

## What do Jesus Christ and Harrison Ford Have in Common?

Jesus Christ and Harrison Ford did it and even Changing Rooms' Handy Andy and the Queen's nephew get up to it. So what does this eclectic group of men have in common? Carpentry - one of the oldest and most appreciated trades known to man. Carpentry ranges from making joists for floors and rafters for roofs, to cabinet making and antique restoration. At one end of the spectrum carpenters ensure our roofs stay on and that timber framed houses stay up. At the other extreme cabinet makers create furniture to complement our homes, offices, hotels, restaurants and other haunts. All carpenters are skilled craftsmen who work with wood and wood based materials. They use hand and power tools to shape their materials appropriately. It is a manual, physical job but the most skilled carpenters also design and invent. This enables them to demonstrate their imagination and creativity and their love for wood. Cabinet makers make individual pieces of furniture with incredible attention to detail. Pieces can be customised to a client's needs and taste. They can also construct fitted furniture (mostly storage), kitchens and shop fittings, again often customising what they build. Most cabinet makers specialise in a particular field, often working to their own designs. They start with a design and from there decide the type of material to use. The wood is then cut, shaped and planed before being joined together to form a structure - be it a chair, table or cabinet of some sort. If appropriate hinges, locks and handles are added. The finished product is then polished or painted. Furniture restorers care for and repair furniture, often antiques. They may need to merely glue together broken furniture carefully to try and disguise the previous damage. Or they may replace lost parts with newly made pieces and entirely reconstruct a piece of furniture. Restorers also re-upholster and french polish pieces to bring them back to life. Other carpenters are an integral part of a builder's team at both the first and second fix stages of a building project. They are often known affectionately as "chippies". During the first fix they make and install the wooden structures that are crucial to the strength and basic needs of a building. These include the joists for the floors and rafters for the roof, partition walls, window frames and external doors. During the second fix carpenters are busy fitting exposed floorboards, skirting boards, shelving, fitted storage and internal doors. This sort of work needs to be precise as it will be on view rather than covered up like many first fix jobs. Chippies may need to work with other trades at this point - for instance a plumber and an electrician when fitting out a kitchen. Another important role is making staircases - these can be basic and carpeted over or can be elaborate and decorative if the wooden stairs are to be exposed. When a new shop or restaurant is being opened then carpenters are involved in fitting out the premises. This involves creating the shop front, benched seating, shelving, storage and partitions. There may be decorative work too. A fun area to work in is making film and TV sets, and star spotting at the same time! Carpentry is an old trade and is often romanticised the shaping of organic materials and the creation of beautiful pieces is an attractive occupation. But much of the carpentry trade is involved in crucial structural work to our buildings. Projects involve demanding physical work, concentration, precision and creativity. Maybe that's what Jesus and Harrison Ford have in common!

## About the Author

Expert carpenter India Cooper delves into the intimate world of a carpenter. To find out more please visit <http://www.ratedpeople.com/find/carpenter>

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