

5 ESSENTIAL KNIFE CARVING TECHNIQUES EXPLORED

WOOD CARVING

Christmas fun

- A shelf sitting reindeer
- Santa's helper
- Viking-style reindeer
- Mouse letter opener

How to carve
a fruit and
flower festoon

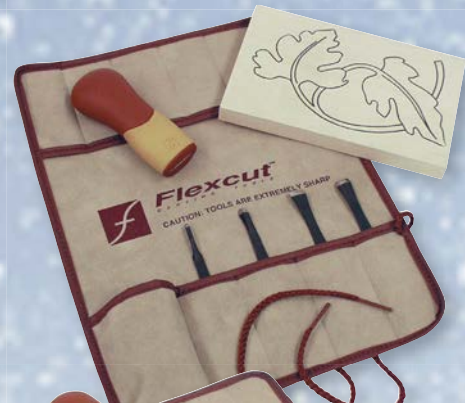
50 GIFT IDEAS FOR CHRISTMAS

10 commonly
encountered
carving problems

Nancy Tuttle and her
driftwood carvings that
'make people laugh and smile'

Carve your own
wood pigeon

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What are you making for Christmas?



Christmas is always a fun time of year. The time to be with friends and family and for carvers it is the time to pass on some of the lovely items made as personalised gifts.

The reality is that these gifts will have been made or started a long while before December and I know of one person who starts making their 'Christmas' items in April. How is that for planning? I wonder if he gets bored with the concept of Christmas when it finally arrives? I'll ask him next time I see him. I must admit to starting my Christmas items

in October. I only make a few and they are well received and I must admit to having fun while making them. I have encountered people saying they love the items, but have no space for them, so Christmas goodies are often seasonal, can be packed away and brought out and displayed at the appropriate times. I know I don't have enough space to display all the items I have so a visual change is welcome at this time of year. Although, I do hate packing everything away again. Oh well, less of the bah humbug. Christmas tree ornaments, shelf whimsies novelty candleholders are but some of the fun things one can make. I say fun because they provide a break from what many people

carve at other times of the year and do make me smile. I can't remember the last time an abstract sculpture made me smile. They do however make me think, ponder and analyse. That doesn't happen with the whimsical folksy, humorous items. So, if you haven't made anything yourself yet, go on and give it a go, there's still a little bit of time to make some Christmas items for friends and families.

If you do make some, send me some pictures. I would love to see what you have made.

Have fun, Mark

To get in touch please email me:
markb@thegmcgroup.com



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News & events...

We talk to the BDWCA and bring you the latest news and events from the woodcarving community.



British Bird Carving Champion 2010,
Wallcreeper by David Askew

BDWCA: Regional Group Competition

The copy deadline for this issue unfortunately comes just before our Annual Show and Competition held in Bakewell, Derbyshire, so news of that will have to wait until next time. However, I can tell you that a wide range of birds, including the starlings which are the subject of the Regional Group Competition this year are eagerly awaiting the event as I write!

Members of the BDWCA generally share two interests, carving and birds. Many became carvers because of their interest in birds, and for many years the Association has exhibited at the British Birdwatching Fair, which is held at Rutland Water Nature Reserve in August.

The BDWCA has, in recent years, had a large double stand at the main entrance to the Art Marquee. One of our constitutional aims is to promote the interest of the art of bird carving both nationally and internationally and the Birdfair provides an ideal opportunity to further these aims. As usual our stand

had a wide range of carvings on display which attracted a lot of interest from the visitors, many of whom could not believe that they are created from wood.

Back in 2010 BDWCA member David Askew won the coveted award of British Bird Carving Champion with his carving of a Wallcreeper, which was creeping towards a small moth. Since then David has often included a moth as part of his carving and recently started using up small offcuts of wood to carve and paint different moths. He brought some along to the show and they attracted a lot of attention, and flew off the table to new homes!

BDWCA member Roger Francis kindly provided a Green Woodpecker for us to raffle. It was very popular and it was interesting to see four previous raffle winners coming to buy tickets to see if they could add it to their collection.

Those members who attended, while being perhaps a little tired, felt an inner satisfaction as yet another successful Show came to its conclusion. Setting up the

stand, followed by three days talking and demonstrating, makes for a tiring but pleasurable long weekend.



A view of the BDWCA stand in the Art Marquee

For further information visit www.bdwca.org.uk. Contact Membership Secretary Janet Nash on 01442 247 610. Alternatively, please email: pam.wilson@bdwca.org.uk



Man Shed session leaders outside Man Shed

NEW ESHER WOODCARVING GROUP

A new woodcarving group is meeting Friday mornings at the Princess Alice Hospice in Esher. The initial group of enthusiasts were all adult learners at a local authority woodcarving class in Coulsdon, that was a victim of budget cuts earlier this year. "We've been carving for years and were disappointed when the Coulsdon class closed," said Peter Prowse, who negotiated the agreement to use the new woodworking workshop at the Man Shed in Princess Alice Hospice in Esher. "Although woodcarving is a hobby you can pursue on your own at home, it's more rewarding if you can do it in a group."

Some members of the new group have also applied to work as volunteers at the Hospice, offering an introduction to woodcarving to people attending the day centre and others for

a modest fee and subject to available spaces. They also offer this to carers and bereaved relatives who can benefit from getting involved with a creative activity in a social context.

Princess Alice Hospice's Man Shed is part of the Men's Sheds Association. It's a vital resource enabling the Hospice to support for people affected by a terminal illness. Kathy Birch, Day Hospice Manager at the Hospice, said: "this as an ideal opportunity to partner with the local community and encourage volunteers to share their skills."

Anybody interested in joining the new woodcarving group should contact Peter Prowse: peter.prowse@waylines.co.uk.

Anybody interested in volunteering to help at the Princess Alice Hospice in Esher should contact Zoe Byrne: zoebyrne@pah.org.uk.

Fruit Belt Woodcarvers

Fruit Belt Woodcarvers are hosting their annual show in Cass Country Fairgrounds, Michigan. Over the two days, there will be door prizes, sales and competitions.

Among these events, there will be vendors in attendance, and Cedar Bird Shoppe – Tools and Supplies will also be there too.

The Fruit Belt Woodcarvers Club provides a forum for learning the art of woodcarving in the classroom, in competitions, and in a relaxed and fun social environment at regular meetings. The club's goal is to assist, support and encourage each member in reaching their full potential as a woodcarver.

The Fruit Belt Woodcarvers encourage appreciation for woodcarving as an art form to the general public and to surrounding communities with their annual Woodcarving Show. This would be a great show for those interested in taking up woodcarving!

When: 5–6 November, 2016

Where: Cass Country Fairgrounds, 590 North O'Keefe Street, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031

Web: fruitbeltwoodcarvers.wordpress.com



Wooddale Carvers were at THE GREAT YORKSHIRE SHOW promoting The BWA while demonstrating carving to the public. It went well and the Wooddale Carvers were kept busy the whole time; and the show was a success with large attendance. The Judge for the Woodcarving competition was Mr D. Shire, Darlington. He awarded 1st to Mr G. Thompson for his relief carving of the Brontë Family. Mr Thompson also scooped the Bill Hodgson trophy for the most liked carving as voted by the public.

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

NEWS IN BRIEF

• Harrogate Show

The 'North of England' Woodworking & Power Tool Show – the Harrogate show as it is affectionally known – takes place on the 18–20 November, 2016 in the newly refurbished Hall one at the Yorkshire Showground. The new hall was officially opened a few weeks ago and will be great for the show with easier access, more catering areas and almost 20% extra exhibition and demonstrator stands. With 40 demonstrators and almost 100 exhibitors on show, this year's show will be something special. Make sure you do not miss it.

Contact: SK Promotions

When: 18–20 November, 2016

Where: Hall 1, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate

Web: www.skpromotions.co.uk

• West Riding Woodcarvers

Woodcarving club, the West Riding Woodcarvers club will for the first time be taking a 6000 x 3000mm stand to the November 2016 North of England Woodworking and Power Tool Show at Harrogate. "Our intention is to borrow back from the Forget-me-Not Children's Hospice, the panel we made for the children," said John Murphy, secretary for the West Riding Woodcarvers. A panel that was featured in *Woodcarving*, issue 141. The West Riding Woodcarvers have raised over £13,000 for the children's hospice and hope this stand will add something different to the show.

Contact: John Murphy

Telephone: 01422 361 109

Web: www.wrwoodcarvers.com

• New Dorset Region of the BWA

South Dorset Woodcarving Club has become a new Regional Meeting of the British Woodcarving Association. They share information and ideas throughout the country and have the opportunity to participate in Regional and National competitions. The club has been running successfully for 14 years and have a small number of vacancies in their membership especially for people with practical skills and an artistic flair. "We all have different tastes, but have a common interest in the absorbing art of woodcarving, and have a free hand in creating our own carvings at our own pace." Although they admit they are not qualified to provide instruction, but do have a lot of experience and will advise starters if they need it. The club meet every Tuesday evening at the Upwey Old School Village Hall from 7–9pm. A tea break provides a chance for a bit of chit chat and exchanging experiences in a friendly environment.

Contacts details and dates of meetings are to be found at www.southdorsetwoodcarvingclub.co.uk

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Christmas fun

- A shelf sitting reindeer
- Santa's helper
- Viking-style reindeer
- Mouse letter opener

**50 GIFT IDEAS
FOR CHRISTMAS**

10 commonly
encountered
carving problems

Carve your own
Totem Pole

9:41 AM

CARVE YOUR OWN THISTLE IN THE ARTS & CRAFTS

WOODCARVING

Totem Pole

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carving and raising
of a totem pole
in Victoria BC

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in cherry

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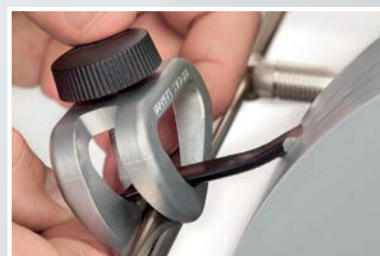
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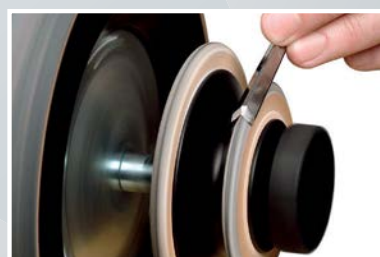
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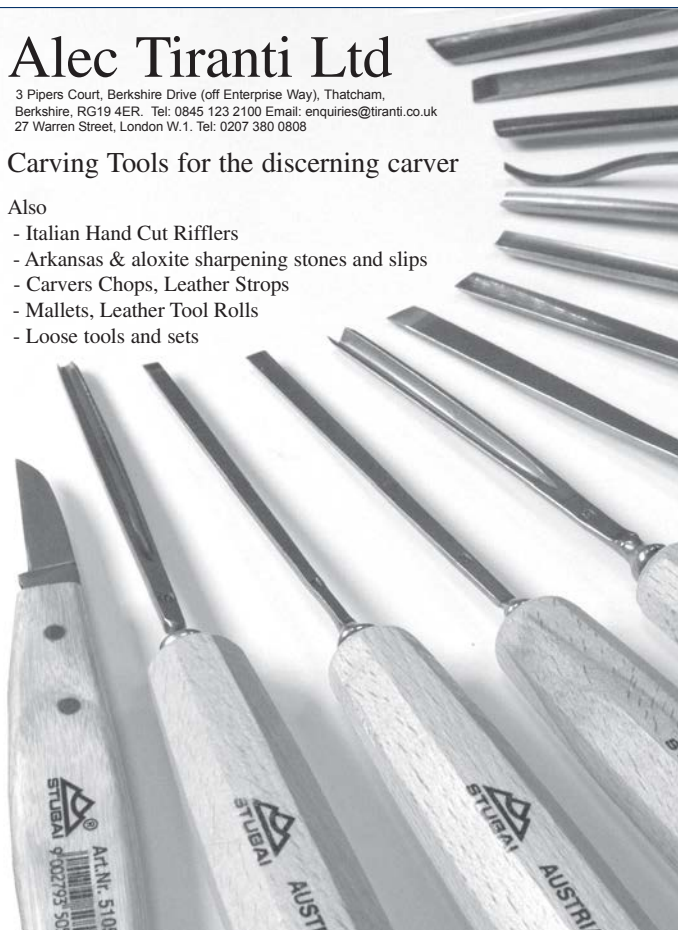
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Christmas fun

In time for Christmas, Peter Benson makes two fun and festive projects



Making things for Christmas enables people to take a break from the norm and make something that is fun. One project is a shelf sitting reindeer. It is designed to be stable on the edge of any shelf without taking up too much room, but can be modified in many ways to suit the carver. This one has been carved in butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) with a minimum of added colour, while the one shown with ram's horn antlers has been carved in jelutong

(*Dyera costulata*). The choice is yours and the variations of design are what you want to make of them.

Santa's little helper is the next project. Again, it is made from jelutong and is easy to make. There are no hard and fast rules about shape, size and design.

Christmas should be a time of fun and enjoyment so even if you are a dedicated serious carver, giving over an hour or two to carve something like this can give other people a lot of enjoyment.

NOTE: This is intended to be a fun project and can be modified in any number of ways – don't just follow these stages, feel free to experiment, and I am sure there are many ways you can improve on what I have shown.

Carving the shelf sitting reindeer

1 For this project, you are going to need:
A bandsaw, or coping saw to rough shape the blank, a carving knife, a drill and bit to drill holes for the antlers and some pipe cleaners. From the pattern shown, either draw this yourself onto card or reproduce it to the size required and then transfer it onto your chosen piece of wood. You will need a piece 100 x 80 x 45mm if you want it the same size as mine

2 Cut out your design with either a bandsaw or coping saw from the side view only as shown. This gives you the scope to turn the head or give the body a twist if you wish to do so. As there is not a great deal of wood to remove I see little to be gained by cutting out a top view, but that is up to you

3 Draw a centreline to ensure that your carving is symmetrical...

4 ... and mark out where you need to remove waste for the head and tail

5 On the side view, draw in the position of the front and back legs so that you don't remove the wood that is needed for the front legs when you shape the head

6 Narrow down the top of the back to form the withers (point where the tips of the shoulder blades meet above the back)

7 Draw in the lines representing the bones of each leg before any further shaping

8 Cut away the waste to define the front and back legs, checking that they are the same length on each side





9



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16

9 Once you have the basic shape of the body and legs, start to shape the head

10 In order to get rid of the waste wood between the head and front legs you will probably find it easier to use a small gouge

11 Move to the back end, shape the tail and hind quarters showing the heels on each side

12 With a small No.9 gouge shape the inside of the ears and cut a recess for the eyes to accept the black pins used for the eyes

13 If you wish to texture the carving, try using a small veiner or No.9 gouge to create a fur like appearance. Keep any tooling as long shallow 's' shapes in the natural direction of the fur. Don't overdo this. It is better to leave it without adding a texture than to do it badly or too much. I oil my carvings at this stage as it makes for cleaner cuts when texturing. I have used boiled linseed oil, wiping off any surplus for a better result

14 Your carving is ready for painting and I suggest that you use very diluted acrylic watercolour. You can always add more colour, but you can't take it off. Seal with satin or matte acrylic varnish before continuing. The oiled finish helps prevent a blotchy result, but the paint needs to be applied before the oil dries completely. Now add the eyes. These are black board pins. Push the pin into the centre of the socket as far as you can and then take it out. Trim the pin down to about 4mm in length and push back into the socket adjusting until it just protrudes. You shouldn't need to glue this in place

15 All that is left is to add the antlers, which I have made from brown pipe cleaners that are easy to shape and will not break. You can, if you wish, shape antlers from ram's horn as shown in the second model, but these are not easy to make and are rather vulnerable

16 Drill top of head and fix antlers – the two finished carvings shown are one in jelutong with a painted finish and ram's horn antlers and the other as described earlier on

Carving Santa's little helper

1 Tools used: a bandsaw or coping saw, carving knife, brush and paints if you choose to colour. Draw the patterns on two sides of your chosen piece of wood. I have chosen a piece of jelutong at 100 x 55 x 55mm, as I wish to paint the finished carving. You can, of course, use whatever timber you wish and make any size

2 Cut out your pattern with a bandsaw or coping saw...

3 ... the pattern is symmetrical from the front view so you don't have to worry about getting the patterns the wrong way round

4 Start by shaping the mushroom taking care to allow enough wood for the feet

5 On figure carvings of any kind I always favour setting out the face as soon as possible getting the angles from the nose backward correct. Start with an angle of 90°

6 Shape the hat and the roundness of the back, taking care to allow wood for the arms

7 Shape the arms and legs spreading the knees to allow for the beard. Then, detail the face, beard and clean up ready for a coat of linseed oil

8 This figure can be a hanging Christmas decoration. With a hole drilled in the bottom it can be made into a bottle stopper with a dowel and cork or a cane topper for the garden. The amount of detail you wish to include and the purpose to which you put it are up to you. Likewise, instead of a toadstool for it to sit on, modify the design and make it even more Christmassy

9 Coat the whole carving with linseed or another oil and wipe off the excess. It is now ready to be given a coat of paint. I used very diluted acrylic water colour. The oil will help the paint to spread evenly

10 The finished piece as a bottle stopper. An alternative would be as a hanging ornament ▶



1



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From the community

Here are just a few letters the Editor has received from you, the readers

Inigo Jones woodcarving

Dear Mark,

In response to one of your reader's letters in 'Round & About'. The section I refer to is Graham Thompson's carving of Grinling Gibbons. It is a really nice piece of work and, as I understand, the most difficult, being a three quarter face.

I have enclosed a mask, that I carved of Inigo Jones, which was given to me to do by the carver who taught me in the 1960s (I apologise for the poor quality). I too, thought maybe I was alone and did not attempt to push the fact of Grinling Gibbons work, as Mr Thompson did, in your magazine, except with other carvers I used to work with. They knew of him, but none, to my knowledge had done a mask, bust or figure of him! In my opinion, I don't believe Grinling Gibbons has been neglected, it's just he was not spoken of as much as Sir Christopher Wren over the years, hence not as well known.

It was good to see Graham Thompson's carving in *Woodcarving* and it may just take up the interest of other carvers also. I hope for all it does!

Kind Regards,
Mike Durrant Inigo Jones



PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE DURRANT

Just a note to say...

Hi Mark,

Just a note to compliment you on Issue 152. In particular, I very much enjoyed Dave Western's article on the Victoria, BC Totem Pole. First Nations carvings are under appreciated in most of the world and they are so very finely carved and finished with precise symmetry. For anyone visiting British Columbia, Canada or Washington State, USA, I highly recommend visiting the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver, BC. Its native art is quite spectacular. Thank you for a wonderful magazine... it is a real stimulus for fine carving.

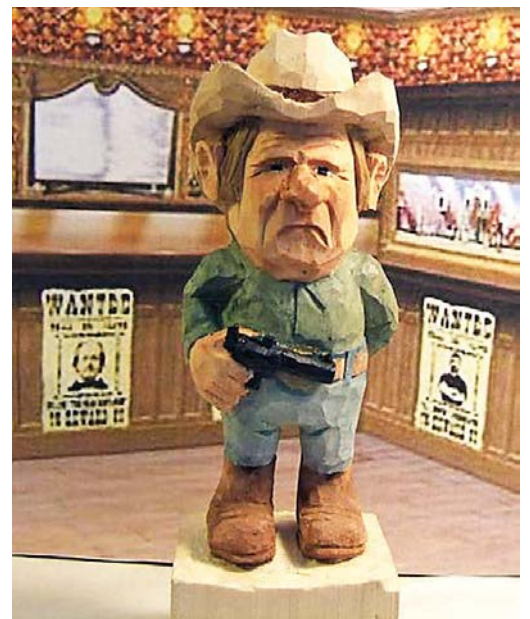
Best, Michael Keller

FROM THE FORUM

Here we share with you the pieces that readers have posted on our *Woodcarving* forum.

If you are interested in the possibility of your piece appearing here, or would simply like feedback and advice on your work, visit www.woodworkersinstitute.com and click on the forum button.

Claude posted something a little different on the Woodworkers Institute. Usually posting Santas, Claude decided to carve a cowboy he's labelled as 'this little gunslinger cowboy.' Claude carved the gunslinger cowboy from basswood and painted it with acrylic paints. It stands at about 153mm tall including the base. Picked as our Members' Choice by Mark Sutton, here's what he had to say about the piece: "I have never had the chance to do any carving, but I can appreciate the work that goes into them, and I found that Claude's Gunslinger Cowboy showed me the intricacies and depth of details required to complete them."



'Gunslinger Cowboy' by Claude

What's the Story?

Behind every carving there is a story. This is the story of Barry Howcroft's carving.

I first met Barry in August 2014 at the initial meeting of Cleveland Carving Club. At the time he was working on his carving of the plough horses. Although I didn't know it, this carving had taken years to get to this stage.

Barry had started to carve it for his father many years ago. His father was an ex coal miner who had an amazing memory for poetry. He could recite poems easily and one of his favourite poets was Robbie Burns. Barry took the subject of the 'Wee, Sleekit, Cowrin, Tim'rous Beastie' for his carving.

Sadly, while Barry was working on the carving his father passed away and Barry put the piece to one side as he didn't have the heart to finish it. The carving lay in his workshop for many years. Every time Barry thought about working on it, a commission would take priority over it.

Time passed and Barry and well-known professional carver, Jose Sarabia worked together for six years taking on many commissions and working in all the various disciplines of woodcarving.

Barry also taught woodcarving at Redcar Adult Education College after getting his teaching certificate.

All this changed when Barry lost his

Barry Howcroft's carving

wife. Barry lost all interest in carving until his best friend convinced him he should take it up again. Not long after this I met Barry who had just started working again on the carving he had originally started so many years ago.

Barry is a founding member of the Cleveland Carving Club. He takes a very active role using his skills and

experience to help and guide other carvers. He has rekindled his passion for woodcarving, finally finishing the piece.

He used ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) for the carving, and although the plough horses are the most visible part of the work, if you look hard enough you will find the Wee, Sleekit, Cowrin, Tim'rous Beastie.

Vince O'Donnell



PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCE O'DONNELL

If you have something you want your fellow carvers to know, send in your letters and stories to Briony Darnley at Woodcarving, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN or to briony.darnley@thegmcgroup.com



'Wallcreeper' by Artik

Artik has just completed another bird sculpture that he uploaded to the Woodworkers Institute. The piece is a life size carving that is coloured and designed with some great, intricate detail. Forum user Dalboy, commented on the piece saying: "A great carving, I envy you guys who carve birds and even more so when you can colour them like this." The piece, Wallcreeper, used apple tree, linden, tempera and wax.

Monkeybiter posted a beautiful oak green man to the Woodworkers Institute. This piece is made from oak (*Quercus robur*) finished with Danish oil. Monkeybiter commented on the piece: "I used oak as it was intended to hang outside, but decided it will stay indoors." Extra coats were used on the face so a slightly darker look and glossier appearance would be achieved and the size of the piece is approximately 315 x 215mm.



'Oak green man' by Monkeybiter

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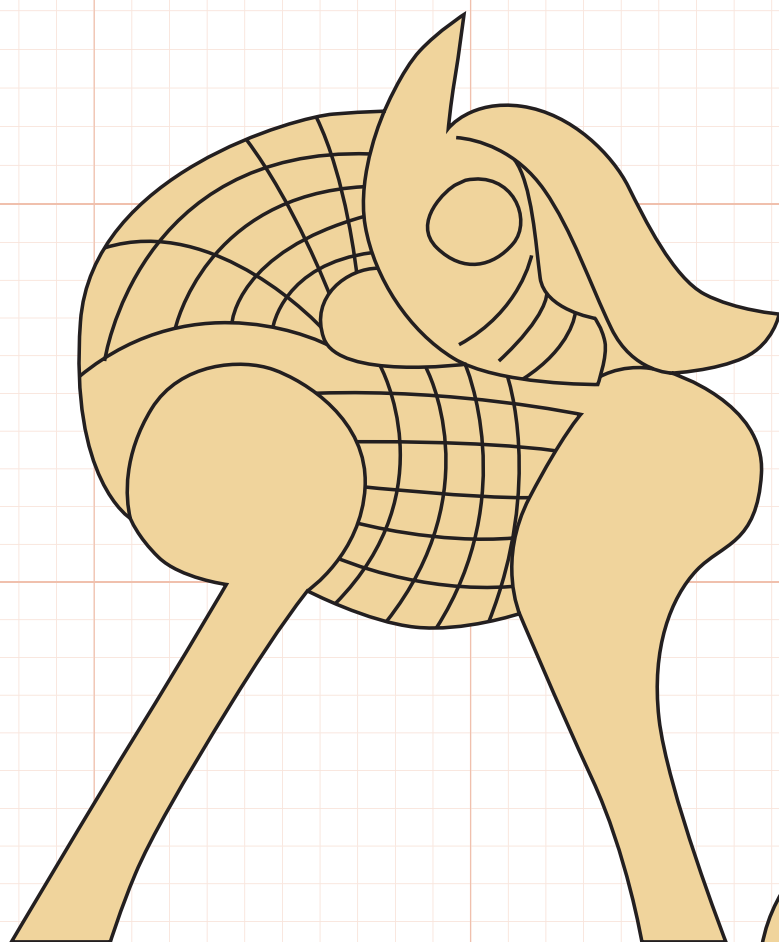
Viking reindeer

Dave Western carves a traditional Viking reindeer

Recently, I was fortunate enough to attend a wonderful show of Viking art and artifacts that was hosted by my local museum. It was a particularly eye-opening examination of the Vikings as explorers, traders, farmers, craftsmen and most important, artists. As you would expect, much of the work was exuberant and robust, but many pieces displayed great sensitivity and delicacy of touch. Sadly, little wooden work has remained after all these years, but a particularly striking metal pot lid provided a surprise bit of carving inspiration that I hope I can pass along to

my fellow carvers. Almost unseen among the lid's swirl of wolves and serpents, a heavily stylised reindeer stood, glancing over his shoulder, poised to spring from danger. Elegantly rendered, he appeared both vulnerable and virile. I was so taken with it that I scribbled a quick sketch on the back of my entrance ticket using a pen scrounged off one of the security guards. No doubt the vagaries of my memory have effected some subtle changes between my design and the original, but I believe it is fairly close in spirit and I hope that you will find it as much fun to carve as I did.

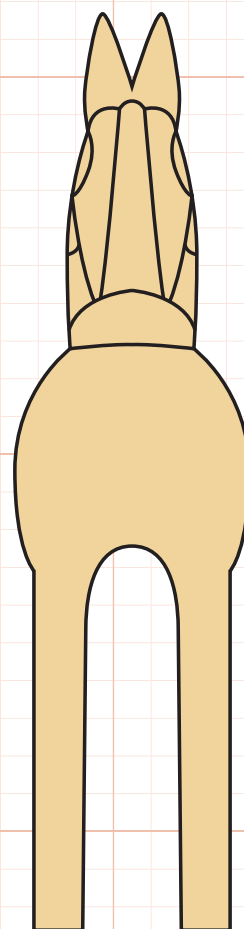
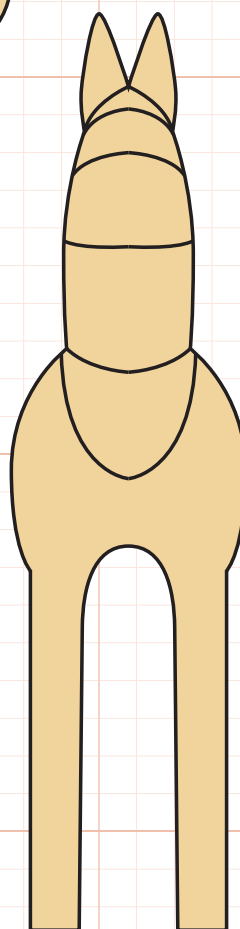




Things you will need

Tools:

- Gluestick
- Bandsaw/scrollsaw/ coping saw
- Small saw (I used a small Japanese saw)
- Small straight knife ($\frac{3}{4}$ –1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in length's best)
- No.9, 7mm gouge
- Abrasive to 320 grit
- Needle file for hard to reach smoothing
- Danish oil



1 First, photocopy and fasten a design to your blank with a gluestick. Be careful to align the grain so it runs down the body and legs (if it runs across the legs, you'll be guaranteed a break along the way). Shape the rough outline of the reindeer with a bandsaw, scrollsaw or jeweller's-type coping saw

2 With the outline cut, take a few rough cuts with a saw to shape the taper from the body to the head. You can be fairly crude at this stage, you're just trying to remove as much excess material as possible before you begin carving

TOP TIP: I recommend not separating the legs until much later in the proceedings. If they remain a unified 'block', they will be much stronger and less likely to be snapped off.



EXPERT ADVICE



Be aware of the grain direction as you start roughing out. Because the grain is oriented through the carving from top to bottom, the sections near the neck bend and the buttocks are easily snapped off if you cut too far behind the curve. Also be conscious of the fragility of the legs and avoid putting too much pressure on them as you grip the piece.



There is a fair bit of cross grain carving, which occurs on the body of the reindeer. Keep the knife sharp and don't try to take off too much at once, as there is potential for the grain to pull out if the knife is dull or the cut too deep. Remain vigilant of where your non-carving hand is located. You'll be moving the piece around and it becomes easy to give yourself a clip with the blade.



3



4



5

3 Redraw a couple of lines to mark out the front shoulder, rear haunch and the head details. Also pencil in a centreline running through the body from head to tail; this will help you to keep both sides even as you remove stock. When you begin carving, round the body and leave some material to form the shoulder and hip areas. Start tapering the nose and thin down the stylised antler

4 As the reindeer becomes more refined, start shaping the outer edges of the legs and ears. Don't separate either until you are happy that the lion's share of rough cutting is completed! With the body taking shape, you'll be able to tell if one side is fatter than the other, if the head seems too big and if the neck area seems even and fair. Thin out the antler area before you do too much work on the head so that you can more accurately judge the head's finished size from it

5 It may happen that you start taking a bit more material off one side. If this happens, try to redraw your centreline so that the carving returns to balance. Here you can see I took a bit more off one side of the legs than the other. I'll re-centre the line and ensure the neck area is balanced before carrying out too much more carving

6 When satisfied your rough carving is completed and the body is pretty close to where you want it, separate the legs and the ears. Use a saw for the separating, as it is a bit more refined than cutting with the knife

7 Once the legs have been separated, they are more vulnerable and the danger of breakage is ever present. Be careful how much cutting force you exert on them while carving and be conscious of how tightly you are gripping them when finish carving the body and neck

8 The head is a tricky area to get right. If you don't remove enough material early, you can be left with the right shape, but too much width. This head has too much stock left on and so it all has to be thinned down some more. The presence of much end grain in this area makes carving a bit tricky too. Be careful not to take too much material with each pass of the knife and don't generate too much force on delicate areas that might snap off



6



7



8

DID YOU KNOW?

The original Viking reindeer piece had oversized eyes which most likely symbolised the animal's alertness, which I have copied on this version.

9 When you are satisfied the body is all in proportion and the carving is complete, you can engrave the eyes. Use a small No.9, 7mm gouge to scribe the circle and then shape the eyeball with a pointy straight knife

TOP TIP: At this point you could undertake a bit of cleanup and leave the deer 'from the knife', or you can press on and sand it smooth.

10 To mimic the smoothness of the original metal piece, a uniform finishing is a good idea. Sand down the piece to 320 grit in preparation for an oil finish. If you like the deer to appear more realistic, this is the time to stop carving, but if you'd like it to have the Viking feel, there is some texturing to yet be carried out

"... when you carve the crosshatch lines, the look is completely transformed."

11 Pencil the body and neck contour lines onto the reindeer as shown, then carefully scribe shallow V grooves along each line. The grain is awkward in many places, so go light with your cuts. The curve of the neck and body adds another dimension of difficulty to getting the lines even so be sure the piece is braced well as you cut and ensure your lines have been accurately drawn. You'll be carving in tight quarters, which makes things dangerous for your non-cutting hand, so vigilance is crucial

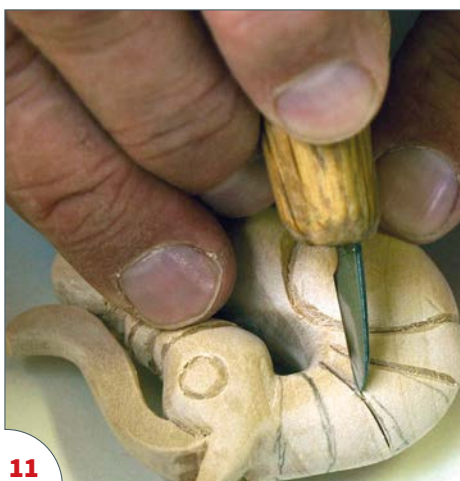
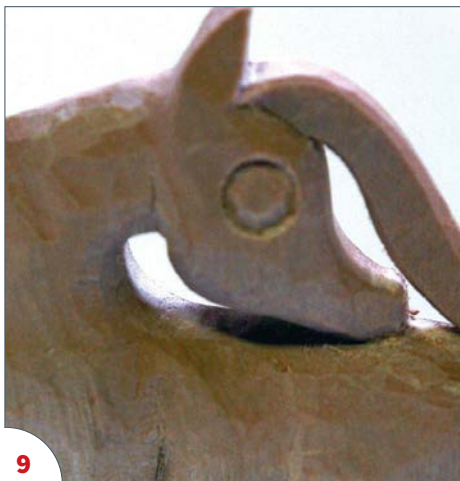
12 With the contour lines all cut away, the deer may get a bit of a creepy, skeletal look about it. Don't worry; when you carve the crosshatch lines, the look is completely transformed

13 Repeat the pencil lines and careful 'V' grooving to create the crosshatch pattern. On the original piece, the cross pattern occurs on the sides of the neck and body, but not on the top and underside. It's pretty difficult to get in under the head, so I left that area unfinished too

TOP TIP: It's fiendishly easy to break bits off the cross-hatching if you aren't extra careful with your cutting. Keep all your cuts shallow and work your depths in two or three passes rather than trying to do it in one swoop.

Finishing

The reindeer is complete and all that remains to be done is some final sanding and cleaning up. Apply a couple of coats of Danish oil and buff off beeswax polish and leave it at that. I think this little fellow works best with a light, satin finish that lets you feel the wood when you handle it. ▶



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THE DIARY

of a student woodcarver – part two

An Arkansas stone in use – notice the natural black formations in the stone



Peter Thuring imparting some useful advice



A water grinder at college, perfect for quickly grinding back a chisel



Using a leather strop to put the final edge on my chisel

William Barsley looks at the trials and tribulations of sharpening and the beauty of chip carving

This series follows my journey as I undertake a three-year diploma in Ornamental Woodcarving and Gilding at the City and Guilds of London Art School (www.cityandguildsartschool.ac.uk) endeavouring to turn my passion for woodcarving into a full time profession.

Sharpening

Whether you're a seasoned woodcarver or just starting out, I've no doubt that at some point someone has mentioned to you the importance of a sharp chisel. A highlight of the carving diploma is that (almost) all of the practical tutors are practising professional carvers or artists themselves, usually each spending one day a week teaching us a particular topic or skill. Our first lesson on sharpening was with Peter Thuring (www.peterthuring.com) a highly regarded woodcarver, sculptor, gilder and restorer of antique picture frames and furniture. Peter has worked on a number of exceptional commissions over the years for the likes of the Royal Collection, The National Trust, and a number of museums and private collections. He was therefore the perfect person to teach us our first, and arguably, most important lesson of the course: how to sharpen a chisel.

Before starting the course I believed my chisels to already be fairly sharp. How wrong I was! Peter quickly informed me they were nowhere near sharp enough. Over the following days, I learnt the incredible difference between a chisel you think is sharp and one that really is!



Sharpening stones

Carvers tend to have varying techniques and preferences when it comes to sharpening their chisels. For example, most will have a preferred type of sharpening stone and each may use it in a slightly different way to another. The following are some of the main types of stones and strops that Peter taught us were good to use:

Oil stones

Oil stones are one of the most commonly used stones for sharpening. They are named as such because oil is used to lubricate the stone and to carry away the waste metal or 'swarf' left over from sharpening. One of the best oil stones available is called an Arkansas stone, which can be incredibly hard and therefore good for putting on a final edge to your chisel prior to stropping. An alternative is the India stone, which is coarser than an Arkansas stone but generally more affordable. It is important to note that oil stones do have a slower cutting rate.

Water stones

Water stones are becoming increasingly popular. Japanese water stones are highly regarded by many carvers, and are said to give an excellent finish. I have not used them myself so cannot comment personally, but the only critique I've heard is that they are fairly soft and therefore can wear down more rapidly, requiring frequent flattening. It is important to dry your chisels as the exposure of tools to water can lead to rust.

Diamond stones

Many carvers swear by diamond stones, and though I've not had enough experience to speak of their virtues from a personal perspective, from what I've learnt and heard they seem very good. They are on the more expensive side of the market, as they contain tiny diamonds stuck to the surface, which result in very fast sharpening and little wear over time.

The process of sharpening

Peter began by explaining the fundamentals of sharpening a chisel that was merely blunt and didn't need squaring off (grinding flat the end). The first step, he described, would be to begin sharpening the outside bevel. Carving chisels are commonly sharpened at 15°, a much lower angle than carpenters' chisels. Using a fine sharpening stone, the gouge would be rolled from left to right, being careful to do this evenly and not to dig in the edges of the chisel. This would be done until a slight burr appeared across the top of the chisel (a tiny fold of metal). Using a slip stone or strop, one would then polish out the burr and continue to strop, alternating between the front and back bevels.

Peter explained that a slip stone that fit into the bevel of a carver's smallest chisel would generally be fine for their other gouges.

Stropping

I had never really heard of stropping (the final phase of sharpening, which uses leather and honing compound) before starting the course, but it was by far the greatest revelation of the lesson for me. I learnt that if I stropped every five to 10 minutes when carving, depending on the type of wood, then I would rarely need to use sharpening stones.

Is it sharp yet?

As a beginner, one of my main dilemmas when sharpening is knowing when my chisel is sharp enough. Peter showed us that, by cutting across the grain of soft pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) wood, one can test a chisel's sharpness by



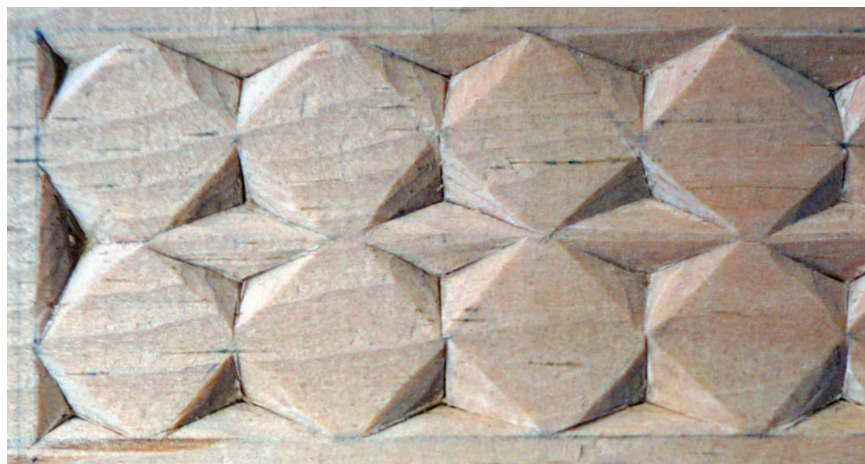
Honing block with a variety of shapes, perfect for tricky chisels

looking to see how clean the cut is, and whether or not any grain has chipped out.

Another trick is to take a piece of paper and run the chisel along it, observing how easily the paper cuts. It should cut at just the slightest touch of the chisel.

TOP TIPS FOR SHARPENING:

- **Stropping:** I can't emphasise how much of a difference this has made to my sharpening. I used to pass my chisel over the strop maybe four or five times. However, after learning how much sharper you can get the chisel by stropping more, I now aim for 30–40 passes at least.
- **Test the sharpness:** In the past, a common way of testing for sharpness was to see if the chisel would shave a hair off the back of your hand. For health and safety reasons, this practice would NOT be recommended today.
- **Mark the bevel:** It is often hard to see where you have been sharpening on the bevel. A useful tip is to use a felt pen and draw on the bevel, allow it to dry and then sharpen; the areas that



Chip carving

After learning how to sharpen my chisels it was time to begin my first carving of the course. As is often the case for those first learning to carve, we began with a technique called chip carving. It is a simple yet highly effective form of carving, which primarily focuses on using the shape of the chisel to make the pattern. Although chip carving is often seen as a useful technique for beginners, it is important to highlight it as an effective form of carving in its own right. Peter explained that, not only would chip carving test how well we had sharpened our chisels, but it would also be a chance to learn about the various shapes of the chisels in our tool roll. Chip carving is also a perfect way to start learning about the behaviour of wood and the direction of its grain.

Wood for chip carving

Like with many forms of carving, there is usually certain types of wood that suit a certain method or style best. Chip carving is commonly carried out without the use of a mallet, and as such a soft wood is generally desirable. Wood with a tight grain is also good, as it allows for finer detail and ensures the wood is less likely to split out.

A final point to note is the colour of the wood, which is important because of the amount of light it absorbs and reflects, thus creating more or less shadow and light. Woods such as lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), cherry (*Prunus avium*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) are good for chip carving. Other woods such as oak (*Quercus robur*) are also good, albeit a little harder, but just as effective.

Tools for chip carving

Chip carving can be carried out using normal carving chisels, with the fishtail chisels particularly useful for cutting into corners. However, many chip carvers use chip carving knives specifically designed for the job. These come in a wide range of shapes and sizes, much like carving chisels, and require a similar handhold to whittling.



Chip carving by Sarah Davis (www.sarahgdavis.co.uk) a fellow first year woodcarver

DID YOU KNOW?

History

Chip carving, in some shape or form, has been practised in different cultures throughout the world for centuries.

In Britain, it is said to have been introduced by the Scandinavians hundreds of years ago and is said to be visible on old Norman churches in England. It is also a common form of decoration found on furniture and everyday objects. Designs are often geometric in form, due to its repetitive nature and the shapes of chisels. The possibilities in design appear endless, with an incredible range of shapes and patterns available.



A close up photo of a chip carving pattern



An old panel at college, carved using chip carving techniques

The importance of shadow

'Carving is the process of creating shadow, it's all about light and shadow'
(Peter Thuring)

This mantra of Peter's clicked in my mind one day, like one of those 'eureka!' moments. He asked us to hold up our chip carvings and notice the difference in shadow between different sections, and how it changed if you turned it the other way around. The difference was incredible! For example, compare figure 1 and 2 (see *middle left* and *right*). Both are exactly the same chip carving pattern, but one is vertical and the other horizontal. The vertical carving appears much flatter as the shadow only falls slightly on the stab cut and the light highlights the top curve. The horizontal version, however, is much more effective, with the shadow translating the depth of the cut nicely. Peter emphasised this point throughout the class, telling us to always think where your carving is going to be displayed. As a result, he said it is important to continually lift your work off of the bench and review how it looks from different angles.

TOP TIPS FOR CHIP CARVING

- By ensuring you push the bevel of the chisel down onto the wood, it should leave a cleaner cut and follow your desired path with greater accuracy (provided your chisels are sharp!).
- I learnt this one the hard way. It is so easy to want to stroke away a wood shaving or feel the surface of your carving but, as I found out, the oil from your skin slowly gives the carving a dirty look, which cannot be rubbed out easily. Instead, use a brush to move chippings away or cover sections with a cloth.
- If you are like me, you'll want to sand everything! Since starting the course, however, I've found that a carved finish to our work is often preferred. Our tutors argue that the chisel should be able to leave clean cuts and that rounding off edges by sanding can leave them dull.



My first carving project at the college, a chip carving in Quebec pine wood



Figure 1 – vertical chip carving

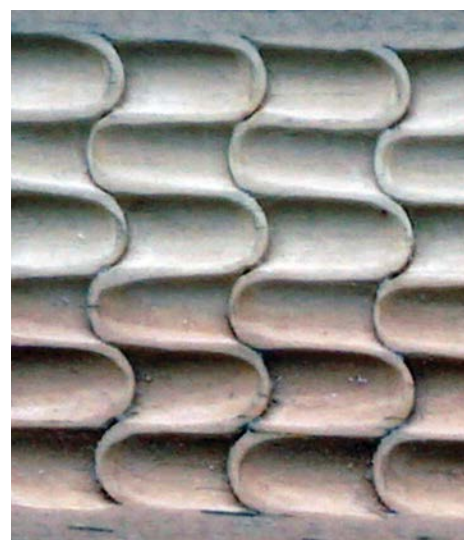


Figure 2 – horizontal chip carving



Gothic oak leaf



Acanthus leaf in lime wood

Next time...

Join me in my next article as I learn the beauty of relief carving through creating a traditional acanthus leaf in lime and a gothic leaf in oak.

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10 most commonly encountered problems

The Editor shares his thoughts on your woodcarving problems

Every carver experiences problems while they work, and especially when learning to carve. I have noticed that there are ten questions which regularly crop up and everyone will have encountered these problems to a greater or lesser degree, at some stage in their carving journey.

Rest assured, you are not alone in having trouble from time to time. So, below (and in no particular order) are the problems most carvers will seek help for.

Have no doubt that I will be sure to cover these subjects comprehensively in future issues of *Woodcarving* magazine.

1 Preparation...

...is where everything starts and if you get this element right, you are well on the right track to creating your masterpiece. You must decide what you want to carve and how you want it to look. Will it be a relief or in the round carving? Is it going to be abstract, realistic, naïve, classical, modern or in the style of something particular? Do you want a tooled or sanded feel? What timber will you use? Is it to be dark or light in colour, or even painted? Have you done your research and know your subject matter well? You cannot carve something you don't thoroughly understand.



2 Timber choice

Don't make life difficult for yourself when starting to carve by using a wood you have to fight with. Rather than use any old bit of wood from the log pile, or the bits and pieces in your shed, like oak (*Quercus* spp.), ash (*Fraxinus* spp.) or holly (*Ilex* spp.) that are always tricky to work, use timbers like: lime (*Tilia* spp.), cherry (*Prunus* spp.), walnut/butternut (*Juglans* spp.), jelutong (*Dyera costulata*), tulipwood (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), white pine (*Pinus strobus*). Even common or garden knot-free softwood timber 100 x 50mm is a good starting point to practise cutting on.

3 Sharpening

This is still one of the areas where people struggle at times, no matter how many years they have been carving. You will find differing views on how to sharpen carving tools and all strive to show how to create a correctly profiled ultra-sharp cutting edge that you can work with easily. There are lots of DVDs, YouTube clips, web and magazine articles as well as books covering this subject so you have plenty of options to study. Remember though, do not throw lots of money at this. Often the simplest methods are the best. Do not be afraid to seek help from more experienced carvers who can help and advise.



Cutting across the grain

4 Cutting wood the right way

The grain direction has a bearing on how wood likes to be cut to give a clean surface. We have all experienced grain tearout due to cutting the wood the wrong way or not in an optimal way. In general, cutting across the grain, either at right angles or obliquely, will be the safest and more controllable option, especially if using slicing cuts. Cutting with the grain can cause uncontrolled splitting, but can be useful when roughing out.

5 Holding and manipulating tools

Hold the tools in a manner that enables you to manoeuvre them easily with control. Use a light grip where one hand moves the blade positively forward in a given direction, while the other guides and adjusts the cut depth and position of the cutting edge. The two hands work together, in harmony with each other, your own strength and the character of the wood.



Hold the tools in a way to give you maximum control

6 Work holding

Hold the work securely and in a way that gives you flexibility to work in different areas and positions. Relief carvings are usually held on a non-slip mat and/or rested against a stop of some sort so you can cut and put pressure against the stop preventing the board from moving. Rarely are clamps used, but they too can be helpful at times.

In the round carvings can be held on carving screws, moveable carving clamps, chocks and vices. Whatever you use, you will need to be able to move your work in all directions to ensure safe and effective cutting unless you have all round access.

7 Comfortable working height

Whether standing or sitting, ensure you have the work mounted at a height that will not make you stoop/hunch over the work too often. Having to bend in ways that are not comfortable not only affects you, but also your work. If you are forced to work in an awkward position by the mere nature of the piece you are carving, only work for short periods before changing what you are doing.

8 Sanding work

Whether you sand your work or give it a tooled finish is a matter of choice. Neither method is a short cut. Each method takes time and care to be effective but, be warned, if you sand your work, you will need to go through the grades of abrasive to remove all scratches and defects without removing fine detail and sharpness. A tooled finish doesn't mean that you leave the work with a rough finish. You need to go over the whole piece to remove any evidence of ragged or indefinite cuts. What you choose should be decided before you start to avoid unnecessary 'over carving'.



Learn to use a basic tool set well, before buying more tools

10 Buying too many tools

This one is like saying to me don't buy too many fishing rods or flies. We never seem to have the right ones at the right time. Well, the same rules apply. One only really needs a very basic kit to start – some say 10 tools, including a knife, to do a wide variety of carving styles. The key is to have a few and learn to use and sharpen them well, before buying more. ▀

PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK / ICOR GRATZER



Be sure to carve at a comfortable height

9 Selecting an appropriate finish

A well chosen finish can enhance your work and really make it come alive, but a poorly chosen one can ruin the piece you have spent so much time on. If you get it wrong, you will have a nightmare of a time trying to remove the wrong finish. Create sample boards using the finishes you are thinking about. This way you can see what you are likely to end up with before you make your final choice.

Also, no matter what finish you use, make sure you clean up/remove all the excess finish not required – especially in the nooks and crannies of finely carved work.

PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK / INACI-BAGOLY ARPAD

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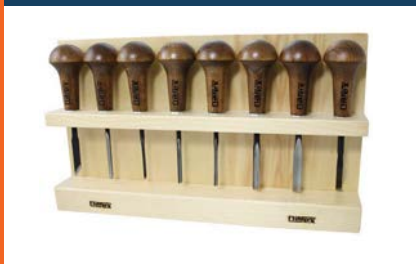
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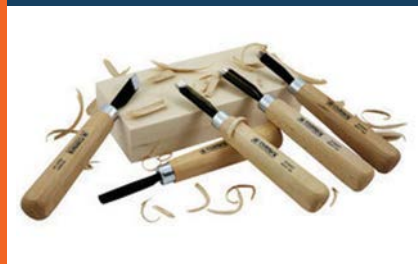
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Fruit and flower drop

Steve Bisco shows how to design and make your own limewood foliage carvings

When we discuss limewood (*Tilia europea*) foliage carving we are automatically drawn in to invoking the name of Grinling Gibbons (1648–1721) – the great master of the style. His magnificent festoons of fruit, flowers, fish and fowl, which adorn many palaces and grand houses of Britain are among the greatest works ever produced in woodcarving. For the last 300 years generations of carvers have set the target of their ambitions at ‘doing a Grinling’.

Assuming you don't live in a grand palace with vast rooms, you will probably want to try a smaller and more manageable version of the festoon – just a ‘drop’ of a few flowers and some fruit. In this article I have set out a design for a limewood drop carved from a single block, which you can copy directly if you choose, but I will also show you how to create your own naturalistic designs for your own carvings if you want to exercise your creative skills further.



Things you will need

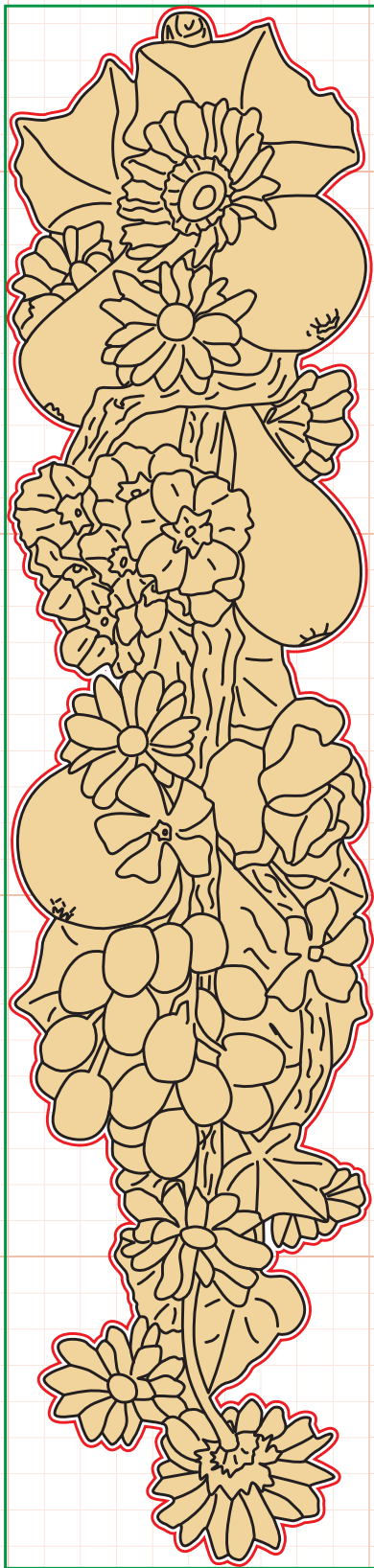
Tools

- No.3, 20mm fishtail gouge
- No.3, 10mm fishtail gouge
- No.4, 6mm fishtail gouge
- No.3, 10mm gouge
- No.8, 8mm gouge
- No.5, 7mm gouge
- No.5, 5mm gouge
- No.9, 3mm gouge
- No.9, 16mm curved gouge
- No.5, 13mm curved gouge
- No.8, 8mm curved gouge
- 10mm short bent gouge
- 6mm short bent gouge
- No.3, 5mm bent gouge
- 12mm back-bent gouge
- 6mm back-bent gouge
- 5mm bent chisel
- Straight 'V'-tool
- Curved 'V'-tool
- 2mm veiner
- 16mm hooked skew chisel
- 10mm skew chisel
- 10mm skewed spoon gouge
- 3mm chisel
- 2mm chisel

Material

- Lime – 580 x 130 x 80mm

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE BISCO



DID YOU KNOW?

The lime or linden tree is the best wood for fine foliage carving. Its American cousin basswood is the next best thing. Lime can be difficult to source from ordinary timber merchants, but is generally stocked by specialist craftwood suppliers. See the adverts in this magazine and search the internet. In countries where the tree is not native, you may need to order from overseas.

Designing a limewood foliage carving

Limewood foliage carvings are based on natural objects portrayed life-size and grouped into an artistically pleasing arrangement, so the best place to start for an arrangement of fruit and flowers is at the supermarket or in your garden. Gather some real fruit and flowers and set up a 'still-life' model. If the season limits your choice of materials you can use substitutes such as silk flowers.



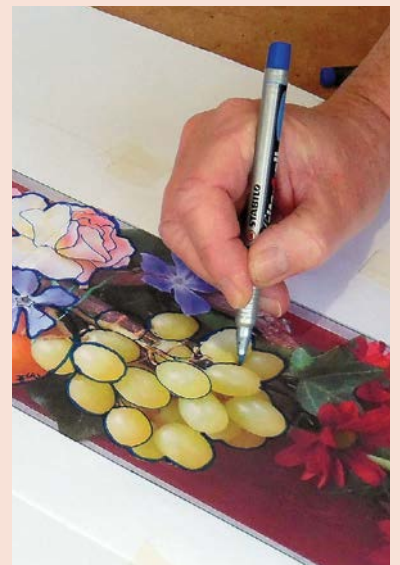
A good reason for making your own designs is to fit them to a particular piece of wood that you already have so mark up a board with the dimensions of your wood. Every item should appear to hang naturally under the influence of gravity so place the board almost upright to get an idea of the fall. Use nails, string and wire to position things without them falling off. Fix a branch, ribbon, rope, or anything that can be made to look plausible as a point of suspension, then wire on the bulkier items such as the fruit. You also need a bit of background foliage, such as the ivy leaves I have used here.



Arrange the flowers and foliage into clusters with open parts between and around them. The positioning must appear random and asymmetrical, but there must also be a degree of balance. A large item on one side should be balanced by an item of similar bulk on the other side. The whole drop must appear to tumble down in bunches, finally tapering away at the bottom. You must also establish an apparent attachment between the items, usually by stems that emerge from under a leaf, a fruit or a flower above them.



When the arrangement is complete, take a careful 'face on' photo that you can blow up to full size, as a basis for your drawing. Also take photos from both sides and all angles to use for reference when carving.

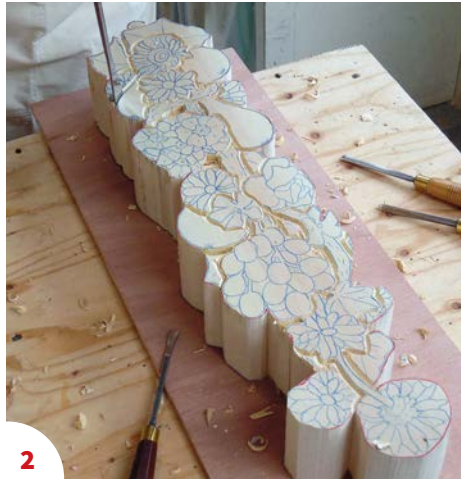


Print out your 'face on' photo to the full size of your wood. If it needs more than one sheet of paper, crop the picture into pages that are all at the same scale and join them together. Now draw around the edges of each feature with a marker pen. As you draw it, think about how you will carve it, and make adjustments as necessary to create a viable carving pattern. It is then best to make a working tracing of your drawing, but you can, if you wish, trace directly from your drawing onto the wood.

Now you can proceed to carve a pattern of your own design, or follow my limewood drop design, just as you wish. Either way, the following project will guide you through the process.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Preparations

1 Get a piece of lime of suitable size – in this case 580 x 130 x 80mm. Make a full-size copy of the drawing and trace the pattern onto the wood using carbon paper. Mark the cutting lines in red, then cut round the pattern with a bandsaw or whatever saws you have

Roughing out the elements

2 Fix the wood to a backing board, screwing from the back into the larger fruits. Separate the individual elements with a 'V'-tool and some vertical 'bosting' cuts so you can see what is what

3 Rough out the levels and outline shape for each element, referring to the finished photos in step 15 or your reference photos of your own design. Don't remove wood you may need later

4 Work your way along to the other end, then go over it again to make sure each element fits in comfortably with the others. Repeatedly throughout the carving process place the carving upright at the height at which it will be seen to check that everything 'hangs' naturally

Carving the detail

5 Start at the top with the most prominent flowers. Look at the key features of each type of flower and try to represent those features in the carving. These gerbera and chrysanthemum flowers have fine thin petals, which can slightly overlap each other for structural support and the middle of the gerbera can be textured to create the inner ring of tiny petals

6 Once you are sure the flowers are finished and in the right position, you can excavate under and around them to model the fruits and leaves beneath them. Note how the apples and pears have a 'blossom end' at the bottom which determines how the fruit appears to hang. Leaves can form an 'under-storey' of foliage. I have converted the ivy leaves in my model to grape leaves by giving them 'eyes' and serrated edges

7 Continue down to the next group. Primroses and other bunched flowers should be formed into overlapping levels so each flower has some petals projecting under its neighbour, but try to give each flower some separation so it doesn't look like a solid mass, and create some gaps in and around the bunch

8 A rose can be made a key feature of a flower carving, so try to arrange each petal convincingly and carve it very thinly. The central petals can be layered inwards towards the middle, and the outer petals can be layered away from the centre

TOP TIP: If you break a piece off a thin element while carving, don't despair. You can either amend the design or you can glue it back together and recarve the join.

9 Grapes need to be carved individually, appearing barely to touch each other, with some larger gaps so they don't look like a lumpy mass. Thin stems give a visible structure, and show outlines of more grapes inside the bunch

10 As the carving tapers away towards the bottom, a lot of excavation is needed to create a sub-structure of stems and leaves that will help support the structure

11 Continue down until you get to the bottom. Note how this chrysanthemum has its back to us and its thin stem on show. Carve the stem as thin as you can, making sure the real support is transmitted through the leaves and flower petals touching at the tips

Excavating and undercutting

12 Most of the undercutting will be done from behind, but while the carving is still fixed to the backing board, deeply excavate as much surplus material as you possibly can between the upper flowers and stems, using mostly spoon-bit gouges. Refine the edges of the petals with a hooked skew chisel so they present a sharp thin edge without any thicker material spoiling the illusion when viewed from the sides

13 Remove the backing board and place the carving face down on a soft surface, with timbers to form a 'cradle'. Carefully undercut from behind using small sharp tools to minimise pressure on the fragile flowers. A No.8, 8mm curved gouge gives leverage without exerting much pressure, and a hooked skew chisel allows you to shave the leaves and petals to a thin edge

14 Excavate through to let light in the gaps. When the carving is finished and hung up you shouldn't be able to see any wood that is not part of a fruit, flower, leaf or stem

Finishing

15 Use 120–400 grit abrasives to create a smooth finish on the round fruits and larger petals, with a lighter touch on the textured surfaces. Limewood foliage carvings traditionally have a barewood finish, but can also look good gilded or painted in matte white



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



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NANCY TUTTLE

in profile

This Californian artist's carvings often tickle and occasionally terrify, but they never drift far from terrific, as Catherine Kielthy discovers

The south Oregon beaches where
Nancy collects her driftwood

"I can't think of a better way to make a living than to make people happy, but then I also love making disturbing and scary things as well"

"My preference is to create art that makes people laugh and smile," says artist and woodcarver Nancy Tuttle. And an awful lot of her work does just exactly that. Some, however, well, she does use the tag 'Psychosculptor' on online shopping store Etsy... but we'll return to her dark side later. For now, we'll stay in the light and imagine we're walking alongside Nancy as she forages for driftwood at the southern-

most tip of the Oregon coastline. It's an area she knows well, although she was born and raised in the much drier climes of the state's southern desert and also lived further inland near the Sierra Nevada mountains for several years. "At that time I used forest woods, driftwood from rivers and lakes," for carving material, "and I also made many trips to the Northern California coast." And this stunning area of coast, which crosses the border line into Oregon which Nancy first discovered in the mid-1980s, pulled her back full-time in 1993. "It turned out to be one of the most plentiful years for driftwood," she recalls fondly. "The beaches were completely covered with wood, large and small. I bought a few palm chisels and started carving with this free wood. It was love at first slice." Unsurprising, then, that after her few years away inland she was drawn back to this driftwood paradise. "It's best to live here to get the best driftwood."

DRIFTWOOD IN SAFE HANDS

How Nancy turns washed-up wood into thought-provoking fine art





Nancy needs a good, plentiful supply of drift to satisfy her seemingly insatiable desire to explore and create art that will provoke an emotional reaction in viewers. It's a world she has inhabited for some 30 years, having completed her first carving project in high school. "I knew right away this was something I wanted to do more of," she recalls. "Even then I had envisioned carving human forms growing from the wood. I'd been doing art shows since my late teens trying to sell my oil paintings and drawings. I rarely sold anything. A few months after I started carving, I did my first craft fair with woodcarvings. There were only a few carvings but they all sold. I was unemployed at the time so I went into high production woodcarving and travelled around northern California selling my wares as my new job."

It was a sound business move as well as being creatively rewarding and bringing recognition for her work, which has been exhibited in several galleries. "I have won a few local art awards here in Brookings, Oregon," she says modestly, "but I've never entered much competition with my woodcarvings or sculpture." The human body and form have long fascinated Nancy – she majored in pre-medicine at college, with a minor in art – and human faces, in particular, have always demanded her attention. "I've been drawing them for as long as I can remember. One of my first professional carvings was a face in a miniature knot. For the past several years, I've been carving more surreal and fantasy-type characters (mainly faces). It's fun because there are few rules and there's plenty of freedom to use the imagination."

Imperfect challenge

You need a lot more than a good imagination, however, to create such thought-provoking, stunningly executed carvings – not that Nancy's talents begin and end there. She also creates mail art, 2D art, digital paintings, vessels and masks. It demands an affinity with the feel and way



ABOVE LEFT:
Tree for Two, 2014

ABOVE RIGHT:
In the Peaceful
Woods, 2010

of the wood and, we imagine, endless of patience when another recovered piece of drift reveals its hidden secrets. "Carving the naturally found woods can be very difficult because of the imperfections in them," she concedes. "A large percentage of what I start is never finished. It's simply a part of this type of work. It can become frustrating. There have been days when every piece I start eventually has to be tossed due to the unforeseen flaws deep inside the wood." As you've probably guessed by now, though, such obstacles only serve to challenge further Nancy's inventiveness and she adapts her design to the shape and sometimes the grain of the naturally found woods. "There are often flaws that appear as I carve deeper that may also dictate the outcome of the design so I've learned to keep an open mind as to what the final piece will look like. It's near impossible to come up with an idea for a finished piece and find the wood to fit that idea. The design must flow with the wood. This type of artwork limits and challenges creativity but I love the collaboration with nature."

Such collaborations have produced works including 'Stupid on a Stick', described by Nancy as "this crazy, stupid stick", which definitely raises a smile. But there is also 'Patiently Waiting', an overgrown lizard carved from a single piece of driftwood. He is exquisite, but also rather intimidating, a little scary and reflects that darker



Patiently Waiting, 2011

side of Nancy's work. "The face is carved into the trunk of a little red alder tree with the roots flowing behind," she explains. "I've added colour, just his face and teeth using oil paints and stain. Everything else is au naturel!"

Natural and, for some, slightly terrifying, which fulfils Nancy's belief that "art should move people emotionally". And while she says she "can't think of a better way to make a living than to make people happy," she quickly adds, "but then I also love making disturbing and scary things as well." 'Patiently Waiting' undoubtedly meets the brief on both counts there. He also reflects Nancy's stunning artistry, her attention to detail and her skill. It all demands time, patience and hard graft. "It can take a couple of hours to carve a small face but larger sculptural pieces that need sanding can take months," she explains. "Of course, there are also many back-breaking hours spent on the beach picking through the driftwood to find just the right pieces. There's so much that goes into this type of work besides the carving."

BELOW LEFT:
A touch of
Witchcraft, 2012

BELOW RIGHT:
Bamboozled
(carved bamboo
root), 2014



Hatchet job!

Nancy tends not to have specific favourites in her work, but likes items where a “great-looking piece of wood and, hopefully, a good-looking carving flow together like they belong”. To achieve these creations she uses a raft of tools, comprising mostly rotary power tools, a chainsaw to rough out larger pieces, a variety of accessories on angle and die grinders, occasionally knives and chisels, and “even a hatchet... whatever it takes to get the job done”.

As well as continuing to mine her imagination for future carvings – “I have more ideas than I have time to carve” – she is also working on a large stained-glass window, metal sculptures, ideas for assemblage wood sculpture and a book showing the process of carving a couple of knots along with the type of tools she uses as well as the staining and finishing process. The latter has been in the offing for quite a while now, though, she admits.

Surprisingly, she has undertaken few commissions, but says that of those one of the most challenging was a chess set in 1989 where all the pieces other than the rooks had unique faces and expressions. We’re confident the client made a clever move in choosing this uplifting and talented artist for the task. “I think the things that inspire all of us, young and old are creativity, originality and skill,” she says. “And creating pieces from unique and original ideas that are also executed well. There’s a lot to be explored in the world of woodcarving. Like art in general, it’s only limited by imagination.” ▶



A selection of Nancy's earliest knots, dating back to 1987



This 1994 group of knots shows how Nancy's work has progressed



LEFT: Say It Isn't So, 2016

DID YOU KNOW?

- The best beaches for driftwood are near forests and where streams and rivers meet the sea.
- Go at low tide, after a storm or as the tide is going out for your chance to get the best driftwood pieces.
- The laws surrounding the collection of driftwood vary from state to state within America, so it's safest to check with the local park ranger before you start foraging for driftwood.
- If you plan to collect drift in the UK, please check with the local government or national park agency that you are legally allowed to remove such debris.
- In some areas, for instance, driftwood might be regarded as a problem, while in others it could be providing a valuable site of shelter for birds, fish and other aquatic creatures.

Contact info

Website: www.NancyTuttle.com

You can purchase Nancy's carved art on ebay. Her user ID is [sculpting_nudes](#). Her work can also be viewed on Etsy where she uses the handle 'Psychosculptor'



All I want for Christmas is ...

... well, that's something that only you can decide. But, let's be honest it is far better that you decide than you leave the precious opportunity to a well-meaning giver who may not have your depth of knowledge about woodcarving. When it comes to gift selection for practical people, DIY has much to commend it!

Young Aladdin here looks pretty pleased with what she's got by rubbing on her trusty teapot but maybe you'll not be so lucky. So why not drop a few well-placed hints about the sorts of goodies that we can supply that will bring tears (of joy) to any woodcarver's eyes.

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like to offer choice in all things. and, wherever we can, we will. That way, if we say that we believe that a product is 'the best' for your situation, you can be pretty sure that it's because we have also tried, and most likely also stock, the others and are giving you our considered opinion.

If choosing is just too hard - and sometimes 'today' is not the perfect time to make a decision - then we can offer other options. What about a Gift Voucher? These are available in any amount the giver chooses, and are redeemable in payment against any purchases at The ToolPost: they're the ultimate in flexible gifts.

Christmas is a good time for giving - and receiving. Make sure that you enjoy the receiving as much as the giving. We're here to help. You could call that our genie-ous (ouch!) - but probably only if you have no shame!

We wish you a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

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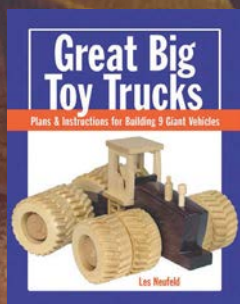
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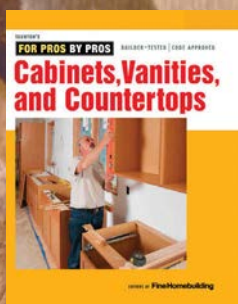
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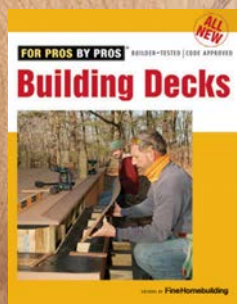
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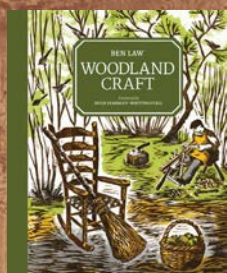
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Horse head – part two

Andrew Thomas finishes work on his horse head carving

In the last issue of *Woodcarving* (152) I described the techniques of how to carve the first details of the horse head, including the surface anatomy of the mouth and surrounding jaw muscles. We continue

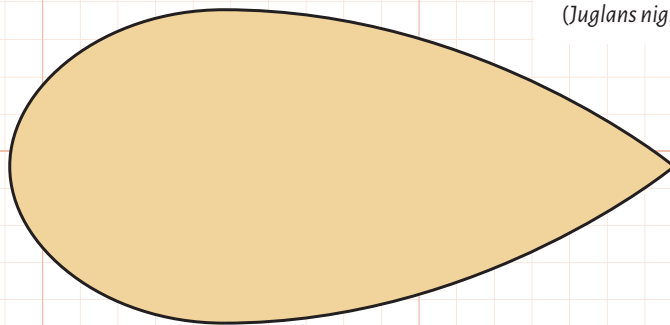
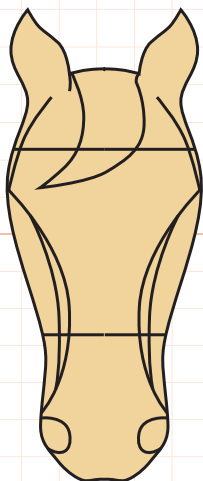
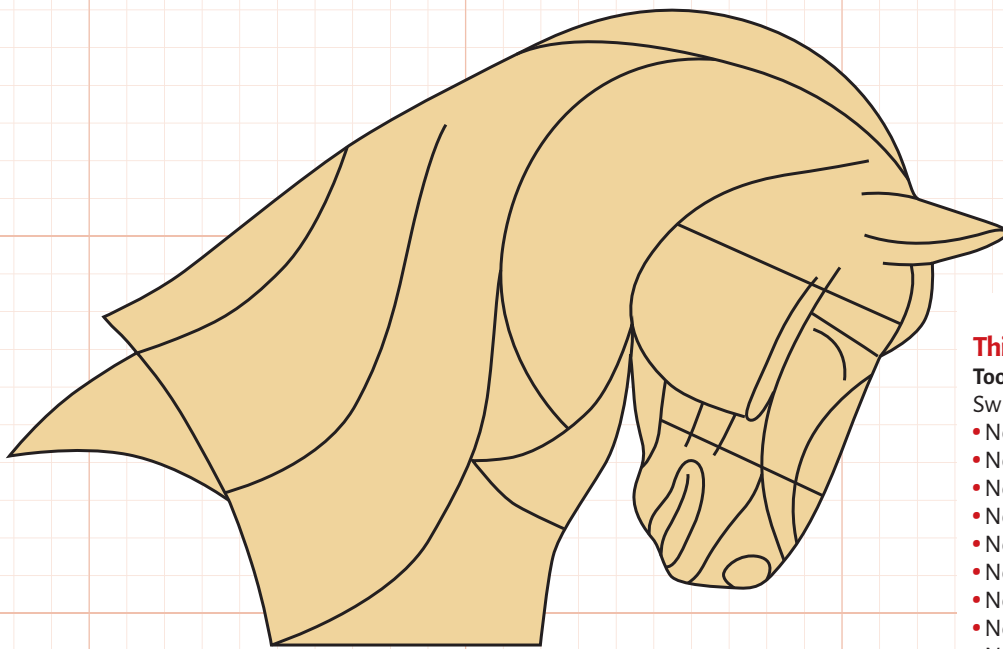
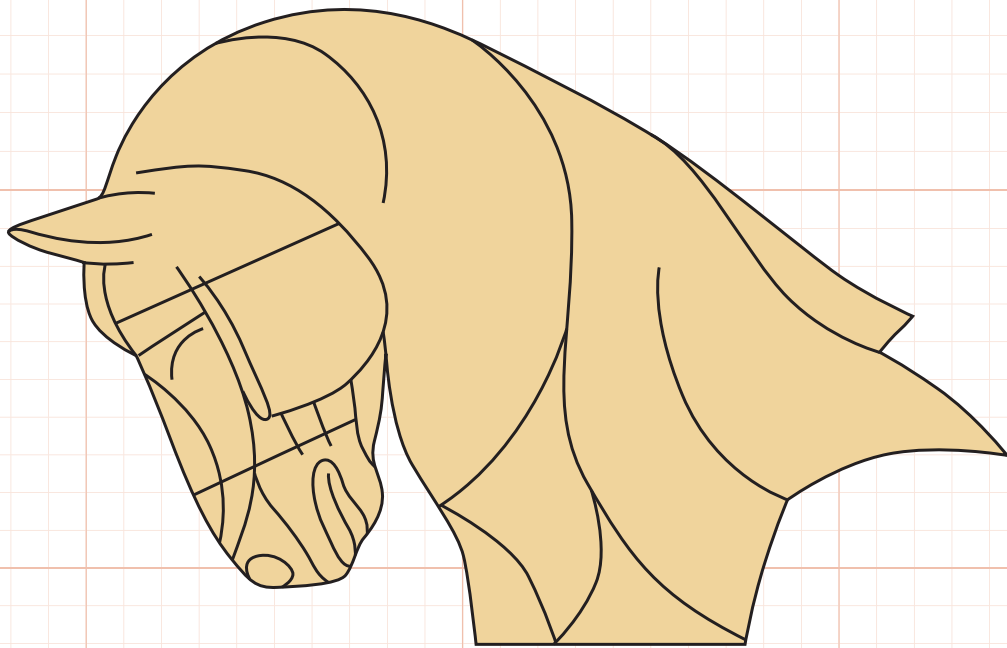
now with part two of the project; how to carve the details of the nostrils, ears, eyes and mane.

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

how the carving develops. Please also refer to your reference material of horse heads, ears, eyes, nose and mane, and use this information to help you to visually understand the form of the details that you are carving.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW THOMAS

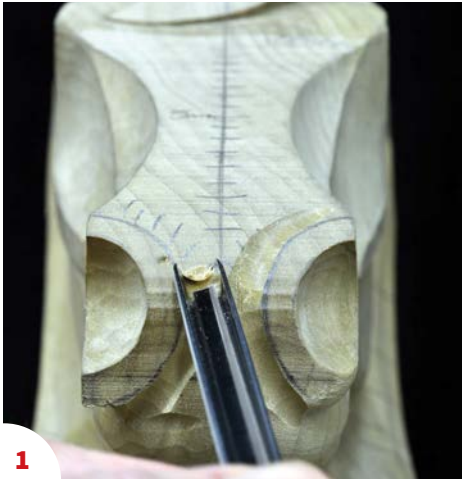


Things you will need

Tools:

Swiss gouges:

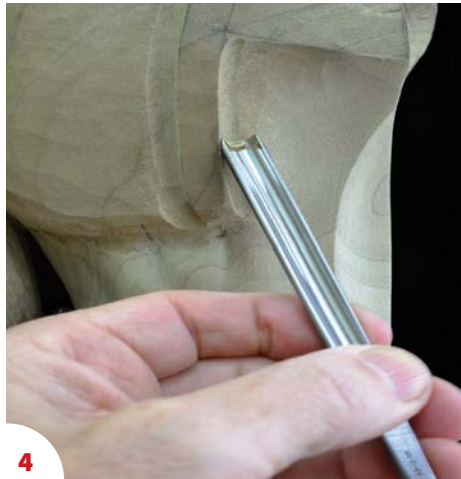
- No.2, 10mm
- No.2, 20mm
- No.5, 8mm
- No.5, 20mm
- No.7, 14mm
- No.7, 20mm
- No.8, 14mm
- No.9, 7mm
- No.9, 10mm
- No.11, 4mm
- No.12, 6mm
- Knife
- Horse head – tulipwood (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) – 400 x 250 x 100mm
- Base – American black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) – 250 x 120 x 25mm

**1****2**

1 We return now to the nostril area, just above the mouth (where we finished in part one). Measure and draw a line around the nostrils, 6mm away from the original gouge cut. Use a No.9, 7mm gouge to cut a deep groove along the outside of the line, and then vertically up through the centre of the head to the forelock

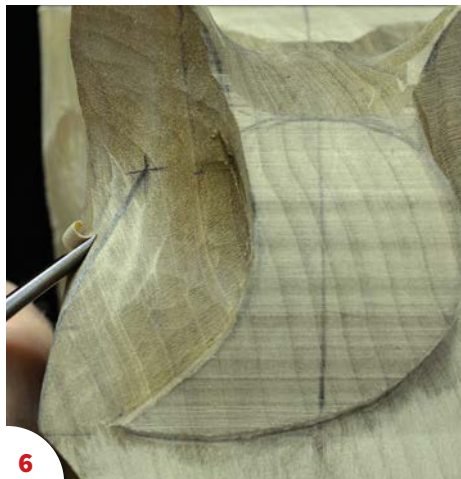
2 Blend the surrounding areas of the surface evenly into the gouge cuts; up from the mouth, around the nostrils and up through the head

3 This complete area can now be sanded with 100 grit abrasive, to blend all of the details smoothly together and bring them alive. Please note that the straight angled lines along the bridge of the nose should be kept sharp and not rounded over at all. Do this and then study all of the details carefully to ensure that both sides are symmetrical with one another and that they have enough depth to give value to the shadows that strike across their surface. Make adjustments if necessary

**3****4**

4 The zygomatic crest on the sides of the head will almost certainly need to be made more pronounced on the upper sides of their line. Do this by cutting a deeper channel with the No.9, 7mm above their line, and then blend the surrounding areas into this cut

5 Sand over the zygomatic crest, cheek and jawline with 100 grit abrasive to bring these details to life

**5****6**

6 The area directly above the eyes, from the horizontal straight line on the side of the head, up to the ear, is next to be positioned and shaped. Measure and draw the line of the forehead onto the front edge of your wood. Use a No.2, 20mm to create a delicate curve between these two points. The ears can now be drawn back in their correct position, ready for shaping

“... the straight angled lines along the bridge of the nose should be kept sharp and not rounded over at all.”

**7****8**

7 The forelock is the first detail to be shaped in this area in order of sequence, with a gentle curve being established, from the original height on the left side, down to the surface on the right side. Do this with the No.2, 20mm

8 The forelock can then be separated from the ears as it flows back behind the ears; first, carve the inner edge of the ears to their correct shape. Then use either a gouge or a knife to create a deep slice between the ear and the forelock to give the appearance of separation. Pare the edge of the forelock naturally into this deep slice. Repeat if necessary and then sand over the complete area

9 The forelock and ears should now look like this, and the ears are ready to be hollowed

10 Begin the hollowing of the ears with the No.9, 10mm, working as far into the ear as the tool will allow

11 Then swap to a 6mm conical or spherical shaped carbide burr, to hollow deep down inside the ear, and evenly around the back and sides. If you do not have power carving tools, then perseverance with a selection of razor sharp smaller gouges from No.7 onwards will create much the same effect and depth

12 Use a piece of 120 grit abrasive rolled around a small piece of dowel to smooth the hollowed ears evenly and naturally

“... perseverance with a selection of razor sharp smaller gouges from No.7 onwards will create much the same effect and depth.”

13 The details of the eyes are very simple to create, but these can also be modified to the readers own design ideas should they wish to do so. Measure and draw the eyes into their correct positions on both sides of the head, and check for symmetry from all angles. Use a razor sharp knife to slice accurately along the line

14 Use a No.2, 10mm gouge to pare the wood below the knife cut, curving it evenly into the knife cut. Repeat steps 13 and 14 until a depth of 4–5mm is established in the centre of the eye, and then smooth over with 120 grit abrasive. The carving of the head is now complete, but before you continue check that all of the details have realistic depth and form, and that they are symmetrical on both sides

“The detail of the mane can obviously be designed to accommodate the individual ideas of the reader...”

15 Moving on now to the horse's neck and mane. The first job to do is to completely round over all of the square edges along the line of the neck at the front, and the mane on top. Do this using a very large No.2 gouge, and working from the centre lines on the edges, into the centre of the mass on each side of the form

16 The detail of the mane can obviously be designed to accommodate the individual ideas of the reader, but the most important point to remember is that the hair must flow naturally around the neck to form even connecting contours on both sides



9



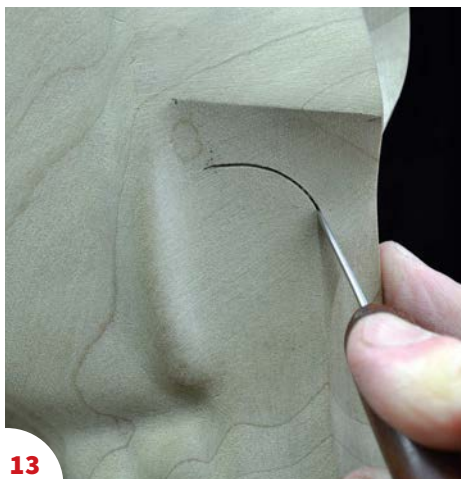
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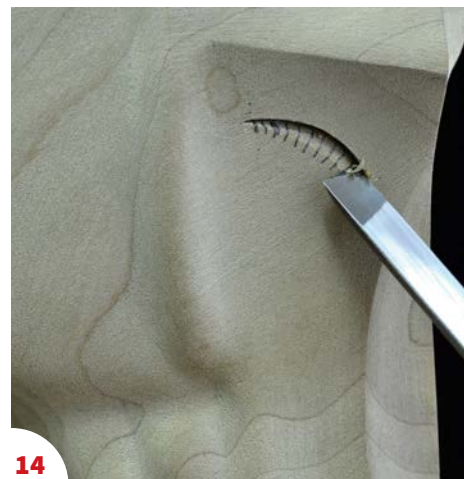
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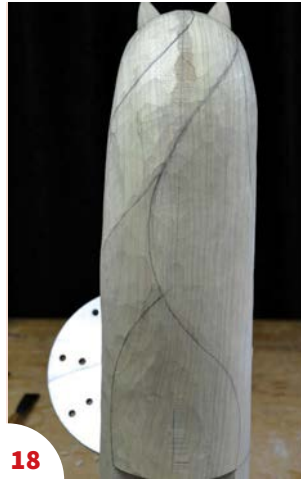
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16



17 Using either the designs supplied or your own designs, draw these onto both sides of the wood

18 The designs supplied of both sides of the mane should connect along the top edge something like this

19 The objective of this technique to produce the mane, is to split the various locks of hair into different sections, and then lower the edge of one adjoining section so that it appears to be flowing underneath the lock next to it. In this example, the front lock on the right side of the head (as you look at it) flows underneath the chin, and then over the front lock on the left side. The hatched areas show the edges that will be lowered. Start by using a 'V'-tool to sketch along the lines of each lock



20 Then use a No.2, 20mm gouge to pare the lower side into the 'V'-tool cut. Repeat this procedure until you reach a depth of at least 10mm

21 The front lock on the left side (as you look at it) flows underneath the front lock on the right side, but re-emerges again on the right side. The hatched areas show the edge and sections that need to be lowered

22 The section of hair at the very back of the mane, curves right around from this side to the tip of the opposite side. Draw this curve on your wood first, and then use the No.2, 20mm to shape the wood following your line



23 Now swap to the opposite side, and use a No.8, 18mm gouge to remove the bulk of the mass, from the design line at the rear edge, across to approximately 15mm from the curved line that you drew in step 22

24 The No.2, 20mm gouge can then be used to pare the No.8 cuts neatly back to the design lines



25 Use the 'V'-tool to create a neat sharp cut right into the very corner of the lock to give it the appearance of separation

26 The upper left edge of this section can now be curved over naturally to meet the opposite right side edge

27 Your carving on this side of the mane should now look something like this. If you wish to, you can add more depth to the different sections of hair, which will enhance their curvature and add to the shadows that strike over the surface of the finished piece

28 When the separation of the locks and shaping of the mane have been completed, the final job to do is to tidy up the tool marks along the edges of each section. Use either the 'V'-tool or knife to cut into the corner, and the No.2, 10mm to pare the wood evenly back to a square edge. Also, if there are any deep gouge marks on the surface of the mane, it will speed up the sanding process if you skim these back as evenly as possible to the surface. When you are sure that the carving is as clean and even as possible, you can move onto the sanding process

29 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 smooth the surfaces of each section. When you are sure that it is perfectly smooth; clean the saw dust 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

TOP TIP: A cloth used to apply boiled linseed oil is prone to spontaneous combustion! Always wash with soapy water after use, and lay the cloth flat outdoors before discarding

30 The example used for this project, was finished with one good application of boiled linseed oil, applied with a brush for the awkward areas of access, and a cloth for the open areas, which beautifully enriched the natural colour of the grain. This was left for a week or so to dry before applying several coats of dark wax polish, which sealed the grain and gave it a wonderful sheen

Base:

I have provided a template for the base that the example is mounted upon, which you can use if you like or preferably design your own. This base was simply cut out, drilled, sanded and finished with the boiled linseed oil and dark wax ►



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Guardian of the black pearl

Bob Jubb carves a detailed decorative octopus

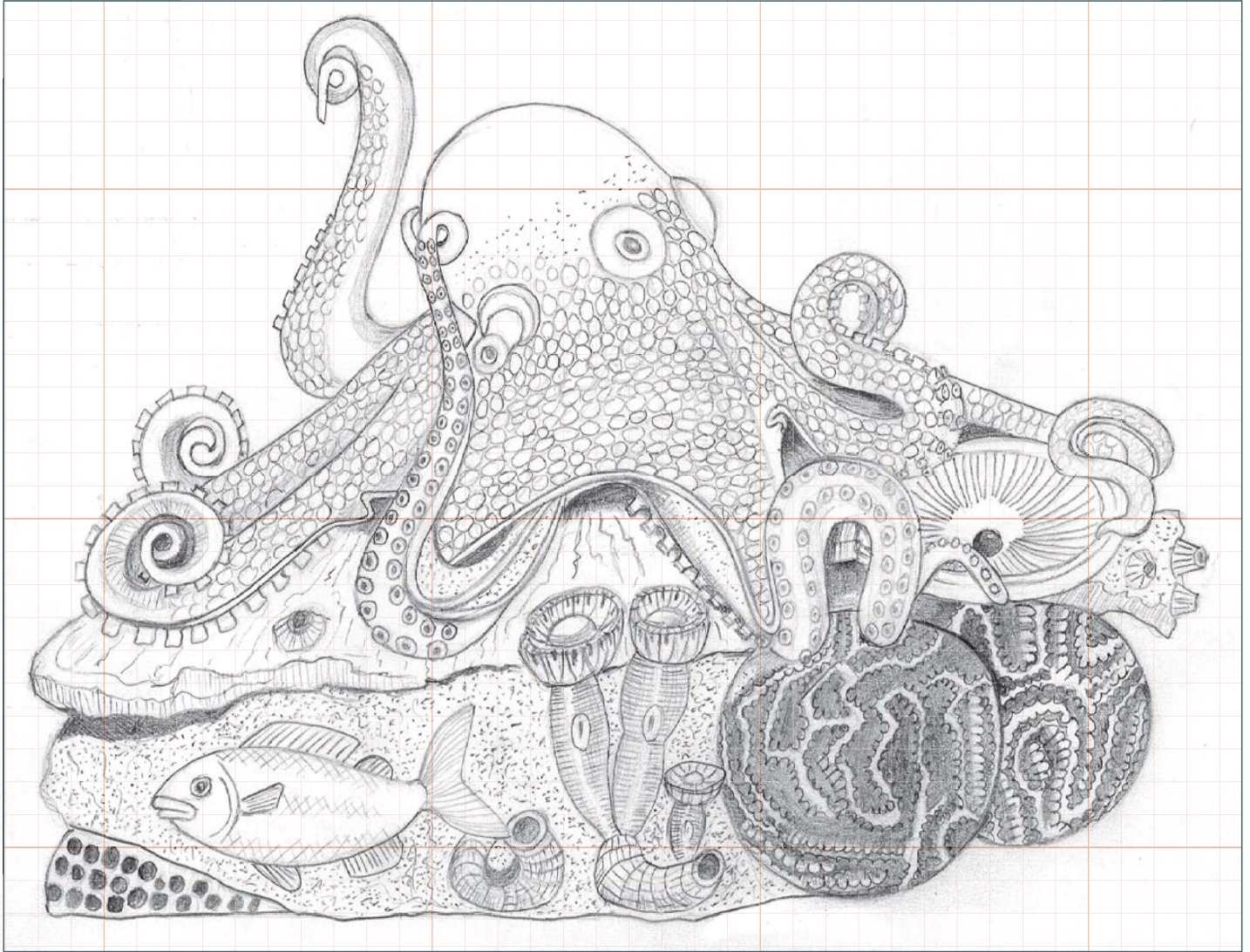
To most people the octopus is an ugly creature, but they are intelligent, interesting, far from ugly, and use camouflage and stealth to hunt. They vary considerably in size from the tiny deadly poisonous blue ringed octopus to very large creatures several metres long. I have had a couple of encounters with octopuses, which have inspired me to have a go at carving them, culminating in this carving which I call 'Guardian of the black pearl'.

Design

The dimensions of this carving are 220 x 165 x 165mm and it is carved from a boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) tree stump. Boxwood was chosen not only for the stump to work with, but also because boxwood hold incredibly fine detail. I drew a quick sketch from which I created the octopus. The tentacle sticking up in the air is actually a root of the tree stump, and so the grain runs along the stump making it less easy to break – but then thought I would try to add other marine creatures to show it in a natural reef like setting. I was able to incorporate two brain coral, sea anemones, sea squirts, limpets, two little fish, a hermit crab in a shell and seaweed, plus an oyster shell with a black pearl in it, made from African blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*).

It is likely to be hard to copy this exactly, but hopefully this will inspire you to have a go and create your own octopus carving, adding those elements and extras you want in order to create an individual carving. ▶





DID YOU KNOW?

- Octopuses are actually boneless with the hardest part of their body being their head. They not only lose their shape when they leave the water, but have the ability to squeeze into small spaces.
- Octopuses actually have blue blood because their blood is copper based, which is great for transporting oxygen in a cold, low-oxygen environment like the ocean!



Next issue...

On sale 22 December

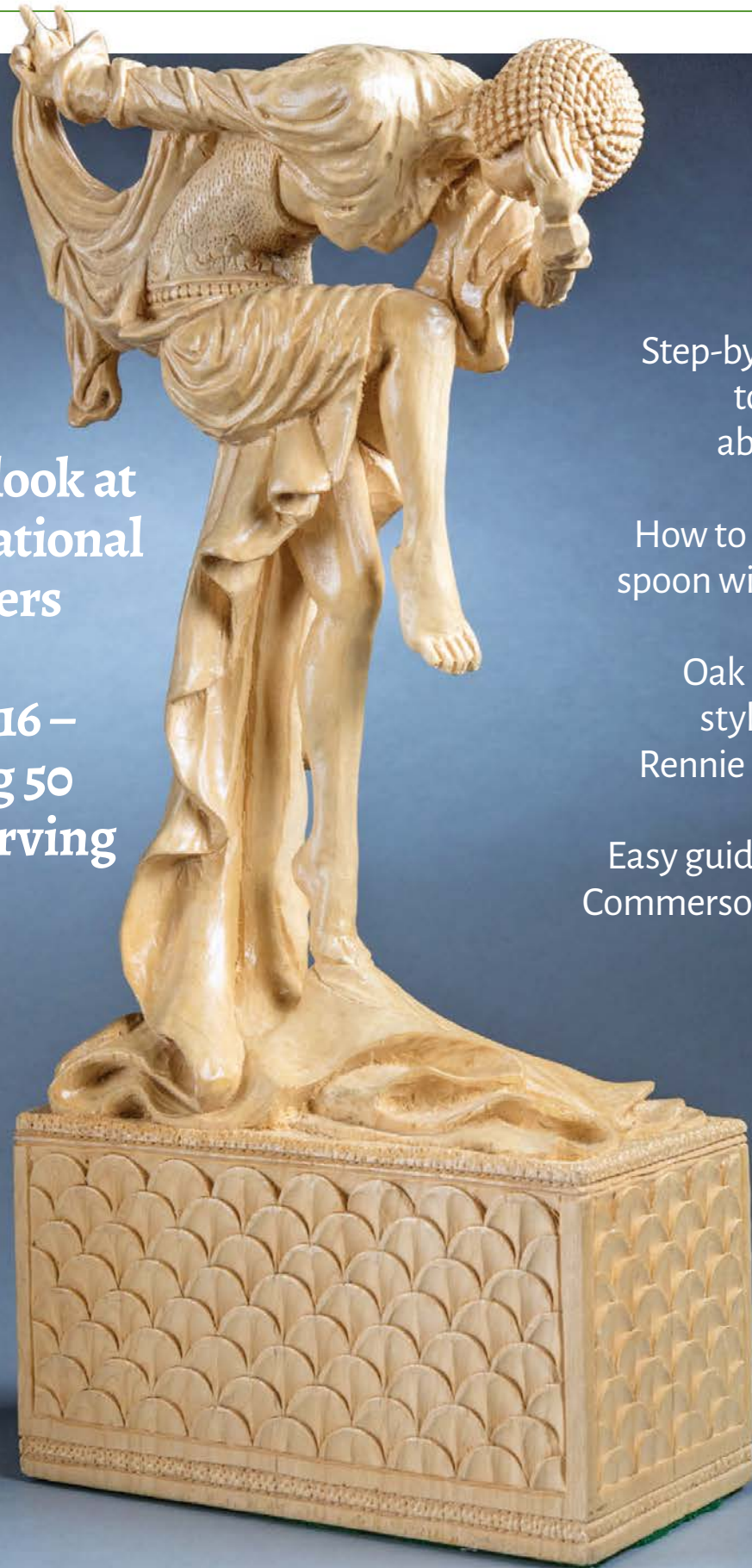
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the International
Woodcarvers
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show of 2016 –
celebrating 50
years of carving
excellence

Step-by-step guide
to carving an
abstract swan

How to carve a love
spoon with a dragon

Oak panel in the
style of Charles
Rennie Mackintosh

Easy guide to carving
Commerson's dolphins



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5 essential knife techniques

Jason Townsend looks at knife skills in the context of working in-the-round

Knife carving is on the increase as far as popularity is concerned, but is also one of the oldest forms of carving. There is a lot one can do with just a knife, and it starts with five basic cuts, which form the fundamental basis for all knife carving projects. Here, I look at those five cutting techniques.

EXPERT ADVICE



- With carving knives, there is no one size fits all in terms of blade shape. There are an untold number of different blade shapes and sizes out there and although you can start with a single blade, it is well worth experimenting with blade shapes and sizes to fit your particular style or particular task in hand. A good first blade would have a straight cutting face and be about 40mm long.
- When working with sharp tools, it is essential that you wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and observe some basic safety precautions. Always have some plasters handy just in case you do accidentally cut yourself; it can be easily done, even when simply reaching across the bench to grab another tool. I also suggest keeping some alcohol swabs handy too so you can clean the area before applying a plaster.
- Gloves. Gloves. Gloves. A good quality pair of cut-resistant and stab-resistant gloves are an essential item in a woodcarvers' toolbox. The pair of gloves shown are made from a high quality Kevlar weave with nitrile coating on the palm for good grip and an extra cut resistant layer where the thumb meets the palm. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of wearing at least one glove (on the hand that doesn't hold the knife).
- Leather digit guards are also worth looking at and can be worn on the thumb of your cutting hand and/or the finger and thumb of your non-cutting hand. They will not offer the same level of protection as a good Kevlar glove, but have their place in the toolbox.



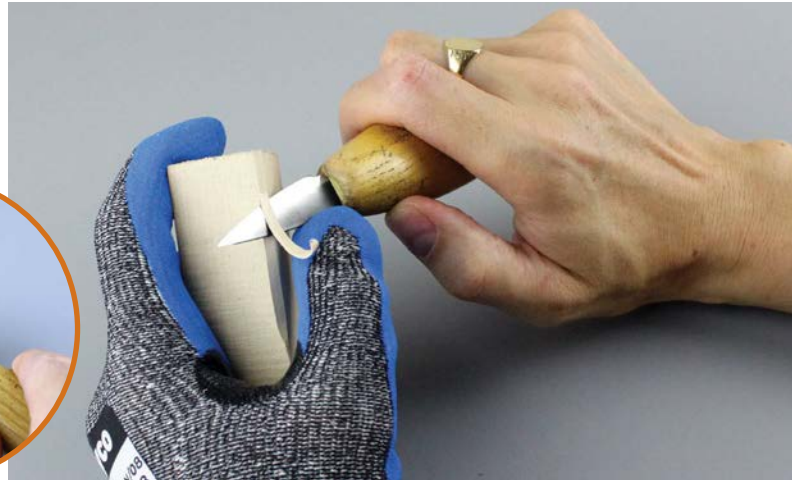
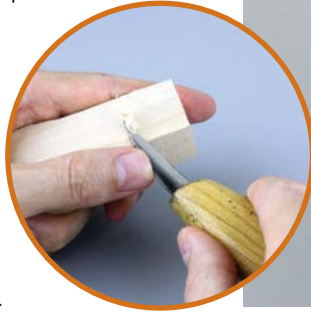
1 Paring cut

The paring cut is where the knife is pulled towards you. Position the thumb of your cutting hand securely on the piece of work, place the knife blade on the work with your thumb outstretched and grip the knife between your palm and fingers. Pull the knife towards your thumb to make the cut. A leather guard on the thumb of your cutting hand

and a glove on your non-cutting hand is a good precaution with this cut because the blade is coming towards you. The blade should be fully under your control though because it can only travel until your fist is clenched. If the piece of work is longer, you can move your thumb down the piece of work while keeping the blade in place and continue the cut.

2 Thumb-push cut

The thumb-push cut is where the knife is pushed away from you. With this cut, the thumb on the hand not holding the knife does all of the work. Grip the knife between your fingers and palm with the thumb resting on the back of the knife, the blade facing away from you. Grip the work with the hand not holding the knife and place the blade on the work in front of the thumb of this hand. The back of the blade (or the back of the knife) should rest on this thumb. Extend the thumb so that it pushes the blade along the work to make the cut. This cut has a very high degree of control because the blade can only travel as far as you can, flex the thumb of the hand not holding the knife.

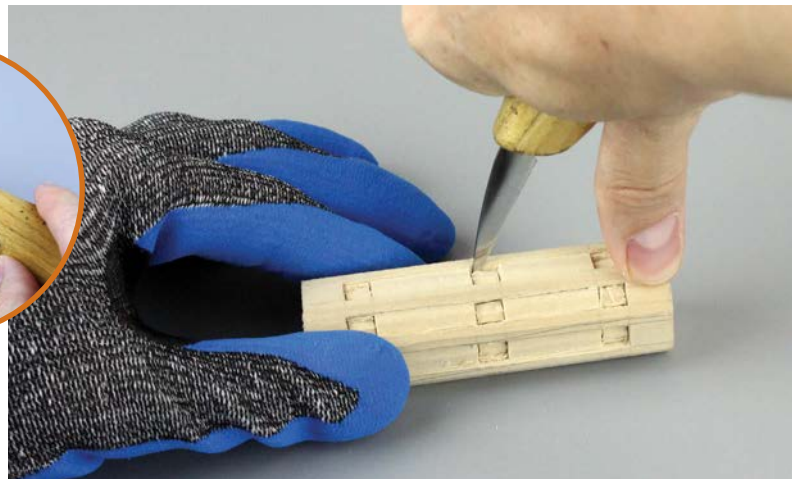
**3 Stop cut**

This essential cut involves pushing the blade into the wood to make a cut that other cuts can butt up against.

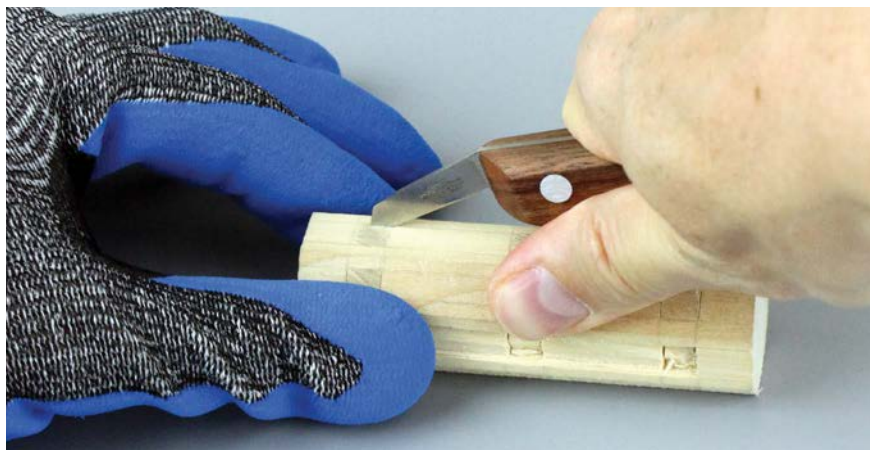
Holding the knife between your palm and fingers, place the thumb on the piece of work and lower the blade to the place where you want to make the cut. Push the knife down into the wood. You can use the tip of the knife for a smaller cut or the very base of the blade for a more powerful cut. You will only be able to go to a certain depth before the blade will be unable to travel further. Do not use too much force with this cut or you risk the knife slipping and having an accident.

**4 Stab cut**

The stab cut is one that is essential in chip carving, but has its place when used with knives that have a variety of blade shapes. This cut is most useful when trying to cut out a triangular piece of wood. Make two stab cuts and can then use a thumb-push or paring cut in order to remove the chip of wood. Hold the knife in a similar way to that for a stop cut but you want to bring the tip of the blade down onto the work rather than the cutting face of the blade. Knives with a curved cutting face are not so useful for this and knives that have an angled blade are the most useful. Again, don't use too much force with this cut because the blade will only be able to travel so far into the wood.

**5 Scoring**

Scoring is used in all sorts of contexts. Once you have marked a design out onto a piece of wood, you might score the wood along the lines of the design. You might also score with a knife to make a cut that another cut can butt up against, much like a stop cut. A variety of blade shapes can be used for scoring, but knives with a curved cutting face are probably not an appropriate choice; a straight cutting face is the most appropriate. As with the stop cut and stab cut, don't use too much force when scoring because the blade can only cut into the wood so much; it is much better to repeat scoring if you want a deeper cut. ▶



Carve and paint a wood pigeon

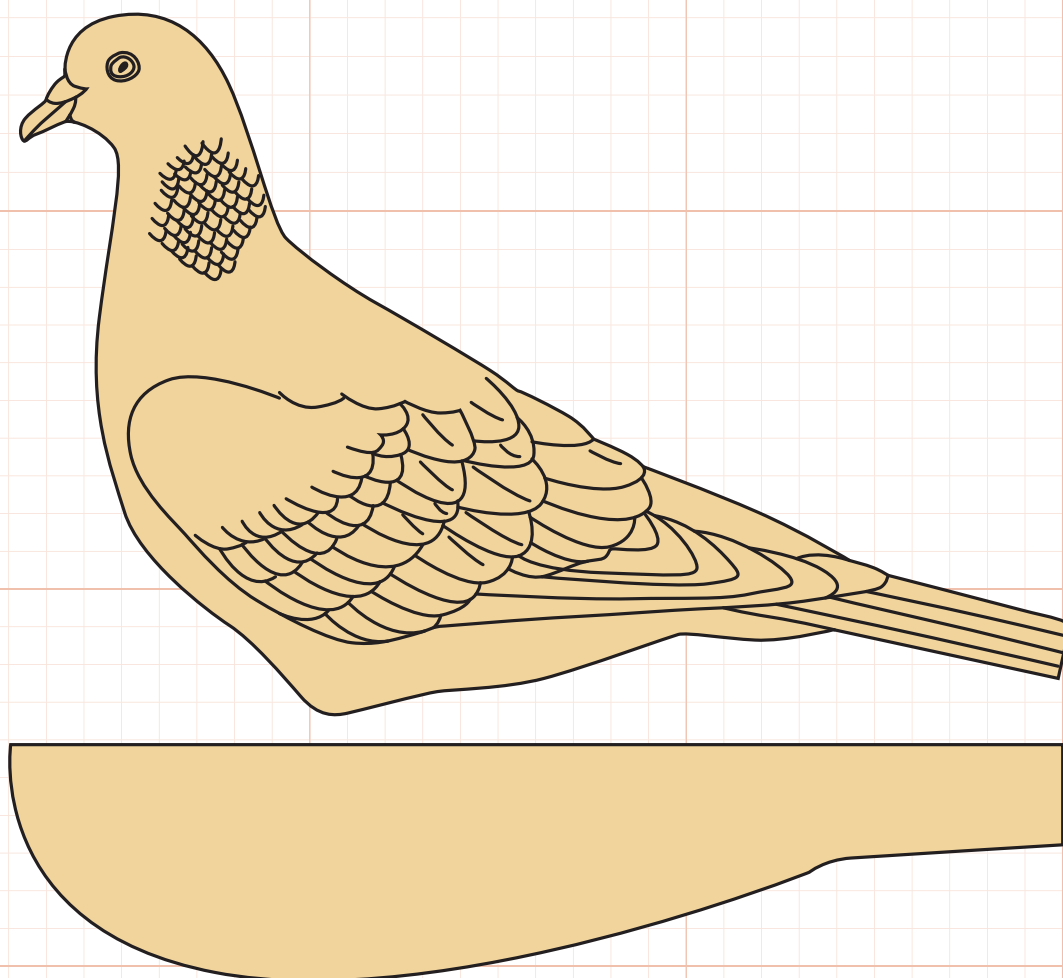
Mike Wood explains how to shape, detail and colour a familiar garden bird

The wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) is the UK's largest and most common pigeon and is part of the dove (*Columbidae*) family. It is largely grey with a white neck and wing patches so it's clearly visible in flight. Its cooing call is a familiar sound in woodlands as is the loud clatter of its wings when it flies away. They are found across the UK in fields, woods and also towns and cities where they frequent parks and gardens. Wood pigeons are known to eat crops like cabbages, sprouts, peas and grain, but also buds, shoots, seeds, nuts and berries. The wood pigeon can be found across Europe, Eastern and Northern Asia.

Even though they are seen often, unfortunately few of us take the time to look at them more closely. They are, in fact, a beautiful bird that are well worth taking the time to carve.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Pigeons have lived alongside humans for thousands of years, with the first images dating back to 3000BC
- The pigeon was often used in both World Wars, carrying messages over enemy lines. Their use as a messenger in wartime resulted in many pigeons being awarded honours by both the British and French governments
- Some religious groups in India believe that when a person dies, their soul assumes the form of a bird, normally a pigeon
- GI Joe is a famous pigeon from WWII, having saved the lives of thousands after British troops established a position in an Italian town that was due to be bombed. GI Joe delivered a message after communication systems went down



Things you will need

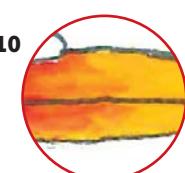
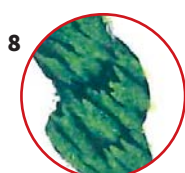
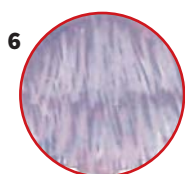
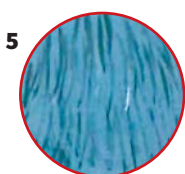
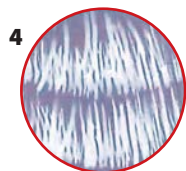
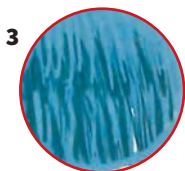
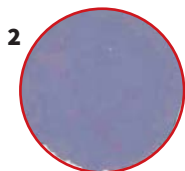
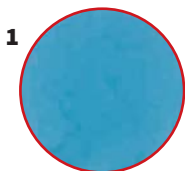
Tools

- Rotary carving unit
- Handpiece to hold cutters and sanding units
- Drum sander and abrasives to fit hand unit
- Coarse and medium grit tapered rotary cutter
- Medium grit ball rotary cutter
- Fine grit small ball rotary cutter
- Fine grit pointed ruby rotary cutter
- Fine grade flame/tapered cutter
- Airbrush/brushes as appropriate
- Coloured artist's paints
- PPE and extraction
- Pyrography unit and shading and incising/scalpel-type tips

Materials

- Body in jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) at 300 x 160 x 200mm
- Head in lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) at 70 x 50 x 60mm
- Eyes – the ones I use are glass and special wood pigeon eyes with an oval pupil

Colour swatches



1 Payne's grey and white gesso for a light grey

2 Violet red and white gesso for the pink breast feathers

3 Payne's grey added to the light grey mix, for the darker grey to use for individual feather detail

4 White gesso is used for breast detail

5 Thinned down grey mix – No.1 – is used as a wash over the back and head

6 Thin down the No.2 mix for a wash over the breast

7 Mix Payne's grey and burnt umber to create a dark brown to use on the primary feathers and the dark markings on the tail and neck feathers

8 Use a green iridescent paint to edge the small feathers on the neck

9 Mix a small amount of white gesso with rose-coloured paint to colour the feet

10 The bill is painted with cadmium yellow as a base, then this is mixed with a small amount of cadmium red which is blended into it to create the colour grades towards the head

1 First, cut out your sections of wood for the head and the body pieces using the drawings to create your templates. Once cut, rough cut the body and head to represent the main profile lines and sections as best you can. I use a bandsaw, but you could use a chisel to do this. Sit the head on the body section and swivel its position around until you find the angle you want the head to be at

2 Further refine the head and body shape using a rotary carving unit fitted with a tapered burr to achieve a rough shape. If you are hand carving the bird, the process of shaping and detailing takes longer but there is still dust production as with power carving

3 Now the head needs to be refined and a combination of burrs can be used to do this. Once you are happy with the overall shape and look, mark the position of the eye sockets and cut them in. A rotary ball burr makes this process nice and easy, but it can be done using a drill bit, followed by a gouge. The socket size cut needs to match the size of the eyes to be used. I use glass eyes obtained from taxidermists specifically made for pigeons which have an oval pupil. The next stage is to sand everything smooth. This can be done by hand or power sanding. Be careful with power sanding though. It can very quickly remove wood you do not want removed

4 Once the head is shaped and sanded, refine the body shape with a tapered burr and then sand it smooth. After sanding, draw in the wing positions using the pattern provided

5 Now mark in exaggerated breast and underbody feather positions and use a high speed grinder or gouge to rough shape these, using a small round burr. I call this detail some 'lumps and bumps' on the body

6 Use a drum sander, or another suitable method to refine the lumps and bumps...

7 ... then sand the undertail coverts and tail

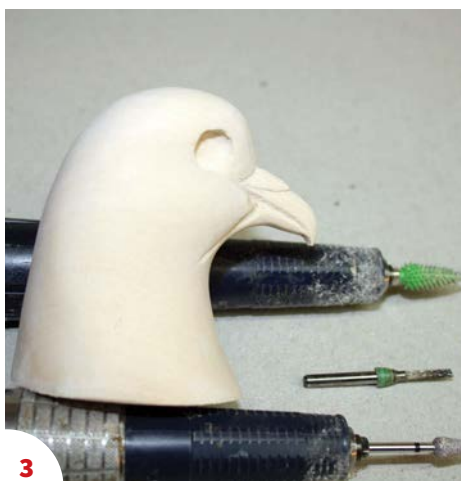
8 Now permanently fix the head in place and blend the head joint into the main body. Mark in the body and tail feathers. Now fix the eyes in place with plastic wood...



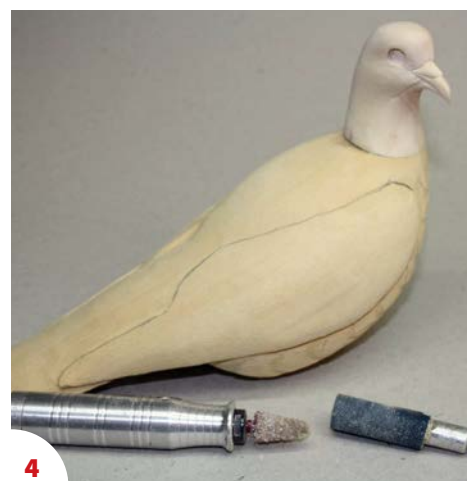
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9 ... and shape around the eye. Next, blend the head into the main body and then carve in the head detail and neck feather detail

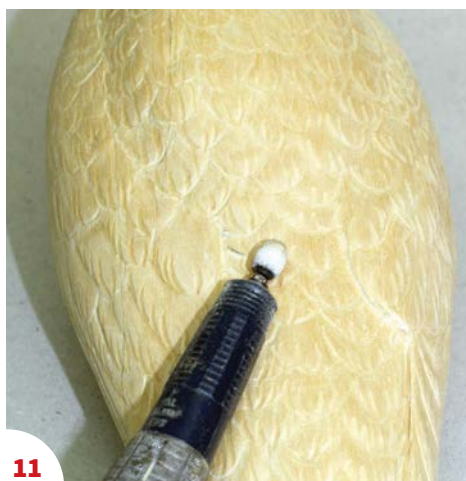
10 Now you can start shaping the body and tail feathers using a tapered burr

11 Refine the feathers cut using a very fine ball-end or flame-shaped cutter

12 Now it is time to move to the underside of the bird. Drill two holes where the legs will fit in and then draw in the feathers on the undulations. Use a pyrography unit fitted with a scalpel-type tip and carve in the feather detail

13 Once the underside is done, turn the bird back over and pyrograph in the central feather detail

14 It is up to you, but I chose a branch, cleaned it up and using a combination of wire or rope, and either bought or homemade copper sheet leaves, create an ivy running around the branch. This gives a realistic looking perch on which the pigeon can sit. Copper sheet can be primed and painted to suit your requirements

**11****12**

15 I make my own feet, but you can buy suitable feet from many specialist bird carving suppliers instead. Position your feet where you want them to sit on your branch/ pedestal. Position the feet to make sure everything looks right. Once you are happy with the position, drill holes in the branch in the right position to accept the feet later on and then fix your feet into your pigeon

16 Now it is time to sort out the colouring. Start by giving the whole piece a couple of light coats of thinned down white gesso. You can, of course, use brushes for this and the following colouring processes. Coat the bulk of the body in the light grey colour mix – labelled No.1 described in the colour palette earlier. Keep the beak white. Now paint the feet with the rose colour mix – labelled No.9 on the colour palette. The ends of the wings and tail need to be given a coat of the pure Paynes grey or black. This might seem stark at the moment, but will be softened down somewhat later

**13****14****15****16**

17 Having given most of the bird a coat of light grey, define the feathers both underneath and on top. Use cardboard templates cut to the right shapes to allow you to create white highlights – using gesso – on the back feathers. Use a mid-grey to create some of the fine line feather details, followed by the darker grey mix – No.3 – to create fine-line detail



17

18 The outer edges of the wings are painted white and then give the back a thinned down coat of the light grey, to mute down the high contrast



18

19 Paint the breast area with the pink mix No.2, and once dry, use white to create detail on all the underside feathers (except the tail). When the white is dry, give the whole breast area a light wash of the pink No.2 colour so it looks like the colour swatch No.8



19

20 Put in the tail feather detail with the No.7 colour mix in the palette and once dry, apply a white band to the underside of the tail feathers



20

21 The neck has a white band – where the join went and grey feathers above and below it. There is a distinct section – a small feathered area on the back and side of the neck which is an iridescent green. Highlight the feather detail using the colour mix No.7 and when dry, coat these feathers with iridescent green



21

22 The end tips of the tail feathers need to be given a dark coat of Payne's grey. The end section of the wing tips – primary feathers – need to be detailed with white



22

23 Paint the beak with colour mix No.10 – which is cadmium yellow – then mix the cadmium yellow with a tiny amount of camium red and working back to the head leaving the tip yellow, use light overwashes to create an ever-darkening graduated red. Add darker highlights using colour mix No.7. The overcover of the beak is white

24 This view shows the bird from the top

25 The finished bird ▶



23



24



25

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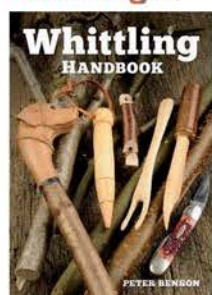
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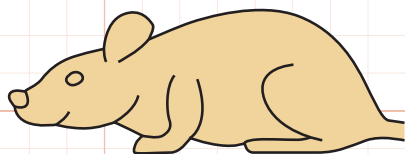
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Mouse letter opener

Paul Purnell makes good use of leftover gun stock by carving this handy letter opener



Should a shotgun user damage the stock of their gun, the chances are they will have it repaired at their local gunsmith. If the damage is beyond repair, the stock will need replacing. A stable wood is essential for any gunstock and an attractive grain is desirable. This is why walnut (*Juglans* spp.) is often a top choice. Other woods commonly used include wild cherry (*Prunus* spp.), maple (*Acer* spp.), mahogany (*Khaya* spp.), ebony (*Diospyros* spp.) and a couple of other exotic hardwoods. Some stocks are handmade with very high-quality material that has fantastic grain. Therefore, it is possible that sitting in the stockroom of your local gun shop there will be a box of broken stocks that might end up in a woodstove. With some negotiation, you could have access to some great pieces of wood for small carvings. MGR Guns of Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire kindly donated the walnut stock from which I have made this simple project of a mouse letter opener. The exact species of walnut is unknown although I do suspect it is American black (*Juglans nigra*).



Things you will need

Eyes

- Glass eyes: 4mm dark brown or black

Wood

- Walnut: 210 x 25 x 20mm

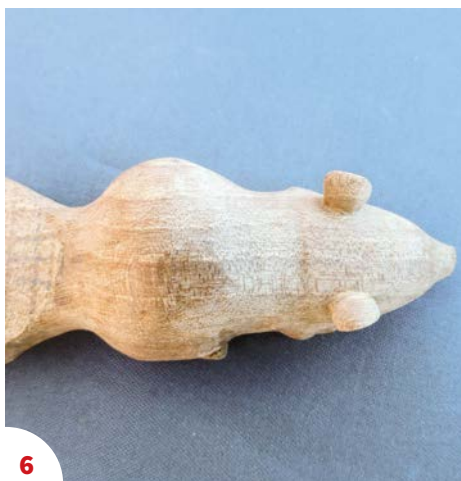
Tools

- Bandsaw
- Rotary carving tool
- Coarse and medium spiked burs
- Selection of diamond burs
- Blue ceramic cone

for texturing

- Carving knife or scalpel
- Cushioned-drum sander
- Cloth sandpaper 120 through to 400-grit
- Epoxy putty
- Finishing oil



**1****2****3****4****5****6****7****8**

1 Have plenty of reference material to hand before you start to carve. Use the diagram to make cardboard templates. Use the side template to bandsaw the blank. Do not touch the top view at this initial stage. Ensure you leave plenty of material on the blade to accommodate the tail – ideally a depth of 7–8mm. Have the grain run along the length of the piece of wood

2 Mark a centreline on both sides. Draw the side view positions of the legs and ears. Use a coarse, flame burr in your rotary tool to rough out the side view. Use the top view template to draw the top profile of the mouse's body

3 From the top perspective, use the coarse burr to shape the snout, body and the cutouts at the point where the blade of the opener meets the backside of the mouse

4 With a medium, flame burr round over the body and snout. Separate the ears on the top view. As this carving is of a generic mouse, the ears can be of any size. However, neither carve them too large nor too thin, as this will make them fragile. This is especially important if the intention is to use the opener as opposed to it just being an ornament

5 Continue to refine the ears from both the side and top views. Start to outline the leg and feet positions – all with the medium burr. With a cushioned-drum sander and 120-grit abrasive, sand the body. Do not be too fussy, as this sanding is simply to enable a better perspective of how things are looking, and to facilitate the pencilling back in of the details. Redraw the features

6 With a diamond, flame burr continue to refine the ears, shape the head and nose, and remove any marks left on the body from the coarser burrs

7 Then use the same diamond burr to obtain better definition of the legs and feet. A carving knife or scalpel will help with the shaping of the feet. Draw the position of the four feet on the underside. Outline with the carving knife and use the diamond taper to define further. Use the same burr to add shape to the belly

8 Sand the feet and head with 240-grit paper in a split mandrel. Each foot has five toes. The number of toes you will be able to define will depend on how much wood you leave on the topside of each foot. It doesn't matter if you do not have room for five, as often only a couple of toes will be visible in this pose. To define the toes, use a knife or scalpel to run a line between each toe on the upper and lower surfaces. Then take a sliver from each side of this line to give a v-shaped groove. Use a thin, diamond needle burr to round over the edges. Sand with a piece of 240-grit abrasive folded to enable you to work between each toe by hand. If you just touch a 1mm diamond ball to the tip of each toe, the small indentation will give the impression of a toenail



9 Next, use two pins to locate the eye positions on either side of the head, as shown

10 Hollow out the ears using a 1mm and 2mm diamond ball. Do not make the edges too thin and fragile. Sand the ears using the mandrel with 240-grit paper

11 Create a shallow depression running through the eye with the mandrel sander and 240-grit abrasive. Starting with the 2mm diamond ball, create the eye socket. Check the symmetry and alignment. Using a 3mm diamond ball, enlarge the socket to accommodate the 3mm glass eyes. Starting with the smaller diamond burr will enable you to adjust alignment if necessary. Ensure a tight fit. The eyes will be fitted with epoxy putty, which will show through if the sockets are too large. The nose is a tiny pip of around 2mm in width. Use a knife or scalpel to define it. Carefully round over with the small piece of folded, 240-grit paper. Mark the position of the mouth. Run a knife or scalpel vertically along the drawn line then cut at an angle of about 45° to take out a small section. Soften the edges with the piece of folded abrasive. Check over the mouse; remove any hard edges or imperfections

12 Draw a line to bisect the side edges of the letter opener blade. This should leave 3–4mm either side. Draw the position of the tail on the top of the blade. Use a coarse, blunt-end carbide burr to remove the wood from one side of the tail down to the mid-point line. Now remove the wood from the other side of the tail. Tidy up both sides with a medium blunt-end burr. Use a sanding block, with 240-grit abrasive, to sand the edges of the blade. Use the centreline to obtain symmetry. With the medium burr, reduce the remainder of the blade's top surface to match the bottom profile of the tail. Sand the top surface using the drum sander and the sanding block with 120, 180 and 240-grit abrasive. Use the mid-point line on the edge for reference. Shape the tip of the blade

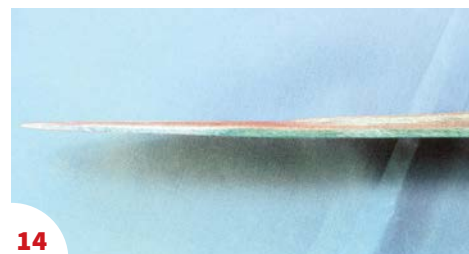
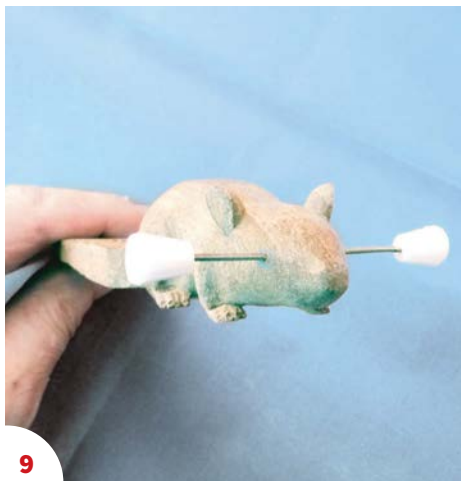
13 Round over the tail and tidy up around the mouse's backside. Sand the underside of the blade using a sanding block with 120, 180 and 240-grit abrasive.

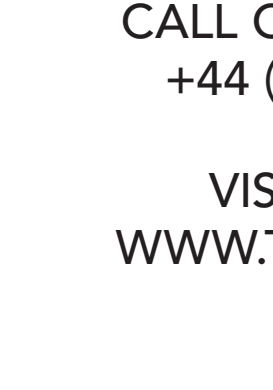
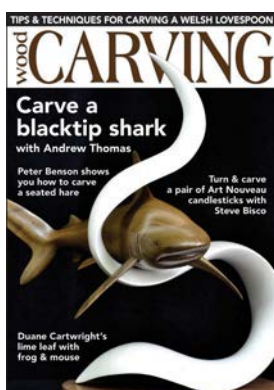
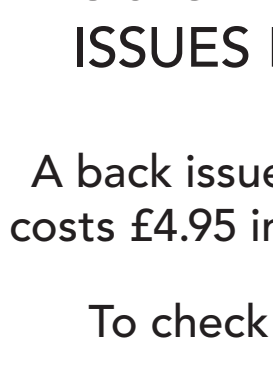
14 The side profile of the blade should be around 3–4mm at the base of the tail tapering down to 1mm at the tip of the blade

15 Sand the entire piece by hand with 320 then 400-grit abrasive. Use a blue ceramic cone to add the detail. Remove any debris from the carving with an abrasive brush in the rotary tool

16 Wipe down the carving with white spirit, then allow to dry. Apply four coats of finishing oil. Fit the eyes with epoxy putty. Use the smallest amount to achieve the fix. If you are planning on using the opener, smear a thin layer of superglue over both surfaces at the tip of the blade to add extra strength

17 The finished carving ▶





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Christmas gift guide

A fun Christmas gift list, with everything a woodcarver would want

All prices are correct at the time of going to press. Photographs courtesy of the manufacturers/retailers, unless otherwise stated

Christmas is a time for family, friends and, as my children reminded me recently, presents. I admit I requested long ago that no socks, jumpers and other gimmicky Christmas stuff are given to me, and instead I would like to have in the workshop or for my other hobbies. Following is a selection of products I have found that would look great under any Christmas tree as presents for carvers. I hope you have a great Christmas and New Year and let me know what you end up receiving and making over Christmas.

HANDTOOLS



Flexcut Micro Tool sets

Flexcut's six sets of micro tools make the job of carving those extra fine details far easier. All sets consist of four tools with well-shaped ash handles that give the user exceptional control. The overall length of each tool is 142mm.

£89

Contact: BriMarc Tools & Machinery Web: www.brimarc.com



Whittling knives

The basic whittling set includes five knives each with a different blade style. The set is presented in a beautifully soft leather toolroll with ten pockets, giving plenty of room for expanding the collection at a later date.

£53.62

Contact: The Tool Post

Web: www.toolpost.co.uk

Pfeil eight-piece carving set

This starter set contains a 12mm chisel, 12mm skew chisel, No.5, 12mm gouge, No.4, 20mm gouge, No.7, 10mm gouge, No.9, 4mm gouge, a 60° V-tool 8mm wide and a chip carving knife. All supplied in a canvas roll case.

£158.40

Contact: Classic Hand Tools

Web: www.classichandtools.com

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the manufacturers/retailers
unless otherwise stated

**Greenwood carving blades**

Greenwood carving blades suitable for greenwood carving techniques, include curved blades, also suitable for seasoned wood.

From £28

Contact: Nic Westermann Web: www.nicwestermann.co.uk

Mikisyo

A precision tool with scraping or cutting function in carving and restoration work. Made of blue paper steel with the overall length is 200mm, the blade length is 25mm and blade width 4mm.

£47.90 (plus p+p)

Contact: Nic Westermann Web: www.nicwestermann.co.uk

**Fishtail bullnose chisel**

The blade is forged from a round bar of the best high carbon steel available, shaped by heating in a forge and repeatedly hammered to refine the grain structure. The initial bevel of 10–12° is given a microbevel on the top side only.

From \$35 (plus taxes and p+p)

Contact: North Bay Forge Web: www.northbayforge.com

Kirschen chisel set

Carving chisel set with octagonal hornbeam handle in microfibre roll plus 1 set sharpening stones. 12 pieces: straightedge: 6, 12mm, skew-edge: 8mm, shallow flute, 4, 8, 12mm medium flute: deep flute, 4, 6mm, 'V'-tool: 6mm.

€392.22 (plus p+p)

Contact: Kirschen

Web: www.kirschen.de/en

**Narex professional six-piece carving set**

All tools are handmade to the highest quality and designed for professional carvers. Blade length is 70mm and handle size 82 x 40mm. Length of the carving knife is 175mm and blade size is 40 x 12mm.

£69.95

Contact: Tomaco Web: www.tomaco.co.uk

**Japanese finger files**

Easily controlled, these thin files are safe-edged to avoid damaging adjacent surfaces. Made of coated stainless steel, they have a medium-fine abrasive texture that removes material quickly yet leaves a smooth finish. The tooth pattern cuts evenly in any direction and resists loading in hard or soft woods. The files are 95mm long overall. Available individually or in a set of all five shapes.

\$29.90 (plus tax and p+p)

Contact: Lee Valley Tools Ltd. Web: www.leevalley.com

**Cape Forge starter set**

The set consists of a No.1 standard carving knife with sheath, a strop and compound, which is all you will need for edge maintenance; a glove for protection against slips; an information packet, including a pattern or two and a band aid for good luck. The handle styles come in standard and tear drop and glove size in small, medium and large.

\$69 (plus taxes and p+p)

Contact: Cape Forge Web: www.capeforge.com

POWERTOOLS & POWER TOOL ACCESSORIES

Foredom K1030 portable micromotor

This all new design has a pocket-sized control unit, which features a digital speed display at the top, so it's easy to read and monitor the speed, which is easy to control with the dial control. Operating at a speed of 0–30,000rpm, the run time is approximately five hours, depending on how long it is in continuous use, but you can plug it in for day-long use.

£325

Contact: Woodworks

Craft Supplies

Web: www.woodworkscraftsupplies.co.uk



OZ Plus micromotor

The Ram OZ Plus is an excellent higher end tool for the carver that requires a smoother, more powerful micromotor, especially if the tool will be used in a commercial application. Features include a controller, variable speed dial control, a speed safety dial lock, speed limit memory function and many more.

OZ Plus comes with an 3mm collet and a 3–2.4mm reducer.

\$650 (plus tax and p+p)

Contact: Treeline USA

Web: www.treelineusa.com



Dremel Fortiflex

The Dremel Fortiflex is a high quality precision tool, consisting of a powerful hanging motor (300W), a patented heavy duty flexible shaft, an exchangeable precision hand piece and a foot pedal for variable speed control (0–20,000rpm).

£262.99

Contact: Dremel

Web: www.shop.dremeleurope.com



Proxxon PS 13 pen sander and NG2/E adaptor

The PS 13 pen sander from Proxxon is ideal for working on awkward to reach areas.

The pen sander is supplied with four sanding arbors with straight shanks and four angled, plus three sheets of pre-profiled self adhesive sanding pads. The NG 2/E mains adaptor is a 230V to 12V unit suitable for use with many of the Proxxon machines.

PS 13 pen sander £24.97

NG2/E adaptor £25.56

Contact: BriMarc Tools & Machinery

Web: www.brimarc.com/proxxon



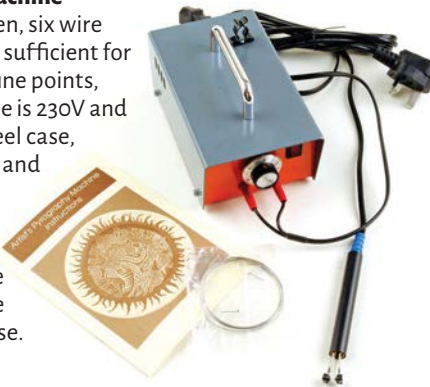
Peter Child pyrography machine

Includes a powerful unit, pen, six wire points, small supply of wire sufficient for making approximately 30 fine points, instruction leaflet. Available is 230V and 110V. Housed in a strong steel case, it is robust and long lasting and suitable for continuous professional use. The pen (for handpiece) has a cool running lightweight handle which remains comfortable even after many hours of use.

£109.75

Contact: Turners Retreat

Web: www.turners-retreat.co.uk



Microplane rotary shaper

With Microplane's rotary shaper, you can enjoy shaping with precision and control on wood, plastic, plasterboard and more. Microplane blades are made from 400 series stainless steel and are fitted to an aluminium extrusion which is provided with an 8mm shank. Available in two sizes 25mm or 50mm, with replacement blades available for both.

From £24.26

Contact: BriMarc

Tools & Machinery

Web: www.brimarc.com



Arbortech TurboPlane blade

The TurboPlane blade is 100mm diameter, wood shaping and carving blade designed for use in an angle grinder. With excellent control and balance, it removes stock very quickly and leaves a smooth finish requiring minimal sanding. Three tungsten carbide blades hold their edge well and can be easily sharpened with a diamond file when needed.

£102.46

Contact: BriMarc

Tools & Machinery

Web: www.brimarc.com/proxxon



Saburrtooth rotary tools

These rotary tools feature long-lasting, razor-sharp carbide cutting teeth arranged into a unique open pattern to resist loading while providing rapid stock removal and smoother finishes. Available in many shapes, sizes and textures to suit your needs.

\$20.36 (plus tax and p+p)

Contact: Saburrtooth Web: www.saburrtooth.com

**Axcaliber carving and shaping cutter**

This carving and shaping blade will give excellent results when used on a 115mm angle grinder (22mm bore). Well balanced with five tungsten carbide cutting tips, the blade is very smooth in use with a controllable cutting action. The blade is 100mm diameter and the cutting tips are 6.8mm wide with a rounded profile. **£52.96**
Contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery Web: www.axminster.co.uk

Makita 10.8V brushless combi drill

The new Makita HP332D 10.8V drill has more than 20 torque and drill settings, a keyless chuck, a brushless motor that is controlled by the variable speed trigger, two speeds and has an overall body length of 168mm, weighs 1.3kg and sports an ergonomic soft grip, LED job light and belt clip.

£280.80

Contact: Makita UK

Web: www.makita.co.uk**Burnmaster Eagle set**

This set includes the Burnmaster Eagle 2 port wood burning power supply, two handpiece power ports, two Burnmaster wood burning pens, plus a full selection of 10 burning tips, the Mastercarver tool bag for neatly storing it all, a manual and a UK power lead so you can plug it in and get going straight away.

£296.12

Contact: Classic Handtools

Web: www.classichandtools.com**Kutzall burrs**

Kutzall's burrs are well known to carvers. Kutzall lists seven shapes, which are available in 1/4in or 1/2in shanks, to choose from to suit most situations.

From \$11.25 (plus taxes and p+p)

Contact: Kutzall

Web: www.kutzall.com**Kirjes complete sanding kit**

The complete sanding kits give you all you need to create wonderfully finished objects. Features include a sanding and polishing motor, Kirjes flexible shaft, the KJ100 four drum sanding kit, hand pump and an instruction booklet. **£296.87**
Contact: Classic Hand Tools Web: www.classichandtools.com

**Microdrill/detailer**

The micro-drill handpiece has a 1/8in collet as there is a good choice of cutters, burrs, etc. suitable for wood related crafts with this size shank. An optional reduction sleeve allows 3/16in accessories to be used in this handpiece. Specifications include variable speeds, a foot pedal is included, a quick release 1/8in collet chuck and an optional reduction sleeve available at extra cost. Supplied with 2x carbide piercing cutters

£285

Contact: Woodart

Web: www.woodart-products.co.uk**SHARPENING EQUIPMENT****Tormek T-4**

Tormek T-4 takes precision and stability to a completely new level. It's able to sharpen all the common edge tools. Configure the T-4 with your choice of jigs according to the tools that you are choosing to sharpen. The jigs are sold separately.

£299.96

Contact: Tormek

Web: www.tormek.com**Rider sharpening station**

The ultimate sharpening station from Rider consists of a double-sided diamond stone (1000 grit and 400 grit), leather strop and honing compound, board and all the instructions you need for the ultimate edge. **£59.96**

Contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery

Web: www.axminster.co.uk

WIVAMAC honing machine

The WIVAMAC honing machine has 2 x 120mm diameter flat felt disks to suit a variety of carving and chisel profiles. It also has two smaller 100mm profiled disks. It has a mono phase 220V/550W motor that turns at 1500rpm.

€306.67 (plus p+p)

Contact: Willy Vanhoutte

Web: www.willyvanhoutte.be/en



Diamond honing/polishing kit

The diamond whetstone kit is comprised of: a 200 x 75mm fine bench stone, lapping fluid, honing guide, precision roller guide, honing bar and leather strop. It also includes James Barry *Sharpening Made Easy* DVD and *Sharpening* booklet.

£144.01

Contact: Trend

Web: www.trend-uk.com



WORKSHOP MACHINERY, KIT & ACCESSORIES



Record BS350S bandsaw

An ideal workhorse for the busy workshop where power and generous capacity are required but budget and space do not allow a bigger machine. A basic wheelkit is provided as standard. The bandwheels are cast iron and dynamically balanced with precision ground. The rip fence is the strongest and most industrial in its category with a chromed fence and the mount machined from a single piece of cast iron. The extrusion itself is a heavy section to provide rigidity and accuracy.

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Contact: Record Power

Web: www.recordpower.co.uk



MC200

This filter can be stood on the bench close to the work piece or using the optional accessory mcc100 cradle it can be wall mounted, either to act as a general workshop air cleaner or over a machine, ideal over a lathe.

£199.20

Contact: Acrol Ltd.

Web: www.acrolltd.co.uk

MUT EOD

From cap crimpers, a beefy field blade, and fuse-wire cutters to a carbon scraper, bolt override tool and a replaceable C4 punch, the Leatherman MUT EOD has everything you need in an easy-access configuration for your specialised line of work.

£204.95

Contact: Leatherman

Web: www.leatherman.co.uk



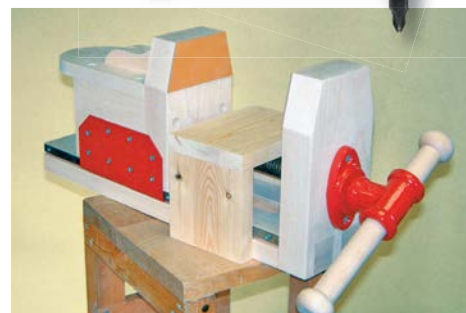
Ready-made carvers chops

The Rocking Horse Shop are now making up the Carvers Chops in their own workshop, complete and ready for you to put to work. Made of maple with steel screw and complete with bolt to secure it to your bench and wooden bridge to protect your work.

£250

Contact: The Rocking Horse Shop

Web: www.rockinghorse.co.uk



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Four types are available: Cold Glue is the original and is ideal for everyday woodworking projects and offers long open time and great versatility; Fast Set wood adhesive is a faster setting, 100% clear drying PVA – ideal for creating tough, moisture resistant bonds to most woods and especially to hard and oily woods; an aliphatic resin based adhesive designed for the more demanding woodworker and hobbyist. It is ideal for furniture restoration and stress joints, as it provides the toughest (least flexible) glue line; Alcolin Ultra is the world's most advanced wood adhesive. It is the first waterproof, water-based wood glue developed and also offers the ultimate in strength and setting time. **From £2.68**

Contact: Johnson tools

Web: www.johnsonstools.co.uk



Microcrystalline wax

Microcrystalline wax forms a very dense coating, which makes it very hard wearing and highly water repellent that's ideal for situations needing a tough coating that might get wet. These waxes also have a higher melting point than traditional waxes.

£10.50

Contact: Chestnut Products

Web: www.chestnutproducts.co.uk

**LED Light magnifier square lens**

A very high quality professional magnifier work light, now featuring all new LED lighting solution. It gives off a high intensity light and features hinged cover over magnifying lens. Supplied with sturdy metal counterweight base, or space saving table clamp.

£65

Contact: Warco Web: www.warco.co.uk

**Dockable gear ties**

The high-strength flexible ties are made from steel wire with a thick rubberized sheathing and a loop at one end. You can feed the free end through the loop to cinch around loose items. Ties can also be formed into a hook or wrapped around objects; the high-friction sheathing grips onto itself as well as the item being held. They come in lengths of 150mm, 305mm and 610mm lengths. The 305mm and 610mm sizes are available with a nylon docking bracket for hanging the tie (150 x 50mm wood screws included).

From \$5.05 (plus tax and p+p)

Contact: Lee Valley Tools Ltd. Web: www.leevalley.com

7pc Forstner set

This 7pc Forstner set comes in a neat wooden box and includes popular sizes 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40mm cutters plus a 200mm extension bar. The cutters are short series type 90mm long overall.

£54.24

Contact: Planet

Plus Ltd.

Web: www.planetplusltd.com

**HOME & ACCESSORIES****Cushion cover**

Handmade cushion cover. 460 x 460mm, wooden plank cushion, decorative scatter pillow. One bold cushion cover in natural wooden plank design. Extremely soft cotton. The cushion cover is 460 x 460mm and doesn't include the pillow insert.

All cushion covers are handmade to the highest standard with double stitched corners for extra strength and durability.

£8.50

Contact: OldWoodCo – Etsy

Web: www.etsy.com/uk/shop/OldWoodCo

**Laterna Lamp**

Compact and lightweight, 200mm tall, it turns on with just a light tap on the top so you are never left fumbling for a switch in the dark. Additional taps let you toggle the light through the low, medium and high settings (23, 55 and 100 lumens) or turn the lamp off. The lamp will run for up to 120 hours on the low setting and up to 30 hours on the high setting, using three AA batteries you supply.

\$29.95 (plus tax and p+p)

Contact: Lee Valley Tools Ltd.

Web: www.leevalley.com

Carving the Human Figure

The human figure is the most important subject in sculpture. In this practical introduction the emphasis is on carving in wood, but sculptors in other media will find it equally valuable. Male and female figures are included, plus drapery, and stylised and abstract carving. Basic human anatomy, including heads, torsos, knees and hands, is covered as well as carving whole figures.

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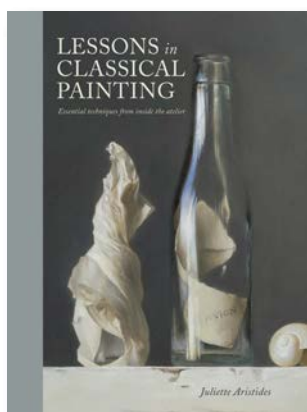
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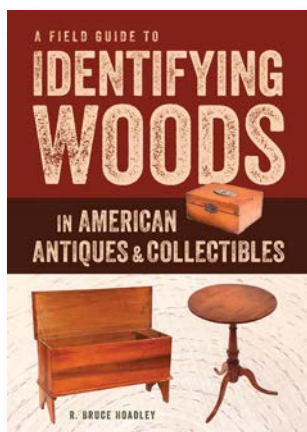
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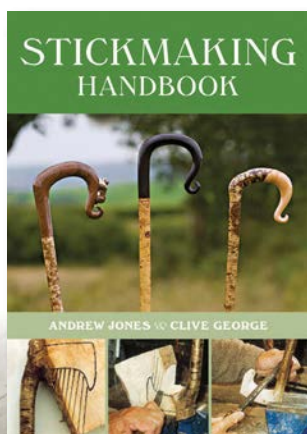
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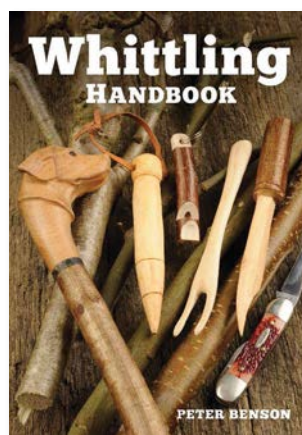
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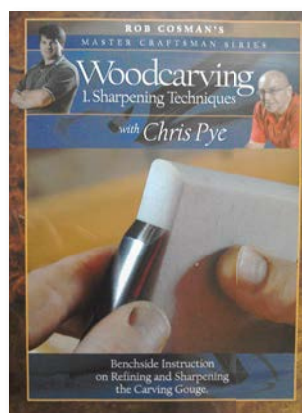
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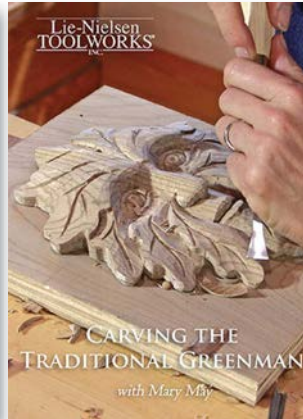
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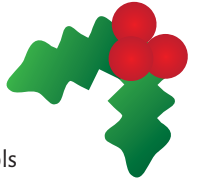
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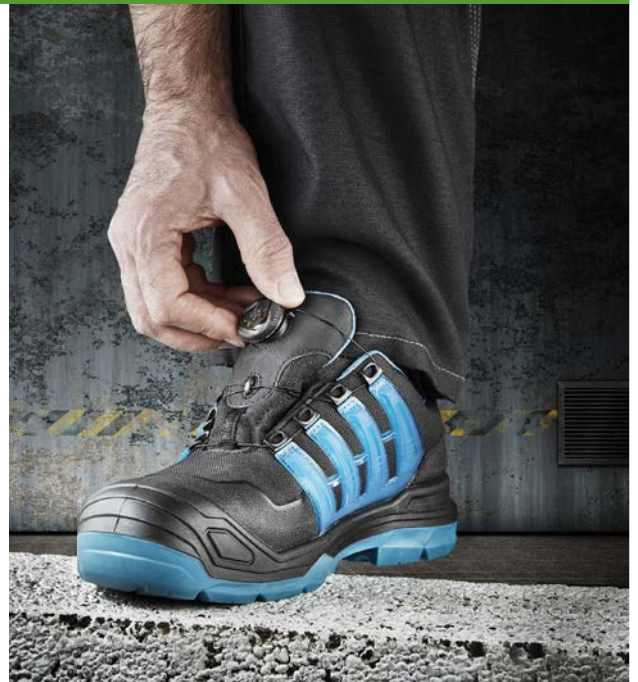
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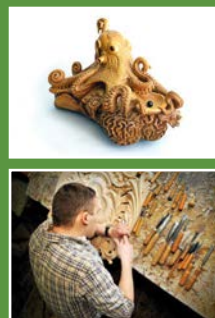
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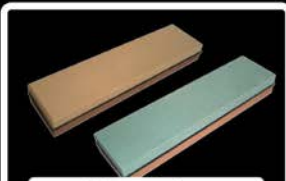
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The carved eagle was designed because of Vladimir's interest in the relationship between man and nature describing their link as 'two entities that co-exist in the same universe with both distinct and conflicting functions'. The final piece shows nature mixed with humans as the unchanging language represented by the environment, and follows a cycle using survival instinct, whereas humans rely on evolutionary language guided by the instinct of survival, but also faces its own evolution as a economic, social, and spiritual point of view. The eagle itself represents the spirituality of the human race surrounded by nature, and as Vladimir describes: "It is with these two languages, aesthetics, material and colour that I was to confront the existence of the truth."

Leaving Kyrgyzstan in 2008, Vladimir has had many career paths before finding woodcarving and starting at a workshop in St-Louis-De-France, Canada, with Pierre Goulet who has become a mentor to him throughout his woodcarving career. Davydov then worked in a woodcarving shop as a sculptor before opening his own workshop in 2011, and realising his passion could be a full-time career. Since opening his own workshop, Vladimir has been teaching lessons on the subject and is a member in the Club of woodcarvers of Quebec City, Vladimir says: "I am completely immersed in my career. I teach woodcarving classes, complete special orders and participate in exhibitions."



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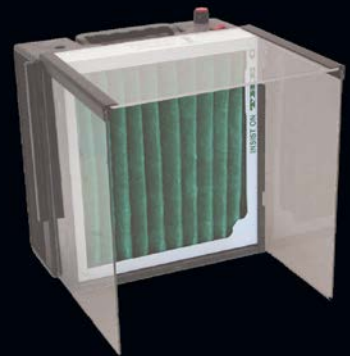
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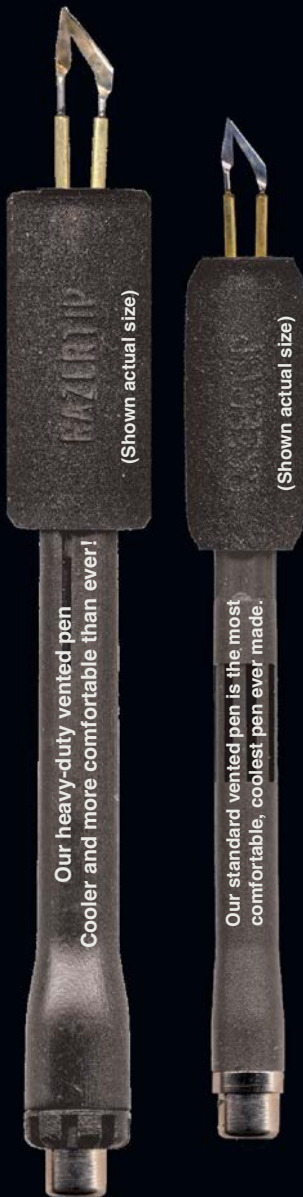
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