

SATURDAY 28 OCTOBER 2000



## Myself carving at Wellington Arch

After a 12-month restoration, the splendidly over-the-top Wellington Arch at Hyde Park Corner gives the lie to those who would dismiss London's monuments to 'forgotten generals'.

**Mark Palmer** reports on a neglected masterpiece that is set to take its place among the capital's greatest landmarks

Almost all the stone carving was done on site. David Baker, a self-employed carver, spent nearly eight months working amid the noise of diesel generators, clouds of dust and fumes from the passing traffic. Latterly, he was joined by 24-year-old Katie Worthington, who had previously spent two years at York Minster. "I was more used to Gothic than Classical work but it's such an impressive building and it's been a real challenge to copy things as exactly as we could," says Worthington. "The modillions were the most difficult. The gaps you had to carve into were so small it makes you wonder how they did it in the first place."

To Baker's wonderment, the detail in the arch was so precise that there was little room for interpretation. He was helped greatly by studying Burton's original three-dimensional drawings of the capitals. "The carvers at the time produced exactly what Burton had drawn. He must have been at their shoulder every day," says Baker.



One of the lion's masks I recarved