



Traditional skills

We're always keen to hear about companies and individuals who are keeping traditional skills and crafts alive. This month let us introduce you to letter cutter Fergus Wessel. He trained in the tradition of Eric Gill – prolific engraver, writer, typographer and sculptor (1882-1940) – and now has his own workshop in Oxfordshire carving fine inscriptions and decorations in stone and slate. Fergus says, 'I'm passionate about the preservation of traditional skills.'

Previously a potter at Winchcombe Pottery for seven years, Fergus has always had an eye for visual arts. He says, 'I grew up playing with pieces of type in an old letter press where my mother works, so perhaps that's where the inspiration came from!'

Each commission is unique. Fergus explains, 'I draw up a few sketches after a discussion with the client; then progress to a detailed design. When we're happy I start drawing onto the stone. For the carving, I don't use machinery. Every bit is done by hand, with a chisel and mallet – they're more

precise than machine-cut engravings.

Our hands are the finest tools.'

● *To commission*

