

## Celebration of Craftsmanship

I shall be exhibiting at A Celebration of Craftsmanship and Design, held in the Thirlestaine Long Gallery, Cheltenham, for one week in August. The exhibition is a showcase for the best work in furniture being produced in Britain today. Most of the work on view is for sale, and my humble offerings in this illustrious company will include a sideboard (commissioned), a comfortable chair and a console table. The exhibition opens with a preview for invited guests and the press. Also of note are the floral arrangements by Sue Artus. Check out the website [www.celebrationofcraftmanship.com](http://www.celebrationofcraftmanship.com).

## India

A recent visit to northern India led me to experience Mughal architecture and, without doubt, some of the world's greatest buildings. The planning and execution of this work is supreme, with the contained spaces an elemental part of the whole. Colour, light, incised decoration and inlaid surface decoration were overwhelming in their abundance and I wonder how (rather than if) this will affect the very restrained British feel of my design work in the future. For the present, a number of local silks were selected to use as jewellery box linings.

## Not just a square box

Designed in response both to its intended position in the room space and also to its function, this TV cabinet presented challenges not met previously. The doors were one such - the remote control will not work through wood, and glass had already been ruled out of the design. Slotted doors, with the spaces bounded by ebony strips was the solution, and these had to be created in the context of double folding doors deeply inset and following the semi elliptical line of the cabinet front. The picture shows that it is possible after all, but I would like to meet the designer! Internally, the free standing shelving allows an element of future proofing.



## A new chair is born

The result of a commission, a new design for a comfortable reading chair in wood has been created. Following extensive development, the full size prototype is currently on trial in the clients' home. The results of this test period will provide information to enable me to build matching chairs, specifically for the couple's requirements. Although this chair design will be available to commission, I would expect no two chairs to be alike due to the options available (rather like the BMW Mini). Each chair will be made to order from a list of options which include:-

- Choice of timber/timbers
- Height, width, and depth of seat
- Thickness of upholstery
- Upholstery fabric or leather
- Shape, height and springiness of backrest
- With or without arms

Sounds complex? Well, all you have to do is sit in the chair and I will ask a series of simple questions based on the options. Easy. The answers will then provide the information for production. If you are interested in trying the chair out visit one of my exhibitions or the workshop. The chair is strong, yet light enough to be moved with minimum effort.

## Derbyshire Open Arts Event

Visitors to my open workshop in May will also see the work of photographer Bridget Flemming and guitar maker Alan Marshall. Bridget is an award winning photographer based on the Chatsworth Estate whilst Alan - trading as Northworthy - is a guitar maker of some repute, having made instruments for George Harrison, John Renbourn, etc.

## Open workshop

**26,27,28 May**

## Design Factory

Since December 2006, I have been a member of Design Factory. The organization supports creative enterprise across the East Midlands and is proactive in forming partnerships with exhibitions such as Origin, Top Drawer and Grand Designs thus providing a national platform for its members. The comprehensive website showcases recent work. [www.designfactory.org.uk](http://www.designfactory.org.uk)

## Gordon Russell Furniture

Early this year I received a commission from existing customers to design and make a double bed and ottoman to match and complete a suite of bedroom furniture produced by the Gordon Russell company. It is understood that the original pieces were made in the 1930s for Lady MacAlpine - they are certainly well made in English walnut and oak. My designs will contain themes from the original suite, but will incorporate my own personal touches. A museum based on the life and work of Gordon Russell (Royal Designer) and his company is due to open later this year in the former factory at Broadway, Gloucs.

## Credence Table

Illustrated below is a credence table designed and made for St Anne's Parish Church, Lancashire and delivered earlier this year. Made in memory of my father in law, who was priest in charge of a neighbouring parish, it is made of figured oak to blend with an existing larger altar. Additional detailing reflecting the barrel vaulted roof of the building also doubles as hand holds, for this moderately light weight table will be used in many parts of the church. It is likely to be much photographed, as the priest plans to use it during wedding ceremonies for the signing of the marriage register.



## Last orders, please

The Oak Blanket Chest has proved very popular judging by the orders and comments received whilst displaying it over the years. The chest has also been featured in BBC Homes and Antiques magazine. Originally designed and made prior to establishing the business more than 15 years ago, it has become increasingly difficult to obtain the quality of stock I require for certain components. Rather than compromise the design, later this year I shall withdraw the design and the original chest to a graceful retirement. However, I currently have in stock sufficient timber to fulfill orders for the final two chests (total production run of 15), each to be made at last year's price of £2,200. Please get in touch if you are interested.



## Cedar wood blocks

Hang in the wardrobe or place in drawers, these cedar wood blocks will impart a spicy aroma to fabrics, and also prevent moths from damaging clothing. Made from wood particularly rich in aromatic oils, the blocks are available at the workshop or events I attend at £2 each, or via post at £2.20. Alternatively, I could design and make a chest/chest of drawers/wardrobe lined out in cedar wood for you for considerably more!

## Calendar of events 2007

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|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 19, 20 May          | <b>Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair</b><br>Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire                                                                                                                    |
| 26, 27, 28 May      | <b>Open Workshop</b><br>With invited guests<br>As part of Derbyshire Open Arts event<br><a href="http://www.derbyshireopenarts.co.uk">www.derbyshireopenarts.co.uk</a>                  |
| 17 - 26 August      | <b>A Celebration of Craftsmanship and Design</b><br>Thirlestaine Long Gallery, Cheltenham<br><a href="http://www.celebrationofcraftsmanship.com">www.celebrationofcraftsmanship.com</a> |
| 18 August           | <b>Ashbourne Show</b><br>Osmaston Polo Ground, Derbyshire                                                                                                                               |
| 24 - 27 August      | <b>Chilterns Craft Show</b><br>Stonor Park, Henley on Thames                                                                                                                            |
| 1, 2 September      | <b>Art in the Garden</b><br>Botanical Gardens, Sheffield                                                                                                                                |
| 15, 16 September    | <b>Art Trail</b><br>Melbourne, Derbyshire                                                                                                                                               |
| 23, 24, 25 November | <b>British Crafts</b><br>Town Hall, Chiswick, London<br><a href="http://www.britishcrafts.co.uk">www.britishcrafts.co.uk</a>                                                            |

*Opening times for most events are 10am to 5pm. Should you require more details about specific events, please email me via the website or phone.*

*Visitors are always welcome at the workshop - but please phone first to check I'll be there.*