

Jon Price is a framer, surfer, musician, husband & father. His business, Handmade Picture Framing, is located near Bude on the North Cornish coast. Here he tells 4Walls about his first encounter with renowned artist Ric Hyde, a commission for his most challenging framing project to date and why it's currently kept hidden away.

A few months ago, a gentleman came in to my workshop to enquire about buying a few lengths of frame moulding. Within minutes he was causing chaos, tipping over pictures and knocking down display chevrons as he wheeled about a three-metre length of gold moulding. This was my introduction to Ric Hyde, one of North Cornwall's most prominent artists. Surprisingly, given the circumstances, it didn't take long for the very apologetic Ric and I to build a rapport.

Ric, known for his unique painting style which portrays his sometimes serious, sometimes ludicrous view of human nature, moved to North Cornwall over 40 years ago to escape the London scene. Now 81, he told me he had always framed his own work, but was unsure of what to do with a recently finished triptych. As I made suggestions he casually asked, "I suppose you wouldn't consider making a pentagonal frame, would you?" At this point most sensible framers would have laughed, said something like, "of course not!" and quickly dismissed the idea. But I love a challenge and like many bespoke framers, I like to think I can frame almost anything. Besides, I had experimented a little with unusual-shaped frames. So, that's how I ended up agreeing to frame not only an irregular pentagon but also the two irregular quadrilaterals that made up the triptych. These turned out to be among the most challenging frames I have ever made.

The first thing I did was to work out the exact angles involved. Ric's paintings were my guide but the board he had used wasn't perfectly straight. The Internet made it easy to find the correct name for the shape of each piece and more importantly the total sum of their angles. This meant I could check that my calculations added up to the correct amount. For those whose GCSEs or O Levels are as distant a memory as mine, a pentagon is 540 degrees and a quadrilateral 360 degrees. Now for the hard bit. Those framers who use Morso mitre cutters to cut their moulding and have made irregular-shaped frames will know that frames with angles of 90 degrees or more are far easier to cut than those with angles of less than 90 degrees. This is because the adjustable 'fences' that dictate the cutting angle cannot be set for cuts of less than 45 degrees. So, with corners of 90, 110 and 140 degrees the irregular pentagon was relatively straight forward. However, the irregular quadrilaterals needed two 37.5 degree cuts to make up a 75 degree corner! Some improvisation was needed, along with few choice

swear words - swearing in frustration being, in my experience, a regular part of bespoke framing.

I worked out that if I set one of the Morso cutting fences to the opposite angle of the angle needed then the cut on the other side would be correct. In other words, if I wanted a 37.5 degree cut I should set the opposite fence to 52.5. However, that meant cutting freehand with no fence to keep the frame moulding at the correct angle on the last couple of cuts. It also meant the longitudinal (end) stop that ensures the moulding is cut to the correct length was of no use. At this point, I could have sought advice from Argadia's Ask the Experts who, with their wealth of experience, were bound to have solved similar issues. I could also have spoken to the joiners just down the road to see if they could mitre the necessary angles. However, I had ordered spare moulding, just in case, and had nothing to lose. So, I set the opposing fence angle at 52.5 degrees, put the moulding on the Morso ready to be cut, with a pencil mark to indicate where the cut should be, and taped a straight piece of wood to the support arm to act as a temporary fence to hold the moulding in position for the last few cuts. It worked - all four pieces cut at exactly the right angle.

The next problem was joining the pieces using my foot-operated underpinner. For those who don't know, this type of underpinner has a fixed 90-degree guide to help hold the pieces of moulding in position as V-shaped nails are inserted into their underside. Along with glue, these V-nails hold the pieces of moulding together. I should also mention that I was using a Larson Juhl Spoleto bronze scoop moulding. A lovely moulding, the only disadvantage being that scoop mouldings tend to push apart during underpinning. Luckily my underpinner had a guide to help with this, as long as the join was at 90 degrees. In situations like mine where the joins were 75 or 110 degrees the guide was about as much use as... cue more swearing.

The solution? Muscle power. I simply held the moulding in place as well as I could.

I must say; I was pleased with the end result. I've seen very few examples of irregular-shaped frames and the finish was up to the standard I demand in my usual framing. So, what happened to my masterpieces, the result of all my hours of hard work, Internet geometry lessons and swearing? Were they to be the centrepiece of Ric's next exhibition, due to open in a fortnight? No. When Ric came to collect the three paintings he wasn't happy. The framing wasn't the problem, but Ric felt the paintings needed more work. When I went to see him, a few weeks after his exhibition, the three paintings were sitting in Ric's isolated North Cornwall studio while he awaited the inspiration needed to add the finishing touches. I've told Ric in no uncertain words not to get any paint on my frames!

[www.handmadepictureframing.co.uk](http://www.handmadepictureframing.co.uk)

# JON PRICE: HANDMADE PICTURE FRAMING



Ric Hyde with triptych in his North Cornwall Studio.



The three pieces of the triptych.

Jon Price - Handmade Picture Framing, Bude.

## FATG SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Along with Jo Ronald (featured on Page 4 of this issue), Jon Price has been awarded this year's FATG scholarship, sponsored by Argadia. The scholarship covers study and examination costs for the Fine Art Trade Guild's Certified Framers (Accredited Professional Framers) - GCF(APF) - qualification.

With his wife Becky, Jon runs Handmade Picture Framing, near Bude in Cornwall and has been in business since 1999.

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