

Edwardian jewels

BY JULIA RAI

Get regal with jewellery in the style of Queen Mary.

Queen Mary was the mother of King George VI, and Queen Elizabeth II's grandmother. This silver tiara and pearl choker and necklace in 1:12 scale were inspired by Queen Mary's many ensembles. A full size tiara band is normally open at the back but this design is a very fragile form at the metal clay dry stage. This tiara uses a continuous band technique, which creates a more robust design when using metal clay.

MATERIALS

- 20g Art Clay Silver
- Silver syringe clay
- Silver paste
- 3mm and 2mm clear cubic zirconia stones
- Roller
- Playing cards
- Ring mandrel
- Ring sizer
- Greaseproof paper
- Sticky tape
- Circle stencil sheet
- Straight and wavy edged blades

- Tiny heart, teardrop and round cutters
- Drills in a variety of sizes
- Tweezers
- Sanding sponges
- Small files
- Wet and dry sanding paper (240 grit)
- Paintbrush
- Polishing tools
- Collapsible eye needle (fine)
- White thread
- 1.5mm (14/0) cream seed beads

1. A simple plastic ring sizer set can be used to calculate the size of the band to fit the doll being used. Choose a size that fits the hair or head of the doll where the tiara will sit, and then go up three sizes. The band will be made at the larger size to account for the shrinkage of the silver clay after firing.

2. Slide the larger sized ring onto a graduated ring mandrel until it stops. Draw a line on both

sides of the ring on the surface of the mandrel using a sharp pencil. This gives you a guide to where the tiara bands will be made. Using a varnished wood mandrel means that this pencil line can be wiped off later.

3. Cut a strip of greaseproof paper about 20mm wide and wrap it once around the mandrel over the double lines. You should be able to see the lines through the paper. Stick the paper to the mandrel using sticky tape on the edges, not over the area where the lines are. The ring will be formed over the lines.

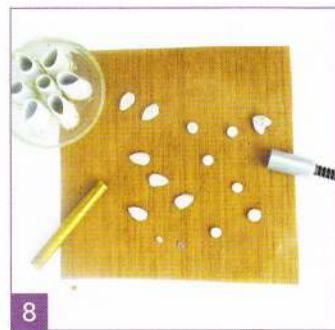
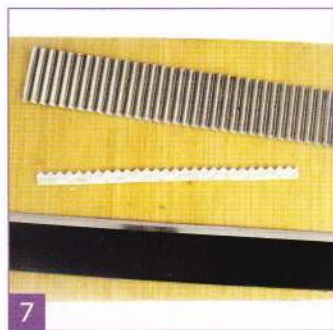
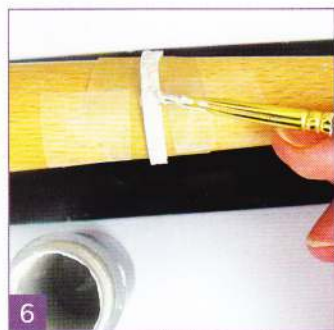
4. Choose a texture with an appropriate pattern, which will provide some additional sparkle to the tiara. Form a third of the silver clay into a long sausage and roll it out five cards thick to create a long, thin shape. Texture this and then, using a straight blade, cut a band

around 5mm wide without trimming the ends.

5. Lightly dampen the surface of the paper to help the clay to stick in place. Pick up the band by one end and wrap it around the mandrel over the parallel lines, allowing one end to flap over the other and making sure the band is straight. Cut through both layers and remove the excess clay from above and below.

6. Flap one end back and put a blob of paste on the paper under the join and up the cut edge. Gently push down the end so it's making contact with the paper, but take care not to squash the band. Remove the excess paste that squeezes out with a damp paintbrush and smooth the edges. Allow to dry.

7. Slide the dry ring off the mandrel and put aside. Wrap fresh greaseproof paper around



TIPS

When making small shapes for decoration, always make more than you need. They can be stored for other projects if you don't use them immediately.

Stones set in metal clay need to sit right down in the drilled holes. Look across the surface of the clay; you should just be able to see the flat top of the stone. If it is sitting too high, it will not be caught by the clay shrinkage during firing and the stone will probably fall out.

Always clean any paste or clay dust from the surface of stones before firing or this will be fired to the stone. They are much easier to clean once they are dry. A cocktail stick will crack off dried paste and a dry paintbrush will remove dust and debris.

RESOURCES

Art Clay Silver, cubic zirconia, plastic ring sizer: metalclay.co.uk
Collapsible eye needle: cjbeaders.com
Seed beads: perlesandco.co.uk

EXTRA PROJECTS

A simpler design for the tiara could be achieved with a single band. If the band was thick enough, stones could be set directly into the band using the drilled technique. Making a band with one straight edge and one edge cut with a more dramatic rise in the middle would fit different periods or design styles. This technique is also the basis for making crowns.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JULIA RAI, LOUISE CLARKSON



the mandrel as before. Roll out and texture another snake of clay. Use a straight blade to cut one side and a wavy blade to cut the other, creating the top ring of the tiara. Put this onto the mandrel. Cut and stick as before.

8. While the second ring is drying, roll out the remaining silver clay five cards thick and cut out hearts, teardrops and round shapes. Choose cutters 2mm or 3mm all around the stone used with each shape to ensure a good setting. Dry and then sand the shapes carefully until they are smooth.

9. Mark the position of the centre of the 3mm stone on the heart with a pencil. Drill a hole smaller than the stone, then create a cone-shaped setting with successively larger drills. The stone should sit right down

in the cone without sticking up above the clay surface. Drill appropriately sized stone settings in the other shapes.

10. To set the stones, extrude syringe clay down in the drilled setting. Using tweezers, put the stone into the hole and press it down, ensuring the stone is level. Use a damp paintbrush to clean up excess paste and leave to dry. Remove the dust and dry paste from the stones with a cocktail stick and a dry paintbrush.

11. Check the inside and outside of the two rings and fill any gaps with syringe clay. When this is dry, smooth the inside of the rings with sanding sponges. Refine the straight edges with sandpaper flat down on the table to ensure the edges are filed flat and straight. Use small files to refine the wavy edges.

12. The rings will be joined together at the back and open out at the front for the stone embellishments to be added between the two. Mark the joins of each ring with a pencil. Using a stencil guide, mark the exact opposite side of each ring. This will be the centre front where the focal heart will go.

13. Put greaseproof paper around the mandrel and slide the way ring on with the wavy edge pointing towards the thick end. Slide the straight-edged ring on. Line up the join of each ring and add syringe clay between the two rings, sticking them together. Gently pull the rings apart at the front, making sure the back is still touching.

14. Stick the heart in place in the centre of the front, sticking it firmly to both rings. Check the back is still stuck together and add more syringe clay if necessary. This is fiddly, but it is important that this part is done correctly as it forms the basis for the whole design. Allow this to dry on the mandrel.

15. Measure and mark the position of the oval shapes, ensuring they are at an equal distance from the heart on each side. Stick them on at an angle, making sure they are attached to both bands and

forming a mirror image of each other. Mark the position of the circles and stick these on, attaching them to both bands.

16. When it's dry, slide the tiara off the mandrel. Check the inside and fill any gaps between the bands and the attached elements with syringe clay. When this is dry, refine the inside with sandpaper and refine all the edges with files. Kiln fire the tiara at 800°C for one hour or by torch. Polish and burnish to a high shine.

PEARL CHOKER

1. For the pearl choker, thread a collapsible eye needle with 15mm long white thread and make a knot in the middle of the thread. Thread about 22 seed beads onto the thread and make a knot up against the end of the beads. Rethread the needle with the other end of the thread and do the same on that end.

2. Wrap the double row of beads around the doll's neck and tie the ends together using a reef knot to ensure they are secure. Trim off any excess thread. Put a knot in the end of another length of thread, thread the needle and make a length of beads for the longer necklace. Tie the ends together with a reef knot.

