

Grinling Gibbons the Wood Carver

Grinling Gibbons was a wood carver. He made beautiful decorations for buildings such as St Paul's Cathedral in London and Hampton Court Palace. He liked to do his work shut away in a little thatched house. No one could disturb him there. One day one of the king's servants, John Evelyn, passed by the little house. He looked into the window. He was very surprised to see someone making fine carvings in wood. He knocked on the door of the little house. Grinling Gibbons answered the door politely and asked him in. John Evelyn had travelled to many places. He looked out for beautiful carvings and paintings wherever he went. He had never seen any carving so good as Grinling Gibbons' carving. Grinling Gibbons' carving was so clever that it looked real. He carved flowers and fruit that were very small and pretty. They were strong too and would not break easily.

John Evelyn asked Grinling Gibbons how much he charged for his carvings. He also asked him if he would like to meet the king. The king liked beautiful carvings and would be sure to want to buy some of Gibbons' work.

Grinling Gibbons became the king's carver. He made carvings for great houses and churches all over the land. In Petworth House in Sussex he decorated a whole big room with carvings. In the picture you can see his carving. There are all sorts of musical instruments with flowers, leaves, fruit, and beads. Can you see the violin and the recorders?

