

WOOD CARVING

Solid oak bookends with Steve Bisco



TECHNICAL ADVICE Relief carving landscapes • Sharpening U-tools • Carving realistic hands **PROJECTS TO CARVE** Asymmetrical chip carving • Kingfisher bowl • Celtic sun • Spoon carving • Druid figure • Black swan walking stick



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Welcome



PHOTOGRAPH BY DENNIS ZONCKER

In the UK, the clocks have gone forward, the days are longer, the bluebells are in bloom, temperatures are rising, and your workshops are warmer. All good reasons to celebrate the changing of the seasons with some spring carvings such as Dave Western's Celtic Sun and the bucolic river scene on Zoë Gertner's relief carved bowl.

We talk to Alexander Grabovetskiy about his beautiful work and woodcarving school, and the BDWCA looks forward to woodcarving events and competitions resuming later in the year. Dennis Zongker shows how to create realistic hands as demonstrated in his latest stunning sculpture, *A Self-Made Man Called Determination*, and Steve Bisco carves decorative book ends, adorned by oak leaves and acorns.

John Samworth continues his relief carving series with a sailing lake scene, Cedric Boyns finishes his hare and tortoise

money box and Peter Benson knocks up an easy tabletop carving tray. Tatiana Baldini advances your chip carving skills, acquired in the last two issues, with an intricate asymmetrical design.

Nic Westermann continues to tackle tricky sharpening issues in his new series, so don't miss out on this opportunity for him to solve the problem tool of a lucky reader in each issue.

Also lucky, we announce the winner of last issue's leather apron from BeaverCraft Tools, and another prize draw opportunity to win one in *From the Community*.

As always, we love to see what you've been carving, so please email photos of your work to WCeditorial@thegmcgroup.com.

Happy carving.

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Solid oak bookends

Steve Bisco carves these useful additions to your shelves, combining gravitas with gravity

Many of us love books, and many people have a few special ones we would like to display on a cabinet or mantelpiece between some fancy bookends that will set them off.

Things you have made yourself are always more special than bought goods, but there are also other reasons for making your own. Most things we buy these days are made of lightweight materials for easy handling and transport, and manufacturers seem to have forgotten something our Victorian ancestors knew very well – some things work better if they are heavy. Bookends are a good example – a bookend that weighs less than the books it is holding up will be a bit of a pushover. Fortunately, we woodcarvers have a remedy for this – solid oak. Our native *Quercus robur* is not only good looking and good to carve, but it is also a heavyweight champion in the gravity department.

The bookends in this project are carved from two oak blocks 180mm long x 140mm high x 110mm deep. They are shaped as classical corbels but, as befits an oak carving, the decoration on the top and side panels is of oak leaves and acorns. Making the bookends combines the traditional skills of the woodworker with the more specific skills of the carver. The initial phase involves shaping the squared blocks into corbels (or consoles) using saws, chisels and moulding planes (see box). The base and the vertical ends must be flat and the angles square. Accuracy is important for a neat job. The sides are then carved with traditional classical volutes and the naturalistic oak leaf and acorn pattern is carved on the top and sides.

They are carved as a matching pair, as is usual with bookends, and the sides that face the front are a mirror image of each other. When you are carving a matching pair of anything it is best to carve them both together. When you shape a feature on one piece, repeat the same operation on the other piece before moving on. That way it is easier to get them both the same.

CARVING SOLID OAK

There is one downside to carving solid blocks of oak. It is a hardwood and most of the carving must be done with a mallet, so it is important to practise a mallet technique that will not cause undue strain to your arm and wrist. If you are removing bulk, hold the mallet at the bottom of the handle and use the swing to do the work. For detail carving, hold the mallet nearer the head and tap the gouge along gently with short strokes.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE BISCO

Things you will need**Materials:**

- Oak, 2 pieces @ 180mm long x 140mm high x 110mm deep
- Wax polish (Antiquax Original)

Tools:**Gouges:**

- No.3 fishtail - 18mm, 10mm
- No.5 - 7mm, 5mm, 13mm curved
- No.6 - 25mm
- No.7, 10mm
- No.8 - 8mm
- No.9 - 20mm, 3mm
- Skewed spoon - 10mm L&R
- V-tool - 6mm straight, 2mm straight

Chisels:

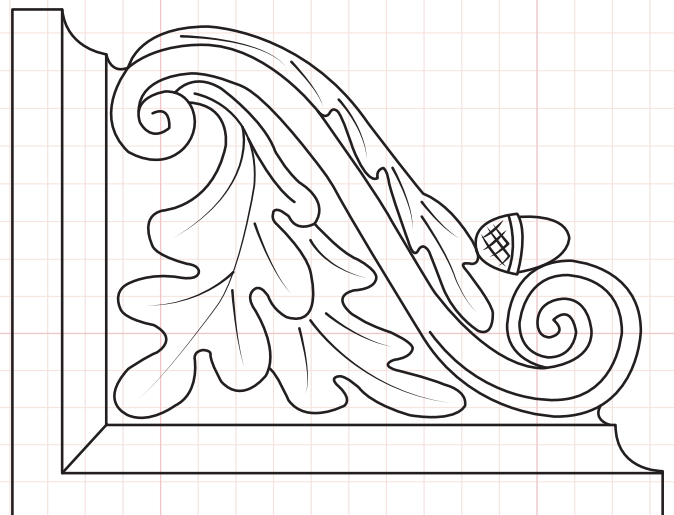
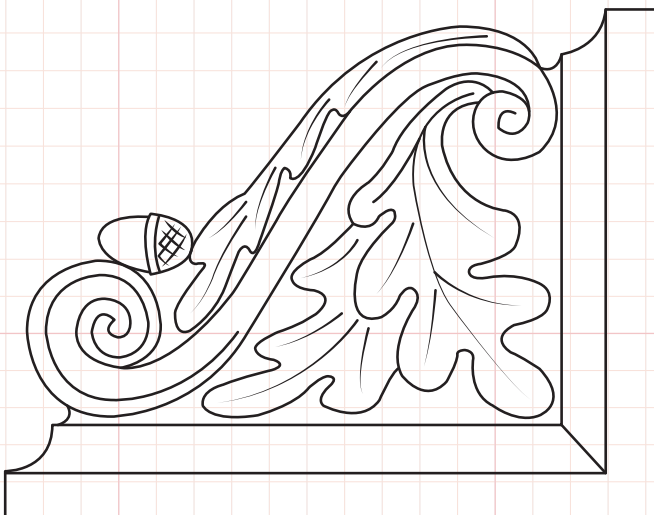
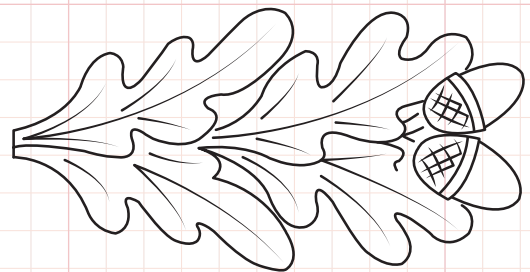
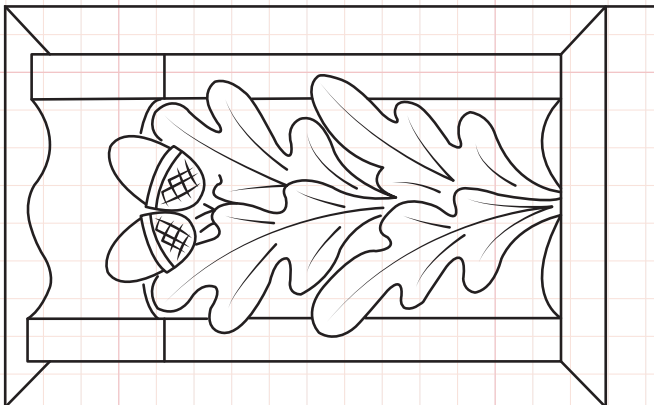
- Flat - 20mm, 6.5mm, 3mm, 2mm
- Bent - 10mm, 5mm
- Skew chisel - 10mm

Other:

- Bandsaw or handsaws
- Moulding planes and rebate plane
- Cabinet scrapers

MOULDING PLANES

Traditional wooden moulding planes are a useful addition to your toolkit to help you tackle borders, frames and linenfold panels. Try to build up a set of a few concave and convex profiles. They are a pleasure to use (when sharpened) even though the adjustment (tapping the blade with a hammer) can be a bit tricky. You can buy second-hand ones quite cheaply at antique centres, but you can also get new and old ones online.



WORK HOLDING

The best way to secure these pieces for carving is with a bench vice. Use packing pieces of wood to raise the work to the upper part of the vice (see photo 5) and protect the edges with plywood or MDF. You can easily turn the work around in the vice to get the best cutting direction.

PREPARATIONS

1 Get two pieces of oak 180mm long x 140mm high x 110mm front to back. All the surfaces must be planed and all the edges straight with 90° angles. Make a full-size copy of the drawing to fit the blocks, and get some carbon paper for tracing.

2 Carefully trace on and mark out the coves and volutes on the side pattern. Mark in red the cutting lines for forming the profile. Make sure the vertical and horizontal lines are square to the block.

SHAPING THE BLOCKS

3 Use a bandsaw, or whatever saws you have, to remove the surplus 'wedge' of wood, and then cut in the outline shape of the side profile.

4 The concave coves at the top and end of the block have a profile of a quarter of a 25mm circle, so use a moulding plane that fits to plane them out. Alternatively, a circular rasp can help with the shaping and a No.9, 20mm gouge will bring the cove to a smooth finish. Always work inwards from each side so you don't break out the ends.

5 Work the rest of the profile down to the line using a rebate plane, moulding planes, and a 20mm flat chisel if necessary. Use a shallow concave moulding plane to shape the convex scroll at the end. Check that the profiles are an exact match on both bookends.

6 Trace the long oak leaf pattern from the drawing on to the blocks. The leaf pattern is not totally symmetrical, so flip it over on opposite blocks to get a mirror image. Cut round the edges of the oak leaves and remove the surplus wood down to the level of the volute. Complete the cylindrical shape of the lower volutes when the surplus wood is removed.

7 Measure and draw on the lines for the sides of the volutes, 13mm in from the outer edges, then cut out the surplus wood to create a flat surface on each side of the block down to the inner level of the coves. It is important that this area is exactly 13mm deep. It is best to remove the bulk of the wood by carving across the grain with a deep gouge as carving along the grain may result in long splinters running down into the required surface.

8 Now use a No.9, 20mm gouge to carefully create smooth coves along the base and vertical end. Be careful not to break out the short grain at the top edge, and watch for grain direction on the long-grain edge.



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**9****10****11****12****13****14****15****16**

9 You can use a swan-neck cabinet scraper to bring the coves to a smooth, even, and glossy finish, and also a flat scraper to remove all the tracing lines from the flat surfaces. Drag the scraper along towards you in a near-vertical position to produce fine shavings.

CARVING THE DECORATION

10 Trace the side patterns for the volute and oak leaves on to the sides of the block, making sure they line up exactly. Also draw a line for the inner edges of the volutes on the top face, 13mm in from the edge.

11 Cut out the background of the side panels between the volutes and the oak leaves to a depth of 5mm. Bent chisels are handy for carving a flat background surface in the small gaps. Create a sharp, straight edge to the coves.

12 Carve the side oak leaves in low relief. One leaf overlaps the other. Carve all the leaf lobes with shallow concaves, then put in the vein lines with a 2mm V-tool.

13 Also use the 2mm V-tool to carve the swirl lines on the sides of the volutes. Take care to make the curves smooth and even.

14 Moving to the top face, carve the front of the 'bobbin' on the end of the volutes. This is quite difficult as it consists of a double ovolo shape around a 'reel', mostly carved in end grain. Access along the grain is restricted, so most of it has to be carved across the grain with sideways slicing cuts from a No. 3, 18mm fishtail and 10mm L&R skewed spoon gouges. Getting a smooth, even finish off the tools in these conditions is difficult, so you can use abrasives and the swan-neck scraper to refine the finish.

15 Now carve out the background between the oak leaves and the sides of the volute on the top face. This only needs to be to a depth of 3mm as the pattern is already raised above the surface. Access is not always easy and some parts will need refining once the leaves have been carved.

16 The oak leaves on the upper face are more three-dimensional than the ones on the side, so they need roughing out first. There are four leaves which overlap from top to bottom and from side to side (facing to opposite sides on each block). Mark the overlaps with a V-tool and then slope the ends of the leaves down and outwards so they are nearer to the background at their outer edges.

TOP TIP 1

Thick pieces of oak often develop splits, or shakes, when drying out. You can fill these cracks with solid beeswax, which you can buy in small blocks. Scrape some beeswax off the block with a knife, press it into the crack, then scrape the surface clean. Because the wax is the same colour as the wood the crack will virtually disappear.

TOP TIP 2

Cross-hatching – carving a diagonal chequered pattern into a background – is a good way to make a smooth, low-relief feature, such as the oak leaves, stand out more from the background around it. The shadows created by the hatching lines tend to make the background surface look darker than the smooth surface of the main feature. You can also create texture with punch holes made by a nail head or punches with special patterns.

17 Carve the detail on the individual leaves, as on the side leaves, but using the greater thickness to create more visual depth to the carving.

18 Now carve the two acorns that emerge from the leaves on narrow stalks and lay over the 'bobbin'. Excavate around and behind them, and make their surfaces as round and smooth as you can. Create cross-hatching on their cups by making diagonal cuts with a 2mm V-tool.

FINISHING

19 Texture the background around the oak leaves on the top and sides by cross-hatching with the 2mm V-tool. Make the cuts diagonal to the grain direction and try to space them evenly. Where a space is too small for the V-tool, cut in vertically with the end of a small chisel. This will create a contrast between the smooth leaves and the textured background.

20 Check the carving over and clean up all surfaces to a good tooled finish. Use scrapers to smooth the flat surfaces and coves. Polish the carving with a good quality wax polish (I use Antiquax Original), using a cloth on the smooth surfaces and a stiff brush on the carved and textured details. Give it at least two coats, and let the wax be absorbed into the wood before polishing it up to a soft sheen.

21 Photo 21 shows the finished carvings from all angles. Refer to this when carving.

22 Your best books will be supported with dignity by the solid oak bookends. ▶

DID YOU KNOW?

Books have been around for several thousand years, and the reason we know so much about the Ancient Romans and Greeks is that many of their books still survive. We can still read Julius Caesar's own detailed account of his invasion of Britain in 55BC from his book *De Bello Gallico*, and it is as fresh now as it was then. It is highly unlikely that emails, e-books, and other electronic media will be readable into the future as digital technology changes every few years, so much of the history of our times will be lost to future civilisations. Also, a Kindle doesn't look very impressive in a pair of carved bookends, so cherish and preserve your books. ▶



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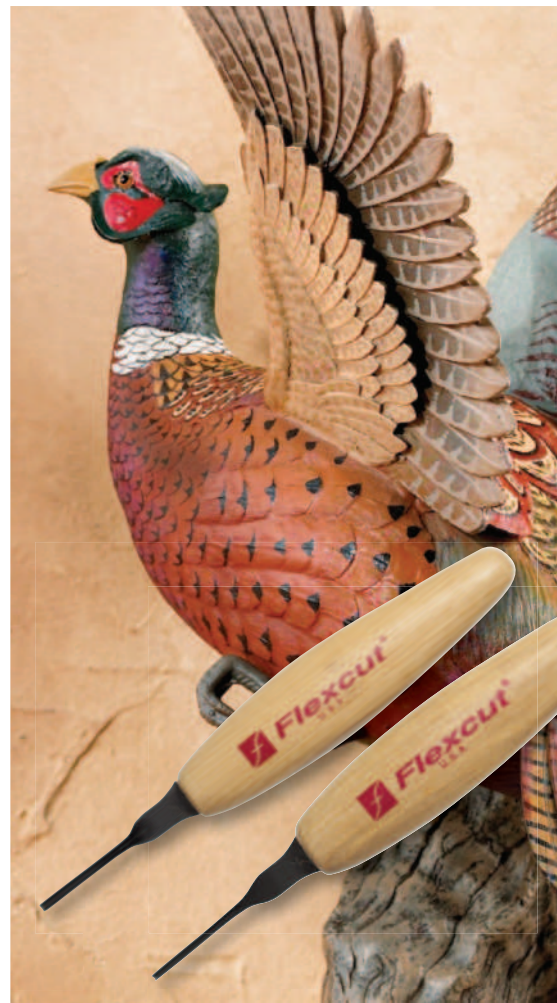
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CARVING TOOLS

Carving realistic hands

Dennis Zongker carves the hands
for his sculpture, *Determination*



For a long time, I have been wanting to design and carve a man carving himself out of a tree. I started my design by making a full-scale model out of oil-based clay. I decided to make the statue at half scale of my own body size at 38in tall and the bottom tree trunk and stone base at 22in square at glue up.

The concept of a man carving himself out of a tree is very interesting to me and goes hand in hand with woodcarving. I call him A Self-Made Man called *Determination*.

The great thing about designing in oil-based clay is that you can't make a mistake because you can always add or subtract the clay as needed to get your final design.

In this article I will be starting at the last steps of the statue with the forearms and hands. I cut off the excess wood at the elbow joint. The extension blocks of wood will be the forearm and hands. The reason I add the blocks of wood versus having an extra-large glue up for the entire statue is that it's much easier to carve the hands being able to rotate to carve in all the details on the bottom and inside details of the hands. I will then add them on to the statue with glue and screws.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DENNIS ZONGKER



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1 To begin, I use a pencil to draw the angled line from the elbow to the upper inside joint of the arm. Then, with a handsaw, I cut all the way through to get an even, flat joint to where the arm and hand can be attached.

Blocking out

2 With both blocks of wood, I use a handsaw to cut the angles needed where the arms would be at the correct position for a man to be carving himself out of a tree.

Next, I drill holes through the blocks of wood into the upper arms. I also drill holes for wood plugs to hide the screw heads. At this point I screw on the blocks of wood to the upper arms, just as a dry fit so I can remove as needed.



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3 With a pencil I draw on the forearms and hands. I wanted the right hand to be holding a mallet and the left hand holding the chisel. As I am drawing, I use my own arms and hands as a model for shape and position. Since the statue is at half scale, I measure myself then divide it by two. This really helps me to draw in the correct dimensions. I draw the arms and hands on all four sides of the blocks.

4 To save some time carving I first bandsaw off some excess wood by cutting approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ in away from the pencil lines off both sides on one face of the blocks.



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5 Then, using the cut-off pieces, I tape them back into their placement. I then cut off the excess wood on both sides on the bandsaw, ensuring accuracy.

6 After I am done bandsawing off the waste wood, I screw the arms back on to the statue to check the proportions and to make sure I am ready to start drawing.

7 Before I start carving, I redraw the hands on to both blocks. Both hands will be holding a handle for a mallet and chisel. Gripping a handle, the thumb will need to rest on top of the index finger. I draw this position on all sides, again using my own hands as a model. With a No.5/12 carving gouge I start by carving where the fingers will be lower than the thumb.



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Separating fingers

8 Next, I rotate the arm in my bench vice and clamp it tight. Using a No.16/3 V-tool I carve in the finger widths, then shape the fingers and knuckles with No.3/10 and No.5/10 gouges. Each finger is a different size from length to width. For example, the middle finger is longer than the index finger and the pinky is the smallest. Your fingers are mostly straight then rounder at each joint. It is best to establish these landmarks at the beginning. The closer you get to the finished hand size the more realistic the hand should appear.

9 I repeat the No.16/3 V-tool and No.3/10 and No.5/10 gouges and slowly shape each finger and knuckle. Also, with a No.3/12 I carve the arch into the top of the thumb and undercut the lower radius of the thumb.

10 To get some separation between the index finger and thumb I use a No.2/5 to undercut the underside for a realistic placement for gripping a handle.

11 As I carve the hands, I never complete one area to its final details. It is best to balance the entire hand by carving off smaller amounts until you get the finished size before you start to carve in the final details.

On the back side of the hand, I stab cut and carve off the different lengths of the fingers with a No.3/8 and No.5/8 gouge down to the centre of the hand. Then, with a No.3/12 and No.5/12 gouge I carve in the palms of the hand. At this time, I also carve the wrist to size, which will be thinner than the palm.

12 On the bottom of the hand, I draw in the pinky finger and the tips of the remaining fingers, also on the wrist where the main bone is located, which is an important landmark of the wrist. To start carving in the fingers I use a No.3/10, No.5/10 and No.5/8 to carve out the centre of the hand and fingertips. At this point I only carve a few fingers deep, allowing for the size of the handle diameter.

13 At this point I keep rotating the arm and hand in my bench vice and I slowly keep carving the fingers and knuckles of the hand using No.3/10, No.5/10, No.5/8 and No.2/5 carving gouges.

Creating fists for the chisel and mallet

14 One of the main goals is to carve completely through the hand. At first, I carve about $\frac{3}{4}$ in into the top of the hand using a No.5/8, 3/8 and No.2/5 gouges. Then, with a $\frac{3}{8}$ in diameter drill bit, I drill completely through the hand. This really helps me carve the remaining waste wood around the inside of the hand. I leave a grip size hole of $\frac{3}{8}$ in diameter.

15 I stab cut with No.5/8 and No.5/10 gouges, with the face side of the gouges facing the finger profile, then remove the waste wood. Note: It is much easier with the drilled hole in the centre.

16 I flip the hand over and clamp it in my bench vice to secure it while carving. By repeating the same steps as in 15, I remove all the waste wood until I get a clean diameter hole all the way through the hand.



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**17****18****19****20**

17 After I have the whole hand carved to its finished size, I draw in the fingernails with a pencil. To carve the fingernails I use a No.2/5 and No.4/2 carving gouge and start by lightly stab cutting on to the pencil lines then removing the fingernail wood with the No.2/5 carving gouge upside down. Then I relief cut up to the stab cuts at the pencil lines.

18 After I am done with the fingernails I move to the thumb nail. The thumbnail is slightly larger than fingernails, but I still use the same carving gouges.

19 On the front of the thumbnail with a No.2/5 gouge I carve the thumb in front of the nail lower. Then I carve into the fingernail up to the stab cuts with a No.2/5 gouge while maintaining the radius of the nail.

20 On the last steps I dry-fit and screw the arms together. At this point I carve the elbow and muscles to match up to the upper section of the arm. To carve in the veins on the hands and arms I simply copy the veins on my hands and draw them in where they will go on to the wood. Then, with a No.5/5 gouge I carve slightly on to both sides of the veins by leaving a small hump remaining at the pencil lines. To make the veins look realistic I use sandpaper to blend the high and low areas together.

I make my own mallet and carving gouge by turning them on the lathe. I then carve out the centre of the gouge. Both the mallet and the gouge I cut in half then use a two-sided screw to join them together. This way I can join them together in the hands to where you can't remove them unless you unscrew the mallet or gouge.

I detail sand with 150 grit sandpaper the hands and arms. I glue and screw the arms together and plug the screw holes, then cut off the remainder of the plug and sand it smooth. Finally I sand the entire statue then I apply my coats of finish and colour. ▶

The finished piece – Determination



Kingfisher in willow leaves bowl

Zoë Gertner carves a river scene on a bowl



Some time ago I acquired some lovely chunky wooden bowls, now somewhat distorted in shape by time, which were turned some years ago by an old friend who worked for the local River Board and who had been a keen fisherman and outdoors person. Sadly, he has passed away now. Knowing he had been familiar with the wildlife both in the water and along the riverbanks, I carved this bowl that he had turned many years ago in his memory for his family. If you look closely at the finished bowl you may be able to see the date he made it pencilled on the rim.

Tools used

- Mallet
- No.39, ¼in V-tool
- No.39, ½in V-tool
- No.5, ½in gouge
- No.3, ½in gouge
- No.3, ¾in gouge
- No.3, ¼in gouge
- No.11, ½in gouge
- ¼in skew (No.2) chisel
- Curved metal scraper
- Light hammer and round punch

Preparation

The apple wood bowl is approximately 15in diameter with a 2in rim and is slightly distorted in shape due to its age, which adds to its interest. The accumulated dust and dirt were removed with a soft brush and a damp cloth. Although it could have been held securely in my vice, to avoid damaging its rim I rested it on a non-slip mat and nestled it within four sandbags, the advantage being that I could turn it quickly and easily when needing to change the direction of my cuts.

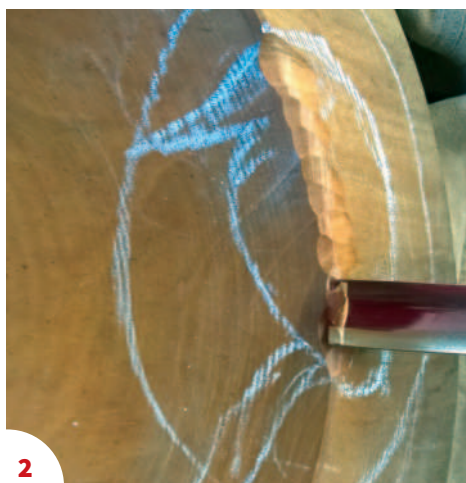


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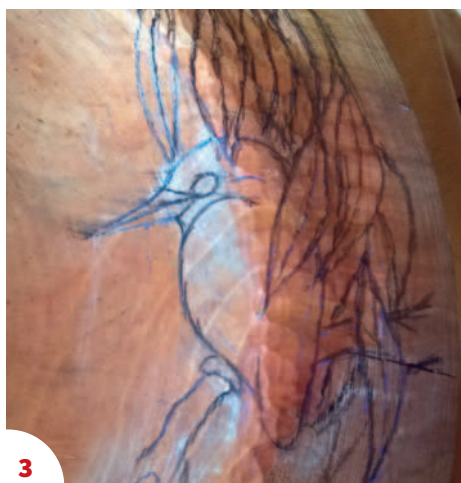
Starting the carving

1 With the grain lying horizontally, I used chalk to draw an approximate outline of the bird so that it lies partly over the edge of the rim and partly within the bowl.

2 Within this area, remove the edge of the rim by cutting towards the centre of the bowl with a No.5, ½in gouge until there is a gentle slope downwards with no trace of the original sharp rim edge. Then smooth this surface using the No. 3, ½in gouge ready to draw the outline of the kingfisher and the willow leaves around him.



2



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3 Trace or draw the outline and transfer the drawing of the bird, leaves and the branch on to the smoothed area using transfer paper. Place your tracing or drawing so that the wing and edge of the tail lie vertically in line with the highest part of the smoothed area, formerly the edge of the rim. This will then correspond with the highest part of the bird when you are carving him and you will be able to shape him rounded more easily.

4 Using a mallet and No.39, ¼in V tool, cut the outline of the bird, the overlapping leaves and the branch, taking care to cut in the correct directions so that there is a clean edge along the drawn lines. Along the head and beak lying below the edge you will need to cut towards the centre of the bowl and away from the rim.



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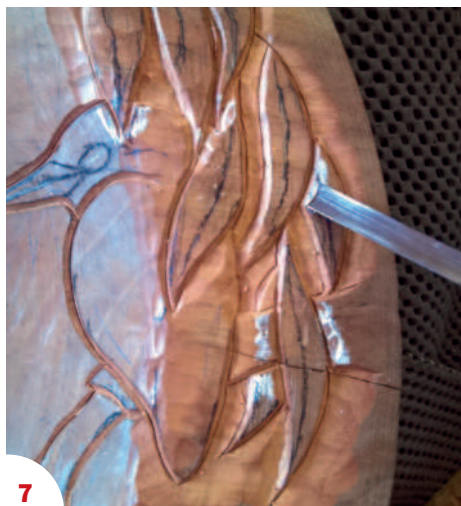


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5 Using opposing cuts to relieve them, and starting with the leaves that overlie the bird, place the cutting edge of the No.3, ¼in gouge against the side of the V channels, marking them. Make an initial series of cuts downwards and around the leaves, making sure you angle these cuts away from the leaves themselves, at the same time turning the gouge so it matches the shape of the leaves as you work around them.



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6 The second set of opposing cuts is now made towards the initial ones you cut previously around the leaves. Using the gouge held with its bevel underneath its cutting edge to obtain clean cuts, carefully remove the underlying areas between the leaves. Start these cuts near to the leaf edge, gradually extending and overlapping them to produce a lower and shiny surface between the leaves.

7 Where one leaf overlaps another, reduce the adjoining surface of the underlying leaf. Similarly, reduce the back and tail of the bird so it is beneath the leaves around him.



Carving the kingfisher and branch

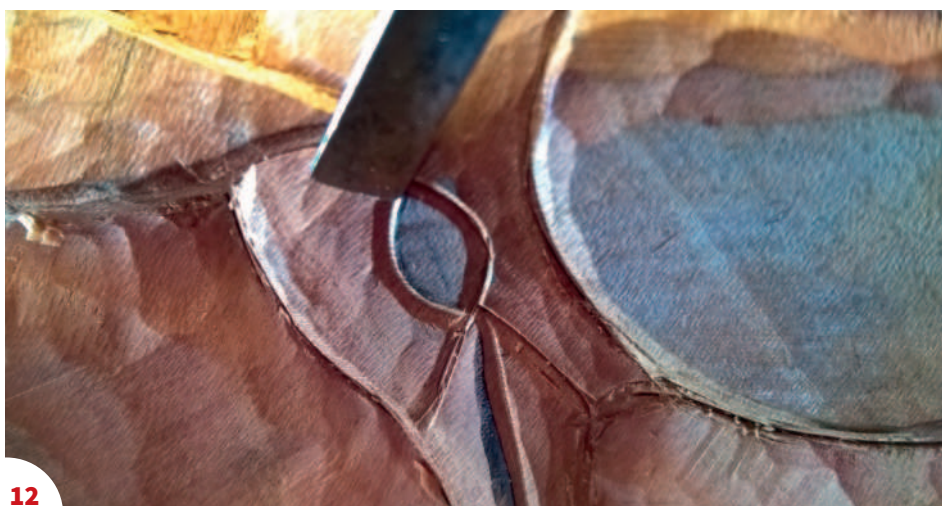
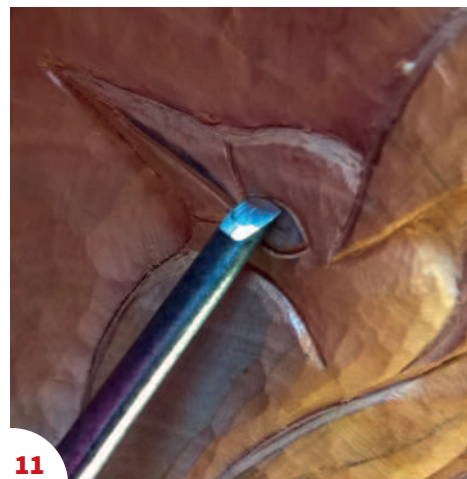
8 The branch, breast, beak and head of the kingfisher are relieved next. Where these are positioned down from the edge the surface of the bowl will be end grain and the 'opposing cuts' technique cannot be used. Instead, use the No.3 or 5, ¼in gouge with its corner tilted against the outer side of the V-tooled channel and gently scoop the adjacent surface of the bowl upwards, cleanly removing it, and working with the grain to produce shiny tool cuts. If you need to deepen the adjacent surfaces of the bowl more, re-cut around the bird with the ⅛in V-tool by aligning its blade alongside the bird. This will deepen the channel and you can then re-use the No.3 or 5, ¼in gouge as described above. Then using the ⅛in V-tool mark the foot resting on the branch and remove the adjacent surfaces of the branch with the No.3, ¼in gouge so the foot now rests upon the branch.

9 Using the No.3, ⅝in gouge held inverted, cut along both sides of the branch and, with a slight twisting forward movement of the tool, round over the edges of the branch along its length. Keeping it rounded, reduce the surface adjacent to the bird so that the body is above the branch. Then reduce the foot so it is below the body.

10 Round over the head and neck up to the edge of the wing, reducing them so they are lower than the shoulder. Then reduce the back of the bird so it is beneath the leaf lying over it, and round over the edges of the tail.

11 Still working towards the centre of the bowl, chamfer the beak using the No.3, ¼in gouge. Mark the line between upper and lower mandibles and the eye with the ⅛in V-tool.

12 With the No.3, ¼in or ⅝in gouge inverted to match the shape of the eye, make outward cuts around it. Then remove the adjacent surface of the head so that it stands proud. If the eye is positioned on end grain, tilt the corner of the gouge and cut with the grain, carefully paring towards the interior of the bowl as described before until the eye becomes fully rounded, otherwise use the 'opposing cuts' method.





13



14

Finishing the kingfisher

13 Round over the top of the wing and its edge if you have not yet done so, then, using the $\frac{1}{4}$ in V-tool or No.11, $\frac{1}{8}$ in gouge by hand, using a light flicking action cut short nicks to show the markings around the eye and across to the edge of the leaf that is lying over the bird.

14 In the same way, cut the markings around the top of the wing.

Finishing the willow leaves and the branch

15 Draw the main veins on the leaves then, using the $\frac{1}{4}$ in V-tool, cut them so they curve gently along the lengths of each leaf. Start the cut from the stalk end and gradually decrease its depth as you approach the tip of the leaf so that the vein tapers and ends there. Then using the No.11, $\frac{1}{8}$ in gouge, cut a series of close curving grooves of different lengths along the branch to show the bark.



15



16

Underwater scene

16 The kingfisher is watching some fish in the water below his perch, one of the fish is leaping to catch a mayfly and there are stones and weed in the pond. Starting with the stones at the bottom of the pond, draw and cut around them using the $\frac{1}{4}$ in V-tool, then relieve them using No.3 gouges with opposing cuts as described before, remembering to work towards the centre of the bowl and with the grain. It is helpful to draw a chalk centreline at the middle of the interior to remind you of the direction the grain lies at the sides of the bowl. Periodically round over each stone, taking care to cut in the correct direction for each, which will differ according to its placement. Keep deepening the triangular spaces between them until each stone is fully rounded and the original turned surface is removed. You may find the point of the $\frac{1}{4}$ in (No.2) helpful to access the angles when deepening the triangular spaces between the stones.

17 When the stones are rounded merge the surface adjacent to them into the surface of the bowl using a selection of No.3 gouges, ready to start carving the fish.



17



18

Starting the Fish

18 Cut round the outlines of the fish using the $\frac{1}{4}$ in V-tool.

19 Using a selection of widths of No.3 gouges that correspond with the shape, make the initial set of cuts around the outline as described before.

20 With the tool bevel down, make a second set of cuts towards those initial ones around the outline and deepen and widen the original V-tooled channel, then remove the adjacent background. Depending upon the placement of the fish, as described previously, you may need to use the corner of the gouge to remove the outer edge of the V-tooled channel and repeat cutting with the V-tool to make them stand proud.



19



20

21 Round over the edges of the fish and reduce the pectoral fins and tail below the body. Reduce the mandibles – the lower a little more than the upper – cut in the gill, then with the $\frac{1}{8}$ in V-tool mark the eye. Relieve it with opposing cuts using the No.3, $\frac{1}{4}$ in or $\frac{1}{8}$ in gouge and shape it to a convex round with the $\frac{1}{4}$ in no 3 gouge inverted.

22 Mark the striations on the fins and tail using the $\frac{1}{8}$ in V-tool. Around the head and tail of the uppermost fish I used the No.11, $\frac{1}{8}$ in gouge and cut concentric curves to show it leaping from the water.

Fish scales

23 Over the bodies of the fish draw curving guidelines. Starting below the gill, with the No.11, $\frac{1}{8}$ in gouge, impress the first row of scales. Repeat the process for the second row, this time placing the gouge beneath and between the two scales above it as you make the impressions. As you work along the body towards the tail, gradually make the scales smaller – this is done by dropping the gouge handle downwards which will reduce the width of the curvature of the gouge.

Waterline

24 Mark the waterline running across the bowl using the No.11, $\frac{1}{8}$ in gouge, positioning it so the leaping fish is partly in the air above it. Make the first cut from one side towards the middle of the bowl, then repeat from the opposite side so they meet each other at the centre. Carefully paring with the No.3, $\frac{1}{4}$ in gouge, remove the upper edge of the groove, starting your cuts from the middle and working back up to the rim each side. Below the waterline, use the No.3, $\frac{1}{2}$ in or $\frac{3}{8}$ in gouge to remove any remaining original turned surface. The tool marks from the gouge represent the water.

Mayflies

25 Draw the mayflies above the water and incise each using the $\frac{1}{4}$ in or $\frac{1}{8}$ in V-tool.

26 Using the appropriate width No. 3 gouge, carefully pare the surface of the bowl from above the groove marking the waterline up to the rim, again working from each side towards the middle of the bowl, and smooth the surface above the waterline using the scraper. The surface below the waterline should already be patterned by the shallow tool marks and now contrasts with the smooth surface above it. Following the lines of the pattern of the grain at the left-hand side of the bowl, the clump of reeds growing from the stones upwards to above the waterline was incised using the $\frac{1}{4}$ in V-tool.

Finishing the fish

27 With a light hammer, a circular punch was used within the convex centres of the eyes and the point of the No.2 skew chisel used to tidy between the scales to complete the fish.

Finishing the bowl

Check all meeting edges are cleanly cut and remove any deep cuts or digs by careful paring. Ensure the tool marks remaining beneath the waterline are clean and shiny, and the surface of the bowl above the waterline is smooth. A light satin cellulose spray was used to finish it. ▶



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The background of the entire image is a light-colored wood grain. On the right side, there is a vertical, curved piece of wood featuring intricate carvings of flowers and swirling vines. The carvings are detailed, with visible petals and leaves.

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Asymmetry

Tatiana Baldini chip carves
a more technical design
from her book

This pattern is more complicated than the ones in the previous issues. In this, it is necessary to carve the chips sequentially because, for the most part, they are connected to each other.

Tools and materials

- Basswood board (at least 100-120mm square and 15mm thick)
- 0.5mm mechanical pencil with H or HB lead
- Ruler
- Compass
- Skew knife
- Sandpaper or leather strips for sharpening



1

Drawing process

First draw a square with the sides 6cm long. Then draw two perpendicular lines that intersect at the centre and two diagonal lines that connect the opposite corners of the square [1].

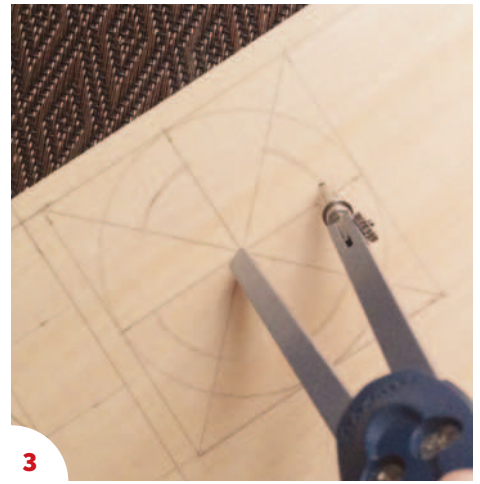
Next, prepare a circle for the central and main pattern. Using a compass, draw a circle with a 3cm radius inside the square. Next, fill the sections of the circle with patterns. First, draw four-sided chips of different thicknesses along the inner perimeter of the circle. Mark a dot 2.2cm from the centre [2]. Using a compass, draw the curved lines of this radius in every other section, starting with the one to the left of the vertical perpendicular line [3]. In the remaining sections, mark a dot 2.6cm from the centre of the pattern [4] and draw curved lines using a compass [5, 6].

Next, draw the central sharp semi-ovals of different lengths. Mark the first dot for the shorter oval 1.6cm from the centre on the vertical and horizontal perpendicular lines [7]. Put the compass on a dot and draw a curved line starting from the centre of the pattern (clockwise from where the compass is placed) to the point where the diagonal line of the main pattern goes [8]. Repeat these steps on the remaining three dots [9].

Now mark a dot 1.9cm from the centre also on the horizontal and vertical perpendicular lines [10]. Placing the compass on a dot, draw a curved line to the right (anticlockwise from where the compass is placed) to the point where the diagonal line of the main pattern goes [11]. Now draw lines for line carving that will repeat the contour of the wide and the narrow four-sided chips. Mark a dot 3mm from each side, and draw curved lines with a compass [12].



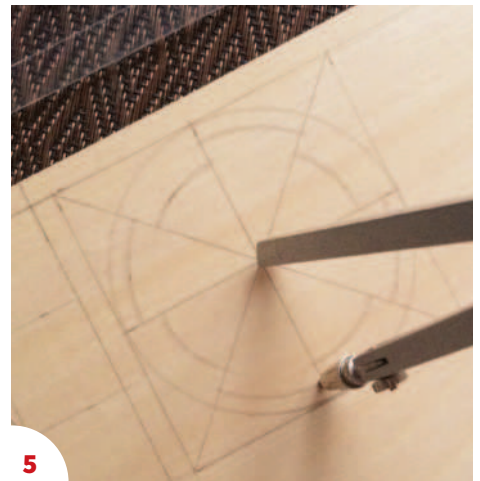
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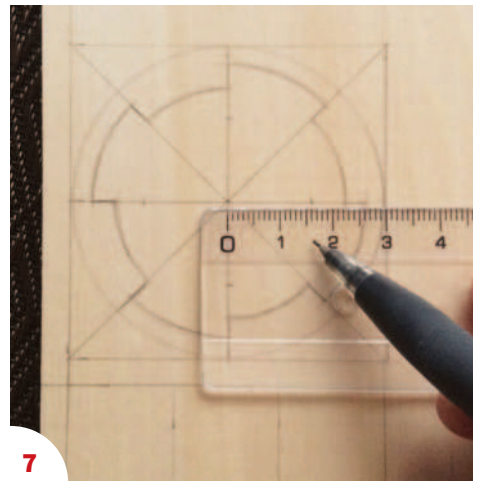
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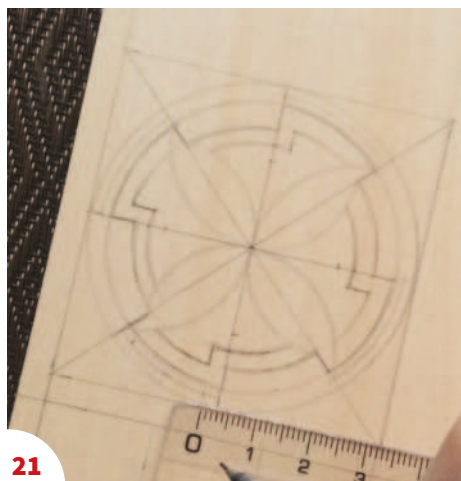
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Where there are wide four-sided chips, draw a line a little beyond the perpendicular lines [13, 14]. Take a ruler and, on the line that goes a bit beyond the perpendicular lines, mark a dot 3mm from the perpendicular line [15]. Having drawn a parallel line, connect the top and bottom curved lines together [16, 17].

Start drawing lines inside the chips for additional stop cuts. Start with the thin four-sided chips: divide them in half [18] and draw lines using a compass [19]. Repeat these steps inside the wide four-sided chips [20]. The central lines for additional stop cuts are ready; now mark where the deepest spots are inside the four-sided chips.

Start again with the thin four-sided chips: mark a dot 3mm from the horizontal perpendicular and the diagonal lines of the main pattern inside each thin chip [21], then connect these dots with the bases/short sides [22]. Repeat these steps inside the wide four-sided chips, but mark dots 4mm from the diagonal and perpendicular lines [23, 24, 25].

Draw lines inside the semi-ovals for additional stop cuts: divide in half the widest place of one of the semi-ovals [26] and draw a line by hand that follows the shape of the semi-oval's curved side [27]. Repeat these steps on the remaining semi-ovals. The pattern is now ready for carving [28].



21



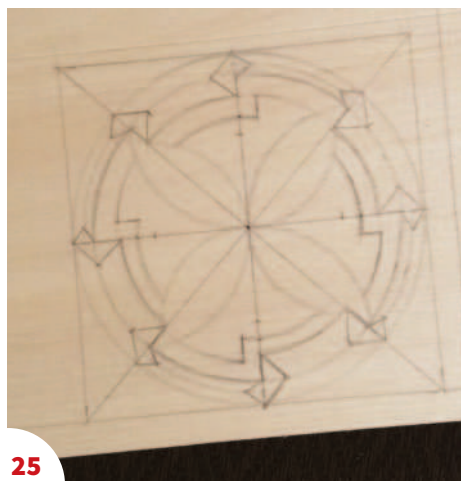
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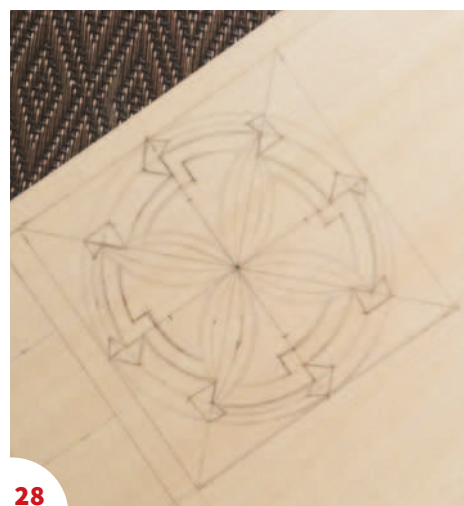
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Weak and strong connections

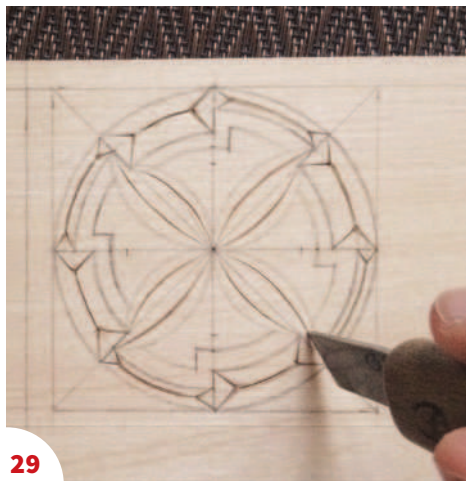
For the most part, the weak connection in the patterns is at the ends of the lines, where the chips are connected to each other, while edges of the carving are chipped less often. It does not matter whether they are connected to each other by the bases or by the sides. We need to make sure that this is no longer a weak connection but is transformed into a strong connection. In order to do this, you need to carve the place where they connect without chipping. To do this when undercutting, it is necessary to hold the knife at the right angle, for it to be sharp and for the wood you are carving to have been dried properly. In this pattern, we have a slight advantage: the place where the thin and wide chips are connected together, in a sense, is no longer a weak connection, because the ends of the short sides of the thin chips do not connect to the ends of the short sides of the wide chips (they are not the same length); therefore it is possible to avoid chipping just with sequential undercutting.



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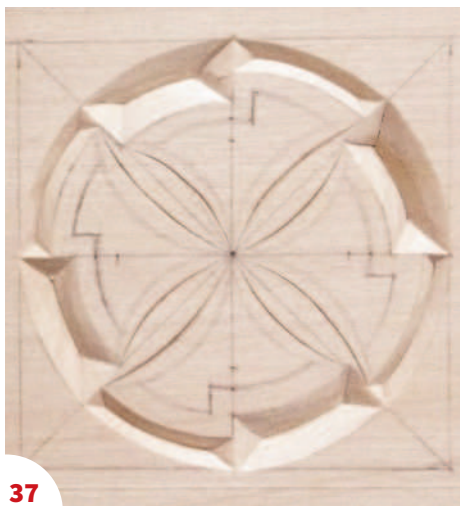
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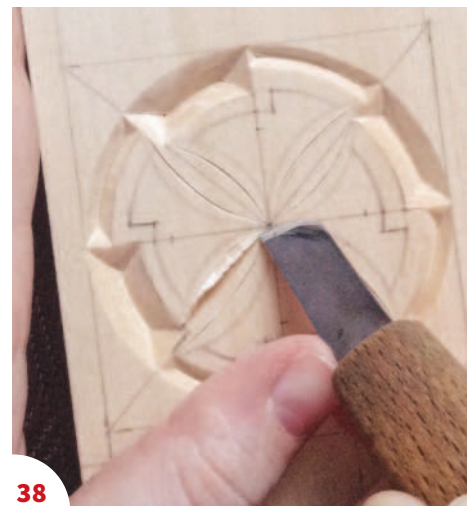
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Carving process

Make stop cuts inside all the chips of the pattern. Inside each of the semi-ovals, make stop cuts with a slight pressure of the knife where the tops of the semi-ovals go; the deepest place is the middle of the diagonal/central line of the semi-oval [29]. All stop cuts inside these are made perpendicular to the surface of the board. Start carving the pattern from one of the thin four-sided chips; namely, undercutting its short sides [30]. Then undercut its long sides [31]. All undercuts inside these thin and the other wide four-sided chips are made at an angle of 60-65 degrees, following the grain direction. When one thin four-sided chip is carved [32], carve the remaining thin chips. Notice where the short sides of the chips go along the grain: first carefully check when the knife goes easily through the grain – whether away from you or towards you – and only then make an undercut [33]. Carve out the remaining thin chips [34].

Next, start carving the wide chips. I left these to be carved last in this sequence, because I follow this principle in my carving system: when smaller chips are combined in patterns with larger chips, the smaller ones are carved first, then the larger ones – there is an effect in the pattern that the larger ones cover the small chips.

To carve the wide chips, start undercutting them from the short sides [35]. Carve the first chip [36] and then the remaining wide ones, following the grain direction [37].



39



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41

Next carve the two-sided chips; that is, the semi-ovals. Start carving them from one of the shorter chips, keeping the knife at a 65 degree angle to the surface of the wood. Start from the side where one semi-oval connects with the other, longer semi-oval [38], then undercut it from the other side [39]. Then turn the board to make it comfortable to undercut a longer chip. Start carving it from the common side [40], then carve its second side [41].

Following the steps for undercutting chips of different sizes, carve out the remaining semi-ovals [42].

Now carve the lines that repeat the shape of the pattern formed by the thin and wide four-sided chips. First, for example, undercut the long first line 1mm to the right [43]. Then make an undercut on the second short line, next to the first one, which overlaps it, by slightly grabbing the first line with the tip of the knife to avoid chipping [44].

When the undercutting on the right of all the lines is complete, rotate the board and start undercutting on the left to completely carve out the lines [45, 46]. The carving is now complete [47]. ▶



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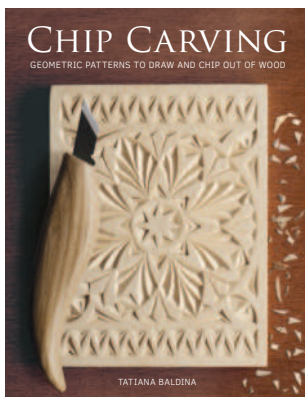
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An extract from *Chip Carving* by Tatiana Baldina, GMC Publications, RRP £14.99, available online and from all good bookshops



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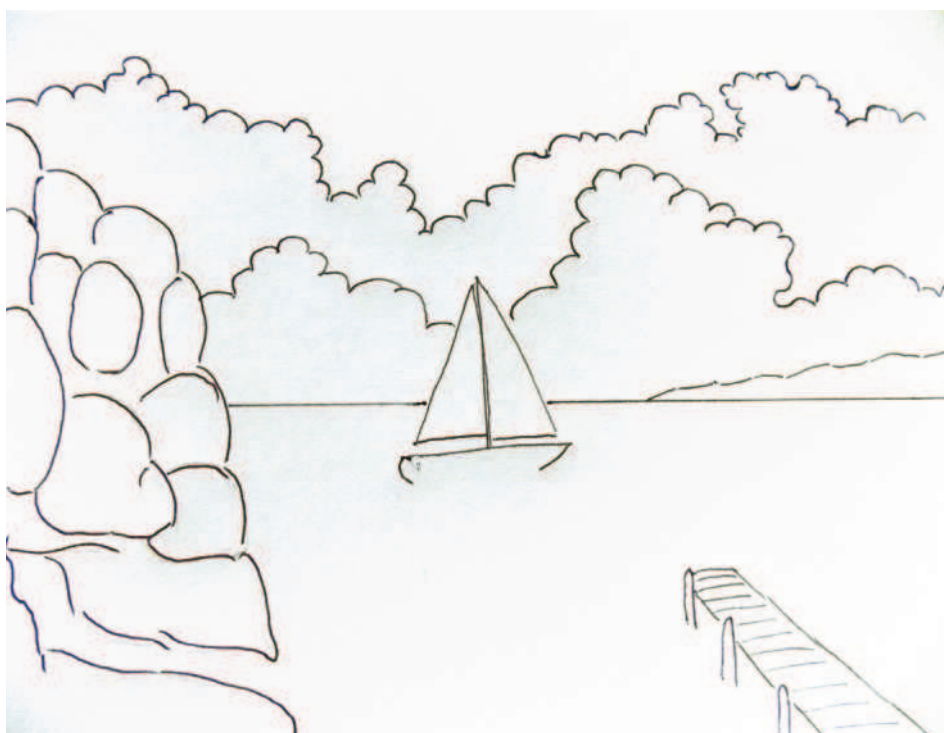
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Relief carving landscapes

John Samworth continues his series with an introduction to scenery



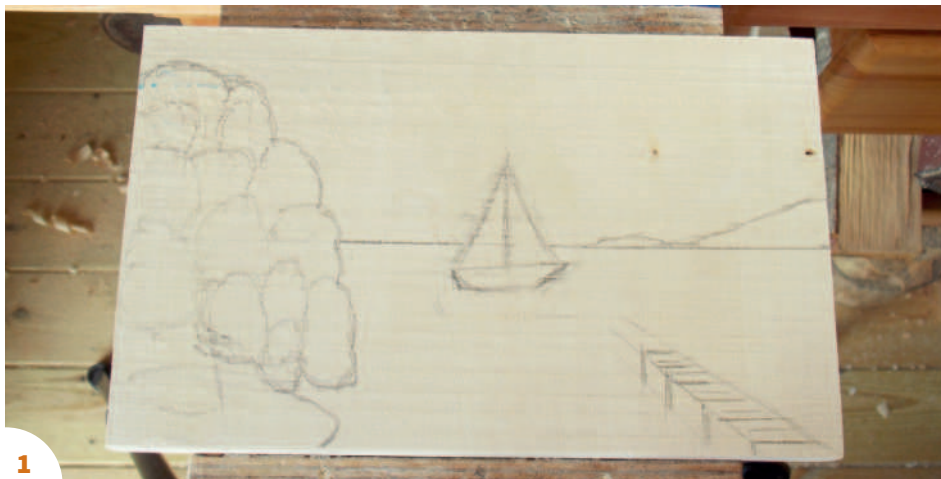
Following on from my earlier article on relief carving, I'm going to look at how to carve a landscape image. Landscapes have been a popular source of inspiration to artists for hundreds of years. Since the discovery of geometric perspective by Leon Alberti, landscape pictures have developed into an amazing likeness of the vista in front of us.



1 I have drawn a typical landscape image to emphasise the topics discussed in my earlier article, but first we need to consider the various elements contained here:

- Central focal point
- Weeping willow tree
- Clouds
- Boat and boat's shadow
- Jetty
- Water

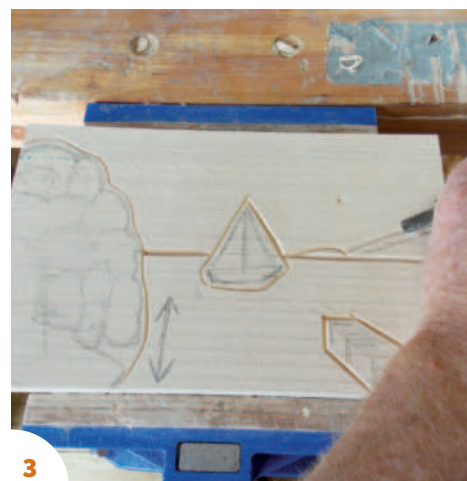
Start by preparing your piece of wood. In this instance we shall be working the entire front surface and only need to smooth the sides. Sketch or trace the plan on to your wood.



2 Mark the right side as shown. The blue line represents from X to Y the depth of the water sloping down to the horizon then the sky curving up and forward. The left-hand pencil line is the depth of the jetty and the central pencil line the depth of the boat. Note also the vertical pencil line to fix the position of the horizon. We will need to redraw the horizon several times and this mark is vital to keep the horizon fixed.



3 Using a parting gouge, make stop cuts around the objects and mark the horizon. Note the grain direction is vertical. This will be very useful when forming the tree.



4 Using a large No.9 fluter, followed by a large flat No.3 or No.4 sweep gouge to clean up the work, begin to waste away the water level and the sky. Keep at least 5mm of spare depth of wood in the sky to construct the clouds.



5 Begin to shape the tree. The point closest to the viewer is the section just above the trunk. Gently slope the surface of the tree away from this point towards the background. The trunk is slightly lower than the shape of the tree immediately above it. Mark the main area on to your carving and label them 1. For the closest section, 2. For the next and so on. Use a large No.9. fluter to rough out these sections.



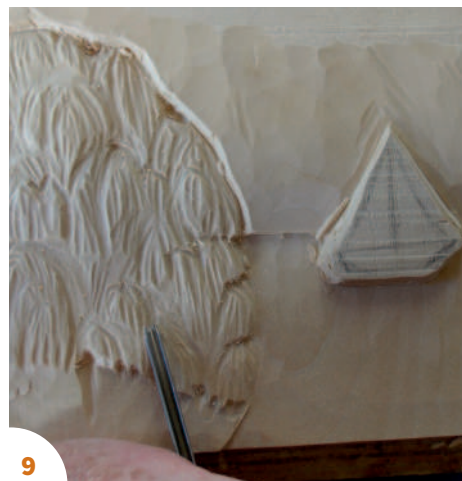
6 By reference to an image of a genuine willow tree, it is apparent how the tree is constructed of large sections, each subdivided into small sections and again to smaller section still before the individual willow rods droop down to the water.





7 Check over your work. You are looking to ensure that the overall appearance is natural, there are no patterns to the sections, no straight cuts, no parallel cuts, no flat areas and that the various sections' heights are gently sloping from the centre to the background. I have spotted a flat area and a section too high, which I marked with an F and an H. These will be adjusted. Even out the flat and high areas. Note how the tree's edge is running into the sky. A small section of the sky has been taken back to accommodate the tree. In the final piece the sky will be behind the tree, but for the time being I want to keep plenty of wood to form the sky later.

Note how the tree's edge is running into



the sky. A small section of the sky has been taken back to accommodate the tree. In the final piece the sky will be behind the tree, but for the time being I want to keep plenty of wood to form the sky later.

8 Repeat the exercise using smaller and smaller fluters to divide up the tree's sections and start to define the individual willow rods.

9 Begin to break up the outline by carving small notches from the bottom and where the different sections meet against the background.

10 A simple technique for the sky is to chip out a line of randomly placed curves. Use a mixture of No.5-No.8 gouges of different widths, 5mm-10mm. Two rows like the original drawing and you will have a very effective skyline. I am after a more dramatic skyline, perhaps evoking a storm coming.

11 Using a large No.9 fluter, rough out the basic shape of the main cloud sections. Use larger sections with more depth at the top but much more delicate work towards the horizon. We are using five tricks here—the sky is curving forward with the top closest to the viewer, the top has larger cloud areas than at the horizon, the top casts more shadow by the extra depth of the carving, the sky will run behind the tree, boat and distant headland and the jetty will create a perspective line to a vanishing point behind the boat. Together they will trick the viewer into seeing the sky fading away into the distance, creating great depth in the carving. Check over the rough work, make sure there are no flat areas, except perhaps right down on the horizon. There are now no straight cuts, no parallel cuts and the depths are right. Begin to gently open more space between the tree and the sky, while keeping the rough outline of the clouds consistent. Work over the clouds again with a smaller gouge.

12 Reduce the height of the boat and begin to add some detail. Hollow the sail to appear to be catching the wind. Using a fluter, cut close and parallel to the leading edge of the sail. Keep a check on your grain direction. Carving with the grain will leave a clean and sharp edge to the sail. Rotate the flute on to its side and gently remove the rest of the sail's hollow back to the mast. The mast will be slightly lower than the boat's hull top. Round the hull back to the water line. Repeat the hollowing of the rear sail.

13 Tidy the edges, checking that the various depths are correct and lower to the sky as necessary behind the boat, and blend this area into the rest of the sky. The mast itself is not carved, rather a fine line is carved to cast a shadow suggesting the mast. Let one sail be slightly taller than the other. Add a very small amount of undercut behind the sails.





14



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14 Lower the jetty with a large, flat No.3 or No.4 gouge. Slope the top edge away leaving the lower edge of the jetty boards as the high point. Slope the jetty into the carving such that the distant edge is almost level with the water background. Use a parting tool to mark out where the jetty piles will be.

15 Lower the background between the piles. Use a small fluter and short cuts, working back towards the jetty boards. If you try to cut too much out with one cut, the wood will split, leaving a scar in the background or tearing away one of the piles.

16 Where the piles meet the water, they are at different heights, which will look wrong. Before tidying the background, invert a flat gouge and lower the piles to form a smooth line between the water's surface and the jetty boards. By doing this you will make the piles stronger to carve and you may safely remove the rest of the wood between the piles and tidy up this area.

17 Finish the clouds with abrasive paper, working through the grits. The clouds are the only section to be sanded. Lime has a tendency to fluff when sanded and it is this soft, textured finish with no hard edges I am looking for in the clouds. If you catch the water's surface with abrasive, re-cut with a flat gouge. Add some texture to the water's surface with successive sized fluters and, using the finest veiner in your tool box, cut a few lines in front of the boat to cast a reflection of the boat on the water.

18 Apply the finish of your choice. Because of the heavy shadows within the tree, I chose an oil finish, because the oil penetrates deep into all the groves and will puddle slightly in the deep grooves, accentuating the shadows. A little beeswax only on the water will help reflect light.

19 Here is an alternative version of the sky. It is worth comparing the two. For me, both are convincing portrayals of sky, the first being moodier as if a storm is brewing and the boat must head for a sheltered mooring. The second is calmer and more picturesque and the boat can boldly head forth into open waters. ▶



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Celtic sun

Dave Western carves this uplifting celestial body



After a long, grey winter and all the stresses of Covid-19, I just can't stop thinking about the sun and how much I am looking forward to seeing it again. To celebrate (hopefully) its return to our skies, I carved this elegant little Celtic-style piece.

Drawing inspiration from NW Coast First Nation-style sun carvings and from Celtic ceremonial art, this design is stylishly straightforward. The ornamentation consists

of a simple repeating Celtic knot arranged in a circular pattern around a raised and domed sun 'face'. The knotwork can either be cut in low relief or can be fretted for a bit of extra pizzazz. It's a design that can be carved from a flat timber if you don't feel up to undertaking the domed central section, but the piece really does look better for the extra work of raising the centre.

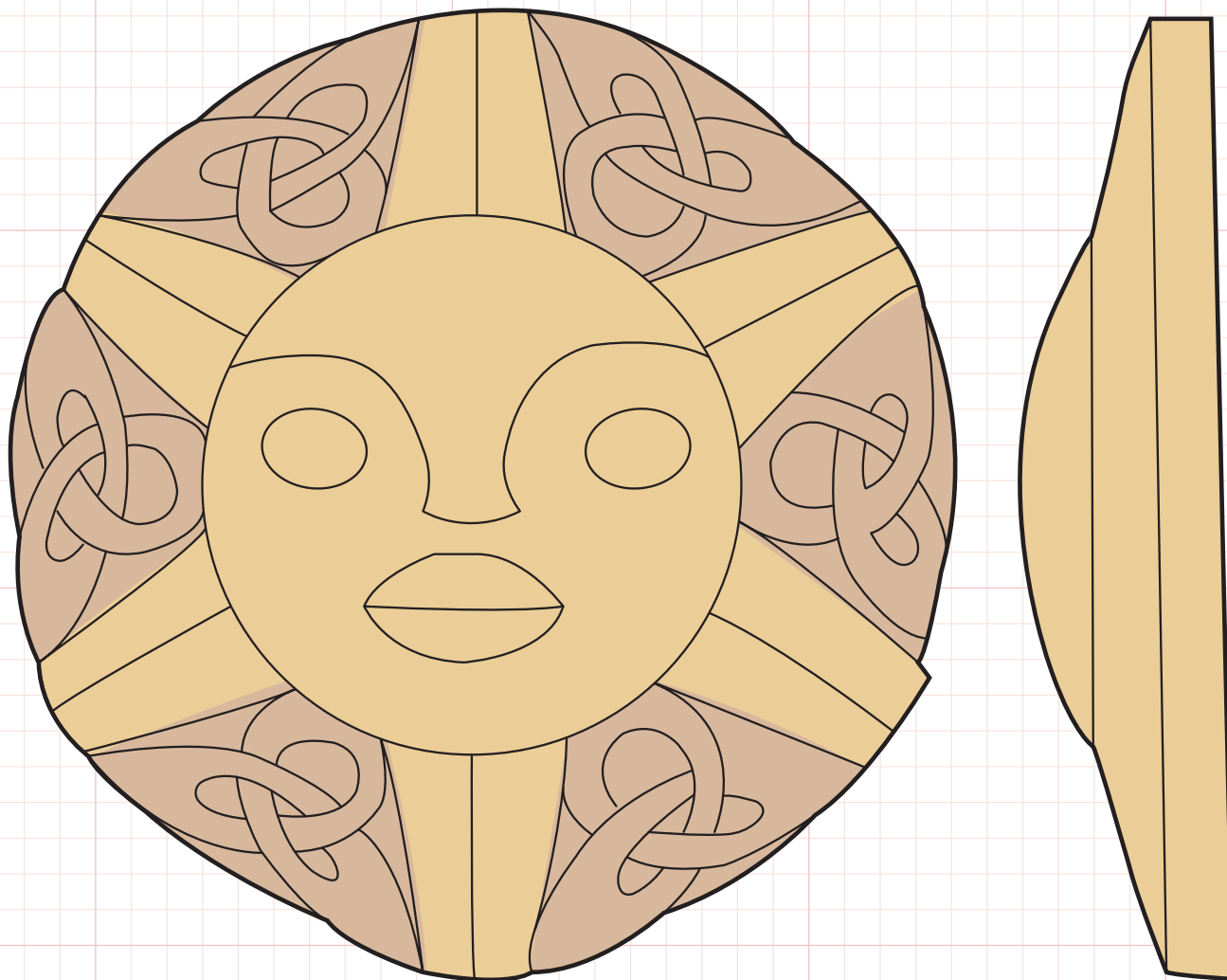
I used a small offcut of lime (basswood/

linden) for this project, but any softer hardwood such as birch, alder, sycamore or jelutong would work equally well. I opted for wood with a light colour tone to symbolise the brightness of the sun, but if you are of stout heart and wrist, cherry or yew might give an equally attractive result. I think darker woods like walnut might be too moon-like and might not allow the details of the face to be as clearly visible.

Things you will need

Tools:

- Scrollsaw with fine blade
- No.1, 1/2in gouge or regular chisel
- No.1, 1in gouge or regular chisel
- 1/4in chisel
- Drill or drill press
- 1in straight knife
- Fine dovetail saw or Japanese-type saw
- Flat needle file
- Cloth-backed fine abrasive (150 grit)
- Assortment of sandpapers (150-320 grit)
- Danish oil and brush
- Glue stick if applying pattern directly to workpiece



1 I began this carving by rough cutting a circular piece slightly larger than the drawing. I used a bandsaw and then after copying the exterior and interior circle lines to the piece using a bit of carbon paper, I committed to cutting a nice smooth outer circle with a scrollsaw. You could use a jigsaw, jeweller's saw or even an axe and a stout straight knife to cut the circle. Just aim for a consistently fair curve with no bumps or hollows and try to keep the edge as close as possible to 90° to the face.

2 Using a pencil and your finger as a guide, scribe a line around the entire outer edge of the piece. This line should be somewhere around 1/3 the depth of your material's thickness. This line will act as a guide to help you as you saw around the disc to begin the process of removing the stock that will allow the centre circle to be raised.





3



4

3 If you are confident on the bandsaw and have a safe clamping system, you can undertake cutting from the outer edge in toward the centre circle relatively quickly, but you are likely safer cutting several times to a set depth with a marked handsaw as I did. Once you've cut around the entire circle, lay the piece flat on the workbench and use a fine handsaw to cut from the face down to your interior sawn lines.

4 You'll have to cut six or eight segments to clear the area and get as close to the centre circle as possible. If you do everything right, you should be rewarded with a nicely raised central circle that won't require a great deal of cleaning up.



5



6

5 At this point, scribe a fresh line around the outer edge of the spoon, about $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ in from the saw line. This will give you a line to aim for as you clean up the sawn face with a tin flat chisel and carve a slight dome into this area. Because there are sections of cross-grain cutting, I advise shallow and cautious cutting here.

6 This side view shows the gentle curve from the inner to outer circles. It isn't necessary to get too carried away with curving in this section, but having at least a bit definitely adds a feeling of 'movement' to the rays of the sun and to the Celtic knotwork. Having the pencil line to work toward will enable you to keep the flow consistent and will help you avoid cutting in high and low areas.



7



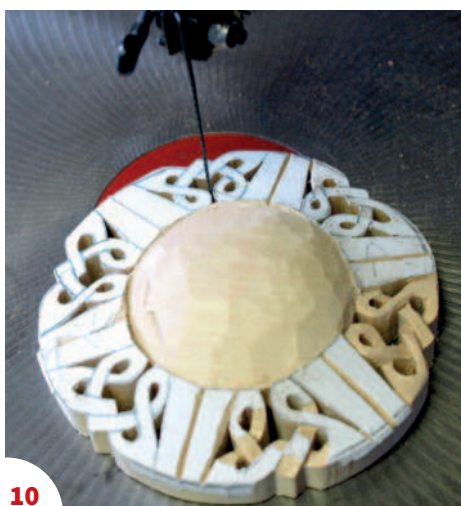
8

7 With the outer circle area curved and faired, you can begin doming the centre circle. Start with a straight knife or flat chisel and carefully chamfer the square raised edge. Gradually round this area over, being careful not to dig the tip into the outer ring. Work carefully here; both to avoid damaging the outer ring and to ensure that you keep the dome as even all round as possible. It's easy to get carried away in one area and cut in a low spot if you don't remain vigilant. Turning the piece frequently as you cut will help avoid this kind of error.

8 After doming the centre section, glue the Celtic knotwork pattern on to the outer ring, being careful to align it with the face. I generally draw a centreline through the entire piece to help me keep track of where the face and the knotwork need to be placed to keep everything in order.



9



10

9 At this point, you might notice a few rough areas that require cleaning up on the centre dome. Make use of a flat chisel, files or a scraper to ensure this area is really well shaped before proceeding to the knotwork area.

10 The knotwork can either be cut in low relief or it can be fretted through. For those lacking a scrollsaw or a steady hand with a jeweller's saw, the low relief method is probably the easiest way to proceed. If you opt to fret the pattern, use a very fine-toothed blade and cut carefully to achieve as smooth a surface as possible. Neat cutting at this stage will save a great deal of adjusting and clean-up work at later stages.



11 Lightly scribe all knotwork intersections with a straight knife and shallow cuts. Once you've ensured all the over and under intersections are correct and in order, take out a shallow wedge-shaped sliver of wood at each intersection. Avoid the urge to cut too deeply on the first pass, just in case there is an error in the pattern and you need to reshape an area. I use a small $\frac{1}{4}$ in chisel to undertake this clearing work.

12 Once you are confident that the pattern of overs and unders is all correct and the knot is taking shape, you may proceed to deepen the cuts and make the 'ramp' cut longer and smoother.

13 This close-up photo shows the knotwork at several stages of completion. The section to the far left of the photo shows the knotwork with the initial wedge-shaped cuts, which delineate all the over and under intersections. The middle section shows deepening of the intersection cuts and the effect ramping back from the intersection has on the look of each knot strand. The final section to the far right shows the depth cutting and ramping largely completed. Now only a bit of shaping of the ramps and some gentle easing of the edges of each strand remains to be finished.

14 With just a little filing or sanding needed to finish the knotwork, you can begin work on the sun's face. Start by scribing a line of approximately $\frac{1}{16}$ in (1.5mm) depth along the line that will form the eyebrow and nose. You can use a gouge or straight knife tip to mark out the eyes and the line where top and bottom lips meet. With these all scribed, you can begin clearing material away to bring up the nose and brows. The photo shows the left side of the face with basic scribing cuts and some light clearing cuts. The right side shows the more finished face with all the shaping cuts around the eye, mouth and chin completed.

15 I recommend a bent knife or a shallow gouge for clearing the areas around the eyes and mouth. Be cautious making these cuts as it is easy to push too hard and have the knife/gouge cut into the nose or brow and take out a chip. The goal is to leave the nose and lips as the carving's high point and to work down and away from both.

16 Although most of the shaping work on the face is best undertaken with a bent-bladed tool, flat tools like the $\frac{1}{4}$ in chisel often come in handy for clean up work. In the area where the eye socket meets the brow, the use of a chisel will enable you to get right into the deepest areas cleanly and crisply. The chisel is also very useful for rounding over the eyeballs and for smoothing the 'rays' which radiate around the design.

17 For shaping the cheeks, the section beneath the lips and the section between the lips and nose, the gouge is the most useful tool. Having an array of sweeps on hand will let you vary the curves as they move from tight and fairly deep to smooth and shallow. Keeping the gouges razor sharp will also allow you to cut cross grain along the chin and in a couple of sections around the eyes.



11



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18 Finish the eyeballs and the shaping of the lips with a sharp, small, straight knife. Because the area around the eyeball has been shaped, if you lose concentration, it is easy to break through and take a chip out with the tip of the knife. Cut slowly and carefully in this area. Aim to shape a very soft convex curve into the lips rather than cutting two flat angled cuts. The rounding will make them appear more realistic and much less 'static' than flat cuts will.

19 Because of all the curved areas around the eyes, cheeks and chin, getting a really good, smooth finish can become a bit of a challenge. While razor-sharp tools will take you a great deal of the way toward achieving a super-smooth finish, it may be necessary to do some filing, scraping or abrading. I prefer to use cloth-backed abrasive drawn under my finger to create a nice, fair finish.



21



22

20 If you lack access to cloth-backed material, regular sandpaper can be used in the same way, albeit with much less pressure placed on it to limit tearing. In areas where the paper does not need to be pulled under the finger, sanding can be performed in the traditional fashion.

21 This picture shows the completed carving as viewed from the side profile. The dome is clearly visible, as is the slight angle of the outer knot ring. Also visible is the clean cut at the brow/eye intersection and the very slight curving of the areas around the eye and below the nose. The doming really brings this carving to life and is very much worth all the extra work that carving it entails.

22 Take plenty of time to ensure that all the sanding and filing is completed before applying any finishes to the piece. Here, the photograph shows the face just prior to its last couple of sandings. I recommend you sand down to at least 320 grit before committing to any finish preparations. Note that the areas where the knotwork meets the rays and the face still require a bit of tidying up, as do some of the knotwork intersections. Any scratches, bumps or rough sections will become very noticeable with the application of a finish, so time spent cleaning up these fiddly sections will be time well spent.

24 Once the carving, filing and sanding is completed, an application of Danish oil will help to bring up the grain and the wood's colouring. I usually apply about three or four coats and finish with a final wet sanding using 1000 grit wet and dry abrasive. After the piece has cured for a week or so, I apply a beeswax polish and give the piece a good buffing with a cotton cloth. ■



23

Hare and tortoise money box

Continuing with the second part of his series, Cedric Boyns makes the hare to join the tortoise

Things you will need

Materials:

- Wood blocks – lime
- Tortoise body block, 215mm long x 100mm wide x 100mm deep
- Tortoise shell block, 145mm long x 110mm wide x 90mm deep
- Hare block, 50mm long x 60mm wide x 90mm deep
- Hare tail block, 80mm long x 30mm x 30mm (if turning allow extra length for chucking)
- Length of 12mm/½in ash dowel (or any wood could be used) – at least 110mm long

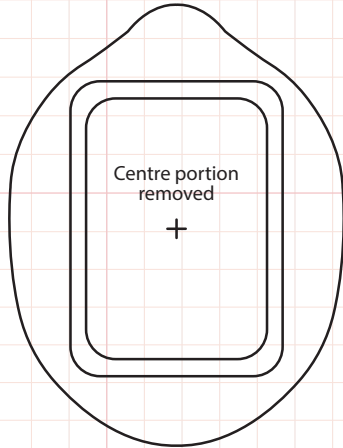
Tools:

- Copy of the templates
- Wood glue and hot-melt glue gun
- PPE dust mask and suitable dust extraction
- Bandsaw, fretsaw and handsaw
- Range of No.3 and No.5 gouges (3-12mm)
- Range of No.11 gouges (2-10mm)
- Straight No.1 chisels (1.5, 5 & 10mm)
- Spokeshave
- Detail carving knife
- Rifflers
- Pillar drill and hand-held drill
- Pencil and ruler
- Forstner bits and twist drills
- Carving chops with cork and leather-lined jaws
- Rotary tool with 1in sanding pad and sanding cylinder
- Abrasives, 100 down to 400 grit

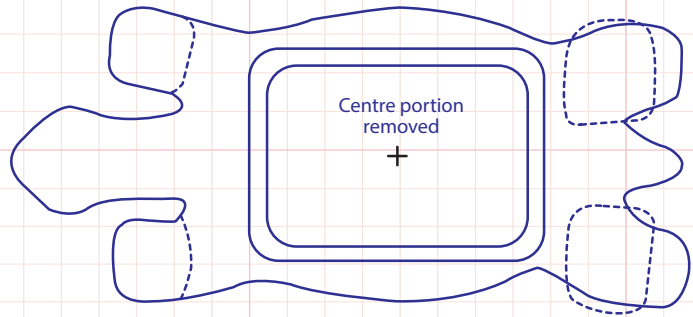


PHOTOGRAPHY BY CEDRIC BOYNS

Tortoise shell template – from below

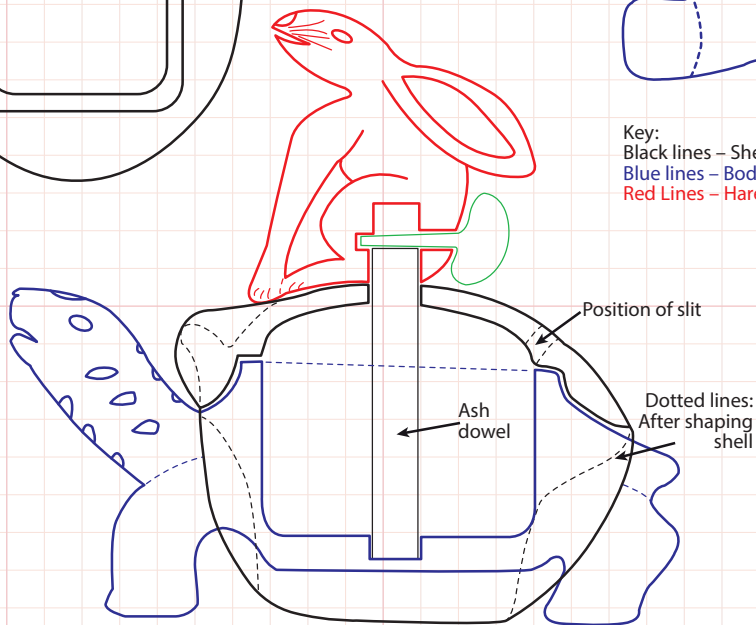
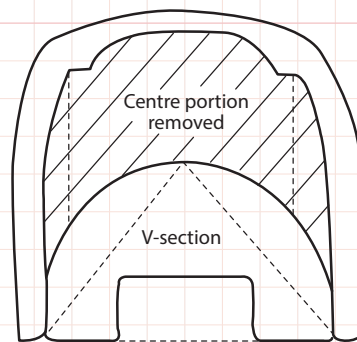


Tortoise body template – from above



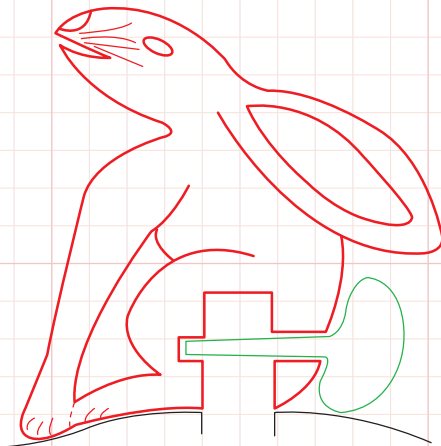
Key:
Black lines – Shell
Blue lines – Body
Red Lines – Hare

Tortoise shell template – end view

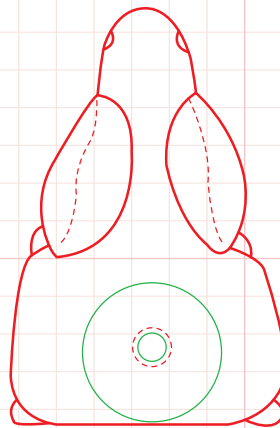


Side view templates

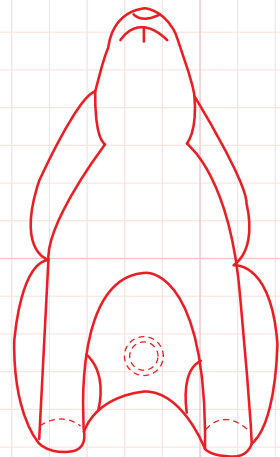
Hare: Side view



Back view

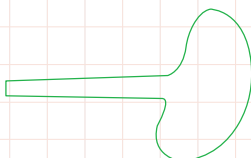


Front view

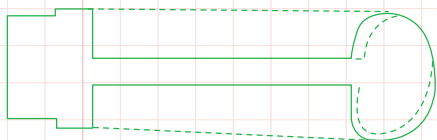


Tail:

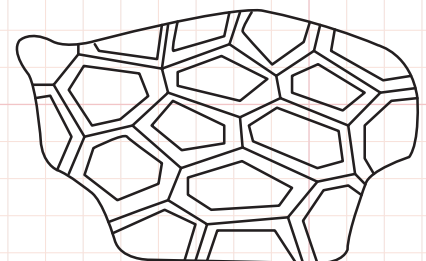
6mm



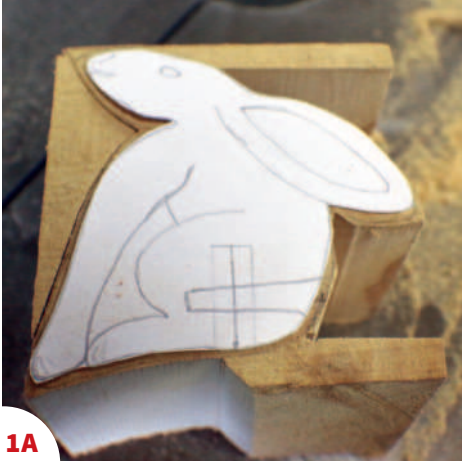
Template if carved



Plan if turned before final shaping



Rough plan of patterning on shell



1A

Making the hare

1A & 1B Mark out the side profile on the block and cut out with the bandsaw. I left some 'legs' to support the block for cutting out the front profile. Some of the waste wood was stuck back temporarily as before with hot-melt glue. The front profile was then cut out, and the temporary legs removed.

2 The main features of the hare were redrawn on to the sawn block.

3 I cut around the outlines of the main features with a 2mm No11 fluter (a V-tool could be used).

4 These cuts were then deepened with an appropriate sized and shaped shallow gouge around the ears, thighs and front legs to mark out the region to be reduced.

5 Check against the template and mark the region down the side of the front legs that needs to be reduced. Remove the necessary wood with a shallow gouge.

6 Further shape the features, marking in the area to be removed between front legs and back legs on both sides.

7A & 7B Having re-marked the position of the chest, drilled out the wood that needs to be removed to isolate the front legs with a 4.5mm drill to a depth about 20mm. Remove the region in the front, again with the aid of drill holes and two saw cuts to help release the wood, until the middle region of the front legs is free of the rest of the body. This can be completed with a small fluter gouge.

8 Having decided how far back to cut between the front and hind legs towards the chest/belly of the hare, it is now possible to drill a 12mm/½in vertical hole about 20mm deep centrally in the bottom surface. This will take the dowel coming up from the bottom of the hollowed 'box' region of the body of the tortoise.

7A



1B



2



3



4



5



6



7B



8

**9A****9B**

9A & 9B Once the hole is in position, continue to remove waste wood and shape the legs and face, removing all the flat surfaces.

10A & 10B Moving on to the ears, flatten the outer faces so that they are about 45° from the vertical axis of the body. Blend them into the face where they meet the head. The inner surfaces are now rounded, which involves removing the wood from between the ears. This can be done by paring down the sides of the ears with a No.3, 6mm gouge, then removing waste from the area between the ears with a small No.11 gouge.

**10A****10B**

11A & 11B The region in the centre of the ear lobes can be marked and removed with a suitable deep gouge (No.9 or No.11). The hare should now be ready for sanding.

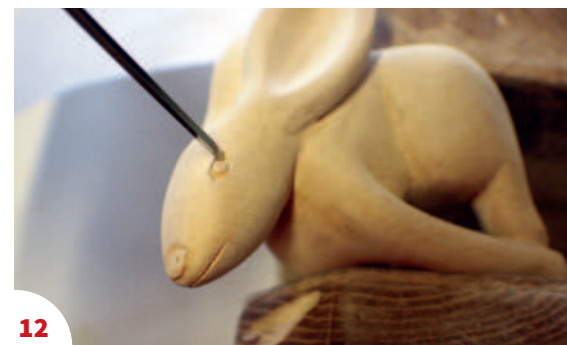
12 Following sanding the facial features can be added to the hare using the small fluter or parting tool and a 1.5mm flat chisel.

Making the tail

13 The tail block can be turned to a diameter of 25mm on a lathe. The free end is rounded over to produce a flattened half-sphere. Measure 20mm from the end and then reduce the diameter to produce 6mm, 30mm long peg, as shown in the photo.

14 The flat inside face of the sphere will need to be shaped to fit the contour of the back of the hare as shown in the photo
Note: If you do not have a lathe, the tail can be carved.

15 Use the template to mark the outline of the tail on the block.

**11A****11B****12****13****14****15**



16

16 Use the bandsaw to cut out a square peg measuring 6mm x 6mm down the centre of the block as shown. This can later be whittled to a round peg with a carving knife.



17A



17B

17A & 17B The actual tail part is then also cut out, rounded down to 25mm diameter and shaped on the inner surface to fit the contour of the back of the hare.

Fitting the tail and making the closing/locking mechanism

18 The length of dowel will need to be glued into the hole in the body base and should extend above the top of the shell by 20mm. The top will need to be sanded so that it passes easily through the top of the shell, fits loosely in, and reaches the top of the hole in the base of the hare when it is sitting on top of the tortoise.
Note: If you have a lathe, a short length of 12mm dowel can be turned. If not, dowel made from a number of woods can be readily obtained.



18



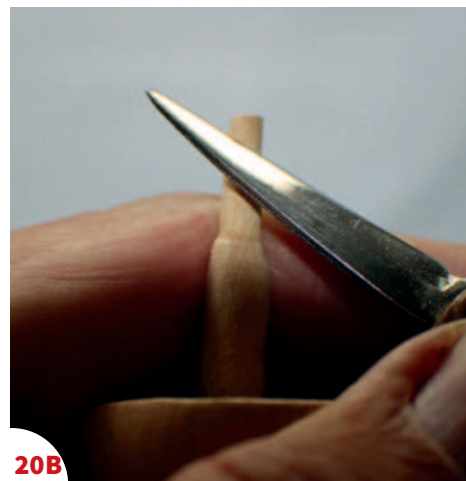
19

19 Mark carefully and drill a 6mm hole in the middle of the back of the hare at right angles to the 12mm vertical hole already drilled. It should be about 12-14mm from the base of the hare.

20A & 20B When the tail is put in place, the dowel peg which forms part of it will pass through this hole, which needs to be extended into, and through, the dowel as a smaller 3.5mm hole, which if necessary can continue out the other side into the body of the hare (be careful not to extend it too far). The end of the tail peg will then need to be pared down with a knife so it will fit into the smaller hole but not be loose. The procedure will need to be done very gradually to achieve this.



20A



20B

The idea is that when the tail is fully in place, the peg forms a 'jam joint' with the hole in the dowel and secures the hare to the top of the tortoise. The box cannot be opened until the tail is removed, allowing the hare and shell to be lifted off, so revealing the inside of the money box. Also, when the tail is fully in place and fitting properly, it is not obvious how the box can be opened and the money inside accessed.

21A & 21B Once an appropriate finish of your choice has been applied – I used a coat of sanding sealer followed by two coats of wax polish – the completed money box should look something like this. ▶



21A



21B

Our contributors



Cedric Boyns joined a carving evening class in 2010, which started him off. He also joined a local woodturning club and he enjoys combining the two skills in his projects. Travelling abroad in recent years has provided much inspiration for his carving work. He has no formal training in art or design, but feels he has learned a great deal by 'giving it a go'.



Dave Western is a professional lovespoon carver and the author of two books on the subject. He carves to commission and also teaches carving classes. His books, *The Fine Art of Carving Lovespoons* and *History of Lovespoons*, are both available through GMC Publications. davidwesternlovespoons.com



Dennis Zongker has been a professional furniture maker, marquetarian, and woodcarver for over 32 years. He is co-owner of Zongkers Custom Woods and the author of *Wooden Boxes: Skill Building Techniques for Seven Unique Projects*. He teaches classes in carving, marquetry, and hand-cut dovetails. zongkers.com/specialties



Jean-Jacques Frézouls is a self-taught sculptor who lives in France, near Albi. He has been sculpting sporadically for 20 years and as a full-time occupation for the last four. His sculptures are mainly of figures following themes of sacred art, nudity, animal life or others... depending on the day's mood. www.facebook.com/JJFsculpteur/



John Samworth is the present chairman of Cornwall Woodcarvers, a group of like-minded carvers who enjoy carving and encouraging others to take up the craft. He teaches an evening class at a local college and supports local Scout troops. jandjsamworth@btinternet.com



Nic Westermann is a blacksmith and specialises in toolmaking. He is highly regarded in the green woodworking and carving communities. He researches, designs and manufactures jigs and other kit to help make sharpening things easier. nic.westermann@btconnect.com



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



Zoë Gertner has been a professional woodcarver and sculptor since 1980. She is experienced in the teaching and practice of all aspects of woodcarving and sculpture, including relief carving, lettering, signboards, ecclesiastical, restoration, fairground and carousel work. www.zoegertner.co.uk

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Alexander Grabovetskiy – Master Carver

We talk to Alexander Grabovetskiy about his carving and his woodcarving school

Tell us about your background and training.

My background goes back to my great-great-grandfather. I have definitely never met him, but I had a chance to hear about him from my grandmother. When she was a little girl, she spent time in his woodworking shop listening him singing while he was working on some furniture projects for a royal palace.

Yes, he was one of a few people who built furniture for Russian empire royalty. His profession was 'red wooder'. It was a common name for furniture makers who worked with dark woods such as Indian mahogany or walnut. He was one of the best and before communists took power over the Russian Empire, he travelled the world and was well known in woodworking circles.

I think I've inherited his genes. I've always loved wood – the smell of it, the feel of it, the warmth of it.

I grew up in a small Russian town and we had a central plaza. On that plaza was a gift store. I remember everything about it, especially when you went inside and turned right there was a section

with gifts made from wood. Hand carved bears and other animals. I looked at these little carvings and thought that one day I will be able to carve like that.

I started to carve at the age of six – or rather I thought that way until I met Master Wood Carver Vladimir Tokarev at the age of 16.

Somehow, I managed to impress him. Vladimir took me under his apprenticeship, teaching me the techniques that would help me to create unique, award-winning, custom wood carving masterpieces.

Life seemed to be heading in the right direction for me when I suffered the biggest setback of my life. I was arrested by the Soviet government and sent to prison for my adherence to faith and refusal to enter the Red Army.

I was released from prison at the age of 21. By that time, I had already started a successful architectural and ornamental woodcarving business from prison.

In 1996, my wife, 10-month-old son and I immigrated as political refugees to the US. The rest, as they say, is history.

What was the first project you completed?

It is interesting, but my first project was not related to wood in all. It was still carving but it was not a woodcarving.

I was six when I got a chisel from my grandfather and I did not tell him.

I found a white brick and carved a human face. Well, I thought it was human.

When my grandfather found out about the missing chisel, he expressed himself in a way I did not expect. But I was still happy with the result.

He said: 'This chisel is not for bricks or opening paint cans; it was designed to work with wood ONLY.'

I learned my lesson, and since then never used chisels in a wrong way. Well, almost never. I might have opened a couple of paint cans.

So that is a story of my 'first' project. That is what I remember.

What made you decide to set up your own business?

When I immigrated to the US I had to make a decision about if I was going to be employed by someone or start my own woodworking business.

To be honest, to find the job was really easy for me. I came to the US on Saturday and on Monday I nailed my first job. A small framing crew employed me. But there was a problem – I did not speak English well and the communication problem was a big deal for me and for them. More for them than me. I lasted two days and found another job.

I was working hard on my English and, finally, I could communicate. About the same time more Russian and Ukrainian refugees came to the US. They faced the same problem as me. They were very talented and professional people but they could not speak English.

One day, I made a decision to start a woodworking

firm and employ those woodworkers so they could provide for families. That was a turning point.

How did you go about it?

My firm was woodworking but in reality we grew much bigger. We did all finish carpentry, built kitchen cabinets, custom furniture, high-end millwork and even built custom high-end homes.

My part was to run operations but also I was the only one who could do woodcarving. While my employees were working on other stuff, I was carving for clients.

Tell us about your carving school?

A few years ago I was in my woodworking shop. I had a big shop with all heavy-duty woodworking machines. It was very late, I think about 9 or 10pm. I was trying to finish another project for a client, not carving, and I was very tired. A famous woodworker came into my shop. He was a big businessman in the woodworking industry. His woodworking shop was over 120000sq ft. He said to me: 'Think about how old are you. I am about 20 years older than you and I am in my sixties. You are in your forties. I met you when you were in your twenties and I was in my forties. Over twenty years passed in the blink of an eye. Think about how many more productive years you have. Maybe 15 or 20. Why don't you concentrate only on wood carving? On what you do the best.'

The same week I sold my heavy machinery and rented my big shop to another woodworking firm.

I made a decision to downsize my operations and concentrate on what I love the most – woodcarving.

One day I got a phone call from a woodworking school in Indianapolis. Marc Adams, founder of the school, called me and asked me if I was willing to teach a woodcarving class in his school.



I had not taught before and it took me a couple years before I said yes. Please understand, English is still not my first language and I thought, how in the world will I teach these people?

But anyway, I agreed to teach.

My first class was great! People loved it and, most important, I loved it. I fell in love with teaching. It was the starting point of my woodcarving teaching career.

My son came to me one day and said: 'Dad, you are carving every day for clients, why don't you film the process and start a school of woodcarving online?'

I agreed and that was the start of my school. As of today, I have more than 2500 videos on my site and they are based on real projects.

Tell us about the types of students you train and to what ability?

People from all over the world join my school. I have some who are very young – nine years old – and I have a 99 year old. I have some professional carvers and some who have never carved before.

There is no restriction based on ability or skill level.

My school is project-based – some projects are easy and some are very complicated. Beginners carve easy projects and professionals are working on very hard projects. Everyone is happy.

Tell us about how you work – what are your favourite tools and why?

I am a traditional carver and I use traditional woodcarving tools.

I have a small shop in my home. I still work for very high-end clients, but now I don't have any employees, only me. I start my day around 5am. I don't have to, but I like it that way.

Because my shop is in my home it takes me only few minutes to go downstairs to it. A cup of coffee and some reading takes me about an hour or so and by 6am I am already holding my gouge in my hand. I carve all day long and film everything I do. While carving I am explaining why I am using the tool I am using and what other tools could be used. That is my normal day.

As far as woodcarving tools, I love English-made tools. Ashley Iles and Henry Taylor are my go-to tools. I have about half a thousand of those tools. A huge quantity.

And why? They are Sheffield steel and have traditional round handles. Those tools hold edge the best and my hand does not get tired when I am using traditional round handles.

Tell us about your workshop – what is the set-up, how long have you been there, and will you be staying?

As I mentioned above, my workshop is in my home now. It is a two-part shop. My two-car garage is a machine shop. Yes, I still have all the equipment I need for my custom work.

And the second space is on the main floor of my house. It used to be a library room, but I remodelled it and made a woodcarving studio/school video studio.

Two huge windows give me all the natural light I need. In this room I have only what I need for woodcarving – my woodcarving bench, all of my woodcarving tools, sharpening systems and a scrollsaw.

How does your design process work?

It depends on the project. A lot of the time I am designing and developing on the go, right on a piece of timber.

But, for example, right now I am working on a big project for a client and it is a room. An on-the-go approach is not going to fly. I had to create a 3D model on my computer.

As for software for modeling, I use a multiple. I love using Rhino and Blender. Rhino because it is NURBS based and Blender because it is Mesh based. NURBS creates the smoothest images and Mesh I can manipulate easier.



Rhino is designed for curves. I know it sounds complicated and if you are not planning to design the whole room to scale you don't even have to think about it. Just take a piece of paper and pencil.

Which woods do you most like working with and why?

I love working with limewood.

It is a queen of woods. It carves easily and you can carve almost anything from it. It does not have pronounced grain and when you carve, you can create any curvature and it will not be lost visually.

My second favourite wood is walnut. I love to carve walnut, but the smell gets to you after a while.

Mahogany also good. As far as oak – I love English brown oak.

Do you work with other materials as well, and how do they compare?

I love to work with leather and metal. I am not the biggest fan of stone carving. I am able to carve stone, but I don't like stone dust.

What sort of finishes do you prefer and why?

When I am carving for myself, I don't use any finish.





Nothing – no wax, no lacquer, no paint, just bare wood. I like to see the wood itself ageing without any finish.

But when I am carving for my clients, I am using whatever they would ask for. Paint, lacquer, or water-based finish or wax.

But in my opinion, nothing beats the natural look.

What inspires you and where do you get your ideas from?

I have a lot more ideas in my head than time to bring them to life. My ideas come to me naturally and not from inspirational pictures. Maybe someday I will carve only what I imagine.

But when I am working for a client, I am listening to what they want and trying to design accordingly. For me, it is also very important to understand the historical context of a project I am designing. For example, my current project is a Venetian style of woodcarving based on the late 15th and early 16th century. Back then common trades people did not travel a lot. Most of the time they stayed in one town all their lives and polished their knowledge in one workshop. Every shop had a master and apprentices. Every shop developed a unique approach to certain details. And these details are not the same in Venezia and Rome. Two different cities feature two different details, even on the same so-called acanthus leaf.

What is your favourite project you have worked on and why?

I love carving flowers. My favourite would be a 2015 wall decoration project.

What is the most challenging project you have worked on and why?

The most changing project for me was a grapevine vase I carved back in Russia. I had one knife and one No.7, 19mm gouge when I was working on it. But I did it.

What are you working on now and next?

I am working on a custom commission, an Italian Venetian-style room (end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th century style). Carvings will be on the walls and the ceiling.

As far as next, I have a few people on a waiting list. One of the projects will be a carving for a medieval European palace. It will probably take me a few years to finish.

What are your aspirations for the future?

It is a hard question again. For example, an aspiration for the future palace will again be of Italian Baroque design. I will have to carve what was not carved before. Just the style has to be accurate, but I will not do any replicas. All will be original.

Have the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns affected your business? If so, how? Do you think the impact will be long term?

Covid did not affect my custom carving or my online school of woodcarving. My woodcarving school spiked because people were home and they had more time to watch. The woodcarving school grew a lot during pandemic. I even had to relocate my site to a separate server because of traffic on my site.

As far as woodcarving classes in person, it did affect us. We had to cancel classes last year because states were closed for business. I was still teaching in a couple of schools, but it was not the same as before. On the other hand, I had more time to concentrate on my custom commission work.

What do you do when you're not working?

When I am not carving you can find me walking outside to the gym and if I am not there, I am in the sauna or church. ▶

The druid

Jean-Jacques Frézouls sculpts a bas-relief Druid figure. Translation by Olivier Cauquil

I wanted to sculpt a character who appeared as close to animal life as possible and so the druid naturally came to me (the druid is a character that occupies a prominent place in Celtic society, close to all forms of life and keeper of knowledge and wisdom).

In order to bring my initial idea to life, I browsed the internet in search of inspiration, and I fell in awe with a drawing by the excellent illustrator Guillermo González made for Black Crow Miniatures (www.blackcrowminiatures.com). I asked them for their permission to use his drawing as part of my sculpture and, exceptionally for *Woodcarving*, I was allowed to use it for a feature in your magazine. I would like to take the opportunity to thank them for their kindness.

The original design is remarkable, but I wanted to bring some personal touches to it by adding animals and other details close to my heart.

The sculpture will be presented in the form of a bas-relief using a chestnut plank that I had lying about in my studio. This decent piece of wood, however, given as a gift, has a chainsaw cut in it that will need to be sorted out during the making of the sculpture.



DRAWING USED COURTESY OF BLACK CROW MINIATURES (WWW.BLACKCROWMINIATURES.COM)

Original drawing by Guillermo González

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEAN-JACQUES FRÉZOULS UNLESS WHERE SPECIFIED

Things you will need**Materials:**

- Compass
- Ruler
- Tracing paper
- Misc. pencils
- Sandpaper, 80, 120, 180 grit etc...
- Protection (goggles, gloves, mask, etc.)
- Wax paste
- Hair dryer

Wood:

- Chestnut plank, 630 x 330 x 60mm

Tools:

- Chainsaw
- V-gouge
- U-gouge
- Shallow gouge
- Shallow curved gouge
- Flat curved gouge
- Chisel
- Carving knives
- Scalpel
- Rotary burrs

These suggested woodcarving tools are the ones I own as part of my vast tool set. They are not specific to this project – please use the tools you are most comfortable with.



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1 Two copies of the drawing will need to be made, the first one kept as a visual reference during the entire process. The second, a pattern, is cut to be placed on the chestnut plank in order to draw the outline of the design. Armed with the tracing paper, trace the various objects (arms, face, scythe, moon, owl, etc.) which, once cut, will help you keep some visual marks.

2 Using the chainsaw will help you gain some considerable time tidying the background. A simple line drawn with a pencil will create a visual border to not go over. Do not hesitate to do multiple cuts, this will help you in the long run. But be careful, only use a chainsaw if you are familiar with and confident using this tool.



3 In order to remove pieces of wood between chainsaw strokes, use a large gouge, almost flat. Then, when working around the character, use a flat chisel and work at a right angle towards the bottom.

TIP 1

You can also use a router. However, aside from the speed you get from a chainsaw, removing pieces of wood with a gouge will enable you to get a first physical contact with the wood and understand how it is reacting to the tool.

4 While working around the druid and the animals, work your way down and flatten the bottom so it is clean. Using a flat chisel and a nearly flat gouge seems to be the most adequate way to proceed.

5 Now we can start giving shapes to the objects. This is an opportunity to remove some wood from the face to get rid of the ugly scar left by the chainsaw stroke.

6 Now you need to visualise the different heights of the various building blocks of the characters. For example, for the owl the moon is close to the bottom, then for the first wing, the body and the second wing, the beak is the highest point. It is important to keep in mind these various points as contour lines.

7 While keeping the high points (the nose of the druid, the top of the hands, the beak of the owl, the beak of the bird and the nose of the squirrel) round off the objects to give the main shapes to the ensemble.

8 At this stage, all the objects are in place and the use of a coarse sandpaper allows them to be softened. It will also help you better appreciate the general composition of the sculpture.

9 Using sculptor's knives, work on the details. The druid's gaze will be an important element of the sculpture as he is the main character of this piece.

TIP 2

Do not focus on a single element of the sculpture – switching from one to the other allows you to forget what you have just done and thus to rediscover it when you come back to it.

10 When the objects seem right, refine the details. The plumage of the bird is made with a small V- gouge and rotary burs.



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11 Taking a step back will allow you to see the entire sculpture and to check whether there is harmony between each element before working off the detailing.

12 The location of the beard will allow the placement of details mainly traced with a V-gouge and a small flat gouge to extract the pieces.

13 A sculptor's knife and scalpels allow you to deepen the details, such as leaves, feathers and rope.

14 Regularly take a step back to ensure that the general sculpture is acceptable before continuing with more precision on each element.

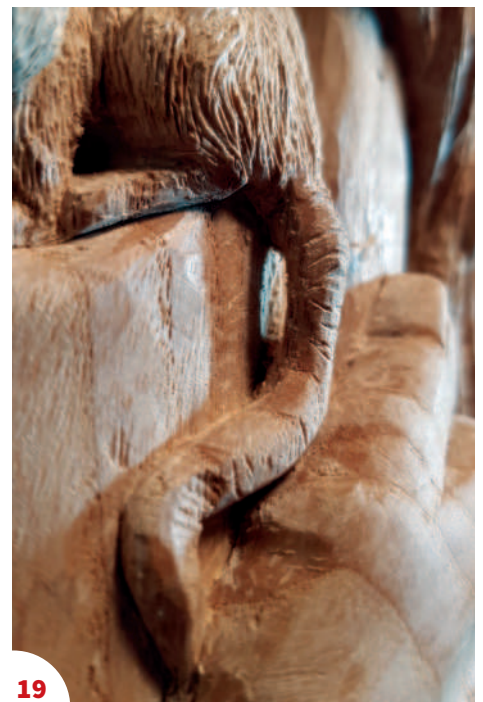
15 The background between the details such as the feathers and foliage are not yet clean, however using a flat curved gouge will help remedy this.

16 The details of the owl are made with a small V-gouge, sculptor's scissors of different shapes and small scalpels in order to deepen the plumage.

17 In this sculpture, the character's gaze is essential and deserves special attention. The use of gouges of different shapes allow you to trace the eyes and small tools affirm the look. Flawlessly sharp sculptor's knives and small scalpels enable this action.

18 Once sculpted, the texture of the handle of the scythe is achieved with a round rotating bit that is pressed irregularly on the wood.

19 The tail of the mouse is dug out with a scalpel so as to give more life to this little animal.



19

TIP 3

The sculptor's advice: For scalpels, blades of different shapes are available, but be careful when changing blades as they tend to break. I use a pair of small pliers to change them safely.

20 A rotating burr is used to add detail to the bracelet as well as to the mouse's coat.

21 Use a light to look for possible errors and to double check your work. Light can be an excellent tool to show you things you may have missed.

22 The back of the fingers is emptied with small, curved gouges and scalpels.

23 Thick wax will not always penetrate the depths of the detailed elements. Use a hair dryer to help you melt the wax so that it goes into every nook and cranny. A first layer of wax is applied, then a few hours later, the second layer to finalise the work.

24 The wax and the light reveal the objects and the shadows...

25...for you to better enjoy the details of the sculpture.

26 This type of sculpture gives the impression of great depth, seeing it from the side allows you to understand that the sculpture is only 6cm deep.

27 The sculpture is now finished and can offer itself to the admiring gazes of all.

CHAINSAW SAFETY

Woodworking tools, and particularly chainsaws, are inherently dangerous. Please make sure you comply with all the safety regulations mandated in your country. Ensure you wear all safety equipment, including body, eye, nose, mouth, face, ear, head, feet and hand protection. Make sure your tools are correctly maintained and used in a safe manner as recommended by their manufacturer. Any deviation from these recommendations mentioned in any article, you follow at your own risk. We describe these tools being used but cannot be held responsible for any damages, injury or death caused by their use..



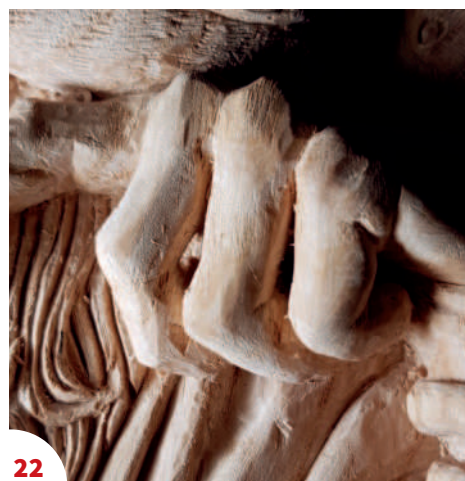
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Spoon carving

Part 1 – cleaving and axing out a blank

In this first article in an occasional series, wooden spoon carving expert Lee Stoffer shows the first steps in making a cooking spoon from a sycamore log

This first project is split into two parts, as there are many steps to making even a simple spoon design. The first part shows the procedure used for preparing all the work – cleaving and axing.

Spoon carving can be a great introduction to working with wood. The fresh-cut or fallen timber you need is readily available, often for free, and only a small selection of hand tools is required. I first tried my hand at spoon carving more than 10 years ago after watching Ray Mears make one during a bushcraft expedition. Since then I have probably carved a few hundred spoons, developed my skills and become fully immersed in the joy of working green wood with hand tools, all the while meeting many inspiring and friendly characters along the way.

For this project I will show you how to carve a simple spoon for use in the kitchen. I will be working with a freshly cut section of sycamore log. Sycamore is an excellent wood for spoons, but I would also recommend birch, willow, alder, hazel, hawthorn, beech and most fruit woods. I almost always carve my spoons from green wood as it is much easier to work with edge tools. I will be using

a production-based technique shown to me by Martin Damen, to make a spoon out of a radially cleft billet from a log that would yield a minimum of 16 similar spoons.

This method, while not the most efficient, gives the beginner a fighting chance of producing a usable spoon.

The most important tool being used in this section is the axe, which needs to be properly honed for carving. There are, of course, alternative ways to make a spoon utilising seasoned wood, power tools and abrasives, but I prefer a more traditional approach.

The idea for this project came from a turned, toadstool-shaped money box with a 'secret' mechanism for closing it. I first came across these in Romania, but

Things you will need

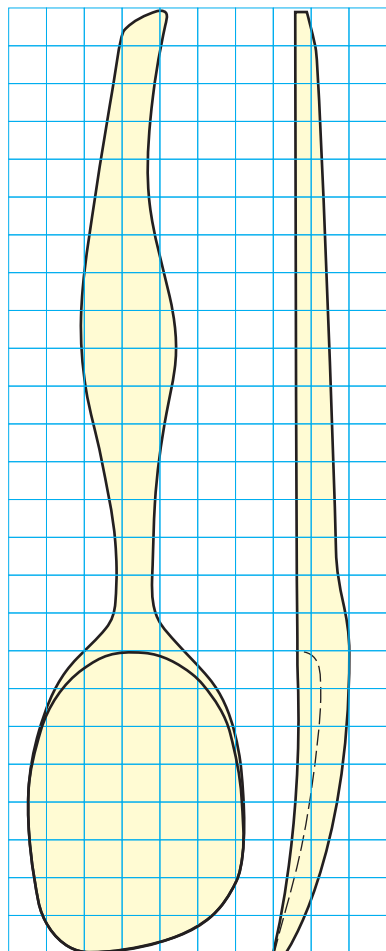
Materials:

- Sycamore log

Tools:

- Froe
- Club
- Carving axe
- Chopping block
- Saw
- Pencil

the design as I wanted to make a (almost totally carved version. The main inspiration for my design came from the well-known Aesop's fable, and two of the fence post topper decorations of a hare and a tortoise that I have made for my garden fence were the trigger for the final design.



1 square = 10mm (1/2 scale)



1

1 Begin by cleaving the log in equal halves through the pith – growth centre. Hopefully you'll be the first person to see some nice, clean, straight-grained timber to work with. If you don't have a froe, then metal or wooden wedges or a suitable axe can be used for this stage.

2 Continue cleaving each new section in half radially. I would always recommend using a wooden club or mallet to strike metal tools.

3 For this spoon I'll be using a billet representing 0.5mm of the log. You could carve or turn a bowl from the remaining half of the log and more spoons from the balance.



2

4 Choose a face to work from and mark a line parallel to this – approximately 25mm away – then square off the most pointed edge close to the growth centre.

5 Axe off the waste wood and bark. Start axe cuts near the chopping block and work halfway up the billet, then flip the billet end to end and repeat. This technique should keep your holding hand a safe distance from the blade and prevent the axe binding in the wood.

6 You should end up with a reasonably even plank of around 25 × 80 × 280mm. Don't worry too much if your dimensions vary, as long as you have at least 20mm thickness.



3



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7 Next, draw a line across the face side about 80mm from the end and down the edges about 7mm. From that point you will need to extend the lines as shown; this will give you the crank profile of the spoon. Saw in a stop cut from the face side down to your edge marks.

8 Axing with the grain, remove the wood down to the line, taking care to lever out waste near the stop cut. Avoid working too far up the billet; this will help you to keep your holding hand safe.

9 Trim off waste here across the grain – often referred to as hewing – following the stop cut with the toe of the axe. You can use the same technique to finish off the previous stage.

10 It is time to remove the waste from the back side of the blank – with the grain – away from the crank point, where the lines change direction.

11 This is how your newly cranked billet should look, with parallel faces and an even thickness around 15mm.

12 Draw the shape of your spoon on the face side, with the crank point around two-thirds to three-quarters from the front of the bowl, and saw in two more stop cuts at the narrowest point of the neck. Start to remove waste from around the handle working with the grain, again stopping just short of the stop cut and lever out waste.

13 You can now flip the billet over to remove waste from the end of the handle, working carefully down to the line.

14 Now, work towards the stop cuts from the sides of the bowl, taking care not to cut into the handle. It helps to have a step and/or notch in your block to support the blank properly.





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15 Again, from the sides work around the front of the bowl. Keep the axe falling vertically and tilt the handle away from the cut to follow the curve.

16 You can lay the back of the bowl on the block and rock the blade through the end grain like a guillotine; this will allow you to tidy up where previous cuts meet.



17



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17 Holding the tip of the bowl, start to bevel off the shoulders of the bowl and back of the handle, leaving full thickness around the neck of the handle.

18 Turn the blank around and follow the cut through to the front of the bowl.

19 Repeat on the opposite side of the bowl until the rim is about 5mm thick.

20 Your blank should now be looking something like this, which, with practice, represents around 10 minutes' work.

21 That said, don't worry if it takes longer. The important thing is to enjoy the experience.

22 Here you can see what your blank should become using the tools and techniques we'll be looking at next time.



19



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In part two, we will continue refining the shape of the spoon and hollow the bowl. In the meantime, pop your blank in a plastic bag, then into the freezer. This will preserve the moisture in the wood and prevent any mould forming on the surface. ▶



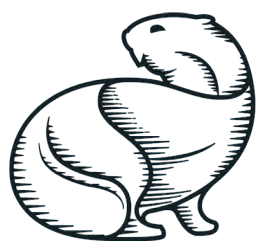
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From the community

A collection of letters and news from the woodcarving community



BEAVERCRAFT

Announcing the winner of the Beavercraft leather apron prize draw in WC179 – Peter Smith from Coatbridge

Want another chance to win?
Email your address to
WCEditorial@thegmcgroup.com –
closing date 17th May 2021.

Made from genuine leather with an additional surface wax coating for greater durability. Reinforced straps with full-metal copper hardware. Big kangaroo pocket, together with additional chest pocket to give plenty of storage. Apron body length 75cm, waistband 60cm wide with adjustable neck strap and an adjustable waist strap up to 120cm – great for woodworking. Helps to keep you clean and safe in any situation within your workshop. RRP £169, available from www.beavercrafttools.co.uk

Also enter on our Instagram page (@beavercraft_tools). The winner will be announced in the next issue.



Native American influences

You asked what we have been up to during the lockdown? Well, before an old friend (Jack Smith) passed away, he gave me a piece of lime (24 x 12 x 10in) when lockdown was imposed and, after falling over it a number of times, I thought I should do something with it. Another friend (yes, I did have two) used to carve many different styles of Indian's heads so that gave me the idea for this

project. I like to go on Pinterest to look at American Indian heads for information – I found a couple that I liked and came up with this design. After many hours of work I finished the carving. The other carving is my interpretation of a Martin Brothers bird based on different Martin Brothers birds.

Alex Garfield



Spoons for all

It seems I need inspiration and motivation to get carving these days. Without the weekly incentive of the carving club meetings, I was finding any excuse not to get back into it. So you can imagine my surprise at just what sparked my interest again. It wasn't my wife, Angela, asking where all her wooden spoons went, although that has a bearing on this narrative later. In fact, it was the gift of some chainsawed lime logs I was given last year, now dried enough to work with.

My aim was to just get them into workable squared-off sizes. I only have a small bandsaw (picked up at a car boot sale for 15 quid a couple of years ago) that was not big enough for the size of logs I had. So I proceeded to hand saw the logs into rough shapes, getting a fair sweat on in the process and giving myself a good workout at the same time.

Then I thought I would try out the collection of wood planes I bought off another woodworker, that Bill, a club member had put me on to last year. He really gave Bill and I as fellow carvers some fabulous bargains. He let me have the planes for £5 each on average. One in poor condition, is currently fetching over £100 on eBay, but I promised him I will cherish them and look after them. You know how men are with tools.

Anyway, out came the planes, now this is where the magic happened. Being a machine tool fitter in a previous life I was well used to working with tools, but not so much wood tools. Taking time to get some knowledge from YouTube on planing techniques, and learning how to sharpen them properly, another hidden dark art, and I set to. Soon I was getting the shavings along the whole length of the log, which was gradually turning into usable wood as if by magic. Checking with square and flat edge I was in a world of my own and the shavings were by now over a foot deep. The rhythm and the sheer pleasure of planing that wood combined with the workout was the catalyst to get out the chisels. This is where Angela and then my grandson come into the story.

Having not seen me for hours she popped into the garage with a cup of tea and spied one of her old spoons covered in paint! You can imagine words were said and new spoons were mentioned.

Right says I, a spoon but not just any spoon, a spiral tapering spoon at that. But just to be difficult, not from the wood I had so much enjoyed preparing earlier, no I would use some hardwood from the door frames we had just had replaced with plastic – sacrilege I know, but I'm getting too old to keep up with the painting and Angela wanted the wood not to be just sacrificed in the wood burner.

The first spoon took a day, then once the process was mastered, I could make one in half a day, even without a spoon knife. Then I thought, let's

get my grandson involved if I could. No problem, nine years old and all for it, so last Thursday he produced a usable spoon, spokeshave tick, saw tick, gouge and mallet tick, you get the picture, I think we may have a new recruit. A happy story all around for Rory the grandson, happy with his spoon, Angela happy with her spoons, daughter in laws with theirs. Angela now says, think of something else to do already.

Mike Price of Shropshire Woodcarvers



BDWCA NEWS & EVENTS



© RAY LOUGHLIN FOR THE BDWCA

Song Thrush and Four Wild Cherries by David Clews, 1st Advanced Songbirds

The current plan is still for our annual show and competition – the Festival of Bird Art – to be held on the weekend of 11 and 12 September 2021 at its normal venue, the Agricultural Centre in Bakewell, Derbyshire.

Reminiscing about past years, and the carvings that were entered in the competition, we've gone back 10 years, to the 2011 show, to find some photographs of carvings you may not have seen before. Hopefully all these carvers will be entering in this year's competition!

As I write this, in the third week of February, we have just had the news of the proposed roadmap out of the restrictions required to fight the coronavirus, so fingers crossed that it will be possible. Failing that we will definitely hold another Virtual Competition. We will keep updating our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/bdwcapage) and our website (www.bdwca.org.uk) with the latest situation.

In the past year shows have been cancelled around the world, and at a recent well attended webinar – the Future of Carving Competitions – 11 shows from the US, Canada and the UK (yes, the BDWCA), spoke about what they had managed to do last year and their plans for this year. While shows in the early part of the year have already been cancelled, those that are scheduled for later in the year are still hopeful they may be able to go ahead.

One new show will go ahead this year, the virtual Wildfowl Carving Championships. The results will be in by the time you read this so more news in the next issue.

Contacts

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*. Or contact the membership secretary: Mrs Janet Nash, 26 Shendish Edge, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9SZ, Tel: 01442 247610. Alternatively, please email: pam.wilson@bdwca.org.uk.

Diary items – we hope

Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd August 2021

The BDWCA will be demonstrating and exhibiting in the Art Marquee at the British Bird Watching Fair – The Birdfair – at Egleton Nature Reserve, Rutland Water.

See www.birdfair.org.uk for more details.



Heron, one third size, by Ron Dickens, 1st Advanced Sea Birds and Shorebirds



Grey Partridge by Terry Getley, 1st Advanced Game Birds



Woodcock "walking in leaves" by Richard Rossiter, Best Intermediate and Best Newcomer



Lapwings at Rest – carved in Douglas Fir – by Christine Rose, 1st Advanced Interpretive Wood Sculptures – Painted

Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th September 2021

The National Bird Carving Championships, The Festival of Bird Art, in Bakewell, Derbyshire.

Featuring the BDWCA Annual Competitions for members and the British Bird Carving Championship, which is open to all.

A wide variety of bird and wildfowl carvings at youth, novice, intermediate and advanced levels.

Demonstrations of wildfowl carving, painting, stick making, and decorative techniques will take place during the weekend.

Stockists of carving supplies, books, equipment, paints and wood for carving will also be present.

See www.bdwca.org.uk for more details.



Steve Bisco wows with a Grinling Gibbons tercentenary festoon



Carve Cedric Boyns's walrus, inspired by a visit to Petropavlovsk, Russia



John Samworth
& Zoë Gertner
demonstrate their
relief carvings

Dave Western
carves a pair of
combs with a
Georgian influence

Learning from lockdown

Peter Benson goes back to basics, carving in the home



The lockdowns have been very difficult for so many people for all sorts of reasons. Family groups, friends and loved ones have been separated for long periods as well as many single and elderly people with no one to speak to or help with the shopping etc.

Classes, clubs and social groups have been forced to close, removing what little social contact many might otherwise receive.

The upside is that many gardens look better than they have for years due to the amount of attention they have had, with lawns neatly and regularly maintained and trees and shrubs trimmed to within an inch of their lives. All those jobs that have been on the back burner since goodness knows when have been completed and probably an awful lot of daytime television has been watched by folks who would be reluctant to admit it.

As woodcarvers we haven't escaped the

problem even if we don't fall into any of the aforementioned categories. Even though what we do tends to be a little isolationist, we can still benefit from input and support from others. Unfortunately, there is also a downside to this in that we can tend to rely too much on our tutors, or more experienced carving friends, to help dig us out of the holes we get ourselves into rather than attempting to do it ourselves.

All of this really boils down to how much confidence we have to solve any problems we may face ourselves. It doesn't really have very much to do with ability, it is more about experience in problem-solving and not being afraid of making mistakes. Everyone who attempts to be in any way creative and innovative will always make mistakes at some time, otherwise nothing new will ever be achieved and, in woodcarving, the solution to every problem you may face is to take off more

wood. All you need to do is to identify what needs to be removed and from where.

With the lockdowns, unless you intended to spend hours on the phone, we have all been forced to deal with these problems ourselves. My advice is to forget about producing masterpieces that take forever to carve and think about smaller pieces that can be held in your hand and that can be completed in a relatively short time. This will mean that if mistakes are made you don't have a huge time investment and the fear of 'messing it up'.

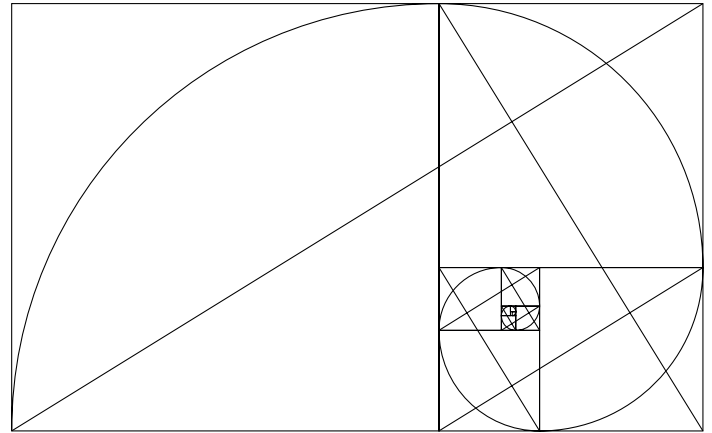
If you feel that you need ideas or guidance, you can find a selection of how-to books from bookshops, libraries or online that can provide a wealth of projects you might like to try. The important thing to remember is that no instructions can show everything you need to know. You still have to do your own bits of research if the results are to be realistic and satisfactory.

Inspiration from nature

If your particular fancy is abstract carving you still need to study the work of others to appreciate what shapes work and what don't, and what techniques you need to master. There are shapes and curves that are pleasing and those that are not – a look at Fibonacci sequences



and curves can be fascinating as well as very informative. These give an insight into how nature treats curves and shapes, from a curve produced by a drop of rain on the end of a blade of grass to the shapes of sea and snail shells.



Carving in the home

Since I was a child, most of my carving has been done indoors as, like many carvers, I didn't have a shed or workshop. Obviously, this meant that nearly everything was small enough to be held in the hand. It wasn't until many years later that I was able to attempt anything larger when I had the space and equipment.

I can already hear the cogs turning in the heads of carvers' partners as they fear that they are hearing me suggest that carvers start carving in the living room. I certainly don't want to antagonise any more people than I do already, but I am sure most households have some small corner indoors where an enthusiastic carver can work.

A sheet on the floor can protect the carpet from the chips but,

even without one, a few minutes with a stiff brush will soon re-establish the status quo. We have the cleanest carpet in the neighbourhood as it gets brushed regularly to remove wood chips that are not dirty anyway.

With a simple lap or tabletop carving board you can successfully carve almost any simple piece safely with no mess. Using a few simple safety rules, you won't even run the risk of cutting yourself.

With this type of carving, you will only need a few small gouges and a knife, a leather strop to hone the knife and a small piece of MDF (medium density fibre board from the DIY store), suitably shaped to hone your gouges.



Option 1 – a quick carving table

1 Here are the components needed to make the first of two options of carving board that you might like to consider. This one is for use on a tabletop with protection in the form of foam strips or leather to prevent damage.

The parts can be made cheaply out of any offcuts and the bracket shapes from thick plywood or MDF. Make the gap between the top and bottom of each bracket wide enough to slide on to the table you wish to carve on but not take gouges out of, remembering to allow for the thickness, top and bottom, of the foam or leather.

2 Screw or glue the brackets on to the underside of the board you are using for your table.

3 Glue the protective foam rubber or leather strips on to the inner surface of the curved bracket.

4 Glue or screw the edges of your tray in a frame to your board and your angled block offcut in the middle of the side away from you. You can add a leather patch to the top of the block.

Option 2 – a lap board

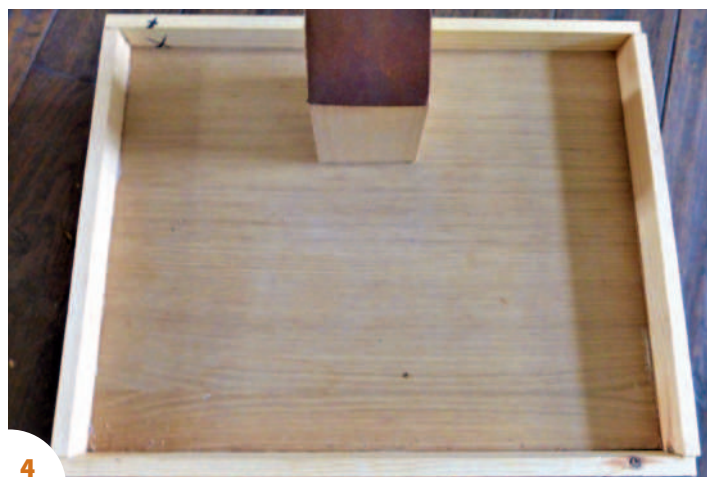
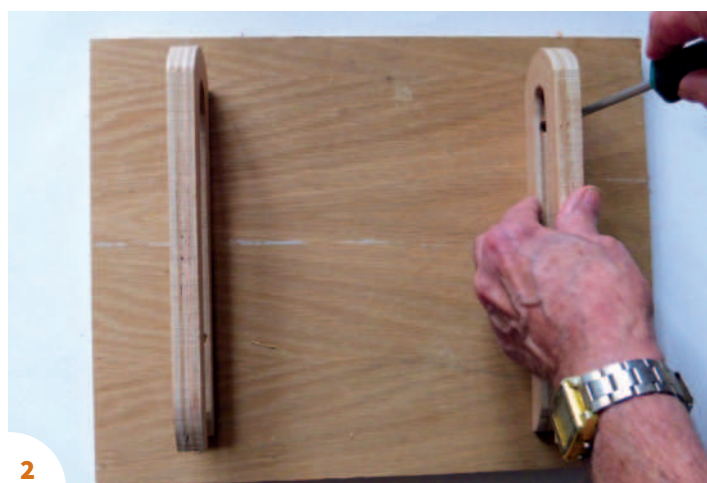
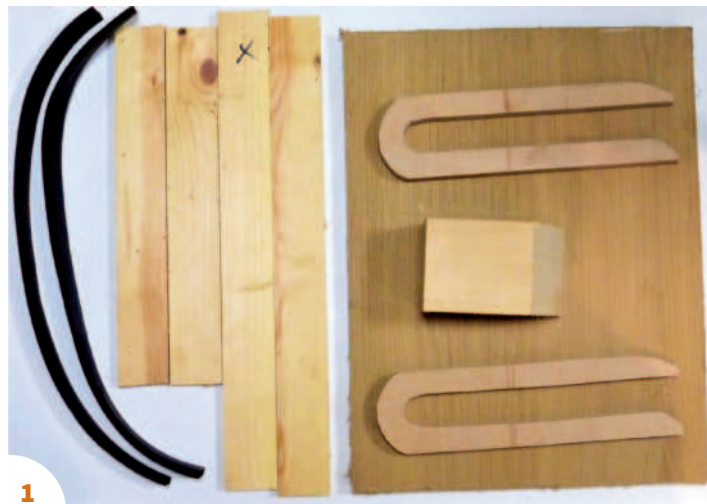
The other options is for use on your lap should you wish to carve sitting in your armchair. If you intend to carve with the board in your lap you would be wise to have a leather apron, or something similar, underneath to protect your legs or nether regions.

You can make the carving table without the underside brackets and table protection, or with brackets wide enough to fit the outside of your lap.

In use

Obviously, there are many variations you can use but these are the ones I have found successful over the years. The post in the middle, with a leather patch on the top, gives you something to rest your carving against as you put pressure on the gouge. This is a safer way of cutting than towards the piece held in the hand. I have found this particularly useful when carving netsuke. As you use these you will find that you want to vary the design to suit your needs. The board can be larger or smaller, the width and thickness of the under brackets will need to suit the individual table or to fit the outside of your lap if you wish to keep them in place in addition to a cushion. You might even choose to add a couple of arm or wrist rests on the top for comfort. As there is little or no expense involved you can quickly and cheaply arrive at something that is ideal for you.

You may or may not decide that this way of carving suits you, but I can assure you that carving small can be very rewarding and can extend where and when you can follow your hobby. You can produce simple pieces with little time commitment, or enter the world of netsuke where extremely intricate pieces can be carved in a variety of materials. For those of you with partners, the main requirement is understanding and tolerance of the chips on the floor issue. Persuasion, bribery, the odd gift or offers to decorate the living room may be routes open to you, but I am afraid I cannot help you with that.



Inspiration to begin netsuke

Here are some carving ideas that may help you to start with, but I stress that you don't have to be too ambitious for a carving to have value. Simple shapes well carved can be very attractive and popular.

While these carvings may not win any medals at shows or exhibitions, they will give you an opportunity to practise all your skills and keep you carving as an alternative to watching, or maybe while watching, daytime TV, if that is your thing. I have included a selection of ideas

that you may like to try or develop. Some are very basic, and others are quite complicated.

I've carved simple houses from scrap wood, painted or left plain – design entirely up to you – simple animals or birds needing knowledge of shape and movement and a few netsuke that will challenge most carvers. The largest of those shown is the rabbit at 50mm long.



For those of you who know nothing about netsuke, have a look on the internet at some of the designs that have been produced.

They are very small, incredibly intricate and detailed, and can drive you

mad, but can be extremely satisfying when completed successfully.

In the next issue of *Woodcarving*, I'll be looking at the history of netsuke and carving a netsuke dove. ▶

Triskele mirror

Glenda Bennett looks into the creation of a spiral hand mirror

This hand mirror introduces a new element of Celtic art, that of the spiral.

The spiral, or triskele, is made up of three legs or curves that radiate from a common centre, and is thought to represent the sun and the movement of heavenly bodies. Others interpret the three coils as representing the three elements of heaven, earth and water, and a safeguard against evil.

The spiral motif appears in very early pagan Celtic art; one of the oldest examples is on the entrance stone at Newgrange in County Meath, Ireland, which dates back to 3000BC. Newgrange – a passage-tomb and the alleged burial place of the ancient Kings of Tara – is one of the most famous prehistoric monuments.

Spirals with two coils appear on early Celtic jewellery, such as bronze-age metal cloak fasteners and third-century Irish horse ornaments. These motifs are also found on stone crosses carved by stonemasons working in the sixth century.



Spirals appear in pictorial form in *The Book of Kells*, where the Celtic artist took the simple spiral and introduced fantastic variations by adding animal and bird features.

The mirror featured in this project follows the tradition of the enamelled and engraved bronze mirrors produced by craftsmen of the pre-Roman Celtic period of British culture.



The Celts were particularly conscious of their appearance, especially their clothes and hair, so mirrors and combs were very important objects. Many Pictish stone carvings bear a mirror and comb motif. In the drawing (above) of another of the Aberlemno stones, the mirror and comb can be seen in the lower right-hand corner.

The actual design on the back of the mirror has been adapted from the central motif on the eighth-century High Cross of Aberlemno, Scotland, shown below.

Two legs from the lower spirals break away to create the knotwork on the handle, forming an eternal knot.

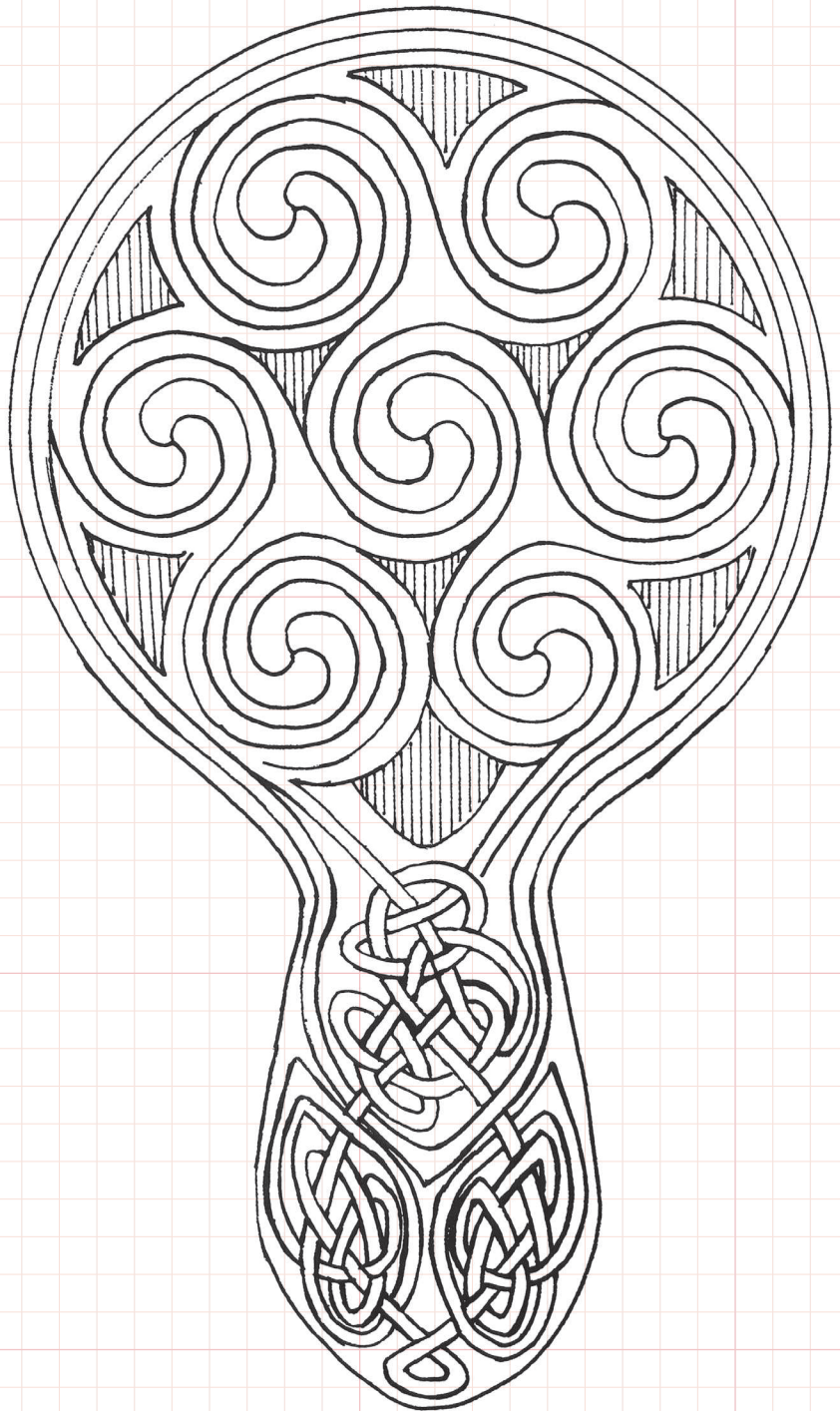
For this project, I used European oak for strength, as the handle has to be strong enough to support the weight of the mirror. Oak is not the easiest of woods to carve, as the grain is quite coarse, but the finished result makes it worth the effort.

Things you will need**Materials:**

- Photocopy of template, enlarged by 125%
- Carbon paper
- Repositionable spray adhesive
- Timber, at least 160 x 260 x 12mm (6¼ x 10¼ x ½in) (European oak)
- Round mirror, 125mm (5in) in diameter
- Glue suitable for sticking glass to timber.

Tools:

- Scrollsaw or hand fretsaw
- Router with straight cutter (optional) and non-slip mat
- Dremel with cutter bit No.9936 (optional)
- Carving chisels and gouges
- Chip carving knife (optional)
- Clear wax polish, or finish of your choice

**1****2**

1 Either trace the design for the back of the mirror frame (above) through carbon paper on to the timber, and cut around the outside of it, or stick the template on to the timber for cutting out using spray adhesive, as shown here. I prefer the latter method, as I find it easier to follow a black line on white background, but it means that the design must then be traced on to the timber after cutting out.

2 Turn the mirror frame over and position the mirror centrally on the large circle, holding it firmly in place with one hand. Draw round the mirror to mark where the rebate needs to be cut.



3 The rebate is cut to the depth of the mirror, plus an extra millimetre to allow for gluing and final sanding. A router is the obvious choice for this operation, but if you do not have access to a router or a Dremel with routing facility, the rebate can be made using chisels and gouges, making sure that the base of the rebate is smooth and even.

Most standard routers will have to be used freehand to cut the circle, as the diameter is too small to be cut using the central pivot method. This is not a problem if both hands are used to guide the base of the router instead of using the handles. As with any routing operation, ensure that the base is kept level at all times, so that the cutting bit cuts at an even depth throughout. Use a non-slip router mat under the work to hold it in place during the routing operation.

Round off the outside edges, also using the router fitted with a round-over bit. Again, if no router is available, you can use a gouge, chisel, or a rotary carving tool.

4 Working still on the mirror side, shape the handle by rounding it and slimming down the 'waist' where it meets the larger circle. This can be quickly achieved using a structured tooth tungsten carbide bit in a rotary tool, but only if you are well practised in its use, and are sure of your ability to control the cutter. Otherwise, use a gouge or chip carving knife.

5 Next begin the carving on the reverse. Before starting to carve the spirals, the central line must be scored. There are several ways of doing this – the choice is yours: you can cut the shape using a gouge of the same sweep of curve, held at right angles; mark the line with a V-tool, or score it with a chip knife or craft knife.

6 Deepen a V-shaped groove between the coils by removing material evenly on either side of the scored line and curve over the top of each coil as it is formed. Work at right angles to the central line, unless using a V-tool.

7 When all the spirals are complete, remove the areas between them (shown shaded on the template) to an even depth. Try to make this depth the same as the depth between the coils of the spirals.

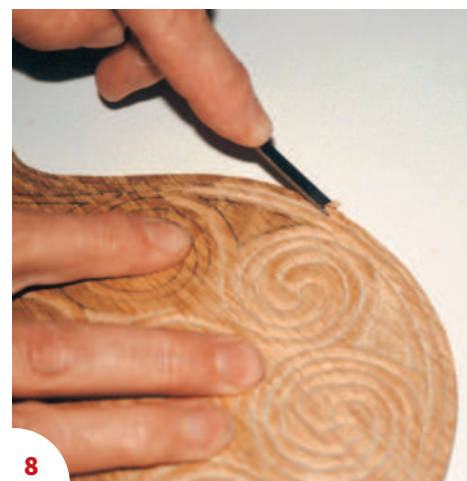
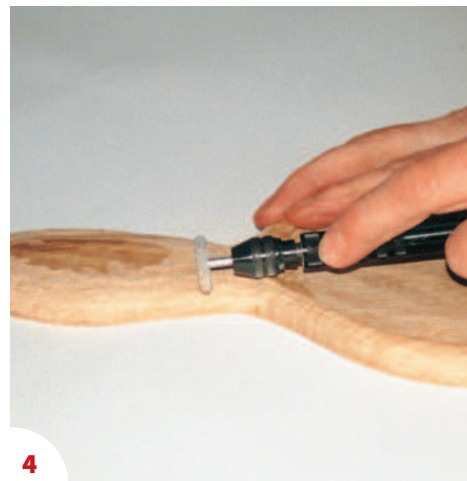
8 Reduce the outer ring to the same depth and round over the large coil that is left enclosing the spirals.

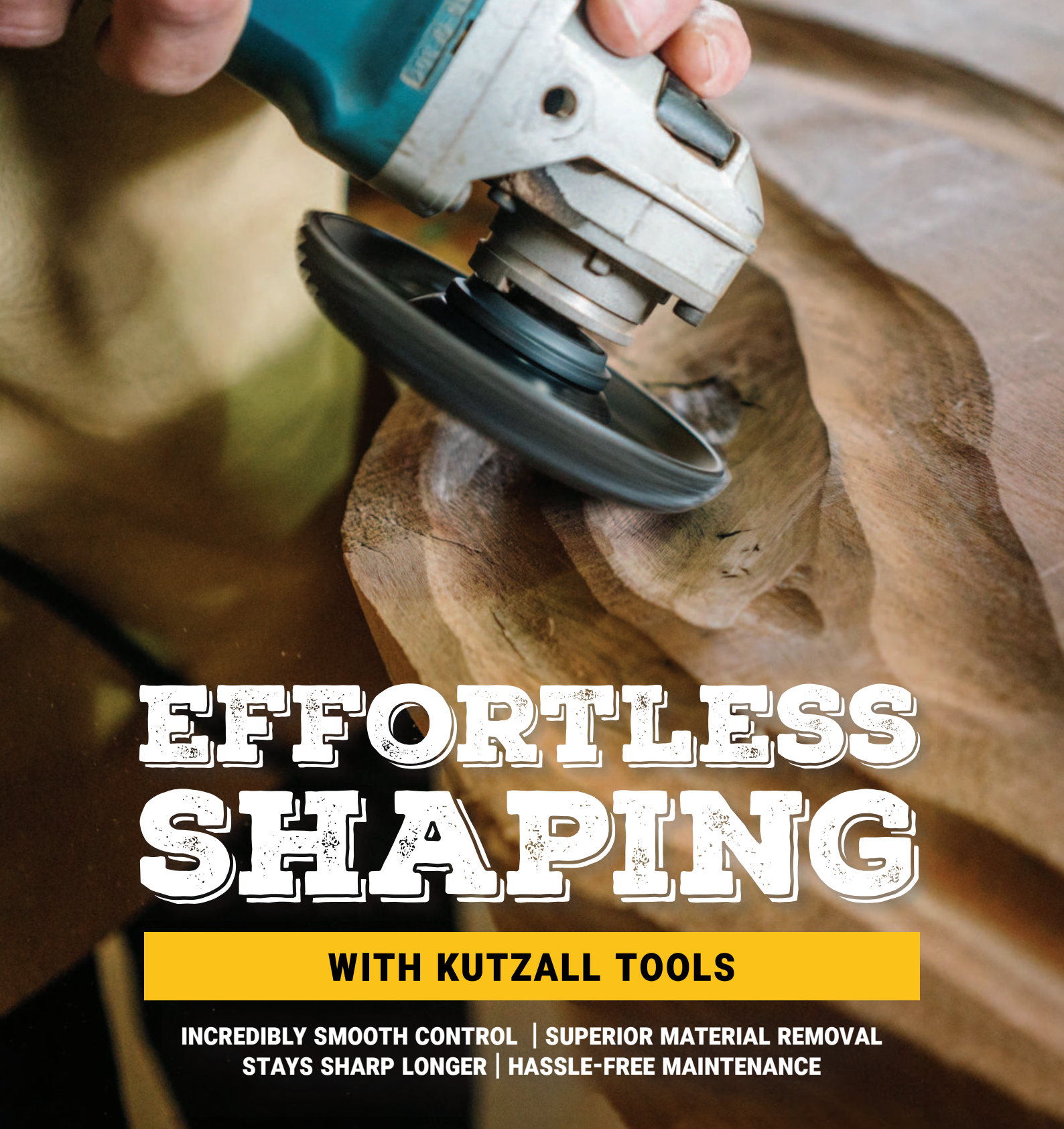
Work the knotwork design on the handle by scoring the lines then reducing the background.

9 Using a fine 5mm ($\frac{3}{16}$ in) straight chisel, reduce the raised bands on either side of each crossing point to give the effect of them weaving under and over each other.

When all the carving is complete, sand as appropriate and apply the finish of your choice. I used a clear wax polish, as the colour and grain of the wood needed no further enhancement. Do not apply any finish to the area where the mirror is to be glued, however, as it may prevent a good bond.

Glue the mirror firmly in place on the reverse side. ▶





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Sharpening clinic – U-tool nightmare

Nic Westermann tackles another of
your tool sharpening problems



For this article I have a pair of gouges – a No.7 and a No.11. John, who provided these, had not been able to sharpen them satisfactorily and then sent them off to be done professionally. Unfortunately, they were still not right so finally they turned up at my workshop.

Starting point

1 At first glance they looked good – the grinds were even, if a little coarse, but this initial grind had been smoothed out at the edge, which is really all that matters. However, when I tried to take some test cuts, it was obvious all was not well.

Initial ‘cuts’

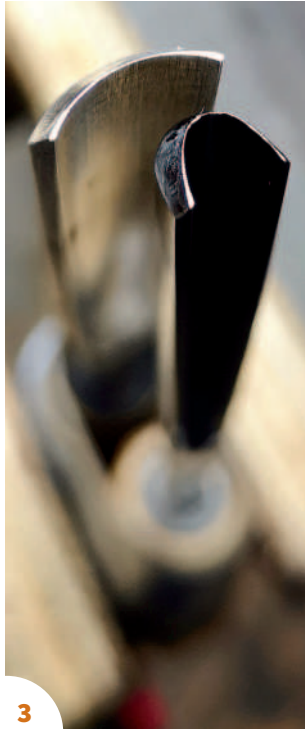
2 Looking straight on at the edge it was apparent what the problem was. It looked like the gouges had been jointed, something I approve of as it allows good control over the shape of the cutting edge. But in this case the grinds had not progressed far enough back to produce a new edge. I have in the past done this inadvertently, so I’m not going to condemn too harshly – but as both gouges sharpened by this company showed this error it suggests they were not checked before being sent out.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY NIC WESTERMANN

Obviously all is not well – no edges!

3 The grind on the No.7 gouge looks good, on the No.11 I wasn't certain originally as the bevel tapering to the top of the wings looked odd. However, a quick check with callipers suggested that the wings thinned towards the top of the U, so simple geometry means the bevels should be shortening as they rise.



3

Dial a friend

I should say that at this point that the night before I had a long and interesting conversation with Peter Benson about the finer points of sharpening and maintaining gouges. I was aware of a few different ways to produce a sharp edge, but I wanted to produce one that was appropriate for the use the gouge would see.



4

In many ways these were similar to last month's V-tool – the No.11 basically being a U-tool, and the No.7 gouge simpler still. So, if you have something a bit more challenging, please get in touch.

First, I polished up the inside faces, making up some simple formers and using self-adhesive sandpaper to ensure an accurate finish. This can take quite a time, but it is not something you will have to repeat very often, and I think it's worth doing, as the scratches from grinding inside of the gouge can be quite deep.

Smoothing the inside with wet and dry paper

4 I then very lightly jointed the edges to make sure I had them true and square. Next, I ground the bevels to 25° on the ProEdge, right to the edge this time.

I had considered doing these on a wheel and sharpening across the hollow – this would make touching up easier – however, after discussing this with Peter I felt that this would produce a bevel that was too flat and would not come out of a cut easily.

I worked down to a belt of approximately 1,000 grit on the No.11 so I could jump straight to polishing on a wheel. On the No.7 I stopped at 400 grit and finished off the bevel by hand, just to show a couple of different methods.

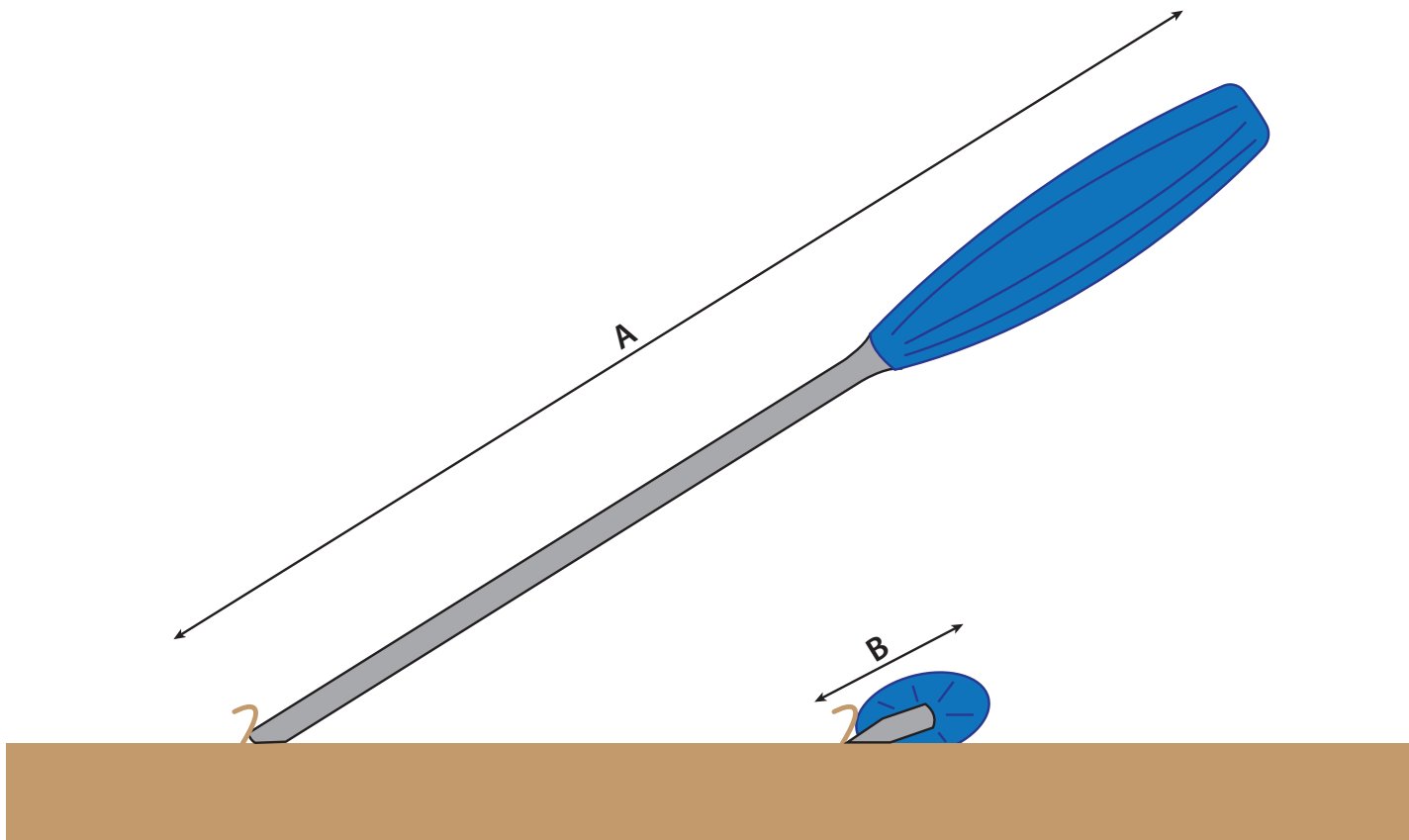
No.11 gouge straight off the ProEdge

5 The PE will produce a very flat bevel, and final hand sharpening will, despite my best efforts to keep everything flat, put in a tiny amount of convex to the bevel form. This is what is needed, however, the amount of convex needed is very subtle, so unless you have exceptional control of your freehand sharpening, trying to keep everything flat is enough. If you consciously aim to convex you will likely put too much on.

I also had a very interesting conversation with Peter about stropping. He is convinced that stropping is enough to maintain an edge on a gouge almost indefinitely, whereas in the green woodworking circles I frequent, excessive stropping and the resultant micro bevels are seen as a major drawback. I believe both points of view to be correct. For knives, a micro bevel will give a significant loss of control as there is very little leverage to control the cut, your hand is very close to the edge in terms of the radius it will rotate around, so the bevel provides this support or guidance. For a gouge with a long handle the direction of the cut can be controlled easily without bevel support, so stropping is not going to have the same drawbacks. To put it another way, if you are trying to open a stubborn paint lid with a screwdriver you will use the leverage available to you rather than try to twist the lid off by rotating the screwdriver.



5



The extra control a gouge gives means that bevel support is not as important as in a knife

The diagram shows the difference in leverage between a Gouge A and a Knife B, drawn end on.

At this point I finished the No.7 by hand and the No.11 under power, using a flat buffing wheel to polish up the outside bevel and a V-shaped wheel to remove the burr from the inside. This had already been cleaned up accurately beforehand, so little was needed here.

6 Polishing the outside bevel.

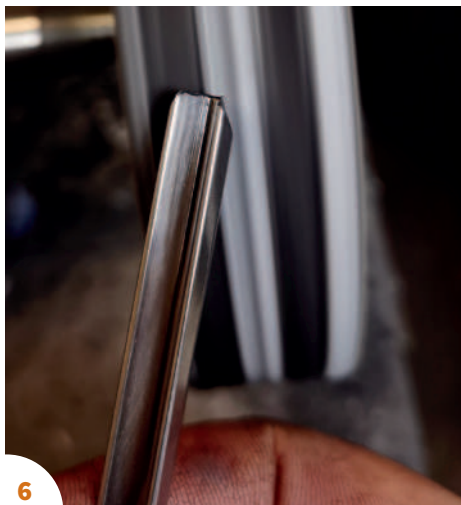
7 Polishing the inside on a V felt.

8 Both insides finished.

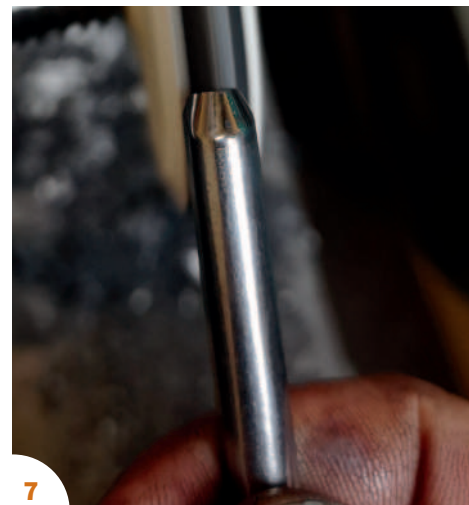
The No.7 I finished on progressively finer papers. I had spoken to Peter about the merits of different sharpening actions – some people recommend side to side, working along the edge, some backwards and forwards into and away from the edge and some in a figure of eight. This was felt to make for the most even wear patterns in softer stones. I tried this with PSA sandpaper, but my control wasn't good enough and I kept cutting the paper on the push stroke of the eight, so settled on a side to side action, drawing progressively towards me to evenly use the paper.

A side to side motion worked best on sandpaper

9 I then stropped the outside bevel by hand in the same manner, and finally stropped the inside with a wooden rod loaded with polishing compound.



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**10**

Stropping the inside by hand

10 I then tried some test cuts. I was hoping that my carefully hand honed edges on the No.7 would be better than the machine-produced No.11. But it wasn't to be. Both cut much better, but the slightly spalted end-grain birch is incredibly unforgiving – any discrepancy of the edge shows up in the wood much magnified.

The No.11 cut well and only showed minor tear-out on deep cuts, which was to be expected. The No.7 was leaving track marks – white parallel lines in the cut corresponding to blunt areas along the edge. I obviously hadn't taken the original grind marks out with my diligent hand sharpening. Maybe my effort to keep everything flat meant I had consciously stayed too far away from the edge? Did I start over with the coarsest grit and work down methodically to 10000 grit? No, I hit both sides on the buffer, taking less than a minute, and the edge then cut cleanly. Hand sharpening can be a dreamy, Zen-like meditation, but at 10.30 on a Friday night power tools are king.

11 The improvement in the cuts is plain to see

**11****12**

The outside of the finished gouges

12 I then made some cuts in a more forgiving piece of alder and produced some gorgeous shavings, which you can see at the start of the article. So, what did I learn? First, that a deep gouge such as a No.11 is very similar but easier to sharpen than a V-tool; that, although you can accomplish a lot by hand, sharpening with power is much easier; and although it is possible to overdo it and round a bevel, gouges are much less sensitive to this, and I can see now why buffing is so popular with gouge and chisel carvers. ▶

THE SHARPENING CLINIC IS OPEN

I am really excited to be doing this new series. As the name suggests, I will be helping carvers with sharpening problems – this will allow me to focus my articles on tools that are relevant to you, the readers.

I am looking for readers to send a brief email with a description of the tool, the sharpening equipment they are using and the problems they are having. Please do not send images at this stage as it clogs up my email system far too quickly.

I will try to answer all emails, but will only be selecting one tool per article. You would then send the tool to me

at your expense, I will sharpen it and make it the subject of the article and send it back to you at my expense. Turnaround will be up to a month as I will need to get the tool well before the deadline to be certain I can fulfil my obligation to WC of turning in a quality article each issue. If not selected, please do not send me your tools. I don't have time to sharpen them in my day-to-day business, and I don't have the budget to return them to you if you do. Also, due to the timescales involved with overseas post currently, this is only open to carvers in the UK.

If you are interested, and I hope you are, then please email me at nic.westermann@btconnect.com



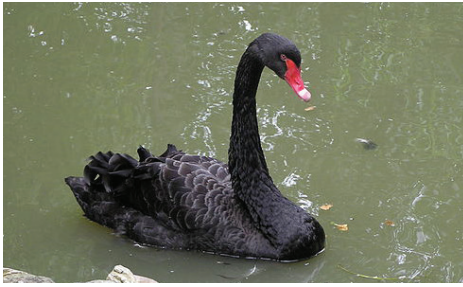
**HEWN
HONE**

Black swan walking stick

Paul Purnell creates that rare and unexpected beauty that is the black swan...



Black swans



Black swans (*Cygnus atratus*) range freely in the estuaries and waterways of Western and Eastern Australia and Tasmania. In 1973, Western Australia officially proclaimed the black swan as its emblem and it appears on the state flag.

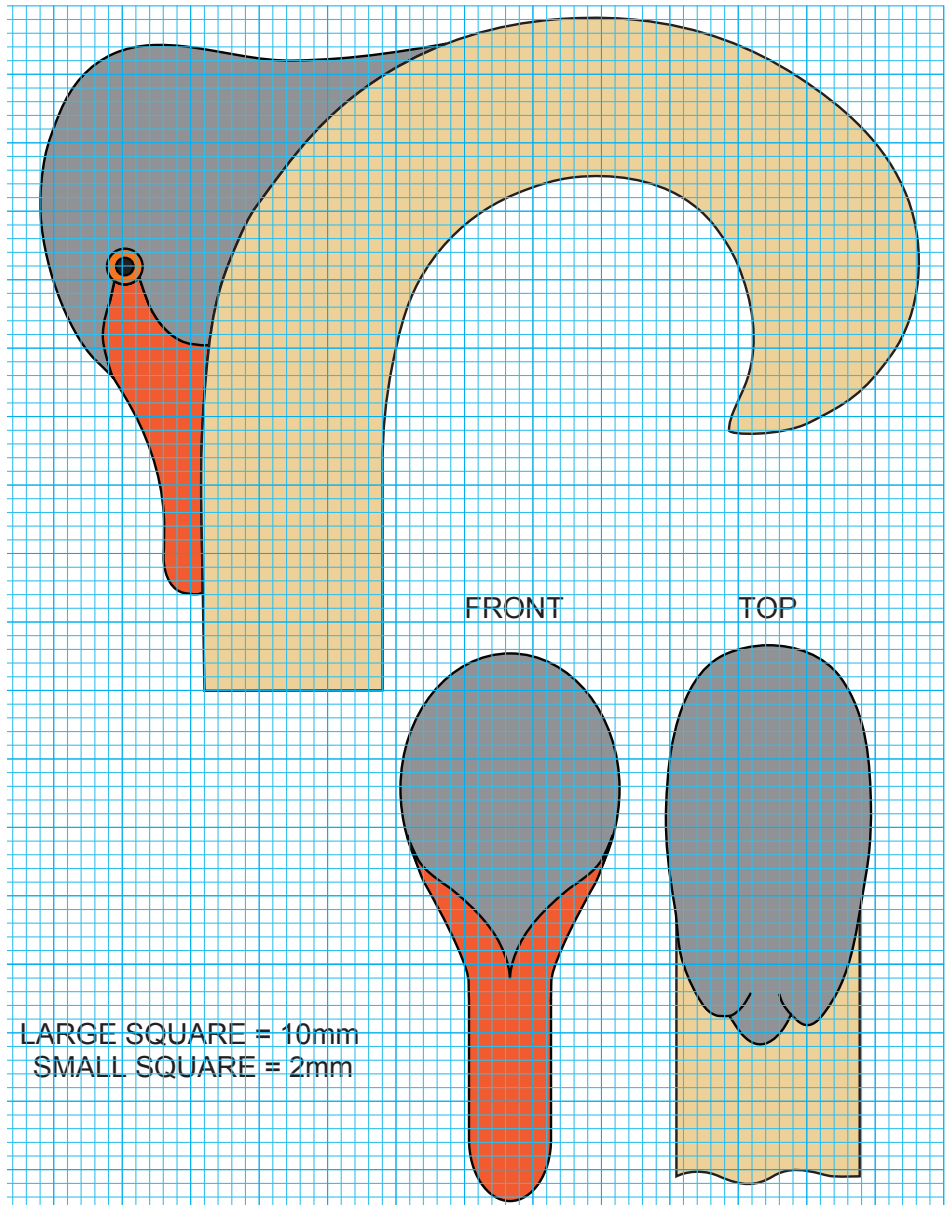
Things you will need

Materials:

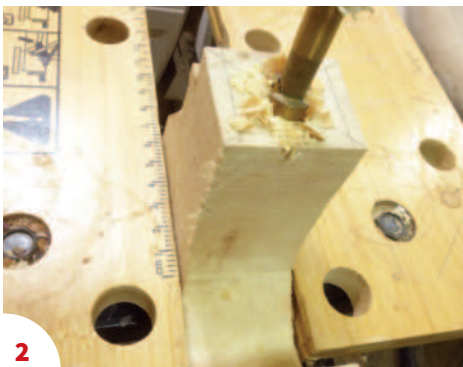
- Epoxy glue
- Epoxy putty
- Brass collar
- Brass ferrule
- Hazel shank
- Assorted sandpaper: 120 to 400 grit
- Wood: Lime 140 x 100 x 40mm
- Eyes: 6mm red
- Acrylic paints

Tools:

- Bandsaw
- Rotary carving tool
- Coarse and medium burrs
- Diamond burrs
- Flamed ruby burr
- Forstner bit or wood drill: 13mm
- Carving knife



1



2



3

1 Use the drawings to make the three templates. Bandsaw the blank using the side-view template. You will need the other two templates for reference later.

2 Measure the diameter of the shank you intend to use and add 2mm. Find the centre point on the bottom face of the neck of the head. Draw a square around this centre point using this measurement. My stick was 26mm and the square drawn is 28mm. Adjust your measurements accordingly. The extra 2mm is to give some leeway for error. Drill a hole 45mm deep with a 13mm Forstner or wood drill at the centre point.

3 The handle width needs reducing from 40-30mm. Draw reference lines 5mm in from each side on the top face of the handle as guidance. Use a safe-end coarse burr to remove the wood down to this line and up to the position of the head. Draw on the side view of the head. The finished head is approximately 33mm wide, but keep it at 40mm for the time being. Remove the wood below the bottom edge of the head to blend in with the handle as shown in the photo.

4 Give the handle a rough sand to check symmetry and progress.

5 Draw the shape of the head from the top view using the template. Using the safe-end coarse burr, carve this shape.

6 Using a coarse bull-nosed burr, start to round over the swan's head.

7 Prepare the shank to receive the head by carving a 45mm dowel. (See *Woodworking Crafts* issue 21 for the full process.) This stick will have a brass collar fitted so the two surfaces will abut one another. However, if you intend to use a spacer instead, the dowel will need to be longer to accommodate the extra length.

8 Use a carving knife to refine the swan's head to the finished dimensions. You could continue with power for this step if you prefer.

9 Place the brass collar centrally over the hole in the bottom of the neck. Draw the inner diameter of the collar on to the head. Draw a line around the neck of the head 5mm from the bottom. Use a knife to place a stop cut around this line. Pare away wood down to the inner diameter until you achieve a tight fit of the collar.

10 Pencil sighting lines 10mm either side of the centreline on the handle. With a bull-nosed burr round over the handle.

11 Shape the tip of the handle with the coarse burr. Start the reduction at 30mm from the tip. Take each side down to meet the tip at 5mm from the centreline. Give the entire piece a general sand with a cushioned-drum sander fitted with 120 grit paper.



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**12**

12 The collar I have used is 25mm in length. In step 9, it was fitted 5mm from the bottom of the head. Therefore, it will cover 20mm of the shank. Mark this measurement on the shank. Secure an edge of magazine paper around this point. Use a carving knife to place a stop cut around the shank. Carefully cut a groove at this point, working from the top side. Now systematically remove wood from around the shank until the collar fits snugly. Test fit the collar with the head and shank joined.

**13**

13 Use pins to locate the position of the eyes. Drill a hole approximately 10mm deep using a 3mm drill bit. With 120 grit paper on the split-mandrel sander, shape the eye depression.

14 With a carving knife, start defining the bill. In this project only the upper mandible is visible. Reduce it to its final width and slope. Then add the shield-shaped nail at the tip. Drawing sighting lines 5mm apart on the head will help you to achieve symmetry.

15 Use a diamond bud-shaped burr to define the cheeks. Round over and blend into the head with the split-mandrel sander and 120 grit paper.

16 Enlarge the eye socket to accommodate a 6mm red eye using a bullet or flamed burr. Then use a 3mm ball to enlarge the back of the socket to allow sufficient epoxy putty to fix the eyes. Lightly round over the edge of the socket with the mandrel sander.

17 Use a carving knife to separate the beak from the forehead. Use a stop cut, then remove a sliver of wood.

**14****15****16****17**



18



19

18 Do the same as above to define the bottom edge of the upper mandible as shown. Round over the hard edges with 240 grit on the split-mandrel sander.

19 Use a small gouge to add a little depression behind where the upper and lower bill meet to create the 'smile'.

20 With a cushioned-drum sander, flatten the area of the beak where the nostrils are located, then use a 2mm diamond ball to define the nostrils. Add a lip to the nostril with a flamed ruby burr and then sand.

21 The head and beak details are now finished. Give everything a final sand by hand with 240, 320 and 400 grits before texturing. Draw on the feather flow.

22 The cheek areas and the crown of the head are rows of tiny feathers. Outline these using a flamed ruby. Use the mandrel sander and 240 grit paper to soften the edges and remove all burr marks.

23 The small feathers outlined above blend into rows of V-shaped clumps of feathers. The crown merges with the occiput and nape and the cheeks merge with the sides of the neck. To carve these feathers use a combination of the flamed ruby and a bull-nosed ceramic stone. Sand with the mandrel sander.

24 Before texturing ensure you have removed all burr marks. Start texturing the feathers from the bottom of the nape and work upwards. Use a 2mm, blue ceramic cylinder to texture the feathers. Ensure that your strokes have a degree of randomness and are neither straight nor regimented.

25 Use the same blue cylinder to texture the remaining small feathers of the cheeks, crown and forehead. Use a pad in the rotary tool to remove any fuzzy areas left by the texturing. This image shows the texturing completed.



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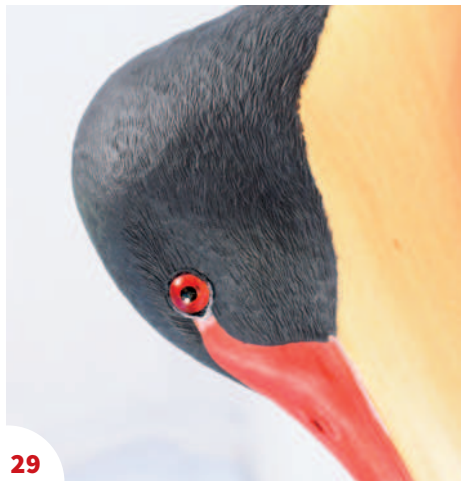
26 Apply three coats of finishing oil and allow to dry for seven days.

27 Fix the eyes with epoxy putty and make the eye rings.

28 After seven days, you can start to paint. Start with the beak using a mixture of cadmium red (medium) and a hint of golden ochre. Add white for a pink and blend to the tip. Add a touch of this pink below the upper bill. Use white for the stripe across the beak and the nail.



28



29

29 Paint the rest of the head with a mixture of ultramarine blue and burnt sienna to create a rich grey-black. With the addition of black and then white, create darker and lighter values with which to add some random highlights. Paint inside the nostrils with the darker value. Paint the front half of the eye ring with white. Use a weak wash of the dark colour to go over the bill and eye ring to tone down the colour.

30 After seven days, apply another two coats of finishing oil to the head. Apply three coats of oil to the shank. Fix the ferrule with epoxy glue. Glue the head and collar to the shank with epoxy glue.

31 The finished stick should look something like this. ▶



30



31

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Book reviews

We review two new additions for your workshop library



Buchanan-Smith's Axe Handbook

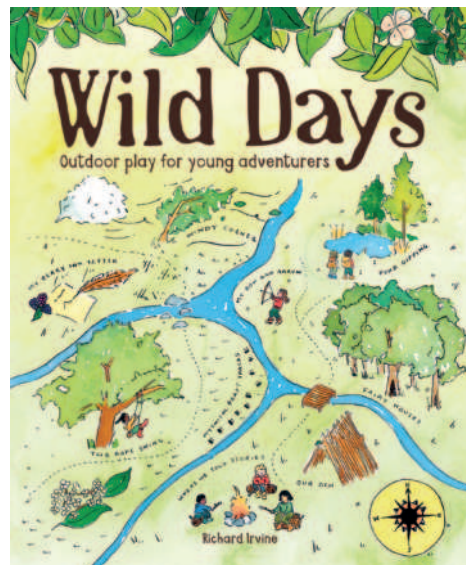
Peter Buchanan-Smith

Peter Buchanan-Smith, founder of the Best Made Company, describes this as a personal 'love letter' to his favourite tool, the humble axe. The book begins with a fascinating history of the axe, from the earliest stone tools made by early humans, through the Vikings' double-bit broad axe and the iron and steel versions of the 18th and 19th centuries, right up to the present-day revival in traditional crafts and tools and the emergence of new forges. Interesting historical snippets are also spread throughout the book, including 'the President's Axe' owned by Theodore Roosevelt, 'the Poet's Axe' of Robert Frost, and a tribute to the Women's Timber Corps.

There is also plenty of practical information, including a detailed 'anatomy of an axe'; illustrated guides to the different styles, head and helve patterns; general care, safety and sharpening tips; and a detailed guide to buying and restoring new and vintage tools. The making process is also covered in detail, with photographs taken at a modern forge. There's information about using an axe, too, covering chopping firewood, felling trees and preparing timber.

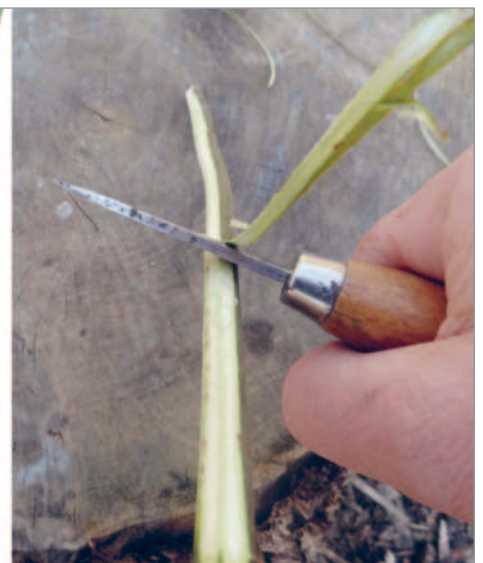
If you're interested in using an axe in your woodcarving, this lavishly illustrated, comprehensive guide is the book for you.

Published by Abrams Image, £17.99



Wild Days: Outdoor Play for Young Adventurers

Richard Irvine



Wild Days is packed with ideas for families to get outside, have fun and be creative. There are over 50 activities, all designed to get children away from their screens and out into nature, wherever they live. For young carvers, there are plenty of whittling and carving projects to enjoy, including making a walking stick, a magic wand, a woodblock stamp and a hedgehog-shaped pencil holder. Their creativity will be inspired as they make their own paints and inks, learn to tell stories and make up poems.

Other activities are designed to expand children's knowledge of

the natural world, teaching them to identify plants and wildlife, tell a tree's age by its rings, map the stars and listen to birdsong.

While the emphasis is on fun, there is also plenty of essential safety advice and valuable tips on how to behave responsibly and respectfully outdoors.

Hopefully this book can help you create some magical family memories and inspire children with a lifelong love of nature and craft.

Published by GMC Publications, £16.99

Astorga Cathedral

We learn more about a masterpiece of Spanish architecture



Astorga Cathedral, the Catedral de Santa Maria de Astorga, combines elements of Romanesque, Gothic, Neo-Classical, Baroque and Renaissance architecture. This 'crossroads of styles' is fitting in this part of northern Spain, which has been a cultural melting pot for centuries. The construction began in 1471 in the German Gothic style but incorporating the walls of an earlier Romanesque cathedral. Building continued until the 18th century, adding the Neo-Classical cloister; the Baroque towers, capitals and façade; and the Renaissance-style portico. The striking entrance is richly decorated with relief carvings depicting

five evangelical scenes, as well as plants and cherubs. One of the main features of the interior is the High Altar, which was created by the Spanish sculptor Gaspar Becerra in 1558. Considered a masterpiece of Spanish Renaissance art, the altarpiece is arranged in three layers, with the central section depicting the assumption. The carvings were made in polychrome walnut wood.

Today, the Cathedral complex includes a Diocesan Museum and the Neo-Medieval Episcopal Palace, which was designed by Antoni Gaudí in the late 19th century. The Cathedral was declared a national monument in 1931.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SHUTTERSTOCK

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- 1 x Stone Grader (TWSSG)
- 1 x Straight Edge Jig (TWSSEJ)
- 1 x Spanner
- 1 x Instruction Manual



Optional Accessories

Triton offers a range of sharpening jigs and accessories for a variety of woodworking blades including chisels, gouges and carving tools. For full accessory range visit tritontools.com



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TWS CTJ

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TWS LHW

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TWS TGJ

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TWS DTT

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