

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO CARVING A STYLISTED SWAN

WOOD CARVING

50th International Woodcarvers Congress

Creating dragon
inspired lovespoons

Carve your own
Mackintosh
-style panel

How to carve
Commerson's
dolphins



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Time to have some fun



Let me start by saying Happy New Year everyone! I am viewing 2017 as a year for change. Like many, people plan to do something and no matter what the good intentions of following through with the

plan are, there are things that come along and disrupt, alter or cause one to give up on the planned changes. I must admit that I prefer gradual changes over radical ones, but if something happens fast and needs to happen then I trust myself to adapt and deal with something quickly and efficiently. Changes occur all the time and New Year's resolution or not, we try to fit everything in to our daily lives and hopefully still have some fun.

Now the word 'fun' is definitely something, I think, that is often not thought about. If

there is one thing I would say, it's that I will try and have more fun in the New Year.

We all experience pleasure when we do something we want to do and carving is something we all love to do but fun to me goes a bit further than pleasure, it is a playfulness, amusement and causes one to smile – even a wry one, chuckle or giggle.

Carvings are no doubt decorative whether they are religious in nature, secular, abstract representations or realistic in what they depict. They have been used to dominate and show power – almost a shock and awe tactic as people come to see, view or pass by them. They can be commemorative, respectful and downright disrespectful and irreverent at times too. Carvings can also be a social comment on the times, situations, events, places, culture and might have a biting wit and satire inbuilt; conversely they can be a lot of fun too.

I have been in many a church to find a carving that is poking fun at someone or a situation and being very irreverent. I look further afield and find temple carvings, which show social or cultural situations – again, some are very amusing. Carvings over the millennia have enabled people to glimpse the past, current, aspirational and devotional aspects of life and I see no reason why that will not continue with each of us adding our own parts to the long-told story of what we are, what we do, how we live and how we see things.

I do hope you have a happy and prosperous New Year and keep in touch with what you are making.
Have fun,
Mark

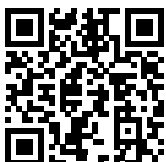
To get in touch, please email me:
markb@thegmcgroup.com



Thai culture stone carving on a temple wall

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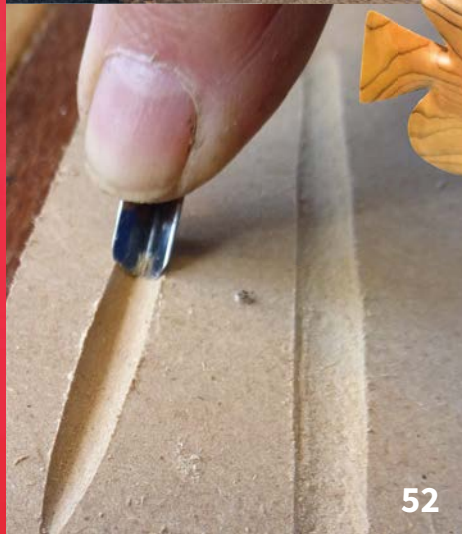
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News & events...

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

BDWCA: 2016 Festival of Bird Art



LEFT: British Champion 2016, Lapwing in Display Flight by David Clews



ABOVE: Visitors' Choice, Garganey Pair by Steve Toher

Once again another BDWCA annual show and competition has been and gone. The 2016 Festival of Bird Art – was held, as always, on the second weekend of September in Bakewell, Derbyshire.

The number of entries was slightly down over last year, but they still had over 200 carvings gracing the tables, ranging from tiny miniatures to full size birds of prey, and everything in between. Hopefully this was just a 'glitch' and there will be more next year! Skill levels ranged from novice through intermediate to advanced, and the quality and variety of the entries seems to just get better every year. "Congratulations to all who entered – you all deserved a prize – and commiserations to the judges who had the extremely challenging job of selecting the winners," Pam Wilson noted, "last year I wrote that the only sad fact was that we had no Youth entries, something that, in common with other carvers, we are trying to encourage, but hopefully next year will be different and I'm glad to report that this year we did have a Youth entry of two carvings, so now we're hoping for more in 2017!"

David Clews won the coveted awards of the British and BDWCA Champion

with a magnificent Lapwing in Display Flight, and who also took the award for runner up to the British Champion with his Winter Starling – Calling, on chimney.

The festival has a special award – a trophy that is awarded for the Visitors' Choice. Everyone who visits the show is given a card on which to enter the number of their favourite carving, and the carver whose carving gets the most votes then receives the trophy. At the prize giving a card is drawn – this year by the Deputy Mayor of Bakewell, Councillor Steve Edwards, ably assisted by his young daughter – and the winning visitor receives a beautiful bird's head stick carved by top stick carver, Colin Hickman. It's always interesting to see what the visitors like best, which usually differs from the judges' favourite, and this year it was the Garganey Pair carved by Steve Toher which also won the award for Advanced Slick Smoothie Waterfowl.

"It was, as always, a very enjoyable show, and we are already looking forward to next year and planning our entries! The amount of wood that was purchased from the trade stands certainly suggests there could be some interesting carvings," Pam explained.



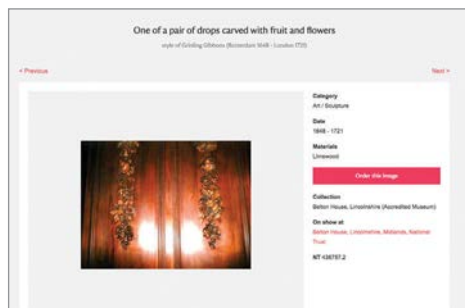
British Championship Runner Up, Winter Starling – Calling, on chimney by David Clews

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

National Trust online collections – Grinling Gibbons

The National Trust website have a number of online collections that exhibit some famous woodcarvers and their work. A key example of one of their collections is the works of Grinling Gibbons. The National Trust feature many pieces of his work, are available to view and order. Grinling's carving of a pair of drops carved with fruit and flowers, dated between 1648–1721, is just one of the images available on the National Trust website. Also included are exhibition details of where the photos and carvings are being held. Grinling was a Dutch-British woodcarver, born in 1648, and is known largely for his work such as Windsor Castle and St Paul's Cathedral.

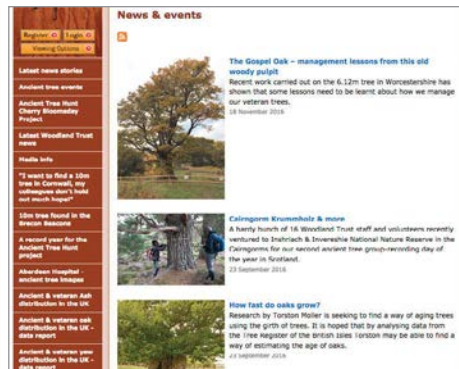
For more information and to view the collections, please visit www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk



European Woodworking Show

Following the success of their 2015 show, the European Woodworking Show aims to make their show just as good for the 7th staging of the show in Essex. Many demonstrators and exhibitors have pledged to return and they'll be doing their best to add more demonstrators to their list to keep the show fresh and inspirational. Their 2015 show saw Derek Jones host three masterclasses such as French Polishing, and Nic Westermann done a demonstration about making an axe.

When: 16-17 September, 2017
Where: Cressing Temple Barns, Essex, UK,
 Witham Road Braintree, CM77 8PD
Web: www.europeanwoodworkingshow.eu



The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Hunt

The Woodland Trust conduct a series of surveys throughout the year regarding nature, trees and more recently a survey on how fast oak (*Quercus robur*) trees grow. Alongside these are the most recent news and updates from The Woodland Trust such as a 1000mm tree found in the Brecon Beacons. The Woodland Trust also post information regarding conservation, new plants and keep the public up to date regarding pests, diseases and anything that can harm you trees. Finally, the website covers a 'tree of the month' explaining background information about the tree, the type of wood the tree is made of and how old they are.

For more information, please visit www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk



The North of England Woodworking Show

Just finishing up with their 2016 show, the North of England Woodworking Show is in full swing for their 2017 show. The show is an excellent day out that involves over 40 demonstrators taking apart, more than 100 companies exhibiting and some great prizes to be one in their free raffle.

When: 17-19 November, 2017
Where: Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, HG2 8NZ
Web: www.skpromotions.co.uk

WOODWORKING SHOWS, 2017

• The Desert Woodcarving Show and Sale

When: 11–12 February, 2017
Where: 201 nCentre, Mesa Arizona, USA
Web: www.desertcarvingshow.com

• The Midlands Woodworking and Power Tool Show

When: 24–25 March, 2017
Where: Newark Showground, Lincoln Rd, Winthorpe, Newark NG24 2NY
Web: www.nelton.co.uk

• Texas State Woodcarvers Show and Seminar

When: 1–7 April, 2017
Where: Celburne Conference Centre, Cleburne, Texas, TX 76033
Web: www.texaswoodcarversguild.com



• Yandles Woodworking Show

When: 7–8 April, 2017
Where: Yandle & Son Ltd, Hurst Works, Hurst, Martock, Somerset TA12 6JU
Web: www.yandles.co.uk

• Weald of Kent Craft & Design show

When: 29 April-1 May, 2017
Where: Penshurst Place, Tonbridge
Web: www.thecraftshows.co.uk/kent/spring

• The Contemporary Craft Festival

When: 9–11 June, 2017
Where: Mill Marsh Park, off St John's Lane, Bovey Tracey, Devon TQ13 9AL
Web: www.craftsatboveytracey.co.uk

• Wood Show

When: 17–18 June, 2017
Where: Weald & Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0EU
Web: www.wealddown.co.uk

• The Stock Gaylard Oak Fair

When: 26–27 August, 2017
Where: Stock Gaylard House, Stock Gaylard, Sturminster Newton DT10 2BG
Web: www.stockgaylard.com

• Bentley Woodfair

When: 15-17 September 2017
Where: Harveys Lane, Nr Halland, East Sussex, BN8 5AF
Web: <http://www.bentley.org.uk>

• Artistry in Wood

When: 14–15 October, 2017
Where: Dayton Expo Centre, Ohio, USA
Web: www.nelton.co.uk

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

READ WOOD CARVING ANYWHERE



STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO CARVING A STYLISED SWAN

WOOD CARVING

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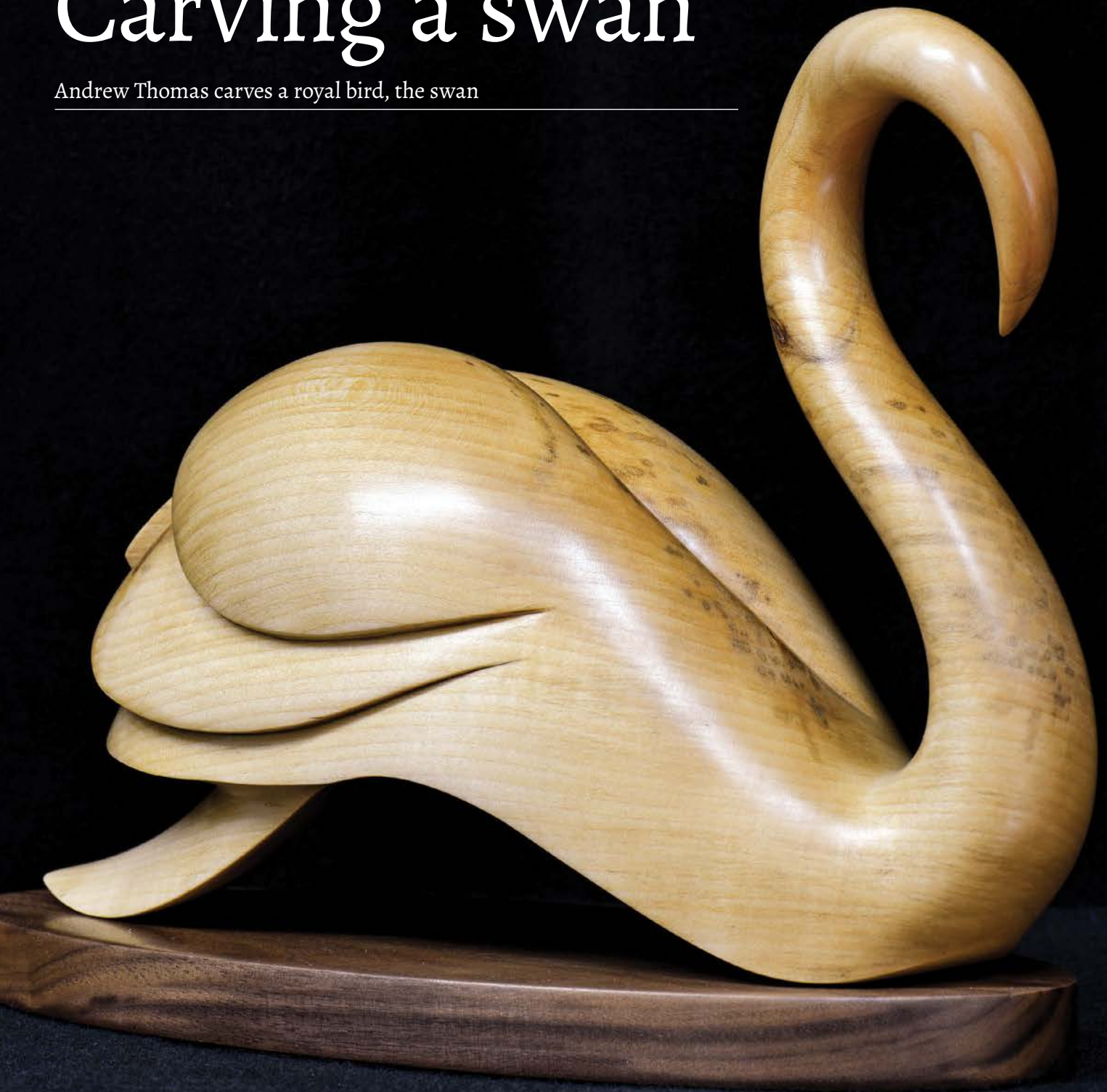
How to carve
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dolphins



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Carving a swan

Andrew Thomas carves a royal bird, the swan

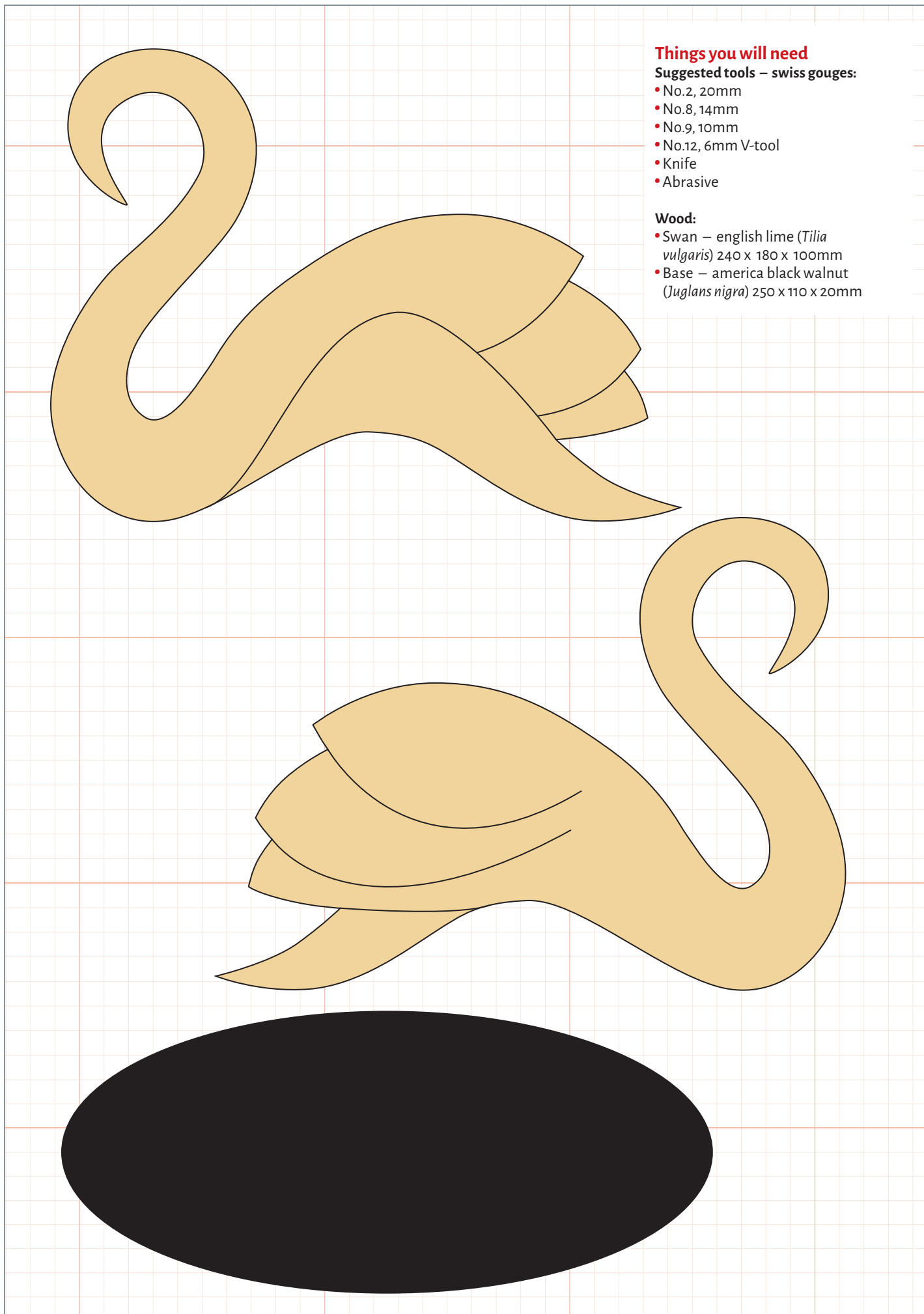


The form of the swan lends itself beautifully to the art of abstraction with the delicate flowing lines of its body and majestic neck and head. The possibilities of how to position and represent these details in any medium are really quite innumerable, but of course the most important component is to capture the essence of this graceful creature. Abstracting any natural form requires

consideration, contemplation and visualisation to attain effective, structured design ideas of how the intended form relates to the real life form. These designs should initially be made on paper to ensure good balance, scale and proportions in relation to the real-life form. Asymmetry is also a vital principle of design, which naturally adds life to a composition and should be carefully considered and explored

to create interest around the complete three dimensional surfaces of the sculpture.

This design offers many options for it to be adapted to the reader's ideas, which is highly recommended and encouraged. Before you start work on the project, please read through the complete step guide, study the stages and finished images to see how the sculpture develops.



Things you will need

Suggested tools – swiss gouges:

- No.2, 20mm
- No.8, 14mm
- No.9, 10mm
- No.12, 6mm V-tool
- Knife
- Abrasive

Wood:

- Swan – english lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) 240 x 180 x 100mm
- Base – america black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) 250 x 110 x 20mm



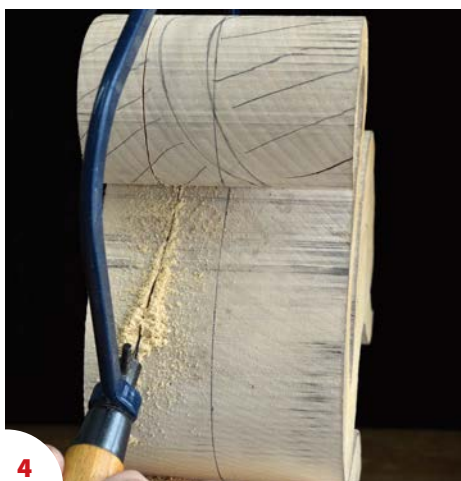
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1 Scan or photocopy the scale drawings provided. Enlarge them to the correct size for your wood and print them out onto a piece of card to use as templates and references. Transfer one of the side view profiles onto your wood, ensuring the grain direction is running horizontally through the block. Cut this shape out and secure it safely onto your vice. Measure and draw a centreline all of the way around the upper and lower edges.

2 Draw the lines of the neck and head onto your wood at the angle that you would like it to naturally flow, from the body and up to the tip of the bill. Make sure the dimensions between the lines of your neck and head correspond exactly with those on the sides so that it is square going right up through.

3 Use a saw to make a horizontal cut across from the outer edge of your wood within 5mm of the base of the neck line.

4 Now use the saw to make a vertical cut down through the wood until you meet the horizontal cut, removing as much of the waste as possible.

5 Using a No.2, 20mm carefully pare the wood squarely back to the design line.

6 Repeat steps 3–5 on the opposite side of the neck and head. The front sides of the body can now be merged evenly and naturally into the neck line where the horizontal saw cut was made in step 3.

7 Measure and mark onto your wood the centreline of each of the four sides of the neck and head.

8 To create the natural curve along the complete length of the head and neck, one needs to very carefully pare the wood away between the lines on the sides to the lines on the front and back, in four separate quarters. If the actual lines themselves are carved over, this essentially means that the design line will be distorted. It is therefore important to carve between these lines and not over them. Do this along the complete section with the No.2, 20mm swiss gouge.

TOP TIP: When carving an area of detail such as the swan's neck, the objective is to produce an even contour around the complete surface. It is far more effective to hold the gouge the opposite way around, in the upside down position, so that the sweep of the tool is creating a convex cut along the edge, lending itself efficiently to the form of the design, rather than cutting the normal concave channel.

9 The position where the tighter curve of the neck meets the head is far more complex to tackle. This can be accomplished effectively by using either a razor sharp knife or rotary burrs to work with the awkward grain direction. 80 or 100 grit abrasive is another effective option to consider, which can be simply used by hand to shape and form the curved edges.

10 Great care should be taken when working down the head towards the tip of the bill because this area of wood grain is not strong and therefore more prone to snapping. The tip should be carefully braced with great attention to the safety of your fingers and hands. Ensure that your gouge is razor sharp and use a very shallow slicing motion of cut to curve the four edges to the centre lines.

11 When you are sure that all four edges along this section are neatly carved with an even contour around all sides, sand over the complete surface with grit 100 evenly blending and smoothing the four sides naturally together.

TOP TIP: When sanding over any vulnerable areas of a carving, it is good practice to actually hold the delicate part in your fingertips to prevent the abrasive snagging on it, potentially snapping it off. The same technique should also be used when polishing with a soft cloth, which is even more prone to snagging on sharp areas of detail.

12 Moving onto the right hand side of the body now. Use the template provided to help you transfer the lines of the wings accurately into their correct positions on your wood. The first job is to create the natural curve of the front end of the body from the lower edge on the side, up onto the top of the body, and from the forward most position of the wing down towards the neck. This area will be further developed in step 21, when the top of the wing is fully formed.

13 The lines of the wing can now be separated from each other. Use a V-tool to cut carefully along the lower edge of the design line.

14 Then use the No.2, 20mm to pare the wood adjacent to the V-tool cut, into the V-tool cut.

15 The lowest area here is the swan's body and tail feathers. This emerges smoothly from underneath the upper wing feathers, which needs to be produced using a No.9, 10mm gouge or similar to reflect a less parted appearance.



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16

16 The smallest line of the wing above the tail can now be separated using the V-tool and No.2 gouge.



17

17 Now, you can work on the upper most part of the body and wing. Using a large No.2 gouge, pare over the square edges of the mass to produce a curved contour along the upper area of the wing, and then down the body to the area that was carved in step 12.



18

18 Now work in the opposite direction along the upper wing towards the rear tip. As the wing tip becomes further developed in the subsequent steps, the upper area can be revisited to curve it over towards the centreline along the body.



19

19 From this position onwards, you need to curve the rear areas of the wings and tail naturally around the back edge of the swan. This is achieved by repeatedly cutting the feather lines with the V-tool, and then curving these sections around the rear of the body with the No.2 gouge. The V-tool cuts should delicately emerge from the front of the wings, and then become deeper as the design line flows back and around the rear of the body.

TOP TIP: When using the V-tool on details such as the lines of the feathering along the wing, you will find that your carved line will gradually creep away from the original design line. To maintain the original level of the line, place your template in its correct position after every two or three cuts and redraw it in the correct position.



20

20 Each line of feathers should also have a natural curve, vertically from the V-tool cut at the top, down to its lowest edge. Also note that the middle line of feathers projects furthest out from the body.

21 The tight curve at the base of the neck will now need to be formed and merged into the depths of the surrounding areas. Use a No.8, 14mm gouge to curve the wood from the side of the swan up to the centreline of the body. The No.2, 20mm can then be used to bring all of the depths evenly together down along the back and side of the wing.



21



22

22 This side of the swan's body should now look something like this, which is all that can be accomplished here for now and allows us to turn our attention to the opposite side of the swan. The first job to do is to transfer the details of the design onto your wood. Use the template provided to help you do this.

23 Note: this side of the swan is completely different to the opposite side and features an undercut across the complete body. The undercut tapers off from the top of the design line in the middle of the body on this side, down to the lowest position of the wing in the middle of the body on the opposite side. Use the V-tool to cut accurately along the very top edge of the line, separating the two main parts of the body.



23

24 Use a large No.2 gouge to create the curve on the front end of the body, from the V-tool cut on the side up to the centre line on the top.



24

25 The No.8, 14mm can then be used again to shape the area at the position of the tight curve of the neck, using the same techniques as outlined in step 21.

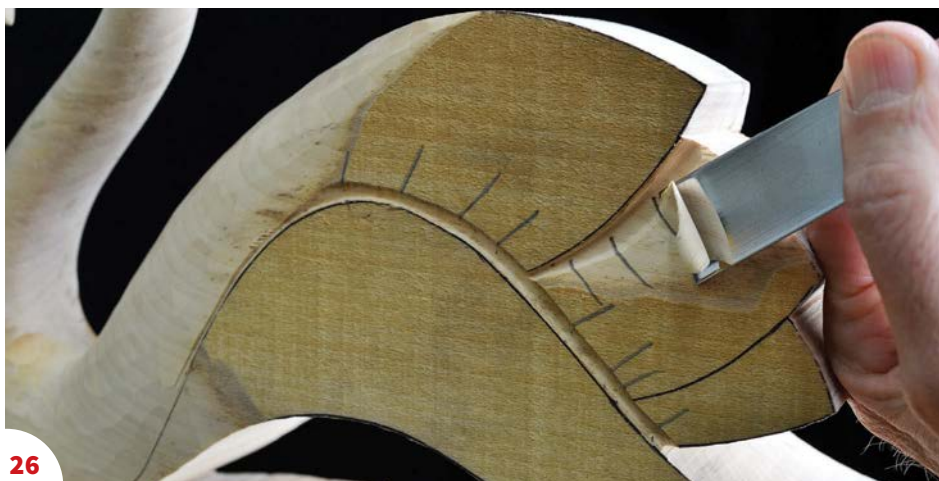


25

26 Moving to the rear end of the body now. The three layers of the wing feathers are separated using basically the same techniques as the opposite side of the body. The V-tool is used first to cut precisely along the outside of their design line. The No.2, 20mm is then used to pare the wood back to the depth of the V-tool cut.

27 The individual layers of the wing feathers must be gradually tapered around in a curve from the side of the body to the rear tips. When enough depth has been achieved with the two lower sections, the largest top section of the wing can then be curved from the side edge up over the body and around the rear end.

28 Study this image to see how each layer of the wings is not only formed differently to the one above or below it, but also on each side. There is still a lot of work to do here yet, but the important detail to note is that each layer should be balanced in relation to its position, easy on the eye, and completely asymmetrical. The uppermost position of the large sections on both sides of the body should now be almost flowing into one another, without any flat areas along the centreline whatsoever. Check that all of these details are correct and make any necessary adjustments.



26



27



28

In the next issue of *Woodcarving*, I shall be completing the wings, undercut, finish and mounting. ▶

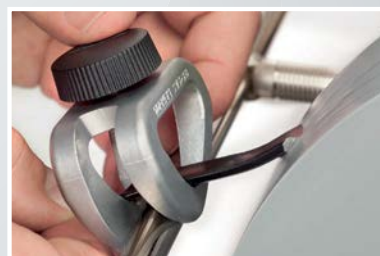
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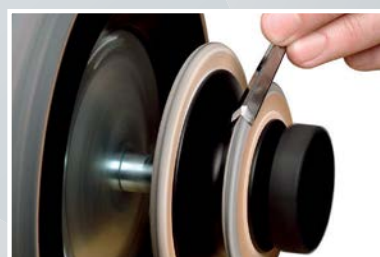
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From the community

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

Oak leaf dragon

Hi Mark,
I have just completed this oak (*Quercus robur*) leaf dragon reproduced from Duane Cartwright, from July/August 2016, issue 151. I enjoyed carving this; it is not an exact copy as I have carved out under the branches of the acorns, which was difficult. It took me 75 hours to complete. I have been carving since 1992. I am a past member of Solent Woodcarvers, have been retired since 2010 but I'm not a member of any club as there not many close to me in Llanelli, Wales.

Richard Goodall



Richard Goodall's oak leaf dragon



A portable tray with a lid made by Eaton Tarrant

A portable tray with a lid

Mark,
Being a carver and caravanner now for many years I have devised a portable tray (with lid) that I can carry my blanks, palm tools, sharpening stones and home-made strops in, either on to the dining table on cold winter evenings or, as at present, while caravanning both at home or abroad. The main feature of the tray is a carving block drilled on a grid, which I insert sawn off castle golf tees to accommodate the piece I am carving. The box is lined with a non-slide shelf liner, which protects my tool edges and holds the carving block firm. My strops are wooden pieces with fine grit glued one side and a leather belt glued to the other, to which I apply jeweller's rouge. I thought the idea may be of use to other carvers who have the same problems, in particular the retention of chipping. I really enjoy the magazine.

Eaton Tarrant

Lovespoon

Hi Mark,
I noticed that you're doing an article on a lovespoon with a dragon in the next issue [this one] and thought I would show you this. Although it's not a dragon, it's a seahorse. I hope you like it.

Mark Gough

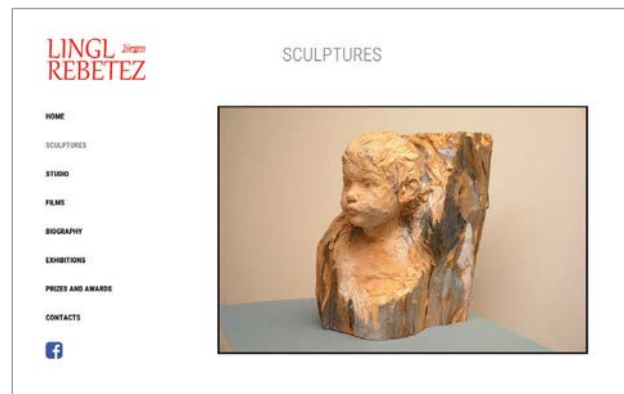


Mark Gough's seahorse lovespoon

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

ON THE WEB**Websites of the month**

Lingl Sculpture: The work of Master carver Jürgen Lingl-Rebetez is truly fascinating. Mainly using a chainsaw – although not exclusively – to carve with, the human figures and animals cannot fail to impress.
www.lingl-sculpture.com



Wood Symphony: Nairi Safaryan's exquisite, delicate and intricate carvings will intrigue and delight and are well worth viewing.
www.woodsymphony.wordpress.com

Bill Prickett: Bill's website shows the beautiful diverse work that he creates and is a real visual feast.
www.billprickett.co.uk

Pinterest

Lion Head: Pinterest is a wonderful format to explore carvings.
tinyurl.com/j4lrndng

Tree Rocking Chair: This chair carved from one solid piece of wood is stunning.
tinyurl.com/jsrqnlb

YouTube

Wayne Barton – American Woodshop: Wayne's teaching style is clear, concise and he imparts loads of useful information.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zj3YvaW-cgc

How to Carve an Acanthus Leaf on a Cabriole Leg: Mary May explains in great detail how to carve a classic design.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9qeRU6ENDw

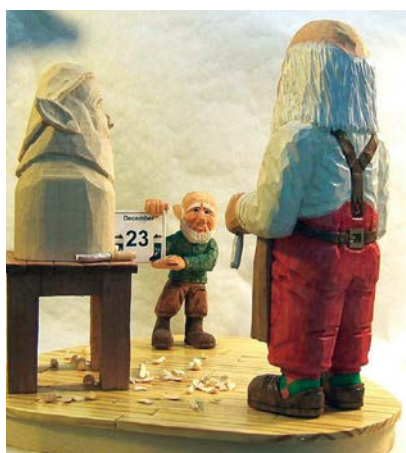


Woodcarving 'Howling Wolf': This time-lapse video will inspire and amaze.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXaeVOWFnys

FROM THE FORUM

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

Claude posted a carving that was a special order for a good customer of his. Santa is carving a bust of an elf while being reminded by the elf of how close it is to Christmas. Claude says: "Santa stands at 250mm tall and the base is approximately 330mm wide." This piece is made from basswood (*Tilia americana*) with pine (*Pinus* spp.) flooring and is based on an original design by Wayne Shinlever." Ian Thorn said: "That is very well done Claude."



Copeau12 – Johan Roudy – posted a carving he started a year ago.

After a few trial and errors, copeau12 decided to carve the piece in lime (*Tilia* spp.) wood. Sadly, the user didn't get back to the original model between clay and wood. Gregmcateer commented: "This is absolutely wonderful. It certainly looks real, it's as if you've taken a mould from a living face. Well done and thank you for sharing."



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.

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International Woodcarvers Congress 2016

We take a look at last year's winners at
the 'Congress' week celebration

Shelly Weiser's 'Art Deco Dancer'
won the Group Award and the Class
Award, in the Human Figure category –
standing at 635 x 330 x 230mm

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARC FEATHERLY, COURTESY OF IWC

The International Woodcarvers Congress is known to be the longest running, competitively judged, woodcarving art show in the United States and said to be the most prestigious show of its kind. The 11 June, 2016 saw the 50th International Woodcarvers Congress held in Maquoketa, Iowa at the Jackson County Fairgrounds.

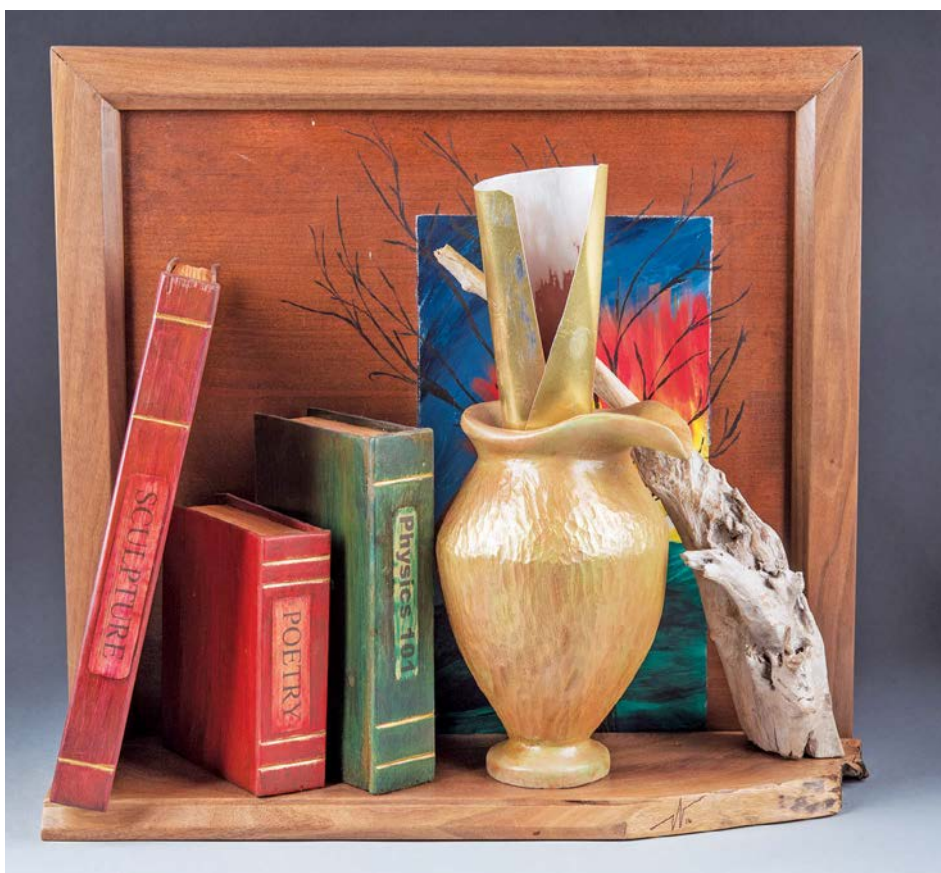
The week-long celebration of carving included activities and competitions, such as a series of carving seminars, the Awards Banquet, the AWC Membership Meeting and the Judges' Critique Sessions, as well as a competition in over 85 separate categories. Artists from all over the United States, Canada and overseas have competed for cash and awards at the 'Congress'.



Charles E Tillema entered his 'Leaping Bass', which measures 330 x 100 x 125mm, into the Realistic Fish (painted) category, taking 3rd place



'Smoke Break' by Roger Stegall took 1st place for the Class Award in the Caricatures category – standing at 292 x 100 x 140mm



2016 CONGRESS CATEGORIES

Here's just some of the categories in the competition, judged by Fred Cogelow, Randy Landen and Wayne Barton, who comprised the Affiliated Wood Carvers' judging panel at the event:

- Best of Show
- Judge's Choice
- Flexcut Creativity Award
- Bob Guge Memorial
- Dave Dunham Memorial Award
- Tom Pressler Memorial Award
- People's Choice Award
- Mythical/Santa Relief
- Religious Relief
- Ornamental Carving
- Chip Carving
- Human Figure
- Realistic Fish (painted)
- Pyrography on Wood
- Group (Any Combination of Mixed Subjects)

William Wohlford entered his piece into the Any Combination of Mixed Subjects category, taking 2nd place in the Class Award. The carving is called 'Vessel No.1604' and stands at 460 x 485 x 6150mm

Mike Trezek won both the Group Award and Class Award in Fish, Aquatic Creatures, Amphibians, Reptiles, and Dinosaurs category, with his 'Dinner Time' carving





Herman Sporleder's 'Looks Like Christmas' carving of two poinsettias in a frame took 1st place Class Award in the Relief Carving group



James Wall's 'Untitled' carving, at 100 x 140 x 255mm, took 1st Class Award in the Birds category



The winner of the Young Carvers Open Class category was this piece by Matthew Sirota, entitled 'Ugly Duckling' at 115 x 165 x 100mm



'Companions' by Neil Z Cox came 5th in the Combining Realistic Humans and/or Animals group, measuring 280 x 280 x 100



Standing at 255 x 150 x 305mm, Julio Martinez's 'Northern Exposure' won the Class Award in the Carving from a Roughout group



Josh Guge's 'Common Redpoll' was awarded Best of Show at the 2016 International Woodcarvers Congress

'James' by Whitey Hershberger won the Class Award and took 3rd place in the Group Award in the Instructor Assisted Carvings group

**NEXT YEAR...**

The IWC teaching classes will be held:
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The IWC competition and exhibit will be:
15–18 June, 2017

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Mackintosh panel

Steve Bisco carves an oak panel in the style of Charles Rennie Mackintosh

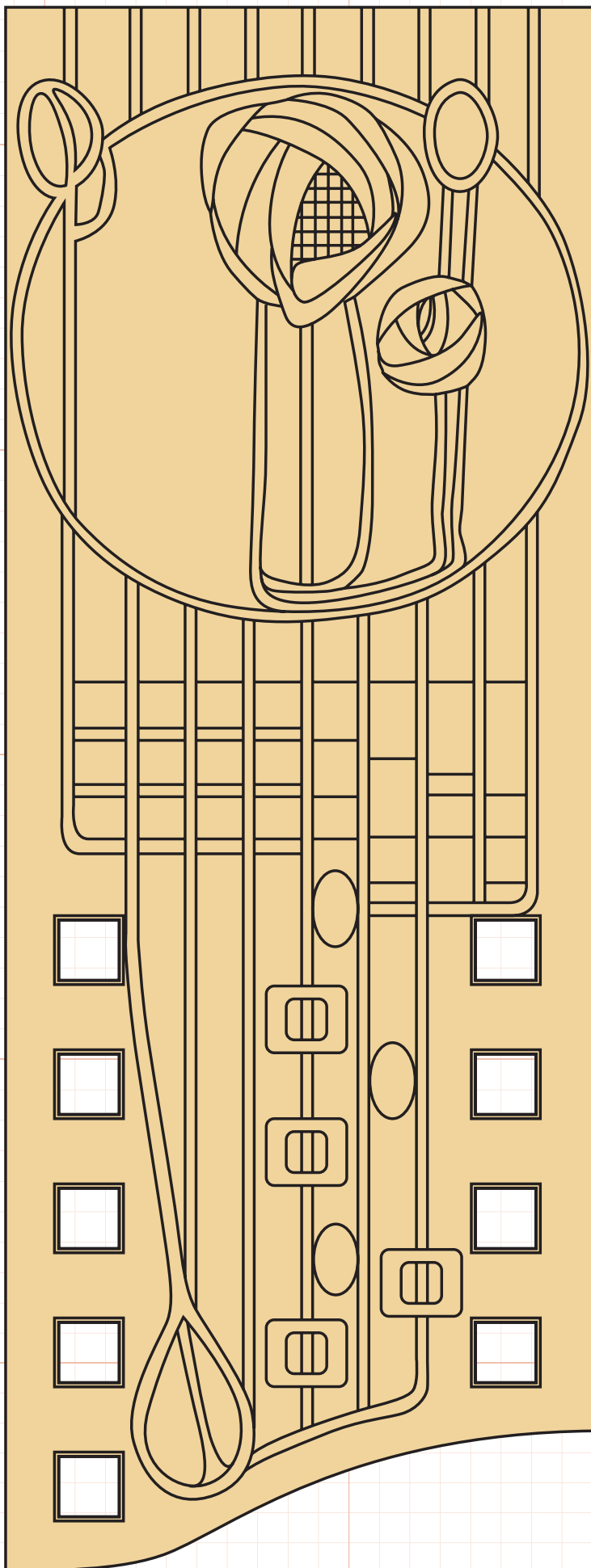
Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928) was known to his friends as CRM and was one of the most influential architects and designers at the turn of the 19th/20th century. His reputation spread far beyond his native Scotland to have a pan-European and even worldwide influence on the Art Nouveau style, although his unique style was not part of mainstream Art Nouveau.

His most famous public building is the Glasgow School of Art, which sadly experienced a devastating fire in 2014. Most of his original work was destroyed, but restoration of his work is under way to recreate them to the original designs. His most famous commercial interior is the Willow Tea Rooms in Glasgow, featuring his trademark black lattice grids and tall-backed chairs. Although closed in 1919, the tea rooms were restored and reopened in 1983 and are still operating today.

His domestic interiors were altogether lighter and more colourful, which he created with his wife, the artist, Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1865–1933), known as MMM. Charles and Margaret together produced several very beautiful, distinctive, modern decorative schemes and furniture for his clients and their own home.

I have put together this oak (*Quercus robur*) panel combining several elements featured in Mackintosh's work – long vertical lines, open and closed lattice squares, black surfaces with panels of light, colour and, most importantly, the 'Mackintosh rose' that features prominently in the work of both Charles and Margaret. This is an unusual carving project as most of the low-relief detail is only 6mm deep, reflecting the stained-glass panels from which most of it is derived with decoration combining black ebonising lacquer, metallic silver enamel and acrylic paint.





Things you will need

Tools:

- Jigsaw
- No.3, 20mm fishtail gouge
- No.3, 10mm fishtail gouge
- No.3, 10mm gouge
- No.8, 8mm gouge
- No.5, 7mm gouge
- No.5, 5mm gouge
- No.9, 16mm curved gouge
- No.8, 8mm curved gouge
- Straight V-tool
- 20mm flat chisel
- 15mm flat chisel
- 10mm skew chisel
- 6.5mm flat chisel
- 3mm chisel
- 2mm chisel

Wood:

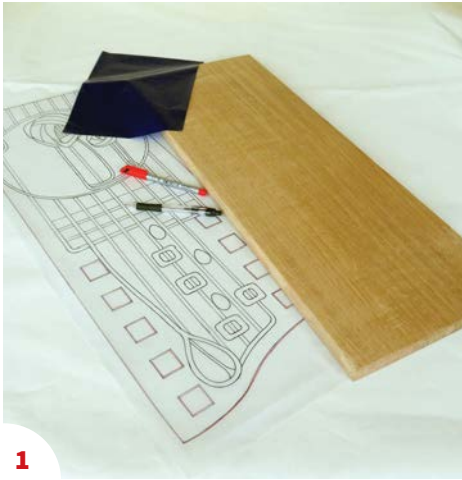
- Oak – 700 x 260 x 25mm

Finishing materials:

- Sander-sealer
- Chestnut ebonising lacquer
- One-shot silver signwriting enamel
- Pink and mauve acrylic paint

THE MACKINTOSH STYLE

With the Mackintosh style we get two Mackintoshes for the price of one. Charles and his wife Margaret collaborated in many of his interior design projects and the Mackintosh rose is probably as much her invention as it was his. While Charles' architecture tended towards a fairly stark Scottish vernacular Arts and Crafts style, Margaret's art was closer to the Art Nouveau style prevalent at the time. Both had a profound impact on the Vienna Secessionist exhibition of 1900 that was so influential in the spread of Art Nouveau. Charles in particular was strongly influenced by Japanese design and this is reflected in his black lattice panels and long elegant lines. There is a pronounced vertical exaggeration in his designs, notably in his tall-backed chairs. His designs were executed in wood, metal and stained glass by various makers – a process, which luckily is repeatable in modern restorations of his work. He eventually gave up architecture and took to painting – and drink – and died at the age of 60. In recent decades his reputation has soared almost to a cult and most of us today are familiar with his style.


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Preparing the panel

1 Get a piece of oak at 700 x 260 x 25mm. Oak that has been air-dried for approximately three years should be quite easy to carve and be reasonably stable if you select a piece fairly straight-grained and free of knots. Kiln dried oak is more stable, but more brittle. Make a full size copy of the pattern and get some office carbon paper.

2 Cover the whole panel with carbon paper and fix the drawing firmly in place with tape. Trace the pattern carefully onto the oak using a long ruler to draw the straight lines.

3 Use a jigsaw to cut out the curve on the bottom edge and the nine open squares. Drill entry holes in the squares, turn the jigsaw blade along the sides into the corners and then work back the other way until you have straight edges. You may need to tidy up the holes from the front and back, and use a flat chisel to make their edges neat, square and vertical.

4 Mark a depth line all around the sides of the panel 6mm from the front edge.

5 Fix edge strips to a backing board to hold the panel in place while you work. Clamp the backing board to the bench and move it around to get the best cutting direction. A freestanding bench that you can walk around is even better.


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Carving the lattice pattern

6 Start the carving phase by bringing the area outside the grid pattern down to the 6mm 'ground level'. First of all, go round the edges of the grid lines with a V-tool.

7 Now remove the bulk of the surplus wood using a deep gouge. With oak being so hard and brittle, be careful not to split off pieces that go too deep or run into the pattern areas. Work down gradually to see how the sub-surface grain runs before you get to full depth. Use the depth line drawn on the sides as your guide.

8 Straighten up the vertical edges of the raised grid, first with the V-tool then 'bost' vertically with a flat chisel. Smooth out the ridges left by the deep gouge with a shallow gouge, then use a broad flat chisel to shave off the surface down to the 6mm level.


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ART NOUVEAU

- Art Nouveau was a movement in the decorative arts and architecture in the late 19th and early 20th century.
- Although it's known as Art Nouveau, other countries translated it into different titles such as Germany refers to Art Nouveau as Jugendstil, whereas in Vienna it was known as Sezessionsstil and Modernismo in Spain.
- Floral and other plant-inspired designs were very popular Art Nouveau designs, but female silhouettes were also very popular.

9 Make a simple depth gauge by inserting a screw through a flat piece of wood so the tip protrudes 6mm. Place the wood flat on the grid area and slide it around over the 6mm surface area. The screw will make scratches on the parts of the surface that are not yet down to 6mm. Continue shaving and checking until the gauge no longer leaves any scratch marks.

10 To get a smooth surface on the cut-down areas, place a flat chisel in an almost vertical position and draw it towards you. This will scrape fine shavings off the surface to create a smooth even finish.

11 Use the same process described in steps 6 to 10 to cut the channels between the grid lines of the pattern. Define the edges with the V-tool. Rough out the bulk with the deep gouge and straighten up the vertical edges with a broad flat chisel. Cut it down to the 6mm level with a 15mm flat chisel, scrape it smooth and check the levels. Redraw the small squares and 'teardrops' that will later be cut below the ground level.

12 Take great care with the horizontal grid bars that run across the grain as these can easily be chipped out. Start by cutting a 45° angle then gradually cut back at steeper angles until you get to a neat vertical edge. Make sure the horizontal bars are the same thickness as the vertical bars.

13 The grid is supplemented by some squares and oblongs that are cut a further 2mm into the background so set the depth gauge to 8mm for these. Also cut three 'teardrops' to the same depth running down two of the verticals.

14 Finish the grid detail by carving the four buckle-shaped objects. Carve the vertical bars to dip slightly as they pass under the buckle. Slightly curve the flat surface of the buckle toward the corners. Now, lower the central bar in the oval loop at the bottom left of the grid.

15 Finish the grid pattern by carving the bars and channels at the very top of the panel. Chamfer the ends of the bars at 45°.

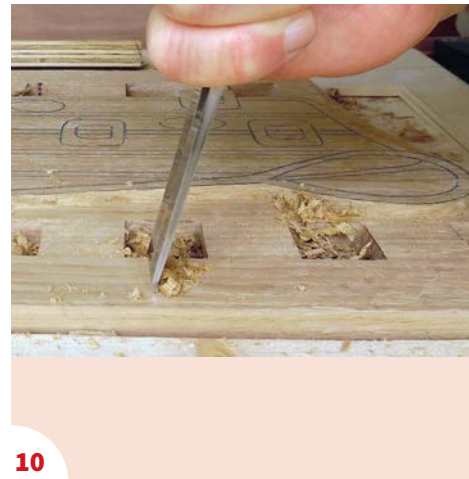
Carving the rose panel

16 Ground out the rose panel in the same way as the rest of the carving, but take the ground down to 8mm to allow extra depth for carving the rose. Take great care in the narrow gap between the top of the rose and the top of the circle as you can easily break out the cross-grain.

TOP TIP: You will be using the mallet for nearly all of this carving so learn a good mallet technique. Keep a fairly relaxed grip on the chisel and mallet handles. Hit with a steady rhythm that you can keep up without straining your wrists, elbows and shoulders.



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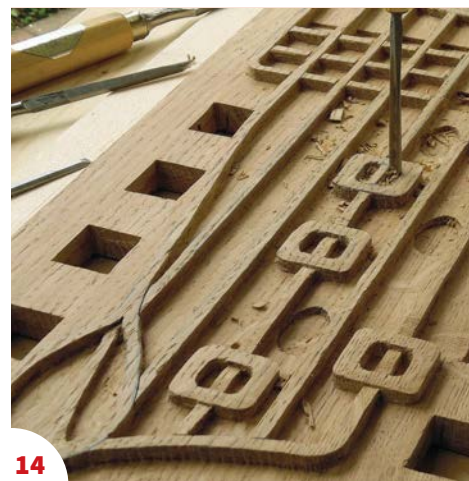
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17 The petals of the stylised rose are like a series of escarpments with one steep face sloping towards the centre and one shallow slightly-convex face sloping outwards. Start from the outside and work inwards using a broad shallow gouge upside-down for the outward slope and a small sharp chisel for the inward edge.

18 The centre of the rose is shaped into a grid of 6mm squares; each one should be sloped at an angle towards the top right.

19 The smaller rose is carved in the same way as the larger one. Reduce the level of the stems so they are about 4mm deep where they join the roses. The group of stems at the edge of the circle needs to be partially separated sloping down into the adjoining stems to give them more definition. Beware of the cross-grain!

20 The carving is now finished and the panel should look something like this.

Decoration

You could leave it with a natural oak finish and wax-polish if you like, but for the full Mackintosh style we need to decorate it.

21 Give the whole panel, both sides, a coat of sand-sealer. When it is dry, sand all surfaces smooth without losing the sharpness of the carving. Spray the whole panel with black ebonising lacquer, making sure it covers all surfaces. It will take several coats using a whole 400ml can.


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22 Paint the background of the rose panel in a good quality metallic silver paint leaving the black stems standing clear. Try to get neat edges. Also use the silver on the oval 'teardrops' lower down the carving.

23 Use pink and mauve acrylic paint on the rose and the other areas. Tidy up any ragged edges where the paint meets the black, which you can do with a black permanent marker pen.

24 The job is now finished. Hang it where the light strikes it sideways to enhance the shadows.


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DID YOU KNOW?

Charles Rennie Mackintosh was only 27 when, in 1897, he was given the job of designing a new building, including interiors, for the Glasgow School of Art. When it was completed in 1909 its combination of Scottish Baronial architecture and Art Nouveau decoration with Japanese elements was totally unique and starkly modern. It was not appreciated by everyone and, with changing fashions, demolition was considered in 1946. Thankfully it was reprieved and came to be considered as a work of art in itself. The devastating fire in 2014 destroyed the iconic library and damaged much of the building, but the decision was taken to restore everything using Mackintoshes original designs. ■

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Angelfish shoal on coral

Jean Grace continues to carve small creatures, but this time she goes for an aquatic theme

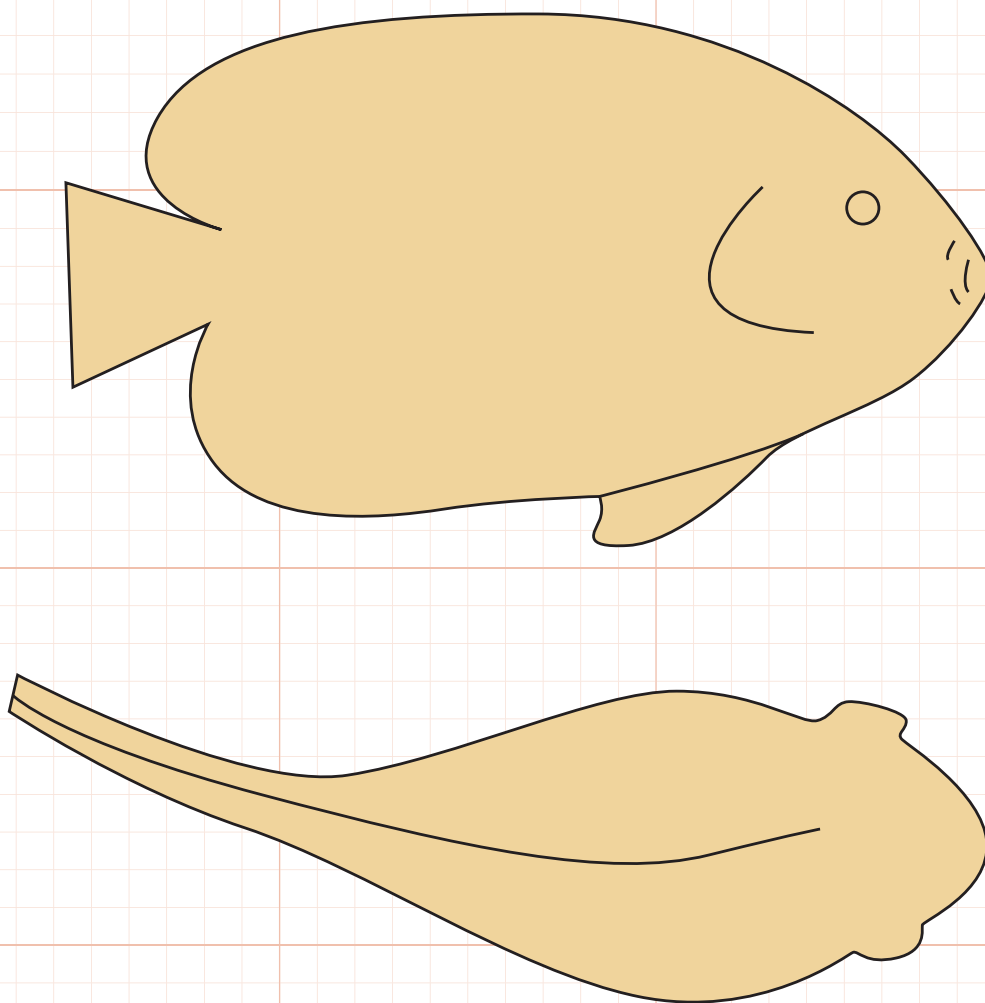


As a member of the Sussex Woodcraft Society, I like to support their annual show. Last year the set competition was anything made from a supplied piece of cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) at about 175 x 175 x 90mm. I pondered what to do with my block of wood for a while, not really sure how to make the best of its wonderful grain.

Finally, I realised I didn't need to make just one item from it and with a little research I found some fabulous angelfish with amazing markings on their bodies, some of which resembled the grain in my block of wood. Initially I didn't know how many fish I would be able to get out of my wood, however, with a bit of help, and by turning one of

them round, I found that I could get three fish and still have a piece left over. Now the idea was really coming into focus. I could have three fish shoaling on a piece of coral. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to finish it in time for the competition, but, I persevered by learning new techniques and using different tools, and I finally finished another carving.





Things you will need

Tools:

- Bandsaw
- A selection of carving gouges
- Flexi shaft machine
- 19mm cylindrical structured carbide burr
- 6mm spherical structured carbide burr
- Mini angle grinder with carbide cutter
- Power sander
- Abrasives (micromesh P120-P800)
- Diamond nail file

- Cut resistant glove

- Optivisor

Material requirements:

- Block of cedar of lebanon 175 x 175 x 90mm
- 6mm dowels
- Sanding sealer
- Microcrystalline wax

1 Draw a plan view of the fish on your block, allowing plenty of room for the tails so they can be turned vertically, as well as horizontally when you carve them. Start sketching with a pencil, moving on to a marker for your final line. Make sure you leave sufficient space between elements to allow for the saw cut.

2 Cut carefully between the lines drawn allowing as much room as possible for each tail. Ideally the bottom of the block should be flat so it sits firmly on the bandsaw table. Control the direction of the cut with one hand and feed the wood towards the blade with a push stick. Then draw a side view for each fish and bandsaw out supporting the uneven block carefully.



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3 Do plenty of research, and print out views from all sides, then you can start drawing the key features on your fish so you know where you can remove wood from, and more importantly where to leave extra for fins jutting out, etc. In addition draw on a centreline, but make sure you give the fins some 'movement'.

4 Start roughing out the body shape, rounding the body and thinning substantially towards the edges of the fins. Stop and check your line regularly. Where you have canted a fin to one side illustrating movement, shape the other side accordingly. The tape was to remind me to leave plenty of wood for the front of their pelvic fins.

TOP TIP: When roughing out, add a marker where you need to leave extra wood for a feature you intend to carve later, so you don't get too carried away.

5 I used power tools to rough out the body and fin shape, however you could just as easily use a gouge or knife for most of the work.

6 Examine your fish from all angles to make sure you have the movement the way you want, then remove more wood as necessary. Think about how the fish would swim through the water and turn so you can ensure your movement is realistic.

7 Mark any areas that need further attention, then start carving the features. Undercut the gill plate with a hooked skew then move on to shape the eye, which on fish can be very bulbous. Work primarily on the front at this stage, leaving plenty of wood on the fins and tail at the rear.

8 Once you are happy with the general shape you can start to refine it with a power sander. Here I am using a lightweight drill and an 80 grit, 75mm disc on a flexible backing pad. Watch out for features that can disappear quickly when using power tools.

"Examine your fish from all angles to make sure you have the movement the way you want..."

9 Having used 80 and then 120 grit discs, you should start sanding by hand with 120 grit, going with the grain to smooth out any remaining ridges or inconsistencies. The sawdust from this wood may collect on the carving so brush it off regularly so that you can clearly see your progress.

TOP TIP: Carve the most robust features such as the eyes and gills before removing wood from fine features such as thin fragile fins.

10 Carve fine features such as the grooves around the mouth with your smallest veiner or U-shaped gouge. Rotating the fish as you carve helps you produce a smooth groove.

11 Use a very sharp carving knife with a flat portion on the blade to slice cleanly in to form the mouth. Here I was cutting against end grain.

12 To ensure you don't put pressure on the ever more fragile tail, use a book and cloth to raise the carving. Use a fine curved riffler file to refine the shape where the fins meet the body, and between the fins and the base of the tail.

13 Continue sanding and improving the finish all over, however you need to ensure you keep certain features crisp. I would advise smoothing the edge of the gill plate with a bent diamond nail file. I had intended to carve pectoral fins, however I couldn't get a result I was happy with on test pieces so abandoned the idea.

14 Having completed the rest of the fish, remove the wood between the pelvic fins that will become very fragile because of the grain orientation. Use a carbide cutter in a mini angle grinder, which gives a good degree of control.

15 Make sure you leave sufficient wood to be able to remove all the small grooves left by the carbide cutter with rolls of abrasive. Work through the grits as before.

16 Seal your carving using sanding sealer as a base for your chosen finish. This may raise the grain slightly, so you will need to de-nib it with some fine abrasive. I used 600 grit for the final finish.

TOP TIP: Brush sanding sealer on a small area, then wipe off the excess, and repeat to get an even coat all over. Otherwise it dries too quickly and unevenly.

17 Apply your favourite finish. Mine is microcrystalline wax, which is applied with a soft cloth and buffed to the level of shine you choose.

18 All three fish are now complete and looking for somewhere to swim. Now make the coral.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Angelfish are one of the most popular breeds of aquarium fish.
- Originating from South America, the angelfish are freshwater fish belonging to the cichlid family and are carnivorous. However, angelfish are generally found in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans.
- The female angelfish prefer to lay their eggs in neat rows on a slate against a wall of the tank.
- Freshwater angelfish breed for life and females can lay up to 1,000 eggs at a time. When one fish dies, the other will not breed again.
- If the angelfish is well cared for by its owner, it can grow to be about 150mm tall once it reaches adulthood, which is approximately a year old.



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19 Draw your coral on the remaining wood, remembering how uneven it is, and bandsaw away as much of the waste as possible.

20 Now, shape the block introducing further irregularities. Create high, medium and low points where you can mount the fish. Working close to my dust extraction hopper, most of the dust is captured at source.

21 Check, using your fish, that you are happy with the shape before adding the final texturing with a carbide ball cutter. Constantly change the direction of the cutter to ensure the marks it leaves appear random. The cutter works best when used on its side. Seal the coral with sanding sealer using a small amount on a brush with a stippling action.



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22 Drill each fish between the pelvic fins to accept a mounting dowel, keeping the drill as square as possible. Use a bradpoint bit to ensure the drill bit doesn't slip and ruin your finish.

23 Determine where your fish will be mounted and drill the coral. Enlist some help to hold the fish up so you can choose their best placement. Test fit a scrap dowel to ensure a snug fit.

24 Decide how much each fish needs to be raised above the coral, and cut a suitable length of 6mm dowel. I had to dye the dowel with some brown stain to blend in with the other wood. Then install them in their final position and turn so they shoal together. Real fish don't swim in straight lines, so further movement can be added by placing one at an angle. ▶



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Here be dragons

Dave Western discusses his favourite dragon designs that work best on a lovespoon



Because I am a lovespoon carver who specialises in the Welsh style, I am often asked for the Welsh flag dragon to be included in many of my designs. Symbolising Welshness, a Welsh connection or simply as a symbol of strength and protection, the Ddraig Goch of the Welsh flag makes for a versatile design symbol.

As a Welshman myself, I can't fault the sentiment, but at the risk of skating out onto some very thin ice, I have to say that I find its use a bit clichéd. When I see it on giftshop-

type lovespoons, it frequently appears disappointingly 'tacked on' to the design and often looks more than a little bit clumsy.

Over the years, I've had a lot of fun designing my own dragons, which represent the many duties of the flag dragon while lending a bit more harmony and elegance to the final design. After a bit of an awkward beginning where I was frequently inspired by existing examples such as the dragons of the SA Brain and Felinfoel breweries and the sublimely stylised dragon of Cardiff, I finally grabbed

the fictitious fire-breathing lizard by the horns and began designing my own from scratch.

It is my hope that this will appeal both to lovespoon carvers looking to expand their repertoire and to carvers from other disciplines, who might be looking for some inspiration and project ideas. While many of these designs have been created for the peculiar 1–2½ dimension carving common to lovespoons, most can be easily adapted to suit 3D sculptural type carving.

Some things to consider:

The space

How will your dragon fit into the available space? Is it going to blend in among other design features or will it be the focal point of the design? Will it be sinuous and lively with motion or will it be fairly static and regal? Will it snake through the design or will it be more powerful to locate it in a particular area of the design? To illustrate several of these ideas, please study the following four pictures.



A very simple dragon twines along one edge of the cutaway section through the handle. It's kept minimal on purpose meaning the dragon isn't overwhelming and must be sought out by the viewer. The idea here is to blend it in as an equal part of the design



In the above picture, the dragon still sweeps through the design, but has now become the main focal point. The dragon is flying above a field of hearts, thistles and is visually brought forward to create that particular optical effect. Because its wings create a large and powerful draw to the eye, the rest of the body is kept sleek and sinuous to allow the background to regain some visual balance



The dragon acts as the crown of the spoon, but is not an overpowering element of the design. Locally focused, the dragon does not travel throughout the design, but has a specific purpose of enveloping and protecting the Swiss flag carved at its centre



The fourth spoon features a design where the dragon has become the main feature. As the core visual element, it is also the most eye-catching. While the heart acts to balance the design and the 'egg-shaped' bowl anchors it, the powerful sweep of the dragon's wing draws the viewer's eye strongly toward the centre of the beast's body

What kind of dragon

Dragons can be surprisingly expressive. From benign and beneficent to fearless, powerful and even to ferocious and arrogant. Subtle positioning and facial rendering can make a huge difference to the dragon's physical outcome. Unless your purpose is overtly nationalistic, you are probably best to avoid creating an excessively vicious looking

dragon and steer more towards one which is simply proud and fearless. That said, I rarely make 'happy' dragons as it seems a little disrespectful... they're not bunnies after all! Regal always seems the best description I can think of and what I aim for as much as possible.



This dragon is one of my favourites. It has that feeling of being regal, but without conceit or nastiness. With its head slightly bowed and the knotwork of its tongue between its head and chest, it seems to be less aggressive while still remaining strong and resolute



Here the dragon appears slightly more enigmatic. He is definitely not to be trifled with, but there is no indication that he is unnecessarily ferocious. His tongue forms a knot, which envelops the central design, a design which is further protected by the location of the dragon's body



This dragon symbolises a mother's love for her family and the fierceness and she is prepared to protect that love. The dragon's bowed head among the roses illustrates he is not a danger to the family, but his expression indicates he won't tolerate anything that is

What style of dragon

There are many versions of dragon legends and types around the world, but the two main types are Asian and European dragons. The Asian dragon tends to be more lithe and beneficent, often a symbol of good-fortune and celebration. The European dragon is generally bigger, more vicious and to be

feared. Representing either type of dragon offers up a host of stylistic possibilities ranging from realistic to highly stylised. Depending on the type of detail you are prepared to get into, the bodies can be smooth or heavily scaled, the wings flat or highly curved and the faces relatively plain or highly detailed.

I generally try to plan the dragon to suit the rest of the design. If the other elements are going to be busy and complex then my dragons are more detailed and involved. If the design is simpler in nature then I tend to stylise the dragons a lot more.



This slightly older Celtic design from the European continent is less abstract than the British dragon. While still in a flat form, the dragons are more realistically portrayed and are more readily recognisable. They also appear more sleek and lizard-like and can be easily rendered in three dimensions



A typical Asian dragon is designed with its serpentine body, recognisable for its lack of wings, its broad head and large whiskers. Because it was carved for a wedding, I took the further step of staining it in lucky red to bring as much good fortune as possible to the happy couple. Because the body is twisting throughout its length, this particular dragon was carved in full 3D



The classic European style of dragon is symbolised with its long curving neck, powerful wings, and a lizard-like body. Because of its position at the crown of the design, it is shown with its chest pushed forward and wings swept back shielding and protecting the design below. Although it is basically anatomically correct (minus the upper arms), it is again highly stylised to represent the various parts without excessive detailing. To match the extensive Celtic knot-work the dragon is smooth, sleek and relatively unadorned



This dragon, by lovespoon carver Laura Jenkins Gorun, is somewhat unique as it represents a capitulating dragon shown at the moment of its defeat. Carved in 3D, the dragon's head is bowed with its flames extinguished. The once powerful wings are now folded and limp with its weakened limbs struggling to find purchase on the surrounding ground. It's not easy to portray such a dominant creature as being so beaten and vulnerable

This plain design in the Celtic style of the *Book of Kells* is straightforward and stylised. The wings and scales utilise a simple, low relief 'ramp' type carving to build the illusion of depth. The head and feet are simply marked out with shallow chamfer-type cuts. As with most Celtic art of the period, the design suspends belief by making use of highly stylised and proportionally incorrect features, which are as important for their shape as they are for their anatomical inclusion

Experiment

The nice thing with dragons is that there is no right or wrong with them so there is plenty of room for experimentation with design and for adventures with the carving. When I stumble onto a particularly pleasing design, I will often try variations on the theme, looking to see what works and what doesn't. Some of these trials are successful and some aren't, but what inevitably happens is I am able to refine the design to a point where I am proud to show it in public.



This elegant dragon went through a number of incarnations before I settled on this particular rendering. I was very happy with the way it managed to balance a regal countenance with a feeling of approachability, with its potent strength expressing a sense of gentleness. It might not be everyone's cup of tea, but for me it is a very successful dragon



Once I was satisfied with the dragon's head, I began a series of experiments trying a variety of body structures and patterning. The dragon became heavily stylised with the wings and bodies often represented by simple sweeping lines. Some designs were left largely unadorned, while others made great use of symbols and artistic flourishes. Although the spoons all began basically the same at the crown and by the time each arrived at its bowl, the artistic differences were significant.



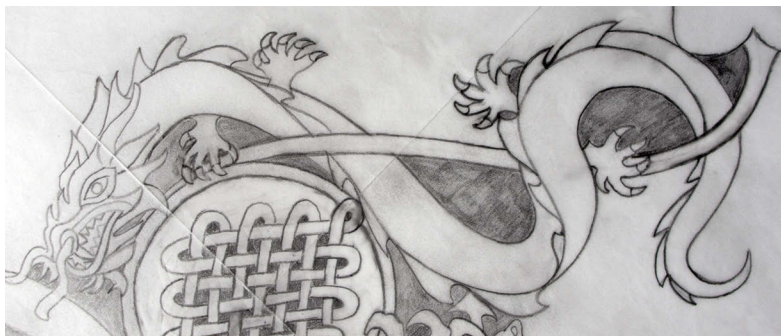
Gradually, the design evolved into something which I think might be the best representative dragon I have achieved thus far. Relying on heavy stylisation of the wings as they sweep around the body, this dragon blends an abstract and realistic form in a way that doesn't jar or defy believability. It is a long way from the flag dragon, but no less effective as a symbol of pride, strength and protection

Have a go!

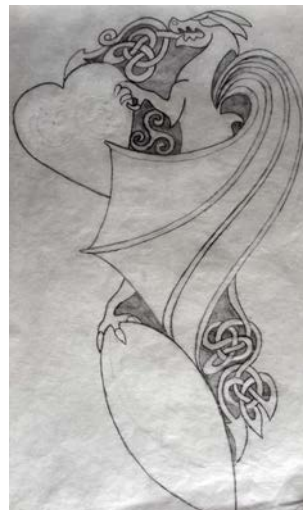
To finish off, here are three straightforward designs for you to begin practicing your dragon carving skills with. They can be carved as part of a lovespoon or as a stand-alone carving. Use a photocopier or graph paper to enlarge them to whatever size you feel comfortable working with, but I ask you to keep in mind they are for practice and gift giving only. Please don't use them for professional or commercial purposes.



The Celtic dragon can be carved from thin timber or if you are daring, you can use slightly thicker wood and carve a nice dome into the handle. I find this design works better with a lighter colour timber as the subtle details aren't lost behind dark grain. This design could be easily adapted to make a nice ornament or brooch



I've isolated the Chinese dragon out of a much larger and more complex carving. You can choose to keep the 'stem' he is climbing or remove all the other extraneous material to just leave the dragon behind. If you decide you'd like it lucky red, I used a shoe polish to get the right tone as paint or stain were inevitably too candy coloured



Even though this doesn't begin to scratch the surface of what is possible with dragon designs, I hope that it gives you some inspiration to have a bash at a dragon or two of your own! Dragons make a marvellous design feature on anything from buttons to table legs. They're everywhere, you just have to be willing to see them! ▶

Although heavily stylised, this simple dragon could be fancied up with some scales and a bit more detail around the face. You can make him in 2D like I did, or use a slightly thicker timber and go for the full 3D effect. If I were to do this one again, I would likely include a prominent set of horns at the top of its head

In the next issue

Dave will be looking at the most common knife carving mistakes and practical solutions on how to avoid, or salvage mistakes.

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MARC COTTERILL in profile

It takes a brave man to follow in the footsteps of a great craftsman, a challenge that's perhaps even more daunting if he's your granddad. But Nottinghamshire carver Marc has more talent than you can shake a stick at, as Catherine Kielthy discovers

Strong neck, long, slender nose, light-brown, oval eyes, square chin (perhaps a hint of a dimple?), on-trend goatee, but what about the hair? What colour? Straight or curly? Long or short? If it weren't for his firmly affixed beanie we'd be able to give a full and accurate description of Marc Cotterill. As it is, we'll just have to make-do. Not something, of course, that this 28-year-old self-taught stick maker, whose grandfather is renowned craftsman Colin Hickman, would ever countenance. Carving, perfectionism and detail run in the family.

"I swapped the spanners for carving chisels, which I didn't mind at all. It's a bit cleaner than lying under a dustbin lorry!"



I would have left. It was daunting to walk out of a job."

Like his granddad, Marc has long been interested in wildlife and focuses on birds, dogs and bulls for his subject matter. Marc's carvings, however, are to be found atop of sticks, hence his Facebook moniker The Wild Stick Maker (and they're definitely 'sticks' for Marc, not 'canes' – before the head goes on it's a 'shank'). As yet, he hasn't had the need to set up a website to promote his work, producing sticks mainly to commission and attracting clients via social media. His Facebook page has more than 10,000 'likes'. But Marc, who hails from Sutton-in-Ashfield, is anything but a social media junkie. He laughs at the suggestion that he might be spending hours in front of the computer, before adding, "no, I'm just in my shed all the time!" And when he's not in there he's to be found in Colin's workshop.

Marc spends hours chiselling away in his shed, which is less of a surprise when you take a closer look at his sticks. They are stunningly well observed and expertly executed recreations of creatures that are familiar to many of us and would jar if even one of the features were a fraction out. Marc is all too well aware of this and channels his inner artist – it was one of his best subjects at school – his amazing observational skills and a heck of a lot of homework to get the details spot on. It's all down to the prep work he mentioned earlier, which he insists is the key to a fine piece of work. "It really takes time and is half the battle." As well as real-life observations, he uses hundreds of close-up images that he finds on the internet. A mere millimetre – I did say perfection ran in the family – can make all the difference to a piece (see panel on page 43), which can take anything from, say, two days for a mallard duck to a week for a dog, to finish.

Heads first

For Marc, part of this prep is also a clean, tidy workshop as are sharp tools and Plasticine, which he uses to mould the heads prior to carving. "It's so I have a 3D object to carve from. Obviously with wood you can't put it back, once you've taken it away, it's gone. The Plasticine goes on top of the shank. Then I make the head, which is in a vice that I work from, then I look at photos of the head – bags under the eyes for dogs, for instance. I buy the eyes in different sizes and colours, but if it's a black eye, I make it out of

→ "When I come to carve a piece, it's all about prep work," Marc tells us. "I have to study what I'm going to carve in fine detail because without that my work wouldn't be the same." People clearly appreciate the effort. When we spoke to him in mid-August, Marc was in good spirits after a successful show that prompted a slot on Nottinghamshire radio, great feedback and a commission for a new labrador stick. It's all the more remarkable when you consider he's been carving professionally for only four years and opted to go full-time a little over 12 months ago.

A recent addition to his work, Marc feels he's "hit the nail on the head" with his German pointer

Family heritage

He has, however, been 'around' carving since the year dot thanks to Colin, who has been instrumental in his grandson's career. "I always looked at his pieces when he was doing them and used to go down to his shed when I was young. I did carving for a year and a half when I was about 18, but when you get to your 20s other things take over [no, we didn't ask]. I regret not starting earlier, but I'm here now and I love it and can't wait to get as good as granddad."

At the rate Marc's developing, we'd wager that could happen sooner rather than later. Yet it wasn't so long ago that Marc had a very different set of work tools to hand. "When I started my carving, I was also working as an HGV fitter, but after three years of doing my sticks I finally had enough orders to take it up full-time. I swapped the spanners for carving chisels, which I didn't mind at all – it's a bit cleaner than lying under a dustbin lorry!"

But what, we wonder, prompted him to make the change (other than the obvious)? He credits this decision, which was a big gamble at the time, to master carver and sculptor Mike Painter. "I spoke to him at a show once and he said to me: 'quit the spanners and start stickmaking.' Without his advice and reassurance that I had a career in it, I don't think



A selection of Marc's sticks



The stunning Angus and Hereford bulls

MAGIC STICKS

Although their main purpose today is viewed as a walking aid, historically sticks – or canes, staffs or poles – have had different purposes and been decorated in myriad ways. Shepherds have long needed sturdy examples while tending their flocks, the ancient Egyptians used them to denote occupation and by the time of the Middle Ages European royalty and religious leaders regarded them as symbols of power and prestige. Louis VIII of France, for example, is said never to have been without a walking stick. By the 18th century, it had become an item of fashion with the standard example being of rattan with a rounded grip. No gentlemen worth his salt would be seen out without his stick. There were even gadget sticks, fashioned to disguise weapons or drugs. A century later saw the arrival of exquisitely carved ivory versions while the Art Nouveau movement brought beautifully carved ‘animal’ handles. Many have become collectors’ items – “a couple of people have bought mine purely to collect them,” reveals Marc – with those produced by elite houses such as Fabergé and Tiffany selling for \$15,000 and more. Keep those Black Labs limited, Marc...



The colours come to the fore on this kingfisher stick

buffalo horn.” Marc employs watercolours for the bright colours of, say, the kingfisher, with the black flecks created with pyrography, while for the hues of a hare, rabbit or pheasant he uses soil or clay – “anything from the earth really because that’s where the animal is to be found”.

The heads themselves tend to be made out of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) because “it’s nice to carve”, though Marc does use other timbers as well, especially tulip (*Dalbergia* spp.) and rhododendron (*rhododendron* spp.) for examples such as the curved head mallard. “Rhododendron is really nice to carve, but it splits when you season it, so after about 10 pieces you might get one that’s usable. For the curve, it’s often very difficult to find the right piece of wood. It’s a U-shape and then you have to find the curve, but after that you can make it however you want it really.”

When the head is ready, Marc puts it on the shank and seals it. It’s then polished with beeswax. The timber for the shanks is hazel (*Corylus avellana*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). “They’re straight and nice when they’re finished. With the holly, I always strip it. You take all the bark off so it’s a white stick when it’s all done. With the ‘twist’ sticks – I’ve put an eagle on one – I strip them because they look better that way.”

Marc’s sticks are about more than aesthetics, however. They’re also functional pieces. “If I know they are going to be used, I usually put them on a thicker stick.” But what about the more fragile parts of the sticks’ heads? “If it’s something that’s prone to breaking if it were wood, say, the beak, then I use a different material, for example, ram’s horn or buffalo horn. But the heads and sticks are durable. Obviously it’s wood so they’re going to get scratched if they’re bashed about. And, of course, they might get dropped. So, what I do with the grain – because it’s a cross-grain on the head – I drill past the

grain on the top and then I put a thread and bar in, so if it's dropped on the floor it shouldn't break."

Inspirational approach

Marc hopes to "work his way through" all the common birds and animals, but his focus will be dogs' heads, which he considers more of a challenge. "With a bird, you can do different feather work, but with a dog everything has to be right. It can get frustrating if something isn't working, but what I do is leave it for a day and then go back to it. And it's amazing what you can see. I've always wanted to do a Great Dane and once I have time away from my commission work I'm going to make one."

He also hopes to inspire more people into the craft, particularly younger ones: "we need to advertise classes and bring young people in otherwise the craft will die out. Clubs are very important. I've also done some one-to-one courses on how to carve one of my mallard ducks, and sharpen and pyro. It's all you need to know to start off."

Marc intends to run more courses next year (see page 43), but in the meantime he'll continue to learn from and be inspired by his granddad as well as the likes of The Tiny Turner – "I love the Errol [a Swamp Dragon creature from Terry Pratchett's novels] that she has carved" – and Mike Painter whose work he admires and to whom he is eternally grateful for having encouraged him to 'quit the spanners.' Now, there's a man who was definitely barking up the right tree.

The graceful
avocet is perfectly
captured



A beautifully
curved mallard



Renowned carver Colin has passed down his talent to his eternally grateful grandson, Marc



Inside Colin's workshop where Marc spends a lot of his time carving his pieces

EYE-CATCHING

Marc's most challenging – and favoured – commissions have been the Hereford bull, an Angus bull, a limousine and the spaniel. "The first Hereford bull I made took me two attempts," he recalls. "With the dogs they have to be spot on. For example, the eyes have to be in the right place and the bags under the eyes, which are very hard to find [in images] at times, need to be perfect. You really have to see an animal before you can carve it."

"And the eyes have to be the right size. They're 6mm for a Labrador and spaniel that I carved. I put 7mm in first – I had a couple

of goes with that lab – and they just looked massively oversized even by 1mm. They looked completely out of place. So, I took them down to 6mm, which my granddad had told me to do in the first place, but I didn't listen to him. He said 6mm; I thought they needed 7. I put them in and he was right – as he normally is! I didn't want to get rid of the spaniel, but it's gone. That's the trouble when you do them full-time." He has, however, kept the Hereford. "They all looked so realistic, but especially the Hereford. You can look at it from any angle and it's spot on. I've kept that one." ▶



Marc sets to work in his cramped shed



The eyes have it for Marc's spaniel

Contact info

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Marc will be running three-day courses, based in Tibshelf, Derbyshire, from February 2017. Students will learn how to sharpen, pyro, carve and put a mallard on a shank.

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Finished Gothic leaf next to the original



PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM BARSLEY

THE DIARY

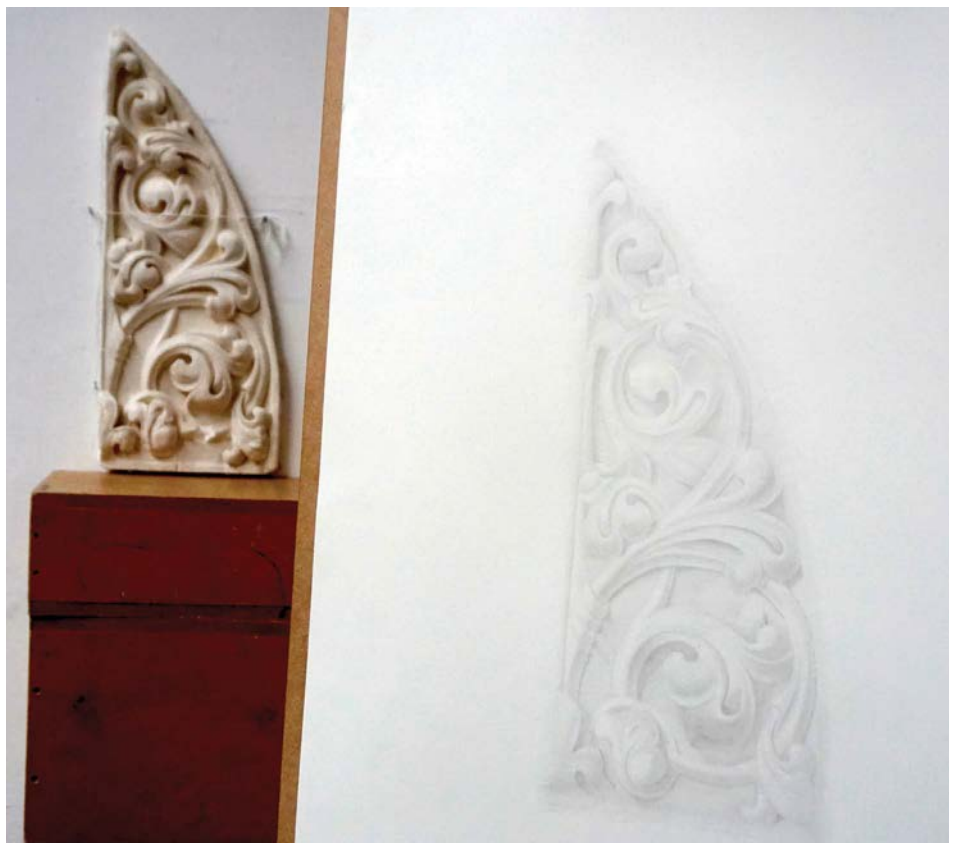
of a student woodcarver

William Barsley continues his series by telling us about his journey in woodcarving

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) striving to turn my passion for woodcarving into a full time profession.

Schedule

It's now been two months since I started the course and I have to admit, I am absolutely exhausted! The course schedule is Monday–Friday, 8.30am–5pm, usually with two evenings of life drawing each week. This may not sound too strenuous, particularly as it's doing something I absolutely love, but I've found the process of learning can require an incredible amount focus and energy. I've come to think of the course a little like training for a sporting event, day-by-day increasing my stamina and ability to focus for longer periods of time and building up my skill, through not only repetition from hours of carving and drawing, but also through analysis and critique from tutors and classmates. In this sense, the course is exactly what I've been after, and is living up to its reputation of providing high class, quality tuition in historic ornamental woodcarving and gilding.



A sustained shading exercise of a Gothic ornament

Learning

An important part of this learning is the study of traditional English and European carving, in particular knowing about the different decorative styles and periods. In the first year of the course, every Wednesday we have lectures from experts on history of art, architecture and decorative styles learning about the Gothic period, Romanesque, Rococo, Baroque, etc. all to help us identify old carvings and enable us to learn from the carvers of the past. While documenting carving in Asia as part of my Carving Countries journey (www.carvingcountries.com), I visited the home of a famous Malaysian woodcarver called Nik Rashiddin Nik Hussein, who wholeheartedly believed in

the importance of knowing your own roots and history of carving before striving to progress the craft yourself. This lesson stuck with me ever since and, as such, it's been an absolute joy learning about my own country's history of woodcarving.

The gothic era

At the moment, my favourite period by far has to be the Gothic, which, in England, can be classified into three main periods: the Early English (c.1180–1275), Decorated (c.1275–1380) and Perpendicular (c.1380–1520). The style first developed in France around c.1140 in the Basilique Saint-Denis near Paris and is distinguished in its architecture by its use of pointed arches, vaulted roofs and buttresses, all ground-breaking

techniques at the time. In terms of carving, I personally love the vitality of Gothic work, the fun and the humour in a lot of their carvings from gnarly grotesques to cheeky misericords that hide under choir stools such as those found in Exeter cathedral.



The History of Architecture tours held at The British Museum



Start of the process

Around the time that we began learning about the Gothic period, we started carving a traditional gothic leaf taken from a misericord at Lincoln cathedral. The gothic leaf was by far one of the toughest carvings I've done so far; the combination of carving hard dried oak (*Quercus robur*) while trying to achieve the smooth curves of the design was a real challenge. Much of the work of a professional woodcarver can be in restoration and, as such, this was an exercise in helping us to train our eyes



Begin by planing off the rough surface of the oak

and make an exact replica of the carving down to the millimetre. Our tutor, Robert Randall, who used to be a former student of the college and now runs a professional carving company with his former peer Ashley Sands (www.sandsandrandall.com), found us a great piece of oak for the project. What I hadn't realised about oak was the beautiful medullary rays it can have, which are often perpendicular to the tree rings and are the channels through which sap is transported through the tree.

DID YOU KNOW?

Medullary rays can give a clear indication of how your wood has been sawn. For example, in quarter sawn timber, the medullary rays are parallel with the surface of the wood and, as such, not only give a beautiful wave-like effect, but also show that the grain in your timber is running flat and thus often good for carving.

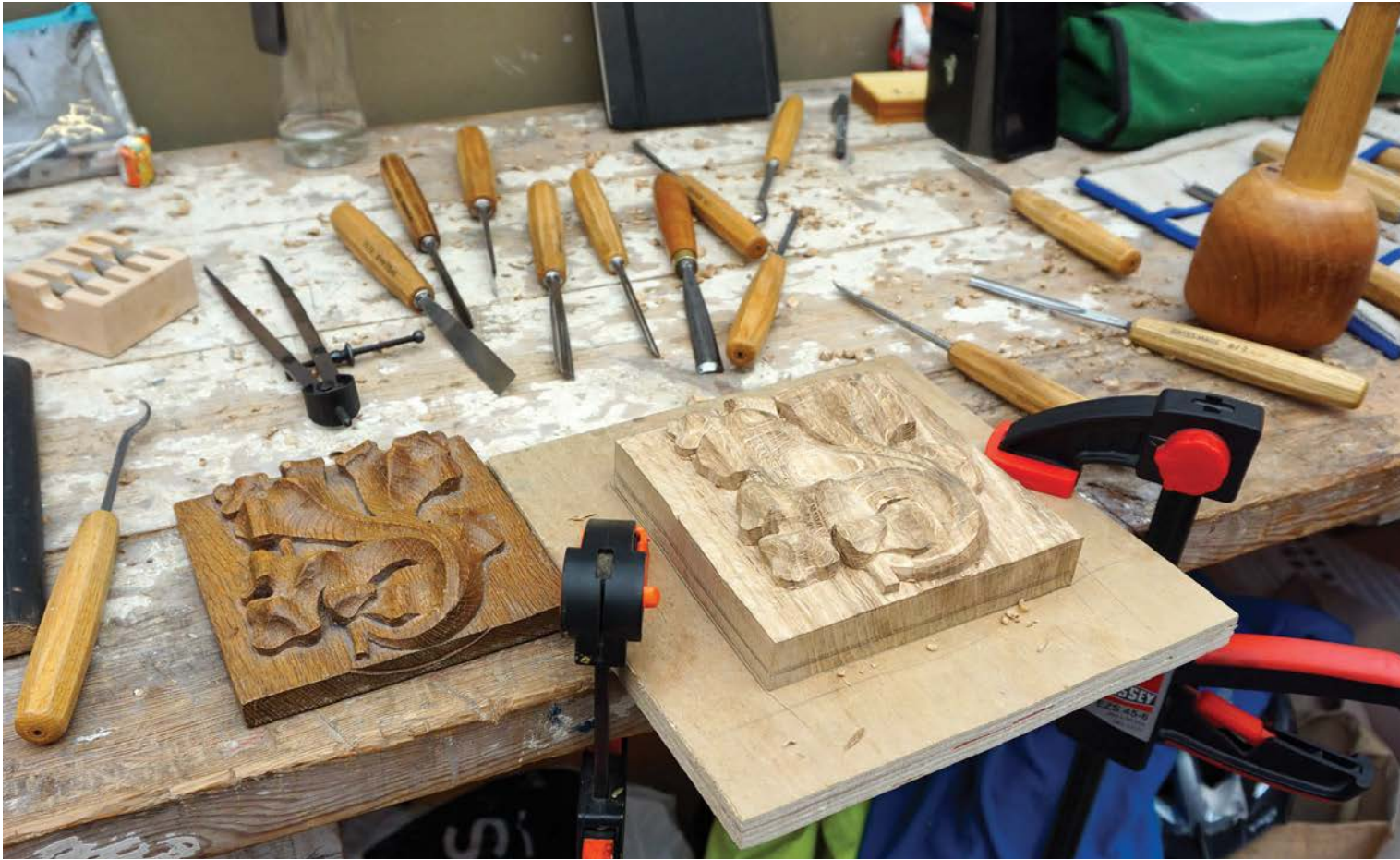


Medullary rays in the oak



Low profile of Gothic leaf, highlighting the ridges and curves

The Gothic leaf slowly took shape over three days of carving, and besides being a challenging design, it was also a great lesson in improving our sharpening techniques as the hard oak really blunts your chisels after a while. One great lesson I learnt with this piece



Putting the finishing touches to the leaf

was to think about the edge of your work. It obviously depends on what you're carving, but often work may be displayed on the wall and would be viewed from the side. In this piece, I included a small Gothic motif running

around the edge, which I felt gave the carving an extra little something to catch people's eyes and bring it to life; hopefully in a similar way to old Gothic carvers may have done hundreds of years ago.



Original Gothic oak leaf cast from Lincoln Cathedral

TOP TIPS FOR CONCENTRATION

1. What you listen to can have a huge impact on your carving.

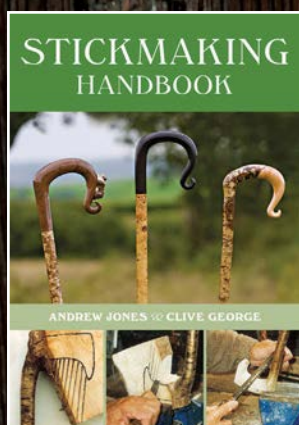
Like many carvers I've met, I love listening to music while carving and find it can really boost my focus and energy at times. However, since starting the course, I've realised that it can also be quite distracting and can disrupt my focus. One of our tutors often talks about this point and says he prefers to carve in silence or with the radio just quietly burbling in the background. The art of finding that perfect 'zone' where you are wholeheartedly focused on your work is so important when trying to carve to the highest level, and what you listen to can have a big impact.

2. Take a break before your work does!

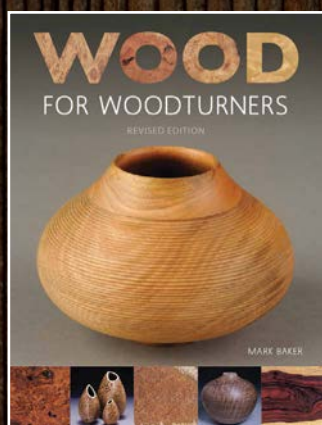
Like many carvers, I tend to get absorbed and lost in the process of carving finding that hours can fly by in what seems like seconds, meaning I often forget to take a break. It can be so hard to stop sometimes however, in the past few months I've found myself making silly mistakes when my concentration has begun to wane, making cuts that I wouldn't usually make or not keeping my chisel as sharp as they should be. Forcing myself to take a simple five minute break every now and again has really helped, although it's not been easy! ▶

Next time...

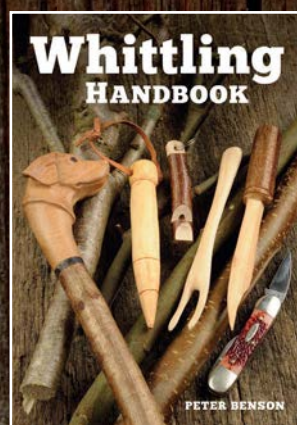
William Barsley will be talking about his challenges of learning to draw, an important part of the course and an essential skill to master.



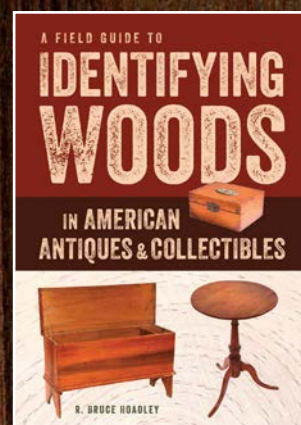
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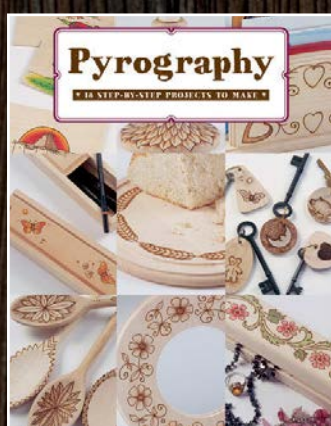
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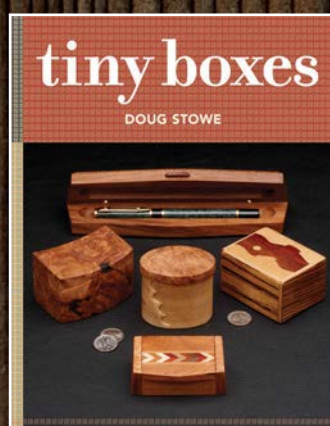
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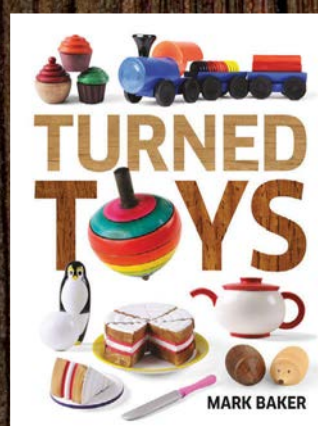
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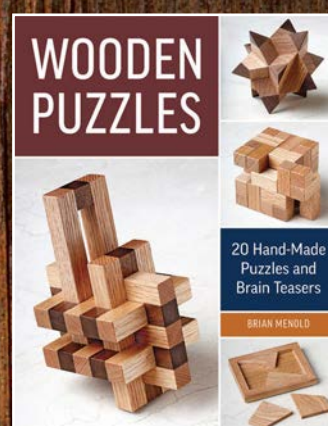
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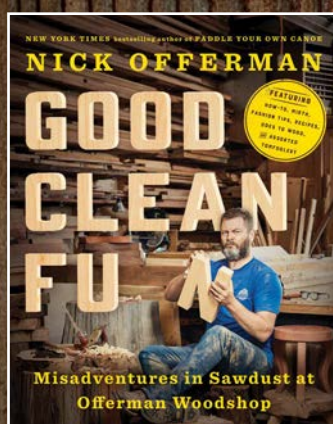


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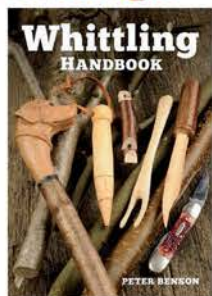


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Carving start to finish

Peter Benson begins his series by telling us the processes, start to finish, in carving...



Over the coming issues, I will be looking at the techniques required to carve a basic carving from start to finish.

While the techniques covered will be specific they will give the carver a basis upon which to develop and perfect the sorts of skills that will serve well in future projects. Much of what I cover will be old hat to many carvers and I apologise for repeating what they already know, but there will always be new enthusiasts who buy this magazine in the hope that they will learn something to help them on their way. Many new carvers are understandably keen to carve something specific as their first project. Sometimes having no experience with carving tools beforehand can be frustrating and disheartening when they encounter all sorts of problems along the way because of their inability to get the best of the tools they are using.

If you wish to approach carving with the minimum of expense, you would be advised to start with knife carving or whittling. You only need a knife, safety gloves and a suitable piece of wood and you are on your way.

If you prefer to go with traditional carving gouges and mallets you will need to have a basic set of tools, a mallet, something to hold your work securely and some means of keeping the tools sharp. This can involve a fair amount of expense but what you buy, if it is of good quality, will be a good investment as most reputable manufacturers offer an unconditional



lifetime guarantee with their tools so they should retain their value. Starting with a selection of around six tools should be sufficient for most carvings. I don't advise that you buy a set of tools unless you know exactly what you are buying and know you will use all tools in the set. I have come across sets that contain tools that I have never found a use for in a lifetime of carving. What are the best tools to buy then? I suggest a roughing out gouge, No.6, 18mm; a No.4, 12mm; a No.3, 7 or 8mm; a No.5, 8mm; a No.9, 8mm, and a No.9 or 10, 3mm. If you are confident with your sharpening techniques you might like to include a 6mm 60° V-tool. This is my recommendation and may well be different from other carvers, but in the end the choice is yours.

Tool selection

To clarify the classification of tools the following may help you: gouges, from No.3 to No.9, (No.3 the shallowest sweep and No.9 the deepest) conform to the London pattern and will all scribe



A V cut in MDF with tool being dragged backwards to hone. Shallow groove on the right is for a gouge. No compound is needed



The direction of rotation has been reversed by turning the motor round, a hard felt wheel added (right) and a close stitched rag wheel (left) each with a wooden slope to give the correct angle for honing

Before embarking on your first masterpiece you need to be confident that you can make each tool do what you require of it. Carving an egg shape, or something similar, can be a good practice especially if you carve one or more holes in it. You will use nearly all of your tools and should find out exactly what you can do with them. One small tip here – cabinetmakers and



Note the grain splitting ahead of the cutting edge of the tool

carpenters tend to prefer working with the grain of the wood so they can get a superior finish. Carvers, however, generally prefer to work across the grain as this reduces the likelihood of the wood splitting. You can cut right up to a line without the cut running ahead of the cutting edge of the tool. The waste you are removing also drops away easily rather than having to be cut away.



Here the cut stops at the line without any splitting of the wood

While each tool in your toolbox may have a specific purpose there is actually little limit to what each one can do. I will be trying to show how much can be achieved by exploring the capabilities of your tools and understanding that by applying these, the whole carving process can be easier as well as more enjoyable. ▮

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Commerson's dolphins

Steve Heath carves a majestic, wave riding mammal... the Commerson dolphin



Dolphins make great subjects for the beginner and more experienced woodcarver, and I find myself returning to them time and again. I aim to capture the graceful energy of these animals while trying to reflect something of their social nature, which is why I tend to carve them in groups of two or more. For this project I have chosen the Commerson's dolphin, a strikingly patterned little cetacean with a penchant for cold-water surfing. I have painted my carving as I aim to achieve a realistic representation, but you may choose to go with a natural finish. These templates of a female adult and calf Commerson's dolphins are an amalgamation of various images. I avoid copying a single image because this throws up copyright

issues and limits the design of the finished template. As always the importance of research cannot be overstated, search images of your subject and watch videos too. Familiarity with the shapes and movement of the animal will bring insight to the carving process and make for a better finished piece.

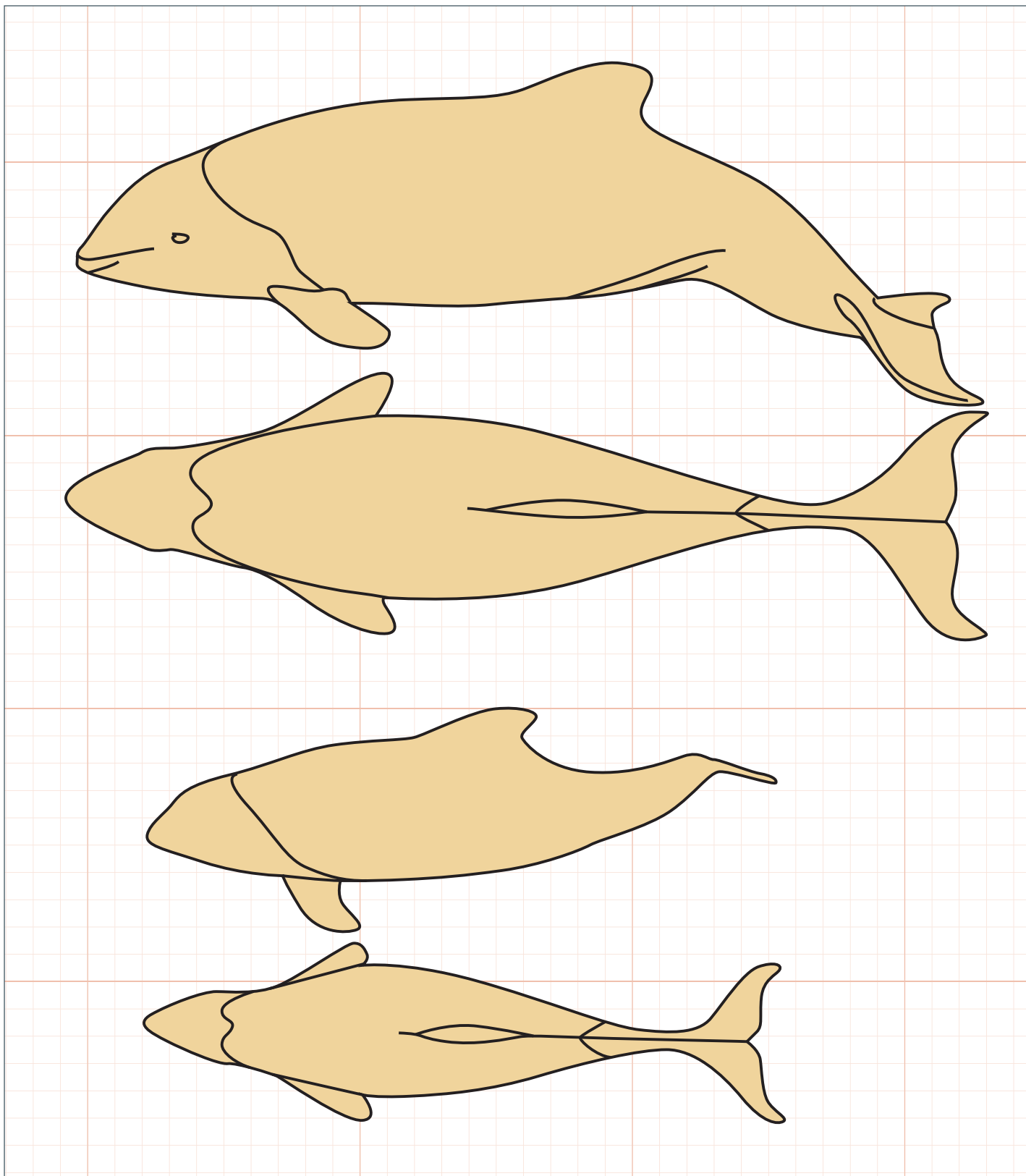
Things you will need

- 6mm coarse grit typhoon burr and/or carving knife and/or No.5, 5mm palm gouge
- No.5, 3mm palm gouge
- No.39, 1mm or No.39, 2mm V-tool
- 2mm and 3mm black semi-circle glass eyes on wires
- 1mm wood drill bit
- 4mm fine diamond ball burr

- Scalpel No.3 handle size 11P blade
- 120, 240, 320 and 400 grit cloth-backed or abranet abrasive.
- Two-part fast setting (five minutes) epoxy adhesive
- Sponge – natural or synthetic
- Acrylic paint: titanium white, burnt sienna and French ultramarine blue
- Pencil and eraser
- Masking tape
- 5mm wooden dowels

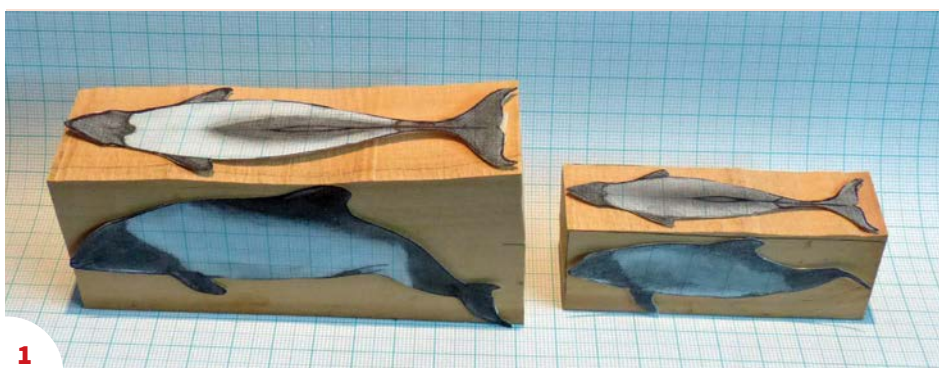
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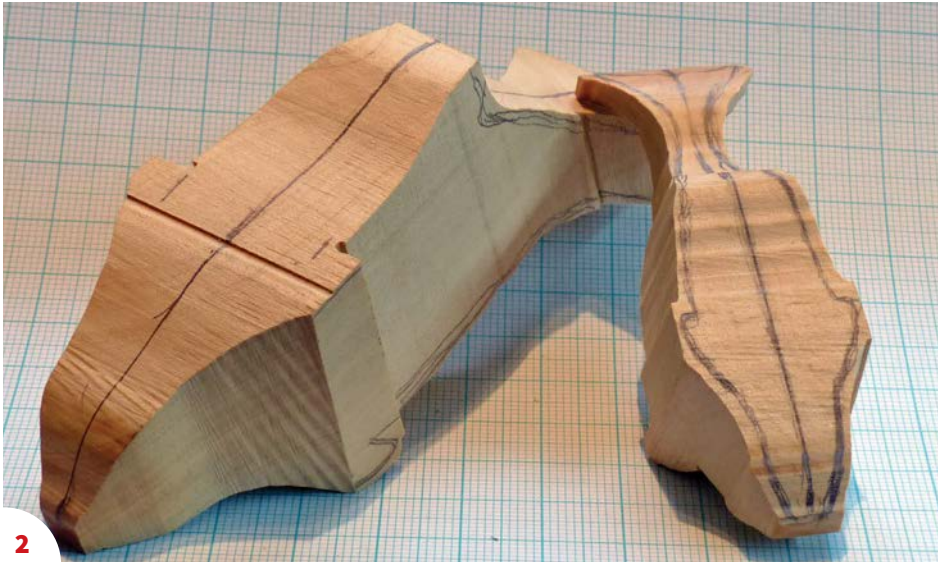
- Lemonwood (*Calycophyllum multiflorum*) for the dolphins
- Yew (*Taxus baccata*) abstract mount
- Walnut (*Juglans nigra*) block



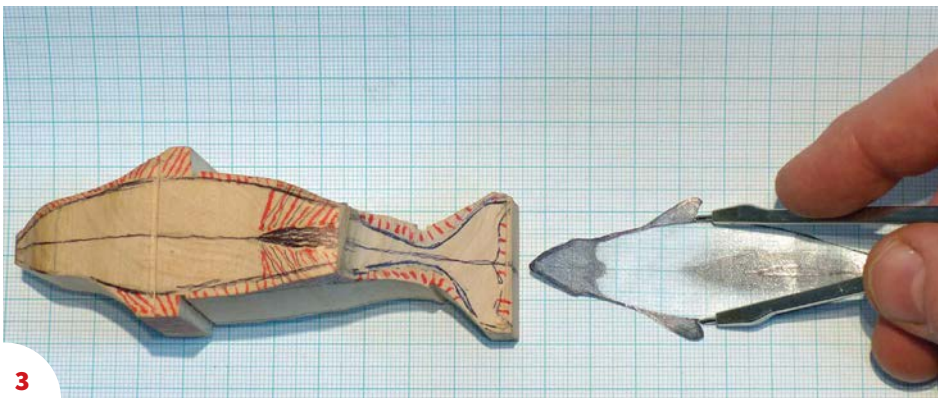
Method

1 This is a small carving, but it will work well on a larger scale. Just scan or photograph the templates, then resize and print. I've chosen lemonwood due to the size of the carving, but lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) or any light fruitwood will work just as well.




2

2 Draw the lateral and dorsal outlines on the timber blank, taking care to ensure the features line up accurately; tip of nose on one side to tip of nose on the other, and the tip of the fin to tip of the fin, etc. Cut out the lateral outline. Tape the blank back together and cut out the dorsal outline making sure the loose components of the blank remain aligned. I'm not keen on this technique for asymmetrical animal carvings, where the head is turned as an example, but dolphins tend to be fairly symmetrical. I use a bandsaw for both techniques, but I will admit that spinning bandsaw blades, for all their cutting efficiency, make me nervous especially when I'm cutting out small projects. Consequently I avoid cutting right up to the edge preferring to leave a margin of a few millimetres, which I can reduce with hand tools in a more controlled fashion.


3

3 Using the templates re-draw the dorsal and lateral outlines. The red diagonals indicate waste to remove. A typhoon burr is to be used to cut the waste back to the dolphin's flank leaving a square outline of the flipper standing slightly proud and extending below the abdomen.


4

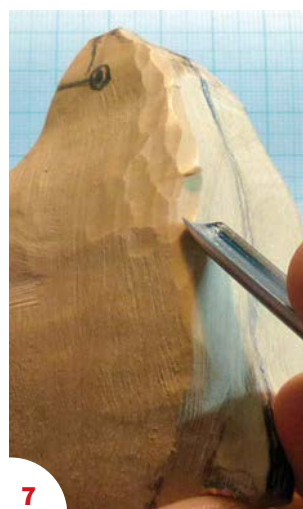
4 Use a 6mm typhoon burr to remove this last few millimetres of waste down to the outline. Alternatively, a knife or shallow gouge will do the trick.


5

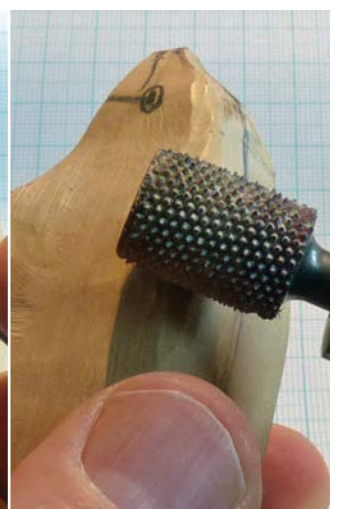
5 It's a good idea to leave the space between the front flippers (marked in red diagonals) to provide strength during the carving process. Now re-draw the centre guideline from nose to tail along the back and the abdomen.


6

6 Transfer the outline of the eye and the mouth from the template to the blank in pencil using dividers to maintain accuracy. View the carving from the top-down and front-on to ensure the eyes and the mouth align on both sides. Keep rubbing out and re-drawing until you are happy. Care taken with the face at this stage will result in a more convincing and engaging finished carving.


7

7 Use a shallow gouge, knife or a typhoon burr to round off the square flanks ensuring symmetry along the length of both dolphins.



8 Repeat the same for the underside of both dolphins, rounding and softening the edges. Along with misaligned facial features, 'boxiness' is a common error that can let down an otherwise good wildlife carving.

9 Using an inverted and very sharp, shallow gouge, outline the egg shaped orb of the eyes. Carefully carve the bulge of the eye in relief using a pair of dividers to maintain symmetry of the eyes on the faces of each dolphin. A disposable scalpel is a useful tool for fine shaping and scraping the eye orb smooth.

10 Use a scalpel or shallow gouge to further shape the rostrum or beak. Unlike the more familiar long rostrum of the bottlenose dolphin, the Commerson's beak is barely more than a slight bulge beyond the forehead.

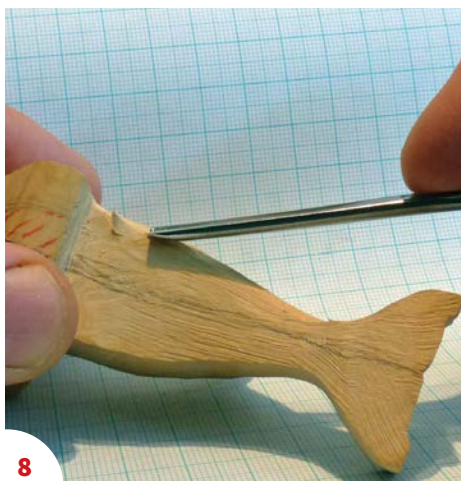
11 A 1 or 2mm V-tool can be used to define the mouth. As you can see, the space between the flippers has been removed, but keep the flippers thick until the last minute for strength.

12 Use a burr, shallow gouge or carving knife to round the leading edge of the dorsal fin and taper the trailing edge. This will produce the classical symmetrical hydrofoil when it is viewed in the cross section. Evolution hit on this design long before engineers. It will make structures exposed to water flow both streamlined and strong.

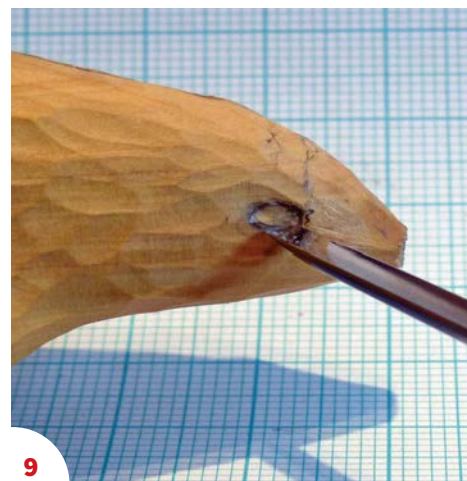
13 Shape the top edge, between the dorsal fin and the tail flukes, into a thin, rounded ridge with the same tools used to shape the dorsal fin. A similar ridge appears from the anal area on the underside narrowing to a point midway between the tail flukes.

14 If necessary, redefine the flukes and flippers using the template and carve down to the outline. Using a burr, well-honed shallow gouge or knife, shape the rounded leading edge of the flukes and flippers tapering down to a sharp trailing edge; in cross-section a variation of the hydrofoil shape is used for the dorsal fin. Start with a 120 grit cloth-backed abrasive or abranet and work through 240 and 320 grit, finishing with a 400 grit. Avoid working at blemishes and tool marks with abrasive, you'll be there for hours and will often end up with an unsightly dip. Instead, use a scalpel or similar razor sharp edge and scrape or carve away wafers of wood until the mark has disappeared, remembering to work with the grain. Now move through the grits of abrasive, from coarse to fine, and the area will blend with the rest of the finish.

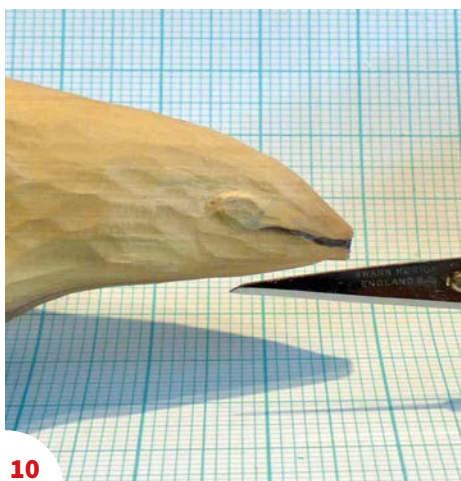
15 I decided to use glass eyes bought from an online taxidermist supplier. For the 1/4 scale I was carving in, I used a 2mm and 3mm black half circle glass eye on a wire for the small and large dolphin respectively. Drill a hole using a 1mm drill bit to a depth of approximately 5mm and cut down the wire to about 4mm. Use a 4mm circular diamond burr and make a very shallow depression in the drill hole, ensuring the 2mm and 3mm eyes for the calf and adult dolphin sit slightly proud. Using a five minute two-part clear epoxy adhesive, carefully countersink the eye in the depression.



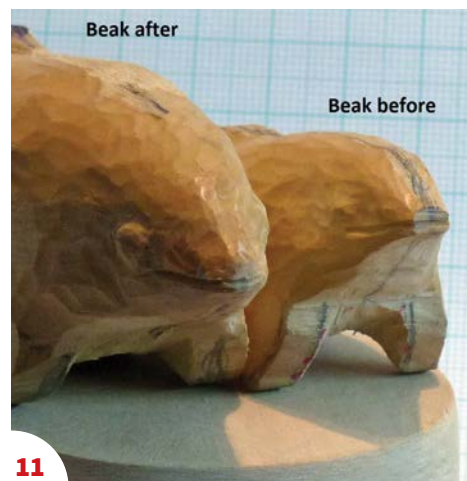
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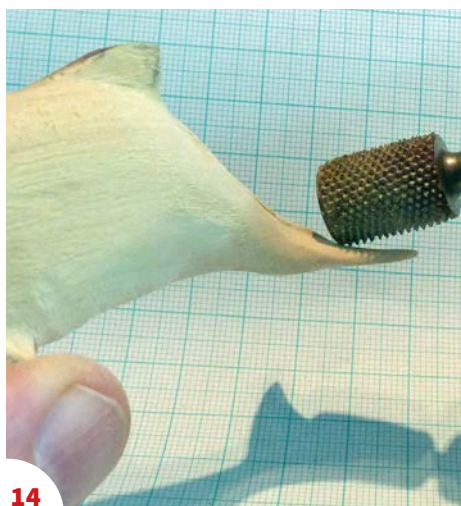
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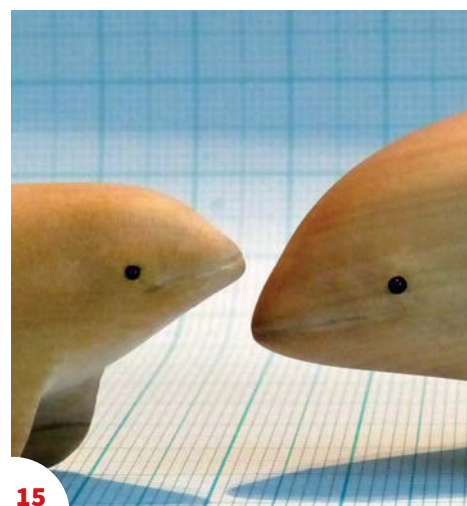
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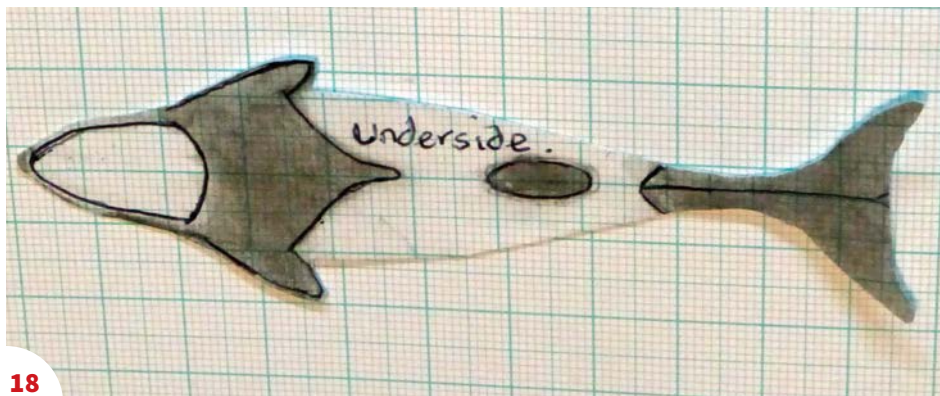
16 For finishing, I prefer to apply acrylic paints using natural sponge, but a brush or spray gun can produce effective results. Alternatively, you could use stains or beeswax and leave the finish natural. On the subject of painting I have, in the past, found myself conflicted. Wood is such a beautiful natural substance, it seems a shame to cover it up. I personally struggle to find a method of colouring the carving in a way that is both realistic, but preserves the appearance of woodgrain. I have developed a technique that I feel strikes the balance between keeping the integrity of the wood and depicting realism, but see what you think. I should add that I didn't develop this technique in splendid isolation, but pieced it together from my own trial and error and by adapting the approaches of other carvers. Begin by diluting white acrylic with water until it is as thick as full fat milk. Use a


16

natural sponge to gently dab the paint all over the dolphin, avoiding any heavy blobs of paint. Dry at room temperature or using a hairdryer on a cool setting.

17 When the acrylic is dry, gently rub the surface with a fine denibbing pad. This will expose the grain in parts and distress the finish. Repeat the process, denibbing between each coat, until you have a silky smooth finish with 'lost and found' areas of grain.

18 With a pencil, lightly sketch in the outline of the black areas, ensuring symmetry. I have drawn an underside template to guide you as this surface does not appear on the original templates. Sponge or brush in a mixture of burnt sienna and blue ultramarine acrylic denibbing between coats. Oddly, true black is not common in nature. Mixing your own


17

18

black (closer to a very dark grey) gives a more natural and less flat, uniform finish. Remember to wipe any paint off the glass eye with a damp cotton bud and beware of scratching the eyes with the fine denibbing pad. The dolphin is a pale grey. This can be lightly sponged on using a mixture of white and the very dark grey. Although the adult appears to have large areas of white, you will note fine passages of sponge-dabbed very dark grey/white mixture. Remember to keep your paint well diluted, but not watery. It's a good idea to practice this technique on a sanded offcut before starting to paint your carving. Don't despair if there is a problem with your painting. Acrylic when everything is dry will rub off using a 120 grit abrasive and work through the grades of abrasive and start again.

19 Cut out a square or rectangle block of wood to act as a base. Any timber will do providing it has the weight and size to support your carving without overwhelming it. Find an offcut of timber with a distinctive grain. I used yew, but pine (*Pinus* spp.) or ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) or elm (*Ulmus* spp.) would work well and create an abstract, undulating shape and sand to a silky finish. The holes in the 'water' add to the fluidity. Match up a point on your dolphins' flanks with a point on the abstract shape. Ensure the dolphins can be mounted without encroaching on each other and that the abstract shape touches the flank of your dolphin in a way that hides the dowel completely. Flatten the abstract shape at the point of contact with the dolphin until a snug fit can be made. Mark the point of contact on the dolphins and abstract shape with a pencil and drill a 5mm deep hole at these points. Fix the dolphin to the abstract shape using wooden dowels and a two-part, five minute clear epoxy adhesive (I used 5mm wooden dowels cut to 8mm length with a hacksaw). Masking tape is good for holding the carvings in place while the glue cures as it doesn't mark the finish. Use another dowel and epoxy adhesive to fix the base to the abstract shape. Leave the paint and glue for at least 24 hours to cure, then polish with a clear beeswax to a high sheen. All done. Hopefully the areas of grain will appear in subtle patches through the translucent grey or white. ▶


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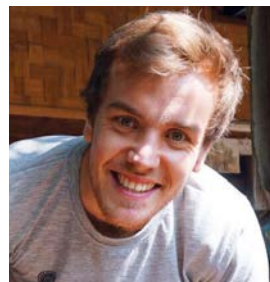
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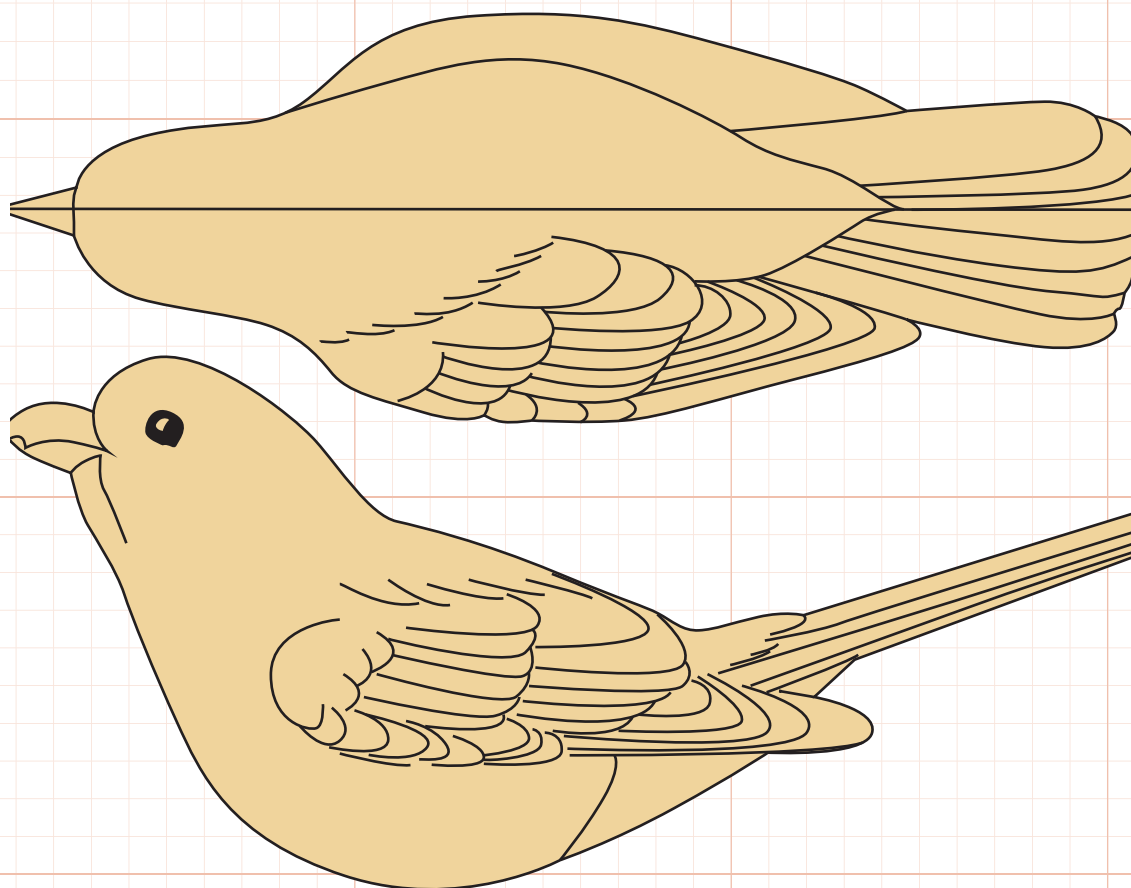
Carving and painting a red-backed shrike

Mike Wood gives a step-by-step guide to carving what is one of the world's most fascinating and macabre birds

The red-backed shrike is a bird that is not only striking to look at, but also a clever bird. It will perch on fence posts, telephone wires, the tops of bushes, anywhere to get a good view of potential prey. A male red-backed shrike is unmistakable with its bluish-grey head, bright chestnut back and a thick black bill. The red-backed shrike is now virtually extinct in the UK as a breeding bird, but they can be seen in the spring and autumn across the south and east coast of the UK, and as far north as northern Scotland. Although this bird can't be bred anymore, it can be carved in fine detail. Prior to carving, gather together as much research material as possible.

ABOUT THE RED-BACKED SHRIKE

- The red-backed shrike measures approximately 170mm in length, meaning it's slightly larger than a house sparrow.
- Although males are easily recognisable with their black eye mask, females and young don't possess this mask. Their mask is a 'dull' brown and the young have bars on their back.
- Their nests are built from plant stems, roots and grass and are usually located quite low down in thorny bushes in order to protect them from predators. Females also lay eggs between the end of May and late July.
- Although most red-backed shrikes used to breed throughout most of Europe, they migrate to tropical climates through the winter, typically southern Africa.



Things you will need

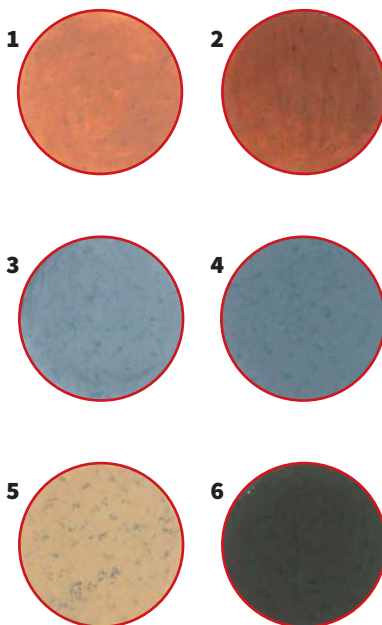
Tools:

- Rotary carving unit
- Handpiece to hold various 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
- Medium sized fine grade ball-ended cutter
- Airbrush/brushes as appropriate
- Coloured artists paints
- PPE – facemask/goggles, dust mask and extraction
- Pyrography unit, and shading and incising/scalpel-type tips

Materials:

- Body in jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) 180 x 60 x 60mm

Colour swatches



1 White gesso and a small amount of burnt sienna for the under coat, then thin washes of burnt sienna

2 Burnt sienna wash

3 Payne's grey and white gesso to under coat the grey on the back

4 Payne's grey wash

5 White gesso and raw sienna for edging the secondaries

6 Dark mix black and burnt umber for the primaries

1 First, following your templates, cut out the bird shape on a bandsaw, coping saw or similar. Once cut, mark the main large features on the bird and then rough cut the shape of the body and head to represent the main profile lines and sections as best you can.

2 Rough down the bird following your previous markings using coarse rotary burrs. Once the main features are in place, further refine the head and body shape using a rotary carving unit fitted with a tapered burr to achieve a rough shape. Make sure all of the main body forms and shapes are correct and in place before moving on to the next stage.

3 Sand smooth the bird all over using drum sanders or by hand sanding. Remember, any dust is potentially harmful to health and using powered sanding techniques, it can throw the dust a long way from the work. Use PPE and suitable extraction to minimise inhalation.

4 Now mark the positions of all the feather patterns. Check your resource material properly to make sure the positions and sizes are correct.

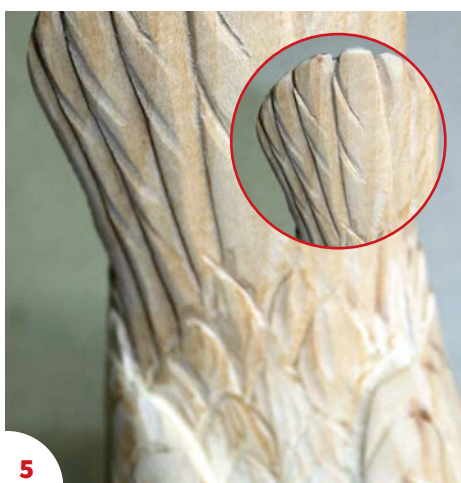
5 Using a high-speed grinder and a small ruby point carve in all feathers. The inset picture shows the carved-in tail feathers.

6 Using a small round diamond burr 'soften' all edges of feathers.

7 Here you can see all of the feathers carved in. Rough cut in the eye holes and affix a small metal pin in the end of the bill.

8 Carve in all the undertail feathers using the same diamond burr and add texture to the underside.

9 Using a round-ended stone smooth all feathers over the underside of the body. These need softening to create the soft pillow-like effect a bird's feathers usually have. Now you need to position the feet. I make my own feet, but you can buy suitable ones. Again, check reference material to make sure you get them in the right place and cut the right angle to the body to give a naturalistic stance.



**10****11**

Where to buy bird's feet and eyes

- eBay
www.ebay.com
- Quality Carving Supplies (American)
www.qualitycarvingsupplies.com
- Woodcarvers Supply, Inc (American)
www.woodcarverssupply.com
- Blue Ribbon Woodcarving Supplies (American)
www.blueribbonwoodcarvingsupplies.com
- Cascade Carver Supply
www.cascadecarvers.com

10 As you can see, this is a close-up of the head, eye socket, beak and top body feathers before refinement. The next stage is to soften the feathers a little, but not as much as on the underside of the bird. You need to retain the defined outline to accentuate the various feather clusters, ready for burning in the defining detail later on.

**12**

11 Use a fine-grade flame cutter – I used a diamond one – to soften the feather clusters. The bird is now finished and ready for 'burning'. Note the feet, their position and fixing post underneath to glue into whatever supporting material you opt to create. Also be sure to test fit the eyes, then fit them in on a bed of Plastic Wood. Once bedded in, shape and remove any excess bedding material as required. There are numerous types of fixing/bedding material. The key to success is finding one that not only holds the eyes perfectly in place, but can be easily moulded and shaped without being excessively sticky or gunky.

"You need to retain the defined outline to accentuate the various feather clusters, ready for burning in the defining detail later on."

**13****14**

12 Using a pyrography unit fitted with a combination of a standard wire tip and scalpel-type tips – you need to use a wire tip for rough outlining and the scalpel-edge blade to incise and score precise detail into the feathers – start burning in and refining the look of the feathers.

13 This picture shows all feathers burnt and defined, and since the shrike sticks its prey on sharp spikes, a thorny shrub-type branch sitting in a weighty base worked well for the composition. The choice and look of such is your choice, but I always go for a naturalistic display.

14 Here is the view of the opposite side of the bird.



15

15 To accompany the bird I made some insects – I made two beetles and a bumble bee – and stuck them on the spikes. Again the choice is yours, but whatever you make, do your research and get your composition right. It's a pain if you fall at the last hurdle with something that isn't quite right.



16

16 First paint the bird with a thinned coat or two of gesso, then block in the main colours. The grey is Payne's grey and white gesso mix, the red area is burnt sienna and white gesso, the dark colour is black and burnt umber.



17

17 Use burnt sienna in several thin washes on the red area. For the grey area edge all the feathers with white gesso, then give it several washes of the grey mix. The secondaries are painted with the dark mix and then edged with a mixture of raw sienna and white. The bill is grey at the base, I would recommend airbrushing the tip black. Paint the feet with thin washes of Payne's grey to finish.



18

18 Paint the breast white and the lower part of the belly burnt sienna.



19

19 Insert some bristles in front of the eye, fit and allow to dry, then trim.

20 The finished bird. Here is also a carving of a great grey shrike I have just finished. I used jelutong, 180 x 70 x 80mm. ▶



20

Great grey shrike

- Small numbers of the great grey shrike come to the UK in autumn and spend the winter here.
- Very territorial, the great grey shrikes don't usually stay together. It's rare to see more than one at once.
- The great grey shrike is the largest bird of the European shrikes. They have very long tails and tend to sit on the tops of trees.
- Like the red-backed shrike, the great grey shrike eats beetles and other insects. However, they also eat small mammals and birds. They usually store their food by sticking it on a thorn.

Jennie Starbuck



Tony Wilson



Mick Hanbury



Wayne Mack



Michael Painter



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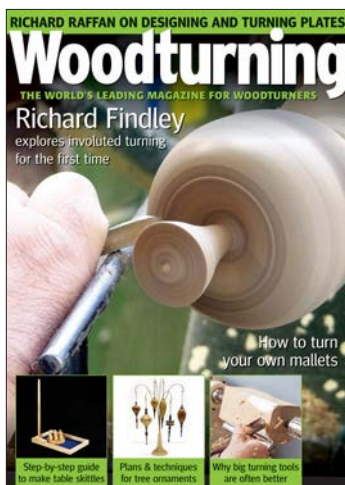
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CALAMITY CONTROL

Fixing common carving mistakes



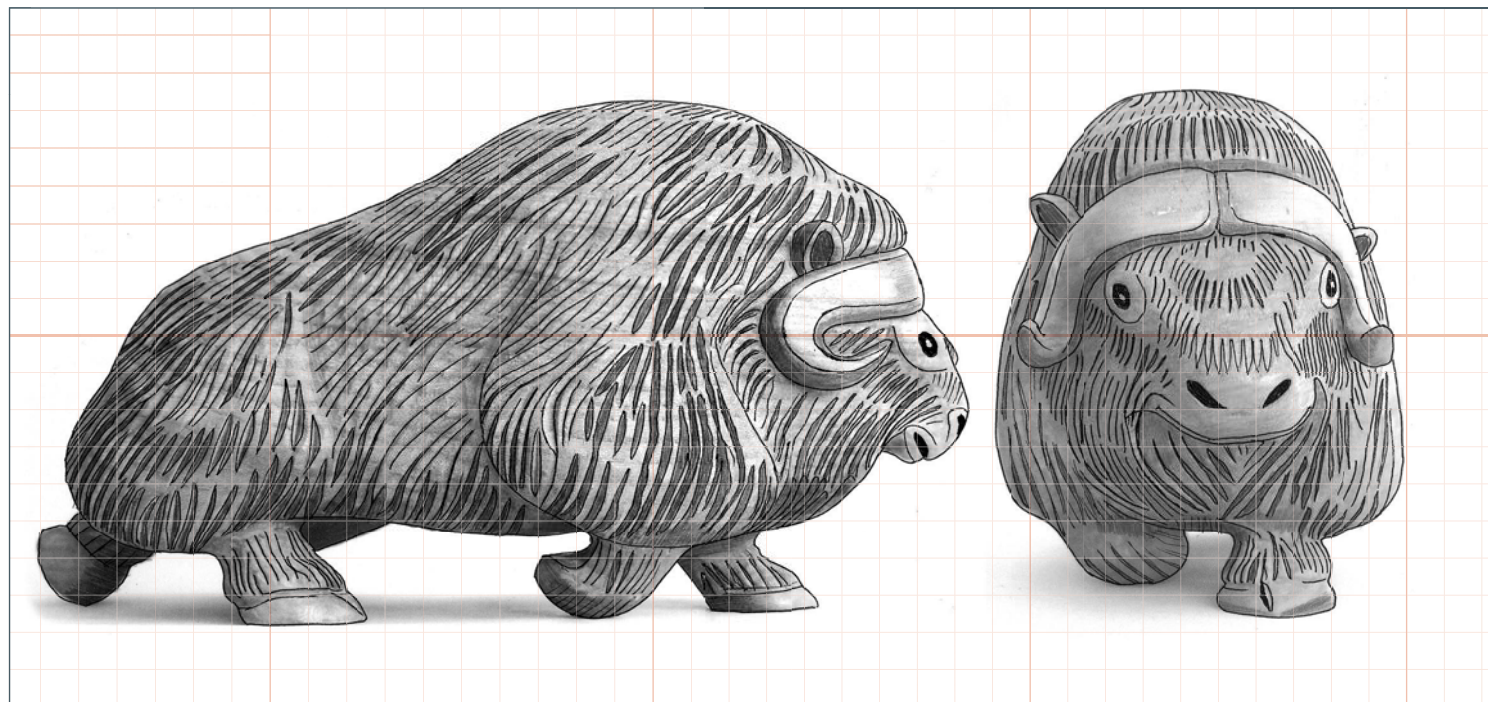
Simple steps to carving a sunken low-relief Green Man

How to carve a bowl and keys

The mighty ox

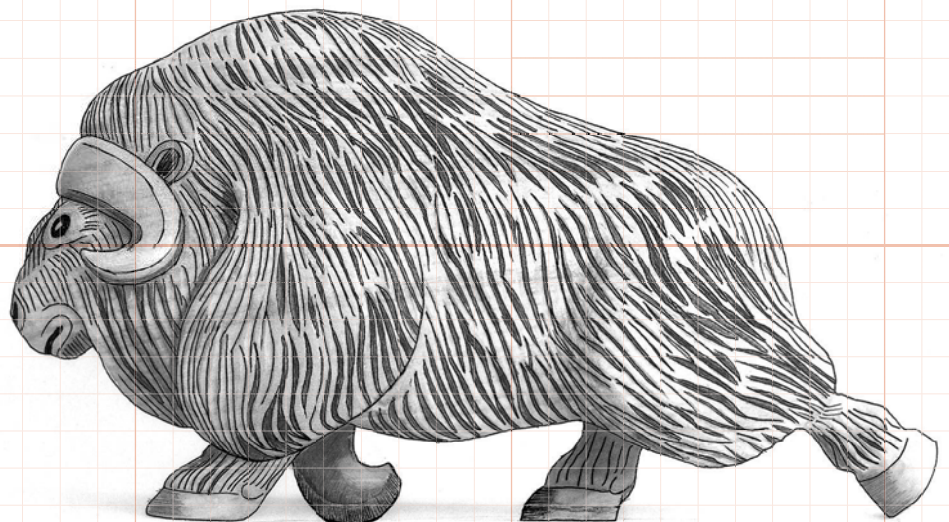
Bob Jubb provides plans for carving a musk ox

The musk ox is really tough, living in the high Arctic through the severest of winters. As if that wasn't impressive enough, they are also a prey for wolves. When there is a wolf attack, the adult oxen form a tight circle around the calves to protect them from the wolves. I've only ever carved one musk ox, which is this one, and it was carved approximately 25 years ago. I managed to track down its owner who has kindly let me borrow it so I could take some photographs. I still like it to this day and I am tempted to carved another, but maybe in walnut (*Juglans regia*) this time. This carving was carved in elm (*Ulmus procera*) and the dimensions of this carving are 292 x 165 x 120mm. ■



**DID YOU KNOW?**

- The musk ox has long shaggy hair, which is well adapted to its frigid climate in the Arctic. They have a shorter undercoat that gives additional insulation in the winter.
- The female musk ox carry calves during an eight month pregnancy and calves can keep up with their mothers and the rest of the herd within a matter of hours.
- The musk ox are herd animals and are usually led by a single female.
- The musk ox has a life span of 12–20 years and grows to approximately 1.5m in height.
- They are very protective of their calves and are fed on their mother's milk until they learn to graze the tundra.
- They can be found on the treeless tundra from Alaska through to Northern Canada and to Greenland.
- To see a musk ox in action, visit: www.tinyurl.com/hapq373



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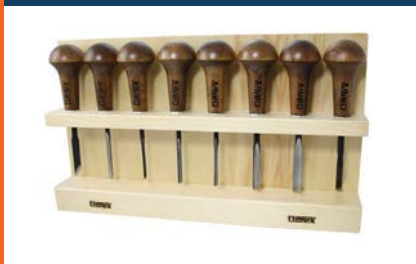
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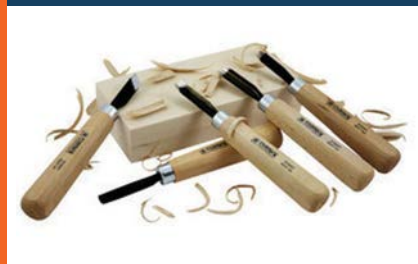
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These gouges, designed by Chris Pye, are lightweight and with forged short fishtail-shaped blades. The set consists of seven tools, with octagonal ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) handles with tapered brass ferrules. The set includes a series No.3, 6mm and 14mm, a series No.5, 8mm and 14mm, a series No.7, 8mm and 14mm as well as a series No.9, 8mm fishtail gouge.

£255

Contact: Classic Hand Tools

Web: www.classichandtools.com



Atoma diamond stones

The Atoma plates, distributed by Johnson Tools, measure to be 75 x 210mm and are available in the following four grades: 140 grit, 400 grit, 600 grit and 1200 grit. The 140 grit plate is used for flattening sharpening stones that need significant correction or heavy steel removals, whereas the 400 grit is used for maintaining sharpening stones, correcting chips and minor blade edge defects. The 600 grit plate is best for maintaining fine sharpening stones and minor blade edge work. The 1200 grit plate is best for final sharpening stones and flattening blades.

From £79.99

Contact: Johnson Tools

Web: www.johnsontools.co.uk



Planet Plus six-piece Forstner set

This six-piece Forstner set is aimed at the woodturner making salt and pepper mills and includes a 24mm and 7mm auger drills. The set includes four Forstner cutters at 20mm, 30mm, 35mm and 40mm which are 90mm long short series and presented in a neat wooden box.

£45.12

Contact: Planet Plus

Web: www.planetplusltd.com

Record Power WG250-PK/A wet stone sharpener

Record Power's excellent value WG250 wet stone sharpening system package deal is now available with a greater saving than ever before – with a new lower price of £259.99, the package includes a diamond trueing tool, straight edge jig, angle setting and finding gauges, stone grader, support arm and honing compound. A full instructional DVD is also supplied to help you make the most of the WG250 and achieve the best results possible. There are a wide range of optional jigs available which are compatible with the common 12mm diameter support arm system, making it an ideal machine to invest in for all your sharpening needs in the future.

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Contact: Record Power

Web: www.recordpower.co.uk



Rotarex carving discs

In the Rotarex range there are currently four discs available that cover cutting, shaping, carving, planing and milling in a host of materials such as timber, plastic, rubber, aerated concrete and even animal hoof. Within the range is the RC 115mm pro-carving disc, which features six alternating teeth each followed by a limiter that regulates the cut and virtually eliminates the threat of kickback. The R2 115mm shaping disc features hundreds of easy cut teeth that remove material in a quick and controllable manner. The R4 115mm universal disc allows you to cut and shape all with one disc in a controllable manner and the RX 90mm shaping disc is ideal for renovators, timber framers and general shaping.

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Contact: Johnson Tools

Web: www.johnsontools.co.uk

The FX extreme double-side 125mm fine/ex-coarse pocket stone

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£32.34

Contact: Trend Machinery & Cutting Tools Ltd.

Web: www.trend-uk.com



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Good Clean Fun

Good Clean Fun, by Nick Offerman, consists of a number of projects such as kazoos, baseball bats, ukeleles and even moustache combs. In these pages you will find a variety of projects for every skill level, with personal, accessible instructions by the Offerman Wood Shop woodworkers themselves; and, what's more, this tutelage will be augmented by mouth-watering colour photos (Nick calls it "wood porn").

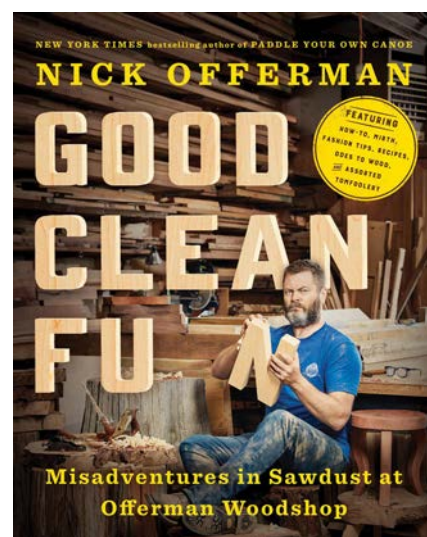
You will also find writings by Nick, offering recipes for both comestibles and mirth, humorous essays, odes to his own woodworking heroes, insights into the ethos of woodworking in modern America, and other assorted tomfoolery.

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Contact: Johnson Tools

Web: www.johnsontools.co.uk



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NoCry Safety Gear is launching its latest product in addition to its extremely popular gloves that were launched five years ago. The gloves are available in small, medium and large, the latest design offers a unique blend of stainless steel threads, high-performance polyethylene, glass fibre, spandex and nylon, making these gloves extremely tough and durable, while still offering a great level of breathability, comfort and dexterity.

From \$12.99 plus p+p

Contact: NoCry Safety Gear

Web: www.cutresistantgloves.org

Snickers chisels and knives

These Snickers chisels and knives come in a number of sizes. The chisels are available in 390133 incannel gouge ICG, the 390073 chisel EDC 25mm and the 390033 chisel EDC 12mm and these are great for any carver's toolbag. The knives come in a bigger range than the chisels. Six are available; the 380110 outdoor knife OK1, the 380270 outdoor knife OK4, the 380220 precision knife PK GH; the 380120 flexible knife FXK, the 380230 rope knife RKR GH; and finally the 380140 electrical fitter's knife.

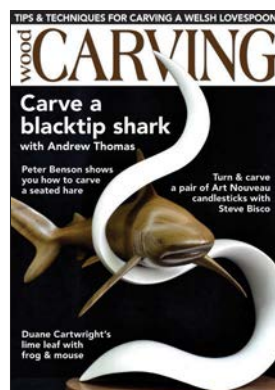
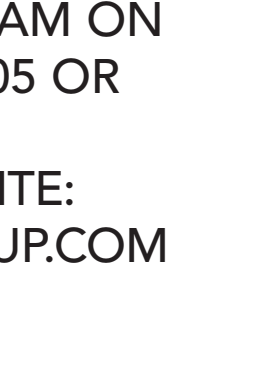
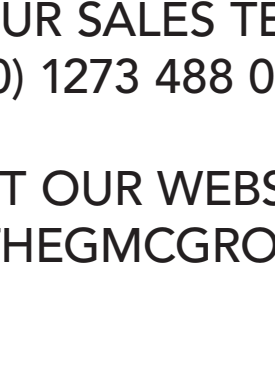
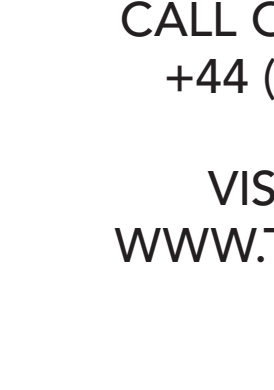
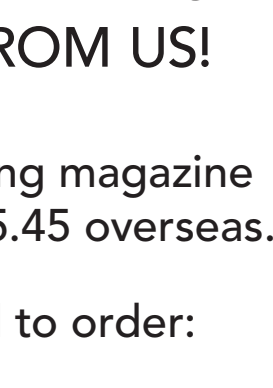
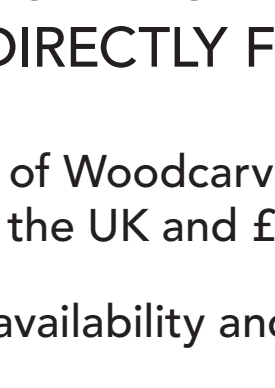
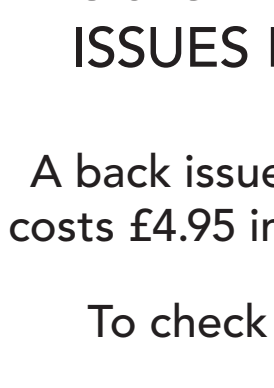
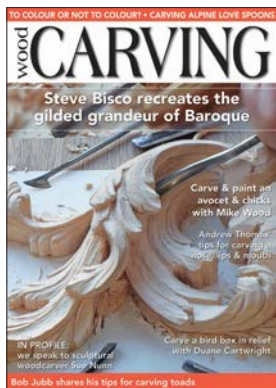
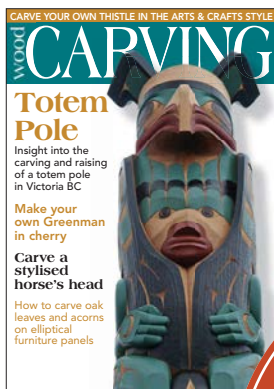
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Mhaykhā Jhyā – peacock window

We take a look at this beautiful window in Bhaktapur, Nepal

The peacock window, also referred to as the 'Mona Lisa of Nepal' adorns the Pujari Math in Bhaktapur, Nepal and dates back to the 15th century. The Pujari Math building is home to the Woodcarving Museum and also to a number of other exquisitely carved windows and doors. The Pujari Math is just off of Dattatraya Square, a tourist hotspot.

The peacock window is an excellent example of wood fretwork that can be seen all over the Kathmandu Valley. It consists several small bird carvings

with a large intricately decorated peacock in the centre, it's tail feathers forming a lattice window.

The window is known as a 'Newar window', an elaborately carved wood window, which is the distinguishing feature of traditional Nepalese architecture and is described as a symbol of Newar culture and artistry. They are found on palaces, private residences and sacred houses across Nepal Mandala.

The Peacock Window is still in use today along the Pujari Math building.

TYPES OF WINDOWS

- Sanjhyā is a projecting bay window and the classic Newar window.
- Tikijhyā is a lattice window and the most common window in traditional architecture.
- Gājhyā is a projecting window located under a roof.
- Pāsukhā Jhyā is a small window with five units symbolising the Pancha Buddha (Five Buddhas).



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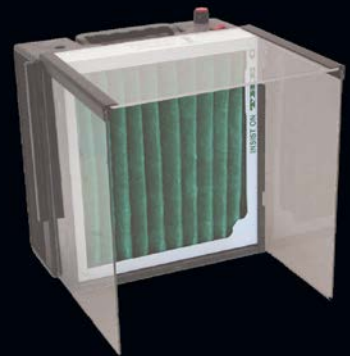
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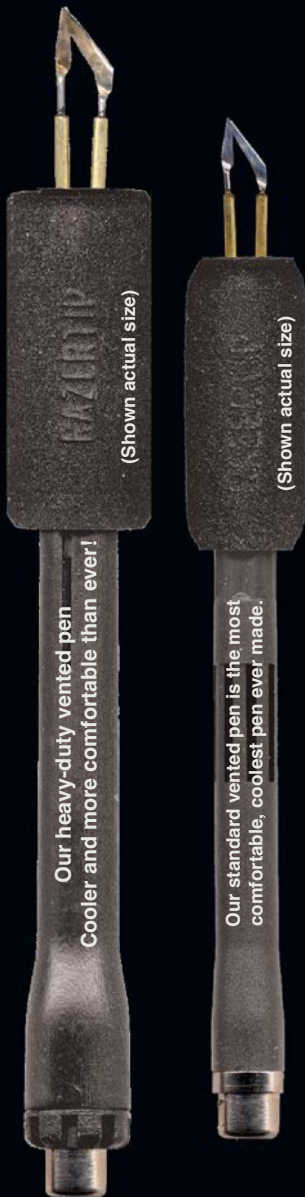
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