

Furniture & cabinetmaking

Issue 258 • June 2017 • £4.25

DESIGN • INSPIRATION • PROJECTS • TECHNIQUES • TESTS • NEWS • EXCELLENCE



The last apprentice

Preserving the
Golden Age
of furniture

Wood from the trees

The buyer's guide
to selecting timber
in the round

New House of Windsor

Exploring contemporary
versions of a
classic theme



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Welcome to...

...the Golden Age

Sometimes all it takes is the right few words from someone in the know to completely flip your opinion around. James Mursell did that to me when he said, 'Windsor is not a style, it's a technique'. Dumbing it down even further for my benefit he went on to explain that any piece of furniture that has at its centre a slab of timber through which legs, arms or backs are passed constitutes a Windsor. Boom, there I was, completely and utterly transformed. It was as if a whole new world of opportunity had opened up and things that were once just familiar objects were now objects of fascination and, dare I say it, desire. Maybe it had been staring me in the face all along but suddenly the lineage of Welsh stick chairs to Shaker benches to Scandi chic and beyond all made sense.

I don't think I'll ever make one though. For a start all that turning and spoke shaving would drive me nuts, no, I want to be able to sit back in something that's a complete mystery to me and enjoy a piece of furniture history. The work of Bern Chandley is our featured gallery this month (page 50). Bern has been a furniture maker for around 17 years and uses the Windsor technique to great effect in creating some of the slickest contemporary seating I've ever seen.

It never pays to use up all your superlatives in one issue but I'm on a roll this month. Responding to a comment that I really should get out more, I decided to pen our cover story this month (page 22) and visit the workshop and showroom of Alexander George Antiques, a one-stop shop for the finest 17th- and 18th-century English furniture anywhere in the world. It's moments like this that remind me why I do what I do. Can you imagine being surrounded by genuine artefacts from the Golden Age of furniture, with complete provenance all the way back to the maker and being allowed to touch it? No, of course you can't and you'll just have to take my word for it, it's about as good as it gets.

Continuing that theme I've chosen to share with you a significantly momentous occasion in the world of woodworking craft that I think in centuries to come people will look back and stick a pin in the map to identify the start of a new renaissance in craft activity. André-Jacob Roubo's *L'Art du Menuisier* was published in 1768 and sought to gather in minute detail the inner workings of the cabinetmaker's craft. Roubo may have been as fluent in English as he was French but as he only wrote (and published) in his native tongue (Ye Olde French) he may as well have



been speaking double Dutch to the rest of the world. *With All the Precision Possible: Roubo on Furniture* is the first serious attempt at an English translation of this important account and we've been speaking to the team responsible for making this happen on page 46. Our business feature this month (page 66) looks at the latest developments surrounding tablesaw safety technology from SawStop and Bosch.

Last and by no means least, we're taking you on a guided tour of the sawmill with our long-awaited article from English

Woodlands Timber (page 28) on how to identify the quality of timber from the outside of a tree.

So don those white gloves, grab your steelies, put on your high viz and hold on to your holdfasts, it's going to be intense.

Derek Jones

Derek Jones

derekj@thegmcgroup.com

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Front cover image courtesy of Alexander George Antiques

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Don't forget there are plenty more articles and discussions to be found on the Woodworkers Institute & Forums
www.woodworkersinstitute.com



Woodworking is an inherently dangerous pursuit. Readers should not attempt the procedures described herein without seeking training and information on the safe use of tools and machines, and all readers should observe current safety legislation.

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UNDER THE HAMMER: The Contents of Glyn Cywarch

This month we look at several lots from Bonhams' sale of the property of Lord Harlech

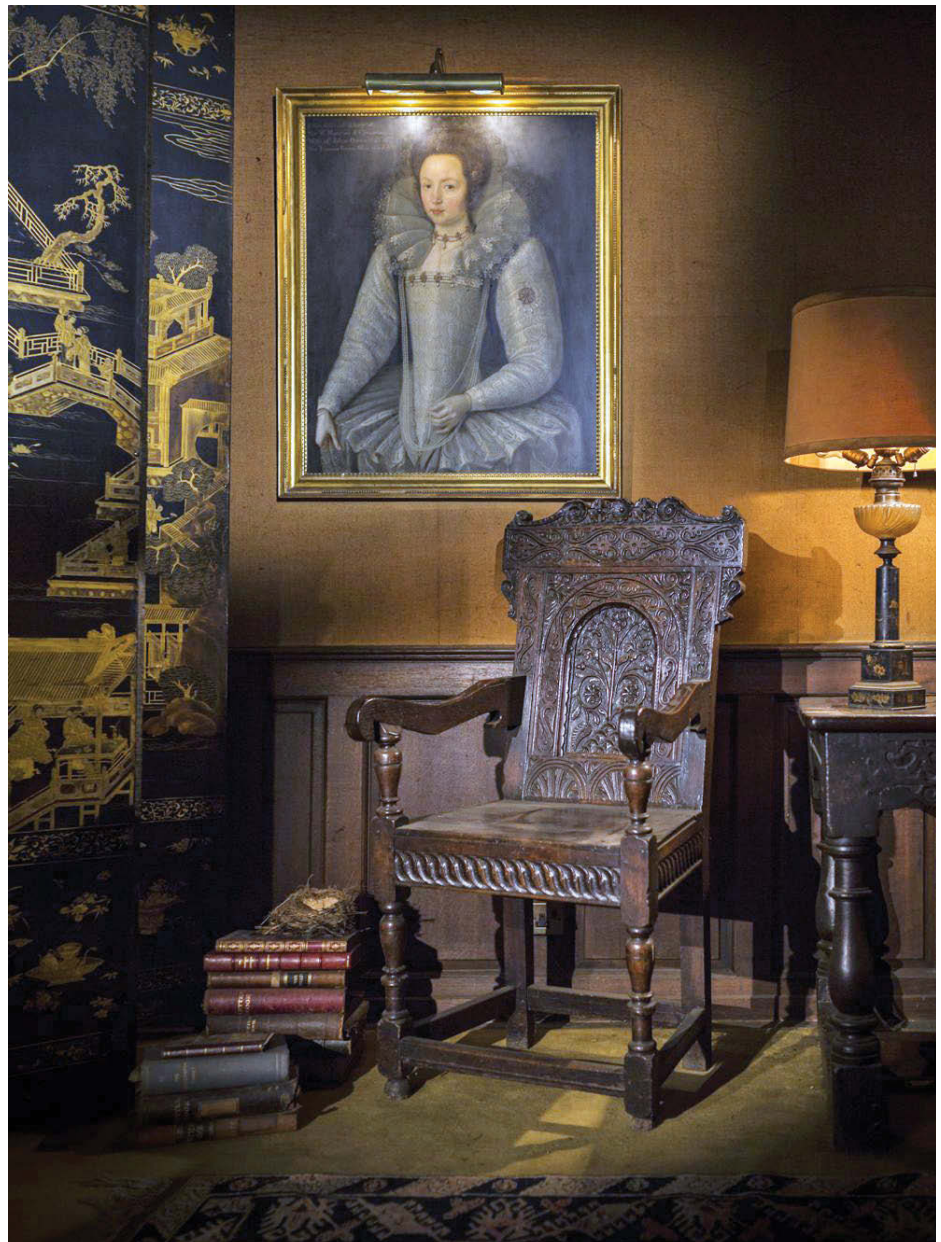
An auction of 400 items was held to fund the upkeep of Glyn Cywarch

On 29 March, 2017 Bonhams held an auction of 400 items from Glyn Cywarch in Gwynedd, Wales. Lord Harlech, who inherited the family house and grounds in February 2016, decided to sell the pieces in order to fund the upkeep of the Grade II-listed property.

Built for William and Kathryn Wynn in 1616, Glyn Cywarch was originally two dwellings which were linked by a rear wing before being extended with another wing in the 1870s. Ownership passed by marriage to the Owen family and then again to the Ormsby (later Ormsby Gore) family who continued to develop the estate. It has a secluded setting on the edge of the beautiful Snowdonia National Park with unrivalled views across the estate down to the Irish Sea.

Many of the items in the sale came to Glyn Cywarch from Brogyntyn (formally known as Porkington), an imposing George II house near Oswestry in Shropshire, which was the family home of the Ormsby Gores from 1815 until 1956. The first Baron Harlech was created in 1876 for John Ralph Ormsby Gore, a Member of Parliament and Groom in Waiting to Queen Victoria. Politics featured throughout the careers of all the Harlechs as well as roles championing North Wales and Shropshire. The family have also played a long and distinguished role in military and diplomatic service.

The lots included furniture, paintings, military uniforms, ceramics and metalware. In his introduction to the auction catalogue, Lord Harlech wrote, 'Bonhams' sale will help our family generate the much-needed funds to invest back into the Estate, and I am looking forward to building on the work of my predecessors in promoting this beautiful and largely undiscovered part of North Wales from which my family proudly takes its name. Just as the items in the auction have been collected by my family over time, I hope that they will help form parts of new collections, and their owners will take just as much pleasure from these works as we have.'



Oak panel-back open armchair, made in the West Country, ca 1620



£37,500

An Elizabeth I joined oak coffer, made in Gloucestershire, ca 1590. The two-plank hinged lid has an applied moulded frame, the front has four arched panels beneath a deep top rail carved with a pair of opposed dragons. The twin-panelled sides have a nulled-carved top rail with an interesting iron lockplate pierced with hounds.

£47,500

An important set of seven George III giltwood framed open armchairs. This fine set of armchairs is designed in the refined and rare Anglo-French style of the late 1780s. Using (or more likely, reusing) French gros and petit point chair-needlework almost certainly dating to the second quarter of the 18th century and depicting Aesop's fables, the chair-frames adopt a fashionably Gallic degree of rectilinearity both in seat plan and back plan as well as ornament, employing up-to-date French motifs such as 'Pompeian' columnar baluster arm-supports enriched with spiral fluting.



£525

A Regency mahogany and ebonised line inlaid serving table, probably made in Scotland. The table has a bowed breakfront top above three drawers.



£1500

A Regency burr elm sofa table. The rectangular top of this table has hinged leaves above a pair of frieze drawers flanked by faux drawers, set on stile ends with downswept legs.





£1062

A George I walnut, crossbanded and featherbanded bureau. The fall encloses a fitted interior of drawers, pigeon holes and a central cupboard door above a well. The bracket feet were added at a later date.



£17,500

A George III mahogany serpentine commode, made in the manner of Thomas Chippendale. The commode has a serpentine top with a moulded edge above a pair of panelled doors with carved flower heads to each corner, enclosing four cedar wood sliding shelves on ogee bracket feet. This commode was very probably made as a pair, the other commode doubtless enclosing drawers, and each would have stood in the window-piers of a bedroom apartment with its adjoining dressing room. Mahogany twin-door serpentine commodes were thus reserved for the grander sort of house in the mid-18th century and are correspondingly rare, the extra cost of a pair increased by the sheer difficulty of making serpentine doors as well as serpentine drawers and trays. Aspects of the cabinetwork on this commode parallel those found on Thomas Chippendale's furniture at Dumfries House, Ayrshire. For instance, the thin red wash visible to the back and underside of the commode, and the laminated blocking behind the bracket feet, are Chippendale characteristics.

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£2250

A Regency mahogany and satinwood banded sofa table. This table's rectangular top has hinged leaves above two frieze drawers and opposing dummy drawers on lyre end supports.



£20,625

An unusual, large, early Victorian mahogany estate cupboard. Affectionately known as The Duke of Sussex Cabinet, it is profusely carved with a scrolled acanthus leaf and floral crest with a central tablet carved with a twin-handled vase above a pair of central cupboard doors opening to reveal six adjustable slides flanked by 12 drawers and above three further drawers on four large fluted column supports with Corinthian capitals on twin plinth bases. Stamped to the central drawer is 'BERTRAM AND Sons, 100 DEAN St SOHO, W1'. The origin for the cupboard's name is unknown, however it is possible that the cabinet came to the family via John Ormsby Gore, 1st Baron Harlech who was Groom in Waiting to Queen Victoria. The Duke of Sussex (1773-1843) was supposedly Queen Victoria's favourite uncle who gave her away at her wedding to Prince Albert. One possible scenario to the naming of this cabinet is that it was gifted to the 1st Baron following the death of the Duke.

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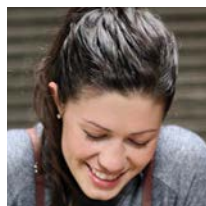
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Meet the Contributors



John Adamson

John began his publishing career as a graduate trainee at Cambridge University Press and afterwards worked in the Press's marketing department as European sales representative, then publicity manager and lastly as export sales director. He then served as head of publications and retailing at the National Portrait Gallery in London before setting up a small publishing house in Cambridge under his own name devoted primarily to highly illustrated books in the decorative arts. He is the publisher of David Russell's book *Antique Woodworking Tools*.
Web: www.johnadamsonbooks.com



Anne Briggs Bohnett

At the forefront of the online woodworking community, Anne is happiest when sharing her experiences with like-minded people. Her passion for learning and capacity for hard graft has earned her a place on the Lie-Nielsen demonstrating team and a permanent place at the Pratt Fine Arts Center where she runs project-based workshops. Home is a four acre smallholding outside of Seattle where she is actively pursuing a self-sufficient lifestyle.
Web: www.anneofalltrades.com



Theo Cook

Theo completed a five-year apprenticeship at Edward Barnsley Workshop and during that time he took a year out to study at the prestigious College of the Redwoods in the USA. After nine years at the Barnsley Workshop he worked at Senior and Carmichael gaining several awards including Guild Marks from the Worshipful Company of Furniture Makers. He now teaches at Marc Fish's Robinson House Studio.
Web: www.marcfish.co.uk



Tom Compton

While his heart is firmly rooted in forestry, Tom's head is keenly focused on the timber business. He has more years experience than he'd like to admit in buying and selling round timber, is passionate about the development of the UK forest and timber industries and is a professional member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters. English Woodlands Forestry & Timber are foresters, silviculturalists, sawyers and wood suppliers, two separate teams of people working alongside each other.
Web: www.englishwoodlandstimber.co.uk



Hendrik Varju

Hendrik is a fine furniture designer/craftsman who provides private woodworking instruction and DVD courses. His business, Passion for Wood, is located near Toronto, Canada. All of his work is done on a custom order basis, with the client getting directly involved in the design process. Using only the highest quality materials, he uses time-tested joinery techniques to ensure that every piece he makes is of heirloom quality.
Web: www.passionforwood.com



David Waite

David has a background in science with a PhD in Chemistry. He has been involved in scientific research for over 20 years prior to enrolling on a one-year designer/maker course at Waters and Acland. Over the coming months he will be writing a series of short articles for *F&C* capturing his observations and experiences to try and become a professional and setting up his own fine furniture making business.
Instagram: @fourlimesdesign

F&C reflects the interests and aspirations of our customers with some of our best articles coming from readers. If you'd like to propose an idea for an article drop me a line at: derekj@thegmcgroup.com

EDITOR Derek Jones
Email: derekj@thegmcgroup.com
Tel: 01273 402843

DESIGNER Oliver Prentice

GROUP EDITOR - WOODWORKING Mark Baker
Email: markb@thegmcgroup.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATOR Karen Scott
Email: karensc@thegmcgroup.com
Tel: 01273 477374

ILLUSTRATOR Simon Rodway

ADVERTISING SALES EXECUTIVE
Russell Higgins, Email: russellh@thegmcgroup.com

ADVERTISEMENT PRODUCTION & ORIGINATION
GMC Repro Email: repro@thegmcgroup.com
Tel: 01273 402810

PUBLISHER Jonathan Grogan

PRODUCTION MANAGER Jim Bulley
Email: jimb@thegmcgroup.com
Tel: 01273 402810

PRODUCTION CONTROLLER
repro@thegmcgroup.com

MARKETING Anne Guillot

SUBSCRIPTIONS Helen Johnston
Tel: 01273 488005, Fax: 01273 478606
Email: helenj@thegmcgroup.com

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STC = Sliding Table Carriage. TWE = Table Width Extension. TLE = Table Length Extension.

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News&Events

Contribute to these pages by telling us about matters of interest to furniture makers.

Call Derek Jones on 01273 402 843 or email derekj@thegmcgroup.com

Please accompany information with relevant, hi-res images wherever it is possible

Polish oak wins European Tree of the Year



Oak Józef in Wisniowa, Poland was crowned European Tree of the Year

A Polish oak tree with a remarkable history has been named European Tree of the Year 2017 after gaining over 17,000 votes from the public. The Brimmon Oak tree in Wales came second and a lime tree in the Czech Republic came third.

Unlike other similar contests, the European Tree of the Year doesn't focus on beauty, size or age but rather on the tree's story and its connection to people, and this year's winner certainly testifies to that. Oak Józef is a 650-year-old tree in the village of Wisniowa in southeastern Poland. The tree has long inspired artists and photographers and its image was printed on the 100 złoty bill. During World War II, Oak Józef served as shelter for two Jewish brothers hiding from the Nazis. 'The hideout was shown to the brothers by Rozalia Proszak,' said Jakub Pawłowski of the Ulma Family Museum in Markowa. 'The hollow in which they hid was huge. People say it had two levels, the lower was used as a hideout and the upper as a lookout. Both brothers survived the occupation but their fate after the war is unknown.'

Wales' entry to the competition, the 500-year-old Brimmon Oak, is also a much-loved tree. It has been cared for by one family for generations and in 2015 a petition was raised to save it from destruction by a new bypass.

The European Tree of the Year contest was launched in 2011 to highlight the significance of old trees in the natural and cultural heritage that deserves our care and protection. It is a non-profit project organised by the Environmental Partnership Association.

Contact: European Tree of the Year

Web: www.treeoftheyear.org



The Brimmon Oak in Newtown, Wales came second in the public vote

Makita train up Building Heroes

The Building Heroes charity was formed in 2014 to deliver construction skills training courses to military veterans to enable them to find employment in the industry. Makita is supporting this worthwhile initiative by providing technical training within a specially designed course.

The Building Heroes Property Maintenance Course developed by Chichester College is a multi-disciplinary programme of maintenance skills covering internal and external structures, plumbing, tiling, painting and decorating, Health and Safety responsibility and business management requirements. In the final week of this course one of Makita's technical demonstrators spends a day with the attendees taking them through the safe and correct use of a wide variety of power tools, explaining correct procedures, advising on accessories to benefit performance, maintenance and operations. The course was originally founded at Chichester College and has since expanded to encompass Reaseheath College and Colchester Institute.



Makita provides power tool training on the Building Heroes construction skills course

Alison Sleat, Programme Coordinator for Building Heroes, said, 'We'd like to thank Makita for stepping forward to help us and Heroes4Hire-Handymen in what we're aiming to achieve. The support from industry is vital to grow the success of the

Building Heroes programme and those who are committed to supporting our veterans.'

Contact: Makita & Building Heroes

Web: www.makita.co.uk & www.buildingheroes.org.uk

OSB sales overtake plywood in the UK

Latest statistics have highlighted that sales of Oriented Strand Board (OSB) in the UK have exceeded those of imported softwood plywood for the first time. This indication is derived from Norbord's own production and sales figures of SterlingOSB, plus OSB statistics available from EuroStat and data on plywood imports from HM Revenues & Customs.

From January to November 2016, softwood plywood imports have decreased by 2.5% compared to the same period in 2015. In comparison, OSB imports dropped during the January to November 2016 period, posting over 5% decrease in volume compared to the same period in 2015. The Timber Trader Federation's statistics also highlight that OSB exports increased by over 19% in the same period.

The weakening of sterling on international currency markets following the Brexit referendum in June 2016, obviously had a detrimental effect on plywood imports. SterlingOSB is the only OSB manufactured



Norbord's SterlingOSB is the only OSB manufactured in the UK

in the UK, and therefore remains unaffected by the current currency situation.

Contact: Norbord
Web: norbord.co.uk

Chippendale students to exhibit at Scottish parliament

Five gifted students from the Chippendale International School of Furniture will be exhibiting their work at the Scottish parliament this summer. The prestigious exhibition in June has been sponsored by Iain Gray MSP. The five pieces to be exhibited will be chosen at a public exhibition in Edinburgh by Professor Christopher Breward, who is a leading cultural historian. Professor Breward is also Principal of the Edinburgh College of Art, Vice Principal for the Creative Industries

and Performing Arts, and Professor of Cultural History at the University of Edinburgh. 'We are indebted to Iain Gray MSP and honoured that Professor Breward has agreed to choose five students to exhibit at the parliament,' said Anselm Fraser, Principal of the Chippendale International School of Furniture.

Contact: The Chippendale International School of Furniture
Web: www.chippendaleschool.com

Courses



If the only time you get to hang out in the workshop is at the weekend, then why not join the Editor on one of his short and sweet classes this year? Each class is project based, which means you'll be taking more than just a head full of tips and tricks back home with you. Using just hand tools you'll be able to make an exquisite marking gauge, a cunning little Japanese style tool box, a six-board chest or brush up on your finishing skills with an introduction to French polishing. All courses are held at Robinson House Studios in Newhaven, East Sussex. Contact derek@lowfatroubo.co.uk for more information.

Build a six-board chest:
When: 17-18 June

Make a traditional pencil/marketing gauge:
When: 1-2 July

French polishing:
When: 21-22 October

Build a Japanese-style tool box:
When: 25-26 November

Build a six-board chest:
When: 2-3 December

New Designers: Part 1 & Part 2

New Designers presents an unmissable opportunity to browse new products, get inspired by fresh ideas and discover new design talent to commission or recruit. Every year over 3000 of the most promising graduate talents from Britain's leading design courses exhibit at New Designers. The show features everything from illustration to animation, furniture to fashion, and gaming to glass. It provokes fresh thinking and kick-starts careers, providing a pipeline of young talent into one of the UK's fastest growing creative industries. Nowhere else is it possible to see such innovation and creativity across all disciplines, and the content is completely new every year.

The 'One Year On' exhibition within New Designers presents young, entrepreneurial designers who are in their first year of business. It runs across both Parts of the show and covers all disciplines. Those that exhibit go through a selection process, and are chosen on the strength of their work, flair and quality of product. One Year On is the place to go to buy directly from the selected designers and invest in the iconic furniture, fabric, jewellery and ceramics of the future.

When: Part 1: 28 June–1 July, 2017; Part 2: 5–8 July, 2017
Where: Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, Islington, London N1 0QH
Web: www.newdesigners.com



Rustic Stool 1.0 by Mark Laban.
A graduate of Central Saint Martins, Mark's work will be featured at One Year On

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF NEW DESIGNERS



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WEST DEAN COLLEGE

Entry to the West Dean Arts and Crafts Festival includes admission to West Dean House

West Dean Arts and Crafts Festival

This show is an outstanding showcase of arts and craft activities. Visitors to the Festival can also tour historic West Dean House, home to West Dean College, to be inspired by works from the Edward James Collection, house tours and the chance to dip into the College's rich history of arts and craft.
When: 2–4 June, 2017
Where: West Dean Gardens, Nr Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0RX
Web: www.westdean.org.uk

Pen Tools Summer Trade Show

This year's Summer Trade Show at Pen Tools is set to be the biggest yet, with demo vans from Makita and Hitachi, in-store demonstrations from Trend and representatives from Charnwood all attending. As well as all the great deals, there will be an all-day BBQ and refreshments on offer.

When: 9–10 June, 2017
Where: Pen Tools, Jubilee Building, Faraday Road, Hereford HR4 9NS
Web: www.pentools.co.uk

Summer Open Studios at Cockpit Arts

The biannual Open Studios events at Cockpit Arts offer an excellent opportunity to meet the makers at the two centres. Visitors can see behind the scenes in the studios and buy work direct from Cockpit Arts' master craftspeople and artist-makers.

When: Holborn Studio: 9–11 June, 2017; Deptford Studio: 16–18 June, 2017
Where: Holborn Studio: Cockpit Yard, Northington Street, London WC1N 2NP; Deptford Studio: 18–22 Creekside London SE8 3DZ
Web: cockpitarts.com

Wood Show

This new show at the Weald & Downland Living Museum celebrates the many traditional uses of wood. There will be a wide range of demonstrations, exhibitors and displays. Visitors will be able to walk through the museum's working woodyard, where they will be able to see craftspeople at work and watch horse logging. Admission includes access to the museum's collection of over 50 timber-framed buildings. And



The Wood Show at the Weald & Downland Living Museum offers great entertainment for the Father's Day weekend

as the show takes place on the Father's Day weekend, dads get free entry!

When: 17–18 June, 2017
Where: Weald & Downland Living Museum, Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0EU
Web: www.wealddown.co.uk

Working from the Wood: Country Chairs Today

This exhibition celebrates the bicentenary of the birth of Philip Clissett, a Victorian chairmaker who influenced many designers and architects who became well known as members of the Arts and Crafts movement. Clissett's influence is potent today among a group of furniture designers who follow his way of working and try hard to work in a sustainable way. Tinsmiths brings a group together for this show to display their own designs, while Mike Abbott will present the history of Philip Clissett in an illustrated talk on 15 July.

When: 30 June–30 July, 2017
Where: Tinsmiths, 8a High Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1DS
Web: www.tinsmiths.co.uk

Charnwood Roadshow & Sale at Yandles

Exclusive deals will be available online and in-store for this one-day event, plus free expert advice on Charnwood machines, 15% off all self-select timber, free bandsaw and planer classes and turning demonstrations.

When: 1 July, 2017
Where: Yandle & Son Ltd, Hurst, Martock, Somerset TA12 6JU
Web: www.yandles.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE WEALD & DOWNLAND LIVING MUSEUM



STRAIGHT CUTTING



PENDULUM ACTION JIGSAW 750W

The **TJS001**'s powerful 750W motor and three-stage pendulum action deliver an incredibly fast cutting performance.

Dual-axis grips allow the tool to be held with both vertical pressure and horizontal direction control. When a perfectly straight cut is needed, the supplied track adaptor and parallel guide transform the Jigsaw into a precision tool ideal for breaking down larger sheets and fine trimming finished pieces. Detailed work is no problem with the precision bevel, which can cut up to 45° in wood, steel or aluminium.

Keeping a clean jobsite is essential for continuous work, and the **TJS001** is supplied with a dust extraction port adaptor, which can be connected to a workshop vacuum. The jigsaw is also supplied with a practical carry case, which ensures a quick clean-up and pack-up every time.

Engineered **Precision**



tritontools.com

Social media dashboard

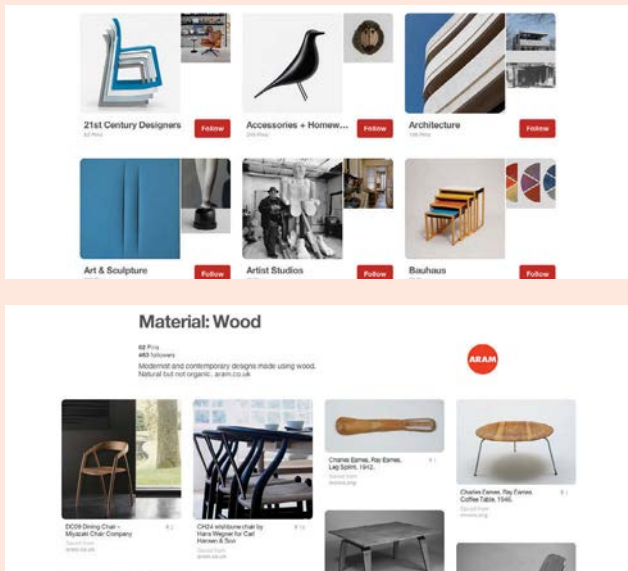
Bringing you a round-up of the best from the online world plus a selection of the latest projects from our readers

In this section of the magazine we bring together the best furniture and woodworking related content from social media. Here we'll recommend who to follow, where to comment and which online communities to join. We'll also feature readers' letters, comments from the Woodworkers Institute forum and pictures of readers' work. If you'd like to see your furniture on these pages, email derekj@thegmcgroup.com

Pinterest: Aram

Aram's Pinterest site showcases the store's collection of modern furniture with boards for different eras, designers, styles, furniture types and materials. The Artist Studios board gives a fascinating glimpse into the working practices of iconic designers.

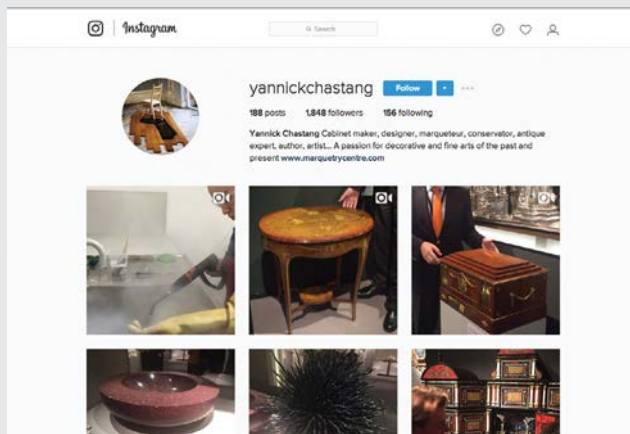
Address: uk.pinterest.com/aramstore/



Instagram: Yannick Chastang

Yannick Chastang's Instagram feed reflects his work as a cabinetmaker, marqueteur and conservator, as well as his love of decorative arts. Alongside photos and videos from his busy workshop, there are pictures from his travels to beautiful locations in the UK and Europe.

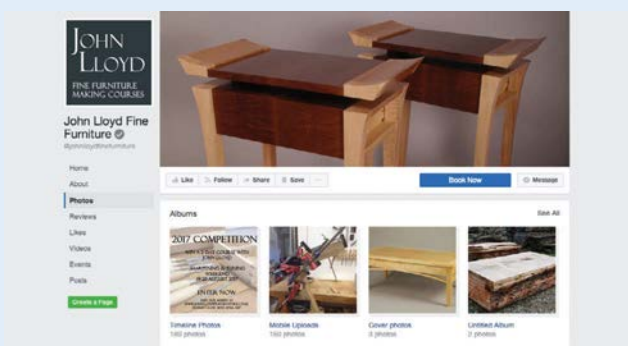
Address: [yannickchastang](https://www.instagram.com/yannickchastang)



Facebook: John Lloyd Fine Furniture

This Facebook page is a great place to go for information about the latest courses at John Lloyd's furniture school. There are regular posts from the school's workshop to give you a taste of what the students experience, plus links to John's blog.

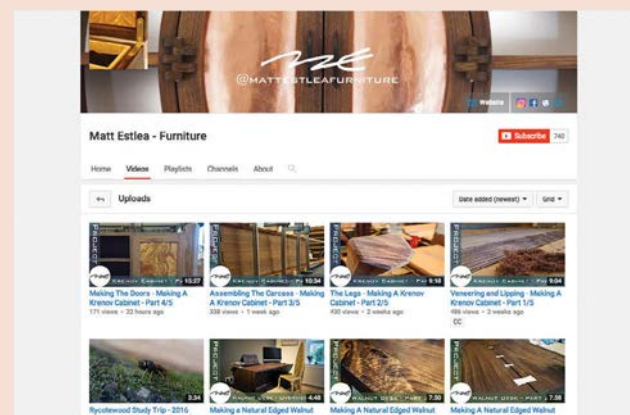
Address: www.facebook.com/johnlloydfinefurniture/



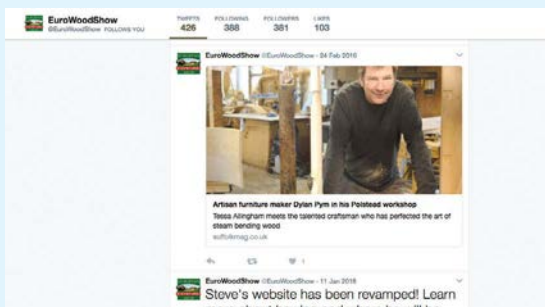
YouTube: Matt Estlea

Matt Estlea is a student at Rycotewood Furniture Centre and a part-time sales advisor at Axminster. His videos on YouTube chart his progress on various projects such as a natural-edge walnut desk and a Krenov cabinet. There are also videos documenting the latest events at Rycotewood.

Address: www.youtube.com/channel/UCxWzA3ZIEOLr1JkKH0ZMyg



Twitter: European Woodworking Show



The European Woodworking Show returns to Cressing Temple Barns this September and you can find out all the latest news about exhibitors, demonstrations, competitions and offers at the Show's official Twitter feed.

Address: @EuroWoodShow



From the forum



The Woodworkers Institute forum is a great place to discuss furniture making and show off your latest projects. To join in the conversation, visit www.woodworkersinstitute.com and click on the forum button.



Makepeace-style chest of drawers

Woodworkers Institute forum user woodbloke recently finished this chest of drawers in the style of John Makepeace. 'The original by John Makepeace had 18 drawers; my version has 14 which means that they're much bigger, suiting the requirements of the "trouble n' strife" admirably! My chest of drawers is the same overall size as the original. The drawers are made in English walnut, with Cedar of Lebanon drawer bottoms. The drawer slips and muntins are made from very tough and hard wearing American hickory, not recommended for hand planing but it scrapes very well. Each drawer runs on a centre muntin (two on the bigger drawers) with the fronts planted and screwed in place, which is the way that Robert Ingham makes them. The top is a bookmatched pair of walnut veneers with a 6mm Indian ebony line. The skeletal frame is made from English oak, Dominoed together. The drawer pulls are made from Indian ebony, with a curved, laminated front section. The finish is two coats of Satin Osmo-PolyX with a good quality beeswax over the top.'



This is a stereoview (c. 1870) of two Japanese woodworkers...

This is a stereoview (c. 1870) of two Japanese woodworkers slapping up some logs with mazzaki. It's hard to see the saw being used by the woodworker on the left due to the angle of the photo. (Photo from Flickr / Chisawa Soba (Rob)) ... read more

Source: Giant Cypress | Published on 2017-03-30

'The Intelligent Hand' by David Savage

Editor's note: For several months I've wanted to tell you about a book that furniture maker David Savage is writing for Lost Art Press called 'The

Blog: Unplugged Shop

Looking for some new blogs to follow? Then The Unplugged Shop is the place to go! The site brings all the best hand tool woodworking blogs together in one place, with links to new, interesting articles posted on its homepage. It's a convenient, easy-to-use site and it's interactive too – if you want to suggest a blog for Unplugged to link to, simply click on 'Submit a website' and send through the details.

Address: unpluggedshop.com

Maple Workshop-2017 Northeastern Woodworkers Association Showcase

Looking forward to the 2017 Northeastern Woodworkers Showcase this weekend (April 1 & 2).

<http://www.maplewoodcraft.com/2017-northeastern-woodworkers-association-showcase> Some of my former students will be entering some of the instruments they have made in the show. There will be quite an array of fine craftsmanship on display this year. Looking forward to it! I will be spending much of my time at the Maplewood Center for Common Craft Booth. <http://www.maplewoodcraft.com/2017-santa-rosa-woodworking-showcase> <http://www.maplewoodcraft.com/> Hope to see you there! I will be giving ... read more

Source: The Maple Workshop | Published on 2017-03-29

The common Stanley No 110/120 block planes.

Stanley manufactured numerous versions of the ubiquitous block planes. From the small model makers sizes to the larger fully adjustable ones. The model in question, the No 120 was manufactured from 1878 to 1947 (Walter) It does not show up in my Stanley Catalog No 34 of 1946 but some claim they were



The last apprentice

Derek Jones meets Jim Broughton from Alexander George Antiques to see how the Golden Age of Furniture is being remembered

PHOTOGRAPH BY DEREK JONES FOR F&C PUBLICATIONS EXCEPT WHERE MENTIONED



Once upon a time the workshops of Great Britain were staffed exclusively by individuals working their way up the employment ladder to become time-served craftsmen and highly respected members of the community. Though self-regulating and often under the watchful eye of a strict master, apprentices learned their trade over a period of years in a tradition that is now more or less resigned to history. It was a system that created as many problems as it solved but Jim Broughton considers himself lucky to have been one of the last to learn his trade the hard way.

Leaving school at age 16, Jim Broughton was following in the footsteps of his father when he applied for a job in an old family firm of cabinetmakers (Plumb Contracts) in his home town of Coventry and what must have been one of the last traditional indentured apprenticeships in cabinetmaking. After five years and at the end of his agreed training period Jim had become, in his own words 'proficient at the craft' and was offered a full-time position with the firm. Sensing there was more to life and much more to learn he declined the offer, packed up his tool chest and headed south to enroll on the full-time course in furniture design and history at Rycotewood College in Thame, Oxfordshire. The more relaxed college atmosphere was in stark contrast to the old-school training he experienced as an apprentice but it was over too quickly and like all fresh faced students the time had come to set about the task of gaining some real life experience. More by luck than design he took the opportunity to work in a restoration workshop run by one of the Cotswolds' leading antique dealers, Witney Antiques. It was a move that turned out to be the first rung on the ladder to one day having his own workshop and becoming his own boss. By his own admission it was an unusual step as people deciding to change direction in the trade typically do it the other way round. 'I was hooked straightaway on restoration and have never looked back,' he said. His formal training in furniture design, cabinetmaking and construction provided a solid practical background to understanding the techniques used by period craftsmen. Jim returned to Rycotewood in 1995, but this time as a guest lecturer teaching furniture restoration part time until 2005. The intervening years have seen him grow his business, his family and a valuable network of customers and associates. Along with his wife, Jo and ex-employee of 10 years Mark Pargeter, he launched Alexander George Antiques (AGA) in 2016. Collectively they're getting on for nearly one hundred years' worth of experience in every aspect of the trade.

Jim possesses a rare quality among restorers and perhaps craftsmen in general; a quiet tenacity. Craftspeople are masters of their own destiny; they can decide where and when an item is finished and how it should look. In contrast, the restorer's outcome is clearly defined by well documented guidelines and strict rules about provenance and authenticity. It's something that he and



William and Mary olive oyster veneered chest on stand
with single line holly wood stringing C.1690

CONTACT

Visit www.alexandergeorgeantiques.com
for more information

the rest of the team take very seriously. When it comes to authenticating a period piece of furniture every single detail is an indicator and both Jim and Mark approach each project with an almost obsessive level of forensic intimacy. This knowledge extends beyond mere identification as it helps them tune into the original maker's vision of how the piece was originally intended to look and gives an insight into the methods they might have used. Such details are not only important on an academic level for future students of the subject but because each piece that leaves the workshop carries a full dossier listing all their observations, it also ensures a complete and reliable provenance for future custodians of the piece.

The Golden Age

Depending on your point of view and loosely speaking, the Golden Age of Cabinetmaking was either during the mid 17th century if you are on the continental side of the Channel or the early 18th century if you are on the English side, and even then opinion is divided and more than a little subjective. Alexander George Antiques' area of expertise lies somewhere in the middle years and where I believe the magic really started to happen. A guided tour of AGA's showroom will convince you of that. A finer collection of 'right' pieces in one room would be hard to find. Mark is partly responsible for the collection and spends a considerable amount of time away from the workshop and showroom hunting down specific pieces. 'It takes a lot of work to find the right pieces and a tremendous amount of research before you can comfortably make a purchase. Sometimes there's only two weeks between an item being listed for sale and an auction taking place so it can be pretty exciting,' Jim explained.

Jim is no stranger to research having co-authored an article for the prestigious



In 1690 this is what fine furniture looked like. In 2017 this is still what fine furniture looks like.



Original makers label from renowned London makers Coxed & Woster C.1700

Furniture History Society's journal in 2014. His craft training and hands on experience give him an edge over many of his contemporaries who may have reliable theoretical knowledge but none of the practical experience. His article titled 'Cocuswood and Kingwood Cabinets in the Early Restoration Period', re-evaluated an important piece of historical furniture and added a considerable amount of important information to the study of early English veneered cabinetry. Jim led the restoration team and was able to identify and recreate specific techniques used by the original maker, something that perhaps

only a traditionally trained craftsman would be able to do. It's hard to imagine a more serendipitous alliance than the last true apprentice and this significant artefact.

Tidy workshop, tidy mind

There are surprisingly few tools on the wall in their workshop. It's a look I've come to recognise from visiting other workshops that are designed to cater for the finest pieces. To me it suggests a clear link and fascination with the process rather than items that exist because of the process. I certainly wouldn't call it minimalist, more purposeful and efficient if anything. In contrast, general

woodworkers are often easily distracted by the shine on the tools themselves and if left unchecked what they end up with is something akin to a woodworking shrine, in a good way.

At opposite ends of the AGA workshop are two English-style tool chests, both made from mahogany. 'I made this not long after my father passed away as somewhere to keep the tools that he handed down to me as well as a lot of my own. The mahogany came from a pair of 18th-century dining table leaves. I left the old finish on the outside to keep it looking old,' Jim explained. Loaded with Distons and vintage bench planes and a lot of Sheffield steel, it's hard to believe it didn't start out as a tool chest. 'It took over a year to make, mainly in my spare time and evenings,' he added. Jim let on that one of his earliest memories was of being entertained by his father producing wonderful streamers of transparent shavings from a bench plane. The tool chest is as

much a memory box as a container of tools and inanimate objects.

One thing the workshop is not short of is templates. Nothing, it seems, passes through the workshop without having its fingerprints taken. Anything that could be used in the future to identify, authenticate or duplicate a missing piece is recorded. One of the most common alterations to period furniture from any era is the upgrade or conversion of one style of foot to another, typically bun feet to brackets in the case of 17th-century furniture. Whatever form this takes it's important to recognise that every period had a style and a fashion conscious homeowner with an eye for detail would seek to keep up with the times. Dealers of second-hand furniture would also play their part and refurbish old pieces in what we might refer to now as upcycling to give an old piece a new lease of life. For experts like Jim, their job is to identify any inappropriate modifications and make amends. 'We turn all

our bun feet from wet wood, usually olive ash for olive oyster veneered pieces and walnut for walnut pieces,' he said. 'It's a traditional method. As the wood dries out it becomes oval in shape which is entirely in keeping with the style.'

We talked at length about finishes and the techniques they use at AGA to impart age to new or repaired sections of timber. Needless to say the usual suspects are all part of their armoury: earth pigments, water-based stains and shellac along with other more specialised chemicals for bleaching or oxidising timber.

Typically the furniture that AGA deal with predates the use of shellac as a finish by at least 100 years. The correct surface treatment is a combination of oil and wax and as Jim points out 'plenty of elbow grease'. He showed me a tin of wax that's so hard to the touch that it's too dense to push a fingernail into. Just waxing the top of a chest of drawers can take a day.



Replacement bun foot turned from wet olive ash



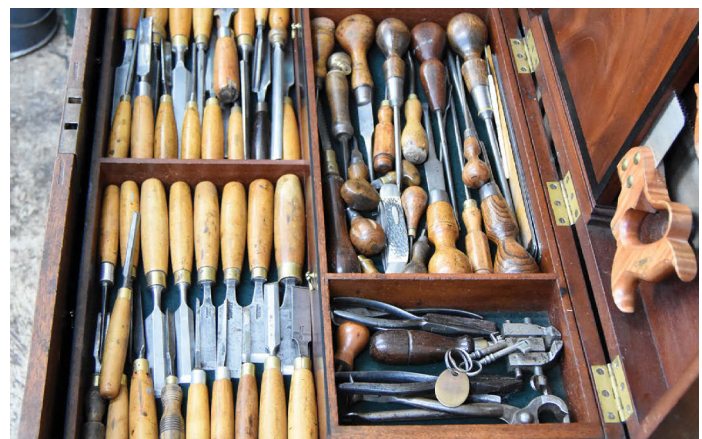
A record of every detail is kept for future reference



Complementary skills such as locksmithing are all part of the restorer's trade



Jim's tool chest is lined with Diston's and Sheffield steel





The restorer's palette: ochres, browns and rusty reds

Mulberry wood

A first for me was an introduction to 'mulberry wood', a made-up name for a finish that mimics the appearance of tortoiseshell. The ground work is carefully selected figured boards of field maple (*Acer campestre*), which is native to England and most of Europe. After exposure to nitric acid, the porcelain-like maple takes on an orange hue. The earth pigment gas black (also known as lamp black) is rubbed onto the surface where the swirling pattern of end grain takes up more of the colour than the straight grain in a random fashion. The pores also get impregnated with the fine dust further adding to the visual texture. Wax of a warm tone is applied over the top and hey presto – mulberry wood. I won't lie, it's an acquired taste and in its day would have been considered the height of sophistication and quite exotic; it's also something I'm desperate to try out.

The upholstery side of the business is Jo's area of expertise. She's been around the antiques trade from the age of 16 and her work has been exhibited at the highest level. Currently the workshop is engaged in restoring a pair of walnut (*Juglans regia*) Irish chairs. As with most upholstered period pieces, the frames have been subjected to more than one covering in the last 200 years. The beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) frames are in need of consolidating to establish a reliable platform for the tacks. A mixture of sawdust and animal glue is used to fill the holes before wrapping the frames with hessian soaked in more animal glue. The result is a

smooth stable surface ready to withstand at least the next 100 years and numerous rear ends. Jo knows her way around the business and understands the wants and needs of the most discerning clients; she is integral to the smooth running of the company.

The best source of information for the student of furniture design is a good saleroom on preview day. For a start admission is free and it's often the only time you won't be discouraged from opening drawers, bobbing beneath an apron to see

what's under the table or peering round the back of a cupboard for a different view. In a museum things are out of bounds or maybe even behind glass so you don't get a chance to connect with a piece and its maker. I can tell you it doesn't get any better than removing a drawer from a carcass and seeing handwriting by the man who made it. For Jim, however, such details are priceless and can be clues that enable him to link a piece to a specific workshop and perhaps even the maker. *F&C*



The top of the 'mulberry wood' chest opposite

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXANDER GEORGE ANTONIUS



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXANDER GEORGE ANTIQUES



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXANDER GEORGE ANTIQUES

'Mulberry wood' bureau from the Swan workshops managed by John Coxed and Thomas Woster, St. Paul's Churchyard, London C.1700



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXANDER GEORGE ANTIQUES

'Mulberry wood' chest of drawers also from the Swan workshops, London C.1700

Hidden treasure

Tom Compton from English Woodlands Timber reveals some of the tell-tale signs that enable him to read what's likely to be on the inside of a log prior to opening it up



Classic medullary rays found in English oak



Desirable to some, the lacey feature of London plane

The art of buying logs to yield particular grain patterns and figure is a practice exercised through accumulated experience of sawing and observation over generations. Knowledge has been acquired that enables current round timber buyers to predict likely outcomes. At the buying and selling stage this is critical in the calculation of value or desirability of a log so that after all the processing the miller produces something desirable to the end user. Hardwood log values are high so for all concerned it's commercially critical that these judgements are secure, but there's no doubt with trees and logs there is no way to predict or ensure an outcome, only to give a reading of the potential in a given tree or log.

For each timber species a round timber buyer employs the visual 'tells' on a log to help determine the likely outcome. They are a cautious and particular breed. They will likely see things that a lay person may not recognise. Some might say that they'll use any excuse to push the log price down but the best buyers actually bring confidence to the process, appreciating the potential in the raw material with a mind to how it will be transformed in conversion to its best use for boards that in turn will make beautiful pieces of furniture or joinery. As we all know, trees grow over many decades if not centuries and each species has its own individual physiology of radial rays and annual cell structure (the ring growth), which when sawn reveals the different and varied grain patterns we are familiar with, vibrant medullary ray in oak (*Quercus robur*) or detailed lacewood figure in London plane (*Platanus hybrida*), for example. The wood we use today is the embodiment of a lifetime's growing followed by careful felling and processing of a tree.



A product of the environment

Growing trees are, to a degree, a product of their environment. They must withstand the natural pattern of the seasons: cold, hot, windy, dry conditions, physical and animal damage, insect defoliation, fungal attack. The quality of soil, microclimate, aspect, elevation, silvicultural management, etc. are all variables that will influence how trees grow. These variables then create a historic record within annual ring growth and grain texture that is only opened up when the tree is felled and sawn.

Before even looking at the log the buyer will/should have knowledge of the conditions of the trees growing that gives a baseline of likely qualities. For example, oak grown on light, free-draining soils in, say, the New Forest is far more likely to suffer from high grain tension and shake than those grown on the deep clays of Wealden Sussex. The same species of tree will respond differently to different conditions of growth in order to survive and ideally flourish. It's undoubtedly healthy trees with favourable growing conditions and accompanying silvicultural management that flourish and become the best sort of logs for working with.

The most profound moments for me as a forester and sawmiller occur when converting old, large dimension timber and revealing the grain that has not seen the light of day for 200 or 300 years. We recently put an oak into stick following sawing and found a piece of metal buried deep near the heart. The tree was at least 250 years old and so was a mere youngster during the Napoleonic wars, perhaps it was planted in response to the strategic need to bolster our oak forests?

Reading the grain

So what are the visual tells that give clues as to the figure and suitability of a log for



ABOVE: The light free draining gritty soil of the New Forest is not conducive to growing good quality oak
INSET: The heavy clay soil of the Sussex Weald provides the right conditions for shake-free oak

sawing? Well, when viewing a log I run through a sequence of questions to answer that are essentially the same for each species initially, but then become species specific. How does the general shape of the log present? I'm looking for a cylindrical shape indicating strong apical growth. Grain? Here I look firstly to see if the grain goes straight up and down the log or if it twists around the circumference. If I find the latter it indicates there will be lots of cross grain in the boards and they're unlikely to dry flat or stay flat when worked on by the maker no matter how many years seasoning we allow. It's one of the first questions I ask because it can be a particular feature in our oak and sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). If it's a log already felled I then look closely at the butt end (i.e. the end closest to the ground). This is like a window into the history of the tree and what can be observed here reveals the biggest tells. First, I'm looking for a nice central heart with even, concentric rings, layer upon layer, right through to the sapwood, sapwood being the outer most layer. This reading to the heart of the tree will at the same time indicate the presence of shake

or not. Shake is the sawmiller's bete noire and although we can't avoid it altogether we need to identify these structural 'faults' up front. Shake occurs along the radial rays (star shake) or annual rings (ring shakes). On conversions these logs typically result in boards literally separating as they come off the saw or later during air drying or kilning.

Shake has very loud tells so we have that to be thankful for. When looking at standing trees, one can often predict likely presence of shake in oak before the tree is felled through observation of calloused, over vertical wounds in the bark close to the base of a tree or the somewhat tight and tortured look of bark. Conversely, well growing oak will have healthy looking bark and a light brown colour between the fissures. The light brown is telling that the tree is growing so quickly that the new cambium has not yet weathered, so not a bad sign. Shake is a factor in oak and elm (*Ulmus procera*), star and ring, sweet chestnut, mostly ring but less so in ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) so we're quick to spot it when selecting and buying round timber for conversion.



A good round cylinder at the base of the tree is a good indication of quality



Straight lines on the bark can indicate straight grain on the inside



An erratic bark pattern may suggest a similar quality to the timber within



A small fissure on the outside could be hiding something more sinister on the inside

Predicting colour

After checking for shake and overall shape, my attention turns to colour as the next consideration. As a timber merchant I need to keep in mind our customers' varied requirements. This means for joinery timber one wants an even colour to make matching

boards easy, but for more decorative purposes and for bespoke furniture making, colour variations are often what's desired. So at this point, the only tell available is in the butt end. Colour is species dependent of course and there's no one answer to

faultless identification of colour but starting with oak or sweet chestnut the holy grail is for an even honey or perhaps slightly pinky colour. A couple of species I tend to seek out where I can are elm and walnut (*Juglans regia*). In both cases, the darker brown it is the better it is. Darker overall colouring in these two tends to reflect the potential depth, richness and strength in grain pattern. Ash is an interesting one because it has a

couple of recurring colour variations. My ash preference is for either completely pale, white coloured ash right across the log or a wide, strong coloured heart, ideally with that tell-tale green tinge that will reveal itself as olive ash. In sycamore it has to be white all the way as it's the creamy white sycamore that's valued above any other factors, apart from ripple figure of course! The colouring of hardwood timbers are ultimately variable as

they're affected, primarily, by the minerals in the soil taken up by the growing tree but they reflect the beginnings of natural decay or reaction to fungal infection in the tree. The dark colour of brown oak, for example, is caused by an infection of *Fistulina hepatica*. Catch the tree before the fungus has caused too much infection and you have the beautiful brown oak but leave it too long and you are, sadly, left with a pappy mess.



A prime oak log with good even colouring across the butt end



This ash log may have star shakes but the dark colouring at the centre indicates 'olive' ash inside



Nice, clean white ash logs will yield consistently coloured boards

Signs of good figure

Figure in timber is perhaps the hardest feature to find and predict. One of the best known wood grain features is the lovely and very desirable ripple that we find in sycamore and ash. The 'tell' for this can actually be felt under the bark as a series of small waves or ripples. Log buyers of these two species will often knock off small areas of bark to look for it. In oak and elm the well loved pippy or burry figuring is observed externally through the presence of intricate knotty clusters on the bark. They appear either lightly spread along the log, in dense gnarly patches or completely surrounding the tree as a burr. These indicators are signs more than they are rules. They don't translate to light, medium or heavy pip as one might assume. With pip and burr one can never tell exactly what the figure will be until you get the log up on the saw. This is part of the excitement, and sometimes disappointment, of milling hardwoods. Speaking of the saw, we can't discount this important tool as a determinant of grain. Judicial use of the sawmill follows the careful round timber buying in maximising the potential of the logs. How one saws a log will determine and reveal different and desired grain characteristics. Often the most interesting grains are revealed when the radial rays are cut along their length. Such grain patterns don't appear in the outer crown boards, not because they aren't there but because the grain orientation off the saw is different.

I'm afraid I haven't exhausted my knowledge

here in this explanation but I hope I've gone some way to explain the process of selecting logs for their potential as useful, desirable wood that is fit for purpose. It's just a taste of the diverse variables we find in hardwoods that makers and designers are seeking more and more. We are thrilled to have customers who embrace this diversity and who value the richness in the myriad of qualities that our native hardwoods provide. It certainly makes our job more enjoyable and long may it continue. F&C



**ABOVE: This long plane burr may contain boards with the most outrageous figuring
INSET: A series of little growths or burrs on the outside is a good indicator for pippy oak**

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End-grain end tables – part 2

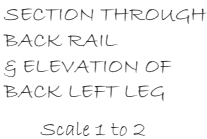
Hendrik Varju combines simple robust joinery and a few minimalist details to complete the work on a pair of matching end tables



PHOTOGRAPHS BY HENDRIK VARJU

The base of this table design is, visually, very simple – three tapered legs and two aprons. Yet there are some interesting techniques involved, including dowel joinery and decorative

cherry (*Prunus serotina*) strips glued to the apron faces. Sometimes a simpler design is difficult to build because there is nowhere to hide if you make a mistake.



Making the leg blanks

I started by milling stock for the legs and face gluing the boards to make the fairly bulky leg blanks. I always orient growth rings on the end grain with a 'butterfly' pattern to improve stability should the moisture content drop in future – a common event in this part of Canada. The theory being that the outer edges of the two boards would be drawn closer together should any movement occur. It's a good idea to remove any machine marks from the gluing surfaces with a hand plane before applying any glue. The hollows or indents on the surface are areas of compression of the wood fibres and can expand when they come into contact with adhesive. Using a double row of clamps for an assembly of this size allows you to generate even clamping pressure across the entire mating surface, which will minimise the appearance of a glue line.



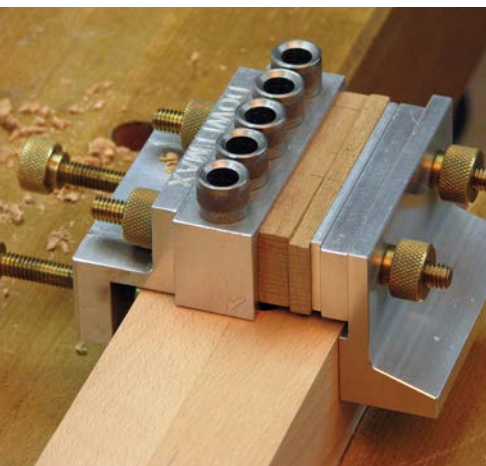
Take a moment to mark the ends of the boards to identify their correct orientation

Bulletproof dowel joinery

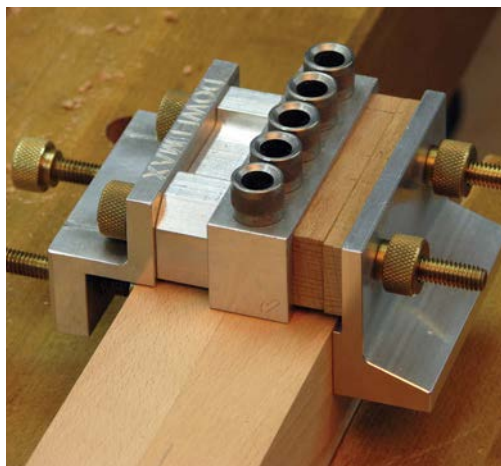
After remilling the leg blanks and cutting to length, the aprons could also be made quite simply before moving on to the joinery. While I love mortise and tenon joinery, sometimes dowels are more than adequate and I don't think anyone can argue that they're not strong enough in this application, especially when I used 10 dowels per joint! I could have

easily used just five but the apron thickness allowed room for a double row, easily accomplished with my Dowelmax dowelling jig (see *F&C* 212 for a complete guide to using this tool). I often joke with my clients that if their house ever collapses in a tornado the only thing still standing might be a piece of furniture that I built for them! In fact, these

tables might even hold the roof up, saving a few people inside. This table base involves just four joints in total – three where the legs meet the aprons and one T-joint where the two aprons meet. Each leg is a little vulnerable, having only one joint instead of two as in a normal four-legged table, so it's better to make the joints super strong.



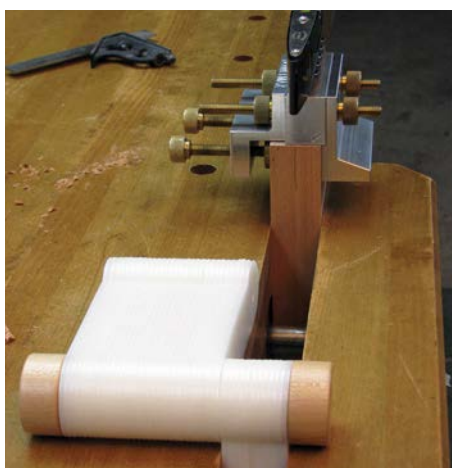
Wooden spacers allow the jig to be positioned at varying distances from the reference edge



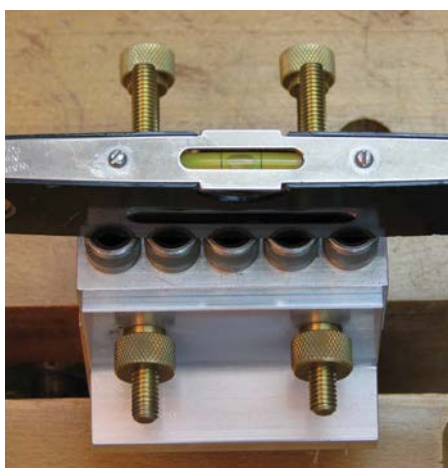
Alternate their position in the stack to offset the location of the holes without swapping reference edge



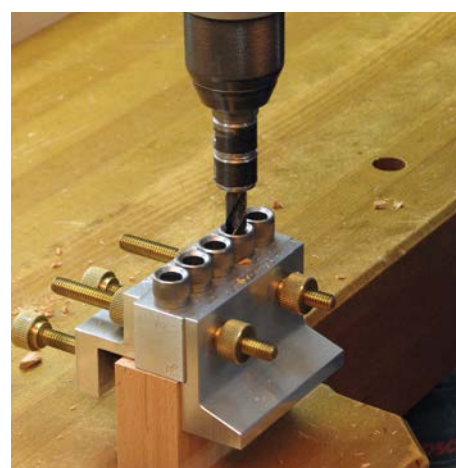
Removing the sharp edge from the top of the dowel hole will aid assembly



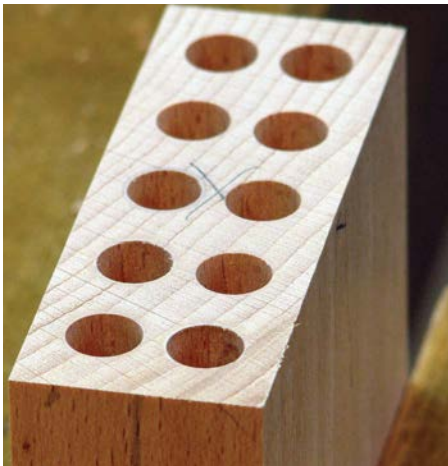
The Rack Stop from Lee Valley helps maintain even clamping pressure on a wide jaw vise



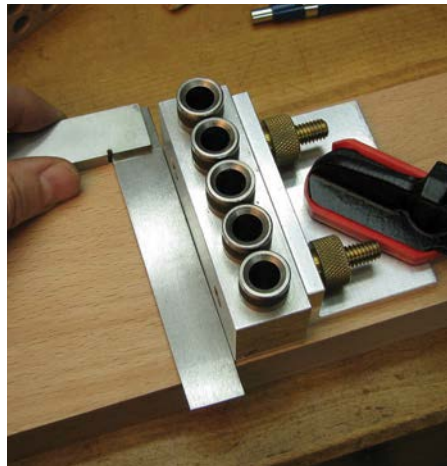
Levelling the Dowelmax jig on end grain joints helps to promote accurate drilling



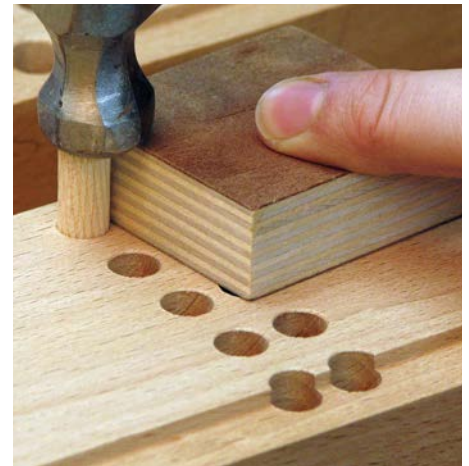
Note the same reference edge is being used for each component



The surface area for glue on a double row of dowels is greater than that of a single tenon



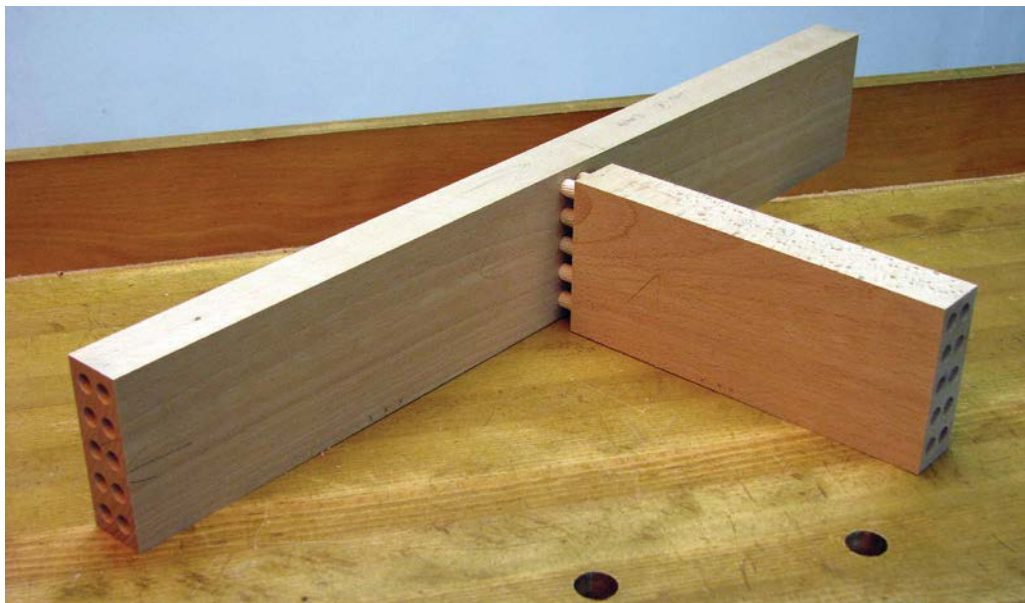
The Dowelmax jig has ample clamping area to secure it in place for drilling



Set a consistent height for your dowels with a depth stop block



Use a square to ensure a 90° angle between components



Carry out a partial dry fit of the components before final assembly

Cherry strip detail

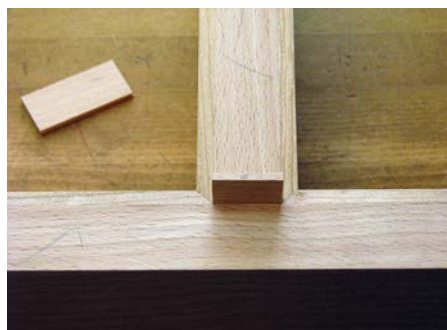
While the basic design is quite simple, I wanted to include a sort of cherry inlay at the bottom of the aprons on the visible sides (the back side of these demi-lune tables go up against the end of a couch). However, this 'inlay' is really more like a raised bead. I glued them into 3mm-deep rabbets but they are 6mm thick. So they sit proud by 3mm. There is a 3mm roundover profile at both the top and bottom, so the order of operations was quite important.

I started by routing the rabbets into the aprons on my router table. I debated for some time whether the rabbet on the long apron should be stopped where the short apron rabbets would meet it. But I decided a through rabbet would be easier than hand chiselling at the stop point. That left a tiny exposed area on the underside of the aprons, which was easily filled with a small piece of beech custom fit, glued in and then trimmed with a flush trim saw and block plane.

I first made the cherry strips, leaving them extra long and slightly wider than the rabbets. I cut mitres on one end where they would meet at the 'T' joint of the two aprons but left the other end long. Then I routed the 3mm roundover profile on the top edge of the strips before gluing them into the rabbets. Of course, the strips had to be properly sanded, as well as the front face of the aprons, before the strips were glued in. Sanding inside corners after assembly is to be avoided.



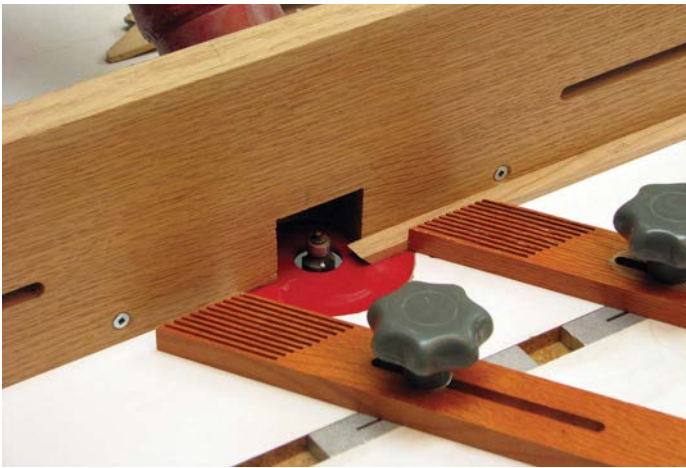
The gap in the through rabbet requires filling



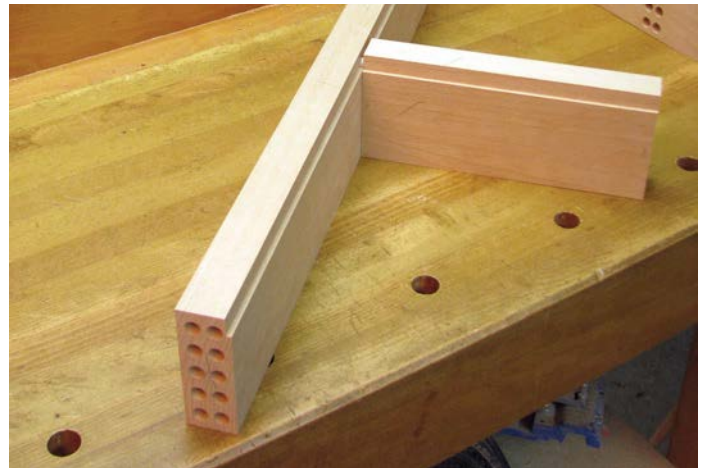
A slither of beech fills the gap



The inlays were glued into place before assembling the T joint



Feather guides are the safest and most accurate means of shaping small stock on the router table



A single rabbet is easier to machine than a stopped version

Plan ahead about joining table top to base

I also used a Forstner bit on the drill press to drill three shallow holes for figure 8 clips to attach the table top later. This was easier to do now before assembly. Remember that an end grain table top expands and contracts in both width and length (but not in thickness), so figure 8 clips work well in this application. The fixings effectively pivot around the two screws to the components are free to move independently of each other. Notice that drilling holes in the tops of the aprons for these clips means they are technically visible from the front view of the table. I considered burying the clips in a larger recess routed into the table tops instead. But when I realised that the clips, as I've done them, could not be seen even from 6 metres away while in the squatted position, I knew this wasn't a real issue. I opted for the quickest and easiest route that served my goal.



Use a Forstner bit to create the rebate for the fixing



Allow sufficient clearance for the fixing to rotate

Gluing, trimming, planing and routing

From there I could glue the strips into the rabbets using multiple light duty clamps. The strips stuck out beyond the ends of the aprons, so I later trimmed them off with a Veritas flush trim saw and low angle block plane. Finally, the two aprons could be glued to each other and left to dry.

At this point, the cherry strips were still slightly proud of the underside of the T-shaped apron structure. I considered using a flush trim router bit to do most of this work, but in the end my standard angle block plane proved to be more than suitable. If you've ever hand planed the face of a mitred picture frame, this was similar except that you

reference the plane sole off the aprons like you would when trimming edge banding. You just have to be careful about grain direction, particularly at the mitres, to avoid tear-out. The work went swimmingly.

Once trimmed, I could rout the 3mm roundovers onto the bottom edge of the cherry strips using my Bosch Colt palm router. The router bit couldn't cut right into the inside corner of the 'T', so I had to trim this by hand. A smallish bench chisel held bevel down carved this out nicely, followed by a bit of sanding for final smoothing. A good bit of work here for a seemingly simple T-shaped structure. As they say, the devil is in the details.

Leg tapering done simply

I drilled the dowel holes in the legs earlier while they were still square, but it was time to taper the legs as well. The rear legs are tapered only on the two 'inside' faces. This is a 16mm-deep taper at the bottom and it begins 6mm below the aprons. I always start my tapers below the aprons in case I cut them slightly too high up the leg. Any cut beyond the bottom edge of the aprons would result in an unsightly gap.

The middle or front leg is tapered on three

sides – all but the front face. I originally planned to make all three tapers 16mm deep, but I decided to cut that deep only on the rear face while I cut the left and right faces only 8mm deep. This left the leg with a square profile at the bottom identical to the rear legs. I suspected this might look better, so I cut my first leg that way (I made two tables at the same time) and was immediately convinced it was the right decision. This example shows the pitfalls of

designing on paper and hoping to predict how the project will look in real life. So a minor redesign was in order here and a quick email to Derek Jones meant the drawing in Part 1 of this article (see *F&C* 257) would reflect the change.

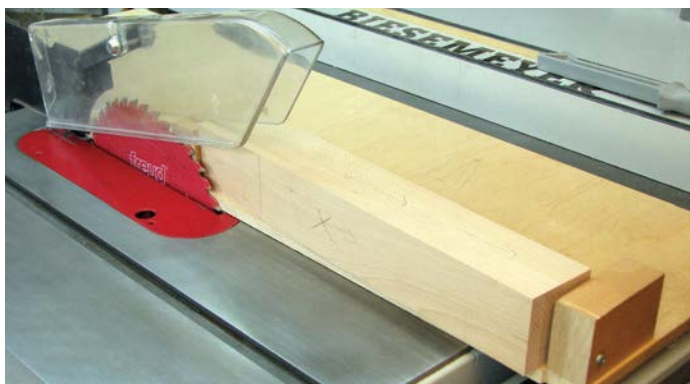
I won't go into the details of my leg tapering jig except to say it was published in a past article I wrote called 'One-stop solution to tapering legs' (*F&C* 169). It was even featured on the front cover. This jig is easy to use and

will cut any taper angle on any number of sides with just a few simple pencil lines on the leg to guide you. If these legs were slightly thicker I'd have to use a similar jig on my bandsaw, but my tablesaw just managed the

cuts. It can cut 80mm deep but you have to include the 12mm birch ply base of the jig.

After cutting the tapers, I ran them over the jointer to clean up the saw cuts, sometimes cutting the top of the leg first

and sometimes the bottom of the leg first, depending on grain direction. As long as your push pads remain over the tapered part of the leg and not the untapered top end everything works out beautifully.



This tapering jig uses the saw's fence for reference...



...and requires the leg to be positioned at the correct angle



Use pressure pad as well as a push stick to smooth the tapers on the jointer



Check the grain direction on each component to avoid tear-out

Sanding and final assembly

The legs needed to be properly sanded before final assembly and I can't tell you how much I despise this step! You always think you're nearly done and then you find that several hours are required to do the job right. I had six legs to sand for two tables (120 grit, 150, 180 and then 220), so it takes time. The success of your finish, though, depends on your sanding regime, so there are no shortcuts here. Also, be careful not to sand much in the untapered parts of the leg so as not to introduce convex shapes where the aprons will meet the legs.

Final assembly was straightforward, especially with my son, Noah, willing to help. I carefully loaded the dowel holes with glue using the glue bottle nozzle and a smaller diameter dowel rod while my son hammered the dowels home. He likes to hammer on things for some reason!

The finish line

A day or two of drying time to allow the glue to really harden in the joints and I was ready for finishing. I could write another article on that alone, as finishing by brush is quite an art form. Suffice it to say that I applied three coats of

oil-based varnish to the base and somewhere closer to six or seven coats on the table tops. It takes a few coats on the end grain surface just to stop up the pores of the wood when not using a paste grain filler. After a couple of coats, I started wet sanding with 320 or 400 grit wet dry sandpaper between every coat, finishing off with 600 grit wet sanding at the end to remove any final dust nibs. A final rubbing out with fine synthetic steel wool and a coat of paste wax gives the tables a luxurious feel. I often rub out table tops, especially larger ones, by cutting a round of synthetic steel wool for my random orbit sander, operated on low speed. It works wonders.

Conclusion

I hope you'll agree that this design is quite pleasing to the eye and will look fantastic at the end of a couch. Because I have two of them, they can also be pulled into the centre of the room and oriented to form a full circle, serving as a makeshift cocktail table for guests. While they look simple, there is considerable skill involved in some of the steps, so be ready for a bit more work than you anticipated. *F&C*



Final surface finishing the top

Hendrik Varju is a fine furniture designer/craftsman who provides private woodworking instruction and DVD courses. His business, Passion for Wood, is located near Toronto, Canada. Hendrik is also the producer and host of a 6½ hour long DVD course called *End Grain Table Tops and Cutting Boards*. See www.passionforwood.com

Blue Spruce Toolworks

For more information about Blue Spruce Toolworks, visit: www.bluesprucetoolworks.com

Dave Jeske's blog can be found at: blog.bluesprucetools.com



An afternoon with Dave Jeske

Anne Briggs Bohnett catches up with the man behind Blue Spruce Toolworks

I met Dave Jeske of Blue Spruce Toolworks three years ago at my first Lie-Nielsen Hand Tool Event in Seattle. He and I had a great conversation about woodworking, finding community and even struck up a little trade – I was cash poor and vintage tool rich back in those days, and a certain pair of architect's dividers in my tool chest had caught Dave's eye. He traded me one of his butt chisels for it, and I knew we were going to be long-time friends (both he and I, and the chisel and I). To date, it is my favourite chisel, and another one of those tools that touches every project before it leaves my shop. I've since purchased other tools from Dave, and every time I use them, I'm reminded of his warm smile and the encouraging words he shared with me when I was just getting my start in this industry. So of course, when I found out I'd get to interview him at his shop in Portland, Oregon for *F&C*, I jumped at the chance.



Selecting the perfect wood stock



Marking knife



Joiner's mallets



Butt chisels



Paring chisel

The tools that make the tools

If I liked Dave's tools before, I like them even better now, knowing how they are made. Dave's shop is like a vintage *Popular Mechanic's* project museum. While walking through his loft, I saw a shelf of old motors and other parts. I asked Dave what they were for, and he nonchalantly mentioned that he and his Dad have made almost all the machines used in his shop to make Blue Spruce tools. My personal favourite is his 'Sand-o-matic 3000', pictured above right. I especially appreciate the name, very reminiscent of my favourite childhood pasta dish, which I appropriately named 'Pasta 3000'. Dave's shop is a no-muss, no fuss operation. He has tools that work, and they don't have to be pretty, but the hand tools they produce with the help of Dave's expert hands are nothing short of gorgeous.

Blue Spruce handles are made in house, with much of the rough work being done by CNC, and final shaping, finishing and buffing is done by hand. Dave has recently outsourced his steel tool components to a local company which does the initial shaping and heat treating. Dave then assembles, finishes and sharpens the tools by hand before sending them out.



Stacks and stacks of blades. INSET: The Sand-o-Matic 3000



LEFT: CNC cutting maple ABOVE: Handles on the drying rack

The infusion process

One of the more unique processes Dave has developed within his tool-making is infusion. While many Blue Spruce tools feature infusion, the most notable application is in his mallet heads. The poly-resin compound, infused into his mallet heads, adds a surprising amount of heft and durability to the wood. I've had a Blue Spruce mallet kicking around our woodworking classes at the Pratt Fine Arts Center for two years now, and despite quite a bit of abuse, it still looks totally unused. Using (once again, a homemade) vacuum system, Dave pumps out all the air and moisture from a chamber, then introduces a poly-resin fluid that penetrates to the very centre of the wood. It is then removed from the vacuum and baked in, leaving behind a heavier, more durable chunk of wood. It is then machined down to final tool dimensions.

I asked Dave if the infusion process changed the way the wood works, or if it was harder on his cutters. He said infusion basically makes grain direction cease to matter and the wood ends up cutting more like plastic than wood, but that, despite its newfound hardness, it didn't



The vacuum chamber on the unique Blue Spruce infusion process

seem to be any harder on his tools than other hard woods. After the shop tour, I got Dave to sit down with me and answer a

few hard hitting questions about his company, his priorities and his long-term dreams.

Q & A

Why did you start making tools?

I wanted to learn how to use hand tools and specifically how to cut dovetails. I did not have many tools and needed a marking knife so I decided to make one.

What was the first tool you ever made?

It was a marking knife. I used a piece of a broken cold saw blade and laminated the handle from bubinga and maple.

If you weren't a toolmaker, what would you do?

I really would like to explore furniture design and making. I have a lot of experience from my prior life as an engineer with high performance composite materials and want to combine the two media. It is difficult making a career as a tool maker and even more so as a furniture maker so it may need to happen in my retired life.



Securing the handle to a marking knife in the chuck of the Sand-o-Matic 3000

Tell us about your hobbies aside from woodworking, do any of them lend themselves to woodworking?

I have so many hobbies and it is hard for me not to add more! Some have come and gone and have come back again. Some of my current favourites besides woodworking are hiking, target shooting, audio equipment and driving my Lotus Elise.

If you could live in any time period in history or future, when would it be and why?

It is really tough to choose just one. I would like the mid to late 1950s because of the cool hot rod scene, the late 1800s because of the industrial revolution, 1776 to witness the birth of our country or the early 1700s to learn from some of the master woodworkers of that era.

When you aren't working or making stuff, what do you love to do?

I love to create, I love to make stuff! I go crazy sitting around. I love to hike in the mountains. It clears my mind and lets me enjoy God's creation. He is the ultimate creator and it inspires me to create. I love going out to nice dinners with my wife. Good food, good wine and great company; a perfect evening. I love drifting through a corner at high speed in my Lotus.

What would your dream life look like?

I would not need to worry about money. I would love to be able to make things and give them away. I enjoy surprising people and bringing them joy. More realistically I see Blue Spruce Toolworks continuing to evolve

into a more customer focused, semi-custom type of company. Eventually I do want to have more time to pursue furniture design and making. Also, I am hoping someday to be a grandfather and all that brings.

Outside of toolmaking, what has your greatest success in life been so far?

I think one of the biggest achievements for Dawn and I was to raise our two wonderful kids up to adulthood. Books do not prepare you for all the adventure of raising children! My son was married last August to a lovely gal and my daughter was married in January to the love of her life. They both graduated from college with honours, have great jobs and we are very proud of both of them.

Was there a mentor/inspiration who taught or guided you to become a maker? Or what was the catalyst that led you to start making stuff?

The very beginning of my professional tool making career began with a conversation with John Economaki of Bridge City Toolworks. He has a short history in his book *Quality is Contagious* but basically he told me not to be a tool maker, which, of course, made me want to do it. John helped me get started and we have been friends ever since.

What's the coolest thing you have ever made? And what is your favourite tool?

A hope chest for my daughter was my coolest and most complicated woodworking project to date. I blogged about it so you can see details there. My favourite tool is the first CNC lathe I made which started Blue Spruce Toolworks. I just recently retired it

but it made literally over 10,000 handles. My favourite hand tool varies with each project and whichever one performs the next job to perfection.

How long have you been seriously pursuing making stuff and perfecting your craft?

Eleven years for Blue Spruce Toolworks.

Who are some of your favourite makers?

Huge list: John Economaki, Ron Hock, Jeff Hamilton, Mark Harrell, Tom Lie-Nielsen, Mike Wenzloff, Konrad Sauer, Chris Schwarz ... on and on.

What brings you the most joy? What gets you really excited? What makes you laugh?

Spending quality time with my wife and/or kids and/or good friends brings true joy. I get really excited about new stuff, new designs, new toys, new adventures. My dog, Maggie, a mini Australian Shepherd, makes me laugh.

What do you wish someone told you when you first got started making stuff? (Or maybe someone did tell you and you wish you had listened)?

You will never make any money. They did tell me!

Any other advice for people wanting to follow in your footsteps?

You got to really want it.

Do you like kittens?

Yes, cats no. Puppies yes, dogs yes.



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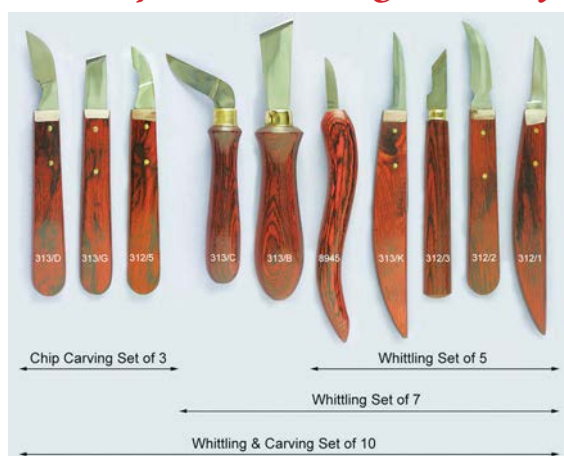
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A 19th-century portrait of André-Jacob Roubo, who researched, wrote and illustrated *L'Art du Menuisier* in the late 18th century

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**How a small team of experts set about unravelling some
of the best-kept trade secrets of the Ancien Régime**

No matter what brand of craziness is happening elsewhere in the world you kind of know that things aren't all that bad in your neck of the woods when the toughest decision you have to make at 7.30 in the morning is which route to take into the office, the one that takes you past the site of a medieval jousting green and through a castle keep onto the High Street, or the one that ends with an invigorating march up 'The Street of the Fossilised Kidneys', otherwise known as Keere Street. Antiquarian bookshops outnumber coffee shops 3:1 on my stretch of the High Street in Lewes and whichever route I take I'll pass at least one of them with the others in clear sight in both directions. Occasionally I'll just walk straight past but more often I'll take a moment and check out the window display. Even though the themed subject matter is nearly always outside my area of interest, the objects themselves are weirdly captivating despite the shopkeepers' lacklustre attempts at promoting their wares.

In an age where the bottom line is greater on books full of blank pages (or worse spaces to colour in at home) than those covered in carefully considered ink, it's reassuring to know that in years to come there's a faint chance that some of the pages we produce today may eventually have the last word. And what a story they will tell.

There may not be as many ancient textbooks about woodworking as say, architecture or religion or wars, but what there are is worth investigating, at least that's what Don Williams, a senior conservator at the Smithsonian Institution decided in 2008. To be fair Don had been familiar with hundreds of ancient texts long before then but nothing it seemed had captured his imagination quite like André-Jacob Roubo's *L'Art du Menuisier*. First published in 1768 by the French Royal Academy of Science, it might just be the world's first piece of serious woodworking journalism and one that's still regarded around the world as one of the most important books on woodworking ever published. An 18th-century journeyman joiner, Roubo feared that much of what had been learned in the workshops of the western world was in danger of going to the grave with its craftsmen; an opinion he shared with Joseph Moxon, who almost a century

earlier lamented the decline of persons 'conversant in the handy-works' in his 1678 book *Mechanick Exercises* aimed specifically to encourage more people to make things. Roubo's solution: capture in as much detail as possible the art of the craftsman and explain to the world how woodworking and a variety of allied trades really work. No stone was left unturned. He interviewed

marqueteurs, cabinetmakers, carriage builders and green woodworkers who built garden furniture, to capture every detail and nuance. He studied with architects in the evening to learn how to draw and became an accomplished geometer. He honed his writing skills and learned how to engrave; skills that were no mean feat to master in a lifetime let alone in one's spare time.



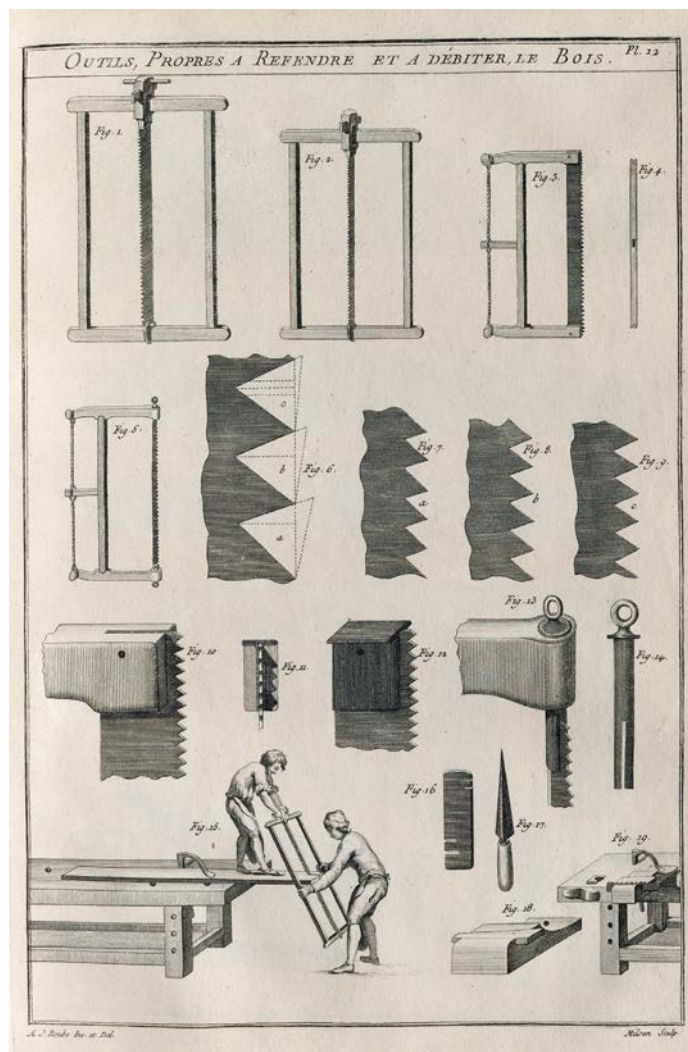
For the translated edition of *L'Art du Menuisier*, several woodworkers put Roubo's writing into practice. Here, a leg vice without a parallel guide holds a drawer

Hidden in plain sight

L'Art du Menuisier has been an important body of reference for more than two centuries but the original old French text made it almost impenetrable to anyone other than the most committed and tenacious student. To overcome this, Don enlisted the help of co-worker Michele Pietryka-Pagán to translate a sample chapter and from that moment on the two were hooked on unlocking the 18th-century text. Philippe Lafargue, a graduate of École Boulle, was then recruited to help provide a French menuisier's perspective, thus completing the translation team. Their first book, *To Make as Perfectly as Possible: Roubo on Marquetry*, was completed in 2013. It explored Roubo's writing on marquetry, finishing and metalwork. And now, almost nine years after beginning their translation, the team have published the 470-page *With All the Precision Possible: Roubo on Furniture*.

There are sections about tools that have disappeared from regular use including one on moulding planes that appear to do what no spindle moulder is capable of. The book explores all the major furniture forms, from beds, to tables to chairs and even workshop equipment. Of course all this information has the potential to be rather dry and compared to contemporary woodworking texts, it's not an easy read. However, the real jewel in the crown is one of glorious, unambiguous context through the eyes and mind of an 18th-century woodworker. It's hard to imagine now but even at the height of the Golden Age of furniture making, the menuisiers were upset at how much craft knowledge had been lost from earlier centuries. They too were angry about woodworkers who used cheap methods to peddle shoddy goods, alluding to craftsmen who were lazy, uninspired or merely uninformed about the wider world.

Despite the temptation to simplify the text, the translators were keen to preserve Roubo's sentence structure and commissioned shorter essays from contemporary experts of Roubo's work to comment on subjects like upholstery, chairmaking and even making wave mouldings (see *F&C* 187 for more of that) where further explanation might be needed. It takes a couple of chapters to tune into, but once you're there you'll be struck by how the 18th-century craft is both familiar and foreign. And while many of the tools are the same as ours, they had tools and techniques at their disposal that have all but disappeared from our repertoire (just read the section on the French winding sticks for proof). And now that *Roubo on Furniture* is available in English, there's hope that these methods can be put into common practice again.



L'Art du Menuisier covers a huge swathe of the craft, everything from building a carriage to filing saws

Extraordinary lengths

The effort behind this book is really only half the tale and I doubt very much if many of us will be around to see the full story unfold. The real legacy lies in the production of a limited edition of 1000 copies of a deluxe version of the book; a book that I'm certain some day will cause people who are not the least bit interested in woodwork to pause for a moment on their way to the office and just gaze upon it. This version is being presented in the same 11 x 17in size as Roubo intended. It has been printed to the absolute highest standards using the best materials the publishers could find. The paper is made by Mohawk Paper in Cohoes, New York, a family owned company with strong environmental ethics. The printers, Puritan Capital of New Hampshire, are one of the leading fine art and photography printers in the US with over 75 years of experience in printing books and catalogues for major museums and cultural institutions. They have an eye for detail and understand that an artist's work may be valued at more than just the paper it's printed on. When the ink is dry the pages are loaded onto a truck and driven 2000 miles to Roswell, New Mexico to a specialist bindery for stitching together. They

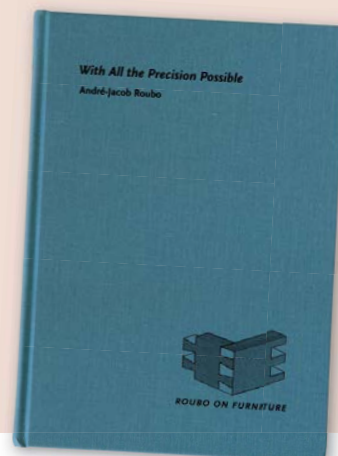
are the only facility on the continent capable of handling the large stock size. The same firm will also produce the handmade cloth-covered slipcases for each copy. At this point the cost of all this attention to detail will come to around \$200,000 and that's before any consideration has been made for labour getting there. When questioned, that's exactly how Lost Art Press explain the \$550 per copy price tag.

Now if you're a book collector this won't surprise you one little bit, in fact it's an entry-level price to pay for a premium product. If you're considering dipping your toe in the water for the first time, think Holtey, Sauer & Steiner and Skelton and you're more or less in the same league. But why? 'What John (Hoffman) and I sought to do with this book is give you a "period rush" – an inexpensive look at what high-end publishing is like', said Chris Schwarz of Lost Art Press. Now whether that's the equivalent of a day's pay, a week's pay or even a month's salary in 2017, it's still not as much as you would have had to pay for it in 1774 or indeed the last time an original found its way onto the open market.

One thing you can be sure of, however, is that everyone who buys this book will get

more than they bargained for – from the authors, the publishers, the designer, the pre-production staff and the printers and binders on the front line. **F&C**

Both books are published in the USA by Lost Art Press. As well as hardback editions, they are also available as downloadable PDFs. They are sold by Classic Hand Tools in the UK: www.classichandtools.com





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The New House of Windsor

Bern Chandley talks to *F&C* about his interpretation of a style that's never been out of fashion

They say you should never meet your heroes and I'm inclined to think that the same rules apply when deciding where your next project will take you. Not so much a hero as an icon, the Windsor chair is so deeply ingrained in Western culture that to understand it completely is to understand man's journey from stone-wielding Neanderthal to steel-

wielding millennial. And while the distance travelled is not commensurate with the time it's taken to get here, the journey has been momentous.

Sitting in on a class at The Windsor Workshop last year James Mursell explained to me that 'Windsor is not a style, it's a technique'. Dumbing it down for my benefit he went on to explain that

any piece of furniture that has at its centre a slab of timber through which legs, arms or backs are passed constitutes a Windsor. And for a split second, in rural West Sussex time stood still and I've been considering the implications of that bombshell ever since. Suddenly the lineage of Welsh stick chairs to Shaker benches to Scandi chic and beyond all made sense.

New but familiar

One of many contemporary iterations of the Windsor form is being made by Bern Chandley in Melbourne, Australia. 'I guess you could say it's based loosely around the idea of a Shaker style,' he told us, but that's inevitable, surely? I mean weren't the Shakers the original exponents of minimalist proportions for an aesthetic effect? For

'effect' yes, 'original' definitely not.

Bernard has been a furniture maker for 17 years, less than the blink of an eye in the grand scheme of things, but has put his use of the Windsor technique to great effect in creating some of the slickest contemporary seating you're ever likely to see. You could argue that in terms of development we

haven't really come that far as the basic principles are the same whichever century you care to study. Stylistically, however, the subtle shifts in form make every version a variation of a perfect form that's not only stood the test of time but has also lived in perfect harmony with its surroundings for the majority of man's time on this planet.



An iconic design originating in 18th-century New York, the Continuous Arm Rocker includes the eponymous crest rail, which is one length of hand-shaped wood steambent to form the three curves. The version pictured here is painted pin oak with Melbourne street elm seat.



The Lowbow Diner is part of Bern's contemporary range of furniture under the 'Windsor modern' brand, designed with smaller dwellings in mind. While they would be perfectly at home in a larger area they come into their own in the confined spaces of apartment living. They are light, versatile and comfortable. The version pictured here is in American black walnut.

The Lowbow Rockers are designed for those who like to keep their hands busy while relaxing. Whether playing guitar or crafting, these rockers provide incredible comfort and support. The Lowbow Rocker has a small footprint so it's perfect for a home where space is at a premium. The version pictured here is in American black walnut.

Based on the late Rodback-style American Windsors, the entire upper section of the Rodback Settee is steam bent for comfort and beauty. The version pictured here is in Tasmanian blackwood with English ash spindles.



Based on the historic Welsh stick chair, this dining/armchair has a one-piece steambent arm rail and, as with the seat and spindles, it is carved and shaped by hand. The Lowback Stick Chair evokes both the simplicity of its Welsh origins and the sophistication of the mid-century modern style. The version pictured here has an elm seat and arm rail, the spindles and legs are American white ash.



The Shaker Modern Bench is a contemporary take on the traditional Shaker Meeting Bench. It can be built to any length and in a number of timber species.

Bern Chandley Chair Maker + Fine Furniture

For more information about Bern's work, visit: www.bernchandleyfurniture.com



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PHOTOGRAPHS BY THEO COOK



Theo Cook explains how to make a tried-and-tested shooting board

I've been a teacher at the Robinson House Studio furniture school for over a year now. When teaching certain techniques I found that we didn't quite have enough shooting boards to go around. So I decided to design and make a new one and turn it into a student project. Of course, the students keep the shooting boards they make and their boards are custom-made to their particular planes.

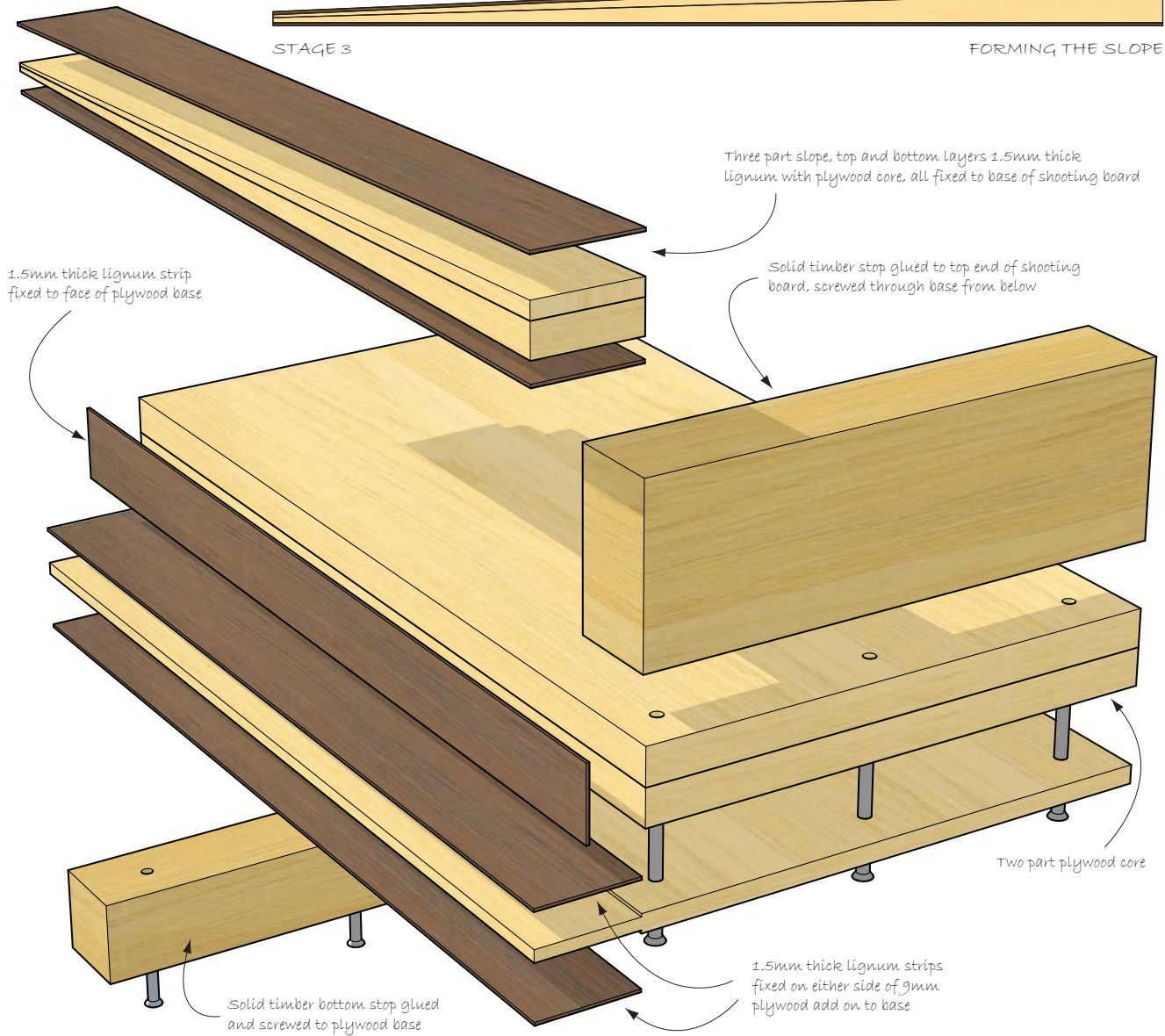
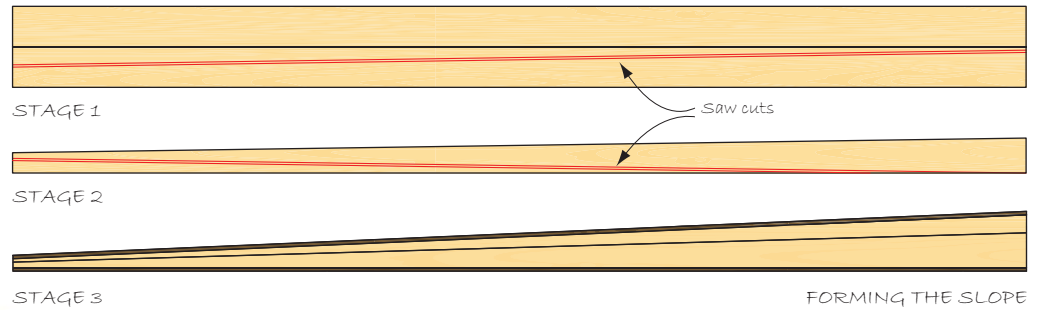
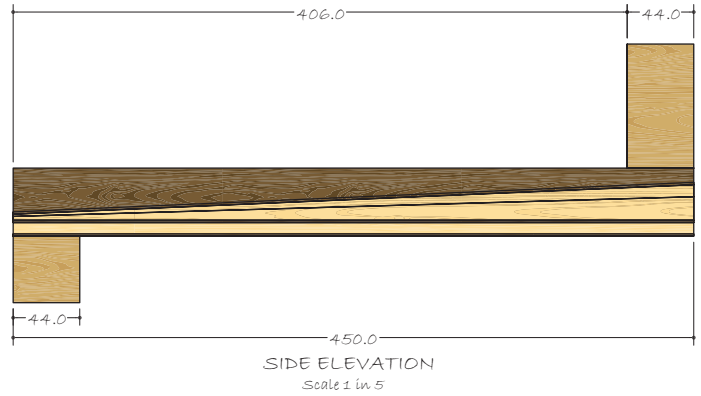
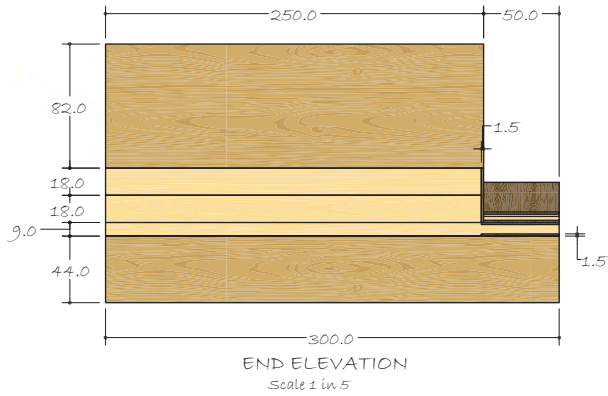
My design is based on the concept of the Lie-Nielsen skewed shooting plane. My thinking was, why not just make the slope on the shooting board skewed, so it

would do the same thing as the plane. One of the questions people ask me is why I chose to do the slope up instead of down. I decided to do it this way because when your plane is at the top of the slope, almost all of your blade is cutting. If the slope is going down, then you aren't cutting with that much of your blade when you hit the stop. One of the benefits I can see with the slope going down is that when cutting down on to your wood it may break out less, but I haven't seen the problem so far with the slope going up.

The wood I've used on the shooting board

is birch-faced ply for the main body, with solid wood for the end and bottom stops and lignum vitae (*Guaiacum officinale*) for the running surfaces as this is a naturally oily wood and very hard wearing. Before gluing any of the lignum make sure you clean it with acetone. I use Titebond original to glue lignum. The shooting board size is 450 x 300 x 48mm.

I hope that with the drawings and pictures you can make your own shooting board just like the one we use in the workshop. It's tried and tested and a well-used tool by all of our students at the workshop.





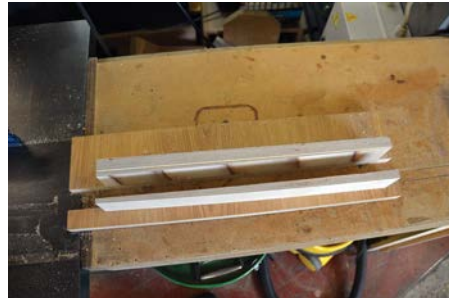
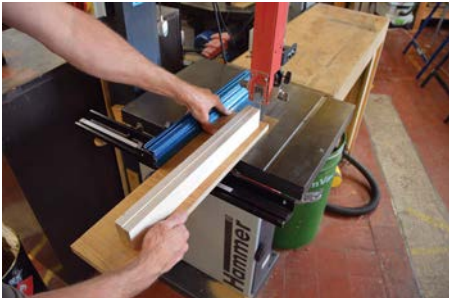
STEP 1

Start by cutting all the 18mm-thick ply components oversize, then glue the two boards together that will make up the main top. Use sufficient clamps or cauls to make sure there is a good even bond between the two surfaces. When dry, check for flatness with a straightedge. Adjust accordingly and cut a straight edge along one side. Now glue the two 18mm thick pieces of ply together that will make up the slope. Don't scrimp on clamps.



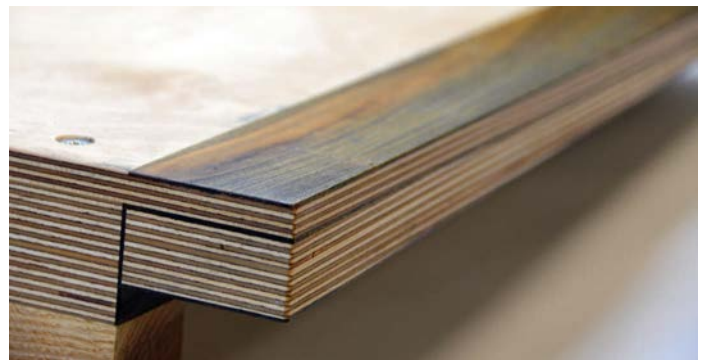
STEP 2

Prepare the lignum into slices of 1.5mm thick. A well-tuned bandsaw is the most convenient method of re-sawing. If you don't have access to one, your supplier may be willing to do this for you for a small fee. Be wary about thicknessing through a machine, not all planer-thicknessers are capable of handling thin stock. If you are left with no option other than hand tools, a scraper plane is the best option. You can now glue a piece of lignum onto the straight edge of your main board.



STEP 3

Cut a straight edge along one side of the slope component. Prepare a sacrificial board with a taper equal to half the slope angle along one edge. Mount the ply onto it and cut one side of the slope. Turn the sacrificial board around and cut the other side of the slope. Face both sides of the slope with a slice of the lignum and trim flush all round when the glue has dried.



STEP 4

Glue the piece of 9mm ply on the bottom of the main board. At this time you can decide whether you want to make your shooting board left-handed or right-handed. Taking all the same precautions mentioned in Step 1 you can now glue the slope in place ensuring it's tight up and square to the edge of the main top.

STEP 5

Route a 1.5mm-deep rebate the same width as the slope on the bottom of the 9mm sub-base directly beneath the slope. Glue another strip of lignum into this rebate and flatten with a scraper plane when the glue has set. This will help to counter any uneven shrinkage of the solid wood and balance the ply. You can now trim and flush the whole board to size on all four edges. Fix the front bottom stop (hook) in place with fixings of your choice. A combination of screws and glue will be fine.

STEP 6

Finally, glue and screw the top back stop in place paying careful attention to make sure the end is perfectly square and flush with side of the main top. As well as preventing breakout at the back of the workpiece it also prevents the plane from tipping over if you put too much pressure on it at the end of the cut. Use an engineer's square when gluing this on just to make sure it's 90° to the slope. It's very difficult to adjust afterwards.

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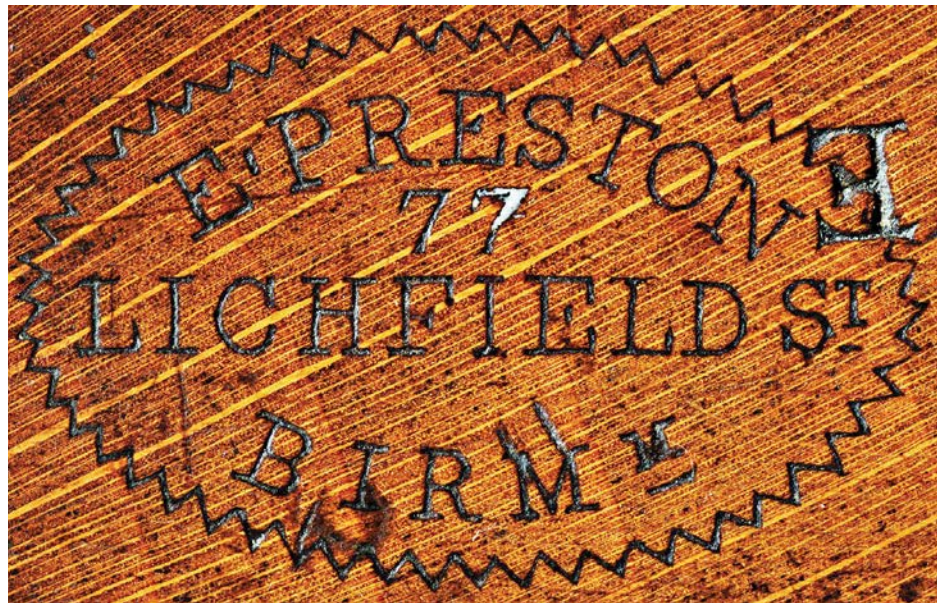
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Edward Preston

John Adamson charts the history of Birmingham's greatest tool manufacturer and reveals the potential for adding Preston to your collection

Of the many ways to build a collection of early tools one that is particularly rewarding and infinitely fascinating is to amass the tools of one maker or manufacturer. Choose a tool-maker with a significant output and who was active over a long span of years and you find yourself immersed in the evolving history of material culture as well as acquiring items that are awe-inspiring and often beautiful.

So for any craftsman or tool lover who wishes to build up a collection of vintage hand tools, a wonderful place to start might be to visit the world of Edward Preston & Sons of Birmingham. In its heyday, this firm produced a wide range of hand tools in wood and metal that are ergonomically sound, utilitarian but elegant – and affordably priced. Today, we can enjoy a twofold legacy: some of the firm's



designs live on in tools made later by other tool-makers; and many of the original tools are still available to buy, often at prices that vie with those of newly made tools. Whether you wish to showcase your Preston tools or work with them at the bench, they are a delight to behold – or to hold.

To be sure there is wizardry in working with such tools. Often they handle well; and have good balance, but there is also the thrill of reconnecting with the craftsmen of the time of the tools' manufacture. Unearthing the historical background to the tools you gather together is part of the fun of collecting.



Maker's mark stamped on the stock of the square (right)

The workshop of the world

Little has been written about Edward Preston & Sons, but to some extent the tools speak for themselves. It is up to us to observe and interpret the tools as well as try and find out more about who made them. The firm claimed its year of foundation to be 1825. No documentary evidence has yet come to light to confirm that to be the case; all we can rely on is later documentation in which references to that date are made by the firm. Nevertheless, it is likely to be around that date, for checking the records of the first national census in 1841, we find an Edward Preston, plane-maker, living (and most probably also working) at 77 Lichfield Street in Birmingham. Genealogical websites such as findmypast.co.uk enable us to access historical census records currently up to 1911. Edward Preston's age is given as 40 years old. We cannot be sure that this is accurate and even allowing a margin of error of a few years either way, online records do not yield a date for the birth of an Edward



The blade on this 8in coach-maker's horizontal square in gun-metal and steel is swivelled and may be locked at the required angle relative to the face of the stock with a knurled screw. The square is listed in the Preston 1901 catalogue under no. 1488

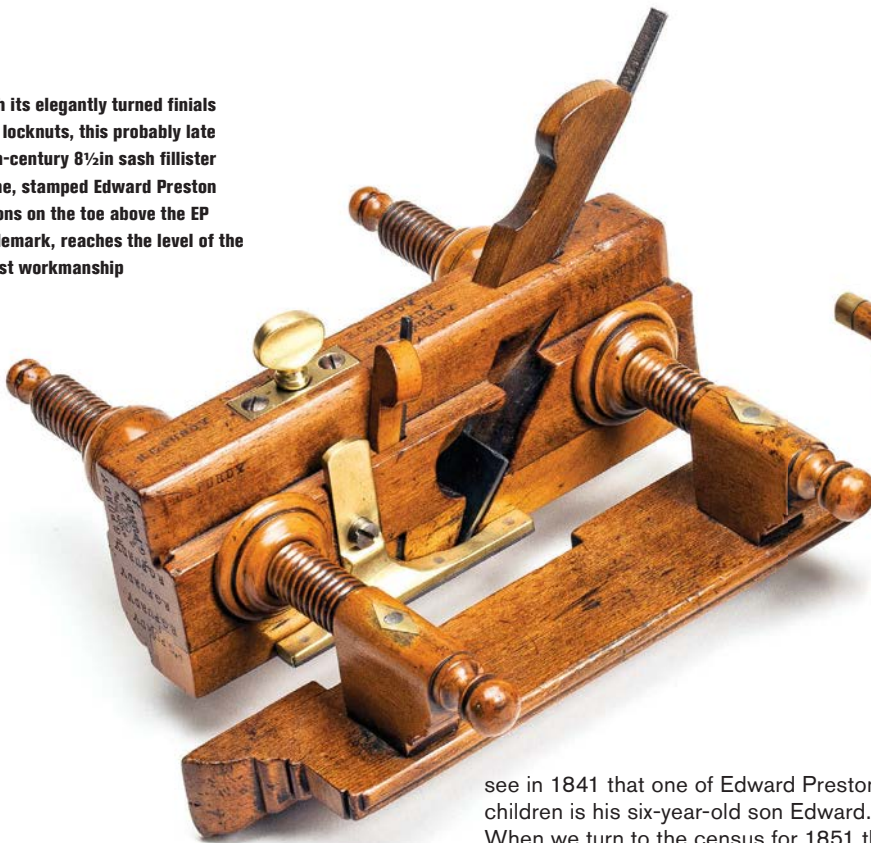
Preston in Birmingham at around 1800. Further research through the International Genealogical Index, also online through familysearch.org, does, however, give us an Edward Preston, christened on 26 March 1798 at the church of St Philip. Now, this English Baroque church, elevated to the status of cathedral in 1905 with the creation of the Anglican diocese of Birmingham, is not at all far from where Lichfield Street once lay. We can only surmise, for want of further evidence, that the child baptised on that day would one day become the founder of one of the great British tool-making firms of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The disappearance of Lichfield Street is part of an interesting story in its own right. While he was mayor of Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain arranged for the Council

to clear a slum area of 43½ acres of the inner city in the wake of the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act of 1875. This included Lichfield Street, where the Preston family had lived and where the old workhouse had stood. New building began and the first portion of Corporation Street opened in 1878, with the street reaching Old Square by January 1882.

The French historian and statesman Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in 1835 how taken aback he was by the burgeoning industry of Birmingham on a visit to the city: 'The whole place is like the streets of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. It is an immense workshop, a huge forge, a vast shop.' Already the city had earned its reputation as the 'workshop of the world'.

With its elegantly turned finials and locknuts, this probably late 19th-century 8½in sash fillister plane, stamped Edward Preston & Sons on the toe above the EP trademark, reaches the level of the finest workmanship



This 8in sash fillister plane in beech and boxwood with 11/4in iron was made at the workshop of Edward Preston Sr, 77 Lichfield Street, Birmingham



A family affair

City directories, many of them searchable online, confirm that Edward Preston of 77 Lichfield Street was carrying on a business as plane-maker. The Birmingham Directory for 1835 lists him as: 'plane maker, Lichfield street'; but, interestingly there is another Preston (William) operating at nearby '57 Steel House lane'. Pigot's Directory of 1837 lists Edward Preston as a plane-maker at 77 Lichfield Street (and also, importantly, as we shall see later, a John Rabone as rule-maker at 61 St Paul's Square, near the Jewellery Quarter). Robson's Birmingham & Sheffield Directory of 1839, however, refers to Preston as 'dealer in all kinds of carpenter's & cabinet maker's tools'. The University of Leicester, which holds a remarkable hoard of historical directories of England and Wales in its Special Collections Online, was the passport to much of this information.

Going back to the census records we

see in 1841 that one of Edward Preston's children is his six-year-old son Edward. When we turn to the census for 1851 this boy is now listed as a 15-year-old youth, working as plane-maker, like his father, at 77 Lichfield Street. This census provides, for the first time, details of where each person was born. We learn that both father and son were born in Birmingham. The father's age is now given as 54. Arithmetically, this now tallies better with the baptismal record of 1798. Business has grown, for the census states also that Edward Preston Sr has two men working for him.

Come the 1861 census, Edward Preston Sr is entered as being 63 years old, working still as plane-maker but now living at 97 Lichfield Street. Edward Jr is not listed but his younger brother Henry is, as a 16-year-old plane-maker. Evidence suggests that the younger Edward had set up his own successful tool business around that time; the 1871 census lists him aged 35 in the civil parish of Aston, as 'Rule and Spirit Level Maker', 'employing 20 men, 17 boys 1 youth'. Meanwhile his father is listed at another Aston address as a

73-year-old 'Master Plane Maker employing 3 men 1 boy'.

The son's new line of business is confirmed by an advertisement from 1876 stating that the firm of 'Edward Preston, Jun.' had removed from 26 Newton St to Whittall Works, Whittall Street, and was the manufacturer of 'Box and ivory rules, wood and brass plumb rules, engineers' round and square tube spirit levels' and much more – but not planes. The Whittall Works were located in the inner city at 22–24 Whittall Street, not far from what was then called the Birmingham and Midland Free Hospital for Sick Children, established in 1862 in Steelhouse Lane.

The 10 January 1880 issue of the New South Wales newspaper *Northern Star*, reporting on the continuing and astounding success of the Sydney International Exhibition which had opened three months earlier, highlighted the 'fine ironmongery' put on show there by Edward Preston, listing rules, spirit-levels, planes, joiners' tools, tin-openers and corkscrews among other sundries. Edward Preston won the highest awards at the Sydney fair and again at the Melbourne fair in 1880. At the Adelaide Jubilee Exhibition in 1887, the firm won a first order of merit.

A talent for innovation

It is unclear when the younger Edward Preston began making tools other than rules,



Late 19th-century 51/4in boxwood smoothing planes stamped E. Preston & Sons, Birmingham, similar to the 'single iron smooth' found in the Preston 1909 catalogue



A set of late 19th- or early 20th-century boxwood 3½in compass and flat-sole rebate planes with maker's mark of E. Preston & Sons, Birmingham

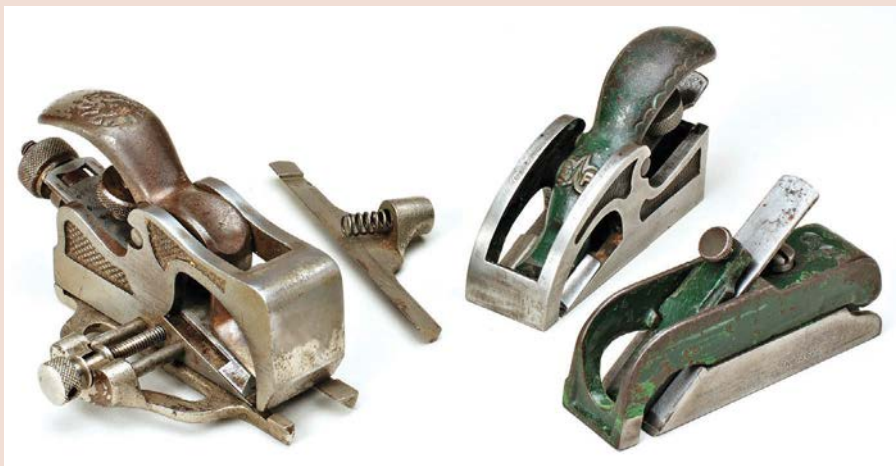
levels and can-openers, but it is likely to have happened not long after the move to Whittall Works in around 1876. The 1881 census records the continuing growth of the firm with the younger Edward listed as rule-maker and master, employing '53 men, 11 boys / 29 females'. A bill-head dated 1888 features planes, improved iron spokeshaves and joiners' tools among the items manufactured by the firm, by then called Edward Preston & Sons, reflecting the partnership formed

by the three sons of Edward Preston Jr with their father. The firm was incorporated in 1898 as a limited company.

In the 1901 census Edward Preston Jr is listed as living in Edgbaston and working as 'Maker of Rules, Planes, Wood + Metal spirit Levels and other tools used by Carpenters and others'. This is borne out by the Preston catalogue of 1901. Entitled *Illustrated Price List of Rules, Spirit-Levels, Planes and Tools &c., Manufactured by*

Edward Preston & Sons, it was reprinted in the United States in 1979 with an introduction by Kenneth D. Robert. The firm's 1909 catalogue *The "Preston" Catalogue: rules, levels, planes, braces and hammers, thermometers, saws, mechanic's tools &c.: Catalogue No. 18*, May 1909 confirmed the continuing output of a wide range of tools. This catalogue, with outline history by Mark Rees, was reprinted by Astragal Press in the United States in 1995.

A move to cast metal



By the 1880s Edward Preston was making a range of cast-iron products, among them shaves, routers, and shoulder and bull-nose planes. In the picture above, on the left, is a 4in adjustable bull-nose side-fenced rebate and chamfer plane, with maker's mark of Edward Preston, Birmingham, and model no. 1335. There are three fences, two for chamfering and one side fence. The cutter is adjusted by a milled head screw. Centre and right are two planes with maker's mark of Edward Preston & Sons Ltd, Birmingham, the left-hand one, without adjuster, features in the Preston 1909 catalogue, whereas the plane on the right with set-screw adjuster may be a later model.



ABOVE: Maker's stamp PRESTON / BIRM[™] with EP trademark on the plane iron of the adjustable bull-nose plane on the left. The EP trademark seems to have been used from around 1880. Advertisements with the firm's EP trademark appeared in *Lloyd's List* in the 1880s

LEFT: Maker's stamp with EP trademark on the plane iron of the right-hand plane with set-screw adjuster



On this 31/8in bull-nose rebate plane in gun-metal by Edward Preston & Sons Ltd, the cutter is held by an ebony wedge. Note the firm's trademark shown without initials

A lasting legacy

The report of the death of Edward Preston Jr in the *Lichfield Mercury* of 26 September, 1913 refers to the establishment of the firm on the site of the Victoria Courts, Corporation Street, 10 years before he was born in 1835. This lends weight to the assertion that the firm was indeed founded in 1825.

'Mr. Preston was decidedly of an innovative turn of mind,' wrote the newspaper, 'as many of the machines in use at his works as well as of the tools produced were the invention of himself and his three sons, who now manage

the business.' Business by 1913 was carried on at the Whittall Works in Cheston Street, Aston, Birmingham.

When the firm fell on hard times it was acquired in 1932 by John Rabone & Sons, the long-established Birmingham makers of rules. Two years later, manufacturing rights to some of the Preston range of planes were sold to the Sheffield firm of C. & J. Hampton, the forerunner of the Record Tool Company. Some of the Preston plane designs were directly added to the Record line, whereas others were modified.

It is interesting to think how rules and spirit-levels were very much part of the Preston success story. We can draw a parallel between the way the Stanley Rule and Level Company evolved into Stanley Tools in the United States and the way Edward Preston Jr's firm grew out of being rule and level makers to become innovative general hand-tool manufacturers in Great Britain. Both companies were targeting the same mid-priced market. Stanley's competition became increasingly fierce and in spite of Preston's ingenuity it undoubtedly contributed to the English firm's demise.



Maker's stamp on the cast-steel plane iron of the cast-iron smoother

Three smoothing planes: left and centre in gun-metal with maker's mark of Edward Preston, 22-24 Whittall Street, Birmingham; right in cast iron with maker's mark of Edward Preston, Birmingham, conforming in almost every way to the no. 1354 in the Preston 1901 catalogue, and with the firm's own plane iron



Two levels by Edward Preston: a no. 517 Patent Improved 22in adjustable mahogany and brass spirit-level (top); a no. 98 18in mahogany spirit-level and plumb with brass fittings, marked "E. Preston & Sons / Birmingham" around the EP trademark (bottom). Edward Preston Jr forged a career principally as a rule and level maker before diversifying into general tool manufacturing from around 1880 onwards



This late 19th- or early 20th-century 22 3/4 in turn-screw in boxwood and cast steel by E. Preston & Sons is of the cabinet pattern. The round blade, squared at the tang end is set in a domed cast-steel ferrule riveted through the handle

Next month

In the next issue of *F&C* we shall be looking at collecting by theme/type. Dan Cherry will tell us how he amassed his collection of rules and tape measures, what his guiding principles were and what interesting ideas have come to light from bringing these measuring devices together.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN JAMES. COURTESY OF DAVID STANLEY AUCTIONS

BACK TO SCHOOL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID WAITE

Twisted Japanese dovetails

A tail with a twist

David Waite explains how he mastered dovetails

David Waite

David Waite lives in Kent and has a background in science with a PhD in Chemistry. He has been involved in scientific research for over 20 years prior to enrolling on a one-year designer/maker course at Waters and Acland (www.watersandacland.co.uk).

Over the coming months he will be writing a series of short articles for *F&C* capturing his observations and experiences while on his journey to try and become a professional and setting up his own fine furniture making business.

You can follow David's day-to-day activities via his Instagram account: [@fourlimesdesign](https://www.instagram.com/fourlimesdesign)

The start of my one-year designer-maker course at Waters and Acland reminded me very much of my first day at college. After saying goodbye to family and friends on a late summer Sunday afternoon, I headed north feeling a mixture of excitement, trepidation and overwhelming relief to be finally starting my journey towards becoming a fine furniture maker. There are seven of us enrolled on the course, with varying levels of experience at the bench. Like college, one of the fringe benefits of studying with others is that you meet people of different nationalities with a wide variety of life experiences from selling houses, oil exploration and practising permaculture. Alongside me are students

from as far afield as Dubai, Uruguay and Dublin. With such a diverse group, conversations at tea breaks are never dull and the banter is always lively!

Perfecting hand tool skills

The first term focuses on mastering core skills and techniques using hand tools. Being able to flatten and dimension stock with a plane, mark out, accurately saw to a line and control a chisel and spokeshave to cut exactly where you want them to cut, are critical to your success as a fine furniture maker. Equally important is practising and improving your skills with a

pencil, charcoal, brush and computer mouse (more on this topic in a future article).

A series of set projects of increasing complexity challenged us to improve our hand tool techniques. Firstly, we made a chamfered octagonal breadboard, learning to control the hand plane saw and spokeshave. Then we moved onto a surprisingly difficult Chinese puzzle where accurate dimensioning to 0.01mm, marking and paring with a chisel were all critical to achieving success. We were encouraged to make as many of these puzzles as was necessary to achieve a perfect result, before moving on to what many consider the holy grail of cabinetmaking – the dovetail joint.

The challenge of dovetails

Whether you love or hate the use of dovetails in contemporary furniture making (and I know they divide opinion), there can be no denying that they demand a very high degree of skill and accuracy to cut well by hand, which is why they are still a rite of passage for any aspiring fine furniture maker. I have cut many dovetail joints over the years, learning much from two excellent teachers, Marc Fish at Robinson House Studio and from Graham Loveridge at Waters and Acland. With that prior experience, I was able to execute the school's next set project – a pair of dovetail bookends in oak (*Quercus robur*) – with relative ease and was keen to prepare a series of more complicated examples of the joint to push my making abilities and create samples to show prospective clients. Thus, I moved on to cutting a series of skinny pin half-lap dovetails and a houndstooth version.

It was at this point that Tim Smith, the professional maker at Waters and Acland,

suggested with a twinkle in his eye that I should consider cutting a twisted Japanese dovetail. Intrigued, I readily accepted the challenge without really knowing what Tim had in mind. He then showed me a sample of the joint he had previously made and which, on first inspection, seemed impossible to assemble. After letting me study the sample over the tea break, Tim helpfully explained that the joint is cut in a similar fashion to traditional 'through' dovetails but can only be assembled by offering the inner corners up and driving them together at 45°. Unlike traditional dovetails, it is impossible to see the fit of the joint until it is fully driven together. This requires the maker to accurately mark out, then saw and chisel, at identical angles on both components. Somewhat daunted by my newly acquired understanding of the joint, I decided that the only thing to do was to trust my abilities and go for it! After an afternoon of intense concentration at the bench and

pushing my hand skills to their limits, Tim helped me assemble my first attempt at the joint. I was relieved to find the pieces fitted together sweetly.

Shortly after my attempt, I was delighted to come across a picture of the twisted dovetail in the 'House and Home' section of a Sunday broadsheet accompanying a very interesting article about Kintaro Yazawa, one of Japan's finest furniture makers and the person responsible for teaching the twisted dovetail to Alan Peters while spending time at his workshop in the UK. For those interested in attempting the joint, Alan published an excellent article on its construction in *Fine Furniture* magazine in 1986. David Charlesworth also covers the topic in detail in the first volume of his *Furniture-making Techniques* book. Finally, for those online check out Theo Cook's Instagram feed, @theo_cook, to see a truly amazing video of his version of the joint!



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Sitting on the fence

Hendrik Varju reports on the latest tablesaw safety technology from SawStop and Bosch



SawStop's Jobsite Saw



The Bosch Reaxx Saw

PHOTOGRAPHS OF SAWSTOP PRODUCTS PROVIDED BY SAWSTOP, LLC. PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BOSCH REAXX SAW PROVIDED BY ROBERT BOSCH TOOL CORP.

While none of the machines mentioned in this article are currently available in the UK, or other parts of Europe for that matter, the technology behind them and the surrounding litigation has been a hot topic on forums, blogs and in workshops for more than a decade now. From the numerous conversations I've had with woodworkers of all persuasions over the years, the general consensus is that we're missing out on an incredible opportunity to make the work place a safer place. To put this into perspective you have to understand that there is an epidemic of tablesaw injuries in the US. This is possibly the case in other countries too, but I suspect the safety record in European countries is much higher due to more rigid safety rules and a very different operating culture regarding their usage. I have been a

full-time professional woodworker for over 20 years and have spent thousands of hours teaching others woodworking skills as well, including tablesaw safety training. About 10 years ago, I learned that there were about 35,000 tablesaw injuries per year in the US alone, which is somewhere near 100 tablesaw injuries per day. The SawStop website currently quotes a statistic of 65,000 tablesaw injuries per year, which if accurate, is just shameful.

There are numerous ways that a tablesaw can injure you, including kickbacks where the workpiece is thrown violently towards you, causing puncture wounds, broken ribs, bruises and, in rare cases, even death. However, the most common catastrophic injuries tend to involve finger amputations or other traumas to the hand and arm. Such injuries not only affect your health but are often life changing, affecting your finances, your job prospects and general quality of life.

The technology in a nutshell

Steve Gass, the inventor of SawStop technology, came up with a system whereby a small electrical charge is sent through the tablesaw blade at all times. Because dry wood is a good insulator but human flesh is a conductor, the saw knows when your hand has touched the spinning saw blade. On detection it activates an aluminium brake cartridge that jams into the blade in less than 5 milliseconds. A very loud bang is all you hear and the next thing you know your tablesaw blade has disappeared having been automatically retracted beneath the table at the same time. Then you start to understand the gravity of the situation; without this technology, you could have just cut one or more fingers off. Instead, you have a tiny nick on your finger that, at most, requires a plaster.



Cost implications

When the flesh-sensing technology is triggered, the aluminium cartridge is 'spent', much like a car's air bag. So it has to be replaced at a cost of about US \$69 (approximately £55). However, SawStop has a special programme called 'Report a Save' where they'll send you a free cartridge if you send in your old one and SawStop can confirm that actual skin contact occurred. Understandably such an event will also result in some damage to the blade and SawStop recommends that a sharpening professional analyse whether the blade is still safe to use after replacing any missing teeth. With the average value of blades falling into the \$50 to \$100 range (£40-£100) most people would simply replace it to be on the safe side. Personally, if SawStop technology just saved my fingers I'd be all too happy to spend that much and more.

My experience

I first used a SawStop tablesaw not long after the first version was released. Many of my woodworking students started buying them and I've probably set up and used at least two dozen over the past decade or so. Even aside from the flesh-sensing technology, these are very finely made saws and I don't think anyone can argue otherwise. The fit and finish are excellent.

The game changer

When SawStop launched its new Jobsite Saw in 2015 this was a real game changer. Apparently, more portable tablesaws are sold each year in the US than all the other larger tablesaws combined. For a lot of trades a Jobsite-style saw brings workshop capability to the building site.

Multiple choice

The Robert Bosch Tool Corporation released a new jobsite tablesaw called the Bosch Reaxx™ on 1 June, 2016. Manufactured in Taiwan, the saw has its own version of flesh-sensing technology very similar to SawStop. Bosch calls it Active Response Technology™.

When the saw senses human flesh it shoots a cartridge as well. However, this cartridge is not a brake that jams into the spinning blade. It simply shoots the spinning blade below the table without damaging the

blade at all. Many woodworkers will see this as a big advantage. No blade damage, so only the cost of replacing the cartridge. And each cartridge is a dual cartridge. When it goes off, you simply swivel it around and you have one more use. The cost is about US \$99 (approximately £80) so less than \$50 per activation.

I studied the Bosch Reaxx saw at the International Woodworking Fair (IWF) in August 2016. While I've never had the opportunity to set it up or test it, I did

give it a close inspection and witnessed the technology in action. It's a slick looking saw and the 'no blade damage' aspect is obviously a big selling point. The saw sells for about US \$1499 (around £1200) compared to about \$1299 (£1050) for the SawStop Jobsite Saw.

Let's hope these technologies will continue to evolve and give woodworkers choice as to what safety features they are interested in and what they are willing to pay for them.

Not coming soon

While SawStop, LLC, based in Oregon, US, do not sell their tablesaws in Europe, they do sell them in the US, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and Kuwait. Their saws are also manufactured in Taiwan but are 100% US engineered and the company is 100% US owned, facts that SawStop is very proud of. Their tablesaws have revolutionised tablesaw safety and have been adopted into many

workshops and woodworking schools in those countries. So can we expect to see similar technology freely available in the UK or rest of Europe any time soon? The short answer is no and here's a possible reason why.

Currently the legislative bodies that advise on what's good for health and safety are steadfast in their opinion that technology alone is not the answer to reducing the number of injuries caused by

tablesaws. There are already sufficient guidelines in place that statistically make the UK the safest place to own and operate a tablesaw, providing those guidelines are followed, of course. Any change would require a meeting of minds and acceptance of two different schools of thought. Consumer pressure could encourage the technology to appear on the shelves but don't expect a re-write of the best working practice manual as a result.

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MINI TEST Pfeil Straight gouge

Everyone's got at least one gouge in their chisel roll, surely? Apparently not and I don't know how I've got this far without one. The need arose the other week when I wanted to put a little fingernail-shaped hollow into the keyed wedge on the lid of a Japanese-style tool box; the sort of thing you might see on the lid of an old wooden pencil case or, come to think of it, my grandad's Moore & Wright 4in engineer's square box. Gouges, with their very exact profiles are a one-, two- or maybe even a three-trick pony at best if you're not a carver and not unlike drill bits in that respect. For example, a 5mm bit is similar to a 6mm bit but it won't bore a hole for a 6mm dowel. Gouges come in numerous shapes and sizes and, like plane irons, are either bevel up, bevel down or on both sides which is where the Classic Hand Tools website page comes in handy. Clearly displayed are the shapes and profiles of a range of chisels to choose from and that's exactly what I did.

The graphics are there to help guide a novice like me through the decision making process but even then a little guidance from a friendly voice was necessary. Pfeil gouges are grouped in series categories that relate to the shape of the tool; some more elliptical than others and some a true arc. Series 2, for example, is almost flat while series 11 is a deep ellipse and one step away from becoming a V tool. I chose a 13mm-wide series 8 because it seemed to be capable of creating a finger-shaped recess.

My technique went something like this: make an initial vertical chop with an 8mm bevel edge bench chisel. Pick up the gouge and make a series of progressively deeper and therefore wider cuts with it until a suitable recess is formed. It's not rocket science and I suspect there's a dandy little tool out there that I'm not aware of that will help to clear the waste from the back. If you're aware of one, please share that piece of information.

Pfeil chisels are forged from a steel alloy made especially for Pfeil with some very specific qualities; high elasticity, good edge retaining properties and hardness. They also arrive pre-sharpened, razor-sharp to be precise. The handles are made from ash sourced from Swiss forests and are finished with a solvent-free vegetable oil. The eight-sided lozenge shape means they are comfortable to grip and don't roll around on the bench. All in all I'm happy with my purchase to the point that I can envisage acquiring more carving chisels in the near future. All that leaves now is a means to sharpen them!

Series 8 Straight Gouge £22.85

Contact: Classic Hand Tools
Web: www.classichandtools.com
Tel: 01473 784983



Swan compressors

Swan specialises in making top-of-the-range, high performance, oil free, low noise compressors; they are innovative in design yet meet the strict regulations for compressed air purity required by many applications. These DRS models are ideally suited to home use in various craft work applications as well as in a laboratory, school, upholstery or furniture workshop. Their low level of noise emission and vibration means they are also suitable for demonstration purposes. A grab handle and two wheels adds to their portability. The DRS range comes in three tank sizes: 22l, 30l and 50l. The larger model (PV-202-30) features a combined 'V' twin pump and motor reducing vibration to an absolute minimum.

Contact: Axminster Web: www.axminster.co.uk

Improved backing paper from Mirka

We've all been there, striving to get the last possible bit of use out of our abrasive. Well, Mirka have jumped in and developed a new backing paper for their Jepuflex Plus and Avomax Plus abrasives that could take some of the frustration out of sanding. Mirka claim the new paper has a higher resistance to the effects associated with heat and humidity helping to maintain a consistent belt geometry. The result is a greater resistance to clogging and therefore extended belt life. Customers can expect to benefit from the improvements from May 2017.

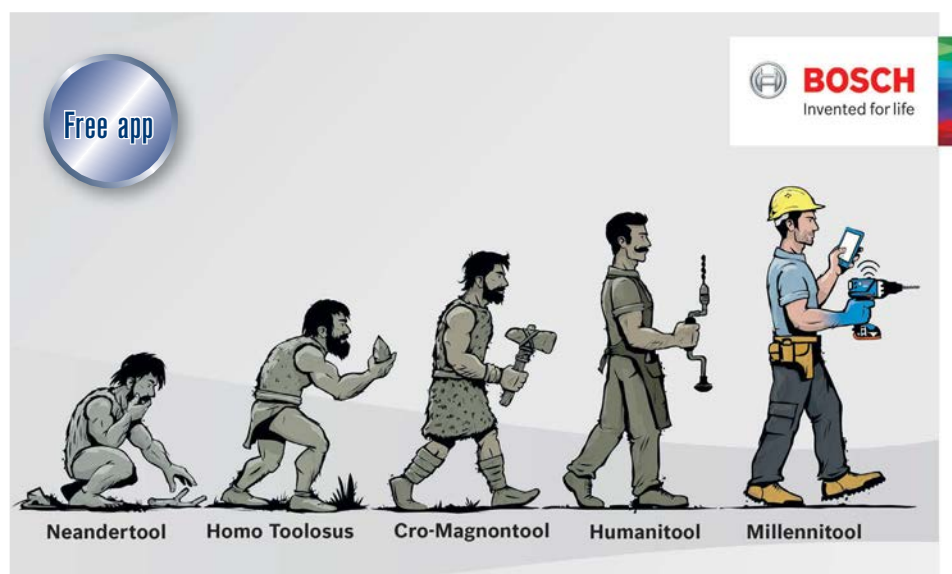
Contact: Mirka Web: www.mirka.com



Bosch Connected

Power tool manufacturers, it seems, will stop at nothing to achieve brand loyalty and Bosch are the latest big brand to venture into the 'connected' system using Bluetooth technology to link a range of power tools to a free app on your phone or tablet. Data capture of any kind tends to raise eyebrows but the boys in blue claim the new technology allows various time and effort saving aids for the user such as easier product registration, accumulative usage data and even a remote control feature for some products. Users can access the Toolbox app to dial in a range of personal settings or simply monitor run times, alerts and battery life expectancy.

Contact: Bosch Web: www.bosch-professional.com/upgrade



Bench seat hinges

Used to hinge a bench seat to access an under-seat storage compartment, these double-articulated hinge arms are designed to move the seat top forward slightly as it lifts for clearance against a padded backrest. Springs assist with opening the lid and hold it fully open at about 45°. The hinges are not recommended for use with toy boxes as they do not prevent slamming.

Contact: Lee Valley Web: www.leevalley.com



Product news: BESSEY expands its workbench adapter range

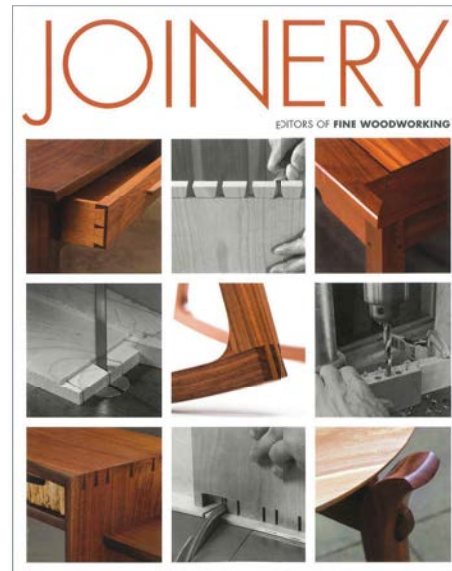
BESSEY is expanding its TW16AW adapter range for use of its clamping elements on all common workbenches with a hole system. The TW16AW19 workbench adapter enables the use of BESSEY clamping elements of the TW16 and TWV16 series on workbenches with a hole diameter of 19mm. BESSEY now also provides adapters for three further workbench hole systems – for diameters of 20mm, 25.4mm and 30mm.

If you are still not able to find a suitable size in this expanded range, the locking pin on the adapter can be removed and replaced with a self-made one. No matter which workbench adapter size is selected, all of them can be connected with the suitable BESSEY clamping elements in a few simple steps, and then inserted into the workbench without the need for tools.

Contact: BESSEY Web: www.besseytools.co.uk



BOOK REVIEW



No doubt about it, the editors of *Fine Woodworking* certainly know their stuff and Taunton Press have bundled together some of their best bits from past issues of the magazine on the subject of joinery for this 219-page book of tips and tricks.

Strict hand tool lovers might want to look elsewhere for guidance, as the focus here is mainly on machines, tablesaws and routers in particular, although that's not to say you couldn't adapt things and freehand some of the steps. If making fancy jigs is your thing then your next few weekends are spoken for as there are plenty to choose from. A self-centring mortising jig is perhaps the most complex followed by an elaborate screw mitre shoot. Both devices require at least one machine or power tool to make them effectively. A lot of the jigs and techniques demonstrated are perfectly suited to batch runs that will appeal to woodworkers aiming to streamline their output. In this respect you won't be disappointed. Others, of course, are designed to introduce a level of accuracy that could take years to master by using hand tools alone.

Despite the excellent writing, wonderfully detailed drawings and top quality photography there's still far too much unguarded blade action for my liking. My recommendation is that you don't follow suit. For experienced hybrid woodworkers that have access to a full range of machines and power tools this one's definitely for you. If that's not an accurate description of your workshop, perhaps move on.

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Out & about: American Museum in Britain

This month we visit a British museum devoted to American decorative and folk art

You don't have to travel to the USA to see American decorative and folk art – there is a fine collection at the American Museum in Britain. Located just a few miles from Bath, the museum is housed in Claverton Manor and is set within 125 acres of parkland. It is the only museum of American decorative and folk art outside the USA and was established to educate people in the UK about American cultural history.

History

The American Museum in Britain was established by Dr Dallas Pratt (an American psychiatrist and collector), John Judkyn (a British-born antiques dealer, who had become an American citizen), Nick Bell Knight (a furniture restorer employed at nearby Freshford Manor, Judkyn's business base in Britain) and Ian McCallum, the Museum's first Director. Pratt and Judkyn

were inspired by their visits to historic houses and 'living history' museums in the United States during the 1950s. They wanted to show the achievements of Americans in the decorative arts and to promote Anglo-American understanding. They had a summer house in the Bath area, so when Claverton Manor came on the market in 1958 the decision was made to transform it into the American Museum in Britain.



Information for visiting

Address: Claverton Manor, Bath BA2 7BD

Website: americanmuseum.org

Opening: Tuesday–Sunday, the grounds are closed in winter

Charges: £12.00 for adults, £10.50 for over 60s and students, £6.50 for children aged 5–18

Information correct at time of publication, check the American Museum in Britain's website before making your visit

Collecting for the museum began in earnest in 1958, facilitated by Judkyn's business contacts – each piece testifying to the artistry of Americans and how these people had lived in the past. Panelling and floors were also shipped over to Britain, enabling period rooms from demolished buildings in America to be reconstructed within the spacious interiors of Claverton Manor. The museum opened to the public in 1961.



The Deer Park Parlor room recreates the interior of an early 19th-century Baltimore home

What to see

The furniture collections are showcased in 18 Period Room settings to create a sense of how American families lived during the last 300 years. Display rooms include a late 17th-century Puritan home, an 18th-century tavern and a sumptuous New Orleans bedroom from about 1860 – the eve of the Civil War. The collection includes several fine examples of Shaker furniture such as mid-19th-century candlestands, a fascinating tailoring bench, a stunning chest of drawers and smaller objects such as wooden boxes.

There is also an impressive collection of traditional American quilts and textiles, the Dallas Pratt Map Collection and the American Heritage Exhibition, which tells the stories of the Founding Fathers, Native Americans and the Civil War, through a series of interactive galleries. The museum's library and archive is a fantastic resource for those interested in the history of American furniture and decorative design containing over 11,000 books and periodicals.



ABOVE: Mid-19th-century three-finger Shaker box



LEFT: Shaker candlestand in cherry made ca 1820 in New Lebanon, New York



TOP RIGHT: The Greek Revival Room is based on a New York dining room ca 1825–35



BOTTOM RIGHT: Conky's Tavern reconstructs a late 18th-century tavern in rural Massachusetts

Folk art

The American Museum holds an important collection of folk art including paintings, wood carvings, textiles, scrimshaw, weather vanes and sculptures. 'Folk art' is often used in Britain to describe 'primitive' art, but the museum uses the American definition of folk art, which is 'the artistic legacy of ordinary folks living in pre-industrial America'. The American Museum's folk art collection testifies to the exuberant resourcefulness of art and home decoration made 'by the people, for the people'.

For the museum's fiftieth anniversary, the folk art collection was moved to a new gallery and a Lady Liberty weathervane was commissioned from Karen and Gordon Green, which serves as a reminder of the continuing tradition of handcrafting objects in the modern world.

*Emma Thompson portrait painted ca. 1845–55 in
New England by Sturtevant J. Hamblen*



Other museums of interest in Bath

Bath is England's most complete Georgian city and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. It contains numerous sights and museums for those with an interest in history, architecture and design including:

- The Roman Baths
- No.1 Royal Crescent
- The Fashion Museum
- Museum of Bath Architecture
- Museum of Bath at Work
- Victoria Art Gallery
- Museum of East Asian Art



Georgian town houses in Bath

Where else to see... folk art museums

American Folk Art Museum

New York, USA
folkartmuseum.org

Netherlands Open Air Museum

Arnhem, the Netherlands
www.openairmuseum.nl

Skansen

Stockholm, Sweden
www.skansen.se

Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park

Warwickshire, UK
www.comptonverney.org.uk

Museum of International Folk Art

Santa Fe, USA
www.internationalfolkart.org



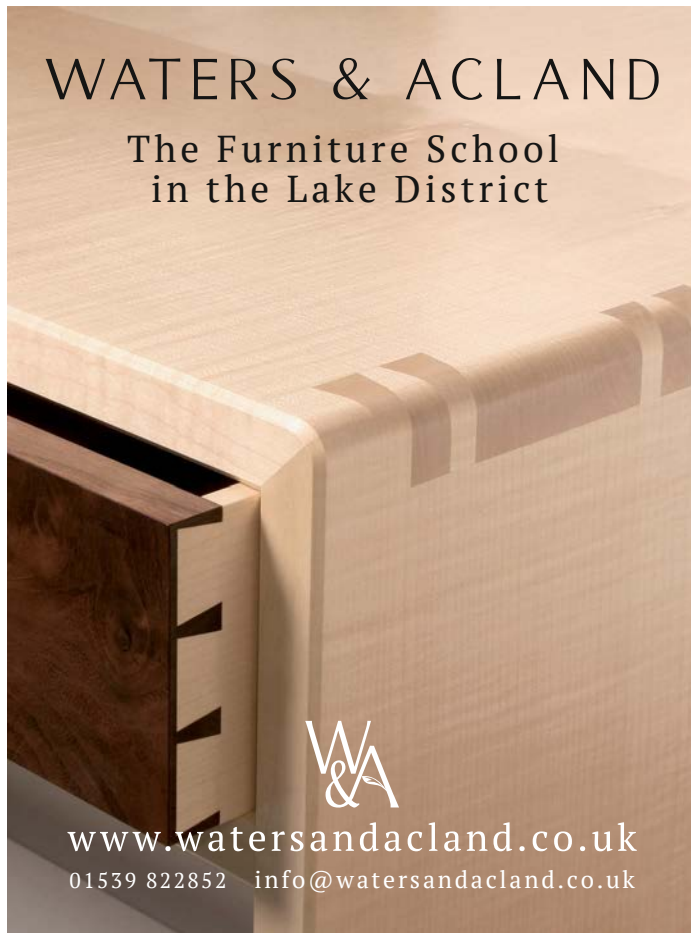
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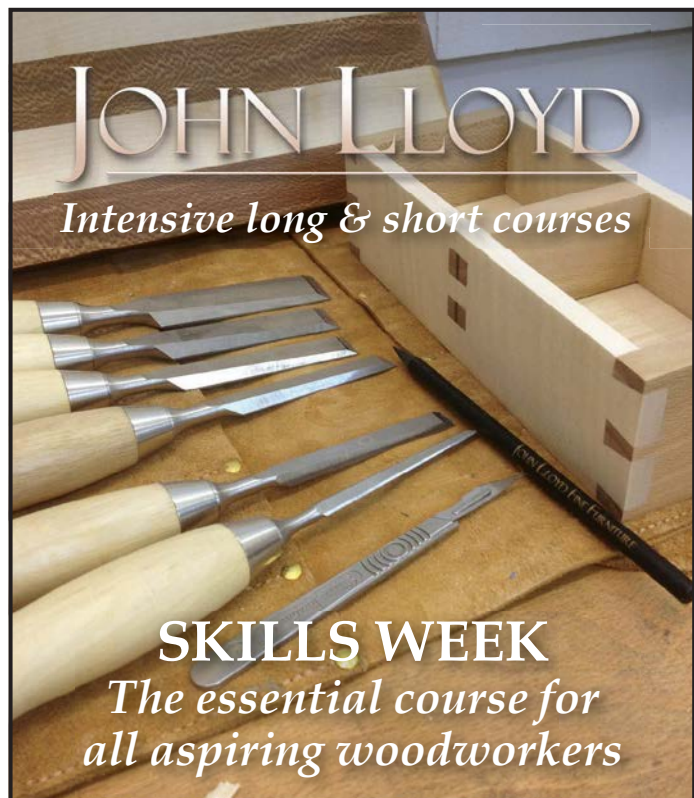


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