



THE WINDSOR CHAIRMAKER

Newsletter of The Windsor Workshop

October 2006

Since our last newsletter in June the new workshop has been completed, opened, and used for several courses. About fifty attended the opening party on 2nd September, including past and prospective students, supporters and friends. Chloe Darling (organiser of Chairs 2004) opened the workshop by cutting a cake with The Windsor Workshop logo scanned into the icing! We were honoured also to have Bill Cotton (author of The English Regional Chair) at the party. There was a wonderful atmosphere, and plenty of food and wine was consumed! A great start for this new development.



John White & Charles Harries
with John's chair

The first course in the new building was with John White and Charles Harries, who had both been on my very first course (with Keith Chaloner—see over). This was their third, and they both made continuous arm chairs.

The workshop now has three benches (including two doubles), and three lathes, giving comfortable space for four students. There is plenty of room to expand, but in order to increase numbers further, more building work will be necessary to create a sitting/eating /kitchen area on the end of the building. Photos of the workshop can be found on the website.



Chloe Darling cutting the cake
to open the new workshop

Visit from Drew Langsner

At the end of September, Drew (author of 'The Chairmaker's Workshop') visited us with a group of American woodworking enthusiasts. We had a most enjoyable time discussing Windsor chairs and related woodworking topics, and found that we had much in common!



www.the.windsor.workshop.co.uk

New information, course dates, and photos are regularly posted to the site. Do have a look now and again to see what's new. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you find any mistakes!

Continuous-arm Course

As mentioned above, this course is now up and running, and is available to anybody that has completed the bow-back course.

As with all the courses at The Windsor Workshop, it lasts five days (Monday to Friday) and costs £430.00 (incl. VAT).

This course gives you the chance to steam-bend the arm in two planes, learn new techniques, and to go home with an elegant and very comfortable chair.

The next course is: **26th February to 2nd March 2007**



Chairs 2008

After the disappointing cancellation of Chairs 2006, a new event is being organised for 29th May to 1st June 2008 at St Fagans, Cardiff. Chloe Darling, who created the successful Chairs 2004 is involved, so we can be sure of a great event! More details in future newsletters.

Win a FREE Course!

In conjunction with Classic Hand Tools, we are offering you the chance to win a free course. Go to their website www.classichandtools.com and click on the competition link. All you have to do is email the correct answers to five questions, with your contact details, and you have a chance of winning.

The winning entry will be picked on the 15th December 2006.

Please do not delay booking onto a course at The Windsor Workshop in the hope of winning a free course—if you have already booked and paid (after 10th October 2005), and you win, your course fee will be refunded!

After the first two months, courses from other prestigious woodworkers will be on offer in the same way!

Good luck!

THE ALUMNUS' ARTICLE

In the second article of the series, Keith Chaloner shares his experience of taking up Windsor chair-making. Keith was on my first course, and has now made seven chairs. Although several years past retirement age, Keith still runs a landscape gardening business with his partner, and has many other interests including photography.

"I was quite seriously into 'cabinet making' as a hobby. This at a time of life when I could excuse the cost of the 'essential' (and expensive) tools I had to have, on the basis that I couldn't take it with me and might not be around much longer!

I had already made a chair, 'a cabinet maker's chair' complete with carefully made joints, when I read an article about a fruit farmer turned Windsor chair maker.



Inspiration was immediate and I promptly booked a place on the chair-making course mentioned in the article. That first course lasted five days, went far too quickly, and left me with my own Windsor chair and a first hand experience of this one-time fruit farmer.

The contrast between the disciplines of cabinet making and the very different demands of working with green wood was striking. When cutting, say, a dovetail in a carefully sized and prepared piece of Walnut, a quarter of a mm is significant and a pair of digital callipers quite useful. The initial shaping of the split green Oak for a bow, using a drawknife, is a different experience. Here the tolerances are of a different order; an eighth of an inch is fine.

The process of making a Windsor chair is an exciting journey where each part and process is relaxed in terms of accuracy and preciseness and yet has to be 'right,' and fit for purpose. There are many small details of angle and 'weight' that influence the outcome.

If some of the above looks a bit daunting, it is because I have not added the magic ingredient, James! James is a gifted teacher and an authority on Windsor chairs; his relaxed manner and encouragement ensures that everyone, whatever their background and skill level, goes home with a superb chair and a sense of achievement.



I have now added 7 Windsor's to my collection, all of them under James's guidance. I have enjoyed every moment and would urge anyone reading this and undecided about taking a course to go ahead. The new workshop is superb and the food is not bad either!" KC

Chairmaking Courses

30 Oct - 3 Nov (FULL)	Bow Back
13 - 17 Nov	Sack Back <i>(advanced course)</i>
27 Nov - 1 Dec (one vacancy)	Bow Back
11- 15 Dec	Child's Arm <i>(advanced course)</i>
2007	
14 - 19 Jan (WEST DEAN)	Comb Back <i>(as in Furniture & Cabinetmaking)</i>
29 Jan - 2 Feb (FULL)	Bow Back
12 - 16 Feb	Bow Back
26 Feb - 2 Mar	Continuous-arm <i>(advanced course)</i>
12 - 16 Mar	Bow Back
26 - 30 Mar	Bow Back
(Tues.) 10 - (Sat.) 14 April	Bow Back
23 - 27 Apr	Bow Back
6 - 12 May (West Dean)	Sack Back
21 - 25 May	Bow Back
4 - 8 Jun	Bow Back
18 - 22 Jun	Continuous-arm <i>(advanced course*)</i>
2 - 6 Jul	Bow Back
16-20 Jul	Bow Back
3 - 7 Sept	Bow Back
7-12 Oct (West Dean)	Wheelback

note NB Advanced courses: need to have taken bow back previously **Please that all courses cost £430 (incl. VAT).** This includes all materials, food/drink during the day, and use of tools.

If you wish to book a course, please phone/email to check availability, and then send a cheque (payable to 'The Windsor Workshop') for £150 as a deposit to secure the place.

The balance is due at the start of the course.

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