

# "It's really begun to take off -

IF your idea of painting is slapping half a pint of emulsion on the kitchen wall with a broom, spare a thought for Peta Hudson who habitually works with brushes about two hairs in width.

Peta's a painter with the Prince August model and toy soldier factory in Kilnamartyra, Co Cork where everything's in miniature: from the inch-high infantrymen right through to the minuscule cannons.

At the moment, however, Prince August's famed soldier boys and Tolkien figures (you should see those dragons...) are put firmly to one side as Peta concentrates on painting exquisite chess sets — and not just any chess sets (at this factory they theme them in everything from the Crusades to Robin Hood).

Right now, Peta's focussing on golfers — part of the Edman Collection — recreating the perfect detail



**Jo Kerrigan**

of the Roaring Twenties, when men wore plus fours and women were adorned with sensible tweed skirts.

"We've always done very well with the golf chess sets, not just as personal gifts but as club prizes," observes Peta.

The popularity of the sets probably has a lot to do with the strategic location of Prince August: between Waterville and the Old Head, two must-play golf courses for any visitor; it

could also have something to do with the fact anyone winning the sets gets something they can really enjoy, rather than the traditional piece of crystal which can only be put on a mantelpiece — the tiny chess masterpieces (which can now be bought with their own mahogany playing board) are a joy to use, and a talking point when awaiting a game.

Earlier this year, the factory began to notice an upsurge in interest for the golf sets.

"I think it's really begun to take off — because of the Ryder Cup," says Peta. "It seems everybody wants them right now, as mementoes of the big event."

"We had some American visitors in recently and they ordered eight sets there and then — that was pretty good for one morning — and Jerry Gray, captain of Macroom Golf Club, has ordered five special sets for

a tournament he's holding at the end of the month in aid of the Muskerry Special Olympics team."

As a result of the demand for the sets, Peta and co-painter Eileen are currently working around the clock to keep up.

How long does it take to decorate an entire chess set?

"It's hard to say," muses Peta, as she selects an even finer brush than usual to paint near-invisible buttons onto a miniature figurine. "You don't necessarily work non-stop on one set: you might switch from one thing to another to give yourself a break — but the other week I took home four golf sets to paint because of the rush and I know it took me 40 hours from beginning to end, because I timed it."

When required, the sets are personalised for the club or individual to receive them — undoubtedly making them extra special, but

## Peta Hudson, golf chess set painter — because of the Ryder Cup"



**Peta Hudson: "We've always done very well with the golf chess sets, not just as personal gifts but as club prizes."**

Peta admits that working hunched up, crouched over a table and concentrating on something only a few inches away can strain the eyes.

"We try to get up, walk around, stare at things in the distance every now and again," she says, "but if you're really engrossed in a piece of work, you don't notice the time passing."

"I sometimes get a cramp in my little finger, which I use to steady my hand when painting, and that can be a nuisance, but I love making the little figures come alive — each one is unique."

Are the painters looking forward to a break when the Ryder Cup is over?

"Not a hope," laughs Peta. "We'll go straight into the Christmas rush then."

demanding even more from the painter.

"The Americans, for example, wanted their players dressed in blue tops and gold pants," Peta says.

"The colour scheme looked a little odd I felt,

but that was what they wanted so it was what they got.

"They also asked if they could possibly have different club logos painted on the sweaters [remember we're talking a quarter-inch of

space here] and of course we said they could.

"One of the logos incorporated Texas longhorns — that was my first attempt at drafting microscopic Texas longhorns; we managed to get them on, though."

■ To contact the Prince August factory; phone 026-40222 or visit internet site [edmancollection.com](http://edmancollection.com).