

WOOD CARVING



The wonder of winter

Tatiana Baldina chip carves
an intricate snowflake design

TECHNICAL ADVICE Guide to sharpening an adze • Selecting timber
PROJECTS TO CARVE Whale puzzle • Holly candleholder • Skiing tomte
• Starfish • Mouse • Gibbons-style stone carving • Crab bowl • Trivet

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Flexcut
CARVING TOOLS

Welcome



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE WESTERN

This year is steaming ahead like a runaway train, and it has thrown up more challenges than even 2020 did. We have continuing restrictions due to the coronavirus, fuel shortages have made travel and deliveries difficult, and a delicate economy has made us nervous to spend money. Hopefully by the time you read this some of these things will have diminished and we are on the path to leading a relatively normal life. Christmas will be upon us again soon and we can hopefully celebrate this time of year with our friends and family. To help you get in the mood and prepared early, we have featured a couple of festive projects that you can carve to decorate your home or even to give as gifts. The holly candle holder will look great in anyone's living room and skiing Santa will bring a smile to everyone's face. Carving wood, as you know, is an immensely satisfying and therapeutic pastime but have you ever considered carving a different material like stone? It isn't as difficult as you might think, and we explore the design of Grinling Gibbons to give inspiration for all who want to give it a try. If you are set on wood carving, then we have an informative article on selecting the timber you can use and where you might find it. If you want to stick to, or explore, old-school tools read about sharpening an adze for hollowing, you could make yourself a nice bowl from a section of tree. Travelling is becoming an option again for us and there is so

much in the world to explore that will give us inspiration for our carvings. William Barsley introduces us to the carvers of Bali and the beautiful things that inspire them to create their amazing carvings. Perhaps while on a holiday in an exotic place you will see starfish and crabs on the beach. If you can't make to some sun kissed oceanside destination we show you projects that feature each of these creatures. A more local creature is the mouse, and we have a project to carve one of those too...along with a piece of cheese. You could place the mouse on a shelf perhaps, to play a trick on someone and see if they jump on a chair screaming like a character in Tom and Jerry. Letter carving is a precise skill and forming the letters takes skill and patience. However, imagine after you have invested all this time to create a perfectly worded plaque or other lettered work you look down and see what you have carved is spelled incorrectly. We show some hilarious examples of spelling bloopers that emphasise the importance of checking and double checking your spelling, so you have no regrets.

There is all this and much more in this issue of *Woodcarving*.

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

Alan Goodsell



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Gibbons-style stone carving

Steve Bisco explores the lesser-known stone work of the celebrated carver



Grinling Gibbons (1648-1721), whose tercentenary we have been celebrating in 2021, is famous as the carver of the magnificent lime wood foliage festoons that graced the palaces and grand houses of late 17th-century England. But when Queen Anne came to the throne in 1702, she preferred plainer interior decorations, and Gibbons' magnificent woodcarvings went out of fashion. Fortunately, he still had a large contract in place with Sir Christopher Wren on the internal and external decoration of St Paul's Cathedral as it neared completion, but the lime wood foliage carving on which his woodcarving workshop depended started to dry up so, to adapt and survive, he expanded the stone carving side of his business. The bulk of his stone carving work was in funerary monuments, but the St Paul's contract included a good amount of stone carving on the exterior (see later).

It has been said that Gibbons' stone carvings didn't have the flair of the woodcarvings that had made him famous, but I think that is not entirely fair. It is true he didn't excel at carving human figures, and in his funerary monuments he left most of this to specialists. He did, however, manage to transfer much of the design flair of his

lime wood foliage style to stone, but the problem lies in the material. Stone is very different to lime wood. It is hard and brittle and has no tensile strength, so the deeply undercut and open style of Gibbons' woodcarvings is not fully achievable in stone. It could be said that Gibbons' mistake was to even try to transfer this style to stone. Having tried, he succeeded to an extent that few others could have achieved.

As I carve in both wood and stone, and have carved several Gibbons-style lime wood festoons, I thought I would try following his path to see how his style adapted to stone. In stone carving the stone is generally removed by the 'percussion' method of hammer and chisel, but in thin sections this carries a high risk of fracturing the stone. To achieve the degree of sharpness, undercutting, and separation that Gibbons did without breaking up the stone, I believe he would have adapted woodcarving tools and methods to carve the final details, pushing the gouges by hand pressure, which can be done on freshly-quarried Portland stone. This is what I have done with this small project, using the same Portland stone. It is not a job for the faint-hearted, but even if you don't feel ready to give it a go yourself, I hope you will enjoy following the process.

Things you will need**Materials:**

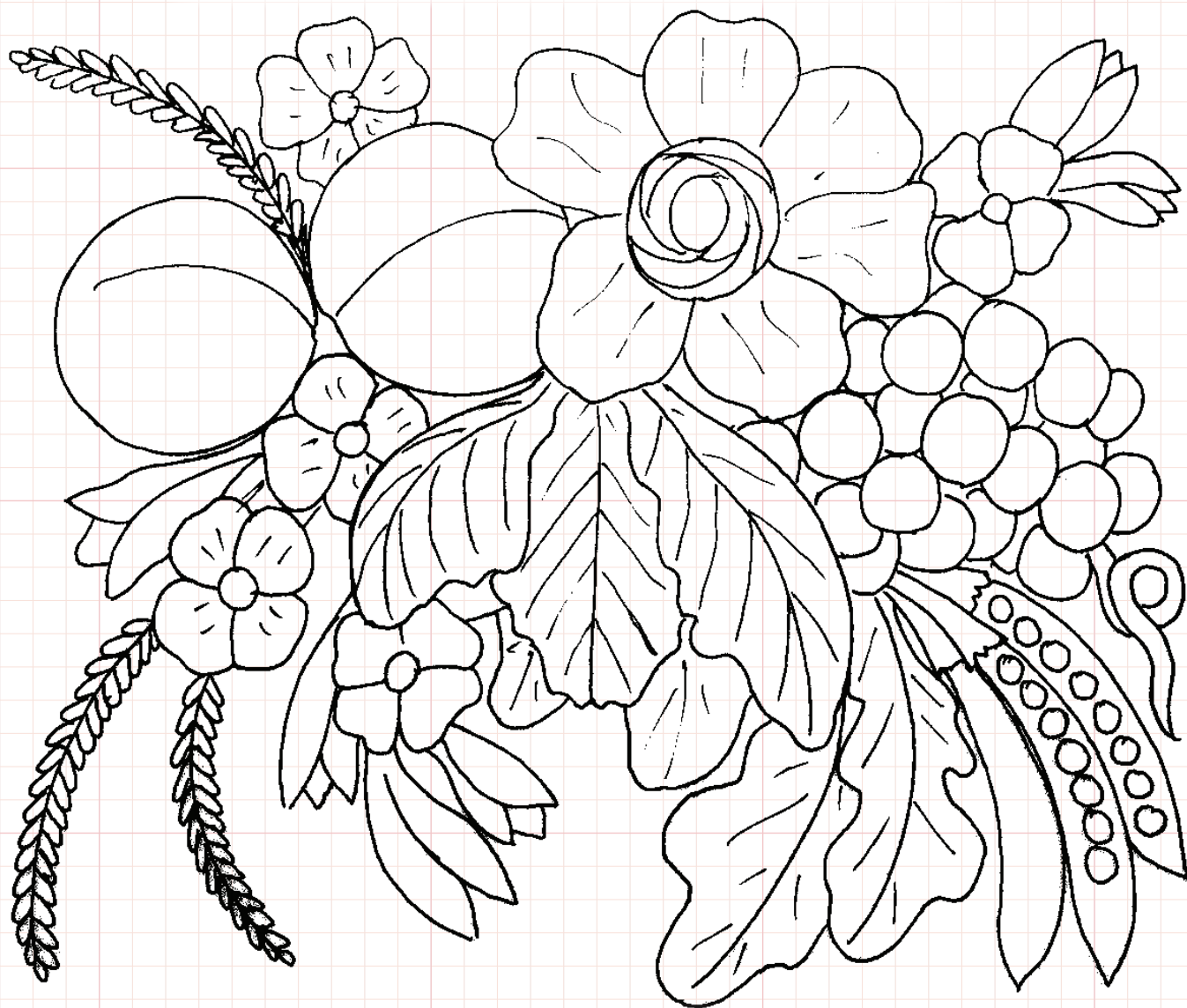
- A block of Portland limestone, 330 x 280 x 150mm (this will weigh around 35kg so take care with lifting)

Stone carving tools:

- Chisels – 4mm, 6mm, 13mm, 18mm; 13mm bullnose
- Gouges – 6mm, 13mm, 18mm
- Mason's dummy mallet
- Claw chisel
- Bolster

Woodcarving tools:

- 8mm flat chisel
- 30mm flat chisel
- 25mm No.6 gouge
- 8mm No.7 gouge
- 6mm V-pointed chisel

**PORTLAND STONE**

The stone quarries on the Isle of Portland in Dorset sit on the south coast of England across the Channel from the Caen stone quarries on the French coast about 80 miles away. Between them they produce some of the best carving stone in the world. In medieval times Caen stone was the main stone used for the great cathedrals of England and France, but by the 17th century Portland had become the main provider of stone for the great classical buildings of London. It was much favoured by Sir Christopher Wren, who was rebuilding the churches of London, including St Paul's Cathedral, after the Great Fire of 1666. Consequently, it was the stone used by Grinling Gibbons for his carvings at St Paul's. It is a fine limestone, light grey in colour, that is moderately 'soft' to carve when freshly quarried. It is not as easy to carve as Caen stone, but is more durable against erosion when subjected to centuries of weather and pollution.

SOURCING STONE

The best place to look for good quality carving stone is at the yard of an architectural stonemason. Look on the internet for your nearest supplier.



GRINLING GIBBONS SET IN STONE

Gibbons' stone carvings on the exterior of St Paul's Cathedral in London exhibit many of the features we are familiar with in his lime wood foliage festoons – the wide variety of naturalistic flowers, the swirling palm leaves, loose bunches of grapes and peaches, oak leaves and acorns, even ears of wheat and his 'trademark' pea pods. His distinctive and rather

disturbing cherub heads are also much in evidence on this ecclesiastical building. Anyone familiar with his wood carvings can instantly see his hand in these stone carvings. The only concession made to the hard and brittle medium of stone is the absence of layering and the high-flying detached stems of his lime wood festoons.



Gibbons stone carving panel at St Paul's Cathedral



Gibbons stone carving on a gate column at St Paul's Cathedral

STONE CARVING TOOLS

Today we can buy a fairly limited range of stone carving and woodcarving tools from a fairly small number of suppliers, so we have to work with what we can get. In Gibbons' day, carvers had all their tools made locally by a blacksmith, so they could have any tool they wanted made to their own specification to suit their own work. Gibbons is known to have had hundreds

of special woodcarving tools made for his lime wood foliage work, and he no doubt also had a wide range of stone carving tools made to suit his particular needs. They would have looked much like woodcarving tools, and to get nearer to the finish on Gibbons' stone carvings I have 'repurposed' some woodcarving tools in the way I think Gibbons would have used them.



Standard stone carving tools used for this project



Old woodcarving tools 'repurposed' for this project

CARVING STONE SAFELY

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

BREAKAGES

Stone can be fragile and unpredictable, so always carve carefully to avoid breakages, but if a disaster occurs you can save the job by using PVA masonry sealer/adhesive. Retrieve the broken piece of stone, vacuum off all the dust from the joining surfaces, and glue the broken piece back in place.

Gaps can be filled by mixing a paste of stone dust and PVA. Re-carve the surfaces to get an almost invisible repair.



1



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PREPARATIONS

1 Get a piece of limestone around 330 x 280 x 150mm and make a full-size copy of the drawing to fit your block. Getting stone cut to size is expensive, so work with the nearest size of offcut you can get from your stone supplier and tailor the project to fit it. For authenticity I have used Portland stone, as Gibbons did, but Caen stone would be easier to carve.

2 Draw a line around the sides of the block 75mm down from the top edge. This will be the baseline for the carving. If the block is dry and clean, you can trace the pattern on to the stone with carbon paper. It may be a bit faint but should be visible (if it is not you should trace templates for each element and draw round them). To help with visibility, draw round the main elements with a red wax pencil.



3



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ROUGHING OUT

3 First we must rough out the outline shapes and levels of the elements, starting by removing the stone outside the pattern area down to the level of the baseline.

4 Next we must reduce the level of the lower elements like the wheat ears, peas, oak leaves, crocuses and the small flowers to around 30mm above the background. This leaves enough stone to get some rise and fall in the carving.

CARVING THE SMALLER ELEMENTS

5 We can now focus on carving the smaller elements, starting with the pea pods and oak leaves in the bottom right. Carve the two oak leaves and the tendril of the grapes at a lower level than the peas. Carve the shape of the three pea pods and very carefully carve the peas using a 6mm stone gouge. Carve the detail on the oak leaves with a bit of flick and curl. Undercut all the elements as deeply as you can with the standard stone carving tools.

6 On the lower left there is a complex arrangement of wheat ears, crocuses and small flowers that needs roughing out first. It is best to 'drill' small hollows inside the crocus flowers by rotating a 4mm stone chisel into their centres while tapping it gently before carving the outside.



5



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7 Carve the individual wheat grains with the 6mm gouge. Tilt the ears to the left side and carefully undercut the edges.

8 Carve the petals on the crocus flowers and carefully undercut inside the petals. We can also carve and undercut the small round flowers, but these will need further work later when the large elements are carved.



7



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9 Repeat these processes on the wheat ear and flower in the top left...

10 ...and on the crocuses and small flower in the top right.

CARVING THE LARGE ELEMENTS

11 With the background elements carved, we can turn to the foreground elements – the peaches, the grape bunch, and the two large flowers. As these are still at the full 75mm thickness of the carving, they need to be roughed out into their three-dimensional shapes. The large hollow flower hanging downwards in the centre should be partially hollowed at this stage while there is still plenty of thickness in the stone to resist the outward pressure of the hollowing. The hollowed dome shape will withstand chiselling from the outside much better than from the inside.

12 We can now carve and undercut the two peaches. These must be rounded and smoothed with the 13mm and 18mm flat chisels. The crease across the top, which defines each of the fruits as a peach, can be carved with the 6mm chisel and gouge. The underside of each fruit must be deeply undercut to make it look detached from the background (without actually detaching it!).

13 Turning to the other side of the carving, the bunch of grapes must be carved into an open cascade with plenty of gaps between the grapes. The 18mm stone gouge is used to create the size and shape of each grape, with the 6mm chisel opening out the gaps. Create the curves of an under-layer of grapes in the gaps between the upper grapes.

14 The big open flower at the top centre faces upwards and has an outer ring of petals laying outwards, with an inner ring clustered inwards. Start by 'drilling' a deep hole in the central cluster by rotating and tapping the 6mm gouge. Carve the outer petals to lay over the surrounding elements, with deep grooves and score marks to give a natural floral look.

15 Carve the central cluster of petals to wrap around the centre hole. I have copied the spiral pattern of these petals from similar flowers on Gibbons' panels at St Paul's.

16 The centrepiece of the carving is a big floppy flower that is hollow and hangs downwards. It is potentially fragile and requires careful handling to avoid breakages. Remember always to carve in towards the most solid parts of the dome shape, and avoid chiselling towards the fragile outer edges. Start by carving the flowing curves on the upper petals.



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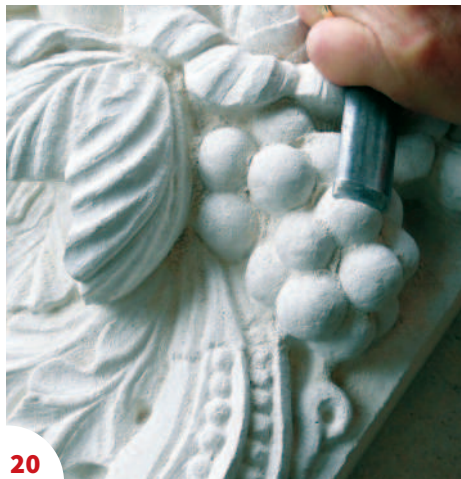
17 Very carefully chisel out as much of the hollow interior as you can without risking a breakout at the top and sides. Use a small 4mm 'quirk' chisel or similar to minimise the shock, and always carve towards the centre of the hollow. When the hollow is excavated, carve the details on the lower petals.

'GIBBONISING' THE DETAILS

18 Having gone as far as we can with the standard tools, we now need to use woodcarving tools (not our best ones) to refine the details to the sharpness that distinguishes a Gibbons-style carving from an ordinary one. Work the tools as you would for woodcarving, pushing them along by hand pressure. First, use a small, sharp woodcarving chisel to undercut the petals on the large flowers, and create sharp edges with deep hollows under them.



19



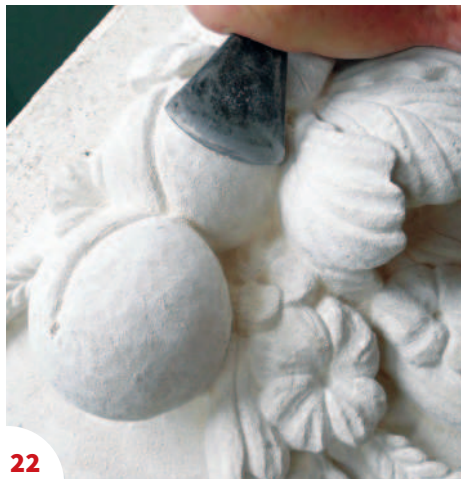
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19 Use a small, sharp gouge to smooth the surfaces of the flowing grooves and ridges on the flowers and oak leaves, and sharpen their crinkly edges.

20 To give the grapes a smooth surface with a regular shape, use the inside of a gouge that is the right size and profile (such as a 25mm No.6 gouge). Also use a small gouge to smooth and round over the peas.



21



22

21 Where the tangents of the spherical grapes meet each other, the small triangular interstices need to be sharp and clean. Use a tool with a point, like this diamond-shape V-tool from a cheap carving set, to chisel them out. Do the same thing with the peas, and also use this tool to sharpen joins and edges all over the carving.

22 Use a broad, flat chisel to smooth the larger surfaces of the peaches, and to level and smooth the background surfaces to a good finish.

FINISHING

23 Check that the background surface is smooth and level all over, and make sure all features are cleanly undercut to make them look detached from the background. Finally, carve 45° chamfers of around 3-5mm width around all edges of the block to remove any chips and give a neat edge.



23



24

24 Hose off all the dust, and retouch any imperfections revealed. With a final wash down, the finished carving is now ready for display, outdoors or in, where it will hopefully survive for 300 years like Gibbons' carvings at St Paul's. ■

Sperm whale puzzle

Cedric Boyns solves the task of creating this oceanic toy



I have been lucky enough to visit Central America on my travels, and in Costa Rica in particular I was intrigued to see the variety of wooden objects that local craftsmen produce to sell on their stalls. These range from boxes with hidden compartments to puzzles which clearly involve scrollsaw work, as well as vases, pots and several musical instruments, including flutes and whistles.

One particular puzzle which caught my eye was like a 3D jigsaw, and, having fairly recently been given a scrollsaw that I hadn't yet used, I set about working out how these fascinating objects are constructed. I started with a lizard as this was one I had seen out there, but wanted to try a design of my own. I decided on a sperm

whale, a creature I have been lucky enough to encounter on several occasions while cruising around the seas and oceans of the world.

Scrollsawing

Prepare the rectangular block so that what will be the bottom face and one of the side faces (I used the left side but it doesn't really matter) are planed flat and are at right angles to one another. This should be checked with the try square as these are the faces which will lie flat on the scrollsaw table during the sawing process (see later). For all the cuts to be made successfully, the block must basically remain square to the scrollsaw table throughout the cutting process, so the final carving part of the project can only be done after the sawing is complete.

Things you will need**Materials:**

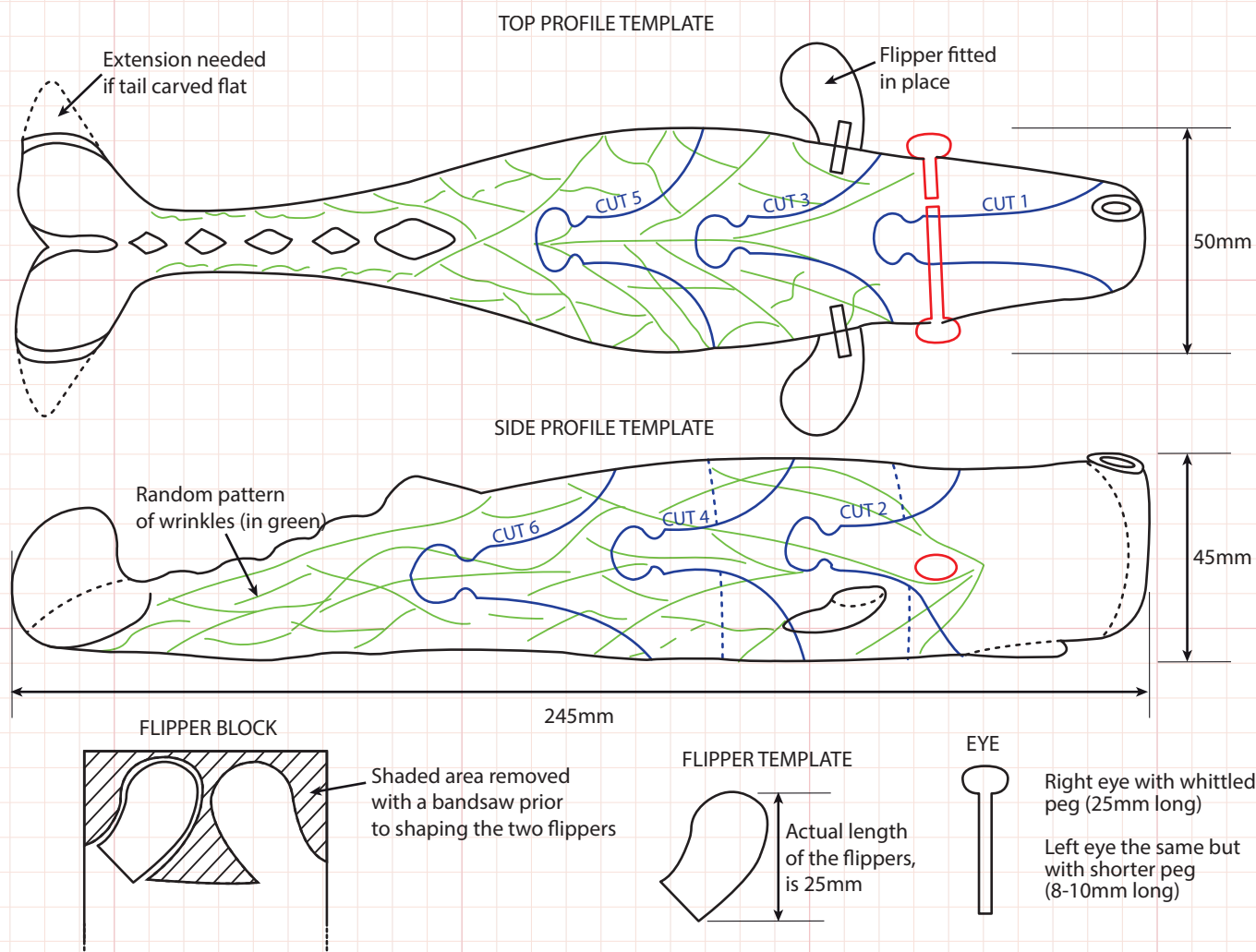
- Wood: block of lime: 50mm wide x 45mm deep x 245mm long
- Block of lime: 50mm wide x 8mm deep x about 100mm long, from which to carve the flippers (and eyes)
- Thin flattened strips of wood to be used to brace the structure during carving
- Templates: top and side profile views

- Tracing paper
- Hot-melt and wood glues
- Masking tape
- Finish: sanding sealer and clear wax polish

Tools:

- Suitable PPE, including dust extraction
- Scrollsaw and bandsaw
- Table planer (or hand plane)
- Selection of gouges I used: No.3, 6mm, 10mm and 20mm

- No.5, 3mm, 6mm and 20mm
- No.7, 6mm
- No.9, 6mm and 10mm
- No.11, 2mm
- Try square
- Small clamp
- Detail carving knife
- Hand drill
- Twist drills: 2.5mm and 3mm
- Abrasives: 100-400 grit
- Carving chops or suitable vice for work holding



1 Make full-size copies of the templates (I used tracing paper for this) and use them to draw the top and side profiles on the block surfaces opposite the ones that have been planed flat (as above). Included in these profiles are the patterns for the saw cuts that will be made with the scrollsaw. (This photo shows the side profile.)
Note: My scrollsaw has a maximum depth of cut of 50mm, which was just sufficient to complete this project.

2 Before the first cut is made it is possible to slightly taper the section at the front of the head, meaning less wood will need to be cut as shown in the photo. With the bottom surface of the block flat on the scrollsaw table, the first cut can then be made. Once the cut has been completed all the way round, the elongated 'nose' section resulting can be removed by sliding it up or down. If this is to happen it is vital that the blade is at right angles to the saw table, otherwise the cut will be slightly off square and the piece may only slide out one way – either up or down but not both. This happened to me but I feel it actually adds an extra dimension to the solving of the puzzle if the piece can only be put in one way. The choice is yours.

3 With the first piece removed, the block is now turned 90° so the second cut can be made following the pattern shown. Again, once the cut is completed all the way around, the second section of the puzzle can be slid out.

4 At this point, before the third cut is made, it is possible to shape the head region of the whale while retaining the required square section further back. The two pieces should be replaced for this and temporarily held in place somehow (I used tiny blobs of hot-melt glue which can be easily removed afterwards). This shaping reduces the amount of wood needing to be cut through during the third cut.

Remember: to remove the first two sections before you make the third cut.

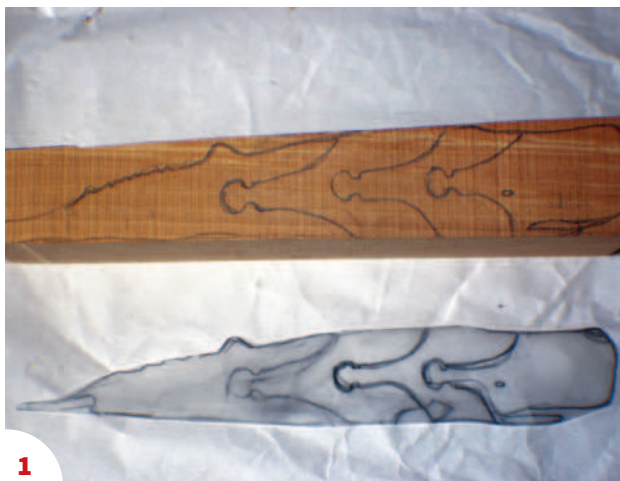
5 Continue to make cuts 4, 5 and 6 in order, following the same basic procedure outlined above and remembering to remove the last piece before the next cut is made.

6 & 7 Once the scrollsawing is complete the pieces are reassembled so the tail section can be cut to shape using the bandsaw as shown. Details of both profiles will need to be redrawn on to the block where necessary.

Carving

In order to shape the carving successfully, I felt the inevitable movement of the pieces that now make up the body of the whale puzzle needed to be stabilised in some way.

8 I found a combination of a small strip of waste wood attached with blobs of hot-melt glue (easily removed later) and a small clamp worked quite well at this stage, but masking tape can also be used.



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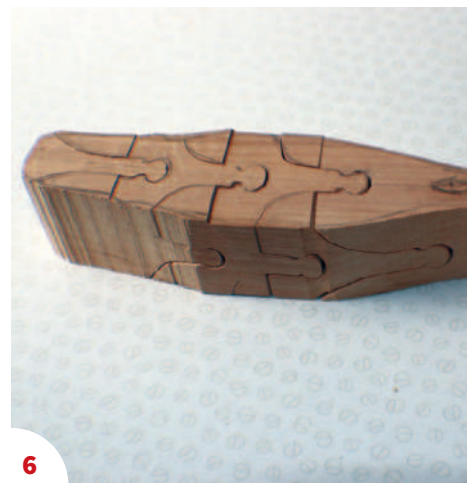
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9 Shaping the front of the head region had to include carving in the single blowhole, which on a sperm whale is set on the left-hand side of the head (accounting for the 45° angle of the blow, which is a useful feature when trying to identify this animal in the wild). This was cut in with a No.5, 3mm gouge, before some wood was pared away around it, and the rest of the front of the head, to leave it just proud of the surface.

10 The saw marks were removed from the sides of the head with a small, shallow gouge and the top shaped as required.



11



12

11 Turning to the tail end, this whale species has a triangular or rounded dorsal hump, followed by a spinal ridge with knuckles along the top of the tail region which narrows towards the flukes. These features were cut in with a small veiner, No.11, 2mm, and rounded over with a suitable small, shallow gouge.

12 As is the case with all the large whales, the overall width of the tail flukes is greater than the maximum width of the body region. This creates a problem with this project as you cannot have the tail end wider than the rest of the body during the scroll sawing. I feel there are two possible solutions:

A) Glue a small block of wood on to each side of the fluke region to extend it sideways, and then carve the flukes so that they lie flat.

B) My chosen option: namely to turn the ends of the flukes upwards so that they do not protrude beyond the maximum width of the body, but their length is effectively increased so that they would extend if they were flat. This seemed to work. Having left an excess of wood in the region of the tail flukes (see photo 7). I then used a No.5, 20mm gouge to carefully cut across the grain and remove wood in the central region.



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13 A No.9, 10mm gouge was then used, cutting with the grain, to reduce the thickness of the flukes, and I used the bandsaw to shape the trailing edges of the flukes.



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14, 15 & 16 Further shaping and finishing was then carried out on both the outside and inside of the flukes until I was happy with the basic shape. Do not make these flukes too thin as this will reduce the chances of damage as the puzzle is played with.

17 & 18 The flippers of a sperm whale are disproportionately small and have to be made separately and glued on the sides of the carving. Using the template with the drawings, the flippers were drawn on to the end of the flipper block and mostly cut out on the bandsaw or scrollsaw. They can be shaped and sanded while still attached to the block, which can be held in the chops while this occurs. They can then be cut off the block once shaping is complete. They need to taper back from the leading edge, which should be about 6mm thick to the trailing edge about 1-1.5 mm thick.



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19, 20 & 21 To add strength to the join, a small dowel peg was whittled from an offcut of lime, to fit into a 3mm hole, 5mm deep, that was drilled into each flipper as shown.



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22 The position of the flippers is shown on the templates and a suitable 3mm hole must be drilled (in section 4 of the body). I used some masking tape on the drill bit to gauge the depth needed (about 5mm).



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23 They can then be checked for fit. I planned them to emerge horizontally but I feel they look best with the leading edge slightly above the trailing edge. Only once the final sanding has been completed are the flippers glued in place with wood glue.

24 The shaping of the underside can now be completed. Once again, I made use of a 'splint', glued on as before and supplemented this with masking tape as shown.



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25 The sperm whale is a toothed whale with a relatively small mouth compared with the other really large whales, which rely on a huge gape to collect food. It is set under the head and so, using a suitable small shallow gouge, I shaped the lower jaw on the underside of the first section, and pared away wood to make it stand proud of the underside of the head.

26 & 27 In order to keep the pieces locked in place when the puzzle is complete, it is necessary to secure the first piece to the second piece so that the first piece will not fall out of its own accord. This will keep the whole structure together. It can be done with the eyes. Each eye was whittled from a small offcut of lime, leaving a bulbous eye on the end of a peg. 3mm holes must be drilled in each side of the head in the second section where the eyes should be (see drawings).

On the left side I made the hole and eye peg short (about 8mm long) so that it did not penetrate the first section. This eye peg can be glued in permanently.

On the right side I made the eye peg, and the drilled hole, long enough to pass into and through the first section to hold it in place. You want this to act as a jam-joint when the eye peg is pushed fully home, so making the very end of the hole a smaller bore (2.5mm) and tapering the end of the peg very slightly may be necessary.

The puzzle should now be securely held together and can only be taken apart by removing the right eye peg.

28 Final fitting of the flippers and sanding can be completed.

29 Sperm whales have very wrinkled skin and this can be conveyed by using a suitable veiner to cut a random pattern of small grooves over most of the body as indicated in the drawings.

30 Once the finish is applied – I chose a coat of sanding sealer followed by two coats of clear wax polish buffed up with a soft cloth – the completed puzzle should look like this.

Note: There will inevitably be some saw marks left on the inner surfaces of the pieces. I chose not to try to remove these as there is a danger of widening the gaps between pieces too much, making the whole structure too 'loose'. I sealed the inner surfaces with a coat of sanding sealer.

31 Taken apart, the pile of pieces provides the challenge to solve the puzzle. No force should be needed to put it together. Have fun making this. I certainly did. ■

Star of the show

John Samworth concentrates on the intriguing and ancient starfish as a centrepiece



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN SAMWORTH

Starfish are echinoderms, not fish, with more than 1,500 species known today covering the world's oceans, from the tropics to Arctic waters. They live in tidal waters down to a depth of over 6,000m, and fossil records have revealed starfish inhabiting the waters over 450 million years ago.

But from here on the facts about starfish become extraordinary and they are a worthy subject for carving. In this piece the starfish is clinging to the surface of the scallop shell. Although our common starfish eat mussels and clams, this one may have bitten off more than it can chew!

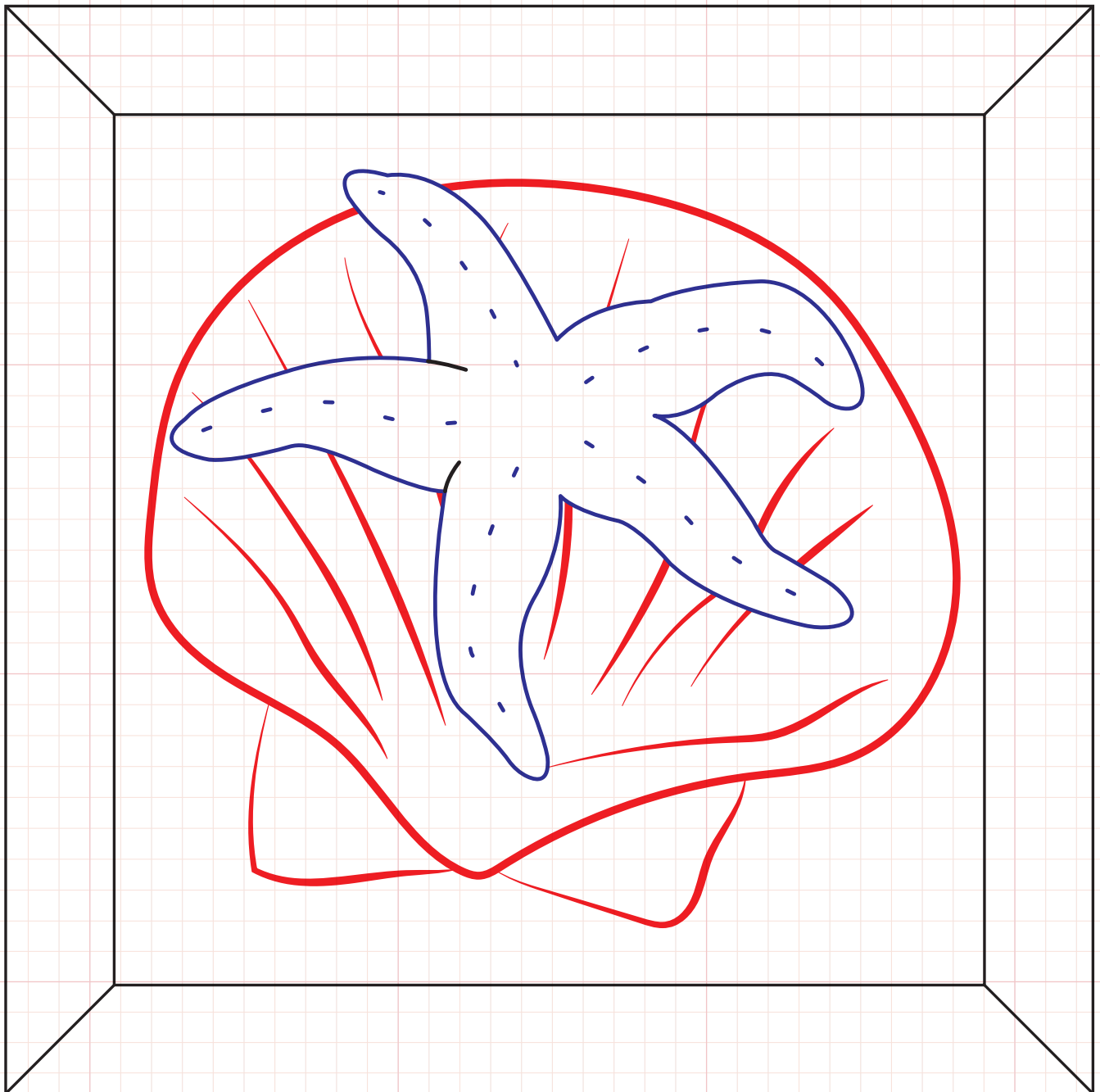
Things you will need**Tools:**

- PPE and RPE
- Wood marking gauge
- Set square
- Jack plane
- Fret or coping saw
- No.11, 12mm and 6mm gouge
- Veiner No.11, 3mm gouge

- No.3, 12mm, 6mm and 3mm gouge
- No.8, 6mm gouge
- No.2, 10mm skew gouge
- Parting or V tool

Materials:

- Two pieces of lime, 12.5 x 12.5cm x 25mm thick
- Walnut 25 x 25mm x 100cm long for the frame



1 This carving will be framed. Start by ensuring that the edges are straight, clean and square. The carving is in deep relief build-up from two pieces of 25mm lime. Using a plane or by sanding, clean and flatten one face on each piece ready for gluing together.

2 Trace the shell and starfish design on to one piece of lime and cut out the shape about 1mm over size. Glue and clamp the two pieces together, leaving overnight to set. Using a depth gauge, mark a line about 12mm from the bottom of the carving on all four edges. This marks the level of the background of the carving and where the frame will sit. The second, smaller pencil line marks the high point of the shell. The starfish will sit on top of the shell and be carved in the top third of the lime.

TOP TIP: Setting the shell design central and at a slight tilt within the frame is more appealing to the eye than setting it horizontal.

3 Using a No.11, 12mm gouge, rough out the waste wood between the starfish's legs to the depth marked in the picture. By carving away from the drawn line, the process is quick. If cut as indicated in the picture there is no need to first cut around the starfish with a parting tool.

4 The edges of the starfish remain strong and can be carved to a clean, crisp line. Using a No.11, 6mm gouge, remove most of the buttress wood supporting the starfish legs by cutting in from the side.

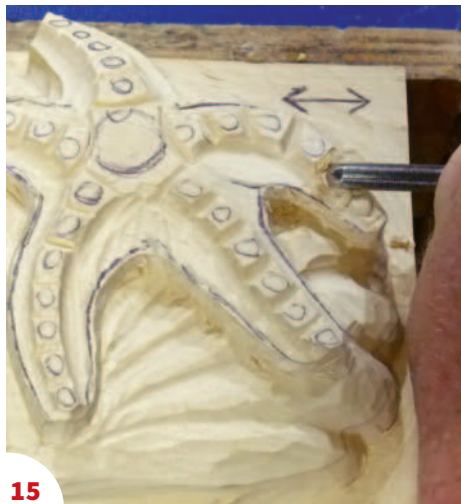
The shell

5 Sketch in the shell's edge around its hinge, but do not include the scalloped outline, keep is as a simple curve. Using a No.11, 12mm gouge, remove this wood all the way down to the second piece of wood.

6 Using the No.11, 12mm gouge, remove the waste wood from around the shell down to about 1mm above the final background's depth. Note that the shell's hinge will now be too high. The corner marked X will be the lowest point of the carving. Lower the two sides of the hinge to within 1mm of the background.

7 Using a No.3, 12mm gouge, round over the shell shape to the background. Do not at this stage cut in any scalloping to the edge, these will be formed later. Mark the centre lines of the starfish legs. This shows where a series of raised nodules will be.



**8****9****10****11****12****13****14****15**

8 Using a No.11, 6mm, cut the legs on either side of their centreline, leaving a 4mm ridge down the centre. Lower the top of the legs to about 10mm from the surface of the shell. Leave the centre of the starfish at its original height.

9 Sketch in the outline of the legs. Using a No.3, 12mm gouge, cut back the legs to this line. Adjust the ridge to about 4mm wide and high along the legs. Along the ridge, mark out where the nodules will be formed. Five or six per leg will look very effective.

10 The profile of the shell should be a gentle curve, symmetrical left and right and with the front-back high point off centre towards the back when the shell hinges. In the image it is apparent that the hinge is too high. Using a shallow No.3, 12mm gouge, adjust the profile as necessary.

11 Sketch in guidelines for the shell's ridge-groove pattern. The lines mark the centre of the grooves. Each ridge-groove radiates out from the centre and back of the shell; symmetrically left and right. Five grooves either side will be sufficient. With a veiner No.11, 3mm gouge, chase out the centre of each groove from its start to the background level. Each groove should appear to flow organically underneath the starfish, but do not undercut the starfish. Access at times is restricted, but it will improve as the carving progresses.

12 Swap the gouge for a No.11, 6mm fluter and re-cut the groove for two-thirds of the length to the background. Next, swap to the No.11, 12mm fluter and re-cut the final one-third only to the background. The effect here will progressively widen the groove from narrow in the centre to full width and the end at the background. It is this process which will form the familiar scalloped outline to the shell.

Follow the grain

13 Invert a No.3, 6mm gouge and round over the groove. Take care to follow the grain, which will swap direction, as marked, from one side of the groove to the other.

14 Using a parting or V-tool, separate each nodule along the spine of each leg. Ideally, the nodule spacing will match the width of your smallest gouges, either a 3mm veiner or a No.3, 3mm gouge. These small gouges and a skew will tidy the spaces between nodules.

15 Using an inverted No.8, 6mm gouge, run across the tops of each nodule, following the grain. Work in both directions, lifting the gouge handle up as the cut progresses, rounding the nodule into a pea shape. Use the No.3, 3mm gouge and a skew to remove any waste from between the nodules.

16 Invert the No.3, 12mm gouge to round over the legs. Where the legs meet, vary the appearance by using crisp cuts imitating one leg folding over another (see middle bottom), and smooth, sweeping curves where legs are stretching out (see left hand side).

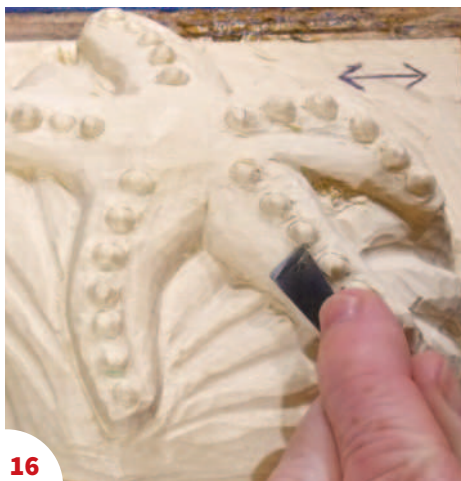
17 The main carving is now complete; time to begin tidying the work. Originally, I marked the background depth at stage 2, using a marking gauge. This left a fine scratch line in the wood as a marker. Use this scratch line to align a large, flat gouge to complete the background, lowering into the final depth, consistently all around the edges, ready to fit into your frame.

Tidying the work

18 Tidy and clean the carving. There are many ways to achieve this and which to choose is a matter of personal preference. Where possible I prefer to leave as much of the original tool finish as possible. The quickest technique! From the top of the picture, I could use abrasive paper, working through the grits. The result is to soften finish, losing all tooled appearance and risk of losing any crisp edges. Second is a diamond needle file. Next is a traditional needle file. Next is a double-ended riffler wood rasp. After using a riffler, the finish normally requires further work with file or abrasives. Next is a carving gouge used perpendicular to the carving as a scraper. Last is a homemade scraper. The files and riffler come in an array of shapes and sizes to fit the carving. Whichever technique you choose, the aim is to leave the carving clean and tidy.

19 If, like me, you do not have a set of accurate mitre joint clamps, use the carving as a template to hold the frame in place while the glue sets. I used Super Glue on the mitre joints, but any proprietary wood glue will suffice. I made the frame from a length of black walnut; square is cross section with a small internal rebate. The frame was too tight, so I cut away a few areas to fit snug around the carving. I like the appearance of nature outgrowing the frame.

20 The frame is made from black walnut, which contrasts well with the lime wood. The frame is glued on to the carving before the finish is applied. I used tung oil, left to cure for three days before applying a top coat of beeswax. Hang on a wall and enjoy. ■



16



17



18



19



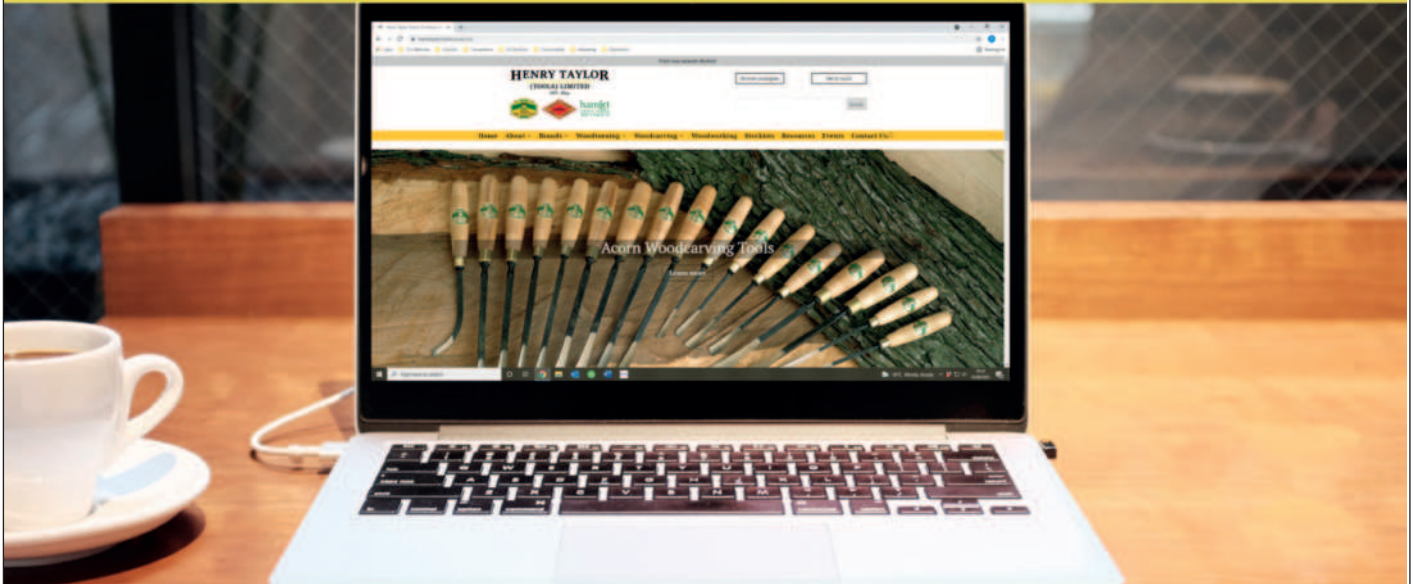
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Soar like an eagle!

Chainsaw carver Paul Waclo
tells WC about his life and work



COURTESY OF PAUL WACLO

www.chainsawcarvingbypaul.com
[@paulschainsawcreations](https://www.instagram.com/paulschainsawcreations)

After a career in design and production, Paul Waclo took up chainsaw carving in 2012. Just two years later, he gave up his job to carve full time. His creations include eagles, horses, bears, owls, human figures, benches and treehouses. He receives numerous commissions, including one for the US President! He lives in York, Pennsylvania. He shares his story with us here.

Inspired to carve

My creative adventure began as a graphic designer working with a Top-Secret clearance drawing various layouts for government defence programmes. A degree in Mechanical and Architectural drafting showed me that I was able to perceive and illustrate images in three dimensions but, at that point, I had no idea how to utilise that particular skill...

Most of my adult life was spent in sales creating custom apparel for the automotive and motorcycle industry. BMW of North America was one of my biggest clients and I designed many of the garments you would see in their boutique dealerships. I would sketch graphic concepts and hand them off to my team of artists to finalise before approval and production.

After spending many years travelling around the United States in aeroplanes and rental cars, one day I returned home to my wife and three children to find them watching a Discovery Channel programme called *Saw Dogs* where extremely talented carvers were creating amazing wood sculptures. I was immediately struck with enthusiasm to run out and purchase a chainsaw. I didn't know how to start it. I didn't know how to put the oil in it. I had never picked one up before, but that didn't slow me down in the least. Within a week, I had sorted out the basic operation and fumbled my way through the first little bear in my driveway.

Soon, I had curious visitors walking by asking if I was going to sell my creations. The answer was, of course, 'Yes, will that be cash or charge?' My years of sales and marketing experience helped me design a logo and website for my new side business. Within a year, I was taking orders at a local farmers market where I would set up on the weekends to entertain the customers. The requests for bigger and more complicated sculptures was increasing to the point where I was able to make the decision to walk away from my successful corporate 'job' and create an entirely new and exciting lifestyle for myself. It was certainly a big gamble but it didn't take long before I was surpassing the financial gains I once enjoyed while working to build someone else's business. Now, I was working for myself and my mind was completely dedicated to designing and growing my own new venture.



Delivering a 9-foot American Bald Eagle carving to the White House

'I didn't know how to start [the chainsaw]. I didn't know how to put the oil in it. I had never picked one up before, but that didn't slow me down in the least.'



In the process of carving a 12-foot American Bald Eagle



A test run for a 14-foot Native American carving



Paul working on a horse carving



Paul also makes carved benches

Building a business

Social media and a good website had a great deal to do with how I initially attracted the bulk of my customers and I was finding myself standing in front of massive trees while still possessing somewhat limited skills. I persevered with a strong belief that I was doing this and there was nothing I'd allow to slow my enthusiasm. There were lots of technical frustrations and many lessons learned by watching hours of YouTube videos. I also need to throw much credit to my wife and family putting up with the long weekends carving at different venues and the many pounds of sawdust my wife must have put through the laundry. We can look back on it now and acknowledge it was a group effort to help me push

through to the success I enjoy today.

Years passed by and now in 2021, it's been seven years since I went pro and I understand that the passion you must feel for whatever you do in life is what drives you through the tough times where many people would give up. Whether it was 15°F below zero out or 110°F, raining or snowing, I was out there completely focused on the task at hand. Looking back, I certainly encountered many issues that could have derailed the entire operation but, somehow, I was making good business decisions and trying to be as careful as possible climbing wet scaffold and swinging dangerous tools to make my living.

Throughout the journey I met many wonderful people who were willing to help

me in any way they could. One of the most important friends I made was Larry Dubel, who owns the sawmill where I carve most of my large pieces. He made his many wood suppliers and heavy equipment available to me and that has made it possible for me to accept much larger projects that require his heavy loaders to move and manipulate into place. I've learned so much about the many different species of trees and which ones are best for carving. Most of my sculptures are carved from white pine but my favourite wood is paulownia, which has a really unique grain that I showcase in the wings of my large eagles.

Creating so many sculptures, it's difficult to single out my favourite but, one of my biggest sculptures was the 20-foot Kodiak



One of Paul's carved owls



Kris Connors and Paul with their giant Kodiak bear carving

bear that I carved with my friend Kris Connors, who I would consider one of my earliest mentors. Kris has many years of experience in sculpture and we have a great relationship that allowed us to work in very close proximity to each other while we carved away on this massive bear.

Carving for the President

Being asked to carve a 12-foot American Bald Eagle for President Donald Trump's 74th birthday was a tremendous honour and I hope to visit him again at Mar-a-Lago in Florida where the sculpture is now. I'll always remember the Secret Service agent calling my cellphone to ask me if I could be at the White House in the morning. What else could I possibly be doing that

would be more important than that?!
Good times...

Eagle carvings

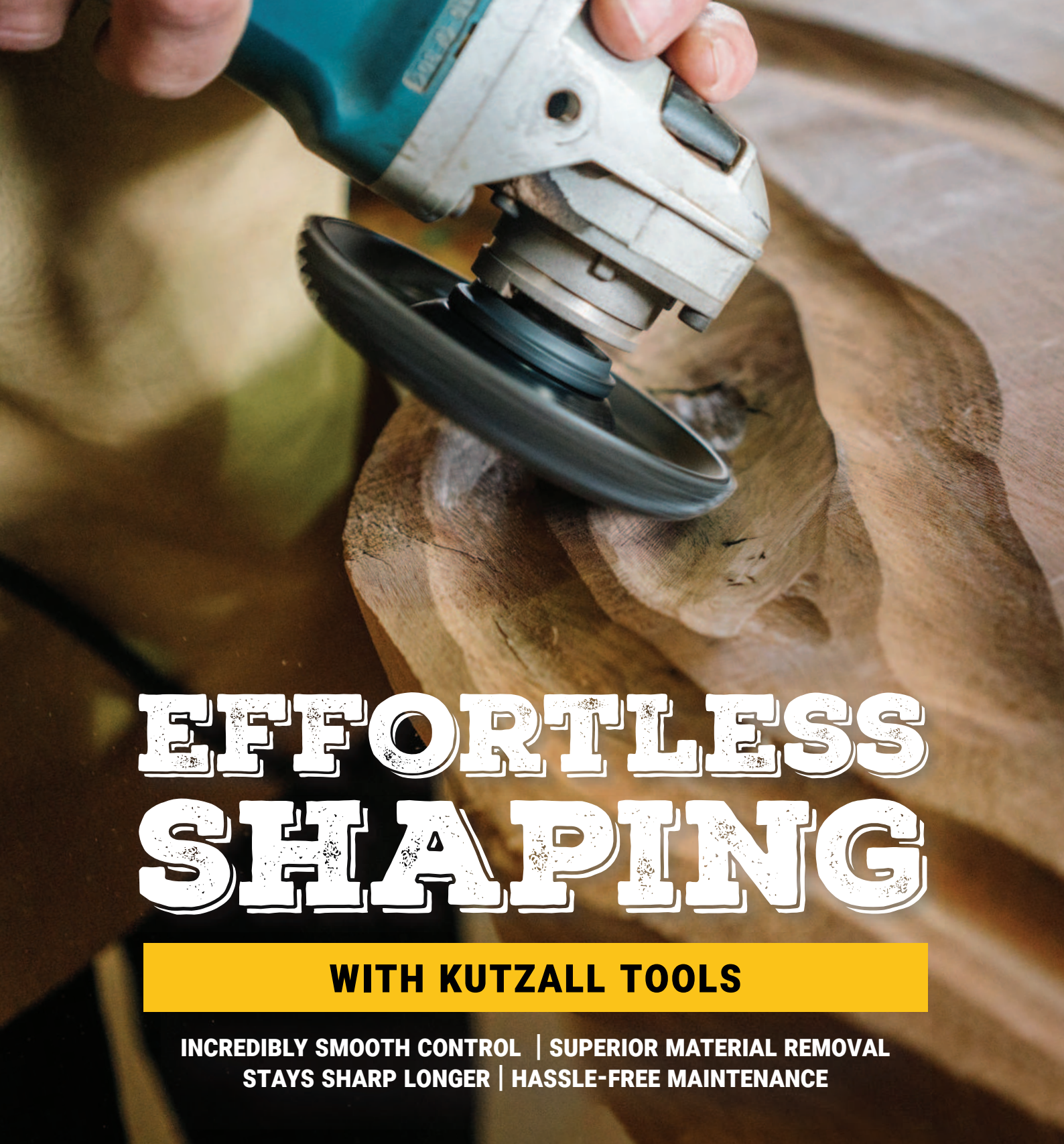
My eagles are now what I'm known for and I'm always striving to improve the look and flow of these majestic birds in the air. Since it's not easy to find trees big enough for the large sculptures my customers request, I attach the head and the tail in a seamless fashion that most observers won't even notice. Joinery is all part of the engineering that takes place while constructing larger and more intricate pieces. Kiln-dried wood is used for many of my open wing eagles which ensures a much longer lifespan for the sculpture and I do have a good percentage of customers

who appreciate that higher quality.

Future plans

My latest venture is 'Cold Cast Bronze' which involves creating an original sculpture and then a mould that can be used to produce additional copies in the future. The first in this series is a soaring eagle with a 5-foot wingspan that will be mounted on top of a 7-foot iron pedestal in the shape of a beautiful sweeping arch. I intend to keep the first edition, but there are already customers interested in this concept for future orders.

I'll always be aware that the many challenges over the years have brought me to where I am today and allow me to fully acknowledge life is short so, Carpe Diem my friends!



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Printer Precision Colour Printing
Distribution Seymour Distribution Ltd
T: 020 7429 4000
Woodcarving (ISSN 0965-9463) is published bi-monthly
by Guild of Master Craftsman Publications Ltd.
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Christmas sport

Peter Benson takes to the slopes with this mischievous skiing figure



Last year for the Christmas project we carved a Swedish Christmas spirit, or 'tomte'. As I have been somewhat incapacitated for most of 2021 and unable to attempt any serious carving, I have decided to follow on with the same subject and add a few variations that you might like to try. I have always been a very keen skier and thought I would see how the tomtes would take to the sport.

The project involves carving a basic crouching tomte, which can be mounted on a spring to give some movement to the figure. The skis are carved into the base, which is shaped to represent the snow slope. You can, of course, carve the skis separately and glue them on if you wish.

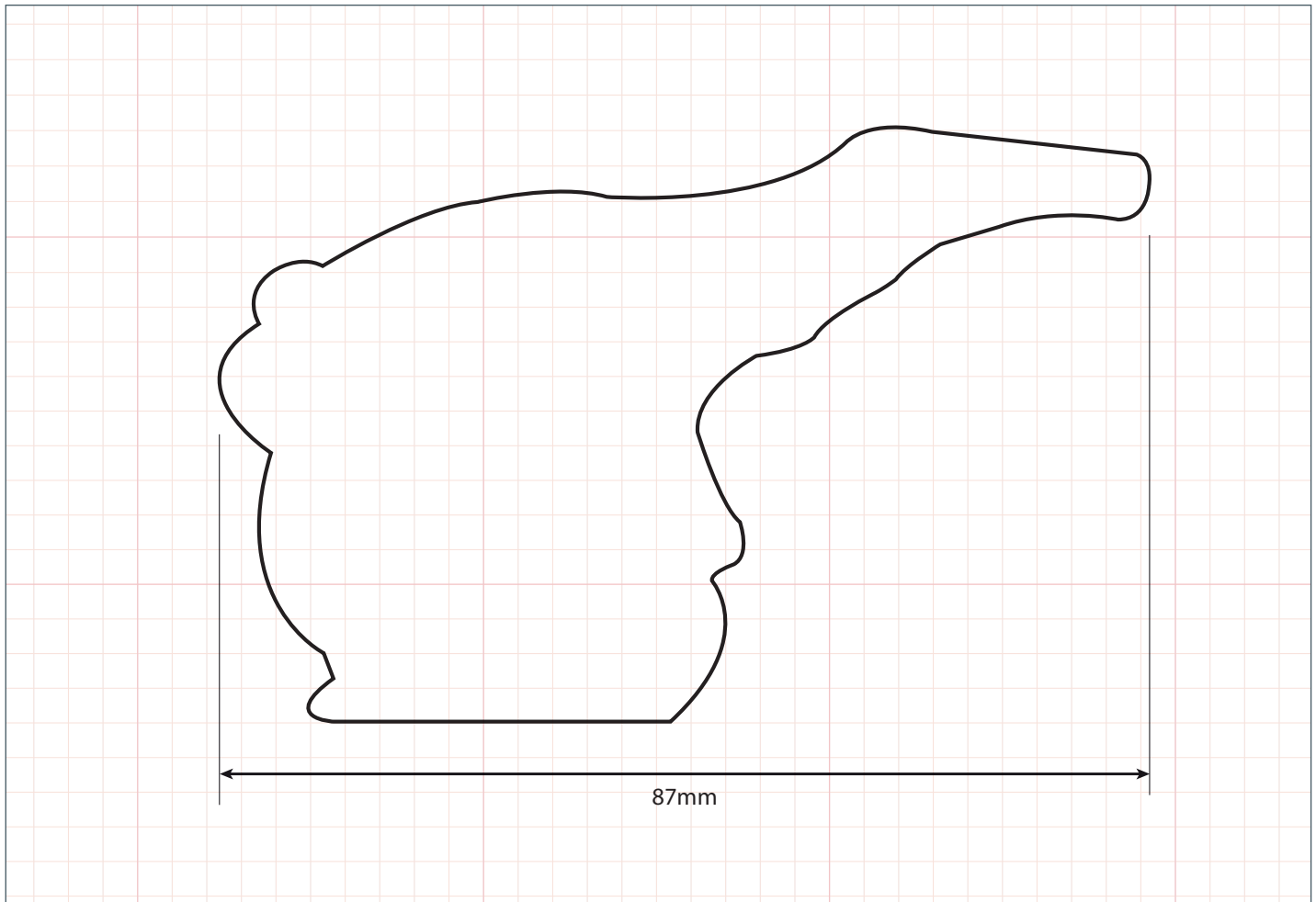
Things you will need

Tools:

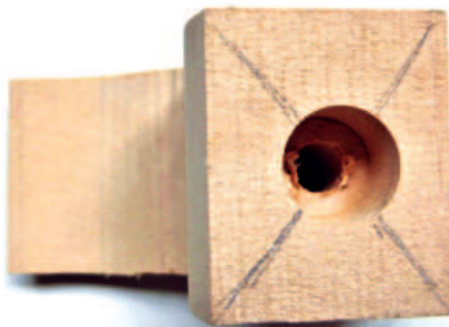
- Bandsaw or coping saw to cut out the shape of the figure
- Knife
- Safety glove, PPE and RPE
- Strop
- No.3, 6mm or 7mm small gouge
- No.39, 3mm or 4mm small V-tool

Materials:

- Piece of timber (I used jelutong) 90mm long, 60mm deep and 42mm thick for the figure.
- Piece 80mm long, 50mm wide and 35mm thick, cut as shown, for the base.
- Length of 8mm compression spring, if you want the figure to rock – readily available from online sources such as eBay or Amazon.



1



2



3



4

1 Using the pattern, cut out the outline of the figure.

2 It is not essential that you use a spring, but I do think it adds a bit of life to the carving. You will need a compression spring 8mm in diameter and around 30mm long. You will need to carve or drill a recess about 15mm deep in the underside of the figure and then drill an 8mm diameter hole at the base of this recess. This is to make the pivot point as high up the figure as possible, otherwise it will not rock. You can do this after you have cut out the pattern, but you may find it safer to drill the block you have marked out before cutting the shape.

3 The base can be any size, depending on what you intend to do with it – see the end of the article. The shape needs to be triangular (like a slice of cake).

4 Once you have cut the basic shape, draw the outline of the hat, nose and space between the feet.

5 Remove the waste to leave the squared shape of the figure.

6 Starting with the hat, round off all the corners, making sure that the body and base of the hat are smooth curves, not squares with rounded corners. Don't worry too much about getting the base of the hat neat at this stage as you may well make marks in it as you texture the beard. Take care that you shape the body so the top looks as though it fits into the hat rather than have the hat sitting on top. You can add some shape to the feet but don't bother with detail.

7 Using your V-tool, texture the beard with short, curving cuts. Avoid straight lines and don't be too careful with where the cuts are placed. The beard needs to look random but flowing towards the rear of the figure.

8 Now you can trim around the bottom of the hat, undercutting slightly with the tip of your knife to give the impression of the hat fitting over the top of the head.

9 The figure should now be ready for painting with acrylic watercolour paints. When finished, give a coat of satin varnish to protect the finish.

10 For a simple, free-standing figure you can now work on the base. Drill an 8mm hole about 6-8mm deep down the centreline and approximately halfway down the slope. Once you have carved, or attached the skis, you can fit the spring. The spring should fit so that it is at right angles to the skis.

11 Once finished, fit the figure to the base using the spring. You will need to adjust the length of the spring so that the figure rocks freely. The spring can be glued with epoxy glue and I have put two cocktail sticks between the figure and the skis until the glue sets. This will ensure that there is space for the figure to rock.

POSSIBLE USE

Someone mentioned to me that this might make a good door-stop wedge, so I have added a picture of my attempt to produce this. It does, of course, have to be fitted to the particular door it is for, but you may have ideas of your own. Whatever you finish up with, make sure you have fun. ▶



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



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Holly candleholder

Dave Western gets into the Christmas spirit with this seasonal table decoration



Despite it being a year-round presence in my garden, for me, nothing symbolises Christmas and wintertime quite like holly. Perhaps it's the contrast of the green leaves and red berries or maybe it's just because it's become such a ubiquitous part of nearly every festive scene, but it's always the holly I will remember from any image or arrangement. This elegant candleholder takes advantage of the graceful sweep of the holly leaves to form a sweet little tripod that supports a deeper central area where the candle resides. The even spacing of the leaves is contrasted nicely by some randomly placed berries, which help give the piece a more organic and less mathematical feel. I used $\frac{3}{4}$ in-thick timber for this piece, but would suggest using something a bit thicker if you can access it. The deeper the candle hole can be, the better for stability and an insert is highly recommended.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVE WESTERN

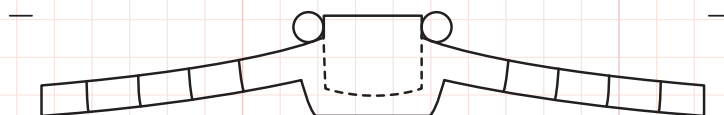
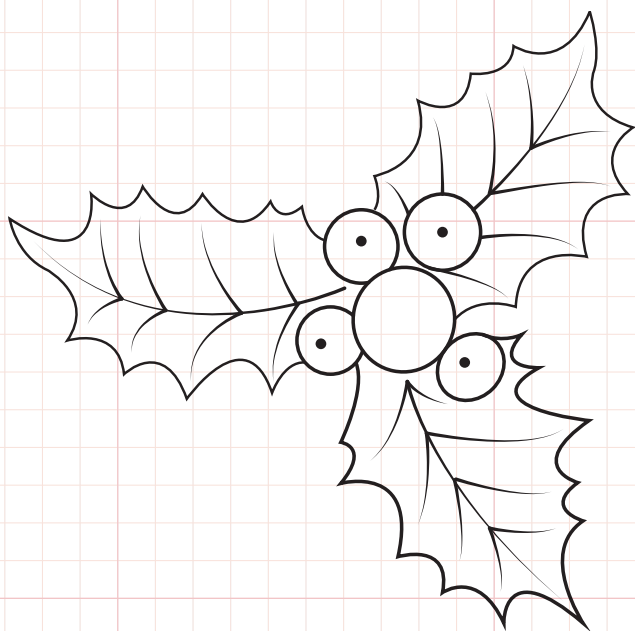
Things you will need

Tools:

- Saw: jeweller's saw, scrollsaw or bandsaw
- Glue stick and paper pattern
- $\frac{3}{4}$ in or similar Forstner bit
- Drill or drill press

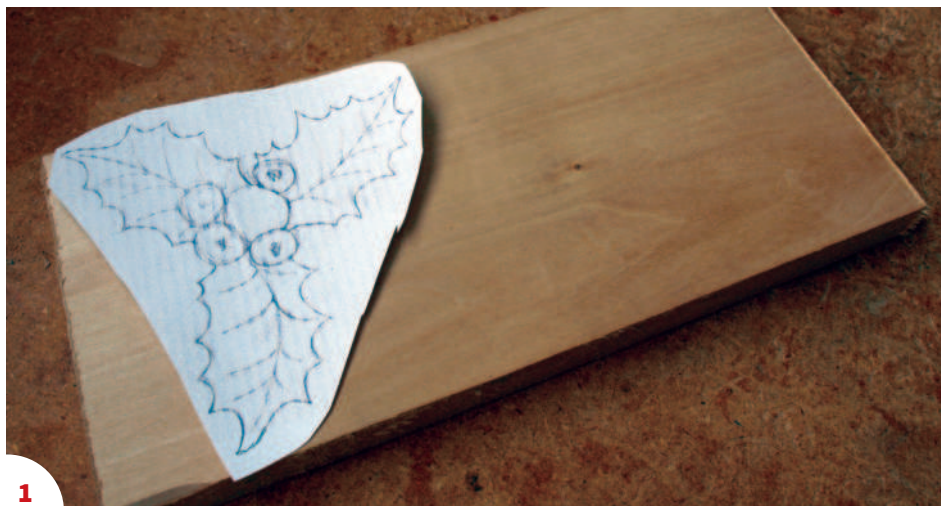
- No.1 sweep 10mm gouge
- No.5 or #7 sweep 14mm gouge
- No.9 sweep 7mm and 10mm gouges
- Bent or hook knife
- $\frac{1}{4}$ in straight knife

- Flat needle file
- 320 grit sandpaper
- Penetrating oil
- Beeswax polish



SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR CANDLES AND TEALIGHTS

- Use an appropriate heat shield made from either metal, ceramic or glass.
- If you stick the glass, metal or ceramic heat shield insert in place, use a heatproof adhesive and make sure you leave a little bit of an expansion gap between the hole and the holder insert to allow for any wood movement.
- Never leave a lit tealight or candle unattended or place one near any flammable material.
- Never place tealights or candles too close together.
- Always make sure the holder of the candle or the tealight is of a design and weight and has a suitable width of base to be stable enough to stay where it is placed and withstand accidental knocking.



1

1 I selected a nice pale piece of lime (bass/linden) wood for its pale holly wood look and for its ease of carving. I made sure when I glued the pattern to the workpiece to orient the grain lengthways through at least two of the leaves. This meant there was only one leaf I needed to battle with cross-grain orientation. Unless you are unbelievably lucky with your grain, you'll have at least one leaf that has the wood grain running across rather than from tip to stem. Ensure the cross-grain section is good, straight, easily-carved wood without swirling grain or knots etc.



2 With the paper pattern glued in place, begin work by drilling a hole suitable for the most common candle sizes you might encounter. If you wind up with a hole a bit small, the candles can be shaved, and if it's a bit large, they can be shimmed, but what is ideal is for the hole to be either bang on or ever so slightly smaller than the candle's diameter. I used a $\frac{3}{4}$ in Forstner bit in a drill press as it let me drill to within $\frac{1}{8}$ in of the bottom without breaking through.

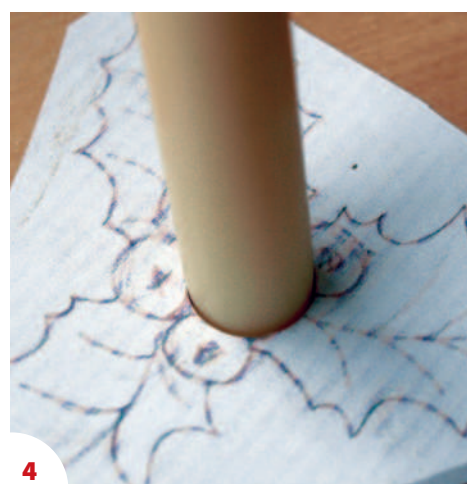
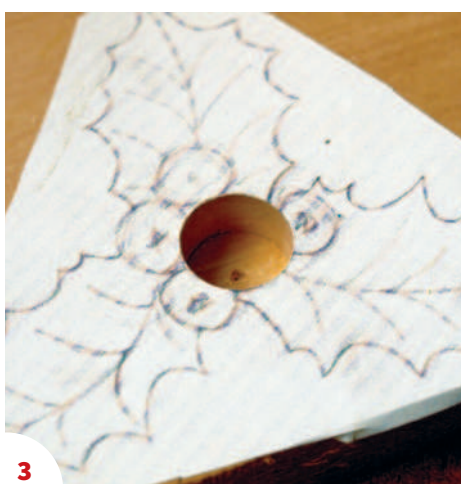
3 & 4 I achieved a fairly decent fit and didn't need to shim, but it maybe isn't as tight as I would like so I probably would drill with an $\frac{11}{16}$ in bit the next time and shape the candle a bit for a super-snug fit. It's really important that the candle is not at all loose and floppy in the hole or you risk the whole arrangement toppling over and setting fire to your Christmas dinner. Take whatever time is necessary to ensure you'll get a proper seating of the candle and that it stands straight up with no leaning.

Shaping the leaves

5 & 6 When you are certain the hole is perfect for the candles you intend to use, you can begin the process of shaping the leaves and cutting away waste material. For this, I used a scrollsaw for the neatest effect, but if you lack one of those you can make use of a drill press to shape along the edges of the leaves and then clear the remaining stock with a straight knife. You could also make use of a jeweller's-type coping saw and cut the pattern out, or go really old school and use a variety of gouges to cut the pattern to the line. Fortunately, the pattern is not large, so even hand shaping with a straight knife is not beyond the realms of possibility.

7 With the outline of the design neatly cut, you can begin shaping a curve into the top face of the leaves. I drew lines freehand, making sure to leave about $\frac{3}{8}$ in of material for a base at the tips of the leaves. This area is necessary to maintain the flatness and support needed to keep the holder from wobbling, so avoid the urge to take the leaves down too close to the ground.

8 I used a bandsaw to quickly cut a substantial amount of material away in a quick pass, but those without a power saw can make use of a shallow gouge like a No.5 or 7 sweep to clear this stock quickly and efficiently. Be careful to leave the area around the berries untouched at this point. You will want the berries to stand proud of the leaves, so ensure you don't cut them down at all at this stage. Again, avoid the urge to cut the leaf tips too thin, as you will need some material there for bases.





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The berries

9 With the rough stock removal largely completed, use a No.9 sweep, 10mm gouge to shape the round berry bodies. Carefully work your way around each berry, being careful not to pop any material up and out. The objective at this stage is to clearly define each berry and to create a stop line where more leaf material is removed to raise the berries.

10 With the berries defined by the gouge cuts, use a No.1, 10mm or similar flat gouge or chisel to start carefully removing more leaf stock. I worked around each berry taking about $\frac{1}{8}$ in of material with each pass. I would then use the gouge to refresh the cuts around each berry before taking another $\frac{1}{8}$ in deep cut of leaf material away. I repeated this process several times until I had raised the berries to about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{8}$ in above the leaves.

11 Once the berries are defined, begin shaping them, using both a No.1 flat gouge and a 1in straight knife. I began by cutting little faceted chamfers around the edge and gradually removing more and more stock until each berry was nicely rounded over. Ensure the knife is razor sharp or you risk pulling on the end grain. Initially, my plan was to drill a $\frac{1}{16}$ in hole and fill with black wax to create the terminal black dot at the end of the berry, but I decided it would be too distracting. In the end, I left the berries unadorned, but you may well disagree with me and opt for some decoration in this area.

12 When shaping the faces of the holly leaves, I opted to keep a fair bit of tool marking visible and rather than engraving distinct veins, just let a prominent midrib define the flow of the leaf. I also endeavoured to curl the edges of each leaf upwards a bit as real holly leaves tend to do. For the shaping and curving I used No.9 sweep gouges (a 7mm and a 10mm).

13 This detail shot shows how I hollowed the leaf between the midrib and the edges to achieve some depth and a bit of 'action'. With the edges curved upwards a bit, I further shaped each little point a bit more to make them each slightly different in terms of how much curve they have.

14 The cross-grain leaf presented some additional problems with the short grain, which can pull up a bit and chip out if you are not cautious. Use a really sharp gouge to cut across the grain. I found it best to clear the centre point of each hollow down to its lowest depth and then fair down from either side.

15 & 16 Once the leaves are shaped to your satisfaction, you can tidy up the berries. I used a small file and some very fine sandpaper to get rid of the last of my knife facets and to ensure the berry appeared uniformly smooth. If you are deft with a file, you will likely not need sandpaper, but I found some 320 grit came in handy to really tidy up the berries. You might also want to slightly undercut the berries with the tip of a straight knife to give them a bit more roundness and depth.

Undercutting for effect

16 Undercutting the carving brings more vibrancy to the leaves and makes them appear much lighter and more delicate. I used my bent knife to rough this area away, leaving the leaves about $\frac{3}{16}$ in thick through the centre and tapering down to about $\frac{1}{16}$ in along the edges. If you don't have a bent/hook knife, you can undertake this operation with a stout straight knife and a gouge or two. Leave sufficient space around the central section for the candleholder and also leave an unfinished area of about $\frac{3}{16}$ in to $\frac{1}{2}$ in at the tip of each leaf. Keeping these four areas flat and uncarved will allow the carving to sit flatly and securely on the table.



17 After all the roughing out was completed on the back faces of the leaves, I raised the midrib of the leaf and then put a bit of effort into making sure the rest was neatly carved without bumps or raised areas with an even texture of cuts from the blade. Again, I wanted the faceting of the knife cuts to bring the area some vitality, even though it will seldom be viewed. As with the front face, the cross-grain leaf posed a few problems, but shallow cutting with a sharp blade ensured I avoided chipping out any areas.



18 I confess that I wasn't super brave about undercutting the edges of the leaves and so left about $\frac{1}{16}$ - $\frac{1}{8}$ in of material at the edges. I was worried the fine points might become too weak and chip off if I undercut them to an extreme. If you are braver than me, with a steadier hand and keener eye, you might be able to really undercut that edge and create look of an actual thin leaf. I used a fine straight knife to gently cut this edge section, but a broad chisel or flat gouge might work just as well.



19 The final bit of detailing on the leaves involved cutting a little incision along under the leaf and parallel to the bottom of the holder to 'thin' the leaf's appearance where the wood thickens out again to form the tripod platform the holder stands on. This was a bit trickier than it looks because you are cutting through a lot of end grain and the knife has a tendency to wander off line. Take your time and aim to create groove about $\frac{1}{16}$ in deep and wide.



20 Finally, give the circular central section one last going over to ensure it is nicely rounded with cleanly cut sides and a gently chamfer along the edge which will contact the table or mantelpiece. Be cautious not to cut too much side stock away as you will risk breaking through into the hole which will contain the candle.

21 I brushed on a couple of coats of penetrating oil to bring up some colour tone and to hopefully protect the piece against spilled wax staining it. A generous coat of beeswax polish applied a few days after the final oil coat has cured (about three or four coats with a good four days to cure) ensures the best possible finish. ▶





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BDWCA NEWS & EVENTS



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2010, Avocet by Kathleen Winn

As I write this, we are three weeks away from our Annual Show and Competition – the Festival of Bird Art – which is always held on the second full weekend in September – this year the 11th and 12th September 2021, at its normal venue, the Agricultural Centre in Bakewell, Derbyshire, and my 17 year old granddaughter is working hard to complete her entry in time!

That set me thinking and remembering the youth carvers who have competed since I got involved in writing this article for our Association. In 2009 Kathleen Winn won Gold, and Best Youth, for her carving of a Great Spotted Woodpecker, and in 2010 she repeated her success with an Avocet, in both years she was the only youth carver competing.

Kathleen moved up to Novice in 2011, where she was awarded Bronze for her Marble Teal, but we had three youth competitors! Two youngsters, both from our Kent group, were awarded Silver and Bronze for their carvings of Dunlins, and James Langford, with three entries, won two Bronze awards and Gold, and Best Youth, for his Wren.

2012 and James was back again, with four carvings, three of which took Gold and one Bronze, and his Common Quail also won him the Best Youth trophy. There were three other youth competitors, with a total of seven carvings, the most we have ever had on the Youth table!

In 2013 James moved up to Novice, entering a Red-legged Partridge, and not only did he get a Gold but also won the trophy for Best Novice Carving! There was one young youth carver that year, from our Thames Valley group, who won Bronze for his Dunlin.

In 2014 Joe Chappell took Gold and Best Youth with his half size Long



© HARRY HARTSHORNE FOR THE BDWCA

2009, Great Spotted Woodpecker by Kathleen Winn

Eared Owl sitting on a book, a carving he did as part of his GCSE course in Art and Graphics. There was nothing the following year, and then in 2016 my granddaughter started competing at the age of 12, improving each year until in 2019 she won Gold, and Best Youth, but she was the only youth competitor each year!

As carvers we all know that we need to bring young people into the craft if it is going to survive, so what inspired these young people to pursue the art form? The answer is that they all had mentors, people to encourage them and help them develop their skills! Do you know any young people who have shown an interest in carving and could you help them?



© RAY LOUGHIN FOR THE BDWCA

2011, Wren by James Langford



© RAY LOUGHIN FOR THE BDWCA

2012, Common Quail by James Langford



© RAY LOUGHIN FOR THE BDWCA

2014, Long Eared Owl on book by Joe Chappell



The competition tables before the show opened on the Sunday

How did it go?

...And now it is two weeks after the Show, and the good news is that we had three youth carvers compete, my granddaughter, Leah, and the two granddaughters of another carver who had seen him working on one of his entries and asked if they could enter something. Leah won Gold and the Best Youth trophy with her interpretive carving of a flying Red Kite and will be competing at Novice level next year, and the girls were both awarded Silver, hopefully they will be competing again next year. What did the three of them have in common? I'm sure you've guessed, they had mentors!

With the uncertainty over Covid still affecting some people's attitude to going to events visitor numbers were down, and only thirty carvers competed, but fortunately some of those carvers had definitely been busy during the two years since the last show and there was a great selection of carvings on display. Congratulations and thanks for helping us have a great show go to all of them, and a special welcome to the three new members who competed!

David Askew won the top awards of British Bird Carving Champion and the BDWCA Championships with his beautifully carved and painted carving of a Curlew, and the Runner-up to the British Champion was awarded to Paul Tully for his interpretive carving of Two Crested Grebes. Paul, who has been working his way up the classes, winning Best Novice in 2018 and Best Intermediate in 2019, won Best Intermediate again, together with the Artistry Award, and will be competing at Advanced level next year, we will be very interested to see what he enters!

I will write more about the show, and the winning carvings, in the next issue, but special mention must go to one of our new members – Stephen Rose. Stephen won Gold, Best Novice and Best Newcomer for his Eurasian Hobby standing over a House Martin, together with a Silver and two Bronzes for his other entries and will be competing at Intermediate level next year.

Pictures of all the carvings entered in this year's Show are on the Bakewell Show page of our website – www.bdwca.org.uk – as well as pictures from the previous few years.



British Champion 2021, Curlew by David Askew

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



Baby Penguin (approx. one third size) by Chloe Smyth



Emperor Penguin (approx. one sixth size) by Hannah Smyth



Best Intermediate, Two Great Crested Grebes (75% lifesize) by Paul Tully



Best Youth, Flying Red Kite (approx 20% lifesize) by Leah Hastie



Best Novice, Eurasian Hobby standing over House Martin by Stephen Rose

From the community

A collection of letters and news from the woodcarving community



BeaverCraft Tools are generously offering one of these high-quality leather aprons as a prize!

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To be with a chance to win, please email your name, address and phone number to WCEditorial@thegmcgroup.com. The closing date for entries is 30th December and the winner will be announced in the next issue. BeaverCraft Tools will contact the winner of the draw to arrange the delivery of the apron.



Tortoise & jockey



I thought you may like to see this carving I have just finished – I liked the idea of the money box carving in the magazine and this is my interpretation of the same

idea. The size is 12in in length by 8in width and 8in height. The carving is made of lime with a mahogany base.

Regards Alex Garfield

Eagle eyed



I haven't done a lot of carving over the past year. I demonstrate at a local plantation museum. <https://hendersonhallwv.com>. I've been working on an eagle during the demos. I find a large carving using large tools allows a better experience for the visitors rather than doing smaller carving with knives. Most of my time through the

pandemic I have been working with antique carousels. I am the National Carousel Association (NCA) President and NCA Census Chairman. www.carousels.org. As Census chair I maintain and NCA database of operating carousels in North America. <https://carousels.org/NCAcensus.html>

Patrick Wentzel

2021 Carve In 4/5: A huge success



Becky Lusk, Carve In 4/5 Featured Carver, setting up their display space.

On Saturday, 21 August, an amazing group of woodcarvers participated in Carve In 4/5 @ the Bekkum. Because Covid cancelled the 2020 show, the organisers made this year's event bigger and better than the previous three by reaching farther into the community of Midwest carvers. Some came as far as 200 miles to show their carvings and demonstrate their skills.

More than 50 flat-plane, caricature, chip, bark and realistic carvers participated in this year's event. Becky Lusk, a Vesterheim Gold Medal Carver, was this year's Featured Carver. She worked on an acanthus carving throughout the day so people who attended the show as well as the other carvers could watch her skilful techniques. Becky's husband, Mike Lusk, is co-owner of their business, Lusk Scandia Woodworks, where he sells an assortment of handmade wood items used by rosemalers. Mike also demonstrated at Carve In 4/5, showing the crowd how he makes bent wood tine boxes.

Since the first Carve In, the event has grown every year, attracting more carvers as well as attendees. Many people come not only to see the amazing carvings on display but to watch the carvers and purchase carvings. Several of the carvers, like Barb Thompson, spend most of the day helping people learn basic skills to promote the craft and hobby of carving.

A highlight of the event is the free raffle when everyone has a chance to win. More than 25 donations from local businesses, as well as many carving tools donated by various companies, are always coveted prizes given at the end of the day.

Although the Bekkum Carve In was delayed by Covid to August this year, it will return to its regular April schedule in 2022 when we hope to see you on April 23rd. Event founder and organiser, John Sutton, announced at this year's event that April Bird, a very talented carver from Madison, WI, will be the 2022 Featured Carver. April carves in many styles but is known throughout the Midwest as an exceptionally talented bark carver. We are sure many will be coming to see her and the rest of the carvers who have already signed up to participate.



Becky Lusk, Carve In 4/5 Featured Carver, with her Vesterheim winning carving of cows 'Frozen' and Christmas ornaments.



Carving done by Marc Te Ronde



Barb Thompson, a wonderful carver who spends most of the day at Carve In @ the Bekkum teaching carving skills to anyone interested in learning.



Mike Lusk demonstrating how he bends wood for tine boxes.



An example of bark carving done by April Bird

2022 Carve In 6

When: April 23, 2022 at 10am – 4pm.

Where: Bekkum Memorial Library 206 North Main Street, Westby, Wisconsin 54667, USA

Admission: Free – donations encouraged

Email: lbarnfarms@gmail.com (John Sutton) bekkum@wrlsweb.org

Selecting timber for carving

Steve Bisco shows what defects to look out for when choosing wood for projects

When we first embark on the hobby of woodcarving, we probably focus more on the carving than the wood, but there are a number of common defects in wood that can cause problems when carving and disfigure the result, so it is important to choose wood that is free from these issues.

This short article gives you a brief, practical overview of what to look out for when buying wood for carving. For simplicity, I am focusing on oak and lime, these being the most commonly used carving woods in the UK, but the same principles apply to many other woods.

Sourcing and drying options

Timber naturally shrinks as it dries, and the degree of dryness affects the stability of the wood. You can buy wood as:

Green: freshly cut or in the early stages of drying

Air-dried: dried naturally in the air for several years

Kiln-dried: dried quickly and thoroughly in a controlled manner in a heated kiln.

Wood you buy at estate sawmills and wood fairs will mainly have been cut within the past year or two and will be green or partially dried (**photo 1**). These boards are generally good value, but see the advice below concerning warping and cupping.

Specialist craft wood suppliers can usually supply kiln-dried stock up to 100mm thickness (kiln drying only works up to this thickness) and some thicker, air-dried stock for sculptural carving. This will usually be fairly stable.

Specialist commercial hardwood suppliers can supply top quality kiln-dried hardwoods, but they are expensive.

Oak is easiest to carve if it is 'green' or air-dried for about three years, but warping can be an issue. Kiln-dried oak is more stable but can be quite hard and brittle. You have to decide how much warping you can tolerate in your project.

Knots, shakes and other problems

Generally, carvings do not benefit from the elaborate figuring, burrs or knots that may be attractive for woodturning and veneers. Such features distract the eye from the carved pattern. Carving wood generally needs to be fairly straight-grained and free of conspicuous markings, and other parts of a board should be discarded (**photo 2**).

Knots are a particular problem as they compromise the structure of the wood. They are harder than the surrounding wood and have a distorted grain pattern, frequently with deep splits and hollows (**photo 3**). The wood around the knot often has latent tension and compression strains, being the site of a branch,



1 This is a good flat 'green oak' board from an estate sawmill with fairly straight grain and only one small knot



2 This oak board has noticeable knots and shakes in several places and only one-third of it is usable for carving



3 Knots tend to have deep splits and very distorted grain, which would disfigure a carving



4 Knotted areas often go deep into the wood and are honeycombed with splits, hollows, bark inclusions and soft wood



5 On many woods, like this oak, the sapwood (right of picture) is paler in colour than the heartwood and will show up in the carving

and these may cause movement after carving. Knots often go right through the board and, in the case of burrs and other very knotty areas, the subsurface wood is honeycombed with fissures and sapwood (**photo 4**).

Sapwood, the outer layer of the tree, is often paler and softer than the heartwood, especially in oak, and this should generally be excluded from the carving (**photo 5**). Sapwood is also prone to woodworm.

Warping, shrinking and cupping

As timber dries the fibres shrink more in their width than in their length, and the newer wood near the outside of the trunk shrinks more than the older wood in the middle. Exposed end grain at the ends of boards allows the end fibres to shrink more than those further into the board, causing 'shakes' to develop at the ends (**photo 6**).

Most logs are sawn 'through and through' from the circular trunk, working from top to bottom (**photo 7**) so the radial grain varies in each board. In the middle of the log the radial grain will be roughly at right-angles to the surface of the board, and these boards are less likely to warp (**photo 8**). At the top and bottom of the log, however, the radial grain is at a tangent to the board surface, and these boards are likely to warp into a bow shape, known as 'cupping' (**photo 9**).

You may hear the word 'quartersawn' bandied about as being the best timber to

get for stability. It is, but it is cut in a way that produces a lot of waste and it is therefore very expensive. It is normally reserved for top-quality furniture and I've not found it easily available for carving projects.

Warping needs to be avoided on flat panels, but it is less noticeable on pierced carvings with irregular edges (**photo 10**). It is of very little importance in lime wood foliage carvings, which are made up of very thinly carved sections assembled together (**photo 12**).

Colour differences

Individual pieces of wood can have significant colour differences, even from the same tree. This is not usually a problem if the carving is made from just one piece of wood, or if it is to be painted or gilded, but it can be detrimental on bare-wood carvings made from more than one piece of wood.

This is a particular problem with lime wood foliage carvings in the Grinling

Gibbons style, which are often built up in several layers. Lime wood varies from pale cream to a pinky-brown, often with grey and darker brown streaks when cut from the outer edge of the branch (**see photos 11 & 12**).

On other woods, an uneven colour over the panel surface may impact on the appearance of the carved pattern. ▶

Further reading

The characteristics of various species of wood, and the way in which it is sawn, dried, and milled is a huge subject, far beyond the scope of this short article, so I strongly recommend that you buy Terry Porter's *Wood - Identification and Use* (GMC Publications), which will both fascinate and inform you.



6

Thicker timbers will usually show shrinkage shakes at the ends, even when sealed, so cut off and discard the ends before use



7

Most boards are cut straight from the circular trunk, working from top to bottom, so the radial grain varies in each board



8

The radial grain on this board is mainly at right-angles to the surface, minimising distortion on this flat Gothic panel



9

Boards cut furthest from the centre of the trunk are prone to 'cupping' as the outer growth rings shrink more than the inner ones



10

Warping is not so much of a problem on pierced panels with convoluted edges as it tends not to show



11

Many pieces of wood differ in colour, even from the same tree, as in these lime wood sections



12

Colour differences can be problematical in bare wood lime carvings made in several layers



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ammonites,
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**Dave Western introduces
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(reverse) spoons**

Carved trivet

A burnt ring on a table tells many stories for Kevin Alviti...



When my wife and I bought our first house we'd maxed out our budget and although we'd both been saving things for our 'bottom drawer', we were still short of many items. A dining room table and chairs were among the more major items, so we hunted through all the local secondhand and antique shops until we found a set we could afford. It was cheap, as dark wood was far from fashionable at the time, and had carved, sweeping legs.

Our first meal with friends showed us something else we were lacking. I put out all the hot food in containers on place mats so people could help themselves. Now, I'm not sure what these place mats were made from, but it turns out they conducted heat better than some of my grandma's old aluminium pans. When they'd left and I tidied up we had some huge rings branded on our 'new' table.

I learnt from 'our' mistakes (my wife says the mistake lies solely with me) and used trivets forever more to protect against hot pans. But now our family is getting bigger, or hungrier at least, with three children who frequently

try to eat us out of house and home, I've had to buy bigger pans to cook the quantities they demand, so need bigger trivets to match and protect my homemade oak kitchen table.

I'd seen some beautiful old carved trivets around and always thought they'd make a great project as I could have the size I wanted. I always keep a folder of interesting designs and pictures I've seen that might inspire a future project. One that I kept going back to was William Morris' (from the Arts & Crafts movement) Lily & Pomegranate design. I thought that a simple design influenced by this would work really well – it should also fit his ethos of: 'Have nothing in your house which you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.'

For the project, I sorted through my offcuts and stumbled upon some lime, which I knew would carve easily. I have to confess that, in hindsight, this might not have been the best wood for this design. A light wood is going to show marks and heat damage far easier and some of the fine detailed bits might be a

bit more fragile than if I'd done them in a slightly lower relief and harder wood. Twenty years as a carpenter and I can still pick the wrong wood for a job.



COURTESY OF THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

Things you will need**Materials:**

- 190mm x 190mm x 22mm of chosen wood for carving
- 25mm x 25mm x 200mm of timber for the feet

Tools:

- PPE and RPE
- Planer thicknesser (optional)
- Pillar drill (optional)
- Sander
- Lathe (optional)

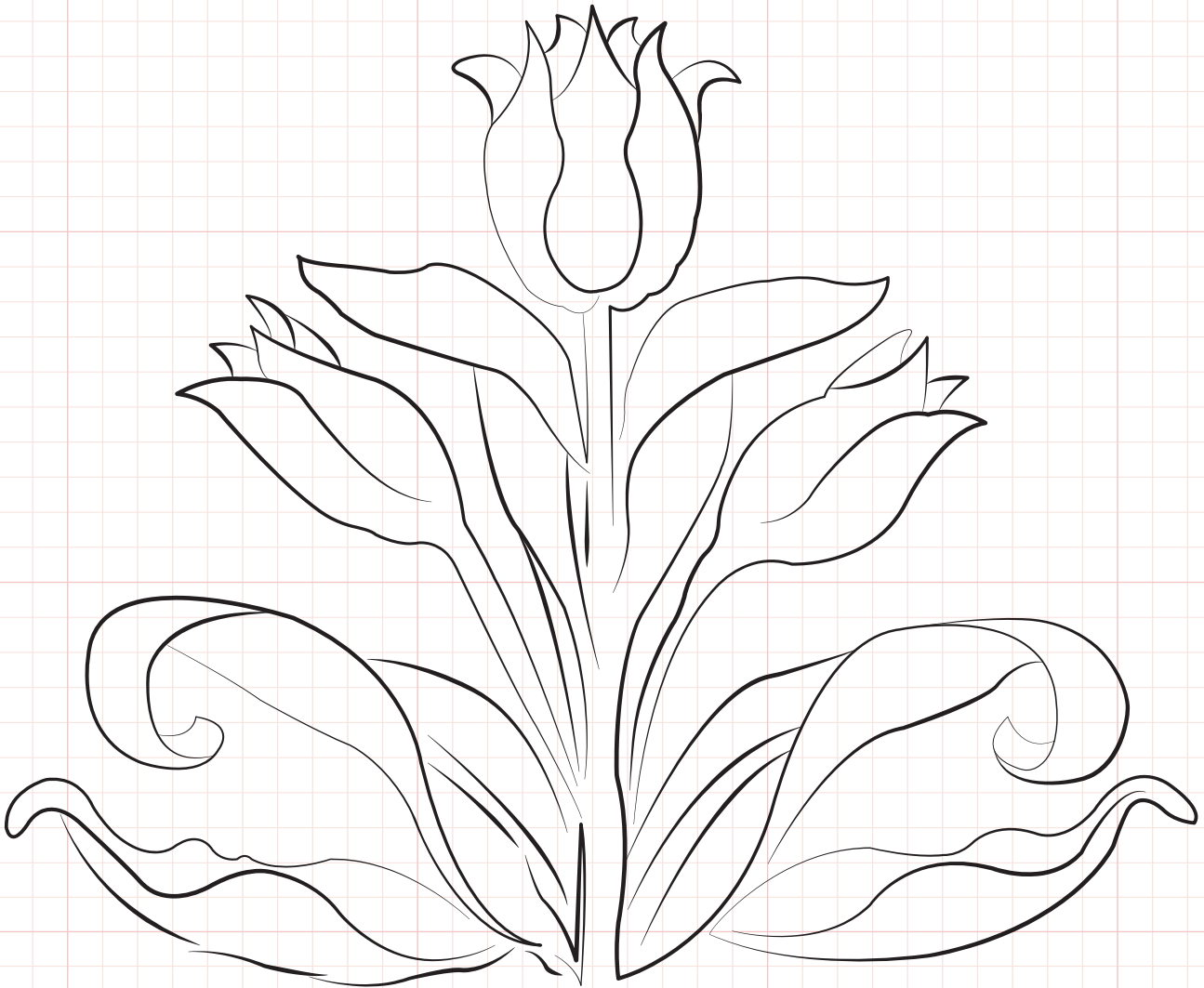
Hand tools:

- 12mm Forstner bit
- Smoothing or block plane
- Tenon saw
- No.3 gouge 12mm
- No.3 fantail gouge 4mm
- No.4, 2mm gouge
- No.4, 4mm gouge
- No.4, 6mm gouge
- No.4, 14mm gouge
- No.6, 12mm gouge
- No.6, 20mm gouge

- No.8, 10mm gouge
- No.8, 12mm gouge
- No.10, 2mm gouge
- 6mm straight double bevel chisel
- 13mm straight double bevel chisel
- No.39, V-tool 60°

Lathe tools :

- Roughing gouge
- Skew chisel
- Parting tool
- Narrow parting tool
- Spindle gouge



1 Board selection – as with any carving, try to make things as easy as possible for yourself. Pick a board with no knots if possible and clear of any defects. Use the surfacer to plane one side then thickness down to a suitable depth. I went for 22mm.

2 I took a bit of time to experiment with how big the trivet needed to be. I wanted this to work for my two large frying pans but not be so huge that it takes up too much room in storage/display. I cut it down to size, ending up with 190mm square of wood.

3 Add some centrelines then mark out your drawing. You can either do this freehand or do like I did and use tracing paper to sketch on to. I drew out my original design on the tracing paper then turned it over and drew over the lines again. This leaves a faint outline on the wood.

4 Go over the drawing again and make sure it's how you like it. Some of the finer details might be left out of the final carving, but that can be a decision to make while carving and seeing how the wood behaves. Now is a good time to secure your work. I like to make a small jig to hold it with a simple wedge, this way if I need to rotate the work I can do so easily.

5 Using the V-tool, start by carving a shallow line as a border around the outside. It's surprising how straight you can keep it just by hand.

6 Continue using the V-tool to roughly outline the flower. I can't stress enough that it really only needs to be roughly here, we will outline properly later so just go somewhere near the drawing so we can lower the background. The aim is to eventually lower it by about 6mm, but don't attempt to do this in one pass.

Lower the background

7 Using a No.6, 13mm gouge, start to lower the background. As I wanted the background to be heavily textured, I wanted the background to fall from the border towards the detail in the middle. Try not to make too heavy a cut in one go, start near the carving and then work back. I did this in two steps, going back to outline again once I'd removed some of the background then removing more background. This is the perfect time to rotate the carving as you work your way round it.

8 Now is the time for some better outlining. Using chisels to match the curve where possible, use slicing cuts to outline. I use my upper body weight and gently push the chisel forward, lifting the front edge at an angle, almost like a knife.





9



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9 These slicing cuts are so important. Don't think that by just pushing the chisel downwards or striking it the wood will hold on to its detail. The smaller, finer bits like the tips of the flowers will easily break if you do. Controlled slicing cuts let you work through the wood slowly; reducing the risk of bits breaking off (ask me how I know...).

10 While cutting the sides fairly vertical, try to remove as much background as possible between the details. I used my smallest gouges here – I found a small, No.4 fantail to be ideal to get in the gaps, as well as a No.4, 2mm gouge, but use what you have to try to clear the background.



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11 When you feel you have outlined enough, it's time to turn attention back to the background. As we have already lowered it, now it is time to use a flatter chisel and start levelling the ridges left between the gouge marks. Because it's outlined properly, the background can go right up to the carving.

12 Using a narrow, U-shaped veining chisel, in this case a No.10, 2mm, start creating grooves in the background. I angled mine all, roughly, to the centre, making long, steady cuts. This way it creates a feature but not one that is too overpowering. With the skew chisel or the small fantail, then go round and nick off these shavings where they meet the carving.



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13 While creating these grooves, make things as easy as possible for yourself by rotating the workpiece round rather than having to work at odd angles.

14 With the background now semi-complete, it's time to start shaping the carving. I started on the largest flower, shaping the outsides to slope down towards the background and create the impression that it's a 3D shape.

15 The middle petal is set in from the ones either side of it. Using a gouge that matches the shape, here a No.8, 10mm, press down into the wood and then, using a flatter gouge, cut the vertical lines upwards as well. Lower the middle section slightly to give the appearance of depth.



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16 Working your way down the carving, now start to shape the other two flowers and the leaves. Slice across the leaf and then lower one side of it using a small, shallow gouge (No.4, 6mm) to give the leaf some movement and twist. I marked the high points of the carving with shading so I wouldn't get confused and reduce the wrong area.

17 As this is quite a symmetrical piece, I suggest doing one part of one side, then it's a mirror image. It doesn't have to be perfect, the eye is surprisingly forgiving when it comes to symmetry. Make sure you round over the stem, I used a No.3, 4mm fantail, and I also added a rib detail to the middle set of leaves. You could detail the leaves much heavier than this if you liked.

18 When you are happy the carving is complete (sorting out the background to stop it looking wispy and to make it clean is what takes the time), add a chamfer around the outside to soften the edges, also remove the arris from the back side. You could use a router for this but it's easily done with a sharp hand plane (and if, like me, you like to justify your purchases of vintage wooden planes...).

19 You could leave the project there and finish it, but I wanted to add some small feet to keep it off the table. Obviously, these could be carved by hand, but turning them on the lathe was a fairly quick job to do. Start by getting some 25 x 25mm timber, marking the middle and mounting it between centres on the lathe.

20 Rough the blank into a cylinder using a roughing gouge. I turned mine to 25mm diameter.

21 I take any opportunity to practise with the skew – so make the cylinder as smooth and even as possible using this tool. If you struggle, sometimes raising the toolrest slightly can help.

22 Now mark 10mm increments on the blank. I think it's always wise to turn a couple of extra feet with something like this if you have enough wood, so mark enough for six. Each foot will be 10mm deep and have a 10mm tenon.



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23 Set a gauge to the width of the drill bit you'll be using as a mortise, I used 12mm. Then, with your parting tool and gauge, turn down every other section to this width to create the tenons.

24 Using a spindle gouge, round over each foot. This tool can take some practise but it is used in a sweeping and lifting motion and it is fairly easy to form the round-over required. Sand these edges up to a smooth finish.

25 Either use a thin parting tool to gently thin out between the feet you've just created to help with separating them or just take it from the lathe and saw between them. Sand up any cut edges.



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26 Set up the pillar drill with a 12mm Forstner bit and set the depth to make sure it will go no deeper than your carving – 10mm was perfect for mine and allowed enough room for the tenons on the feet with no trimming. I set them in 20mm from each side as I didn't want them to be seen from above.

27 Fettle any feet that won't quite fit in their tenons if they need it. Make sure the back is sanded and clean of any pencil marks. Then glue all the feet in place. If they are a tight fit there should be no need for clamps. Check that the trivet sits flat on the ground and doesn't rock on its legs.



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28 Apply your finish of choice using a brush to get into all the heavily detailed areas. ▮

FINISH

This is a potential minefield. I ended up using raw linseed oil on mine, which will take a long time to dry. I know that the hot pans will darken the wood with age, and I'm fine with that. I'd be fine if they even got burnt around the edges as I feel it would soon build up a lovely patina of colourations and show it is a used item. But I understand that it's not the look everyone wants. Many of the woodworking forums have the question of heat-resistant finishes and don't come up with many answers other than some in the States using what they call 'mineral oil', as it's a non-drying food-safe oil. Mineral oil is sold in the UK as liquid paraffin wax (often in animal feed stores as laxative for cows). As it's petroleum derived, even though it is food safe and widely used (especially for chopping boards), I'm not that keen on using it. It might be one for some experimentation, but I feel oils that soak in rather than sit on the surface will do better.



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Sharpening clinic – adze you like it

Nic Westermann sharpens an adze



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NIC WESTERMANN

This month's article finds me attending the Bowl Gathering, a festival celebrating the handmade wooden bowl and other related treen. I was looking forward to trying out a few large adzes I had forged, doing some final tweaks on the edge-to-handle angle. This is absolutely critical with adzes – a degree either way can make a huge difference to how they cut. As I was saying to some other smiths, there are no bad adze heads, only badly fitted handles.

We had some superb freshly felled beech to use, and it was nice to put on a 'have a go' session for two reasons – first, there's a lot to hollow in bowls this size and many hands make light work, and second, watching other people use my tools teaches me a lot. The bench the bowl sits on makes a difference to how an adze handles and watching carvers of different heights taught me more about the ergonomics of the set-up as whole.



Even a perfectly set up adze won't feel good if the bench is the wrong height for you



I was hoping I would find a tool in need of sharpening that could be the subject of this article and I wasn't disappointed. I have to say though that the response from you, the readers, to my call for blunt tools in need of attention has been underwhelming, so if you have a tool you would like to be featured in a future article please do get in touch. I have had feedback that as I run a professional workshop, I was using tools not available to everyone, so thought it would be good to take the sharpening clinic outside. I brought a basket of likely looking abrasives but would have to make do with what I could find or borrow this time round.

Rosie Mockford has been woodworking for about three-and-a-half years. She teaches spoon carving and green woodwork for Cotswolds National Landscape on its Rural Skills programme. She supports Dave Cockcroft to run the Gloucestershire Spoon Club. Rosie assists on courses and events at Brook House Woods. She also teaches independently and is passionate about increasing access to green woodwork for people who might not typically have access. To this end, she also works with Pathcarvers. Rosie has received support and mentoring from Dave Cockcroft, Yoav Elkayam and Amy Leake among others and is forever grateful for this.

Rosie had been given a Svante Djarv adze by Aimee, who was also attending the bowl gathering. It was lovely to hear that she had been gifted a large selection of tools from a third carver who was reaching the end of their career, and she chose to pass on this bounty to carvers who would make good use of them, as I know Rosie will. The Bowl Gathering, while not free to attend, is refreshingly non-commercial, people share knowledge and it seems tools freely. It is my favourite show of the year.

The adze was an early example of Svante Djarv's work and I could see it needed a bit of attention.

First I did some test cuts to establish a baseline—I was pleased that the original correct handle-to-edge geometry was still intact, as the tool basically swung well, neither burying into the wood nor bouncing off the bevel. This is quite an involved topic, and I could write a whole article on setting up, testing and altering this vital interaction.

These test cuts were okay, you could see a few track marks which corresponded with the nicks that could be seen in the edge. But the adze was quite blunt and didn't cut very far with each stroke, so it was hard to join to make a smooth coherent groove as was my aim.

However, even with the edge sharpened and the nicks removed I felt that the long, flat bevel would hinder the adze carving a deep hollow. There have been so many images in previous articles about flat bevels binding in a concave surface and how to convex a bevel without altering the edge angle that I will spare you more. Instead, I have some close-ups of the actual tool and the way I achieved this.



Svante Djarv adze as Rosie received it



Often a test cut will show up edge dependencies that are not easily seen on the tool itself



Nicks in the edge—in this case the edge damage was plain to see



Ridge formed by the back of the bevel that needs to be removed



Rough grinding outside bevel



Grinding the inside bevel



Back of the bevel blended in without altering the edge angle



Inside bevel rough ground

I wanted to remove the step at the back of the bevel, and, although this could have been achieved with a file, or even an angle grinder, it turns out I had easy access to a ProEdge (as ever) and so used that. I concentrated on this ridge, only just wanting to kiss the edge on this coarse grit, all I was aiming to do at this stage was create clearance, the actual surface finish really doesn't matter.

I then ground the inside bevel, which was actually quite steep and so pretty short. This needed little work, I was just trying to clean this up and take out the obvious nicks, again there was no attempt to change any angles. I used a cordless drill clamped in a vice, using one of our H&H abrasive wheels and universal mandrels, as ever working with the wheel moving away from the edge, which is imperative when you use felt wheels.

This set the basic bevel geometry, the geometry of the edge was untouched at this stage. Next I refined the grinds on the inside and outside using finer grits, and finally I used a felt wheel to polish out the remaining scratches. I had only brought convex wheels, which weren't ideal for polishing the outside of the adze as the contact point was very small, but it was still easier than stropping by hand.



Polishing inside bevel



Polishing outside bevel



The polish is nice but incidental really, the smoothed outline helps the adze to hollow efficiently

This process was relatively quick, the whole thing—including taking numerous shots at every stage with my phone steadfastly refusing to focus (due, it turns out, to a cracked lens) took only an hour and a quarter. Test cuts were then taken, and you can see how the track lines had disappeared and the cut was a lot cleaner, joining up to make a smooth groove. In all honesty, the groove we cut was fairly straight, as it was a big bowl, this meant the clearance created by blending in the outside bevel wasn't really needed. However, small, light adzes like these will often be used on smaller-diameter bowls and at that point the clearance will be needed. You can see just such a bowl Rosie carved with the freshly sharpened adze. The Bowl Gathering was a wonderful festival to attend. It was really fulfilling to breathe life into an older tool and then see what it can go on to create, hopefully for many more years to come. ▮



A marked improvement in the cut after sharpening!

THE SHARPENING CLINIC IS OPEN

As the name suggests, I would like to help carvers with sharpening problems—this will allow me to focus my articles on tools that are relevant to you, the readership.

What I am looking for is readers to send a brief email with a description of the tool, the sharpening equipment they are using and 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**

Cherry crab bowl

The shape of this common crustacean lends itself perfectly to a bowl decoration, says Zoë Gertner



One of the childhood joys of seaside holidays is to go crabbing off the quay. Armed with fishing lines, pieces of breakfast bacon and bits of fish, as a child I spent many happy crabbing hours with friends, when the days seemed long, sunny and carefree...

Crabs are not nice characters. They scavenge, fight each other with their large claws, sometimes losing one during

the process, they steal food from each other and squabble with one another. Their gait is odd – it's sideways because their leg joints are designed to swivel so they can creep easily into rock crevices and cracks to hide; and perhaps also so they don't tangle their legs together as they move about in the rockpools. That said, being the shapely scavengers of the seabed, crabs have a fascination of their own and my 'generic crab' will fit nicely inside my bowl.

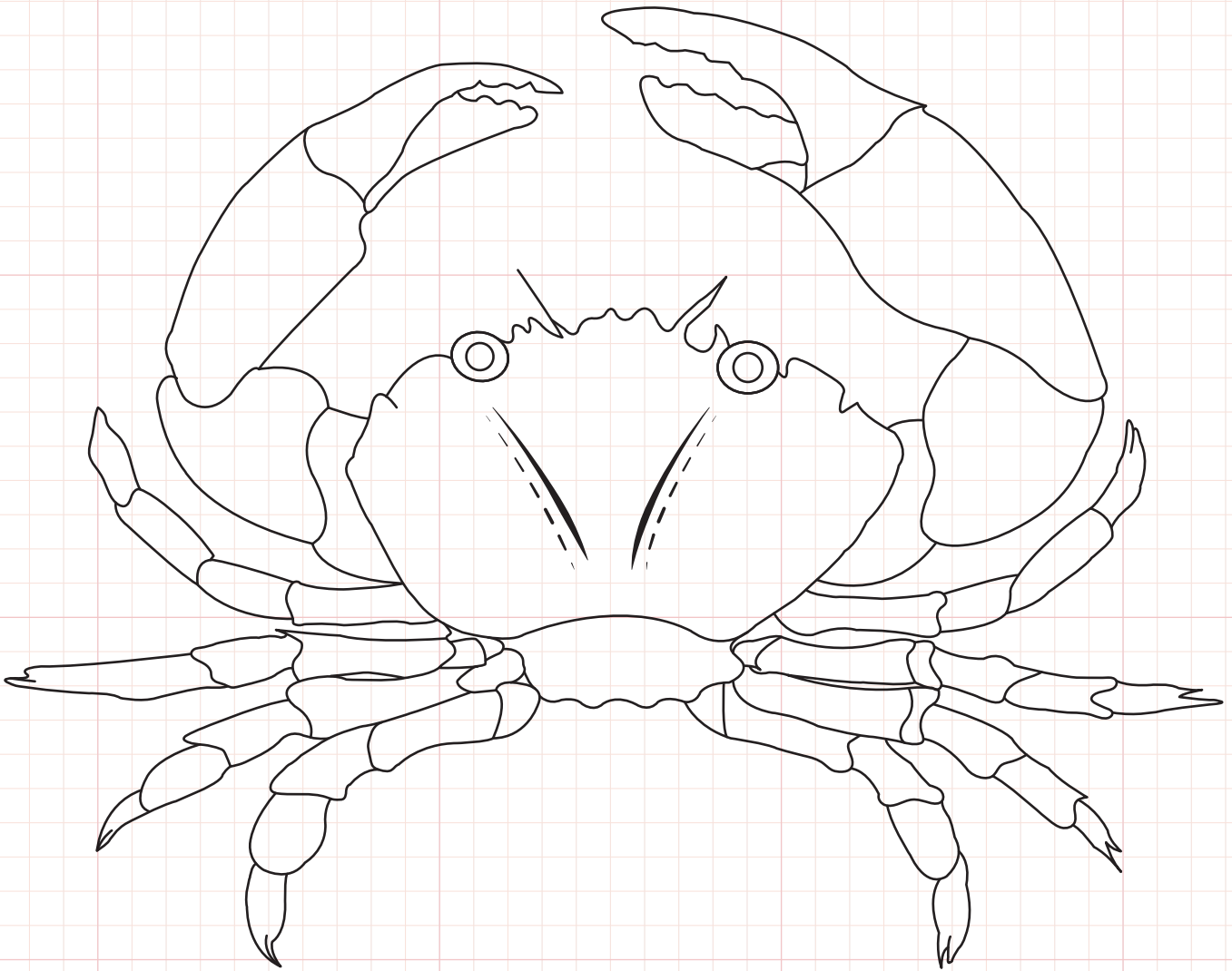
PREPARATION

From my collection of lovely, chunky wooden bowls that I acquired some time ago, their shapes somewhat distorted over time, I chose one of a pair that had been turned in cherry wood, approximately 15in diameter and about 2in thickness, including the rim. Accumulated dust and debris was removed with a soft brush and a damp lint-free cloth, ready to draw the crab inside it.



Things you will need**Tools:**

- PPE and RPE
- No.39, ¼in and ½in V-tool
- No.3, ½in, ¾in, ¼in, ⅛in gouges
- No.5, ¼in and ⅛in gouge
- No.7, 8 or 9, ¼in gouge
- No.2, ¼in skew chisel
- Nail punch
- Round punch
- Light hammer
- Scraper (optional)

**1****2****Starting the carving**

1 When carving a bowl of this size I prefer not to use a vice to secure it, but to rest it on a non-slip router mat, nestling it within four sandbags so it can be turned quickly and easily when I need to change the direction of my cuts.

2 Trace or draw the outline of the crab and secure it inside the bowl, preferably with the grain lying horizontally. Using masking tape to hold the drawing, place some transfer or carbon paper beneath, ready to transfer the design to the surface of the bowl. Use a different coloured pencil/pen for tracing the drawing on to the surface and you will easily see the lines you are drawing and whether any have been missed. Check the result inside the bowl and correct it if necessary.



3 The outline of the crab can be cut using the No.39, ¼in V-tool, cutting towards the centre of the bowl from each side, thus with the grain, where possible. It is quicker and more controlled to use a mallet with your V-tool, holding the tool well down the blade so that your hand is close to the cutting edge and resting your wrist and forearm on the work.

4 The crab will now be relieved using sets of opposing cuts. The first set is made by cutting around the legs, claws and shell using No.3 gouges. Rest the cutting edge of the gouge so it is angled against the inner edge of the V channel marking them, and continuing the angle downwards, away from the crab. Be sure to turn the gouge when necessary so your cut matches the shape of the line you are cutting. The first set of cuts is always made before making a second set, the opposing cuts, producing a V channel around the outline which protects it when the background is removed later on.

5 The set of opposing cuts is made starting from a short distance away towards the first set at the same depth and angle where possible. Holding the gouge with its bevel underneath its cutting edge, carefully remove the outer edge of the V channel to the depth of the initial cuts around the crab.

The background

6 Using the No.3, ½in or ¾in gouge, begin your cuts at the middle of the concavity and work your way back up the sides, overlapping your cuts and cutting towards the centre of the bowl from all round until the whole inner surface has been tooled. Repeat with shallow cuts from the opposite side until the original turned surface has been covered with a shiny 'beaten pewter' effect around the crab.

The legs and claws

7 Use the appropriate width No.3 gouges and re-cut around the edge of the shell, inverting where necessary to adjust its shape.

8 Reduce the surface of the legs and the claws next to the shell so they lie beneath its edge, deepening the background closely if needed. With the No.3, ½in gouge, tidy up the spaces between the legs and the edge of the shell and mark in the first articulation across the top of each leg.

9 Invert the gouge and round over both sides of the legs with the No.3, ¼in gouge. By rolling the gouge across and over the leg from each side, cut in the rest of the lines of the articulations along it. Reduce the lower edge of each articulation so it lies beneath its upper edge. At each side of each joint in the angle between it and the background, tilt the corner of the ¼in or ½ No.3 to cut a clean edge, or use a No.2, ¼in skew chisel.

The claws

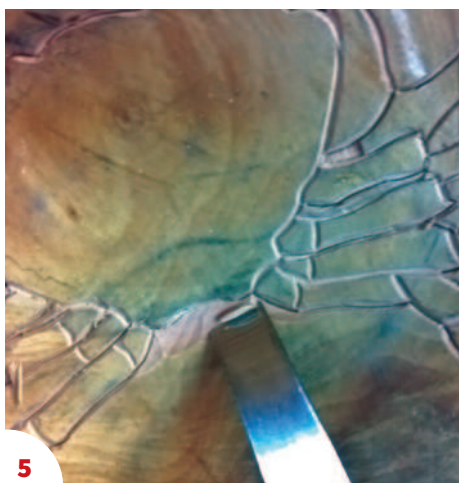
10 Round over the edges of the claws. Cut the articulations and reduce the adjacent surfaces of the lower one to lie beneath that above it. Then smooth the surface of the large claws so that they contrast with the tooled background.



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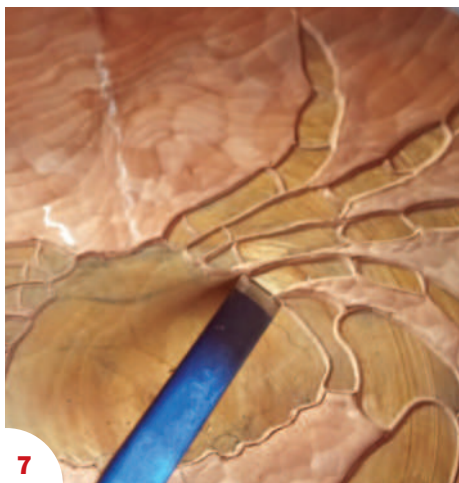
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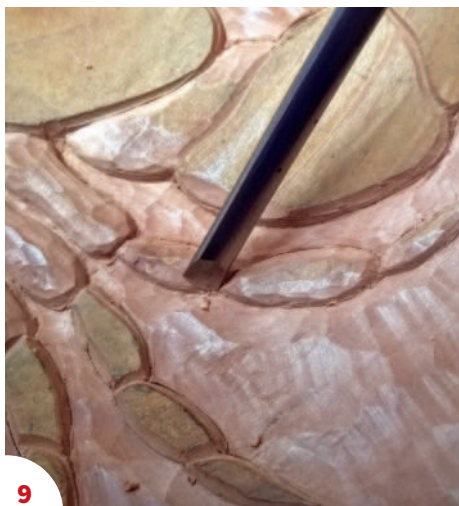
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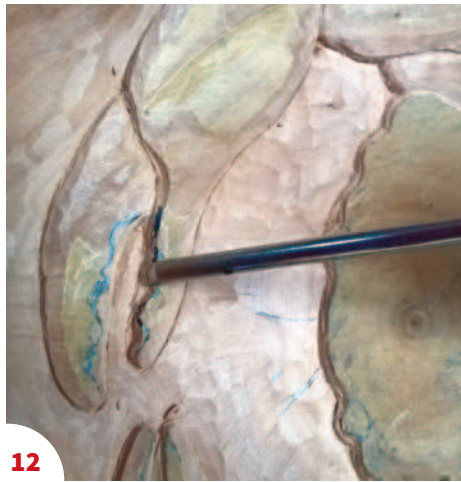
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11 Reduce the ends of the pincers.

12 Then, using the No.3 or 5, 1/8in gouge, cut the indents along their inner edges, inverting the gouge as necessary to shape them, and carefully remove the adjacent background between each indent and between the pincers.

The shell or carapace

13 Round over the edges of the shell with the No.3, 3/8in or 1/2in gouge then, with the No.39, 1/8in V-tool, mark the eyes. As described before, use opposing cuts to relieve them by making the first set using the No.3, 1/8in gouge inverted around each, then with the No.3, 1/4in gouge, bevel beneath the cutting edge to remove the adjacent surface of the shell. Deepen the background in front of the eyes if necessary then, with the No.3 gouges, round each eye into a prominent convexity ready to mark the eyeballs.



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14 Around the back of the shell draw the 'piecrust' edge, the indents or tubercles being smaller between the eyes and larger behind each side of the shell. With the No.7, 8 or 9, 1/4in gouge, cut a shallow groove as far as the first leg each side, matching the path of the groove to the shape of the edge of the shell. Then, using the No.3 or 5, 1/8in gouge, carefully refine each indent along the edge of the shell, finishing each by scooping a small hollow within it to form the piecrust edge along both sides from the eyes to the first leg.



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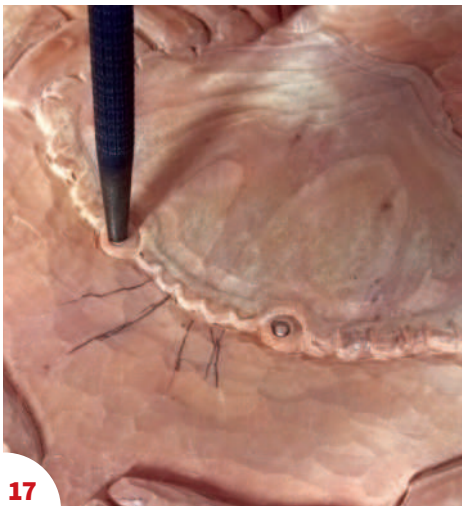
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15 On the surface of the shell cut two shallow grooves running from the back towards each eye to form three lobes, then smooth the surface of the shell so that it contrasts with the tooled background.

16 Starting from the first leg, at the end of the piecrust on each side, cut a V line using the 1/8in V-tool, meeting the cuts at the middle of the back of the shell. With a nail punch and light hammer, make a series of dots within the V channel around the back of the shell as decoration.

Finishing the eyes

17 Smooth the surface of each eye, making sure it is rounded and prominent, then mark each eyeball with a hole punch and light hammer.



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18 Draw the two pairs of feelers between the eyes and mark them using the 1/8in V-tool. Start with a shallow cut from each outer end and work towards the shell, deepening the cut as you approach the shell so that the feelers widen where they join the shell. The two outer ones are usually longer than the inner ones.

Final touches

Erase your pencil marks and check all meeting edges are cleanly cut and there are no spaces in the tooled background, that each tooled cut is polished and shiny and the crab shell is smooth. I used a scraper to smooth the rim and outer surface of the bowl then a light wax polish for its finish. ▶

The wonder of winter

The intricate design of a snowflake makes for an absorbing chip carving project, by Tatiana Baldina



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TATIANA BALDINA

Snowflakes are one of the wonders of winter. They are always different. It's amazing, but no matter how hard you try, you can never find two alike in the whole world. In this article

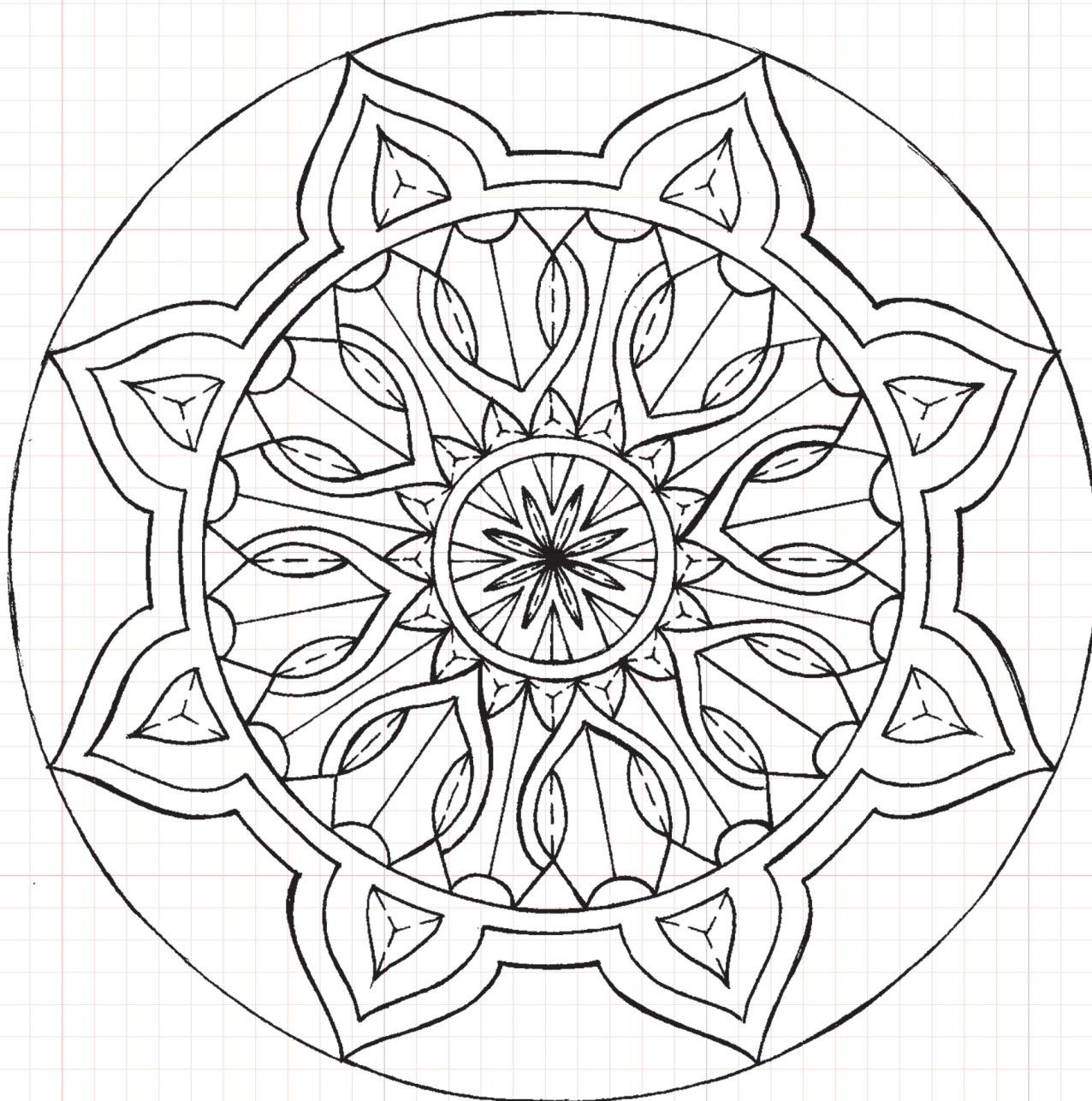
I show you how to carve my version of a snowflake pattern. It looks complex at first glance, but following certain steps, I hope you enjoy carving it.

Things you will need**Materials:**

- Basswood board with transferred design (a radius of 12cm, 1.5cm thickness)

Tools:

- PPE and RPE
- Skew knife
- Sandpaper or leather strips for sharpening

**UNDERSTANDING DEPTH**

One of the challenges in chip carving, when you are just starting to carve or have not developed enough muscle memory yet, is to understand where the tip of the knife currently is and how deeply you undercut this or that facet. Sometimes, but at the initial stages usually, you think you didn't push the tip of the knife deep enough into the wood and you would have to do it a little deeper. If you have such 'problems', I suggest that, before carving the pattern of this box, you experiment: draw several triangles of different sizes, make stop cuts inside each of them, and then start to undercut the facets a little, one by one until they pop out. And you will see that there is no need to put so much pressure on the knife and push it deep into the wood to completely remove one facet when carving the usual sized chips.



Preparatory steps

Before you start carving the main figures of the entire pattern, it is necessary to carve a few preparatory chips – namely, the straight-wall chips that go along the perimeter of a circle, both in the shape of a triangle and two-sided ones, with one rounded side; and also two-sided chips that separate the main figures from each other. I will show the example of the carving on the top left quarter of the design.

1 Start carving the first straight-wall chip, which is in the shape of a triangle. Hold the knife directly above the sides of the chip at about 90° to the surface of the board, then gently push the tip of the blade deep to the top of the triangle, where the facets meet. Without removing the knife from the wood, lower the heel of the knife to the base of the chip, to its third side, without applying any pressure.

2 Lay the knife blade low to the surface of the wood along the bottom of the triangle and push the knife towards the top of the triangle where the sides intersect at the top.

3 The second chip is two-sided. Cut the rounded sides at about 90°. After you have done this, undercut the base in the same way as you did when carving the straight-wall chips. The last step and the last chip to carve in order to start carving the main figures, is an oval or two-sided chip, which is located between the main figures of the design.

4 Make stop cuts inside the chips. Place the tip of the knife at one of the tops of the oval, then start to lead it to the other top. The deepest part of the undercut is in the middle of the chip. In the places that are closer to the tops, there is almost no pressure when undercutting.

5 Place the knife at the edge of the chip at about 60° to undercut the sides of the chip until they pop out. If this does not happen the first time, you will have to repeat the cuts or make stop cuts to sever the wood fibres again in the centre of the chip.

The main figures of the pattern

6 Start carving the main figures of the pattern from the one that is in the large triangle with rounded sides and a pointed top. Undercut the sides using the same technique you did with the sides of the straight-wall chips. The deepest cut is there where the top of the double-sided chip is.

7 The central lines in the main figures of the pattern are the edges or the highest points on the entire pattern are on par with the surface of the wood. The sides are carved inward, like bases or third sides of straight-wall chips. There are two ways to undercut the sides: the first technique, shown in this photo, is to undercut everything in one go.

8 The second way is to carve the large surface of the chip in two steps. When undercutting in this way, first you have to remove a small part by grabbing about 2mm of the chip...



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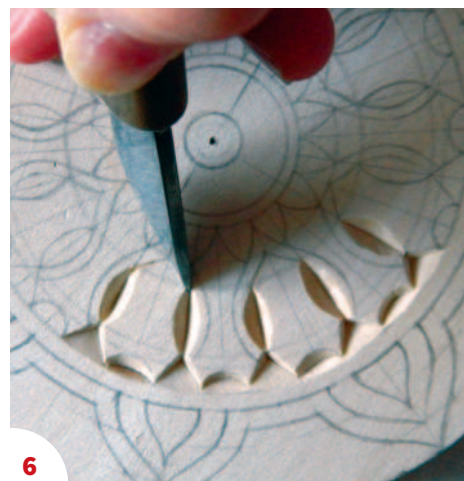
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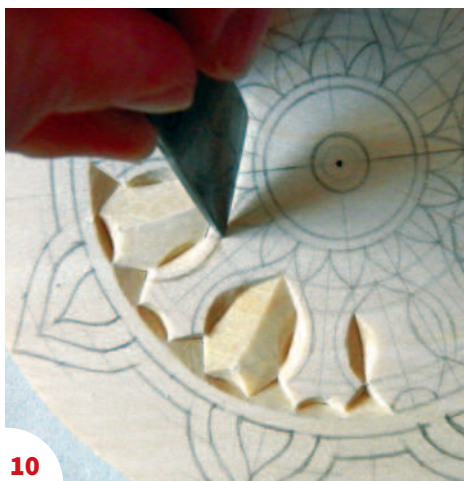
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9 ...and then, by keeping the same angle, carve the entire side completely. When the first shape is done, repeat all the steps on the second figure.

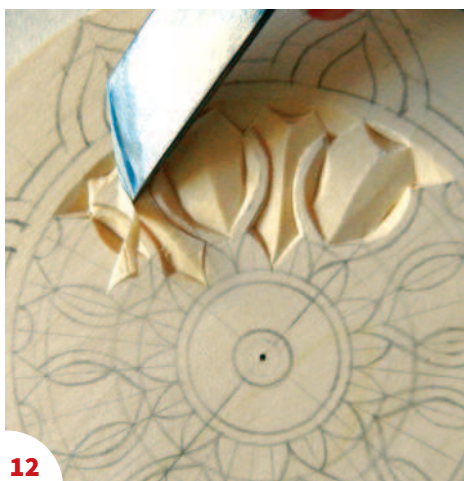
10 Then, start carving the next thin figure.

11 Undercut the sides the same way as for straight-wall chips, but the pressure you push the knife into the wood with will be the same around the entire perimeter of the sides of the chip.

12 By following the grain direction, repeat the steps you took to carve the first figure: either do it in one go or in two steps.



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13 Next, carve triangles or three-sided chips that go around the outer line of the central pattern. Make stop cuts inside each triangle.

14 Then angle the knife at 45° around the edge of the triangles to remove the chips one at a time. Carefully undercut the sides that connect to the short sides of the thin figures of the pattern. In this case, you can apply the technique of undercutting a chip in two steps to avoid chipping the edges.

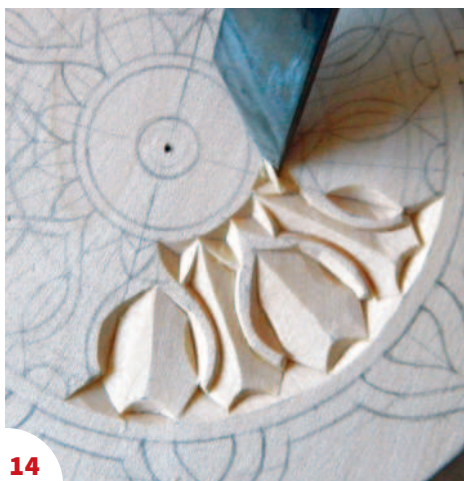
15 Prepare two triangles for carving inside the wide shape: mark a dot 0.2mm from the short side of the figure and draw the first line parallel to it by hand.

16 Draw one curved line...

17 ...and then a second curved line, as shown here. Start carving the prepared straight-wall chips by undercutting the inner sides. In this case, the base of the chip is the long outer side, and the top and deepest point is where the short side of the chip and the inner long side intersect.



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18 Undercut the short side and then the long one by gently leading the tip of a knife to where two straight-wall chips meet each other.

19 By following the grain direction, undercut the base of the chip.

20 The last step in carving the main pattern is to make four cuts on the wide figures. Mark a dot 3.1cm from the centre of the board, then freehand extend the lines to the carved sides of the figure.

21 Make a stop cut on the resulting line with the tip of the knife perpendicular to the surface of the wood.

22 Undercut the first chip at about 60°...

23 ...and then start carving the second one.

24 Change the knife grip in your hand and finish undercutting the second chip.

25 The remaining two cuts you have to do are at the top of the figure. Make a stop cut with the tip of the knife perpendicular to the surface of the wood ...

26 ... then two undercuts at about 60°.

Central pattern

27 The next pattern to carve is the central circle. You need to prepare the surface for carving the chips. Make a cut around the perimeter with the tip of a knife at about 90°. The depth of undercutting is about 3mm.

28 Make long, straight cuts at the same angle as for carving the base or third side of a straight-wall chip, and follow the grain direction...



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29 ...to undercut the surface.

30 Next, draw perpendicular, central and diagonal lines on the resulting smooth surface.

31 Mark two dots 2mm to the left and right sides from the central and diagonal lines, draw triangles by eye and freehand.

32 Then carve the three-sided chips at about 45°.

33 Mark the dots 0.7mm on clean surfaces from the centre of the pattern.



32



33

34 Next, by eye (or after drawing) make two undercuts at about 60° to make two-sided chips.

Snowflake rays

35 Make stop cuts inside the triangles.

36 Then undercut each side of the chips at 45°.

37 Next, start on the line carving. First, for example, undercut the first line 1mm from it on the right at about 60°.

38 Then make an undercut on the second line, next to the first one which overlaps it, by slightly grabbing the first line with the tip of the knife to avoid chipping.

39 Finish the line carving. The first quarter of the pattern is now done. Next, carve the remaining three quarters of the design to complete the snowflake. ▶



34



35



36



37



38



39



Carving Countries

William Barsley
visits the carvers of Bali

In this new series, William Barsley looks back on the journey that inspired his career change from an office job to a professional woodcarver. This article focuses on his visit to the beautiful island of Bali, which has a rich heritage in woodcarving and is where William began this adventure to explore woodcarving around the world.



Carving with Mr Mudana, trying not to chop my toes off!



Why Carving Countries?

It was 2014, I was 25, and I felt I had chosen the wrong profession in life. The pressure to choose a career had weighed heavily on me since school, and I found it impossible to pick a direction. I had completed a degree in International Development and found myself in a good job working for the United Nations in Rome. However, I wasn't happy and found long days at the desk mentally and physically challenging.

I'd been interested in woodwork from a young age, finding a huge amount of satisfaction in whittling and creating something with my hands. I discovered woodcarving in 2009 and, since then, had harboured a crazy dream to make that my sole profession, but it seemed too risky at the time. I later began reading stories of old journeymen who used to travel huge distances to learn and practise different crafts. Inspired by these tales, I decided to take a leap of faith and set off on a journey around the world with the simple aim of meeting as many woodcarvers as possible and opening my eyes to the different techniques, methods, woods, chisels, and styles of carving.

As keen long-distance cyclists, my girlfriend (now wife) Lisa and I decided to try to cycle as much of the journey as time would allow. We find this mode of travel the best way to get to really know a country and its people. Luckily, Lisa worked remotely so could continue her job part-time from the road, needing only power and decent Wi-Fi. Asia had always interested us and, after a lot of research, Bali kept appearing as a hotspot for woodcarvers, so what better place to start?



An effective style of carving on to the roots of a tree

BALI

Situated in the Indonesian archipelago, Bali has a population of 4.3 million and is famous for its beautiful beaches, surfing, and temples, but it also has a thriving woodcarving industry that caters to both the tourist and export markets.



Colourful sculptures in the first few days of the trip



Ornate temple door, carved and gilded



Shrine carving, beautifully painted and gilded

Woodcarving in Bali has a Hindu-Javanese origin dating back to the 13th-14th century, primarily being used as a way to elaborately decorate temples and shrines, something that continues to this day. It underwent a transformative period around the 1930s, influenced by an art movement called Pita Maha. Carvers began creating themes inspired by their daily life, often showing traditional farming scenes. Mythical gods and creatures also appeared, but without the constraints of religious tradition. This allowed for a wider range of woods to be used, as within a religious context only sacred woods were allowed. Carvers' imaginations ran wild and more and more creative carvings began to appear, with craftsmen inspired by the organic shape of each piece of wood and keen to let nature dictate their designs.

Journey

Prior to arriving in Bali I contacted the head of the Bali Indonesian Sculptors Association, who suggested I visit a region called Ubud, located toward the middle of the island. Specifically, I was told to visit Mas village, which is where hundreds of carvers are based.

Arriving at the airport and after a quick rebuild of the bike, we found ourselves winding through busy streets on our way to Mas village. I instantly knew we had come to the right place. There were carvings everywhere I turned, from the vibrant and colourful temples adorned with rich decoration to the carved souvenirs that flooded out of the gift shops.

On a visit to the renowned museum of Puri Lukisan in Ubud, which houses work by some of the most famous and influential



Carvings for sale on the side of the street

carvers in Bali's history, I was fortunate to meet the curator, who kindly acted as my specialist advisor during my time in Bali. He insisted I find the 'true' woodcarvers who were still practising the craft as an art form instead of those who were mass-producing pieces at speed for the tourist market. Eager to learn more and to get carving myself, I was guided to a master carver, Ida Wayana Mudana, with whom I undertook a three-day carving course. I soon learned on this trip that there'd be no better or quicker way to understand a country's carving style than giving it a go myself under the guidance of a local expert.

Notable woodcarvers

Ida Wayana Mudana

Walking down a quiet side street in the heart of the village I approached Mudana's home and workshop (intertwined with one another) and noticed a buzz of activity. A number of apprentices were busy working on some incredibly intricate pieces. I soon learned that Mudana was taught by one of the most famous and influential woodcarvers in Bali, the late Ida Bagus Tilem. As such, he was well known in the profession and was the ideal person to introduce me to Balinese carving. Mudana had exhibited his work internationally, most recently in Germany, and has



Carving by Ida Mudana of a goddess and the moon

clients throughout the US. His work is inspired by natural and mythical themes, expressed in the free and uninhibited style of the Pita Maha movement.

I spent three memorable afternoons carving with Mudana and decided to carve a mythical goddess as this was a common theme in his work. He guided me through the process of roughing out the timber and finding its natural form before refining the piece. The immediate difference was that we were carving sitting on the floor with only a thin mat between us and the concrete. The traditional technique is to use your feet to hold the piece while carving. I would like to say I mastered this by the time I left but sadly not; the dexterity and stamina required to sit on a hard floor all day must take years to build up. Mudana began carving at the age of 14 so was well used to it. I, however, was in a lot of pain after the three days.

The force and confidence in Mudana's chisel strikes were incredible to see, just millimetres from his feet. We were carving a section of hibiscus wood, using a small hand axe to rough out the piece before switching to chisels. His desire and passion to see the craft continue was amazing to witness and was displayed in his openness to teach others.



Ida Mudana at work



Ida Mudana in his gallery – note the flowing carving using the natural shape of the wood



Woodcarver at the Ida Bagus Tilem gallery

Ida Bagus Tilem

Inspired by Mudana, our next stop was the gallery and home of the late Ida Bagus Tilem, arguably Bali's most famous and influential carver of the last century. It was Tilem who developed the abstract style of elongating figures' limbs and using the knots and imperfections in the wood to guide his designs, resulting in a powerful and expressive style. The defining legacy of Tilem was his determination to train other carvers, and it is thanks to this and his dedicated students such as Mudana that this unique style of carving remains to this day. The gallery still produces traditional artwork, with carvers dotted around the compound quietly working away.

Tools and techniques

The carving chisels I came across in Bali had no wooden handles and were strips of flat steel shaped into the usual range of gouges and profiles we know in the UK. This meant the hammers I saw were often heavily beaten up by the steel end of the chisel. Although still made of hardwood, their hammers seemed a lot more disposable than those we know. Another tool used for detail was a double-sided hook knife with a long handle, used to add finish to faces. As mentioned above, the traditional technique involves sitting on the floor and clamping the wood with your feet – something that takes some getting used to.

Garuda village

After two weeks of exploring the island, and meeting the carvers of Mas village I was keen to explore the more religious



Chisels and hook knives



Traditional farming scene found within the Ida Bagus Tilem gallery

carving influenced by Hinduism in Bali. Hearing of a particularly special village in the hills outside of Ubud, which solely carved the iconic and mythical creature called a Garuda, half-man, half-bird found throughout Hinduism and Buddhism and said to be the mount of lord Vishnu. Cycling two hours out of Ubud, past terraced rice fields and farmsteads, I arrived at the small village of Pakudui. Sheltering from an unexpected rainstorm, I met a young carver called Jemo, carving away in an open studio resembling a single car garage. He was putting the finishing touches to a Garuda, around 4ft high, masterfully adding the final details. He explained carving was in his family going back generations, having been taught by his father. No official training is given, but more a family apprenticeship is common.

Reflecting back I realise that woodcarving in Bali was unique in many senses, such as the remarkable concentration of carvers in Mas village and the emphasis on using

the wood's natural form to influence the design. Never have I seen such creative carvings with such long elongated forms.

Next time William flies to Singapore, from where he cycles up the east coast of Malaysia in search of one of Malaysia's most famous woodcarvers.



Jemo carving a Garuda



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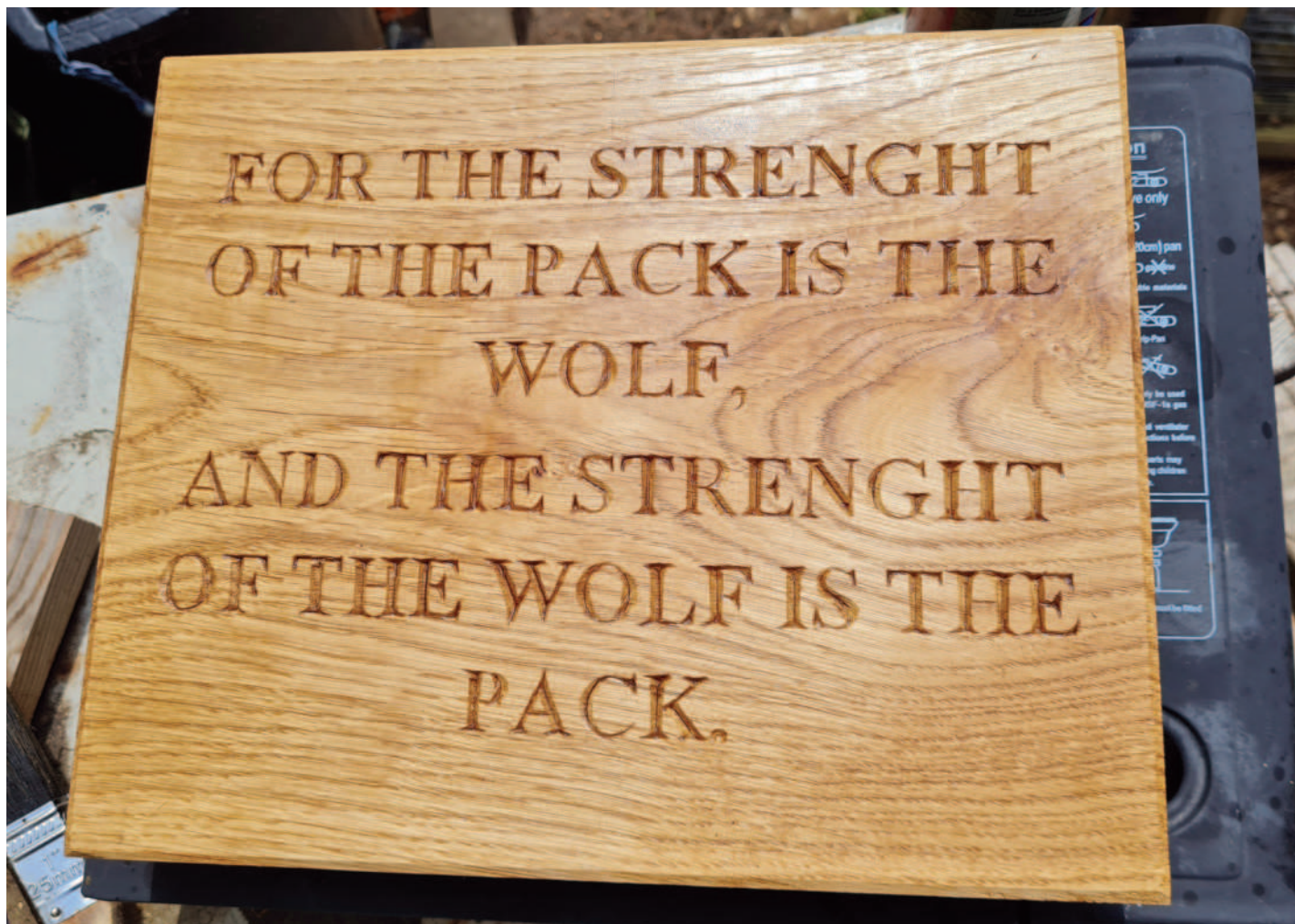
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Check and double check

Kevin Alviti displays his error as a cautionary tale



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN ALVITI

Are you sitting comfortably? You are? Good, as I have a little cautionary tale to tell you... In fact, you might have already spotted a mistake I made in the above carving. But sometimes making a mistake once isn't enough. I like to be consistent in life, that's why I made this mistake twice.

What's worse is I didn't realise this mistake myself. I printed out the phrase I wanted to write, a Rudyard Kipling quote, and spent ages getting the spacing right and picking a font that carves well.

I glued it to a beautiful piece of oak that I had lovingly planed flat. I sorted out a way to hold it and wedged it tight.

I then started to carve the words out, going across the piece methodically, carving all the large uprights first, then going back and doing all the serifs then all the curves.

I did it over a few days, in between other jobs so I wouldn't get bored. I had it sat at the edge of my workbench, so if I found myself with five minutes I could just carve a few more letters out.

When it was finished, I painstakingly removed the rest of the paper, using white

spirits to get rid of any residue and cleaning out any of the letters that needed it.

I then applied two coats of Scandinavian oil, which brought out the wood's warmth.

As I was quite proud of this piece, I went immediately to show a friend. She looked at it and then straight at me. In her strong Australian accent she said as kindly as she could: 'It looks great and all, but you know you've made a mistake?'

'No, I haven't! Don't do that to me!' I chuckled.

'Yeah, here – you've spelt strength wrong.'

I looked at it and the blood drained from my face. I still couldn't see it, I had to Google the word just to make sure.

'Poop,' I replied flatly, or maybe it was a stronger word, I can't quiet remember.

I guess this is the risk of a dyslexic carpenter carving out words. But as someone who loves to write I often think I've come up with coping mechanisms to deal with any problems I regularly encounter. This time I'd missed out a critical step – getting my wife to check my work.

I still can't believe that I worked on something for three to four hours and didn't notice the mistake. But then

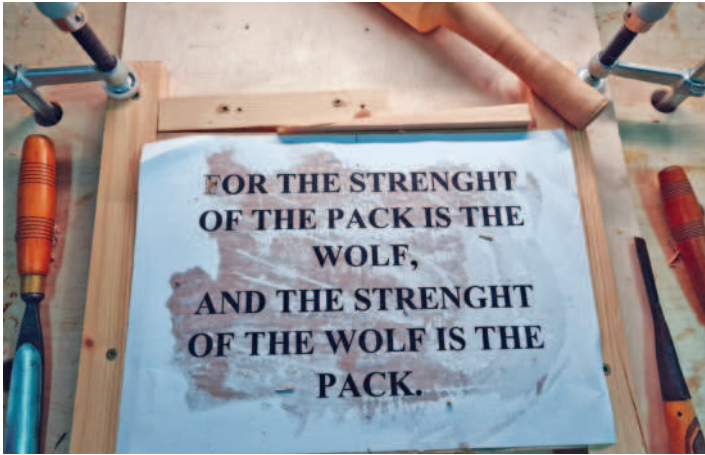
I've always been told that a person who's never made any mistakes is a person who's never made anything!

After 20 years of working with wood I'm sure I have a fair collection of them. I've learnt that I'll probably never stop making mistakes – the only time to really worry is if you keep making the same mistake over and over again.

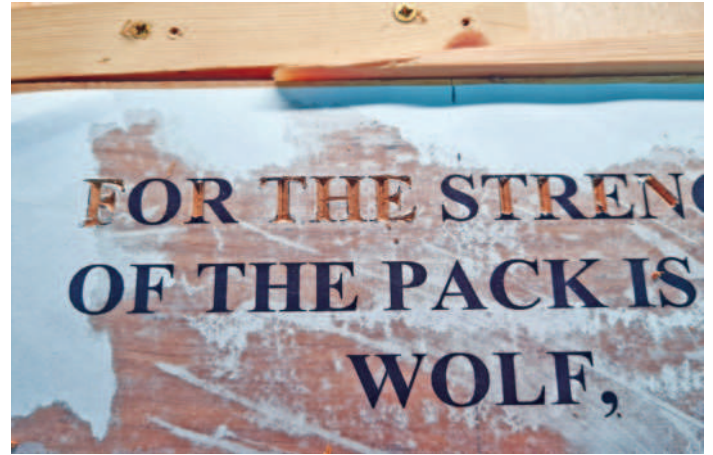
A lesson from my carpentry apprenticeship was always: if you can't hide it then make a feature of it. I could see no way back for this carving, short of planing it down to start again. So instead, I decided that it would make a good reminder to go on the workshop wall. A reminder to always check and double check my work.

I decided to carve a squiggly line under the incorrect words and painted them red, imitating the spell checker that a word processor normally does automatically. Unless, I now learn, **YOU'RE WRITING IN BLOCK CAPITALS...**

Hopefully my mistake will make a few people smile as they come into the workshop and it's a good lesson that mistakes are a part of life and carving. To err is human after all. ▀



Motivational text attached



Firmly wedged in place



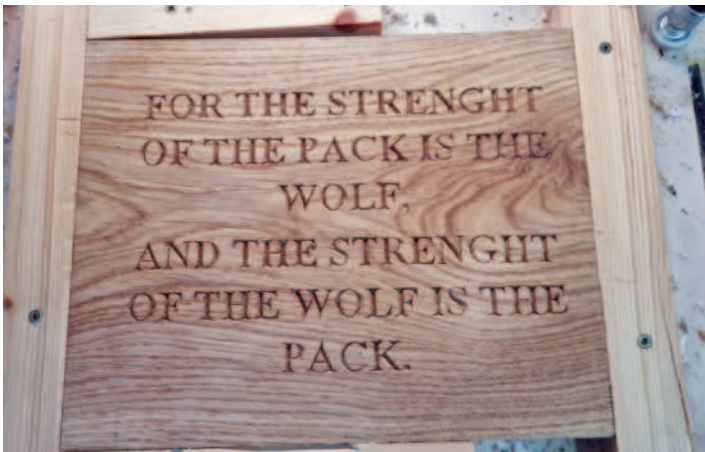
Carving the uprights



Starting to carve the curves



Ready to remove the paper



Before applying the oil



Spell check required!



'Finished' piece



A cautionary reminder

Moveable mouse

Peter Keene has some fun with an inquisitive rodent



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER KEENE

I've been trying to come up with an idea for a mouse carving that can be moved into different positions and activities. I have carved mice in various poses on clocks, on cheeseboards and even running across the pages of books. But all of these were fixed (carved on to the stationary item), and I wanted to carve a realistic, but not anatomically correct, mouse ornament that could flit from place to place. The

problem was how to get a life-size carved mouse to do this. The main requirements are for balance and holding on to various items.

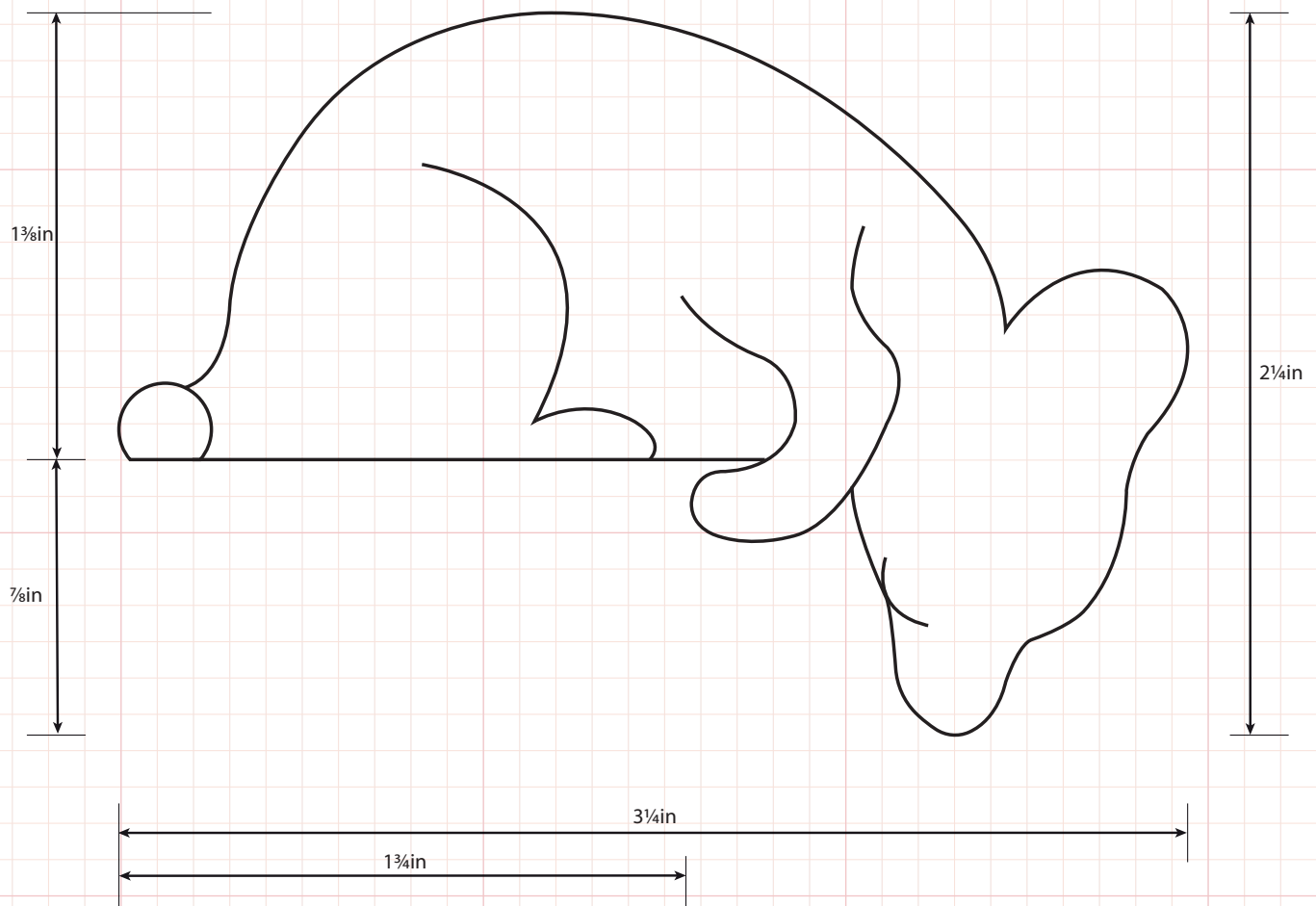
This project is based on a design that I've used before. The mouse is made from a piece of beech that is 90mm long, 55mm high and 38mm wide. I started with a blank that was big enough for two mice, one possibly sacrificial.

Things you will need**Tools:**

- PPE and RPE
- Fret saw
- Flexicut cut chisels No.6, $\frac{1}{4}$ in, No.8, $\frac{1}{4}$ in
- Palm chisels No.7, $\frac{3}{16}$ in- $\frac{5}{16}$ in and $\frac{1}{2}$ in fishtails
- Rotary burs $\frac{1}{8}$ in shaft, $\frac{1}{8}$ in dia and $\frac{3}{16}$ in dia. ball, $\frac{1}{8}$ in cone for the fur effect

Materials:

- Block of beech $3\frac{1}{2}$ in x $2\frac{1}{4}$ in x $1\frac{1}{2}$ in
- Abranet 120, 240 & 400 grit
- Dark oak Briwax and toothbrush for wax application

**1****2****Roughing out**

1 The first step is to cut the beech into two pieces, each approximately the right size for carving one mouse.

2 The mouse is then roughly cut into shape. →

Starting the carving

3 To begin the actual carving, I shape the tail first to make sure I don't get carried away and forget to leave enough wood for it, so I have to slice 6mm off one side, leaving the tail behind.

4 Now I have the tail in place it's time to start putting more detail into the mouse. I shape the ears and round the back using a set of palm chisels, the main one being a $\frac{1}{2}$ in fishtail.

5 I then draw the final details on the wood for the feet, head and legs...

6 ...the feet being the important bit.

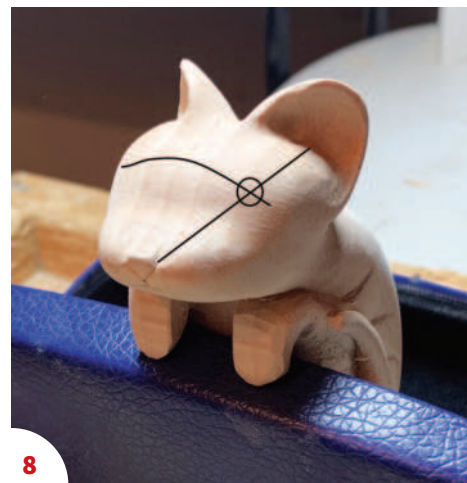
7 With the feet separated and cut to shape, I now need to work on the head.

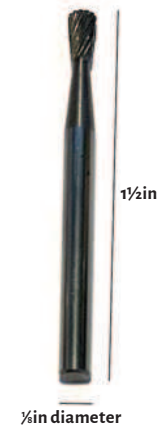
8 I start by marking out the nose and eyes. For the nose I mark the centre of the front of the face then mark 1.5mm either side of the centre using a small V-tool. I cut a 3mm-long V either side of the centre then shave off the outside V cut, leaving the nose proud. I mark from the centre of each ear to the outer edge of the nose, then draw a line between the eyes halfway between ears and nose.

9 For the eye, I use a 5mm half-round gouge pushed in 1mm deep and carve round the outside of the cut, leaving the eye 1mm proud. I then shape the eyeball round with a 4mm flat micro chisel and paint it with acrylic black paint.

10 When polished, this leaves a beautiful, shiny, black eyeball. This is the only paint I use – for all other colour on all my carvings I use waxes.

11 The really important part of this carving is the balance. With mouse two, I want him to sit on a shelf looking down. At first he kept tipping forwards as he was not very well balanced, so I had a choice – either take some weight off the head or try adjusting the legs with very little to play with. I decided to take some weight from under the chin and a little off the front feet, in effect adding length to his back end – the heaviest part of the mouse – removing little by little until I was satisfied he would sit on the shelf safely and not fall off. Once I am satisfied with mouse two I transfer the work to mouse one, taking a little off the chin and shortening the front feet by 2.3mm. This increases the weight of the back enough to balance the mouse on the shelf.





12

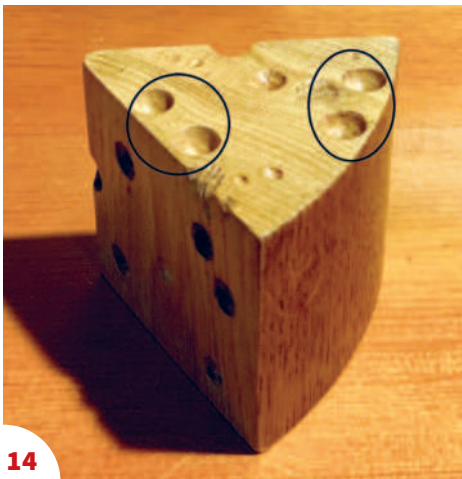


13

12 The next task is to carve the fur. In the past, I have used a 1/16 in V-tool for this, but it was very difficult to use on internal curves and took forever. I found this rotary burr amazing – it now takes about a tenth of the time it used to take and the tool can easily be used for thick fur or fine. The problem is, I could now do with a new one but can't find one anywhere.

13 I use the rotary burr to carve the fur across the whole body and head.

14 The cheese is made from a piece of oak 63mm deep so the mouse can hang on without the tail touching the bottom. It is cut into a triangle with the Swiss cheese holes cut in with a 3/8 in round burr. As you can see in the picture, in the outlined area two holes are specially cut in to take the mouse feet. The cheese is then polished with a clear wax to show off the grain and the back is polished with dark oak wax to look like the rind of the cheese.



14



15

Finishing

15 The mouse tail is sanded smooth with 800 grit wet & dry paper, as is the nose, then the mouse is lightly rubbed down with a 400 grit, which gives the fur its sheen. I prefer wet & dry paper because the grit doesn't come off as easily as the grit on sandpaper. I've also started using the mesh abrasive sheets. The mouse is then polished with dark oak wax, giving a nice fur effect, leaving the nose and tail slightly lighter for effect. Finally, I try him out for size on various items around the house and now I'm satisfied with him – job done and I thoroughly enjoyed carving this little creature.

16 Some more fun places to show the mouse. ▶



16



St Elizabeth's Cathedral, Kosice

This month we visit the easternmost Gothic cathedral in Europe



Dedicated to the city's patron saint, St Elizabeth's Cathedral in Kosice is the largest church in Slovakia, and the easternmost example of a Gothic-style cathedral in Europe. It was built on the site of an earlier church which had been destroyed by a fire; the main construction began in 1380 and was completed by around 1508. In the later stages of the building work, the frescoes and sculptures were created by local master craftsmen Stephan Lapidus and Štefan Staimecz. The cathedral's architectural highlights include the Main Altar of Saint Elizabeth, the Altar of the Visitation and an impressive Gothic-style spiral staircase at the entrance to the royal oratory.

St Elizabeth's was designated a national cultural monument in 1970, at which point major renovation works began. This included the reconstruction of the crowns of the gables, gargoyles and other architectural details, which were recreated based on the original designs found in the cathedral's archives.



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