

Jake and 'The Kit'

By Rod Fraser



Carving? Are you crazy? I'm only six!

A couple of weeks ago, Ken told me his grandson, now age fourteen, expressed an interest in woodcarving. Ken felt he should encourage this and was keen on buying Jake a 'carving kit' to get him started. He also had a cutout of a 'boot' at home—a good project for a beginner. Ken would give this to Jake when they met.

Over the course of a few Saturdays, he would work with his grandson on the boot. If all went well, Jake would have a fine carving to set on the mantle, a good reminder that carving is a skill that can be

taken up by almost everyone.



Boot carved by my Grandson Peter.

Wood carving is also a hobby that can be picked up (and put down), depending on how busy you are. Schoolwork, studying, work and family responsibilities usually come first. But when there is free time and opportunity, a novice carver with a few tools, can readily produce some nice work—if someone has shown them the basics (even if in the distant past).

I told Ken I gave both my grandsons carving tools when they were younger. Their interest in carving soon waned, but their tools remained a prized item, sitting in the back of their closet. When Covid-19 hit the country, one of the boys pulled out his carving

kit, sat on the porch and passed away a good number of hours whittling a handsome boot (funny how boots are often the first item a beginner carves).



When I told Ken about my earlier experience with my two grandsons, we had an interesting discussion about what tools Jake might require. We agreed quality tools would be best. The number of essential items are relatively few and Ken could afford the cost.

Ken thought a carving knife and a couple of small gouges would do the trick. Coupled with a safety glove and a leather thumb guard, Jake would have what he required.

At our next get together, I told Ken he might consider my '*emergency carving kit*' as a model for Jake's tool kit. I carry it with me on holidays, and on visits to my daughter in Stratford. When I have the opportunity, and it seems appropriate, I open my Herschel bag (measuring 3" x 3" x 8"), pull out my carving knife, pick up a piece of wood and carve a little guy.

Everything fits in the bag and it looks just great. It is a little expensive (\$40.61 delivered to my door), but easily ordered online from Herschel Supply Company. Mine arrived three days later.

Once I had the Herschel bag in hand, I set about to fill it with a modest supply of tools, everything I require to carve when I'm away. As you can see from the pictures below, it's surprising how much stuff this little carving bag will hold.



Carving Kit bag from Herschel Supply



Knife, sheath, strop with case, glove and thumb guard.



V-Tool and # 9 Gouge.



Wooden ruler, pencil, sharpener and band aids.



As Ken and I talked about Jake's 'carving kit' and the

future of carving, we began to realize that many other carvers might also stand in our shoes.

We have grandchildren who have shown an interest in carving; we know they have busy lives ahead of them; we understand they might not turn to carving as a serious hobby for many years; and we would still like to plant the seed.

Who knows? At some future time, perhaps with the same 'tool kit' Jake is going to receive in the very near future, he (and many others?) will turn to a hobby that has given so many of us pleasure during our retirement years. For grandparents (or parents) who provide these young carvers with tools and guidance, our reward will be a nod of appreciation. Who could ask for more?

As we chatted, it become clear (at least to us) that the *Ontario Woodcarver* should consider a 'junior membership' for young people who show an interest in woodcarving.

We thought a one year subscription to the *Ontario Woodcarver* magazine at half the normal subscription price would be a suitable outreach project for OWCA. I ran it by the editor of this magazine and I suspect he has passed on the idea to others, for discussion and deliberation.

Our idea is to have the grandparent pay for the subscription (as part of their membership). It would make the most sense where the young people live

at a separate address from their grandparents.

Like most ideas, I suspect this one has a number of flaws, and I confess I have no idea of the pros and cons of the costs involved. Nevertheless, the purpose of this magazine (at least in part) is to encourage debate and discussion. Let the chips fall where they may.



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