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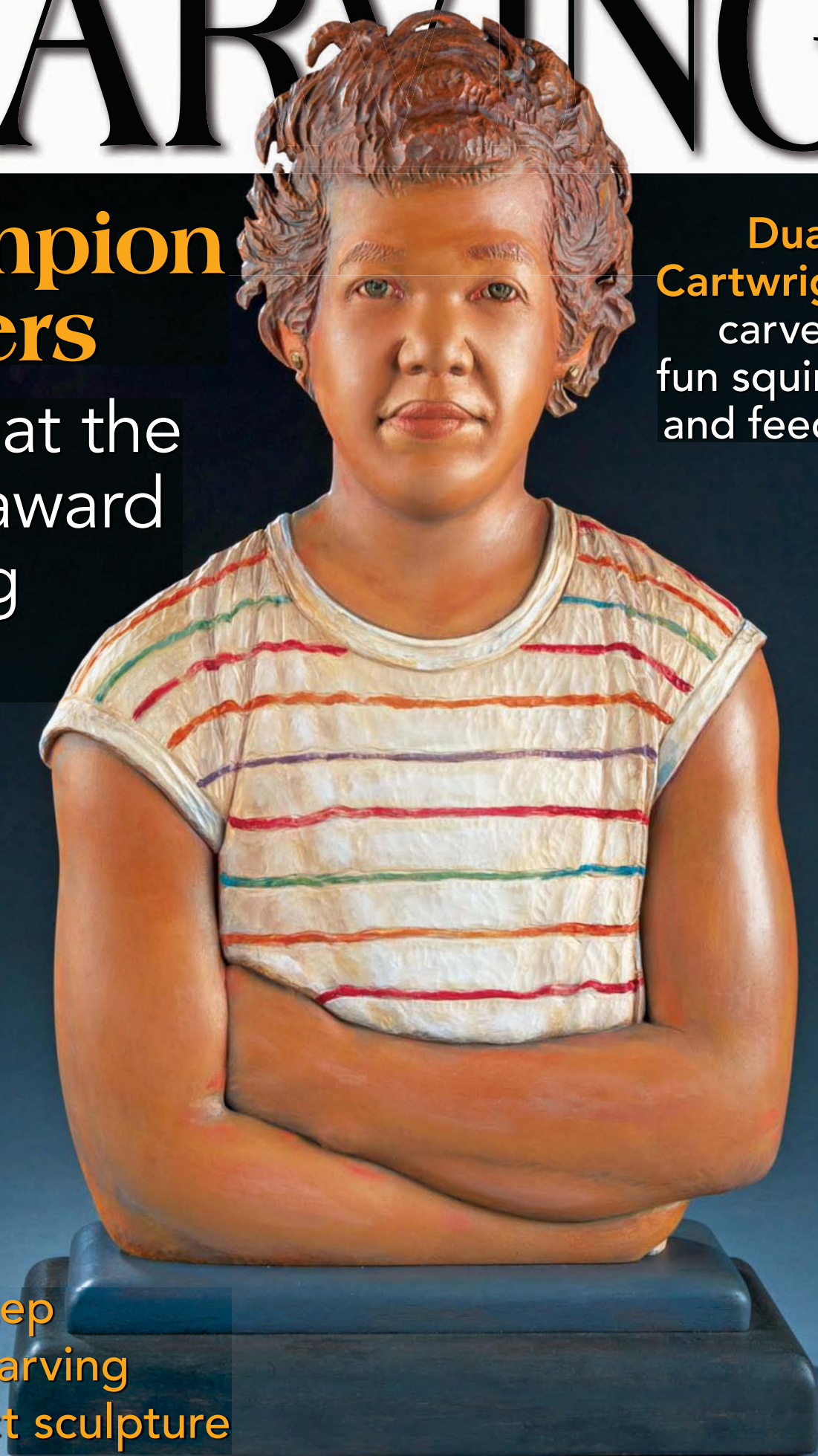
A look at the IWC's award winning line-up

Carve a seasonal pair of robins

Netsuke plans for an otter

Step-by-step guide to carving an abstract sculpture

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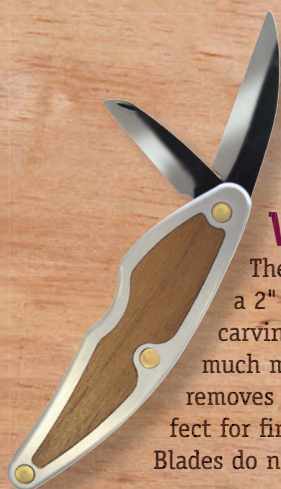
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Woodcarving is an inherently dangerous pursuit. Readers should not attempt the procedures described herein without seeking training and information on the safe use of tools and machines, and all readers should observe current safety legislation.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JASON TOWNSEND

Carvings at the European Woodworking Show by Classic Handtools in Cressing Temple Barns in Essex

Promoting carving



Let me start by wishing you all the best for the New Year. The New Year brings new challenges and also new possibilities. One of the most discussed issues last year was that of tuition and where one can go to get good instruction.

Carving courses are typically listed on websites and in specialist journals and magazines. They range from a few hours to much longer and that is a discussion you need to have with the tutor before you sign up. This type of course can be tailored to suit individual needs. In some areas courses are also available via local authorities. These typically centre around evening classes and because these are spread over a longer period of time, they offer not only a graduated introduction with time in between each one to practise, they also offer social aspects.

Of course the above is not answering whether the courses are any good, but asking around in clubs – if one is near to you – and checking on websites and forums will yield results. Personal recommendation is always useful. There are numerous excellent teachers out there, but it does seem from talking to people that there appears to be a decline of such courses in some areas.

Another much discussed issue is clubs and their locations. There are numerous

clubs about, and if you want to join one, you can check online to find one in your area. National carving associations usually list clubs and their locations on their sites. Having said that, if one is not in easy travelling distance from you, the only solutions are to set up a club yourself or try to organise an informal gathering of local carvers.

Having said all this, clubs need to be more proactive in reaching new members. An ideal way to publicise the club is to have stands at various craft shows and not just the woodworking ones. Another thing is to make sure the club's website is updated with the correct contact details, include a gallery page showing a lovely variety of work and also include information about the social aspects of the club.

I will touch on this further in coming issues, but we all play a part in publicising what we do and we must be ambassadors and not shrinking violets. It is no use wanting more and moaning about not seeing enough of something being done if we are not all prepared to play our part.

Let me know what you, your club or organisation are doing to promote woodcarving.

Have fun,

Mark Baker
Editor of **Woodcarving**

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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 20 for details.

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Front cover image courtesy of the IWC

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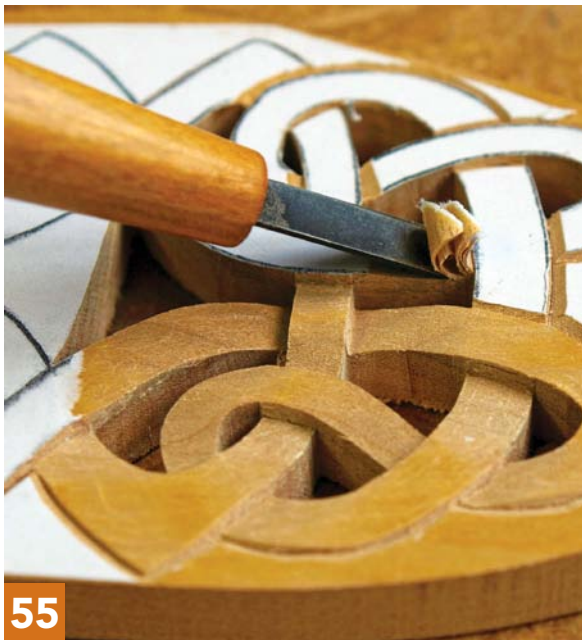
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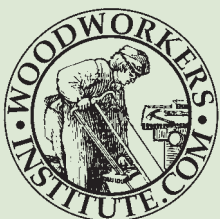
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The Woodworkers Institute web forum

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.

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 Briony Darnley at Woodcarving, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN or to briony.darnley@thegmcgroup.com

BDWCA: 2015 Festival of Bird Art

Once again another BDWCA Annual Show and Competition – the 2015 Festival of Bird Art – has flown by.

It was held on the second weekend of September in Bakewell, Derbyshire, and more than 250 carvings, ranging from miniatures to full-size birds of prey, perched on its exhibition tables.

The skill levels ranged from novice all the way through intermediate and advanced and the quality and variety of the entries was exceptional. The organisers were keen to congratulate everyone who entered, insisting they all deserved a prize. But somehow the judges achieved the onerous task of selecting the winners.

The only low point was the absence of any youth entries, something that, in common with other carvers, the BDWCA is trying hard to rectify. It is hoped the situation will be different next year.

Meantime, Gerry Sanger won the coveted awards of both British and BDWCA Champion with a magnificent American Eider, while Ian Chappell was runner-up in the British Champion category with his Red Breasted Goose.

The BDWCA strives to encourage new members to compete at the event, with its special award for Best Newcomer. This year the category was won by Jack Crewdson with an impressive Peregrine Falcon. Tony Sully, meanwhile, won the



A bird's-eye view of the fabulous entries at this year's BDWCA show

Best Intermediate award with his Pintail Drake, and Alan Pickersgill, in only his second competition, won the Best Novice award with his Eurasian Hobby. The BDWCA said it was looking forward to seeing their entries in future events.

Participants and visitors said it was "a very enjoyable show" and the BDWCA is already planning next year's event. It added that if the amount of wood purchased from the trade stands was anything to go by, there should be some interesting carvings.



*British Champion
2015: American Eider
by Gerry Sanger*



*British Championship runner-up: Red
Breasted Goose by Ian Chappell*

Contact the BDWCA

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

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

BWA: The 'wannabe woodcarver'

Phil Cross started carving seriously in September 2014, when he joined the Shropshire Region at the Pontsbury carving group, after a request from his wife to take up a hobby. It was either carving, or joining the local ukelele band and he is now more than happy that he chose the former. Phil's first carving was a leaf in lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), which received words of encouragement from members of the club.

The next task was to carve something 'in the round'. He chose to do a Little Owl in lime, followed by two others in oak (*Quercus robur*). These pieces also received kind words and further encouraged him to branch out into other, more adventurous projects. These projects, however, were in the world of lovespoons. After carving several spoons Phil decided he needed a real challenge, which came about

after reading by chance, a back issue of *Woodcarving* magazine – No.134 – in which Steve Bisco had produced 'The Swag' and was offering it as a challenge to anyone who wanted it. That was the one! Phil set about copying his patterns onto the required pieces of lime – eight pieces in total – no mean feat in itself.

Phil started with the largest piece, the baseplate to which all the other pieces are fixed in turn. This has onions, courgettes, apples, pears, garlic, strawberries and flowers on it. He proceeded with some anxiety and a great deal of caution. This was a steep learning curve for him and he could see for himself how much he had learned and improved as each piece was completed. The additional leaves and butterflies are from his own imagination and discretion. The completed 'Swag' was finished with Danish

oil and mounted on an oval-shaped mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*) backboard, which was sealed and beeswaxed.

Phil began this project in August 2015 and finished carving November 2015, a rough estimate of time would be about 200 hours. Phil, in his own words, says he is still a 'Wannabe Woodcarver'.

The North of England Woodworking Show

The show, held at The Great Yorkshire Showground by Nilton Productions and led by Tony Cox, was again a great success.

This show saw four of the BWAs Northern regions coming together to carve on the same stand for the first time. Everyone agreed it was a worthwhile exercise with lots of new friendships forged. Thanks to Tony and his team for making it happen.



The BWA stall at the North of England Woodworking Show



Carved by
Phil Cross

Contact the BWA

Tel: 07749 769 111 Web: www.britishwoodcarversassociation.co.uk

Or write to: The National Secretary, 32 Beaufort Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 8PF

Lancaster County WoodCarvers

The Lancaster County WoodCarvers' 43rd Annual Woodcarving & Wildlife Art Festival will take place on 23 April, 2016.

The festival is being held at Student Memorial Center, Millersville University. Featured and guest artists scheduled to date include Rosalyn Leach Daisey of Newark, Delaware. Rosalyn does fine wildlife sculpture and has written several books.

Three-day round-up

The Lancaster County Woodcarvers will hold a three-day woodcarving round-up after the festival. The three days will be spent with the same instructor. The instructors lined up are: Dennis and Susan Thornton, Rosalyn Leach Daisey, Kathy Overcash and Jim Hiser. Details of the tutors' teaching projects and the costs are available from Andy DiPace at lanccarvers@gmail.com.



DETAILS:

When: April 2–3, 2016

Where: Student Memorial Center, Millersville University, opposite side of street from 101 Shenks Ln, Millersville, PA 17551

Web: www.lanccarvers.com

Conversion chart	
2mm	(5/64in)
3mm	(1/8in)
4mm	(5/32in)
6mm	(1/4in)
7mm	(9/32in)
8mm	(5/16in)
9mm	(11/32in)
10mm	(3/8in)
11mm	(7/16in)
12mm	(1/2in)
13mm	(11/16in)
14mm	(7/8in)
15mm	(9/16in)
16mm	(5/8in)
17mm	(11/16in)
18mm	(23/32in)
19mm	(3/4in)
20mm	(3/4in)
21mm	(13/16in)
22mm	(7/8in)
23mm	(29/32in)
24mm	(15/16in)
25mm	(1in)
30mm	(1 1/8in)
32mm	(1 1/4in)
35mm	(1 3/8in)
38mm	(1 1/2in)
40mm	(1 5/8in)
45mm	(1 3/4in)
50mm	(2in)
55mm	(2 1/8-2 1/4in)
60mm	(2 3/8in)
63mm	(2 1/2in)
65mm	(2 5/8in)
70mm	(2 3/4in)
75mm	(3in)
80mm	(3 1/8in)
85mm	(3 1/4in)
90mm	(3 1/2in)
93mm	(3 3/8in)
95mm	(3 3/4in)
100mm	(4in)
105mm	(4 1/8in)
110mm	(4 1/4-4 3/8in)
115mm	(4 1/2in)
120mm	(4 3/4in)
125mm	(5in)
130mm	(5 1/8in)
135mm	(5 1/4in)
140mm	(5 1/2in)
145mm	(5 3/4in)
150mm	(6in)
155mm	(6 1/8in)
160mm	(6 1/4in)
165mm	(6 1/2in)
170mm	(6 3/4in)
178mm	(6 7/8in)
180mm	(7in)
185mm	(7 1/4in)
190mm	(7 1/2in)
195mm	(7 3/4in)
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)

Kenyan treat at the Great Yorkshire Show



A group of Masai visitors at the Great Yorkshire Show



Mick Weston receives the Bill Hodgson Cup

To Mark Baker,
Sir, could we maybe have a small mention in your excellent magazine of the Great Yorkshire Show, where a demonstration team from the Wooldale Carvers attended on behalf of BWA.

The good weather made for a large turnout of visitors and our team were kept busy the whole three days with visitors from all over the UK and abroad, with some people travelling from Kenya. This group of Masai visitors – who were on a global tour to promote their country, their language and culture by visiting schools, village halls and events such as

the Great Yorkshire Show – were particularly interested in our carving skills. They put on a display, with the money raised going to help build schools and educate children. Not all of them spoke good English, but the ones I met said they looked after animals, mostly cows/goats, as they travel around. Separately, Mick Weston, from Briely, won the Bill Hodgson Cup and the people's choice – the second time he has scored the double. This was awarded by a judge with eminent knowledge and carving skills, Mr N. Walsh, from Holmfirth.

Yours, Mr A. Wilson, BWA member

Branch out in style



Peter has had great results using sycamore

I entirely agree with your editorial in the September/October issue of *Woodcarving* regarding trying out different styles. The Henry Ford quote is brilliant and says all that needs to be said on the subject. The only other thing I would add to your suggestions is to try different wood species – don't stick rigidly to a single species like lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) or jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) for every carving. I use lime, but I have had great results with walnut (*Juglans nigra*), oak (*Quercus robur*), box (*Cornus florida*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) among others. Different species require different or modified techniques, which will help to enhance your skills. Take care and keep the magazine coming. Regards.

Peter Gater

Spiky customer!



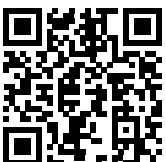
Tony's hedgehog, inspired by Bob Jubb's article

Dear Briony,
Having been inspired by Bob Jubb's carving of a hedgehog in the November/December issue of *Woodcarving* 147, I thought you might like to see my chainsaw version, carved from sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). I have also carved a mole in beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and a dog chasing a hare in oak (*Quercus robur*) – I use the wood that the wind chooses for me, ie, blown down – which are on display alongside many other carvings at Tanglewood Wild Gardens near Penzance in Cornwall. The gardens are open to the public from April to October. For more details, visit www.tanglewoodmaycontainnuts.co.uk

Tony Marr

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Carving scrolls

Dennis Zongker explains how to carve decorative scrolls on table legs

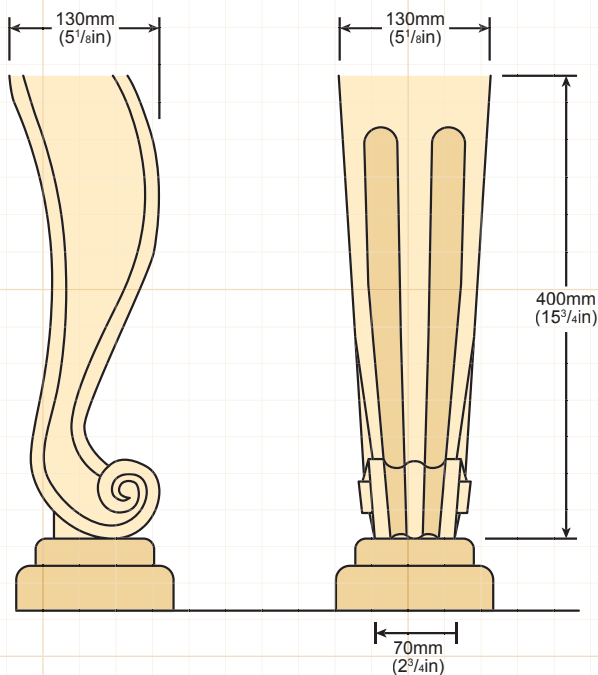
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



Carving scrolls into furniture is a technique that has been around for many centuries because of its simplistic beauty and accurate clean lines blending together several different radiuses. Scrolls can be incorporated into any style of furniture from a complicated baroque chair to a simple, modern-style table.

When designing this end table I wanted the upper section of the legs to resemble a griffin, a mythical creature which is part lion and part eagle. On the lower section of the leg I wanted a simple form to complement and balance the entire leg.



Things you will need...

Tools:

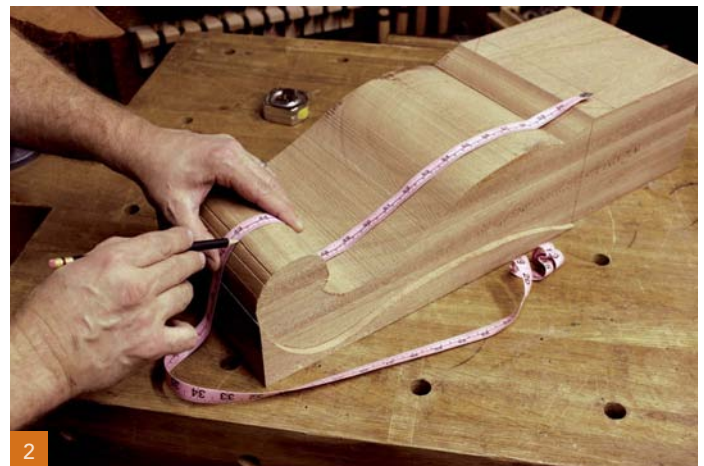
- Carving gouges: No.2, 20mm, No.2, 12mm, No.3, 5mm, No.3, 8mm, No.3, 12mm, No.3, 16mm, No.5, 8mm, No.5, 12mm, No.5, 16mm, No.7, 6mm, No.7, 14mm, No.8, 7mm, No.8, 18mm, No.9, 15mm, No.8a, 7-spoon gouge
- Bandsaw
- Mallet
- Detail riffler files
- Poster board
- Tape measure

Wood:

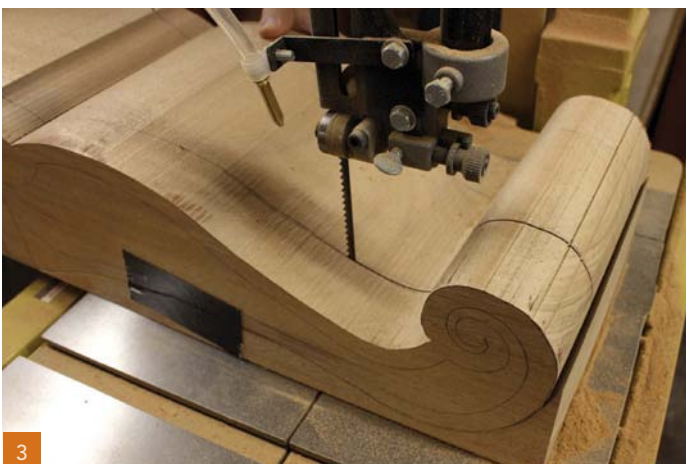
- Genuine mahogany (Swietenia macrophylla)



After gluing up the block of wood, make a drawing template out of poster board, which is a thicker piece of paper for the pencil to follow when transferring it to the wood. Using a template is an important step as it will ensure that all four table legs will match up to each other. Using a bandsaw, cut out the side profile by following the outside edge of your pencil line



Once the side profile has been cut out place the back cutout piece onto your bench, then sit the table leg on top in order to draw in the two outside edges. Use a seamstress tape measure and pencil to make sure that both sides are equal distance with the lower scrolled foot smaller in width than the upper section where the flutes end



Then tape the cut off bottom to the leg so that it rests flat and steady while you are cutting. Cut the taper off the front on both sides with a bandsaw



Next, use the drawing template to redraw in the side profile carving lines



For drawing in the front flutes I use a pencil and freehand the carving lines. Follow the same angle on the outside edge of the leg. Make sure that the lower section of the foot has tighter, closer lines, then gradually draw it bigger towards the upper section

Starting at the centre of the scroll, stab cut with your carving knives at a straight 90° angle and work your way to the end of the scroll using a variety of different carving knives. Make sure you use a mallet and tap your knife lightly approximately 455mm deep into the wood



Use a No.3, 12mm fishtail carving knife to relief cut up to the stab cut. Keep repeating these two steps, 'stab and relief' cutting, leaving the centre of the scroll as the highest point and carving deeper as you move outwards around the scroll



Match up your carving knives to the scroll. Carve in a reveal around the edge that will blend with the side of the scroll



Use a No.2, 20mm carving gouge to flatten up to the end of the scroll



Use a No.8, 18mm carving gouge to carve the flutes into the face of the leg and lower scroll section. Follow the pencil lines and go deeper into the flutes towards the upper section of the leg and gradually carve shallower towards the lower scroll



To carve into the smaller inside flutes on top of the scroll use a No.8a/7 spoon gouge



12

Use a No.9, 15mm gouge for carving the deep and wide section at the very top of the flutes. When carving this wider area you will need to slowly shave and blend the thinner mid-section of the flutes together



13

On both sides of the table leg there is a centre recess with 11mm wide edges that follow the front and back edges up to the scroll and follow into the scroll. The depth of the recess is approximately 4.75mm deep. Start off by stab cutting the border lines using three different gouges – No.2, 35mm, No.2, 20mm and No.2, 12mm – and use a mallet to cut into the wood around 3mm deep



14

Use No.2, 20mm and No.3, 20mm gouges to remove the centre recessed wood. The goal is to have a flat recess, so the flatter the gouge the better the results



15

Repeat steps 13 and 14 to get the right depth of 4.75mm. Use a No.3, 12mm gouge to clean and flatten next to the scroll



16

The last couple of carving steps are to radius the corners of the flutes to blend with the other edges. Use No.5, 8mm, No.3, 8mm, No.5, 12mm and No.3, 12mm gouges upside down at different areas to arch the edges to where they will flow together



17

Around the tighter radius of the scroll, use a No.5, 12mm to blend the concave and convex arches so that they also flow together



18

Use an assortment of detail riffler files to clean up all the carving gouge marks. This is a great way to smooth the carving and also gives the project crisper details



19

After all the carving marks are cleaned up, sand the carving with a 150-grit sponge block. I only sand enough to smooth and blend the wood evenly, this way I don't remove any detail but leave the carving looking clean and crisp

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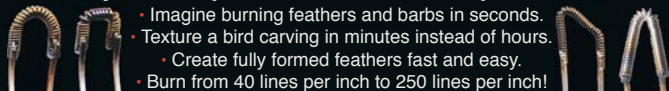
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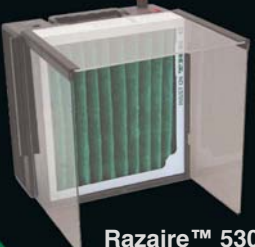
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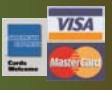
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Divinity

Andrew Thomas carves his sculpture, Divinity

Developing the ability to produce your own original creative designs, in line with your technical skills, is fundamentally essential to your learning and should be given equal attention as you work through your various projects, otherwise you will be left with the uninspiring and bleak option of replicating. Abstract design can be difficult to understand at first as it is the absolute opposite of a realistic technical study, which does not endeavour to represent the reflection of reality as we see it, but instead delineates a visual expression of form, in a partially or non-representational composition. But once you start to gain some traction in your understanding of this area of the subject, then with experience over time, you will naturally be capable of uniting creative design and technical skills to supreme effect, creating original forms in whatever style or technique that you wish to employ.

The design that I created for this project is a Buddha-esque, abstracted, figurative form in a lotus position, which is an enjoyable and challenging lesson concentrating on producing flowing contours, in the form of folds across its surface. It can be modified in many various ways to alter the details of the composition, which I would very much encourage you to do. This will give the reader some valuable experience with the design and problem solving skills which are vital for every artist to learn so that they can bring their own original ideas and concepts to life.

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

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Thomas has been a professional sculptor since 1993 and rapidly gained international recognition for his 3D art, which has won him numerous awards and gold medals. His work is held in many fine art galleries across the UK and in private collections worldwide.

Andrew delivers weekly woodcarving lessons for private students at both beginner and intermediate levels. See www.3dsculptor.com



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW THOMAS

Things you will need...

Tools:

- Swiss gouges:
- No.2, 10mm
- No.2, 20mm
- No.5, 20mm
- No.7, 14mm
- No.7, 20mm
- Knife

Wood:

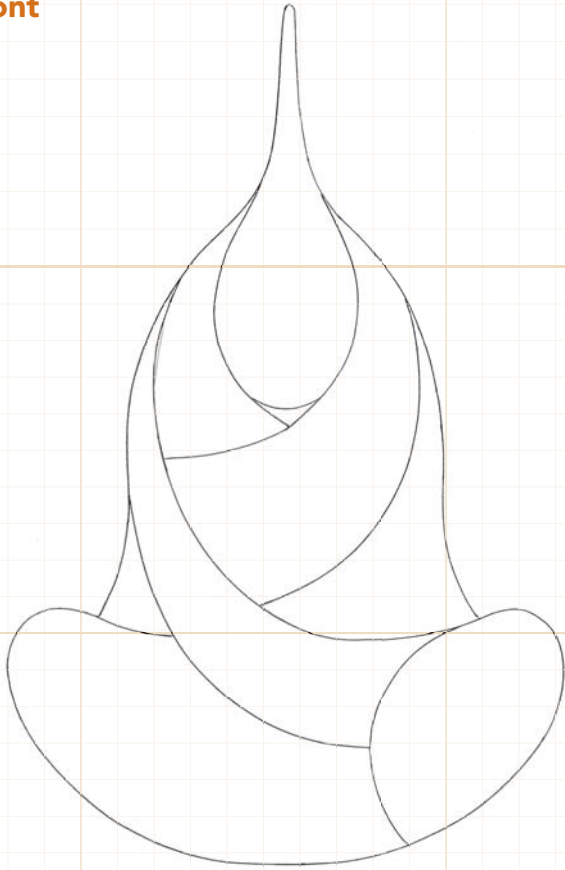
- English lime (*Tilia vulgaris*)
– 280 x 180 x 150mm

Procedure

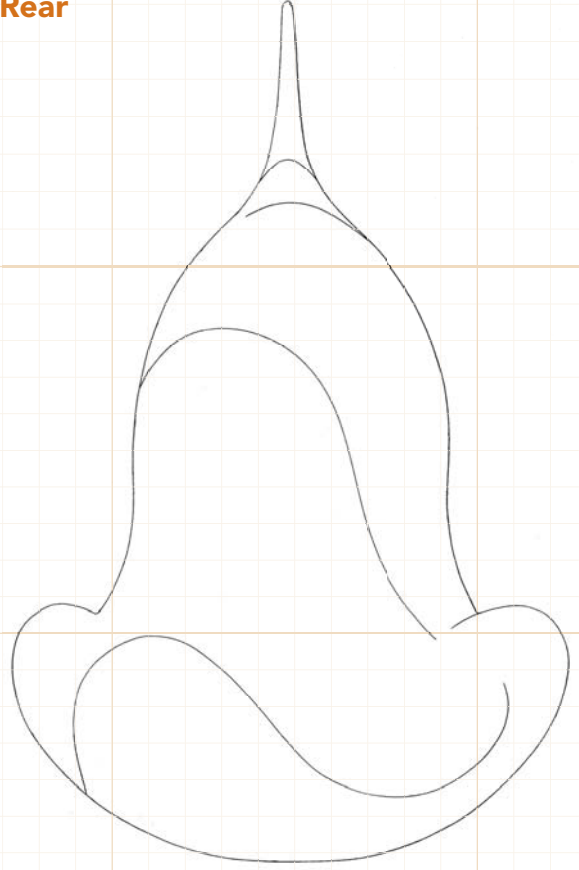
Scan or photocopy the scale drawings provided, enlarging them to the correct size for your wood and print them out onto card to use as templates. Transfer the right side and front views onto your perfectly square block ensuring that they are in precise alignment with each other, and that the grain is running vertically though the design. Please note that you will need to leave an area of wood directly underneath the form that will be used for securing it to your face plate – 30-40mm will be adequate.



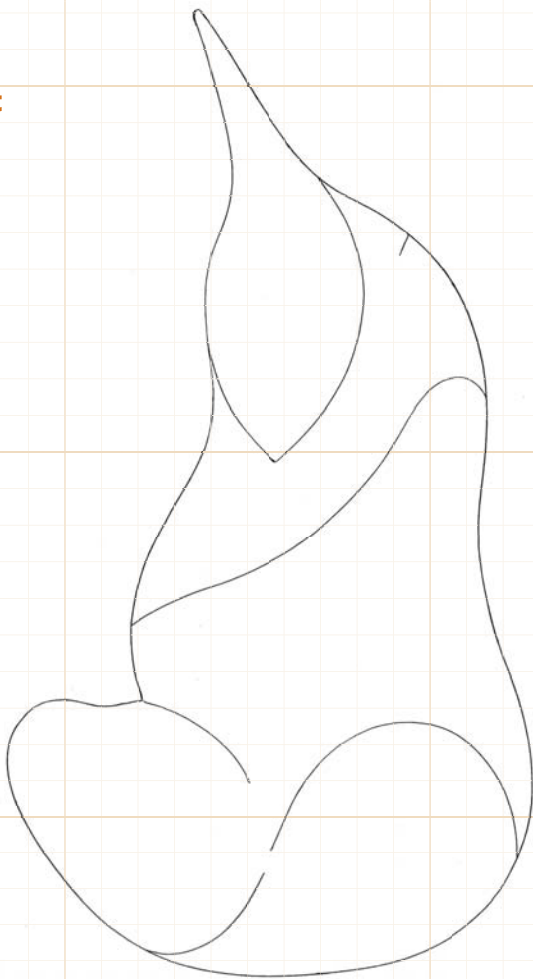
Front



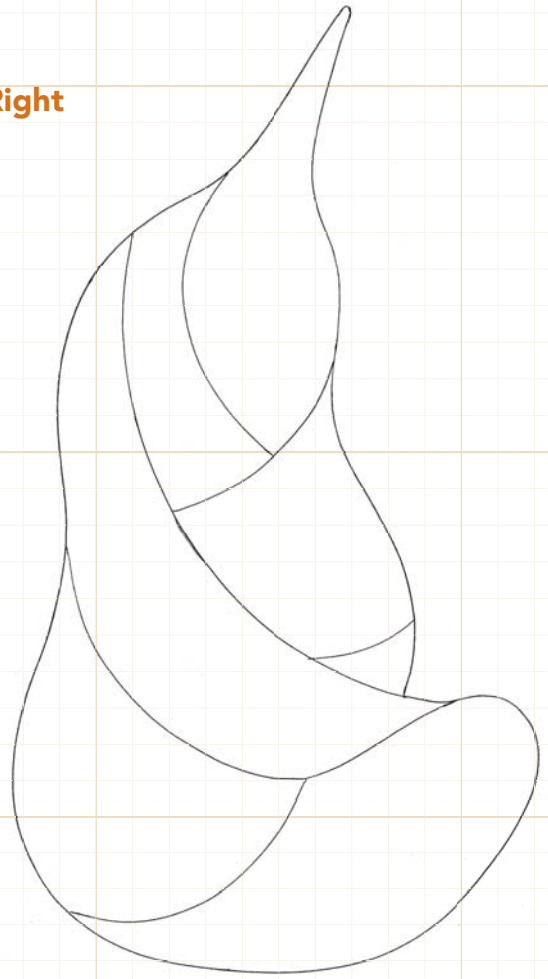
Rear



Left



Right





1 Cut out both of these profiles and attach the form securely to your face plate. Measure and draw a centreline on all four sides of the form



2 The first cuts to make are on the rear side of the form, working from the bottom area, around the thighs to the outer front edge of the knees, creating a triangular shape to give the impression of the seated lotus position. Do this using a No.5, 20mm



3 Then, continue working up through the form, creating an even curve from the centreline on the rear of the body, around to the centreline on the sides



4 Now turn your attention to the front half of the form. Using a No.2, 20mm, pare away the corner edges from the position of the legs upwards, from the centreline on the side, around in a curve to the centreline on the front



5 At the position just above the legs, you will need to swap to a No.7, 20mm, to continue curving this area from the side to the front



6 Use the No.2, 20mm again, to curve these areas naturally down over the knees, around to the front centreline and all of the way down to the base



7 Using your front and side view templates to help, draw the lines of the head onto the front and sides in their correct positions



8 Use a No.12, 8mm 'V'-tool to cut directly along the outside of the front view line



9 Use the No.2, 20mm to pare the wood back to the depth of the 'V'-tool cut



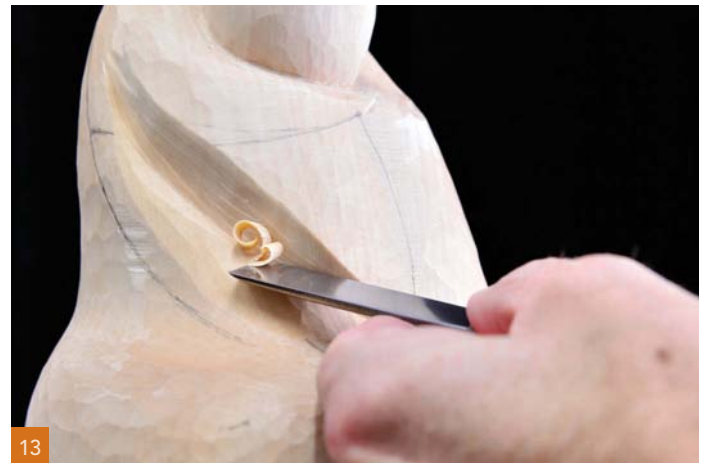
10 Repeat steps eight and nine until you reach the position of the side view lines of the head



11 The square edges next to the head that you have just formed can now be blended evenly into their surrounding areas, to create a naturally flowing contour from the base of the head, all of the way around the shoulders to the back



12 The head can now be shaped around its complete surface, creating a symmetrical curve from one side to the other



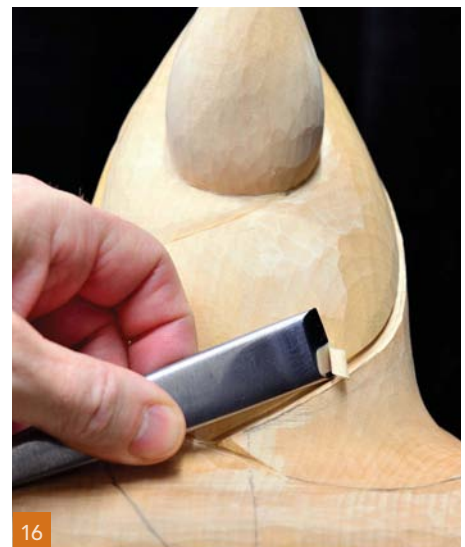
13 Detail of the robe is produced by making a series of connecting cuts and folds around the complete surface of the form. Use the templates supplied to accurately draw this first line of the robe around the form, which starts at the leg and terminates at the back of the head. Use the 'V'-tool to 'sketch' along the outside of this line and the No.2, 20mm to pare the wood away to the depth of the 'V'-tool cut. Repeat this process until you reach the level of the line on the side view



14 Now curve the square surface of the chest and shoulders area evenly around the side, down to the level of the robe line



15 Draw the next line of the robe fold accurately. Use the 'V'-tool to sketch around it, down to a depth of approximately 5mm. Curve both the adjoining edges naturally into the 'V'-tool cut



16 This next fold starts at the position of the first robe fold, flows over the left shoulder, around the back and down the other side. Use your templates for guidance



17 Use the 'V'-tool to sketch around it, down to a depth of approximately 5mm



18 Curve both of the adjoining edges into the 'V'-tool cut and then across the surrounding surfaces, naturally blending the depths evenly together



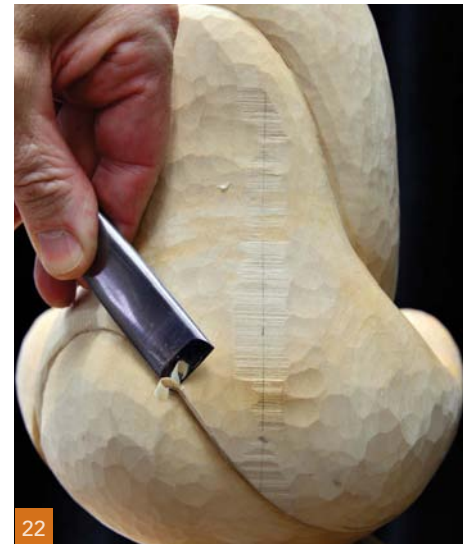
19 We now turn our attention back to the fold line that we established in step 13 and continue this line across to the position of the knee. Use the same technique as outlined above with the 'V'-tool and No.2, 20mm



20 The fold around the knee starts on the underside of the leg at the lowest position of the form and flows up and over the leg onto the thigh. Use the 'V'-tool again to sketch around it, down to a depth of approximately 5mm



21 Curve both of the adjoining edges naturally into the 'V'-tool cut and blend in the depths of the surrounding areas



22 The final fold starts next to the one on the underside of the knee, flows up and over the bottom, down again, up over the thigh and ends under the fold made in steps 16-18. Draw this in around the form and carve it down to a depth of 5mm. Use a 'V'-tool to sketch around the line and a No.2, 20mm to blend.



23 With all of the folds carved into position, we can now fine tune their shape, to add life to the visual appearance of these folds. The first area to address is the large fold on the rear side of the form, where you can add the impression of volume. This is achieved by using a No.7, 14mm to cut a deep groove around the edges of the lines



24 And then the No.5, 20mm to follow the line of the No.7 cut, blending it quite deeply into the centre of the mass



25

The area between the chest and the left knee can be carved even deeper in the centre of it to create the impression of the fold being compressed between the chest and knee. At this stage, it's advisable to sand these details with a piece of grit 100 abrasive to see how well these details are naturally developing and make adjustments if necessary



26



27

The final detail of the folds is to make a deep knife cut in the centre of each fold, which adds shadow and a lifelike crease line. Use a razor sharp knife to follow the lines of each fold, ensuring that the angle of the knife cut is kept low so as to not slip. Then, use a No.2, 10mm to pare the adjoining edges naturally into the knife slits and the surrounding areas. Repeat steps 26 and 27 until each fold effectively appears to be laying one on top of the other



28

The final job before sanding and finishing the form, is to cut away as much of the base as possible to allow the lower edge to be shaped. Work towards the centre of the form at the lowest position, paring away the wood from the base until you reach approximately 15–20mm from the centre. Then, blend the curvature of the lower area of the form naturally together to produce an even contour in all directions



29

To sand the piece start with grit 100 and work over the complete surface of the sculpture, following the line of the grain wherever possible, to remove every tool mark and blend all of the details smoothly together. When you are sure that it is perfectly smooth, clean the sawdust off all of the surfaces and then brush or pour hot water over the complete sculpture and leave it to dry, thus raising the grain and allowing the following grit to be worked more easily and effectively. Next, work through grits 150, 240 and 400, removing all of the scratches from each previous grit and repeating the hot water process in between



30

The form can now be cut off the faceplate base for the underside to be finished. This can be safely achieved by securing it in a woodworkers vice with a piece of dense foam lining each jaw to protect its surface from getting damaged. Use the No.2, 20mm to merge all the surrounding depths to produce evenly flowing lines in all directions. Sand through all grits as described above. The finish used in the example was three applications of the Rustin's two part wood bleach, followed by two applications of clear wax. The gold head was achieved using two coats of Liberon's Red Fontenay Base, followed by two coats of Liberon's Chantilly Gilt Varnish to produce an effective contrast

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Incised slate panel

Steve Bisco shows us how to carve a beautiful Art Nouveau 'line drawing' in slate

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE BISCO



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



Carving an incised pattern in slate is an enjoyable stone carving project whether you are a beginner or have some experience. You don't have to rough out or shape the stone – just patiently and gently chip out the incisions in the flat surface with just a few chisels and a 'dummy' mallet.

You will often see projects based on incised lettering, but for something different I'm going to show you a large and pretty 'line drawing' in the style of late-Victorian illustrator Aubrey Beardsley. The plant swirls are adapted from a Beardsley book design, the peacock is one I drew myself in the Beardsley style to fit the composition and I've arranged the design to work as an incised pattern. It may look more complex than incised lettering, but the process is just the same.

Slate is a metamorphic sedimentary rock formed from layers of very fine silt built up and compressed over millions of years by geological activity. The layers can be split apart by 'riving', or 'cleaving' with a bolster, but the ease of delamination which is helpful in producing roofing slates can be unhelpful when carving. The thin layers can have a tendency to flake away at the edges of your cuts, which you have to manage by keeping your chisels sharp and with the edge presented at an angle of about 45°. Delamination aside, slate is a good material for incised carving. Its fine texture gives sharp detail and the lighter grey of the cut stone will usually contrast with the darker grey of the surface, making the pattern stand out.

I have used 'riven' slate which has the natural matte finish left by the splitting, or 'riving' process but you can if you wish use smooth 'polished' slate instead.

Things you will need...

Tools:

- 655g dummy mallet
- 6mm chisel
- 13mm chisel
- 20mm chisel

Materials:

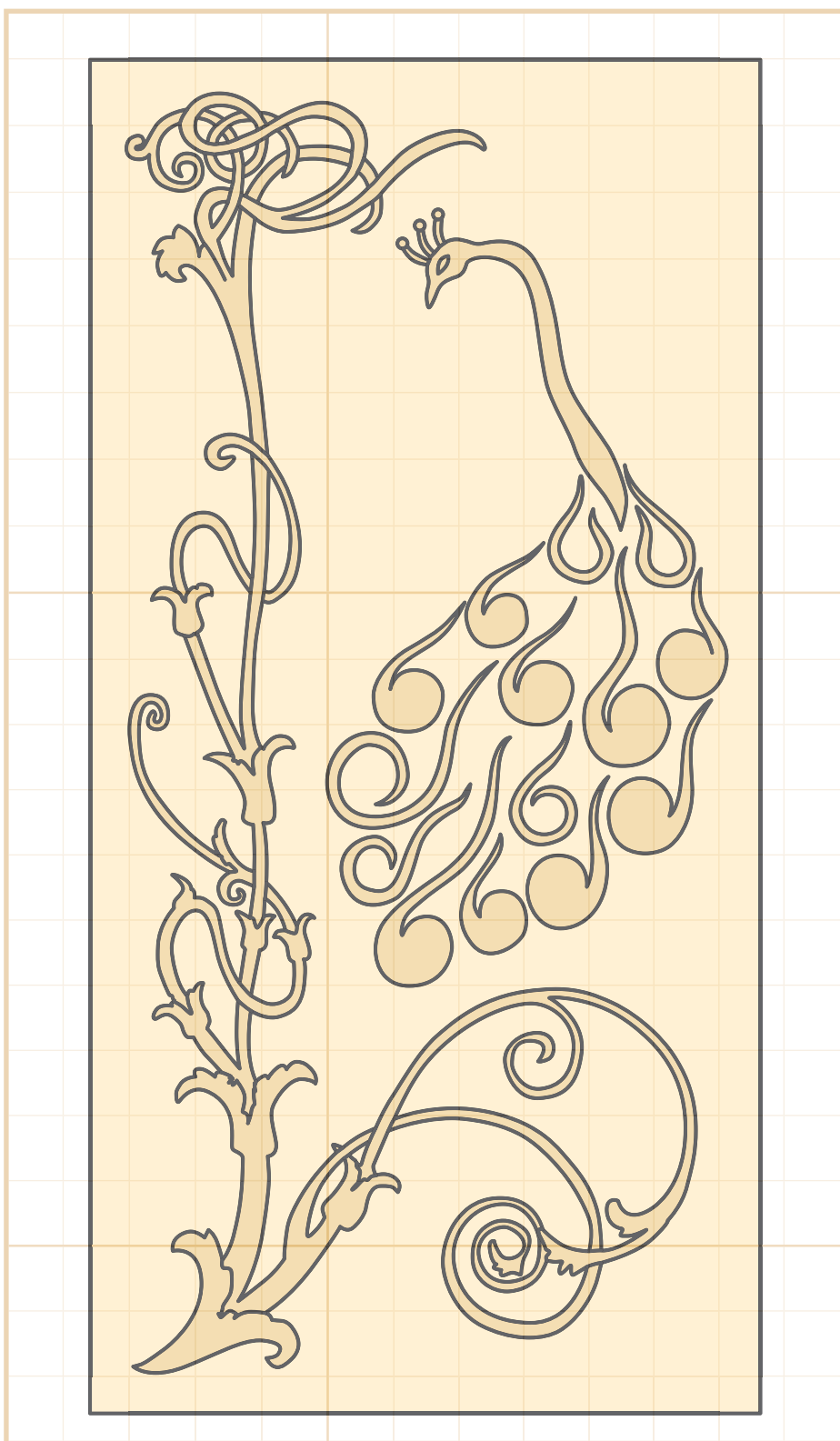
- A piece of riven slate - 540 x 270 x 30mm - weight around 13kg

Working from the pattern

This drawing shows the pattern on a grid which equates to 25mm when blown up to full size. Ideally, make a digital copy on your computer using either a scanner or a digital camera. Crop it into three overlapping sections of 11 squares across by eight squares down, print it out on A4 'landscape' pages and it should come out full size. Make sure all the pages have the

same 25mm scale and stick them together to make the panel 540mm long.

I have designed this panel so the length is twice the width, which is an easy proportion to replicate if you want to make it bigger or smaller. Just remember that if you make the panel smaller the pattern lines will get proportionally narrower.



The 'Beardsley line'

Aubrey Vincent Beardsley – 1872-1898 – was a late-Victorian artist and illustrator whose work influenced the Art Nouveau style. Some of the content was considered risqué, but his talent was striking and unmistakeable. Tuberculosis condemned him to a short and challenging life and his large output of illustrations was produced in just six years before his death at the age of 26. Much of his best illustration was done for the works of Oscar Wilde.

He developed a highly original

and distinctive style of black-and-white line drawing in ink that was greatly influenced by Japanese art. Its distinctive feature became known as the 'Beardsley line' – long flowing slender curving lines creating forms and figures with a pronounced vertical exaggeration. Figures with wide skirts and cloaks at the bottom tapered upwards towards small heads, making his illustrations seem taller and narrower than they actually were. The peacock was a favourite motif.

Sharpening chisels



Slate is a silica stone and will blunt your tools as you work. They need to be sharp to cut through the slate layers cleanly, so sharpen them frequently on a carborundum stone. Put some oil on the stone, present the cutting edge at an angle of 30° to the stone and push it along the same as you would a woodworking chisel.

Sourcing slate

The best place to look for good quality slate is at the yard of an architectural stonemason, or at makers of kitchen worktops and floor slabs. Look on the internet for your nearest supplier. Slabs about 30mm thick are good for incised panels. You can buy 'riven' slate, which has its natural unpolished surface, or you can buy smooth polished slate.

Working safely with slate

- Repeated exposure to silica dust can lead to respiratory illness, so work outside if possible and wear a dust mask if you are indoors or using power tools.
- Slate chippings are sharp, so wear eye protection.
- Stone is heavy, so take care when lifting and don't drop it on your hands or feet.



Preparations

1 Get a slab of slate 540 x 270 x 30mm, or any suitable size where the length is twice the width. This will weigh about 13kg so take appropriate care with lifting. Make a full-size copy of the drawing and get some carbon paper

2 Make sure the slate is dry and free of dust. Tape the drawing securely onto the slate with the carbon paper under it and trace the pattern

3 You will need a 'dummy' mallet and three chisels in widths of 6mm, 13mm and 20mm. Make sure the chisels are sharp. Put a 'softener' such as a cork mat on the bench so stone chips that get under the slate don't create a pressure point that could fracture the slab. The pattern tends to become a bit faint as you carve, so scratch in the carbon lines with a sharp point before carving



Carving the plant swirls

4 Start by taking a 6mm chisel and cutting a line along the centre of one of the wider stems. Place the chisel with the cutting edge at an angle of about 45°, so just one of the corner points is digging in. Lay the shaft back also by about 45° and gently tap the chisel with the dummy mallet. Aim to drive the chisel along by about 2mm with each tap, keeping up a steady rhythm. Steer the chisel midway between the guide lines and try to create fine powder rather than chips

➔ **5** After the first cut, turn the chisel over and carve along the other side of the cut

6 Keep repeating this process and gradually widen the cut until you reach the guide lines. Keep the chisel angle the same on both sides so the 'V' of the incision is about 90° at the bottom and is sharp and regular

7 The depth of the 'V' will increase in proportion to the width of the line, so in the wider parts you will need to switch to a 13mm chisel, otherwise the uppermost point of your chisel will be below the surface of the slate and may lift the edges

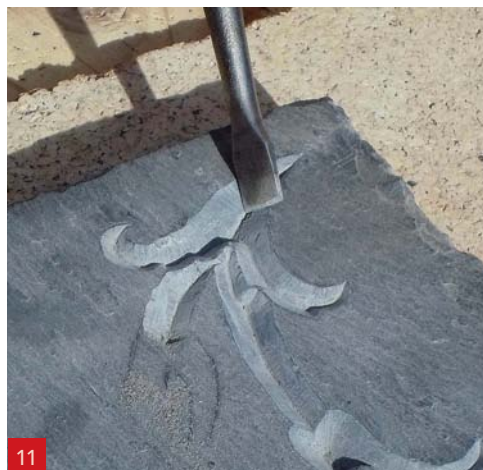
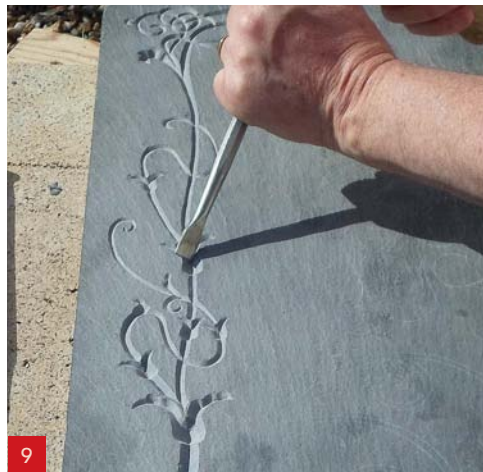
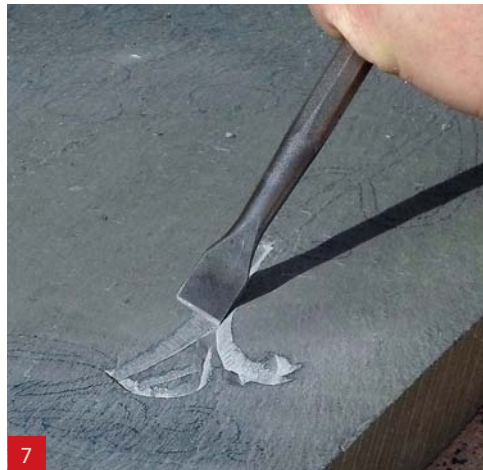
8 Continue this process up the curly stems. Some of the smaller stems are very narrow, so go carefully and take care to steer the chisel around the pretty swirls without putting kinks in the curves. Where the lines cross, follow each line through so its 'V trench' cuts across the other line without losing direction or width. Try to get sharp mitres in the 'trench' where the incisions meet and note that narrow lines will not be as deep as the wider lines in the crossover

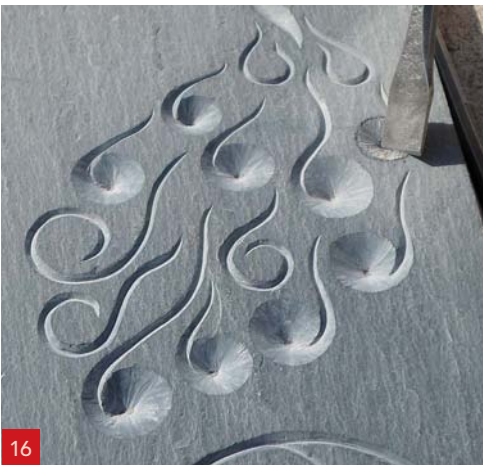
9 As you work towards the bottom end the stems get wider and you will need to use the 13mm chisel more

10 Along the stems there are several 'husks' from which the upper stems emerge. These need a little 'sculpting' inside the incision to create a sharp 'ridge' between the husk and the stem above, by carving the 'V' of the stem along the edge of the 'V' at the top of the husk. To carve the fine points at the outer tips of the husk, place the point of the chisel on the tip of the husk and carve inwards, then widen the line as you move away from the tip

11 In the bottom left corner there is a large husk from which the whole plant emerges. This is quite deep and is close to the corner, so over-zealous chiselling could break off the corner. Just chip along gently, working inwards from the corner

12 Finish the plant by carving the thin swirls that run from left to right across the bottom. Take care not to put any jarring kinks in the large graceful curves. The peacock pattern is hidden under the dust where I scratched it in, so it is worth hosing it down at this stage





Carving the peacock

13 Start the peacock by carving the long slender neck, which starts in a point at the bottom then tapers up towards the head

14 Carefully shape the head with its narrow neck and pointed beak. The eye needs particular care – carve away both sides of it until just a point remains at the top. The three plumes must be carved very thin – the tiny roundels at the top ends are made by placing the chisel point in the middle, then walking round in a circle while gently chipping into the centre

15 The peacock's body and tail feathers are depicted by 14 swirls to represent the 'eyes' on the feathers. Five of these swirls are formed by thin curly lines with the 'circle' end open

16 The other nine swirls have large roundels at the lower end, for which you will need to use a 20mm chisel. Place one point of the chisel into the centre of the roundel and keep chipping into it as you turn around the circle – it really helps if you can walk right round your bench for this. Cut at a slightly shallower angle or it will get very deep in the centre

Finishing

17 To finish off the panel, mark a line 3mm in and down from the outer edges and cut a chamfer along all sides

18 Now wash off the dust and display the panel where the light will strike it obliquely to enhance the shadows. Slate is impervious to water and it will live happily outdoors or indoors ▶

Top tips

1. If stone chips get under the slate while carving they can create a pressure point that may fracture the slab. Use a 'softener' such as a cork mat on the bench to avoid this and make sure your bench surface is dead flat
2. When carving curly lines it helps to have a freestanding bench that you can walk around, so you can navigate the curves without having to keep repositioning the work
3. Smooth away the tool marks after you have finished a cut by pushing the chisel along the cut

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Carving a perch and fry shoal

A recent diving trip inspired Steve Heath to carve this charming underwater scene



The perch is a common freshwater fish

Things you will need...

- 6mm coarse grit 'Typhoon' carbide burr
- 3mm fine grit 'Kutzall' carbide burr
- Dividers
- 7/7 palm gouge
- 12/2 V-tool
- 5/3 palm gouge
- 1.5mm diamond ball burr
- 3mm diamond ball burr
- 3.5mm coarse grit ruby flame-shaped burr
- 19mm head bud-shaped fine toothed carbide burr
- 120 grit, 180 grit, 240 grit, 320 grit to 400 grit cloth backed abrasive (I use Hermes RB 406 J-flex) and 1,000 grit wet and dry paper for eye
- Cyanoacrylate adhesive, ideally with brush applicator.

Wood:

- Lemonwood (*Calycophyllum candidissimum*), yew (*Taxus baccata*) and pine (*Pinus* spp.)

The idea for this little carving came to me at the bottom of a cold lake in north Lincolnshire. I was diving around the footing of a jetty and met a very tolerant perch eyeing up a shoal of fry. Not for the first time I was struck by how many of our native fish species are both exotic and hidden.

I decided to use a small lemonwood (*Calycophyllum candidissimum*) blank I had originally bought for netsuke carving, reflecting a trend in my recent projects towards the compact and bijou. This heavy, tight-grained tropical timber is fairly hard but holds detail well. Any close-grained timber – lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) or most fruitwood – will also work well. I began by building a reference file of images of my subject, taken from as many different angles as possible, to familiarise myself with

how the fish moves. Although this article provides side- and dorsal view templates, I recommend getting to know your wildlife subject via internet videos as well as photos, books and, if possible, your own field photos/videos and sketches before you tackle this kind of project. It's amazing how familiarity with a subject makes for a less hesitant, more intuitive carving experience.

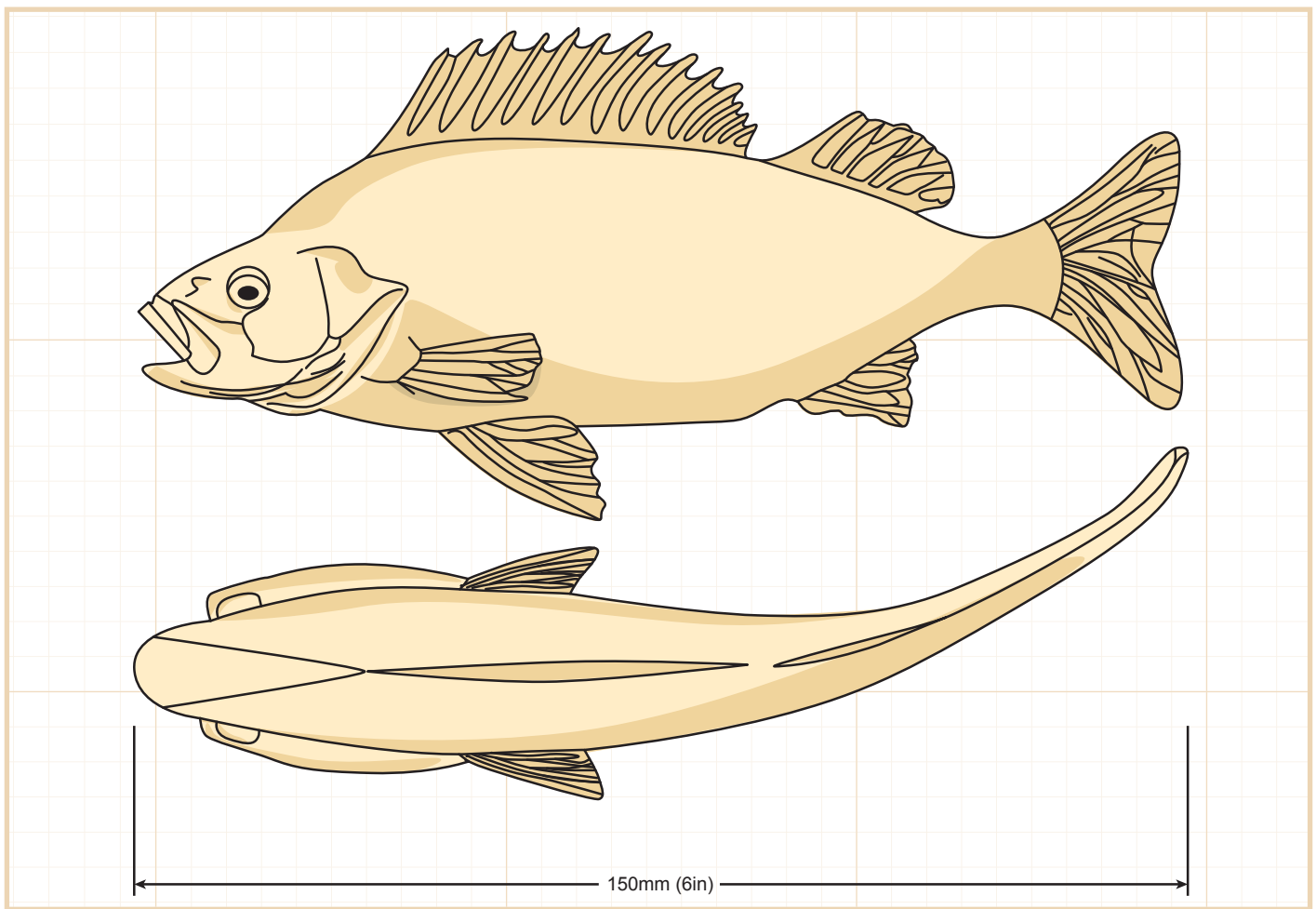
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Heath has been carving for eight years and painting and drawing animals since childhood.

He works full time as a nurse specialising in resuscitation.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE HEATH

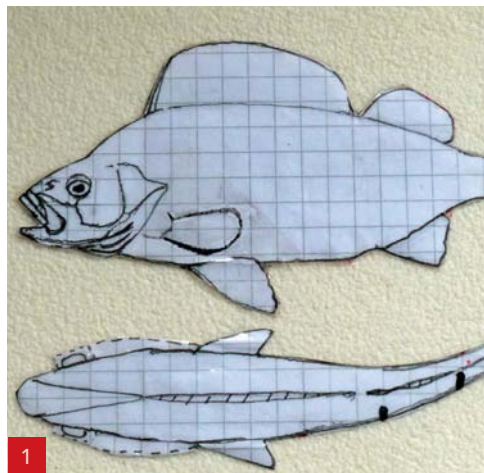


1 Use the side and dorsal view templates to outline the perch on your timber blank, ensuring key features such as the eyes and tips of the tail and fin tips align. You can shrink or enlarge the template to suit the size of your blank

2 Use a band or fretsaw to create a rough perch shape. I rough out the blank with a bandsaw rather than following the outline exactly. This allows me more freedom to create when I start using hand tools. It also probably reflects the fact that my skills are better suited to hand tools than a bandsaw

3 Shape the body down to the template outline using a 6.35mm coarse grit carbide burr. I have a core group of power and hand tools and always end up using a combination of items from this group. The tools I use here are by no means the only way this carving can be completed

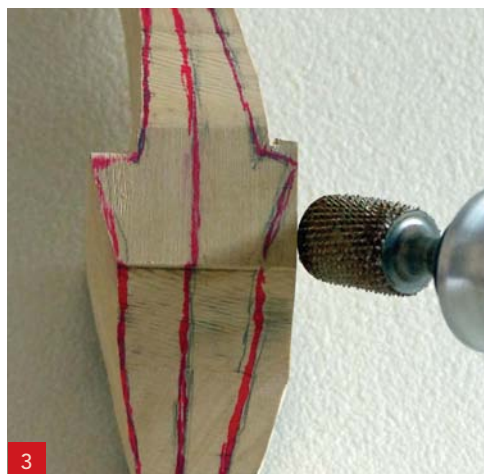
4 Further define the fins using a 6mm coarse grit carbide burr, moving to a smaller 3mm fine grit carbide burr. Note: the thick 2-3mm red lines along the top edge of the fin ensure enough width is left in the fins to allow further shaping



1



2



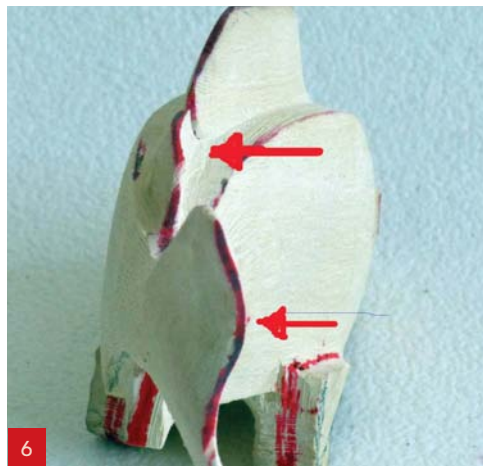
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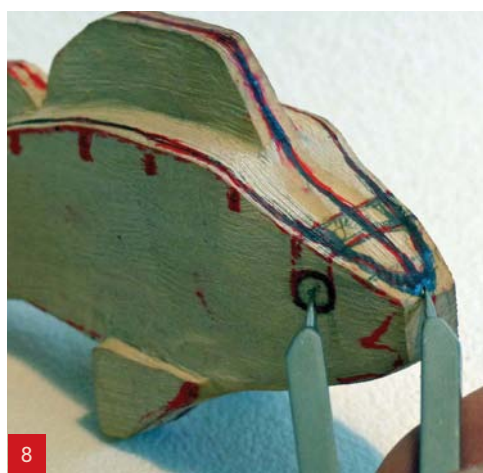
6

5 The secret to creating delicate-looking but robust fins in wood is to taper the fin from the base, where it joins the body, to the outer edge. The fine knife-like outer edge of the fin belies a wider and sturdier midsection and base

6 Carve an elongated 'S' shape into the tailfin and a gentle curve in the second soft dorsal fin, as indicated by arrows here...



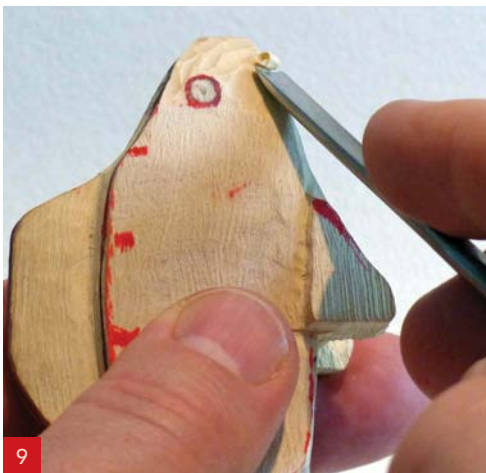
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8

7... using a 3mm shank fine grit carbide burr. The first spiny dorsal fin tends not to bend and curve as it moves against the water. Use the 6mm coarse grit carbide burr to taper the pelvic and underside fins to a fine edge, with gentle curves in the outer edge to convey movement

8 Using a pair of simple dividers, transfer key features such as the eyes, gill covers and mouth parts from the template to the blank, constantly cross-referencing to your file of images to ensure symmetry and correct proportion. It's worth being fastidious at this stage and getting everything nicely aligned in pencil.



9



10

9 Next, use the 7/7 palm gouge to start rounding the main body and defining the features. Remove the boxiness that doesn't often occur in the natural world – not to do so will lend the carvings an unfinished appearance. Again, power tools or a knife, for example, can be used to soften and round the body's contours

10 The pectoral, or sidefins, are carved in relief against the body using a 12/2 V-tool. To soften the appearance of the pectoral fins, undercut the trailing edge with the 12/2 V-tool and contour the surface with a 3mm fine-grit carbide burr. This helps convey the delicacy and flowing movement of the fin. Inserts can be used for the pectoral fins, but I was keen to finish the carving from a single blank



11



12

11 Fish eyes have evolved to give a wide field of view. They are often large and appear more bulbous than the eyes of many mammal and bird species. To define the circumference of the eye's roughly circular base, make a series of deep vertical cuts using an inverted 5/3 palm gouge and carve the surrounding wood away

12 Use a 5/3 palm gouge to cut away a triangle of waste from the mouth...

13... followed by a 1.5mm diamond ball burr to hollow the mouth to a depth of about 10mm

14 The 'plates of armour' around the face and gills and branchiostegal rays are initially shaped with a V-tool and palm gouges, then softened using a 3.1mm diamond ball burr for the plate contours and a 1.4mm diamond ball burr for the rays. The trailing edges of the operculum are undercut with a 12/2 V-tool, slightly lifting them from the body

15 The thick upper lip is defined using a 12/2 V-tool and rounded using a 5/3 palm gouge. There is no clearly defined lower lip. The hinge-like plate at the corner of the mouth – see picture 14 – is defined in low relief using a V-tool and 5/3 palm gouge combination

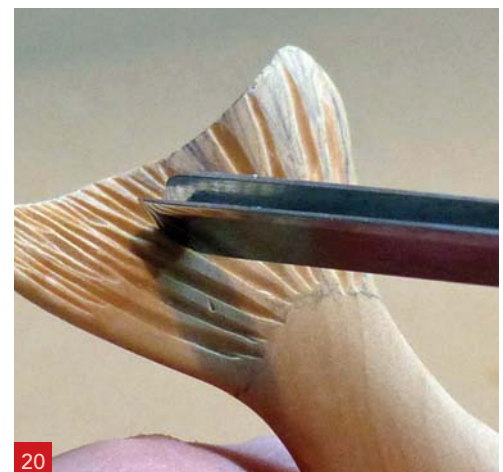
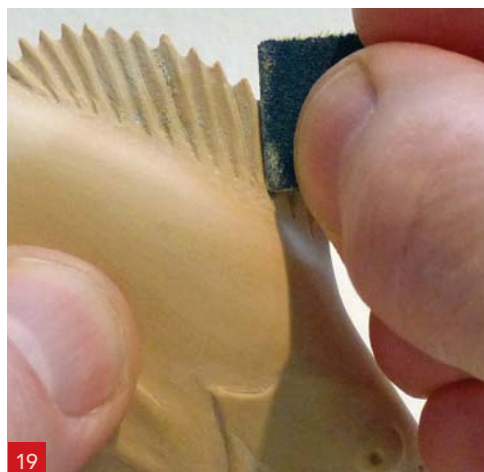
16 Sand the piece, starting with 120 grit and working through 180 grit, 240 grit, 320 grit to 400 grit

17 The 14 spines of the first dorsal fin are drawn freehand on both sides. Ensure the base and tip of each spine line up on either side of the fin. The location of each spine base can be marked in pencil at regular intervals on both sides of the bottom of the fin using dividers. Note that the base of each spine is slightly bulbous, narrowing to a point at the top

18 Use a 12/2 V-tool to cut the grooves between the spines. Take care to ensure the spines and grooves taper from the bottom up to convey the hydrodynamic shape of the fin while retaining strength

19 The spines and grooves are refined further using a 2cm square of 120-grit cloth abrasive folded in half to form a thin abrasive edge and superglued back to back

20 Roughly pencil in the rays of the remaining 'soft' fins. Each ray comprises a single soft spine that divides into fine branches at the end. The soft spine is carved in relief using a 12/2 V-tool and 5/3 palm gouge and finished with a square of cloth abrasive as in step 19. The ray branches are created by making two or three cuts with the 12/2 V-tool about midway from the end of the soft spine out to the edge of the fin. A brushed-on application of superglue will strengthen any vulnerable edges on the outer fin. The ragged-edged appearance of some soft fins is common among wild fish





21



22



23

Top tip

Viewing your progress in a mirror to check proportions is hugely helpful, especially when transferring key features onto the blank. An otherwise beautiful wildlife carving can be let down by, for example, misaligned eyes



24

21 For the pupil of each eye, make a hole using a head 3mm coarse grit ruby flame-shaped burr. Although this effect works well by itself, I decided to insert some buffalo horn. Buffalo horn is available pre-cut from stick making suppliers and polishes to a jet-like sheen. Using Cyanoacrylate glue a small piece of buffalo horn to a galvanised nail head – this is a technique I adapted from an article in *Woodcarving*

22 Tighten the nail into a power carver, so it acts like a simple mini-lathe when the foot peddle is activated. Use 120-grit cloth abrasive to shape a point ...

23... which is then superglued into the pupil hole and sanded flush with the eye using finer grits of cloth abrasive and finished with a 1,000-grit 'polish' with wet and dry paper

24 I mounted my perch on an offcut of sanded yew using a single glued wooden dowel, and this in turn was mounted on a block of burnt pine. The beautifully grained yew offcut was shaped using a 6mm coarse grit carbine burr to evoke the movement of water. Job done! Well, not quite. Something was missing. The fry! Pencil a small shoal of simple fish motifs over the yew mount, then carve these in relief from the mount using a combination of a 19mm head bud-shaped fine carbine burr, followed by a 12/2 V tool to define the fish shapes and 7/7 and 5/3 palm gouges to finish the relief carving. Use a 1mm drill bit to form the eyes



25

25 Re-sand the mount, re-mount the perch and finish the whole piece with two coats of beeswax polished to a sheen. This piece could be painted but I preferred an unpainted finish to show off the lemonwood's subtle marking

Tips for carving otters

Bob Jubb shares his ideas for carving otters

When I was a boy, my playground was the water meadows around Winchester in Hampshire, through which flows the famous trout river, the Itchen. I spent a lot of time with my brothers and our friends playing and fishing around the whole area, and one day when I was on my own, I saw two otters hunting downstream. I froze and watched for quite a time, it is a memory that will always stay with me. They are such playful creatures that they are great to watch. They are much loved in the UK, despite their reputation for catching trout and other fish on prize trout rivers. Because of this they were hunted and killed for many years but they are now fully protected and are making a comeback in the rivers of England, and in 2011 otters have been seen in the water mill in the middle of Winchester on the Itchen. I have carved many otters over the

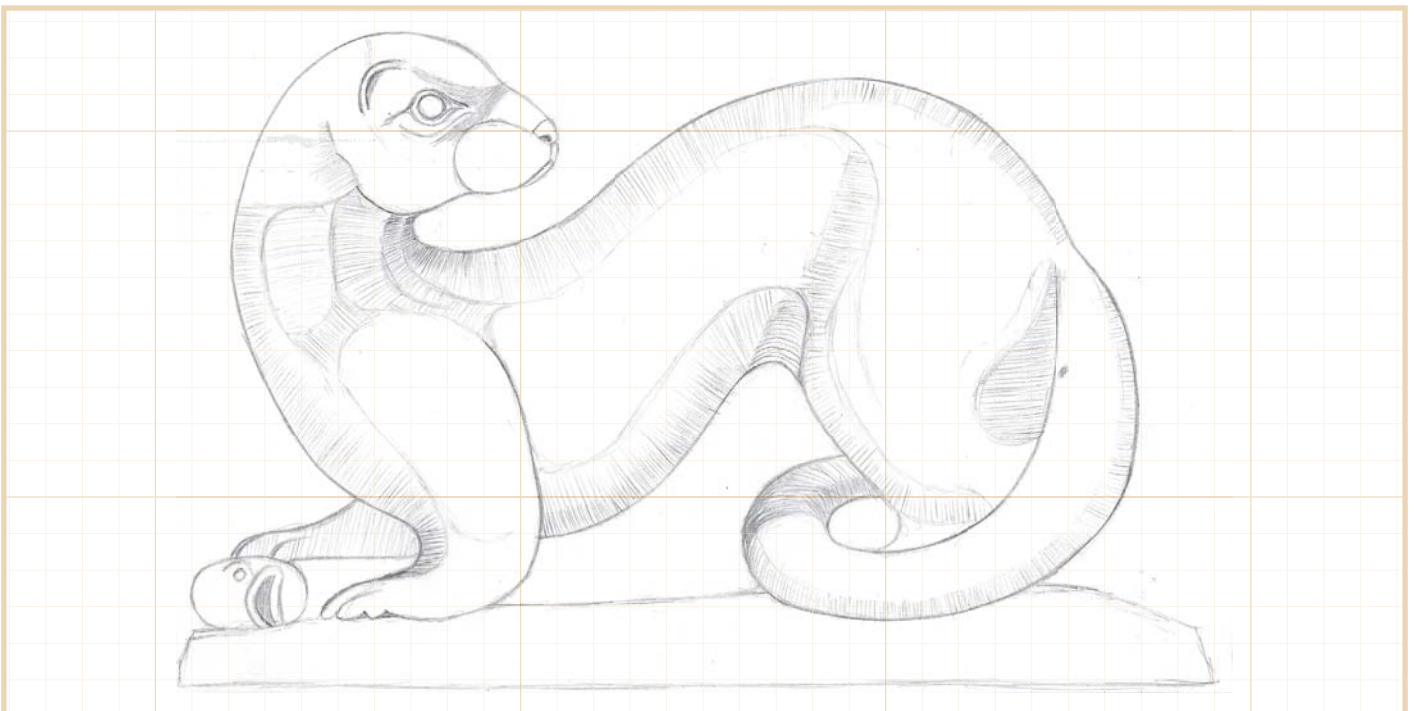


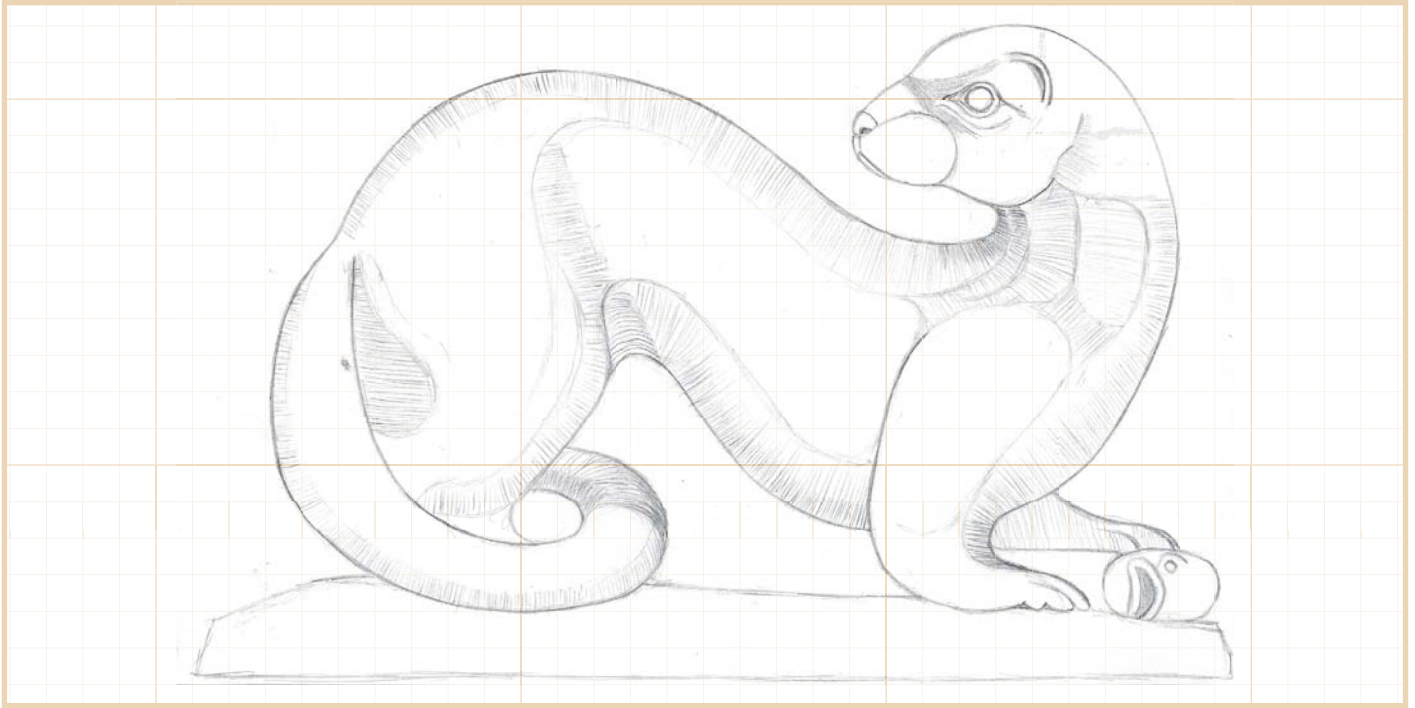
years in different poses and will share several of them with you here.

Lime otter

This otter, made in 1974, was carved in lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) and was the first otter I ever carved. In fact, it was about the fourth carving I ever made and for that reason I have kept it. The

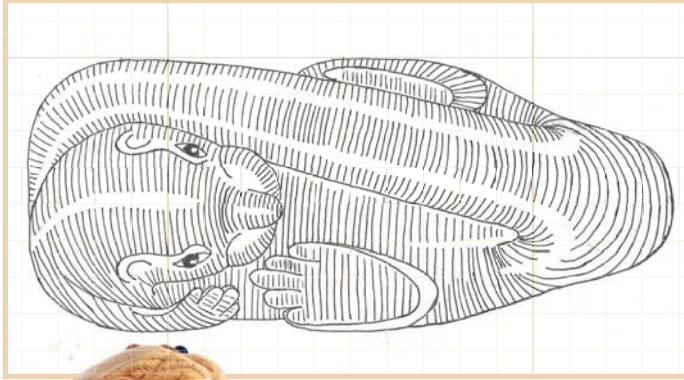
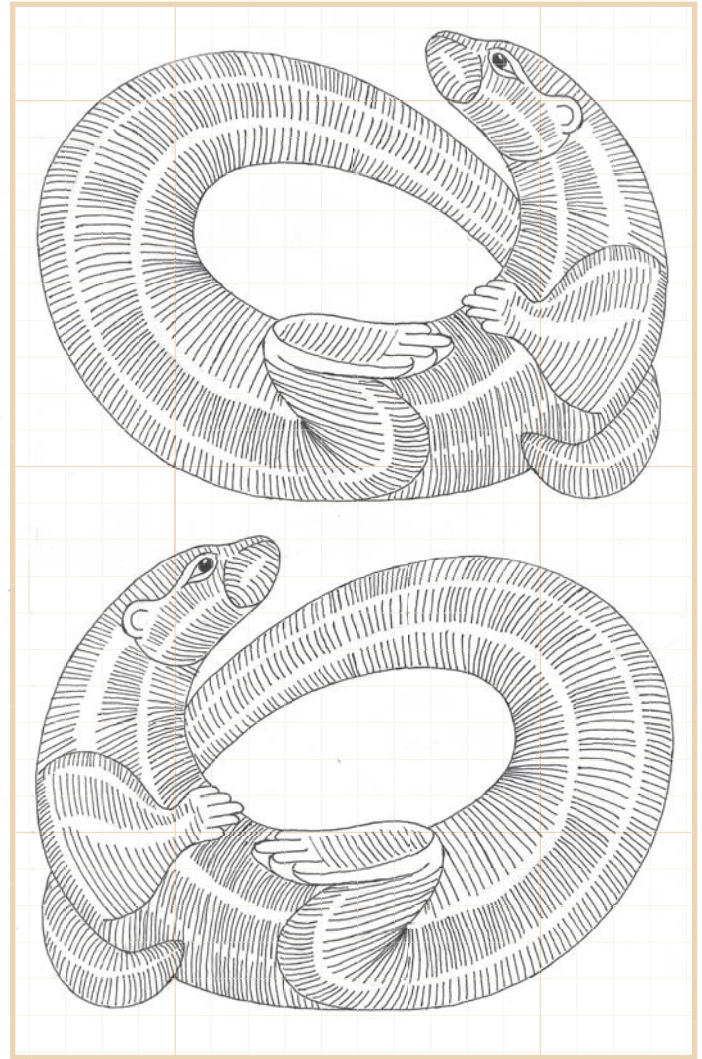
colour of the lime has nicely mellowed over the years to a honey-like patina, and I usually bring it out at carving shows. It is 292mm long x 190mm high x 140mm wide. The pencil sketches shown here have been reduced in size to fit on the page but the otter can of course be carved to whatever size you prefer.





▶ Otter ball

This design is of an otter on its back with the tail looped around its body to form a ball shape. It is an unusual stance but one that I think shows the animal's playful nature. I have carved this design quite a number of times and people seem to like it. The versions shown below were made in mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*) and sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) but I have also carved this design in walnut (*Juglans regia*), oak (*Quercus robur*) and yew (*Taxus baccata*). I gave them a smooth polish to make them look as though they are wet. The dimensions of this carving are 165mm long x 125mm high x 70mm wide, but I have used a wider wood on several occasions. I have also carved it at about twice this size in yew.



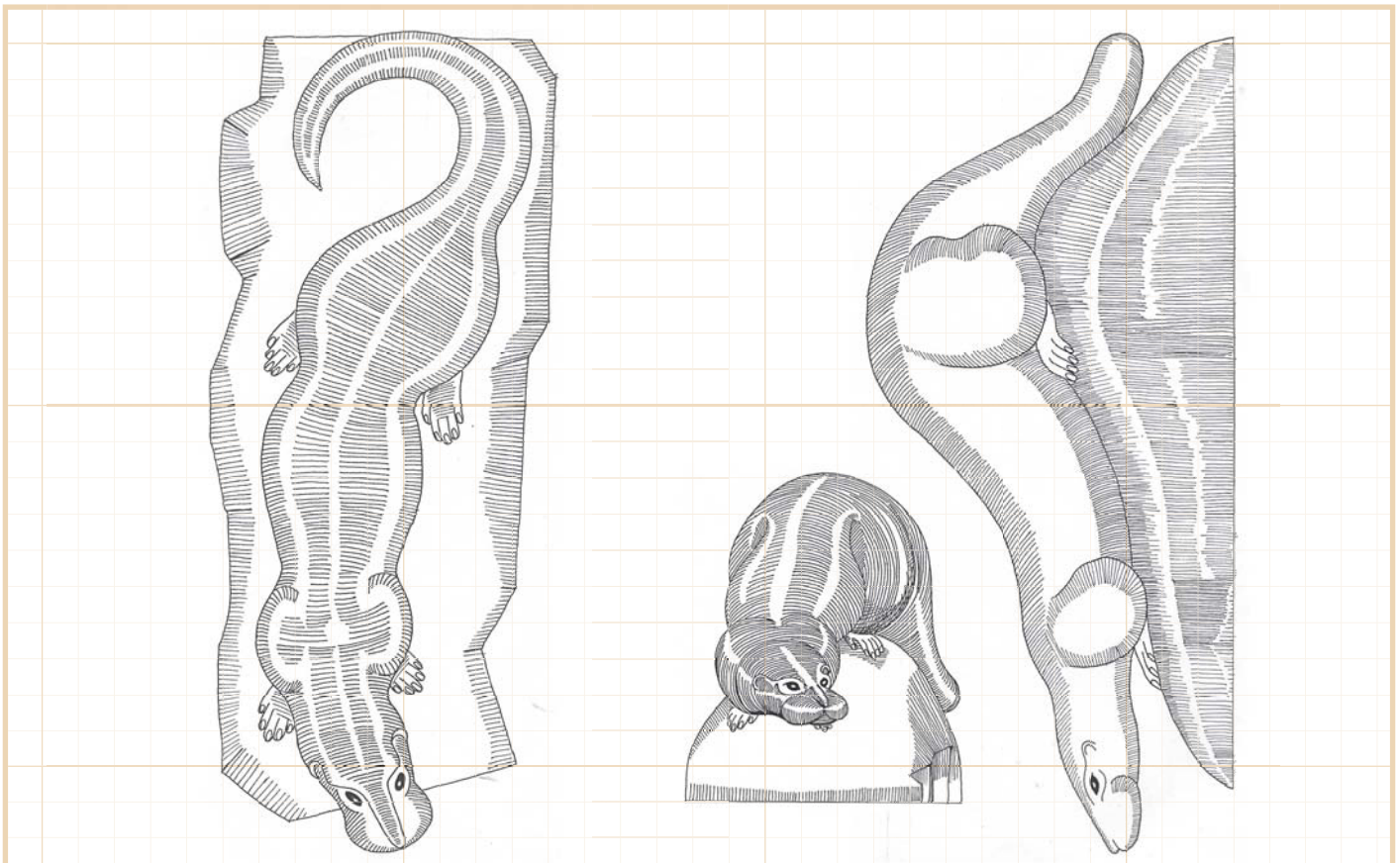


Oak otters

These two otter carvings are approximately the same size at 300mm long x 125mm high x 100mm wide. They are both carved in oak and show otters entering the water from a river bank. These were some of my early carvings when I didn't inlay eyes but carved them out of the original wood. The tail in each otter

is turned in opposite directions. I have carved many otters to this design and make small changes in each just out of interest. Sometimes I curve the body and tail one way, and sometimes the other. If you are lucky, nice medullary rays will appear when sanding the oak, as with one of the examples shown here. In trying to make them look

sleek and wet, I sand the bodies of the otters so that they are really smooth, and then polish them with a clear wax such as shoe polish or Renaissance wax. The otters could equally well be carved in cherry (*Prunus avium*), lime, walnut, apple (*Malus sylvestris*), pear (*Pyrus communis*) and many other woods. ▸



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Star performers

Famous faces were on show as artists from around the world flew in for the International Woodcarvers Congress

You wouldn't often expect to find Artemis, Father Christmas and Air O'Smith – forgive the pun, it's not ours! – in the same room, but the International Woodcarvers Congress appears to have the knack of gathering together the sublime and the eclectic for its annual woodcarving art show. And this year was no exception.

The prestigious event is one of the longest-running, competitively judged, woodcarving art shows in the US and sees artists from across the States, Canada and overseas take part in one of the hotly contested 80-plus categories.

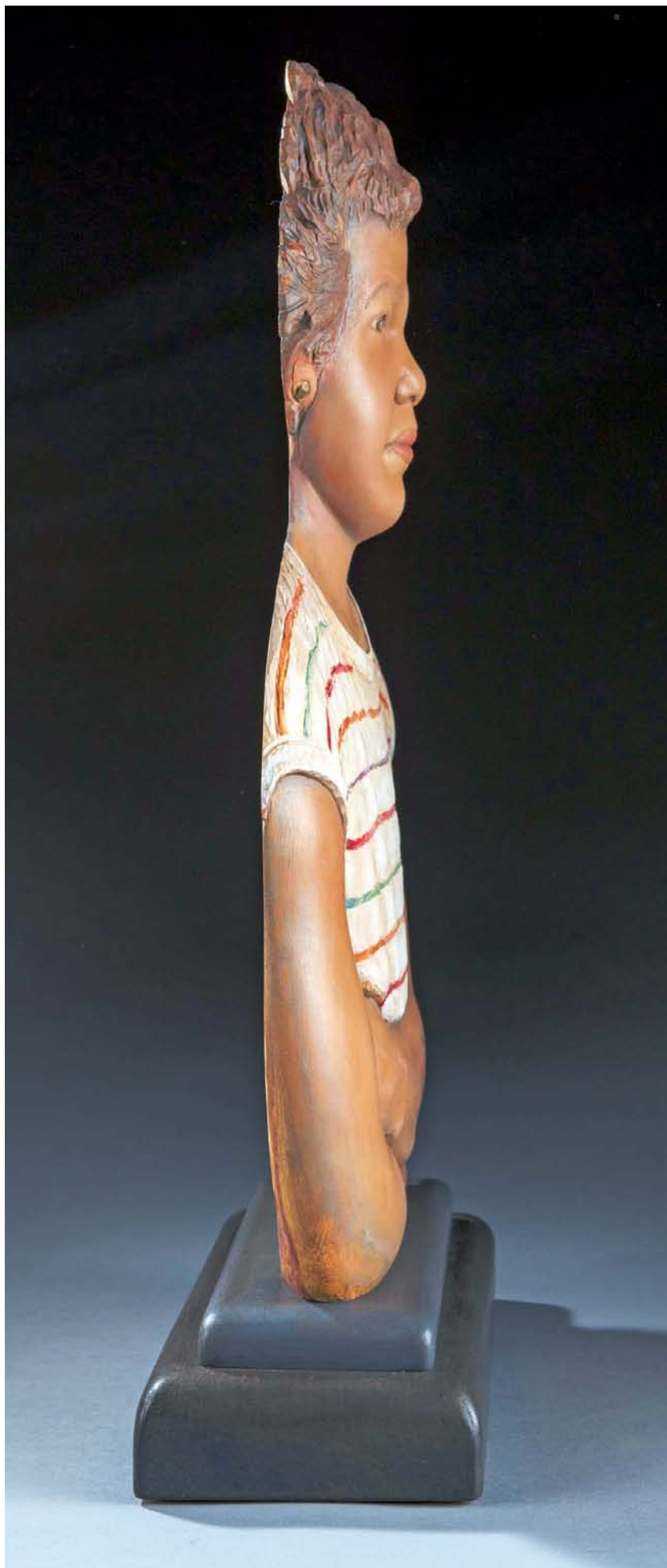
In the long run, Artemis and rocker Air O'Smith were pipped at the post for the esteemed Best in Show award by an unknown young girl called 'Spunk', a relief carving by Rick Harvey. The Greek deity, a 15ft-tall mahogany sculpture by David Seagraves, came in as first runner-up overall with Terry Brasher's caricature of the American rockers close behind.

There were many other pieces that caught the eye, however. Among them were that Father Christmas, a relief carving that secured Nancy L. Olson first in her class. The judges were also impressed by Charlotte Phillips' ornamental carving, 'Basket of Will Flowers', which secured a first in group as well as class; Sandy Czajka, who achieved the same honours with her birds, 'Territorial Dispute'; and their fellow double-first winner Charlotte Phillips with her ornamental carving, 'Basket of Wild Flowers'. Josh Guge, meanwhile, managed to achieve the double-double with his 'Virtue vs Vice', which depicted Caribbean fish on coral, and 'Kingfishing'.

The entries were appraised by Vic Hood, Janet Denton-Cordell and Neil Cox who comprised the Affiliated Wood Carvers' judging panel at the event, which was held in Maquoketa, Iowa, in June. As usual, the judges were also responsible for two Critique Sessions, where they highlighted what they look for during the competition. Over the years, these sessions have proven to be both hugely popular and a valuable learning experience. Other activities included the awards banquet and the AWC membership meeting.

The AWC was founded as a non-profit organisation in 1982 to continue the sponsorship of the International Decoy Contest and the IWC, which were started in the late 1960s under the sponsorship of the Mississippi Valley Fair Board in Davenport, Iowa. In the years since the Congress was based at the Putnam Museum in Davenport, before returning to its original location and then moving on again – this time to its current home in the Jackson County Fairgrounds in Maquoketa. The AWC is proud of the association, explaining on its website how it is "able to hold the competition, seminars, banquet, and Judges' Critique Sessions all in the same building with additional seminars in an adjacent building; all that at an affordable price. It can't get much better than that!"

Planning for the 2016 IWC congress, to be held from 11-19 June, is already under way, and there are an estimated 85 categories in the judged competition and cash prizes of thousands of dollars to be won. Whether or not there'll be another roll call of famous faces on show who can say? But we do hope so... ▀



Spunk – a portrait of a young girl, by Rick Harney, was the winning carving in the 'Relief Carving' category as well as Best in Show



The full figure and close-up detail of Josh Guge's winning piece Kingfishing, from the category 'Exhibits of two or more subjects, Human and/or Animal'



Winner of the 'Ornamental Carving' category was Charlotte Phillips' Basket of Wild Flowers

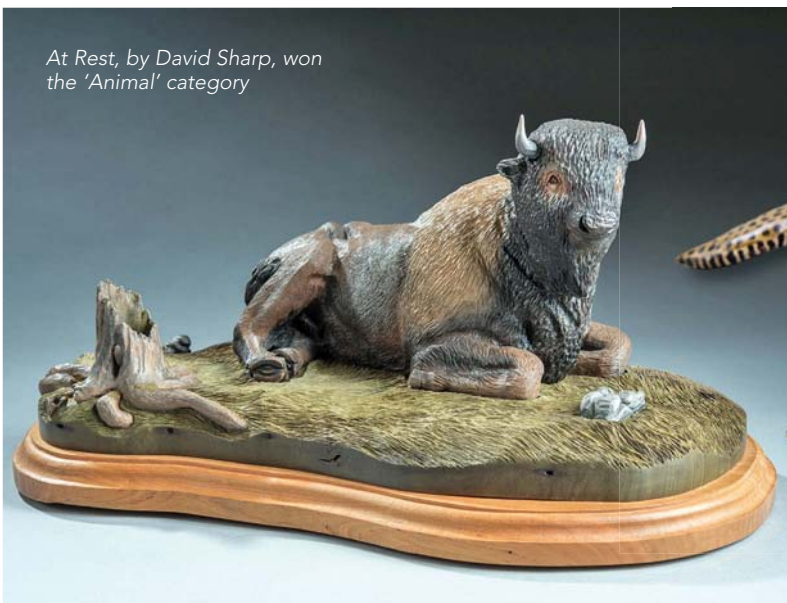
Sandy Czajka came first in the 'Bird' category with her Territorial Dispute carving (see close-up image on page 39)



In third place in the 'Exhibits of two or more subjects' category was Grandma's Aprons by Sue Orth



At Rest, by David Sharp, won the 'Animal' category



Jeffrey Porter won the 'Fish, Aquatic Creatures, Amphibians, Reptiles, and Dinosaurs' category, with Green Sea Turtle



Pat Boleman – right – gets some help from Dylan Goodson

The Show's chairman Larry Yudis says:

"The IWC is the most prestigious woodcarving competition in North America and attracts carvers who do not participate in any other woodcarving events. They want their work to be judged along with the best that is available. The judges for the 50th anniversary competition are Randy Landen, Wayne Barton and Fred Cogelow. The IWC is also the only competition of its kind to accept shipped entries. Besides the US and Canada, there have been pieces from Belgium, Brazil, the UK, France, Mongolia and Russia to name just a few."



Jan Faulkner burns in hair on her buffalo during a realistic animal carving class



Vic Wood – right – offers some advice to Robert Zenoble



Josh Guge – seated – had everyone's attention for his air-brushing course

Contact

For more pictures from the IWC, as well as information about 2016's competition, seminars and categories, visit www.awcltd.org



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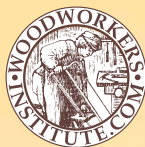
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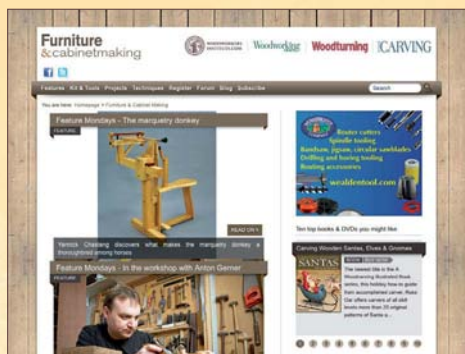
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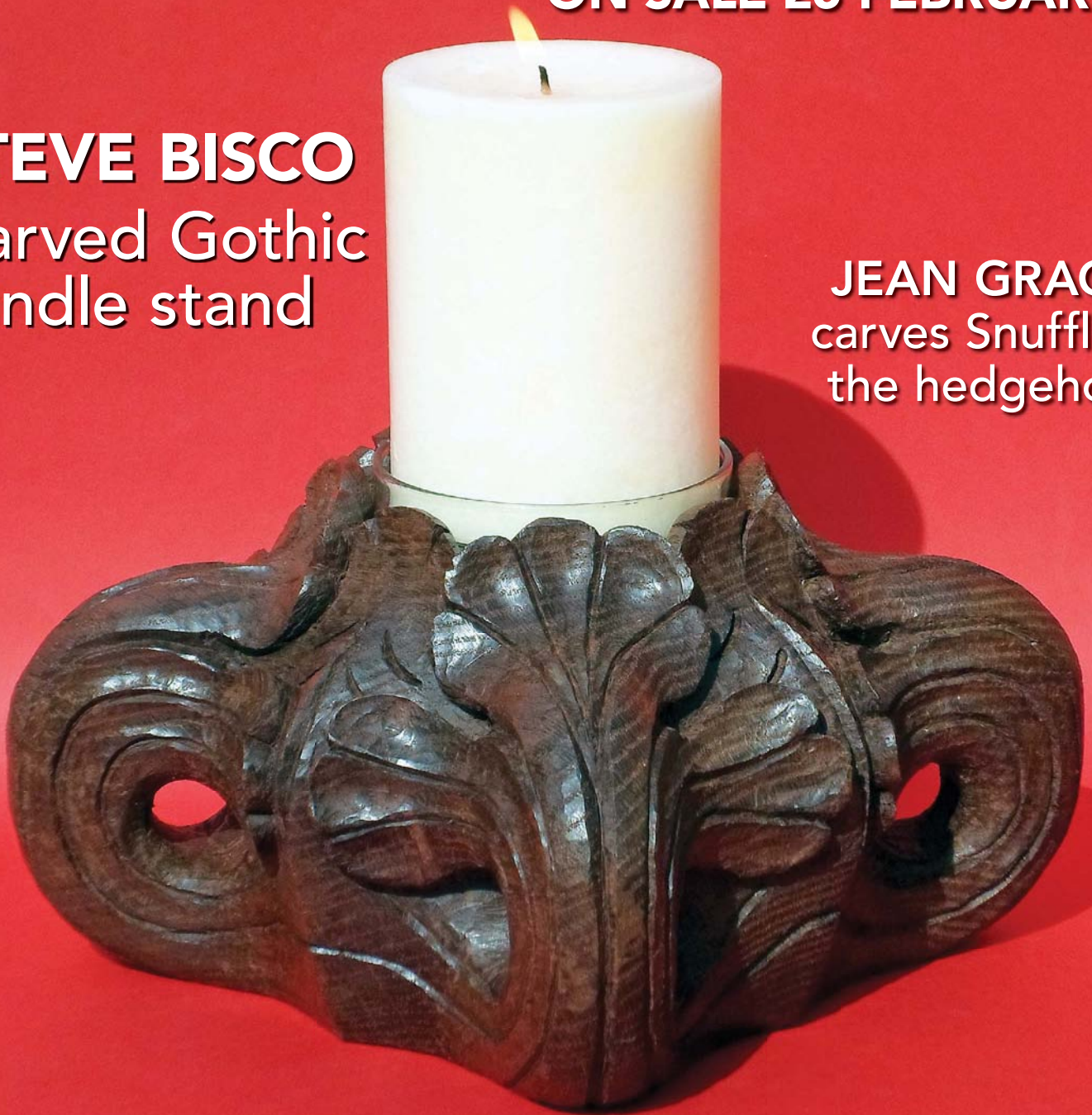
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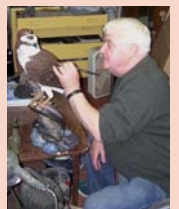
Christmas robins

Mike Wood carves a pair of festive robins

Robins in a winter setting: it's an iconic image that many people find heartwarming. My chirpy duo here pick up on the traditional scene with snow, holly and berries – they are also fun to make. Depending on where you live, you might not get too much snow, but you can use your imagination as to how you create your perfect setting for the robins. This step-by-step guide deals mainly with the birds themselves. Anyone who has robins in the garden will know they are feisty, territorial birds who think nothing of trying to badger and intimidate larger birds who dare to encroach on their patch. Indeed, they've been called birds with attitude – the male certainly struts his stuff and puffs himself up to show off – so you should definitely have fun creating your own version of this wonderful creature.

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



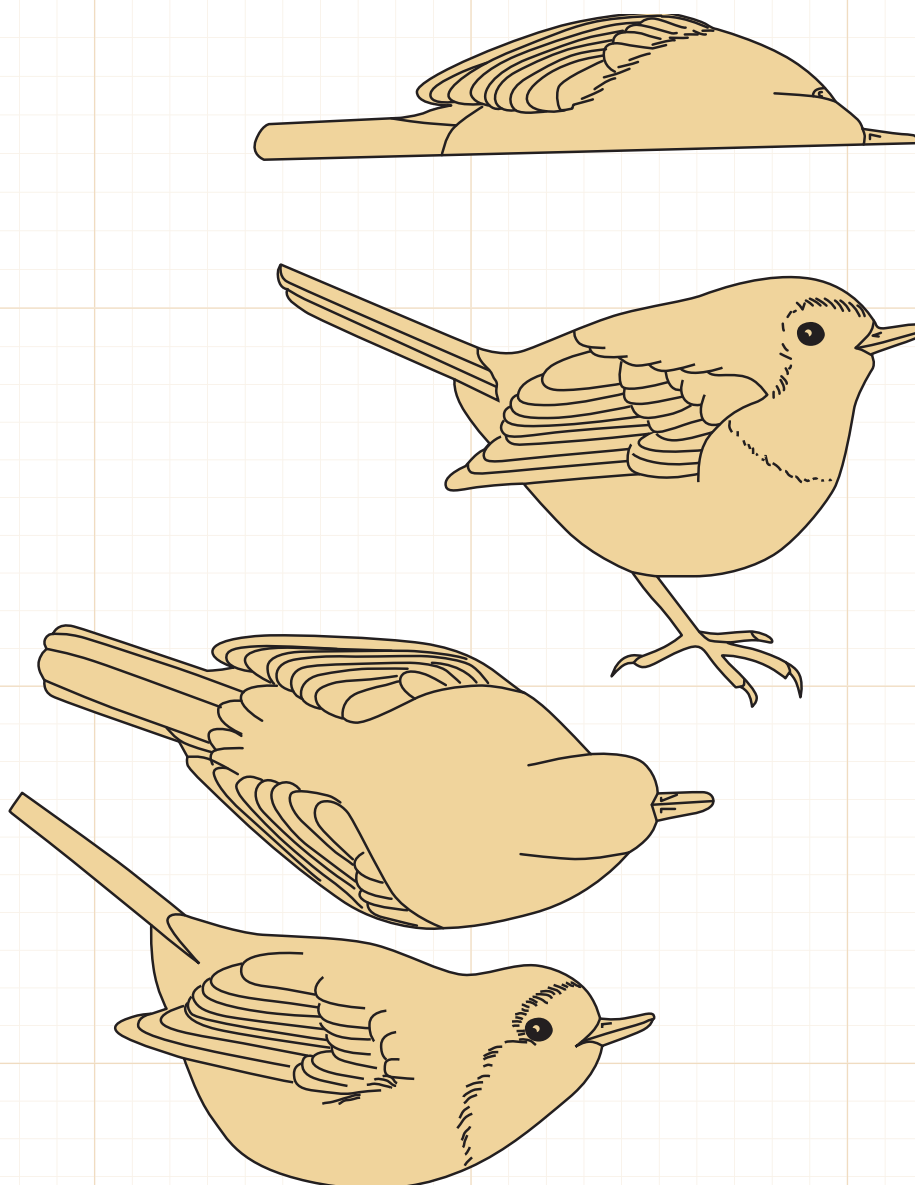
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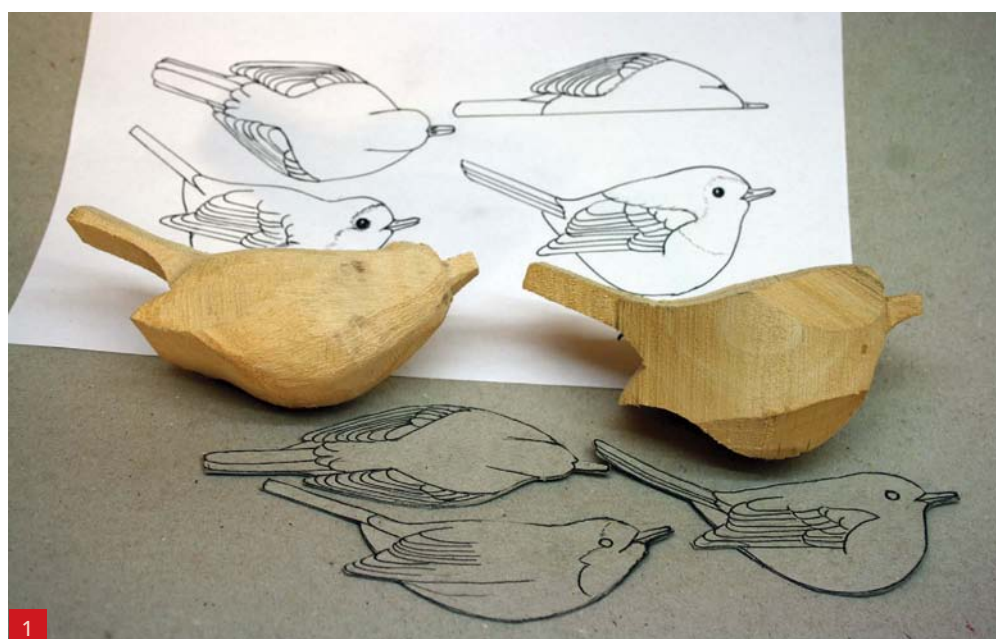
- Grinder and saburr wheel
- Rotary carving unit
- Coarse taper
- Sanding bobbin
- Ruby taper
- Bullnose stone
- High-speed grinder
- Plastic wood for eyes
- Copper tubing for feet and legs
- Pyrography machine
- Airbrush
- White gesso
- Paint: burnt & raw umber, red, violet, green, Payne's grey, orange & dark brown
- Large brush & rigger paintbrush
- Acrylic texture paste
- Copper wire
- Wooden beads for the berries
- Artificial snow
- Personal protective equipment: Eye & face protection, lung protection (dust mask as a minimum) and extraction

Wood:

- The wood used for the birds and holly leaves is lime (*Tilia vulgaris*)
- Weathered old pine post



1 First, create cut-outs from the patterns provided. Also keep your plan handy as all of them are needed for reference. Once you have your plan, use it to mark and cut the right-sized timber sections. A bandsaw will make light work of cutting the initial block to the block-like bird shape. Then using the cut-outs, refine the shape using a combination of chisels and burrs, to get much closer to the cut-outs. Be careful not to remove too much wood at this stage as you will need it later on to refine the shape





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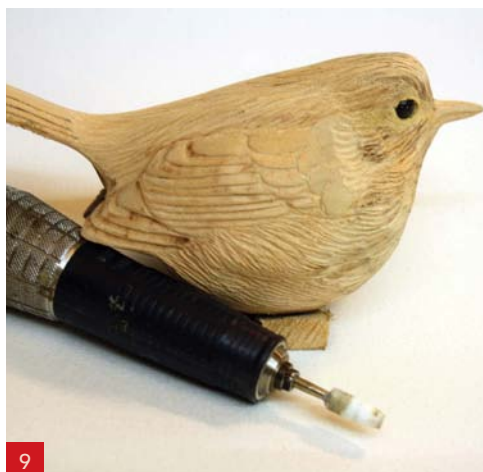
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2 Once you have your rough outline, refine it a bit more until you have a clearly defined bird shape. A combination of rotary burs – coarse and medium – will help with this, but of course it can be done by using handtools and then abrasive. When happy with the shape, pencil in the wings

3 With a small-toothed burr held in a rotary unit, define the body form further and cut in the eye sockets. You need to create the definite wing positions, shape and curves of the body. After this...

4 ... use a bobbin sander to smooth out the surface without removing the detail of the body curves and other similar items

5 Now define the lower wing area, face and rear section of the bird using a rotary burr. Then draw in the wing pattern...

6... and tail

7 With a high-speed rotary unit fitted with a small white stone, or similar fine-grit abrasive cutter...

8... carve in the feather detail. There are many types of cutter that can be used for this job so don't get vexed about using the same one as I have here. You need a fine grade that cuts on the side and the end so you can angle a cut and incise at the same time. You can cut the detail by hand using a chisel and V tool. I find this a harder route (it also takes longer), but if time is no issue, then the choice is yours. Since I make my living carving birds, time is important and the power-carving route is quick and efficient. It does, however, need a few cutters and a rotary unit and the process also produces more dust than hand carving

9 With the same unit and stone put some texture on the head, breast and back. It is all about creating clearly defined texture and detail to delineate between areas and also create a lifelike feel. Note how the burr/cutter is clogged a little. You can clean these up by running a cutter at lowish speed over a rubber block. Secure the rubber block in a vice, or screw it down, so it does not whizz away when a running cutter touches it. The two birds are similar, but if you create a 'puffed-up' showy male, then the body shape for each one can be made slightly different

➔ **10** Do the same on the tail and undertail coverts. Again it is all about mimicking the real thing. There is depth change in the texturing and also the body – when shaped and sanded it is not uniformly even. Real feathers vary in density and size and the slightest movement of the body, or even a breeze, can ruffle them and create a different look.

11 You might have guessed that I work on the birds in tandem; each step is undertaken on each bird as I go along. If both your birds are now also carved up to and including step 10 then you are working efficiently. Don't worry if you haven't been working in this way, however, or prefer to work on one bird at a time. Some people like to finish one bird before moving onto the next. The danger in crafting both birds at the same time, I suppose, is that you might be more likely to duplicate any mistakes. This could prove annoying if you don't realise your error until later on and the problem can't be rectified. Now, since I am working on both birds in sequence, repeat step 10 on the second bird

12 Next, carve in tail feathers and add appropriate detail as per your reference material

13 Using a pyrography unit with a pen fitted with a scalpel-edged wire or tip, or a very thin detail wire or tip, burn in...

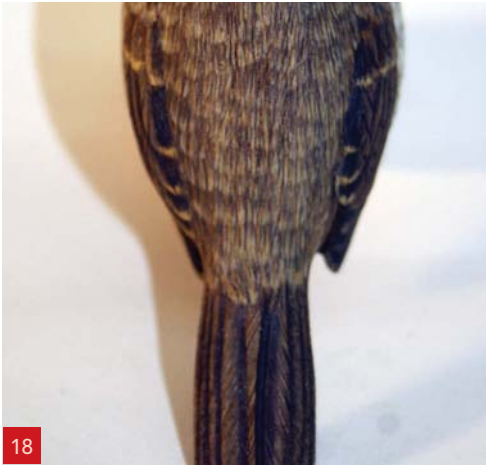
14... all feathers on both birds using the tip of your choice. Now fit the eyes – I bought mine – using plastic wood. Then smooth out and add detail as required

15 Note the legs are in place in this and the previous picture. I make my own, but you can easily buy them, too. They are only loosely fitted at the moment and will be painted and fixed later

16 Once the pyrography is complete, undercoat both birds all over with white gesso. Next, mix a small amount of raw umber and burnt umber with the gesso, then undercoat the back of both birds

17 Orange, tinted with a small amount of white gesso, is used to colour the breast area. It's oft-repeated that robins have a red breast and that's how they're depicted on many a seasonal card. In reality, they are orange, but the hues vary a bit from bird to bird





18



19

18 Lighten the face with white gesso and edge all the feathers on the back of both birds

19 Now darken the inner webs and centre tail with dark brown

20 Paint under the tail and underwings; the rump and belly have a thin wash of burnt umber

21 The breast on both birds needs to be edged with a mixture of orange and a small amount of red violet. The grey edging down the eye and sides is painted with white gesso and a small amount of Payne's grey. The feet and legs are fixed in place with plastic wood and are then painted flesh colour. The tips of each bill are airbrushed dark brown. As I have said before, you can use a brush to colour the birds, but airbrushes make life easier, especially if you plan to create a lot of birds



20



21

22 & 23 Now the birds are complete. Note how the two birds have a different posture and also body shape. One is puffed up and has attitude while the other is leaner and looking upwards more

24 To make the base, obtain an old weathered pine stump or post and distress it with a combination of burs, steel and bronze brushes to create the aged look you are after. You can then either scorch or colour the base. The holly is made using copper and the berries are small dyes or painted, wooden beads. The snow is done using a combination of texture paste – to build up volume. While the paste is still wet, it should be covered with artificial snow (you can buy loose artificial snow from modelling shops or online). The snow will stick to the wet surface. Alternatively, you can let the texture paste dry, apply a coat of adhesive over the dry paste and then apply the artificial snow. You can also apply adhesive to other areas of the post and holly and sprinkle the artificial snow over these areas, too, in order to create a more authentic look. Spray snow can also be used, but the loose artificial snow is easier to control and will only stick on the wet surfaces whereas spray snow coats everything it touches



22



23



24



25

25 The finished birds can then be placed and secured in the arrangement of your choice. As you can see here, this setting works very well and has one radiant robin looking at its mate

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Celtic conundrum

In the first of a two-part series, David Western helps to untie some knotty issues

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave Western is a professional lovespoon carver and the author of two books on the subject. He carves to commission 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



Unfortunately, the seeming impossibility of carving these tortuous knots has tended to frighten away many carvers. This is a great shame as it is fun to do, adds excitement and variety to your carving and greatly impresses those who view your work. In this two-part article, it is my intention to offer simple tips and techniques to encourage you and to help make your first efforts less of an ordeal than mine were. Even though I'm certain that it would take a full-sized textbook to truly do justice to the subject, I'm hoping that I can impart enough information (and reckless enthusiasm) to get just about anyone who is interested up and running.

A look at the knots

At the most basic level, there are two types of knots used in Celtic Art. The first is 'open', which has each end untied, and the second is 'closed'. This latter knot (sometimes called an eternal or lover's knots) is completely enclosed and forms an endless loop.

Whether the knot is rigid and geometric, or fluid and organic, the 'over and under' arrangement of the knot's lines is critical and should always remain consistent. If the knot comes out of order and has an 'over' following an 'over', then there is an error in layout and the knot should be redrawn.

This is one of the great challenges (and agonies) of crafting a good Celtic knot and it should be taken seriously. Mistakes in layout come back to haunt and lend the finished knot an amateurish look. If this is your first foray into Celtic knotwork, try to resist the urge to bite off too much and stick with simple patterns until you have the hang of it.



Open knot



Closed knot

There can be little doubt that one of Britain's greatest contributions to the world of art and applied design is the spectacular Insular Art which was developed during the period of approximately 600-900 CE. More commonly known these days as 'Celtic Art', it has found renewed favour among tattoo artists, jewellers, metalworkers and wood carvers. Although it represents just a brief period and a small part of the several thousand years history of the Celts, it is the area that has resonated most with modern artisans and is what most people automatically think of when they hear the words Celtic Art.

Renowned for the wonderful and convoluted interlacing knotwork which forms its basis, this most unique of art forms is pre-eminently suited to wood carving, where its magnificent complexity and sinuous form can lend spectacular drama to even the simplest pieces.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID WESTERN AND CHRIS ROBERTS

TYPES OF LINE USED IN CELTIC KNOTWORK



Shoelace: this form is basically a square section that has been heavily rounded over to appear more like a rope than a bar. It's just personal taste, but I always think this type of finish looks overworked and a bit limp.



Square: the line is formed into a square section where the depth measurement usually matches that of its width. It can be left square or the edges can be eased for a softer look.



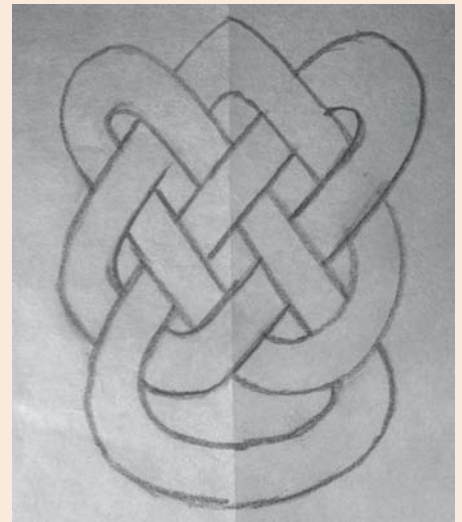
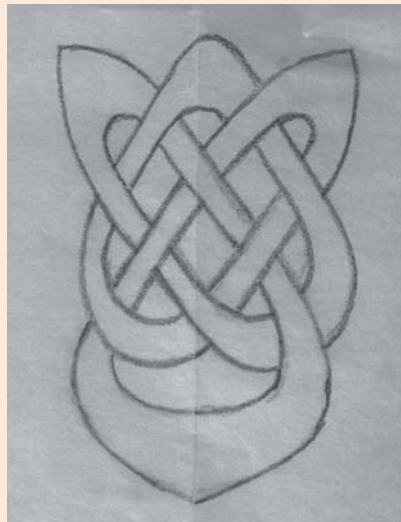
Square organic: this knotwork combines the rigid square-type line with a hint of organic flaring around curved sections. This gives the knot a feeling of increased 'movement' while still retaining the appearance of being geometrically even.



Organic: the line varies in width (but remains relatively constant in depth) giving the knot a more organic and flowing appearance. This type of line is eminently suited for asymmetric and freeform work.



Ribbon: this is a heavier version of the square knot in which a more rectangular effect is achieved and the space between lines is reduced. The face of the lines can be left flat and square; the face can be flat with an eased edge; or the face can be domed.



This series of drawings illustrates the difference in appearance between (from left to right) square or shoelace line, organic and ribbon style rendered on the same knot.

CARVING THE KNOTS

Whether left as a relief-type carving or fretted out for the full three-dimensional effect, there are a number of ways to approach Celtic knot carving. If you are just starting out or tools are at a premium a simple recessed line around the design may be enough to bring up the knot and separate it from the background material.

Utilising chip-carving techniques to create a peaked panel effect between each knot is slightly more difficult to

carry out, but produces a more finished and refined appearance. Like the lining method, it can also be undertaken with a simple straight knife.

By lowering the background material, the knotwork can be given the classic low-relief treatment, which makes it appear applied or raised from the material surface. This method requires a bit more time, patience and tools, however when it is done well, it creates a vibrant and bold appearance for

the knotwork. Cutting away the background material gives the classic 'fretted' knot which can be carved on both sides for a very dramatic three-dimensional effect. The removal of the superfluous material results in a knot that is both physically and visually lighter than the knots carved onto background. Unfortunately, it requires a good deal of drilling and sawing (or very tedious carving) to be done correctly.



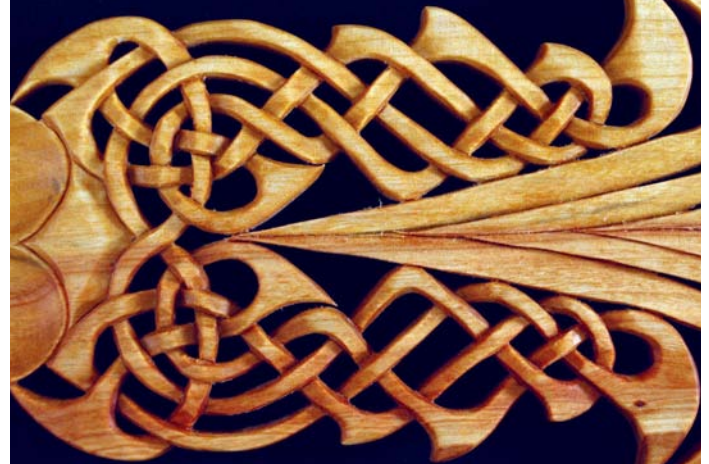
A simple V-shaped channel helps bring the knotwork design to the foreground



Chip-carved type peaked background



The classic low-relief treatment creates a bold appearance



Fretted background

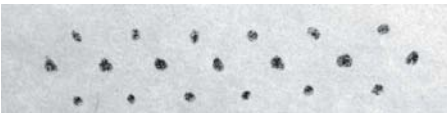
PREPARING A DESIGN

We are fortunate to live in a time when boundless information is close at hand. Millions of pictures of all types of Celtic knotwork are accessible on the internet and myriad excellent texts are

available which explain in depth the processes of construction involved in this art. For preparing your own drawings for carving, a number of methods can be utilised as shown here...

Drawing with dots or a grid

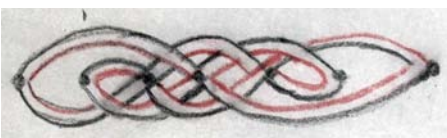
This is the classic method of drawing up Celtic knotwork where a grid of dots is used to develop the framework around which the knot will be drawn. It is a precise and mechanical way to make a wide variety of knots and is the one taught in the best Celtic art books.



A measured framework of dots is developed to outline the framework of the knot



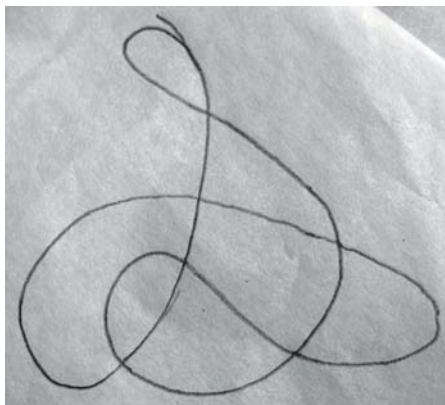
The dots are joined with curved lines, the layout of which dictate the pattern of the resultant knotwork



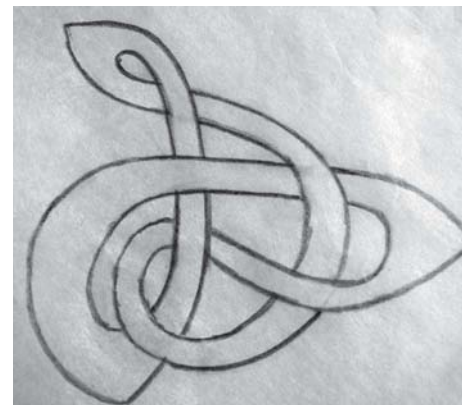
The lines are widened and the intersections formed to create the finished knot

Freehand drawing

This method is considerably more challenging as it is very difficult to freehand knotwork that looks nicely balanced and flows properly.



A quick sketch forms the outline of the knot



The completed knot, ready for carving

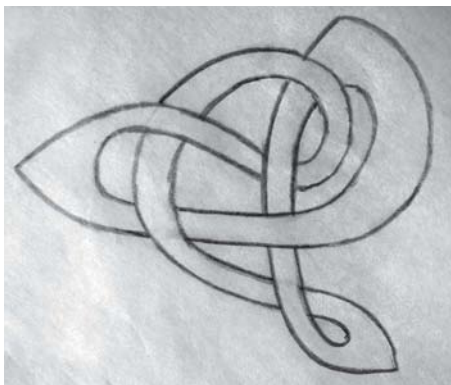
Copying

Tracing or copying out knotwork from existing examples are both great ways to follow the footsteps of the masters and to discover how and why the various knots work as they do. If you just want to get straight to carving without the studying, a photocopy glued to the work piece will save a great deal of time. However, please be careful not to copy the work of currently practising artists if you intend to market your resulting carvings as this is both illegal and unethical.

➔ Repetition in design

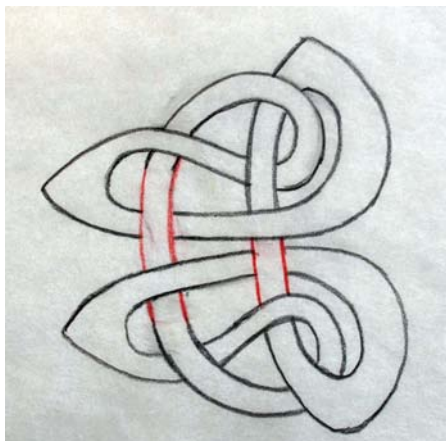
A good deal of Celtic knotwork utilises repetition of a single, small pattern to build up larger, more involved panels and borders. The following method illustrates a simple way by which carvers who are not particularly proficient or confident with a pencil can utilise simple repetition to create larger and more intricate patterns without relying on geometry or skilled penmanship:

1. Begin with a simple closed knot and then open it to reveal a pair of open ends.



1. Simple single closed knot

2a. Mirror image the first knot with the same knot opened at the same point. **2b.** Re-join the two open ends being careful to realign all the overs and unders. A note of caution here: if you use tracing paper to copy the original knots, the overs and unders will be out and need to be adjusted to be completely opposite to the original knot. This will ensure that when they are rejoined, the regularity of the pattern will be retained.

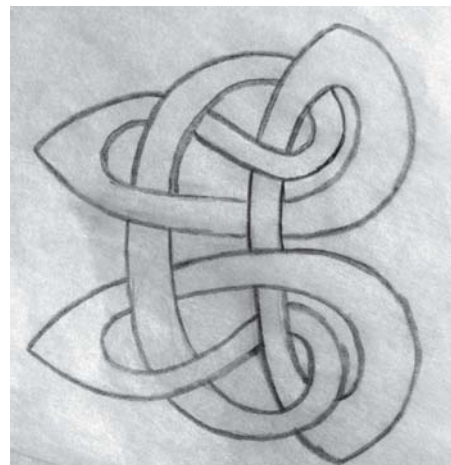


2a. A small section of the single knot is removed to open two lines. These lines, in red, are reconnected to a second opened knot

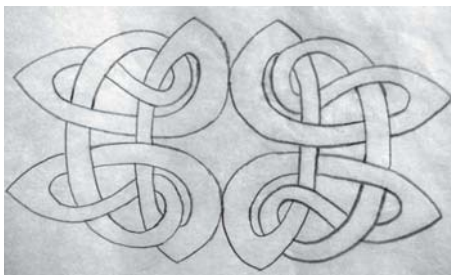
3. Mirror image the enlarged knot to create the appearance of a four-part knot. The resultant knot can be left as is or it can be joined to form an unbroken knot.

4. Things get a bit more complex as more strands are opened and then rejoined, so work slowly and carefully!

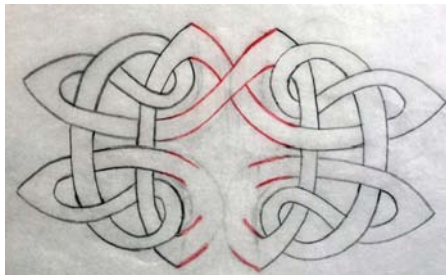
5. The finished four-knot panel looks wonderfully complex and a casual viewer will likely never guess how it has been built up. ▶



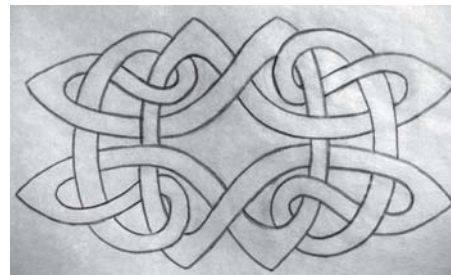
2b. The two single knots are reconnected to make a double knot



3. Two double knots mirror imaged but not connected to form a four-knot arrangement



4. The red lines in this diagram show the double knot sections opened and then joined together to form a single large knot panel



5. The properly connected four-knot arrangement makes an exciting complete knot

Next issue

In the concluding part of his Celtic series, David Western explores the carving process in more detail, showing how doming, hollowing and curving knotwork can be fun and provide the basis for stunning ornaments, brooches and jewellery. He'll also have some useful advice for beginners and some top tips about how to get out of trouble should your Celtic project leave you tied up in knots.



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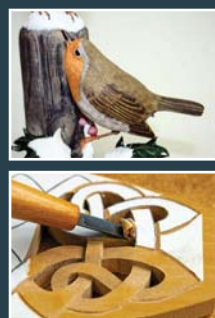
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Carve a seasonal pair of robins

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Duane Cartwright carves a fun squirrel and feeder



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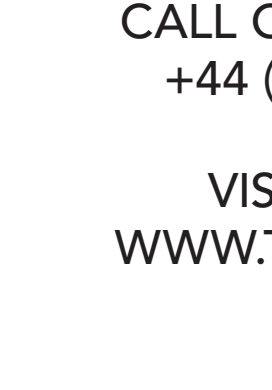
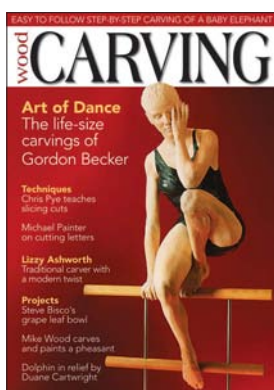
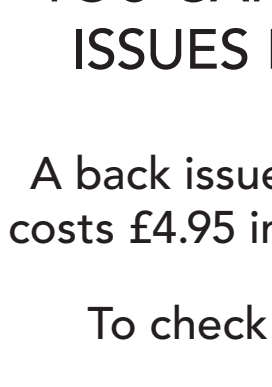
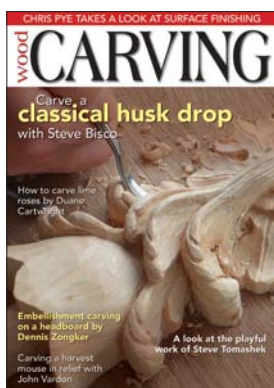
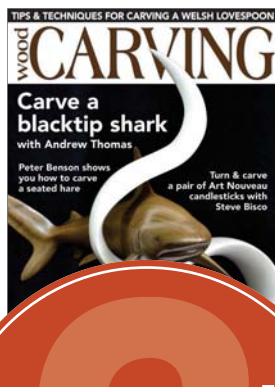


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Squirrel and feeder

Duane Cartwright carves a fun squirrel and feeder, perfect for your garden

This carving is based on a red squirrel, which is why I decided to use cherry (*Prunus serotina*) wood for the piece. There are more than 200 species of squirrel worldwide, however, so find photos, etc. of the species you wish to carve. You might even find a squirrel to match the colour of a piece of wood you wish to use! The possibilities are endless.

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...

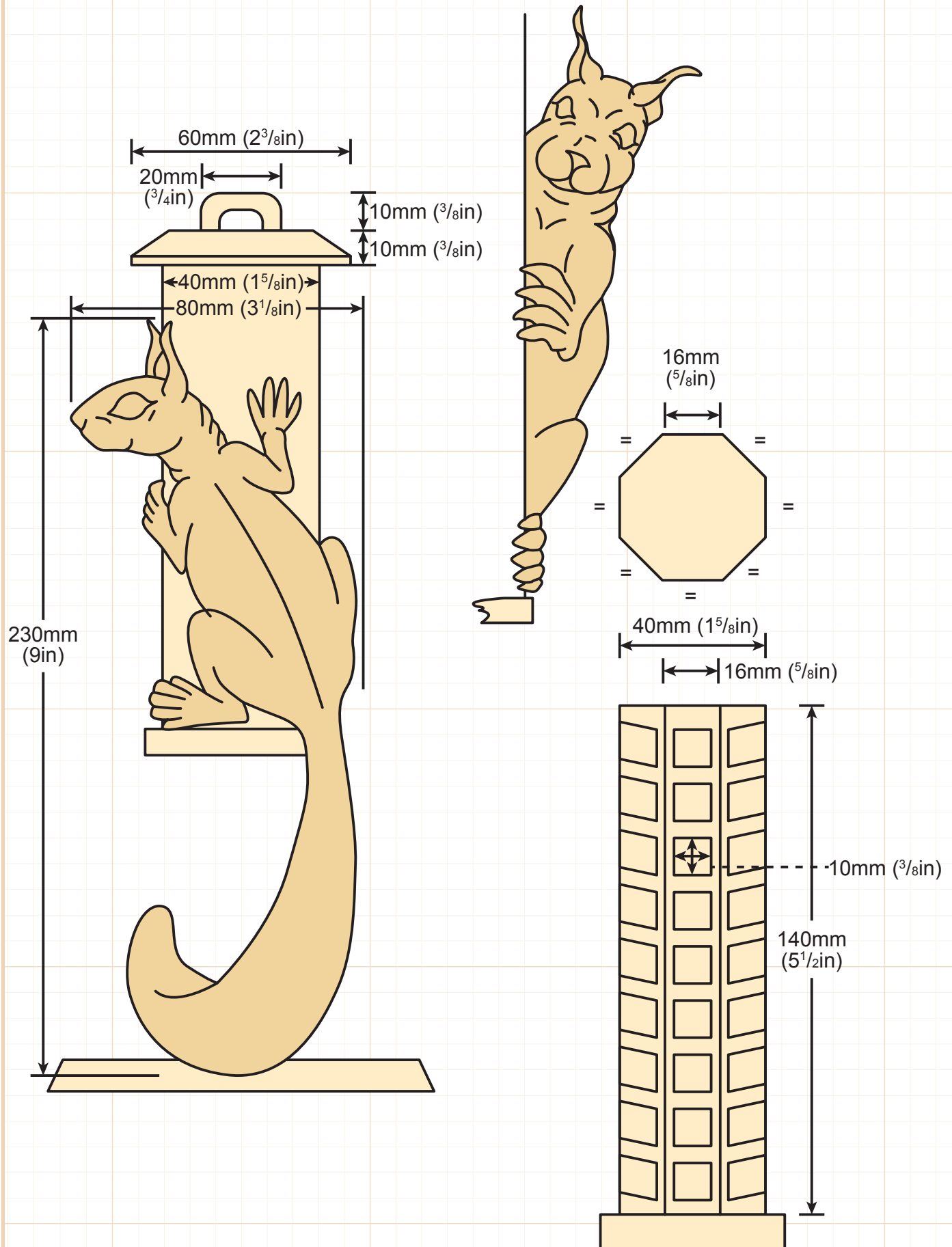
- Bandsaw/coping saw
- Dividing callipers
- 30mm, 5mm and 2mm drill bits
- No.1, 8mm
- No.1, 15mm
- No.2-3, 20mm
- No.5, 3mm
- No.5, 8mm
- No.6, 8mm
- No.7, 6mm
- No.9, 5mm
- No.9, 14mm
- No.11, 2mm
- No.11, 3mm
- 2mm 'v'-tool
- Carving knife
- Plasticine/clay for marquette
- 150, 240, 320 and 400 grit abrasives

Wood:

- American black cherry @ 220 x 85 x 52mm
- Basswood (*Tilia americana*) @ 150 x 40 x 40mm, 50 x 60mm square and 25 x 50 square
- Plus a piece of wood for a base/plinth

Design

When I came up with the idea to carve a squirrel and feeder I had to decide whether to carve from a single block of wood or to make it from different species of wood. As you can tell, I chose to go with the latter. I then had to decide on whether to have the feeder as the main part of the carving and have the squirrel hanging from it – if I had turned the feeder on a lathe I would have turned a stem and base to the feeder. I decided for this project, partly on the presumption the majority of readers would not have access to a lathe, not to use the lathe and to carve the squirrel and feeder with traditional carving tools.



➔ **1** Make a marquette model of the squirrel to use as reference while bolstering in the squirrel

2 To carve the feeder cut the blank 40mm square, then draw a centreline down each face. Mark out 8mm on both sides of the centreline so you have a 16mm strip in the centre of each face. Make a simple jig to help cut the corners from the feeder – get a square strip of wood and cut it at 45° down its length, creating two 45° triangle strips. Glue these side-by-side onto a piece of plywood. Trim the four corners of the feeder to create eight equal 16mm sides

3 Sand each face, then using a 30mm drill bit, drill out the centre of the feeder. Due to the depth of the feeder drill from one end and then from the other. If needed use a rasp or sandpaper to clean up the centre

4 Using your finger and thumb as a guide, draw some lines 3mm in, down the edges of the feeder, then measure and mark these off into 10mm squares. Drill out the centres of the squares

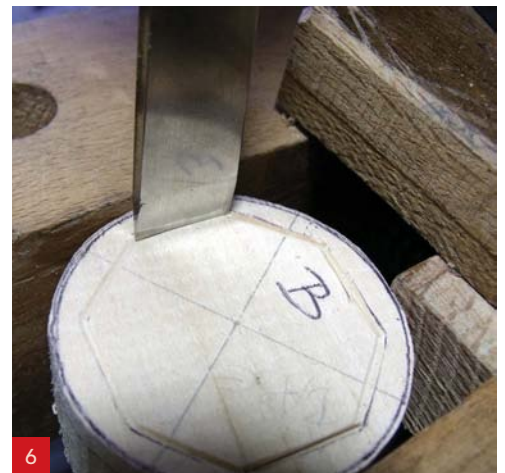
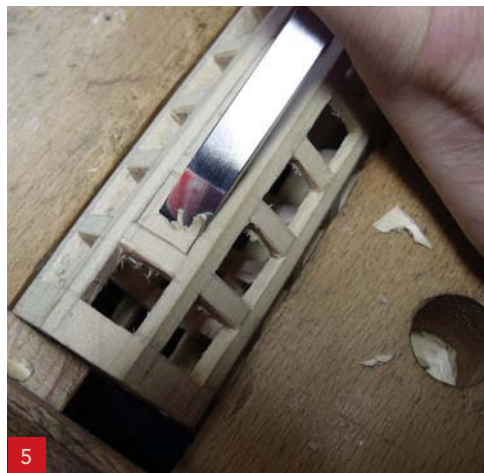
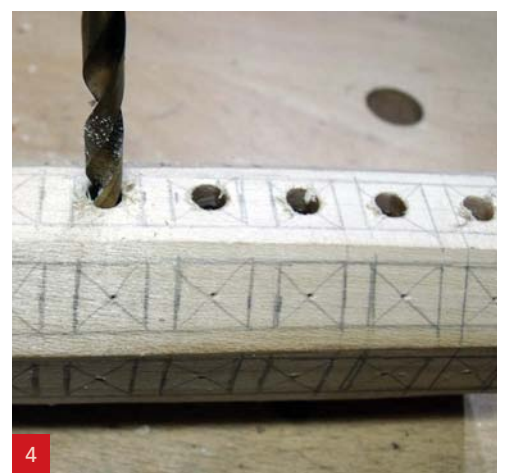
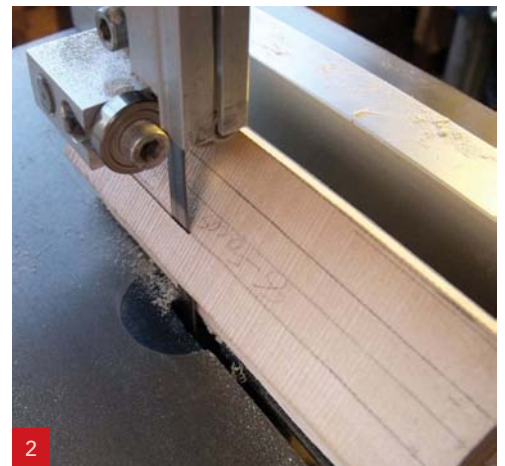
5 Using a chisel cut out 10mm square holes. Leave one square whole with just the pilot hole in it as this will rest against the squirrel's underside, to secure it to the feeder. Hold the feeder against the squirrel and mark a square that best rests against the squirrel's underside – the square not to carve out

6 For the top cut out a 60mm round lid and a 50mm round base, then mark them so you know which is top and bottom. Place the feeder onto the centre of the base and draw around it. Next cut out a recess in the base so the feeder fits in tight

7 Do the same with the lid/top, then find the centre. Mark out a hoop at 20 x 10mm and carve down around the hoop to a depth of 10mm. Bevel the lid so the outside edge is 5mm thick, then drill and hollow the hoop. Clean up and trim the width to 5mm wide

Carving the squirrel

8 Cut the profile using a bandsaw – only cut out the top half for now. With the carving secure in a vice, hold the feeder to the underside of the squirrel and check it from all angles. Once happy, draw around the edge of the feeder

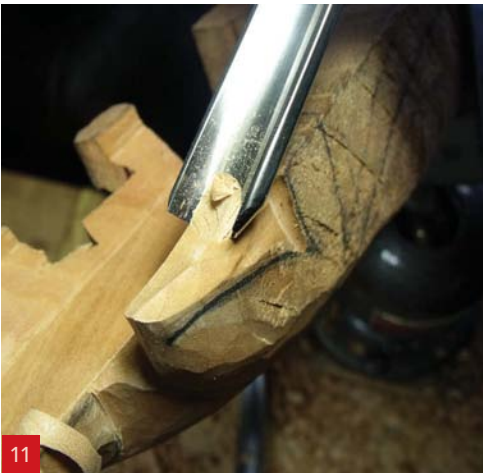




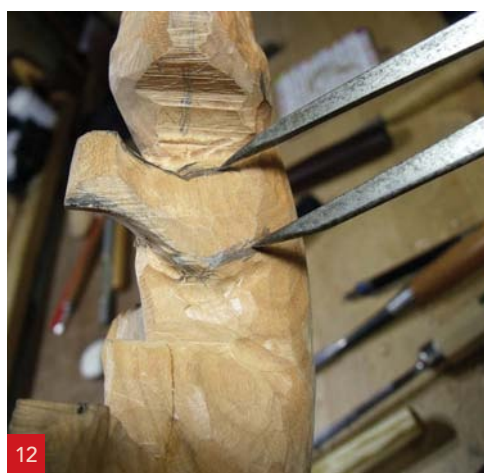
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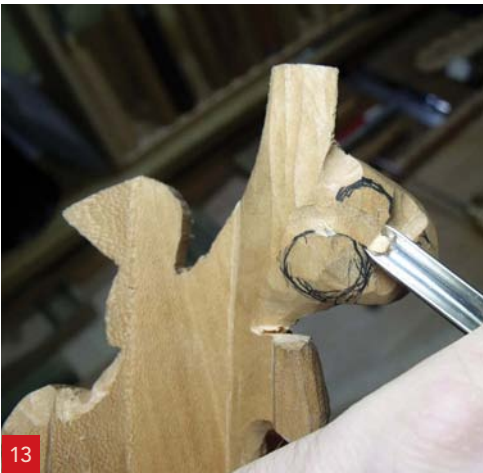
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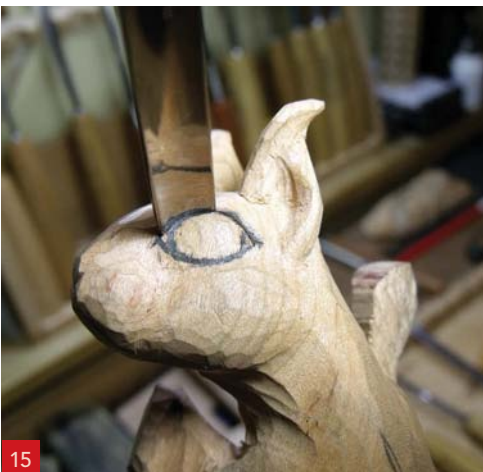
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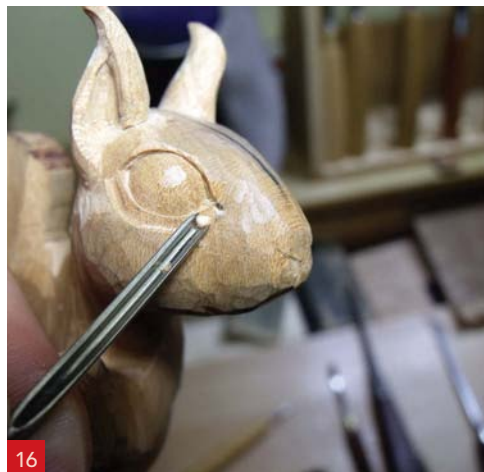
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14



15



16

9 Carve out the waste. Stop regularly to check how the feeder fits. Carve the underside of the squirrel to match the feeder – you want a nice tight fit – and carve it to a depth that the squirrel's paws will wrap almost halfway around the feeder

10 When the feeder fits nicely and you're happy with how the squirrel holds onto the feeder, draw in the spine of the squirrel and from the spine, using dividing callipers, mark out the placement of the limbs and paws

11 Using various gouges, carefully take away the waste wood revealing the knees and paws, stop often and check how the limbs fit with the feeder

12 Using dividing callipers, measure the width and length of the limbs, then use a deep gouge to carve them in – by using a deep gouge rather than a 'v'-tool; it will allow more freedom to change or move a limb if you need to

13 Now you need to start bolstering in the head. First, draw a centreline along the top of the head and mark out the placement of the eyes and other facial features. When you're happy use a No.9, 5mm gouge or similar and bolster in the head. Carve around the cheeks, then the eyes and blend them together with a medium gouge

14 Redraw the eyes, nose and ears in-place. When you're happy with the placement of the facial features use a coping saw to cut out inbetween the ears. Use a hooked skew and gouges to shape the ears. Do check your reference material regularly on how the ears look, as different species of squirrel can vary greatly

15 Now start to cut in the eyes and nose. Use the best-fitting gouge to the shape of the top of the eyelid and cut in creating a stop cut, then with a shallow gouge carve the eye up to the stop cut you just created

16 Now draw in and with the best-fitting gouge, cut in the bottom part of the eyelid. Then from the top of the eye carve down to the stop cut you just created. With a skew or similar carve in the corners of the eye, rounding it as you go. The last touch to the eye is to carve a shallow groove under the eye

PROJECT

Squirrel and feeder

17 Now carve the front paws, but be careful of grain direction, which should have the grain running across the paw. Use a 'v'-tool or veiner to separate the fingers – front paws have four fingers and back paws have five toes

18 Once the majority of the squirrel is carved, use a coping saw to remove the waste wood from under the back paws to the base of the tail

19 Use a pen to mark out the tip of the tail. Then using a deep gouge, bolster in the tail. Keep in mind where the screws will be

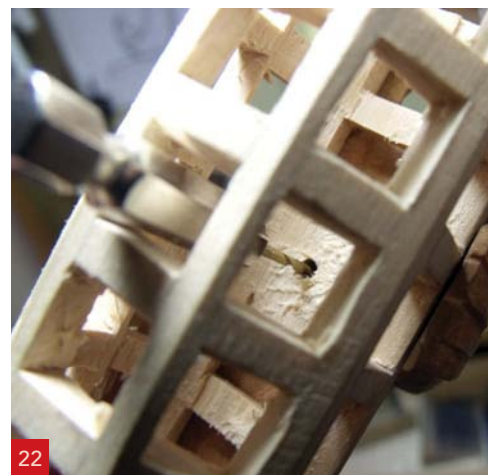
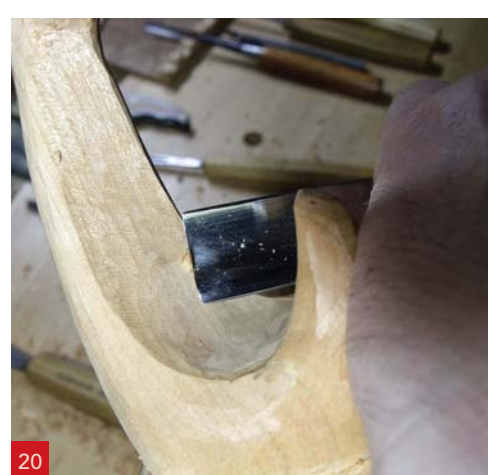
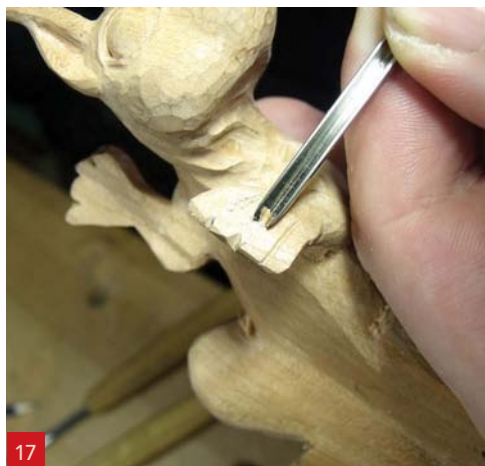
20 Carve the tail and finish shaping around the back of the legs. Keep an eye on the thickness of the base of the tail – the thicker the tail, the stronger the carving will be. Use a shallow gouge to smooth off the tail, finish its profile and create a flat area to the inside curve of the tail

21 With the carving complete, remove the squirrel from the vice and trim the waste from the bottom of the tail. Sand the piece, starting with 150 grit or similar – sand with the grain as much as possible. Brush down the carving before moving onto the next grit

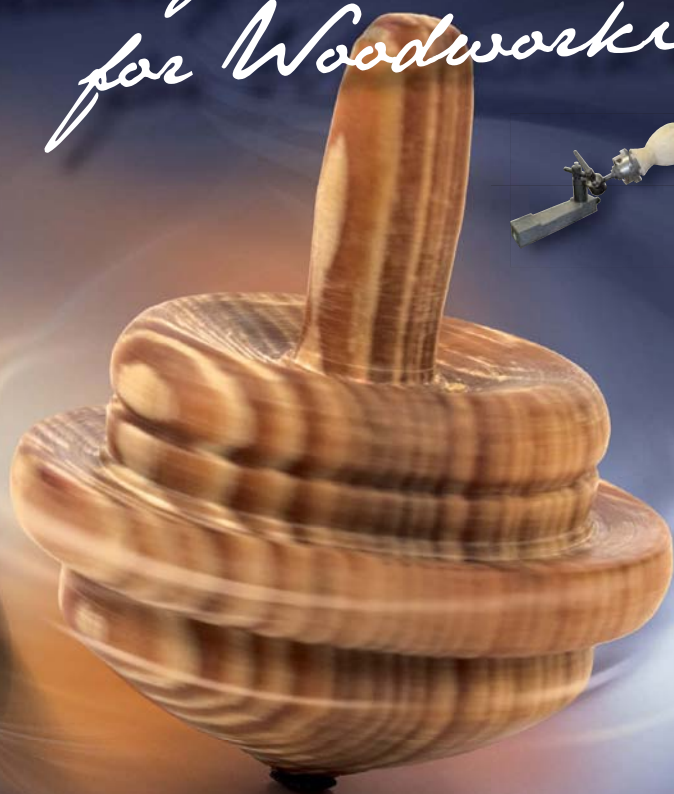
22 With the feeder and squirrel sanded, use a coat of sanding sealer. To attach the feeder to the squirrel drill a pilot hole through the uncarved square in the feeder. Put the top and bottom onto the feeder and with an elastic band temporarily attach the feeder to the squirrel. Make any last adjustments and when you're happy with the placement of the feeder, drill the pilot hole through the pilot hole in the feeder into the underside of the squirrel

23 I used real bird food inside the feeder, mixed with PVA wood glue. Leave the mixture until the glue has just started to set and pack it in through the top of the feeder. Once the glue has set, brush some more glue over the seeds to fill any gaps. Now make a base for the squirrel. Once the base is cut to shape and sanded, drill a pilot hole through the base into the bottom of the squirrel, then apply glue and screw together to secure. Use your finest abrasive to cut back the sanding sealer. Give the carving a couple of coats of finish and you're done

24 The finished carving



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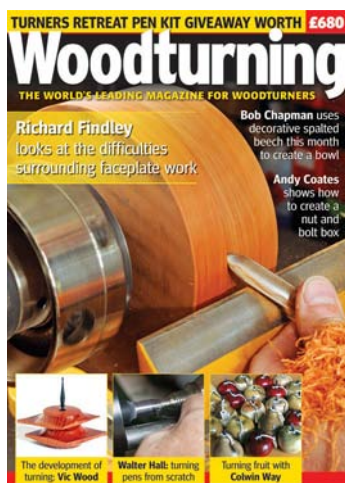
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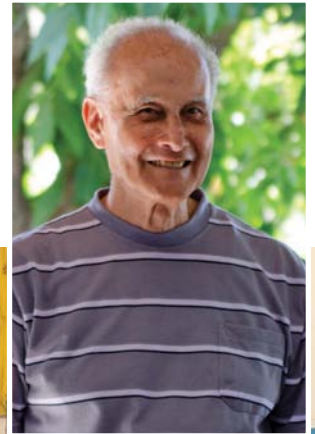
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In the workshop with... Benny Aharon

The Israeli woodcarver on branches, Beethoven and building big



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENNY AHARON



Benny Aharon worked in the furniture industry for more than 40 years. After retiring, he set up a studio in his home in Tel Aviv, Israel, where he carves portraits of famous personalities. Recently he has also undertaken some ambitious large-scale projects, which he tells us about here.

How, when and why did you start carving?

I have always been impressed by trees and their forms and their different structures. You can use your imagination to follow the development of the branches and their movement and see what you want. After being involved in the furniture industry for more than 40 years, visiting international fairs and dealing with timber and wood, I loved this material, its smell and structures, and when I retired I decided to continue creating in wood so I chose carving.

What and who are the greatest influences in your work?

Famous artists in sculpture are the role models I wished to pursue, adding my own style and also responding to the initial form of the wood. I began by carving famous statesmen, such as Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle, Gandhi, Barack Obama and Anwar Sadat, artist Leonardo Da Vinci and actor Charlie Chaplin among others.

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

If I have to give a sage piece of advice to someone I would say: "Hey, stop a moment. Look at this fantastic branch, don't you think it's worth trying to create something from this?" To my fellow carvers, I'd say remember that the results of the job bring a great satisfaction, it makes the sometimes heavy-duty work worthwhile.



Carved portrait of Charles de Gaulle

What music and which book are you currently into?

While I'm in my workshop I listen to classical music such as Beethoven's 9th [Symphony] or the tenors. I generally read biographies of famous artists, such as Camille Claudel, and Pablo Picasso, or biographies of statesmen.

What is your silliest mistake?

My silliest mistake was to retire at 75 years old and not much before!

What has been your greatest challenge so far?

My greatest challenge in carving was to accomplish this giraffe project that someone asked me to do. I thought it would be about 50cm high but no ... he told me it must be more than 2.5m to reach the garden fence!

Is there any one specific thing on your turning to-do list?

I intend to prepare an exhibition of sculptures roughly produced with raw pieces of wood.

Tell us about the piece you are currently working on.

I am just finishing a pair of flamingos made in the same way of gluing together pieces of wood. I remember seeing this technique in a previous issue of *Woodcarving*, where Chris Pye used it to create a Buddha.

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

I think the tool I ultimately need the most is an Arbortech including the different parts for grinding, sanding and so on.

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

If I could make some alterations to my workshop it would be to increase dust collection. Normally I work inside while listening to music, but when I have to sand I work outside.

What is your favourite type of carving?

My favourite type of carving is creating



Carved jacket and accessories

the movements and expressions of human beings.

If you had one wish what would you wish for?

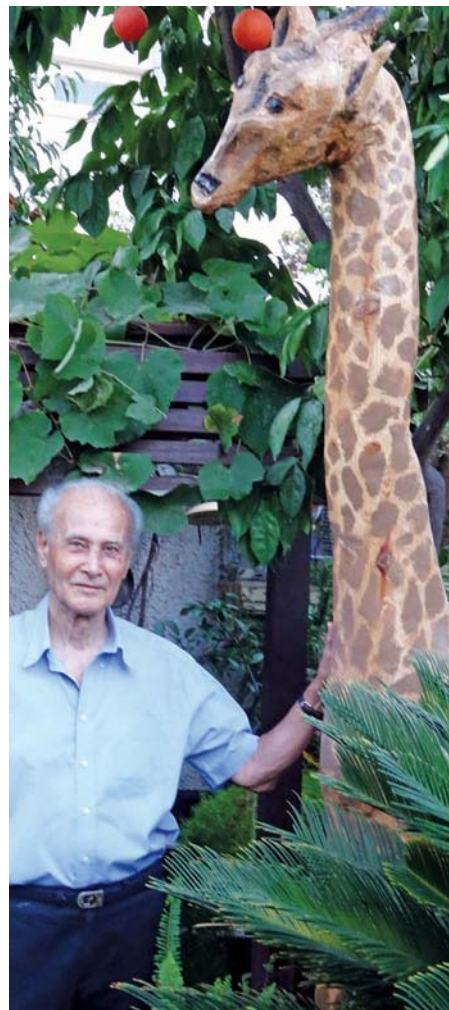
One wish would be to visit the studios of top artists and learn from them how to make better creations.

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

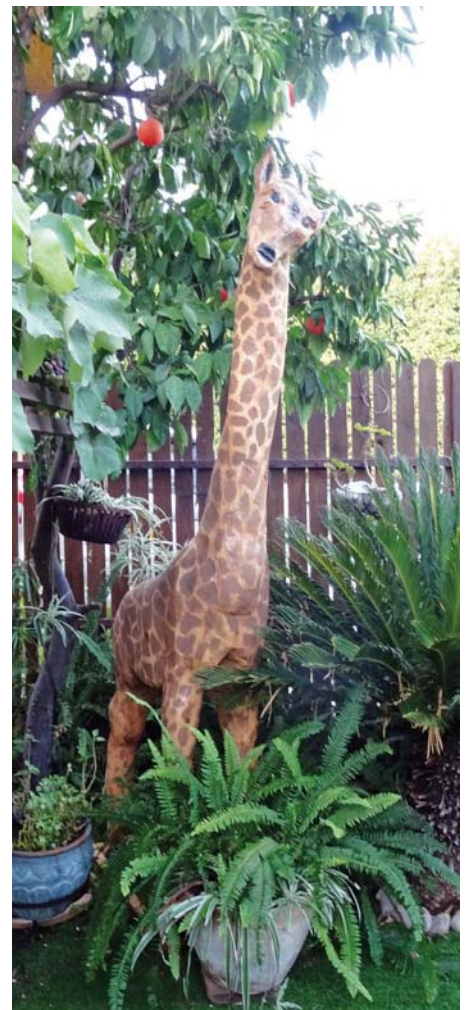
Some of the new innovations in sharpening tools. ▶

Contact

Email: aharonbeni7@gmail.com



Benny stuck his neck out to create a giraffe...



... that had to stand 2.5m tall!

LIKES AND DISLIKES

Likes

- I especially like carving human expressions.
- I love to smell the odour of wood, to enjoy its structure and, from time to time, its tremendous natural design
- Carving is creative and it is wonderful!

Dislikes

- Dust

The carver's toolbag

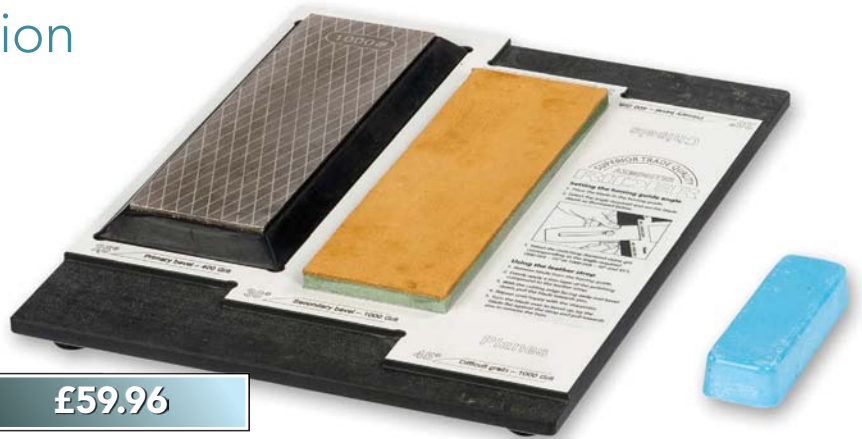
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Contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery
Tel: 03332 406 406
Web: www.axminster.com

Kutzall burrs

Kutzall's burrs are well known to carvers. The manufacturers claim they are: "...handmade out of tungsten-carbide for maximum durability, and are engineered to efficiently produce clean, finished cuts without dulling or loading. This means you'll spend more time carving, and less time fussing with your tools."

Kutzall lists seven shapes, which are available in 1/4in or 1/2in shanks, to choose from to suit most situations. It is looking for international stockists, but in the meanwhile the products can be bought direct from Kutzall.



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ProDesign smock

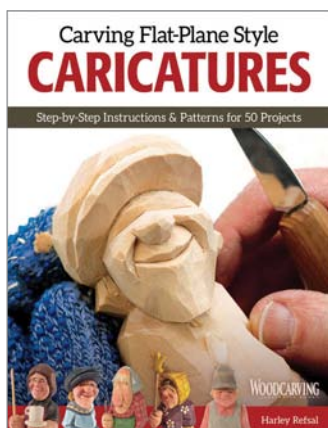
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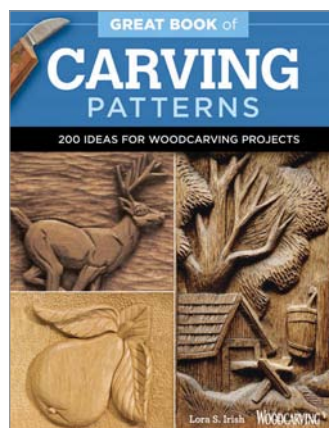
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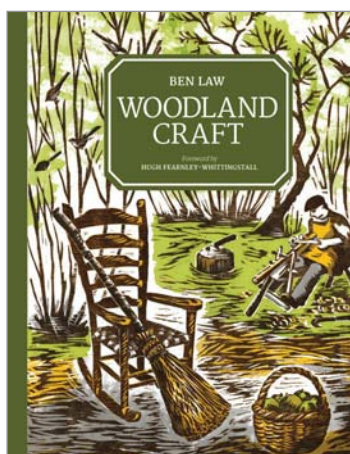
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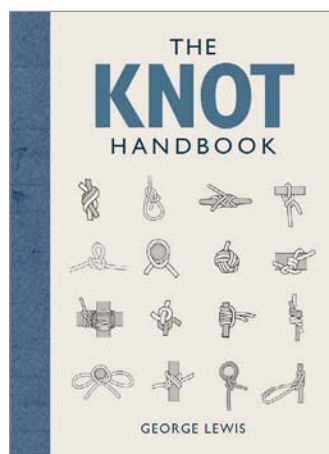
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The Knot Handbook

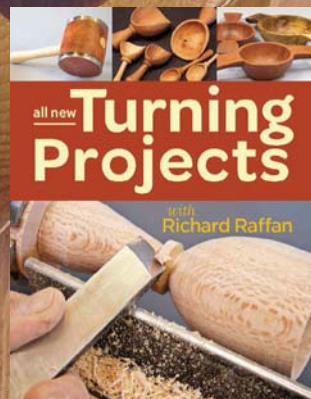
This book shows you how to tie 50 knots. Some have been chosen for their fame, some for their beauty and others because they are knots everyone should know how to tie. On every great theme, there are always possible variations, and, as the text makes clear, from time to time people come up with new effective methods of tying. Many of the knots featured are strongly associated with sailing, but even the saltiest of them have extensive applications on land. Adhesive tape and Velcro have their uses, but they have not rendered knots redundant; no technological advance ever will.

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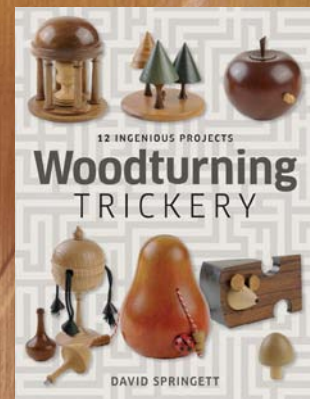
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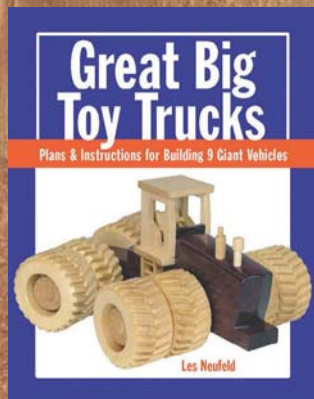
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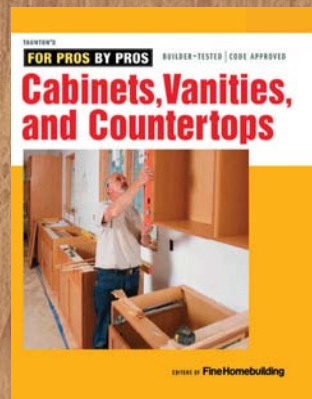
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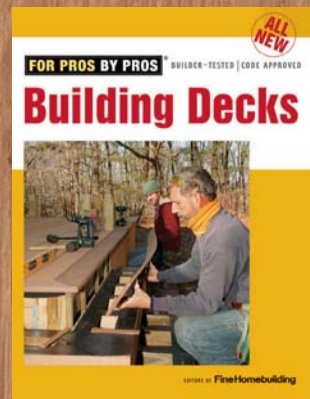
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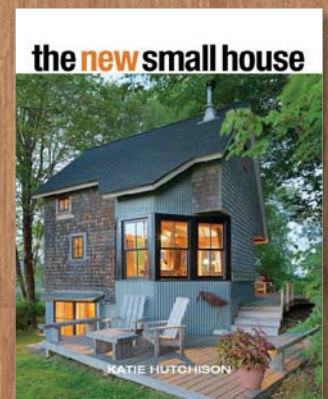
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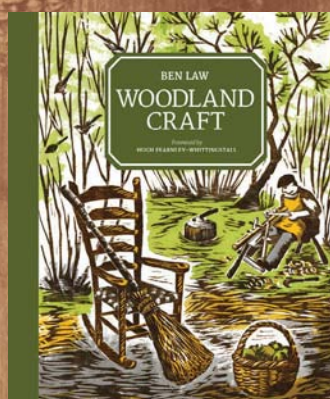
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Aztec Calendar Stone

A truly iconic carving, the Aztec Calendar Stone in Mexico shines a light on a complex and distant civilisation while continuing to influence the art and crafts of today

The richly carved Aztec calendar stone, also known as the Sun Stone or Stone of the Five Eras, is said to date back to 1479. A massive carving, it measures 358cm (11.7ft) in diameter, is 98cm (3.2ft) thick and its weight is estimated at about 24 tons.

After the Spanish Conquest in 1521, the calendar was buried under the central square of Mexico City for more than 300 years. It was rediscovered in December 1790 during repairs on Mexico City Cathedral. For a while it remained on display in the Western Tower of the Metropolitan Cathedral before being moved in 1885 to its current home in Mexico City's National Anthropology Museum.

Dedicated to the sun god, the calendar is made from basalt and was once part of the architectural complex of the Temple Mayor. It would originally have been laid flat on the ground and possibly anointed with blood sacrifices. The calendar is a brilliant combination of artistry and geometry and reflects the Aztec understanding of time and space as wheels within wheels. The detailed surface of the stone combines

the understanding of the gods that the people had created over the centuries as well as their observations of the heavens.

At its centre is a representation of the sun god Tonatiuh (the Day Sun), Yohualtonatiuh (the Night Sun) or the primordial earth monster Tlaltecuhltli. Around the central face at four points are the other four suns which successively replaced each other after the gods Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca struggled for control of the cosmos.

On either side of the central face are two jaguar heads or paws, each clutching a heart, representing the terrestrial realm. The band running immediately around the suns is segmented into the 20 Aztec day names. Then there is a decorative ring surrounded by another ring depicting symbols that represent turquoise and jade, illustrating the equinoxes and solstices, and the colours of the heavens.

The two heads at the bottom centre represent fire serpents and their bodies run around the perimeter of the stone with each ending in a tail. The four cardinal and the inter-cardinal directions are also indicated with larger and lesser points respectively.

The tonalpohualli, or day count, consists of a cycle of 260 days, with each signified by a combination of a number from one to 13, and one of the 20 day signs. With each new day, both the number and day sign would be incremented, with the 13-day period representing a kind of Aztec week. Among the signs carved to illustrate each of the 20 day signs were crocodiles, eagles and lizards, while 'wind' and 'rain' were represented by images of their associated gods, Ehecatl and Tlaloc. There is some variation in the way the day signs were drawn or carved.

The calendar, which draws thousands of tourists to Mexico's National Anthropology Museum every year, continues to influence South American art and culture today and remains a symbol of the continent for the wider world; countries such as Hungary and Australia used it as a backdrop on their stamps to mark the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico. And while experts continue to debate the exact purpose and meaning of the calendar stone, what cannot be disputed is that the Aztecs bequeathed to the world a carving of beauty, complexity and huge historical significance. ▶

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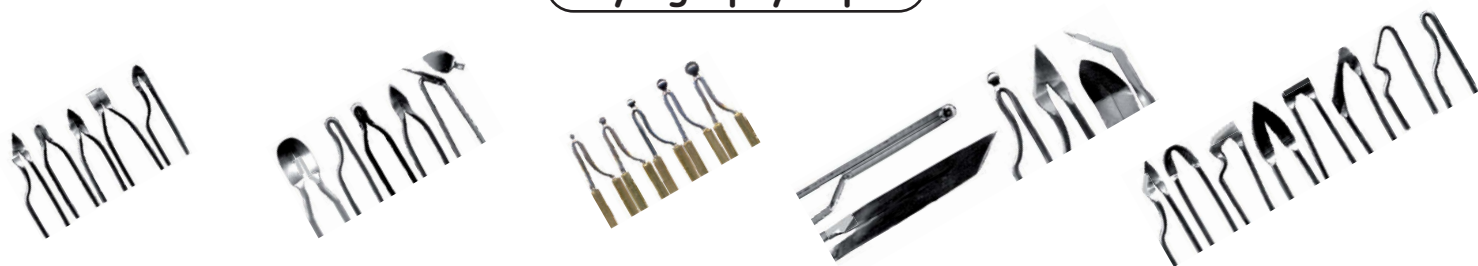
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