Missenden School of Creative Arts

Course Information Sheet

Course Code: 1026-01

Woodcarving

Ernest Riall

10th - 11th Oct 2026
Saturday to Sunday

This course is for all levels. Complete beginners will be introduced to the basic skills of carving, chisel sharpening and wood behaviour. In further sessions you may follow a structured course of set projects or develop your own ideas.At every stage you will add to your skills and knowledge of all aspects of carving and develop design skills. Experienced carvers will be helped to develop their own projects and skills. This course will be held at the Wooburn Craft School in Wooburn Green.

Course Location:
Wooburn Craft School

Wooburn Green
HP10 0PJ

Saturday	
9.45am	Students arrive
10am-1pm	Teaching session
1-2pm	Lunch for all
2-5pm	Teaching session
6.45 for 7pm	Dinner for residents
Sunday	
7.30-9.30am	Breakfast for residents
9.30am-1pm	Teaching session
1-2pm	Lunch for all
2-5pm	Last teaching session

Description

Complete beginners will learn about the various carving tools including different types of chisels and mallets, different ways of holding your work, health and safety. Students will learn how to select the right tool for the situation, how to 'read' the grain and how to make smooth cuts regardless of the grain. To this end, the beginner student will execute a couple of exercises which will show how to copy with cuts at different angles to the grain and do simple chip carving with gouges and straight chisels. You may then progress through carving a natural leaf in high relief, a Celtic knot work, copies of traditional foliage in various styles and timbers, sculpture in the round or high relief, including human, figure or animal figures or abstract work and lettering. At all stages of the course Ernest shall offer guidance on design and advanced carving techniques.
Please note: this course is planned to be held in the workshop of Wooburn Craft School in Wooburn Green, HP10 0PJ, near High Wycombe. Morning and afternoon refreshments are included in the course price but lunch is not. Students may be able to purchase lunch locally or can bring their own with them.There is on street parking close by and a few spaces outside the workshop where tools and equipment can be loaded/unloaded.
Residential option is not available for this course but there are many local options in and around High Wycombe from large chain hotels to smaller guest houses, or even at Missenden Abbey which is about 20 minutes away by car.

Please bring with you

Beginners:
basic drawing materials (e.g. paper, pencils, sharpeners)
a ruler,
a pair of compasses,
and any woodcarving tools you may already own.Other learners should consult the tutor well before the course about the materials relevant to their stages. IMPORTANT: Wood for more advanced students should be arranged before the class starts, Students will be charged at cost for the wood.EVERYONE Please wear stout shoes and old clothes.

Available to purchase from the tutor

First time woodcarvers will be put in contact with the tutor before the course to discuss projects and materials needed.
Tools may be hired from the tutor for the weekend for £3.

Where there is difficulty in obtaining wood the tutor may be able to supply it at cost.

Level

Suitable for all levels

About Ernest Riall

Ernest has studied with the leading woodcarvers in England and in France at l'Ecole Boulle. His passion is primarily focused on carving that is in the support of restoration of furniture but he is equally inspired by carving in support of artistic endeavours.

While most of his work has been with pre-18th century pieces, he has worked in a number of different styles from Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau, Baroque and Neo Classical, as well as modern pieces.

Ernest is active in the furniture and wood section of ICON (the Institute of Conservation). He has taught Wood Carving at both Bucks New University in High Wycombe and at Lyon's Restoration guiding students to produce a variety of creative objects from a simple leaf, to a totem pole to abstract objects in plywood to horses and the list goes on. He is currently the Director of the Wooburn Craft School as well as teaching wood carving there.