



## THE FURNITURE HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

No. 183

AUGUST 2011

### A QUEST FOR MARQUETRY TRUTHS

Marquetry furniture is often regarded as originating from the Netherlands. But does every piece of furniture with a floral design stem from that part of the world? How did the marquetry technique spread across Europe? How did the Dutch influence the English? It is important to remember that the present-day Netherlands did not exist as such in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It had become the Republic of the Seven United Provinces and there was an enormous influx of people from other countries because of its religion and its growing wealth. Conversely, many Dutch craftsmen went to live elsewhere, taking their skills with them.

#### INTARSIA, INLAY OR MARQUETRY?

The terms intarsia, inlay and marquetry are often confused. Intarsia, from the Latin *interserere* [to insert] and inlay involve setting pieces of wood, stone, mother-of-pearl or metal into solid wood.

It is a generally accepted that marquetry was first practiced in Florence during the fourteenth century. It subsequently spread throughout Europe. Initially only one piece of veneer was cut at a time. The invention of the fretsaw blade in the sixteenth century enabled thinner slices of veneer to be cut. The introduction of the chevalet made it possible to cut several layers of veneer at the same time, the so-called sandwich technique. Layers of different veneers would be put on top of each other onto which the craftsman would glue the design. Copies of drawings were made by perforating the outlines of the design and shaking bituminous powder through the holes onto another piece of paper behind. When heated, the powder would stick to the surface to create a copy. The cut veneers were then assembled into the desired design. If the craftsman dyed or stained the veneers, it was done at this stage. Paper was then glued over the assembled veneers to hold them in place when they were glued onto the carcass. Once attached, the paper was removed and the

marquetry sanded and waxed. Of course, this basic technique varied enormously between workshops.

Brighter colours are often seen inside marquetry cabinets. In general, craftsmen tried to use to the fullest extent the natural colours the different trees and plants could produce. It was part of the craftsman's honour not to use dyes. However, by the later seventeenth century cabinet-makers began to experiment with various recipes to colour and varnish wood. They first used natural dyes. Some of these recipes were derived from the colouring of textiles. The veneer would either absorb the dye completely or only the surface would be dyed. The latter produced a less durable result. Shadowing was achieved using hot sand or acid. The sand was heated in a brass bowl. The longer the piece of veneer stayed in the sand, the darker it became. Through these developments some marquetry panels came to increasingly resemble brightly-coloured paintings.

When marquetry pieces became old-fashioned, they were often incorporated into new, more fashionable pieces. In 1767 Messrs Mayhew & Ince used a marquetry floor to make furniture for the 9th Earl of Exeter:

Aug 27th Entirely new working, some old inlaid work, making good the defficiencys, and making up the same, into 2 commodes, one with sliding shelves, lined, the other with drawers, both with brass mouldings, and other very rich ornaments, finely gilt and laquer'd.  
Two corners ditto, to match them complete.

These pieces survive at Burghley, together with a centre table also made up from the marquetry floor panels. All incorporate a distinctive marquetry moth (Fig. 1).

Old-fashioned furniture was often enlivened with marquetry designs. Workshops kept cut-out marquetry designs in store, and patterns often recure. 'Ready-made' flowers [*a kasje met gezaagden bloemen*] were listed in an inventory of the workshop of the Dutch cabinet-maker Johannes van Mekerem (1658–1733), made after his death. This practice was adversely commented on by A. J. Roubo in *L'Art du Menuisier* (1769–75):

Ce n'est cependant pas la méthode du commun des Ebénistes, qui achètent [sic] des fleurs toutes faites à quelques-uns de leurs Confreres [sic] qui ne s'occupent qu'à ce genre d'ouvrages, sans s'embarrasser si elles iront bien les unes avec les autres, & si elles sont ombrées pour la place qu'elles doivent occuper ; ce qui fait que dans la plupart des ouvrages communs, on voit des fleurs qui semblent y être placées comme au hasard, & ombrées les unes d'un sens, & les autres d'un autre, ce qui fait un très-mauvais effet.



Fig 1 Detail showing marquetry moth © Burghley House Preservation Trust Limited

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, many highly skilled cabinet-makers in cities across the Republic produced furniture with inlaid and marquetry panels. Examples include Dirck van Rijswijck and Johannes (Jan) van Me(ec)keren in Amsterdam and Philips van Santwijck in The Hague. Who taught them? Some evidence suggests some cabinet-makers travelled to the province of Zeeland, in the Southwest of the Republic, in order to learn the craft (these sources will be published at a later date, pending further research). Was this perhaps because many French emigrants were living in this part of the country?

Cabinet-makers generally didn't sign their work, although an exception is Dirck van Rijswijck. Most marquetry furniture can therefore only be attributed to a particular country or maker.

A group of five cabinets attributed to Jan van Mekerens (1658–1733) incorporates floral still lifes (some after the same design), against an ebony background. Two cabinets are in Amerongen Castle, Utrecht and the others are in the Rijksmuseum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Charlcote Park. Another group with floral still lifes set into architectural settings are attributed to Philips van Santwijck from The Hague.

Until now, research has indicated that the cabinets-on-stand, for which the cabinet-makers of the Republic are most famous, are similar in construction. All have oak carcasses. Stretchers can be of varying shape. Earlier cabinets incorporate a drawer that runs across their entire width. The bottom of this drawer consists of two boards of which the grain usually runs from left to right. The doors and the side panels of the cabinet have floral marquetry. Some of these panels closely resemble the still life pictures of the period. It is interesting to note that the same marquetry scenes on some of these cabinets are also found on the smaller cabinets on stands which are supposedly English.

The van Mekerens (or van Meeckeren) came originally from Batenburg, Gelderland. Jan van Mekerens was baptised in the 'Nederduits Hervormde Gemeente' in Tiel, Gelderland, on 15 January 1658. He travelled from Amsterdam to London in 1682, where he became a member of the Nederlandse Gereformeerde Church at Austin Friars. By 1687, he had returned to Amsterdam and was recorded in the Book of Guilds as Joannes van Mekerens from Tiel. In 1700 Van Mekerens and five other members of the Guild founded a company specialising in *fijne houtwaren* [fine wooden objects]. Several of them were listed in the *Register of Goede mannen* compiled by the cabinet-maker Arent Busserus on 1 May 1704 where they are described as excellent *kabinet-werckers*.

Although the five cabinets attributed to van Mekerens look very similar, on closer inspection there are many variations. The door panels of the cabinets in the Rijksmuseum and the Metropolitan Museum consist of horizontal boards set into a framework with wooden blocks between. The cabinets in the Metropolitan Museum and Charlecote Park are significantly smaller than the others. Veneers on the two cabinets at Amerongen Castle bear traces of 'artificial' red and blue staining. Although superficially very similar, on closer examination significant differences between the Amerongen cabinets were also noted. The construction of the door panels is dissimilar; the size of the marquetry panels differ; the table on which the vase stands is crooked on one cabinet and the treatment of the flowers differs, for example the crown imperials (*fritillaria imperialis*) that surmount the floral designs are formed differently.

## CONCLUSION

There are many questions to be answered before conclusions can be drawn. Often, furniture has undergone changes throughout its existence. A complete story can be told only if these objects are looked at from every angle. That is why it is necessary to examine

as many objects as possible. If this article has sparked your curiosity and you have marquetry objects that can be examined, please contact me.

I like to thank everyone who has assisted me up to now, but in particular my parents, Prof. Dr Titus Eliëns, Mr Drs Stephen Hartog, Pol Bruijs, Dr Melanie Doderer Winkler, Jon Culverhouse, Anthony Beech, Dr Christopher Rowell, Dr Sam Segal, Drs Lodewijk Gerretsen, Drs Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide, Marijn Manuels, and Matthew Winterbottom without whose continued support and assistance this research would not have taken place.

Véronique Fehmers (info@recolart.nl)

## FUTURE SOCIETY EVENTS

### BOOKINGS

For places on all visits please apply to the Events Secretary, Sara Heaton, 18 First Street, London, SW3 2LD. Tel. 07775 907390 enclosing a separate cheque and separate stamped addressed envelope for each event using the enclosed booking form. Some advance event information (including weekends) will be available by email, please email the Events Secretary or send your email address with your application.

Applications should only be made by members who intend to take part in the whole programme. No one can apply for more than one place unless they hold a joint membership, and each applicant should be identified by name. If you wish to be placed on the waiting list please enclose a telephone number where you can be reached. Please note that a closing date for applications for all visits is printed in the *Newsletter*. Applications made after the closing date will be accepted only if space is still available.

### CANCELLATIONS

Please note that no refunds will be given for cancellations for occasional visits costing £10.00 or less. In all other cases, cancellations will be accepted up to seven days before the date of a visit, but refunds will be subject to a £5.00 deduction for administrative costs. Separate arrangements are made for study weekends and foreign tours and terms are clearly stated on the printed details in each case.

N.B. PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND SUFFICIENT STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPES FOR ALL APPLICATIONS, INCLUDING REQUESTS FOR DETAILS OF FOREIGN TOURS AND STUDY WEEKENDS

### ANNUAL LECTURE

#### *Tapestry In Eighteenth-Century Britain*

The Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1

Wednesday 2nd November, 6.00 pm for 6.30–7.45 pm lecture

Helen Wyld is currently working on a three-year project funded by the Paul Mellon Centre to research and catalogue the most important aspects of the National Trust's tapestry collection.

The lecture will trace the story of the tapestry medium in eighteenth-century Britain, looking at both native producers and the importance of French design and products, the increasing diversification of uses in furniture and other settings, and finally considering the

status of tapestry as a high-cost luxury medium in an age fast moving towards mass production.

Admission to the Lecture is free but attendance is by ticket only, which must be acquired in advance from the Events Secretary. Numbers are limited to 90.

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND WORKS IN PROGRESS TALKS WITH A SPECIAL PAPER ON CHATSWORTH

The East India Club, 16 St. James's Square, London SW1

Saturday 26th November 2011, 11.00 am–1.00 pm

The Annual General Meeting for the year ending 30 June 2011 will be held at the East India Club. The AGM will start at 11.00 am (coffee from 10.30 am).

This will be followed by illustrated Works in Progress talks by Christopher Rowell, the National Trust, Treve Rosoman, English Heritage, Rufus Bird, Deputy Surveyor of the Queen's Works of Art and from the Department of Furniture Textiles & Fashion, V&A. In addition to these talks a paper will be given by Matthew Hirst, Head of Collections at Chatsworth giving details of the recent reinstatement of the Scots and Leicester Apartments, the early nineteenth century bedrooms created by the 6th Duke of Devonshire. The talk will also cover the recently redecorated and redisplayed Sketch Galleries and the Masterplan restoration project and the new documentation project launched in 2011. Afterwards there will be an optional lunch which will provide for opportunity for members to socialise and discuss furniture related matters.

Admission to the AGM is free but all members wishing to attend should notify the FHS Events Secretary at least 7 days in advance for security reasons. Tickets for lunch with a glass of wine at £20 per head should be booked with the Events Secretary at least 7 days in advance.

#### ADVANCE NOTICE — THE 36th ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE FURNITURE HISTORY SOCIETY 'THE UPHOLSTERED INTERIOR'

Saturday 10th March 2012

Next year's symposium will be arranged by Sarah Medlam and Leela Meinertas of the Furniture, Fashion and Textiles Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The symposium will be held at The Wallace Collection.

Full programme and booking arrangements will be in the FHS November *Newsletter*.





## OTHER EVENTS

EXHIBITION: NORTHERN CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE MAKERS,  
ANNUAL EXHIBITION, 12th to 24th September 2011

A diverse selection of contemporary furniture design handmade by craftsmen using traditional techniques combined with the latest technology out of the finest quality hardwoods.

NCFM Exhibition, Tennants, the Auction Centre, Harmby Road, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 5SG. [www.northernfurniture.org.uk](http://www.northernfurniture.org.uk)

LECTURE BY JOHN MAKEPEACE: *John Makepeace furniture — the human dimension*

Lotherton Hall, Aberford, Leeds, Wednesday 5 October, 4.00 pm

In conjunction with the touring exhibition 'John Makepeace, enriching the language of furniture'

Admission by ticket to the house. Contact Wendy Shuttleworth: tel. 0113 281 3259; E-mail: [wendy.shuttleworth@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.shuttleworth@leeds.gov.uk)



## OTHER ITEMS

### CALL FOR PAPERS: INIGO JONES, THE QUEEN'S HOUSE AND THE LANGUAGES OF STUART CULTURE

A two-day conference at the Queen's House, Greenwich, 15th to 16th February 2012

Proposals are welcome from, but not limited to, scholars working in the fields of decorative art and material culture, history, heritage studies, and art and architectural history. Submissions from postgraduate students and early career scholars are encouraged.

Proposals of around 250 words, for papers of no more than 30 minutes, should be sent to the conference conveners.

For further information please contact: Dr Richard Johns (rjohns@nmm.ac.uk) or Amy Miller (amiller@nmm.ac.uk), National Maritime Museum, Greenwich London SE10 8NF

### SPECIAL MEMBER OFFER ON *THE INDEX TO THE DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH FURNITURE MAKERS 1660–1840*

Many members will own a copy of *The Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660–1840* which lists makers in alphabetical order. For research by place of manufacture, by patrons and commissions, by trade or other themes the *Index* is a necessity. This is bound in an identical style to the *Dictionary* and was published at £20. For a limited period, the Society is offering, to members only, the *Index* at £10 (£13 overseas) inclusive of post and packing. Payment may be made by cheque, bank transfer or credit/debit card. Orders to Brian Austen, Publications Officer, 1, Mercedes Cottages, St. John's Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 4EH, tel/fax 01444 413845, email: brian.austen@zen.co.uk

### EXHIBITION: *Thinking Outside the Box. European Cabinets, Caskets, and Cases from the Permanent Collection (1500–1900)*

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, closes 30 October 2011.

Another in the splendid series of small-scale installations in the Wrightsman Exhibition Gallery, *Thinking Outside the Box* draws exclusively from the Museum's own vast collection. The exhibition, curated by Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide, examines the purpose as well as the aesthetic qualities of a wide selection of 'cabinets, caskets and cases'. These are divided into groups, broadly defined by material: tortoiseshell, carved, veneered and inlaid wood, porcelain, hard stones, embroidery, silver, enamel, pastiglia and straw. The exhibits, well labelled and elegantly shown, include strongboxes, cabinets, travelling cases, containers for tea and tobacco, storage containers for toiletries and snuff boxes. Although there is no catalogue, each object is recorded in an online database: [http://www.metmuseum.org/works\\_of\\_art/collection\\_database/gallerylistview.aspx?dd1=76](http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/collection_database/gallerylistview.aspx?dd1=76).

One benefit of this exhibition has been the opportunity it has afforded curators to reassess, and sometimes to re-date objects, most of which have long languished in store. A well-designed ivory-veneered collector's cabinet by Melchior Baumgartner, c.1655–59, is now described as 'later engraved' (Rogers Fund, 1903). A collector's cabinet by Reinhold Vasters, c.1865–85 (in fact a recent gift from Anthony Blumka, 2010) was until recently was considered to date from the late sixteenth century.

Notable exhibits include a massive late sixteenth/early seventeenth-century strongbox (bequeathed in 1890 by Henry Marquand), an exquisite Du Paquier snuff box c.1730 (Irwin Untermyer gift, 1963) and a Renaissance-revival carved casket by Pietro Giusti, similar to

one shown at the London International Exhibition, 1862. Some of the works are relatively modest, but no less interesting for that; an example is the German (Nuremberg?) leather miniature collector's cabinet, c. 1600 (gift of Susan Bliss, 1948). Other objects of particular note are two further recent acquisitions: an amber casket, c. 1680, and from the nineteenth century, a small-scale coffer by Alphonse Giroux, c. 1860.

Although not perhaps intended as such, the exhibition provides insights into the history of the formation of the Metropolitan's collections.

Martin P. Levy.



## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Alan Poole is looking for a researcher who would be able find out more about this half tester bed from Burton Closes, near Bakewell. The house was redecorated by Pugin and the bed was believed to have been part of this. However, this has been disputed by the Pugin Society.

Please contact: Alan Poole, 43 & 45 North Hill, Highgate, London N6 4BS; tel: 020 8341 6051 mobile: 07796 694263

## BOOK REVIEWS

Suggestions for future reviews and publishers' review copies should be sent to Dr Reinier Baarsen, Reviews Editor, Rijksmuseum, PO BOX 74888, 1070 DN Amsterdam, The Netherlands, tel. 00-31-20-6747220. E-mail: r.baarsen@rijksmuseum.nl

Marilyn Neuhart with John Neuhart, *The Story of Eames Furniture* (Berlin: Gestalten Verlag, 2010), 2 vols., 798 pp., 2500 col. and b.&w. illus., ISBN 978-3-89955-230-0, £140.

At first glance these two mammoth volumes, with their wealth of textual and visual documentation, appear to be a comprehensive study of all the furniture traditionally credited to one of the most prolific and influential designers of the second half of the twentieth century, Charles Eames. The scale and ambition are appropriate to the importance of the book's subject. However, the text is seriously marred by inaccuracies, there are fundamental problems of approach and the book does not live up to the promise of being a definitive reference work.

The authors, both designers, first met Charles Eames in 1952 and Marilyn Neuhart describes herself and her husband as 'in and out of the office in various capacities' from 1957 until 1988. In that year Charles's wife and collaborator Ray finally closed the office which since Charles's death in 1978 had been serving mainly as a repository for the sorting of the firm's archive. Mrs. Neuhart describes the book's aim as producing a 'biography ... of a group of artifacts', but she is equally keen to tell the stories of those who 'developed the body of work known as Eames furniture' (p. 15).

The first chapter presents a lively, illustrated sketch of the working life of the Eames Office, as the firm started in 1941 by Charles and Ray Eames became known. It is followed by a biographical chapter on both Eameses, their work and their relationship with each other and with their collaborators. This chapter lives up to the authors' stated intention of offering a 'warts and all' portrait and is fairly startling in its emphasis on personalities and private lives. The next 200 pages of the first volume comprise twenty-two chapters on individuals who worked in the Eames Office. All but three of these (Eero Saarinen, Harry Bertoia and Herbert Matter) are unlikely to be known to anyone not versed in the detailed history of Eames furniture. Collaboration has always been an integral part of the practice of design and architecture, yet seldom has a book attempted to document so comprehensively the work of the entire staff of a single design firm. These chapters are potentially a real contribution to furniture history, but the authors' insistence on diminishing the roles of Charles (and Ray) Eames in the designs in favour of the designers, fabricators and engineers who worked for them, undermines rather than strengthens their case.

The remainder of volume I and all of volume II are organized in chronological order by individual furniture project. The copious images are useful, but the text is problematic because of not being systematically footnoted. More worryingly, some interviewees have denied the statements attributed to them in this book and the authors' conclusions contradict what they wrote in their *Eames Design* of 1989. The latter was an attempt to document, albeit more concisely, every project in the Eames Office, including in each case a list everyone who worked on it. All these issues significantly undermine even the uncontentious sections of the text in the present publication.

Volume II is entirely devoted to the immensely successful collaboration between the Eames Office and the Herman Miller Company between 1946 and 1978 (Miller continues to manufacture Eames furniture). It includes chapters on Miller and on individual furniture projects. Eleven additional biographies are woven into the text, rather than appearing as separate chapters, as is further information on others who worked on or manufactured designs. The designs of 1950–1960 are described as 'the mainstay of the Eames furniture business, and the design and technical foundation for nearly all of the pieces that would issue from the office until Charles's death' (p. 593). Rather than an objective observation of the work, this volume is part of an attempt to not only denigrate the later designs but also shift credit for much of the work to the valued office fabricator, Don Albinson. As with the chapter on the Eameses' early plywood furniture in volume I, the Neuharts tell a story of conflict about design responsibility and credit that is often at odds with available documentation, including interviews with or accounts by some of those involved. This attempt to write revisionist history is not underpinned by any critique of the historical record.

Underlying the entire book is the authors' project of settling old scores, above all against Ray Eames but also, one assumes, against Pat Kirkham, author of the 1995 monograph, *Charles and Ray Eames, Designers of the Twentieth Century*. Vitriolic attacks against Ray Eames stem from the Neuharts' experience of working with her, especially on their collaborative *Eames Design*. The Neuharts clearly disapprove of Ray and what they see as her dysfunctional working style. They characterize Ray's contribution as 'restricted to reviewing color

choices and the refinement of form'. Her presence in the office was, in the authors' libellous assertion, limited to 'lunches and ice cream parties' (p. 59). This view stands in stark contrast to the testimony of some former collaborators profiled in the book, as well as that of the Neuharts themselves in their 1989 publication.

Although, inexplicably, there is no reference anywhere to Kirkham's book (the same is true of shorter essays by Joseph Giovanini, Donald Albrecht and Beatriz Colomina, which are of some relevance to the approach critiqued in the book), the authors clearly lay the blame for the attention paid to Ray at her doorstep. They write that they are 'annoyed by what has been written about [Charles and Ray Eames] since their deaths', and decry 'whole books ... based ... on a few hours conversation with Ray Eames near the end of her life when she was determined to further extend her own mythology about Charles and herself, to essentially obscure what did not fit within that mythology'. Ray did not, according to the Neuharts, co-design what we call Eames furniture. This seems to be a direct riposte to Kirkham's much more subtle and probing enquiry into the nature of professional partnership between a married couple.

The design of *The Story of Eames Furniture* is handsome, though the typeface is very small. It is, however, a pity that the notes for volume I appear only at the end of volume II and that the binding is weak. The weaknesses, however, extend well beyond the physical properties of the book. The inclusion of salacious details regarding the personal, rather than professional, relationship of Charles and Ray Eames, while normal in our age of celebrity culture and intimate biography, offers information unrelated to the furniture and (even if true) is utterly out of place in this book. The sneering tone within which this is framed necessarily gives rise to doubts about the accuracy of what is written. No one interested in Eames furniture will be able to ignore this book, but portions of the text leave a sour taste and serious doubts about its veracity. A story it may be, *The Story* it is not.

Christopher Wilk

*Antique Woodworking Tools; Their Craftsmanship from the Earliest Times to the Twentieth Century.* David R. Russell, with Photographs by James Austin. Published by John Adamson, 2010. 528 pp. £90.00

It has always seemed to me that if one is to understand antique furniture one really ought to have some knowledge of how it was made and so one should have at least an awareness of the tools that were used, whether they be braces, ploughs, awls, adzes or planes; of these, most will recognize a plane but what about the others?

A brace is an old word for a hand-powered drill for boring holes, while a plough was a special, complex adjustable plane to cut rebates. An awl, also known as a bradawl, was a small tool used to start a hole before using a brace, and an adze was an axe where the head is set at right angles to the handle and the tradesman stands astride the plank to smooth out the wood prior to planning, Windsor chair-makers also might use an adze to shape the seat or saddle of the chair.

The written history of tools is quite recent, probably the first books were the volumes by W. L. Goodman in the early 1960s on the history of planes and plane makers and then in 1975 came Ralph Salaman's authoritative *Dictionary of Tools used in the Woodworking and allied trades, c. 1700–1970*. Salaman's book is, I believe, the gold standard by which any book concerning the history of wood working tools must be judged. However, it only has line drawings and no photographs whereas David Russells's book has the most splendid photographs, and at the end of the book is a very useful illustrated list of makers' marks.

The book is essentially the catalogue of David R. Russell's 40 year pursuit of old tools and as such there are over 900 colour illustrations on 528 pages showing the 2000 tools in his collection ranging in date from some Stone Age axes through to mid-twentieth century planes. After the pages of Contents, Foreword by David Linley, Preface and Introduction the next twenty pages deal with the very early tools from the Early Palaeolithic to the Roman period. One can see the extraordinary manual dexterity required to make these ancient tools while to hold such a tool is to immediately realise how fit for purpose they were and in the case of some tools from the Roman period just how little change there has been over 2000 years.

After this initial section of very early tools one comes to the heart of this substantial book. Much the greater part concerns the woodworking plane, in all their myriad shapes and forms — all dictated by the use to which they were originally put. Continental planes, and indeed many tools, were much more decorative than their British counterparts; much like the furniture that they were used to make. A joiner or cabinet maker would have had dozens of planes of all sorts, long 'jack planes' for preparatory work, slightly smaller planes for cutting rebates, and many moulding planes such as the matched pairs to cut 'hollows and rounds' so producing the common scotia and bolection mouldings. All the tradesman's tools would have been kept in a large box with a plain rough exterior and so often with a fine interior display of inlay and marquetry work made by the man himself (Fig. 34–5).

Inside the tool-box, besides the many planes, there would have been hammers, saws, bevels and try-squares to achieve the correct angles for cutting and often made from brass and rosewood, stamped or engraved with the maker's name, and sometimes a succession of owner's names. Also illustrated, and also originally stored in the tool-box, are fine cut-steel compasses, the more elaborate ones usually being French or Dutch, but important tools for marking out. Rulers were also vital tools and the book illustrates a number of ivory rulers that folded to go into the toolbox, or pocket. Finally of the smaller items that David Russell has collected, which are wonderfully illustrated, are little plumb-bobs — almost one of the oldest and least altered of tools; the plumb-bob is simply a weight attached to a string to achieve a vertical line. Russell has shown more than two dozen, some made from bronze while others are turned and inlaid ivory or bone, most only about 2–3 inches long (PI 269–95).

When looking at old tools it is often possible to see the sweat marks remaining from the way the tradesman held it and also to see the name stamped into the wood. This is particularly true of planes and the name was needed because they were his sole means of employment. The loss of one's tools, as happened to Thomas Chippendale's workmen after a fire in 1755, reduced them to penury; so Chippendale and his partner Rannie set up a lottery to raise money to buy new tools for them.

The book is large format, over 10 by 13ins and weighing nearly 9lbs; production standards are of a very high order and so the quality and variety of the photographs make the book good value, for anyone interested it will be a very good investment and a superb reference book.

Treve Rosoman.  
June 2011.













## THE OLIVER FORD TRUST AND TOM INGRAM MEMORIAL FUND

In line with one of its roles — the promotion of interest in interior design — the Oliver Ford Trust has generously expressed the desire to sponsor a place on each FHS study weekend or foreign tour. Applicants should either be a student with a particular interest in interiors, or a junior museum professional. Applications from non-members will be considered. Grants will be awarded via the Tom Ingram Fund, to which candidates should apply.

The Tom Ingram Memorial Fund makes grants towards travel and other incidental expenses for the purpose of study or research into the history of furniture (a) whether or not the applicant is a member of the Society; (b) only when the study or research is likely to be of importance in furthering the objectives of the Society; and (c) only when travel could not be undertaken without a grant from the Society. Applications towards the cost of FHS foreign and domestic trips and study weekends are particularly welcome from scholars. Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the assistance of the Fund in any resulting publications and must report back to the Panel on completion of the travel or project. All applications should be addressed to Adriana Turpin, Secretary to the Fund at 39 Talbot Road, London W2 5JH, Turpinadriana@hotmail.com, who will also supply application forms for the Oliver Ford Trust grants on request. Please remember to send an s.a.e. with any request.

The committee requests that applications for study trips be made well in advance of the final deadline for acceptance — preferably at least one month before.

### COPY DEADLINE

The deadline for receiving material to be published in the next *Newsletter* is **15 September**. Copy should be sent, preferably by email, Elizabeth Jamieson ea.jamieson@tiscali.co.uk or posted to Elizabeth Jamieson, 10 Tarleton Gardens, Forest Hill, London SE23 3XN

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