where your views are
coming from.

We all have opinions and preferences, but
all are subjective to our own likes, dislikes
and experiences with things. I was told not
to buy cheap except if it was for a ‘once
in a blue moon’ job. Otherwise, I was told
to buy once and buy well. That invariably
meant that for items used a lot, I needed
to buy well from reputable brands.

When learning, people take note of
those who appear to be in ‘positions of
authority’ and I certainly did when in my
apprenticeship. Over time, I formed my
own opinions and dared to disagree with my

mentors. The advice they gave was great but
in some instances, our hand sizes differed so
things like chisels and handle sizes on saws
and tool handle shapes affected comfort,
ease of holding and working. So while their
recommendations were sound, some only
worked well for them.

Tools do not make the craftsman. I know
people who produce the most amazing pieces
with nothing more than modified screwdrivers
and bent nails. I wouldn’t say that is the
easiest way forward for most people, but
given that they do not have access to and
the money to buy ready-made tools and
some work in such a specialised area that
no tools are available to help, I understand
the route taken. Many of us do have an option
to buy, but even so, most are on a budget
and therefore need to choose wisely.

Always try before you buy and yes, take
into account all you have heard about this
or that make, but see for yourself before
you part with your hard-earned cash. Does
it do what you want it to do? Does it feel
right? Does it hold an edge in a variety of
timbers well? I have yet to find a ‘bad’ tool
from any of the major brands. Yes, I have
preferences for handle size, shape and
blade thickness, but these are dependent
on what I am doing and what I am using
the tool for, so are qualified likes and
preferences and not a didactic statement.
Have fun,

Mark Baker
Editor of Woodcarving

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 77 for details.



Carve a mallard with Mike Wood – see page 47 for the step-by-step guide. Front cover image by Mike Wood

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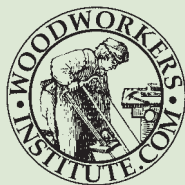
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The Woodworkers Institute web forum



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



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Woodcarving Round & About

We talk to the 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

BDWCA: springing into action

Now that 'spring has sprung' and workshops are warmer, many BDWCA members are springing into action – pardon the pun – and planning their carvings which they will enter at our Annual Show in September.

For the decorative carving groups – which cover textured waterfowl, birds of prey, game birds, sea birds and shorebirds – detailed carving, texturing and painting are required and the live bird is the standard for the judging. Where bases are used they are, for the purposes of the judging, considered as part of the sculpture.

This means that the process of producing a convincing bird carving that meets the judging criteria includes planning how the bird will be displayed and factoring in the creation of the base. Observation of the birds in the wild – if possible – is obviously best, but studying photographs is the next best option, a good base and environment – appropriate to the subject – can greatly enhance the carved bird.

So, for the decorative carvings, it often seems like the carving can be the easiest part, because then we have to start making the base and environment and finally, the painting, which can make or break the finished sculpture!

Photos of all the entries in our 2014 show and the winners from the 2013 show can be seen on our website: www.bdwca.org.uk

This year's show will be held, as usual, in Bakewell, Derbyshire, on the second weekend of September, which this year, will be 12 and 13 September.

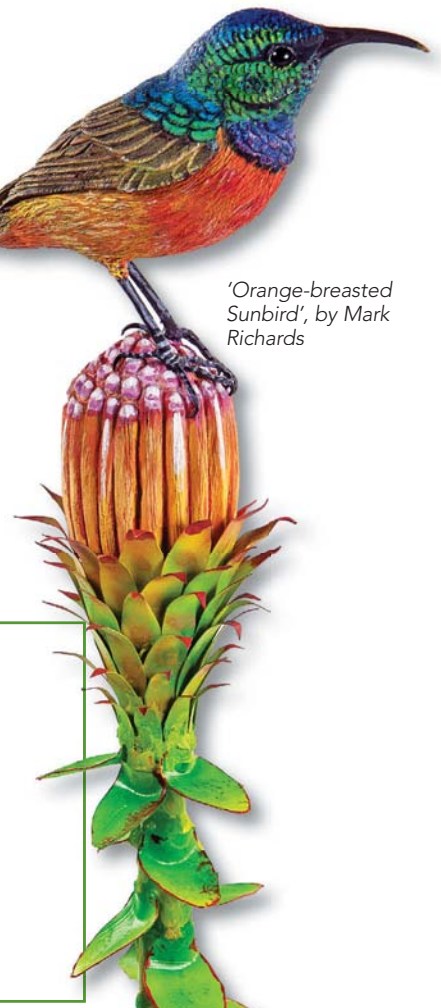
'Rainbow Bird – Indian Pitta', by David Askew



'Fieldfare', by Mike Funnell



'Orange-breasted Sunbird', by Mark Richards



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

The European Woodworking Show 2015 – woodworking in action

After a one year break, the European Woodworking Show returns to the show calendar with its usual mix of top class demonstrators and exhibitors across a wide range of woodworking disciplines.

The show will be held at the historic Cressing Temple Barns near Braintree in Essex over the weekend of 12 and 13 September, 2015.

Demonstrators who have already confirmed for the show include woodturners Joey Richardson, Nick Agar and Mark Hancock, pyrographer extraordinaire Bob Neill, timber hewer Steve Woodley, woodcarvers Peter Berry, Tim Atkins, Dave Johnson and Gerald Adams and marionette maker Lenka Pavlickova. In addition, scrollsaw expert Fiona Kingdon will be present, as well as spoon carver Anna Casserley and Sophie Heron with her converted VW camper van, which was featured on Channel 4's *Amazing Spaces*. You can also expect to see Japanese joint maker Brian Walsh, plus furniture makers David Charlesworth, Dylan Pym, David Barron, Treeincarnated and many more besides. The British Woodcarvers Association – BWA – will be hosting their extremely popular public vote competition.

There will also be many familiar tool suppliers including Turners Retreat, Trend Tools & Machinery, Lie-Nielsen Toolworks, Jet Tools & Machinery, Gransfors Bruks axes, Pfeil, Auriou and Flexcut carving tools, Classic Hand Tools, Lincolnshire Woodcraft, Chestnut Products, David Barron Furniture and a host of other retailers. The masterclasses are being presented by Simon James, author of *Working Wood 3*.

For full details and advance tickets, see below.

DETAILS:

When: 12–13 September, 2015

Where: Cressing Temple Barns,

Witham Road, Braintree, Essex CM77 8PD

Contact: The European Woodworking Show

Tel: 01473 785 946 **Web:** www.ews2015.com



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CLASSIC HAND TOOLS

You can expect to see a wide selection of woodworking demonstrations at this popular event



Isca Woodcrafts' 10th anniversary Wood Show

Isca Woodcrafts is once again hosting its popular woodworking show on 16 May, 2015 at Newport's magnificent Tredegar House. The business is also celebrating its 10th anniversary, thus making it a very special year.

The Wood Show takes place in the 17th-century stable block and courtyard, which is minutes away from the shop, and will run from 10am-4pm. Entry is free but car parking charges will apply within the grounds.

For 2015, the company intend to keep the same ethos, putting emphasis on showcasing woodworking techniques and skills to encourage more people into woodcrafts. Local clubs will be on hand to pass on valuable help and advice to all.

As always, the show will be supported by The

British Woodcarvers – South Wales Branch – and Crow Valley Woodturners will be representing the AWGB. The South Wales Stick Makers Association will also be carving and answering questions.

In among that you can also expect to see fretsaw work, pyrography, furniture making, knife handles, lovespoons and musical instrument craftsmen and women.

Isca Woodcrafts will have a large selection of wood in both board and blank form, plus a range of exotic hardwoods. The shop will open all day and the General Tool Store of Abergavenny and Ross will once again be selling their interesting array of wares. If you missed Newport Model Engineers last year, then they have also just confirmed

DETAILS:

When: 16 May, 2015

Where: Tredegar House, Newport, Monmouthshire, NP10 8YW

Contact: Paul Roberts **Tel:** 01633 810 148

Web: www.iscawoodcrafts.co.uk

Conversion chart

2mm	(⁵ / ₆₄ in)
3mm	(¹ / ₈ in)
4mm	(⁵ / ₃₂ in)
6mm	(¹ / ₄ in)
7mm	(⁹ / ₃₂ in)
8mm	(⁵ / ₁₆ in)
9mm	(¹¹ / ₃₂ in)
10mm	(³ / ₈ in)
11mm	(⁷ / ₁₆ in)
12mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
13mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
14mm	(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 / ₈ 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 ³ / ₄ in)
65mm	(2 ⁵ / ₈ in)
70mm	(2 ³ / ₄ in)
75mm	(3in)
80mm	(3 ¹ / ₈ in)
85mm	(3 ³ / ₄ in)
90mm	(3 ¹ / ₂ in)
93mm	(3 ³ / ₄ 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)

Barbara Hepworth: Sculpture Round & About for a Modern World

Tate Britain will open the first London museum retrospective for five decades of the work of Barbara Hepworth, one of Britain's greatest artists. Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975) was a leading figure of the international modern art movement in the 1930s and one of the most successful sculptors in the world during the 1950s and 1960s. This exhibition opens on 24 June and will emphasise Hepworth's often overlooked prominence in the international art world. You can see over 70 works by Hepworth from major carvings and bronzes to less-familiar works and those by other artists.

It opens with Hepworth's earliest

surviving carvings from the 1920s alongside works by predecessors and peers from Jacob Epstein to Henry Moore. The selection reveals how her work related to a wider culture of wood and stone carving between the wars when Hepworth studied at Leeds Art School and at the Royal College of Art.

DETAILS:

When: 24 June–25 October, 2015

Where: Tate Britain, Linbury Galleries, Millbank, London SW1P 4RG

Tickets: £16.30; concessions – £14.50

Open daily from 10am–6pm

Contact: Tate Britain



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF TATE BRITAIN

Sculpture with colour (deep blue and red) by Barbara Hepworth, 1943

Carving work areas

Hi Mark,

Just to join in on your questions on your recent blog, my work area is my parents' kitchen, as I still live with them. I put a cloth on the worktop most afternoons and carve for three and a half hours. I do have a shed but it's not nice to work in as it gets damp and cold in winter and too hot in summer. I mainly use it to store equipment. We have a garage and my father said I can turn it into a workshop one day, but at present, it houses the car.

Your blogs are always very interesting. I am sending you an image of a 'Knight Templar', which I carved last year.

Regards,
Tim Williams



Tim's carved knight

PHOTOGRAPH BY TIM WILLIAMS

What is real carving/woodturning?

Mark, I enjoyed reading your leader on real carvers/turners. I do agree with the point you are trying to put across: it does not matter what type of tool/machine/process is used, it is about the outcome and the enjoyment of getting to the end result.

The head in the sand approach to what is real carving/woodturning will only see the demise of what is a really interesting and personally rewarding activity, which develops skills, many of which have all but disappeared. If we are unwilling to accept the technology, which is currently available with the power carving tools, files, riflers, etc. we can expect the eventual stagnation of the craft. I know that many people are put off starting these hobbies due to the perception that they need to use a particular tool to achieve a particular effect/outcome. If you are enjoying what you do and you achieve the aim of the activity, then what is the problem?

I currently like to do some woodturning and carving, and yes, I do combine both turning and carving with some woodburning to help enhance the end product. Am I a woodturner or a woodcarver? Or am I something else?



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID FRANCES

David Frances' green man carving

I see myself as more of a woodworker, as I have also made some furniture for my home – am I a cabinetmaker, then? No, by profession I am a patternmaker; however, patternmaking is not just restricted to working with wood, but includes metal, plastic, polystyrene, etc.

I think that open debate on the matter will help lead more people to think about the whole picture and not just one little part. It will hopefully encourage more people to have a go at some other aspects of woodworking that they may not have previously considered. I know that reading the various magazines on woodturning/carving and general woodworking has provided me with ideas and inspiration.

Regards,
David Frances

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Carved chess set

Fred Marchant shares his thoughts on creating a chess set for a friend



A chess set made for friends – a labour of love and took much longer than imagined, nearly two years to complete!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fred Marchant had an interest in art from a young age but ended up following his family roots and working in the print industry. He was introduced to carving after recovering from a major operation and so his love of it grew. Today, he also teaches carving to a charity for partially sighted and blind people, called View Craft.



My chess pieces were a promise to a friend. I had no idea how long it would take and how enthralled I would become with the subject. All creative people are parents or guardians of their work and invest far more of themselves into a piece than others appreciate.

I never used to design a piece before starting but I was encouraged to establish a clear idea of my desired outcome, using reference material or maquettes, since there were no drawings or plans to follow.

My inspiration for this endeavour originated from a religious carving from

mainland Europe, which was featured in an earlier edition of this magazine. Throughout my 'create-as-you-go' process, I met friends and acquaintances who became my subjects of inspiration and were soon developed into the carvings. I, of course, did not explain this to those in question.

I had to think about what the chess set would look like. I opted for a medieval-style set and did not want

Tools used...

Tools:

- Various gouges
- Narrow veiners
- V-tools
- Small wood engraving tools

All tools were bought second-hand, including a couple of Addis ones. I like to visit local markets just in case I can pick up a beautiful old Addis tool, but they are getting rarer and more expensive

Wood:

- Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) sourced from the Bentley Woodcarving Group



to go the more traditional route for the design of the pawns. Tools and techniques have both become unplanned influences on my carving. My technique is ever flexible and changes as the carving and subject come together to explain to me how to best develop the work. I am grateful to my colleagues, who look at my work in progress and offer advice and criticism, which makes me think more deeply as to how I might go about achieving the final result that I desire.

TOP: A maquette was initially used to see how the boar would look

ABOVE: Everything nicely stored in a box

→ Pawns

I made a clay model of a wild boar, using the medieval period as a theme, which was wild boar hunting. Depicting the pawns as hogs spawned an idea that developed momentum with each successive piece. The back row of each side became pairs of similar individuals with distinctively different characteristics.

It soon became obvious to me that all the pieces should have the same footprint but could vary in heights. By beginning with blocks of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) with a consistent base area – 50 × 50mm – I could create pieces of a similar footprint but different vertical profiles. Although every piece has at least one duplicate in most sets, I chose to develop them individually in order to add to the visual impact of the set as a whole entity. Some pieces had enough stock to clamp the work for roughing out, but all were hand-held for finer detail and finishing. By developing individual poses in each piece, they are intrinsically unique and therefore were equally engaging to work on.



The boars were all about 105mm high and everything had a base size of 50 × 50mm. I had terrible trouble keeping both sets of pawns away from my granddaughters, who fell in love with them



These turned out to be 'cuter' than I originally intended and as I was carving them they seemed to take on individual personalities





Bird's eye view of both sets of pawns, showing the level of detail and intricacy. As you can see, each one was slightly different and no two were identical



→ Rooks



As I was carving these and wanting to 'personalise' them with local references, they turned out to be rather Gothic, particularly when I added a skull

Knights



I'm a carver who just 'gets straight in' and made a mistake on sizing, so the knights had to be a bit 'bent over' and aged. I thought this was quite apt and they are older knights, just back from the Crusades, Hundred Year's War and are now looking for a bit of a quiet life

Bishops



As the black set became 'the French', I thought it appropriate that the black bishops each had a wine flagon

Techniques used

I rarely make detailed plans or drawings and started each piece from the head down, hoping for the best. As I carved each piece, I got ideas and the timber seemed to make its own mind up

I saw an illustration in *Woodcarving* magazine of the Duke of Naples and his hands and face inspired me for the figure(s) for the kings and knights. Having just 50mm square to work with and 200mm high, I started with the top of the head of each figure and angled the head in the direction required, then worked down clearing waste, but left enough wood to adapt the stance of the figure – for example, hands clasped or on sword, etc.

I used my chops to hold the figures and gouges as I seem to be unable to master the art of electric tools.

A close friend mentioned that the black king's chest looked a bit bare, so I carved the fleur de lis on him – the black set then obviously became French.

"I started with the top of the head of each figure and angled the head in the direction required, then worked down clearing waste, but left enough wood to adapt the stance of the figure"

Personal references

I have used a number of personal references in carving the individual pieces for the chess set. For example, the white rooks have been carved using the Bell Tower, St. Giles Church, Dallington and the Brightling Hermit's tower as inspiration.

The white knights have been modelled on two of my oldest and dearest friends. The knight with the mandolin has the face of Mike – now in Canada – who has travelled all over the world busking.

The shield of one of the white knights bears the Sussex Martlets.

My daughter was pregnant when I was carving the white queen – our second grandson arrived to everyone's great joy, on 31 January, 2013 – so the white queen is also expecting a happy event.



The skull and mouse details



The opposing rooks in detail



Before and after – the white knights before war, and the black knights after returning



The white – English – bishops look a bit dour – no doubt because they haven't got any wine



→ Queens



I wanted these pieces to obviously look more noble and stately, having had a bit of fun with the other pieces. As I worked my way down, the animals emerged. The little dog with the white queen was modelled on my daughter's Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and the black queen has a cat

Kings



Again, as I carve I get ideas and the black king has his hand on his sword and his favourite dog is at his feet

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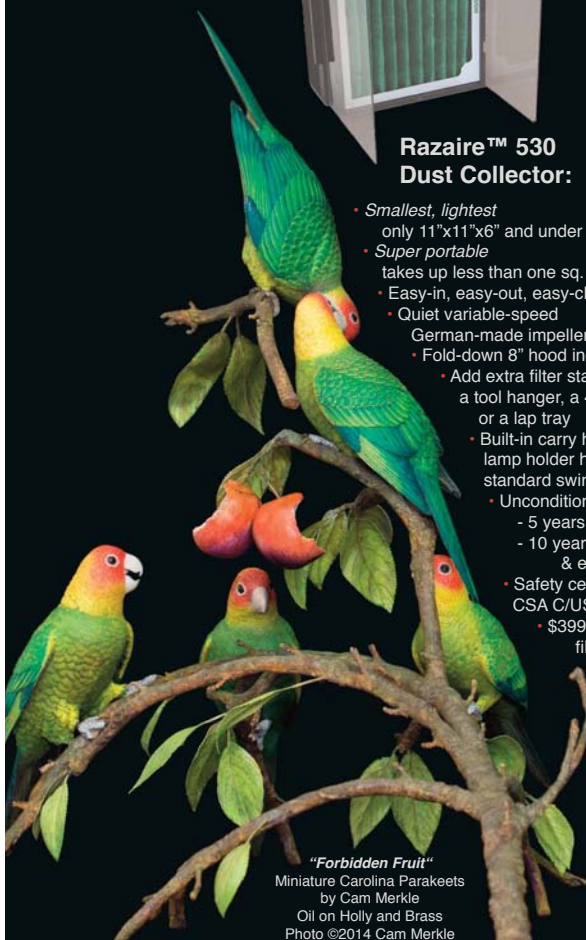
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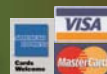
"Forbidden Fruit"

Miniature Carolina Parakeets
by Cam Merkle
Oil on Holly and Brass
Photo ©2014 Cam Merkle

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Carve a cat in relief



PHOTOGRAPHS BY VLADIMIR RUSINOV

Vladimir Rusinov carves a realistic cat in relief

Welcome to my masterclass on artistic relief woodcarving. This method will also allow medal carvers to develop their medal models, coins and various souvenirs using their low relief carving skills. This particular carving of mine is called 'white cat'. This beautiful cat is our family pet and my wife and children love him very much. I took a photo of our cat for the carving, with the aim of surprising my family with it. Before you start with the wood, pick your photograph dimensions and print it out to scale.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in 1960 in Donetsk region, Ukraine, Vladimir Rusinov attended the Folk University of Arts, majoring in graphic arts and painting. An efficient carver, Vladimir makes jewellery models of wood under casting, using bone and stone for jewellery decoration. The carver produces work of average and small sizes. Vladimir has a wife, son and daughter, and works and lives in the village of Liman.



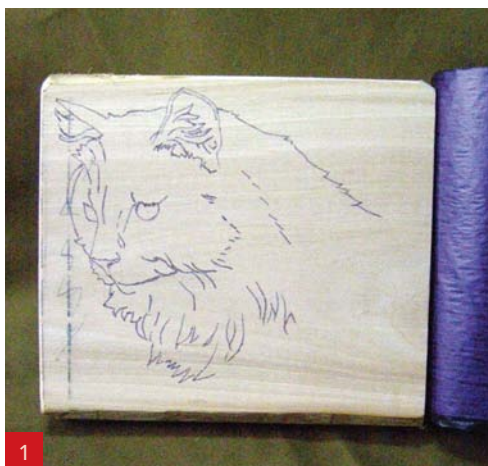
Things you will need...

Tools:

- Transfer paper
- Carving knife
- Carving tools
- Rotary carving unit
- Vertical milling mini-machine or a pillar drill unit that holds a rotary carving unit – optional but makes life easy when cutting to exact depths
- Various rotary burrs and cutters
- PPE

Wood:

- Block of pear (*Pyrus communis*)



1



2



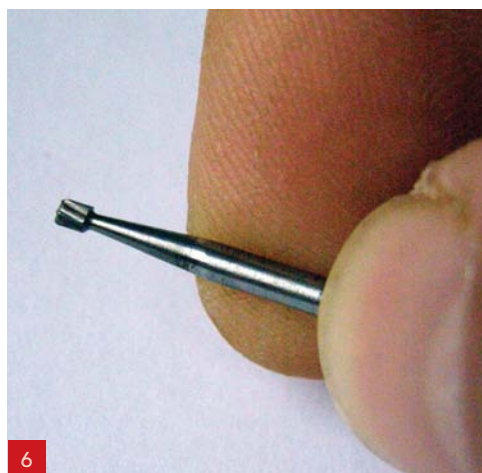
3



4



5



6



7



8

1 Prepare a section of pear (*Pyrus communis*) to carve. The next step is to draw your pattern directly onto your preprepared block, or, take a photo, print it out to scale, lay transfer paper onto the block of wood and then place your printed photo over the transfer paper and then draw round your print out. You can then prepare the main hand tools needed for this project

2 You can then start cutting around the outline of the cat. A knife is ideal for this as it is easy to control around the shape. The image outline cut should incline into the blank

3 Take a small deep-fluted gouge and cut from 10mm away from your knife cut, cutting down to meet the depth of the knife cut already made. You should now be able to clearly see the cat set apart from the blank background

4 Using a small knife, clean up the outline shavings and chips. You can now begin to undercut the cat image at a small angle

5 I now want to introduce you to this – the vertical milling mini-machine. If you follow my way of working, you will need it for further work on the carving. You can use hand tools or a hand-held rotary carving unit freehand or mounted in a pillar drill unit

6 This is a cutter for the milling machine. Insert this cutter into the machine's cartridge and the detent can be raised up or down. The cartridge abuts in it and stays in place. Therefore, the cutter cannot go deeper into the detail – only to the depth you require

7 Label the measurement of depth you want to go to on the side of the blank – here, it is 6mm. Release the cutter at this mark and protract the detent. The cutter cannot cut lower than that depth. Always be sure to stop at this point

8 Now on to power carving. This is a large cutter that will help you to remove the part of the background on your carving. Insert the cutter into your handpiece and ensure to run it at a high speed, but within the manufacturer's recommended speed range. These cutters and handpieces are available to buy from a variety of different manufacturers

➔ **9** During this type of work it is important to cover your mouth and nose with a special filter; this will protect your lungs from wood dust! For your eyes, use safety glasses or goggles

10 Using the same cutter as before, remove about 4-4.5mm of the background. The carving should now be separated into two parts: the high level being the cat's nose and the low level the background

11 You can now return to the mini-milling tool. Start drilling the background until the detent is down to a thickness of around 6mm. Pick the cartridge up and then down. Your detail must be held and turned very slowly and steadily without the piece tilting. Drill the whole background down to 6mm in depth

12 Again, you will need a large cutter and using a high speed, carefully take off some more of the background, but no deeper than 6mm. There will be several very small holes made by the drill. For now, leave them like that

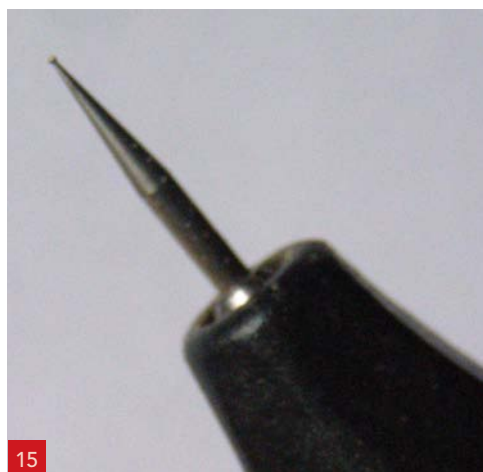
"To work on the snout, you will need a variety of small cutters, as shown here"

13 Near the edge of the outline of the cat's nose there will be a lot of uncut fragments. A large cutter is not able to access this part to clean it up, so you will need similar cutters, but in a smaller size. Once again, using a high speed, clean up the outline of the cat and you must ensure to clean this up slowly. Stop the cutter periodically and look at the results before you proceed. You may need to do some further tidying up at this stage. Do the final cleaning of the outline using a small knife. The next step is to start cutting the outlines on the cat's nose, ears, eyes, chin and fur. To work on the snout, you will need a variety of small cutters, as shown here

14 The first one you will need is a large cutter...

15 ...followed by a small bulb cutter...

16 ... and finally, a 'trihedron-needle' cutter





17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24



25

17 Be sure to keep referring back to your original image and, using a large cutter, remove excess volume. You can then start to create the fur volume

18 Using a small flat chisel, slowly and carefully cut away the parts of the background. Make the plane smooth and be sure to not leave any pits. This has to be done over the entire carving

19 Now back to the small cutter. Start looking for large fur bundles on the photo of the cat's head and begin to slot them in on the carving. Create a fur cover on the cat's forehead, ears and cheeks. Here you can see the fur bundles have different heights, depths and individual volumes

20 Once again, cut away any excess volume with a large cutter, then very carefully cut away any excess volume. Ensure to take your time here

21 Using a large cutter with diamond dust, cut in the large folds on the cat's back

22 Now take the three small cutters and work on the ears, cheeks, forehead and over the entire fur. This step requires a lot of patience and attention

23 Under the cat's nose there are many difficult fur details. This is a large piece of the carving. Before carving each piece, you should reapply any lost details using a pencil. Carve away the pencil lines, draw again, cut, etc.

24 Using a variety of different grits of abrasives, go over the background and refine

25 Using a very small section of abrasive, clean up the cat's outline. The fur should smoothly blend into the background. On the nose, sand all the separate details using a small section of abrasive. Your completed carving should look something like this ▶



Dave Western looks at the history of the Scandinavian lovespoon

Tips & techniques for carving a Scandinavian lovespoon

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



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE WESTERN

Although not nearly as well known in Britain as the Welsh lovespoon, the tradition of romantic spoon carving in several of the Scandinavian countries is centuries old and very complex. Following a timeline similar to that of its Welsh cousin, Scandinavian lovespoon carving began sometime in the mid 1600s. However, unlike contemporary Wales, where a vibrant gift market exists and custom carvers still create one-off pieces, Scandinavian lovespoon carving has largely died out.

Historically, the Scandinavian lovespoon employed fewer symbols and tended to be more conservative than the Welsh spoon. However, while the designs may have appeared a touch more subdued,

the craftsmanship was uniformly excellent and highly skilled, highlighting the long relationship Scandinavians have had with wood and their comfortable relationship with woodcraft.

Even though little is being produced in the way of modern Scandinavian lovespoons, a study of the traditional pieces held in various museum collections opens up a world of exciting design and carving possibilities for British woodworkers. Those with some Scandinavian background may even enjoy an opportunity to reconnect with a wonderful aspect of their culture!

Most of the Scandinavian lovespoon carving appears to have occurred in Norway and Sweden, although

the nomadic Sami people who are renowned for their elegant wedding spoons featuring tiny rings, which they carved from reindeer bone, travelled throughout northern Norway, Sweden and Finland. Traditions varied widely throughout Norway and Sweden affecting the purpose of the spoon, the time of its giving and even its style and level of craftsmanship. A number of lovespoon customs existed throughout Scandinavia, which don't appear to have had correlating traditions in Wales. Wedding spoons, jokespoons and so-called 'feeler' spoons are largely unheard of in Wales where lovespoons appear to have been given to initiate relationships and were given when a positive response was expected – or at least much hoped for!

Feeler spoons

One area where Welsh and Swedish spoons differed was in the carving and presentation of 'feeler' or 'heart' spoons. Typically, a young man would carve several spoons and would distribute them among girls he had the eye for. He would gauge their responses and would hope that at least one would show positive inclinations towards him. These spoons were generally given with a much lighter spirit and would usually lack the intense workmanship of Welsh lovespoons or of proposal type spoons. Among the young women, acceptance of the spoon didn't necessarily signal anything more than mutual interest and in many areas it was seen as an indication of a girl's desirability if she had acquired a good sized collection. The spoons would often be stored and proudly shown on a spoon rack at her house.

The decoration of these spoons tended to be relatively conservative by Welsh standards, although the heart was generally present somewhere in the design and was universally recognised as the symbol of love and affection.

Suitor spoons

When a young man would call on a girl with whom he was interested in pursuing a courtship, it was common for him to carry a 'suitor spoon' in the breast pocket of his shirt. The spoon would be clearly visible to others and since he would likely encounter the girl's father before he had gained a foothold in her



Examples of proposal spoons



Typical feeler spoons

house, the young man would be keen to impress with skilful and tenacious craftsmanship that would act as something of a calling card and résumé. In many cases, it would be as important for the young man to indicate his 'worth' as it was to demonstrate his ardour. At a time when hand skills and the ability to undertake and complete quality work was vital, the young man's value would be inextricably tied to the impression he created through his craftsmanship.

Proposal spoons

When a young couple began courting and it became apparent the relationship was heading toward betrothal, proposal gifts were often exchanged. If the gift was a spoon, it might feature more laborious and skilled craftsmanship indicative of the increasing importance and seriousness of the relationship. Often the spoons featured imaginative designs based around heart patterns or they might employ the ball-in-cage so enjoyed by carvers around the globe. Bowl shapes tended to be somewhat larger than the ones common to Welsh spoons and these were often elaborately decorated with gracefully etched Kolrosing designs. As with most Scandinavian spoons elaborate or crude, birch (*Betula pendula*) was the wood of choice. The spoons were often left unfinished or were finished with only the lightest of coatings – possibly linseed oil or beeswax-type finishes. Occasionally, the spoons were painted, but this is rare and when it does occur, is very vibrant and colourful.

Wedding spoons

Another area where Scandinavian lovespoons are notably different to the Welsh spoons is in the use of wedding spoons. In Wales, the lovespoon's purpose seems to be solely as a relationship initiator. While they were certainly used



Suitor spoons



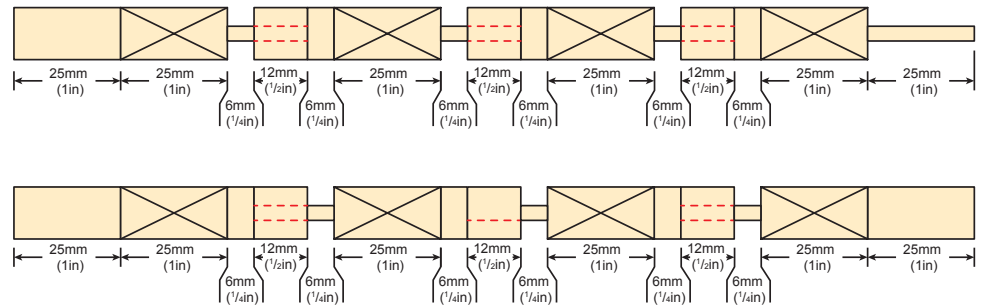
Wedding spoons would be linked together with a carved wooden chain

for that purpose in Scandinavia, distinct spoons were also presented and used by the couple at the wedding ceremony.

Most notable of these spoons is the renowned Norwegian wedding spoon. These spoons come as a pair united by a length of carved wooden chain. The couple would share their first meal – likely with the chain draped over their wrists – and would be symbolically tied together as one. This would have been a solemn occasion which would have not degraded into the mini food-fight that today's cake cutting ceremonies often become and the delicate spoon would have been treated with care.

Make a Norwegian-style chain link

The exquisite chain links found on Norwegian wedding spoons offer carvers and whittlers an excellent opportunity to expand their chain-carving repertoire. With a solid central section between the links, there is space for carvers to add decorative details, such as initials, balls-in-cages or any of a myriad of designs. While they take some concentration at the lay-out stage and can be a bit delicate when roughed out, they are straightforward to carve and make an enjoyable project.



1 Make up a length of timber – something even grained like birch or lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) is best – which measures $12 \times 12 \times 355$ mm. This will yield a seven-link chain when complete; plenty to begin with!

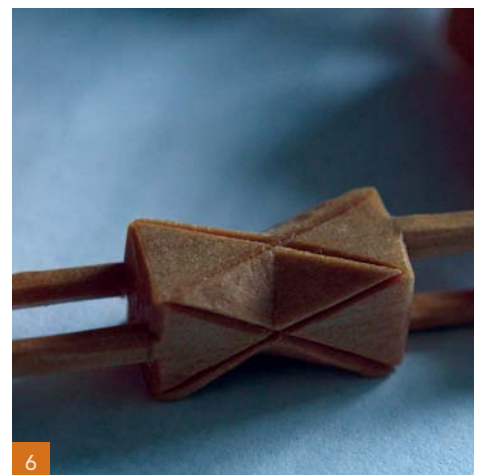
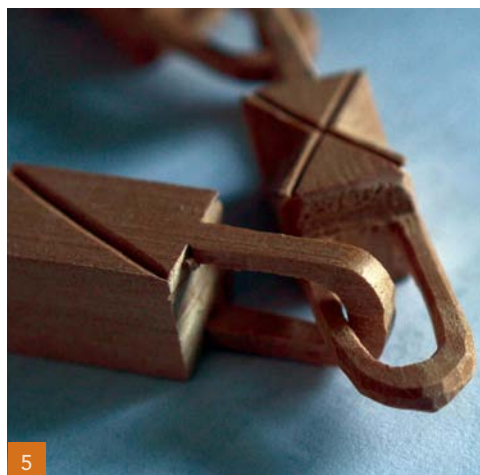
2 Measure in 25mm from each end, then measure another 25mm in to form the first link 'body'. At this point things get a bit trickier as you want to clear away a 6mm slot to start forming the next link. Leave a 12mm solid section which will be further shaped later and then another 6mm slot at 90° to your first slot

3 Create a 'cross' shape by clearing away waste from the 12mm solid section in the middle of the link section. This will show you where the link will be formed and will enable you to see where to start shaping each link. Round the ends of the links furthest from the link 'body', then hollow out the central section of each link. Don't make the arms of each link too thin or a breakage may result

4 Separate the links with a fine knife or thin saw-blade – a recycled scrollsaw blade works well here – being extremely careful not to take too much at a time or exert too much pressure on the delicate joint

5 With the links separated, you will have more access and less worry about breakage. Clean up the links and work to make the arms uniformly sized throughout their entire length

6 Embellish the 'body' sections to your taste





These spoons were produced in the early 1900s



Detail of the wedding spoon handle

These charming little Swedish spoons, produced in the early 1900s, were known as 'Känningar' – sensations. They were likely purchased by young men who wished to present them as 'ice breakers' to young women whom they fancied. Many are inscribed with a line from a poem by K.W. Böttiger, which reads: 'Sök i allt, blott själva kärnan.' This can be literally translated as, 'seek in everything the core' or more loosely as 'don't sweat the small stuff'. Uniformly similar in size and style, they are nonetheless hand detailed and painted, so may have been made from catalogue patterns.

In some regions of Sweden, it was common for brides to be presented with unusual little spoons featuring a female in the nude. Likely, there was a fertility aspect to these spoons, which has been lost to time. Sometimes the wedding spoons could be very simple. This lovely little spoon probably fell somewhere between a serious wedding spoon and a more informal 'jokespoon'. Its likely purpose would have been to enable the newly married couple to symbolically eat their first meal together.



A simple spoon, falling between wedding and jokespoon

Jokespoons

The Swedes in particular had a bit of a fondness for comically unusual spoons, which were typically given at weddings as an amusement. These spoons often feature upside-down or oppositely aligned bowls, which are often set at crazy angles. The spoons were deliberately difficult or impossible to use and no doubt the 'well fortified' wedding guests enjoyed a good laugh watching the newlyweds struggle to handle them.



Front view of single bowl reverse jokespoon



Rear view of single bowl reverse jokespoon



Side view of single bowl reverse jokespoon showing the extreme angle of the bowl from the handle



Front view of double bowl jokespoon. Note the reversed bowls



Rear view of double bowl jokespoon. The idea is to make using this spoon very difficult



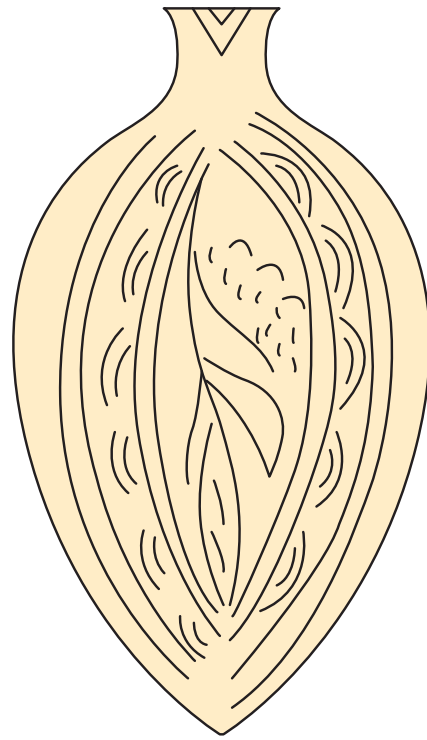
Side view of double bowl jokespoon. No doubt this spoon would have been funny to see in use

↳ Learn Kolrosing

Where the handle design of many Scandinavian spoons is conservative and often understated, the vigorously Kolrosed bowls of many spoons adds an energetic and elegant splash of exuberance to the design. Kolrosing is a method of creating a pattern or picture through the use of simple incisions cut into the wood – in the manner of etching. Primarily found on the bowl, the etching leaves a series of narrow cuts from which no material is removed but which is made visible by the addition of a mixture of ground wood bark and oil.

Nowadays, the lines are generally filled with dry coffee grounds or with graphite powder to bring the image to vibrant life. Resembling scrimshaw, kolrosing originated among the Sami people of Lapland who used the method to decorate reindeer bone carvings.

The process is fairly straightforward, but takes some practice to truly master. If you want to embellish your carving with a bit of kolrosing, here's a starter pattern and an uncomplicated method of carrying it out...



1 Choose a light coloured wood without distinct grain – strong grain lines can 'pull' the cutting blade off course, making a ragged line. Birch is the traditional Scandinavian wood of choice, but lime and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) would make good substitutes

2 Prepare the wood surface as thoroughly as possible. Scrape or sand smooth and try to ensure there are no unwanted dips or rises. I recommend sealing the wood so that your graphite or coffee powder doesn't stain the surrounding area

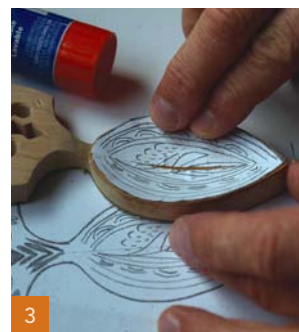
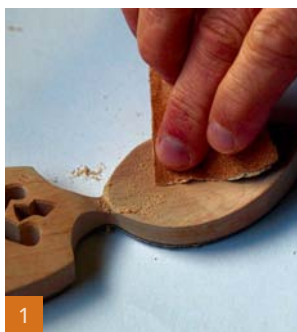
3 Transfer the design with a pencil or carbon paper – I like to stick a paper pattern directly to the surface with a glue stick

4 Using a sharp carving knife or specialised kolrosing blade, cut through the paper or drawn line to a depth of 25-38mm – if you are using kolrosing thin stock, be careful to only cut about halfway through – until the entire picture has been traced. Hold the knife in the manner of a pencil and only cut once in a smooth, fluid motion. If you return over a cut or try to cut in multiple pulls, the lines will look very messy when the powder highlights them

5 With a gentle, circular motion, use a small paintbrush to rub powder into the cut. Try not to use too much, especially with graphite

6 Brush and blow away all excess powder then peel away paper. Lightly sand with 400-600 grit wet and dry – or wipe with an oiled rag – to remove surface mess or any areas where powder has stained

7 A light coat of oil or beeswax polish will finish and reseal everything nicely



Later spoon carving

During the latter half of the 1800s the trend for fretted woodwork, which was prevalent in the UK, became similarly fashionable in Scandinavia. The broader 'panel' style handle so popular in Wales was the ideal palette for this type of work and many elaborately scrolled lovespoons were produced during this period. Although there is a distinctly Scandinavian feel to the designs, similarities to Welsh spoons produced at this time abound. ▶

*Examples of later
Scandinavian
lovespoons*



For more information

Nordiska Museet:

Where: Nordiska Museet,
Djurgårdsvägen 6-16, P.O. Box
27820, SE-115 93 Stockholm, Sweden
Web: www.nordiskamuseet.se

Skansen:

Where: Stiftelsen Skansen, Box
27807, 11593 Stockholm
Web: www.skansen.se

The Norsk Folkemuseum:

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What do I do about carving eyes?

Peter Benson examines a common problem – how to carve eyes

This is probably at the top of the list of problems that carvers face, at least most hobby carvers, and although it has been covered several times in previous articles, I feel that it bears repetition in a little more detail. The answer to the problem of carving eyes can be prefaced by two more questions. Do you really need to carve eyes at all? And, if you do, are you carving human or animal eyes?

Carving human eyes

Let us look first at dealing with human eyes. To be perfectly honest, if a carving has a head that is less than about 25mm in height, then you are asking for trouble if you try to carve detailed eyes. What you really need is a way of showing the eyes as being alive and possibly looking in a particular direction. This can be done fairly simply without trying to carve an eye in detail. Often just a simple line or a pair of lines is more than adequate and will certainly look a lot better than a pair of ragged holes dug out of a face. If you have your subject looking down you don't need to carve eyes at all.

The photos here are examples of small practice caricature head carvings by my good friend Pete LeClair from the USA. Each of these could look equally effective in any style of carving.

Note how deep the eyes are in the face and the rough dome shape into which they are carved. Obviously, as they are caricatures the eyes are closer together than you would see in a normal carving but this can easily be adjusted to suit your carving.

Any face that is larger than 25mm high is, in my opinion, suitable to try and carve a fairly realistic eye but just think about the following observation. How many faces have you carved? Double this and you will have the number of eyes you have carved. Do you really think that you can expect to perfect the carving of eyes with this amount of experience? It is almost like expecting to drive a car after two or three lessons. The solution is simple – practise carving eyes until you are confident that you can do it on your precious carving.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER BENSON, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

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.



Using a simple cut line



Using a cut triangle



With the pupil cut out



The pupil cut out and darkened to give direction

Carving practice

Below I show a method of doing this that you might like to try – I suggest that you choose a piece of waste wood, similar to that you are using for your carving, and cut it out as shown. You might like to start with a piece that is larger than your actual carving and then reduce it later for your final practice.

One piece of information that you should bear in mind is that the face at the eye line is five eye widths wide. This means that you have the two eyes, an eye width between them and one eye width outside each eye. On your block you just need to draw the two eyes as circles with one eye width between. Remember that the eye is basically a sphere, in humans about the size and shape of a table tennis ball.

Your aim now is to establish a mound within the circle but leave the top outside corner of each eye, as to remove the fullness here will make the eye look old.

Carve deep around this circle,

especially underneath and by the bridge of the nose making the bottom of the circle deeper than the top and blend in. Mark in the outline of both eyes doing your best to match the shapes. When you are happy with your drawing you can start to carve. Any further shaping of the eyes should be done on both eyes together, step for step. Carving one eye and then trying to match the second is extremely difficult and usually results in eyes of different shapes. Before moving on you will need to shape the brow and bridge of the nose remembering that the female brow has no brow ridge where the male has a pronounced ridge around the inner end of each eyebrow.

Carving the eyes involves cutting round the lines you have drawn and removing the material from within these lines to an equal depth. I liken this to drawing the eye on the surface of an orange and then cutting out the peel revealing the shape of the orange itself.

You will notice that the curvature of the surface revealed is the same vertically as it is horizontally. You must do the same on your carving otherwise you end up with an almond-shaped eye.

In the photo for step 5 – see page 28 – both eyes have been carved like this with one having the iris marked in and the other with one suggestion of how to deal with showing the iris. You could just outline the iris with a shallow cut if preferred or cut back the rest of the eye surface leaving the iris proud.

It is important, to prevent the eyes from seeming to stare, that there is some shadow on the top of the open eye from the top eyelid. This means that you actually need to cut quite deep. Most carvers are reluctant to do this in case they 'mess it up'. Be bold! If you wish to carve caricatures there is nothing to stop you from painting the eyes to get a more realistic result but I haven't yet seen this done effectively on a realistic face.



1 The pattern for the practice blank



2 Draw two circles to represent eyeballs



3 Create a dome shape for each eyeball



4 Draw the eyes on each dome



5 The iris has been marked on one eye, the other eye has been carved



6 The eye on the right has been set back more to increase the shadow



7 The eye on the left is smiling, the eye on the right looks older

Carving animal eyes

If you want to carve eyes on an animal the basic procedure is more or less the same but you have a few considerations to bear in mind with the different kinds of animal. You do, however, have more options to get an effective result.

First of all you need to understand the difference between the eyes of a hunter, or predator, and those of a prey animal. All you need to do is ask yourself if the animal you're carving is a carnivore or herbivore.

Hunters are carnivores and catch prey to live. Therefore they need eyes that are placed facing forward, so that they can focus on their prey, or that can be moved into that position. In general, you will find that a high proportion of these will also have protective brows with the eyes set fairly deep within the sockets.

The herbivores or grazers don't have the same requirement as they are basically eating grass or vegetation but do need to be constantly aware of what is happening around them. Their eyes are, therefore, set on the side of the head, usually bulging quite prominently, giving them a wide range of vision. This is often helped by having elongated pupils. In general, you will be able to see their eyes from the back as they need to see behind them so, when carving them, this should be kept in mind making sure that any parts of the head do not obstruct this

line of vision. Very obvious examples of these are songbirds and ducks, rodents, rabbits, cattle, antelopes and deer. As long as you bear these differences in mind, you will not go far wrong.

Although these animals have eyelids they are not very prominent but the shape of the eye itself is important and this needs to be studied before you start. If you are painting your carving you can, of course, use glass eyes but you will need to add the eyelids with modelling putty and then paint them.

What, then are the alternatives? With larger heads you can carve the eyes in much the same way as for humans and probably the most effective way to finish these is to paint them with acrylic paint and then coat with a drop of clear nail varnish to give the shine. With care this can make an eye that is as good as a glass one but the correct shape.

For small carvings where it is difficult to carve the eye successfully, you can always try inlaying the eye with a variety of materials. The simplest of these is a small piece of buffalo horn that is readily available. This can be shaped into a thin dowel the size of the eye you want and the head drilled to accept this. It is advisable to drill a fitting hole the same size in a separate piece of wood in case the dowel breaks during the process. You don't want this breaking in your finished carving. Once the size

is correct, put the end of the dowel into the hole with a little CA adhesive and trim and polish when secure.

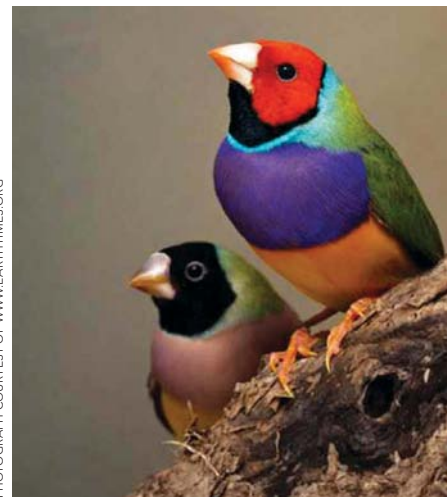
Should you want to do this with a larger carving where you want the eye to be two different colours – iris and pupil – you can do the same thing but in two stages. I have successfully used amber or artificial amber with the pupil in buffalo horn. You make the initial dowel in the amber and glue that into the hole and then drill for the pupil once it is fixed. There is a simpler way to get the same effect and this is to shape your amber dowel and create a small round dimple in the end. This can be blackened with a fine marker pen and then placed in the hole with the dimple on the inside. When polished this will show through as a pupil.

If you don't have any amber or are not successful shaping it you can use a piece of clear acrylic and shape it in the same way using the ink pupil if you prefer. You can then insert a small piece of coloured foil – sweet wrappers from some popular selections are ideal – into the hole before fitting the eye. This will shine through giving a very bright eye of the colour you want.

Obviously, this method will give your animal a round eye but with a little practice and ingenuity you can do the same thing and shape the eye as you want. You will, of course need to shape the hole as well. ▮



Various examples of animal hunter eyes



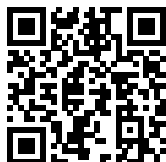
Red male and black female Gouldian finch



The visual ability of birds of prey is legendary and the keenness of their eyesight is due to a variety of factors

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Running hare

Duane Cartwright carves a simple running hare that could be made in just a weekend

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DUANE CARTWRIGHT

This simple little running hare could be completed in a weekend, depending on the wood being used and how much spare time you have. I carved this by simply cutting out the side profile and shaping the body and head, but you could add more movement to the carving by having the hare turning on its front paws, giving the body a slight twist, or even turning the head slightly. Whether you follow the pattern or add the extra movement to the hare, I would recommend using reference material, such as photos of hares from the internet. I've listed the tools I used as a guide, but this project can be carved with just a few basic carving chisels.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



Things you will need...

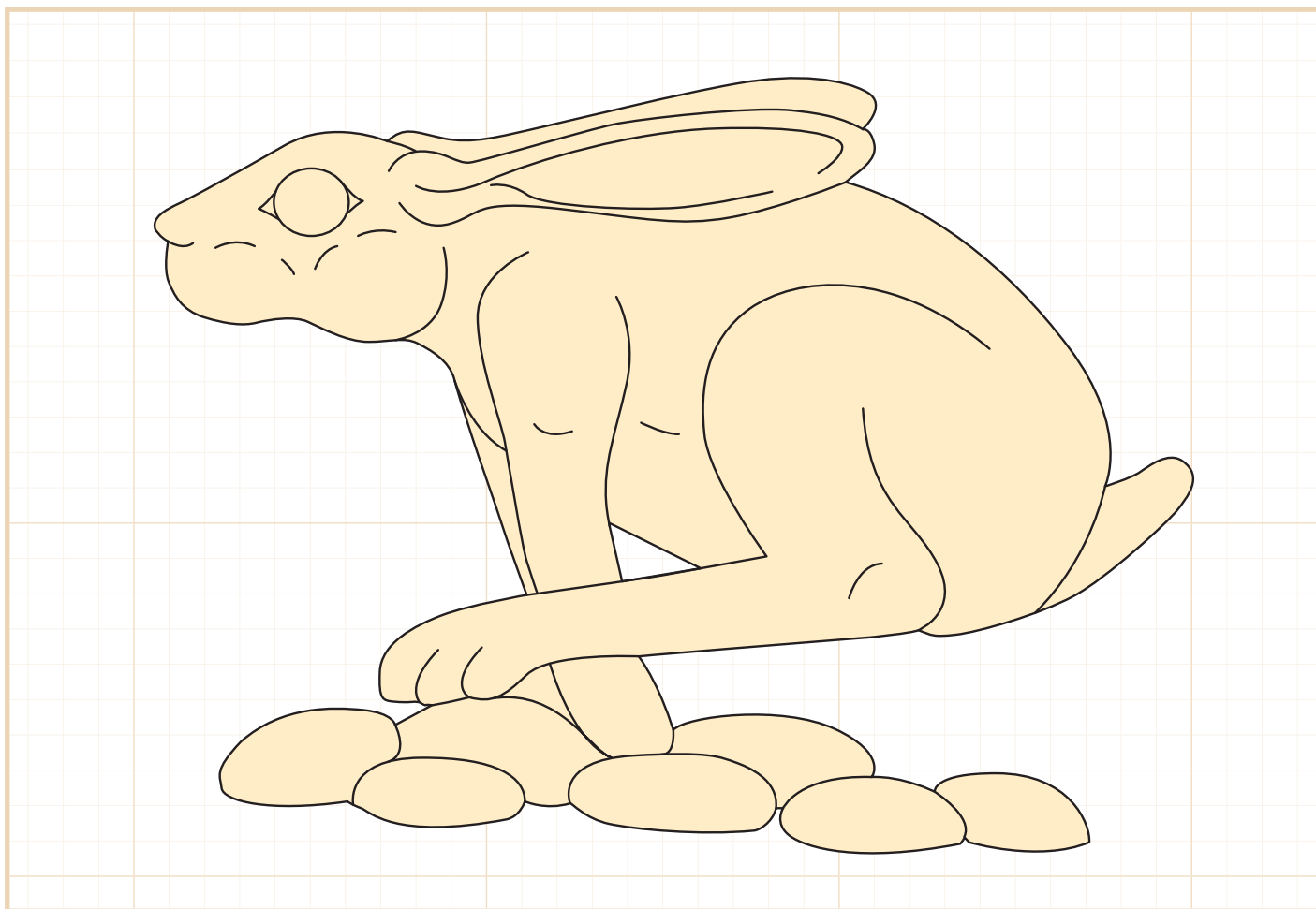
Tools:

Hooked skew
No.2, 20mm
No.3, 10mm
No.5, 8mm
No.6, 6mm & 9mm
No.9, 5mm
No.11, 3mm

No.3, 6mm fishtail gouge
Bandsaw or coping saw
Handsaw

Wood:

Mahogany
(Khaya ivorensis)
170 x 115 x 55mm



1 Transfer the design onto the wood, then cut out the profile of the hare. Draw a centreline around the carving and an oval egg shape on top of the head and mark the rough placement of the ears

2 Due to the base, you can't cut out the top view on the bandsaw, so hold the carving securely and use a handsaw to cut away the waste on both sides of the head



3 Now using glue and paper, fix a scrap piece of wood to the base and attach to your carving vice or similar. With the carving secure, use a large gouge to shape and bolster in the hare's body. Use a deep gouge to carve the placement of the legs and ears. Carve down the front paws between the back legs and separate the ears to give the hare its rough overall shape

4 Draw in the placement of the eyes, cheeks and nose, using the centreline as a guide to measure and mark in the eyes. Some dividing callipers will help to make sure the eyes are equally spaced. With one eye drawn in, draw some lines from the edges of the eye over the head to the other eye to make sure both are equally spaced

➔ **5** Now use a No.9, 5mm gouge or similar and carve across the cheek and around the eyes and along the side of the nose. Carving both sides equally and occasionally checking from different angles will help to make sure the head is symmetrical. Then with a shallow gouge reversed, round over and blend in the facial features and slope the ears in towards the head

6 Once the head is carved and you're happy with its profile, you can then draw in the eyes again

7 Using the gouges that best fit the shape of the top eyelid, cut in creating a stop cut, then with a shallow fishtail gouge or similar reversed, cut in rounding over the eyeball. Then, using the best fitting gouge, cut in the bottom eyelid to create a stop cut, again using the reversed fishtail and a hooked skew in the corners to finish carving the eye ball

"First, draw the detail of the ear using the sketch as a guide..."

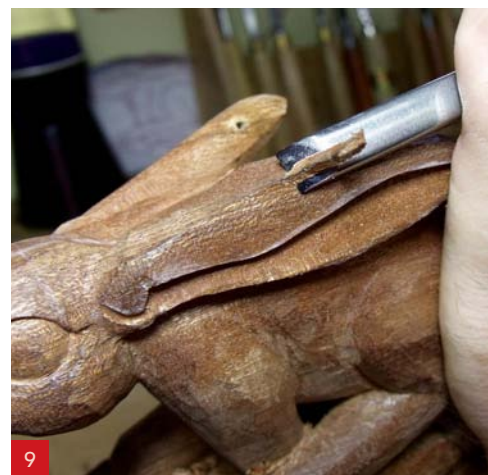
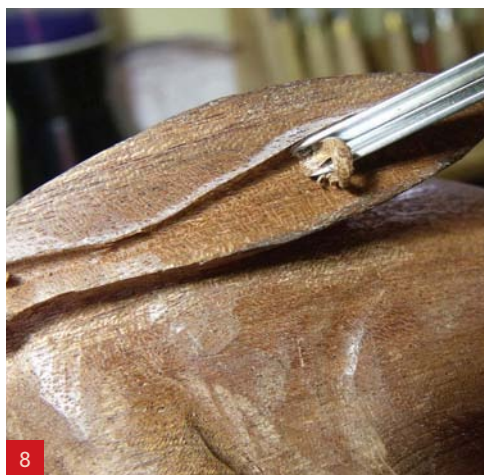
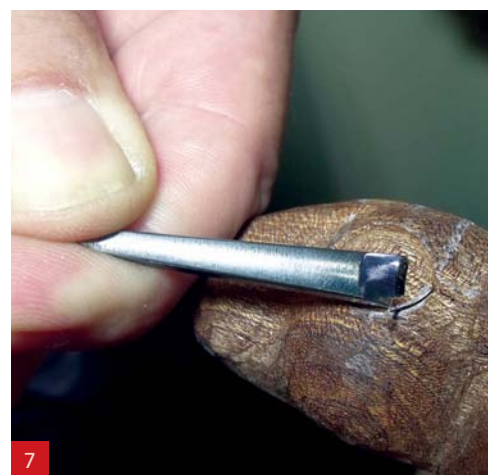
8 Now move onto the ears. First, draw the detail of the ear using the sketch as a guide, then use a No.11, 3mm gouge or similar to carve the inner part of the ears. Carving the inside before finishing off the outside of the ears will allow for change or any errors/breakages that may occur

9 You can now finish shaping the outsides of the ears. Use a medium sweep gouge reversed and be aware of the grain direction

10 Use a veiner or V-tool to carve in the detail of the nose and the mouth, then refine/sharpen the detail on the sides of the nose with a stop cut created with the best fitting gouge

Top tips

1. Keep checking and looking from different angles to help keep the symmetry
2. A white wax pencil will show up on darker wood making your marks easier to view
3. If you do not own a carving vice, then use a larger piece of scrap wood and use a G-clamp or similar to hold the carving to your tabletop





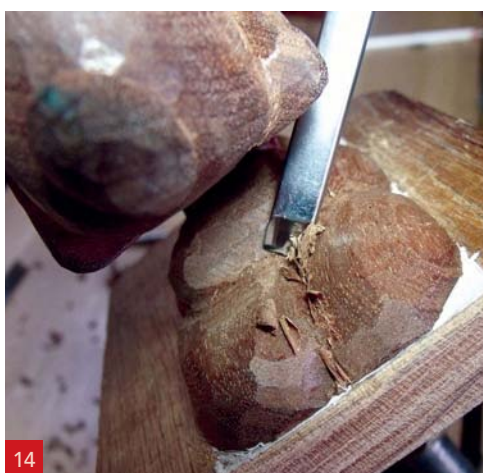
11



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15



16

11 Draw a centreline down the front and back legs; this will help to keep the legs straight while you're rounding and shaping them. Use a hooked skew to carve out the area behind the front legs and above the back legs where they meet the belly. A drill can help to clean out this area. When the legs have been shaped, redraw the centreline on the back legs then equally space and draw the toes in place and carve them in using a veiner

12 Once all of the heavy carving is done above the paws, carving under the back legs can begin. Start with a deep gouge and carve under the back legs to the sides of the front paws, separating the back legs from the base

13 Use a hooked skew or similar to clean up where the front and back legs meet. The front paws will be part of the base

14 You can now move on to the base. I carved it to resemble rocks. Use a pen to roughly mark where you want the rocks, then use a No.11, 3mm gouge or similar to mark out where you made the pen marks, then with a shallow gouge reversed and using the corner of the gouge in the grooves made earlier, round over the rocks

15 I chose to sand the hare to bring out the wood grain but I left the rock base with a tooled finish to add contrast. If you choose to sand, then start at about 120 grit and remove all of the tool marks, sanding in the direction of the grain as much as possible. Then give the carving a good brush down before moving onto the next grit of abrasive, finishing with 320 or similar. With the sanding complete, give the whole carving a coat of sanding sealer, wiping up the excess as you go. When this is dry, use the finest abrasive you have, e.g. 320 grit or higher, to cut back the sanding sealer and remove any raised grain. You can then apply your chosen finish – I chose to use a microcrystalline wax for its durability. Finally, apply some crushed velvet to the underside of the base; this will protect any surface the carving sits on. Cut a piece of velvet a touch larger than needed, peel off the backing and apply to the base, then carefully cut around the edge with a craft knife

16 Here is the finished hare ▶

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CARVING REALISTIC EYES
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In the workshop with...

Fred Marchant

We go in the workshop with Fred Marchant

Fred was born and bred in Tooting, South London and made life-long friends there. He went to Chartersey School in Islington, hoping to make it to art school, but sadly that did not happen. On leaving school, he went into the print industry, where all his family worked. He then did his National Service and soon after met his wife and married in 1963. Fred had a major operation on his back when he was in his late-30s and was introduced to woodcarving when he was recuperating at the Wolfson Centre. The family moved to East Sussex in 1988 and Fred's son-in-law and son built him his own workshop – perfect.

As well as his own carving, Fred also tutors for a charity called View Craft, which gives the blind and partially sighted the chance to work on the visual arts. The group do great work and cover everything from woodcarving to water-colouring to fabric work and weaving, and even some mosaic work.

How, when and why did you start carving?

I was in hospital, Wolfson Centre in London, for rehab after a back operation about 38 years ago. They had a woodcarving workshop and that's where I got hooked

What and who are the greatest influences in your work?

The inspiration for the chess set was the statue of Charles I of Naples, featured in *Woodcarving* magazine. I also love the work of Bernini, particularly his use of drapery



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED MARCHANT

One of Fred's walking sticks



Fred in his workshop

If you were to offer one sage piece of advice to someone what would it be?

If you make a mistake, continue. The wood may possibly guide you in another direction. Don't think you can't achieve an end result, just persevere

What music and which book are you currently into?

I usually listen to bel canto opera, especially Callas, and traditional jazz while I'm carving. The book I'm currently reading was a Christmas present from my wife – *The Wisdom of Trees* by Max Adams. He mentions the oldest woodcarving in England – in Durham Cathedral, the coffin of St. Cuthbert

What is your silliest mistake?

I painted a lovely wood finished piece and ruined it. I've now decided that I cannot master the art of painting wood

What has been your greatest challenge?

The chess set, it took me around two and a half years to make, on and off

Name one thing on your carving 'to do' list

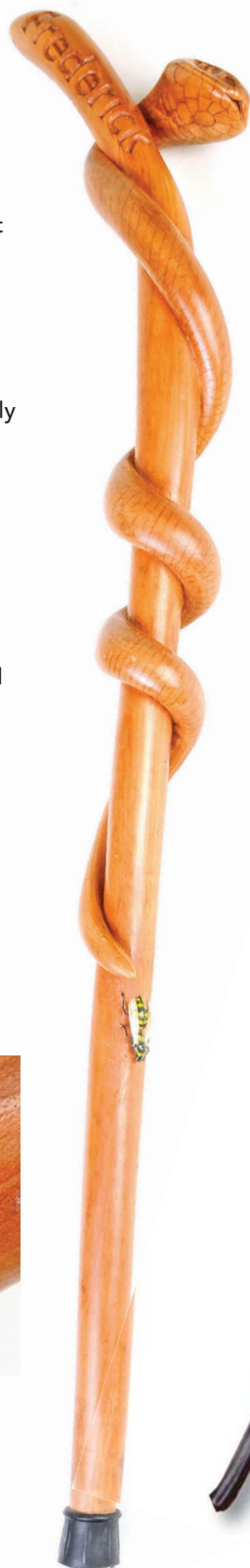
On my carving 'to do' list is making walking sticks for all my friends. I obviously do other things between, but I've made a few and have a few more to do



Detail on walking stick – one of Fred's rare successful painted pieces



Head of walking stick



One of Fred's walking sticks

Likes and dislikes

Likes

- I like to feel a good, sharp tool cutting cleanly through the wood's surface
- To complete a piece with just that – nothing else, e.g. sanding, etc.

Dislikes:

- I dislike painting a piece as I can't do it, especially when I look at the beautiful painted pieces that the Bentley Woodcarvers manage to produce so effortlessly

Handy hints

- Don't let your workshop get into the state that mine is currently in, when you can't find the tool you want to use!
- Get a good extractor to get rid of the wood dust
- Don't leave anything half-finished before you finish for the day

What is the one piece of equipment or tool you would not be without and why?

When I took over the woodcarving tutoring at View Craft, Steve Preston advised me to get a bandsaw to help with the Viewcraft work and my own. It saves me an immense amount of time and I wouldn't be without it

If you could change one thing what would it be and why?

I wish I had started woodcarving earlier and maybe had some professional tuition

What is your favourite type of carving?

The human figure, although I haven't done a lot of it. I'm very fond of carving animals as well

If you had one wish, what would you wish for?

To continue carving for many more years and a magic fairy to clean/tidy up my woodcarving shed!

If you could have one piece of equipment, what would it be and why?

Something that would magically sharpen my gouges; I do my best – but I'm not very good at it!



Fred's favourite carving tool

Contact

Email: irene@marchant9537.plus.com

Favourite jig

I use woodcarving chops by Tiranti, but most of the time I use my hands or hold the piece between my knees – a bit basic but it seems to work



Fred's sharpening setup



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Blacktip shark – part 2

Andrew Thomas finishes carving this blacktip shark

In the last issue of *Woodcarving* I described the techniques of carving the blacktip shark's body, caudal fin, pelvic fins, anal fin, first and second dorsal fins and the mouth. We continue now with part two of the project, looking at how to carve the details of the nostrils, eyes, gill openings and pectoral fins.

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

Things you will need...

Tools:

- No.2, 3mm
- No.2, 5mm
- No.2, 10mm
- No.2, 20mm
- No.8, 4mm
- No.9, 3mm
- No.9, 5mm
- No.9, 10mm
- Knife
- Bradawl
- Stainless steel pins: 1.5 or 2mm
- Drill and drill bit: 1.5 or 2mm

Wood:

Tulipwood (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

Body dimensions:

360mm long × 110mm high × 100mm dia.

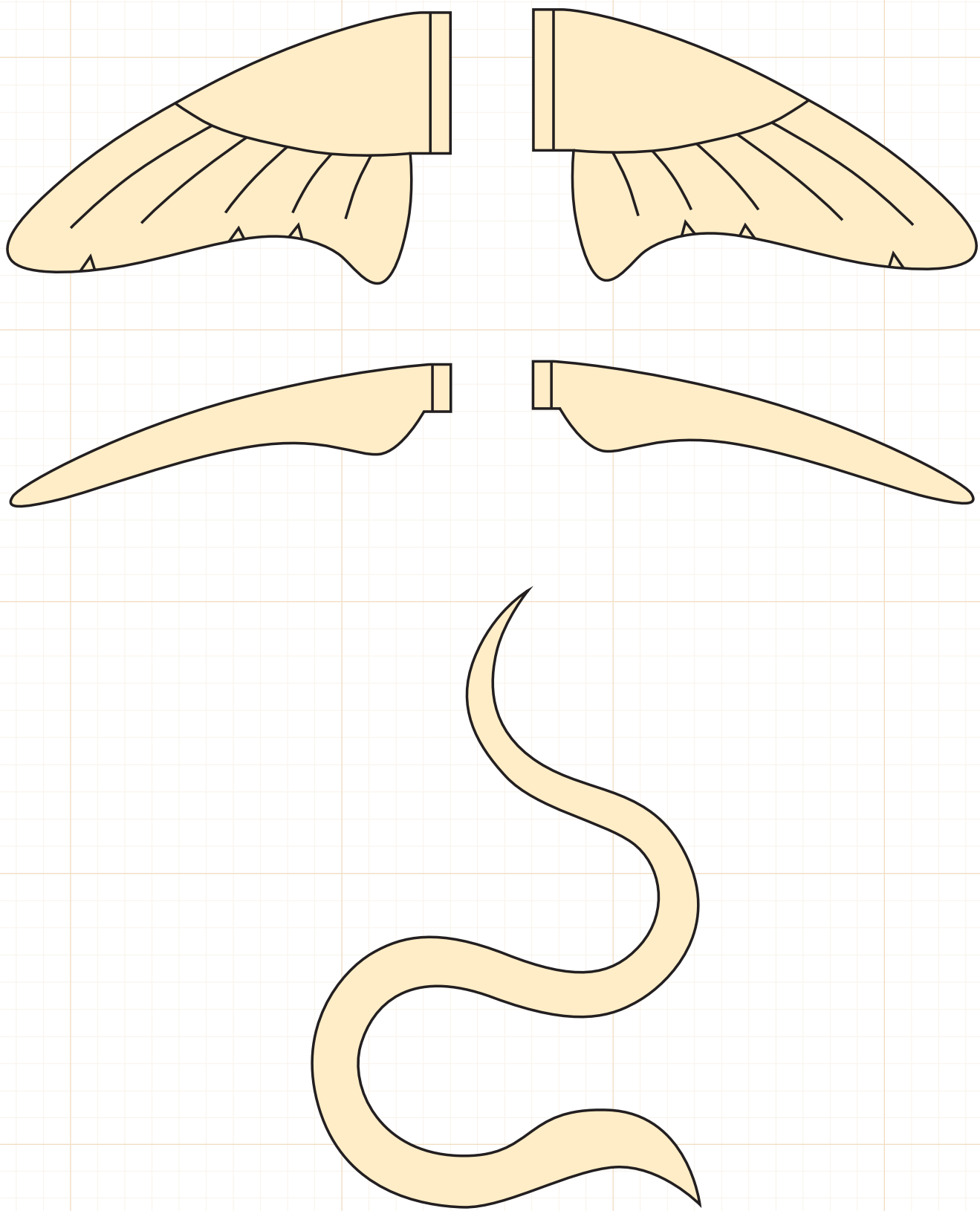
Pectoral fin dimensions:

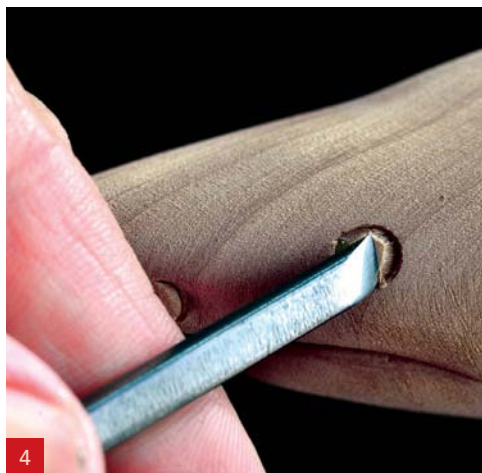
Two pieces at 70mm long × 45mm wide × 25mm dia.

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.







1 Draw the nostrils in their precise position on the head and check for symmetry from all angles. Use a No.8, 4mm or similar to stab quite deeply into the line of the nostril

2 Use the same gouge to carve an 8mm groove behind the nostril cut, leading into the nostril cut. Repeat until the nostril is around 2mm deep. Then, use a piece of 150 grit abrasive to smooth over the semi-circular nostril into the gouge cut and also to smooth the edges of the groove

3 As you can see, I carved the eyes on the example in two different stages as I hadn't made a decision as to what type of finished iris I wanted. As a result, I added them when the carving was complete. Simply follow the stages as they are outlined as follows: using the drawings supplied, draw the eyes in their position on the head and check for symmetry from all angles. Use a No.9, 5mm to cut a 5mm circle

4 Use a No.2, 5mm to curve the edges of the eye into the No.9 cut. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until the circle is around 1.5mm deep and sand them smooth with 150 grit

5 The real-life blacktip shark has quite a deep hollow area on its head directly behind the eyes, so measure back 30mm behind the eye and carve a 2mm deep groove from this position up to the eye

6 Using a No.2 gouge, blend the sharp edge on the lower side of the gouge cut into the area below. Leave the upper edge sharp to produce a more defined ridge. Sand the area using 100 grit to smooth the depths together

7 To produce the iris detail, use a power carving unit with a 1mm diamond bit rotary burr, or a No.9, 2mm. Use a No.9, 3mm positioned in the centre of the eyeball to make a circular cut by pressing it firmly into the wood. Next, use a 1mm diamond rotary burr. Start in the very centre and make tiny circular motions with the burr until you reach at least 1mm deep. Start to make larger circular motions, slowly working outwards. When you reach the No.9, 3mm cut you will see the last tiny slither of wood flick out – don't go any further. Now you can deepen the hole to around 2mm in depth

8 The head of your shark should now look like this

➔ **9** Draw the gill openings into their correct position. Use a knife to cut along these lines

10 Pare the wood into the knife slits from the position of approximately halfway between each gill. Repeat the knife cut again, but this time angle the cut into the gill opening and then pare the wood quite deeply into the knife cut to produce a good shadow and a realistic appearance

11 Use a piece of 150 grit to remove all the tool marks and smooth the details naturally

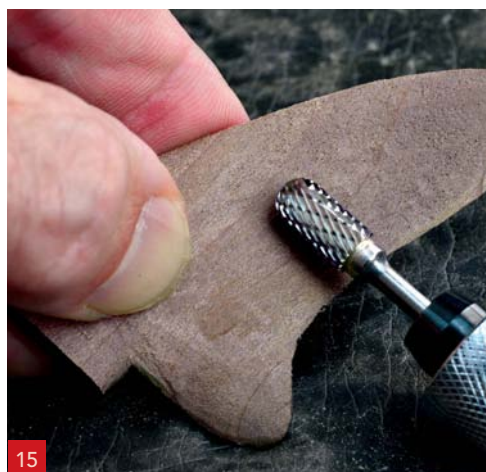
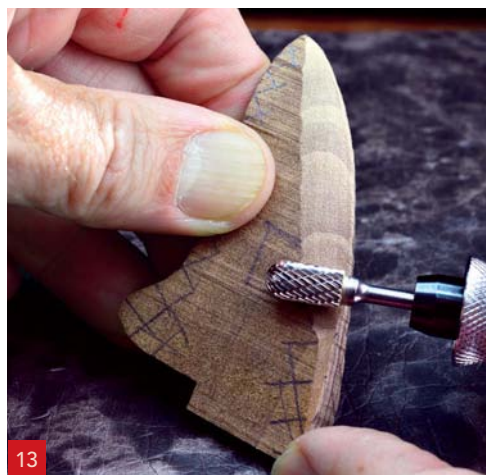
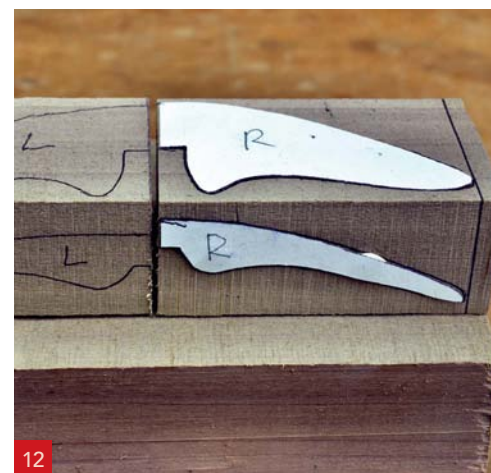
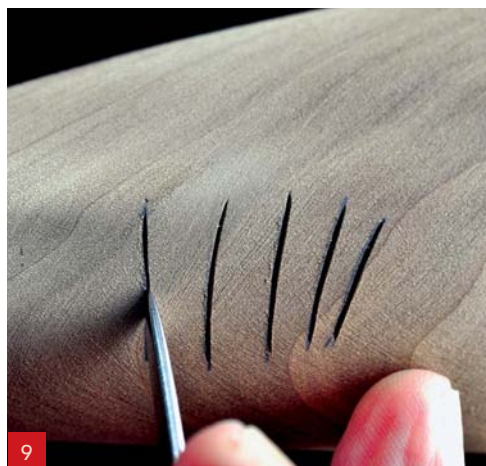
12 The shark's pectoral fins tend to generally be seen projecting out from the body at very similar angles on both sides. The designs that I have supplied are slightly different to one another as the right one is angled down a little lower than the left one. The aim here is to give the visual impression that both fins are very fine and thin. Use the same technique as the other fins; carving and sanding the edges to a sharp finish, but leaving the centre of the mass thicker for strength. Ensure that the wood used is cut from the same block as the shark and that they match the body's colour perfectly. Also ensure that the grain runs along the length of the fin

13 I prefer to use a power carver and rotary burs for any hand-held work, but the same result can be achieved using gouges. Draw a centreline around the edge of the fins. Use a 6mm cone burr or similar to create a gentle convex curve on the upper side of the fins, from the centreline on one side to the centreline on the other

14 Shape the end that will be jointed into the body to an evenly balanced ellipse. Curve the part of the fin behind the ellipse on the trailing edge either up or down

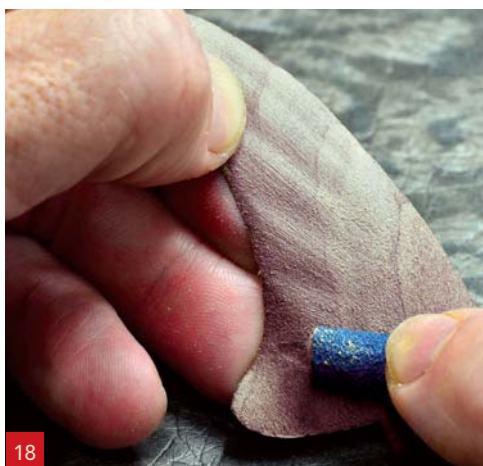
15 The underside of the fins should be concave, naturally following the same angle as the convex top surface. Once happy with the overall fin form, sand evenly all over and smooth the edges down to a fine sharp finish

16 The pectoral fins have a very delicate pattern on both their upper and lower sides. Here, the left fin is marked and ready to be carved, the right one is finished. Draw the surface anatomy details onto both sides of the fins





17



18

17 Follow the lines with the burr to produce a shallow depth of around 0.5mm on both sides

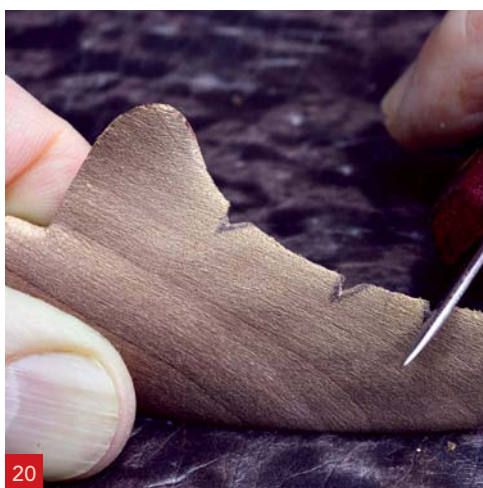
18 Use a piece of rolled 100 grit abrasive to blend in the details

19 The pectoral fins can often be found with nicks along their edge. Mark several positions along the trailing edge of both fins

20 Use the knife to cut a small 'V' shape into each position and then sand with 150 grit. Finally, sand the complete fins through the final abrasive grades – 240-400



19



20

21 The best way to join any carved pieces together is using small stainless steel pins cut from longer rods. These rods can be purchased at a very low cost from engineering companies, hardware stores, or online. I normally use either 1.5mm, 2mm or 2.5mm. When joining two pieces together, use two pins; this will ensure the joint is very strong and can't move. Make a cardboard template with two carefully positioned holes pierced through it, which can then be used to mark the drill holes in their precise position, both on the fin ends and the shark's body. Firmly hold the pectoral fin end on a piece of card. Use a sharp pencil to draw precisely around this end. Carefully cut out and place on the end of the fin. If there is any discrepancy with the matching shape of the template, then sand with 400 grit to correct it



21

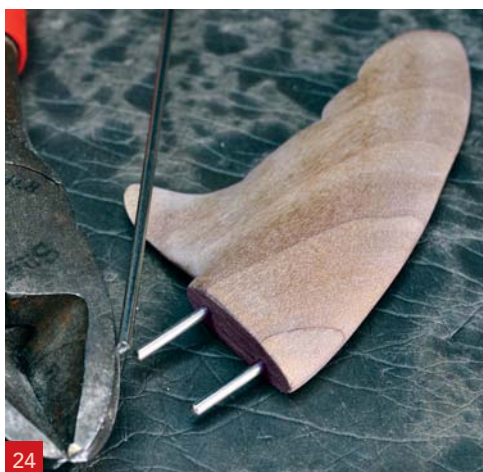


22

22 The two drill hole positions should be made around 10mm apart, but they can be less, especially if you are using 1.5mm pins. Measure out 5mm from both sides of the centre of the template and mark on these positions. Use a bradawl to make a tiny piercing through the template at these exact points. Place the template precisely on the end of the fin and mark these two positions onto the wood. Use the bradawl to make two small holes in these positions for the drill bit to bite on



23



24

23 Use a drill bit the same diameter as the pins, then measure and mark a depth stop on the drill bit – around 8mm – to ensure you do not drill too deeply. Make the holes squarely into the marked positions

24 Cut two stainless steel pins off the rod at around 18mm. File or sand the sharp edges, then push firmly into the fins

25 Using the drawings, locate the position of the fins in precise alignment with each other. Place the template in this position on the side of the shark's body, the correct way around. Make two pencil marks through the holes onto the body and use the bradawl to make the holes

26 Drill the holes squarely into the body, to a depth of around 12mm. Push the fin into position to check the pins align. If either pin doesn't align, make a small bend to take up the correct angle

27 Push the fin right up flush on the body and use a sharp pencil to draw around the shape of the elliptical end. Remove the fin

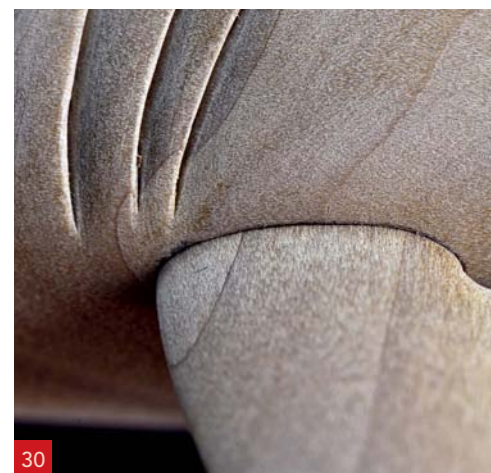
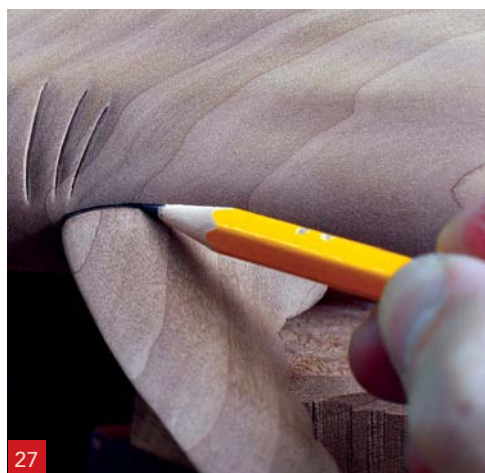
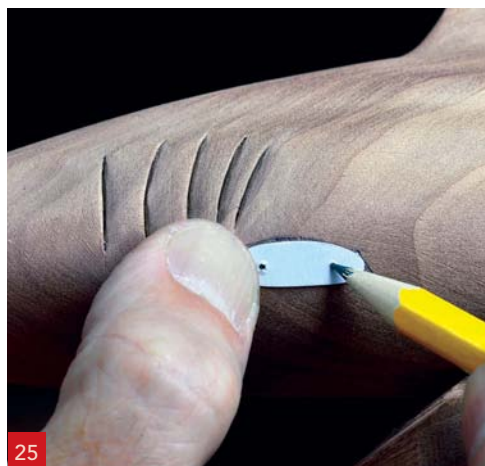
28 Use a selection of gouges with the same curvature as the ellipse to cut directly into the wood surface, along the 'inside' of the line. Use a No.8, 4mm for the corners and a knife in between

29 Use a No.2, 3mm to pare the wood away from the centre of the ellipse, back to the cut. Repeat steps 28 and 29 until you reach a depth of approximately 2mm

30 Plug the fin back into the body and see how well it fits. If it is too tight, look closely around the edges where the elliptical end and body meet and you will notice 'shiny' areas where they are touching. Carefully work on these shiny areas until the fin fits

31 Some blacktip sharks have little wrinkles either side of their pectoral fins; these details add more realism to the project and help take the eye away from the fin joint. Use the knife to cut their lines, a No.2, 10mm to pare the surrounding areas into the knife cuts and 150 grit abrasive to smooth the details naturally together. The project is now complete and can be sanded through the remaining grits: 150, 240 and 400. In between each grit, brush or pour hot water over the surface and leave it to dry to raise the grain and allow the following grit to be worked more easily and effectively. When finished, cut it off the faceplate block, pare the uneven wood into the surrounding areas and sand through all grits of abrasives

32 Finish with one light coat of boiled linseed oil, then leave for a few weeks before applying several coats of a dark wax polish



COMING NEXT MONTH

A new magazine for woodworkers

More step-by-step guides, more features, more tech,
more pages – in fact, more of everything you like!



Cover subject to change

Scratching the Surface at Aladdin's Cave!



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We're sure that Aladdin would agree with us, that all carver's have one thing in common - they're all different! They each 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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To that end we have just been appointed as the only specialist UK supplier of the Spencer-Franklin PowRlock Hydraclamp range for the woodcarving market.

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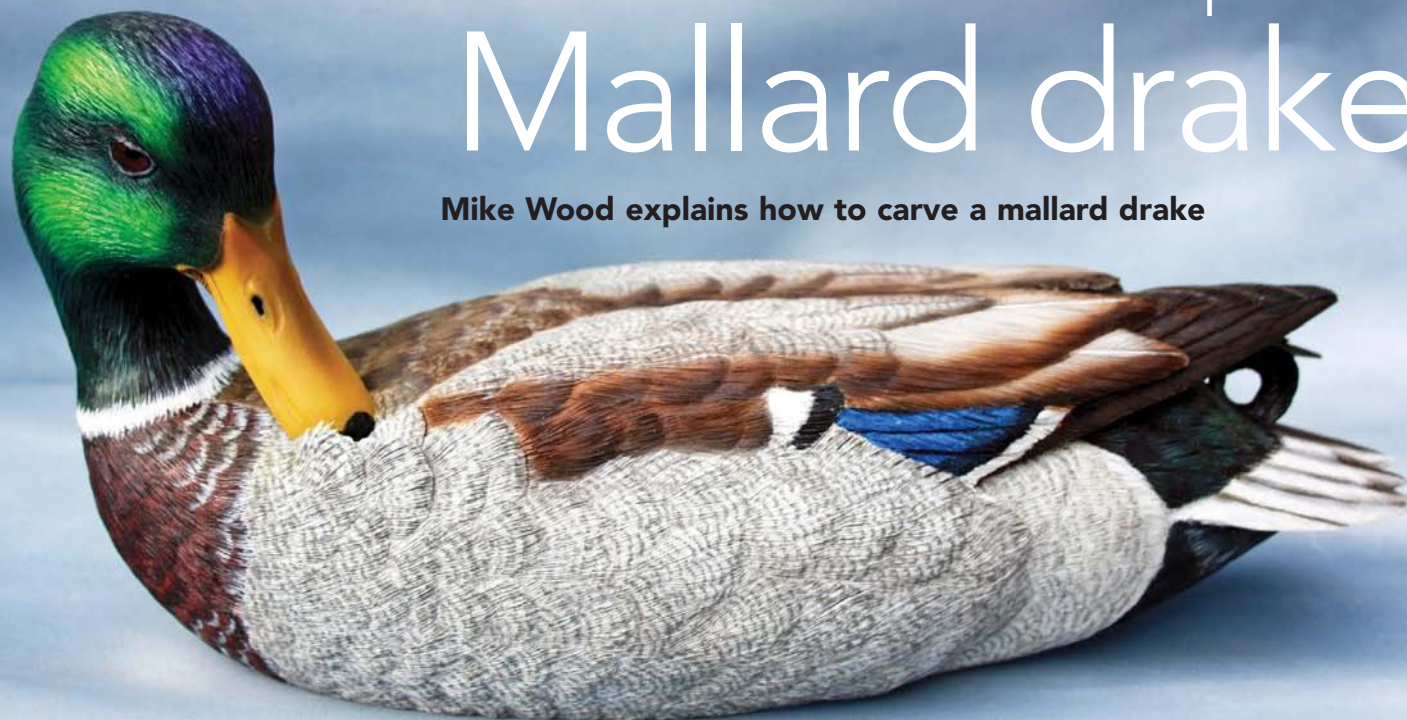
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sharing expertise

Carve & paint a Mallard drake

Mike Wood explains how to carve a mallard drake

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKE WOOD



The mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), also known as the wild duck, belongs to the subfamily Anatinae of the waterfowl family Anatidae. Its common name is believed to derive from the French word 'mallart', which means wild drake. The mallard is a gregarious bird, which lives in wetlands where it feeds off water plants and small animals, such as insects and shellfish. It is the ancestor of most breeds of domestic ducks.

The mallard is large and heavy with a long body and a long, broad bill. The female is mainly brown with an orange bill; however, in this project, we are going to carve and paint the more colourful mallard drake. The male has a dark green head and a yellow bill, it has purple-brown feathers on its breast and grey on its body.

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



Tools:

- 100mm grinder with coarse-toothed wheel
- Rotary power unit with coarse-toothed taper burr
- Abrasives
- Bullnose ruby carver
- Sanding bobbin
- High-speed rotary handpiece with diamond wheel, blue stone, bullnose white stone, small point
- Saburr tooth, ruby point
- Pyrography unit
- Airbrush
- Fine rigger paintbrush
- Plastic wood for eyes
- Mallard curl

Paint:

- White gesso
- Black gesso

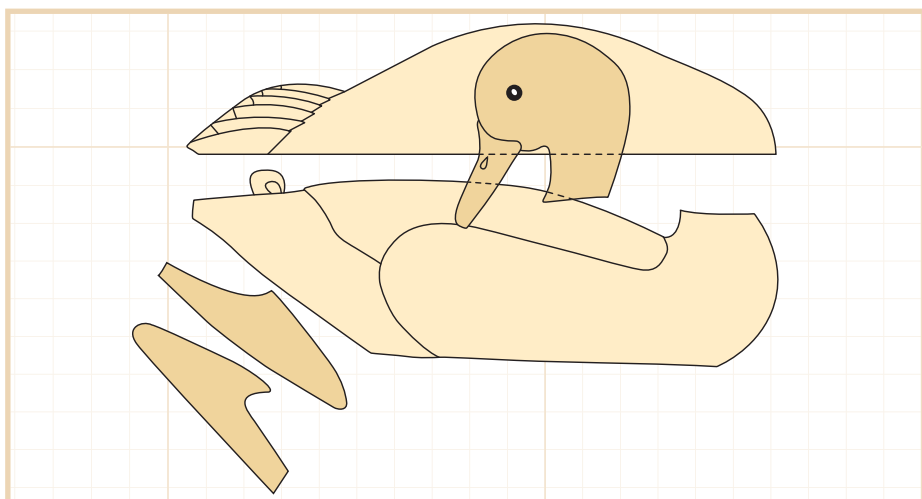
- Raw umber
- Yellow ochre
- Golden yellow
- Bright green
- Iridescent green
- Burnt umber
- Burnt sienna
- Burgundy
- Iridescent purple
- Ultramarine
- Iridescent blue
- Black umber

Wood:

For the body: jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) measuring 370 x 160 x 110mm

For the head: jelutong measuring 140 x 60 x 100mm

For the primary inserts: lime (*Tilia vulgaris*)

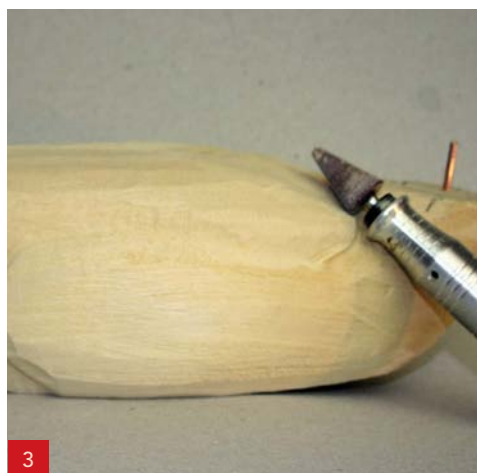


➔ **1** The first step is to trace the pattern of the mallard onto the jelutong blanks for the body and head. I used a study bill to help me get the head shape correct. The next step is to rough out the basic body shape of the bird. I use a coarse wheel in a 100mm grinder for this. This is used two-handed with the blank securely held while I shape it. Some people use a sanding disc in an angle grinder. You can also buy a small single-hand angle grinder, or a right-angle head, which fits onto a handpiece for a rotary carving unit that converts this into an angle grinder. The other option is to shape it by hand and carve it with traditional carving chisels. It doesn't really matter as long as you get the shape right



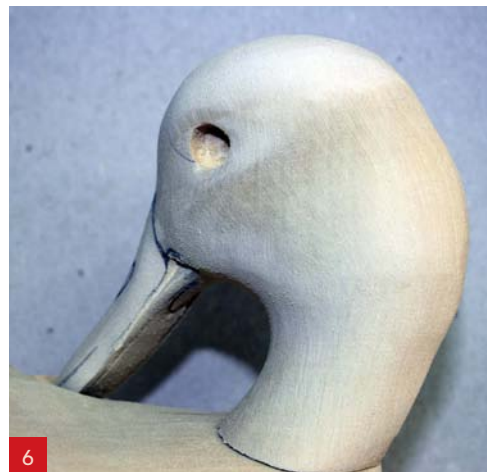
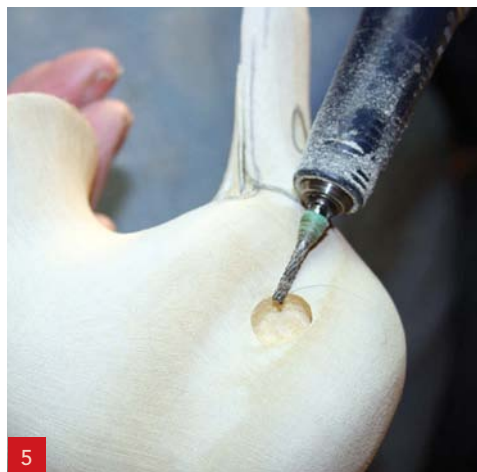
2 Draw in the various locations of the main details, such as the side pocket, etc. ready for carving

3 Using a coarse-toothed taper burr in a rotary power unit, rough shape the body all over. Again, hand carve it if you prefer. Then...



4 ... use coarse grit abrasives to sand the entire body until it is smooth, working from coarse down to finer grits. After the body is smooth, rough-shape the mallard's head with a coarse taper burr in a rotary power unit

5 Sand the head smooth and then cut in the eye holes. I use a small rotary burr for this



6 Temporarily fit the head to the body to check the fit and make any adjustments that may be necessary at this stage

7 Draw all of the feather groups onto the bird's body. Constantly check your reference material to get these and the other details on the bird correct



8 Now use a bullnose ruby carver or similar type of cutter to rough carve all the feathers

Distribution

The mallard is widely distributed across both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. It is found in North America from Alaska to Mexico, across Europe and Asia and has been introduced to Australia, New Zealand, South America and South Africa



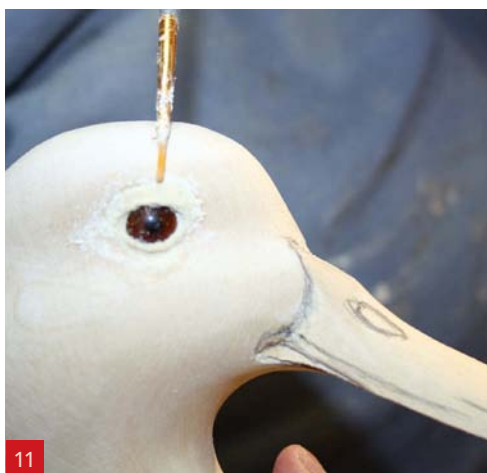
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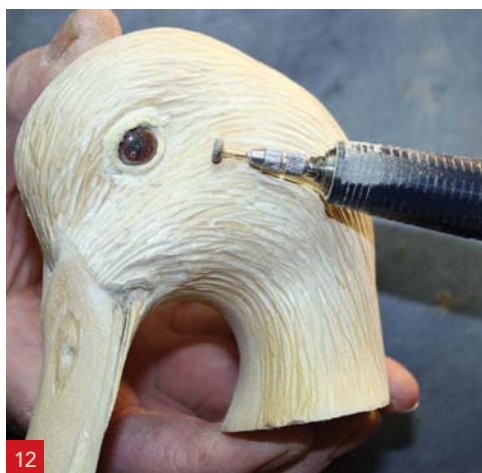
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9 Having cut the feathers, you need to smooth them down to create the pillow-like effect real ones have. This can be done easily with a fine sanding bobbin, or as before, it can also be done by hand. Going down to about 320-400 grit should be fine

10 The sanded feathers should look something like this



11

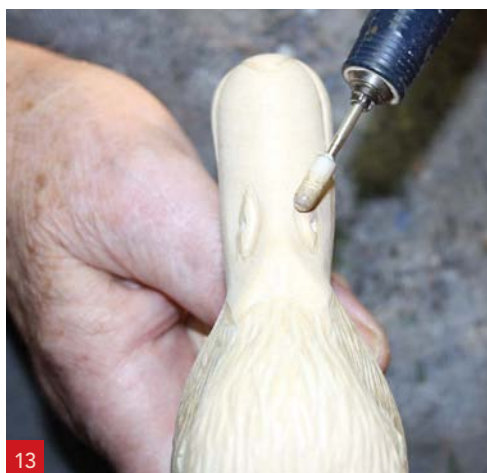


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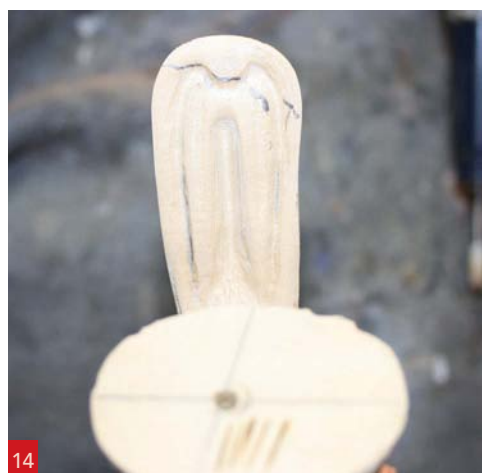
11 Returning to the bird's head, fit plastic wood into the eye holes, insert the eyes and then remove any excess plastic wood and smooth out the eye surround. Next, draw in the details on the duck's bill, then proceed to draw in the feathers

12 Use a small diamond wheel in a high-speed handpiece to start carving in the details on the head. A micro veiner can be used for this if you prefer. Then, use the high-speed grinder with a blue stone to smooth out the details

13 As before, use the high-speed grinder with a bullnose white stone to carve in the details on the bill



13



14

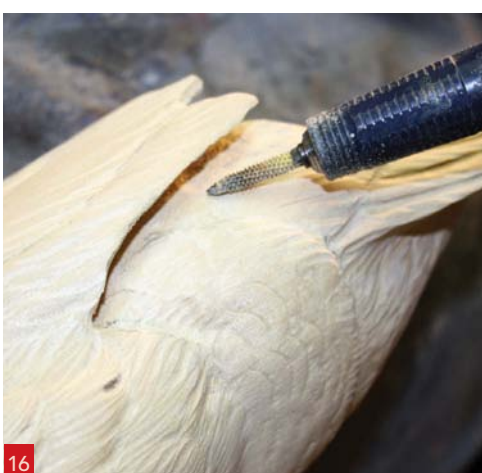
14 The underside of the bill should look something like this when you've finished carving. Using the high-speed grinder with a blue stone, go over the whole body softening the feathers further if you need to

15 You can now cut and carve the primary inserts, taking extra care as you carve the feather details so as not to shatter any feather edges you have created

16 Use a high-speed grinder with a small point burr to cut recesses in the body for the primary inserts. This is where a power carver makes life easier and simpler than hand-carving the slots, but small hand tools can be used if you prefer to use these



15



16

Habitat

The mallard can survive in a wide range of habitats and climates, from Arctic regions to subtropical regions. In the UK, it is found wherever there are suitable wetland habitats, although it is scarcer in upland areas. Some mallards breed here in the UK, others breed in Iceland and northern Europe and migrate to the UK for the winter

➔ **17** Check the primaries for fit in the slots you've cut and adjust as required to get them to fit. Once happy, temporarily fit the primaries in position. They will be finished, textured and painted before fitting properly. Use the grinder with the small point burr to make a hole in the duck's tail for inserting the mallard curl

18 Now carve in the tail feathers using a ruby point

19 Fit the mallard curl in the tail. The bird is now ready for burning. Begin by burning the side pocket – I chose to cast this curl in pewter, but you can carve a wooden one if you prefer

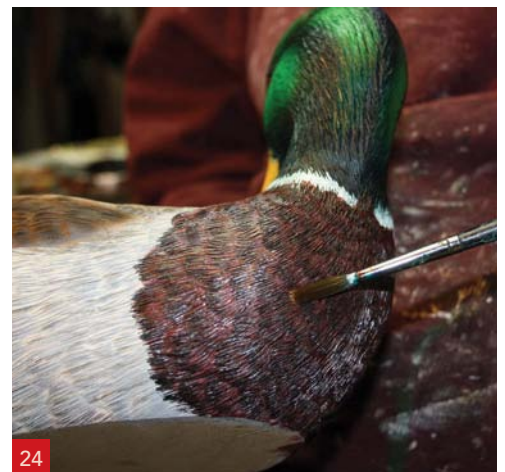
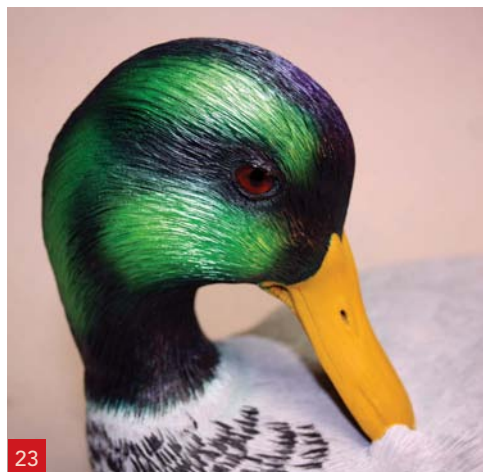
20 Burn in the details on the head, under the bill and the nostrils. Next, move onto the main body and pyrograph in the fine details. Remember to check the reference material to ensure you get the direction, size, etc. of the detail required correct

21 Once all the details have been burnt in, fit the head permanently. You are now ready to paint

22 First, paint the undercoat. The body is painted light grey using white gesso, a small amount of raw umber and a small amount of black gesso. The dark colour on the head is black gesso and the light colour on the head is white gesso

23 Paint the bill using yellow ochre and a small amount of golden yellow. The iridescence on the head is achieved using bright green paint and a small amount of iridescent green applied with an airbrush. The airbrush will give you fine control over the amount and density of the coats applied, but of course you can use hand painting techniques to create a similar effect, but if you start to use colour regularly on your work, it is worth obtaining and learning how to use an airbrush. Once the head is completed, use black gesso and a fine rigger paintbrush to edge all the breast feathers

24 The duck's breast colour is made up using burnt umber, burnt sienna and a small amount of burgundy. Apply this in thin washes until you reach the desired effect. Using the airbrush, spray a small amount of iridescent purple to the back of the head. The iridescent effect is key to getting the mallard to look right; it is the most visual aspect of this bird

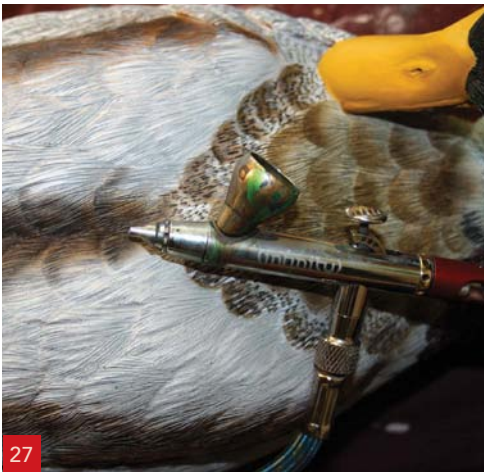




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32

25 The bird's cape is built up of several washes of raw umber and a small amount of burnt umber. The edging of the feathers is airbrushed

26 Using an airbrush with a mixture of burnt umber and a small amount of ultramarine, spray in the secondaries and tertiaries. Again, hand brushing can be used, but the airbrush is faster and for me, is more efficient

27 Use the same colour mixture to spray the edges of the back feathers. Use raw umber and white with a fine rigger paintbrush to paint in some splits

28 Use the same colours to paint all the vermiculeries. Use blue iridescent paint for the speculum. Again, the way the iridescent paint plays and refracts light to change the colour according to the view point is key to getting this detail right. But be careful, only a light coat or two is required to get the desired effect

29 Paint the upper tail coverts black and then airbrush over them with a very watery green iridescent paint. Small bottles/tubes are readily available from good art suppliers of various iridescent colours and they are not expensive, so don't be put off getting some if required

30 The primaries are textured and painted with raw umber and a small amount of black umber, then airbrushed with raw umber

31 Use a small amount of raw umber added to yellow to airbrush the front of the primaries. Once painted, the primaries can be fitted permanently to the body

32 The finished mallard drake should look something like this ▶

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NEXT ISSUE

wood CARVING



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE WESTERN

Issue 145 July/August
ON SALE 25 JUNE

LOOKING AT LOVESPOONS:

Dave Western explores the
subject of Breton festival spoons

Carve a pod of dolphins in
oak with Duane Cartwright

Technical: Andrew Thomas shows how
to carve a set of realistic, closed eyes

In profile: the Jangid family's
miniature carvings

Steve Bisco carves a
Victorian flower panel

'Farthings' house sign



Zoe Gertner carves a personalised house sign from an oak blank

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



As I unwrapped the unexpected parcel brought by post I recalled the phone conversation that took place some months before: "It's my husband's birthday and he wants a house sign – it's called 'Farthings' and can I send you the wood for it?" Time went by and I'd put the matter to the back of my mind, but now the timber had arrived it was time to make a start on this commissioned project.

Using a selection of very few carving tools, the raised letter techniques shown for my 'Farthings' sign can be used to personalise carved signs of any design, for both indoor and outdoor use.

Things you will need...

Tools:

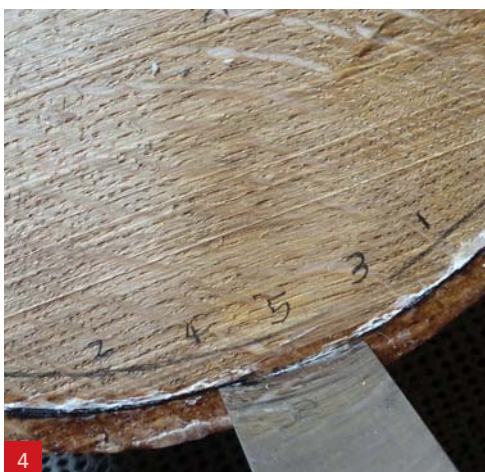
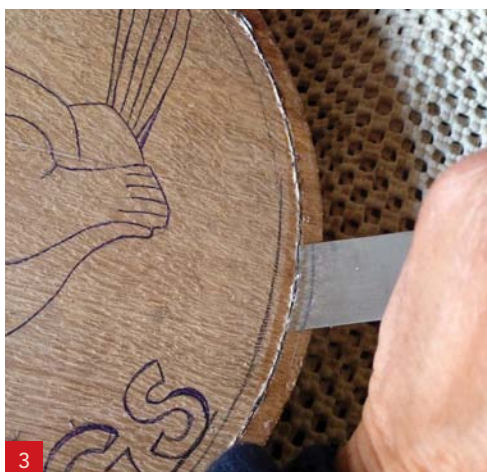
Carbon paper for copying your design onto the wood
No.3 gouges with a selection of widths
Bevel chisels with appropriate widths
6mm 60° degree V-tool
Dispensable No.3 gouge for use as a scraper
Convex headed punch and hammer

Wood:

Oak (*Quercus robur*) blank: 280 x 50mm, although you can choose a different timber to suit your needs



1 The timber I used was an oak (*Quercus robur*) turning blank, measuring approximately 280mm diameter × 50mm thick. Other suitable timbers could be elm (*Ulmus procera*), robinia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) or teak (*Tectona grandis*). I photographed a farthing from my coin collection and then enlarged the photo to the size of the blank. Using a ruler to position it, the additional 'S' was drawn in place on the illustration



2 Align the illustration with the horizontal grain of the blank and place carbon paper beneath it. Using a biro, transfer the outlines onto the surface of the wood

"I photographed a farthing from my coin collection..."

3 Using a No. 3 gouge matching the inner curve of the border, make consecutive vertical cuts around the curve

4 At the top and bottom of the curve where the grain lies horizontally, make alternate cuts from each side; this will stop the wood splitting

➔ **5** Using the No. 3 gouge bevel down and working towards the vertical cuts made around its inner curve, cut a 'V' channel round the inside of the border

6 The wren and letters were outlined with 'V' channels using a V-tool

7 Resting the No. 3 gouge/s against the side of the 'V' channel and turning them to match the curves, make outward cuts around the outlines of the wren and each of the letters

8 Using the No. 3 gouge bevel down, deepen and widen the 'V' channels round the wren and the letters

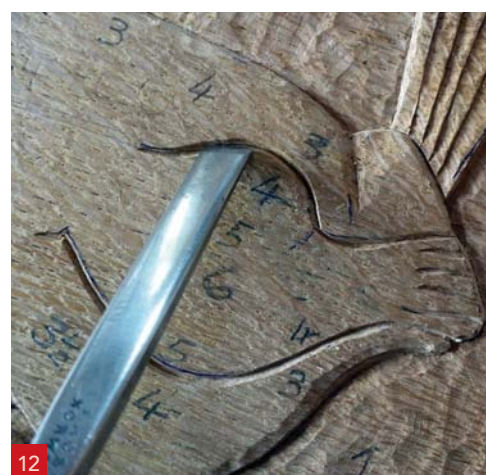
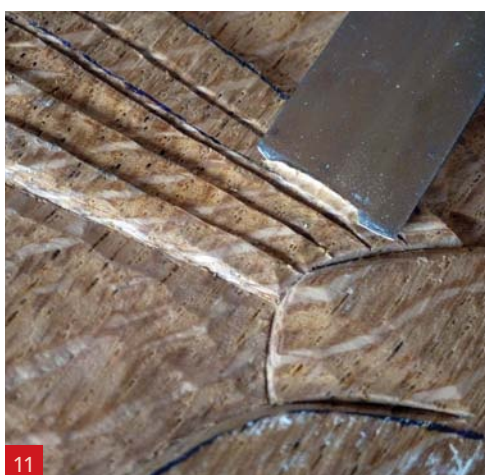
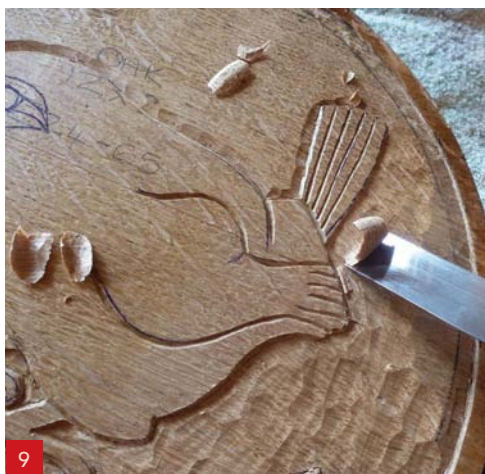
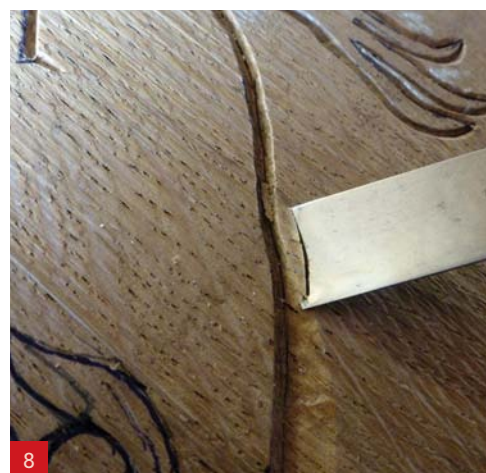
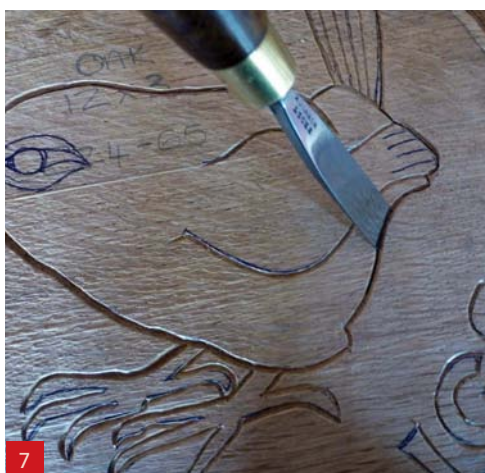
9 To lower the background, divide the area between two channels and cut towards the nearer one. Start by cutting close up it, making successive cuts until halfway, then turn the carving and repeat from the opposite channel, so reducing the background and the areas between each letter. Round over the edges of the bird's feet and toes, tidy the edges of each letter and smooth the surface between each

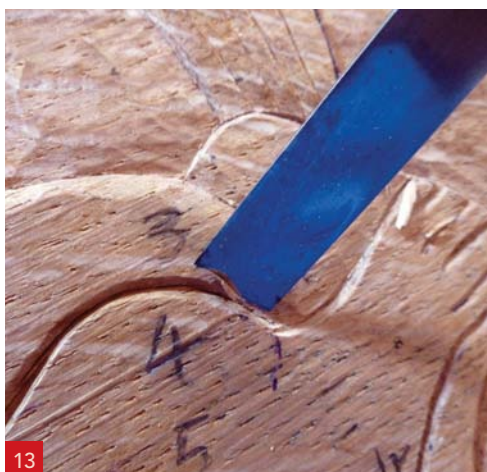
"Layer the tail feathers by cutting along each one with a chisel..."

10 Number the different levels on the wren according to its horizontal and vertical contours. This is the order in which to work. The background, No.1, is deepest – you have already made a start here; No.2 is the next furthest away and so on, rising up to the highest area on the wing, nearest to you, shown as No.6. First reduce the areas numbered 2, i.e. the tip of the beak, the furthest leg and the far side of the base of the tail; then slightly less reduction for the No.3 areas; and so on thus to the highest area on the wing, No.6

11 Layer the tail feathers by cutting along each one with a chisel or No.3 gouge, then remove the adjacent surface on the left so they overlap each other like roof tiles

12 With the tool handle held over it and turning the No.3 gouge to match its curves, cut around the outline of the wing





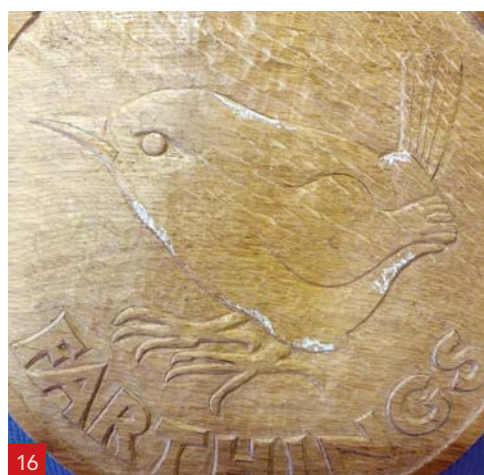
13 Using the tool bevel down, meet up with the outlining cuts, relieve the edge of the wing and reduce its adjacent surface



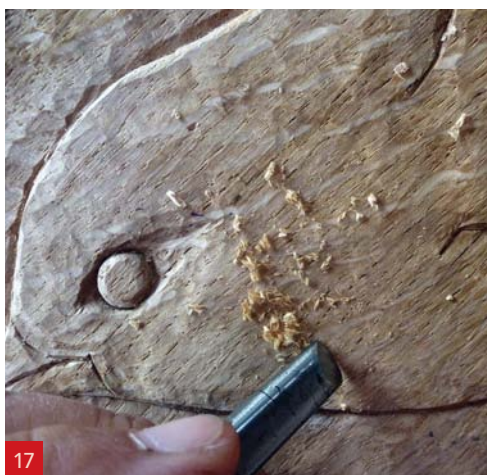
14 Use shallow cuts to reduce the ends of the wing feathers, then invert the No.3 gouge and round their ends. Pare gentle hollows behind the head and under the throat, blending them into the rest of the body. Taper the beak to a sharp point, then using a 3mm No.3 gouge with opposing cuts to make narrow 'V' channels, mark the separation between beak and head, and the upper and the lower mandibles. With the 3mm No.3 gouge inverted, cut around the outline of the eye. As shown in step 4, at the top and bottom, make alternate cuts from each side to avoid damaging the eye



15 Cutting towards the eye from each side, extend the hollow to shape the wren's distinctive eye socket. Round over the outer edge of the eye so it is completely convex, then deepen the tiny triangle in front of it with the corner of the 3mm No.3 gouge



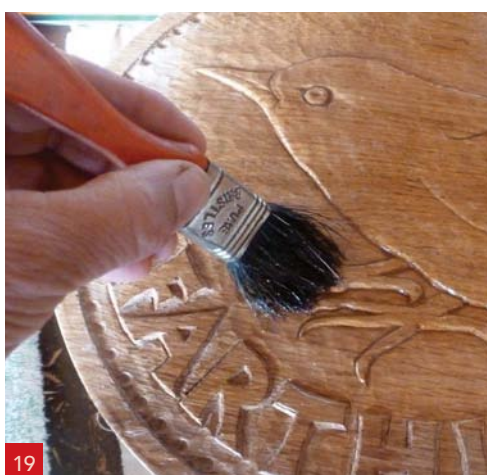
"Use shallow cuts to reduce the ends of the wing feathers ..."



16 View the carving from a distance and mark the edges to be undercut. With the No.3 gouge tilted, gently cut downwards, angling it under the edge. Cutting towards it, carefully reduce the adjacent surface of the background to create a shadow along the edge



17 Erase all pencil marks and pare away any undesirable deep cuts, then smooth the surface of the letters and wren using a scraper. In confined areas, the edge of an old No. 3 gouge can be used as a scraper. The background can be left tooled as a contrast



18 Around the rim of a farthing coin there are raised pips – these were represented by indents made with a round-ended punch, having drawn them in place beforehand



19 When the carving is finished, give the sign several coats of Danish oil

20 The finished sign should look something like this ▶



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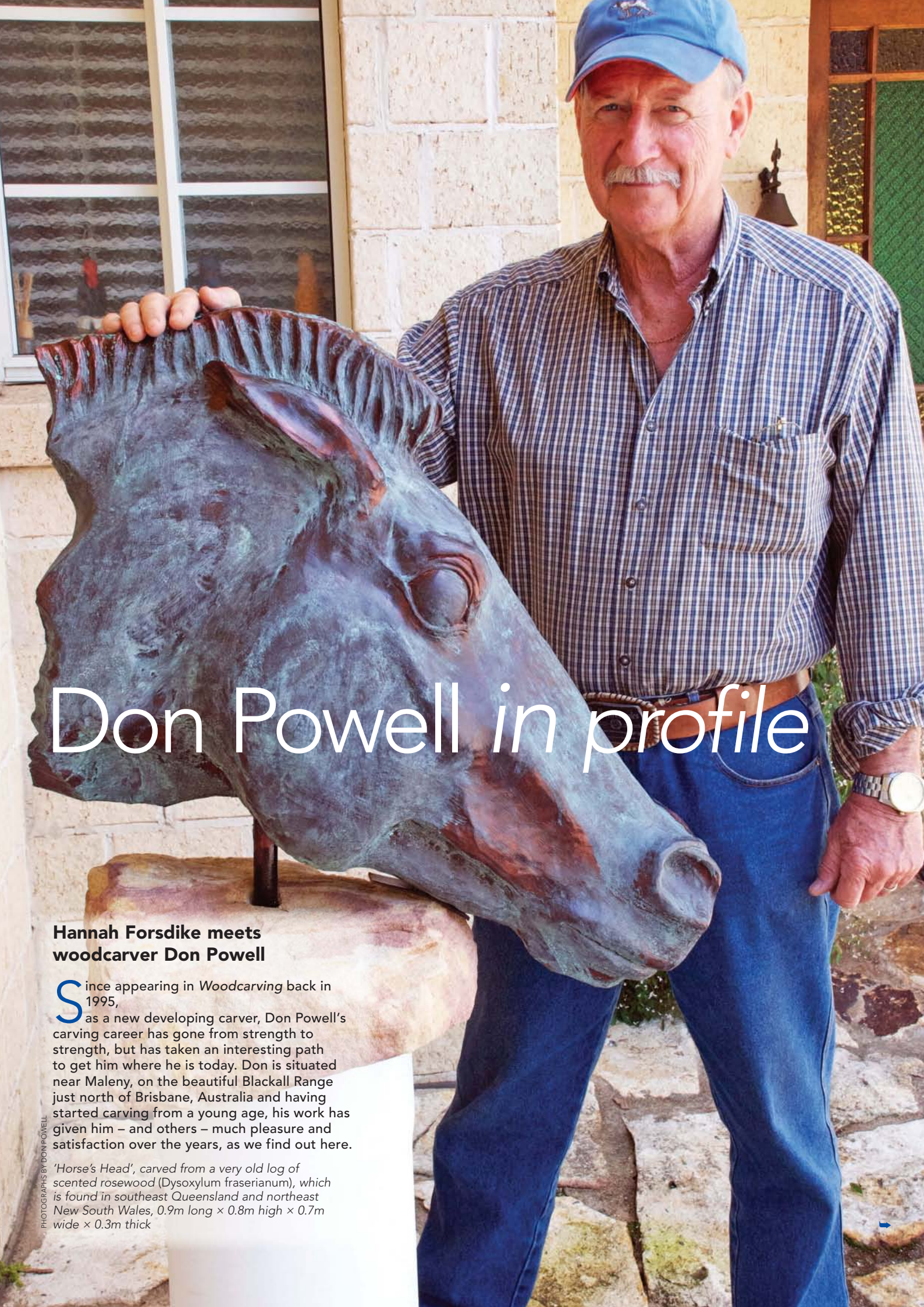
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Don Powell *in profile*

Hannah Forsdike meets woodcarver Don Powell

Since appearing in *Woodcarving* back in 1995, as a new developing carver, Don Powell's carving career has gone from strength to strength, but has taken an interesting path to get him where he is today. Don is situated near Maleny, on the beautiful Blackall Range just north of Brisbane, Australia and having started carving from a young age, his work has given him – and others – much pleasure and satisfaction over the years, as we find out here.

'Horse's Head', carved from a very old log of scented rosewood (*Dysoxylum fraserianum*), which is found in southeast Queensland and northeast New South Wales, 0.9m long × 0.8m high × 0.7m wide × 0.3m thick



Don in his workshop with one of his relief carvings

Beginning

From a young age, Don would be in his father's workshop. His father was a curator at the Marks-Hirschfeld Museum of Medical History in Brisbane. Don tells us that he has always enjoyed hand-held carving and remembers being in his father's workshop as a young boy and picking up a scalpel, and with that, he began carving. Don would constantly practise with the tools and play with pieces of wood lying around.

Don continued to carve through his school years, but with only one tool – a fixed blade scapel. His chosen vocation kept him busy, but for many years, it was sidelined as a hobby while he worked to support his wife and five children. It's surprising to discover that this creative soul, with such a keen eye for aesthetic beauty, spent his entire career working as a police officer.

Shortly after he joined the police force, Don read Dona Z. Meilach's book, *Contemporary Art with Wood*. This broadened his horizons and he bought a basic six-tool European carving set and carved some abstract work. During his police career he was a keen competition pistol shooter, representing his state. His pistol shooting led him to carving orthopedic pistol grips; mainly the Olympic Free pistol and Rapid Fire pistol grips, which have a wrap-around grip. Don carved mainly in walnut (*Juglans regia*) and maple (*Acer campestre*). He comments: "When a keen sportsman commissions you to carve them a fitted orthopedic grip, they have got to be perfect." Don attributes some of his

attention to detail back to those grip carving days.

As Don gets older, he tells us that he finds the craft of woodcarving particularly relaxing and he will often complete a carving while on holiday, packing up a few tools to take away with him. Don is a man who is content with his lot in life. He has a beautiful home on Mountain View Road, which he built in 1999. He has five children, lots of grandchildren, a reputation as one of Australia's top woodcarvers and teachers, and his wife who is a great cook and the toughest and most constructive critic of his work.

Workshop

Visitors to Don's studio and workshop are lured and lost into the ambience of his woodworking world. The shelves on his timber-lined walls are crammed with carvings of heads, horses, eagles and plenty of other designs, maquettes and a number of demo pieces from classes held in his workshop over the years. The workshop is certainly set up to take classes, with chisels lining the walls and pictures and bookcases surrounding. The workbenches are set up to accommodate about six students and Don has an old Swedish draughtsman's drawing station and a jeweller's bench



A view of Don's extensive and well-equipped workshop

crammed with kit and surrounded by tool cases. It certainly can't be said that the space is sparse. He has also built a shed on the property to house his timber supply and power tools.

When looking to his workshop tools, Don loves fishtail chisels, but also relies heavily on No.11 gouges. He also uses bent skew chisels, Cogelows and Ashley Iles' tools, who customised chisels for Don and have made him a set of custom long back bents to his specification. He tells us that he uses miniature back bents in his mammoth ivory carvings and regards himself as a knife specialist.

We asked what the woodcarver's favourite woods are to work with, but Don said that to choose a favourite wood is difficult, having carved with so many different species. For sheer pleasure, English lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) is hard to beat and boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) for fine miniatures.

Development

In 1996, Don was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study teaching methods in woodcarving and after visiting European woodcarving colleges, he was lucky to be able to work for weeks alongside Ian Norbury, whom he regards as a mentor. He credits Ian with teaching him the value of drawing, which he now loves. Don's development of his drawing skills were beneficial to his carvings, as prior to meeting Ian, he relied on visualising his subjects in his mind before carving a piece. For some, this method – relying on visualisation – may be a challenge, but Don tells us he was always able to see a face or a horse in a blank, whereas others would simply see a block of wood. Over the years, his work has changed, eventually encompassing life-sized carvings into miniatures.

Projects

Don has just completed a life-sized sculpture for a Christian College. The piece was a commission, to be made in the style of Henry Moore. Don created the sculpture to be a teacher and child student, with the world symbolically held between them, using two red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) tree trunks, laminated into one block for this particular project. Don's miniature carving first took off with a commission to carve miniature carousel horses, which he did using boxwood and ebony (*Diospyros spp.*).

After this, Don began carving jewellery, mainly pendants. With his daughter, Shari – a jeweller – the pair collaborated on pieces and she would market the work. This was a great opportunity to get his work out there. Don quickly moved onto working with mammoth ivory – staying clear of the modern ivory trade – sourcing the ivory buried in glaciers or the tundra of the northern hemisphere. He tells

us: "The mammoth ivory carves beautifully and holds great detail. Mammoths died out thousands of years ago and if only mammoth ivory was used today, there would be no demand for ivory from living creatures."

Recently, Don has carved a piece of jewellery in cocobolo (*Dalbergia retusa*) for a magazine feature. Don has always been a busy carver and fitted a great deal of teaching into his regime, but recently he has scaled back on the teaching, giving himself more time fulfilling commissions and his own choices.

A particular scene carved by Don, was one from the *Lord of the Rings* books and it has always been a favourite of his. He carved the piece before the movie adaptation had been made and was sure to make it with the Tolkien family's consent.

Looking to Don's sculptures, they

are often carved from several pieces of wood. He has found the combination of different wood adds colour, texture and life to his sculptures, which have even included inlays of gold or silver. 'The Mercenary' comprises of about 18 different woods. Currently Don's work-in-progress is a jaw dropping high relief after Arthur Rackham and a chess set based on medieval figures.

Early last year, Don carved a large horse's head, which was inspired by the Elgin Marbles, for an outdoor sculpture. Years ago, he acquired several large sections of scented rosewood (*Dalbergia latifolia*), which had been lying in the bush for a long time. This wood can really withstand the weather and Don kept it in his wood stock for about 20 years. He intended to carve it with a sculptor's axe for a story. However, the wood was incredibly hard with

'The Dragonslayer', head and hands in pearwood (*Pyrus communis*), cloak in myrtle (*Myrtus communis*), body in walnut (*Juglans regia*), sword handle is snakewood (*Brosimum guianense*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) with the blade in olivewood (*Olea europaea*). The dragon's head is in rosewood (*Dalbergia retusa*). He is standing on a manzanita (*Arctostaphylos spp.*) burl, 760mm

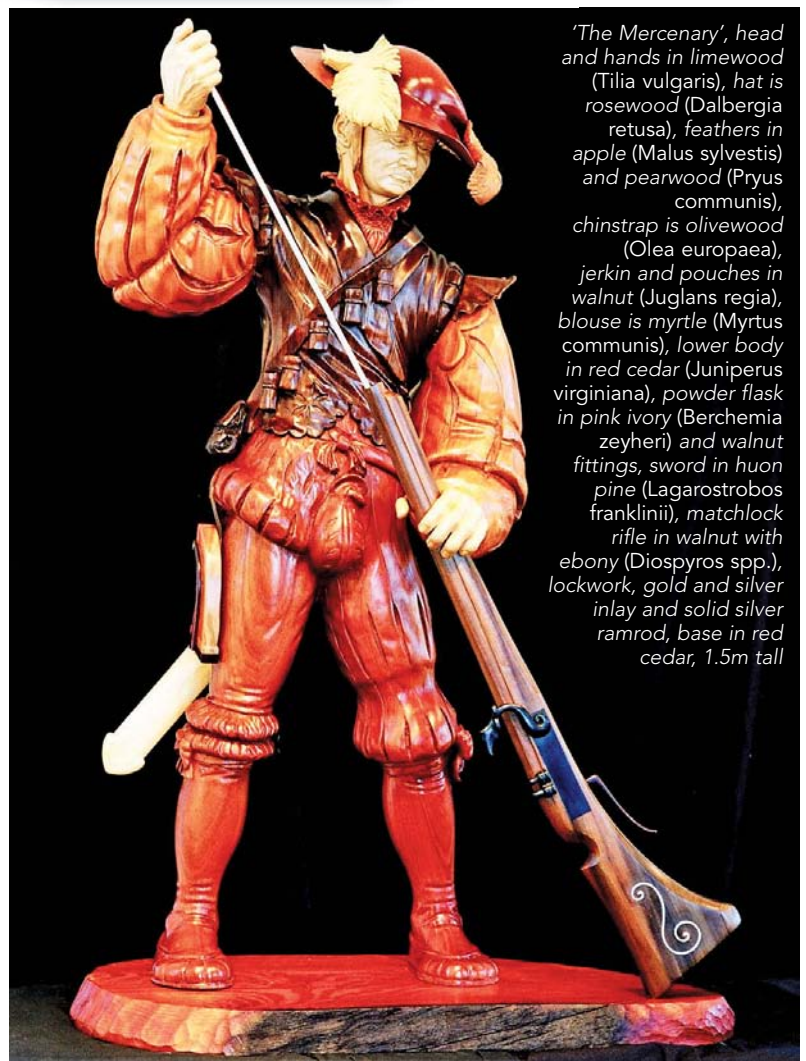




'The Gentle Shire', white beech (Gmelina leichhardtii), 405mm



'The Teacher and Pupil', red cedar (Juniperus virginiana), lifesize



'The Mercenary', head and hands in limewood (Tilia vulgaris), hat is rosewood (Dalbergia retusa), feathers in apple (Malus sylvestis) and pearwood (Pyrus communis), chinstrap is olivewood (Olea europaea), jerkin and pouches in walnut (Juglans regia), blouse is myrtle (Myrtus communis), lower body in red cedar (Juniperus virginiana), powder flask in pink ivory (Berchemia zeyheri) and walnut fittings, sword in huon pine (Lagarostrobos franklinii), matchlock rifle in walnut with ebony (Diospyros spp.), lockwork, gold and silver inlay and solid silver ramrod, base in red cedar, 1.5m tall

twisted grain, so the axes were discarded for a chainsaw and Arbotech, then traditional chisels and a heavy gidgee mallet. The finished carving had to be able to withstand Maleny weather, so Don finished the head with liquid copper and treated it with acid to affect the patina. The finished sculpture stands outside his house and its material fools everyone.

A special commission

Don is no stranger to large works, having been commissioned about four years ago to work on a project for Saint Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, culminating in the Pope's visit to Australia. One piece he worked on was a cathedral chair for the Pope, a complex piece comprised of a multitude of figurines and miniature heads of various saints. The work took three years and Don says he was pleased the church insisted on using Australian artists.

He was one of only two Australian woodcarvers chosen for the job, a testament to his reputation. His talent was also recognised when he won a Churchill Fellowship in 1996 to study techniques of woodcarving and wood sculpture in Germany and Switzerland. The carvings were all completed using Queensland maple (*Flindersia brayleyana*).

Inspiration

Don is a romantic, which is reflected in his work characterised by realism and fine detail. He loves carving people with their character, expressions and clothing offering so much scope. But, next to people, he likes to carve horses, encapsulating their sheer beauty with so many facets; majesty, power and action. Don explains that this offers him such a rewarding challenge.

Future

Don's last carving was a medieval chess set that he designed and carved in walnut and pear (*Pyrus communis*). He is now carving a commission of The Lewis Chessmen. The white pieces are carved in ivory wood (*Siphonodon australis*), which was apparently used by pioneers in Australia for utensils, spoons and artificial limbs. It has close grain and finishes finely. To find out more about Don's stunning work, see contact details below. ■

Contact

Email: powelldc@bigpond.net.au



'The Tree Prince and The Maiden', inspired by the work of Arthur Rackham, work in progress, English lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), 560mm x 355 x 75-100mm thick



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Steam-bending

Steve Bisco looks at steam-bending
to make thin flower stems and leaves



Some while ago I read a comment from a woodcarver, who wondered if the great Grinling Gibbons had used steam-bending to create the ultra-thin curved stems in his stunning foliage carvings. Having seen several of Gibbons' carvings at close quarters, I am sure he did not – but the question made me wonder if steam-bending may have some potential for woodcarvers, so I decided to give it a try. After a bit of experimenting, I found that there is indeed a place for steam-bending

in the woodcarver's repertoire of techniques for 'shaping wood'. Steam-bent stems and leaves, when combined with finely-carved flowers, can enable you to create a large, widely spaced naturalistic floral carving, which is self-supporting and economical on wood. Furthermore, the 'steam cooking' process not only enables you to bend the wood, but seems to make it stronger than it was originally, allowing you to create leaves and stems as thin as those made by nature.

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'.



→ Why use steam?

Thin carved flower stems are naturally fragile, unless the stem is straight and runs directly along the grain. Wood fibres are quite strong along their length, but they have a limited attachment to the fibres alongside them, which is why short-grain sections are fragile. Steam-bending offers the option of producing a long curved, bent, or even twisted stem or leaf in which the grain runs from end to end and through all the changes in direction. The penetrating heat and moisture of steam plasticises the lignin between the fibres, allowing them to 'slide' alongside each other. The fibres can then be bent into a different shape which, on cooling again, will become fixed.

Making a simple steamer

Steam-bending on a small scale is quite

a simple 'low-tech' and low-cost process. The equipment can be cobbled together from things you may already have or which you can buy quite cheaply. You basically need two things: a source of steam and a 'steam chamber'.

Bending some stems

There are quite a few woods that can be steam-bent, but as the finer parts of a foliage carving will usually be made of limewood (*Tilia vulgaris*), I have used this wood for the steamed parts as well. Most limewood bought by carvers will have been kiln-dried. This is thought not to be as good as air-dried wood for steam-bending, but I found that in such thin sections you can use kiln-dried wood for all but the tightest bends. However, if you can obtain some fairly 'green' air-dried wood you should find it easier.

Things you will need...

Steamer:

- A wallpaper steamer
- A 600mm length of 65mm square rainwater downpipe, plus fixing brackets
- Plywood about 460 x 900mm for stand

Tools:

- No.3, 10mm fishtail gouge
- No.4, 6mm fishtail gouge
- No.9, 20mm gouge
- No.8, 8mm gouge
- No.9, 16mm curved gouge
- No.5, 13mm curved gouge
- No.8, 8mm curved gouge
- Straight 'V'-tool
- Curved 'V'-tool
- 16mm hooked skew chisel
- 10mm skew chisel
- Spokeshave
- Also bandsaw and lathe if you have them

1 A simple and reliable way of producing steam for a sustained period of time is to use an electric wallpaper steamer, which you can buy quite cheaply from most home decorating stores. This has a water reservoir, which holds enough water to boil for around an hour – which you'll find is plenty long enough for our purposes – and a length of tube, which you can connect to the steam chamber. Alternatively, if you do not have this equipment readily available, you can use an old-fashioned hob kettle on a portable gas hob, plus a length of tube. Modern electric kettles are no use as they have a thermostat that switches them off when they boil. The 'steam chamber' just needs to be a container in which you can enclose the wood you want to steam. For this project, I have used a 600mm length of 65mm square rainwater downpipe, which I have fixed to a plywood stand. This is quite adequate for steaming flower stems and leaves. You need to fix it at a slight slope; this will allow the steam to flow upwards and the condensation to drain downwards

2 Make a 'plug' to fit each end of the tube. In the lower end, drill a hole big enough to take the steam tube and a small hole at the bottom edge to allow water to drain out

3 Drill a hole about 10mm diameter in the upper end plug to allow steam to escape. The tube must not become pressurised



Using steam safely

1. Steam is scalding hot and can cause severe burns if it comes in contact with your skin and eyes. Make sure the steamer is turned off and the steam has subsided before you open the steam chamber.
2. Use eye protection when opening the steam chamber and keep your face well back. Wear steam-proof gloves or gauntlets to remove the wood – it will be hot to start with but will quickly cool down when removed from the chamber
3. Steam is immensely powerful under compression so make sure the vent never gets blocked
4. Keep steam away from electrical equipment and plug sockets

PROJECT Steam-bending for carving



4



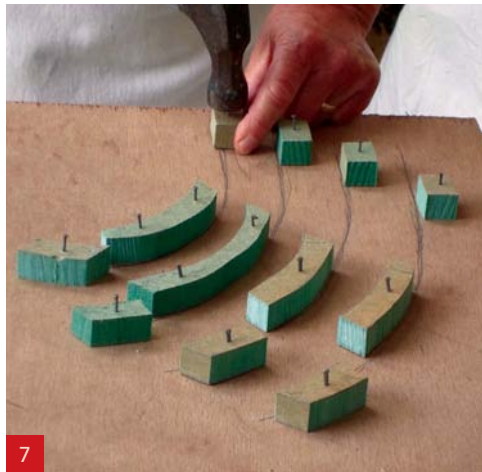
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4 You need to make a rack out of wire, dowels or anything that will allow the steam to circulate around the wood

5 You can then start by making some stems for your flowers. Cut a piece of wood 6mm thick and about 450mm long and then cut it into strips 6mm square in cross section. Use a spokeshave or knife to shave off the square edges, then sand it to a smooth fairly round cross section



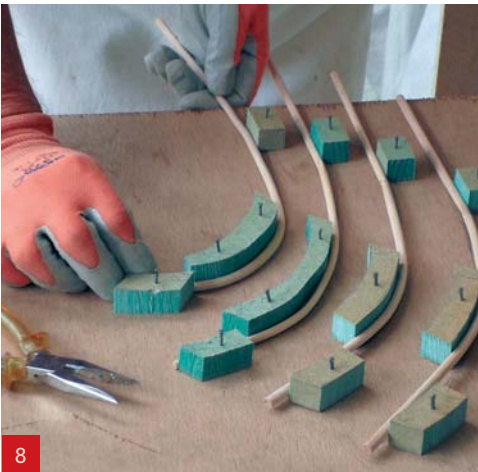
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6 Put a few stems into the steamer. Start it up, put a bowl under the downhill end to catch the drips and let it run for about 30 minutes from the time the steam starts to come out of the end. Don't be alarmed if your plastic downpipe sags and the wooden end plugs swell up with the steam – they will survive

7 Make up a bending board, firstly by drawing some fairly shallow curves a bit tighter than you want the finished stems to be. Cut up some pieces of plywood or MDF to form the inside of the curves and some smaller pieces to push the ends in, then fix them to the board



8



9

8 Switch off the steamer after 30 minutes and extract the wood. Working quickly, press one end of the stem into the top of the curve then work it round the curve and tuck in the bottom end. Try to get all your stems into the formers within a few minutes of coming out of the steamer

9 Now make up a new bending board and try a few tighter bends. For these I used air-dried wood made into stems which measured about 4-5mm thick. Steam them for about 30 minutes and bend them into tight curves to give you flower heads that will hang down. You can fit more than one stem in each former



10



11

10 For a more convoluted shape, tape a thin steamed stem round a piece of pipe so the top end forms a loose spiral

11 It is best to leave the stems in the formers overnight. When you take them out the next day they will remain set in their new shape. Give them a light sanding to remove any stains from the water or the formers. We now have a variety of stem shapes in 4-6mm thicknesses, which can be used in a display

12 Before making the leaves you need to think about the type of flowers you want to make. As we are using steaming to aid the process it is best to go mainly for flowers with long thin curved leaves. We can also throw in a few daisy-type flowers for variety. Leaves generally need to curve outwards from the stem and need just enough thickness to accommodate a central vein or a 'V' along the centre, with a slightly convex or concave shape along each side. I settled on a method of cutting strips of lime, bending them into curves, cutting the leaf shape out of the bent strips and carving in the detail. Cut some wood into strips 5mm thick and from 18-30mm wide

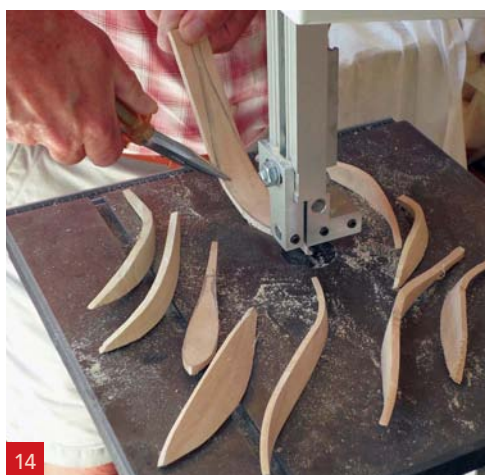


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13 Make another bending board with some deeper and more robust formers. After 30 minutes in the steamer, push the strips firmly but gently into the formers and leave them overnight to set



14



15

14 This produces strips of bent wood that you can cut into leaf shapes for the fritillaries, tulips and daffodils, a few wider ones for the lilies and some smaller flatter leaves for daisy-type flowers. Mark these out on the curved strips so you have a 'stem end', which can be grafted onto the stem and a range of curves towards the tip end. Cut these out with a bandsaw

15 Carve the bent wood into a proper leaf shape with a central 'V' or vein and such surface veins or hollows as suit the type of plant. You will find the grain follows the curves of the wood, making the leaves easier to carve and much stronger than leaves carved from a block. Create sharp leaf edges by paring away each side. Carve a hollow at the stem end that will fit snugly round the stem so it can be glued in place

16 I decided to make two tulips, two daffodils, three fritillaries, three big daisy-type flowers and two large lilies, all life-size. Because the stems and leaves are so thin we need to make the flower petals as thin as possible or they will look clumpy in comparison. The tulips are best carved from lime, 50mm square in cross section, each flower 65mm long with the grain running lengthways. Hollow and rough out the overall shape – use a lathe if you have one – then refine the individual petals. Hold the block in a vice to carve the detail



16

PROJECT Steam-bending for carving



17



18

17 Cut the tulip off the block and make a hole the stem can pass through. Use a chisel to split the end of the stem into six segments so it gives the appearance of stamens. Poke it through into the tulip so it protrudes about 20mm inside and glue it in place. Also glue two of the leaves in position using masking tape to hold them in place. Arrange the leaves so they curve away from the stem

18 Use abrasives to make the join of the leaves merge smoothly into the stem. Here are the two finished tulips



19



20

19 The process for the fritillaries is the same, coming from a block 50mm square and each flower 55mm long. They are a slightly different shape to the tulips and hang downwards. Give them a dimpled finish to represent the spots of the snake's head fritillary

"The daffodils are best made up in two parts"

20 The three daisy flowers are 90mm across and 25mm thick. Glue them to a backing board with card in between. Petals that run across the grain need to be clustered to support one another when undercut



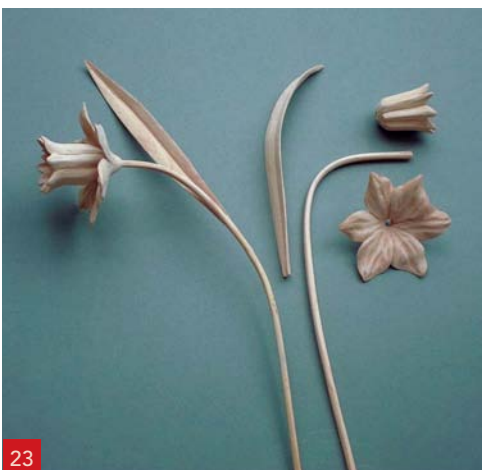
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21 When the top surface is carved, prise the flowers off the card and very carefully undercut the petals. Keep on undercutting until you have very thin petals that will not look too thick against the thin stems and leaves. Make a hole underneath for the stem

22 Glue the flowers to the spiral stems that were made using the pipe, with two leaves to each stem, angled a bit flatter than the other leaves



23



24

23 The daffodils are best made up in two parts: the 'bell' formed by the same method as the tulips from a block 35mm square x 45mm long and the outer petals made by the same method as the daisy flowers from a piece 75mm across x 30mm thick

24 Finally, the two Turk's cap lilies. Each one is deeply carved from a block 120mm square x 80mm thick with the grain running crossways. The flower needs deep and careful hollowing while the block is glued to a backing board and card

25 The underside needs painstaking undercutting when removed from the board. The petals need to be shaved very thin to avoid looking clumpy

26 The finishing touch is to carve six very thin, slightly curved stamens and a central stigma. I used some bent wood left over from the leaves, working them in batches while still attached together. It is a fiddly task so expect to produce several rejects to get the number you need. You can then use abrasives to make them thinner still

27 The next step is to glue the lily to the top of a stem then assemble and glue the stamens in place. Glue the leaves on to finish the job

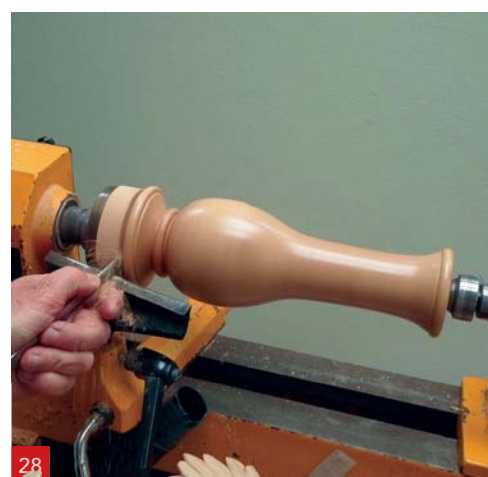
The finished display

28 You can use any vase big enough to hold the bouquet, but if you are a woodturner, or have a friend who is, you may want to make a wooden vase about 250mm tall with a 40mm hollow core

29 Now is the time for some very delicate 'flower arranging'. Cut the stems to suitable lengths so the flowers are arranged in tiers spreading upwards and outwards. If you pour some dry sand into the vase at the end, then it will keep the vase stable and hold the flowers in place ▶

Top tips

1. Use real flowers, or photos of them, as your models. If you include the individual features and irregularities of your particular model in the carving, then it will look more natural
2. Practice carving flower petals and leaves thinner and thinner to the point of destruction to learn how far you can go
3. Create stems of different lengths and curves to suit different types of flowers. Arrange them in the vase with the largest boldest flowers at the top and the smaller ones in layers beneath them
4. Many woods will darken with steaming but most – including lime – will return to their natural colour when dry – pear and beech will become pink



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Sculptor's gouge blades – 18-piece set



Available from Dictum, this 18-piece set is ideal for all-purpose carving. The blades have socket tangs and the set includes a mixture of forms, including flat, flat/skew, curved, 'V' and coarse ground. Please note that these blades do not include handles, the bevel needs refining and the cutting edge needs to be created by the user.

Contact: Dictum Tel: +49 991 9109 902
Web: www.mehr-als-werkzeug.de

Auriou stonecarving tool set – fine

This set from Auriou includes 11 stonecarving tools and a 400g steel-headed mallet, all packaged in a fabric tool roll. The tools are: 6mm chisel; 10mm chisel; 15mm chisel; gouge series 7, 8mm; chisel with four flat teeth, 15mm; chisel with four pointed teeth, 10mm; deer's foot, 6mm; ognette, 6mm; rondelle, 6mm; point tool, 8mm; and snake's tongue, 6mm.

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



Scopas chops – carver's vice

Available from Tiranti is the perfect carver's vice, made in ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with a heavy-duty screw, metal side plates and brass rails. The jaws are lined with cork and buff hide, which can be replaced when worn. The Scopas chops are supplied complete with a specially fabricated bench screw with giant wing nut, which allows the vice to be turned through 360°. Overall length is 450mm and the height is 230mm, with a maximum opening of around 240mm.

Contact: Tiranti Tel: 08451 232 100
Web: www.tiranti.co.uk



Axminster Hobby Series oscillating spindle sander

This simple yet versatile oscillating bobbin sander is suitable for use at home but can also be used for all manner of finishing tasks in the workshop. The bobbin oscillates by 24mm, spreading the wear over more of the sanding sleeve. The cast-iron table tilts up to 45° and has several nylon table inserts to give a close fit around the bobbin. The 370W induction motor is quiet in use and slow running so as not to burn your work. The base is fabricated in sheet steel and has storage for spare

bobbins and table inserts. Dust extraction is via a 50mm port on the rear and should be connected to a suitable vacuum extractor. Supplied with 19mm, 38mm, 50mm and 76mm bobbins. Please note that this price is valid until 31 December, 2015.

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

£299.96



New kits from Dremel

Dremel has introduced a raft of new and improved initiatives to help its users power on with their projects in 2015. The first is the Dremel 8200-20 cordless. This kit contains a Dremel 8200 high performance cordless multitool, two 10.8V Li-ion 2.0Ah batteries, a 30-minute charger and 20 different accessories, all packed into a Dremel soft bag.

Dremel is also launching a new seven-piece DSM20 Compact Saw Accessory Cutting Set, a new seven piece Multipurpose Router Bit Set and three new Multipurpose and EZ SpeedClic accessory sets. The DSM20 Compact Saw Accessory Cutting Set comprises seven high-quality accessories, including a SM500 multipurpose carbide cutting disc and a SM600 multipurpose carbide flush cut blade.

Contact: Dremel
Tel: 08447 360 109
Web: www.dremeleurope.com

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General Finishes' High Performance Top Coat

Available from General Finishes and winner of *Fine Woodworking's* Best Overall Choice Award, High Performance Top Coat is the hardest, most durable consumer polyurethane top coat on the market today. It contains all the consumer friendly characteristics of PolyAcrylic Blend. In addition, it contains a UV stabiliser to protect it from breaking down in sunlight and to protect the underlying stains from fading, and with its pure polyurethane durability, it can even be used on floors. This is the most durable product but is not recommended for outdoor use. Available in the following sheens: flat, satin, semi-gloss and gloss. Also suitable for finishing your carvings, so why not give it a try?

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Contact: General Finishes
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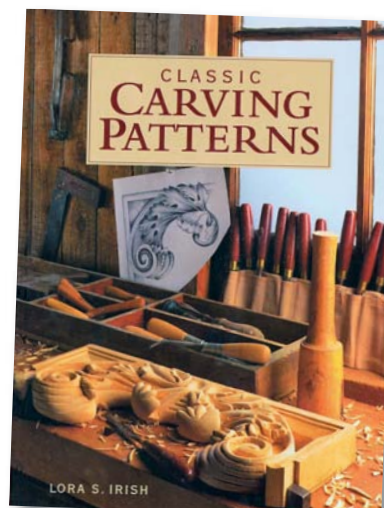


BOOK OF THE MONTH Classic Carving Patterns

By Lora S. Irish

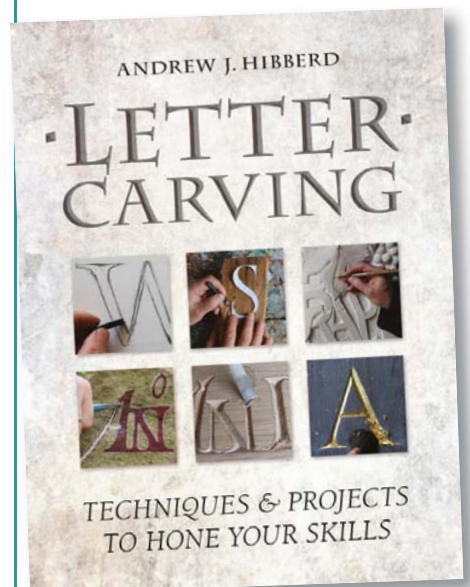
If you've ever wondered what to carve next, this treasury of easy-to-reproduce, classical patterns will help you decide. Themes include ornamental motifs from many periods, images from nature – animals, grapes and vines, oak (*Quercus robur*) leaves, intricate floral designs – and fantasy patterns, plus much more. Why not pick up a copy for yourself and have a look?

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Trajan's Column

Built for Marcus Ulpius Traianus in 113AD, Trajan's Column is a feat of carving wonder



Just some of the relief carvings

From 98–117AD, Marcus Ulpius Traianus ruled as the Roman Emperor. In 113AD, under the direction of architect Appollodorus, the Column of Trajan was constructed. Appollodorus' aim in building this column was to surpass in grandeur and magnificence all monuments that had gone before. The column was to honour Emperor Trajan, standing 42 metres tall and situated close to the Piazza Venezia – the central hub of Rome.

The column is made up of 29 white marble pieces and is 'wrapped' around with a relief carving that makes 183m in length. The detailed carvings featured on the column depict the events of both the Dacian – now Romania – wars. The scenes within the carving tell of the entire Roman military's journey throughout the wars, from fighting and marching to collecting food and building. Over 2,000 figures appear on the column, at about two-thirds life-size and are so finely detailed, it's impossible to fully appreciate them from the ground.

It's not only the exterior of the column that's home to carvings, but another crucial aspect within the column is a carved spiral staircase leading to the viewing platform at the top. Unfortunately, this staircase is inaccessible to the modern visitor.

The question of when the relief was actually carved is still much debated, but its

process is quite clear to a carver's eye. The carving appears to have been started from the bottom of the column and then taken left to right, up in a spiral design. Where the spiral and carving's design was poorly thought out, the carvings can be seen to protrude into the spiral's curves above or below it.

Though a wide range of tools and chisels would have been used in the construction of the column, there is said to be no evidence left of the point chisels, but traces of the marks left by tooth and flat chisels, inside the column. The outside of the column, however, was left at a much finer finish, with no traces of either tooth or point chisel remaining.

Unfortunately, the carving on Trajan's column was never fully completed, missing details that some might not even realise were meant to be. Although a number of the soldiers had stone tools and weapons carved with them, plans for metal attachments were made to further portray the tools and weapons used. Small holes were drilled into many of the figures' hands to house the miniature implements, but these were never filled.

With its carved chamber at the bottom of the column, holding Emperor Trajan's ashes, this spectacular monument is not only a carving masterpiece, but at its central point in Rome, it is also a must-see for carvers everywhere. ■



Trajan's Column is 42 metres tall



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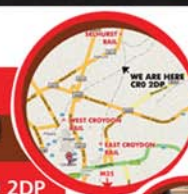
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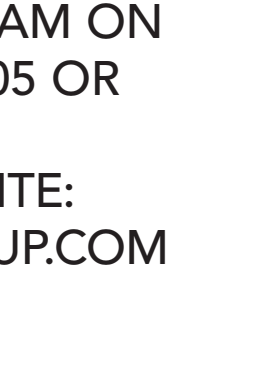
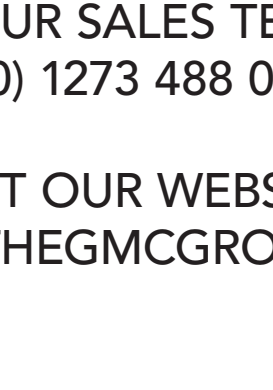
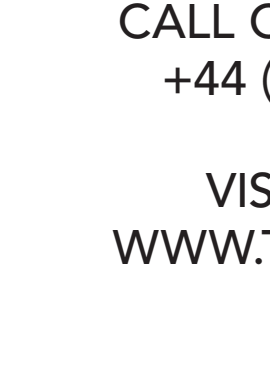
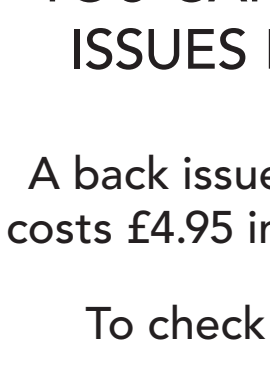
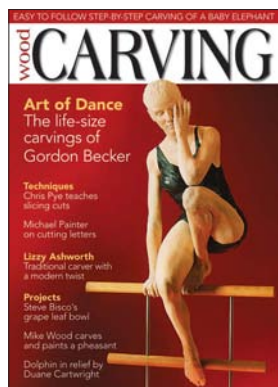
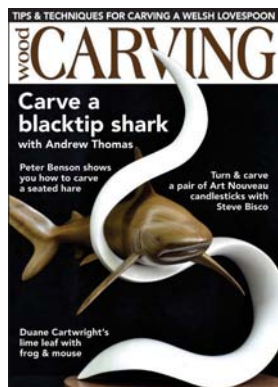
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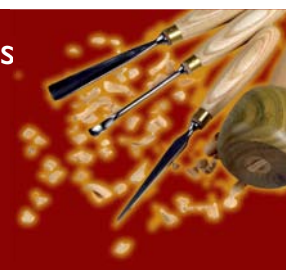
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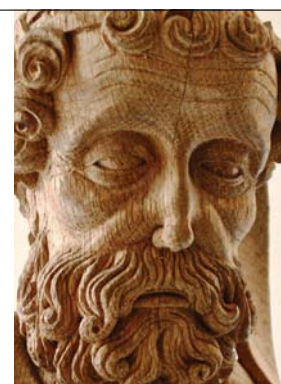


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