

WOOD CARVING

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Carve your own
decorative
sea shell



TECHNICAL ADVICE Chip carved lettering • Carving for competitions
PROJECTS TO CARVE Sleeping dragons in wood and stone • Rose appliqué
Relief carved goat medallion • Polar bear **FEATURE** Lovespoon symbolism

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Choices and challenges



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK BAKER/GMC PUBLICATIONS



Carving is one of those wonderful, creative ventures that allows the person carving so much freedom in what they do. This can be liberating and also daunting to start with, especially when new to

carving. What to carve is typically driven by many people's love of something, curiosity and also the testing of their skills. Once the subject matter is sorted, there is the research to do as well as more decisions to be made in the sense of what style of carving you will choose, whether you want to carve in the round or in relief and, if you opt to carve in relief, what style of relief carving? Will it be large, small, how much detail will you include? And all of this will have a bearing on what timber you will use. Then you have to choose whether you will carve using hand tools, power tools or a mix of both. Oh, and finally, what finish will you choose for your latest creation?

Choices, choices – but what an interesting mental exercise before we even get to carve the item. Of course, despite the best planning, not

everything will go as we wish. Those things that do go wrong are often referred to as 'design opportunities'. We all know about those and we react to deal with them accordingly.

The beauty of carving is the challenge and it gets us thinking about the what, when, why and how of things. Time is, unless you're earning a living, not important, and whatever we create it is ours and ours alone and we will love it for that despite its perceived faults. That last comment is down to us always being critical of our own work and finding fault with it. Who doesn't find fault with their work? This process is vital in order to learn and develop and challenge ourselves to do better. We may rework the item later, or revisit the subject and learn from what we have done before. We may or may not let others see what we have made, but that is our choice and no one else's to make. That said, to help us improve, having a trusted friend and talking about processes and what you have made will always help. But this is a deeply personal thing and the need to have someone you respect and trust is vital.

The other aspect that is often overlooked

in our critical analysis of everything we do when making something is that we have fun. When anyone creative makes something they run through the gamut of emotions – frustration, annoyance, self-criticism, despondency, uncertainty, a sense of failure, pride, pleasure, joy and realising that, despite everything, it is actually fun.

If we don't have fun, why do we put ourselves through the frustrations, trials and tribulations of learning something? Life is just too short not to have fun. My being able to shape and create things in wood and other materials, using various methods, has held a lifelong fascination which only increases as time passes. Admittedly, I have had some torrid times and frustration aplenty, but I have never lost the love and freedom of being able to shape, make and create things as I choose.

Let me know what you have been making recently.

Have fun, Mark

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



Lettering & Decorative Woodcarving

A weekend course with
Gary Breeze

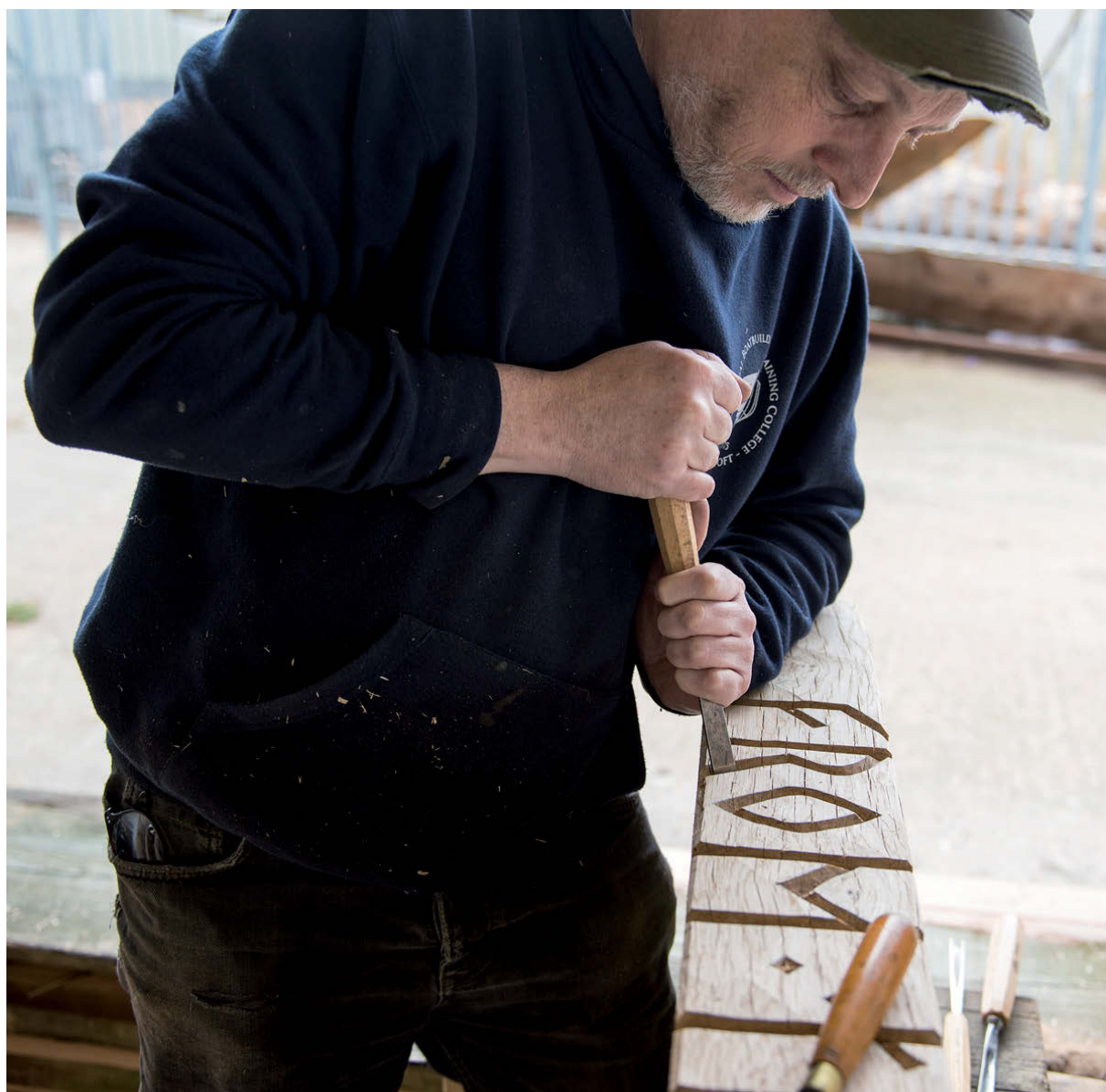


PHOTO: David Collins

A practical approach to v-cutting lettering and decorative motifs into wood.
This course is led by award winning lettering sculptor Gary Breeze.

Gary Breeze is recognised as one of the leading craftspeople in his field. For over 25 years he has won numerous public commissions, from the lettering on the Princess of Wales' memorial to Richard III's tomb. Gary has a broad approach to design, tackling everything from coins for the Royal Mint to landscapes, and was awarded a second RHS Chelsea Flower Show Gold medal for his evocation of a medieval Broadland boatyard sponsored and built by students and staff of the IBTC in 2017.

www.ibtc.co.uk | courses@ibtc.co.uk | 01502 569663



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Sleeping dragon

Steve Bisco is inspired by a medieval dragon in Christchurch Priory



Christchurch Priory in Dorset, is a cathedral in all but name. It's one of the largest churches in Britain, reflecting the historical status of Christchurch as an important medieval port on the south coast of England. The Norman core of the building, started in 1094 and finished around 1150, was built in the Romanesque style, with the round arches and heavy columns that preceded the later and lighter Gothic style. It is well worth visiting for its carved stonework and woodcarving.

While on such a visit I was stopped short by a small dragon nestling at the foot of one of the columns in the nave, apparently asleep but with its mouth partly open as if ready to strike if disturbed. It was carved in medium relief on the upper surface of one of the limestone blocks at the base of the column. It was probably carved later than the Norman building phase in reference to the

mid-12th-century legend of the Christchurch Dragon. A medieval document records that a visiting party of French monks reported seeing the town of Christchurch consumed in sulphurous flames being breathed by a five-headed dragon. There is no record of what the monks had been drinking, but another French report indicates a lightning storm being the cause of the conflagration – you decide which is most plausible.

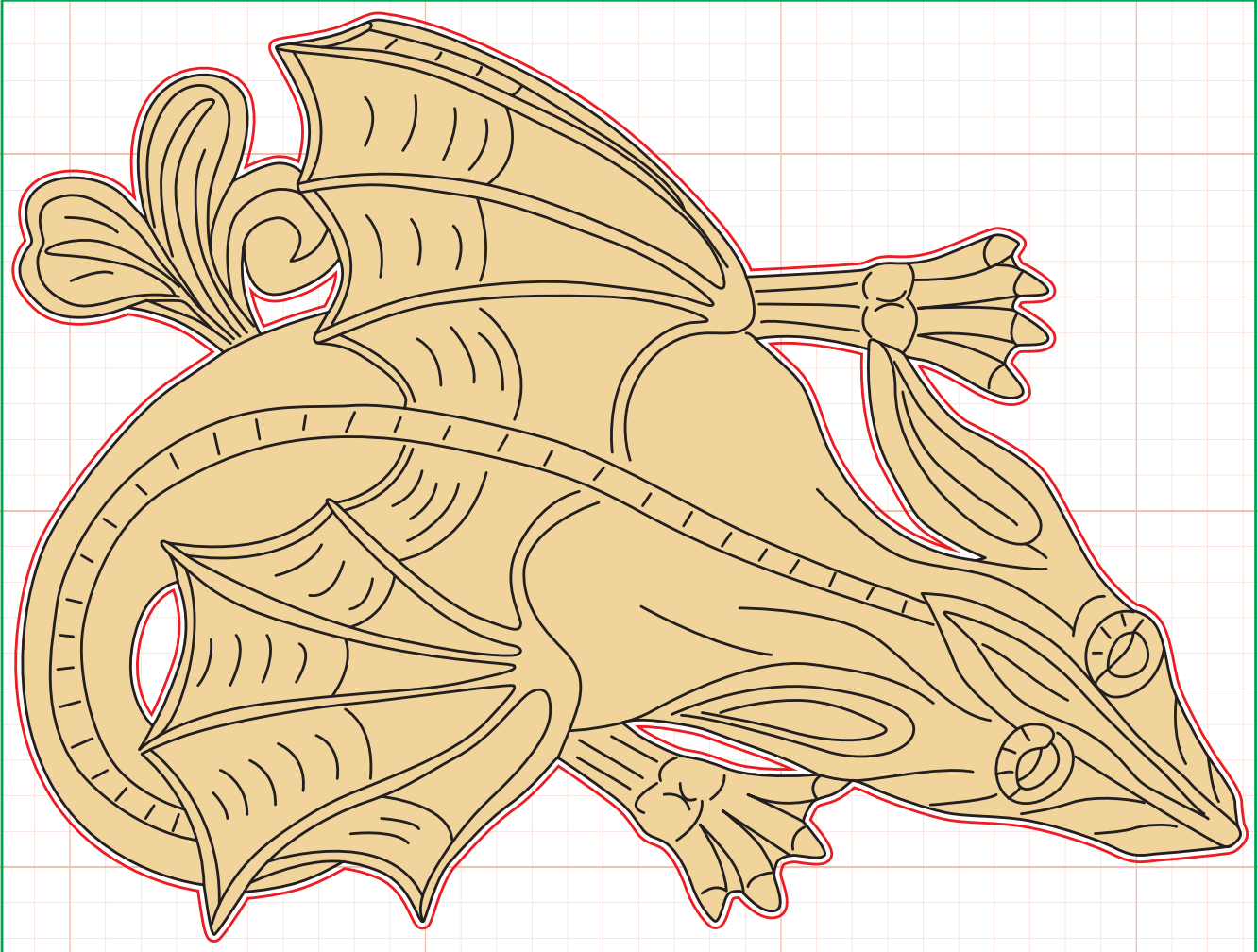
This dragon thankfully has only one head and it provided me with the inspiration for a stone-carving project, with a little adaptation to extract it from its column base and fit it on an oblong block. I have kept to its local provenance by using Portland stone – Christchurch is just a short hop by sea from the Portland limestone quarries – but any suitable limestone will do.

Not wishing to leave woodcarvers out of this project, I have also carved the same design in oak (*Quercus robur*). By cutting the

pattern out of the oak board, the oak dragon is freestanding, or free-laying, and can more easily be displayed in the house. I reversed the tracing on the oak version to make it face the other way, but this is optional.

CARVING STONE SAFELY

- Wear eye protection when carving stone – flying stone chips are sharp.
- Stone is very heavy. A cubic foot, or 300mm metric cube, of stone will weigh around 70 kilos, so take great care of your back and wear protective footwear. Use lifting gear for heavy pieces.
- Stonecarving creates a lot of dust, so work outdoors if possible. Wear a suitably rated dust mask and safety eye wear, and take particular care if working with sandstone as silica dust can accumulate in the lungs.



MAKING THE DRAGON IN STONE

To make the dragon in stone, you will need a block of a suitable limestone (preferably Portland, Caen, or similar). The size is not critical provided you can fit the pattern on to it without it being too small to carve the details. The best place to look for good quality carving stone is at the yard of an architectural stonemason. Getting stone cut to a specific size is expensive, so work with whatever size of offcut you can get cheaply from your stone supplier. If the block has one or more broken faces, cut and square them off using the basic stonemasonry tools and techniques for 'dressing' a stone (see *Woodcarving* 155). A stonecarver's toolkit is very simple because the limestone and sandstone 'freestones' used for stonecarving have no grain and you can approach a cut from a wider range of angles. This carving requires just a basic set of four stone chisels and three gouges. A few other tools are useful for preparing and shaping a stone: a claw chisel, a bolster and a club hammer are used in the heavier masonry work.

Things you will need

Tools:

- Personal and respiratory equipment
- 4, 6, 13 & 18mm chisels
- 6, 13 & 18mm gouges
- Claw chisel
- Bolster
- Club hammer for roughing out
- Mason's dummy mallet

Materials:

- Stone: Limestone 270 x 210 x 125mm

MAKING THE DRAGON IN OAK

If you want to make this dragon as a woodcarving, it works well in oak (*Quercus robur*), although you could use any suitable hardwood. You could also make it as a relief carving on an oak block in the same manner as the stone carving, but I have made it as a freestanding creature cut out from the oak board with a bandsaw or jigsaw. Woodcarving needs more tools than stone carving because of the grain, but you can achieve finer detail with the oak version.

Things you will need

Tools:

- No.3, 10mm gouge
- No.3, 10 & 20mm fishtail gouge
- No.4, 6mm fishtail gouge
- No.5, 5 & 7mm
- No.5, 13mm curved gouge
- No.8, 8mm
- No.8, 8mm curved gouge
- No.9, 3 & 20mm
- No.9, 16mm curved gouge
- 10mm skewed spoon gouges, L&R
- 2 & 6mm straight V-tool
- 3, 6.5 & 20mm flat chisel
- 10mm skew chisel
- Padsaw and either a bandsaw or jigsaw

Materials:

- Oak (*Quercus robur*) 270 x 210 x 50mm
- Antiquax original wax polish



CARVING THE STONE DRAGON

1 Get your block of limestone and make a full-sized copy of the drawing. Trace the pattern on to some transparency film, and also some card to make a template. If the stone is dry and free of dust you should be able to trace the pattern on to it with carbon paper. If not, use the template and transparency to draw it on.

ROUGHING OUT

2 Mark a depth line around the sides 45mm below the top surface. Scratch in the pattern and depth line with a point as the pencil lines will soon vanish. First cut around the edges with a 6mm chisel, then cut out the surplus stone outside the pattern with a claw chisel down to the 45mm level.

3 Use a bolster to square up the vertical edges, then work the 'floor' down to a flat and level surface at the 45mm depth line.

4 Chisel down the level of the feet and the swirly end of the tail so they stand 18mm thick above the floor. This helps you to see the main parts of the dragon.

5 Now shape the body and tail. The body in front of the wings spreads out sideways as the dragon is laying on its stomach. Behind the wings it slopes gradually down into the tail. Round over the sides and leave a ridge to form the dorsal scales later.

6 Shape the bat-like wings by carving out the hollows between the spines with the gouges. Try to create a recumbent look by lowering the wings towards the edges. To reflect the curve in the dragon's posture, the left wing curls under at its outer edge. Use the transparency to redraw the spines as you work down.

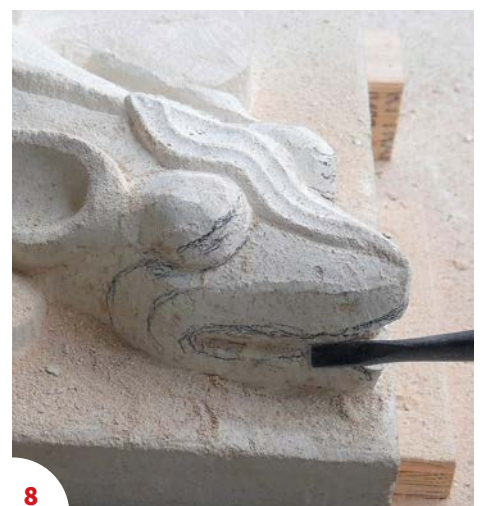
CARVING THE DETAIL

7 Before carving the details, check the position of each element with the transparency and keep redrawing with the pencil. The ears slope downwards and outwards in a floppy sleeping position. Hollow them with gouges and shape the outer edges. The sleeping head lays slightly to the dragon's left, so the left ear lays slightly lower than the right.

8 To form the shape of the head, cut around the bulge of the eyes with the 18mm gouge. Shape the crest scale that runs from between the ears to the tip of the nose and carve two side grooves and a central groove along it with the 6mm gouge. Round over the sides of the nose, and mark the position of the mouth.

DID YOU KNOW

Sightings of dragons were common in medieval times. A report from Bures, Suffolk, in 1405 complains that a huge dragon killed a flock of sheep. A possible explanation for these sightings is a hallucinatory fungus called ergot which could grow on crops of rye, get into the local bread, and cause mass hallucinations.





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TOP TIP: One tool that is essential for stonecarving is the pencil. Before you carve any feature, draw it in carefully first with a hard pencil and check that it is in the right position and looks as you want it. You can then carve with more confidence. It is much harder to correct a bad cut in the stone than it is to rub out and redraw a pencil mark.

9 Very carefully carve the dragon's eyes, which have an overhanging brow and upper and lower eyelids separated by a sloping V-cut to show they are closed. Use the corner points of a 6mm chisel to 'engrave' the sharp lines, and the 6mm gouge to form grooves from the top of the brow back to the ears.

10 Open out the front and sides of the mouth to show a tongue which extends on to the lower lip at the front. Carefully carve the nostrils and the V-grooves which flow from the nose and eyes back around, under, and behind the mouth, looking a bit like gills. Slightly undercut the cheeks and the lower jaw so the head is laying on top of the base.

11 Do some more undercutting under the ears to separate the feet from the neck. Carve each foot into four toes, with v-grooves running back along the legs.

12 Now refine the shape of the body and the thick tail into their final rounded form, undercutting so it looks three-dimensional on top of the base. Carve the inverted V of the dorsal ridge along the back, and make cross-cuts to create pyramid-shaped dorsal scales.

13 The curly end of the tail appears from under the body and wings in low relief and divides into three leaves of the Gothic 'stiff leaf' type. Very carefully undercut the edges of the left wing to create the volute shape of the third leaf.

14 Finish the wings by running the 6mm gouge along the sides of the 'spines' to make them stand out against the wing membranes. Now carve the cross-bars at the outer ends of each flute with the 6mm gouge. Refine and undercut the curved ends of the wing membranes.

15 To finish off, undercut the lower edge of each element where it meets the base to make it look detached. Very carefully undercut all the edges of the wings so they look natural. Rework the base surface to remove all cut marks and make it smooth and level—you can push the bolster along like a plane for the final smoothing. Finally, cut a 45° chamfer along all four sides of the block to give the base a neat edge.

16 The stone sleeping dragon is now finished. Wash off all the dust with a hose and tidy up any rough bits. The stone dragon will live quite happily outdoors in all weathers for hundreds of years, unlike its wooden counterpart.



CARVING THE DRAGON IN OAK

PREPARATIONS

1 Get a piece of oak (*Quercus robur*) 270 x 210 x 50mm. Make a full-sized copy of the drawing, trace the pattern on to the wood using carbon paper and mark your cutting lines in red. Also, get some transparency film and trace the pattern on to it (it will help preserve the pattern as you carve).

2 Cut the pattern out of the block. First use a drill and jigsaw to cut out the internal voids, but be aware that the jigsaw blade will flex a lot at this thickness. A bandsaw or a scrollsaw, if you have one, is best for cutting round the outside to avoid the flexing problem.

ROUGHING OUT

3 Set up the carving on the bench with some blocks to hold it in place. Start roughing out the levels by cutting down the legs and the swirly end of the tail to a thickness of about 18mm.

4 Now rough out the rounded shape of the body and tail. The neck is slightly lower than the level of the forehead, and the body in front of the wings spreads out sideways as the dragon is laying on its stomach. Behind the wings it slopes gradually downwards towards the tail. The height of the body and tail is roughly the same as its width at each point. Leave a ridge down the middle for the dorsal scales later.

5 Shape the bat-like wings by carving out the hollows between the spines. As the dragon is sleeping, reduce the level of the wings towards the edges so they lay resting on the body and legs. Use the transparency of the pattern to redraw the spines as you work down. The dragon's right wing curls under at its outer edge.

6 Rough out and hollow the shape of the ears, which lay in a relaxed posture against the body, sloping down towards the legs.

7 To finish the roughing out, cut around the bulge of the eyes and shape the crest scale that runs from between the ears to the tip of the nose. Round over the sides of the nose, and mark the position of the mouth.

CARVING THE DETAIL

8 Carve the dragon's eyes and the crest scale between them. The eyes have an overhanging brow, and upper and lower eyelids are separated by a sloping V-cut to show they are closed. You may need to put the carving in a bench vice to access some of the cuts. Detailing is not easy in end grain at this small scale, so define the eyes with bold gouge cuts to make them stand out.

TOP TIP: Some carvers print out the pattern, paste it on to the wood, and carve through the paper. I trace the pattern on to the wood with carbon paper which allows me to see the grain and the pattern at the same time when carving at oblique angles.



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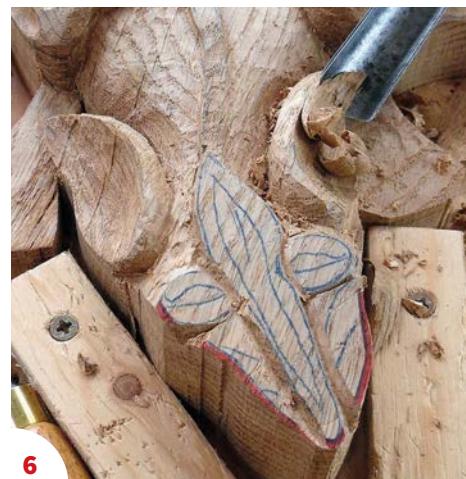
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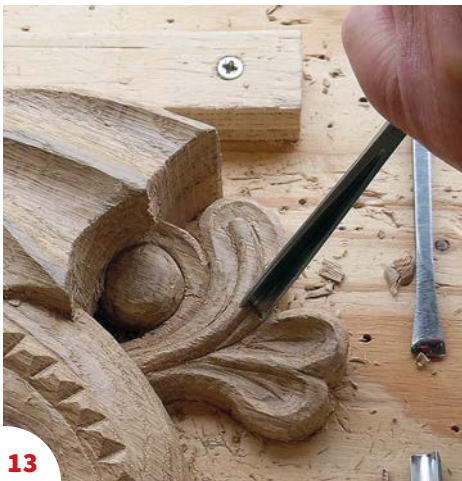
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9 Carve the mouth partly open with the tongue inside it, and carve the nostrils in the nose. Cut bold grooves from the nose down and around the mouth, and from the eyes down and under the cheeks, rather like gills. Again, you may need the bench vice to access some cuts.

10 To carve the ears and neck, you need to turn the piece upside down on a soft surface and carve away the surplus wood under the ears and between the feet and neck. Round over the underside of the neck and upper body.

11 Now carve the final shape of the ears with a hollow scooped out inside them. The tip of the dragon's right ear rests on the right leg, and there is a gap between the ear and the body. The left ear and leg are now separated. Carve both feet into four toes and undercut the body below the ears on each side.

12 Refine the shape of the body and tail so it is nicely rounded. It helps if you round off the underside first so you can get a better idea where the top of the body needs to be. Carve an inverted V all the way along the spine and divide it with crosscuts to form the dorsal scales.

13 Carve the tail swirls, which are in the Gothic 'stiff leaf' style. The tail should emerge from under the body and appear to connect to the curl of the tail that disappears under the left wing and flows under the body.

14 Carve the 'spines' of the wings by running a shallow gouge along the sides of each ridge, then define the edges with a fine V-tool. Now carve the cross-bars at the outer ends of each flute with a No.8, 8mm curved gouge and define their edges with the same V-tool. These cuts run across the grain, so keep the tools sharp and take several shallow cuts for each groove.

15 Finally, turn the carving over on a soft, non-slip surface and undercut around the edges of the body, wings and tail. Cut back just enough so that everything you see when it is on display is dragon and not surplus wood.

TOP TIP: Undercutting an oak carving is much harder than with limewood (*Tilia* spp.), so it helps if you place the carving upside down on a soft surface and fix a strip of wood across it, screwed into the bench at each end as in photos 10 and 15, to hold it still while you carefully shave away the unwanted wood.

FINISHING

16 With the carving finished, polish the dragon with a pale wax polish. You will need to work the polish into the crevices with a small brush; let the first coat be absorbed into the surface of the wood, then give it another coat later. Finally, buff it up to a soft sheen with a smooth cloth that will not leave fluff attached to the grain. Now find a cosy spot on a cabinet where it can sleep undisturbed. ▶

News & events...

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

BDWCA: It's competition time again

This year two members of the BDWCA made the trip to the 48th annual World Championship Competition and Art Festival in Ocean City, Maryland, US – the pinnacle of bird carving competitions held over three days at the end of April, reports Pam Wilson. Congratulations to Claire Williams who took second place in Advanced Interpretive Wood Sculpture with an innovative carving of an emperor penguin. It was very encouraging to learn that there were more competitors and carvings than the previous year – let's hope that the trend continues.

It's always interesting to know where the ideas come from for a winning carving, and in the case of two of the winning entries in the World Interpretive Wood Sculpture category they couldn't have been more different. Jett Brunet, who won with his Chickadee on Piano, had a dream that a chickadee flew in through an open window and landed on the piano keys (he doesn't have a piano), while Lynn Branson, who took third place in the same category, could see three owl chicks hidden in a burl of wood and accordingly 'liberated' them.

Our attention now turns to this year's annual BDWCA show, the Festival of Bird Art, which is held, as usual, in Bakewell, Derbyshire, on the second weekend of September (8 and 9).

Carvers compete at Youth, Novice, Intermediate and Advanced levels in categories ranging from Fully Textured and Painted Waterfowl and Birds and Smooth Painted Waterfowl and Shorebirds to Interpretive Wood Sculptures. There are also five open classes – Working Decoys, Fish, Innovative Wildlife Sculpture, Carved Bird's Head, and Carved Bird's Head on a Stick – where all entries are judged according to the criteria and rules for the Advanced class.

If you are – or if you can be – in Bakewell during the show weekend do please drop in and see all the different birds that will be on display. But please remember to bring some money with you as there will be a lot of other delights on offer to tempt carvers to part with their cash. This includes supplies of wood and, judging from the sight of barrow loads being taken out of the show hall in previous years, it is obvious that some carvers use the occasion to stock up. More information, and pictures of previous winners, can be found on our website.

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.



Winner of Best in World Shootin' Rig, Pintails by Pat Godin



Winner of World Interpretive Wood Sculpture, Chickadee on Piano by Jett Brunet

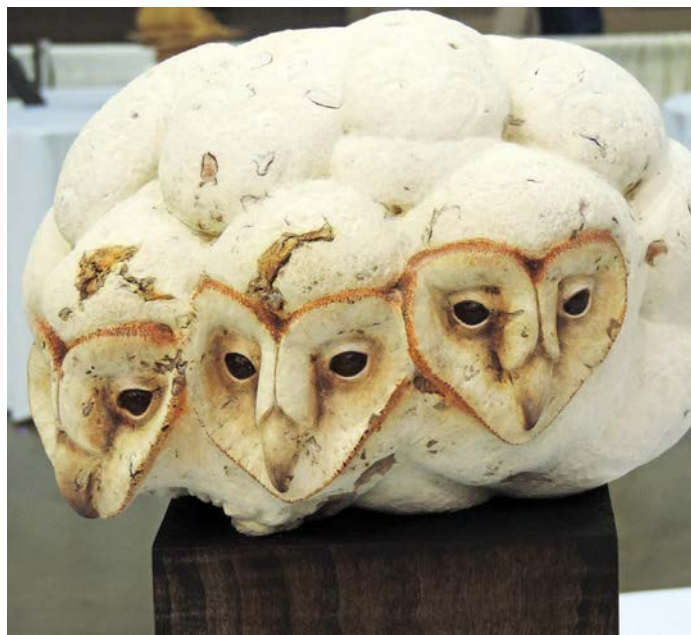


Second in Advanced Interpretive Wood Sculpture, Emperor Penguin by Claire Williams

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF PAM WILSON FOR THE BDWCA



Third in Decorative Life-Size Wildfowl, Beewick Wren by Greg Pedersen



Third in World Interpretive Wood Sculpture, Three Baby Owls by Lynn Branson

2018 Events

• Cheshire Game & Country Show

Featuring the 14th English Open Chainsaw Carving Competition, with more than 30 over-the-top chainsaw carvers from around the world

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

• National Bird Carving Championships, The Festival of Bird Art

Featuring the BDWCA Annual Competitions for Members and the British Bird Carving Championship 2018 which is open to all

When: 8-9 September 2018

Where: Bakewell, Derbyshire

Web: www.bdwca.org.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

• Derbyshire Woodland Festival

The Trent Valley Group of the BDWCA will be demonstrating at the Derbyshire Woodland Festival

When: 22-23 September 2018

Where: Elvaston Castle and Country Park, Borrowash Road (A6120), Elvaston, Derby, DE72 3EP

Contact: <https://tinyurl.com/yaqujkse>

• Bentley Woodfair

When: 28-30 September 2018

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

Web: www.bentley.org.uk

• Brailsford Ploughing match

The Trent Valley Group of the BDWCA will be demonstrating at the 113th Brailsford Ploughing Match

When: 3 October 2018

Where: White Meadow Farm, Moor Lane, Osmaston, Ashbourne, Derby, DE6 1NA

Web: www.brailsfordploughingmatch.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,

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

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Wild rose appliqué

Mark Ivan Fortune takes you through the steps to carve this beautiful decoration



All things in the natural world, whether animal, plant, crystal or snowflake, have a growth pattern. They grow outward in any and all directions, depending on the inherent nature of the form. Working with this in mind will greatly assist in invoking life and character in your carving.

Here I have created a strong enclosed form that, although it may appear quite delicate, is in fact robust and durable and suitable for a wide range of applications. Employing the use of some well-executed undercutting lifts the flower head from its surrounding, which is our main focal point. The subtle but clear distinction between background, middle ground and foreground gives a good sense of depth to the overall piece.

So we may internalise and gain an understanding of the form, begin by sketching

the design. This will enable you to rough out with greater speed and efficiency, leaving you more time to enjoy the detailing.

When drawing from nature, attempts should be made to simplify and stylise the form. By choosing the lines that define the essence of the subject and omitting the incidental, one can create an impression that is comfortable and pleasing to the eye of the observer, allowing it to be more easily read and to make it suitable for the confines of the medium. If the detail is too choppy and busy there is the risk of diminishing the feeling of the overall form. On the other end of the scale I generally refrain from the use of sandpaper as it can easily drain the life force and integrity from the carving. Both symmetry and geometry are implied but not true.

In the roughing out of this piece we

may think of the form as four levels with a central boss, from the ground up we have the pierced leaves, buds, main leaves, petals and central boss.

MOUNTING WORK AND LAYERS

When cutting out your traced/scanned appliqué blank with a bandsaw, leave the serrations and sharp corners for the carving stage and glue it to an MDF backing with paper sandwiched between. Ensure mating surfaces are flat as any gaps will result in breakage when carving. In roughing out think of the form as four flat levels divided in steps of fifths with a central boss. From the ground up we have the pierced outer leaves and stems (1/5 the buds (1/5 the main and lower leaves (1/5 petals and central boss (2/5).

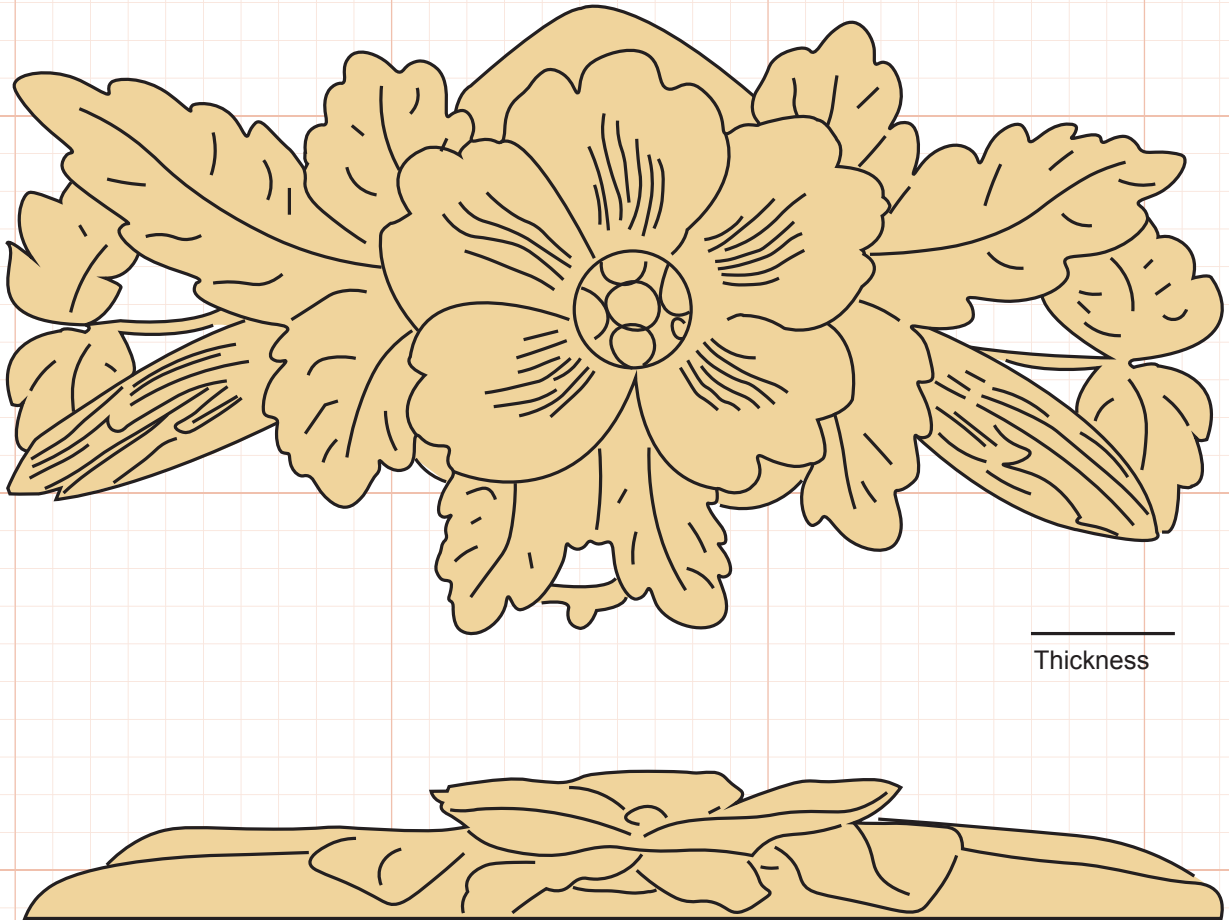
Things you will need

Tools:

- No.1, 10mm
- No.2, 10mm
- No.3, 8 & 13mm
- No.5, 8mm
- No.8, 6 & 10mm
- No.6, 3 & 13mm
- No.11, 2mm
- No.39, 10mm V-tool
- Drill

Materials:

- PVA glue
- MDF backing board
- Wood: Lime (*Tilia x europea*) 135 x 70 x 16mm



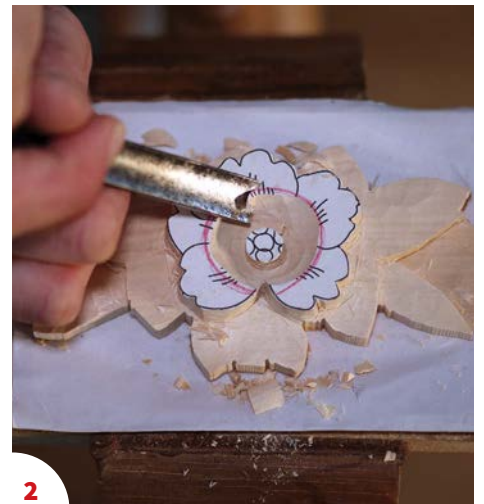
1 Separate the forms with a V-tool, levelling the layers with No.3s to the appropriate height (see sidebar on the previous page), clearing the corners with a skew. We have now established the background, middle ground and foreground.

2 Refine the outline of the petals by stabbing with a V-tool and paring with a small No.3. Now with your No.8, 10mm, establish the central boss, rising from the level of the main leaves. Gently stab the divisions between petals to establish their placement.

Create a bowl using the No.6, 1/3 of the way down the petals. You will need plenty of meat in the other 2/3 towards the tips to evoke movement and life into the flower head.



1



2

**3****4****5****6****7****8****9****10**

TOP TIP: The boss form is used so often in carving it's well worth putting some time and effort into developing good technique to increase speed, dexterity and accuracy of establishing this elementary form. Stab the boss by holding your gouge in a vertical position, assuming a tripod grip with the right hand close to the cutting edge with the left hand on the tool handle. Keep the leading corner of the gouge out of the cut by tilting the gouge and follow the circle by twisting with the left hand. To remove the outer waste we use a similar technique with the left hand making a broad circular sweeping motion.

3 Using a No.3 gouge cut with the direction of the grain, reducing the height of the central boss to 45th the thickness of the blank.

4 Following the grain direction, carve the outer leaves of the main leaf grouping from the tips in an ascending manner towards the central leaf with the No.8, 10mm. They should appear to radiate out from behind the flower and drape over the buds and the stem at the apex, suggesting what lies beneath and touching the ground towards the tips.

5 Invert a No.6 gouge and make a horizontal pass over the lower leaves rounding over towards the tips. Leave a matchstick of thickness for the small stem.

6 Using a No.3 gouge, round over the buds in the direction indicated by the pink arrows. Use a vertical slicing cut where the access for the tool is restricted.

7 Visualising the flow to assist the correct placement, make a No.8, 10mm cut across the main leaf tapering to the ground. Smooth and blend with an inverted No.3 gouge. This will evoke movement by creating a feeling of tension in the folds. The leaves should be varied and relate to their growth pattern and surrounding elements. The aim is not to replicate nature but to shepherd the eye of the observer.

8 With your No.6 gouge, stab the outer parts of the petals and taper the abutting petal. With the same gouge, taper the two lower lobes of the petals to the base of the boss. Leave just enough thickness to complete the impression of the petals fanning out from the centre.

9 Alternating between No.3 gouges and a skew, undercut the petals to a depth appropriate to the underlying leaf groupings. The junctions between flower and leaf should be clean and well defined. This is a good opportunity to hone your technique with a mallet when undercutting.

10 Shape the lobes of the petals using the smaller No.8 gouge. Make rolling cuts as you form the troughs on either side of the petal and round over the middle of the petals using an inverted small No.3 gouge. The swells should flow into the troughs for a voluptuous flower head.

11 Take a No.8, 10mm and, beginning in the centre with the tool lying almost flat, round over the boss, working outwards with the direction of the grain, as if following the curvature of a sphere, first to one side and then to the other.

12 Now cut the serrations of the main outer leaf groupings using stabbing cuts with a V-tool. Try to visualise their correct placement on the leaf as you go.

13 You now need to move on to separating and defining the leaf forms, shaping as required. Begin at the top, separating the upper leaves from the stem at the apex. A skew will be necessary to reach in under the overhanging petal.

14 Separate the individual leaves in the main leaf grouping with a small No.3 gouge using vertical slicing cuts. Cut in the veins with the No.11 V-tool in smooth-flowing, serpentine curves.

RELATIONSHIP LINES

Employ the use of relationship lines in your work – that is an imagined line connecting elements of the form, unifying them into a single flowing piece. Try to visualise these connections throughout the carving process.

15 Use a No.11 gouge to define and accentuate the form of the petals. Make the first flowing cut in the middle of each petal and continue out to either side of the convex portion of each petal.

16 With a No.6, 3mm, gently stab the central and five outer domes. Then invert your gouge and use rolling cuts to remove material between domes. Remove pyramidal chips between the domes with a skew. The next stage is to slightly undercut the boss to lift it from the flower head.

17 With a small No.3 gouge gently slice in the staggered sheaths of the bud, establishing the outer edges. Use a skew to get into the corners. Recess the inner bud and one side of the emerging overlapping sheaths. With a No.1 gouge slice a middle line along the centre of the bud. Then, slicing with the grain, create a central 60° channel, steepening to almost horizontal at the tips. Cut both outer channels in a similar fashion to form two sharp ridges either side of the central channel.

18 Mark out the following: the division of the two lower leaves with stem, the division between the lower and main leaves with small section of stem between, the stem at the apex and smaller outer leaves and stems. Care must be taken to ensure these outer stems curve and do not form a visual horizontal division. Drill all the pierced stem sections. The apex will require multiple drill holes, much of the waste here can be removed by drilling diagonally between holes.



11



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

19 To complete the lower leaves, use a small veiner to shape the piercing to make it look less like a drill hole. With a No.8, 10mm, visualising the stem beneath, carve the tips of the leaves as if they are draped over the underlying stem. Now divide the leaves and, inverting your small No.3 gouge, carve the right leaf rolling under the left like a wave. Take the smaller No.8 gouge and make a trough on the inner part of the left leaf as it relaxes over the visualised continuation of the stem. Cut the serrations and veins as before. Make a few small cuts in the stems with a veining tool as a tip of the hat to the Black Forest carving style.

20 With a No.6 gouge, taper the small outer leaves from their outer edge down to the ground at the inner edge. Remove the waste in the pierced section of the stem and undercut the main overhanging leaf, this process can be completed from the rear once the carving is lifted from its backing.

21 Using smooth, flowing lines, texture the sheaves of the buds with a veining tool. Round over the stems with a small No.3 gouge and texture with the small veiner.

22 Very carefully, working from all sides and without levering, separate the carving from its backing with a paint scraper. Lubricating the scraper with tallow or coconut oil will greatly ease this process.

23 Carefully clean up the pierced sections from the rear with a small-bladed chip-carving knife. Any residual paper can be easily removed with the paint scraper by briefly resting the carving on a damp cloth to soften the glue and paper.

24 Be brave and resist the tendency to reach for the sandpaper. Finish with beeswax polish. This can be easily made by adding a little turpentine to grated beeswax in a lidded jar. Stir occasionally and leave overnight to form a paste. Apply an even coat of polish to the carving with a toothbrush. Wait till the beeswax hardens and buff. The appliqué can be applied with glue or simply hung from the piercing at the apex. ▶

**24**

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Billy goat

Johan Roudy shows how to create a small, detailed relief carving in boxwood



This 70mm diameter medallion is part of a small series of low-reliefs I carved. Contrary to the previous ones I made, which showed farm animals in a strict profile view, this billy goat is depicted in a three-quarter view. Adding some perspective effects to the fine details was one more challenge.

Whatever the size you choose to make yours, it works very well as a larger, plate-sized carving. The best method I know to deal with that is to divide the design in different layers, and to figure out which

elements come in front and which ones come at the back. In this carving, the highest points will be the horns, the muzzle, the tip of the ears and the hanging end of the collar. The head, the neck and the shoulder will be our three main layers.

Regarding the small size of this project, choosing a hard and fine-grained wood such as boxwood, which will hold very fine detail, should be at the forefront of a carver's mind. As a second choice, holly, pear or walnut should also be suitable for this carving. There is little wood to remove, so it has to be

removed from the right place. My advice is to work progressively, under low-angled light, and to make sure you get a good layout of the various features before going into details.

CLAMPING ON THE BENCH

As you won't need to push hard on the tools for such a relief, a non-slip router pad should be enough to hold the piece on the bench, and handy to turn the carving at a convenient angle.

Things you will need

Tools:

- No.11, 1 & 2mm veiner
- V-tool, 5mm
- No.3, 2, 6 & 16mm
- No.5, 6mm
- No.7, 4mm
- No.9, 2mm
- No.3, 1mm or 1mm chisel
- A small skew chisel, carving knife or scalpel

Materials:

- Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) for the medallion 70 x 70 x 6mm
- A small round-shaped scraper
- Fretsaw



DID YOU KNOW

Boxwood across Europe have been attacked for 10 years by *Cydalima perspectalis*, also known as box tree moth. Native to eastern Asia, the larvae of this white and brown moth devastate larger and larger areas every year.

1 Transfer the design on to the wood to the size of your choosing. To do this, print the pattern and redraw it on the other side of the paper with a pencil. Set it on the wood with tape and rub it with the back of a spoon. Once done, use the V-tool to separate the billy goat and the inner circle from the background. Then use a No.5, 6mm and small flat gouges to clear the background. Repeat if necessary to reach a 2mm depth. A depth gauge in cardboard can help to check that you have an even level.



1

2 Set in the design with the best matching gouges to get vertical walls. In the tight area above the horns, I used a very small, flat screwdriver as a chisel, sharpened like a flat gouge, to clear the background.



2

3 Using a V-tool, mark a separation between the different features of the face, that will be treated as different layers. The ears, the chin, the beard, the jaw line, the hair on the neck, and the edge of the circle. Run the V-tool around the horn and give a small cut on the sides of the beard where they cross the circle.



3

4 Use a No.5, 6mm to lower the layer of the neck towards the head and the layer of the shoulders towards the neck. Then, start to give shape to the neck and the shoulder. Round them slightly towards the background at the top and remove some wood towards the beard and the collar. Lower the base of the ear on the left and give a cut under the chin. Behind the ear on the right, remove a little wood to continue the shape of the neck and liberate the back of the ear.



4



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5 Using No.5, 6mm and No.3, 4mm gouges, give a slight angle to the nose bone and the forehead. You can start to rough out across the grain and define the shapes more precisely along the grain. Use the No.7, 4mm gouge to round slightly the nose bone and give the direction of the eye socket on the left. Then carve an angle from the nostrils' area to the mouth with the No.3, 4mm to give the direction of the muzzle.

6 There must be a little recess from the nostril to the eye area in order to put forward the nose and the eye socket. Using the No.5, 6mm gouge, turn around the eye socket and lower the cheek towards the jaw line.

7 Now round the brow bone and the eye area. You can dig a bit more at the base and above the ear if necessary. The right side of the eye socket is defined quite precisely. After this, reshape the neck if it looks too domed.

8 Carve the frame around the horns and the beard using a flat gouge, giving more space to shape them. Be careful of the grain direction and stop a little before getting to the background level. You can clear around the main strokes of the beard. Be careful not to cut deep and to keep an even angle on the frame.

9 Lower the base of the horns with a flat gouge to let them run under the rim of hairs on the forehead. If the separation between the horns disappears, set it in again. On the horn on the left, use the 2mm veiner to carve a groove to separate the base of the horn from the tip, which is closer to the background. Then, round the base on its left side with a flat gouge. On the horn on the right, round slightly the base on its right side.

Now, using the No.7, 4mm, carve a groove where the right horn spins, on the left side at the base, and under the line at the tip. Redraw the lines with the pencil.

10 Using a No.5, 6mm and No.3, 4mm, round the top of the horns. Carve the grooves deeper if necessary to let the horn spin towards the background. On the tip of the left horn as well, carve a groove under the line and round the upper side.

11 Clean and deepen its connection to the base of the horn using a 1mm veiner. When happy with the shape, mark a deeper groove on the base of the horns with a 2mm veiner. Soften the edges of the grooves with a flat gouge.

12 Redraw and set in carefully the eye using a carving knife or a scalpel. Round the eyeball using the small screwdriver-chisel. Dig deeper at the corners to enhance the roundness of the eye. Shape the lower eyelid. Using a No.5, 6mm gouge, remove a little wood to approach the eyeball. Remove a bit more at the corners to let it slip under the upper eyelid. Carve a groove below the eyelid using the No.7, 4mm and soften the transition with the cheek with flatter gouges. Round slightly the upper eyelid towards the eye with a flat gouge, checking that the overall shape is looking good.



13 With the No.7, 4mm, lower the beard, starting at the corner of the mouth. At the bottom, the beard will climb on the frame. Redraw and mark the nostrils and the mouth with the V-tool.

Clean under the nostrils with a flat gouge to shape the upper lip and connect it to the cheek. Use the No.3, 3mm to lower the lower lip. Now use the 1mm veiner to separate the lower lip and the chin with a groove. Refine the lower lip with a small, flat gouge. Now set in and round the chin towards the beard.

14 Refine the shape of the eye socket on the left, which is almost just suggested. Use the 1mm veiner in continuation to the nose bone to separate the eye socket and soften the transition between them with a flatter gouge.

15 Goat ears are a tubular-type shape with an opening on the side, widening at the end. Use the No.7, 4mm to shape the opening, then mark the edge with the V-tool. Use the corner of a No.7 gouge to remove the waste towards the base. The lower part of the ears should almost reach the background (or the neck for the right ear), while the tips should stay at the initial height.

16 Round above the opening towards the background with the No.5, 6mm and flatter gouges. When you're happy with the shape, you can set in more precisely the outline with the best matching gouges.

17 With the main features of the head set, add details on the neck. Redraw the collar, and use the V-tool to set it in. Remove the waste on the neck to let it stand out. The tip of the collar hanging stays as a high spot. Carve a groove with the No.7, 4mm to lower it at the top and flatten around to give the general buckle form, without setting in its final shape. Then use the corner of the No.7, 4mm gouge to clean some of the tight areas.

18 Round the wattle with a small, flat gouge, and define more precisely the shape of the buckle and its prong with small, flat gouges. Give an angle on the top and left side to give some depth and perspective to the buckle. Then you can dig the inner edges around the prong and set in precisely the tip of the collar.

19 Clean the surface of the beard. Redraw the main strokes and use a V-tool to carve them under the chin, and more lightly at the corner of the mouth. This can be done more or less randomly, provided that it gives the direction of the hairs. Some strokes can merge or divide.

20 Give more life to the strokes by shaping them with 1mm and 2mm veiners and a No.3, 2mm. The small, flat gouge is useful to define some layers from one stroke to another and to give an angle or shape a convex part in the hairs. Then use the veiners, letting the tool run from one stroke to another. Check the shape of the whole beard as you go. Once happy with the hairs, set in the edges more precisely and clean the background with small, flat gouges or the scalpel in tight areas.





21



22

21 Refine the shape of the neck and the shoulder and redraw the few rims of hairs. Carve a few strokes with the V-tool to indicate the direction of the hairs on the neck, along the line of the shoulders, and lightly, as a caress on the wood, on a couple of spots here and there.

Carve the hairs as you did for the beard, but more superficially. Use the small, flat gouge to define what stroke overlay the other.

22 On the isolated spots, use the No.3, 2mm to remove the outer edge of the V-tool mark in order to integrate the small strokes to the plain areas. Carve a rim of hairs strokes at the base of the horns and along the spine line.



23



24

23 On the plain areas of the neck and face, you can use a small, rounded-shape scraper to remove some tool marks. I chose to keep some tool marks in some places, such as around the nose bone, as it was helping the eye to 'read' the relief.

24 Carve some little undercutting behind the ears and the horns, under the tip of the collar, and along the nose and muzzle. Clean the background and all its connection to the billy goat.

25 A texturing effect can be made on the horns. Gently place the cutting edge of the No.5, 6mm on to the wood without pushing, and twist the handle from left to right and from right to left to let the tool 'walk' at the surface of the wood. At each move, it will remove a small amount of wood and create a texture on the horn. Search for the best angle to give to the tool to be efficient and let it work without pushing it into the wood.



25



26

26 Carve the angle on the rest of the frame using No.3, 16mm and 4mm, and check that you have an even height between the frame and the background all along the circle. Cut the medallion with the fretsaw and clean the edges with sandpaper. Be careful not to damage the tip of the horn.

27 Using your finger as a fence, draw a line about 1mm from the edge. Along this circle, use a cardboard template to mark a line every 7mm and then the middle of each subdivision. With the No.5, 6mm, set in the pattern of the frieze using the lines as a guide. Use the same tool to make a cut on each side of the ogives. At the middle of each ogive, make a little stop cut along the circle with the scalpel. Use the 2mm veiner to carve a small flute to complete the pattern of the frame.



27



28

28 The background can be marked with a punch. Mine is made of a bunch of small nails taped together and stuck into a handle. This will add some contrast and make the billy goat stand out. To finish the medallion, I polished the wood with a green scouring pad before applying a coat of wax. Once dried and buffed, I added a patina of dark-coloured wax to enhance the details. ▶

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Clamshell

Andrew Thomas shows how to carve your own wonderful, decorative seashore shell



Ever since I was a child I have enjoyed walking along the seashore and studying nature's wonders, be they interesting pieces of driftwood, beautifully sculpted pebbles or the amazing selection of shells in all shapes, sizes, textures and colours.

These natural forms fascinate me and have inspired many sketches over time that consequently develop into my own living works of art.

The clamshell is one of these inspirational forms and the base for this study and project, which has been abstracted from its real-life detail to produce a very fine finish with gentle, flowing curves across its surface. These undulations interact beautifully with the shadow to create a subtle but effective feel of depth, that in turn

enhances the natural appearance of surface tension in the medium and composition.

There are many ways in which this project can be adapted to suit the reader's own design ideas. One thought to consider is adding to the surface textured effects which can be found naturally on the surface shells of clams, cockles, scallops and many other shellfish. Either way, it is highly recommended to source some real-life examples to study and work with that will facilitate a greater understanding and feel for the shape of the form, and the desired finish.

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

DID YOU KNOW

The great British sculptor Henry Moore had a vast collection of seashells, stones, pebbles, flints and bones, among other natural forms, which inspired many of his magnificent works across the decades. These organic forms are an ideal resource from which a multitude of design ideas can be developed to produce outstandingly elegant sculptures in the medium of wood, which lends itself beautifully and naturally to the subject.

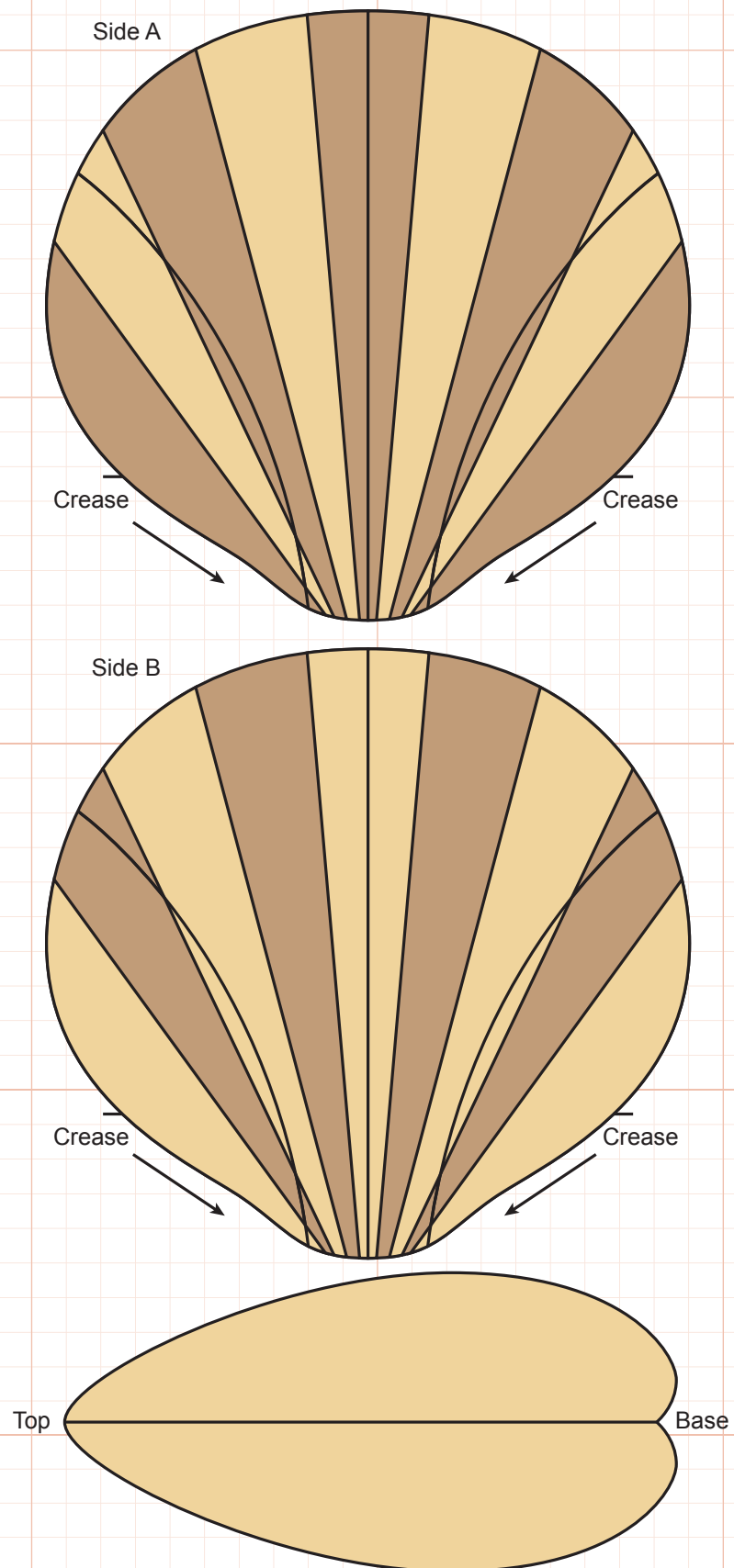
Things you will need**Tools:**

The sizing of the following tools is for Swiss gouges

- No.2, 5mm
- No.2, 10mm
- No.2, 20mm
- No.2, 40mm
- No.5, 20mm
- No.8, 4mm
- No.8, 7mm
- No.8, 10mm
- No.8, 13mm
- No.8, 16mm
- No.8, 18mm
- No.11, 4mm
- No.12, 6mm
- No.16, 3mm
- Knife
- Saw

Materials:

- Timber: American black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) 180 x 160 x 75mm
- Boiled linseed oil
- Medium brown wax



1 Scan or photocopy the scale drawings provided, enlarging them to the size for your wood, and print them out on to card to use as a template and reference. Transfer either the upper or lower design on to your block of wood, with the grain direction running vertically through the block. Ensure that there is a spare section of wood underneath the form, with a minimum length of 30mm that will be used to attach it securely to your vice. Cut out the design then measure and draw centrelines on the face of the wood, front and back, and along the complete edge. Transfer the side view profile drawing on to both profile edges by sighting the design squarely in position.

2 The first areas of waste wood to remove are the top sections on both the upper and lower sides of the form. Use a No.2, 20mm to pare the wood down to the depth of the design line on either edge, then work this depth neatly across the surface to the opposite edge. Repeat this procedure on the opposite side.

3 To simplify the shaping of the profile along the lower edge, use a saw to cut inwards underneath the design. Measure 15mm outwards from both sides of the centreline on both edges of the form and mark these positions on your wood. Use a saw to cut underneath the form until you reach these 15mm positions.

4 Now use the No.2, 20mm to pare the wood away along the design line, down to meet the depth of the saw cuts.

TOP TIP: To verify that the depth of the surface is level from one side to the other, use either a try square or the edge of a steel rule. This will clearly define any areas of the surface that are proud and need a little more work.

5 With the side view profile carved, the next job is to carve the natural shape of the clamshell across both upper and lower sides of the form. The most efficient tool to use for this job is a No.2, 40mm, but a smaller-width gouge will also work. Starting at the middle of the arc, pare away the waste wood on both sides to form a gentle curve, from the centreline on the face to the centreline on the edge.

6 Continue to shape of the surface from the centre of the arc downwards to the base. The shaping of the lower edge at the very base will not be possible until the end when the form is cut off the mount.

7 The markings shown on the wood delineate the proportion of the shell where it naturally protrudes strongest. This dictates that the areas on the outside of these lines need to be pared back slightly to enhance this visual effect of the central bulging mass on the surface. Use your template to help you draw these lines in position. Then use a No.5, 20mm to carve from the lines across the grain towards the edge. Repeat this on both sides.

8 This side view gives a clearer understanding of how much wood to remove in step 7.





9



10



11



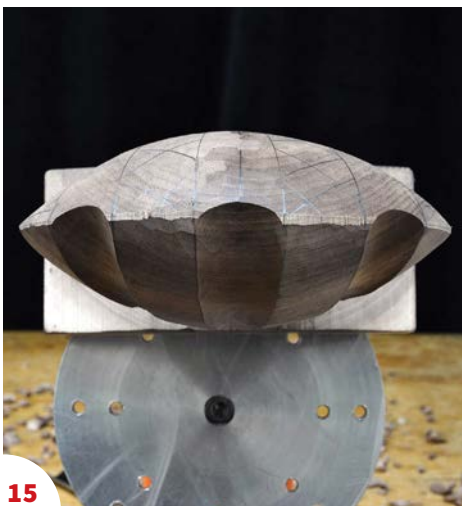
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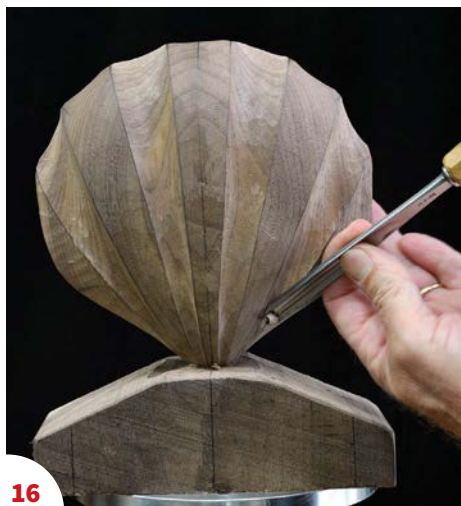
13



14



15



16

9 The sharp angle between the central protuberance and the adjoining sides that were carved in step 7 can now be blended naturally together, forming a gentle unity of surface depth that flows seamlessly across it. Do this using the large No.2 gouge.

10 The section at the very top of the form will also require blending into the surrounding areas to create the basic form into which the deep grooves will be carved in step 14.

11 Next, we move to the lower position of the edges, where the objective is to produce a tight crease, which will eventually flow from side to side when the lower edge that is attached to the base is finished. Measure 35mm up from the base and mark this position on both edges of the clamshell. Use a No.16, 3mm V-tool to carve a deep channel from the 35mm mark down to the base. Repeat on the opposite side.

12 Now use a No.2/5mm gouge to curve the adjacent edge into the V-tool cut. Repeat steps 11 and 12 again, tapering the groove out wider as it flows down to the base.

13 Finally, use a razor-sharp knife to make a deep slice into the V-tool channel, and the No.2/5mm again to curve the edge into the knife cut, creating the natural-looking tight crease. This should now be at least 3mm deep at the lowest position and hold a good amount of shadow. Check to verify this and make further adjustments if necessary. The very lowest edge will be completed when the clamshell is cut off the base.

TOP TIP: The knife is without doubt one of the most dangerous tools to use due to it being prone to slipping. Therefore, great care must be taken when using this highly versatile and valuable tool. Rule number one: never cut towards any part of your body. Rule number two: make sure that it is razor sharp and always stropped before use. Rule number three: keep the handle at a low cutting angle, especially when working over raised contours, to ensure that it does not slip.

14 The next job is to carve the deep channels in their correct order across both the upper and lower faces of the clamshell. Using the templates provided to assist you, measure and draw each of the grooves in their correct position on the surface of the upper and lower faces. Please note that these grooves are staggered opposite one another on each side of the shell. Use a selection of No.8 gouges, from 4mm at the base up to 18mm at the top, to create these grooves.

15 The finished depth of each groove should be approximately the same across the shell, which can be made deeper if the reader wishes.

16 Repeat step 14 on the opposite side, carving each groove in harmony of curvature and depth with its opposite one.

17 The convex curves in between the grooves are next to be shaped. Use the No.2, 20mm held upside down, which naturally lends its sweep to the contour of the detail, working from the centre of each section, into its adjacent groove. As you work down towards the base, swap to a No.2, 10mm.

18 You may find that you have to swap between the No.8s and No.2s to achieve an even balance across each section at the top end. This will be a focal point when the piece is finished, so it's important to ensure that this is accomplished as evenly as possible.

AT THIS STAGE

At this stage of the carving, the reader can, if they wish, add other details to the clamshell in the form of texture, a series of vertical lines, a series of curved horizontal lines, or anything that they feel would add to the composition and overall aesthetics of the finished piece.

19 Before the clamshell is cut off the base, it can be sanded through all the abrasive grits to blend the surface naturally and evenly together. Start with grit 100 to completely remove all tool marks. As you work down towards the base, use a small piece of dowel to brace the abrasive in the tighter grooves.

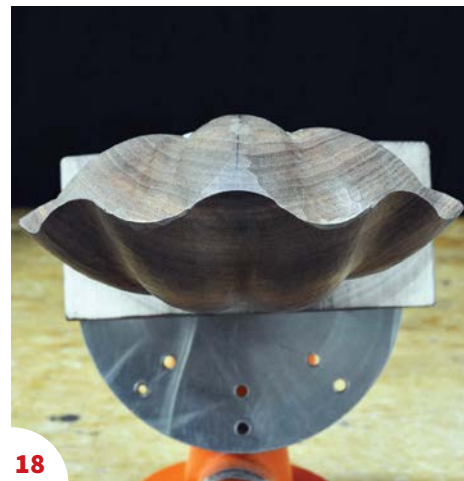
20 Dust off the wood then brush or pour hot water over the shell and leave it to dry. Next, work through grits 150, 240 and 400, removing all the scratches from each previous grit and repeating the hot water process in between. When you are sure that the abrasive work is completed to a fine finish, use the saw to cut the clamshell off the base.

21 You now need to finish off the tight crease that flows from side to side, shape the lower edge and extend the grooved channels. To do this, draw a line to connect the two creases on the edges together that were created in steps 11-13 and use a 6mm V-tool to carve a deep channel along this line to join these edges.

22 Use the No.2, 10mm to shape the sawn wood at the base naturally into the V-tool groove. Then, swap the V-tool for the No.16, 3mm, and use this to cut a deeper, tighter channel. Repeat steps 21 and 22 until the shape of the lower edge corresponds with the side view profile design.

23 Use the razor-sharp knife again to make a deep slice into the V-tool channel, and then the No.2, 5mm to curve the lower edge into the knife cut to create the desired crease.

24 The grooved channels on the lower edge can now be extended as close to the crease as possible. You need to create the visual impression of tension in the material, as well as the natural form of the clamshell. It is therefore very effective to make deeper, tighter grooves in this lower area, which can be achieved using a No.11, 4mm.





25



26

25 These deep-grooved edges made with the No.11/4mm will now need to be curved into their surrounding areas to produce the natural effect of them emerging from this lower edge up through the shell. Do this with the No.2, 5mm.

26 Now work through each of the abrasives as outlined in steps 19 and 20, using the hot water technique in between each grit to produce a fine finish.

27 The hot water technique will also raise the grain in the tight crease, which will require another slice with the knife to clear the channel, creating the infinitive crease for the shadow to fall in.



27



28

28 The finish used for the example was chosen to enhance and enrich the beautiful colour tones and figure in the timber. Boiled linseed oil was initially applied over the surface of the shell, which lowers the natural colour tone of the walnut and adds to the effect of the shadow. This was left for a week or so to dry before several coats of medium-brown wax polish were applied to seal the grain and give a fine finish.

29-32 Here is a selection of images showing the clamshell from different viewpoints. Now for a few comments regarding the presentation of the finished clamshell. There are effectively two options to present the finished piece. It can either be pinned at the base and mounted vertically on wood, stone or some other material, which will show the upper and lower sides to good effect, but cover the crease around the lower edge. Alternatively, it can be presented in its natural position on its side, without the need for any fixings, preferably on a highly reflective material, which, in my opinion, adds to the viewing experience. ▶



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Ella Fielding

Chainsaw artist and woodcarver

Anthony Bailey talks to a woman with a piratical past who's mean with a machine

I got into conversation with Ella – it suddenly developed into a full-blown interview, her ideas and views on carving and how she achieves them flowing quicker and sharper than my pen. I had to try to catch my breath. Her observations and insights into carving were as sharp as the teeth on one of her chainsaws and yet made in a very friendly and approachable manner. She has managed to elevate a much-maligned machine from being something that can fell trees to a tool that can caress wood gently enough to produce fine textures, as well as creating quite monumental statements, just from dead tree trunks. There are plenty of chainsaw carvers around but Ella Fielding has given the genre her own particular spin.

Ella's influences

Ella's earliest connection to wood was working on the lathe with her granddad, while her artistic side was no doubt inspired by her dad, a graphic designer who had won

awards, in the days before computers, when design work was done by physical 'paste up' techniques. At Camberwell College, London, Ella achieved an MA fine art degree in sculpture in 2007. In the final year she could do a dissertation or practical work – a 'no-brainer', in her words. She was inspired by the Tree Pirates at 'Glasto' who made a sculpture bench tree of an 'Ent' tree creature stomping on a car – that was 15 years ago.

The Tree Pirates

Throughout college Ella hadn't connected with the material, so she decided to go and see AD, AKA Captain Chainsaw of the Tree Pirates, who was very open to her hanging out for a long time, absorbing their skills and understanding that, with practice, you can use a chainsaw like a chisel or a hand plane, creating textures. It was fascinating being with someone with a wealth of experience. She says: 'You have to be able to hear how the saw trickles over the wood

– to see and hear, you would be surprised how delicately you can run the chain bar flat, pulling it along. The finish is close to sanding. Yes, there are risks with a cut going badly, cockiness is where safety goes. You need confidence, knowing where to place your body in different positions to avoid kickback and making the right decision.

'The very first complete piece I made was also the first day with AD. It was a 'hand' chair – literally a chair shaped like a hand. It was very rough but he was teaching me how to scoop, revving the saw slowly using the underneath of the bar to scoop out the bum-bucket shape.

In the zone

'My favourite things to carve are when I don't know what to make, often abstract spirally shapes while wearing my Bluetooth ear defenders – listening to blues and hard rock band Royal Blood, or Radio 4, a meditative zone-out. You can over-think too

much on a rainy day outdoors. Listening while carving can really pep you up. No interruptions, you are completely in a zone”.

Making trees work

I asked Ella what her biggest mistake or challenge has been. ‘To be honest, it has always been a success. You find a fault in the tree, so OK, how am I going to go around it and make it better? You have to be intuitive to the tree and not be thrown off course. Because you are working on a large scale, at the stage of blocking out, the bigger it is more forgiveness you have.’

Emotional connections

Ella’s enthusiasm and passion for what she does as her day job, when she isn’t being wife to husband Philip and mother to young son Lucho, is truly awe inspiring.

‘I just want keep progressing and learning, being able to say to my husband I won’t have another job, and it is bloody brilliant. I’m blessed to play all day, predominantly surrounded by smiles. My clients are so pleased because a tree meant something to them, as kids who played under it.

‘I am very emotionally connected to wood. I have a powerful connection to a client – it is the next stage in the life of a tree. So often trees stay rooted into the ground and a process is happening with new clothes put on it. The tree gets a big hug, so it is more than the transaction with a client, it permanently changes that space – it is very special.

Best and worst experiences

Of her worst experiences, Ella talks of dealing with ‘somebody who was unconnected with the process’. She says: ‘I was treated like any old service person, not as someone producing a unique work for them. It has only happened once or twice. Not really interested: “Hello there’s the tree – goodbye”.

‘The best experience I have had was at a woman’s house where the beech tree had a ceremony before it was taken down. The family had done a lot of research and they were telling stories of its life. It had to come down for safety reasons, but being involved in the process was very powerful. So often that has been the case with clients, that it is quite an emotional experience.’

Tears for the fallen

What is your most memorable carving experience?

‘We were doing a giant Pegasus out of a big oak. Its body was carved out of the trunk and the wings made from fallen limbs which we bolted on. It had a 30ft wingspan. The last piece to go on was the head and just as we were craning it up a guy came over to us. He had served in Paras and the Pegasus is their symbol. He said: “I’ve been carrying my cap around with me since my service, can I put it into the space underneath the head please?” So he climbed up the scaffolding and put the cap into the joint and we put the head in place – we were all in tears.’



Ella’s kit equipped with both carving and conventional chains and bars

Listen to the chainsaw

What’s the best bit of chainsaw carving advice you’ve ever received?

‘Listen to revs. You might think it goes grrr but hear the different tones it makes.’

Have you ever given up on a project?

‘I’ve never given up, but I have said no to projects that were not the right thing for me to do. There are limits to what you can make and what people expect. I certainly don’t want it to be a sad thing, it is a creative process. I need to be able to it justice.’

Need for speed

What is your favourite type of woodcarving?

‘Chisel carving is amazing – the detail, the length of time – but I need quick transformation. Bronze-making is so much about the process of the making, not the immediate connection.’ Ella observes that chisel carving, such as that done by Grinling Gibbons, is fantastic craftsmanship but not her thing. She says there is nowhere your brain can go – she needs to be open and flexible so



Part worked sculptures, angle grinders and drill are used for adding fine detail

such skills are interesting to marvel at but not her subject. She does, however, mention David Nash, a contemporary carver who carved a ball from a tree trunk, which was then allowed to roll down a river and eventually out to sea.

Lost innocence

So what has changed since you first started your carving?

‘There was an innocence I have lost. I made marks through lack of experience, a naive simplicity which is quite endearing, but I can’t un-know the knowledge I have acquired now.’

The kit

What are your favourite bits of kit?

‘My Husqvarna 576, two Stihl saws, one with a carving bar so I’m not battling with weight. It also has less kickback. , I also love my power file which allows you to sand more smaller areas and be more fluid with the detail.’

Sun, trees and piracy

What do you like about the world of carving?

‘Carvers are such a lovely bunch of people – not competing, the camaraderie is nice, It can be a lonely existence when I go to people’s houses working solo, so it is about networking, being a bit of a crew – the Tree Pirates – so on bigger projects we can pull in some of the other people who have a variety of skills, such as timber framing and signwriting, so we have a varied and different skill set. Every job is a prototype, so how would it work? We can put our brains together to figure out solutions’.

This is Ella’s helpful advice to would-be chainsaw carvers that still makes me chuckle. ‘Make firewood until it looks like something. Just keep going.’

Visit Ella’s website:
www.ellatreepirate.co.uk ▶



Completion of a dragonfly and owl statue on twin trunks



Definitely a seat of learning!



Ella's sculptures are often on a monumental scale like this cricketer figure



Abstract forms completely transform a tree trunk out of recognition

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Carving for competition

Peter Benson offers some valuable advice for those who want to enter competitions

While many carvers insist that they are not interested in entering any of their carvings for competition, the time will inevitably come when their local club or society has some form of competition for its members.

The value of these competitions is not usually the prizes offered as these are invariably only very small, but more the opportunity to have someone more experienced than yourself appraise your work. Unfortunately, there are many such competitions that are really a total waste of time as there is no feedback from the judge and this does, understandably, put a lot of carvers off.

I think that competitions have a valuable place in the development of any woodcarver's skills but they do have to be properly organised, even at club level. I have been involved in a great number of these both as an entrant and a judge and too many don't

really fit the bill. The requirements of the competition and judging criteria should be clearly displayed on the entry forms and all judges should either complete a critique for each entry or should be available to give verbal critiques for the entrants during the show or display of entries. By far the best competition for this is the International Congress in Iowa, US, where there are three judges, all of whom are required to be available throughout the show to give critiques and are also required to do an evening slide presentation for the entrants explaining what they were looking for and where some of the carvings excelled and some went wrong.

This obviously can't be done at club level but there really does need to be some sort of feedback or the judging and results are valueless. Having said all this, what should we do to get the best out of the competition experience and what sort

of competition should we be entering?

Probably the most valuable experience is at club level, providing you have, or can get, someone to judge whose opinion is valued by the members. Such a competition can be simply an appraisal of the pieces entered with an overall opinion of the standard of work. This has to be done tactfully so as not to discourage or upset any of the carvers. The judge might like to give a stand-up general critique or be available for personal comments.

If the competition is a larger affair it is important to know what the criteria are for the judging and it can be a very risky business to just pick out a carving from your mantelpiece and put it in the competition. You really need to carve something specially to enter, if that is possible. If not, you might need to try to look at your carving from the point of view of a judge and rectify anything that you feel can give reason for criticism.

What will a judge be looking for?



Relief where there are many components that need to be done well



Relief of girl in shirt based on unsigned print found in charity shop. Anatomy and finish are the main things a judge would be looking at

First of all, it helps to carve something that catches the judge's eye, so try to produce something different or special that hasn't appeared in loads of other events. Don't make the mistake of getting too complicated with your design as the more involved it is the more areas there are for mistakes or poor technique.

Choose something that you know you can do well, even if it is simple. Judges will know where to look for poor finishing or small errors. They can pick up the carvings and look in every little crevice and corner and seldom miss anything if they are experienced. It is no good leaving fuzzy undercuts or glass paper scratches on a piece and hope that the judge won't notice. You have to be as fussy as they are and check for anything that they might criticise. The fact that there may be areas that are so difficult to reach that you cannot achieve clean, crisp cuts will cut no ice with judges who will say that you should have adjusted the design to avoid such problems.

Make sure that the anatomy of your subject is correct and that all proportions are accurate. This means you need to study your subject before starting on the carving. You can bet your life there will be a judge out there who is very knowledgeable about what you have carved. Check that all your cuts are clean and neat, with no evidence of blunt tools, and that any undercuts are sharp and accurate.

Carvings that are not sanded will generally do better than those that are. If you once touch your carving with abrasives you are not only doubling or tripling the time taken but also run the risk of covering your work with noticeable scratches. You will need to go through the grades of glass paper, working along the grain until all trace of scratching is removed. Judges have the vision of a hawk when it comes to scratches on carvings. I know it may seem obvious, but ensure that all dirt and pencil marks are removed. I have seen some very dirty carvings and others with pencil marks in evidence that, with just a little bit of care could have been good carvings instead of being rapidly passed by.

Good presentation can be a very important



Pencil marks and dirt obvious, as well as poor detail finishing



Scratches evident on lily pad

part in any competition but remember that, while a suitable mount, base or frame can make a significant difference to the appearance of an entry, it will also be judged alongside the carving and needs to be of the same standard. Many carvings are spoilt by the presentation being somewhat of an afterthought rather than an equally important part of the design process, therefore detracting from the piece rather than enhancing it.

Remember that judges are trying to award prizes, not find as many faults as they can without paying attention to the good points. If they can't find fault with a piece, they can't mark it down. It can be put below a more ambitious piece but only if that is equally faultless or has more good points.

The problems arise when there is nothing to choose between two pieces, either because they are equally good or have similar faults. Then the judge will have to find something that may be really obscure to separate the entries.

I had such a situation once where the two other judges and I couldn't choose between two carvings, one painted and one not. Eventually, we picked the one that had no paint on it solely because we felt there was a remote possibility that the other carver could have covered any mistakes where the non-painted one showed every cut and detail.

There may have been no problems with either but we did need to separate them and any carving competition is about judging carving technique first and colouring second, unless the class is specifically for painted or coloured carvings, such as fish and birds.

It is worth bearing this in mind as in the

UK we tend not to have separate classes for painted and unpainted carvings in general competitions and, if faced with two equally well-carved birds or fish, one in polished natural wood and one painted, I suspect that most judges would choose the natural one. Just bear in mind that any

good judge will only be looking to assess the standard of each individual piece and award any prize on the relative merits.

No judge has the luxury of being able to choose a piece that he, or she, likes. It needs to be an objective choice rather than a subjective one.



Painted and non-painted cottage

What subjects are best to carve for competition?

Although there will probably be certain classes specified and entrants need to adhere to whatever the rules dictate, the largest number of entries in any competition will tend to be animals or people. In the US there will be large numbers of caricatures and painted birds and fish – something rarely seen in the UK other than at specialist shows – and there are some excellent carvers out there that you would have to compete against. If you have studied the human form and are confident you can get it right, this would be a good category to enter as, although there are some very good human figure carvings, the general standard of entries is surprisingly low. It is something most people feel they know about but never really look at what is there. We all see human faces every day and can't avoid seeing people of all shapes and sizes, but we don't actually see what is in front of us. As a result a good human figure or head study will stand a good chance of winning.

Relief carving is something else that you might like to consider, as good examples will always catch the judge's eye. This is something many aspiring carvers think is very easy to do, partly because many teachers and books use

shallow relief carvings as beginner's exercises (myself included).

However, once you get into the realms of vanishing points and perspective the whole process becomes much more complicated.

Landscapes and cityscapes require these to be dealt with skilfully to be effective while any subject carved in relief will have a degree of foreshortening. To achieve this the carver has to forget what the subject is in reality and concentrate on creating the illusion involving some very difficult techniques. Symmetry of form goes out of the window when you are carving a relief of something at an angle or three-quarter view – you have to rely on trusting how it looks rather than how it is.

Unfortunately, many relief carvings fall down on these elements and you get some very strange phenomena, such as shadows from buildings, trees or ships' sails on the sky – something that can never happen. Relief carving is all about creating this illusion of depth on a relatively thin piece of wood and judges will be looking for this – not a carving in the round attached to, or part of, a flat background. Many classical relief carvings are actually up to 12in thick, but they still show the results of foreshortening and perspective rather than

a carving in the round with the back cut off.

None of this is easy, which is why there are not many outstanding examples exhibited, but it is an area that someone keen on competition might like to work at. There are also some amazing examples of relief carving in stately homes and churches – study these and see how the carvers have got the effects they wanted.

Finally, you will probably find, in any competition, that there are pieces that have been copied from existing models or other people's photographs. Some judges may not notice these but somebody probably will. It is a breach of the laws of copyright to do such a thing without the written permission of the original designer or photographer. Even if you have this, full accreditation must be shown with the entry. It is an additional breach to offer such carvings for sale or to gain from someone else's work.

Having said all this, you shouldn't be put off displaying your work or entering it for any competition. It is a great learning experience and just standing within earshot of those looking at the display of entries can be highly enlightening as you will get a huge number of comments, most complimentary, that will help you with further carvings. ▶

Power carving a polar bear

In this extract from *Power Carving Manual*, Chuck Solomon and Dave Hamilton show how to carve a stylised polar bear

Stylised carvings make great beginner projects because you can focus on general form and technique without worrying about texturing or details. For those same reasons, stylised carving is a great change of pace for realistic carvers.

Most woodcarving shows have a category for stylised carving. It may be called stylised, interpretative, or abstract. Stylised carvings focus on the essence of the subject. For example, in this polar bear project, the overall body shape and profile of the head, as well as the snow base, define the subject as a polar bear.

Stylised carvings range from very simple to highly complex, sometimes incorporating paint and metals such as bronze or copper.

This pattern can be used to create a realistic polar bear carving by adding fur texture. Add texture with a white stone in a rotary-power carver or with veiners, V-tools, and other hand tools.



Book offer



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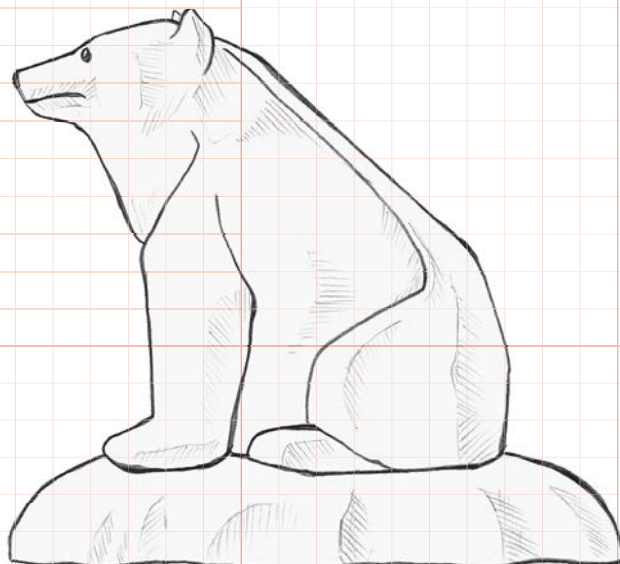
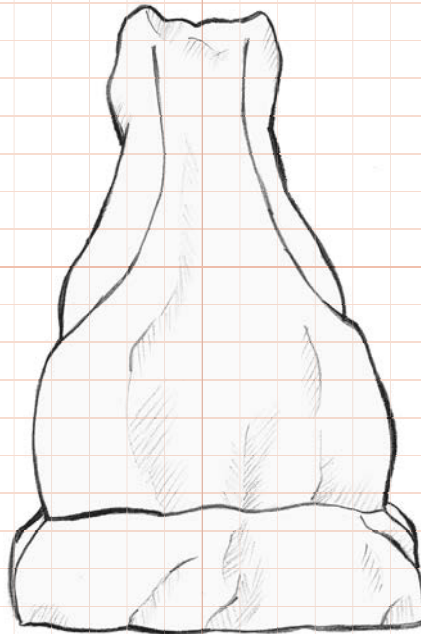
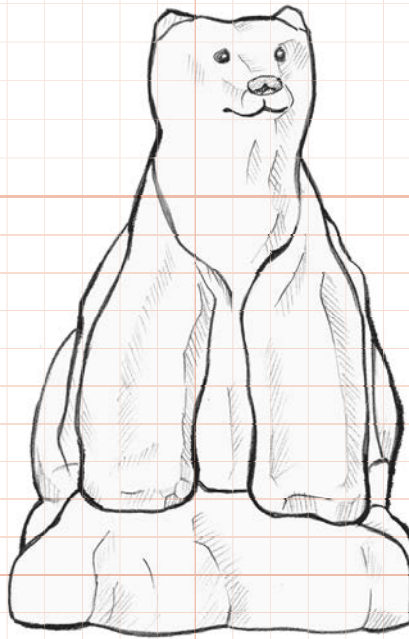
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Things you will need**Tools:**

- Flexible-shaft machine
- Micromotor machine (optional)
- 19mm coarse-grit carbide sleeve
- 25mm-diameter extra-coarse-grit carbide-point sleeve
- 14mm-diameter fine-grit safe-end cylinder-shaped carbide-point bit
- 6mm coarse-grit safe-end cylinder-shaped carbide-point bit
- 6mm-diameter fine-grit safe-end cylinder-shaped carbide-point bit
- Bull nose-shaped diamond or ruby bit
- Cushioned sanding drum
- Pointed diamond or ruby bit
- Bandsaw or coping saw
- Woodburner
- Burning pens: writing tip
- 10mm-wide skew tip
- 10mm-wide shader tip

Materials:

- Basswood (*Tilia* spp.) 102mm x 140mm x 164mm
- Cloth-backed sandpaper: 150-250 grits
- Graphite paper or card stock
- Paintbrush, flat 13mm wide to apply bleach
- Wood bleach, optional
- Finish: satin spray, such as Deft

**REFERENCE MATERIAL**

The polar bear is tied with the kodiak bear as the largest land carnivore. Polar bears are native to the Arctic Circle and live and hunt in the sea and on land. *Polar Bears – Living with the White Bear* and *The World of the Polar Bear* are excellent reference books. Both titles include extensive biological and behavioral information and many high-quality photographs. Internet searches are also a good source for reference photos.

1 Transfer the pattern to the blank. Orient the wood grain parallel with the length of the head. Use graphite paper to transfer the profile to the blank or attach the pattern to card stock, cut around the pattern and trace around the cutout. Cut the bear's profile with a bandsaw or coping saw.

POLAR BEAR: ROUGHING OUT

2 Draw the major landmarks. Draw a centreline on the body and mark the width of the major parts. Use the pattern as a guide. The head is turned to the left, so draw the centreline from the top of the head to the end of the muzzle. Sketch in the shape of the head.

3 Rough out the head. Use a 25mm-diameter extra-coarse-grit carbide-point sleeve. Make several passes to remove the wood. Remove wood at the end of the muzzle to keep the head straight. Remove the waste around the muzzle and then around the head. The sides remain perpendicular to the top.

4 Rough out the body. Use a 25mm-diameter extra-coarse-grit carbide-point sleeve. Remove wood at the neck, shoulders, rump and base. Keep the lines straight at this point.

5 Round the body. Use a 19mm-diameter coarse-grit carbide-point sleeve. Round the body starting at the neck. Work your way down the back to the rump and down the front to the base. Leave wood for the front feet.

POLAR BEAR: ADDING DEFINITION

6 Define the major elements. Draw in the front and back legs. Draw the S-shaped flow lines from the back legs to the back of the head. Keep the lines on the chest smooth and flowing. Carve along the lines with a 1/4in (6mm)-diameter coarse-grit safe-end cylinder-shaped carbide-point bit.

7 Separate the front legs. Use a 9/16in (14mm)-diameter fine-grit safe-end cylinder-shaped carbide-point bit to remove the wood between the front legs. Refine the area using a 1/4in (6mm)-diameter fine-grit safe-end carbide-point bit.

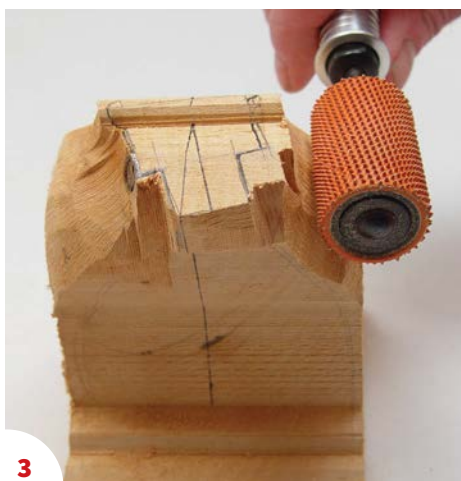
8 Carve the base. Shape the snow under the bear with a 9/16in-diameter (14mm) fine-grit safe-end cylinder-shaped carbide-point bit. Separate the snow into general masses, but keep the overall base smooth and rounded.



1



2



3



4



5



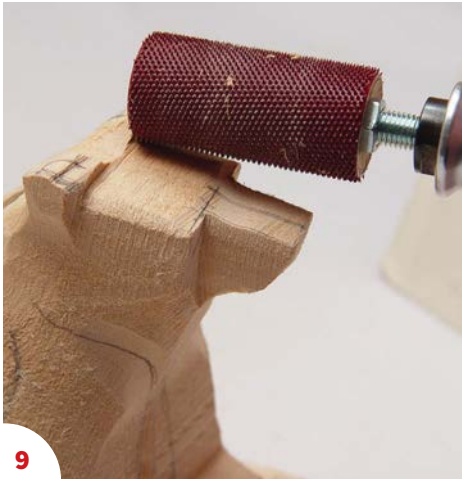
6



7



8

**9****10**

9 Shape the head and define the ears. Use a $\frac{3}{4}$ in (19mm)-diameter coarse-grit carbide-point sleeve to lower the head in front of the ears. Make the cut perpendicular to the centreline on the head. Remove wood from between the ears with the same bit or a smaller carbide-point bit.

10 Round the head and the muzzle. Use a $\frac{3}{4}$ in (19mm)-diameter coarse-grit carbide-point sleeve to round the head and the muzzle. Redraw the centreline as needed and keep the head symmetrical. Round the back of the ears.

POLAR BEAR: CARVING DETAILS

11 Create the trough on the muzzle. Use a $\frac{1}{4}$ in (6mm)-diameter fine-grit safe-end cylinder-shaped carbide-point bit to create a trough on both sides of the muzzle. The eyes are located where the trough meets the head.

**11****12**

12 Smooth and shape the head. Use a bull nose-shaped ruby or diamond bit to remove wood in the centre of the head and above the eyes. Create a shallow depression across the top of the head.

13 Draw in the facial details. Use the pattern and your own reference photos as a guide. Draw in the nose, mouth and eyes with a soft lead pencil.

**13****14**

14 Refine the carving. Use a $\frac{1}{4}$ in (6mm)-diameter fine-grit safe-end cylinder-shaped carbide-point bit to refine the flow lines and further define the ears, front legs, paws, and the snow drifts.

POLAR BEAR: SANDING AND BURNING

15 Sand the bear. Use 150 to 220 grit cloth-backed sandpaper in a cushioned sanding drum. Remove the tool marks from the carbide-point bits and refine the shape of the bear.

16 Woodburn the nose, mouth, and eyes. Use skew-tipped and writing-tipped burning pens to burn the nose, mouth, and eyes. Shade the nose and eyes with a curved-tip burning pen.

**15****16**

17 Deepen the nostrils. Use an awl or a tool with a sharp point to make a pilot hole for the nostrils. Plunge a pointed diamond or ruby bit into the wood to make a shallow nostril. The nostril should be a little more than 1/16 (2mm) deep.

18 Remove any cross-grain scratches. Remove the dust with a tack cloth or compressed air.



17



18

Finishing the carving

You can finish the carving with a few coats of Deft satin spray finish, but we chose to lighten the wood using a wood bleach. Wear safety glasses and rubber gloves and apply the bleach according to the manufacturer's instructions. Apply one to three coats of the bleaching solution – one coat every 10 minutes – and allow the bleach to remain on the carving for 1½ hours. Neutralise the bleach

by brushing a coat of baking soda mixed with water over the entire carving. Allow the carving to dry for 24 hours. Apply a coat of Deft satin spray finish to the carving. Allow the Deft to dry for 45 minutes and rub the carving down lightly with 000 steel wool. Apply another coat of Deft, allow it to dry, and rub it down with steel wool. Apply a final coat of Deft, allow it to dry, and rub it lightly with steel wool.



Our contributors



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Traditional lovespoon symbolism explained

Dave Western explores the meanings behind the signs and symbols used in lovespoons

Understanding lovespoon symbolism can be a tricky business. Loads of mythology has sprung up over the years to explain the origins and meanings of the many romantic symbols found on Welsh lovespoons. Likely originating in Victorian times, much of this lore is more the product of vivid imagination than cold, hard fact. With the advent of the internet, ever more fanciful 'information and lore' floods us, with the result being complete confusion.

Nowadays, carvers and those interested in the history and tradition of lovespoon carving are rightly perplexed about what actually does constitute traditional design and how can we tell the difference between lovespoons and those spoons which are merely ornamental.

In this and the next issue of *Woodcarving*, I will examine

traditional and modern lovespoon design. I will highlight the important symbols of both eras and will show you how to use them to improve your own designs and techniques.

At the end of this article, I will include a couple of patterns which you can use to practise your lovespoon carving or which you can build upon to create your own design for that someone special.

In this article, I will focus on the chief symbols common to the majority of historical spoons which have been gathered by museums and private antique collectors.

Although I can't pretend to have seen every lovespoon ever carved or to have catalogued every symbol which has appeared on a spoon, I have viewed enough of them to gain an insight into which symbols are historically traditional and which are of a more modern vintage.

Hearts

Without doubt, the foremost lovespoon symbol is the heart. Instantly recognisable throughout the western world as the dominant symbol of romance and romantic passion, its use on a lovespoon leaves no reservations that the spoon has a loving intent. From the oldest Welsh spoons in museum collections to today's CNC-produced souvenirs, the inclusion of a heart in the design strongly indicates a suggestion of affection.

There are a variety of ways the heart can appear on the spoon. It can be fretted through the handle or stem, it can be carved in low or high profile, it can be three-dimensionally carved or simply inlaid (either with contrasting wood or, more commonly, with sealing wax). I have seen it suggested that fretted hearts were considered 'less passionate' than carved hearts. I doubt there was any such grading of passion among the carvers or those who received their work. Much more likely the type of heart was a product of the carver's skill level and the type of design being carved.

I should note that on some European spoons originating from strongly Catholic countries, the sacred heart (or heart of Christ) sometimes appears on spoon designs. This type of heart can often appear with a cross, flames, or piercing arrows and may be misconstrued for a love heart when, in fact, its meaning was actually more religious.



No matter how it appears, the heart always symbolises love and affection

Comma or raindrop

Where the heart is an undeniable symbol of love, this common symbol on historic and modern spoons is shrouded in mystery and conjecture. Generally called a 'soul symbol' in Welsh lovespoon circles, it has been claimed its origins lay in Egypt where it was said to be a hieroglyphic symbol for the nostril, the part of the body where the soul enters the body at birth and exits it at death.

Further embellishments to the story tell of Welsh sailors bringing the symbol home with them after voyages to the Middle East. It's a fabulously romantic tale, but unfortunately not likely to be true. The hieroglyphic symbol of soul (ka) is not nostril-shaped and no written evidence exists to prove sailors

had anything to do with its arrival on Welsh spoons. A second theory has it being a paisley pattern from the Middle East. This explanation is more plausible but for the fact that some spoons featuring it are known to have been carved before the popularity of the paisley pattern had spread to the British Isles.

A much more plausible explanation is that it is a 'raindrop' and thus a symbol of fertility and growth.

This symbol could be commonly found throughout France and Germany in the 1600s and 1700s and still appears to this day in the hex designs found on Pennsylvanian barns. It may appear as single commas throughout a design or as a grouping of several arranged in a wheel formation or border.



As with hearts, the comma shape can be fretted, carved in relief, or rendered fully in the round



Diamonds

Diamonds were a symbol of prosperity. Likely the prosperity on offer was more a promise to provide food, clothing and shelter rather than the manor house and servants. Nevertheless, young lovers dream and they generally dream big, so there was no harm

in wishing for more than they probably got. I have only ever encountered stylised fretted diamonds and have never seen an old spoon with a more realistic profile carved diamond. No doubt the symbolism was clear enough with the basic shape.



Simple and elegant, the diamond profile indicated a desire to provide



Circle

Ironically, the simplest symbol commonly appearing on Welsh lovespoons is also the most complex. The circle is a well-known symbol of eternity due to it having neither a beginning nor an end (the reasoning behind the adoption of the wedding band to represent endless love). It can also represent the circle of life or notion of work and livelihood, especially when it appears on spoons carved by sailors as a ship's wheel, or by farmhands as a wagon's wheel. It can be carved as anything from a simple fretted hole to a complicated geometric pattern. Most often the circular pattern is seen with a six-point 'flower' – an almost infinite variety of these can be found on antique spoons.

Easily rendered with a simple compass or even with rudimentary dividers, these geometric patterns enabled carvers to decorate their circles and create designs which seemed more difficult than they actually were. Particularly dexterous carvers would often carve a pinwheel pattern that was much more popular on the continent.



The simple circle could become wonderfully convoluted and decorative using basic geometric patterns. Highly segmented pinwheel patterns tested the carver's skill, patience and tenacity





Chains and ball-in-cages

Once again, loads of Victorian sentiment and fanciful internet yarn-spinning has made more of these traditional carver's tricks than perhaps was the original case.

While the chain is said to be a representation of a promise to provide security (or, more romantically, a way of saying the carver is held captive by his love) it is also suggested that it was the carver's way of indicating a desire for children.

Given that many spoons have good lengths of chainwork, the thought of having masses of children might not have

been a particularly appealing consideration for a young woman who risked her life every time she bore one. The same symbolic meaning is also conferred on the ball in cage and in this case, it would certainly seem more plausible as the numbers of balls in cages found on historical spoons seldom ranged too high. Although I love the romance of these theories, it's probably more likely that carving chains and balls was simply a demonstration of skill and tenacity by the young man and likely not much more was read into them.



Although the true symbolic meaning of chains and balls-in-cages might be unknown, they make for a formidable display of craftsmanship and tenacity



Miscellaneous

Although they appear much more occasionally than the previously-mentioned symbols, a variety of lesser symbols can be found on historical examples. These range from double bowls (which indicate the notion of 'we two are as one') and triple bowls (said to indicate the desire for children – the extra mouth to feed) to keyholes and crossed keys to signify security or the heart held captive.

Occasionally, fretted glasses and pitchers may have denoted a wish for prosperity and a full belly. Anchors and wax-

inlaid sailing ships spoke of a sailor's desire to settle with his love and engraved images of houses offered a similar sentiment for landlubbers. Simple vines and flowers often suggested fertility or the growth of the relationship and, every so often, birds in pairs would suggest love and bonding.

Less frequently, the carver would simply engage in flights of fancy, making up patterns which may have had no purpose other than to look good and nicely fill a space in his design.



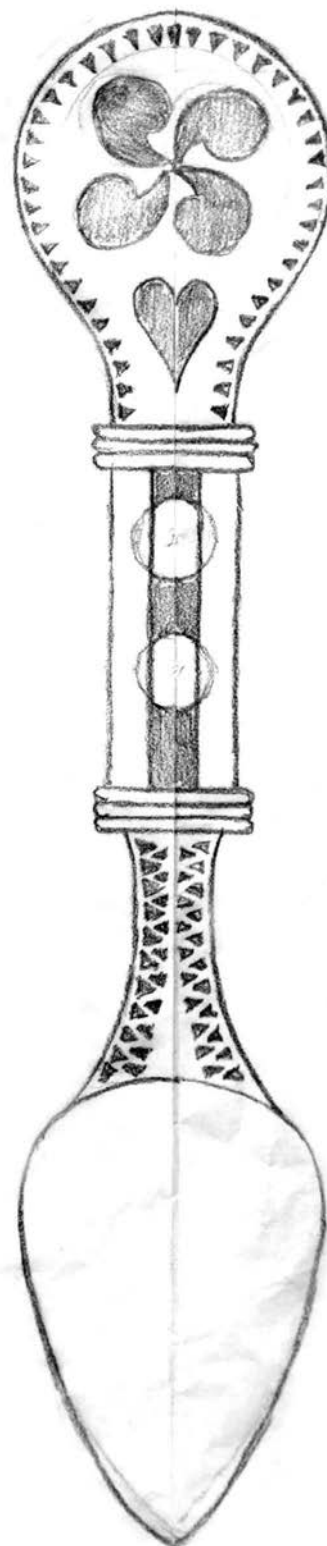
Minor symbols turn up on historical examples, but not in significant numbers. While keyholes and anchors are easily understood, many of the other designs are a bit more esoteric and harder to discern



Designs

If you'd like to try a traditional styled Welsh lovespoon of your own, I have included three basic designs for you to get started with. While these aren't copies of any particular spoons, they are accurate representations of antique spoons of similar styling. They feature many of the most popular symbols and make lovely replica-type spoons.

You can practise technique and get a feel for the traditional style of design by copying them directly, or use them as inspiration for your own versions. Either way, I know you will enjoy the carving. ▀



In the next issue of *Woodcarving*, I will show you how to use these and many of the more modern traditional symbols as a springboard into more contemporary lovespoon carving.

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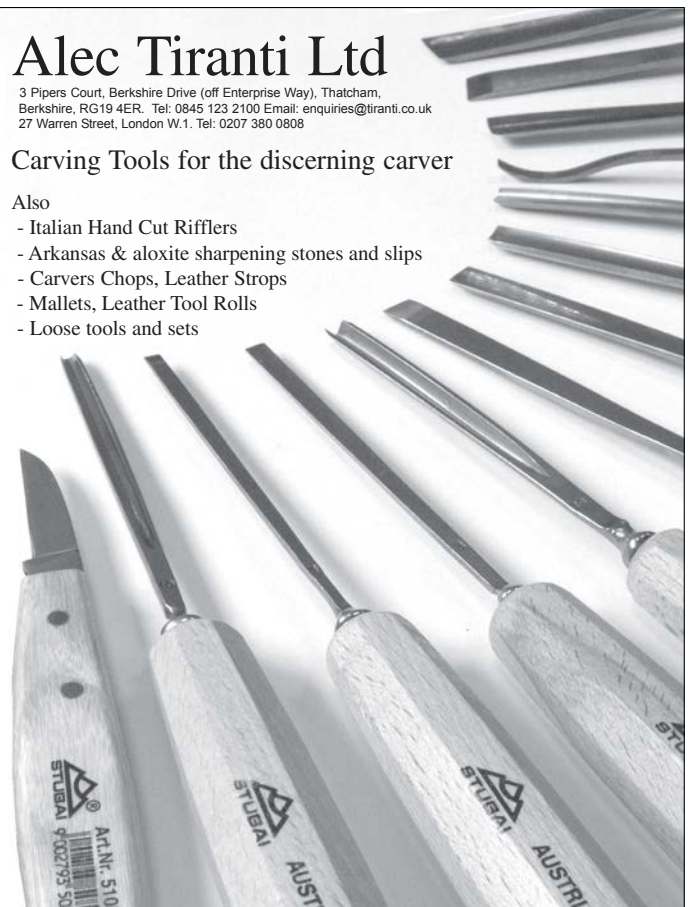
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Chip-carving letters

Murray Taylor gives you a brief history of letter carving
and describes the tools and equipment you will need to carve small letters

Letter carving is a vast subject and if you are thinking of carving large letters as shown, using a mallet and full-size gouges, I would recommend you study *Lettercarving in Wood* by Chris Pye, which I consider to be the bible on the subject.

When I am teaching or visiting clubs I am frequently asked about carving small letters as many people seem to have a problem with this. I must start by saying that, as my background was as a professional jeweller and silversmith, for me it is a matter of the smaller the better as fine detail was my stock in trade.

Have a look at churches and churchyards—you will be surprised at the wonderful array of different fonts and styles of carving you can find. When I am walking around such places I find myself thinking about the craftsmen in the past who carved these letters so neatly and, of course, the tools they would have used.



Carving a house name on a chestnut beam

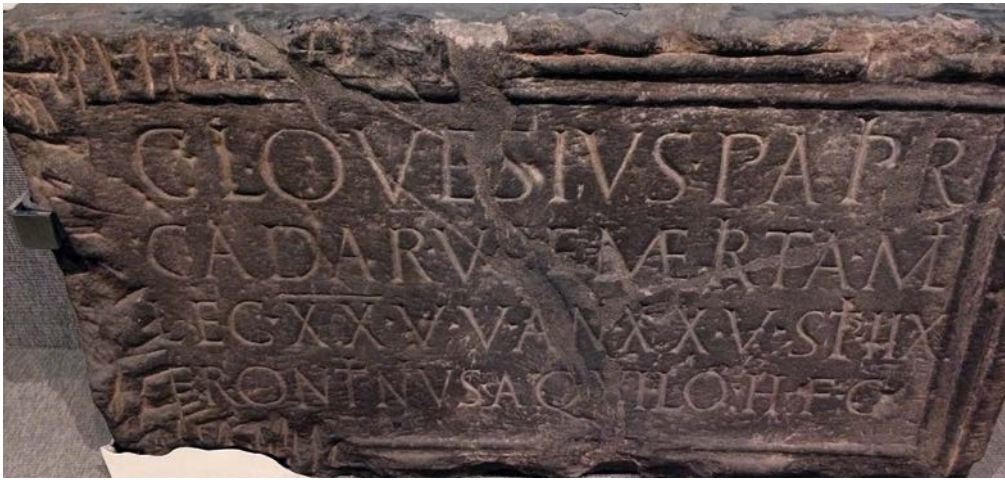


The beam in situ

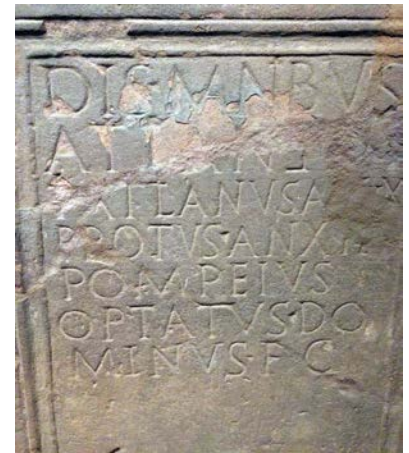


A motto for a college in oak

A brief history



Roman gravestones at Grosvenor Museum, Chester



Grosvenor Museum, part of West Cheshire Museums, Cheshire West and Chester Council

It is generally believed that the lettering on Trajan's Column in Rome is the finest example of lettering known to this day. Its beauty lives on and is an inspiration to us all. The column was built in marble around 115AD. The panel is approximately 3 m by 1 m in size, but unfortunately we do not know the name of the master craftsman who carved it.

The letters H, J, K and U do not appear on the tablet as we know them today, nor W, Y and Z, but by careful study it has been possible to come up with satisfactory shapes to complete the modern Roman alphabet. There are many photographs of the column that can be seen on line.

Students of calligraphy will discuss at length the minutiae of the elements involved with individual letters, the base of the 'A' being slightly inclined from the baseline, the apex of the 'A' projects slightly above the cap line etc, etc, but these weighty matters need not concern us in this article.

The reason for the need to do small lettering is, of course, to put names, dates and inscriptions on to carvings such as lovespoons, badges, plaques and the like. It can also be used on small items such as boxes or plates.



A lovespoon with 'Wales' in English, Welsh and Japanese



The Daffodils, by William Wordsworth



Wedding plaque

Cutting letters

When I started carving I thought small lettering would be very easy in wood – after all I could do it in precious metals. How wrong I was. I had not considered the all-important grain in the wood. In most of the books I read the emphasis was on the spacing of the letters, how this added to the aesthetic appeal etc, and I remember thinking ‘never mind the spacing, I’ll worry about that when I can carve the letters’. And so it was that I began to carve sample board after sample board of different fonts.

In this article I am going to take you through the Roman alphabet style. It does have variations but is more or less a standard form. In order to carve these letters, you will need chip-carving knives and a selection of small gouges, depending upon the size of the letters you are carving. You will also need a mechanical pencil, an eraser, a T-square, suitable sharpening tools, some tracing and carbon paper. I usually prefer graphite paper as this is easier to erase.

Fonts

Many examples of Roman fonts can be easily found on your computer or in the many books available on calligraphy. You can see many examples of fonts all around you – a walk around any city will give you ideas if you keep your eyes open or you could try churches and churchyards.



The tools required



A typical Roman font 1) computer generated 2) hand drawn

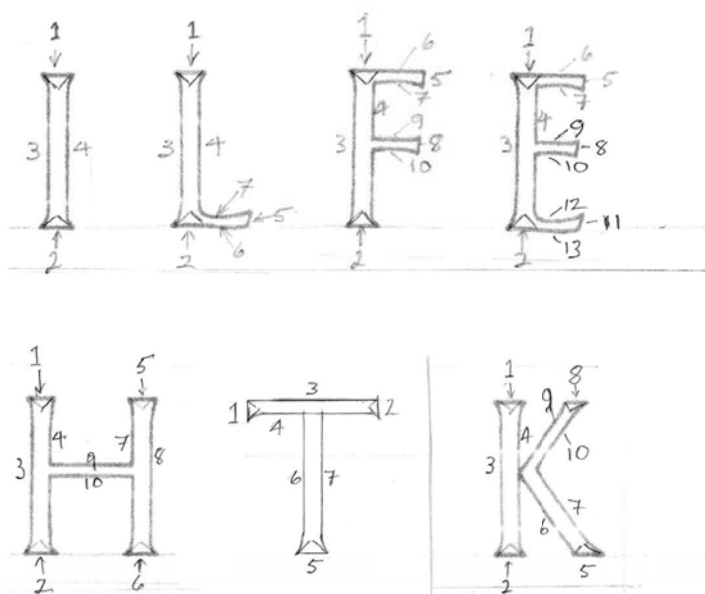


Relief carving on Mr Simms Olde Sweet Shop, Chester

Order of cutting

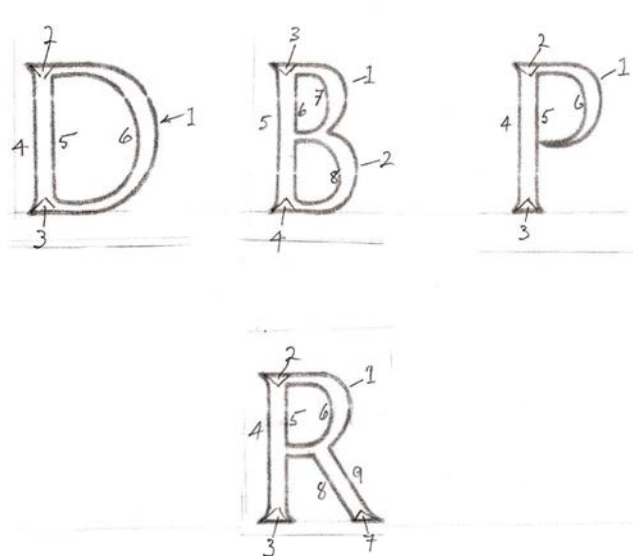
When considering the Roman alphabet for carving we can divide it into five groups, or series.

Series 1

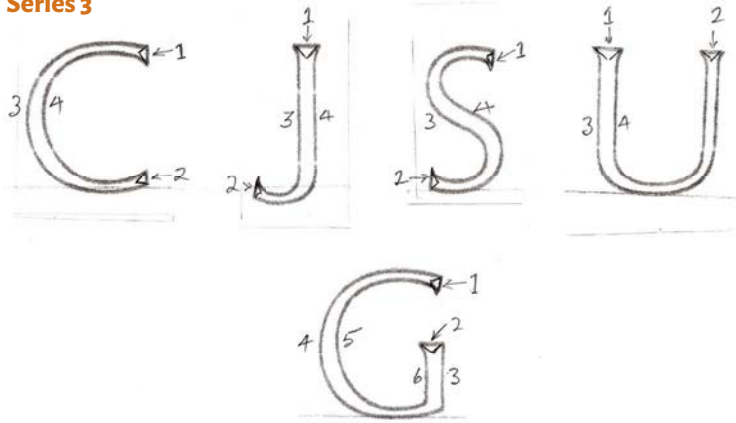


Series 1: Letters with straight elements joined at obtuse or right angles. The numbers indicated with a Δ are cut as three-cut chips

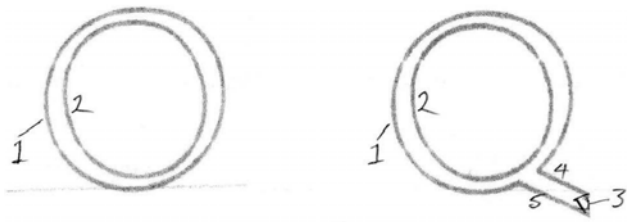
Series 2



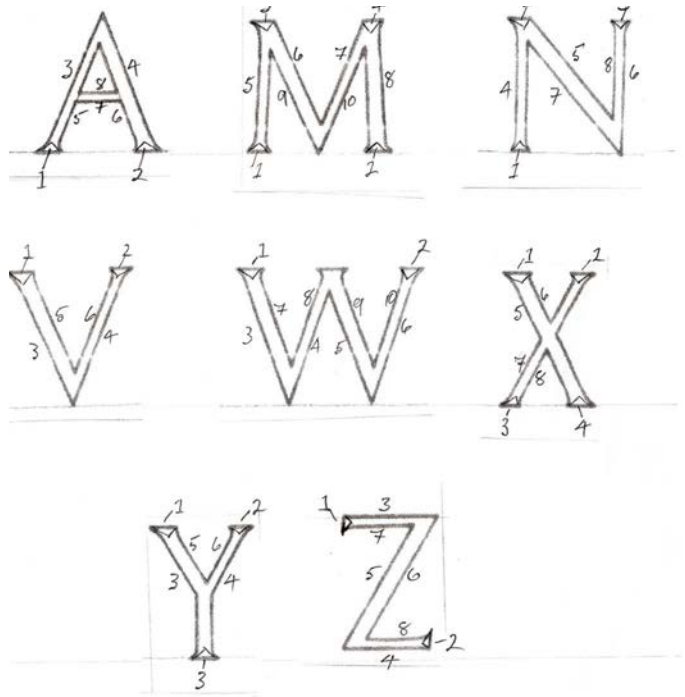
Series 2: Letters formed mostly with straight lines and curves

Series 3

SERIES 3: Letters formed mainly with curves.
Numbers indicated with a Δ are cut as three-cut chips

Series 5

SERIES 5: Completely circular letters

Series 4

SERIES 4: Letters with straight elements joined at acute angles

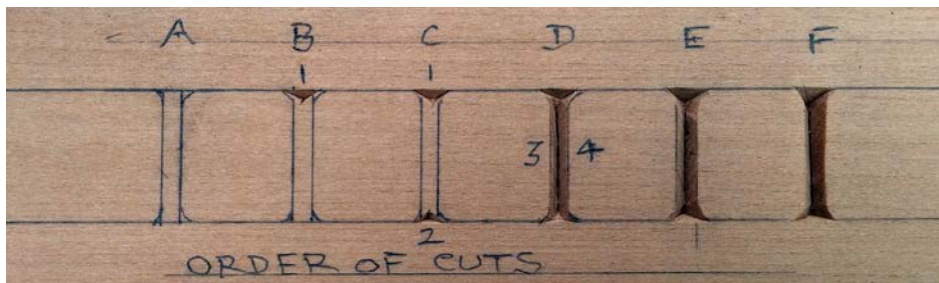
The series 1 letters

Cut a practice board approximately 200 x 100mm and draw a set of parallel lines 20mm apart. Now draw a series of perpendicular lines between them 3mm apart as shown. Then draw in the serifs freehand.

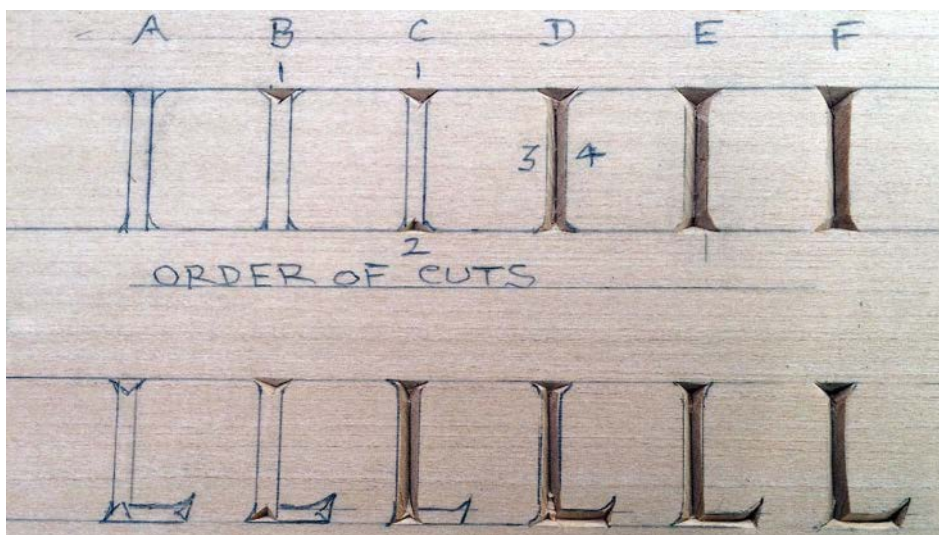
Now cut the three-cut triangular chip number 1, followed by triangular cut number 2. Now cut the perpendicular lines numbers 3 and 4, then round your knife into the serifs and generally clean up your

cuts. What you are aiming for is a neat letter like the one on the practice board.

It is unlikely that this will happen first time, that will only come with practice, so draw a line of the letter 'I' and keep practising. Remember to regularly strop your knife. When cutting the perpendicular lines be careful not to cut into the cap or baselines.



Drawing 'straight line' letters, the first practice board. A) The basic letter 'I'. B) 1st triangular chip. C) 2nd triangular chip. D) Two vertical cuts. E) Round off the serifs. F) The final cleaning up



The letter 'L' showing the sequence of cuts

The letter L

Draw another set of parallel lines 20mm apart and draw the letter 'L' as shown. Now follow the series of cuts as shown in the photograph and you should end up with a neatly carved letter 'L'.

The secret of successful letter carving is to understand and memorise the sequence of the stop-cuts – they will become second nature after a while. Your knife should enter the wood at an angle of between 60° - 65°. Be careful not to cut in too deeply and leave ugly over-cuts at the root of the letter. The rest of the letters in the series 1 group are cut in a similar manner. It is important to become really competent with this series as it is the easiest to master and your ability to master it will influence your ability to go on to the next four series.

The rest of the letters in series 1 are very similar to carve but a little more care needs to be taken when carving the letter 'K', where the two arms meet at an obtuse angle.

It is easier to carve the upper arm coming in to meet the lower and not have them converging on the perpendicular section of the letter. In either case it just takes a little practice not to get a chip-out at the junction, so remember practise, practise, practise, for as we well know, practice makes perfect.

The series 2 letters

When carving these letters, it should be noted that the cut for the outer curve forms the stop cut for the triangular chips. A stop cut is made to stop a cut running on with the grain.

Following the order of cuts shown in the diagram you should, with a little practice, be able to get reasonable results. When cutting the tighter curves of the B, P and R you will find it easier to use a knife with a narrow blade, a standard chip-carving knife would be difficult to use on a very tight curve and cause a jagged cut.

The tight curves are hard to master but you can clean up the curves with small gouges, you will find the narrow gauges of 6, 7 and 8 sweeps being the most useful.



Left. A standard chip-carving knife with diminishing-sized blades going to the right



Cleaning up a tight curve

The series 3 letters

The open curve letters in this series should be relatively easier to carve now that you have had some practice. Follow the order of cuts and clean up with a gauge.

The series 4 letters

This series of letters poses a new problem, that is the acute angle at which the arms join as the sharp points are liable to crumble, so it takes a lot of care with a very sharp knife to keep these points intact. Because we are looking at small

letters, it is possible to work very carefully and maintain the integrity of the sharp points.

Only practice will produce the precision you no doubt strive for, along with the use of a good light source or even a magnifier.

The series 5 letters

This comprises the circular letters O and Q and seems to cause a disproportionate level of difficulty. It is important to note they are not truly round and that the width of the letters

is narrower at the top and bottom. It is vital, therefore, that you draw them accurately using a 0.5mm pencil and not letting your knife wander inside or outside the lines. Once again you can tidy up with small gouges.

TOP TIP: Time spent on accurate drawing of the letters is time well spent. Do not think that 'near enough' will do. You will never correct a badly drawn letter with your knife.

The project

As with most of my projects it is somewhat open-ended. The idea is to carve a sampler – the size of the board and the letters is up to you. I would suggest that the letters should be somewhere between 15-20mm high. You can trace the letters on to the board very lightly and then go over them with a 0.5mm pencil. Alternatively, you can print out the alphabet

from your computer and stick the paper on to the wood with a rubberised spray-on glue, then carve through the paper.

You could chip-carve a decorative border or simply shape and chamfer the board as I have done. The final embellishment in this case was to sign and date it. The sampler was finished with sanding sealer and a clear wax. ▶



The computer-generated letters carved through the paper



The marked-out sampler



The carving in progress



The completed sampler

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The diary of a student woodcarver

William Barsley talks about a blockwood carving and printing workshop with Japanese master carver Motoharu Asaka and a recent study trip to northern France



William deep in concentration
at the Japanese woodblock

Block wood printing

As part of my final year of a three-year diploma in Ornamental Woodcarving & Gilding at the City & Guilds of London Art School, I must undertake a lettering project. For this I chose to do a series of prints using the traditional method of blockwood carving and printing. I've been fascinated with this type of carving ever since documenting the blockwood carvers of Jaipur, in India, as part of my Carving Countries journey. The carvers I met were making blocks to be used in the traditional method of fabric printing. They would sometimes create up to six different blocks for the same pattern, with each overlaying the

other. I was amazed by their skill and ability to carve such fine detail into end grain and wanted to give it a try myself.

I decided to create an exhibition piece for my final year project, with the design staying in the same theme as my final woodcarving project – hops. I designed a series of three prints (in the form of beer mats), following the chronology of hops in the UK. The first incorporates one of the oldest illustrations of hops to be found in print, which dates back to the medieval period, along with the Dutch word for hop, 'hopfen' (the Dutch being the ones to introduce hops to the UK in 1524). The second mat celebrates Kent and the traditional



Blockwood carving for fabric printing in Jaipur, India

oast houses where the hops used to be dried and which are still found throughout south east England. The final mat honours the hop-pickers by illustrating an old hop 'token', often created by the farmers to be used as payment to the workers.

I used a 4mm flat section of pear wood for the carving, a wood known to be good for blockwood carving given its tight grain and ability to hold detail. After carefully designing the images, a challenge given their small scale, I transferred them on to the wood using transfer paper. One of the main things to remember at this stage (which is obvious in hindsight but is something I initially forgot) is to transfer the image on backwards as, when printing, the image is reversed. As always with carving, sharp chisels were absolutely key to the process, as the edges of the design had to be cut crisply in order to make a good print. I look forward to seeing how the rest of the prints turn out and hope to make a limited series of the mats.

Master carver Motoharu Asaka

It just so happened that, during the time I was working on the woodblocks, the Art School had a visiting master carver from Japan, Motoharu Asaka (www.takumihanga.com/profile/?lang=en), who was running a one-day workshop in the traditional method of Ukiyo-e Japanese woodblock carving and printing. Motoharu has more than 45 years of experience in this art and is said to be one of only six remaining masters of this style. At 16, he moved to Kyoto to begin a 10-year apprenticeship to learn the process of Ukiyo-e, which is said to be over 400 years old.

The workshop was co-ordinated by Louise Rouse, who also translated for Motoharu. We were supplied with a 5in by 7.5in section of Shina plywood (*Tilia japonica*), a soft wood to carve so well suited for a one-day beginner's workshop. Motoharu usually carves in Japanese mountain cherry (*Prunus serrulata*), which he told me has a unique stickiness when carving that is perfect for his work. Interestingly, he tried carving my pear wood block and noted it had a similar stickiness.

I chose to carve a series of three hops, with the detail in black and the base colour in green. Our designs, prepared ahead of the workshop, were traced on to both sides of the block as we were creating a simple, two-part print. Reference marks were cut on to both sides, and these were crucial for accuracy when lining up the paper for printing. Once finished carving, we soaked our work in water to saturate it, making it easier to print with.

We used a water-based pigment for the paint, and added drops of rice glue (a very common glue in Japan) to the board when applying the paint. The glue helped to give the paint a stickiness and allow it to spread more easily.

At each stage there was a particular method and technique to use, from how to hold the paper when printing to the way you rub the paper's surface with the handmade barren (a circular pad).

Motoharu described to us the incredible process of making a traditional 'barren', an essential component in the printing process. To begin, a skilled craftsman



Carving the final print in 4mm pear (*Pyrus spp.*)



Exhibition test prints and original carving



Motoharu Asaka



A print by Motoharu

weaves together up to 8m of thinly stripped bamboo into a tight and very thin rope. When coiled into a small circle, this rope provides the perfect base for the barren, giving just enough cushion when pressing down onto the print. The barren is then covered in a bamboo leaf, twisted together to form the handle that is more disposable and thus protects the base underneath.

Apparently, barrens made in this way can cost up to £1,000 since very few craftsman these days are able to make them.

It was an incredible experience and a privilege to attend the workshop with Motoharu. His skill and knowledge of the craft were evident to see. It was the last workshop of a four-week tour that he makes every year, beginning in Rome. He is clearly passionate about passing on his skills to others and, to this day, continues teaching in Japan alongside his commissioned work, having up to 40 regular students.

Keep an ear open for news about his workshops next year.



The process of printing block colours



The class's prints from the day's workshop

Cathedrals of northern France

An exciting and often inspiring part of the course is the historic study trips the Art School organises around the UK and Europe every year. We are fortunate to have such a wealth of historic buildings and ornate carvings within our reach. Centuries-old cathedrals and churches contain the very carvings and styles we study on the course and there is no better way of learning about them than to see and experience them first-hand.

This year, the Art School organised a four-day study trip to northern France to see the stunning cathedrals of the Early and High Gothic era, helping us to position the beginning of this style in our minds. We visited Laon (built 1135-1270), Chartres

(1134-1260), Reims (1211-1345), Beauvais (1225-1548), and Amiens (1220-c.1270). Alongside this, we visited the Palace of Fontainebleau, once a medieval castle before becoming the palace for French monarchs and lavishly decorated in the Renaissance style. Napoleon is quoted in his memoirs as having said that Fontainebleau is 'the true residence of kings, the house of all centuries'.

Choir stalls of Amiens Cathedral

Each cathedral tells the story of a layer of history and of the people who built it. I can only begin to scratch the surface here, but did want to mention my personal highlight of the trip, which was seeing the 16th-century choir stalls of Amiens

cathedral. I can easily say they are the most inspiring wood carvings I've ever seen, not just for the evident skill of the carvers but for their creativity and playfulness. The stalls were overflowing with decorative and figurative carvings, with bench ends and stall backs depicting scenes from the *Old and New Testaments* as well as of daily life. We were fortunate to be allowed into the stalls to observe the carvings close-up, though it would take a whole week to study them thoroughly, such is their abundance. If you are interested in learning and seeing more about the choir stalls, I highly recommend searching for 'choir stalls of Amiens Cathedral' or visiting this link: <https://goo.gl/Umq8wa>. ▶



PHOTOGRAPH BY PHOTOCOLLEUR / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Next time: The final degree show is here. William shows you his final year projects and those of his fellow classmates



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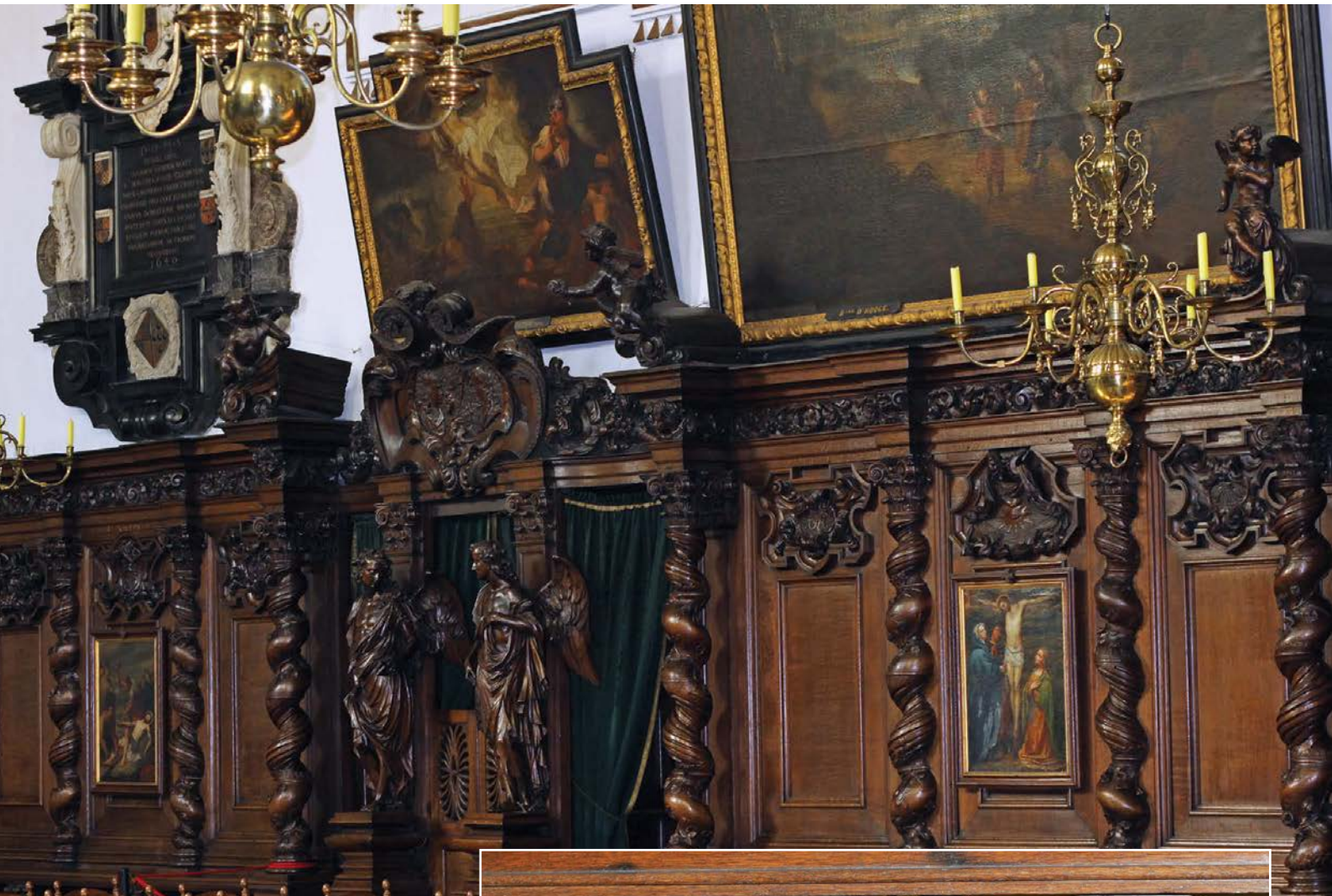
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From the community

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



Sint-Annakerk

Hello Mark,
It is always a nice moment when *Woodcarving* arrives in my digital mailbox.

I know thousands of British people visit our beautiful town of Bruges (Belgium) each year. They will see the hotspots for tourist – the Dijver, the Lake of Lovers, the Begijnhof, the canals etc...

If they are interested in woodcarving, it is worth visiting the church of Saint Anne because it's only five minutes walk away from the town centre and not mentioned in the tourist guides.

This Gothic, single-nave church, built in the 17th century, has a rich Baroque interior with wooden panelling with inset confessional booths and the largest single painting in all Bruges.

Here are a few pictures of woodcarvings in the church by Jacob Berger and Jan Van Corp (17th century). Maybe it's worth a visit for your readers.

Kind regards, Freddy Quackelbeen



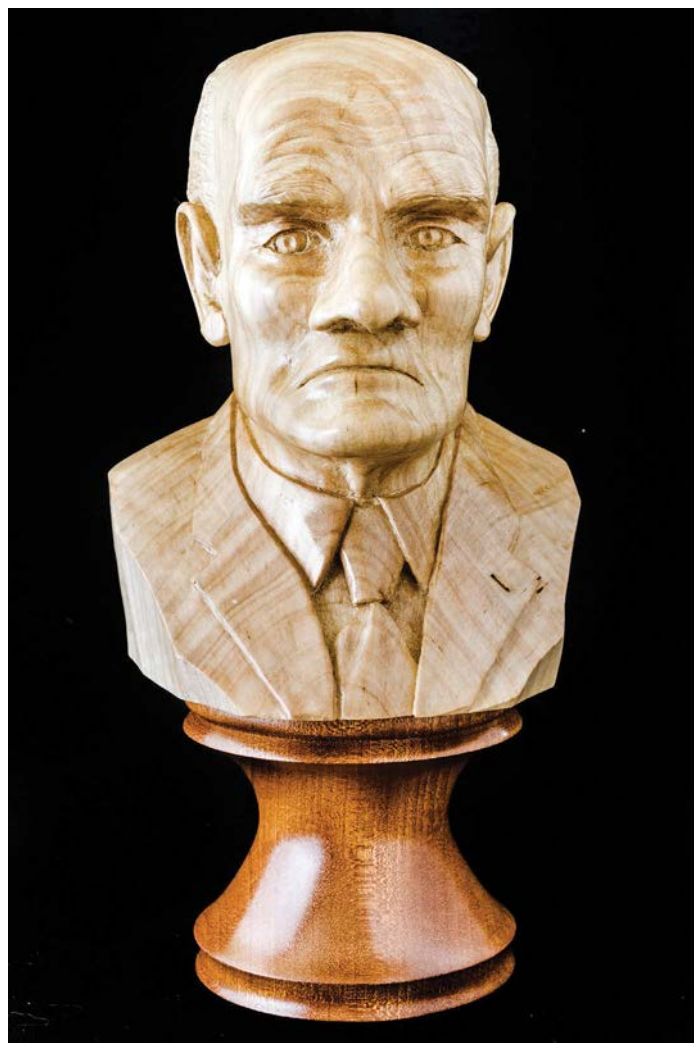
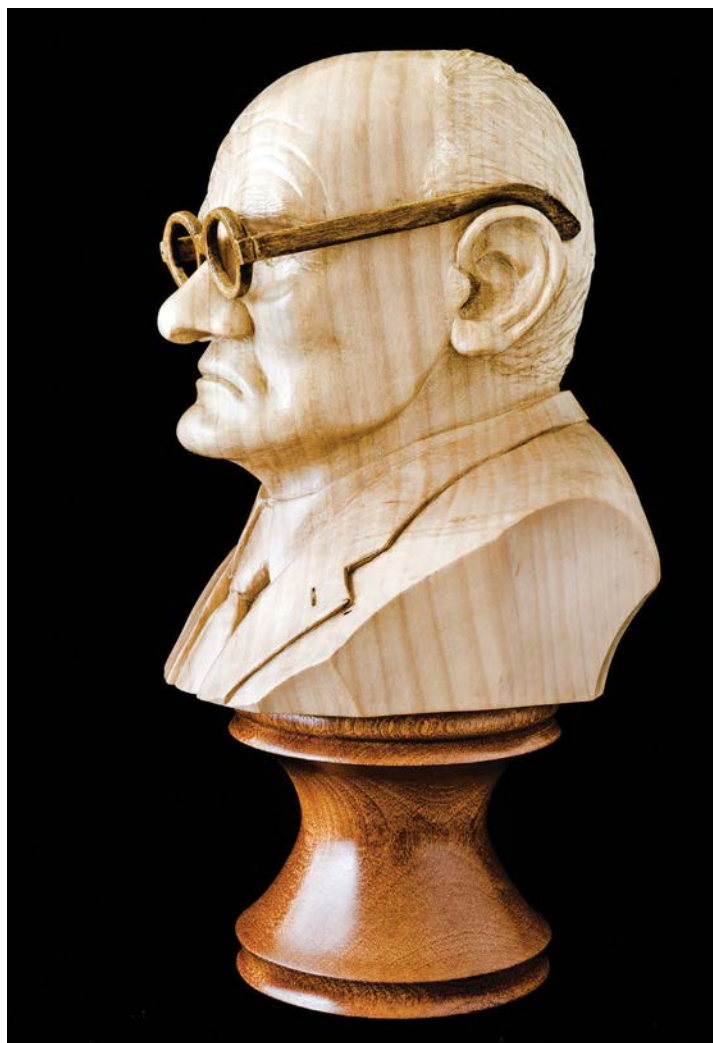
PHOTOGRAPHS BY FREDDY QUACKELBEEN

Forman – known to all his friends as Fred

When I was a young man, close to 60 years ago, Fred was one of the characters of the town in which I lived. He must have been in his 70s by then, a bachelor, and particularly active in the community. I recently came across a number of photos of him, and whilst contemplating what to carve next, thought I might be able to portray some of his character in wood. Ideally full face and profile images are needed, but I was not so lucky, and as Fred died many years ago I had to make do with what I had. One photo, in particular, displayed to me Fred's character and I based the carving on this. I decided that the best way forward was to make a maquette, in clay, which was photographed from various

angles. Card templates were cut at the appropriate size, and the wood carved to fit these to achieve the basic shape of the head, which was subsequently refined. Originally it was my intention to portray him without glasses, but eventually I decided to add them, as they complement his character. They were made from holly and assembled with metal pins and glue. The bust is in lime, but the wood of the base is unknown – chosen only in that its colour complements that of the bust. On completion the carving and base were wax polished.

Peter Downham



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER DOWNHAM

University of the Third Age

Mark

Your opening article has inspired me to write to you for the first time. I have been reading your magazine for many years and I enjoy it and find it helpful. I started carving about 23 years ago. I was inspired by a weekend course with Tommy Horton at Craft Supplies. I later joined a group using Michael Painters old studio at Canwell near Lichfield, and was helped by a great chap called Steve White.

I left the group and have started my own for Stafford U3A, we are now in our sixth year and have 28 members including ten ladies. As far as I know we are the only woodcarving group in any U3A in the country and there are over a thousand. We average about 18 people meeting weekly in a church hall using 'workmates' with a distance piece I make for everyone which makes the height right and enables work to be clamped

to it. We have our own sharpening equipment and about 25 group chisels. The standard achieved is amazing. The group members look after one another and it is very satisfying to see people go from novice to better than competent in a relatively short period of time. Several of us have completed projects from the magazine by Steve Bisco, Andrew Thomas, Duane Cartwright. I am currently working on a green man (my sixth) and have just finished Duane's leaf face, which I altered a bit. Keep up the good work.

Bob Hanlon,

Group Leader Stafford U3A Woodcarving group

Web: staffordu3a.org.uk/groups/carving.php

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

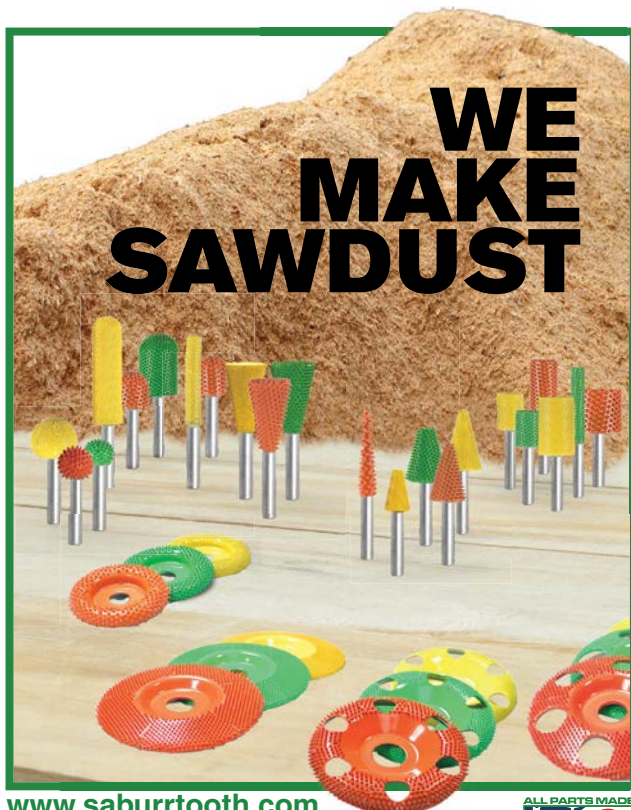
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Carve a tropical fish with Andrew Thomas



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW THOMAS

Steve Bisco explores carving a Viking boat dragon head

Dick Onians' history as a carver and personal perspectives

How to carve a spoon with a fire motif, by Dave Western

Murray Taylor looks at the spacing of chip-carved letters

The carver's toolbag

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Josh Alliston tries out a set of Flexcut chisels

The Flexcut Premium Wide Palm Set contains four brass-ferruled cherry palm-handled tools: No.3, 16mm, No.5, 14mm, No.8, 10mm and a 9mm, 70° V-tool, all of which come in a wooden box.

Flexcut says: 'Every chisel edge undergoes hand sharpening and testing before leaving the Flexcut factory to ensure the tools perform from the word go.'

In use

Flexcut's comment about ready-sharpened tools certainly rings true. The blades were sharp on arrival, creating lovely clean cuts. There is a small amount of flex to the blades, but not to the extent that the control you have on them is at all compromised. That bit of flex is handy when cutting shallow, internal, curved surfaces and it does not compromise control of the tool.

At first I thought the handles to be a little small, but with continued use I realised the size is a benefit as it allows for more options for grip. The handles' matt finish when in the hand makes these feel like a quality product and you can get a nice, secure, non-slip grip, which I find is much nicer than the glossier finish found on the beginner Flexcut palm tools. The handle also has a flat underside, which improves grip and stops the tools rolling off the worktop.

Despite being a set of wide tools, they're versatile and useful for all types of projects, with the V-tool proving to be especially adaptable to every situation I've tried it in.

Conclusion

Overall I found the Flexcut Premium Wide Palm Set offers a nice range of tools that can be used in a wide variety of situations. They sit comfortably in the hand, look and feel top notch and cut beautifully – what more could you ask for from your tools?



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSH ALLISTON

Price: £91.01

Contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery

Web: www.axminster.co.uk



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY BAILEY/CMC PUBLICATIONS

Mark Baker tries out two new spoon template kits from Hewn & Hone

Making spoons has always been popular, but is growing rapidly and ever more people are exploring this wonderful aspect of carving. To help people with working out designs, Hewn & Hone has introduced BEST (Basic Eating Spoon Template) and SDK (Spoon Design Kit).

The BEST comprises a basic eating spoon template with a classic egg-shaped bowl measuring 154 mm x 50 mm, which is laser-cut from flexible 1.0mm PETG (Polyethylene Terephthalate Glycol).

The SDK comprises a set of three flexible, credit card-sized templates to help you design spoons on paper or wood.

In use

The eating spoon template is a thin, flexible, clear material that is able to be twisted and bent somewhat without breaking. I am sure that it will withstand a lot of rough and tumble of workshop use. After using it to mark out a suitable section of wood and shaping the wood accordingly I found it to be a lovely size and shape for an eating spoon.

The spoon design kit is for those who wish to progress with developing their spoon repertoire and has three templates – one for working out the shape and size of the bowl of the spoon and the other two to help with shape, style and size of the handle and decorative detail. Just playing with thin, clear templates on a flat board showed me that there is a huge amount that can be done with these and being able to quickly map out a route of what to do and being able to visualise the intended outcome was easy.

Conclusion

For those venturing into spoon-making or wanting to develop their spoon-making these templates are devilishly effective and will no doubt serve you well as you journey into what is a fascinating aspect of carving.

Prices: BEST – Basic Eating

Spoon Template £7.50

The Spoon Design Kit – SDK £15

Contact: Hewn & Hone

Web: www.hewnandhone.co.uk



Conversion chart

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

Triton rasps



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TRITON

Triton has recently launched a range of hand woodworking tools, including hand rasps. Triton comments they feature 'precision-cut, hardened steel blade for superior performance'. They are said to be 'specially-designed ergonomic, two-tone, soft-grip handles for toughness and durability while maintaining user comfort. Suitable for wood, plastics and other materials'.

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Charnwood Micro clean air filters

Charnwood has introduced a range of air filters for the workshop. There are four in all, manufactured in the UK, and they are designed to remove airborne dust particles from the air in the workshop.

MC200 has an airflow rate of 200 cubic metres per hour. Therefore it is suitable for a small workshop with a volume of up to 20 cubic metres and is designed to sit on a shelf or bench. Locate either close to the centre of the room to establish the best airflow, or locate it closer to the source of the dust.

MC420 is designed to be suspended from the ceiling and has an airflow rate of 400 cubic metres per hour. Therefore it is suitable for a workshop with a volume of up to 40 cubic metres, roughly equal to a single garage.

MC760 has an airflow rate of 780 cubic metres per hour. Therefore it is suitable for a workshop with a volume of up to 78 cubic metres, roughly equal to a double garage. This one can also be fitted to a wall or on a bench.

MC1210 is designed to be suspended from the ceiling and has an airflow rate of 1200 cubic metres per hour. Therefore it is suitable for a workshop with a volume of up to 120 cubic metres, roughly equal to a triple garage.

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Contact: Charnwood Woodworking Machinery

Web: www.charnwood.net



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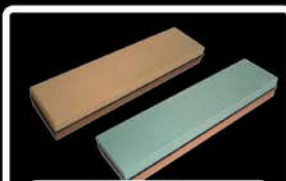
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Banteay Srei, Cambodia

This month we look at the temple known as the 'jewel of Khmer art'



Banteay Srei is a 10th-century Hindu temple located in a forest around 32km north of the Temple City of Angkor. Work began on the site in AD967 when it was commissioned by a Brahmin who was a tutor to Jayavarman V, the ruler of the Khmer Empire. The temple is dedicated to the god Shiva. 'Banteay Srei' means 'citadel of the women' and some people believe the temple was built by a woman as the carvings are too fine to have been the work of a man. These elaborate carvings in red sandstone cover every inch of the temple buildings, with subjects including

women holding lotus flowers, male and female divinities, and scenes from the Ramayana, an ancient Indian epic poem. The architecture and carvings at Banteay Srei are closer to the Indian style than any of the other temples at Angkor. In 1930, Banteay Srei was the first major temple restoration undertaken by the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) using the 'anastylosis method', which involves restoring a ruined building using the original architectural elements to the greatest degree possible. Consequently the site is remarkably well preserved today.

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