

## Celtic Border by Ian Elliott

A few years ago, I obtained a book called **Celtic Art The Methods of Construction by George Bain**. The paperback version was first published in 1951, though the Introduction is dated 1945 so, I assume that the original Hardback version was published around then. If Celtic Art is of interest to you there is now a copy of this book in the club's library.

In my workroom where we have our computer and where I do any off the lathe decoration and my pyrography work. I have a small Birch plywood (IKEA) drawer unit. Its 420mm wide x 320mm high x 190mm deep and has six drawers.



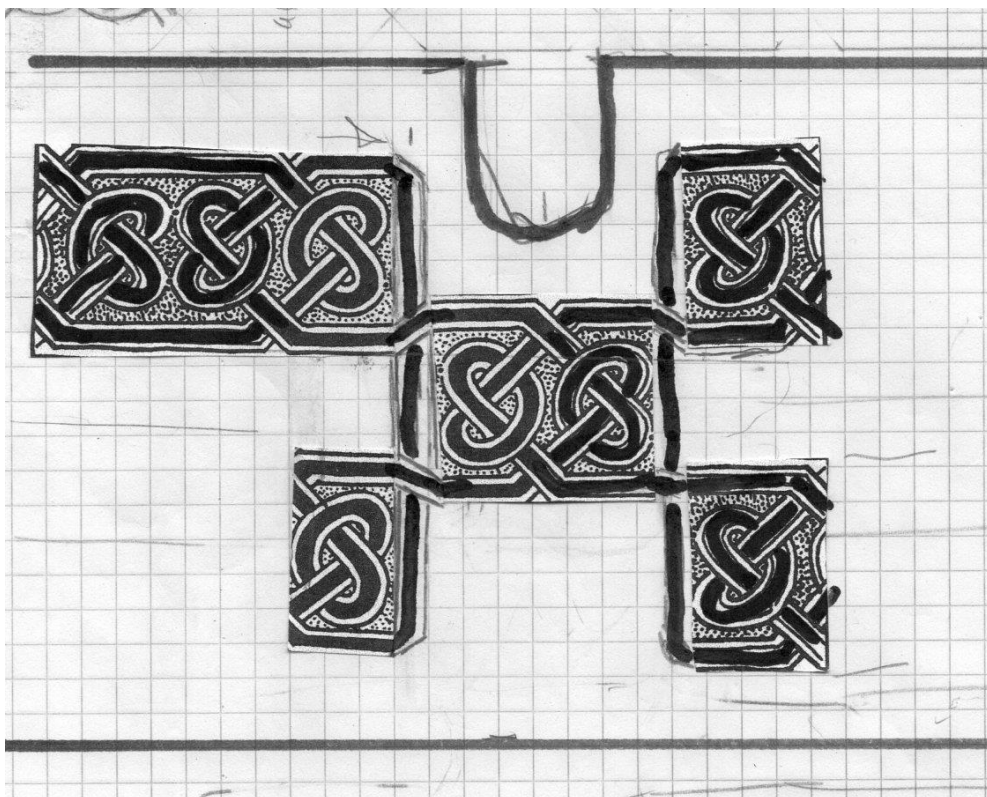
I have in the past used two of the drawer fronts to practice pyrography so, along with the drawer I am currently working on, I have turned them around for this photograph! I will show all the fronts towards the end.

As I have just said, I use these drawer fronts to practice pyrography. I have thought for some time that I would like to try a Celtic Border, the full width bottom draw would be ideal for this. After a lot of deliberation, I finally decided on a version of an Interlacing Border (Pictish School) see below.



However, if you study this border carefully you will see that there are actually three different designs based around the same marking out. On the three on the left the centre twists are interlinked with each other, whereas the two on the right they are not. I decided upon the design on the right but, without any lines within lines, as this would be too cluttered for pyrograph on the scale I was intending to use.

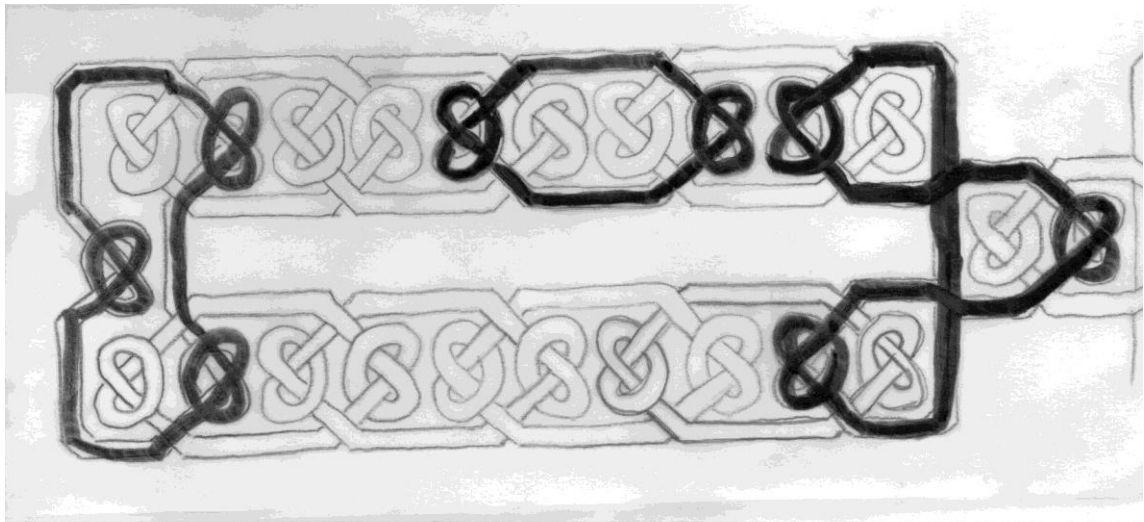
The basic principle of Celtic Knot design is that there are no ends every ribbon is continuous. My problem was the book did not show for this design how to deal with going around corners. I wanted a border around the drawer front not just a band. I also had to contend with how to get around the finger pull. It was a case of literally cut and paste and a felt tip pen, I started with how to deal with the finger pull. (at this point I had not yet decided not to have lines within lines)



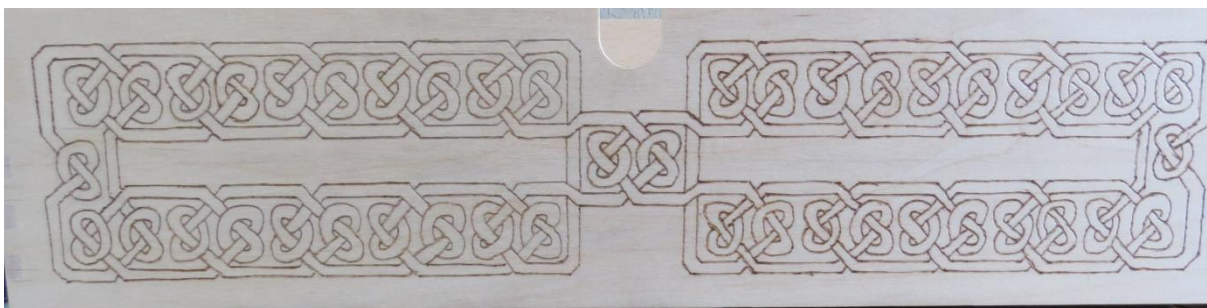
Once I had worked out how the centre would look, I intended to just do the same at the ends. However, I put this

project to one side for several months. When I came back to it, I had completely forgotten what I had intended for the ends. I only remembered when checking my sketches for this piece.

I started the marking off from the centre working out towards the left side end. By this point I had worked out that my design was not one continuous ribbon but, a series of interlocking panels each of whose ribbons are continuous. In the whole border there are only three different panels see below.



The end panel and the centre panel are each used twice (handed) the rest is made up of the same panel repeated four times between the end panel and the centre panel. Repeated a total of sixteen times.



**The Pyrographed drawer front**

Whilst doing the pyrography I decided that I would not do the background as a series of pyrographed dots as

originally intended, but I would do the background Gold. So, after two coats of Sanding Sealer. I used Jo Sonja Pale Gold metallic paint on the main background and Rich Gold for the centre panel background and an exceptionally fine brush.



Drawer unit with all drawers the right way around. As you can see, I still have three drawer fronts to do.

## **Conclusion**

I worked as a draftsman/setter out doing manufacturing drawings for the best part of ten years prior to going into management, but even in management design was always part of my remit. Yet I struggled at times to comprehend how to set out the more elaborate Celtic Knot designs. I can not put into words how much respect I now have for those ancient crafts people, who would have had extremely basic hand tools and equipment. From what I have read about the building of Cathedrals and Churches the Mason/Builder used to draw on a table (or the floor) covered with a thin layer of lime and scratch into the surface to make their drawings. Once finished with that drawing, they would put more lime over the top to do their next drawing.