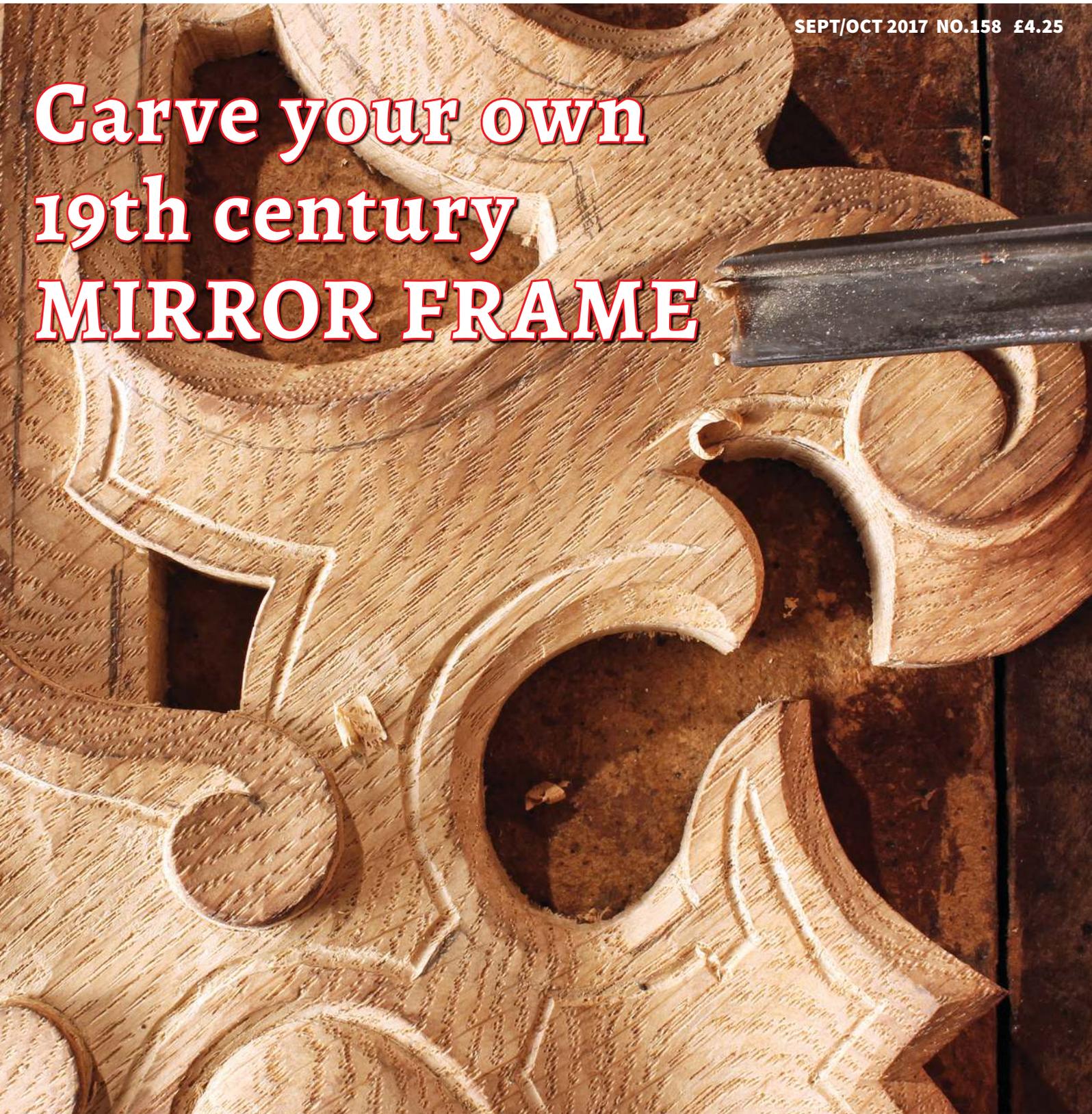


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A 25-year milestone



This issue marks the 25th anniversary of *Woodcarving* – that is a milestone by any magazine's standards. I have been involved with this one for more than 18 years now – that too is a long while. I often think about the

community that is connected with woodcarving and this community encompasses a rich and diverse mix of people from all round the world. The club network is strong but we all know that there are far more people carving away in their workshops and homes than there are belonging to clubs, so the real number of carvers out there is nothing more than a guesstimate. Without doubt the main element that attracts people is knife carving – a vibrant and wonderful branch of carving that can be as simple or as complex as one chooses. Just look at spoon carving for some of the truly amazing things that can be achieved with a knife. Chip carving can be a wonderful avenue for those who like the decorative aspects of carving, working with geometric shapes and who have an affinity with symmetry and order. Then we have those who explore relief carving, in the round, architectural, classical, real or stylised work done by hand or power carving and you can see that these aspects, in all of their diversity, open up many realms and avenues for people to explore. Let's face it, carving is a wonderful thing to do. It allows one to scratch that creative itch and, whether the work is large or small, one can create something that one can call one's own.

Carving has a rich history in all known cultures around the world to some degree or other and

that provides plenty of inspiration for people to draw upon. We who carve, no matter how large or small or what style, are part of a millennia-old tradition and it is heartening to see that it is still going strong with no real sign of any decline in the number of participants over all.

That said, there has been a decline in the number of shops and stores where one can browse products but, conversely, there are now more products for carvers than there have ever been and these are available from myriad online stores. I do miss the chance to go and try things or hold things before I buy and this is why shops, clubs, shows and symposia are so important as they do provide that opportunity to talk to people and try things out.

There are challenges for production carvers. Computer-based carving and 3D printing are having an impact on some aspects of production work. We are also seeing a decline in the number of colleges offering woodworking-based courses, including the carving ones, and there are fewer apprenticeship places. However, carving is not alone in experiencing that. There are still centres of excellence and long may they thrive and carry on teaching people how to carve and develop their skills. There is also a great club network around the world where people can share ideas and work together.

Information is now more widely available than it has ever been and people are exploring various ways with which to disseminate that information to as wide an audience as possible. This magazine is but one such method and it is still going strong thanks to you, the readers.

I hope you enjoy this issue there is plenty

for you to see and read about and also catch up with Chris Pye and Dick Onians who were authors in issue 1. Thank you for your help and continuing support and as always, let me know what you have been carving.

Have fun, Mark

To get in touch, please email me:
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News & events...

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

It doesn't seem possible that we are saying: "As this issue falls through your letterbox BDWCA members will be in the final throes of preparing for the BDWCA Annual Show, which is held in Bakewell, Derbyshire." Yet that is the case. The show is always held on the second weekend in September, which this year falls on Saturday 9 and Sunday 10.

Carvers compete at youth, novice, intermediate and advanced levels in nine categories, ranging from Fully Textured & Painted Waterfowl & Birds, Smooth Painted Waterfowl & Shorebirds, and Decorate Miniatures to Interpretive Wood Sculptures which offer the carver great freedom to carve a piece in a style that is neither decorative nor decoy. There are also five open classes – Working Decoys, Fish, Innovative Wildlife Sculpture, Carved Bird's Head and Carved Bird's Head on a Stick – where all entries are judged according to the criteria and rules for the advanced class.

The Stick class is also open to non-members and entries, for this class only, can be delivered to the show between 9am and 11am on the Sunday morning. The entry charge is 50p per stick.

While the spotlight naturally falls on the winner of the British Championship and the winners of the Advanced level trophies, and people will wonder who will walk away with the top awards this year, it is important to look at the other levels because that is where the future winners of the top awards are to be found.

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



Hen Harrier by David Askew, winner of Advanced Decorative Miniatures 2016



Pintail in Walnut by Terry Getley, winner of Advanced Interpretive Wood Sculptures 2016



Pheasant by Richard Rossiter, winner of Advanced Game Birds 2016

For further information about the BDWCA visit: www.bdwca.org.uk

Zurjole Craft Skills Academy



The workshop

Zurjole, a new craft skills academy in San Sebastián, Spain, offers a space for people to explore the craft world and their creativity. Woodcarving, cane weaving and basketry are just a few of the crafts that can be learned. Other handicraft techniques can be practised and beautiful results can be obtained.

This academy is run by Daniel Lizarralde, a craftsman born in 1975 in San Sebastián. He

has been carving since the age of 21 and attended historic ornamental woodcarving postgraduate studies at the City & Guilds of London Art School.

In his craft skills academy Daniel wants to offer the space and the knowledge to improve people's creativity, a way that he believes provokes positive emotions. It is open to the world and classes in English are given.

Zurjole offers a new experience for its



A copy of Crinling Gibbons' Point Lace Cravat carved by Daniel Lizarralde

visitors. In a week the visitor can acquire knowledge of different crafts, visit the woodcraft of the Basque Country and get to know the Basque culture with the help of a Basque craftsman.

For further information about Zurjole Academy courses, prices and accommodation, visit www.zurjole.com (In english very shortly). Email: info@zurjole.com

Events

• Yandles Woodworking Show

When: 8-9 September, 2017

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

Web: www.yandles.co.uk

• Festival of Bird Art – BDWCA Annual Show & Competition

When: 9-10 September, 2017

Where: Bakewell, Derbyshire

Web: www.bdwca.org.uk

• Bentley Woodfair

When: 15-17 September, 2017

Where: Halland, Nr Lewes, BN8 5AF

Web: www.bentley.org.uk/woodfair-2017

• European Woodworking Show 2017

This is the best woodworking show of its kind in the world, as judged by many well-journeyed demonstrators and woodworking aficionados from around the globe. It is demonstration led with an eclectic mix of workers in wood, from furniture-makers to basket-makers, chair-makers to fabulous woodturners, carvers, bodgers, pyrographers,

knife-makers, marionette-makers, Japanese joinery & toy-makers to toolmakers.

When: 16-17 September, 2017

Where: Crossing Temple Barns,

Braintree, Essex, CM77 8PD

Web: www.europeanwoodworkingshow.eu

• Annual Woodcarving Show

When: 23-24 September, 2017

Where: Stevens Point, Wisconsin, US

Web: www.travelwisconsin/events/fairs-festivals/annual-woodcarving-show

• The Surrey Hills Wood Fair

When: 30 September - 1 October, 2017

Where: Birtley House Estate, Guildford, Surrey

Web: www.surreyhills.org/events/the-surrey-hills-wood-fair

• Orange County Woodcarvers Annual Show

When: 14-15 October, 2017

Where: Santa Ana Elks Lodge, Santa Ana, CA

Web: www.ocwoodcarvers.net/annual_show

• Sculptures & Designs in Wood

When: 18 -19 November, 2017

Where: Simpsonville Senior Center, 310 West Curtis St. Simpsonville, SC.29681

Web: <http://pedmontwoodcarvers.com>

• Derbyshire Horticultural Society Annual Show

The Trent Valley group of the BDWCA will be demonstrating at this event.

Where: Swarkestone Nursery, Lowes Lane, Swarkestone, Derby, DE73 7GQ

When: 28-29 September

Web: www.derbyshirehortassoc.co.uk/annualshow

• North of England Woodworking show

The North of England Woodworking & Power Tool Show is the largest and longest established retail woodworking and power tool show in the country.

When: 17-19 November, 2017

Where: Hall 1, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate

Web: www.skpromotions.co.uk

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



Some flat-looking acanthus leaves carved in oak on a Louis XIII revival desk. A lion and an owl, which are symbols of knowledge, feature as drawer openers

19th-century style

Johan Roudy explores the main influences and styles that developed in France after the 1789 revolution

The 19th century was a time of great upheaval. In France, after the Revolution in 1789, the guild system was abolished. While the political and economic situation was in turmoil, the great traditional workshops lost the monopoly of training skilled workers and manufacturing, and many disappeared

as they lost the clientele of connoisseurs consisting of nobility and clergy.

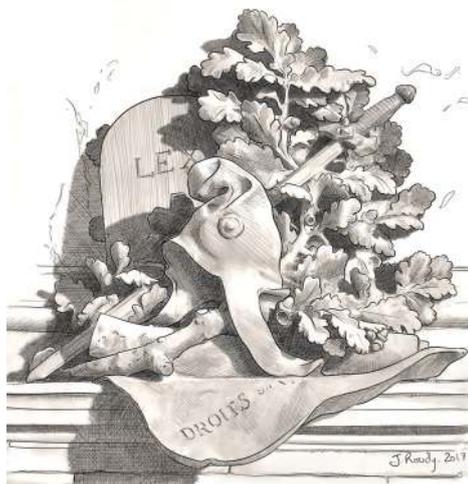
This period also saw the rise of industrialism. This was a revolution in design and manufacturing techniques for the furniture makers. The first woodworking machines, such as bandsaws, planers and tenoning machines were developed.

Directoire (1789-1804)

Directoire is a transitional style between Louis XVI and Empire. The furniture structure doesn't fundamentally change, but the geometric and rigid look tends to be lighter and more austere. For economic reasons, gilded bronze ornaments and marquetry are almost abandoned. Woodcarving does not escape this trend and become much more discreet.

Mahogany, fruit trees, beech or walnut are the more commonly used wood species. Decorative elements, especially floral and vegetal ornaments, are still inspired by the previous style. The main motifs are the palmette, animals and chimeras, geometric shapes (diamond). But ornament also reflects the political situation with emblems of the French Revolution (phrygian

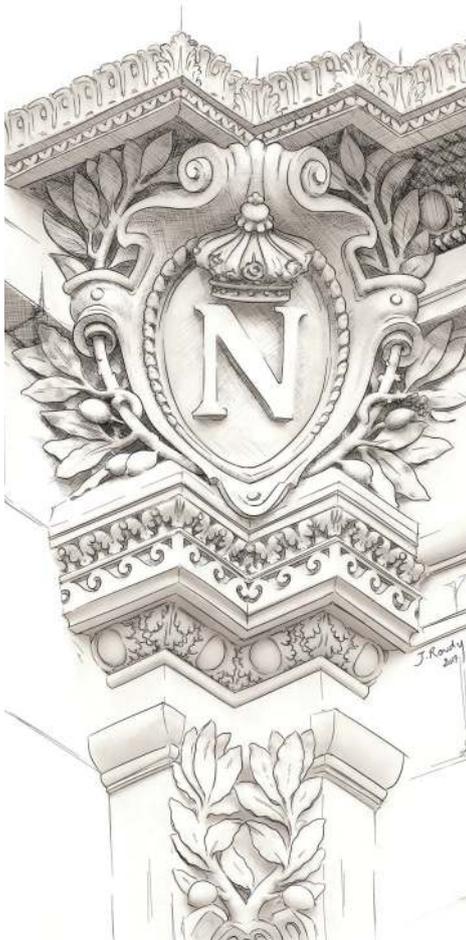
cap, spears, helmets, sabre, oak twig, folded hands for spirit of brotherhood...). Greco-Roman art generates a growing interest. Antique furniture is strictly reproduced according to archaeological documents or pieces excavated from Pompeii during military campaigns in Italy. Some ornaments, such as vases, urns, or mythological animals, are also inspired by this enthusiasm for antique art.



Monument '1792' celebrating Danton in Tarbes shows some French revolution symbols. Oak leaves represent civic virtue



Gilt bronze mount on a XV1 revival chest of drawers



Napoleon emblems were added to the new built wings of the Palais du Louvre

Empire (1800-1815)

Napoleon Bonaparte is crowned emperor and artists and craftsmen have to serve the imperial prestige, notably to refurbish the royal residences. Directed by the emperor, the Empire style is recognisable by massive, majestic and severe furniture. The shapes are strictly rectangular with large flat surfaces and square edges without any moulding. There is little carving – the ornament is mainly made of gilt-bronze mounts, arranged in a strict spirit of geometry and symmetry.

Revolutionary emblems give way to imperial symbols ('N' of Napoleon, 'I' of Emperor, the bee, the eagle, the crown). The flora is less present than in the 18th century, but various festoon and wreath can be found (oak leaves, laurel, palm, vine, ivy, roses). The acanthus leaves look flat and stiff. To refer to the ancient Rome glory, Greco-Roman ornaments are even more used. Following the military campaign in Egypt, some elements become fashionable (sphinx, scarab, head wearing a 'pschent', Egyptian lotus-shaped capitals).

Restoration/Louis-Philippe (1815-1852)

After the fall of Napoleon, Louis XVIII accedes to the throne. Shapes inherited from the Empire tend to soften with some curves. The furniture is less massive and loses its stiffness. As mechanisation develops, the quality declines little by little and furniture manufacturers start to take over cabinetmakers. Ornament is getting poorer.

Inlays of amaranth and ebony or painted motifs replace the gilded bronze, simplifying the lyre, palmette or swan designs already used in Empire style. Since the blockade of the Empire on the United Kingdom, mahogany has been more difficult to find. That's why furniture makers get used to using bright, local woods such as ash, maple or elm.

Under the reign of Louis-Philippe (1830-1848), reproductions or pastiches of past styles of furniture start to be fashionable (Gothic and Renaissance Revival). But, the effort rarely meets the spirit of the original style.

Napoleon III (1850-1890)

Napoleon III or Second Empire style will last until the end of the century. This prosperous period brings back ornamentation in architecture as much as in furniture. It draws its inspiration from all the previous styles, from Gothic to Louis XVI, and sometimes mix them for the best or the worst. Some high-quality copies of Louis XV and Louis XVI furniture are made. Left behind for 40 years, gilded bronze and marquetry are also used again. More often, the old styles are imitated and pastiched. At the same time, there is a fashion for the exotic, Indian and African Art. African figures are sculpted as table feet or torchère lamps likely cohabiting with a Gothic or Renaissance Revival piece. Carving imitates rope or bamboo on some chairs and small furniture.

This eclectic, sometimes exuberant, ornamentation defines the characteristic originality of this style. ▶



PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY BEARD

On this building you can see typical Romanesque arches and columns are decorated with 17th-century style dolphins and covered with a Gothic inspired pattern of thistle leaves

Neo-Renaissance mirror frame

Exploring the styles of ornament

THINK AHEAD

It's easier to carve both halves separately and glue them up afterwards. Straight cuts across the waste will help to clamp the frame firmly. The connection will only be carved when joining is completed.



If there were some workshops producing high quality carving and furniture in the 19th century, ornaments also met the changes induced by the rise of the Industrial era. This mirror frame is a good example of some carvings of this period. By the second half of the century, oak was often used in Neo-Classicism, and it was fashionable to imitate old styles such as Renaissance or Gothic.

Probably designed to be manufactured in series, we can see there a concern for economy and efficiency. The most obvious is there is

almost no scrap : the top of the frame fits perfectly in the central cut-out. The rather simple shapes and light details are abundantly outlined with the V-tool, and accented by this dramatic pattern of cartouche and scrolls. Except

at the top and bottom, the leaves are only suggested by the outline or a simple cut.

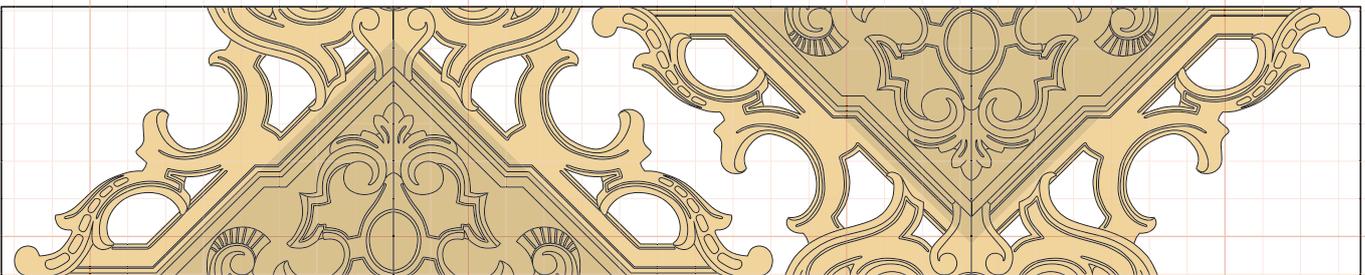
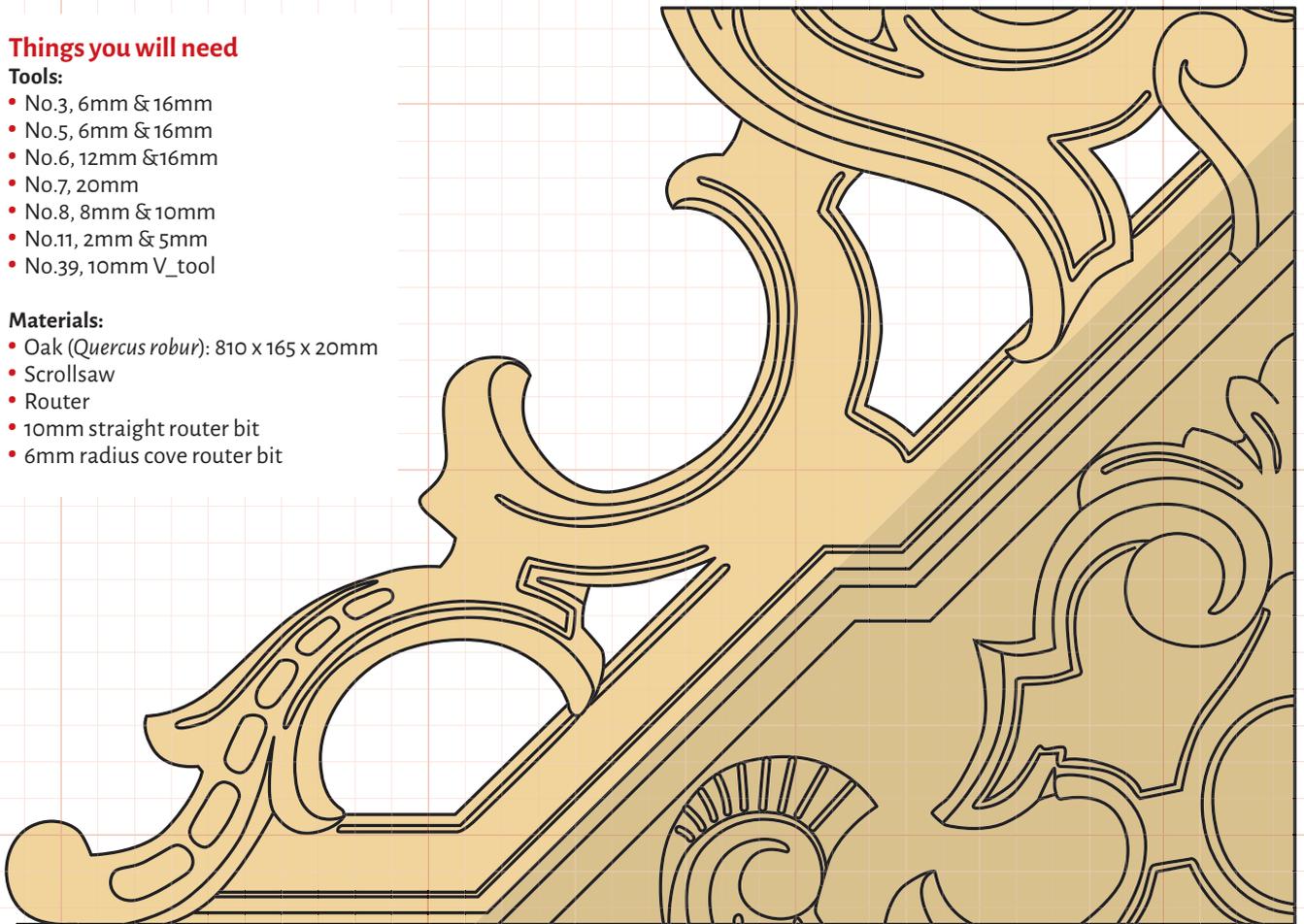
The pattern only shows a quarter of the frame. It has to be reversed and reported twice to get the full frame. The darker area represents the size of the mirror, so you can adapt the size of the design to your convenience.

Things you will need**Tools:**

- No.3, 6mm & 16mm
- No.5, 6mm & 16mm
- No.6, 12mm & 16mm
- No.7, 20mm
- No.8, 8mm & 10mm
- No.11, 2mm & 5mm
- No.39, 10mm V_tool

Materials:

- Oak (*Quercus robur*): 810 x 165 x 20mm
- Scrollsaw
- Router
- 10mm straight router bit
- 6mm radius cove router bit

**1****2**

1 Repeat the design on the wood. Use the scrollsaw to separate the two halves and the central triangle. Glue it up on the top. Clean the inner moulding edges and use the router to cut a cove on the front side, and a 1cm deep rabbet cut on the underside where the mirror will fit. On the front side, remove 2mm on the moulding, above the cove, saving the top corner and the curls of the scrolls. Cut the design with the scrollsaw.

2 Separate the scrolls from the frame using the No.11, 5mm gouge. Then carve a groove with the No.7, 16mm gouge to separate the C-scroll from the other scrolls and from the moulding.



3 Redraw the moulding edge a couple of mm from the edge of the cove and carve 1cm deep the angled recess of the moulding with the No.3, 16mm gouge. Use the No.5, 16mm to carve a smooth transition where the moulding makes a step and meets the C-scroll.



4 On the S-scroll above, use the No.6, 16mm gouge to carve the chamfer on the outer edge, following the drawn line. Switch to flatter gouges when you get to the convex part, and connect it smoothly with the C-scroll. Carve a groove with the No.6, 12mm on the crest on the top of the volute.



5 Separate the volutes from the background using the No.11, 5mm gouge, and draw the oval with the V-tool, about 5mm deep. On the S-scrolls, run the No.6, 16mm gouge all along the edge of the chamfer. Use the No.5, 16mm gouge to lower the area and get an even surface. The edge should be reduced down to 1cm thick. On the cartouche, carve a groove with the No.7, 20mm gouge towards the volute, and shape both sides of the groove with the No.6, 16mm gouge. Work around the oval and the spared top corner of the cartouche to get a nice hollow.



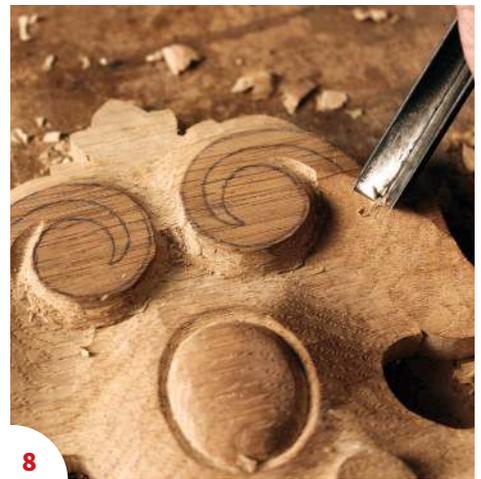
6 Use the No.5, 16mm and No.6, 16mm backward to carefully round the oval. Set it in with the gouges, matching best the curve and clean the chamfer all around with the same tools.



7 Carve a groove at the inner side of the small scrolls at the corner with the No.6, 12mm gouge and smooth the background in between with a No.4, 8mm gouge. Give a slight angle to the scrolls with the No.5, 16mm. Only the top and bottom ends are left untouched. Once happy with the shape, redraw the scrolls, hollow the eye of the volute using the No.6, 16mm gouge and set in the outside edge to its definitive shape. The inside edge has not to be set in.



8 Move to the top of the cartouche. Use the No.8, 10mm to carve a groove above the volutes, combining in the middle. Remove some wood on the top leaf with a flat gouge to get an even surface, lowering the tip. Then make a stop cut across the angle where the volutes meet in the cartouche edges using the V-tool.



9 Use the No.3, 16mm backwards to round the top, twisting progressively towards the stop cut at the angle.



10 Hollow deeply the eye of the volute with the No.6, 16mm gouge. The highest spots should be at the top of the circle and where the volutes meet.



TOP TIP: Hollowing or lowering the volutes tends to distort their shape. Carve them before making any slab cut to get the best result.



11

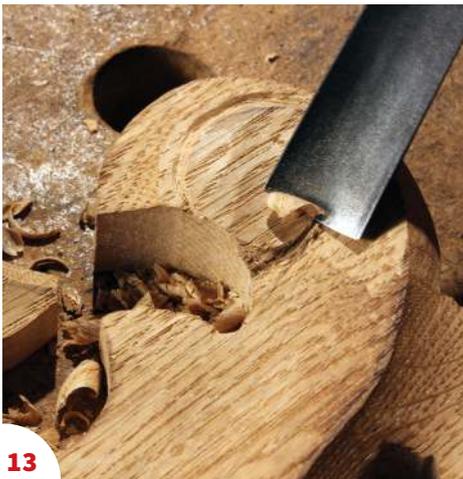


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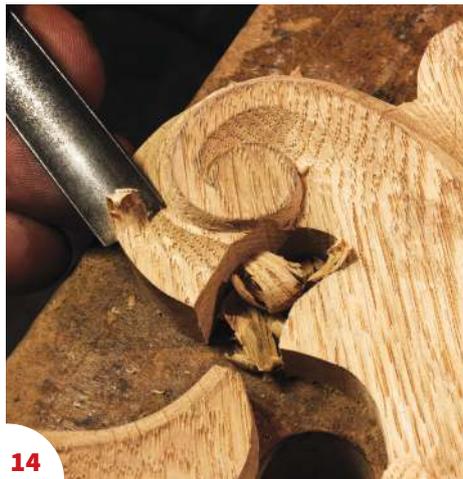
11 Redraw the volutes and repeat step 9 to mark the upper edge. Round the bottom of the groove in the middle towards the background. Set in the eyes of the volutes with gouges best matching the curve, and clear the recess with No.6, 16mm gouge.

12 Redraw the edges of the cartouche and carve them. Twist your tool to keep a constant angle compared to the curved surface. Use the No.6, 16mm gouge for the side and a flatter gouge for the small step on the top.

13 Lower by 4-5mm the volutes on the S-scrolls as well. Use the No.5, 16mm to shape them, fading into the scroll surface. Redraw and hollow the eye of the volute with the No.6, 16mm gouge.



13



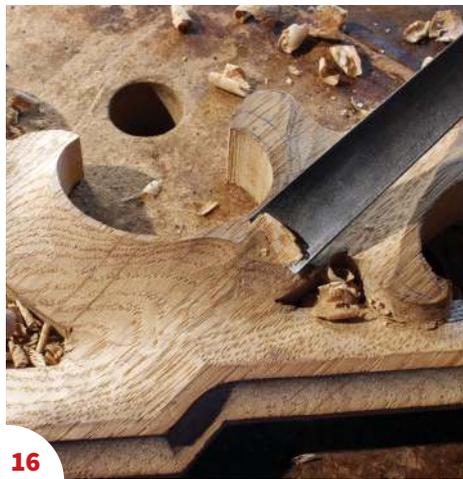
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14 Set in the volute and clear the recess with the No.6, 16mm and No.6, 12mm gouge in the tight curve. The top is set in with No.5, 16mm as a continuation of the chamfer, ending progressively vertical as you approach the eye. Clean the connection to the crest and hollow it again with the No.6, 12mm gouge, 1mm away from the volute's wall. Be careful of the grain direction.

15 Shape the leaf at the top. Set in the secondary leaves with the No.6, 16mm gouge and hollow them with the No.6, 12mm gouge. Round the top leaf with the No.3, 8mm gouge and refine the outline of the whole leaf using the No.6, 16mm gouge. Refine the shape of the leaves running along the volutes if necessary.



15



16

16 Go back to the C-scroll. Run the No.6, 16mm gouge along the edge of the scroll and use No.5, 16mm gouge to get an even surface, connecting smoothly with the moulding of the frame. You can remove some wood on the scroll below, as it will be carved the same way. Hollow deeper at the ends to reach about 1cm thick.

17 Redraw the angled edge of the scroll and carve it using No.6, 16mm gouge. Be careful of the grain direction and don't pay attention to the drawing at the bottom end – cut straight along the curve. Redraw and round the bottom end using the No.6, 16mm gouge, fading into the hollowed surface of the scroll. Above, carve the chamfer between the cartouche and the S-scroll the same way, making a stop cut with the V-tool beside the little horn of the cartouche. Use a deeper gouge like No.6, 12mm in the tight curve.



17



18

18 Redraw the lines running along the scrolls and moulding and carve them with the V-tool, all the way down to the last scroll at the base. Use the veiner in tight areas. Don't forget the veins on the leaves and at the top or the crests. Clean and complete as much detail as possible – join the cove moulding at the corners with a No.5, 6mm gouge, set in the curly end of the upper S-scrolls, refine the outlines.

TOP TIP: If there are little hollows and bumps on the scrolls, the lines and veins made with the V-tool won't look nice. Make sure that the surface is even to get a good result.

19 Glue up the two parts together. Check alignment of the cove on the moulding when setting the clamps. Once dry, complete the cut of the lower scrolls with the scrollsaw.

20 Clear the corner between the remaining scrolls and complete the moulding of the frame. Using No.5, 16mm gouge, lower the outer edge of the scrolls just like you carved the C-scrolls. Draw a nice 'S' shape, without paying attention on the drawing.

21 Redraw and carve the edge with the No.6, 16mm gouge. Like the C-scroll, the curls at the ends of the chamfer are carved straight and shaped afterwards. To avoid breaking the edges, separate the curly end from the scroll with a small cut with the V-tool. Using the No.3, 8mm and 3, 16mm gouge shape the walls at a 90° angle on both sides alternatively until they meet. Set in the back of the scroll and the curl and clean the corner.

22 Complete all the missing lines and veins with the V-tool and refine the round shape at the tip if necessary. Carve a series of flutes on the scroll with the No.8, 8mm gouge. Swap to a No.8, 10mm gouge for the last ones as their size increases.

23 Reverse the carving on a piece of cloth to make the undercutting. Use The V-tool to remove some wood in the corners. A No.3 gouge is then used on convex edges and the N°6, 16mm on concave edges. Try to give an even thickness to the moulding of the frame.

24 Apply stain and finish. I chose a homemade walnut stain and a coat of dark wax. Set the mirror in the frame and cover it with a piece of 2-3mm thick cardboard. Use nails to secure the mirror. Drive the hammer flat on the cardboard to avoid any breakage. ▶



19



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Woodcarving reflections

Dick Onians ponders the changes that have happened, and some to come, since being an author in Issue 1

Of the developments which have affected the world of woodcarving in the past 25 years, one is the negative impact of the shifting of teaching for amateurs from council-run evening and weekend courses to clubs where often the teaching is done by the self-taught. This is now balanced and to some extent compensated for by the number of books by well qualified authors and not least by *Woodcarving* magazine itself, which not only offers instruction in techniques but also looks at good historical pieces so people who do not have easy access to good-quality design and craftsmanship are learning about the possibilities in wood.

Another development which has brought about change is the increasing range and use of machinery, including chainsaws, angle grinders, flexible drive shafts and mechanical chisels. Some carvers are real wizards with machinery although, for a sensitive treatment of wood, there is nothing to match the use of sharp-edged tools. Machines are brilliant for roughing out or for creating unique textures and make larger pieces easier to begin. With sanding, some crispness of cut is inevitably lost; likewise the colour of the wood is blurred unless cut with

a very sharp-edged tool. Beginners still seem wedded to the use of sandpaper – which is understandable as they don't have enough tools to get a good chiselled finish.

Hand tools also have moved on. Flexcut chisels, hooked skewers and microplanes have added to our armoury, but only marginally changed the product, just speeding the carving process. While some carvers tend towards increasingly complex or naturalistic designs, I also see in others greater imagination, more careful judgement and sympathetic stylisation than before. Competitions must have helped here.

A few traditional workshops still survive doing replacement or reproduction carving. Their decline was partly due to changes in taste, to a shortage of money and to the importation of cheaper carving from countries where there existed carving traditions, albeit significantly different from ours so the reproduction is often less than authentic.

Alternatively, you can buy mass-produced carved articles such as mouldings, which have the deadening regularity of things mass-produced by machine. There is still a demand, however, mostly for good-quality replacement work with some

original design from individual clients. Some cathedrals, museums and galleries still have their own workshops or, like the National Trust or English Heritage, farm their work out to private contractors in this country where, contrary to the general perception, there is a tremendous reservoir of experience and talent.

In lettering and letter cutting there is exciting work being done in Cambridge, Aldeburgh and elsewhere – far more imaginative and pleasing than the regular router-cut house names.

What I see is much the same as it was 25 years ago. Model-making can now be done by CNC machines and people who see the reduction in price compared with the hand-carved object may see this as sufficient justification. Likewise, many of the public will not appreciate the difference.

I like to think that design and understanding of 3D form have moved on, but there will not be much change at the amateur level until more carvers learn to draw as opposed to making pictures. Drawing involves working at an understanding of form. It doesn't matter if it is messy. A photograph may guide but it doesn't make us see.

Learning to carve wood in the 21st century

First appearing in issue 1 of *Woodcarving* magazine, Chris Pye talks about teaching and accessing information



Chris and Carrie filming a tutorial

A lot has happened in the carving world since I posted a double-spaced, hard copy of my article and a small pack of printed photographs for the first edition of *Woodcarving* in 1997. Up until then I had only been sharing the craft I love with local students – now I would be connecting to a much wider audience. Little could I know how wide, how global, how almost unlimited, that audience might one day become.

The internet and social media have since exploded on to the scene. We can see images of an enormous range of carvings from around the world and watch a swathe of carvers showing us how to do it. Woodcarving as a hobby is on the rise. Woodcarving is earthy: metal, wood, muscle and silent concentration. It's easy to see its attraction as an antidote to a

→ busy, less physically connected world. It's healthy; many would even say 'therapeutic'.

I've fully embraced the internet myself as a way of sharing the skills of traditional European woodcarving. Six years ago my wife, Carrie, and I created our subscription-based, e-learning website: Woodcarving Workshops.tv. In addition to the video lessons, the website includes a members' gallery, a blog, a newsletter and gift subscriptions. Last year we branched out to Facebook and Instagram and I'm thrilled to report that we have subscribers from more than 40 countries. I'd never have reached these carvers were it not for the world wide web.

This spreading of the word through the internet is, of course, a positive thing but there's a big caveat: It's easy for anyone with a gouge to take a video on their phone and publish it on YouTube, for free. But there is no quality control of the video itself, or what's being taught, or how. So often I see woodcarving techniques and design embarrassingly dumbed down, which makes it a bit of a lottery for beginners trying to learn. How do they triage the good from the downright bad and ugly?

Gone are the apprenticeships. Around the world, would-be carvers are picking up their knowledge from online videos. It's not one-on-one but for most of us it's likely the best we have, or will ever have.



Worldwide positions of people accessing the tutorials

Give a sincere, persistent woodcarving student the best information, with sound teaching methodology and a place to practise, and they will run with it.

But, best practices and sound teaching come at a cost. Highly skilled professional carvers, the ones who could demonstrate first-class work and carving, can't really be expected to spend time and effort providing their hard-won expertise for free when they have a life and perhaps a family to support.

Paying for creative, exciting, top-class carving instruction on the web will be the means to a new end and new generations of

carvers. Please believe me, I'm not trying to promote my own efforts with Woodcarving Workshops.tv but making the bigger case for this craft I love. We need to see paying for carving knowledge on the web not just as investing in our own hobby, or even supporting the lives of those skilled carvers, but as caring for and carrying woodcarving to future generations.

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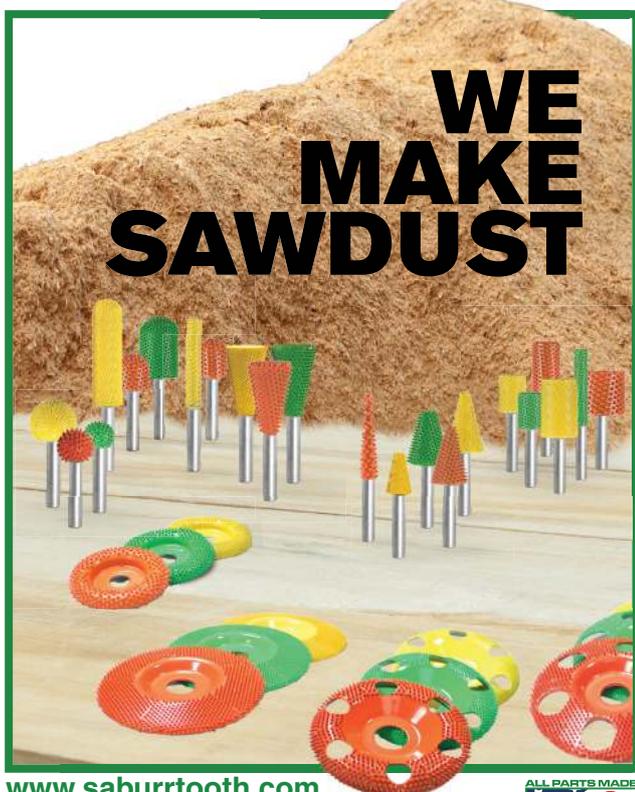
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An introduction to chip carving

Murray Taylor gives a brief history of chip carving and describes the tools and equipment you will need



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SWITZERLAND

A locked casket with flower and shrub motif, circa 1300-1400

In this first article, I would like to introduce you to the wonderful world of chip carving, give you a brief history, describe the tools you need to get started and the different styles of chip carving that can be achieved.

I have heard it said by the uninitiated and those not familiar with chip carving that it is an inferior or lower form of carving. Well, let me dispel this rumour from the start. In its simplest form, it is the removal of chips of wood to reveal a pattern or picture, it teaches tool control, accuracy and attention to detail. At the other end of the spectrum, chip carving is an art form in its own right, allowing the execution of highly decorative and complex pieces of work.

The origins of chip carving go back into antiquity and have been found in many parts of the world, from the South Pacific to Central Africa, from the Antipodes to Japan and, moving nearer to home, was found in most parts of Europe. Chip carving probably first came to the British Isles with the Vikings and spread to the US with the European immigrants in the 19th century.

Nowadays chip carving is prolific in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, where professional carvers use it to decorate buildings and domestic objects. It is not surprising, therefore, that these countries manufacture the tools required for this art. Chip carving as a hobby has long since been practised

in the US. It is now becoming more popular in the UK and both countries are now producing very good chip carving tools.

Very early examples of tribal chip carving have been found on weapons, paddles and tool handles, whereas in the European tradition we find it on small wooden domestic objects known as treen, washboards, chests, cupboard fronts, chair backs and the like. There is also an architectural tradition – examples can be found on doors, staircases, wall panels and exposed beams – which is achieved using chisels, gouges and even a long shoulder knife. I will cover this in a future article.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SWITZERLAND



LEFT: A raised casket with rosette motifs dated 1449

RIGHT: A coopered umbrella stand



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FRANZ STADLHOFFER, VIENNA

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FRANZ STADLHOFFER, VIENNA



LEFT: Candle holder with rosette motif

BELOW: Two free-form designs on boxes



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FRANZ STADLHOFFER, VIENNA

The tools you will need

The things you will need for chip carving fall into three categories – the knives, the drawing instruments and the wood for practice boards or finished objects.

So now let's look at the tools you will need to get started. There are only two knives that are essential at this level of chip carving – the cutting knife and the stab knife. The cutting knife has a short blade, approximately 30-35mm long, and a handle of 100-110mm long. It is important that the cutting edge of the blade has a pronounced downward slope, which makes for easier entry into the wood and more accurate chip removal. The knife is held with the handle in line with the forearm and the thumb resting on the wood.

The two knives you will need – cutting knife (right) and stab knife



TOP TIP: However difficult it seems to keep the thumb on the wood it is really important. Without it you cannot control the knife

As the cutting knife is the most important tool in the box and is in the hand longer than any other I think it is worth spending a little more time discussing it. It goes without saying that the cutting knife must be really comfortable in your hand. The choice of knife is a matter of personal preference but I urge you to try as many types of handle shapes as possible. I realise that this may not be easy but it is usually a subject of much lively discussion at chip carving classes and club meetings where you may be able to try the handle shapes of different knives, if not actually cut with them. Most chip carvers do not like anyone else using their favourite knife, a bit like a fountain pen, if anyone remembers them.

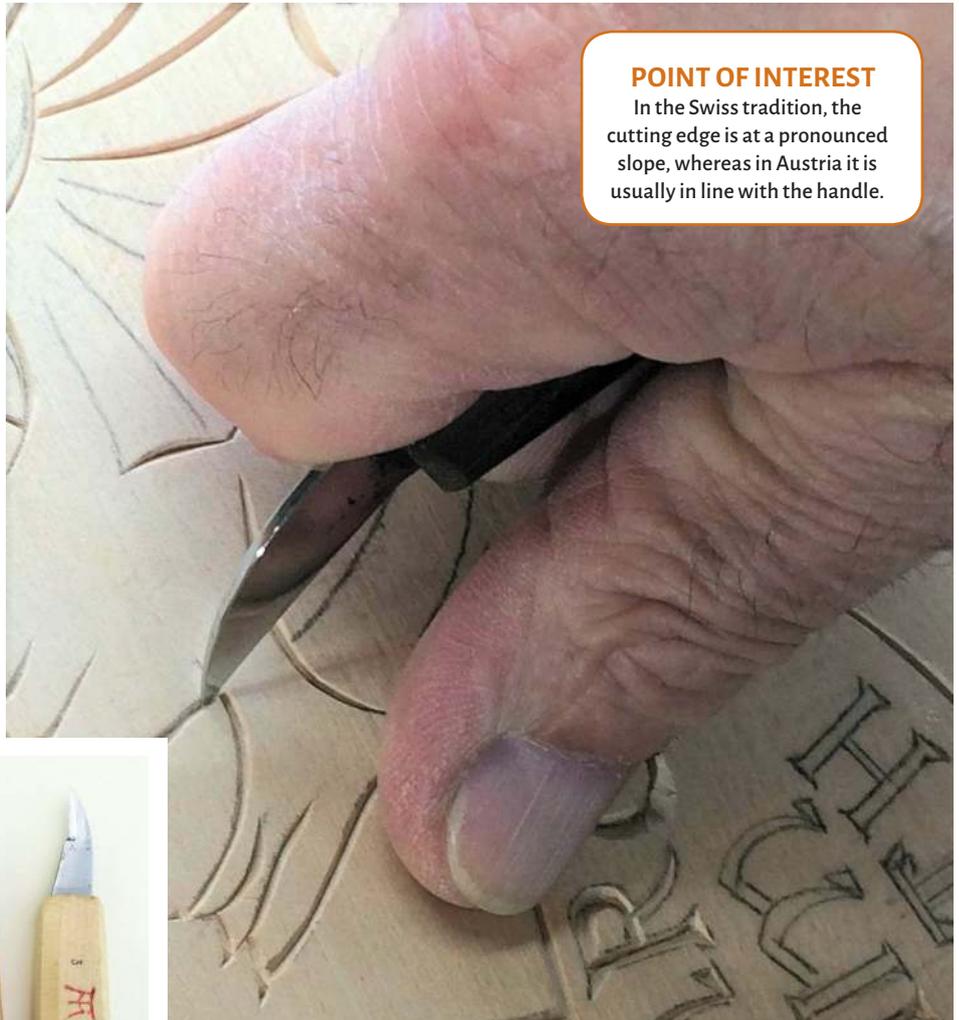
The next thing to consider is the downward sloping angle, or angle of attack of the cutting edge. This can vary from being in line with or parallel to the handle to an attack angle of 20°.



Six cutting knives showing different attack angles from straight (right) – 20°

One aspect of blade design that is not generally considered is blade thickness. My early attempts at chip carving were with home-made knives that I fashioned from hacksaw blades. They certainly took an edge but tended to snap when side pressure was applied. This was because the hacksaw blades were made from 0.75mm stock whereas modern cutting knives are manufactured from 1.5-2mm stock. I tend to prefer thinner blades for a clean neat cut.

The cutting knife is sharpened at a very shallow angle, 10° or less, and has a highly polished finish. I know that sharpening is a subject people have trouble with so I will cover this at length in the next article, along with the 'commissioning' of a knife – that is, the initial preparation before it can be used successfully as most knives are not ready for use when purchased despite



POINT OF INTEREST

In the Swiss tradition, the cutting edge is at a pronounced slope, whereas in Austria it is usually in line with the handle.

ABOVE: The grip for the cutting knife

RIGHT: The grip for the stab knife

BELOW: A small tool kit with some of my favourite knives



the claims made in tool catalogues.

The second knife in the box is the stab knife, this is a totally different kind of tool from the cutting knife as it is not used to cut but rather impress a small triangular design into the wood and is most effective in both geometric and free-form carving.

The blade tends to be slightly thicker than the cutting knife and is sharpened to an angle of 60°.

As your chip carving develops you may find that you require a cutting knife with a smaller blade for very fine detail work or making tight circular cuts. Some of the manufacturers do offer such knives but I often adapt tools to suit my needs. It is important to protect your knife blades from damage when in the tool box and this can be done with a cork or a small tool roll. If you use a cork it must be of the synthetic variety as natural cork tends to rust the blade.



Drawing instruments

The drawing instruments you will need in the basic box are easily obtained from art supply outlets or craft shops and consists of the following:

A 0.5mm propelling or mechanical pencil, these will normally be supplied with HB leads but it is important to empty these and refill with B or 2B leads as these are much softer and will not leave scratch marks on the wood.

The next thing you will need is a soft eraser and, although not essential, a pencil-type eraser is very useful. For the gadgeteers among us, and I'm sure there are a few, you can get a battery powered eraser with a very fine tip, not essential by any means, but a useful addition to the box and always



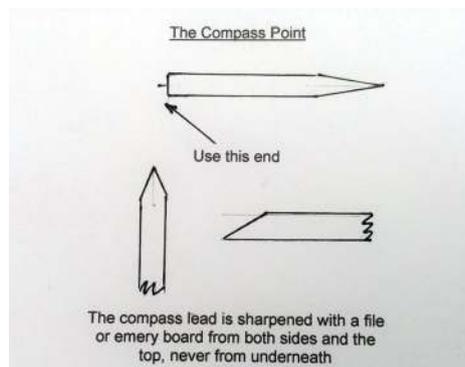
The basic drawing instruments you require

a talking point at demonstrations.

For grid panel layouts, a 12in plastic ruler with imperial and metric measurements comes next, along with a plastic T-square. I also like to have a 6in clear plastic ruler for drawing connecting lines on geometric grids – the transparency makes it easier to use.

TOP TIP: A white ruler with black markings makes it much easier to lay out grids and patterns

The next thing you need is a bow compass – that is, a compass with a mechanical means of adjustment. This type of compass usually takes a 1mm lead and it is important that this



Use the shouldered end of the point (above) and file the lead as shown

is also B or 2B. The point of the instrument will normally be two ended, one is a long tapering point while the other is shouldered. You need to use the shouldered end as this does not disfigure the wood so much.

Unfortunately, the old school-type compass into which you clamp an ordinary pencil will not do as the setting can easily vary and spoil the design. Along with the compass you need a small file or emery board to sharpen the lead. This is done by reducing two sides to a point and then filing down from the top or the outside to form a point. I would suggest that you keep all your tools together in a small convenient box, or when you have had some practice you could chip carve a box like mine.



My chip carving tool box in lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) and sapele (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*)

Styles of chip carving

The patterns or pictures produced by chip carving are made by the removal of either geometric or free-form chips. These chips can be formed using either straight or curved lines to produce a myriad geometric patterns or free-form designs. In the earlier stages of your chip carving you will remove chips where all the cuts are at 65° into the wood, but as you progress we will look at other styles of chip removal. Many of the geometric designs fall into the category of being 'traditional' and you will encounter them in many people's work. They originate from the early examples of tribal chip carving which can be seen in museums, the only difference being that the earlier tribal work was done

by eye and therefore was not so precise, whereas the later European work was set out with the benefit of drawing instruments.

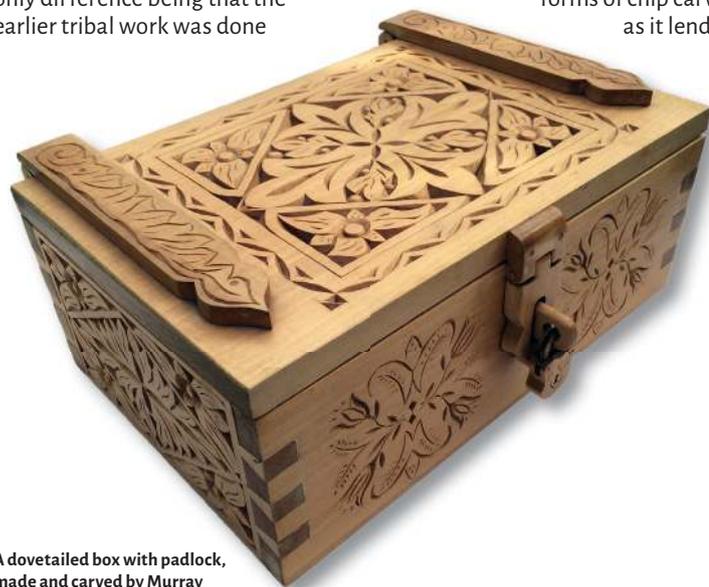
The free-form style of chip carving is not confined by tradition but allows us to use our imagination in the same way that an artist would, the only difference being that we cut our pictures out of a piece of wood as opposed to painting on a canvas. Ideas for free-form chip carving can be derived from your drawings, line drawings taken from photographs or from pattern books, but you must be aware of copyright laws if the work is not for your own use.

Although I enjoy practising and teaching all forms of chip carving I favour free-form as it lends itself to a greater

freedom of expression and at a higher level you can even incorporate imperfections or knots in the wood to enhance your work.

As we progress through this series on chip carving you will be able to develop ideas and techniques of your own. One of the interesting things within the art is the ability to carve one shape in different forms, as with the simple heart shape, which I have carved in three different ways: as a simple outline, with a geometric pattern within the heart and finally by carving the chips outside the heart to reveal the shape.

So start collecting the tools and drawing instruments I have outlined in this article and next time we will sharpen up and start chipping. ▶



A dovetailed box with padlock, made and carved by Murray



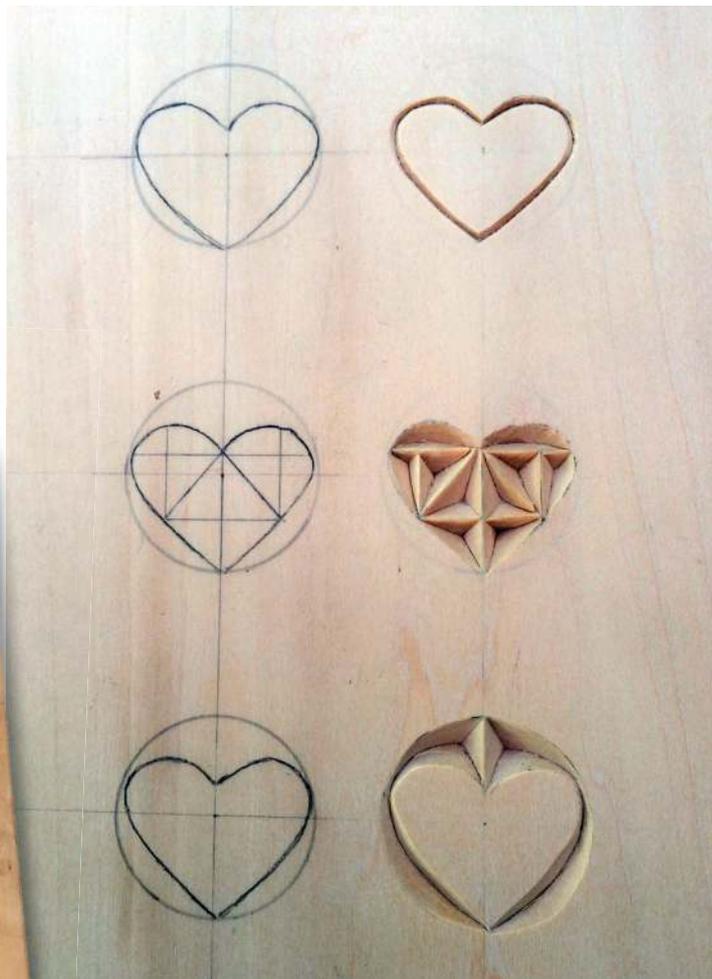
A carved footstool I made, influenced by the work of Wayne Barton



A clock with rosette and leaf design

ABOVE: A chip carving of classical Japanese design by Murray which was inspired by various motifs in the Dover Press book, *Traditional Japanese Design Motifs*

BELOW: A chip carving of the deity Fujin (Japanese god of wind) by Murray, inspired by various motifs in the Dover Press book, *Traditional Japanese Design Motifs*



A sample board of a simple heart shape treated in three different ways

WEBSITES

- Wayne Barton: www.chipcarving.com
- National Museum of Switzerland, Zurich: www.nationalmuseum.ch
- Dover Press: www.doverpublications.com
- Search Books: www.searchpress.com
- Franz Stadlhofer: www.franz-stadlhofer.at



Mind, body, soul

Andrew Thomas celebrates our 25th anniversary by showing how to carve this special contemporary sculpture

My contribution to this special 25th anniversary issue of *Woodcarving Magazine* is an elegantly designed contemporary sculpture, featuring two pierced sections that allow dynamic life through the form, dramatically adding to the effect of the light and shadow as it strikes through and across these positive and negative spaces. The inner pierced sections have

been finished with wood bleach on both the front and rear sides to add effect, naturally enhancing the contrast between the inner and outer surfaces.

There is plenty of scope to modify the design should the reader wish to, but the main considerations should be the overall balance and proportions of the form, ensuring that they are harmonious in their composition and pleasing to the eye.

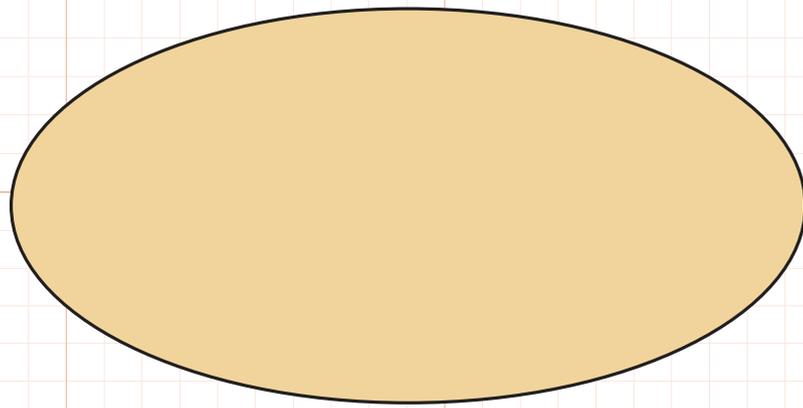
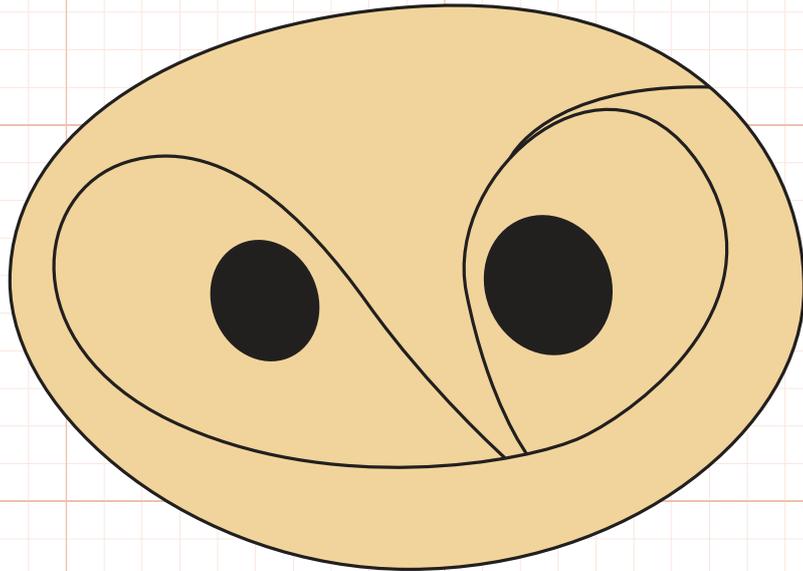
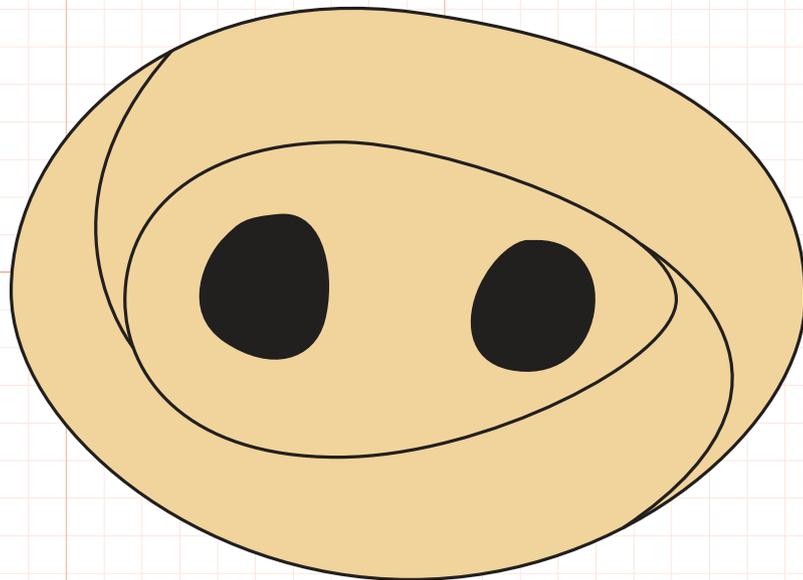
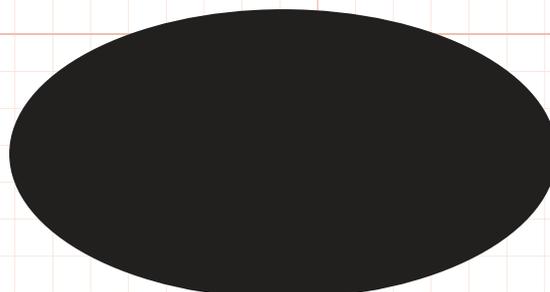
Things you will need**Tools**

Swiss gouges

- No.2, 40mm
- No.7, 20mm
- No.9, 10mm
- No.9, 13mm
- No.12, 6mm
- No.2, 10mm
- Knife
- Saw
- Drill
- 16mm Brad toothed bit
- 45 x 8mm bull nose tooth burr
- 30 x 20mm bull nose tooth burr
- 2mm drill bit

Materials

- Sculpture: Lime (*Tilia vilgaris*). Dimensions: 300 x 220 x 150mm
- Base: American black walnut (*Juglans nigra*). Dimensions: 210 x 110 x 20mm
- Rustins wood bleach
- Danish oil
- Clear wax
- Brown wax

**Top****Front****Rear****Base**

1 Scan or photocopy the scale drawings provided, enlarging them to the correct size for your wood, and print them out on to card to use as templates. Transfer them on to your block of wood, ensuring that they are in perfect alignment with each other and that the grain direction is running horizontally through the block. Leave an area of 30mm depth at the base to attach to your faceplate. Cut this shape out and secure it safely on to your vice. Measure and draw a centreline on all four sides.

2 The first stage of this sculpture is to create an even contour around the complete surface of the form. To do this, divide the work into four quarters and replicate the curvature from one section to the other using a no.2, 40mm gouge. Start by removing the top square edge along the length of the side. Then create an even curve from the centreline on the side to the centreline on the top. As you develop the shape of the side, you will discover that a slight bulge emerges in the middle of the mass. This will need to be reduced by making a vertical cut from the top down to the middle line.

3 The surface either side of this cut will then need to be carved evenly across into the surrounding areas. When completed, the surface of the section should flow evenly from one end to the other, with no peaks or undulations.

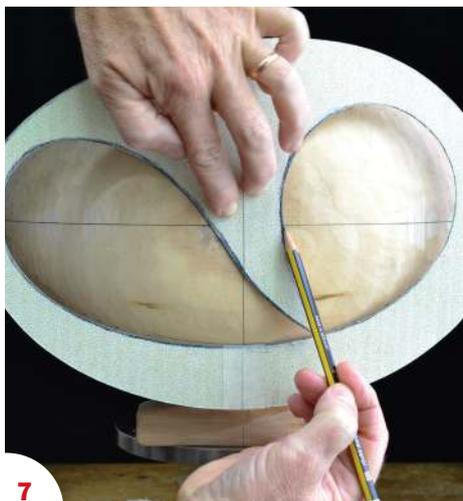
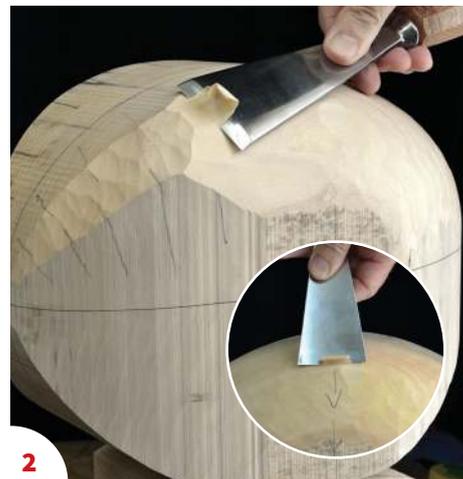
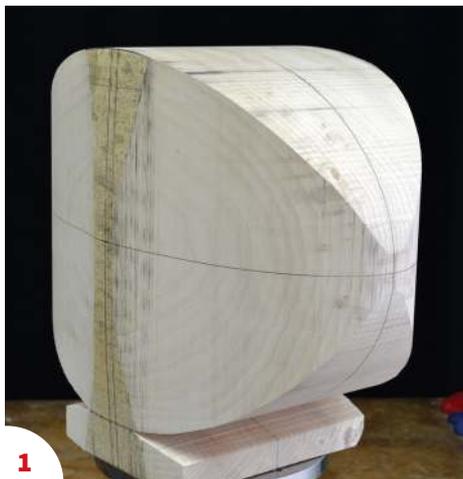
4 Repeat steps 2-3 on the opposite side to produce a symmetrical curve from centreline to centreline. If you have difficulty verifying the symmetry of this upper side, then use a profile gauge to assist you.

5 Next, we move to the lower half of the sculpture. To facilitate an easier working access to the underside of the form, a section of the faceplate base can be removed from both sides of the centre. Measure 20mm out from the centreline; mark these positions on both sides of the base and along the underside of the wood. Use a saw to cut a few millimetres below the sculpture design line until you reach the 20mm mark. Then cut along the line on the underside of the base to meet up with the previous cut, and remove the waste.

6 Use the same steps as outlined above to carve the lower section, uniformly in relation to the curvature of the upper one.

7 The second stage of the sculpture is creating the hollowed and pierced inner sections of the form. Using the templates to assist you, transfer the lines of the inner sections on to the front and back of your wood.

8 Use a No.7, 20mm to accurately carve all the way around the inner edge of the design line, towards the centre of the section, as deep as will allow you go. At the central lowest position where the angle becomes tighter, use a no.9, 10mm to hollow this area.





9



10

9 Before carving the inner section on the rear side of the sculpture, the two piercings can be made with a drill and 16mm brad toothed bit. Measure and mark on your wood the central vertical position of each section. Then measure out 60mm from the centreline and mark this position on each section. Place the drill in these positions and angle the bit so that it exits the wood in the approximate centre position at the rear.

10 The left side hole from the rear view should be slightly higher than the right side, but there is plenty of scope to modify this area of the design should the reader wish to do so.

11 The rear section can now be hollowed using the same technique as outlined in step 8.



11



12

12 With the front and rear sections now delineated and drilled, the next job is to gain extra depth down into them. Use a combination of the no.9, 10mm and no.9, 13mm, working around the surface of both sections into the holes, gradually working your way to the centre of the form.

13 Do the same on the rear side, ensuring that you keep the depth of the surface even.

14 At this stage of the carving, it is far more effective to swap to the use of rotary carbide burs if you have that option, as these are perfect for hollowing and expanding the size and shape of the piercings. If you don't have this option, then the same can be achieved with the no.9 gouges. Start by using a 45 x 8mm bull nose tooth burr on the flat side edge, working carefully around the hole to expand its diameter.



13



14

15 Then turn the piece around to work on the rear side of the holes, using the same technique to increase their apertures. Repeat steps 14 and 15 until they are approximately 35mm in diameter.

TOP TIP: I must emphasise at this point that the 20mm wide bull nose tooth burr is a very aggressive tool to work with and will give an almighty kick in the blink of an eye if it is worked into a hole or hollowing anywhere near its own size. Always open out any holes or hollows initially with either gouges or the 45 x 8mm bull nose tooth burr first before using this cutter.



15



16

16 Now swap over to a 30 x 20mm bull nose tooth burr and work extremely gently around the edge of each hole, front and back, gradually increasing their diameter and blending the surrounding depths evenly together. From the front view, the left hole should be finished larger than the right one, at approximately 50mm at its widest point. The right one should be around 40mm. These can be made either circular or elliptical.

17 When the carbide burr work is complete, the surface of the inner sections will need to be skimmed over with the no.7, 20mm gouge to eradicate all of the marks left from the burrs and to create an even depth across the surface from one side to the other.



17

18 The third stage of the carving is to create a break in the depth of the outer surface on both sides of the sculpture. First, draw a design line that flows naturally from the corner of the inner section on the rear of the form, down underneath and about 30mm past the centreline. Use a no.12, 6mm V- tool to carve a channel along this line.



18

19 Then use the no.2, 40mm to pare the wood back along the lower edge into the V tool channel. Repeat steps 18 and 19, gradually increasing in depth across the surface until you reach 8mm in the centre.



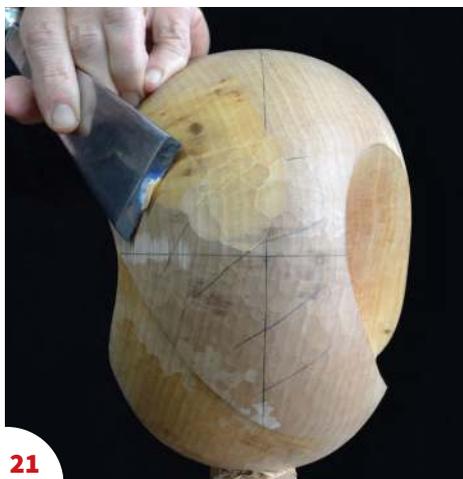
19

20 The flat edge created will then require squaring neatly in the corner. Use a razor-sharp knife to cut a slice deep into the corner. Then use a no.2, 10mm to pare the depth evenly along the edge and flush into the knife slit, producing a sharp inner angle.



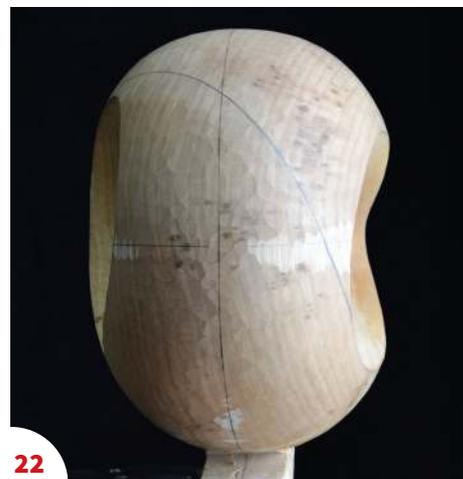
20

21 The area above this detail will now need to be shaped so that the contours flow evenly from front to rear, and down along the side. Use the large no.2 gouge to achieve this.



21

22 The opposite end is slightly different in its design. This line here flows from the top of the right inner section, around the side and down to join the inner section on the rear side. Draw this on to your form.



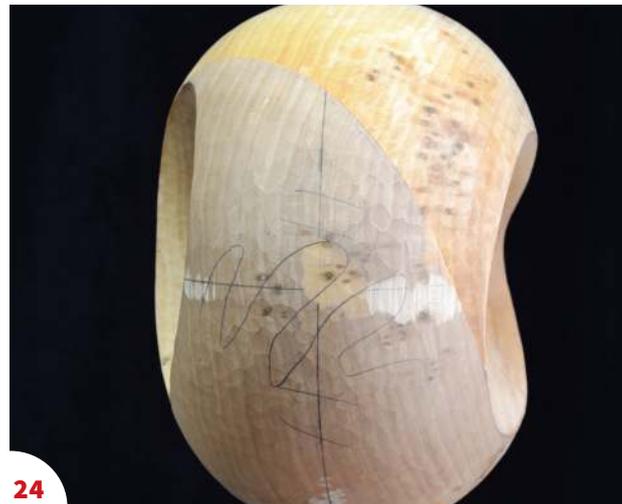
22

23 Use the same techniques as outlined in steps 18 to 20 to produce the detail, but this time pare the wood away from above the V tool cut. The area to the right of this detail will then need to be evenly blended across the sculpture.

24 The centre of this side, directly below the detail just carved, is the final area of the sculpture that needs shaping before sanding. Use the no.2, 40mm to pare back the peaked mass in the centre so that it flows more naturally in relation to the profile of this edge.



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25 Starting with 100 grit, work over the complete form, following the line of the grain wherever possible to remove all tool marks. Dust off the surface then brush or pour hot water over the complete carving and leave it to dry, thus raising the grain and allowing the following grit to be worked more easily and effectively. Next, work through 150, 240 and 400 grits, removing all of the scratches from each previous grit and repeating the hot water process in between.

26 Before the base is removed, it is wise to make a small hole in the very centre of the block where the sculpture will be attached to the base. This will ensure that the piece will be perfectly positioned when mounted. Use a 2mm drill bit, making sure that it goes level through the block into the sculpture, to a depth of at least 10mm. Now cut the base off.

27 Use the no.2, 40mm to tidy up the lower edge, and then sand through the various grits as outlined above.

28 The inner sections of the sculpture were finished with Rustins two-part wood bleach, which creates an effective contrast to the natural colour of the wood around the surface. Part A was applied first and left for 20 minutes to react, which turns the wood a darker colour.

29 Part B was then applied and left for two hours, which lightened the wood. Parts A and B were then repeated three times again to produce the desired finish. The complete sculpture was then polished with several applications of clear wax.

30 The base is shaped by simply curving the entire surface from the centreline evenly down to the edges. A 4mm hole is then made in the centre to attach it to the sculpture.

31 The example used for this project was finished with one good application of boiled linseed oil, which beautifully enriched the natural colour of the grain. This was left for a week or so to dry before applying several coats of dark wax polish.

32 Here is the finished shot of the reverse of the piece. ▶

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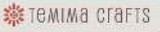
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A rich heritage

Anthony Bailey takes a trip to see Roy James Martin, a true time-served master of his craft for more than 30 years

Tucked away on a very neat, orderly farm estate in the lea of the South Downs, not far from his home city of Brighton, is the workshop of Roy James Martin, skilled woodcarver and ardent Seagulls (Brighton & Hove Albion) supporter. Meeting Roy for the first time is a bit of a revelation, not because of what he is, but what he isn't. There's no airy fairy, arty nonsense as far as Roy is concerned. 'I'm a copy carver,' he says. That seems like a massive understatement of talent – great artists copy, because art, like crafts, develops, it evolves. So it is with Roy's carving skills. A natural from a quite young age, the term 'savant' springs to mind, someone with exceptional skill or knowledge. Basically, show Roy what you want and he can carve it, brilliantly. His speciality is traditional carving styles and decorative elements. Show him a lion's head, egg and dart moulding, acanthus leaves – you name it. He could probably carve a ball and claw foot with his eyes shut such is the wealth of knowledge, understanding and feeling he has for these things. 'Give me a shape you want me to follow, I'll go over it with my tools so I get the feel for it, then I'll carve you a perfect copy,' says Roy, explaining with hand motions at the bench.



A nice large workshop with a room to the side for carving smaller items



Early experience

'I started carving because I loved art when I was younger. A teacher saw some promise in me – Mrs Harwood was her name. She said to my mum: "I wouldn't be surprised if he did something with his hands when he leaves school." If it was raining I was always doing art. If it wasn't raining I was playing football. The creative side was already there.' (Note his equal obsession with 'the beautiful game'.)

Roy continues 'The deputy head said there was a job going and took me to an interview. He told me to smarten up for the interview and said it was right up my street. There was a polisher, upholsterer or a carver needed and I was asked what I would like to do – I chose carving. The company said it would contact me within two weeks. Someone phoned up the next day and that's how I started.'



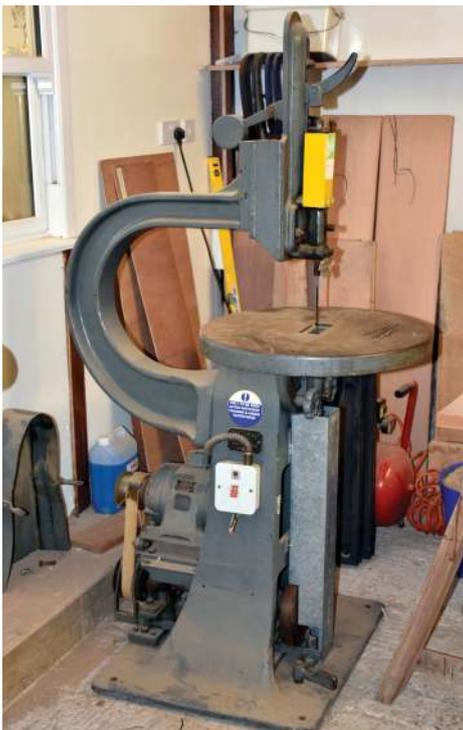
PHOTOGRAPH BY ROY JAMES MARTIN

A large table with a carved centre section

The workshop

Looking around Roy's workshop a couple of things spring to mind. One, it is a decent size for carving activity with an enclosed, office-sized space where he does the bench carving work. Two, there isn't lots of clutter and on my second visit the panel saw which no carver needs had been replaced by a natty little vintage Multico table saw that a colleague who specialises in refurbishing woodworking machinery supplied, nicely painted green and ready

to go. Roy has a propensity for older, more reliable solid kit – a big bandsaw of course, a spindle sanding machine run through a phase converter to single phase, a big fretsaw, a compound mitre saw and that is about it for machines. 'I have a nucleus of 25-30 carving tools which will always be on the bench in front of me, with a reserve of less-used patterns of tool on the shelf behind me,' he says, pointing to a neat selection of gouges and chisels.



The fretsaw that is currently being repaired to full working order



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROY JAMES MARTIN

A commission for a fireplace surround

→ Apprenticeship

'I started my apprenticeship in June 1986. I was at Varndean High School in Brighton – I left school on the Thursday and started my apprenticeship the next Monday. I went to William L McLean, it later became Frank Wenstrom – Wenstrom House group. I was there just short of five years, left in 1991 and went self-employed. I was 20 and still living with my parents. A firm of cabinetmakers was feeding me with work, I was working evenings in my parents' garage and the boss said he had enough work to keep me going. In 1992 I went to Coltherd & Hill woodcarvers, in Whitehawk near Brighton Marina, I was subbing work from them. I was there 13 years renting bench workspace.

'I then did work for Manborne Custom Furniture in Sayers Common, a little village in West Sussex. I've also done work for Brown & Harman, mostly carving for furniture and interiors, which is their speciality. I have been carving wood for more than 30 years and I have produced woodcarvings for clients all across the UK.

'A great many firms are not about any more. There are excellent companies about, but the number is much reduced from what was in the past,' bemoans Roy.

Working with a passion

'It is not only my livelihood, but also my passion. The ability to create something intricate from a piece of wood is as exciting to me now as it was when I first started woodcarving. I love what I do and I believe it shows in each finished piece. I am a

perfectionist and I always ensure that the finished product is the best it can be as I want my clients to be 100% happy with their woodcarving,' Roy enthuses. This is a man with a very direct, no-nonsense manner, very determined, no bullshit, but a good sense of humour too and a complete mastery of his craft.

What are your influences in your work?

'I have dabbled in sculpture, but I was taught as a traditional English carver who deals with foliage, scrolls, feathers, lion's paws, heraldic lions, griffons. Chippendale/Georgian style work. I have gone and learned various different styles as the needs dictate, but I carve what I am asked to do. It is a matter of relating to the furniture industry. I work for furniture companies, interior designers and so on.

Mistakes and development

'I carved some lettering once and I didn't square up the lettering properly. It was slightly off and the end result was not what the client expected. I was inexperienced then and I have learned a lot since. I had been carving for four years at that stage. It was the one and only job where I had a disappointed client.

'Regarding development, I want to see my customer base increase. I have a carving friend who will be working in my workshop on his own jobs too. I want to expand on what I carve. I have spent a while sorting out my new workshop so now I have it ready for working in properly, apart from some adjustments to my large fretsaw. Currently I have a large table to carve and have to carve a poem in it. I have to carve a hippo too.'



A newly carved replica chair. I had to carve all the pieces



Here is the newly finished and upholstered chair alongside the original. Can you tell which is which?

ALL PHOTOGRAPH BY ROY JAMES MARTIN



Legs of all sorts are a frequent commission



What I am asked to carve varies a lot



The first of a batch of thirty four columns



Company logos are nice commissions to have

Q&A

What is your favourite carving style?

'I love working on Rococo as it is elaborate, but I like Georgian and Chippendale-style carvings.'

What about the future?

'To be in a situation where I can keep standards high and have people working with me, including youngsters. In fact, I have a young guy on college release at the moment.'

Likes and dislikes?

'Art Deco is nice but it is not everyone's cup of tea. The style has a nice look, often less is more.'

Helpful advice for other carvers?

'Keep your parallels parallel and verticals vertical. Concentrate on the detail and keep your tools sharp. Learn to read the grain in the wood.'

How do you market your work?

'Social media has helped but its day is yet to come – for me that is. It is a professional front and you need as big a customer base as possible. You have to get out and meet people to build up a client base; it takes time.'

***'This is not my hobby.
It is a profession
so I have to work quickly,
accurately and to
a time and price'***

In conclusion

Apart from all aspects of woodcarving both outdoors and indoors, commercial or domestic, traditional furniture, modern sculptures and everything in between, Roy James Martin has also undertaken restoration on listed buildings and at heritage sites. He is an obsessively precise carver. Working just from photographs, a few dimensions and then his simple card 2D outlines he manages to produce work of a standard his skilled forebears would recognise as on a par to their own output. Truly a master who knows his craft and his business well. ▶

For further information please contact Roy on:

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Classical shell dish

Steve Bisco carves a scallop shell dish in the Classical style

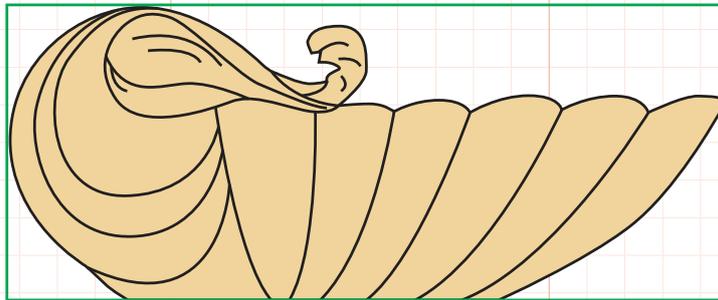
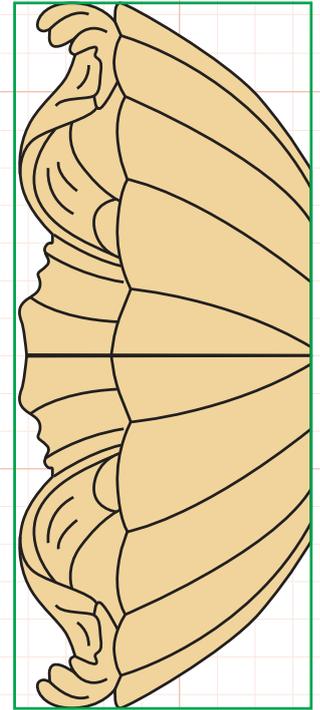
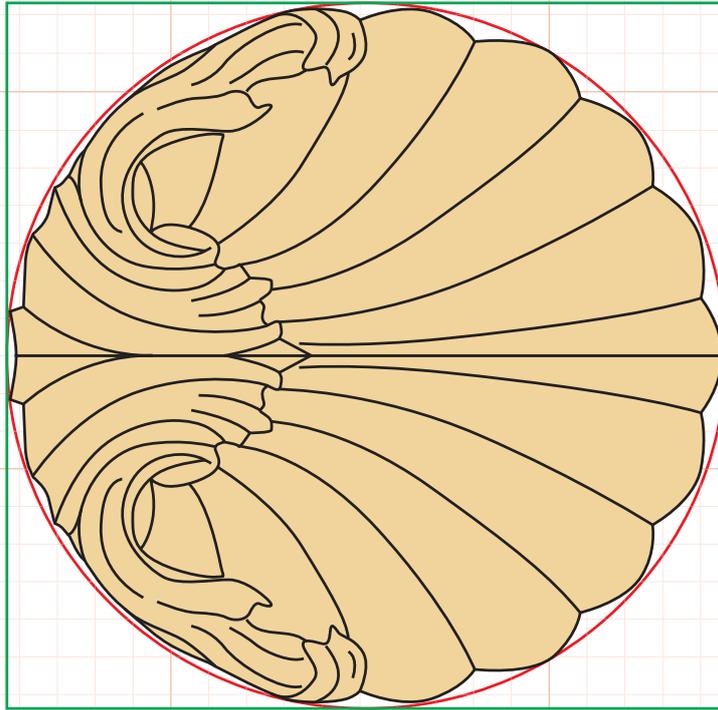
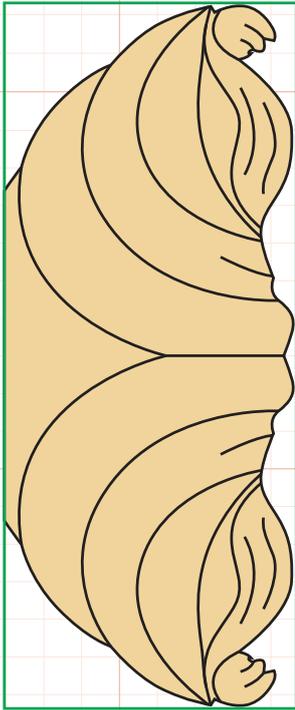


Living on the coast, I've always had a fondness for seashells, and in my youth I used to earn pocket money by walking far out on the mudflats at low tide to pick up wild native oysters. This fascination seems universal to mankind, and seashells are among the most commonly used decorative motifs throughout history. The scallop shell, in particular, appears widely in the Classical styles among niches, cornices, pediments and fountains. Botticelli's Venus famously emerges from a giant scallop shell. The scallop naturally provides a suitable form

for a dish or shallow bowl and was fully exploited by 18th-century silversmiths such as Paul Storr (1771-1844) and ceramicists like Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795).

In woodworking, bowls are generally seen as the province of the woodturner, and we carvers don't use them as much as we could. A richly-carved bowl makes a beautiful ornament to grace a table or sideboard, whether or not you put anything in it. Although this dish is circular, its form is dominated by the elaborate Classical volutes and seaweed-like acanthus swirls

at the 'hinge' end of the shell. To keep these features light and delicate within the fairly small scale of this dish, I have used limewood (*Tilia vulgaris*), which can be deeply undercut and carved very thinly. This can be left as bare wood, painted, gilded in silver or gold leaf, limewaxed or finished in verdigris wax. If you prefer to use a more decorative but harder wood such as walnut (*Juglans* spp), cherry (*Prunus* spp) or mahogany (*Swietenia* spp), you will need to compromise on the amount of undercutting on the acanthus swirls and make them a bit thicker.



Things you will need

Tools:

- No.3, 20mm fishtail gouge
- No.3, 10mm fishtail gouge
- No.4, 6mm fishtail gouge
- No.3, 10mm
- No.8, 8mm
- No.5, 7mm
- No.9, 16mm curved gouge
- No.5, 13mm curved gouge
- 10mm short bent gouge
- 8mm short bent gouge

- No.8, 8mm curved gouge
- No.3, 5mm bent gouge
- No.39, 6 or 10mm V tool
- 20 & 6mm flat chisel
- 16mm hooked skew chisel
- 10mm skew chisel

Materials:

- Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*).
180 x 180 x 75 mm
- Liberon verdigris wax

PREPARATIONS

1 Get a piece of lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) 180 x 180 x 75 mm. Make a full-size copy of the drawing and trace the pattern on to the wood, using carbon paper, with the grain aligned from the 'hinge' end to the front edge.

2 Cut around the 180mm diameter circle with a bandsaw or whatever saws you have. Mark a horizontal line all around the side of the cylinder, 50mm up from the base, then mark vertical lines around the outside to show where the ridges of the shell pattern meet the edge. Also mark the centre of the circle on the underside. You'll need these marks later.

3 Mark a line across the bowl where the acanthus leaves end, and saw out the surplus wood in front of the acanthus down to the 50mm line.

4 Work holding can be tricky on a bowl, so it is best to paste it on to a piece of card, then on to a backing board, using glue or sanding sealer. Screw or clamp the backing board to the bench and you are ready to carve.

CARVING THE UPPER SIDE

5 Start carving by 'bosting' around the inner edges of the volute and the acanthus leaves, then use a large curved gouge to hollow out the middle into a rough bowl shape. Take care to leave at least 13mm thickness in the bottom at this stage.

6 To ensure you don't go too deep at the base of the bowl, make up this simple depth gauge using thin plywood. Make a 'sandwich' of 3 thicknesses of the board, wide enough to straddle the bowl, leaving a gap in the middle that you can slide another piece of board through. Cut the central 'slider' to a point and mark a red calibration line when the point is touching the bench (zero thickness).

7 With the bowl roughly hollowed, rough out the shape of the acanthus swirls so they flow out of the sides of the volute, then curl along the sides, ending with an upward flick. Refer to the drawing and the finished photos for this.

8 Now rough out the area of the 'hinge' volute flowing right over from the back of the bowl to the centre.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Classical style has its origins in ancient Greece and Rome 2000 years ago. It disappeared in the Dark Ages after the collapse of the Roman Empire, but re-emerged in the Renaissance when the ancient ruins were excavated, reaching its peak with the Neo-Classical style of the 18th and 19th centuries. Roman artifacts were often made in bronze and found coated with verdigris – a green coating of copper chloride salts resulting from corrosion by air, soil and salt water over many centuries.

Instead of using verdigris wax, you can buy metal patina finishes from Modern Masters and Sculpt Nouveau to create a metal patina effect.



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9 Carve the ridges and hollows that flow over the top, front and back of the volute. Make the lines nice and sharp with a hooked skewel chisel, then make the ridges slightly concave with a shallow gouge. Keep a smooth flow to all the curves.

10 Shape the acanthus leaves and carve the veins that flow from the volute to the ends. The unfurled frond at the end has to be shaped first into a ball and then scooped out to form the flick.

11 Undercut the acanthus leaves right back to where the inner face of the bowl will be, and open the gap through to the outside. Merge the leaves smoothly into the volute. How well you do this will have a great impact on the finished piece.

12 Now return to the inner bowl surface. Redraw the shell 'flutes' as shown on the drawing. Use large and small curved gouges to scoop out each concave 'flute', leaving a sharp ridge in between each one. Always work downhill, and take care as the grain changes in the bottom. Leave at least 6mm thickness in the base.

13 When you have to carve away your pattern lines in the roughing out stage, it is useful to trace the pattern on to a piece of glass or clear plastic so you can place it over the carving to check the pattern as you progress.

14 You will need some spoon-bit gouges to achieve the downhill direction from under the acanthus leaves. You will also be working across the grain in the rear flutes so take care not to crumble the ridges. Short-bent gouges, also called spoon-bit or spoon-bent gouges, are a useful addition to your toolkit for getting into awkward places where an obstruction prevents you getting a low enough cutting angle with a normal gouge. As well as new ones, it is worth looking out for old ones as they often have a much shorter 'spoon' that gives you more options.

15 Refine the 'scalloped' shape at the outer ends. Check that all the carving on the upper surface is complete and well finished. Saw away some of the surplus wood from the underside then detach the carving from the backing board. The design of this bowl is dominated by curves. Every line must flow in a smooth and graceful curve from end to end and top to bottom. Any kinks or straight bits will stick out like a sore thumb and annoy you every time you look at it, so always keep your eye on the curves.

CARVING THE UNDERSIDE

16 For work holding, use some scrap wood to make a raised section that you can lay the bowl on upside down without damaging the volute and acanthus leaves. Lay some soft material on top of this to protect the carved surfaces.

17 Clean up the base surface, mark a point 13mm back from the centre of the disc towards the volute end, and draw a circle 90mm in diameter for the base. Shape the outer surface of the bowl back to this circle, and check the wall thickness is about 8-10mm using double-ended calipers. Heavy mallet work could now split the thin bowl, so use a sharp flat chisel with gentle hand pressure and a sideways sweeping motion to shave away the wood.



17

18 Now carve the underside of the bowl into convex ridges to reflect the flutes on the inside. Carve the sides of the bowl to a thickness of about 8mm, taking care not to misalign the upper and lower ridges and hollows. Stop at the base circle to retain a flat base.



18

19 The ridges and hollows over and under the 'hinge' volute need to flow seamlessly into one another. Hold the piece in a bench vice with plenty of soft packing and make sideways sweeping cuts to gently shave away the hard end grain.



19

FINISHING

20 Finally, check over all the carving and refine any uneven surfaces. Use fine abrasives carefully to create a smooth finish to the carved surfaces without dulling the detail. Photo 20 shows the finished carving used for reference when carving.



20

21 You can now apply the finish of your choice. I used Liberon verdigris wax, which gives a pale green finish like corroded copper. Apply the wax with a fairly stiff brush, and leave it several hours to thicken.

22 Use a dry cloth to buff the wax to a soft sheen, with the wood showing through on the edges. The classical shell dish now has a look of antique Roman copper. ▶



21



22



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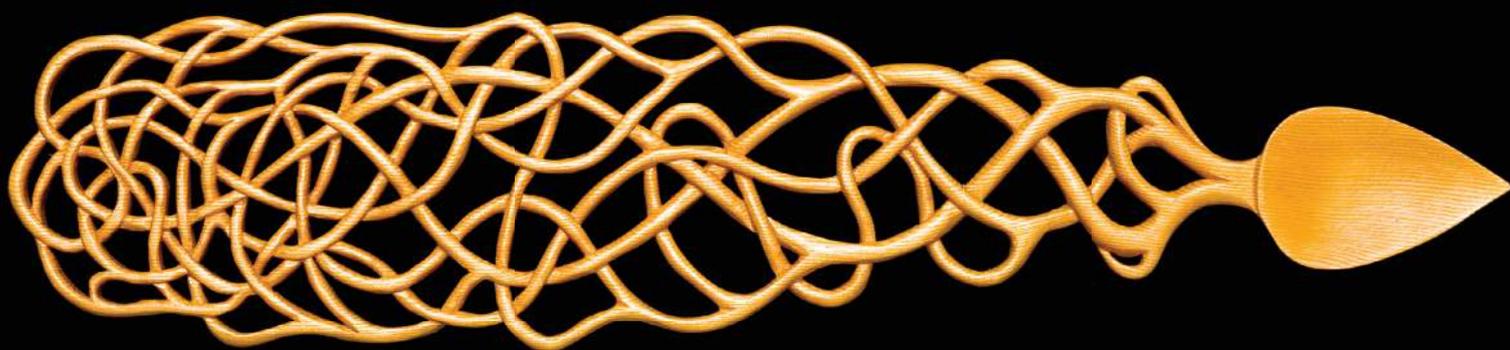
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Extreme lovespoon carving

Dave Western takes a look at the extraordinary lengths people will go to create a lovespoon



By its nature, lovespoon carving is an exuberant endeavour and, by making them, young men have, for centuries, attempted to impress the young women they fancied with feats of woodcarving derring-do. Not only was each of these passionate carvers trying to win the attention of the girl, they were also trying mightily to impress the girl's family and beat back any amorous rivals they may have had to contend with. There was much at stake and a skilfully designed and dexterously carved lovespoon could go a long way towards guaranteeing a positive outcome.

Although things are different nowadays, with lovespoons no longer being given for the same reasons they were in the past, there is still a desire among serious lovespoon carvers to push boundaries, test skills and materials and to design ever more beautiful pieces.

For this special 25th anniversary issue of *Woodcarving Magazine*, I would like to highlight a number of my own designs as well as a multitude from fellow lovespoon carvers who have also taken the craft to the extreme.

Lovespoon carving is an enterprise of endless possibility that offers limitless opportunity for design experimentation and for carving advancement. It is my sincere hope that seeing the following spoons will inspire you to throw caution to the wind and undertake your own exciting adventure in lovespoon carving.



Carvers' tricks such as the ball in cage are taken to new heights on this antique lovespoon with a unique four-cage arrangement

Extreme history

From the earliest days of lovespoon carving, it seems that carvers were constantly on the lookout for ways to elevate their carvings above the competition. On Welsh spoons in particular, these innovations largely occurred in one of two ways.

In the first, long, slender handles were often decorated with a riot of chain links, balls in cages, swivels and other classic carvers' tricks. These made for spectacularly technical spoons, but left little room for symbolic decoration. Carvers began looking for ways to include more detail and the outcome of this search was broadened and enlarged handles which took on the appearance of panels.



The broad-panel handle is seen at its most extreme in this historical copy, with familiar and incomprehensible symbols covering the entire surface of the handle



PHOTOS BY SION LLEWELLYN

In these examples, Llewellyn elegantly fuses traditional straight spoon styling with the broad panel style. The addition of Celtic knotwork gives the spoons a bit of an 'old world' feel

As these panels grew in size, carvers could take advantage of the increased surface area both to add ever-more romantic imagery and to show off a range of carving skills.

In our modern era, much of the eclecticism of earlier lovespoon carving has been replaced by more straightforward design that is easier to machine and mass produce. This has led to a mistaken belief that traditional lovespoon carving was a simpler and cruder affair than it actually was.

Trained cabinetmaker, Siôn Llewellyn, rectifies this masterfully by straddling the historic and the modern. Llewellyn's designs often incorporate hints of his joinery background with elegant frames and panels enveloped in rich Celtic knotwork. Although Celtic knotwork is virtually unknown on historic examples, in Llewellyn's skilled hands it appears as historically believable as it is beautiful.

Carver Bob Tinsley takes 'old world' in another extreme direction through his dedication to hand carving. Using only hand tools and completely eschewing power, Bob's spoons may utilise many modern design features, but they are hardcore old school.

From shaping the blank down by axe, to carving using only knives and finishing with scrapers and files, Bob's spoons represent extreme devotion to traditional hand craft.



Tinsley carves his lovespoons entirely by hand and they amply illustrate what is possible with extreme patience, dedication and hand skill

PHOTOS BY BOB TINSLEY

Extreme symbolism

When it comes to the time-honoured lovespoon tradition of using symbols to represent romantic notions, nobody can tell a story quite like longtime English lovespoon carver Ralph Hentall. Renowned for his elaborate and highly detailed designs, Hentall carves spoons which are masterpieces of symbolism and storytelling. Although it has been suggested that a young girl of yore could 'read' a lovespoon and understand the secret message of love it told, it is more likely that she would have simply recognised a small number of well-known symbols, such as hearts and diamonds. It is only in our modern era that larger numbers of symbols have become 'traditional', as most are never seen on historical examples. Hentall's spoons, however, are carved as symbolic stories, with every detail having personal relevance to the person receiving it. In this way he manages to forge a link between the traditional symbols of the lovespoon and a more modern concept of the spoon as a vehicle by which a person's tale can be told.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER OAKENFULL

PHOTOGRAPH BY STUART KING

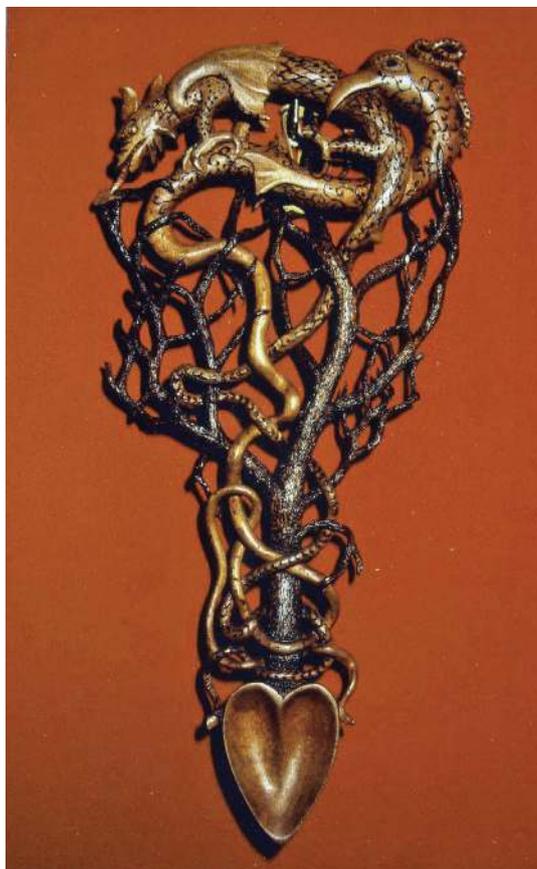


Ralph Hentall's imaginative and carefully crafted lovespoons represent the apex of detailed storytelling in wood

Extreme eccentricity

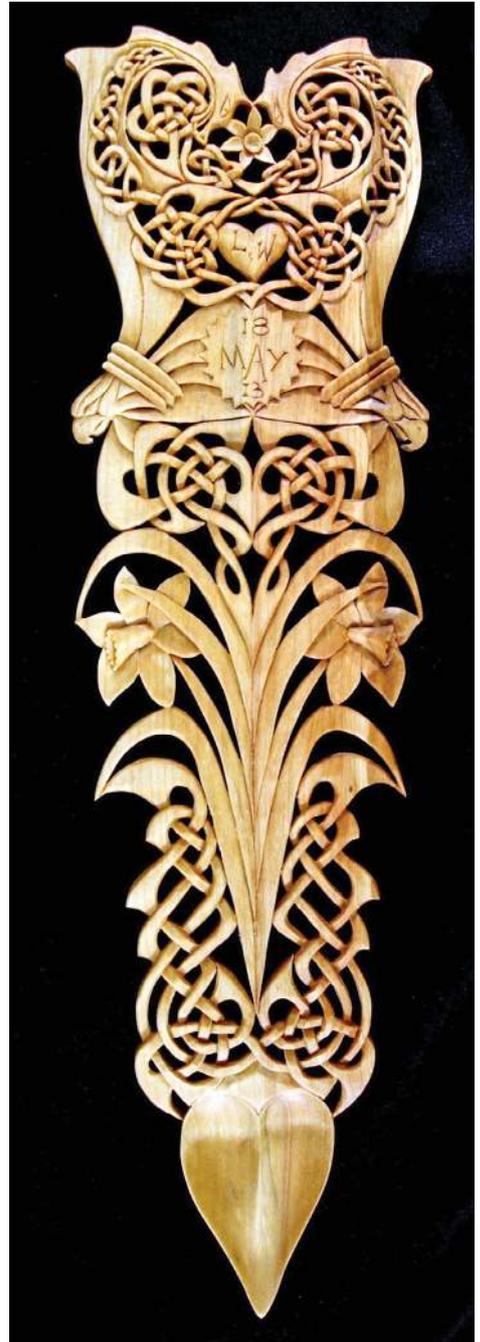
The first lovespoon-maker of the modern era to really embrace the eccentricity of varied styles and designs was Welsh carver Mike Davies. Davies' background as a trained artist is given free rein in his designs and he was the first to carve lovespoons that were truly works of art as well as emotive love tokens. His mastery of both technical carving and artistic design has resulted in a number of spectacular designs ranging from traditional, to Celtic, to more avant-garde works.

It was Mike Davies who inspired me to take on the challenge of lovespoon carving and whose designs opened the door for me to realise the vast potential of this most endearing tradition. When I design a spoon, I try to tell my clients' life stories using imagery that is important to them. Sometimes the imagery is obvious, other times extremely esoteric, but it is always meaningful. Like my fellow carvers, I enjoy a variety of art styles and relish the challenge of making them work in wood. As per tradition, my spoons are always carved from a single piece of wood.

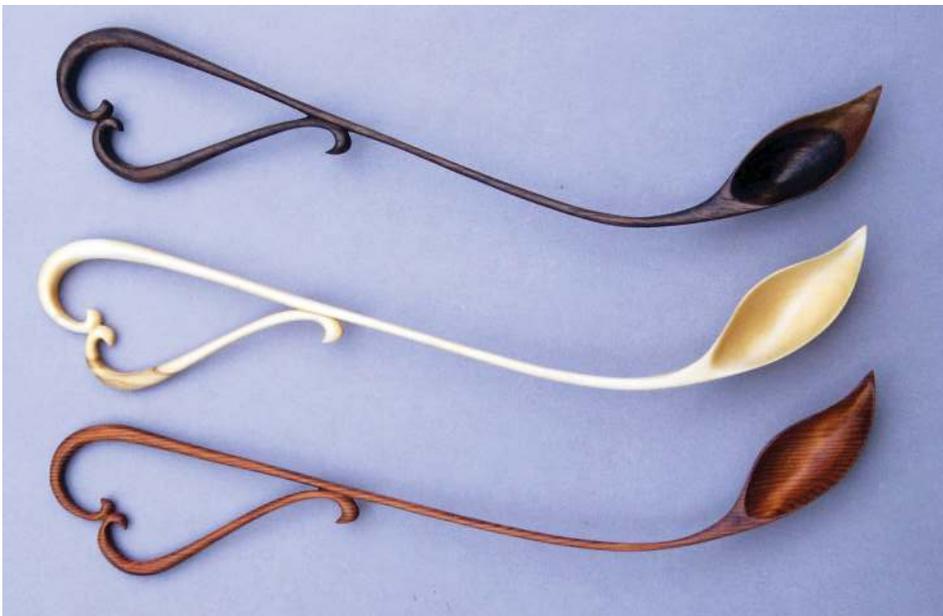


PHOTOS BY MIKE DAVIES

Revelation Tree of Life (which took several hundred hours to carve) and the Royal Lovespoon carved for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth dramatically illustrate the wide variety of Davies' designs and the quality of his workmanship



Dave Western's lovespoons embrace diverse art styles, unusually figured woods, occasional inlays and a variety of carving techniques



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURA JENKINS GORUN

Extreme elegance

Welsh-American carver Laura Jenkins Gorun has taken many of her lovespoons to the extreme of delicacy. A trained artist and self-taught carver, Gorun deliberately avoided studying other lovespoons in order to develop as personal a style as she was able. This is most noticeable in the seeming frailty and extreme slenderness of her designs, many of which defy physics. Although her designs are often copied, I've yet to see any equal her facility for pushing wood to the limits of its capabilities.

Elegant, slender lines are the hallmark of Laura Jenkins Gorun's graceful designs as she takes seeming simplicity to the extreme of difficulty

Extreme design

Australian graphic artist and master carver David Stanley's crisply considered and immaculately crafted pieces elevate design and technique to a whole new level. On Stanley's spoons, designs often happen on several planes and occasionally the back and front of the spoon bear different images entirely. Although extremely complex and frequently visually busy, Stanley's designs

have an effortless and seamless quality that makes them wonderfully engaging.

As I mentioned previously, there are infinite opportunities for stylistic and technical experimentation open to you when you carve a lovespoon. By refusing to be limited by notions of what is standard or expected, you can help expand this remarkable tradition and keep it relevant for the future. ▶



David Stanley's spoons represent the current apex of lovespoon design and craftsmanship. Flawlessly crafted, they are among the very best extreme lovespoons being carved



A collaboration between Welsh artist Jen Delyth and carvers David Western and Laura Jenkins Gorun, this lovespoon harmoniously combines several diverse artistic styles and carving techniques to create a beautiful and distinctive piece



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURA JENKINS GORUN



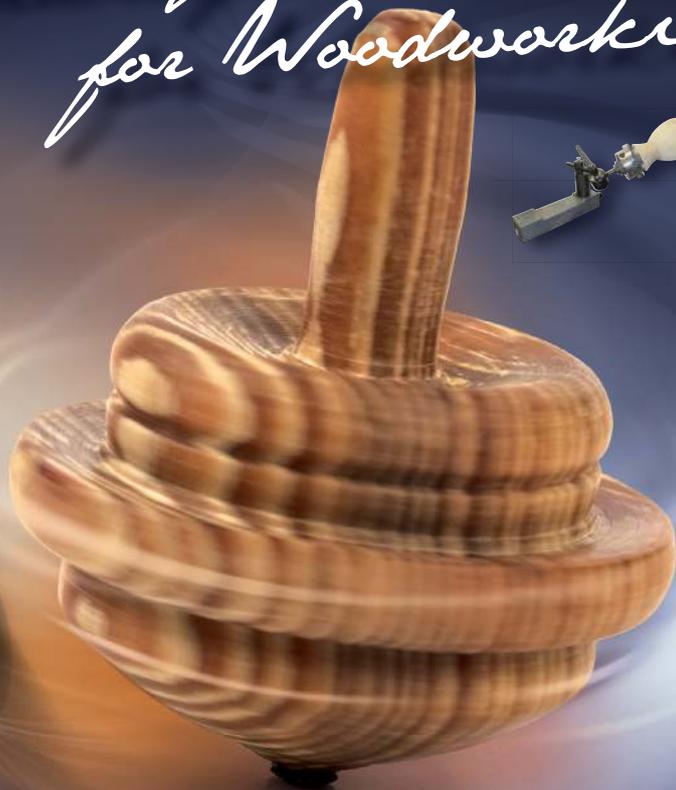
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID STANLEY

More of Laura Gorun's graceful designs

David Stanley Dragon Lovespoon

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PER ISSUE



Marvellous mallard

Marc Cotterill shows how to carve a mallard duck stick head

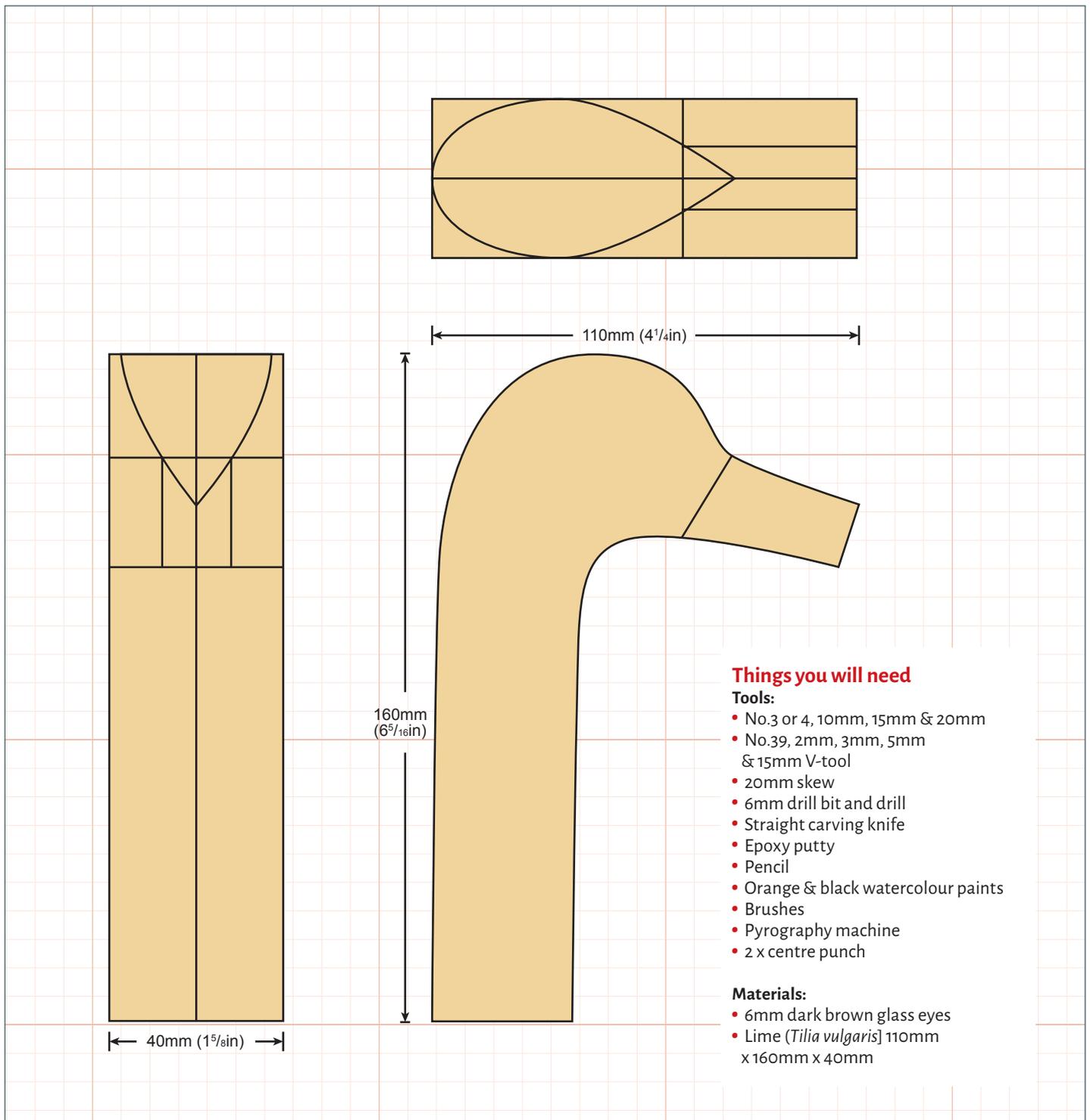


The mallard duck is closely related to domesticated ducks. More than 60 subspecies have been identified.

The overall size of this duck can depend on the subspecies of parents, location, and food resources. They range in size from 20in to 26in long, while their wingspan ranges from 0.9-1m.

It is simple to tell the gender of a mallard duck based on the colour of the top of the head. For males it is a very bold green or blue. For females it is a light shade of brown. The body can be various shades of brown with white and even some blue on the feathers. They are very pretty and also very graceful when they are in flight.

The mallard duck lives in subtropical and temperate regions. They are found around North Africa, New Zealand, Australia, North America, Asia and Europe. They tend to live in the wetland areas where there is plenty of humidity. They do migrate for mating and to avoid cooler weather times of the year. It may surprise you to learn that some of them even live in the Arctic tundra.



Things you will need

Tools:

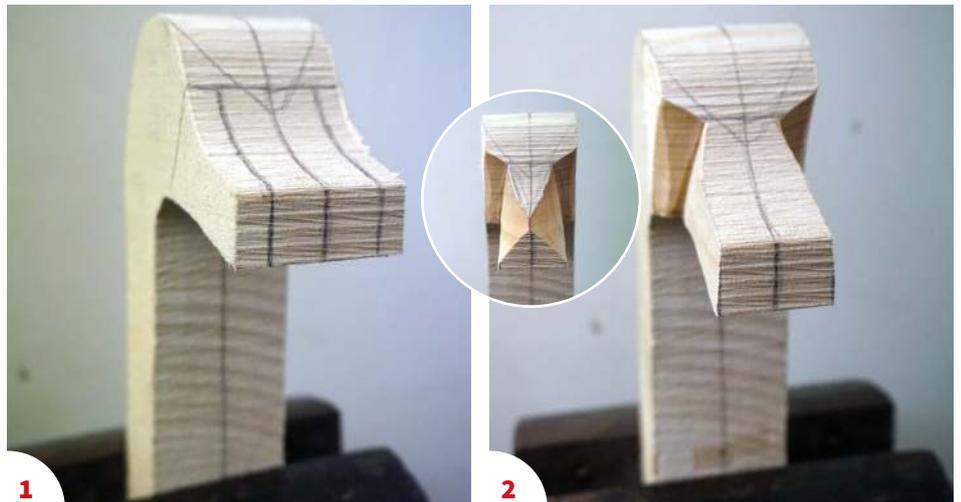
- No.3 or 4, 10mm, 15mm & 20mm
- No.39, 2mm, 3mm, 5mm & 15mm V-tool
- 20mm skew
- 6mm drill bit and drill
- Straight carving knife
- Epoxy putty
- Pencil
- Orange & black watercolour paints
- Brushes
- Pyrography machine
- 2 x centre punch

Materials:

- 6mm dark brown glass eyes
- Lime (*Tilia vulgaris*) 110mm x 160mm x 40mm

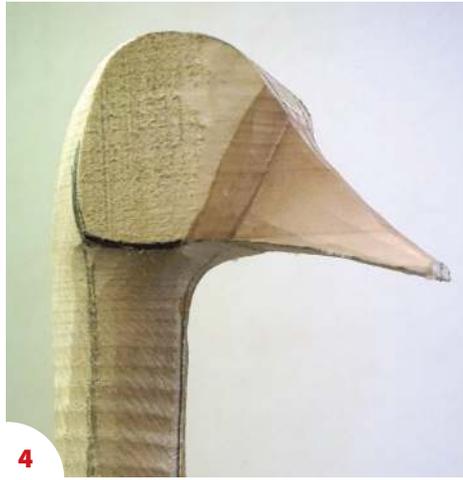
1 Start by cutting out the head on a bandsaw. Make sure the thickness of the head is 37mm. Mark out the blank as shown in the diagrams. Always make sure you start with the centreline.

2 Using a large V-tool separate the beak from the head, making sure you don't carve too deep, and go over the line for the thickness of the beak on each side. Now use a large flat chisel to remove the excess from each side of the beak. This will give you the thickness of the beak. Now take a knife and carve the beak inwards on both sides, starting at the top and working downwards in a scooping action.





3



4

3 From the side view of the beak mark a curved line from the top of the beak to the bottom. Remove the excess using a knife in a scooping action – this will give the beak a nice curve. When using the knife to carve make sure you carve towards you holding the knife with two hands.

4 Mark a centreline on all four sides of the neck. Using a Microplane remove the corners, making sure you leave a nice curve from each centreline. This will also form the bottom cheek so make sure you don't remove too much on the right and left of the head. When using a Microplane you cut forwards and then remove from the surface to come back. This then doesn't flatten the blades or damage the Microplane.



5



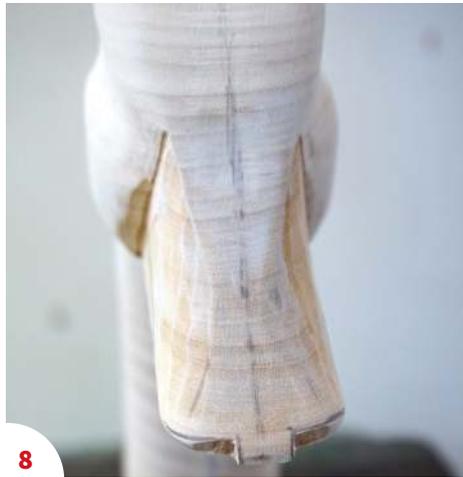
6

5 To form the head, shape from the aerial view, draw a curved line starting at the beak to the back of the head. Using a large flat at a slight angle, carve the excess to form the curve of the head. Note that the top of the head is slimmer than the cheeks and this will also form the rear cheek. Note that the back of the head is slightly thinner than the top of the head and becomes thicker at the base of the neck.

6 Now, to form the top of the cheeks mark out a curved line from the top of the beak to the centreline on the neck. Using a medium shallow gouge carve in the line to form the top cheeks. Note the eye socket is in line with the top of the beak so the top of the cheek should be just below the eye socket.



7



8

7 Using a medium shallow gouge the opposite way around, create a nice curved head making sure there are no sharp corners left. The head is now in shape and ready for sanding. When sanding I use coarse abrasive and work my way down to fine. The head should be smooth when finished, making sure that all the cuts from the bandsaw are removed.

8 To form the egg-tooth, which is the only hard part of the duck when it's in the egg, use a knife to press into each side of the egg-tooth and carve a curve to form the front of the beak. Make sure the curves are not too round – this will cause a peg-shaped beak if they are.



9



10

9 Create the bottom beak by marking out a line from the centre of the beak to a third of the length of the beak. Using a V-tool and knife remove the excess. Picture 10 will help with how thick the bottom beak should be.

10 Under the beak pencil a W shape as shown and push in a small shallow gouge on both the inner lines of the W. This will form the tuft that protrudes in the bottom of the beak. Now pencil in the curve to form the front of the bottom beak.

11 Now complete the bottom beak by using a V-tool to carve the front curve. Using a medium shallow gouge create a curved shape in the bottom beak, making sure you don't remove the tuft. The bottom beak is now completed.

12 Use a V-tool to form the lip of the top beak.

13 Use a knife in a scooping action leaving the lip of the beak. This will form the lip of the beak where the teeth are. Now remove the excess and create a nice curved beak. Pencil in the V at the top of the beak and the curves at the end of the beak.

14 Now use a small V-tool and carve the curves at the front of the beak. With a medium V-tool cut into the V shape and, working down from the forehead, remove the excess as shown in the picture.

15 Using a small V-tool, cut into the lip creating the teeth.

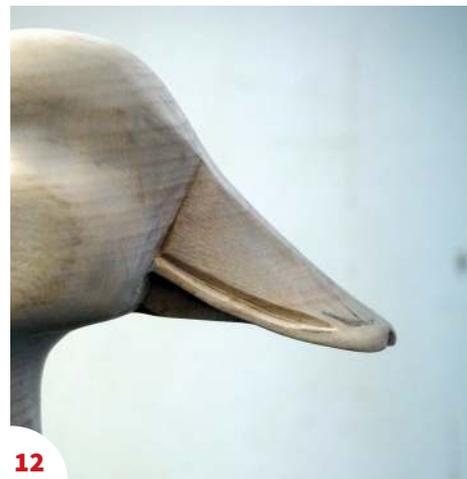
16 Just over halfway up the beak, pencil in a dot. Now it's time to find where the eyes are situated. To do this, draw a line from the top of the beak towards the back of the head and the bottom of the eye is around 15mm inwards, as pictured. Once you've found where the eye is on one side mark a centre punch in the dot and, looking from the front and the top, use another centre punch to find the other eye. See step 17 photo for how to line up the eyes. Eyes can vary depending on the blank cutout due to the depth of the beak so I would advise studying a duck for eye position, but this method works in most cases.

17 Now drill the eyes with a 6mm drill bit (mallard duck eyes are 6mm dark brown) making sure you are level with the other side as explained in step 16. Be careful not to drill through to the other side – I'd advise to drill 10mm inwards. Also drill the nostrils with a 2mm drill bit.

18 Use a small V-tool to carve around the 6mm hole to form the eyelid, being careful not to carve into the 6mm hole. Once the eyelid is carved remove the excess around the eyelid so that it is proud as shown in the picture. The head is now ready for the feather work.



11



12



13



14



15



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17



18



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25



26

19 If you study a duck's feathers you will see that they flow with the bone structure of the head and overlap, starting at the front and working backwards. Now draw in the flow of the feathers on the photo. As I mentioned before, looking at photos of a mallard duck will help you with the feather work. Using a really fine V-tool start at the front of the head and carve the lines as shown in photo 19.

20 Once the lines are carved with the fine V-tool, carve between the gaps keeping the flow of the feather work. Continue this process for the whole head. Note that two lines cut with the V-tool form one hair. Keep referring to your pictures of a mallard duck, this will help with the flow.

21 The head is now completed with the V-tool work and ready for pyrography. Using a pyrography machine on a high power create the feathers as shown in the picture. Start at the front of the head and work backwards as you did with the V-tool work. You can also make light and dark feathers by turning the pyrography machine down or up in temperature.

22 Now the top and back of the head are done work on both sides, creating a curved feather affect with the pyrography machine – this will follow the shape of the cheeks. Remember everything flows with the shape of the bone structure. Just a note on pyrography, I've always found when teaching I can show how to do my style of feather work, but after that it really is practice. After a while, you do tend to get your own style of feather work and in truth it's optional as to how you create. Do take your time though – it looks easy until you come to have a go, so practise on some waste material first.

23 You will now need orange and black watercolour paint for the beak. Starting with the black paint, as shown in the photo, paint the beak and the egg-tooth.

24 Now paint the remainder of the beak with orange, blending the black with the orange.

25 The final step to complete the head is to fit the eyes. I use two-part epoxy putty. Mix the putty together and insert into the 6mm hole, making sure you don't put too much in. The eye wants to sit just inside the socket. A duck's vision is from the sides, front, rear, up and down – all it has to do is tilt its head slightly to look for predatory birds or animals. The head is now completed and ready for the stick. There are various sticks that can be used – blackthorne (*Prunus spinosa*), holly (*Ilex spp*) and, the most common and preferred, hazel (*Corylus avellana*). With a holly stick the bark is removed, which leaves a lovely cream finish after sanding and sealing.

26 Here is a picture of a finished drake mallard to show the colouring variation. ▶



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK BAKER / GMC PUBLICATIONS

V-tools – love them or hate them

Peter Benson explores using and sharpening a V-tool

The V, or parting, tool is probably the most badly sharpened, misused or misunderstood of all the tools available to the carver. Those who can maintain them and use them successfully love them, but the majority, who have listened to all the different opinions on how to sharpen them correctly and haven't succeeded, hate them with a passion or refuse to have them in their toolboxes. This is really the basis of the problem – when sharpened correctly (meaning that the tool will cut cleanly and easily) it can be one of the most versatile and useful tools a carver can possess. Most carvers have tried a variety of methods to achieve this and many have failed, ending up with a tool that can be a nightmare to use.

Why is this? You may well ask. Probably the first problem is that there are so many different views on what a V-tool should look like and how best to sharpen it. This is due, in large part, to its versatility. If used for lettering you may need the cutting edge to slope back to the apex of the V. If undercutting you may prefer the reverse slope.

This is fine for the specialist but the average carver simply needs it to cut a clean V in the wood neatly and easily. My first piece of advice here is to concentrate on what you need the tool to do rather than how it looks. If the cutting edge is not perfectly square but it will cut as you require, it is right for you and this should be borne in mind when sharpening.



Bevel sloped with ears – also called wings – back



Bevel sloped with ears forward

TYPES OF V-TOOL

Let us look, first of all, at what V-tools are available. Manufacturers' catalogues will give each tool a number representing the angle of the V. The most common are 45°, 60° and 90° angles, although other angles, from 22° to 120° are available from different manufacturers. The size given is the length of the sides of the V, not the actual width.

You may find other variations specific to individual makers. While I have a variety of different tool in my toolbox, by far the most used are those with a 60° angle. I find these the most versatile and easiest to keep sharp. If you are doing very fine work you may prefer one with a steeper angle to give more definition.

Using the tool

I have found that one of the problems many carvers have with the V-tool is that, when used by hand, it can very easily slip out of the cut and make unwanted cut marks elsewhere on the carving. As a result of this I tend to recommend the following two methods of using the tool. This may not suit everyone but I have found that it works.

First, you have much more control of the tool if it is used with a small mallet using gentle and regular strokes, keeping the tool in the

cut by maintaining a constant angle. Also, keeping your line of sight directly along the line of the tool can help to keep to the line drawn. I like to draw a double line if possible and keep the two cutting edges along the lines to maintain a constant width. If only a single line is drawn it is very often obscured by the shaving produced and you have to stop frequently to clear the cutting edges. If it is not practical or desirable to use a mallet, you might like to hold the tool in front of

you with the fingers of both hands on the shaft keeping your eyes looking down the centre of the V to the line you are cutting. Keeping your little fingers in contact with the wood will give you complete control.

One final word here – remember, the deeper you cut into the wood, the more you are trying to remove and the more difficult it will be, so don't try to bury a tool with a steep angle into the surface to get a wider cut, use one with a greater angle giving a shallower cut.



Using two lines to ensure parallel sides



Cutting a fine V along a line

What about the sharpening?

As with all your carving tools, you will hear dozens of versions of how to sharpen them and every method has proved successful for somebody. All you need to do is find the method that works for you. Before you embark on the sharpening voyage you need to understand what you are dealing with and what you want from the finished tool. The structure of the tool is such that the thickness of the metal of the sides is quite a bit less than that at the apex, or point, of the V. (as shown in the lower right image).



Each bevel ground as flat chisel



Angle of bevels at side and bottom equal after honing

For a smooth, clean cut the angle of the bevel needs to be constant as the edge passes through the wood. Any variation will cause the tool to jam in the cut. If the line of the bevel is the same at the bottom and the sides (top left image) the angle will be different due to the variation in thickness. Therefore, to keep the angle the same the bevel will be longer at the bottom than at the sides (top right image).



Note greater thickness of metal at apex of V

How, then, do we achieve this?

If you generally want the tool to cut in a straight line or with very shallow curves you can get away with the bevels of each side meeting at the apex as a sharp edge. This will give a very pronounced V in the wood and is preferred by many carvers, particularly for fine detail work or lettering. This profile does, however, have one drawback. If you wish to use the tool to produce twisting or curved cuts in hardwood there is a danger of the sides of the tool breaking out as you try to turn it. All is not lost as you can actually have the best of both worlds without any major difference in quality of cut.

First, if you want the point of the V (the apex) sharp, you need to sharpen the tool as two flat chisels, making sure that the bevels are completely flat, thus keeping the angles even. This can be done fairly easily on a diamond plate or oilstone (see left image top of page). The most difficult part is to get the bevel at the apex the same angle as the sides. Careful grinding and honing can achieve this until it looks like the right hand picture at the top of page. I think most hobby woodcarvers will, however, go for the alternative method as it can be a lot easier to achieve what you want and the finished tool will be more to your liking – I stress that this is only my opinion.

Here, the quickest and simplest way to do the job is to use your rotary sharpener with a hard felt wheel. After you have got the bevels as you want them on the oilstone or diamond plate, move to the power hone. Make sure you keep the bevel flat to the wheel's surface as you polish each bevel but also round off the apex of the V, keeping the tool at the same angle. You will actually be producing, in effect, a chisel on each side and a fine gouge at the bottom. When used, this rounding off will allow you to turn and



Too much metal at the apex



Apex ground away too much

twist the tool as much as you like. As long as the rounding off is kept to a minimum you shouldn't see any noticeable difference in the V that is produced. If you don't have a power hone you can still achieve the same results on a stone and strop – it just takes longer.

Whichever method you use, be careful not to get a sharp point or dip at the apex (see the two pictures above). This may take a bit of practice but is much less likely to happen if you are using a felt wheel.

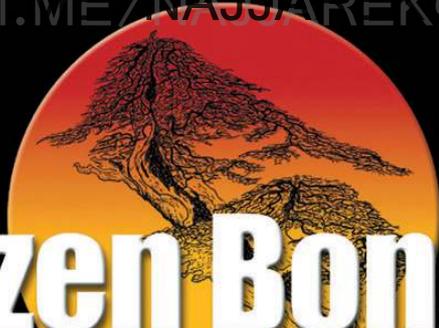
If you think you are alone in having problems

with V-tools, don't. I threw away all mine some years ago as I just couldn't get them right, and only bought new ones after being shown how to sharpen them successfully by Barry Iles of Ashley Iles Ltd. I now have tools ranging from less than 1mm to 30mm, including straight, bent, back bent, side bent, spoon and of various angles. Each of these serves a useful purpose as long as I manage to keep it sharp.

Now, V-tools are among my favourites but, like Marmite, I am sure there are some who will never be converted – to either! ▶



Here the V-tool is being used on its side to only use one side of the V walls to create a vertical shoulder against the work line



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THE DIARY

of a student woodcarver

William Barsley describes his summer adventures exploring woodcarving in Iceland and setting up a workshop in Devon, England

Last summer, I was presented with the exciting opportunity to spend two weeks exploring and documenting woodcarving in Iceland. Although not as rich in traditional Nordic carving as Scandinavia, the influence that Viking culture had on Icelandic carving was fascinating, and I wanted to meet a few of the modern-day carvers who are keeping the tradition alive.

I began by exploring the capital, Reykjavík, and spent a couple of days at the National Museum of Iceland, which houses some incredible woodcarvings. My focus in particular fell upon a beautiful 11th-century door that is believed to be the oldest surviving woodcarving in Iceland. It is called the Valþjófsstaður Door and was once the main entrance of Valthjófstad church, located in the east of the country.

The door is made up of two large roundels that sit under a semi-circular arch. The intriguing scene in the upper roundel is believed to be a representation of the medieval Lion Knight saga from Chretien de Troyes. The lower roundel is carved in the Nordic style of interwoven bands and is a complex carving of beautiful geometric symmetry depicting four dragons intertwined in a fight. It is rare that such a carving has survived since the 11th century. Often, the wood decayed or was used on other buildings, as there was (and still is) a limited supply of timber in Iceland.

In addition to seeing Iceland's historical carvings, I also wanted to meet some of its current carvers, and was lucky to have the opportunity to meet the renowned Jón Adolf Steinólfsson (www.jonadolf.com) and Sigga A Grund (www.sigga-a-grund.com).

Pictures courtesy of William Barsley unless otherwise stated



The Valþjófsstaður door at the National Museum of Iceland

Picture courtesy of the National Museum of Iceland



A reproduction of the Valþjófsstaður door in its original location at the Valthjófstad church copy





A form of traditional Icelandic font called Höfðaletur, often carved in wood. Some of the oldest examples in Iceland are from the 16th-century copy

JÓN ADOLF STEINÓLFSSON

I met Jón in Reykjavík where he was holding an exhibition of his work in the famous Pearl building that overlooks the city. Jón began carving in 1986, studying at a woodcarving school in Iceland and spending three years working with the world-class sculptor Ian Norbury in England. Jón's work is a wonderful mixture of contemporary sculpture that reflects his cultural heritage, and Nordic mythology that touches on technological changes in society. He co-founded Iceland's first woodcarving guild and is an active participant at the International World Wood Day.

Jón Adolf Steinólfsson at the Pearl gallery



Sculpture by Jón Adolf Steinólfsson

SIGGA A GRUND

Leaving the capital, I headed off around Iceland's ring road, a beautiful drive that stretches the whole way around the island, a little like London's M25, but infinitely quieter and more scenic. About two or three hours out of Reykjavík I visited Sigga A Grund, who my tutors had strongly recommended, and I'm so glad I did. Sigga has been carving for more than 40 years and I was thrilled to learn that she spent some time studying woodcarving at the City & Guilds of London Art School back in the 1990s. Observing the carvings in her house, I was amazed to see some of the same



Sculpture by Sigga A Grund in the Treoglist gallery

A TRADITIONAL CRAFT VILLAGE IN DEVON

Once back in the UK and fired up from my travels around Iceland, I headed for the beautiful hills and coastline of Devon, where I'd arranged to set up a small woodcarving workshop for six weeks in a traditional craft village called Cockington Court. I was keen to get a taste of setting up my own woodcarving workshop within a shared space as, once I complete my studies, I will, of course, need to decide what style of workspace I would like to work in.

Set in the grounds of the Cockington estate and open daily to the public, the craft village has more than 20 skilled craftsmen, including a blacksmith, glass blowers, gilders and a traditional chocolate-maker, to name but a few. I found working among other skilled craftsmen and being able to learn from each other and share ideas to be a great delight, and there was a real sense of community. This is highlighted in the large sculpture trail that is currently being exhibited in the grounds of the estate until the end of September, which brings together the work of the various craftspeople on site.

My time at Cockington Court fortunately coincided with an exciting commission I was working on for the Royal College of



The stables at Cockington Court Craft Village

projects that I've been working on at college, such as running moldings, head sculptures and acanthus reliefs.

Sigga is a highly accomplished carver who, like Jón, combines traditional and contemporary styles in her work. One of her great passions is carving realistic figures of Icelandic horses, and her work is on display at a nearby gallery called Treoglist. If you ever find yourself in Iceland, do visit this wonderful gallery. It holds a treasure trove of impressive sculptures and woodcarvings.



Mouldings by Sigga A Grund – the same ones I've been carving at college

Arms – a gilded rampant stag sitting within a golden crown, which was part of the client's heraldic crest. This was the perfect project to get my teeth into while at the workshop, and offered good practice in finding the right balance between interacting with the public and maintaining a productive workflow.

Next time

I'm back at college for another year and focusing on high-relief carving, in particular a difficult piece from Hampstead Heath Church in London. I also talk about an exciting trip with college to see the incredible woodcarvings of Venice. ▶

DID YOU KNOW?

A thousand years ago 40% of Iceland's land area was birch forest and woodland, but with the coming of settlers and subsequent deforestation and livestock grazing this dramatically declined. There is a joke told in Iceland that if you are lost in a forest all you need to do is stand up.



My first workshop, set within the stables at Cockington Court

Next issue...

On sale 26 October

How to carve a Victorian dragon panel



Bandsawing techniques
for woodcarvers

Step-by-step guide to making
a relief-carved carp in reeds

Carve your own stylised
hare in the relief

What you need to know about
making your first cuts in chip carving

Our contributors



Andrew Thomas has been a professional sculptor since 1993 and delivers weekly private woodcarving lessons for both beginners and intermediate students. www.3dsculptor.com
art@3dsculptor.co.uk



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



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



Marc Cotterill is a full-time carver and stickmaker. Marc says he was heavily influenced by his grandad (Colin Hickman) and also Michael Painter who assured him he should take up carving/stick full time. He now also runs courses from his workshop. cotterill.marc@yahoo.co.uk



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



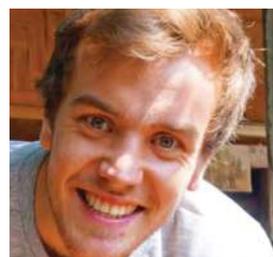
Murray Taylor was a jeweller and silversmith before retiring 15 years ago and devoting time to wood carving. Murray has made three DVDs related to woodcarving, one of which is on chip carving, and is involved in teaching and promoting chip carving. murraytaylor@hotmail.co.uk



Peter Benson has travelled the world teaching and judging woodcarving of all standards for the past 20 years. He has written two books on the subject. bencarve@btinternet.com



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



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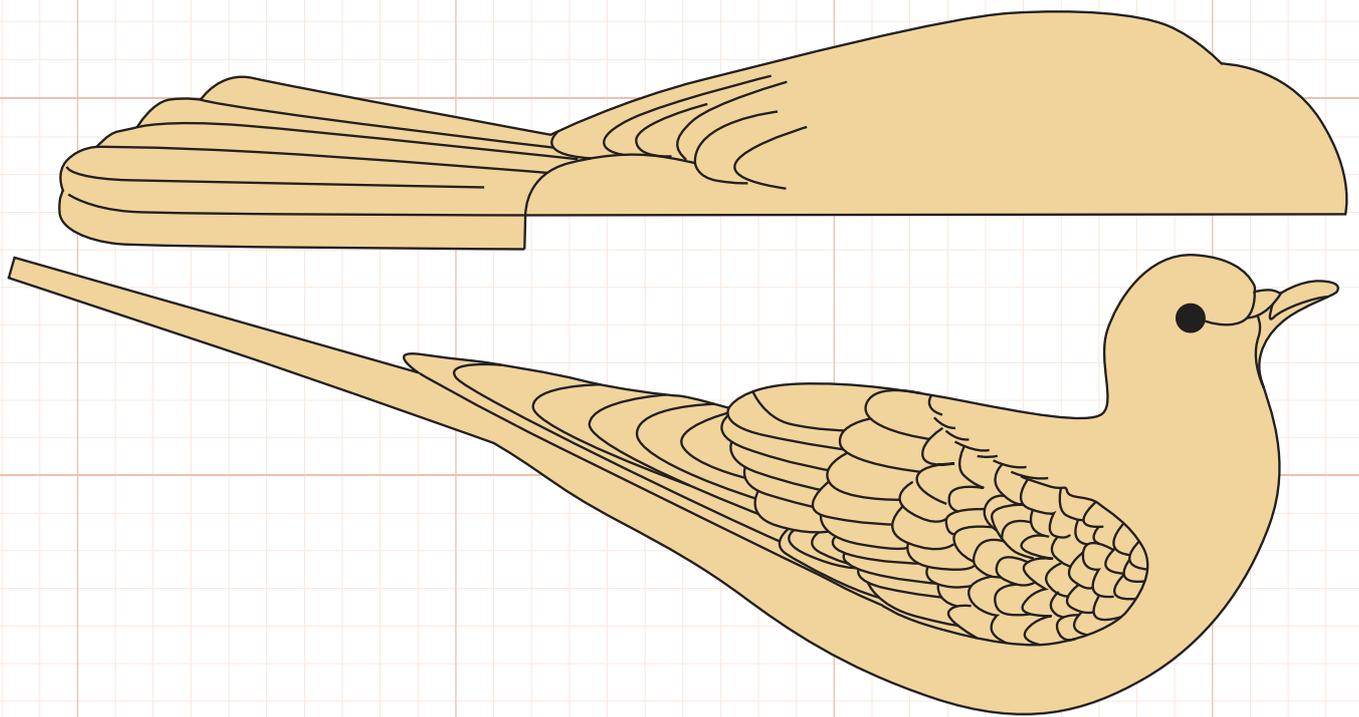
Mike Wood shows how to carve a beautiful extinct bird

Passenger pigeon

The passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) has been extinct since 1901 when it is thought the last confirmed wild bird was shot, although a bird called Martha lived until 1914. This beautiful migratory bird was once abundant in North America with population numbers of billions often mentioned. They were social birds which formed massive flocks. Sadly, habitat loss and hunting predominantly caused by humans, resulted in the the eventual collapse of the breeding stock until it was no longer viable. The male and female were similar sizes with the female being only slightly smaller. A typical size range for the birds was between 140-170mm. They were known to be able to fly at great speeds, some in excess of 80kmh/50mph.

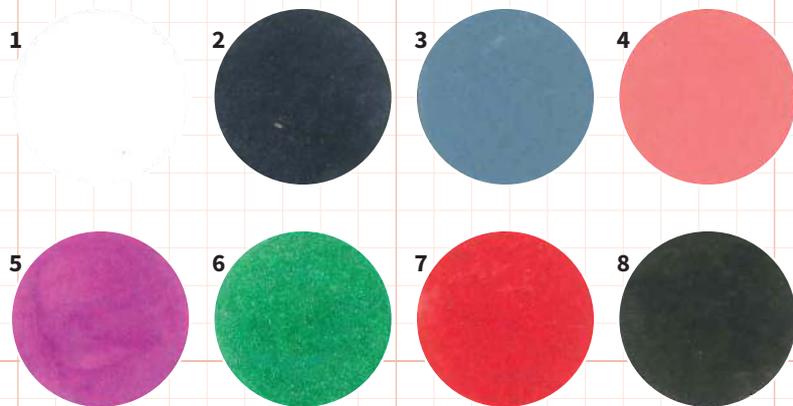
Have a look at the numerous websites for more information about this fascinating bird.





Painting swatches:

- 1 White gesso
- 2 Payne's grey
- 3 White gesso & small amount of Payne's grey
- 4 Pink for the breast
- 5 Iridescent fuchsia
- 6 Iridescent green
- 7 Red for the feet
- 8 Dark brown for the tail and primaries



Things you will need

Tools:

- Rotary carving unit
- Handpiece to hold various cutters and sanding units
- Drum sander and abrasives to fit hand unit
- Coarse and medium grit tapered rotary cutter
- Medium grit ball cutter
- Fine grit small ball burr
- Fine grit flame diamond burr

- Diamond point burr
- Bull nose stone burr
- Fine grade flame/ tapered diamond burr
- Medium sized fine grade ball-ended burr
- Airbrush/brushes as appropriate
- Pyrography unit with scalpel/chisel-edge tip
- Legs/feet
- Eyes
- Two-part epoxy putty or similar to bond the eyes
- PPE – facemask/goggles,

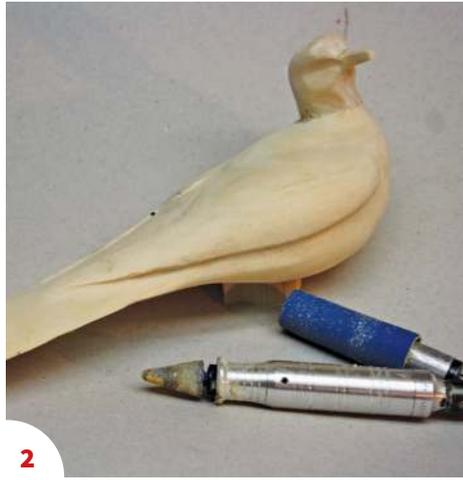
- dust mask and extraction
- Pyrography unit and incising/scalpel-type tips
- Selection of acrylic colours shown in the palette, plus black
- Plastic wood
- Airbrush and/or brushes
- PVA or similar adhesive
- Cyanoacrylate adhesive

Materials:

- Jelutong body 320mm long x 80mm high and 100mm wide
- Head is lime



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1 First cut out the bird body shape following the template supplied. A bandsaw, coping saw or similar will help but you can just carve your blanks to shape if you want to. Note the drawing. The head and body are cut in two parts and joined together. Position the head – it is twisted round and looking slightly to the right in this instance – to give the bird a more natural look. Given the fact that this bird is extinct, you will need to look at the pigeons in your area or reference material you have to see how they move their head. Once you have decided on the head alignment to use, glue it to the body.

2 Now rough shape the lapwing using either handtools or power carving tools. I chose to use rotary power carving tools, creating all the main defining sections and areas. Once shaped, sand it all over. Burrs and drum sanders used in a rotary unit work very well, but it does produce a lot of airborne dust so please remember eye protection.

3 Having rough-shaped the bird, draw in the feathers on the wings and breast areas so you know what shapes to carve. Check your reference material for guidance as to how they should look, sizing and so on.

4 With a high-speed rotary carver handpiece and a small diamond flame burr carve in all the wing and breast feathers. A diamond bit is ideal for this process. It does not remove too much waste quickly. You have full control over depth and angle of attack and you can take your time to get things right.

5 Using the same tools draw in and carve in the rear section of the back and the tail feathers and primaries. Note that the passenger pigeon has longer and slightly different-shaped tail feathers to that of the more common pigeon, which is from the *Columbidae* family.

6 Now mark and carve in the under-tail feathers, creating the larger feather delineation detail, also some of the less prominent feather details. The fine details will be pyrographed in later.

7 Mark in the throat feathers and the beak details and carve them. Now mark, shape and cut the eye sockets. Use plastic wood or a similar product to create the surround for the eyes. Once you have a bed add two-part epoxy putty and press the glass eyes into the putty. Then shape the resulting ring of epoxy putty that forms around the eye when it is pushed in to blend in with the head. Once dry, carve in the feather detail under the bill and around the eyes.

8 Once the eyes are in place, texture all the underside of the bird with a bull nose stone. Again, the fine detail will be pyrographed in later, so concentrate on the main prominent details and shapes.

9 Using a pyrography unit add the feather detail. Start by burning in the feathers on the back of the neck, the back and the wing feather shafts. The pyrography tip used is shaped and sharpend like a scalpel so it burns a crisp detail. Then move on to the finer feather detail using lighter lines to create the layered effect.

10 Burn in the relevant detail on the underside of the bird. This is also the stage at which I drill two holes for the feet. You can make your own or buy feet. Coat with a light grey gesso before fixing them in place with plastic wood. Leave it to set and then burn in any detail.

11 The burnt detail for the head is a series of striations running away, over and from the main detail on the head down to the main shaped aspects of the body as required.

12 Finally deal with the back, wing and tail feathers. Once the pyrography is finished...

13 ...undercoat the head, nape and back secondary feathers using white gesso and a small amount of Payne's grey.

14 Now it is time to paint the tail feathers' primaries. The top feathers feature white sections with soft grey highlights, two deeper grey feathers and the primaries have a dark brown colouring with white edging. The underside feathers are painted using white gesso and a small amount of Payne's grey, then white gesso is applied to create highlights.

15 The head is coated with white gesso mixed with a small amount of Payne's grey and the breast is painted pink then edged with white gesso to create a subtle barred effect.

16 Paint dark spots of Payne's grey on the wings. On the top outer section of the breast fuchsia pink iridescent paint is applied and, once dry, a small area of iridescent green is used. The breast graduates from deep pink down to a white/soft grey near the underside tail feathers. The feet are painted red.

17 You will need to create a base and possibly a perch for the bird to sit on. I chose to create two pigeons and used a limb of a tree to create a nice seating place for them.



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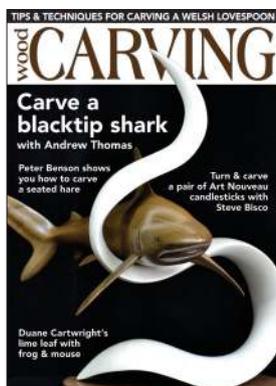
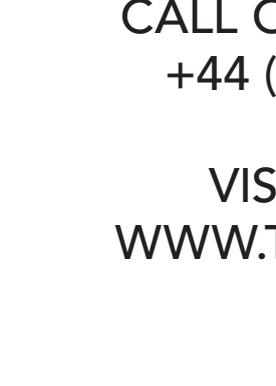
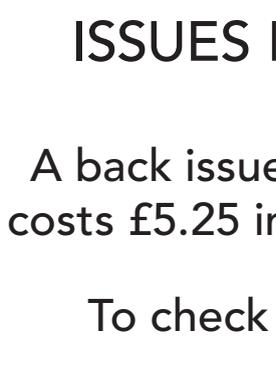
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Record Power carving set

Record Power has created a carving tool package suited to the aspiring woodcarver. It includes a refined and updated set of high quality, spring alloy, beech-handled carving chisels as well as an excellent tutorial DVD and booklet from internationally acclaimed carver and teacher Mike Davies.

Mike is an accomplished and highly experienced woodcarver, having served his apprenticeship in the UK and completed work for royalty, national trusts and private collectors alike.

Mike has developed his unique and highly successful Carving by Numbers system as a way to impart his years of expertise and teaching experience in a logical and easy-to-understand fashion, ideal for the novice carving enthusiast. The DVD features his Significant Six carving techniques that will form a solid foundation upon which the aspiring woodcarver's skills can be built. By following Mike's proven system the viewer will soon be creating a collection of attractive projects and designs using a basic set of 12 tools while also gaining the knowledge and experience to create their own unique projects.

Included in this educational package:

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- Tips and tools
- 16-page full-colour companion booklet containing a collection of projects to put your skills to the test

Price £89.99

Contact: Record Power

Web: www.recordpower.co.uk



To complement this set, the Record Power RPCVM15 15oz carver's mallet has been specifically designed to have the ideal weight and perfect balance for use with carving chisels and is made of solid beech. It is currently available at only £16.99 when bought with the carving package.

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Murray Taylor chip carving set

Murray Taylor has put together a comprehensive chip carving kit which he says has all you need to get started with chip carving.

The set comprises:

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- 1 set of three chip carving knives
- 1 double-sided ceramic sharpening stone
- 1 leather strop
- 1 plastic T square
- 1 Imperial/metric ruler
- 1 0.5mm mechanical pencil
- 1 pack 2B pencil leads
- 1 non-slip mat
- 4 coaster blanks (bass wood)
- 1 chip carving practice board (lime wood)
- 1 sheet 180 Abranet abrasive
- 1 layout template (4mm gauge)
- Carry case

Price £85

Contact Murray Taylor

Web: www.aboutlovespoons.com





King Arthur Merlin2 deluxe kit

Merlin2 is the second generation miniature long-neck angle grinder set from King Arthur's Tools. Merlin2 has been completely redesigned, inside and out, and is now manufactured by King Arthur's Tools. Merlin2 replaces the original Merlin and utilises spiral bevel gears. This product has a new motor, upgraded RoHS compliant electronics, a larger fan, additional vents, a one-piece cast safety guard, a textured finish and improved design. Available in both fixed and variable-speed options, Merlin2 also has a switch guard and improved power cord.

Merlin2 can be used with a variety of accessories for deburring, grinding, roughening, finishing and chamfering on steel, non-ferrous metal, glass, ceramics, alabaster, soap stone and other hard surfaces.

The deluxe kits comprises:

- 1 x Merlin2 miniature long-neck angle grinder with either variable or fixed speed
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Merlin2 deluxe set variable speed

£ 326.66 (shown in photo)

Merlin2 single speed Universal woodcarving set £251.66

There are numerous optional extra accessories to augment the deluxe kit, starting from £4.50

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The Toolpost

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Clarke benchtop bandsaw

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Main features are:

- 350watt 230V motor
- Table size 305L x 305W mm
- Blade size 1425L x 6.35W x 0.3 mm x 6TPI
- CBS190B benchtop bandsaw

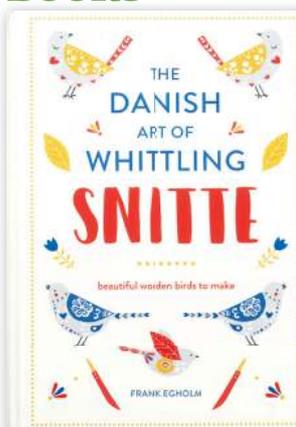
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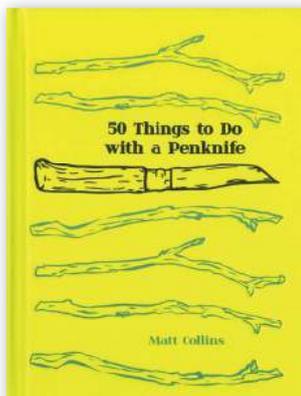
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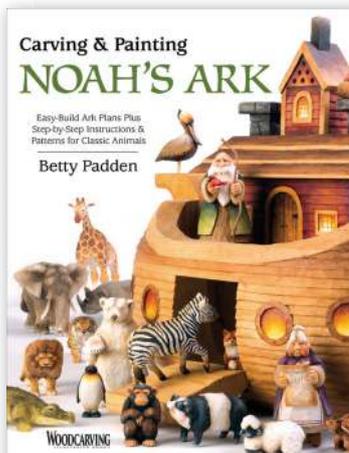
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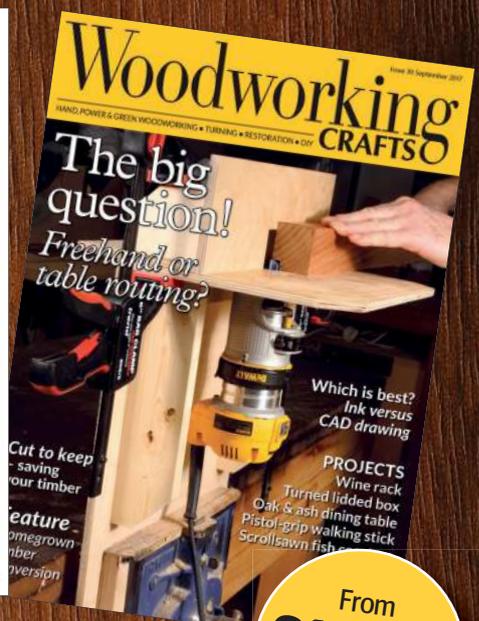
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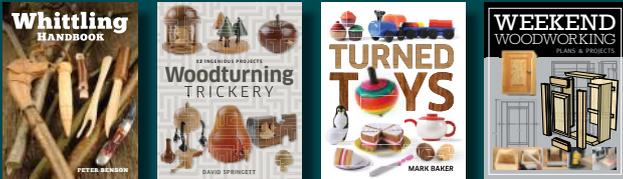
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Newton by Eduardo Paolozzi

We look at the statue of the 17th-century scientist



PHOTOGRAPH BY DISTINCTIVE SHOTS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Sir Eduardo Paolozzi's bronze statue of Sir Isaac Newton sits grandly outside the British Library. The piece is based on a series of watercolours of Newton painted by William Blake in 1795. The British Library commissioned Paolozzi to make the statue in 1995 when the Library was preparing to move to its new location on Euston Road. The sculpture is 4m tall and depicts a naked Newton examining the universe with a set of dividers.

Paolozzi was born in Scotland to Italian parents in 1924. He studied at Edinburgh College of Art and The

Slade School in London. While in Paris his work became influenced by surrealism and dadaism; he went on to become an influential figure in the British pop art movement. He died in London in 2005 at the age of 81.

Other examples of Paolozzi's work include *Piscator*, a sculpture of an abstract head situated in the forecourt of Euston station; *Head of Invention* on the South Bank; and the *A Maximis Ad Minima* sculpture in Kew Gardens. The Dean Gallery in Edinburgh holds a permanent display of his work.



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