

THE WINDSOR CHAIRMAKER

Newsletter of The Windsor Workshop

Summer 2008



Change to an e-Newsletter - PLEASE READ!

Welcome to what is likely to be my final hard-copy Newsletter. Email newsletters seem to be becoming more acceptable these days and having resisted the temptation up to now, the cost of printing, paper, envelopes, labels, postage and time spent folding and stuffing envelopes makes change irresistible. While I would ideally prefer to send you a sheet of paper, there will be a number of advantages, such as links to websites and further photographs / information.

Your email address (if I have it) will be printed on the address label on the envelope that contained this newsletter. Please check that it is correct. If it is then you should automatically receive my next newsletter in due course. If it is incorrect, and you wish to continue receiving The Windsor Chair Maker, please email me with your correct address.

If you do not have an email address, and wish to continue receiving the letter please phone or write, and I'll be happy to continue to send a hard copy, provided numbers are not too great.

Thanks for your patience.



Westonbirt Windsor - Festival of the Tree

This year I will be demonstrating Windsor chair making in the Classic Hand Tools marquee. My plan is to make the chair shown over the four days. This is a chair specially designed for the event, and will be made of ash and tulip wood. It will be painted with milk paints on the Bank Holiday Monday. Do call in and say hello, and perhaps lend a hand! The marquee will be full of delicious tools, and there will be free master-classes during each day. The show itself is definitely worth a visit especially if you haven't been before.

22nd - 25th August 2008 Westonbirt Arboretum, Nr Tetbury, Gloucestershire.
www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6xclux



Windsors to the Republic of Ireland

It is always gratifying to have students from abroad, particularly if they plan to start making chairs in earnest. Gary Marcuam attended the final course before the summer break. He has been teaching diving in Co. Kerry for the past eight years and has been looking for a land based occupation with a product that he can sell to locals and tourists. Good luck in a market that must be virtually empty of hand made Windsor chairs!

After my last Newsletter when I claimed to have had students from ten different countries, I was gently told off for omitting Sweden. Kit Kruger, who has attended more courses here than most, is a Swede. My apologies. Now it's 11 countries and counting!



C-arm settee

This continuous arm settee has brewing in my head for a year or so. The bend is unlike traditional continuous bows as it is continuously bending in three dimensions from the top to the hands. The bending jig (similar to that used for the long-bow chair - see overleaf) is a new departure, and one that I am hopeful will lead to interesting results.



www.thewindsorworkshop.co.uk

"dedicated to Windsor chairmaking"

Travishers

I know that there are many people waiting for the next batch of travishers to become available. Unfortunately the world's only maker of travisher blades has stopped manufacture, and I am pursuing leads in USA and France at present for an alternative supply. If you know of a potential maker please get in touch. I'd be most grateful. As soon as they are available again I will advertise the fact.



Brian Boggs Course



Back in June I attended a ladder-back chair making course at West Dean with well known chair maker Brian Boggs (from Kentucky, USA). Several former students were at West Dean that week, and it was an interesting course. If you have been waiting for me to offer a ladder back course you'll have to wait! Nothing that I saw or did during the week shook my belief that the best wooden chairs are Windsors!

The course did increase my respect for ash as a chair making wood. I sourced the wood for the course from the Cowdray Estate near Midhurst, and band-sawed 2" squares along the grain several months before hand. It was left to dry out in my workshop (dry) but on the course the 2" section was bendable after 90 minutes steaming. It took most of my 15 stone weight to bend it, but it bent very well - impressive! Expect to see more ash on my courses over time.

Wine table

Is this the simplest form of Windsor furniture yet? This is a modern take on a 17th century wine table, and is made in ash and American cherry. These are very useful and stable stands that will hold a drink and a nibble conveniently close to hand!



Mahogany

While I was at the WL West Wood Show in May earlier this year, I mentioned that I would always be interested in wide and thick pieces of timber for special chair seats. I didn't expect the two boards of mahogany that I was shown. They were the final pieces of two butts that the mill had bought - each log measuring 60' long x 8' diameter. I had to have them. To date I have only used a small piece for an experimental chair (90" bow), but will be looking out for worthwhile uses for such magnificent pieces of wood. More on this new style of chair in due course.



Long-bow chair

Book

Some of you will know of my ambition to write a book on Windsor chair making. Well the process has begun. Two publishers expressed interest, and I have nine months to produce 50,000 words and many photos. To date 25,000 words are on my computer, which is backed up religiously every night! Expect publication towards the end of 2009.



Shows

I will be attending five more shows this year, and hope that you may be able to come along. The Sussex Guild shows include talented artists and craftsmen from Sussex, working in many disciplines including wood. The Weald Wood Fair is a superb wood show, and this year I will have my own small marquee to display my chairs and promote courses.

Festival of the Tree, Glos.	22 - 25 Aug.
Sussex Guild, Pashley Manor, E. Sussex	30 - 31 Aug.
Weald Wood Fair, Bentley, E. Sussex	12 - 14 Sept.
Sussex Guild, Ditchling, W. Sussex	15 - 16 Nov.
Sussex Guild, Midhurst, W. Sussex	6 - 7 Dec.

Course Dates

September	15 - 29 26 - 2 Oct.	Intermed. FULL <i>Double bow - W. Dean</i>
October	13 - 17 27 - 31	Introductory Introductory
November	3 - 7 17 - 21	Intermediate Introductory
December	1 - 5 15 - 19	Introductory Intermediate
2009		
January	12 - 16 26 - 30	Introductory Introductory
February	9 - 13	Introductory