

Carving of the Towneley Oak by Richard Colbran A Retirement Presentation for a Forester

There was a request for a presentation carving for the retirement of our local forester. It was stipulated that, if possible, local oak should be used, and suggestions were invited for appropriate subjects.

A carving of the Towneley Oak was proposed. This is a 400-year old tree on the outskirts of our local park, standing proud in mid-field. It was drawn to the public's attention by the forester, and is therefore dear to his heart.

Some local parkland oak was available, off-cuts from a chain-saw carving done 10 years ago.

Photographs of the tree in both Winter and Summer were studied, and an outline drawing was transferred to an oak block (30 X 30 X 4cm).







Background wood was removed by careful freehand use of a router, and a small split in the timber was bridged by a “butterfly dovetail key” positioned across the end-grain, to prevent any further separation.



Using mallet and gouges, the foliage was roughed out into separate zones and some branch structure was exposed in the centre of the tree. This treatment allowed depth to be shown, and avoided a “mushroom” appearance.



The individual clumps of leaves were then sculpted into smaller groups with a tungsten carbide rotary burr on a flexible shaft drive. Then a variety of punches were used to make smaller gaps between the leaves



Ground level was then developed, with dry-stone wall, and the oak burr in the right foreground made into a bush.



Light staining was applied with spirit-based wood-dyes, and some detail on branches and trunk, and wall were pyrographed to give contrast.

A title plaque made from stained sycamore was added.