

WOOD CARVING

Chippendale style Carve a console bracket



PROJECTS TO CARVE Louis XVI-style rosettes • Butterfly on a leaf
Dragon brooch • Walking stick heads • Carve your first spoon

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Pressure and confidence



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK BAKER/CMC PUBLICATIONS



When carving one does not have to consider the time spent, unless one is earning a living from it, so the pressure is off. The only pressure we encounter is that we impose on ourselves and by that I mean trying to get

proportions and perspective right, making the appropriate cuts, minimising tear-out, cutting too deep or in the wrong place and hoping that the end product will resemble what we intended.

We are our own worst enemies at times. We all worry about things and none of us likes making mistakes. But I know of two carvers who got in such a panic about getting something right and how to approach something, they were afraid of making a cut and could not go back to the work for sometime.

In each case it took a friend to encourage and guide them back to carrying on with the work. Both are now flourishing in carving, but both say they still have times when they

doubt themselves and will walk away from the work until they feel like going back to it.

I can attest to having days and moments where I am not confident in continuing. There are times when I have the attitude where I can say to myself that if I make a mistake on this project then I don't mind, there is always an escape route of some sort. But I don't always have that attitude and the other aspect about there always being an escape route is that you have to have made a lot of mistakes in various situations and worked through those issues to know about possible escape routes and fixes.

As we do more, mistakes happen and they are part of learning. Rest assured, no matter how much you learn mistakes still happen, although there are fewer of them and usually not the same ones happening over and over again. My nemesis is that one last cut which is meant to make everything right and come together as it should. It doesn't always, but I am more confident now than I was when starting out and am better armed with knowledge and

techniques that will help, and therefore more confident that I can work through things.

Importantly, I also have a wonderful network of friends who are always willing to help and advise. Yes, I cause a few occasional eyeball rolls from them and, yes, they are very patient with me. We all need people we can bounce ideas off and also know that we can ask any questions of them without getting a sarcastic comment or a put down. Trusted friends not only help with questions, they help build confidence and skill level. This is one of the many reasons for joining a club or finding other carvers and like-minded people in your area or going online and joining a group. We all need help and advice from time to time and making friends in the process is a wonderful thing.

Let me know what you have been carving lately. Have fun, Mark.

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



Lettering & Decorative Woodcarving

A weekend course with
Gary Breeze

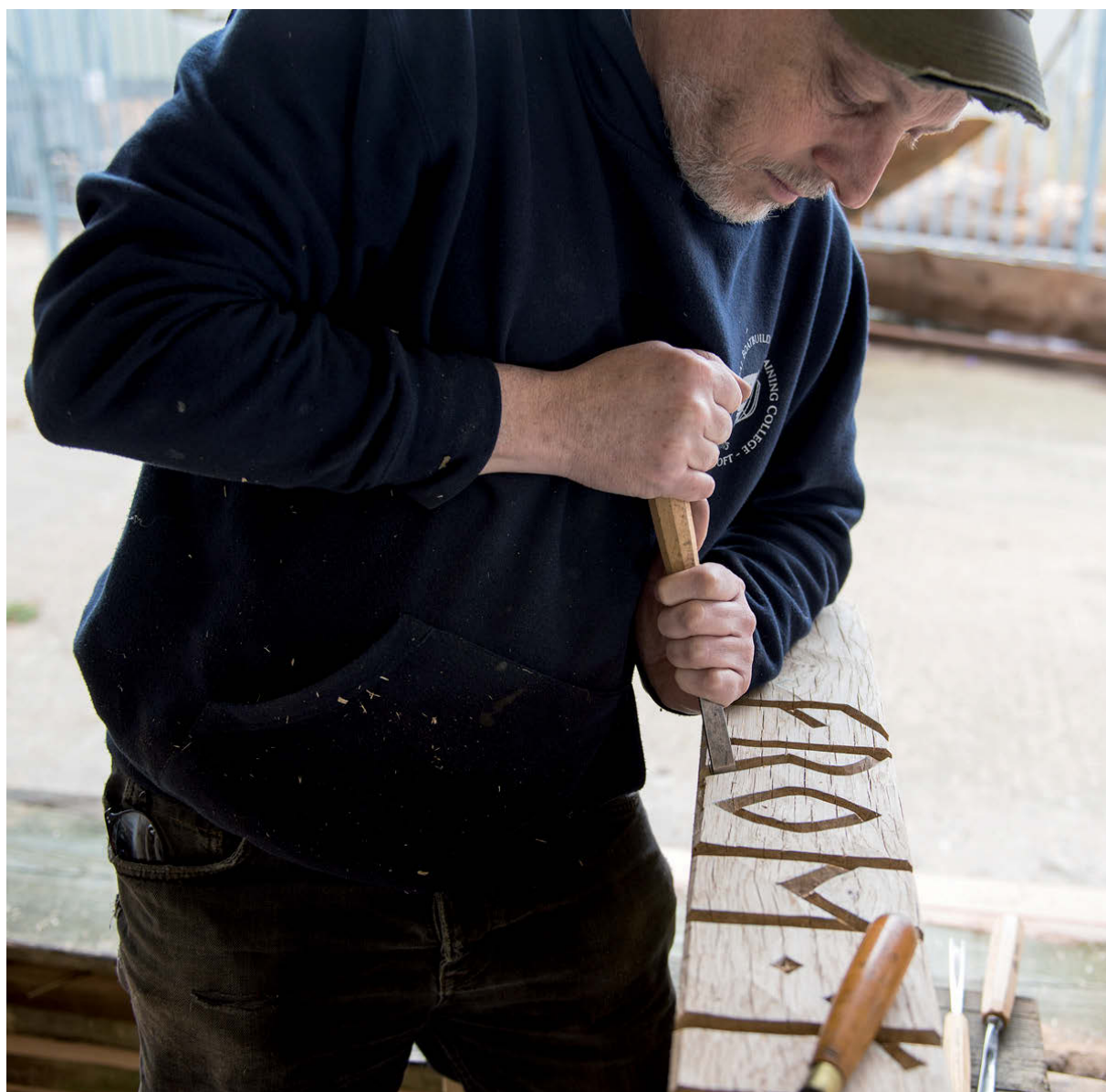


PHOTO: David Collins

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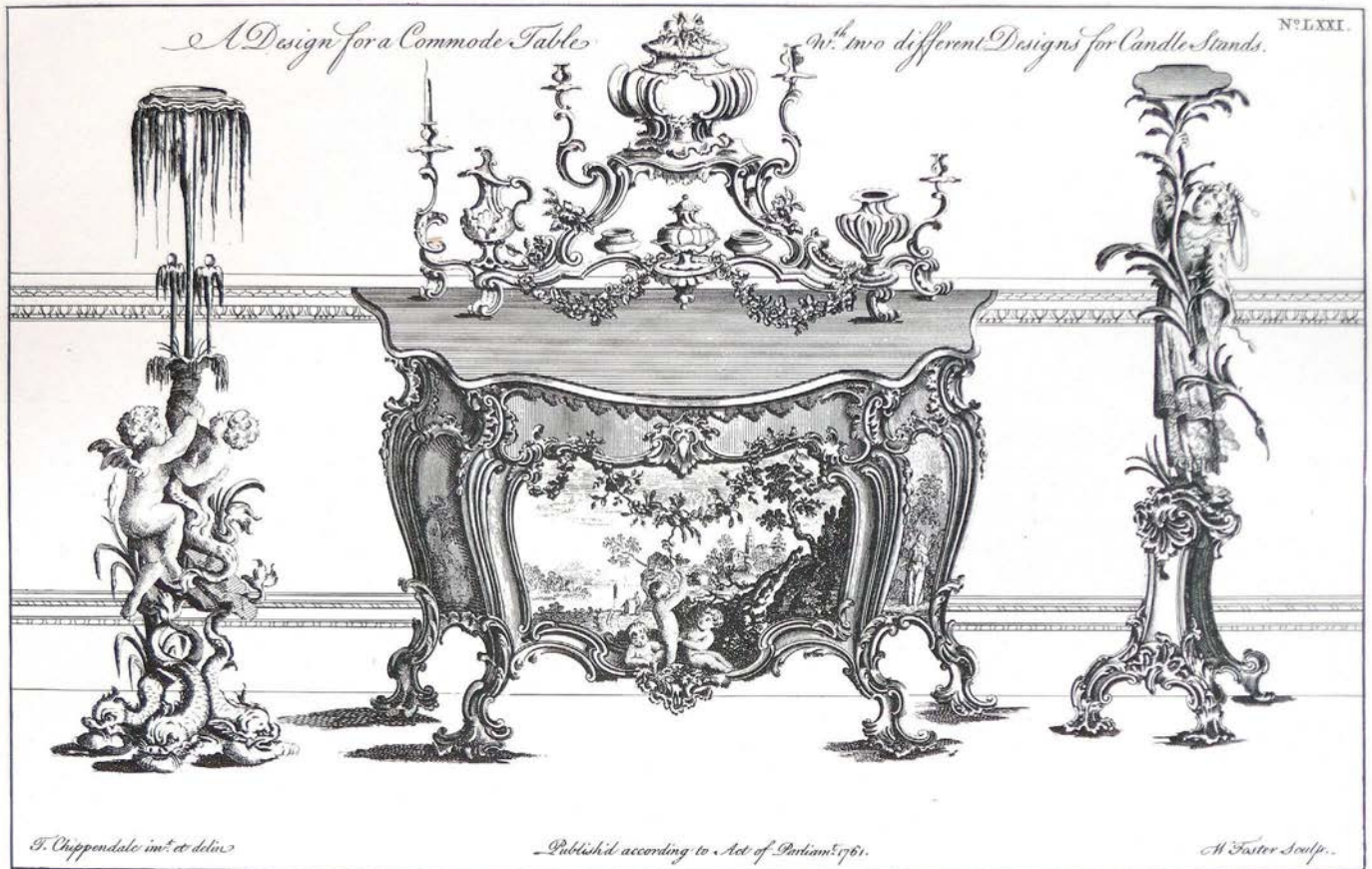
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Chippendale's Director

Steve Bisco looks at the man and the book that transformed 18th-century cabinetmaking and carved ornament

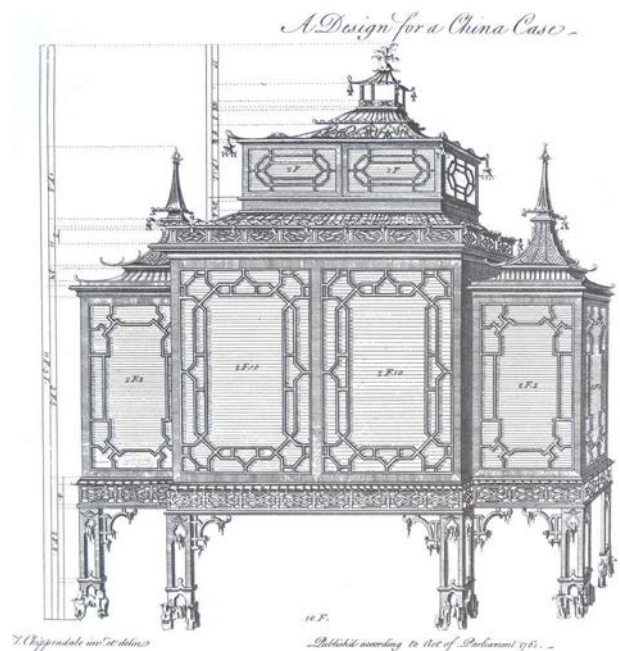
ALL IMAGES: CHIPPENDALE'S DIRECTOR—COURTESY OF DOVER PUBLICATIONS



Chippendale's Director contains 200 pages of designs for fine furniture and carved ornament, much of it in 'the French taste', which we now call Rococo

This year sees the 300th anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest names in woodworking history – Thomas Chippendale. He was born in Otley, Yorkshire in June 1718, the son of a cabinetmaker. As he grew up he became a cabinetmaker himself, and also a master carver of outstanding talent. By the age of 31 he was living in London and in 1754, at the age of 36, he had set up his business at 60–62 St Martin's Lane, near where Leicester Square Underground Station is today. The outstanding quality of his furniture, mirrors and other items, and their extraordinary carved ornament, earned him a high reputation among the grandees of the early Georgian era. Orders flooded in from dukes and duchesses and all ranks of the aristocracy.

Chippendale set up the business in partnership with an upholsterer, James Rannie, who contributed much-needed finance and managed the upholstery and fabrics side of the business until his death in 1766. At its peak, the Chippendale workshop employed more than 20 craftsmen, including cabinetmakers and carvers as well as specialists in upholstery, gilding, lacquering, and making mirror glass, and as many apprentices, some of whom went on to establish their own businesses at home and abroad. Production of high-quality Chippendale-style furniture in Philadelphia, US, in the 18th century is likely to have been the work of ex-Chippendale craftsmen.

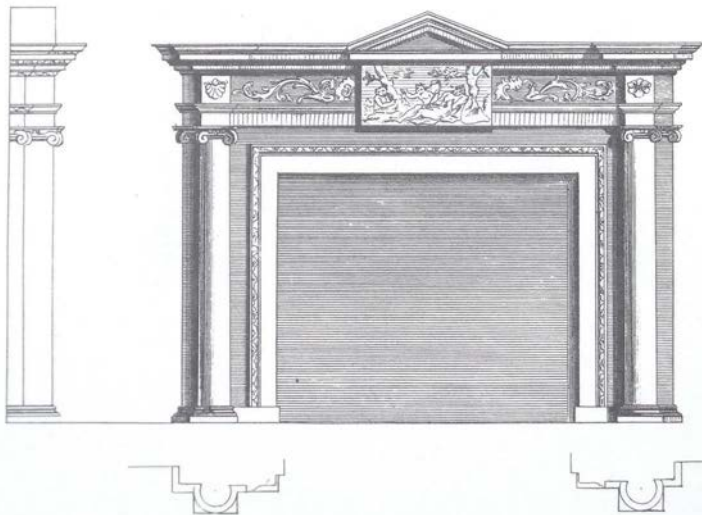


Chippendale included many designs in 'the Chinese style', reflecting the popularity of Chinoiserie in the 18th century

As well as the high reputation of his furniture, which endures to the present day, Thomas Chippendale achieved lasting fame by producing what was effectively a 'mail-order catalogue' of his designs for furniture and furnishings called *The Gentleman & Cabinet-Maker's Director*, known simply as *Chippendale's Director*. The first edition was produced in 1754, with 161 plates (pages) of designs for cabinets, chairs, pier-glasses (large mirrors), girandoles (wall-mounted candle holders), ornately-carved bed canopies and crestings, picture frames, and many other items to furnish the grand houses of the aristocracy, nobility and gentry. A second edition was published in 1755, and in 1762 a revised and extended third edition with 200 beautifully engraved plates. It is still available today from Dover Publications.

The majority of the designs were in what Chippendale called the 'Modern style' or 'French taste' that today we call Rococo or Louis XV style, with its serpentine curves and elaborate carving. This was the height of fashion in the early Georgian period but was starting becoming a little old-fashioned by the time the third edition was published.

There are also many designs in the 'Chinese style', later known as Chinoiserie. This was highly fashionable due to the influence of Chinese porcelain and other goods being imported from the Far East. Chippendale's Chinese pieces are so highly regarded that Chinese Chippendale is considered a style in its own right. Chinoiserie is often associated with Rococo, and the Chinese 'Ho-Ho bird' appears in many of the Rococo designs in the *Director*.



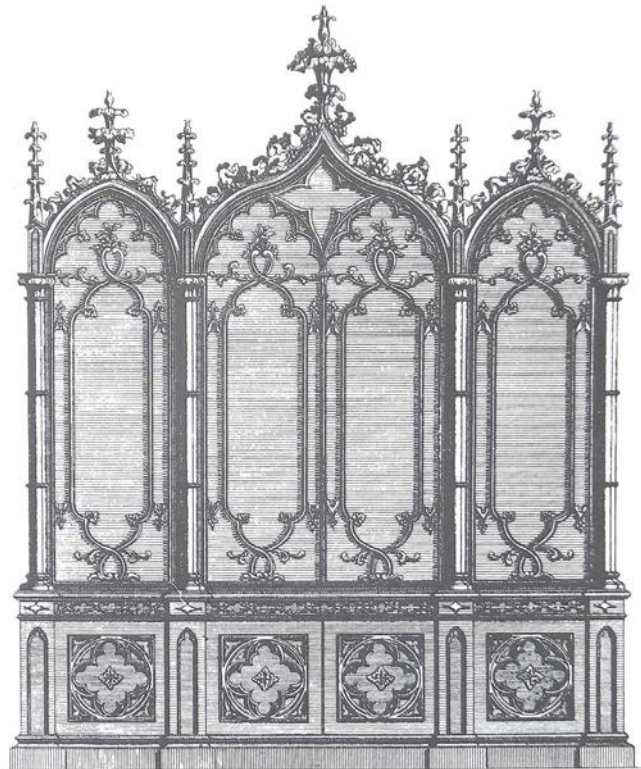
The simpler Neo-Classical style was just coming into fashion when the *Director* was published, so there are only a few designs in this style

The Gothic style was still much in use for libraries, especially in colleges and ecclesiastical buildings, and the *Director* includes many examples of Gothic cabinets, chairs and tables. 18th-century Gothic (or Gothick) was much lighter in style than true Medieval Gothic.

There are only a few Neo-Classical designs in the *Director* as the style was just coming into fashion when the 1762 (third) edition was published. Chippendale started working with the celebrated architect Robert Adam in 1768 and thereafter worked mainly in the more restrained Neo-Classical style.

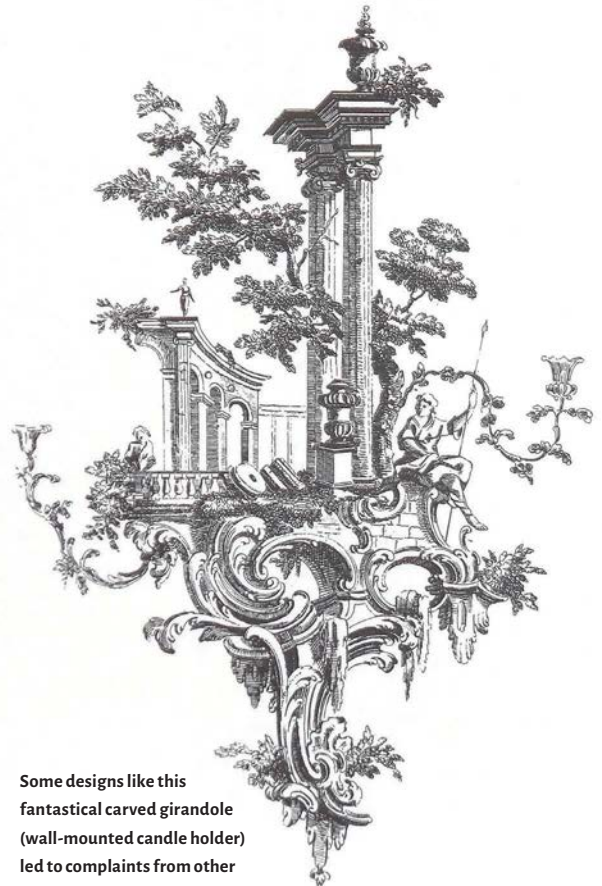
Chippendale was criticised by some craftsmen for the impracticality of many designs. Although the *Director* claimed to give 'proper directions for executing the most difficult pieces', the illustrations cannot be regarded as working drawings. For the heavily-carved pieces there is only the suggestion that 'it would not be amiss if the whole was modelled before it is begun to be executed'. Chippendale would have expected a competent craftsman to be able to turn the designs into practical pieces, and he assured 'all Noblemen, Gentlemen, or others, who will honour me with their Commands' that they could have any design in the book made by 'Their Most Obedient Servant, Thomas Chippendale'.

Thomas died of tuberculosis in 1779 at the age of 61 and was buried in a churchyard that is now under the National Gallery.



The 18th-century version of Gothic was also popular and Chippendale included many Gothic designs in the *Director*

He had 11 children, the eldest of whom – also Thomas – continued the business from the same site until it gradually declined and went bankrupt in 1813. Chippendale furniture continues to achieve record-breaking prices at auction houses throughout the world. Most of the original drawings for the *Director* are now in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. ▶



Some designs like this fantastical carved girandole (wall-mounted candle holder) led to complaints from other makers that they could not be made into practical pieces

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Chippendale console

Steve Bisco carves a console bracket from Chippendale's *Director*



INSPIRATION

Chippendale's general advice for three-dimensional carved pieces is that they would benefit from being modelled before carving, so I followed this advice by making a clay maquette. This was a great help in positioning the elements in three-dimensional form. You have the benefit of my working drawing and finished photos to save you this trouble.

Chippendale does not specify the shape of the top 'shelf' section of the bracket, but gives only three shelf types for all nine brackets illustrated. I have chosen one that best suits this bracket and adapted it to fit.

The bracket is 'pierced' and gilded as Chippendale intended, though I have used imitation gold leaf as real gold would have been very expensive on this scale.



The original illustration in Chippendale's *Director*

To commemorate Thomas Chippendale's 300th birthday I thought it would be fitting to make a carving from a design in his book *The Gentleman & Cabinet Maker's Director* (see previous pages). Most of the designs in the *Director* are large and elaborate pieces intended for the grand mansions of the aristocracy. I don't have a grand mansion so I picked one of the smallest items in the book. It is one of nine Brackets for Busts on plates CLX (160) and CLXI (161), which we would describe as console brackets or corbels, intended to be fixed on a wall as a small shelf to display a bust or vase. The one I chose is a Rococo design with swirling acanthus and C-scrolls. Chippendale's drawing in the *Director*

(see picture right) is, of course, only two-dimensional and much imagination is required to convert the design to three dimensions. When you see items made from Chippendale designs – even pieces from his own workshop – there are always differences in detail between the drawing and the finished piece, so we are allowed some latitude in making the design meet our practical requirements. Chippendale's only comment on the Nine Brackets for Busts is that 'their dimensions cannot be fixed', meaning we should choose our own size. I have fixed this one with an overall width of 240mm, a height of 305mm, and a projection from the wall of 150mm.

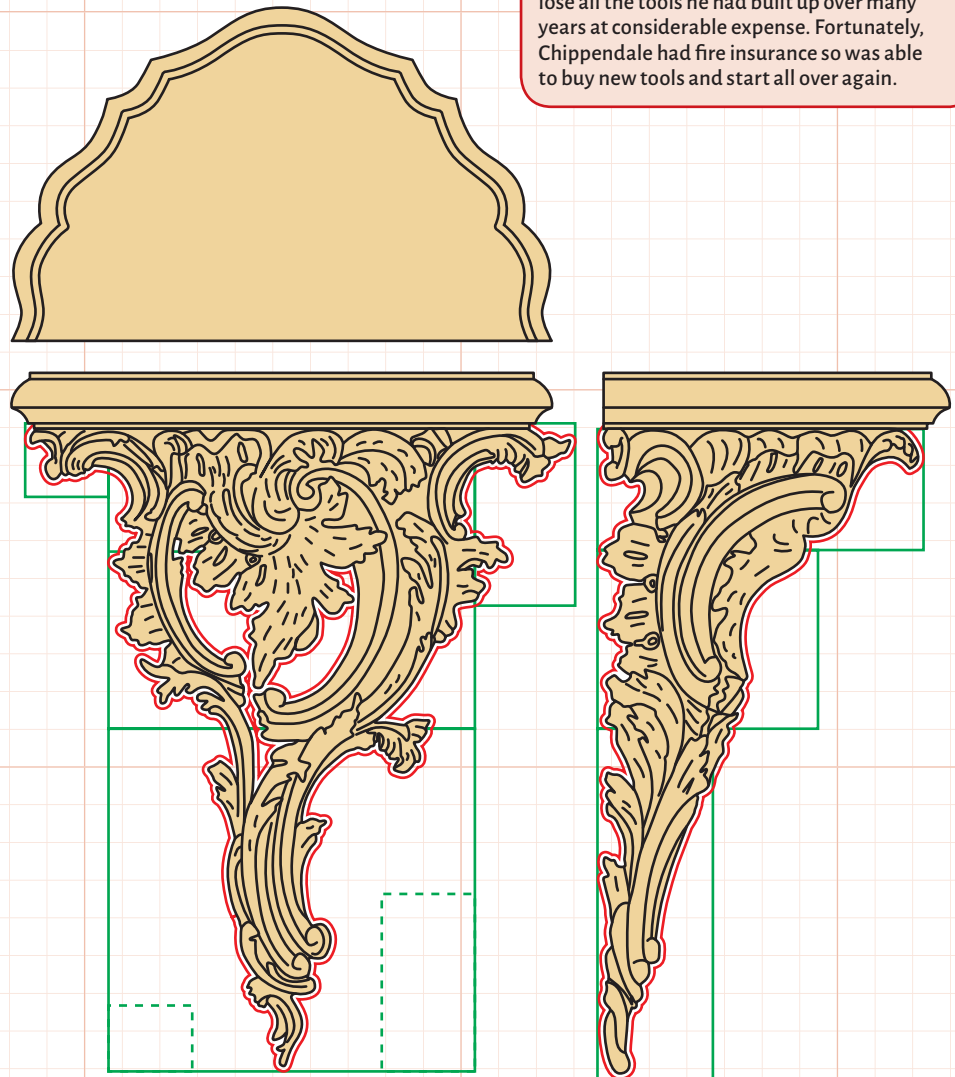
Things you will need

Tools:

- No.3, 5 & 10mm
- No.3, 10 & 20mm fishtail
- No.4, 6mm fishtail
- No.5, 3, 5 & 7mm
- No.5, 13mm curved
- No.6, 25mm
- No.8, 8mm
- No.9, 3, 16 & 20mm
- No.9, 16mm curved gouge
- 18mm spoon gouge
- 8mm short bent gouge
- 10mm skewed spoon gouges L&R
- 12mm back-bent gouge
- 2mm veiner
- 2 & 3mm chisel
- 3 & 6mm straight V-tool
- 5mm bent chisel
- 6mm back-bent gouge
- 6.5mm & 20mm flat chisel
- 16mm hooked skew chisel
- Curved V-tool
- Padsaw
- Jigsaw
- Bandsaw

Materials:

- Lime (*Tilia europea*). The top shelf needs a piece 240 x 150 x 25mm. The main body is best built up by lamination from a board 465 x 160 x 50mm as indicated on the drawing.
- Sander-sealer, gold lacquer (as undercoat), imitation gold leaf, gilding size, French polish (as final sealer)



DID YOU KNOW?

Chippendale's workshop suffered several major fires, one of which destroyed the tools of 22 craftsmen. We can only imagine what it must have felt like for a craftsman to lose all the tools he had built up over many years at considerable expense. Fortunately, Chippendale had fire insurance so was able to buy new tools and start all over again.

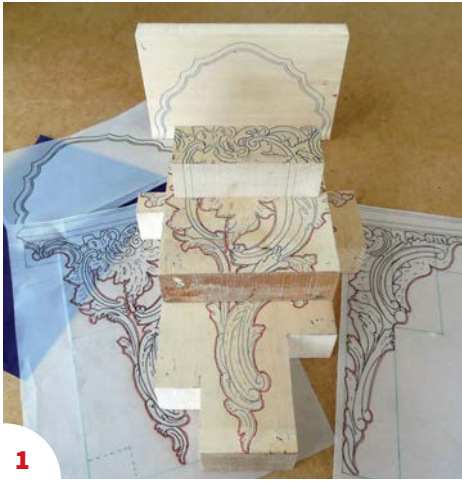
Block lines indicate how the body can be laminated from 50mm-thick limewood

TEMPLATES & TRANSPARENCIES

When you are shaping a complex three-dimensional carving you very quickly lose the traced pattern. This makes it difficult to keep the decorative elements in their right positions and the carving can end up looking quite different from the design. Control this by using templates and transparencies to check against as you work. Make templates of the side profile and the top shelf by tracing on to card, and a transparency of the front pattern by copying on to OHP film with permanent marker pen. By holding the transparency over the carving you can keep checking the shape and position of the elements.



So you don't lose track of the design, make templates and transparencies to guide you as you carve away the pattern.

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

1 Make a full-sized copy of the drawing. The body of the bracket is best built up by lamination with 50mm-thick limewood board. This avoids wastage and makes it easier to cut out the voids more accurately. The drawing indicates how this may be done using a board 465 x 160 x 50mm, but you can apply the principle to other sizes. The top 'shelf' needs a piece 240 x 150 x 25mm.

2 With the pattern traced on to the wood and cut out on a bandsaw, jigsaw or scrollsaw, the layers make more sense. The voids around the central leaf can be cut out before gluing. Carefully align and glue the sections of the main block together (excluding the top shelf) using a thorough coating of uPVA glue on every joining surface and clamps to compress it while it sets.

ROUGHING OUT THE SHAPE

3 Fix the laminated block to a backing board, screwing from the back, and you are ready to start the complex process of roughing out the levels and general shape. With guidance from the templates (see box), the drawing, and the finished photos in step 19, shape the upper/forward part of the carving to blend it in with the shelf and the lower levels. Don't take off wood you may need later.

4 Now rough out the long C-scroll on the right-hand side that flows in a steep, elegant curve from the upper layer of lamination to the bottom of the middle layer. It's not easy, so use the drawing, templates, transparency and finished photos to keep checking the line and position.

5 The C-scroll on the left is smaller and at a slightly lower level.

6 You can now rough out the central acanthus leaf. This is a key feature of the console, so shape it with care.

7 Now shape the lowest level of lamination, working down towards the tip at the bottom. Also, work the various acanthus elements at the sides down towards the background. Create a hollow each side of the main C-scrolls and refine the shape of the upper levels now that everything is clearer.

CARVING THE DETAIL

8 With all the key features roughly in the right place we can now add the detail, starting at the bottom with the swirling acanthus elements. The edges of these elements need to be worked down towards the background so that many of them will be in contact with the wall when the console is hung up. To accentuate the swirls, carve flowing vein lines with a hooked skew chisel, and add flicks and hollows mainly with a No. 8 curved gouge.

9 The large C-scroll to the right of centre is a principle feature that must be made to stand out. The side nearest the centre must be hollowed into a smooth cove that gets wider nearer the top. The outer side must be rounded into a convex curve that has a clean edge against the inner cove. Apart from two V-lines along the upper and lower edges of the cove, the C-scroll must be smooth so it will contrast with the acanthus surfaces.



10 Now we can add the acanthus leaf detail to the right-hand side. These are quite shallow and are more spread out than they appear on Chippendale's drawing as they extend from front to back. Try to give them as many flicks and curves as you can.



11 The C-scroll on the left side is smaller and narrower than the right side one, with some extra veined curves on the outside. The acanthus leaf tips that project sideways towards the background are Rococo features that appear frequently in Chippendale carvings.



12 To carve the features around the top edge, attach the card template of the underside of the shelf to help you visualise how they will work together. The left-hand side is made up mainly of typical Rococo ear-shaped 'shell' features. Shape their top edges into the shelf.



13 The acanthus curls on the right-hand side mostly roll over like a breaking wave. Note the 'reel' feature towards the back, and the way the outermost C-scroll extends beyond the ends of the shelf.



14 Now finish off the detail carving with the large central leaf. Give it lots of swirl, flicks, hollows, and vein lines. The left side has some more of the Rococo 'slits' in the leaves, while the right side has more of the normal acanthus features. The leaf will be completely undercut, so take account of this in the surface carving.



15 Remove the carving from the backing board. Fix a 'cradle' of wooden blocks to the bench and lay a thick layer of padding over it. Hollow out the interior from behind using curved gouges, then refine the back edges of the leaf and the C-scrolls. Open out the inner voids and undercut some of the outer edges where the acanthus lies away from the background. Check how it will look when placed on a wall.



16 Give the carving a light sanding with fine abrasives to remove stringy bits, but take care not to dull the detail. The finished bracket should be light and hollow.



TOP TIP: When you are working on a carving that will be displayed on a wall, hang it up frequently at that height to check that everything looks right from the angles at which it will be seen.

**17****18****CARVING THE SHELF**

17 Draw a line horizontally around the side of the shelf, 16mm down from the top edge. Using the innermost tracing lines, carve a fillet 2.5mm deep on the upper and lower faces and level out the surface with a flat chisel. Then carve a cove along the lower part of the edge, leaving another 2.5mm fillet alongside the first fillet. On the top half of the edge, carve a bullnose moulding. A shallow back-bent gouge is useful for the convoluted edge. Refine the mouldings to a smooth, even surface with abrasives.

18 With the shelf finished, turn it upside down to glue on the console bracket. Use a set square to check they are at right-angles before gluing. Apply a thick coat of uPVA adhesive to the top of the console, invert it on to the shelf and make a 'rubbed joint' by moving it about slightly until it 'sucks' together in the right position.

19 Photos 19a, 19b, and 19c show the front and both sides of the finished carving. Use these for reference when carving.

TOP TIP: When you are working on the sides of a carving that is fixed to a backing board, it helps if you put a piece of timber under one side to prop it up at a more accessible angle.

**19a****19b****19c****20****21****FINISHING**

20 Give the bare wood a coat of acrylic sander/sealer and let it dry. Go over it lightly with fine abrasives to make sure everything is smooth, then give all surfaces an undercoat of a good gold lacquer, taking care not to clog the detail with paint.

21 Get some imitation gold leaf and some gilding size, available from most art stores or online. Imitation gold leaf (basically brass) is easy to use by the following method: Give an area of the carving a thin coat of the size and cut up some gold leaf into pieces about 25mm x 50mm. When the size has become dry but slightly tacky to the touch (about 10 minutes), pick up a piece of gold leaf in a folded piece of paper and lay it over the prepared area. Press it down with a soft brush and brush away any loose pieces of leaf. Continue over the whole carving and go over any bare sections again with more gold leaf.

22 After the gilding is finished, give it a coat of French polish to seal and 'antique' the brassy gold leaf. Work swiftly and smoothly with a soft brush as the French polish dries very quickly and will form 'muddy' patches if you go over it too many times. French polish is shellac dissolved in alcohol, so clean your brushes in methylated spirit.

23 Chippendale's Bracket for Busts is now finished and ready to be fixed on the wall. Make sure your fixings are strong enough to support what you stand on it. ▶

**22****23**

News & events...

Bringing you the latest news and event details from the woodcarving community

BDWCA: showcasing work

As bird carvers we are surrounded by the inspirations of nature, but because of this sometimes we can lose hours simply watching in wonder the antics of our feathered friends. A camera close to hand is a very useful item at this time – you can never get enough reference material.

For the members of the BDWCA, we are now moving towards the time when observation and collection of reference material has evolved into the creation of our entries for our Annual Show in Bakewell, which will be held on the weekend of the 8-9 September. As always it will be fascinating to see what birds – from the demure to the exotic – grace the competition tables.

One bird we are sure to see this year will be the nuthatch, the subject for our Regional Group Competition, chosen by our Cheshire Group which won this competition in 2017. Because of the nuthatch's ability to descend a tree head-first it is often carved in this pose and also lends itself to an interpretive interpretation in polished wood.

Before that we will once again be demonstrating and exhibiting in the Art Marquee at the British Birdwatching Fair – The Birdfair – at Egleton Nature Reserve, Rutland Water, from 17-19 August. This event is, for our association, a great way to introduce our art form to a wider audience and showcase the work of our members.

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

RIGHT: Nuthatch on Birch Branch, by Dave Clews

BELOW RIGHT: Interpretive Nuthatch, by Terry Getley

BELOW: Display of carvings at the Birdfair



© RAY LOUGHLIN FOR THE BDWCA



© PAM WILSON FOR THE BDWCA



© RAY LOUGHLIN FOR THE BDWCA



Ella Fielding standing by the White Witch. Top right image: Ella next to Aslan.

The Narnia Trail comes to Surrey

Iconic characters from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* have been brought to life at an enchanting Narnia-themed nature trail at the new Banstead Woods and Chipstead Downs Local Nature Reserve.

Visitors can meet Aslan the lion, spot Lucy Pevensie waiting by the lamppost and climb through the magical wardrobe entrance to Narnia. Carved posts depicting the site's special flora and fauna mark the route.

Take the trail

The trail has been installed by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council's Greenspaces team with permission from The CS Lewis Company, which represents the interests of the author. The trail was officially opened in June 2017 but now is the perfect time to visit as the trail has matured into the landscape.

Chainsaw sculpture

The figures have been carved from standing deadwood by talented chainsaw sculptors Ella Fielding from The Tree Pirates, Rob Beckinsale and Simon Smith. Ella is currently in discussions about adding another sculpture to the trail.

The launch event marked Banstead Woods and Chipstead Downs' designation as a Local Nature Reserve because of its ancient woodland and rare chalk grassland habitats and species which are in significant decline nationally. Banstead Woods and Chipstead Downs was alluded to in the Domesday Book 1086 and has been in the ownership of Kings and Queens of England, Knights of the Realm, the founder of Barings Bank and many other interesting people over the years.

Banstead Woods and Chipstead Downs Local Nature Reserve is located at Holly Lane car park, Holly Lane, Banstead, Surrey CR5 3NR.



2018 Events

• Cheshire Game & Country Show

Featuring the 14th English Open Chainsaw Carving Competition, featuring more than 30 over-the-top chainsaw carvers from around the world. Not to be missed.

When: 25-27 August 2018

Where: Flittogate Lane, Knutsford, WA16 0HJ

Contact: cheshiregameandcountryfair.co.uk

• Yandles & Sons Woodworking Show

When: 7-8 September 2018

Where: Hurst Works, Hurst, Martock, Somerset, TA12 6JU

Web: www.yandles.co.uk

• Wisconsin River Carvers 2018 Show

When: 15-16 September 2018

Where: The Holiday Inn, 1001 Amber Avenue, Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54482

Web: wisconsinriverwoodcarvers.org/2018show

• Bentley Woodfair

When: 28-30 September 2018

Where: Bentley, Halland, East Sussex, BN8 5AF

Web: www.bentley.org.uk

• World Stick-Making Championship

When: 21 October 2018

Where: Bakewell Agricultural Centre, Agricultural way, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1AH

Web: <http://thebsg.org.uk>

• Woodworking & Powertool Show

When: 26-27 October 2018

Where: Westpoint Centre, Clyst St Mary, Exeter, EX5 1DJ

Web: www.wptwest.co.uk

• The Toolpost Open House

When: 3-4 November 2018

Where: Unit 7, Hawksworth, Southmead Industrial Park, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7HR

Web: www.toolpost.co.uk

• North of England Woodworking Show

When: 16-18 November 2018

Where: Railway Road, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, HG2 8NZ

Web: www.skpromotions.co.uk

If you have something you want your fellow carvers to know, send in your news stories, snippets and diary dates to Mark Baker at Woodcarving, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN or to markb@thegmcgroup.com

Louis XVI style

Johan Roudy explores a style known for its strict adherence to proportions and balance

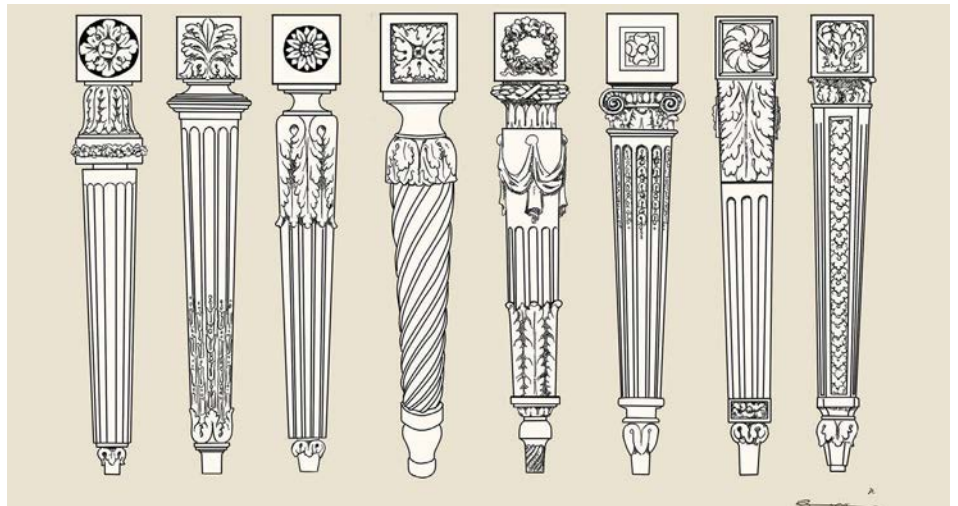
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHAN ROUDY



A rinceau of mixed acanthus and flowers, framed by a water leaf and a ribbon frieze

After the exuberant and fancy Rococo ornaments of Louis XV style, the end of the 18th century gives birth to Louis XVI style (1774-1785), a more sensible, reasonable style. As a reaction against the foolish Baroque curves, the asymmetry and the boundless ornamentation, Louis XVI style brings back some straight lines and square angles, while at the same time maintaining a certain lightness and a great quality of execution. Since 1760, at the end of the reign of Louis XV, the nobility is already getting tired with the excesses of fantasy in ornament. Under the influence of Madame de Pompadour, chief mistress of Louis XV, a transition style emerges. With an interest in the antique Greco-Roman styles, it retrieves a concern for strict proportions and balance, and an orderly decoration. During this period, it is still usual to find some mixed elements that could be attributed to Louis XV and Louis XVI style. Progressively, this results in a style with an elegant soberness, where the weighted use of graceful and delicate ornaments breaks the strictness of the straight lines.

The discoveries of antique ornaments in the archaeological sites of Herculaneum (1738) and Pompeii (1748) is a large source of inspiration in Louis XVI ornament. It encourages the return of severe outlines and symmetry. This is the early years of the neoclassicism – antique designs are widely interpreted and adapted to furniture,



Decorated furniture legs as designed by Richard De La Londe, ornamentalist in the 18th century



A festoon of flowers and roses, hung by tied ribbons



The bow, quiver and torch in a spray of leaves and flowers. Draperies hang in the corners and a line of pearls runs along the frame

decoration and architecture, though they are carved with much more discretion and less slavishly copied than they will be in the 19 century. On furniture and seats, the curved legs are abandoned to be replaced by straight legs, narrowing at the bottom, with round or square section. They are decorated with various types of flutes – straight, fluted or not – or in spiral around the leg, reminding of the columns of Roman architecture. At the top is often carved an acanthus or water leaf square-framed rosette. Lyre, vase and urns, Greek fret bands, egg and dart or water leaf friezes, strings of pearls, hung festoons of flowers and leaves, sometimes

surrounding a ram's head, are among other elements borrowed from the classic ornaments. Very usual in Louis XIV and Louis XV styles, the shell designs tends to disappear, while griffons, sphynx or caryatids are still used, though appearing less threatening. The ornaments are still often gilded, but can also be painted in various shades of coloured grey.

During this period, literature also influences the style. The taste for countryside and sweet, sentimental themes comes with the publishing of books such as *Paul et Virginie* by Jacques-Henri Bernardin or *La Nouvelle Héloïse* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. This also

relief of fishing, hunting or farming trophies, flower or fruit baskets, bird nests, pine cones, laurel and oak leaves... The acanthus leaf is still abundantly used, in a softer and calmer way than the Louis XV style. It is carved in round or oval rinceaux, and in symmetric patterns, but it also gives way to compositions of leaves, small flowers and fruits in bunches.

Specific of the style, the bow, the quiver and the torch, in a spray of leaves or flowers, represents Cupid's attributes. Doves and wreaths of roses often come along to illustrate the sentimental themes, as well as folds of drapery. Used independently, for example on a frame or a mirror, or holding a festoon or a trophy, an other easily recognisable and persistent element of Louis XVI style is the ribbon or the tied ribbon. While the ribbons carved during the Renaissance had a changing width, tending to decrease at the ends, the Louis XVI ribbon keeps a constant size, pleating and twisting abundantly.

After the reign of Louis XVI and the French Revolution (1789), as a continuation to Louis XVI style, the inspiration from Antique Art becomes predominant, even more after Napoleon's campaign of Italy. But in the 19 century, the ornament loses the gentleness and the delicate interpretation the carvers made under Louis XVI. ▀



A tied ribbon carved in Louis XVI style

prefigures the Romanticism of the 19 century. In Versailles, Marie-Antoinette transforms the small Trianon gardens into a bucolic place, building an idealistic countryside village and farm.

In ornament, pastoral themes are represented in many ways. High and low-

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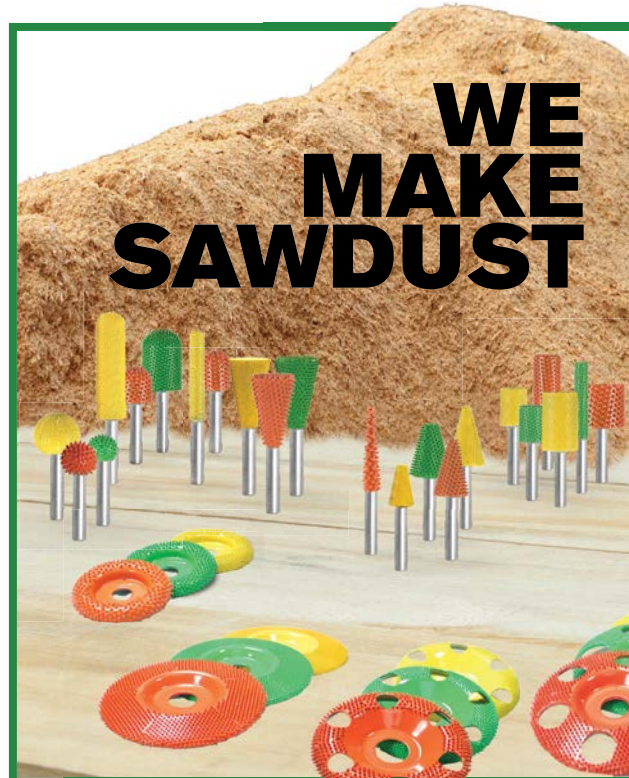
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CARVING TOOLS

Louis XVI rosette

Johan Roudy shows two different ways to carve the same pattern



To illustrate Louis XVI style, I propose to carve a rosette in two different ways from the same design. The first one can be carved directly on a piece of furniture or woodworking, while the second can be freely glued as an appliqué. It is interesting to see the similarities and differences of the work from one technique to another. That will also give you more versatility to use this pattern at your convenience. In order to help you, the drawing includes a sectional view of a median and diagonal cut of both rosettes.

The rosette is a very usual motif under Louis XVI. There are countless different patterns, from the simplest to the most sophisticated, most of the time inscribed in a circle or

a square. They can be found on a lot of panels or furniture, and are very likely found on the legs of tables or seats.

I had to use cherry (*Prunus avium*) for this project as it was part of a commission to decorate a bookcase. If you have several rosettes to carve, I'd advise to set them all on the bench and to carve them all together. You will more easily get good regularity by repeating each step on each rosette than to carve them separately. Oak (*Quercus* spp.), lime (*Tilia* spp.) or walnut (*Juglans* spp.) could suit well for this project, and might even be easier to carve, as cherry can be really reluctant to be carved against the grain, even when you're just carving a groove with a deep gouge.

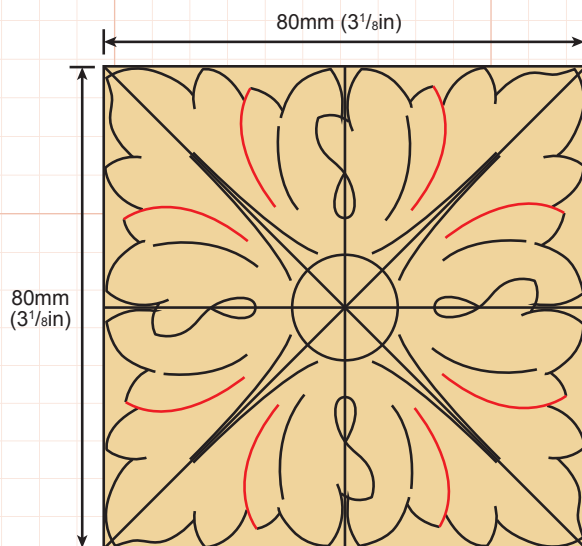
Things you will need

Tools:

- No.3, 16mm
- No.4, 6mm
- No.5, 6 & 8mm
- No.6, 12 & 16mm
- No.11, 2mm & 10mm
- 5mm V-tool
- Skew chisel
- Fretsaw

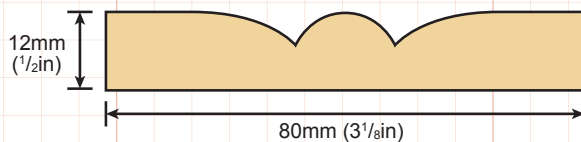
Materials:

- 1st rosette 100 x 100 x 12mm or thicker
- 2nd rosette 80 x 80 x 12mm

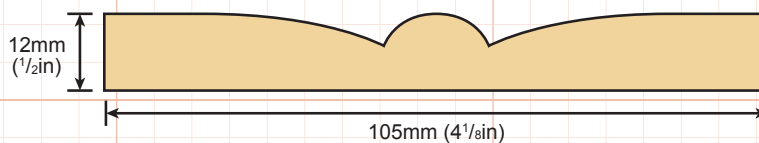


1st Rosette

Overlapping leaves profile

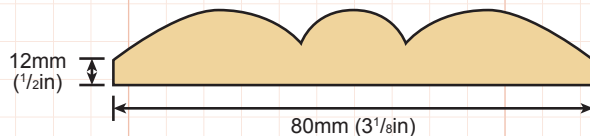


Corner leaves profile

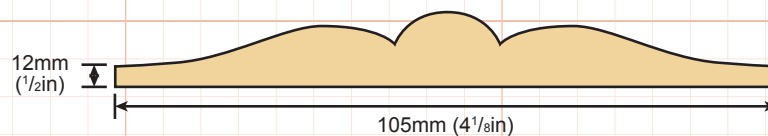


2nd Rosette

Overlapping leaves profile

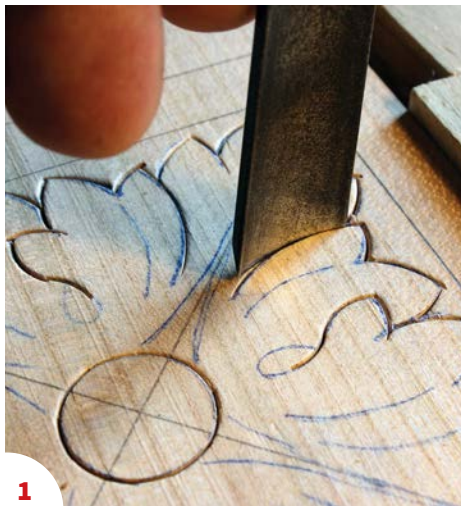


Corner leaves profile

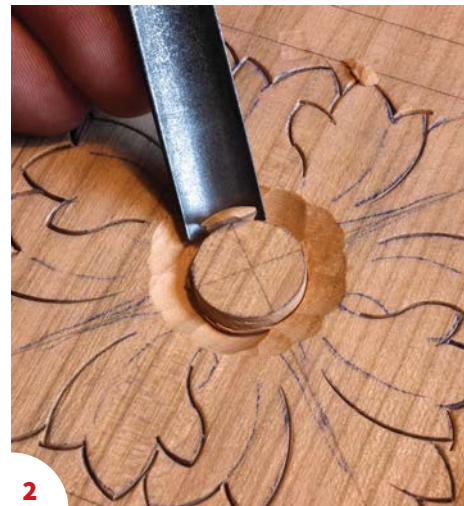


1 Report/transfer the design on to the wood with carbon paper. Use the No.5, 6mm, No.5, 8mm and No.6, 16mm to set in the outlines of the leaves. The cut on the side of the overlapping leaves, drawn in red on the pattern, are stabbed deeper on the outside, fading out towards the middle. You don't need to set in the 'eyes' of the leaves at the moment. Set in the central bud using a No.6, 12mm.

2 Starting from the eyes towards the centre, carve away the wood all around the bud with a No.6, 12mm. Deepen the stab cuts until you reach 4mm or 5mm deep. Using a No.11, 10mm, carve a groove along the cut of the overlapping leaves and aiming at the bud, deeper towards the bud. Don't worry about a little tear in the middle, it will be cleaned at a later stage.



1



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**3****4****5****6****7****8****9****10****DID YOU KNOW**

A carved rosette is typically a round carving or a panel, which incorporates a central carving of a rose or a flower design. Rosettes are usually created as separate items which are applied to work to add detail.

3 At the bottom of the grooves, set in the cut again using No.6, 16mm and use the same tool to give an angle to the secondary lobes of the corner leaves. Follow the sweep of the gouge to let the cuts meet on the centreline near the bud. Make sure to stop at the end of the stab cut.

4 Use No.3, 16mm to round the overlapping leaves' area on the sides and towards the bud, all around the eyes of the leaves. Follow the drawing of the main lobes to get a smooth shape. The grooves made in step 2 should completely disappear. Hold your gouge firmly and make slicing cuts to avoid damaging the bud or the corner leaves.

5 Use a No.6, 12mm to clean the stem area towards the bud and let the leaves connect all together. Then, set in the eyes of the middle leaves with the veiner.

6 Clear around the upper leaf using No.5, 8mm and swap to a No.8, 10mm to carve a groove on the main and small lobes in the middle. Pay attention to the grain direction. The wood won't react the same way along or across the grain. Remove the waste progressively to avoid some parts breaking or splitting.

7 Carve the groove of the lower leaf using a No.5, 8mm. Follow the course of the eye to let the base of the leaf run under the upper leaf and enlarge the groove to give the lobe a smooth curve. Set in the remaining cut of the eye using the No.5, 5mm gouge. The waste should pop out easily.

8 From the birth of the lobes, use a No.4, 6mm gouge to give the stem of the corner leaves a sweep curve towards the bud. That will also give a better shape to the cut of the secondary lobes.

9 Using a No.6, 16mm gouge, make a stab cut fading out towards the stem along the groove of the secondary lobes and carve a 45° angle on both sides of the cut to create an edge that will catch the light and separate them from the main lobe in the corner. You might use a gouge a little flatter if you feel like the curve of the tool is too marked.

10 Make the same angled cut on the edge of the overlapping leaves. Use the No.5, 8mm gouge for the main lobes and a No.5, 6mm for the secondary lobes. In the centre, on the main lobe of the upper leaf, the cut will melt into the shape of the groove creating a slight curve.

11 Redraw the stem and carve it with the 5mm V-tool. Optionally, use the No.5, 6mm to carefully remove the outer edge of the cut. That will give more delicacy to the design and more roundness to the base of the overlapping leaves. The grain direction shouldn't be much of a problem for this step.

12 Round slightly the edges of the corner leaves with a flat gouge and use the No.9, 6mm to carve a groove on each side. Carve the groove a little deeper towards the curly side of the leaf to give more movement.

13 Round carefully the bud using a No.5, 8mm on the sides and the No.6, 16mm on the top. You can start to remove some wood along the grain, then across the grain, and get rid of the remaining angles using No.5, 8mm. Hold your tool firmly to avoid biting the leaves around. Once done, set in the opening of the bud with the No.7, 6mm gouge or No.5, 6mm if you want it more open. Take care to centre it well. You can draw it first if it helps. The waste should pop out easily.

14 Use a No.3, 16mm and No.4, 6mm to remove the waste all around the design. You may have to deepen the stab cuts, especially in the tight corners. A skew chisel is useful to clean the deepest and tightest areas.

Second rosette

15 Report/transfer the design on the wood and cut it with the fretsaw. To clamp it easily on the bench, glue it on a scrap wood with a sheet of paper placed between. Set in and clear the bud as in step two. Draw a line 15mm from the edges and use a No.3, 16mm to round them down from the line to 5mm thick at the tip of the leaves.

16 Using a No.11, 10mm, carve a groove along the overlapping leaves, but this time start from the centre down towards the edges. This will mean you are cutting with the grain so minimising the risk of experiencing grain tear out. On the corner leaves, remove the waste between the grooves with flatter gouges.

17 Set in the overlapping leaves area using a No.6, 16mm. Clear the outer side of the cut on the corner leaves and round the overlapping leaves on the sides and towards the bud with the No.3, 16mm to create a smooth dome shape. The eye areas are left at the original height.

18 As in step four, clean the corners towards the bud using a No.6, 12mm. Then, hollow the corner leaves with a No.6, 16mm gouge to give them an ogee curve.

TOP TIP: Especially on cherry, you will avoid tearing the wood by reversing the course of your tool and cut each side of a groove in the grain direction when using a deep gouge.



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**19****20****21****22****23****24**

TOP TIP: Wherever possible when shaping work, try to slice with a carving edge rather than attack the wood square on with the cutting edge. This can be achieved by rolling a cutting edge as you move it forward to present the cutting edge at an oblique angle to the work.

19 Keep the same tool to carve the secondary lobes of the corner leaves along the cut previously made. To avoid problems with the grain direction, start from the top and enlarge your cut progressively towards the tip of the lobe. Deepen the slab cuts if necessary.

20 Redraw the overlapping leaves and set them in using No.5, 6mm and 8mm gouges, and the veiner for the eyes. On the upper leaf, set in the back of the secondary lobe. Be sure to hold your tool vertical. If you hold it perpendicular to the surface of the wood, you would end up with some undercutting, which is not wanted here. Clear around the upper leaf with a No.5, 8mm.

21 Carve the grooves of the leaves using a No.8,10mm as in step five. Even more than in the first rosette, pay specific attention to the grain direction for this step. Remove the wood progressively and avoid going against the grain.

22 On the corner leaves, the secondary lobes are shaped basically the same way as the first rosette in step seven, using a No.6, 16mm, though the stab cut can be made slightly deeper at the bottom to take advantage of the thickness of the wood. The angled cut on the edge of the leaves is also carved the same way. However, on the overlapping leaves, it is only made on the secondary lobe, which is next to the eye.

23 The main lobes are rounded a bit more than the first rosette. Instead of carving the stem from the outside towards the centre, run the V-tool near the bud to end towards the corner. Then you can carve the grooves at the tip and carve the bud as in step 12-13.

24 Use a large chisel to gently separate the carving from the background. Insert your tool along the grain in several places, and the paper should break and liberate the rosette. Clean the underside using a scraper. You can add a little undercutting on the overlapping leaves. Hold your carving on a piece of cloth and use the V-tool to remove some waste between the lobes. Then use a flat gouge to give a clean angle to the leaves.

TOP TIP: At the end of the carving, you can enhance the shadows in the eyes of the leaves by using a punch in the shape of a drop. Such a tool can be easily made by shaping a nail or a bolt using a file. ▶

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Blind – A Sixth Sense

Report on Victoria Claire's recent exhibition



The Guide

Blind – A Sixth Sense by the artist Victoria Claire was shown at the Beach Creative gallery in Herne Bay, Kent earlier this year. Some 500 people visited this unique exhibition – the first of its kind in the UK which Beach Creative helped to make a roaring success.

The idea originated from Victoria's personal experience of sight loss. She has a rare condition called retinitis pigmentosa, which has been slowly claiming her sight over the past 23 years.

An artist in contemporary sculpture for 25 years, Victoria created six sculptures from wood, each piece representing a sense – sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and a sixth piece which portrayed a sense of trust. The exhibition was set in a pitch-black gallery space and was designed to highlight three important messages. The first was to invite the audience to engage with all their other senses while experiencing the work in the dark, the second was to share Victoria's own experience as she has slowly learned

to accept and embrace her blindness. Finally, there was a message to the visual arts, that disability is not an impairment to creativity.

Victoria wants to change how curators stage exhibitions and encourage them to create more accessible exhibitions so that art then becomes enjoyable for everyone.

The exhibition was an overwhelming success, with the public understanding the premise behind it. A packed-out Beach Creative hosted a private viewing and the exhibition was officially opened by Barbara Norton of Moorfields Eye Hospital.

It then continued with visitors coming from all over the south east to experience the exhibition. The BBC reported on it through art and culture correspondent Robin Gibson. Victoria was also invited on to the KMTV evening news programme to talk about Blind – A Sixth Sense.

Various magazines and publications also featured the exhibition, all of which helped to raise its profile.

Over the duration of the event some very

special and inspiring guests enjoyed the experience. These included Sir Roger Gale MP, the Sheriff Of Canterbury, artist Wendy Daws MBE and the visually impaired Team GB Skier Millie Knight, who kindly took the time out of her extremely busy schedule ahead of competing in the Winter Paralympics.

The overall consensus on this unique exhibition has been that it was an extremely engaging, inspiring and uplifting event.

Many of the public believe that Blind – A Sixth Sense should be shown on a national level, starting with the Turner Contemporary gallery in Margate. Victoria said: 'This truly has been an incredible success, which went beyond my wildest dreams. The support has been so wonderful and the interaction with the public has given me the opportunity to highlight sight loss and my personal journey through it. I am truly grateful.'

The overall amount raised for the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association



Victoria Claire with the Sheriff of Canterbury

was £1400. This was made by sales on sculpture, CD sales of Victoria's music, and hat and raffle sales.

The following organisations and individuals supported and endorsed Blind A Sixth Sense and helped it reach a wider audience:

Organisations

- Beach Creative
- Guide Dogs for the Blind
- RP Fighting Blindness
- RNIB
- BBS British Blind Sports Organisation
- The Iona Centre
- KAB Arts Group
- Talking Books
- The Macular Degeneration Society

Media and Publications

- BBC Robin Gibson
- KMTV
- RNIB Connect Radio
- Radio Kent
- BRFM
- Kent Life Magazine
- Forward Magazine
- Woodcarving Magazine
- Optometry Today
- KM local papers
- Kent & Sussex Courier

Special thanks to:

- Mandy Troughton, director of Beach Creative
- Barbara Norton, Moorfields Eye Hospital
- Sir Roger Gale MP & Wendy Daws MBE
- Steve Bate MBE, Paralympic World Champion cyclist
- Millie Knight, Paralympic skier

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Butterfly relief carving

Andrew Thomas demonstrates how to produce a low-relief carving of a butterfly on a leaf



The butterfly is arguably one of the most beautiful flying insects on the planet that lend their delicate form elegantly to the art of relief carving. The real-life creature differs slightly from the example in this article as it has three body sections – the head, chest and abdomen, plus the antennae, which can be applied to the design if you wish to add these details.

This project is aimed at both beginner and intermediate levels of ability and is a great exercise in learning the principles of relief carving and practising the technique

of working with the direction of the grain, swapping the cutting direction from one side to the other along the curved edges of both butterfly and the leaf.

The main objective is to make the form structurally strong, but give the appearance of the very fine delicate wings, as if it were about to take flight.

The project is completely adaptable to the reader's own design ideas, as both butterfly and leaf can be of any species. Before you start working on the project, please read the complete step guide

and study the stage and finished images to see how the project develops.

SANDING

When sanding into awkward areas such as the undercuts, it is effective to use appropriately shaped pieces of wood to brace the sandpaper, which can then be used with a good amount of pressure to aid the process.

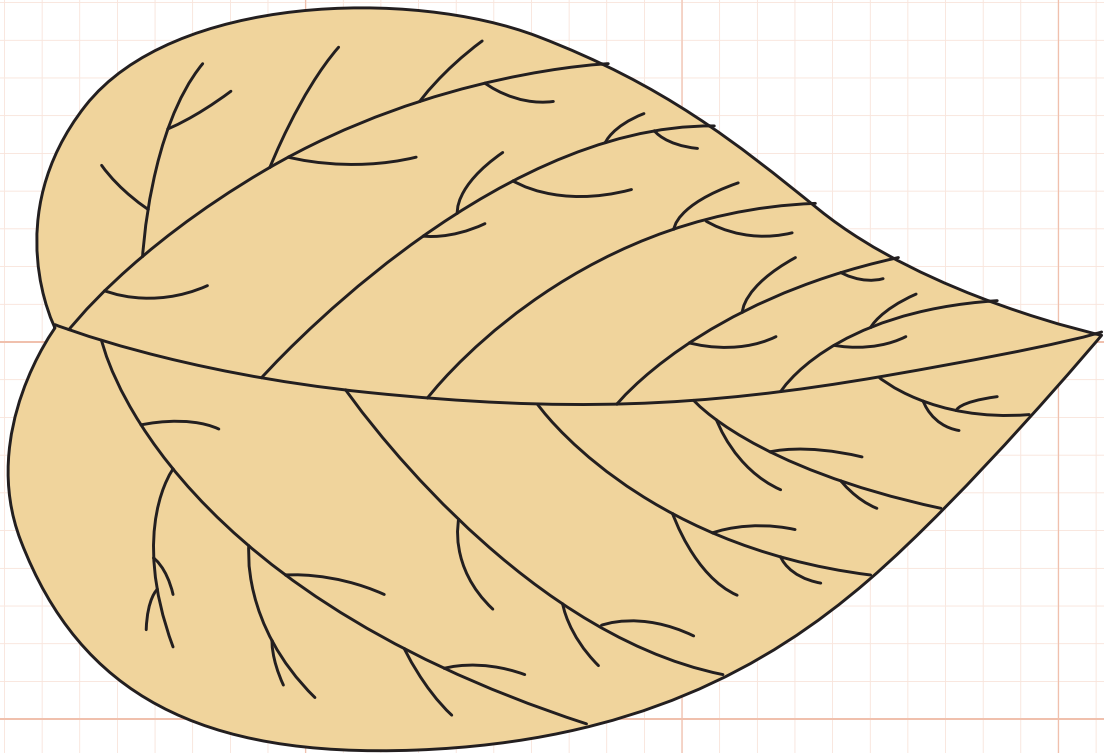
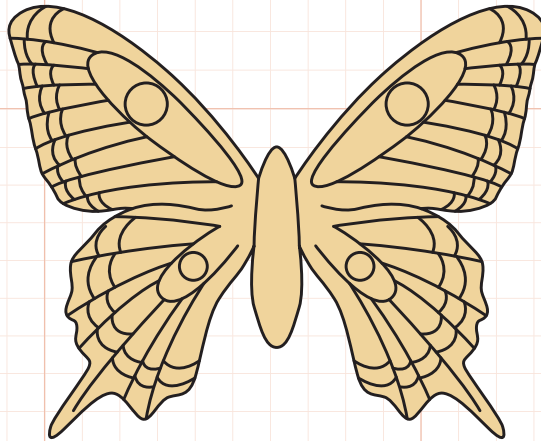
Things you will need

Tools:

- Swiss gouges
- No.2, 5, 10 & 20mm
- No.5, 20mm
- No.7, 6mm
- No.8, 4mm
- No.11, 1, 2 & 3mm
- No.12, 6mm
- No.16, 1mm
- Knife

Materials:

- Timber: Lime (*Tilia europea*)
200 x 140 x 25mm
- Boiled linseed oil
- Clear wax
- Medium brown wax



1 Scan or photocopy the scale drawings provided, enlarging them to the correct size for your wood, and print them out on to card to use as a template and reference. Transfer the design of the leaf and butterfly on to your block of wood, ensuring that the grain direction is running horizontally through the block, then cut it out. It is advisable to attach a smaller piece of timber underneath the leaf blank so that it raises it slightly from the vice faceplate, allowing the edges to be carved more easily, and without any concerns of the gouges coming into contact with the metal faceplate. Secure this safely to your vice.

The first stage of the carving is to separate the outline of the butterfly from the background. Make the initial cut using a No.12, 6mm V-tool, working carefully along the very outside of the design line.



**2****3**

2 Use a No.5, 20mm to pare away the wood adjacent to the V-tool cut, across the entire surface, lowering the background evenly and neatly to the depth of the V-tool cut.

3 The area on the lower edge of the wings has several tight curves that are difficult to work around effectively with the V-tool and No.5. Use a No.8, 4mm in this area, working from the surface downwards on to the background.

TOP TIP: To ensure the background is being reduced evenly across the surface, a line, or several lines, can be drawn around the edge of the leaf at 5 or 10mm intervals, from the top or bottom edge. The surface can then be pared back neatly to these lines.

**4****5**

4 Repeat steps 1 to 3 until you have reached a depth of approximately 10mm. You can, if you wish, add more depth to the butterfly, especially if your original piece of timber was thicker than the suggested size of 25mm. This will only enhance the finished effect of the detail, definition and shadow.

5 Due to the shape of the V-tool's blade angles, it is normal for the cut to gradually creep away from the original design line as depth is gained. The deeper you work into the background, the further away from the original design line you find yourself. This now needs to be brought back in square to the line again, ready for the undercutting later. Hold the V-tool on its side with either the right or left edge flat on the surface, and make a cut back in towards the original outline of the butterfly.

**6****7**

6 Use a No.2, 10mm to pare the wood back along the edges until you reach the depth of the V-tool cut. Repeat until the edges are square and level with the original outline. The position between the lower body and wings is impossible to straighten with the V-tool, but a razor-sharp knife will access this tight area. Use the tip of the blade to make a cut along the line of the body and wings. Then turn the knife on its side and slice into the vertical cut to remove the chips. Repeat until you reach the depth of the background.

7 Now to move on to the modelling of the butterfly and leaf. The first job is to create the visual effect of the wings emerging outwards from the body. The objective is to lower the level of the body and blend this depth up to the tip of the wings. Use a No.7, 6mm to reduce the depth of the body by approximately 4-5mm.

**8****9**

8 Now use a No.2, 20mm to blend the depth upwards and out to the level of the wing tips.

TOP TIP: To verify the depth of the body and the symmetry of the wing curves, a straightedge is placed between the wings to enable the measurement of depth, and to visually verify the symmetry of the wing curvature.

9 Using the template as a reference to help you, draw the line of the body in its correct position. Use the V-tool to 'sketch' directly along the outer edge of this line.



10 Now use the No.2 gouge to blend the V-tool cut up and over the wings to their outer tips. Repeat steps nine and 10 until the inner edge of the wings are approximately 3mm lower than the body where they join.

11 Now use a No.2, 5mm to curve over the straight edges up to the centre of the body from both sides.

12 Unless you have studied these beautiful creatures, you would be forgiven if you had not noticed that butterflies actually have four wings – two forewings and two hindwings. Consequently, the next job is to separate these two areas. Using the template to assist you, draw the line of separation accurately in position on both sides and check for symmetry. Use a sharp knife to cut a slice along this line.

13 Use the No.2, 10mm and No.2, 20mm to pare the hindwing into the knife cut, naturally defining the two different depths of the wings. Repeat this procedure until you reach a depth of approximately 3mm on the outer edges where the forewing and hindwings join.

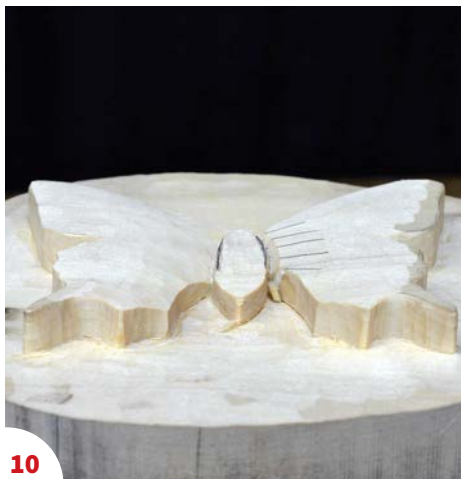
14 Before the next stage of the detail is applied to the butterfly, the complete form must be sanded through 100-240 grit to produce a flush, smooth finish on the surface.

TOP TIP: When sanding, always try to work in the direction of the grain, which lessens the risk of producing deep scratch marks that are difficult to remove with the subsequent abrasive grits. You may have to initially sand across the grain to remove the gouge marks, but can be finished off afterwards by following the grain to remove the scratches.

15 There is scope for incorporating your own design ideas for the wing detail. Using the template as a reference, draw these details on to both wings and check them for symmetry. Use a No.16, 1mm V-tool to carve a groove along each of the lines.

16 Draw the finer details up through the wingtips and the little circles inside the elliptical areas of the wings. Carefully carve these, ensuring all of the grooves are as even in width and depth as possible. Use a piece of 240 grit to sand through each of the grooves, but do not smooth over the edges as this will lessen the important effect of the shadow.

17 Now it's time for the undercutting. This has to be performed very carefully so as not to risk snapping off any parts of the wingtips, especially the lower, thin, pointed parts. Measure and mark a 1mm line around the edge of the butterfly. Using a No.11, 3mm veiner, make the initial groove underneath the wings, and then again to deepen this groove. When the tool starts to stick instead of cut, swap down to a No.11, 2mm to cut further underneath, and finally a No.11, 1mm. Continue around the edges, swapping to the smaller No.11 where necessary, creating a good, deep channel between the surface and the 1mm line.



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**18****19****20****21****22****23****24****UNDERCUTTING**

The objective of the undercutting is to add shadow underneath the carving, creating the appearance that the subject and background are two separate volumes.

18 Now to work on the leaf. The objective is to create a natural curve around the edge, across the surface and into the centre groove. Starting with the outer edge, use the No.2, 20mm to produce the curve from the bottom edge up on to the surface and under the wings, blending it evenly into the undercuts.

19 Using a No.12, 6mm V-tool, carve a deep groove along the centreline of the leaf, ensuring that this terminates neatly on the surface before it reaches the solid area underneath the butterfly.

20 Now pare the adjacent areas naturally into the V-tool cut. Repeat steps 19 and 20 until enough depth is gained to produce an effective and balanced appearance.

TOP TIP: A knife can be used to cut a deep slice along the V-tool channel to produce a sharp finish in the centre of the leaf, as opposed to the wider groove left by a V-tool.

21 The surface of the leaf and the butterfly undercuts can now be sanded through all grits. Start with 100 grit to remove tool marks and to sharpen the edge of the underside of the wingtips, creating their delicate appearance.

22 Dust off the wood then brush or pour hot water over the leaf and leave it to dry. Next, work through grits 150, 240 and 400, removing all the scratches from each previous grit and repeating the hot water process in between each grit grade used.

Next use 400 grit to sand all the details and to refine the shape of the wingtips. Use a small section of the abrasive, rolled up tightly, and shape each section of the tips, from the outer groove to the edge, creating a slight curve between each section and a very sharp edge.

23 The pattern on the leaf can be detailed as in the example, adapted or simply left smooth. Draw the detail onto the surface. Use the No.16m, 1mm V-tool to carve the small channels evenly along the design line. Sand the channels with 400 grit.

24 I used two different finishes to create two different colour tones on the piece to visually separate the butterfly from the leaf. Boiled linseed oil was applied over the surface of the leaf, and brushed around the undercuts and the underside of the butterfly. This lowered the natural colour tone of the lime and added shadow. The oil was left to dry for a week or so before several coats of medium brown wax polish were applied to seal the grain and leave a fine finish. Clear wax was applied to the butterfly with a clean toothbrush, which sealed the wood and retained the original lighter colour of the lime. ■

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Wisconsin River Woodcarvers

Ron O'Kray and Greg Wirtz talk to Mark Baker about their club and their annual extravaganza



On 1 February 1995, a group of 18 carvers gathered in the basement of a fellow woodcarver and decided we could set up a club. Officers, by-laws, insurance, dues, incorporation and a meeting place were discussed and decided upon and the Wisconsin River Woodcarvers was created.

After many years of meeting in a local high school, we decided to meet year-round, not just during the school year.

To ensure we can reach as many people as possible, we meet at a variety of times and locations as follows:

- Lincoln Center, 1519 Water Street, Stevens Point on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 6:00 – 9:00pm.
- At the 1st Congregational Church, 311 2nd Street South, Wisconsin Rapids every Wednesday from 6:00 to 9:00pm; with a business meeting held on the second Wednesday of every month.

Each year we bring in two or three nationally-known instructors to provide classes and we have a yearly summer picnic and a winter Christmas party.

Our club continues to grow and has 111 member as of December 2017. Two charter members remain in our club – Diane Swiggum and Greg Wirtz.

Membership

We currently have 104 members. Membership consists of carver and spouse. We have a very active club with spouses who are not carvers frequently showing up at meetings for the camaraderie. Most club members are from the local areas, but some are from further afield. The most common reason that carvers out of the area belong to the club is to know about the seminars that are scheduled during the year.

We actively support all carvers. A typical meeting starts at 6:00pm and lasts until about 8:30pm. Carvers bring in the projects they are currently working on to ask other carvers to critique their work or advise on a difficult portion. Information and help is always given to those who request it.

Helping carvers

We have a structured programme to help novice carvers. The programme for novice carvers starts with learning about wood, grain, direction of cuts, and proper use of a knife.

The first project for novices is designed to be completed using only a knife. The reason for that is the new carver only needs a knife, safety glove, and a thumb guard, so it is low cost, gets them used to cutting wood which builds skills and confidence and they end up making something nice for their first project.



Clayton Kubisiak received 1st place in the under-14 years of age category for his chip-carved cross

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TROY AHRENS

The follow-on projects incrementally build skills and various gouges, chisels and tools are introduced as they progress. If we do not support the novice carver, the future of the club is doomed.

Our club motto is Keep the Chips Flying, and we will do everything we can to support and encourage people to carve.



Toucan by Joe Stavel



Elephant by Joyce Klement



Charlie Dutter created this carving called Perch



Tom Marker made this piece called Bird on an Axe handle

Annual show

Once a year the club has an Annual Woodcarving, Show, Competition, & Sale which is held at Stevens Point, WI Holiday Inn & Convention Centre. This is a two-day event taking place on a Saturday and Sunday. When I joined the club in 2003, the club had 42 exhibitor tables. On 23 and 24 September 2017, our 17th show, we had more than 130 exhibitor tables.

Our criteria entering the competition are simple. You must rent a table 2.4m x 1m in size to be in the competition. You can sell at the show but entrants are not required to sell.

We have competitions in five classes: Youth 1, under the age of 14; Youth 2, age 14-17; Novice; Open; and Advanced. Within the five classes we have 35 different categories. Carvers determine the class they want to enter but from that point cannot go into a lower class. A Novice carver has to win six blue ribbons or a Best of Show in Novice to advance to the Open class.

A carver has to win six blue ribbons or a Best of Show in Open category to advance to the Advanced class. We have two judges at our show who are from outside of our immediate area who determine the first-place winners (blue ribbons) in each category. They pick a Best of Novice and also do this for the Open and Advanced classes. The judges then pick an Overall Best of Show and, finally, each judge picks his or her Judge's Choice. In addition to the judges' selections, we have a People's Choice where the public can pick the best table display.

Two years ago we encouraged other carving clubs to have a club table at our show. Last year seven carving clubs did just that. By having a club table they can enter six pieces in competition, whether it is six carvers each entering one piece or any combination. By letting carvers have a joint club table, we hope after a couple of years they advance to having their own table.

We tell novice carvers that having a table is the best way to experience the carving show. We also encourage them to have the judges critique their piece, giving advice on how to make it better. This seems to have been very well received.

This year's event

This year's event, which will be our 18th, will have Carol Leavy of Clinton, IA, and John Engler of Battlefield, MO, as judges. John Engler will be conducting a four-day class prior to the show. John's speciality is medium relief carving.

In addition to this, we have seven one-hour demonstrations during the two day event that are open to the public with no charge. We also have free Kid's Carving on both Saturday and Sunday. The children carve a project out of balsa foam using a modified lollipop stick for the tool. In the past they have carved fish, rabbits, and turtles. This year's project will be a duck.

On Saturday night we have a banquet that is well attended and is always a lot of fun. The event is held at the Holiday Inn &



Bark house by Gary Yakowbek



Acanthus by Gerri Taylor

Convention Center in Stevens Point, WI. We use the entire convention center (more than 15,000sq ft) for the exhibition and other rooms for the banquet, competition, and judging.

We make our money to support the show in two ways. Admission cost for adults is \$4.00 and we have a state licensed raffle. Last year we had 115 items on the raffle. ▀



ABOVE: The 15 to 18-years-of-age category winner was Liberty Wirtz with her skull and rose relief carving

LEFT: JoAnn Luke carved this piece called Rabbit Carrot Spoon



Santa and candy canes by Carol Leavy



THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL SHOW DETAILS

Date: 15 and 16 September 2018

Featured carver: Chet James

Venue: Stevens Point, WI Holiday Inn & Convention Centre

To find out more about Wisconsin River Woodcarvers and their show visit:
wisconsinriverwoodcarvers.org

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Colouring and bleaching carvings

Peter Benson explores the highly contentious issue of adding colour to carvings

This is probably the most argued-about aspect of woodcarving, particularly on this side of the Atlantic. For some reason British carvers have a marked aversion to adding colour to their woodcarvings, preferring that the natural colour of the timber used is maintained at all times. This is in spite of the fact that, at one time, anything that was carved was elaborately painted, gilded or stained, be it architectural carving on buildings or furniture and carved objects in the home.

You can still find painting or staining in alpine carvings throughout Europe but it is in the United States that colouring has been taken to a new level. Bird and fish carvers spend hours getting natural coloured finishes on their work, as do the caricature, figure and animal carvers. While I suspect that the majority of hobby carvers would not want to spend the time and effort getting a carving to look absolutely realistic, there is still scope to add colours or tints to

carvings without completely obliterating the natural grain and beauty of the wood. In fact, the usual objection among the anti-painters is that, if a piece is to be painted, why carve it in wood when it could be done in resin or plaster – not that that would be any quicker or easier.

Whatever your individual preference might be there are merits to both sides of the argument, and it is worth trying out the options depending on what sort of carving you are choosing to do. I must admit that I would never willingly colour a relief carving, because I feel that this defeats the object of the exercise which is, to me, the creation of an illusion that is done by careful use of shadows and texture to give the impression of depth and distance. I do, however, use paint with the village signs I have made as, for them to be noticeable, they need to be colourful and obvious. Having said this, I know that many carvers, particularly in the US, like to paint their relief carvings, whereas very few carvers do so on this side of the Pond.

What, then, are the options?

First of all, if the wood used has a pronounced grain pattern or attractive colour I would never recommend adding colour.

Sometimes all that is needed is the addition of a slight tint to an otherwise fairly bland piece of wood. This can be done with one of a large range of wood stains, but these can be a little difficult to control as the stain can tend to bleed into areas that you may not want to be coloured. With experimentation and advice over the years I have found that the best way to do this is with very diluted acrylic watercolours. While these work well there can be a tendency for the finish to be a little patchy. The following method not only cures this but can also emphasise any grain pattern evident.

In a small jam jar of linseed oil, add about an inch-long squeeze of raw sienna oil paint and thoroughly mix it. Paint this over your carving and leave for a short while until there is no oil showing on the surface, or pat dry with a tissue or cloth. Before it dries, add your diluted acrylic paint (about 20 parts of water to one of paint). The paint will spread evenly but can also be painted to a line without it bleeding into surrounding surfaces. Initially the colour won't be very obvious but as it dries it will be more evident. Don't be tempted to add too much at once. You can always add another coat if you want more colour. The oil will bring out the grain in the wood, making it very obvious that the piece is a woodcarving. A coat of matt or satin acrylic varnish will seal



Caricature in basswood with pale wash
by my pal Pete LeClair in the US

the finish and it can be waxed if required.

If you want a more vibrant colour for something such as Christmas carvings, dampening the wood with water will help with spreading. Adding undiluted acrylic colour will give a very good effect but the grain will be hidden under the paint.

These finishes will work very well with lime or basswood (*Tilia* spp.) or jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) but may not be as effective in the very hard woods so you might look at other alternatives.



Higgledy-piggledy house in lime with pale wash

Dyeing

Dyes will give a surface finish that will, in the main, cover any grain pattern but will give a very even finish. I have used this method extensively on boxwood for netukes. There are wood dyes but these have the same problems as wood stains (what is the difference?). Fabric dyes are far cheaper and do a very good job on fairly small carvings. Cold-water dyes can be simply brushed on so can be used for larger pieces. Hot-water dyes are great for small carvings but you do need a little courage as the process involves immersing the carving in boiling water containing the dye. It needs to be in the solution for at least 40 seconds but less than 50 so you need to be a bit sharp.

After the required time, take the carving out and put it immediately under the cold tap. Pat dry and leave away from heat to dry off thoroughly. I have found that there has been no raising of the grain with boxwood so the carving can be polished as soon as it is dry.

One big advantage of this method is that you can mask any areas that you don't want coloured by coating with a latex paper glue that can be removed after dyeing, leaving the masked areas uncoloured.

I once saw a carved chimpanzee in boxwood dyed pink first of all, then, with the face, palms of the hands and soles of the feet, finger and toe nails masked off, immersed again in black dye. When the masking was removed the final effect was stunning, with all the lines between pink and black crisp and clean. I can't think of another method that would have given the same effect.



Figure with undiluted paint



Picture of dormouse finish, which was hot-water dyed



Dyed with masked areas



Rabbit coloured with Procion dyes

Bleaching

For centuries various methods have been used to bleach wood, most of which have been rather nasty and unpleasant to undertake. Nowadays this is very easy and safe to do and the results can be striking.

It is generally not satisfactory to use the normal kitchen or hairdressing bleaches as they are not strong enough, and even the bottled wood bleaches do little more than remove stains. If you want to whiten the wood you have used you will need a two-part wood bleach that is available in hardware stores, but not always in the large DIY stores. It is available on the internet but make sure you get the two-part bleach.

The instructions are clear and you need to read them before use. If you don't get the wood as light as you want it, you can go through the whole process more than once. As you have two solutions you can be very precise, as bleaching will only occur where you have used both. Therefore, you will only bleach the parts you need and can have the carving part bleached and part not if you wish. If you don't quite get the carving as white as you want we have found that polishing with a liming wax can improve the finish.

The picture to the right is a carving in lime that was bleached three times, leaving the seal underneath untouched.



Polar bears carved in lime, which was then bleached

Chemical colouring

Most of the various chemical methods of colouring are probably not the sort of thing that the average hobby carver would want to attempt. Fuming with ammonia or concentrated nitric acid have been used widely professionally but would not be desirable in the home. There is one simple and safe method of darkening wood that can be used and which gives very good results. Shades can be achieved from light grey to almost jet black on most woods and there is no bleeding of the colour into areas where it is not wanted.

First of all a solution needs to be made by immersing steel wool, or even a nail, in vinegar or cola and leaving for a few days. This produces a solution of ferric acetate or ferric phosphate, both of which will react with the tannin present in all woods in various quantities. When added to the wood it will first turn the wood grey or light brown, depending on the wood (always test on a piece of scrap first). By dabbing the wood with a used wet teabag you will increase the tannin and darken the wood. Repeat this process as many times as you like and the wood



Bear treated with vinegar and wire wool solution

will get progressively darker. When you have the result you want, wash off any solution, dry slowly and add your desired finish.

The vinegar will give a slightly more powerful solution but, if you don't want your carving to smell like a chip shop, use cola.

While we are in the realms of natural colouring there are many vegetable or fruit colourings that can produce interesting effects, and details of these can be found in books or on the internet. You might like to experiment with tea and coffee, though, as they can produce some very subtle and natural tints to the woods you use.

To sum up, there are some very attractive woods out there that have beauty of their own and should never be spoiled by adding unnatural colouring. Conversely, there are some very bland ones that are worth experimenting with. Colouring does not necessarily mean that you have to slosh loads of paint on a carving and make it look like a rather bad souvenir from the seaside. It can be minimal, tasteful and very effective if done with care. ▀

Dragon brooch

Dave Western shows how to make a Welsh-inspired pin brooch



My wife is fond of wearing scarves when she braves our Canadian winters. I read somewhere that the ancient Celts would wear their beautiful brooches to keep shawls in place and I thought something like that would be good for keeping things battened down on windy days. I wasn't prepared to attempt a traditional metal brooch like the ones the Celts of Britain made famous, but I thought a wooden one would be fun.

Because wood is a slightly less robust

material than iron or steel, I realised that both the pin portion of the brooch and the actual body of the design would both have to be kept thicker. This means the brooch is only really suited for coarsely woven materials or for materials that can be pulled over the pin. That aside, it occurred to me that rather than make a traditional circular brooch with Celtic knotwork designs, I could play around a lot with the design and have a bit of fun.

I opted to make the brooch in the form of

a flying dragon. Being Welsh, the dragon is a particular favourite, but it is also perfectly suited for this task. The long neck and tail of the dragon can stick out past the body of the brooch and still look good, the wings give the piece some 'movement' and the fabric pulled up over the pin gives it a perfect plump body.

Although there's absolutely nothing traditional about it, the dragon brooch retains a classic look while simultaneously being bit more whimsical and fun than the customary knotwork brooch.

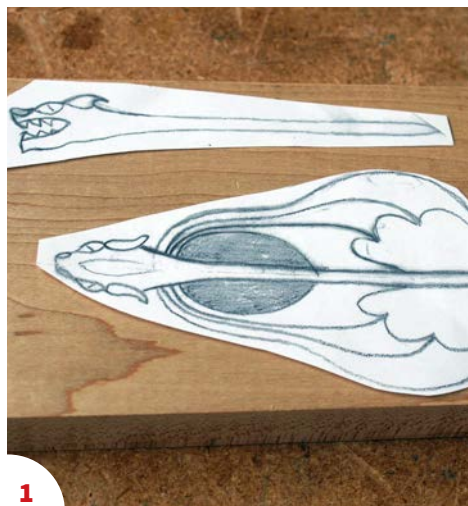
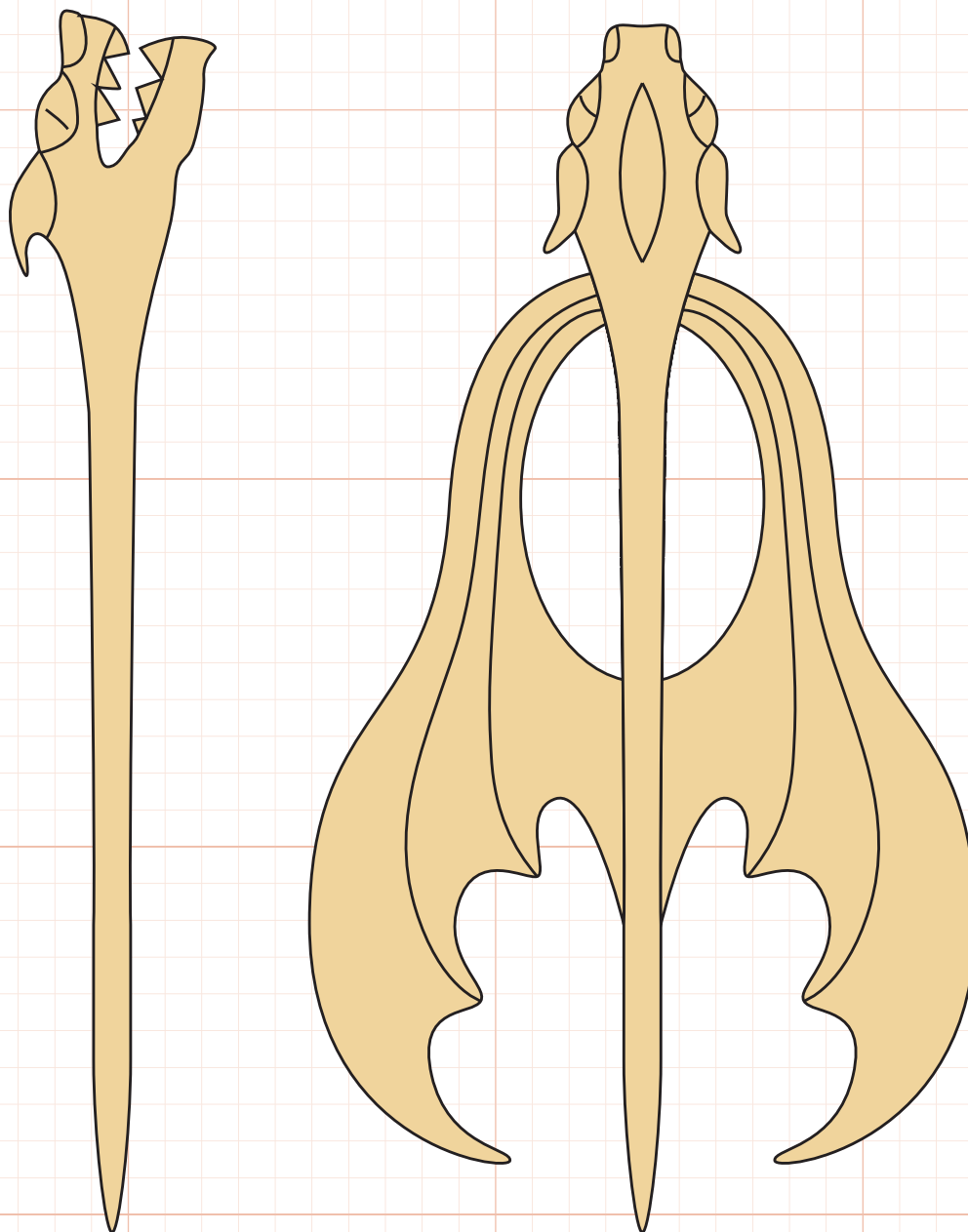
Things you will need

Tools:

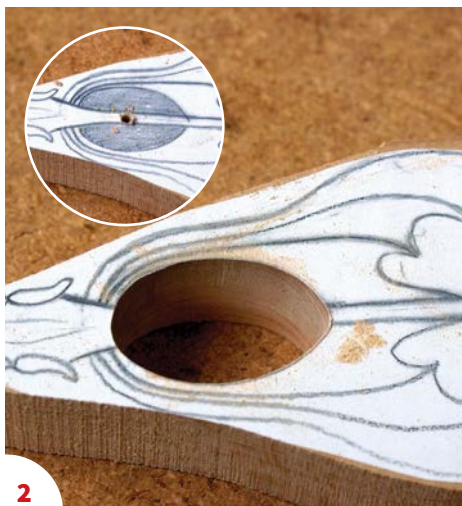
- Straight knife
- Bent knife
- Abrasives
- Brush
- Oil finish

Materials:

- Any scrap wood, but tough dense wood is best.



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1 This project is a great way to use up small scrap. On this particular piece, I placed the pattern carefully so that the pin took advantage of tighter, more vertical grain and the body got the wild tangential grain. This let me have the strongest possible pin and the most visually dramatic body for the brooch. I used a piece of eastern maple for this project. It's a very tough, dense wood that I knew would be strong and robust. It was a nightmare to carve, but I don't have to worry about it breaking.

2 Because the piece is small and potentially difficult to handle, I recommend dealing with the central hole first. If you have a scroll or jeweller's saw, simply drill a pilot hole then saw away the rest. If you don't have a saw, drill a large hole or a group of smaller ones and use your straight knife to cut away the excess material.



3 After cutting away most of the material and forming the body outline using a saw, I opted to leave a chunk of wood that could be used as a platform for clamping. With small pieces like this, clamping helps when rough shaping, enabling you to use two hands and be confident the material won't skid around beneath the tools.



4 At this point, remove some material from the top face so that a domed shape is created between the wings. Use a straight knife or flat chisel to rough off stock and form the shape. Don't take too much material at once or you risk snapping off the wing tips. Take your time and make nice symmetrical cuts. I scribed a line around the piece to help me locate my depth and to keep both sides consistent.



5 Once the wings are nicely domed, redraw the wing lines back on to the body. Use a regular pencil for this and don't get too fussy about being perfect about it. As long as the lines flow and are close to the right place, fine adjustments can be made as carving proceeds.

With the lines in place, use a gouge or bent knife to hollow the sections between each wing segment. Keep the area where the wing 'tendons' are higher uncarved until the hollowing is finished. Once the hollowing is done, the tendons can be detailed with a nice rounded-over shape.



6 Now the top face of the body is complete, I use a gouge to clear a groove for the pin to rest on. The groove will help centre the pin and keep it from moving around. Don't get too carried away with it, though. Keep the depth limited to about half the diameter of the pin.



I usually keep a bit of wood between the top of the body and the clamp so that if the gouge slips at all, I don't have to worry about it contacting the metal clamp. I left it off for the photograph but it is definitely something you'll want for protection!

7 Shape the area around the top of the body, but don't cut the clamping pad off just yet. It will come in handy when you turn the body over and start hollowing the back.



8 Use a bent knife or gouges to hollow this area, being careful not to chip those wing tips. Go slowly and aim for side-to-side consistency.

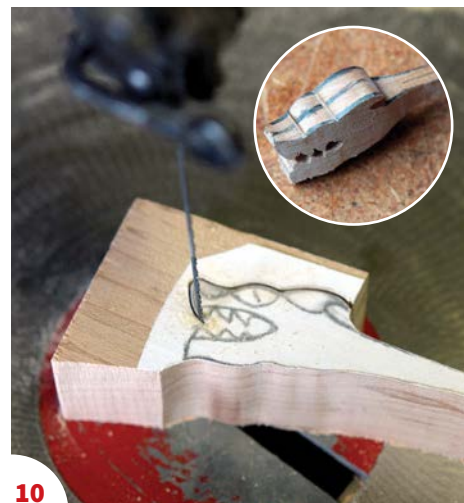


9 With the back hollowed, the effect should be a noticeable, even bend from side to side. I left mine at about 4mm thick. If your timber seems sturdy, you might be able to go thinner. Conversely, if you are at all worried about the strength of your material, leave it on the thicker side – 5 or 6mm would be considered thick.

Once all the shaping is complete, cut off the clamping pad and clean up the tip of the body.



10 Now, begin the pin by cutting the side profile of the head using a scrollsaw or jeweller's saw. Alternatively, bring the head into shape with a straight knife. Be careful not to knock the teeth down when sawing or carving in the mouth area. Cut along the outside of the line to the tail of the pin to keep a bit more material for the shaping process and it will keep the pin a bit sturdier. Draw a centreline down the middle of the dragon's head and pencil in the curves of its cheeks.





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11 With the head marked out, cut or carve down to the pencil lines to form the sides of the face. Once that is complete, the horns can be defined by using a narrow gouge to clear the material between them. Go slow and take light cuts, it is VERY easy to slip and do damage to both the material and your hand if you are not careful.

12 Next, I like to shape the teeth. I begin by scribing along the gum line then cutting back the teeth to a depth of approximately 1mm. Next, gently round each tooth then bring each to a nice pointed shape. Easy does it, as this is an area where it is particularly easy to chip the tips off the teeth or to break them out altogether. Once the teeth have been shaped on both sides, I like to separate the front teeth with a little V cut.

13 Finish up the facial details by cutting in the eyes and some nostrils. If you are up for a challenge, cut them at the front of the nose into the end grain. If you'd rather keep life simple for yourself, you can cut one in on each side of the face and stay with the easier-to-work wood. Place the eyes carefully so they aren't out of alignment when the dragon is viewed 'head on'. You might want to measure them both before committing to any cutting. You need not cut too deep to shape the eyes, usually about 1 mm around the edge is plenty.

14 You can get as carried away as you like with the face at this stage. Add scales or inlay the eyes, define the facial features or just leave it simple... either way, he has a cheeky look about him.

15 With the face completed, shape the pin by chamfering each edge for its entire length. Then, divide the original chamfer into two more chamfers to give yourself a consistent, fair edge along the pin shaft. Once it is getting 'round', you can continue with more light chamfering or you can head right to sandpaper to work it smooth.

16 While the sandpaper is out, give the body a good going over to round sharp edges. I avoid sanding the front surface of the body where I prefer the tool marks to stay visible, but I give the back a good going over. Make sure the edges in the hole are well rounded so they don't snag on the fabric that will be pushed in there.

A final bath or two of Danish oil followed by a wet-sanded coat (use 1000 grit wet and dry for this) and a final surface coat of beeswax polish and you have a lovely little dragon who looks great and will give many years of dedicated service.

17 The finished brooch. ▶



17

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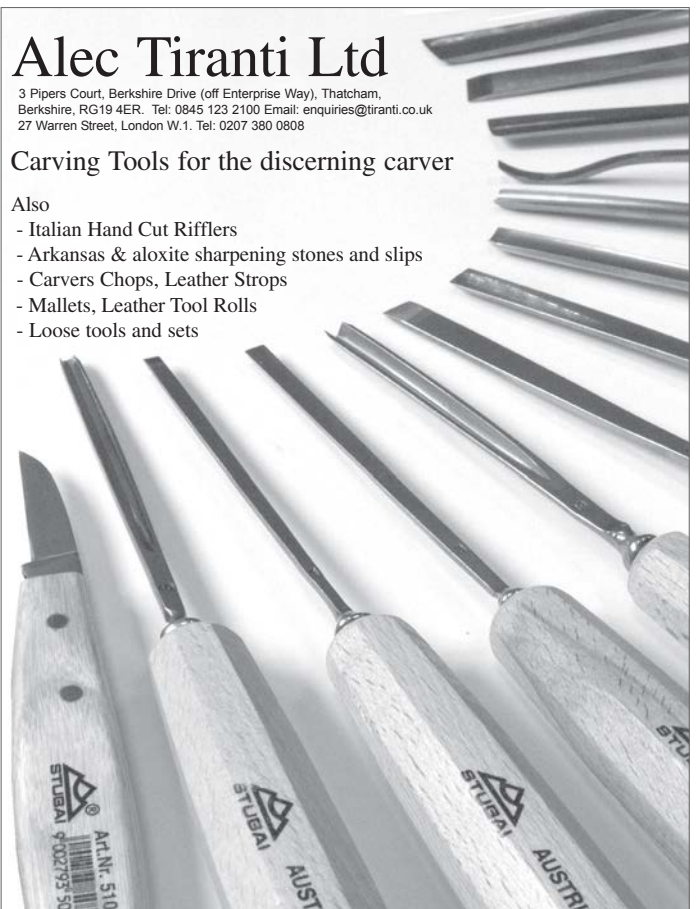
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Carved walking sticks

Mike Wood shows how to create a wow factor with walking sticks by adding carved birds



Walking sticks are highly prized as functional items for the activity they are named after or, depending on the design, shepherd's crooks etc, but they can also feature exquisite carved detail to create a wow factor for anyone owning or seeing one.

Whether you carve the stick incorporating heads or hand the heads on to someone else to bond them to a suitable stick is up to you. For the purpose of this article, I am only giving you patterns for the stick heads. If, however, you wish to delve into the realms of making the complete sticks, there are numerous books, video clips, accessories and stick-making suppliers that will help you with information and equipment you need – and it is a lot of fun when you create one.

Detail

As with all carving, the devil is in the detail. The birds shown here were commissions and the requirements were for them to be as close a representation of the real birds' appearances as possible, with a bit of wiggle-room for artistic licence.

To create lifelike birds it is vital to have good reference material – not only when it comes to working out the shape and poise/position of various parts, but also to do with how the feathers are positioned, the orientation, and of course the colour, shading and pattern on them.

I use pyrography to burn in the details. Typically this is done with a scalpel/chisel-edged nib with which I can make fine,

light markings or deep striations so that when I coat them with a thin layer of gesso prior to applying colour, the texture still shows through the light gesso coating.

For the painting I use a combination of airbrushing and brushes for speed, but using brushes works just as well.

DID YOU KNOW...

Walking sticks and canes have been used for millennia. Not only were they used as a walking aid, they were used as weapons and items to denote people of office. Walking sticks were found in the tomb of Tutankhamun.

Things you will need

Tools:

- Personal and respiratory protective equipment
- Bandsaw, coping saw or fretsaw
- Carving knife
- Rotary power carving unit
- Coarse taper burr
- Medium flame or taper burr
- Bull-nose burr
- Round-nose burr
- Sanding drum
- Pyrography unit with scalpel nib
- Drill
- Drill bit to suit the size of screw joint used
- Eyes

Materials:

- Lime (*Tilia x europaea*)
- Paintbrushes
- Airbrush
- Spray template
- Gesso
- Acrylic colours as per the colours shown in each section
- Apoxie sculpt
- Abrasives 120-240 grit
- Screw joints to fit the carved head to walking stick shank
- Ferrule for the end of the stick
- Epoxy resin

Walking sticks

The choice of timber much depends on how much detail you are going to carve into your design, whether you are going to use pyrography to add detail and if you are going to apply colour. The other important aspect is whether the item is going to be used. Some people collect walking sticks and never use them. That is the case for the ones shown here. They will be put in a showcase or display rack. For these I chose to use lime (*Tilia x europaea*) and where there was a double-headed bird, lime heads were placed upon a harder timber used for the crotch.

Some people will want to use the sticks. For those I would use a denser closer-grained material such as walnut (*Juglans* spp.), maple (*Acer* spp.), birch (*Betula* spp.), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), London plane (*Platanus hybridus*) or fruitwoods. The denser timbers will better stand up to any rough and tumble of use.

I will also use a denser timber for birds with pronounced, protruding beaks.

Cutting the timber

Whatever bird head you are carving, start by scaling the plans shown up or down to suit your requirements. Then mark them on to your timber. Once the outline is marked, cut out your bird blank, leaving just a little bit of extra wood for shaping and refining. While finished size isn't critical, you have to make sure that the head is of a suitable size for the stick on which it will sit.

I use a small bandsaw to cut the outline of

the blank, but you can use a coping or fretsaw.

Drilling

Once you have your rough-cut blank, drill a hole centrally and upright into the mating face/end of the stick head, of a size and length to suit the screw joint fittings selected.

Shaping

Once the hole is drilled, start shaping it using either a knife, gouge or rotary carving unit with a suitable burr. You need to make sure you have all the main bulges, swells, hollows and essential lines and forms of the head in the right places. Constantly check your reference material to see what you need to carve and where.

Once shaped, sand the bird down to 240/320 grit. You can do this by hand or power sander.

Detail & colour

Draw in all the main detailed areas, including where the eyes are. Once the eyes are marked, drill a hole in those positions to suit the eyes you will use. Then set them in place using Apoxie sculpt and clean up and shape the excess squeeze-out. Alternatively, carve the eyes instead.

Once dry, use a pyrography unit with a scalpel-edge tip to carve in the feather details in the right direction and depth.

Then coat the whole head with a thin coat of gesso and apply colours as indicated in each panel. You can apply the colours by brush or airbrush. I use both.

Grey partridge



The grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*) is a member of the pheasant family. The collective noun for a group is a covey.

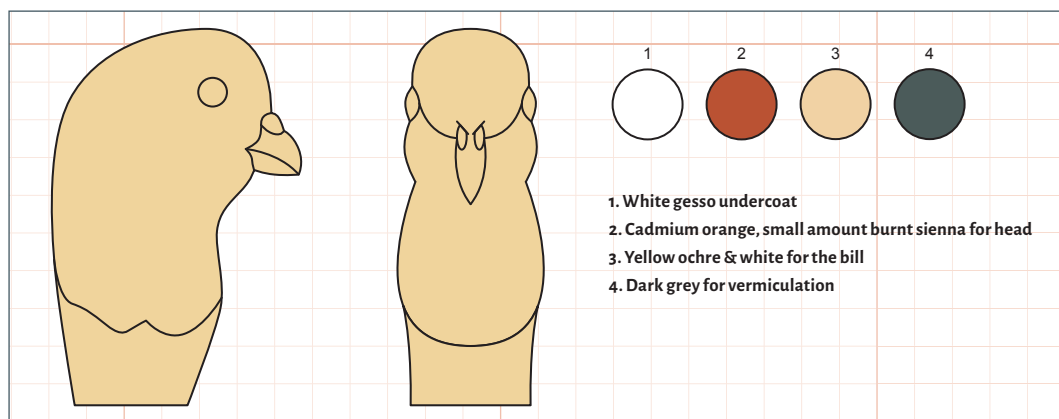
It is a game bird that has a liking for farmland, heathland, grasslands and hedgerows. This is a bird that has sadly suffered a big decline in numbers in the UK. This is possibly due to changes to or loss of their preferred habitat and breeding areas and availability of their food sources, which are insects, seeds, leaves and such like.

Predation, changes in farming practices and diseases are just a few of the factors in the mix of why this bird in decline.

Colour

The head features a prominent reddish-orange face and throat area and the feathers feature a barred/vermiculated pattern. This is the detail that needs care when burning in the pattern and also applying colour.

The white gesso acts as the base colour, but you will need to use a very fine brush to apply the fine, dark grey detail to create the wavy vermiculation that is so distinctive on this bird.



Mallard



1

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1. White gesso undercoat

2. Yellow deep for bill

3. Phthalo green for head

4. Violet iridescent for top of head

5. Burnt sienna & red violet for chest

6. Light green iridescent highlight on head

The male mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) has a striking, iridescent green head which also has iridescent purple on the top and side. It features a white bar which delineates the green head feathers from the purplish-brown chest area. The male also has a yellow beak.

To create these you can buy iridescent paint which you apply over your base colours to create that shimmering change of colour as you view it from different angles.

Pheasant



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1. White gesso undercoat

2. Purple iridescent highlight on head

3. Phthalo green for head

4. Cadmium red for wattle

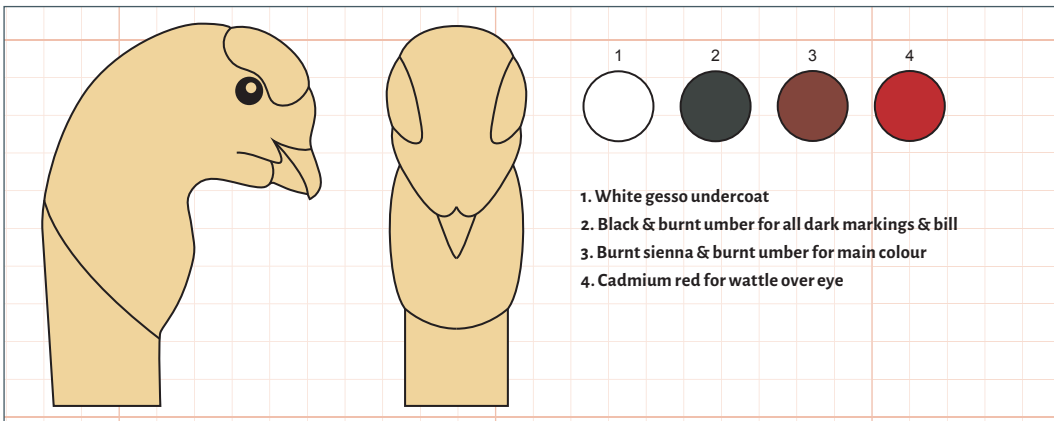
5. Yellow ochre & white for bill

6. Light green iridescent highlight on head

The pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) is a game bird and the male, as with the mallard, features green and purple iridescent plumage on the head and neck. Couple this with the striking red wattle, two ear tufts and, once again, a white collar, and this is a very distinctive bird.

So when carving this, make sure you get the ear tufts in the right place and the wattle and the texture markings right, using your reference material to see where best to apply the colour.

Red grouse

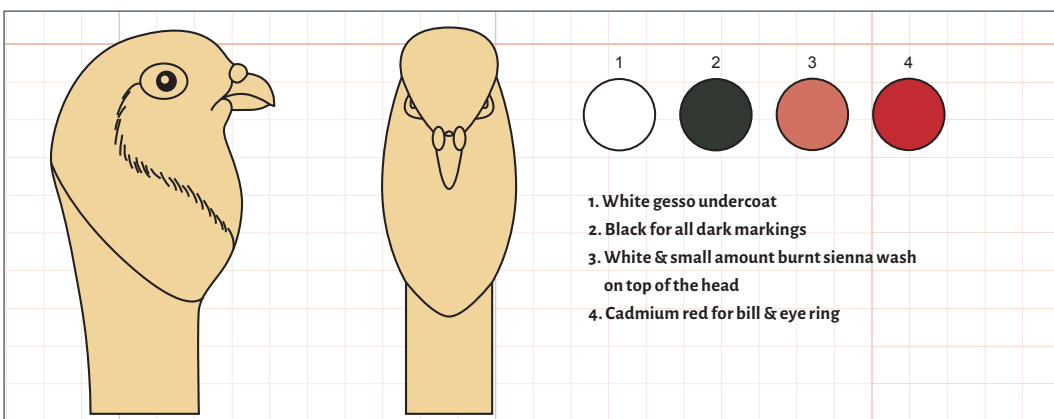


Red grouse (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*) is another gamebird. Its most prominent feature is the red eyebrow. The eye has a white ring around it.

The neck feathers are brown, featuring darker barred patterns and the lower neck feathers as they move down towards the breast feature some white edging.

Make note of how the cheek feathers near the eye form a pronounced area which has the feather detail arcing upwards towards the top of the head.

Red-legged partridge



The red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*) has very pretty head markings. The red beak and ring around the eye are set off against the black markings around the eyes and around the creamy coloured throat area.

It features a reddish-brown top of the head and softer reddish-brown banding which contains the distinctive black-edged white neck feathers.

The rest of the feathers have a bluish tinge to them, creating a nice contrast.

Wood pigeon

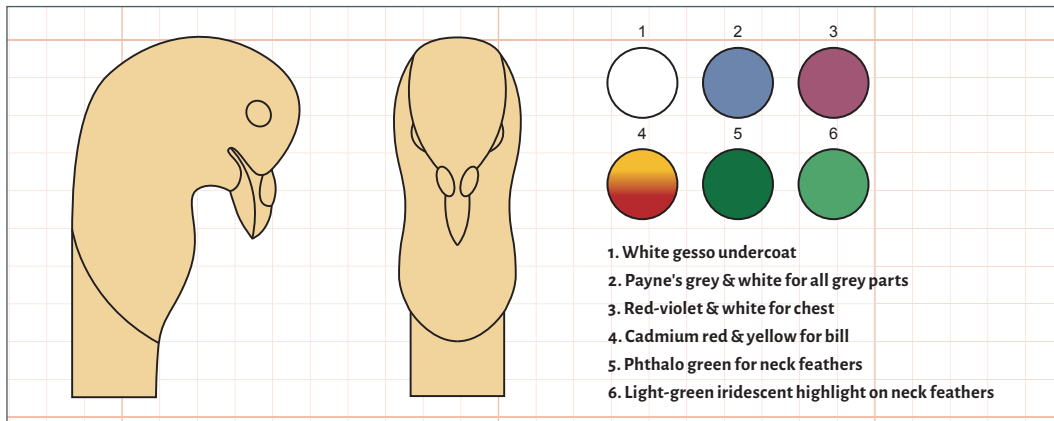
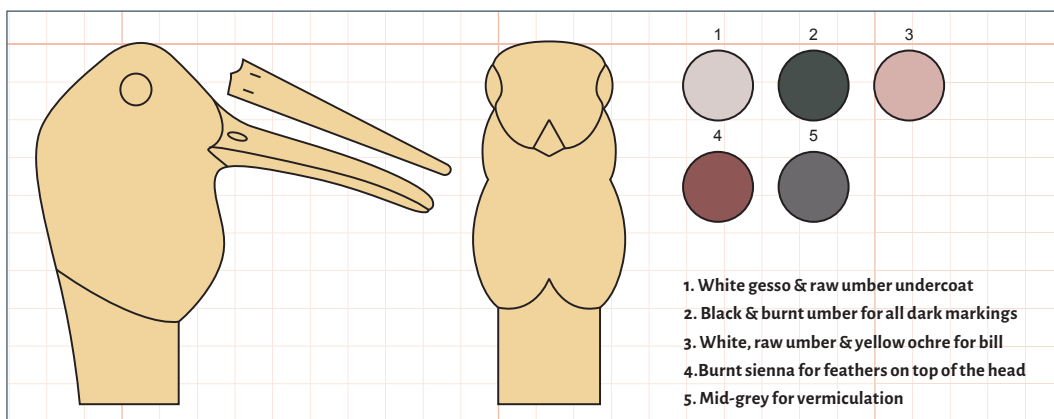
The wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) is a very commonly seen bird and, as far as caring the head for the stick, is one that is more about the positioning of the head, so where the pigeon is looking, rather than any hard sections to carve per se.

The key is getting the feather direction right and the colouring.

The pyrography or carving of the feather detail will give the foundation of the colouring later, but note how the cheek feathers – although not as pronounced as that of the grouse – arc upwards the same as those on the grouse. Note also how some other feathers arc down and around the head to meet on the central line on the back of the head, or down the back.

Once again, this is a bird that features iridescent colouring. There are iridescent green patches on the side of the neck, contrasting with the creamy-white lower area and the dusky purple red colour on the front of the neck.

I have edged these feathers with a darker purple pink colour – they are not as pronounced on a real bird – to create more visual impact.

**Woodcock**

The woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) is a wading bird whose main distinctive feature is the long beak. The beak is typically carved separate from the main head and then bonded to it later. For strength, as wood will likely break, it is carved from ram's horn.

The bird's colouring of various shades of brown and varied brown/grey/black vermiculation on the feathers is designed break up the solid colours to camouflage it when it is in its natural habitats. ■

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Carving your first spoon

In this abridged extract from *Carving Spoons*, Shirley Adler explores carving a spoon with a leaf-form handle



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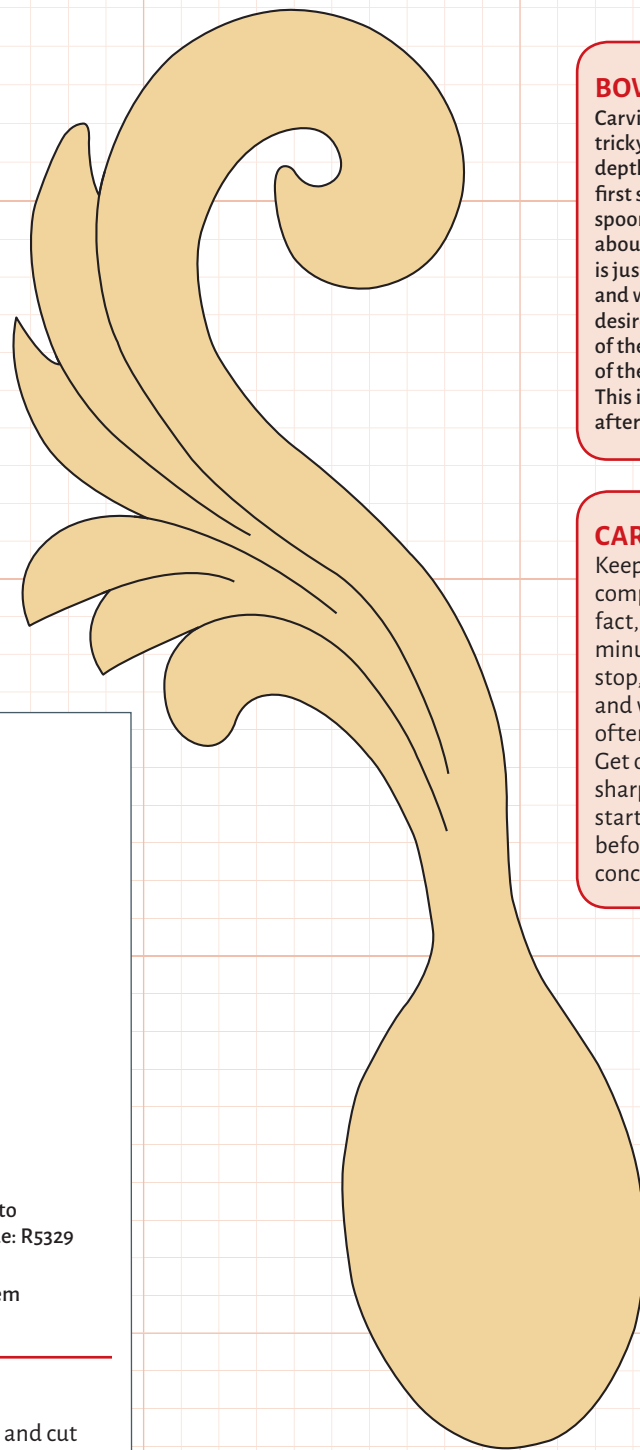
This first carving project is truly organised and presented for someone who has never carved before. I have made the steps quite detailed to build your confidence as you go. If you are a more advanced carver with your own techniques, skip to the patterns in the back, pick one, and just have fun.

The pattern I'm using for this demonstration was used to make the first spoon I carved. The pattern is from Van Dowda, my uncle and best carving buddy. I carved this spoon and just couldn't stop. I hope you enjoy it, too.

The spoon I'm carving in this demonstration is a flat-handled spoon. The thickness of wood

you choose can be anywhere from 13mm to 38mm thick. If this is your first spoon, a piece from 20mm to 25mm thick would be good. The wood should measure at least 100mm wide by 280mm long with the grain running along the length of the wood. Basswood (*Tilia americana*) is a good wood for beginning carvers.



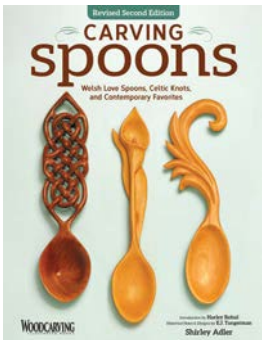


BOWL DEPTH

Carving the depth of the spoon bowl can be tricky. One method to help you gauge the depth of the bowl is shown below. For your first spoon, we will leave the bottom of the spoon bowl about 6mm thick and the sides about 3mm to 5mm thick. The other method is just to carve by feel. Carve the bowl slowly and when you think you are close to the desired depth, use your thumb on the bottom of the spoon and your finger on the inside of the bowl to feel and measure the depth. This is easy and will come quite naturally after you have carved one or two spoons.

CARVING THE BOWL

Keep in mind that you don't have to complete this carving in one day. In fact, you may only want to carve for 15 minutes. If your hands or eyes get tired, stop, put your carving down, get up, and walk around. Injuries and mistakes often occur when you are tired. Get out your cut and stab-proof glove, sharp tools, and pattern before you start. We talked about grain direction before and this is the place where this concept will become most obvious.



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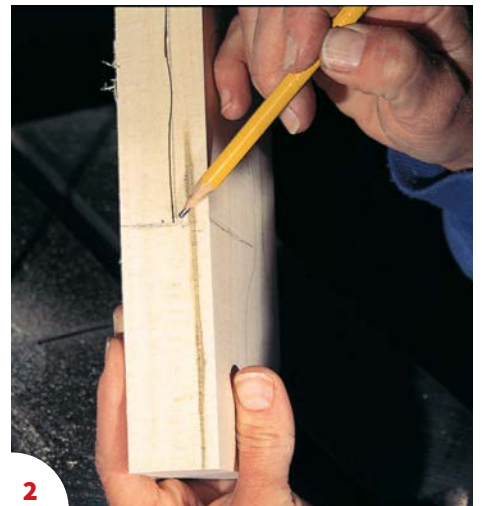
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Initial cutting

1 Transfer the pattern to your wood and cut out using a bandsaw, scrollsaw, or jigsaw. I've trimmed my board a bit so it is easier to handle. Draw a line on the board at the point of the spoon where the bowl transitions into the handle. Continue this transition line over on to the side of the board. Then draw a vertical line to meet it. This vertical line will represent the thickness of the spoon handle.

2 For this spoon we will use approximately 13mm for the handle thickness. On the bandsaw, cut the handle thickness line. Cut down to, but not past, the transition line. Stop your cut right there and back the blade out of the wood. Don't worry if this cut is not perfect. If it is plus or minus 3mm it will be fine. Do not remove the waste handle wood. This wood will give strength to the handle and give you something to grip while you carve the spoon bowl.



3 Chuck a drill bit, about 3mm, in your hand drill or drill press. Gauge the bit so that you drill a hole leaving about 6mm of wood at the centre of the spoon bowl. Wrap tape around the bit to act as a 'stop' indicator. Drill the hole in the centre of the spoon bowl or at the point that will be the deepest part of the bowl. Stop when the tape touches the top of your board. When you carve the bowl to the depth of this hole, then you know to stop. The 6mm will give you enough wood to shape and sand both the inside and outside of the spoon bowl.

Now you are almost ready to start carving. You should draw a line 3mm to 5mm inside the outer bowl line of your pattern. We will call this the inner wall line. If you enlarge or reduce patterns, remember to redraw this

inner line to leave 3mm or a bit more to create the wall thickness for the spoon bowl.

4 Begin by holding the bowl of your spoon with the handle toward you. Start at the top (handle side) of the bowl on the inside wall line. Insert your spoon gouge about 1/2in or about 5mm. Push in the gouge and at the same time gently and slowly push down on the handle. This will cut the wood and lift the blade of the gouge out of the wood so you will be ready for the next cut. This is the same motion you would use if you were trying to spoon very hard ice cream. If your tools are sharp, it should feel about the same. Carving in one direction will produce a smooth curl of wood. This is 'with the grain'.

5 Carving in the other direction will produce a rough, unpredictable splinter of wood. This is 'against the grain'. Don't worry about visually analysing grain direction. If you start to carve and discover you are getting an unpredictable splintering chip, you are going against the grain. Just turn your work around. On the bowl, you will be forced to carve part of it against the grain. Always start your gouge cut on the internal wall line and work to the centre. If there is any tear-out, it will be in the area you are going to remove.

Take only very small 'bites' as you continue this process around the line. Don't push the gouge all the way to the centre because these first few cuts will want to tear all the way across the bowl. You will not work across the grain as you go around, but always with the grain, using short strokes as you work on the sides of the bowl. You can still see the depth drill hole, but the next few cuts will remove it.

6 Now sand the inside of the spoon bowl with the 80 grit sandpaper. We sand this before we carve the outside, so if we have a deformation or thin place we can compensate for it with the outside wall. Your first sanding for the bowl inside is finished.

Your fingers can feel very small deformations in a surface. Use your fingers to check the shape of your spoon bowl. Close your eyes. Your eye can be fooled by the wood grain, but not your fingertips. Clean up any problems before moving on to the outside of the spoon bowl.

7 Now on to the outside of the spoon bowl. Make a pencil mark on the bottom of the spoon at the lowest point of the bowl. This will be the place where you leave the most material.

You will not carve this line away, but will carve up to it and sand it away when you refine the finished shape of the spoon bowl outside. I will sketch an idea for the spoon bowl outside so you can see what our goal is here. Don't depend on a line for your carving. Just try to match the inside bowl shape with the outside wall. Do this by eye and by feel. A transition line into the handle may be helpful.

8 Now carve the outside of the bowl using a slicing cut. Carve so that the outside parallels the inside contour that you've just sanded. Leave the wall thickness 3mm to 5mm. I have some spoon bowls that are thicker and they look fine too. You will find that your bowl outside carves nicely one direction but produces torn chips the other way. The point on the spoon bowl where this change takes place is at the middle or, in most cases, the widest part of the spoon bowl. This is the effect of grain direction again, combined with the shape of the bowl. Just turn your work around and carve the other way.

9 Again, use your finger and thumb to gauge the shape and thickness of the spoon bowl. Now carve the other side. Look for symmetry or a pleasing shape to your spoon bowl. Make any adjustments you think are necessary. Now sand the outside of the bowl with 80 grit.

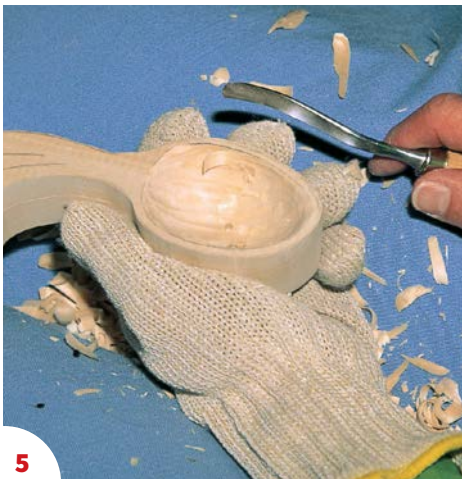
Round over the edge of the spoon bowl with your sandpaper and again look for symmetry. Turn the spoon over and check the back of the bowl as well.



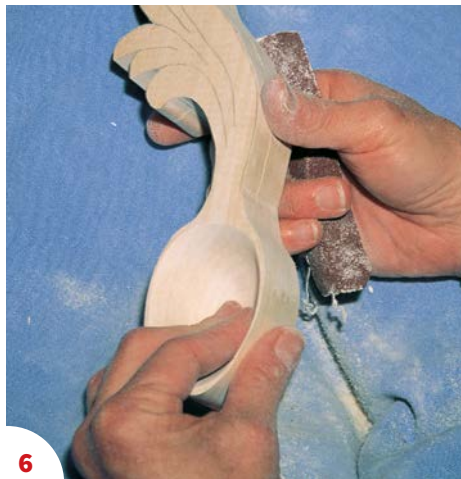
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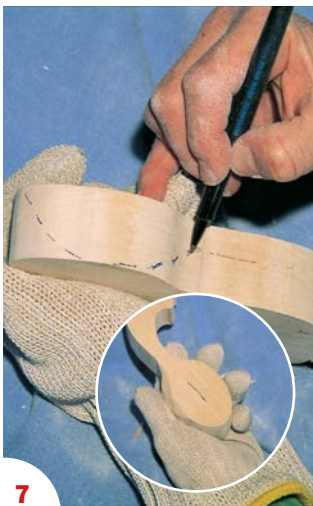
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CARVING THE HANDLE

Now you are ready to carve the handle. There are only two cuts we will use for carving any of the spoon handles – a stop cut and a slicing cut. It is that simple. A stop cut just outlines the area you are working on and prevents the wood from tearing across this line. The slicing cut removes the wood up to the stop cut or shapes from high areas to low areas. That's really all there is to it.

10 It is time to start the handle. This line is the transition line from the bowl to the handle. Remove the waste handle wood by carving the transition from the bowl to the handle.

11 Remove wood from this area of the handle in small slivers. Use the knife to carefully remove the waste wood. As the wood is removed the waste wood on the handle starts to break away. When enough wood has been removed, the waste wood on the handle can be removed. You want a smooth transition that leaves a radius or web of material here to give strength to the handle. With the 80 grit, smooth the transition area.

12 Look at it from different directions. Are you pleased? If not, make any adjustments you need by additional carving or sanding. If you must carve more, remember to clean off all of the sanding grit before you use your knife or the grit will dull the blade.

13 Look at your spoon handle. We will begin by carving the left-most leaf. This leaf is peaked in the middle and drops away on both sides. Therefore the peak will be the closest to you and will be the area of least material removed. The edges of the leaf will be the areas where you remove the most material. Work from the top of the spoon to the centre of the handle thickness for now. We will work from the back later.

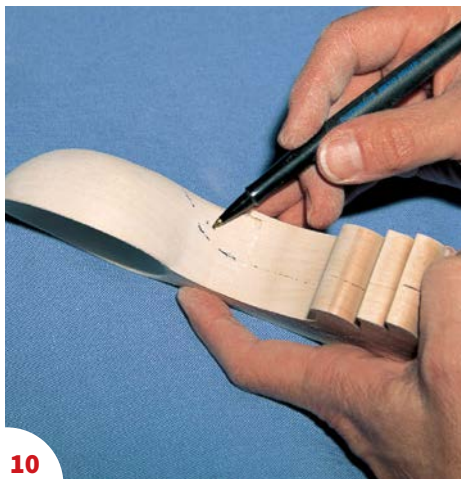
14 Outline your leaf with a stop cut. This cut is perpendicular to the surface of your wood. Slice up to the stop cut to create depth and define this leaf. Repeat the stop cut and slice cuts until you get the leaf shaped on the inside.

15 Use a slicing cut on the outside to shape the leaf. This leaf is complete on the front side. We have taken the shaping process to the centre on the thickness of the handle.

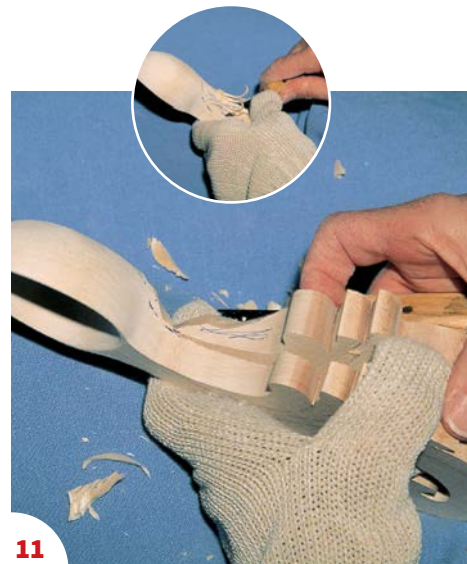
16 We will continue the shaping from the back. You may choose not to carve the backs of your spoons. If this is your choice, take the shaping of the edges of the design from the front to the full thickness of the wood and round over the back edges a bit. Be sure to sand the back smooth.

Keep in mind that whatever was most visible on the top side may be covered on the back. If you need help visualising this, cut the leaf shapes out of paper and glue them together as you want them to be in your carving. Then look at the front and the back.

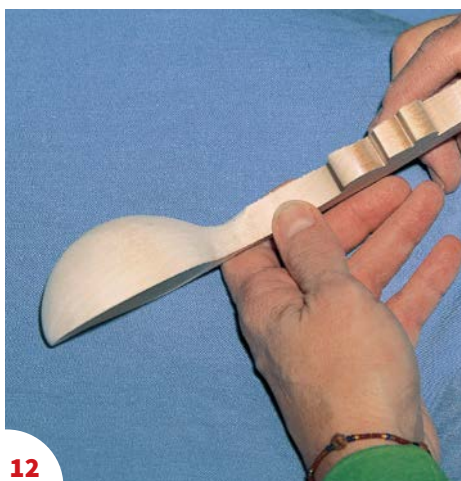
17 The second leaf is behind the first and third leaves.



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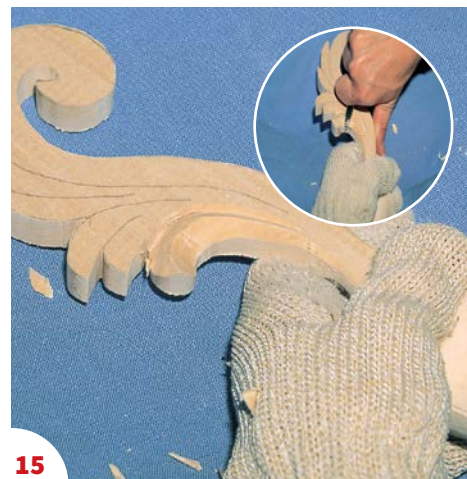
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**18****19****20**

18 Make the stop cuts to outline this leaf. Shape this leaf as before, remembering the high and low areas. Just carve the top – we will get to the back later. Go on to the next leaf on the top side.

19 Use slicing cuts with the knife to separate the leaves. Remove small bits of wood from the end of the leaf to shape the tip.

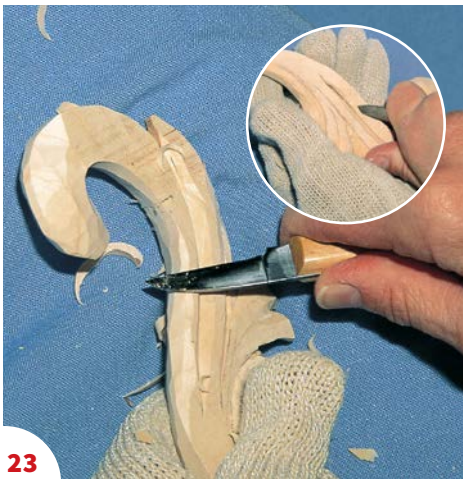
20 Skip to the large leaf – the most dominant one. Use the stop cut to outline and the slicing cut to shape. Peak the centre of this leaf. Support your work.

21 Work on the remaining two leaves in the same manner.

**21****22**

22 Let's return to the back. This leaf was partially hidden in the front view, so more of it will be visible in the back view. Keep that in mind as you carve the back of the spoon. You can create some interest and movement in the leaves by carving their tips bending front to back.

23 Detailing the back of a spoon is not always necessary, depending on how your finished spoon will be displayed or used. For this spoon separate the leaves and round the edges on the back side of the spoon. Nicely formed leaves give the spoon a more finished look when viewed from the side. The back of the handle is now finished. Turn the spoon over and check the leaves from the front.

**23****24**

24 Give the leaf tips some 'movement' by adding a slight curve to the ends. Use a toothbrush to gently remove wood particles from the front of the finished spoon. Turn the spoon over and brush the back as well.

SANDING AND FINISHING

Before you start to sand and finish, check it over one last time for imperfections. Close your eyes and feel the bowl with your fingers. Is it as even and as smooth as you can make it? Open your eyes and look closely at the handle. Are there any parts of the design that need to be touched up? When you are happy with what you have, sand the spoon first with 80 grit sandpaper, then use finer grits until you are happy with the finished spoon. Remember to brush away the grit between sanding steps and also after final sanding.

**25****26**

25 Because this spoon is for decorative purposes, we'll use polyurethane as a finish. Paint on a coat of polyurethane. I used gloss. Poly may foam. Don't let these bubbles stay on your piece. 'Paint' your brush on a dry rag to remove some of the polyurethane. Then go over your spoon with this dry brush to even the coat of poly and remove the bubbles or any excess finish. Hang your spoon to dry.

26 Once dry, sand your spoon with very fine sandpaper. Remove the residue and then paint a second coat. Repeat this step for each coat of polyurethane you apply. ▶



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Looking at freeform chip carving

Murray Taylor opens up the world of freeform chip carving, introducing a new tool and taking you step by step through a basic freeform carving and on to a project idea

In this article I will introduce you to the wonderful world of freeform chip carving, from the basic to the more advanced. I will introduce a new tool, work through freeform carvings from putting the drawing on to the wood to the completed pieces, and finally suggest some ideas for a project.

An overall look at freeform chip carving

Having so far been constrained by the formality of geometric forms, borders and rosettes etc., we can now explore freeform chip carving. Everything you have done so far will help you with knife control and fluidity of movement when carving flowing forms or the demands of carving fine detail.

Your choice of subject with freeform is infinite – you can work from your own sketches, photographs or copyright-free design source books.

Freeform designs can take a asymmetrical form, such as plants, animals or buildings or they can have regular motifs in a symmetrical form.



Two carvings in the Japanese style inspired by ideas from *The Complete Book of Oriental Designs* by Search Press

Choice of design

Drawings you choose can be of a general nature and not specifically designed for freeform. The accompanying photographs of the Draig Goch, or Red Dragon – the emblem on the flag of Wales, where I live – is one I often use in relief carving or piercings in lovespoons, but here you can see how it can be easily adapted for a freeform chip carving.

For more complicated subjects I tend to plan and draw my design on to tracing paper then apply the drawing to the wood using a preparatory graphite paper, I prefer this to carbon paper as unwanted lines can easily be removed with an eraser. Drawings for freeform carving are not as exact as they are for geometric work, so lines can be added or removed at will.

TOP TIP: Be careful with freeform drawings – close converging lines can often result in surface break-out which is unsightly in the finished work.



The dragon and Celtic knot corners drawn on to the wood



The completed dragon finished with a coloured wax

A simple design

Let's now take a look at carving a simple design, I have chosen a turned lime plate, but you can just as well use a plain board or even practise on a piece from your scrap box. The floral and leaf design is drawn freehand on to the wood or you can use a tracing.

When you are cutting the flowing curves of the floral design remember to raise your knife to get round the tighter bends and alter the thickness and depth of the cuts to give more expression to the

design. I have included the pencil marks where the stab marks will be, just to give you an idea of the design, but they will be erased before I use the stab knife in order not to drive the graphite into the wood – it looks unsightly in the finished piece. You don't have to follow the design exactly, you can try anything for your practice pieces. Just remember not to complicate the design and to adapt the tight curves in your drawing to your ability with the knife.



The floral design drawn onto the plate



The completed floral design

TOP TIP: Remember that most of us carry a camera on our mobile phone, so click away at everything you think will make an interesting design

A more advanced design

We are now going to have a look at a more advanced freeform carving, in this case a cherry tree with birds in the branches.

In the drawing you will notice some areas marked with an X. This is a slight divergence from the normal chip carving style as these areas will be pierced, which gives a more open and natural feeling to the picture.



The Cherry Tree, inspired by ideas from a pattern book by Dover Press



The outer shape and piercings are now cut out

A new tool



Two examples of the traditional freeform carving knife

Now I am going to introduce you to the European-style chip carving knife. It is not essential, but is useful when cutting long, curving lines as we will see when I carve the tree.

This style of knife is more usually used in mainland Europe but is available



Using the freeform carving knife

in the UK. It is held with both hands and is used for long flowing curves as you can see in the photograph.

It can be seen in this carving that I have gone a little deeper into the wood to define the trunk of the tree and give more definition to



The completed Cherry Tree

the piece. The piercing allows us to put more expression into the interlacing branches of the old tree. The finish was one coat half-and-half sanding sealer and thinners, then a liquid dark wax was brushed on, left for 10 minutes then wiped off with a cloth.

TOP TIP: Don't discard pieces of wood with knots. Note the plate and the trunk of the tree – they can often be used to dramatic effect



Another plate carved with traditional designs depicting

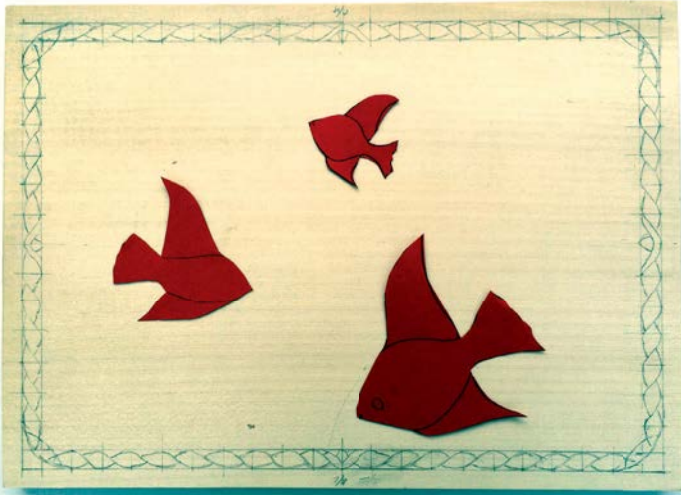


Two simple spoon designs with freeform carving



A freeform chip carving of a Japanese lady inspired by drawings from *The Complete Book of Oriental Designs* by Search Press

An idea for a project



The prepared board with border and cutout silhouettes

For the project connected to this article I have come up with a DIY idea. The fish in the drawing is based on an angelfish, which I have chosen because its overall shape, markings and flowing tendrils lend themselves to a freeform chip carving picture.

I have arranged the fish of different sizes to form the scene and included some rocks and plant forms to bring it all together. You could, of course, draw any fish, a variety of fish or something completely different.

To create the scene, I have drawn and cut out different sizes of fish from coloured card, then these can be moved around on your piece of wood until you are satisfied with the result. I have drawn a freehand rope-style border for this piece. Remember to try to make the border connect to the picture.



The completed drawing, the rocks and plants etc, are all drawn in freehand

Now it's time to carve, but unlike the geometric forms it does not matter if you leave out something that you think does not work or just add things as you see fit.

After sealing the wood, I have used a dark liquid wax to define the design. This wall piece is not meant to exhibit great artistic merit – on the contrary, it is quite simplistic. My intention is just to give you an idea of how to put it together and I hope it will inspire you to use your own designs and produce some interesting pieces.

Remember to stop regularly and alter the width of the cuts to add interest and define your work. Try experimenting with piercing and deeper cuts as I have done in the Cherry Tree and remember – there are no rules, just have fun and experiment with new ideas. ▶



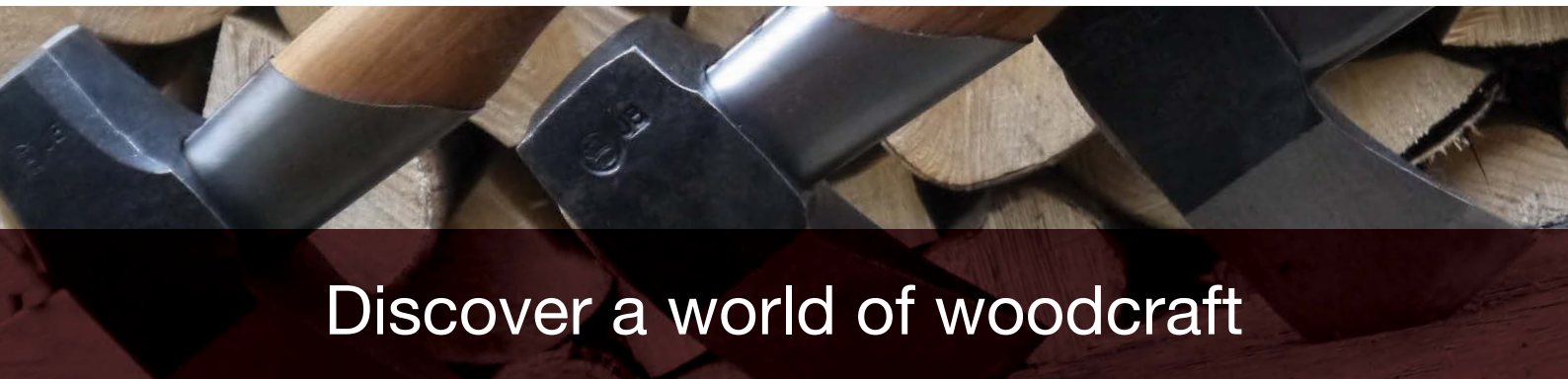
The completed picture

In the next series of articles

I will be starting with an introduction to lettering using a knife, and go on to look at different styles of lettering and ways of carving them



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The diary of a student carver

William Barsley interviews woodcarver and tutor Seana Ku about becoming a professional carver and gives an update on the final year carving projects



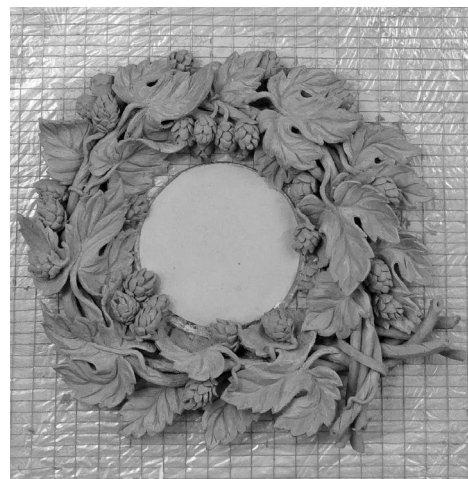
William Barsley carving his ornamental mirror of hops

This series follows my journey as I undertake a three-year diploma in Ornamental Woodcarving and Gilding at the City & Guilds of London Art School, turning my passion for woodcarving into a full-time profession.

With Easter fast approaching we were at the halfway point of the academic year and as always, it was great to see the final projects taking shape. Some, such as myself, are carving two smaller pieces for the degree show, with others carving one big showpiece, meaning everyone was at slightly different stages in their work.

As I described in the previous article, my first project, carving the heraldic crest for Roald Dahl's grandson, is now complete and safely stored away until

the degree show in June. In January I began my next project – an ornamental mirror of hops carved in sweet chestnut, measuring 500mm in diameter. Being from Kent (a historic English county for hop production) and growing up surrounded by hop fields and traditional oast houses, I have always wanted try my hand at carving hops. I decided to carve the hops in sweet chestnut, which is a beautiful timber, slightly easier to carve than oak, but with the same look and feel to it. Sweet chestnut was, in fact, commonly used to create the hop 'poles' up which the hops would grow, so seemed a perfect choice of timber. So far it's proving a beautiful wood to carve, which is a relief, as there's a lot of undercutting and detail to come.



The hop frame modelled in Chavant oil-based clay

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM BARSLEY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM BARSLEY



ABOVE: A close-up of the ongoing dolphin table
RIGHT: Wilfe Gorlin carving the dolphins' heads



Update on my fellow students

A few articles ago I introduced you to my woodcarving peers and their final year projects. Now, all these months on, it's exciting to see their carvings coming to life. Here is a quick update on how they are doing, before you see their finished work in a few articles' time.

Wilfe Gorlin is carving a sculptural coffee table for a client, with two classical/ heraldic dolphins beautifully intertwined and supporting a clear glass table top. Since last time, Wilfe has jointed and roughed out the dolphins, which was no mean feat given the size of them and the twist of their bodies, making them hard to clamp and hold in position while carving. He is now moving on to the finer details, such as the fins and scales (classical dolphins usually look a lot more fish like than real dolphins, hence the addition of scales). He is still deciding whether to gild the dolphins (potentially in silver) or leave them with a natural finish, but either way it will be great seeing the table come together.

Borys Burroughs is working on an exciting project to carve a picture frame for an original Van Dyck painting (the portrait of Olivia Boteler Porter – c.1630s), for the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, County Durham. Since last time Borys has had his design (modeled in the auricular style) and test carvings approved by the museum, and has almost finished carving the frame. His next step is to oil gild the frame, for which he will be using 231/2 regular deep gold, which he will tone to ensure its colour is more sympathetic and in harmony with the painting.

Xabier Mendizabal has been working on a commission to carve the coat of arms for the outgoing Prime Warden of the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers, a tradition going back 300 years or more. Since last time, Xabier has finished a beautiful full-sized clay model of the coat of arms, which was approved by the client. He was in the finishing stages of the carving, having done the main roughing out, and had aimed to finish the carving by Easter. The next stage will be to gild and paint the coat of arms, along with a gilded plaque underneath with hand-painted lettering.



Borys Burroughs' finished frame prior to gilding



Borys Burroughs putting the finishing touches to his Van Dyck picture frame



Xabier Mendizabal carving the coat of arms for the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers

From student to carver – an interview with woodcarver and tutor Saena Ku



Woodcarving for the Carpenters' Company by Seana Ku

Continuing the discussion from the last few articles on how best to make the transition from student to professional carver, I had the opportunity to interview Saena Ku (www.thewoodcarvingstudio.co.uk), an exceptional woodcarver and carving tutor at the City & Guilds of London Art School. Saena kindly answered some of my questions about her experience of becoming a woodcarver and her advice to beginners.

1. First of all, how and why did you decide to become a woodcarver?

I always knew I wanted to work with my hands to physically create something. One day I walked into the National Portrait Gallery and by chance I saw a special exhibition on picture frames – The Art of the Picture Frame. It was not only the finished frames, but the entire process of making that was explained in the exhibition. What impressed me the most was the intricate craftsmanship present throughout. I marvelled at how each frame, beautifully carved with quietly complementing rhythms and forms, almost completed the painting it

surrounded. Here I had an epiphany. I determined in that very instant to learn how to do it for myself.

2. What was the most valuable piece of advice you were given when you first started a career in woodcarving?

I was very lucky to have a friend and mentor who is a woodcarver. He told me to 'ask advice' when I am stuck or uncertain, especially in the beginning of my career. I took him up on this offer frequently.

3. What have you learned that you wish you knew at the beginning?

Be patient, stick with your craft and eventually your time will come.

4. What are the common pitfalls that a new carver may face when starting out?

Many beginners will have to take on a part-time job to support their business initially. It's easy to get distracted by working in another field, where the earning potential may be temporarily better in comparison. Therefore it is important to strike a balance between a 'supportive' job and continuing your practice in your own carving skills.

5. What prospects do a career in woodcarving hold compared to a more 'contemporary' job?

In my own case I can honestly say that I am very happy with what I do and I look forward to working each morning. As a self-employed woodcarver I have flexible working hours, which I can arrange mostly the way I choose. In the traditional carving sector I have the chance to work on some magnificent buildings with huge historical importance. In my contemporary carving I have the chance to meet a variety of very interesting clients and carve projects that require a lot of creative input. It has been a long and hard-working journey to get here, but I feel that it is a worthwhile journey to take.

6. Any other thoughts or advice you may have for a new carver?

Be active in your community among carvers and related crafts. Make yourself known by networking and advertising.

Next time.... I travel to France on a historic carving study trip, exploring the cathedrals of northeast France. ▀

Next issue...

On sale 23 August

**Andrew Thomas shows how
to carve your own clamshell**



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW THOMAS

Carve a sleeping dragon in stone
and oak, with Steve Bisco

Carve a wild rose appliqué
with Mark Fortune

Carve your own billy goat
in relief, with Johan Roudy

Dave Western explores traditional
lovespoon symbolism

Peter Benson offers advice for
those entering competitions

Step-by-step guide to
carving a polar bear

A close-up photograph of several wood carving tools, including gouges and chisels with wooden handles, resting on a dark wooden surface. In the background, a light-colored wooden piece with intricate carved patterns is visible.

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From the community

Here is a personal selection of websites and letters that caught the Editor's attention this month

ON THE WEB



YouTube



Leaf-shaped fruit bowl

This speeded-up clip by WieselRobot is a real treat to watch. There is no commentary, just a music soundtrack. The beauty of this video is you can pause it any time and see what is happening at that moment. There is a lot of information to be gained from this video. WieselRobot has many other videos worth watching too.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1op18MypLJA



Carving a European woodcock, by Bill Pricket

This clip by Bill has no commentary, but does have a nice soundtrack and the clip shows key stages of what he does to make a woodcock. It gives a very interesting insight as to how he works, the tools he uses, control and use of tools at various stages.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TNXL4vdi-M

FROM THE FORUM

Here we share with you pieces that readers have posted on our *Woodcarving* forum. If you are interested in the possibility of your piece appearing here, or would simply like feedback and advice on your work, visit www.woodworkersinstitute.com and click on the forum button.

Yorkshire Terrier

Claude posted: This is a wood carving of a Yorkshire Terrier puppy. It's standing on a windowsill looking at the woods. It is about 90mm tall, carved from basswood.

Copeau12 commented: Each new carving of yours is a surprise :)



www.woodworkersinstitute.com/forum/yorkshire-terrier-puppy_topic21773.html



Carving a decorate corner detail

This clip by Adolf Yuriev shows how he creates a decorative corner detail. I have to say that this clip shows an exquisite piece of work and other clips by him show some similarly stunning work. Even though the commentary is not in English, the video shows clearly all of the processes, tools used and sequence of cuts. The end result is something I have never seen before and I will be exploring much more from Adolf.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuLAo8UFUTY

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.

Carving courses

Hi Mark.

It was interesting to read about the experiences of Sarah Goss and William Barsley in *Woodcarving* magazine and the paths they were able to make work for themselves. It was unfortunate that when Sarah finished her degree, that course ended. Carving/ sculpting and such areas of art really need these courses. I did not work towards a degree, but for Woodcarving Indentures. It is good knowing, though, there are other supports there and the trade still holds interest for people such as Sarah and William.

Before I read about Sarah and Williams achievements in more recent years, I had wished I had worked toward a similar qualification. I did not realise then you could work for a degree in woodcarving. However, the City & Guilds had been mentioned on occasions

by my then mentor, Mr Coe. I noticed Sarah worked on Uppark House. I was asked to submit a metre of dado rail, but did not make the mark, but am glad Sarah did.

I have attached a commode base that I was asked to do while I was self-employed. But because of cost, the customer wished that the finer details be left off, as you may be able to see from the original, which is gilt-based and at the time waiting to be restored.

Unfortunately, I have noticed, carving goes first if a job cost is in question. One of the few types which remains is oak – from my experience.

Mike Durrant, Brisbane



Leaves

Mark,
Inspired by leaves carved in relief by beginners at Ringwood Woodcarvers, I decided to start carving a three-dimensional leaf just to see how thin I was able to go. The number of leaves I carved increased as I found more dried up old leaves to 'copy', interesting woods and finishes etc. I had to struggle with a number of safety issues, including holding the wood while shaping it and dust etc.

Both the leaves and the platter were hand carved, though with the help of power tools. The woods used bear no relation to the leaves depicted.

Eventually I put the collection together and made a display that a number of people found pleasing. I hope you find the photograph attached of interest.

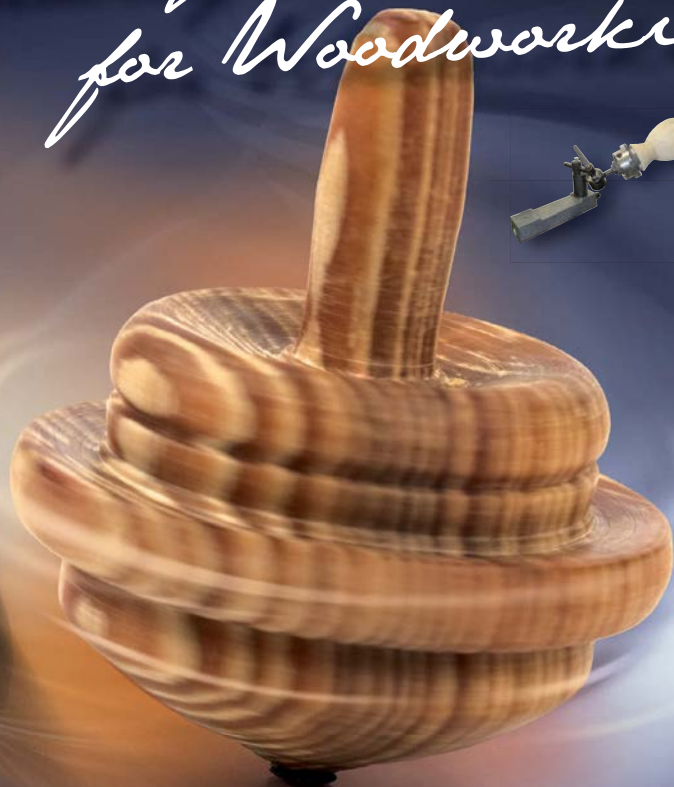
This led me to think about creating displays of individual carvings that work well together as scenes, or other combinations that work, rather than simply carving individual pieces and displaying them.

Tony Wilson



If you have something you want your fellow carvers to know, send in your letters and stories to Mark Baker at *Woodcarving*, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN or email markb@thegmcgroup.com

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davidwesternlovespoons.com



Johan Roudy is a French woodcarver who started the craft in 2005 as a hobby, but turned professional in 2012. Self-taught, Johan is inspired in his work by nature and has a great interest in ornamental carving.
johan-roudy-woodcarving.blogspot.fr



Mike Wood has been carving all his life and professionally since 1986. Carving mostly birds, he is self-taught and takes great inspiration from the American bird carvers.
www.mikewoodbird.co.uk
mikewoodbird@btinternet.com



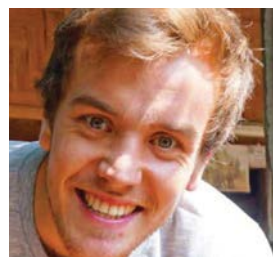
Murray Taylor was a jeweller and silversmith before retiring 15 years ago and devoting time to woodcarving. Murray has made three DVDs related to woodcarving, one of which is on chip carving, and he is involved in teaching and promoting chip carving.
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Peter Benson has travelled the world teaching and judging woodcarving of all standards for the past 20 years. He has written two books on the subject.
bencarve@btinternet.com



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



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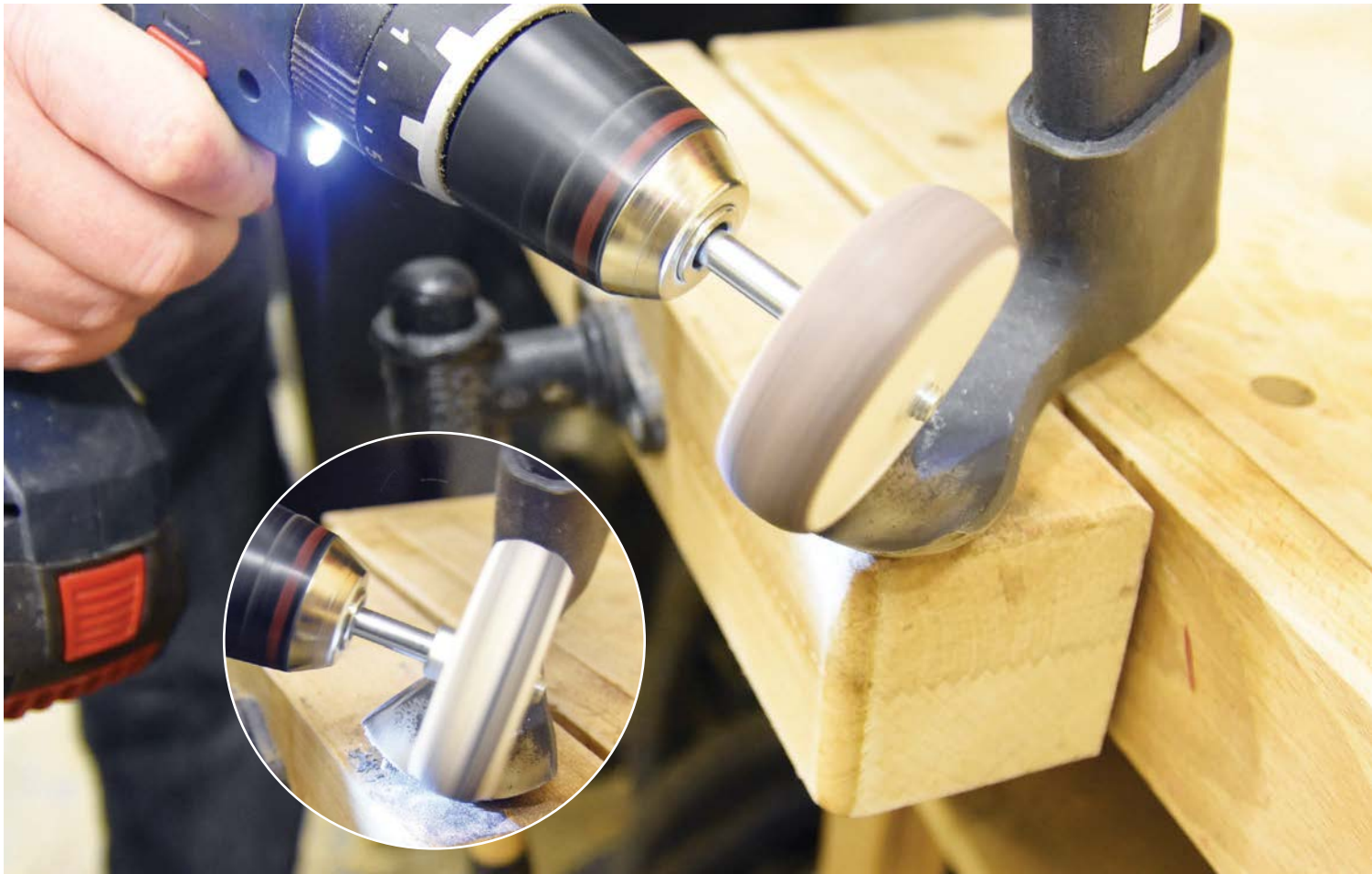
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Mark Baker tries out new honing wheels and compounds from Hewn & Hone



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK BAKER

Nic Westermann, from Hewn & Hone (H&H), has recently introduced honing wheels and honing and stopping compounds of various types to help carvers create the cutting edge they require on their tools.

The range comprises abrasive-coated wheels, shaped felt wheels and honing/stopping compounds.

Abrasive-coated felt wheels

These wheels feature a radiused edge with a pre-coated layer right up to the junction of the flat sides. The wheels are available in two sizes – 68mm x 20mm and 48mm x 20mm for 50mm – and are used in the flutes of gouges and adzes. They are available with either a coarse grit coating, which is a reddish colour, or with a fine abrasive coating, which is a light reddish-brown colour. Each wheel features a pre-bored hole to accept an 8mm mandrel/carrier of some sort.

Shaped felt wheels

Shaped felt wheels come in two shapes and are not coated with anything, so you can apply a honing compound of your choice. One of the shapes available is radiused-edge, labelled as a soft felt. It is firm to touch but has some give. The other is V-shaped, which is labelled as hardened to retain its shape, and is much firmer to the touch than the radiused-edge wheels. The radiused-edge wheels, the same shape and sizes as the abrasive coated wheels, are available in 48mm x 20mm and 68mm x 20mm sizes.

The V-shaped wheel has a 45° V-angle. H&H commented: 'It is designed to polish the inside of V tools. The 45° angle can also sharpen 60° and 90° tools one wing at a time.'

Mandrels

H&H offers two sizes of mandrel. The small mandrel features a 12mm threaded section and has an overall length of 60mm. The

medium mandrel has a 20mm threaded section and an overall length of 75mm.

Each mandrel is 8mm in diameter and at the end of the threaded section there is a shouldered nut against which the wheel aligns and secures.



Compounds

Hewn & Hone has three new honing and stropping compounds.

The coarsest grade is grey in colour and is not really a finishing compound but is designed to remove scratches out of edges left from 320-1,000 grit belts or stones. It will leave a slightly dull look to a bevel.

Blue is a medium-grade compound that can be used after the grey compound and will leave a very sharp, polished edge, or can be used to remove scratches from 600 grit down to 2,000 grit abrasives to refine the edge/bevel further prior to final finishing with a finer abrasive.

White is an ultra-fine compound designed to give the ultimate edge on well-prepared bevels.

In use

I started off by using the abrasive-coated felt wheels, beginning with the coarse grit grade wheel. This was mounted on a mandrel and fitted into a cordless drill. The wheel loaded square and ran true. Wearing eye protection and a suitably rated respirator, I started to use the wheel, ensuring it ran away from the cutting edge, not into it, to refine the inside flute of an adze with an out-cannel grind where the inside of the flute was black and not polished. I set about using the pre-coated coarse grit wheel first, followed by the pre-coated fine wheel. The fine abrasive on the wheel soon made light work of any scratch marks from the coarse abrasive.

I then loaded on to the mandrel a radiused wheel loaded with the blue-coloured medium abrasive compound and the surface was cleaned of any residual visible scratches very quickly.

A final wheel was loaded with the ultra-fine white abrasive compound, and this created a highly polished surface. I have also been using the radiused wheels and compounds to polish the flutes of gouges.

I have been using the V-shaped wheel loaded with the block of fine abrasive compound on the inside of V-tools to help create a highly polished flute and thereby a better cutting edge.

It is worth noting that I also loaded up leather honing stropps with the three grit grades and found that they worked incredibly well when used in sequence to hone restore, hone and polish edges too.

Conclusion

None of the parts is expensive and the various elements are well made. The whole range is well considered and I couldn't fault these items in any way. The abrasive-coated wheels and non-coated wheels, used in conjunction with the abrasive compound blocks, or the blocks used on hand stropps, work incredibly well and help to refine or restore an edge with the minimum of fuss. The ultra-fine compound creates a highly polished and wickedly sharp cutting edge.

Prices: from £1.40-£9.60

Contact: Hewn & Hone

Web: www.hewnandhone.co.uk

The Narex small adze is tried out by Mark Baker



When working on larger projects or carved bowls an adze can make light work of removing the bulk, but can also be capable of fine cuts. This small adze from Narex has a blade width of 50mm and it has a reasonably tight-radius curved cutting edge and the head length is 145mm long. The total length of the adze is 290mm from the top of the head to the end of the handle and it weighs 600g.

The bevel is on the outside of the curved head profile, so has an out-cannel bevel, and the head has a gentle curve arcing from the cutting edge to the back of the head. The adze comes sharpened, the bevel is nicely polished and the adze is supplied with a leather sheath to protect the edge.

In use

The adze is designed for single-handed use. The handle is nicely shaped and of a length that fits well in the hand. Coupled with the 600g overall weight, it feels very well balanced. As you raise the adze and bring it down again you can use a bit of force to make heavy cuts, or gently bring the adze down to create the most delicate of cuts with precisely controlled motion that does not cause undue strain on the arm when used for a reasonable amount of time.

The curved head profile allows the adze to cut into curved areas such as large bowls, trenchers and the like, but also allows you to create rippled texture and patterns or gentle curves on flat work.

Conclusion

The steel is good quality and held up well when working maples, oak and beech and the edge created on the adze lasted a long while

in use and cut the surface of the wood well. The inside of the flute had a black coating which I took the liberty of polishing away to create a polished inner flute area to meet with the cutting edge. This created an even finer edge than that which was originally supplied and was capable of creating very fine polished cuts on the work.

This is a very well-thought out balanced adze that works well without breaking the bank.

Price: £65.95

For UK enquiries regarding stockist details contact Tomaco.

Web: www.tomaco.co.uk

For the rest of the world contact Narex for stockist details.

Web: www.narextools.cz/en



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY BAILEY/CMC PUBLICATIONS

Conversion chart

2mm (5/64in)
3mm (1/8in)
4mm (5/32in)
6mm (1/4in)
7mm (9/32in)
8mm (5/16in)
9mm (11/32in)
10mm (3/8in)
11mm (7/16in)
12mm (1/2in)
13mm (1 1/16in)
14mm (9/16in)
15mm (5/8in)
16mm (5/8in)
17mm (1 1/16in)
18mm (23/32in)
19mm (3/4in)
20mm (3/4in)
21mm (13/16in)
22mm (7/8in)
23mm (23/32in)
24mm (15/16in)
25mm (1in)
30mm (1 1/8in)
32mm (1 1/4in)
35mm (1 3/8in)
38mm (1 1/2in)
40mm (1 5/8in)
45mm (1 3/4in)
50mm (2in)
55mm (2 1/8-2 1/4in)
60mm (2 3/8in)
63mm (2 1/2in)
65mm (2 5/8in)
70mm (2 3/4in)
75mm (3in)
80mm (3 1/8in)
85mm (3 3/8in)
90mm (3 1/2in)
93mm (3 3/8in)
95mm (3 3/4in)
100mm (4in)
105mm (4 1/8in)
110mm (4 1/4-4 3/8in)
115mm (4 1/2in)
120mm (4 3/4in)
125mm (5in)
130mm (5 1/8in)
135mm (5 1/4in)
140mm (5 1/2in)
145mm (5 3/4in)
150mm (6in)
155mm (6 1/8in)
160mm (6 1/4in)
165mm (6 1/2in)
170mm (6 3/4in)
178mm (6 7/8in)
180mm (7in)
185mm (7 1/4in)
190mm (7 1/2in)
195mm (7 3/4in)
200mm (8in)
305mm (12in)
405mm (16in)
510mm (20in)
610mm (24in)
710mm (28in)
815mm (32in)
915mm (36in)
1015mm (40in)
1120mm (44in)
1220mm (48in)
1320mm (52in)
1420mm (56in)
1525mm (60in)

Mark Baker tries Trend Mirror Paste

Sharpening tools effectively and maintaining the edge is essential in working with wood and Trend has recently introduced Mirror Paste which it says 'has a unique formula that has taken two years of development to perfect to achieve a paste that offers a quick cutting speed while retaining a fine abrasion to allow an edge to be refined and polished for the keenest of edges'.

In use

The Mirror Paste comes in a 40g tub and is a bluish-white colour. It is designed to be placed on to a leather strop for hand stropping or loaded on powered mops/wheels.

I used both powered and hand stropping and applied the paste to a leather strop using a coffee stirring stick, rubbing the paste evenly across the strop and to shaped wheels for power sharpening using a gloved finger.

I set about using various carving and woodworking chisels, plane blades and knives of various types which had been sharpened on a fine diamond and fine ceramic stone first. The Mirror Paste, to my mind, is not designed to remove very deep scores/scratches – instead it is created to be used for the final stage of edge creation.

Conclusion

The mirror paste in all cases – whether using a powered wheel/strop or hand stropping – improved the cutting edge over that created by the fine diamond or ceramic stone. A mirror finish is quickly created and you can



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK BAKER

see from the picture that the name Mirror Paste is apt. The edges created on carving or woodworking chisels, plane blades and so on were incredibly sharp.

Price: £11.95

For stockist details visit: www.trend-uk.com.



New Flexcut sloyd knives

Flexcut has introduced three new sloyd knives. They come razor sharp and ready for use. These knives are tough, well-constructed tools, similar to the sloyd tools of traditional Swedish design. They are ideal for whittling, chip carving, spoon carving, general woodworking and handicrafts.

The blades are forged from high-carbon steel, giving them superior edge quality and retention. For added strength, the tang of each knife extends completely through the cherry handles.

The Flexcut standard sloyd knife comes with a custom, 100% leather sheath featuring a built-in belt clip. The sheath's rugged stitching gives it a distinctive look and ensures long-lasting blade protection. The overall knife length is 190mm and the blade length is 73mm.

The double-bevel hook sloyd knife has a gentle curve on the blade which is ideal for a spoon carver. The double edge gives the option of working to the left or right in a push or pull motion to cut the wood effectively.

The single-bevel hook sloyd knife with a tighter radius curve on the blade than the double-edge version allows you to carve



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BRIMARC

deeper hollows in spoons, bowls and ladles and is also useful for smoothing and cleaning up after initial carving with other tools.

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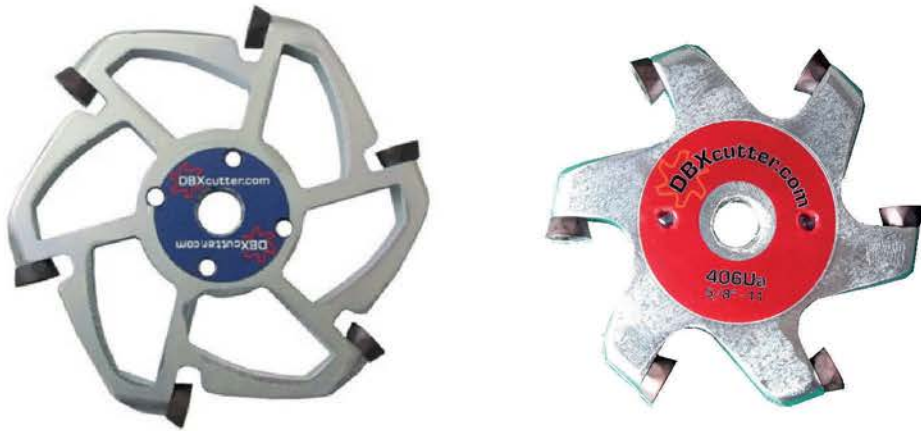
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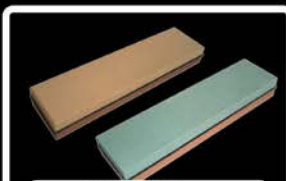
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Church of Jak, Vajdahunyad Castle, Budapest

This month we focus on this church portal at the Vajdahunyad Castle complex



Although it may look medieval, the portal on the Church of Jak actually dates to the late 19th century. Vajdahunyad Castle was built in 1896 to mark the 1000th anniversary of the Hungarian state. Designed by architect Ignác Alpár, the castle complex in the City Park includes replicas of 21 landmark buildings from throughout the Hungarian Empire, showcasing a range of architectural styles. Originally intended to be a temporary structure, the castle was made from cardboard and wooden planks. However, it was so popular that it was remade

as a permanent building. Opposite the castle is the Church of Jak, modelled on a Romanesque-style church in western Hungary. The church was chosen as the best representation of the Romanesque architecture in Hungary. Only the portal was recreated. Characteristic of church architecture from the 11th and 12th centuries, the portal blends the Romanesque with the Gothic style. It is elaborately carved with biblical figures and geometric Norman-style motifs. The tympanum over the portal shows life-sized figures of the 12 apostles with Jesus.



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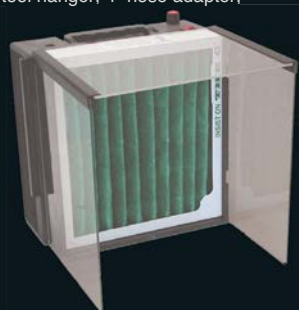


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