

Graver, sculpter : un geste moderniste

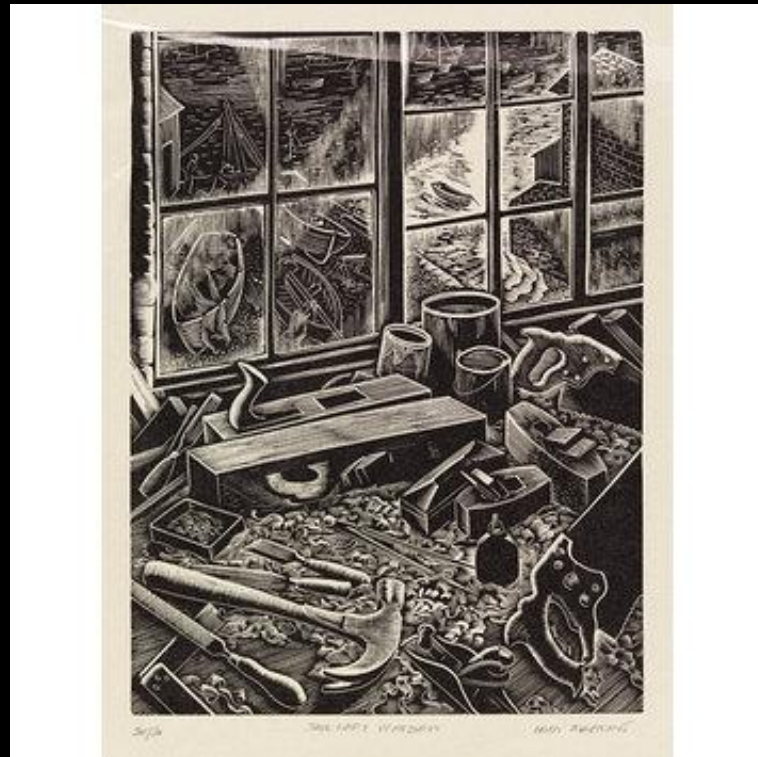
**Descriptions ekphrastiques
dans les manuels de gravure sur bois
des années 1920 et 1930 en Grande Bretagne**

Sophie Aymes, Université de Bourgogne

Clare Leighton, 'Scything' (1935)



Iain Macnab, 'Sail-loft Window' (1967)



John Farleigh, *Engraving on Wood* (1954)

CACTUS DAHLIA

Detail of block 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " w. \times 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ " h.

The graver was used for all outlines and tone: with some re-entering on tips of petals—the broad white lines in bottom left corner with a round or U-shaped chisel and mallet: a technique which is very seldom advisable. Note how the final effect depends on careful clearing of white spaces.

The following examples are reproduced actual size.




Gwen Raverat, 'Crossroads, or Autumn' (1936)




Edward Wadsworth (1936)

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ELEPHANT & CASTLE
OR LAMBETH NORTH

Malcolm C. Salaman

The Graphic Arts of Great Britain (1917)

Never have the graphic arts in Great Britain been so much alive as during recent years [...], and never has the artist had so varied a choice of methods to express his moods. [...] the draughtsman [...] may turn to the copper-plate, the wood-block, or the stone, each of them having been emancipated from the merely reproductive service which so long held it in bondage, and may express himself through the artistic language of the medium, restricted only by his loyalty to the nature of the material. This revival of original expression through the different graphic mediums is one of the most remarkable phases of artistic activity at the present time.
(p. 1)

The Studio, vol. 1 (1893)

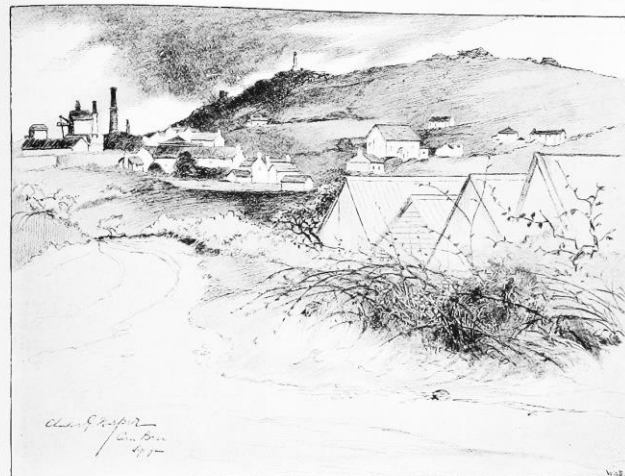
Drawing for Reproduction

PEN-DRAWING FOR REPRODUCTION. — MIXED DRAWINGS, AND DRAWINGS NOT MADE FOR REPRODUCTION. BY CHARLES G. HARPER.

EVERYWHERE to-day is the illustrator (artist he may not always be), for never was "the picturesque" so marketable as now; and the correspondence editors of the Sunday papers have found a new outlet for the superfluous energies of their eager querists in advising them to "go in" for

through the pages of illustrated publications to a final disrepute.

Artists are beginning to ask how they can dissociate themselves from that merely manufacturing army of frantic draughtsmen who never or rarely go beyond the exercise of pure line-work; and the widening power of process gives them answer. Results striking and unhackneyed are always to be obtained to-day by those who are not hag-ridden by that purely Philistine ideal of the clear sharp line; the mixed drawing has many possibilities of artistic expression, and here are



CARN BREA, CORNWALL. IN PEN AND PENCIL. REPRODUCED BY HALF-TONE, WITH THE SKY CUT AWAY

black and white, as one might adventure upon any commercial career. It is so easy to make black marks on white cardboard, is it not? and not particularly difficult to seize upon the egregious mannerisms of the accepted purveyors of "the picturesque," a phrase battered nowadays out of all real meaning.

Pen-drawing has by reason of these things almost come to stand for exaggeration and a shameless license, and the convention that sees everything flamboyantly quaint is being worked down to the bed-rock. Everything now points to a period of instructed sobriety when the now uninstructed *abandon* of these mannerists has rioted

submitted some essays in mixtures, harnessed to experimental arrangements of process.

First comes this experiment in pen and pencil, reproduced in half-tone. It is a scene in Cornwall. Carn Brea is a hill of hoary Druidical traditions that soars above the work-a-day mining-field and arrests the clouds of this humid county. The cottages that straggle down to mid-distance are miners' huts, commonplace enough, all white-washed and staring, and the Dissenting Chapel—the Ebenezer of the place—is merely an offence to the eye. But, taken as a whole, as going to make up a natural composition, these white spots and streaks are immensely valuable, and things of

A New Illustrator

of beer, which was cooling in the stream. Here a woman washing and combing a child's hair; laughing every now and again at some remark the child would make. Men came over the hill from work, who, as they approached, saluted the alcade with an old-world reverence. Away over in the valley, where the sun cast long shadows on the hills, now aglow with the red of the sunset, we could see young girls dancing to their singing. It was simple and most paintable—a page from the life of the place which I wish I could describe in words.

Here we found a bridge of boats—somewhat uncommon; so we made a sketch of it, coming back hot and tired. Flinging the things in a corner, and looking up, I met the wild eye of Antonio, who promptly gave me a drink. He always treated me as if I was deaf and dumb, making signs—why, I do not know, unless it was that I knew no Spanish. After working here some time, the crew grew restive, and at last broke into open mutiny; we made terms, and got out of it, and at nightfall brought up by a canal guardhouse. The old guard seemed very much taken with me, on account of an old peaked cap, with a faded gold badge, I wore; he looked long with wonder, till the cock-eyed Rincon explained it was a sham, and that I was not an admiral; but even to the last he could not quite disabuse himself of the idea. He invited us into his house, full of Spaniards, smoke, and animals. A low bench ran round the large open fireplace; we sat down, and the wine-skin was passed round as though we were the acquaintances of years, not minutes. The wine-skin, be it noted, required plenty of replenishing from the barrel in the corner. To return to Saragossa was the next move, and in our wanderings there we discovered a hotel where it cost us nine pesetas a day, which was about the same charge as that of out-of-the-way places. At San Sebastian it came to ten or twelve pesetas. We found a garden belonging to this hotel a pleasant place to work in—full of magnolias, lilies, and roses. Here M. again found girls to stand for us, and it was cool and delightful to work here, out of the glare and noise of the town; but we got sick of it—why, Heaven only knows. M. proposed going to Jacca, as we had heard a lot about its mysterious surroundings. But our adventures on the way there and after must be left to my next letter.—Yours,

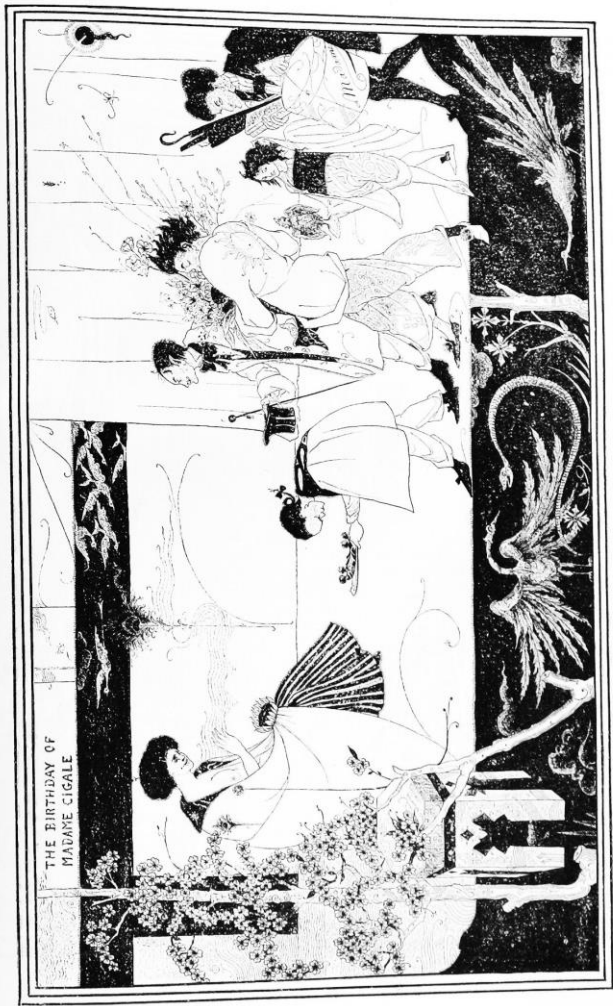
FRANK BRANGWYN.



Here A NEW ILLUSTRATOR: AUBREY BEARDSLEY. BY JOSEPH PENNELL.

I HAVE lately seen a few drawings which seem to me to be very remarkable. The very limited number which the artist is said to have produced makes their perfection of execution all the more remarkable. I am quite well aware that the mere fact of publicly admitting one's interest in the work of a new man, whose first design may be a delight to artists, is not considered to be good form in criticism. But why should one care about good or bad form—or criticism either, for that matter? For the criticism of art to-day is merely the individual expression of persons who mostly know nothing about their subject. Though artists may be struck with a man's earliest work, and though the creator of it may, and frequently does, never produce anything better, one usually waits until he is dead, or discouraged, before any visible sign of appreciation is granted him. Thus is the intelligent critic spared from making a spectacle of himself.

But whether Mr. Beardsley's work is appreciated or despised—and my only fear is that he will suffer from over-appreciation and enthusiasm—the drawings here printed show decisively the presence among us of an artist, of an artist whose work is quite as remarkable in its execution as in its invention: a very rare combination. It is most interesting to note, too, that though Mr. Beardsley has drawn his motives from every age, and founded his styles—for it is quite impossible to say what his style may be—on all schools, he has not been carried back into the fifteenth century, or succumbed to the limitations of Japan; he has recognised that he is living in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and he has availed himself of mechanical reproduction for the publication of his drawings, which the Japs and the Germans would have accepted with delight had they but known of it. The reproduction of the "Morte d'Arthur" drawing, printed in this number, is one of the most marvellous pieces of mechanical engraving, if not the most marvellous, that I have ever seen, simply for this reason: it gives Mr. Beardsley's actual handiwork, and not the interpretation of it by some one else. I know it is the correct thing to



FROM A DRAWING (15 x 9) IN WASH AND LIME. BY AUBREY BEARDSLEY.

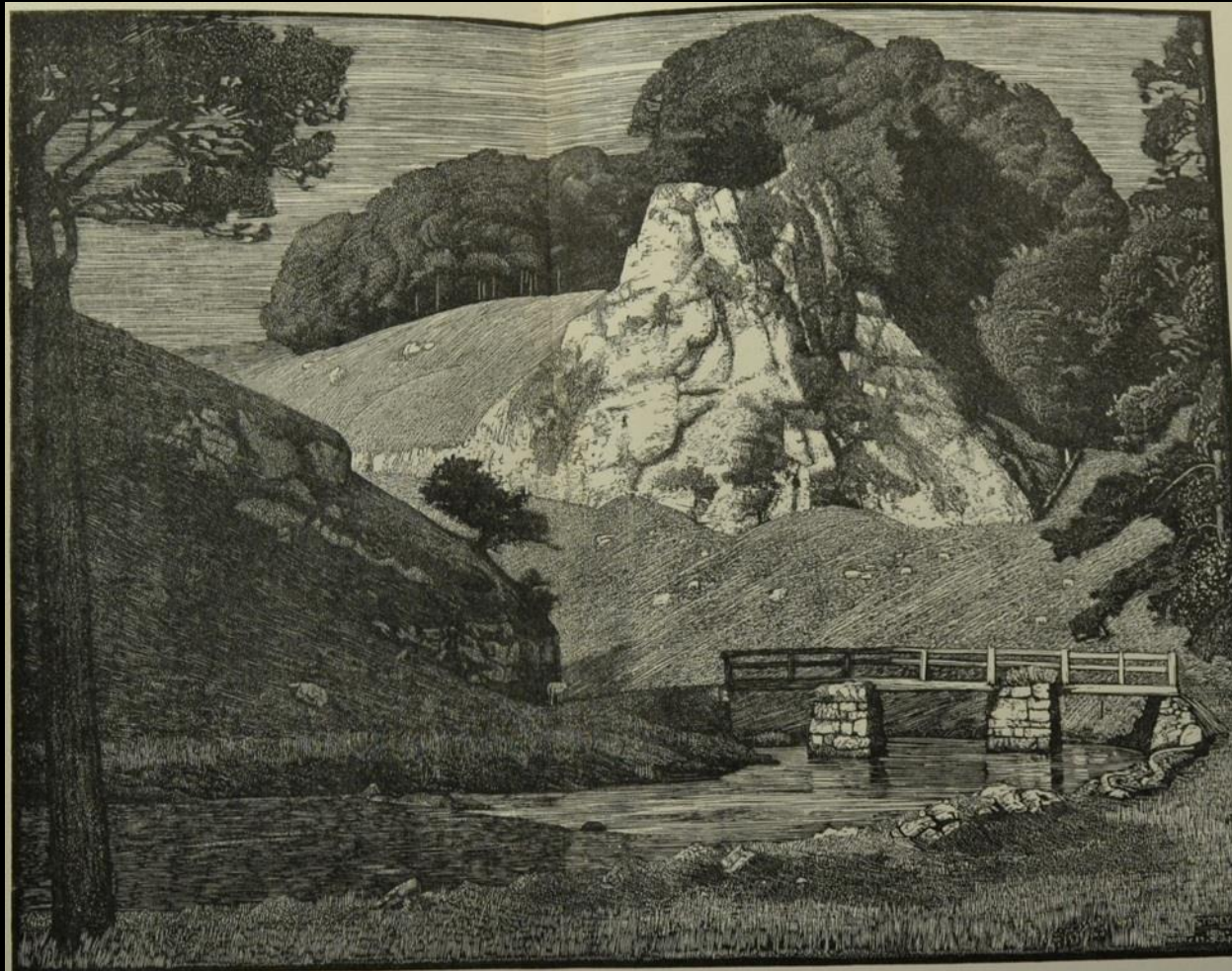
Malcolm C. Salaman

'The woodcuts of Mr. Sydney Lee'

The Studio (vol. 63) 1915

[The *Limestone Rock*] is distinguished among the best original wood-engravings of our time by not only its pictorial qualities, its design, its well-balanced masses of tone, but by the expressive manner in which the material has been used, the absolute eloquence of the wood itself in terms of black-and-white. Mr. Lee realises that when the artist does his own cutting, as of course he should do, the capabilities of the box-wood block, cut on end on the grain, are for original expression very great. (p. 19)

Sydney Lee, *The Limestone Rock* (1914)



Malcolm C. Salaman, 'The Woodcut in England' (*Modern Woodcuts and Lithographs, The Studio* 1919)

used nearly every graphic method with distinction; but it is as a wood-engraver, I think, he most happily expresses his art. His is true white-line engraving, and he handles the box-wood, cut on end of the grain, with the expressive authority of a master. It is essentially creative engraving; for, the design being conceived upon the wood in its main elements of line and mass, the picture is developed in detail with graver and scorper as the artist's invention accepts suggestions from the material, the result being such as no other graphic method could possibly give. Mr. Lee has a very logical practice of coating his block with Indian ink before commencing work with his tools. The advantage of cutting into a positively black ground is that the incisions, or the parts of the wood cut away, show the lights as the whites would appear in the impression on paper, and the effect of this we see in the distinctive luminosity of Mr. Lee's woodcuts. A very remarkable quality of his engraving is the subtle differentiation of textures he suggests with the infinite variety of the character and direction of his incisions. This can be seen in the two representative prints reproduced here, *Cottage Doorway* (p. 23), and *French Peasant* (p. 27), but still more remarkably in the rocks, water, trees and verdure of the well-known *Limestone Rock**—Mr. Lee's masterpiece—and the dark hairy coats of the cart-horses against the stone and timbered cottages in bright sunshine of *The Village Street*.* But while Mr. Lee is loyal to the hard box-wood and graver for his black-and-white expression upon



"SHEEP"

BY GWENDOLEN RAVERAT

* See *THE STUDIO*, Oct 1914 and March 1917.

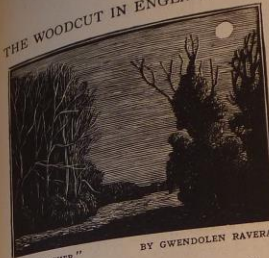
THE WOODCUT IN ENGLAND



"WINTER MORNING" BY GWENDOLEN RAVERAT

the block, he has yielded for colour to the lure of the softer woods—the cherry and the pear—and, in the manner of the Japanese, has taken knife in hand and cut designs of a broad simplicity appropriate to the colour-print. He, indeed, was one of the first to follow Mr. Morley Fletcher's lead in this

THE WOODCUT IN ENGLAND



"THE FOACHER"

BY GWENDOLEN RAVERAT

direction. His best colour-prints are *St. Ives*, *The Bridge*, and *The Sloop Inn* (p. 25), which is among our colour-illustrations. In this nocturne, printed from seven blocks, the lamplight in the inn windows contrasting with the suffused moonlight of the street produces a very harmonious effect of romantic charm. Whatever the subject-matter of any work of Mr. Frank Brangwyn's its artistic motive unerringly suggests the appropriate medium of expression, and within the proper scope of that medium the artist, with his characteristic largeness of utterance, unflinchingly determines his design. When he addresses himself to wood-engraving with his customary vigour and originality of method and the true craftsman's sense of the material, his draughtsmanship is as expressively free and instinct with vitality as it would be were chalk or charcoal the medium, but it has the accent of the wood-engraver's line and no other. Mr. Brangwyn's graphic invention dictates to his graver as the picture evolves upon the wood. Look at the pathetic print, *The Nuns of Dixmiden* (p. 2) with the war-menace of their environment dramatically suggested; could it have been conceived as it is, with its pictorial significance of white on black, in any other terms than those of woodcut? In his designs, too, for interpretation by other wood-engravers, such as Mr. H. G. Webb and the Japanese Mr. Y. Urushibara, his conception is always so loyal to the material that the result is almost that of original engraving. And, by the way, Mr. Webb has himself done original woodcuts of technical and artistic interest.

When M. Paul Colin, the eminent French wood-engraver, in a most engaging *causerie* on the technique of his art, applied to its practice Dela-



"CLERK SAUNDERS' GHOST"

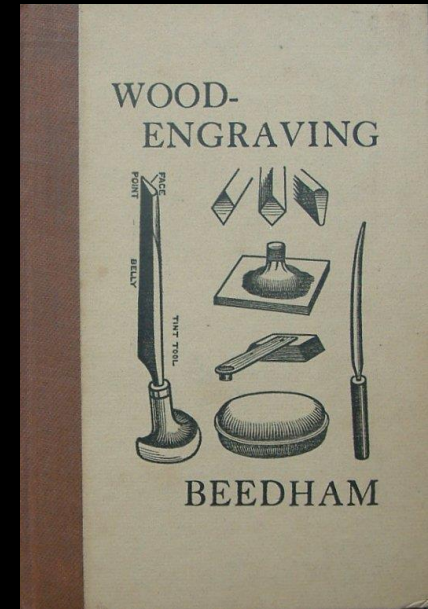
BY GWENDOLEN RAVERAT

John Beedham (1879-1975), *Wood Engraving* (1920)

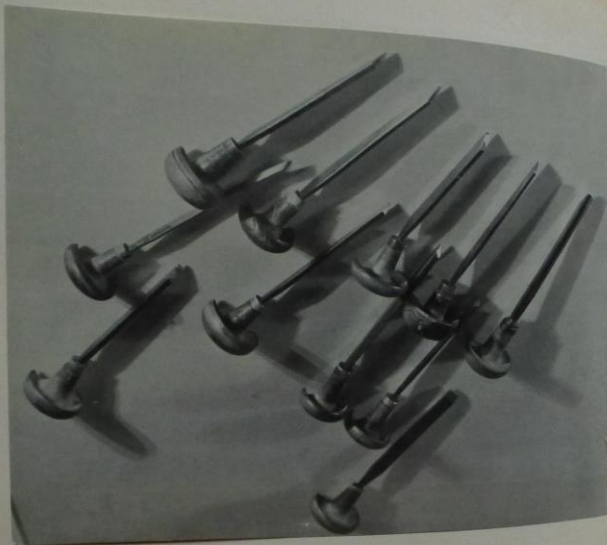
Iain Macnab (1890-1967), *Wood-Engraving* (1938)

Clare Leighton (1898-1989), *Wood-Engraving and Woodcuts* (1932)

John Farleigh (1900-1965), *Graven Image* (1939)



Clare Leighton, *Wood-Engraving and Woodcuts* (1932)



A set of wood-engraving tools. It will be noticed that the handles are only rounded at one side so that they may not knock against the block. The slight angle at which the shaft of the tool is fixed into the handle is also shown here.

From left to right at the top row the tools are as follows:

1. Rounded scoper
2. Smaller sized rounded scoper
3. Square scoper
4. Smaller square scoper

2nd row—left to right:

1. Graver

2. Spitzsticker

3rd row left: Multiple tool (this does not show clearly, but it is a cross between a square scoper and a rake). Right: Flat chisel tool.



This is a close-up photograph of the sharpening of a tool. Put a few drops of sperm oil or typewriter oil on to a Hard Arkansas oil stone. Grip the handle of the tool in the palm of the right hand with the lower spine of the tool to the front. Place the oblique base of the tool *perfectly* flat on to the stone in the pool of oil. The greatest care must be taken that it is absolutely flat, else the tool will be sharpened unevenly and the point may be blunted. Move the tool backwards and forwards, up and down or round and round. The direction does not matter so long as the tool keeps flat on the stone. This should sharpen it in a very short while. Try the point across a finger nail and if it sticks into it the tool is sharp enough. For stumped points or badly blunted tools, a larger, coarser stone may be necessary; but if the tools are carefully handled they should never get beyond the need for the Hard Arkansas stone. Remember that a blunt tool means bad work and slipping and mistakes.



graver, and the spitzsticker. The following are their uses, adding a few extra tools that are undoubtedly good to have:

Scorper. For cutting out large surfaces or making thick cuts of any sort.
Graver. For any fine straight line or specks.
Spitzsticker. For any curved lines.
Square scorper. For corners; useful in lettering, also for thick white

lines.
Flat chisel tool. For shaving off any unstanding points of wood from a large cut away surface.

Tint tool. For finest white lines.

Multiple tool. A very dangerous tool, apt to make the work look cleverer than it is and mechanical. Useful for even greys.

For woodcuts on soft wood or linoleum, an ordinary knife can be used, but as this requires that two cuts should be made—each downwards and slanted towards each other—in order to get a white line, it is better to use a scribe, or hollow V-shaped tool which will cut the line at one go. Semi-circular hollow tools called gouges are used for cutting out white spaces.

Paper. Each engraver must decide this for himself by experience, discovering what paper suits his particular type of work. Any good Japanese or India paper will do. All that is necessary is that for hand printing it should not be too thick to allow of the pressure taking up the ink.

Ink. This can be any good printing ink, and is best bought in tubes so that it shall not coat or dry. Coloured inks can be got. For surface printing avoid any thin ink that will run into the engraved lines and clog them.

On the opposite page is a general view of a wood-engraver at work. The block is on the leather sandbag, so that it can be rotated at any moment. In the reflection in the mirror it will be seen that the left hand grips the block below the level of the surface so that it is out of danger's way should the tool slip. The tools are handy at the right side of the block, with the handles towards the engraver. It is better to sit with the light towards the left, as the shadows do not then fall on to the lines that are being engraved. Notice the way the little finger is gripped round the handle of the tool.

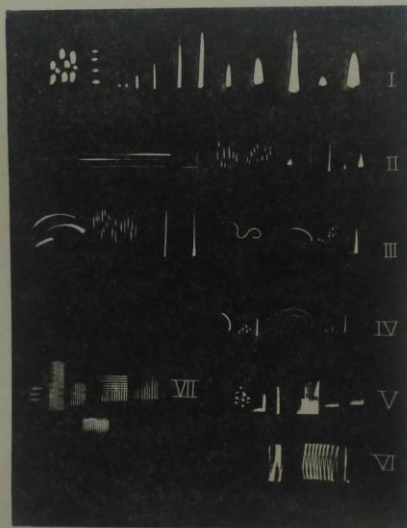


A piece of printing paper having been cut into the required size—allowing a fair margin all round the block—
 it is preferably breathed upon, or even damped over the steam from a boiling kettle. This, though, is not
 necessary. It is then carefully placed over the inked block, care being taken that it should not slip at all.
 Once placed completely on the block, it is rubbed all over with the palm of the hand to ensure its adhering.



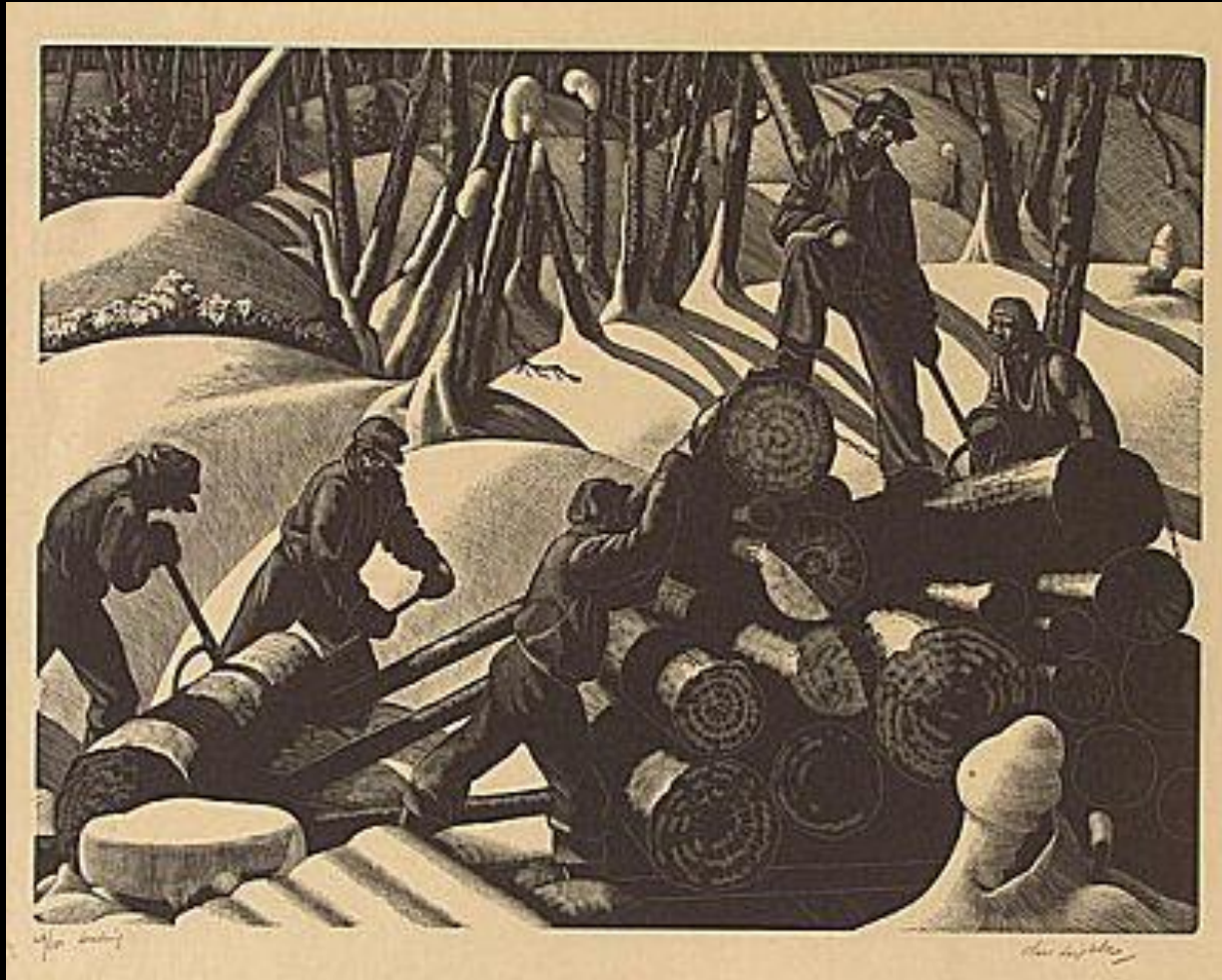
The actual printing now starts. An ordinary tea spoon is better than any of the burnishers sold, as a greater
 firmness is possible. By placing the two first fingers inside the spoon one can feel how one is progressing
 and can exercise the necessary care over delicate portions of the block. It is better to have a thin smooth
 card between the spoon and the printing paper as this prevents the spoon from suddenly ripping up the paper.
 Some people rub a beeswaxed card over the paper to get a smoother surface for rubbing; but this is not
 necessary. The entire block should have a general rub so that the eye can see which parts of the block corre-
 spond to the printing paper. (N.B.—In this photograph the paper has not been properly pressed down at
 the left-hand corner. This shows the risk that arises of letting it slip.) The photograph shows by the different
 colour of it which half of the block has been rubbed and which hasn't. As soon as the general rubbing is
 finished, the card can be dispensed with and the spoon used in direct touch with the paper. This is so that
 the black parts can get the extra pressure in order to make them as rich as possible. Care should be taken
 not to rub hard upon the cut-away white parts. Especial care is needed for the edges of these white parts,
 else the paper might tear.

Wood-engraving tools, blocks and other requisites may be obtained in London from Cornelissen & Sons, T. N. Lawrence, W. Lawrence, Lechertier Barbe Ltd., W. Y. Rhind and C. Roberson & Co.; in New York through E. H. and A. C. Friedrichs Art Stores.



Print of block cut to show marks made by the different tools

Clare Leighton, *Loading* (1931)



CLARE LEIGHTON

Loading (First Stage)

(9 x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

First trial proof taken while the block was being engraved. The positions of most of the figures are merely shown by leaving black spaces. The large masses of white have been cut away with a scorer. The shapes of the grey shadows have been indicated, but as yet the greys are too dark and the edges too hard and sudden.



CLARE LEIGHTON

Loading (Second Stage)

(9 x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

In this second proof the greys have been lightened by numberless crossing white lines engraved with the tint tool. The light on the logs is growing by means of curved lines made with the multiple tool. The central figure is forming. The edges of the grey shadows on the snow are still too much marked.



CLARE LEIGHTON

Loading (Final Stage)

(9 x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

This third and final proof shows a great jump forward. The figures have been engraved and the background cleared up around them. Light has shown up the form of all the logs. The background has been considerably lightened—the central figure has light accents on it by means of occasional thicker white lines. The tree trunks have been made more solid. The greys of the background have been crossed yet again with fine white lines, thicker cuts towards the white parts merging the edges of the grey until they show as minute black specks. The sections of the logs have had the multiple tool used on them.

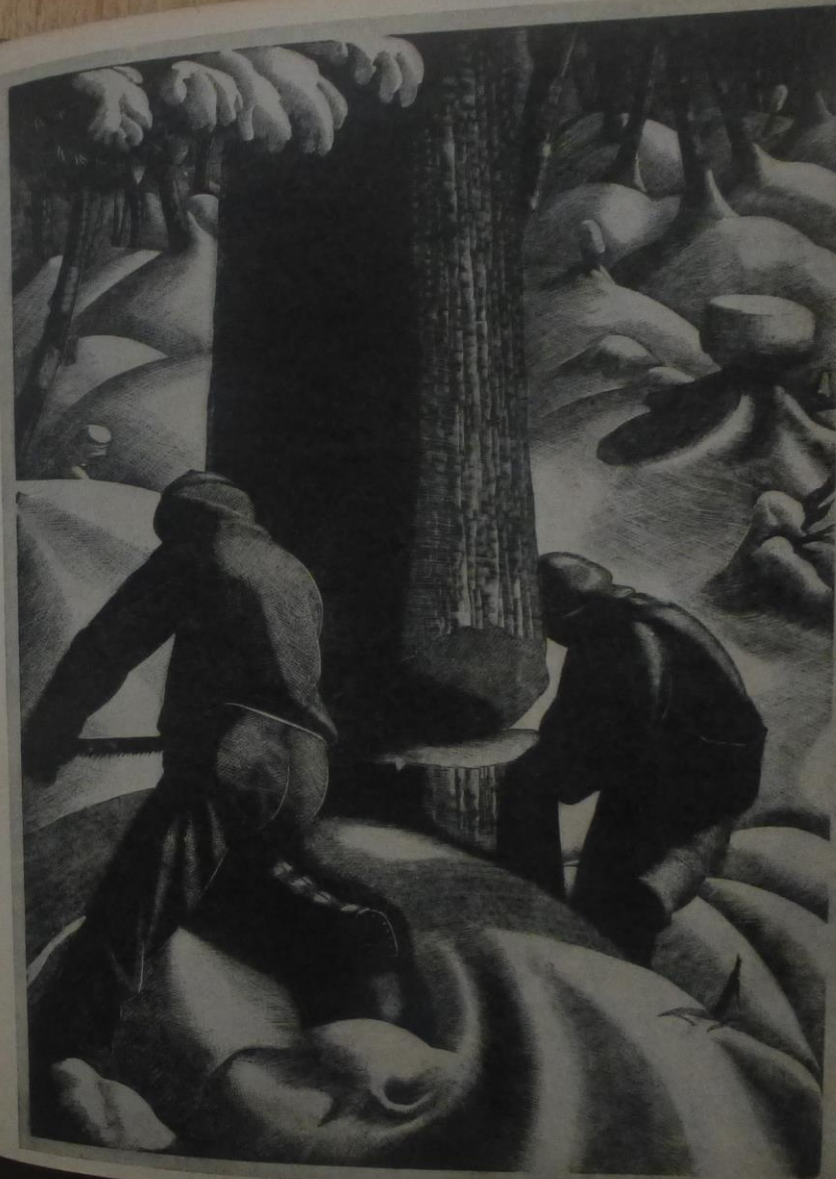


CLARE LEIGHTON

Cutting (properly printed)

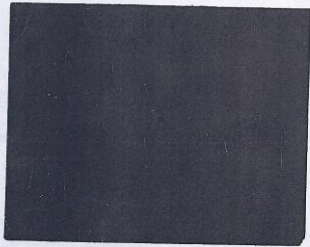
(11½ x 8 in.)

Here is a print of *Cutting* which has been taken with just the right amount of inking. It has also been carefully rubbed. The blacks are deep and rich, and yet none of the finest lines are clogged. All the countless lines on the back of the left-hand figure have come out clearly and the edges of the grey shadows on the snow merge properly into the white. In this print we have now got the right values of the greys and the complete range from the dead black up to the white.



John Farleigh, *Engraving on Wood* (1954)

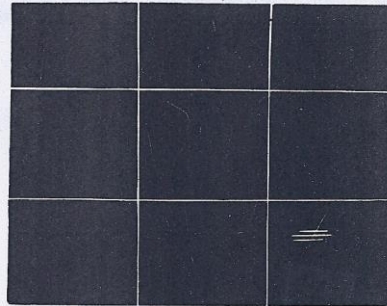
PRINTING



Diag. 2
Proof No. 1

if under inked the print will look thin and starved. Experience in rolling the ink the right thickness on the slab is the key to the correct inking of the block. Repeat this stage of printing until a really good even thin black print is obtained, remembering always that the block should be in the centre of the press for even pressure. Clean block with a soft rag and turps before engraving. If this first stage of printing is carefully observed it will act as a guide for all future proofing of blocks. Practice and experiment is the best way of finding out how to take a good print.

WOOD ENGRAVING



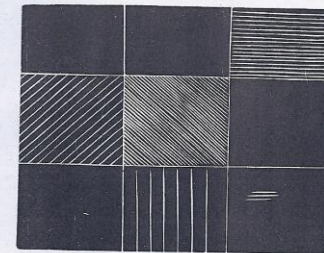
Diag. 8
Proof No. 2

one sweeping movement but experience is necessary to do this successfully.

When the lines are engraved a print should be taken. If all prints are numbered as they are printed and arranged in order at the end of the exercises they will provide a useful reference and guide to future work. (Diag. 8.)

This print will be the first experience of printing your own engraving and of seeing what the lines look like.

ENGRAVING

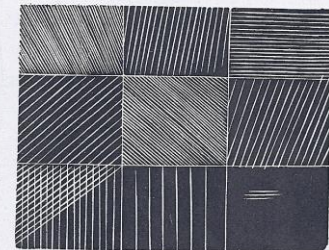


Diag. 9
Proof No. 3

attribute when engraving a design and it should be developed from the beginning. (Diag. 9.)

Fill the remaining squares, except one, with varying tints working slowly and carefully to increase the skill in cutting.

Engrave a line diagonally across one of the squares and



Diag. 10
Proof No. 4

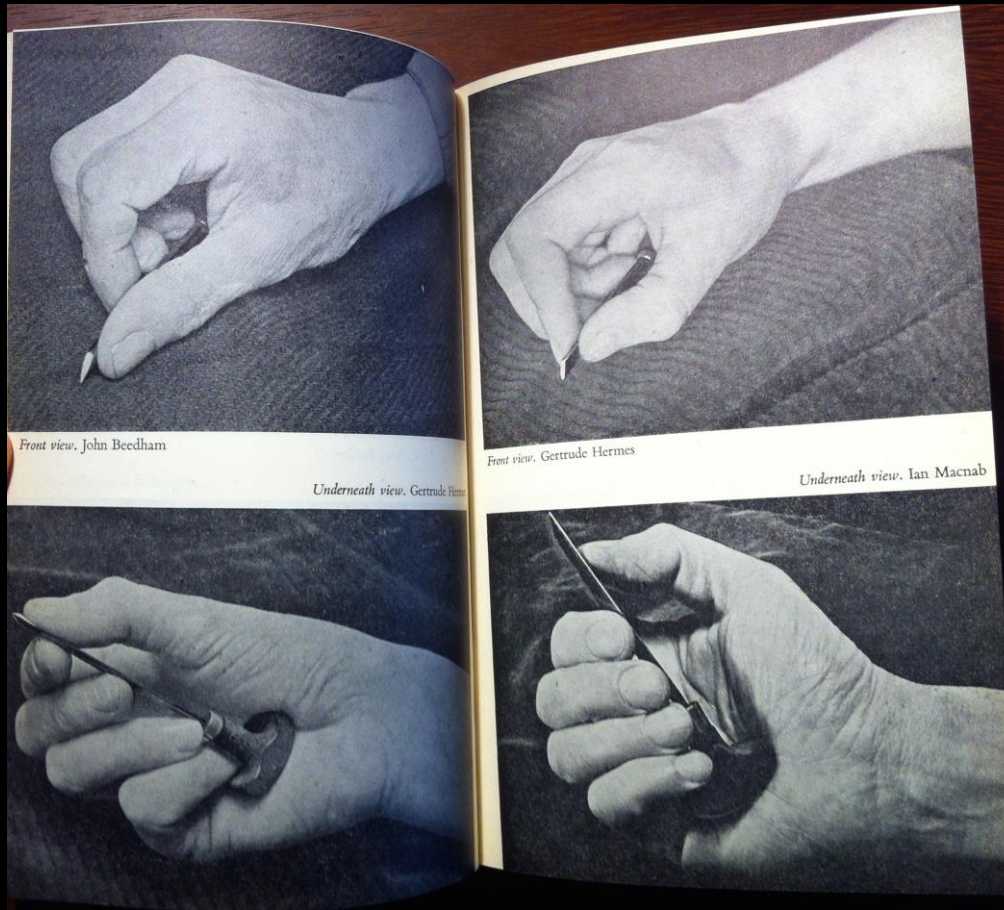
Herbert Furst

The Modern Woodcut (1924)

The Woodcut (1928)

Original Engraving and Etching (1931)

John Farleigh, *Graven Image* (1939)



Herbert Read (ed.), *Unit One: The Modern Movement in English Architecture, Painting and Sculpture* (1934)

