

THE
MARQUETARIAN

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“Wes”

by Peter White of the Meopham Group
1st in Class 8



**Journal of
The Marquetry Society**



The Marquetry Society



Founded 1952

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Deadline Dates

Final date for receipt of material for issue
294 is **12th January 2026**, but please let me
have as much material as possible by
mid December 2025

Final date for receipt of material for issue
295 is **12th April 2026**

Marquetarian Back Numbers

Are available in PDF form via e-mail at a nominal cost per issue. All editions from number 1 are available. Enquire via Editor.

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Page 3 Cartoon



What a rubbish editor you are, those exhibition directions you printed sent them round to my home where they drank all of my Barolo and ate all my Pecorino cos' they said that all that driving made them ravenous!

Cartoon theme by Vaughan Thomas & 1880's Sloper style artwork by Alan Mansfield.

The 2026 International Marquetry Exhibition
De Havilland Aircraft Museum
Salisbury Hall, London Colney,
Hertfordshire,
AL2 1BU.

Saturday 23 May – Monday 25 May 2026 (page 17 for more info)

Opening Hours: 10:30 am – 5:00 pm (last entry 4:00 pm)



From our Tuesday evening marquetry themed Zoom meetings, and the copious emails and phone calls I receive from our newer Marquetry Society members, I am given to understand that the practical and guidance articles we publish are a genuine favourite of theirs.

Over the years I have spent in the editorial chair, I have studiously investigated as much new material for this journal as I have been able to lay my hands on. But, this approach does not really favour those new to marquetry, they instead tend to look more for the basics of marquetry.

So, with that in mind, I have been scouring the archives for material which would benefit those new to marquetry, and would also act as a refresher for our longer serving membership. And so, hopefully, along with 'modernising' those ancient techniques and making them fit for today's readership, we are, with any luck, pleasing those who are both new and old hands at our marquetry arts and craft.

It is a tricky job trying to find material to publish which pleases both new and old hands at marquetry. We have to bear in mind that our materials and techniques remain basically the same as they did centuries ago. Not much changes in marquetry!

Perhaps glues and finishes do benefit from scientific discoveries, likewise cutting techniques with the use of laser cutters, but anything else? Probably you would say MDF for baseboards as a stable platform for our layons, but the basics of marquetry still remain the same.

We cover a lot of these topics in this winter edition, especially with reference to material found in our archives, which is still very relevant today. It makes for very interesting reading, I think you will find.

Our constitution has been updated to conform with points raised at our recent AGM. The revised version can be found on page 12 of this journal, so do check it out and bring yourself up to date with it.

And to finish, may I wish all of you a wonderful Christmas and an award winning New Year - Cheers!

Alan.

Winter period Password

The password for the Winter period Members Only section of our website is

kevasingo

As always the password is all lower case and a single word, so just type it in as seen above on or after the **1st December 2025**.

To visit this section of our website go to the Independents' Page button on our home page, then scroll down on the Independents' Page to the bottom of that page to the "Enter Protected Area" button. Click the button and enter the password in the dialogue box which will appear on screen. You will then have full access to our large online designs library.



**FROM
THE
PRESIDENT'S
PERSPECTIVE**

Buon Natale e felice anno nuovo! to all of our membership. If you don't understand that, I will translate it into English for you:

It actually means "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year" in Italian, that being my family's native language.

I think that you will agree that we have had a most successful year in 2025. Lots of new members and a jolly good International Marquetry Exhibition earlier on in the year. I tried for the Rosebowl again, but was well and truly beaten by the amazing work of Mike Roberts, among a few others, who managed to outshine me. Oh well, there's always next year.

And here's a photo of the 'biter bit' or Steve Jukes doing the photography of the



2025 International Exhibition exhibits for your and my enjoyment. Steve sure knows his way around photography equipment, plus the taking of the best quality photos, being that Steve is a professional photographer. This certainly is something we all appreciate.

Many subjects for discussion arose at our Executive Committee meeting last month, but too late for this winter Marquetarian. I will report on them in the Spring Marquetarian.

Enrico.





Web Secretary's Letter

Doesn't time fly by? It only seems a matter of weeks since I was sitting in front of the computer preparing a report for the last winter edition. Even in October, shops in Glasgow and online are filling up with Christmas merchandise. We hardly get a break! Well, there is still a number of enquiries coming into my inbox which I try to answer. I would like to be an expert, but I am not, so some enquiries are farmed out to others in an attempt to answer the queries.

I recently received one from a gent in California who had read and was very impressed with our website (thank you, Alan) and wanted information regarding the best thickness of veneer for sawcut assembly. I know that American veneer differs in size, so I wasn't able to answer him. I therefore sent his query to Jeff Grossman in Phoenix, Arizona. Jeff immediately contacted the gent in California, answering his query. He was so delighted with the quick response that he is going to join the Society. Thanks, Jeff. All enquirers to our website get invited to join the Society. We do get some joiners, mostly in America, though.

I have received three enquiries regarding works by Buchschmid and Gretaux. One was regarding a bowl of chrysanthemums. We have had a number of queries over

this picture during the years. We direct the enquirer to our answers on our 'Can we help' page. And he seemed satisfied. Because B&G no longer exist, we seem to be the only organisation that can help with their pictures. Sometimes we can help, but at other times we can't as all our contacts have passed away and all I can do is converse with Alan and answer the query in the best way we can with our limited knowledge of B&G. It seems to have worked in the past!

You should by now have received and read the last Journal. You will have read the Report of the AGM held at the National. In item 12, you will see my report. I stated that I would try again to amalgamate the Scottish members with the independent members north of the Border. I did try to do this about five years ago without success, but as we do not have an Independent Secretary now and only seven Scottish members, it was felt that I ought to try again to co-ordinate our Members north of the Border. I am currently doing this.

At last, I have finished my entry for last year's National! It's taken ages, but it should be ready for next year! Thanks to the St Albans Group for agreeing to host it. Have you started your entry yet? It's not too soon to start.

Well that's all for now. I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a fantastic New Year.



Best wishes
and good
cutting.
David.

Still can't find that perfect veneer?

Then why not visit Wood Veneers ebay shop at www.ebay.co.uk/str/woodveneers where you can find everything you could possibly need from veneer boxes, sample packs, individual samples, veneer tape and so much more.

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Phone : 01277 890616

Email : info@woodveneers.co.uk

Buy 2 sample packs receive a BONUS pack completely free

We are running a new promotion that applies to our samples, sample packs, micro bundles and marquetry bargain boxes. If you're a member of the marquetry society (which you are if reading this!), simply add the following message to your next order:

"I'm a member of the marquetry society, help me be creative!"

Your order will be automatically topped up, it costs you absolutely nothing, just add the magic words and you'll get extra stuff for FREE!

While online do check out our newly released Christmas Marquetry Sample Pack.

L A P E L B A D G E S

To purchase one of these rather exquisitely cast and enamelled Marquetry Society lapel badges please send a cheque for £6.00 (this covers Postage & Packing as well) made payable to **The Marquetry Society**



L A P E L B A D G E S

Include your name and address and then mail to our Chairman :

**Peter White,
10 The Russets,
Meopham,
Kent, DA13 0HH.**

Note: Due to any unforeseen postal limitations, please allow for possible minor delays with delivery of your lapel badge.



Firstly I must apologise to all of our members who wondered why the September website update and the delivery of The Marquetarian were all over a week late in being accomplished.

This was all due to my going 'full fibre digital' on the weekend prior to the 1st of September which took place on the following Monday. Unfortunately, the install engineer happened to snap the fibre on the bend where it plugs into the digital modem. We didn't find this out until I went online the next day - it all worked nicely for about 5 minutes and then all of my internet connection collapsed. This took all of my phone network along with it, so I had no phone to contact the full fibre company.

Borrowing a mobile phone I was able to talk with their help desk who arranged for an engineer to arrive the next day to sort the problem. He did arrive the next day, and as soon as he saw the modem he said "I know what's wrong here, have it fixed in minutes" - and he was indeed as good as his word. So now I am back up to speed and running on full fibre at last.

This episode all took over a week to resolve, hence everything ran over a week late, which rather ruined my schedules. The main problem was that I could not contact anyone to inform them as to what had gone wrong. But at least we are now back in business and the website is up to date and The Marquetarians for autumn were eventually delivered and things are now running as they should. With any luck you have received this Marquetarian

nicely on time, as well, of course, our December website update being fully uploaded and in place. Big sigh of relief!

Anyway, I do hope that you are enjoying seeing the galleries and slide show of the 2025 International Marquetry Exhibition on our website. Those wonderful photos were taken this year by Steve Jukes, who is a total master of the camera, especially when compared to myself! Well done Steve. All of the exhibits will eventually appear on our website over the year until the next exhibition takes place. Enjoy the Christmas season everyone - Cheers!

Alan.

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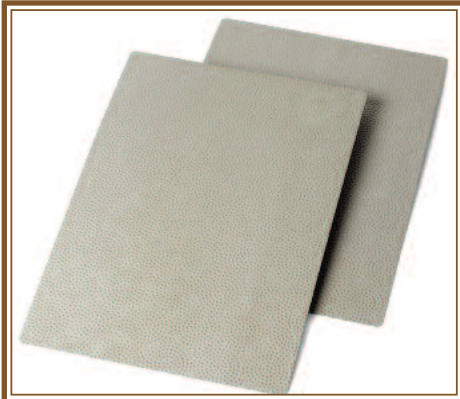
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JOHN COFFEY**

Gluing MDF

by D. Morris

MDF now seems to be THE material for baseboards. It is stable, homogeneous, doesn't have the cross grain of ply, doesn't have the particles and holes of chipboard, is available in a wide range of thicknesses and is reasonably priced. With all the advantages there must be something against it. And there is. The surface always requires a certain amount of preparation before gluing.

As bought the board surface is somewhat shiny and 'greasy'. If the veneer is glued directly on to this the adhesion is not all that good. At the barest minimum, the surface needs a good scouring with a coarse grade of abrasive paper.



StewMac Sharkskin Abrasive sheets

I have often used to use a toothing plane or a hacksaw blade in a handle, but since I had the StewMac Sharkskin Abrasives (*got from Amazon*) to hand, I opted to use them. I mostly use a coarse or medium grade paper and tip the sanding block so that the corner does most of the cutting. I still have the same sanding blocks and stocks of papers from a few years ago. They are getting a little dull, but still work well.



M D F
Sheets

After the sanding is complete, the surface dust is brushed off. Veneer will hold to this fresh, clean, matt, scuffed-up surface much better than it does to the original shiny surface finish and for a lot of work. I consider that to be good enough, but for more important work I seal the scoured surface with dilute PVA glue. About a 50/50 mix of glue and water seems about right and this is brushed on and allowed to dry preferably overnight. If, as is most often the case, both sides of the board are to be veneered, one side of the board is coated and allowed to dry for about an hour and then the other side is coated. A further hour later, the board is stood on edge to allow the air to circulate around both sides. Next day the surface will feel sandpaper rough and will probably have various nibs and bits adhering to it. A quick rub over with the StewMac Sharkskin Abrasive or coarse abrasive paper, soon removes these nibs and the board is ready for veneering.

Why 'size' the surface with dilute PVA? I am convinced that the adhesion is better, and I believe that it is because a scoured, but unsealed surface absorbs much of the glue and also that the fresh glue used for the veneering bonds better to the dried glue which now impregnates the board.

Original or Copy

by Henry Quick

There seems to be an ever-growing tendency in the Society for a few members, on finding which is the sharp end of the pencil, to dub themselves artists.

After self-congratulation, they write to *The Marquetarian* and tell us that in future they are going to draw their own subjects for marquetry.

Thus, I suppose, lifting their noble selves above the common copyist who traces, photographs, borrows or steals his subjects.

Now I have yet to discover just what drawing one's own subject is supposed to prove. What real relationship does it have with true marquetry? The subject can be drawn or copied; only the materials used in making the actual picture determine what is true marquetry and just what is false.

I have seen the definition of marquetry in many books, but I have never seen among these definitions that it was only true marquetry when the worker or craftsman himself had designed or drawn the subject he was going to use for marquetry. Our pictures may well turn out to lose the name of marquetry, but it won't be the fault of the tracing and the copy. More likely the fault of people who want the laws of marquetry to be only what they believe, and not just what is the truth. Is the man who draws any better than the one who prefers to adapt? I don't think so.

The final result of his work is not any more superior, nor his choice of veneers any better; his borders are not more uniform. And does his picture look far more attractive when hanging on the wall? I doubt it.

He may well be contented because he drew the subject, but is that to say the person who does not draw his own subjects can't be really contented with his work? If we are to believe the self-appointed artists are producing better pictures than those who adapt, it is time one of them proved this very doubtful point. But there's the rub.

Could it be that these wizards with a pencil are not quite the artists they imagine they are. It could well be. The pictures of real merit I have seen in the past were all works that had been adapted. That is to say copied, traced, borrowed or stolen, as these would-be Constables and Turners accuse us of doing.

Yet the strange thing about these copied pictures was this. I couldn't have admired them one scrap more, not even if the workers had drawn the subjects with the pencil stuck between their big toes.

No, the fact that the person had not drawn his own subject was of little concern to me. And why should it be? A good marquetry picture is not less true in any sense because a person wishes to adapt, instead of drawing his subject.

A few would have us believe different. However, I sincerely hope that our non-group members will not lose heart with all the talk of drawing their own subjects and not being a copyist. When one is unable to discuss with others any interest or hobby, very often the right and wrong is difficult to determine.

There are many things in marquetry where the right and wrong is still unknown. However, anyone who claims

that one of the wrongs is adapting and copying for a picture instead of drawing it, should write to The Marquetarian and make it very clear just why it is wrong.

None will deny that a basic knowledge of drawing is a great help in marquetry, but this basic knowledge is a far cry from learning how to draw one's own subjects.

If a person wishes to draw his own work, all success to him. But while he is learning, perhaps it would be in his own interest to be silent on the matter, at least to the point of writing to The Marquetarian and taking sly digs at the people who are happy to adapt their subjects. After all, he may find that the day will come when he discovers he cannot master this drawing he was so quick to tell us he was doing. And finding this, he may once again join the ranks of the so-called copyist of whom he spoke in such a condemning way.

Many of us know that C.P.V. (Central Point of Vision) is not the old T.V. set (old example seen below), and that the Vanishing Point is not the moment when you leave the "local" because it is your turn to buy the drinks. Even with this fantastic knowledge we realise that drawing the entire subject for a marquetry picture is another matter.



An example of a vanishing point

After all is said and done, we all make marquetry our hobby for one reason - because it gives us happiness. No matter if we are poor or good at it, or even excellent (none of us is brilliant), we can all share in the joys of spending our leisure hours doing something.

Something that will remind us in years to come that we were not idle all of the time, and not all of the hours were wasted. And perhaps someday others will look at our work (drawn or adapted) and think that we who lived in this age of automation, social media and the internet were not such a gift-less lot when it came to using our hands.

There is plenty of room for those who wish to draw their pictures and those who wish to adapt, without any distinction. The two should not waste time trying to belittle each other.

We stand or fall by our finished work. It is a marquetry picture, not a drawing.

THE MARQUETRY SOCIETY CONSTITUTION

(Amended June 2025)

1. TITLE.

The Society shall be known as The Marquetry Society.

2. DEFINITION.

Marquetry is the art of making pictures and enriching other articles of wood with decorative designs and patterns by the skilful use of the grain, figure and colour of wood veneers, the separate parts of the picture or design being cut to shape, assembled and glued to a prepared base board or background. Although the materials most used for this work are veneers of wood, other materials may be used.

3. OBJECT.

The objects of the Society are:-

- (i) To encourage interest in and to promote and foster the art and craft of marquetry.
- (ii) To develop and maintain a standard of marquetry by:-
 - (a) Holding a periodic competition, as circumstances shall permit.
 - (b) The appointment of judges.
 - (c) The offering of awards and certificates.
 - (d) The granting of Fellowship of the Society.
- (iii) To publish a journal called "THE MARQUETARIAN"
- (iv) To co-operate with the trade and to minimise the costs of materials to all Members.
- (v) To endeavour to bring the artistic, intellectual and general health benefits to be gained from participating in the art and craft of marquetry to all members of the community regardless of creed, race, religion or disabilities.

4. PRESIDENT.

A President shall be elected at an A.G.M. and shall hold office for three years.

5. MANAGEMENT.

An Executive Committee consisting of the President, the Officers, up to five elected ex Officio Members and the Affiliated Group Officers shall manage the affairs of the Society.

6. OFFICERS.

The Officers shall be the Chairman; Vice Chairman; General Secretary; Minute Secretary; Independent Members Secretary; Membership Secretary; Web Secretary; Treasurer; Webmaster; Editor of "The Marquetarian"; Social Media Officer, each as may be appointed from time to time.

7. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- (a) Officers and Members of the Executive Committee, other than Affiliated Group Officers, shall normally be elected at the A.G.M. They shall retire annually but shall be eligible for re-election.
- (b) The Executive Committee shall have power to fill all vacancies.
- (c) An Affiliated Group Officer shall be a Member of the Society with an affiliated Group.

(d) An Affiliated Group Officer may nominate a deputy with voting powers to act on their behalf at Executive Committee Meetings, with the proviso that in voting matters, deputies shall not outnumber elected Executive Committee Members.

8. SUB-COMMITTEES.

The Executive Committee shall have the power to appoint sub-committees for special purposes. Their power shall be only as defined by the Executive Committee.

9. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. (A.G.M.)

An A.G.M. shall be held each year (within 14 days of the International Marquetry Exhibition, if held, or on such other date as the Chairman shall propose should no International Marquetry Exhibition be held within a calendar year), either in person or online, for the following purposes:

- (i) To receive and if thought fit, to pass the independently examined accounts of the Society for the financial year ending 30th November.
- (ii) To receive the reports of the President, Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary, each as appropriate, on the work of the Society.
- (iii) To receive the report of the Treasurer on the financial state of the Society.
- (iv) To receive the report of the Membership Secretary on the membership status of the Society.
- (v) To receive the report of the Webmaster and Editor of the Marquetarian.
- (v) To receive the reports of the Web Secretary and Social Media Officer.
- (vi) To elect the President, Officers and the Executive Committee.
- (vii) To appoint an Independent Examiner to review the Society's accounts.
- (viii) To transact such other business as may be brought before it. A quorum of at least 20 Members (excluding Officers of the Executive Committee) shall be required to vote on motions set before the A.G.M. (or such lesser number as shall apply in circumstances where an A.G.M. is attended by, and/or proxies are received from, fewer than 20 Society Members).

Notice of motions shall be given in writing to the Secretary not later than the 31st March immediately prior to the A.G.M. Notice of the A.G.M. shall be published in The Marquetarian, to be sent to each Member at least 14 days before the meeting. An Agenda may be circulated by email at any time prior to the A.G.M. Minutes of the A.G.M. and the Society's independently examined accounts will be published in The Marquetarian following the A.G.M.

Nominations for President, Officers and Executive Committee may be submitted to the Secretary before, or at, the A.G.M. by any Member, provided the consent of the nominee has been obtained. When more than one nomination has been received for an office, or nominations for the Executive Committee are in excess of the number of vacancies, voting shall be by ballot at the A.G.M. The President, or in his absence, the Chairman shall preside at the meeting and shall have the right to exercise a casting vote.

10. EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING. (E.G.M.)

An E.G.M. may be called for by the Secretary at the direction of the Executive Committee or by written request by 75 Members of the Society, stating the purpose of

the meeting. No business other than that for which the meeting was convened will be discussed and any meeting so requested shall be held within 6 months of the receipt by the Secretary of such request. Members shall receive 14 days' notice of such a meeting.

11. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

Executive Committee Members shall have at least 7 days' notice of Executive Committee meetings. The quorum shall be 10 Members. The Chairman shall have the right to exercise a casting vote. Copies of Minutes of Executive Committee meetings will be sent to Members of the Executive Committee, ex Officio Executive Committee Members and, upon request, Affiliated Group Officers, by mail or email.

12. MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS.

(a) Membership of the Society will be:-

(i) Fellows:

Fellowship of the Society to be awarded for outstanding services to the Society and will be granted by the approval of the Executive Committee. Rosebowl winners automatically qualify.

(ii) Honorary Members:

The Executive Committee shall have the right to grant Honorary membership.

(iii) Members:

The Executive Committee has the right to refuse membership.

(iv) Associate Member:

This category applies to a Member's spouse/live-in partner, children or sponsored juniors under age 18 years at the commencement of the subscription year.

(b) Subscriptions:-

(i) The entrance fee and the annual subscription for the forthcoming year applicable to Fellows and Members shall be recommended by the Executive Committee to the A.G.M. and decided by the Members present. The subscriptions shall be due on 1st January each year.

(ii) Members not renewing their subscriptions by 31st March shall cease to be Members of the Society.

13. GROUPS.

For the purpose of carrying out the objects and business of the Society, Groups shall be established on a UK regional basis. Members forming a Group shall appoint an Affiliated Group Officer. The Affiliated Group Officer must maintain paid-up membership of the Society whilst holding office. The Executive Committee shall have power to delegate to the Affiliated Group Officer the function and power of the Executive Committee with respect to Group Members. The Executive Committee shall not be liable for any debts incurred by the Group. The Affiliated Group Officer shall have power to collect fees and subscriptions on behalf of the Society.

14. GROUP FUNDS.

The balance of cash in hand at 30th November of all Groups, other than monies received for Society subscriptions, shall remain the property of the Group concerned and shall not form part of the funds of the Society.

15. LIABILITY AND DISCLOSURE.

With the exception of any liability undertaken by an Affiliated Group Officer acting (a) at the direction of the Executive Committee, or (b) on their own account in relation to Group or personal matters which are not the responsibility of the Executive Committee, all liability on behalf of the Society is incurred by the Executive Committee. All Affiliated Group Officers should familiarise themselves with the terms of the Society’s public liability insurance cover and ensure their Group’s compliance therewith. By becoming a Member of the Society, each Member acknowledges that its contact details may be utilised by Executive Committee solely and exclusively in connection with the activities of the Society.

16. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION.

Material amendments to this Constitution affecting all Members may be amended only at any A.G.M. or at an E.G.M. called for the express purpose of so doing, on a majority vote in accordance with Article 9 (viii) above.

17. PROXY VOTING.

Fellows and Members shall be entitled to vote at any General Meeting of the Society either in person or by proxy. Notice of proxy together with the names of nominees shall be given to the General Secretary prior to the meeting. Proxy voting forms shall be obtained as required. The General Secretary shall keep a register of such proxies.

18. DISSOLUTION.

The Society may be dissolved only at an A.G.M or at an E.G.M. called for the express purpose of so doing, on a majority vote of those present either in person or by proxy in accordance with Article 9 (viii) above. At that meeting the manner of the disposal of the Society’s assets shall be determined.

MARQUETRY TOOLS
The Press or Seam Roller

No, we didn’t say a ‘steam roller’, this one doesn’t flatten road surfaces. Instead it flattens all manner of things in your marquetry picture when you need a little extra pressure in certain areas, especially if you are using a contact adhesive.

This decorator’s tool helps us marquetry-arians to flatten out and ‘chase’ air bubbles or pockets from our layons while the glue has yet to set.

This is especially important if you happen to use one of the contact adhesives of which some of us make frequent use. If you don’t have access to a decent size of press you may find you sometimes need to resort to alternative methods for fixing



your picture to the baseboard, things like piling quantities of books on it for example. Well, before you do that, a good idea is to go over the surface of the picture carefully with the seam roller while the glue is still wet and with just sufficient pressure, force any recalcitrant air bubbles out before piling your books on top!

Chairman's Chatter

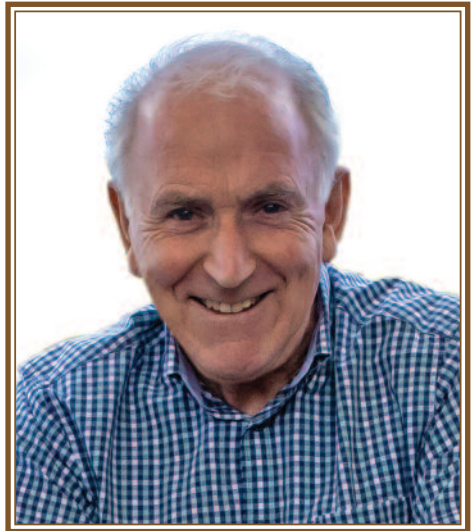


Firstly I'd like to draw your attention to the Society's constitution which you'll see printed in this journal (*pages 12 to 15 Ed*). Our constitution in simple terms exists to provide a framework which outlines our purpose, operational rules, membership structure and democratic processes. Exciting eh!

Well, it is important as it guides us as a committee to carry out actions for the welfare of our members and be reminded of what we aim to achieve as a Society. Making major changes to the constitution requires a vote by members, but minor changes that effectively keep it up to date, clarify or generally ensure it is relevant to how we operate today can be made by the committee, seeing as we are charged with looking after your interests. David Kelmanson and I have recently made some minor changes, which the committee have approved and the results are what you can read in this magazine.

On now to an urgent appeal. Both our membership secretary, Andrew Jaszczak and treasurer, Janet Edwards will not be standing for re-election at the next AGM. These are two very important posts which must be filled for us to carry out essential parts of our operation.

It is not beyond the realms of possibility that we could cease to function without anybody in those roles. Do you have the skills to take on either of those jobs? If you have experience in accounting, have been the treasurer for a small organisation or have reasonable skills at maintaining a spreadsheet, you would help the Society enormously by volunteering your services.



Anyone interested in either of the posts would not be thrown in at the deep end as both the current officers are happy to spend time with you during the handover and have useful documented responsibilities and procedures to help as well.

We are also looking for someone to fill the vacancy of Social Media Officer now that Karen has retired.

And, if we've not been going on about this for long enough, Alan Mansfield would like to take on an apprentice to shadow him in his roles as web master and editor. We must look to the long term future for the good of the Society.

Look out for some 'tweaking' of the competition rules next Spring in respect to the number of accumulated points required to progress through the classes. Much research and polling of members' opinions was carried out by David Kelmanson to ascertain current feeling about the system we have been using for a number of years. After careful analysis and thought about this, we decided to ease the path through the classes and have accordingly reduced the number of points required to progress through the classes.

Peter

Our 2026 International Marquetry Exhibition

De Havilland Aircraft Museum
Salisbury Hall,
London Colney,
Hertfordshire,
AL2 1BU.

Established in 1959, the de Havilland Aircraft Museum was Britain's first aviation centre. Its 20 aircraft include the iconic Mosquito plus the Comet, the world's first commercial jet airliner.

As well as artifacts and materials to handle, there are equipment demonstrations, talks and rare film clips and newsreels. Parking is free and there is a café, shop and play area.

All aspects of operations are provided by volunteers who recently received The Queen's Voluntary Service Medal. Named as one of the 'best small museums' by The Sunday Times, it secured the Travellers' Choice Award for 2025



Do note that, as this is a working museum and as we are holding our marquetry exhibition on their premises, they will be charging an admission fee for entering their museum premises (where we will be holding our own exhibition). But, that admission cost not only lets you attend our own exhibition, it also allows you full access to the aircraft museum itself.

The Museum is located next to Salisbury Hall in the Hertfordshire countryside just off Junction 22 of the M25 and outside the ULEZ. With wide open spaces and free parking, there is a small café serving hot drinks, sandwiches, pastries & cakes with outdoor picnic tables and a lovely shop stocked with models, diecasts, books, clothing, etc.

De Havilland Aircraft Museum

Address: Salisbury Hall,
London Colney,
Hertfordshire,
AL2 1BU.

Opening Hours: 10:30 am – 5:00 pm
(last entry 4:00 pm)

Admission Prices:

Adult – £12
(£14 with gift aid)

Concessions* - £10.90
(£12 with gift aid)

Child (5-16) – £6.50
(£8 with gift aid)

Family – £31.50
(£35 with gift aid)

*Seniors over 65, armed forces/emergency services/disabled visitors.

There is ample free parking.

Plus a café & shop.

Located only 5 mins from M25 J22

<https://www.dehavillandmuseum.co.uk>

Marquetry exhibition dates – Saturday
23 May – Monday 25 May 2026

Gluing & Pressing Pictures to Baseboard

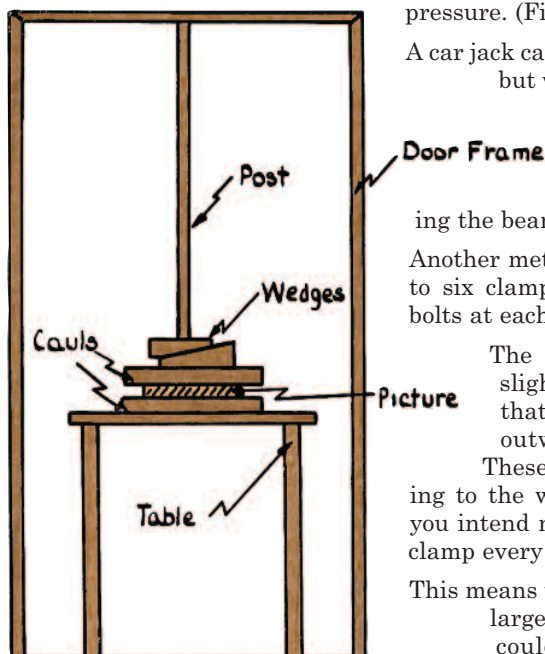
by P. G. Stilgoe

There are several methods of pressing. For this press, two cauls are required, which can be $\frac{3}{4}$ " block board or ply slightly larger than the picture, also about six cramps or hand-screws. Lay the picture between the cauls with a sheet of polythene next to the veneer, and felt or several sheets of newspaper for protection. The cramps should reach about a third of the way across the press.

Starting from the centre place a clamp at each side of the picture and apply slight pressure. Then with other cramps apply a little pressure at the ends, then more pressure in the centre and again at the ends, until an even pressure has been applied over the whole press. The object of this is to press out the surplus glue, starting from the centre, and leave an even layer of glue between the veneer and the baseboard.

Leave it in the press for at least 12 hours. When the panel has been taken out it should be perfectly flat and free from lumps of glue and blisters.

If you haven't any handscrews or suitable cramps, pressure can be applied by placing a table or bench under a beam or doorway in a garage, workshop, or even in your own home, provided that the structure is strong enough to withstand a little pressure. Having glued the picture on the baseboard and placed it between the cauls, put it on the bench or table under the centre of the beam or doorway, cut a post of 2" x 2" about 2" shorter than the distance between the top of the caul and the underneath of the beam, place two folding wedges 10" x 2" x 2", tapering the $2\frac{1}{2}$ " on top of the caul, and with the 2" x 2" post underneath the beam gently tap the wedges and this will give the required pressure. (Fig. 1).

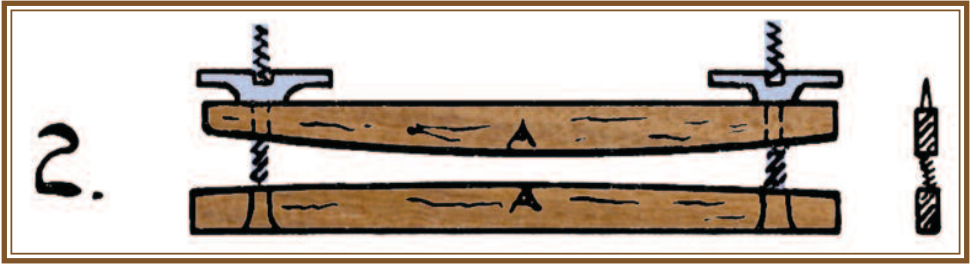


A car jack can be used instead of wedges, but with this method more pressure can be applied than necessary, so please don't use too much pressure in case of damaging the beam or door frame!

Another method is to make about three to six clamping pieces of 2" x 1" with bolts at each end as in Fig. 2.

The inside edge (A) should be slightly rounded lengthwise, so that the glue will be pressed outwards from the centre. These pieces can be made according to the width of the largest picture you intend making, and lengthwise one clamp every four or five inches.

This means three clamps every foot. For larger pictures or panels a press could be made on a permanent

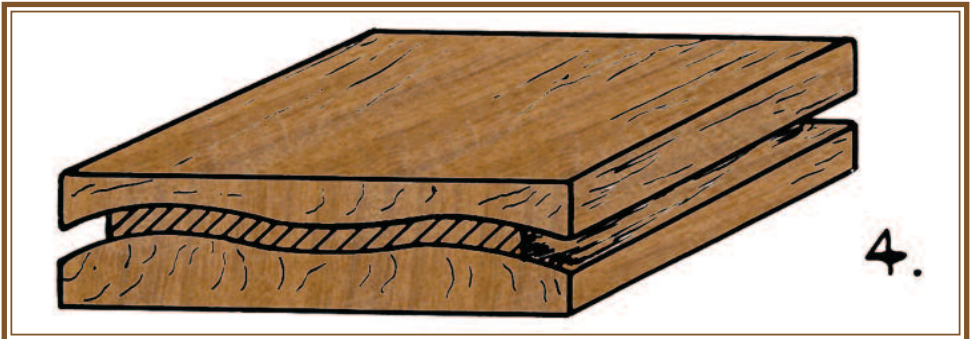
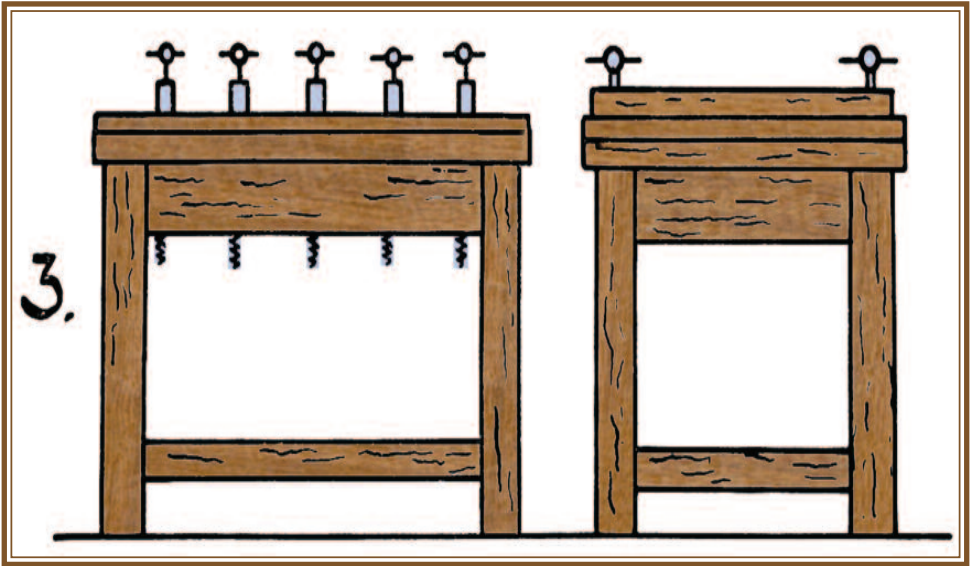


stand as in Fig. 3. This type of press would be used for panels up to six foot square or larger.

Shaped panels can be laid by two methods. Hollow, round or serpentine shapes require two shaped cauls usually made of pine or deal, one to fit each side of the

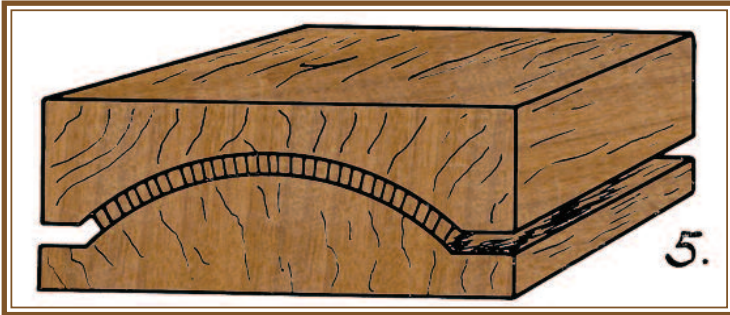
panel as in Figs. 4 and 5. Larger cramps would be required, or the press shown in Fig. 1, with post and wedges could be used.

Shaped panels can also be laid by the sand bag method. These bags are made of strong calico, filled with sand, and large

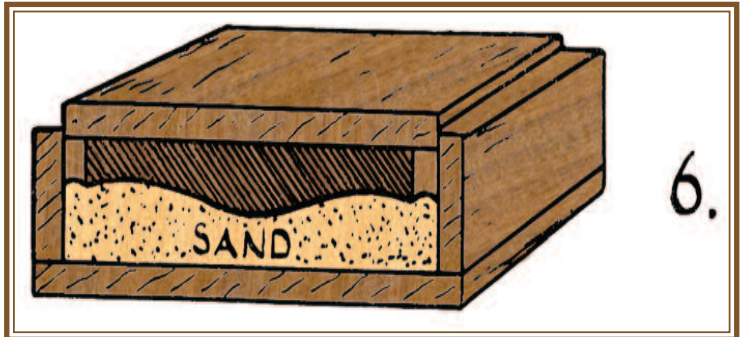


enough to allow for at least two inches of sand at all points.

They should be laid in a box made for the purpose (Fig. 6), and the veneered face gently fitted down to the sand before final pressure is applied. If scotch glue is used the sand bag is heated in the same way as a caul, but it must be remembered that sand retains heat longer than wood, therefore longer time should be allowed under pressure.



With these methods of pressing any adhesive can be used. With scotch glue the cauls will have to be heated; with other glues mix and use according to the makers' instructions. A sheet of polythene next to



the veneer, and felt or sheets of newspaper are necessary for protection of your work, whichever method of pressing and glueing you decide to use.

Although we have talked a lot about scotch glue (also pearl glue or rabbit skin glue and other suchlike glues from the earlier cabinet maker days) in this article, these days we have much more 'convenient use' glues which do not require heated glue pots and suchlike any more.

Mainly I am talking about PVA and formaldehyde resin glues which we use cold and are therefore more convenient for our needs. If you are a traditionalist, you may indeed wish to use scotch glue.

Editorial Note

This article, together with its misspellings, has been reproduced from a much older issue of the Marquetarian in response to requests to reprint "that article about making a marquetry press which utilised a door frame!"

I have left the original measurements and dimensions intact, but I'm sure that if you want to convert the dimensions involved into metric, this shouldn't present too much difficulty.

I have to confess that I was quite surprised at how many of our members

actually remembered a fifty to sixty year old article about pressing, but obviously this article must have left its mark in their collective memory.

The illustrations have been cleaned up and the text has been reprinted in the same format as it appeared in the original article.

I hope you enjoy this article, and find it useful if you require an easy to make press. If there's any article you would like to see again, please let me know.

Alan.

LO TAC TAPE DISPENSER

Although this article is titled 'lo-tac tape dispenser', I have included an historic piece describing a veneer tape dispenser as well, so that we have 'all bases' covered so to speak.

Starting with the "magic tape" you see in the photos here, I find this to be a really good tape for marquetry work. It has many advantages over traditional clear sticky tape. A principal advantage being that it is lo-tac and does not pull out any veneer fibres when you come to remove it, plus it does not leave any sticky residue behind to be cleaned up after you've removed it.



Magic tape rolls & dispenser

3M Magic Tape is easily available, and dare I say it, you can, as I do, buy these reels in boxes of 8 from Amazon.

Also you can get the dispenser and reel holder for slightly under £10 at the time of writing. I have several of these dotted around the office, I have found them very convenient.

Another good thing with the Magic Tape is that you can write on it with a standard ball point pen. For me, this is very handy. For many years I used masking tape when building my marquetry picture or project. A disadvantage with masking tape though is that you can end up with quite a thick mass of tape, which

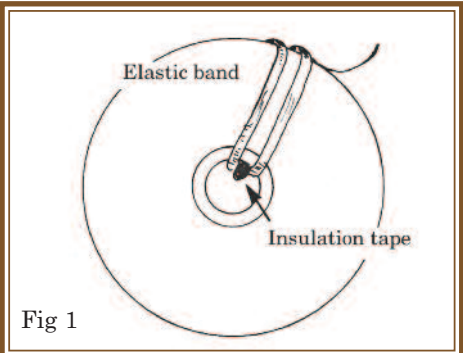


Lo-tac Magic tape in dispenser

if not removed within about 24 hours while it is still 'lo-tac', can end up pulling fibres out of your work when you come to remove it. Magic tape does not suffer from this annoying problem.

And now, we move onto those reels of white veneer tape. Unless you are very careful with it, you can easily end up with a complete 'loose tape spilt out' mess. This problem was covered some years ago with readers' recommendations on how to overcome such problems.

Previous editor Ernie Ives published those recommendations, and so we have brought them up to date and publish them here for you to enjoy and learn from.



An earlier method

Keeping paper tape under control.

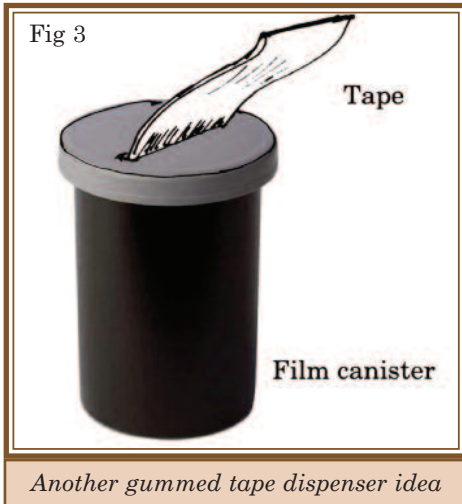
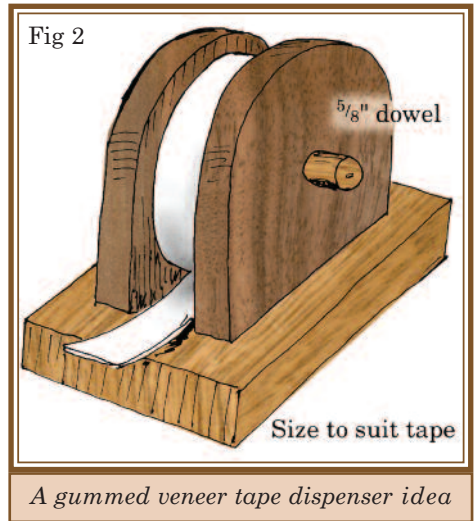
Here is a tip on keeping gummed paper tape tidy on a roll. The method is simple, costs nothing and works! This is one reader's solution, but I'm sure somebody else has thought of it too. I am sure others have their own solutions, if so please tell us.

Thread an elastic band through the centre and bring the ends together using insulation tape (Fig 1). As the reel gets smaller change the elastic band.

This tip reminds me to tell you of a method Ernie Ives used. His holder is more elaborate, but still simple to make.

Fig. 2. Ernie Ives's Tape Holder.

The main material is 19 or 25 mm ply or



blockboard (or MDF), the side pieces being screwed in position through the base. In this instance, within reason the heavier it is, the better. Sizes are of course dependent on the veneer tape used - the 25 mm wide tape comes in smaller sized reels than the 20 mm wide that Ernie normally used. The 12 mm dowel is left somewhat longer than required for ease of removal when changing reels.

Another ingenious and more or less cost-free method of storing tape was devised by one of the children at a local school a long time ago now. Many of them used to

take tape home so they could continue with the cutting of their pictures. Ernie let them pull 20 ft or so from the main reel and they would laboriously wind this into a tidy coil - tidy until they used it once! However, one girl put hers into a 35 mm film container and cut a 'tape size' slot in the lid (Fig 3). Once the initial coiling is done the tape is put in the container and the free end passed through the lid. Tape could then be pulled out as required rather like the string containers that hardware shops and drapers used to have on their counters. That's going back a bit! Could be useful for members taking small quantities of tape for group meetings or demonstrations.

When staying with a marquetry friend and his wife during the National, in the quiet of early morning before the rest were awake, Ernie noticed his friend's simple method of keeping his reel of veneer tape in order. He made a mental sketch of it, but perhaps this sketch will be of more use to you (Fig 4).

Uncontrolled tape.

Perhaps here I can tell you a story that would have made a good cartoon for page 3 - or a video for "You've Been Framed" had there been an artist or cameraman on hand at the time. Ernie bought a bale

of 20 mm wide tape and decided to break the 400 metre reels down into smaller sizes for sale to group members. He schemed a way of using his lathe to do the coiling and put the main reel on a long nail in one of the overhead beams. He started coiling at a great lick and all went well until the tape broke.

That shouldn't have been a disaster except that the overhead reel was spinning quite fast at the time and continued to spin and uncoil itself, showering him and most of the garage floor with tape before he could stop it!

Amazing what a mess and what a tangle tape can make. All he could do was to gather up the debris and 'wheelie' it. He probably got rid of more tape than many marquetarians use in a lifetime!

He modified the arrangement and cut the speed down before continuing with his re-coiling. All went well this time.

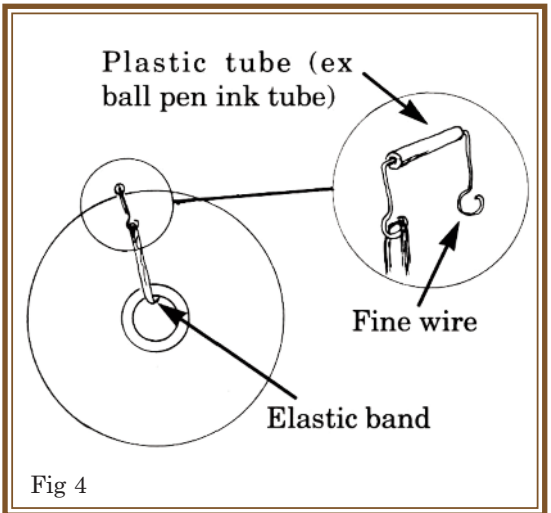


Fig 4
And yet another dispenser idea

So, if you, dear reader, have any similar ideas for gadgets and helpful arrangements which will benefit your fellow readers, then do please send them in to the editorial office and we will happily prepare them for The Marquetarian.



Yes, it's that time of the year once again. It is time to renew your membership of the Marquetry Society.

You can do this by filling in the form included with this edition of The Marquetarian and posting it off with your payment to our membership secretary, or you can renew via our website. Go to the 'How Do I Join?' button on the home page and click, then scroll down to 'online form' and click, then choose RENEW SUBS

and click, and then choose 'Renewal' for your location, and then click the yellow Buy Now button to take you to our Stripe page and just follow the prompts. You will then have renewed your membership.





*There's Magic in the ruin'd battlement
To which the building of the present Age
Must yield its pomp
And wait till ages are its dower*

Have you never sensed, when looking at, or handling some work of art or craft, the living personality or influence of some long dead artist whose hand fashioned the piece, and in doing so has left behind him a part of his soul as an inspiration to a future generation? This sensation is the "Magic" of Byron, as will be seen in the example of his writing in the aged piece of parchment displayed above and I venture to suggest that lovers of Marquetry are privileged in that store of "Magic" which awaits the seeker among the works and designs of the ancient Marquetarians, inlayers and cabinetmakers.

Marquetry pictures may now be your hobby - a pleasant pastime - a retreat from the worries and cares of the daily round, but it can become far more than these - an all-absorbing passion when

even time stands still, and the creation of a masterpiece brings the supreme satisfaction of feeling that you too have given to the world a little of yourself, and who knows, it may be that in years to come, a future generation may feel a little of your "Magic".

Where may one find this inspiration? Private collectors and Museums hold many pieces of 18th and 19th century works, for this was the period when Marquetry reached its zenith.

But the Art of inlaying was ancient in those days. Believe it or not, Marquetry is as old as the Pyramids! Excavations in the Valley of Kings at Luxor revealed pieces dating back to B.C.E. 2,500 and bearing the beautiful "Wave and Lotus" pattern of that period. The Lotus was the National flower of Egypt and the

surrounding countries, and is found in various forms in Greek, Assyrian and Egyptian Art.

The Hebrews had the art, probably learned during their sojourn in Egypt, for they used it in the decoration of the temple erected by Solomon. The Romans knew the art, though it took the form of mosaic or geometric design, the woodwork designs being repeated in the marble mosaic of the floors.

Incidentally, it is interesting to note that a similar type of mosaic is still being done by the natives of British Guiana, where the dadoes around the walls of their houses are wood mosaics of scenes of everyday life, animals, etc., made up from numerous square and triangular blocks of the native woods. (The forests of British Guiana are a treasure house for the marquetry, abounding with such exotic woods as the Purple-heart, Tulipwood, Snake or Letterwood, Silverballi, Monkeywood, etc.)

It was not until the 18th century that Marquetry took pride of place in furniture decoration, when Italian, French



An early form of marquetry on an ancient Egyptian cabinet



Ancient Egyptian craftsmen at work

and Dutch marqueterians vied with each other in the production of the most elaborate designs. Even the 'more staid' English cabinetmakers came under this influence, covering the whole of a piece with marquetry, in place of the judicious use of small inlaid motifs, lines and strings. To describe in any detail the works of this period would call for reams of paper, but many of those pieces are still remaining, such as the Chase Desk, which the interested may see for themselves.



*Chase Desk at Hatfield House.
Photo by Andrew Jaszczak*

Of equal importance is the work of the many unknown craftsmen whose work has never reached the open market, or the public eye. I refer to the many fine craftsmen who lived, worked and died in the service of the "Stately Homes and Manors of England" where family crafts were fully developed, son succeeding

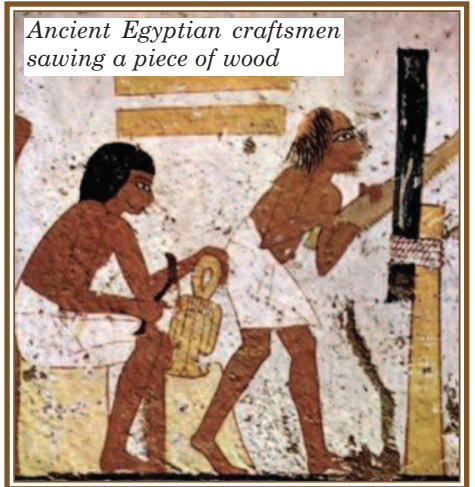


A bar in British Guiana displaying their ongoing interest in all forms of marquetry

father for generations, thus bringing to a high standard of perfection for each particular craft. Of such an order is the Tunbridge Ware, an example of which you see here on the right, being a delightful form of Marquetry peculiar to that part of Kent. In other parts of the country the craft developed on rather different lines, as in Dorset, the "Cube" pattern predominated - doubtless being brought into the county from France, as this is essentially a design from the Louis XV period.



With the turn of the century, from 1850 onwards, Marquetry fell from favour, and ostensibly became a "lost" art.



Ancient Egyptian craftsmen sawing a piece of wood

Lost? Never! While the creative spirit remains, the craft will remain. We have a heritage which we cannot betray.

Our fathers gave their "Magic" to the world. Can we do less?

Mounting a picture, affixing stringers, borders and cutting mitres

Part 3

by David Walker

Apologies for the rather fore-shortened part 2 of this series in the autumn edition, but we had to make way for the AGM minutes, which, of course, must take priority in order to keep you informed of the current 'state of play' of the Marquetry Society.

Obviously you are now up to date with such things, so let's get back to part 3 of David Walker's borders and mitres, etc, tutorial series; here goes:

If a contact adhesive is used to lay the picture, both the picture and the board must be coated as per instructions seen on the tin.

Once the contact adhesive is touch dry, using the markings on the picture and board, position the picture.

Press gently with your fingers so that the picture stays in position then press in the veneer press or flatten down with a wall-paper roller or a similar object.



Once the adhesive has had sufficient time to dry or cure we can now ensure that the border spaces are of equal width.

From the sides and ends measure the width that you require for the borders (Fig 10 & 11). Ensure that the border spaces are the same width all around the picture, this is important.

Mark, using the set square to ensure accuracy and cut through the picture to the base board (Fig 12). Carefully using your knife or a chisel, remove any waste.

Once started this comes away quite easily (Fig 13).

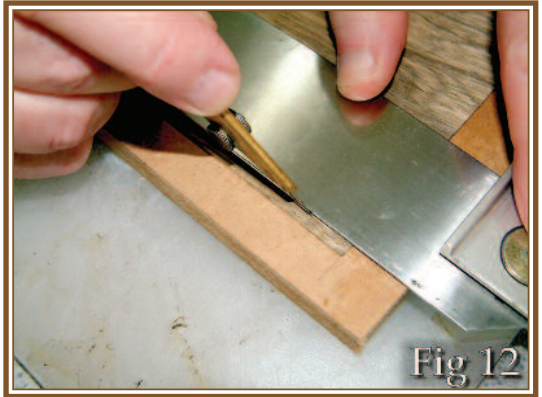
We will now have a picture with the border space of equal width all round and we are ready to prepare the borders with their attached stringers to enhance the overall appearance of our picture with pleasing stringers and carefully applied borders.



If you are new to this procedure do take care with using a scalpel or very sharp blade alongside a metal guide, such as the set square you see here when conducting this procedure, as it is all too easy for the blade to slip and possibly cut your delicate marquetry artist's finger!

This certainly can happen, as I can testify - it happened to me!

If you are unsure, I would suggest using a series of light cuts instead of applying pressure to cut in one stroke. This would help to avoid potential slippage of the blade.



Before the borders and stringers are attached to the picture, glue down the back, ends and sides and allow drying.

When using an adhesive tape for holding the border veneer and stringer together, prior to gluing, make sure to use a lo-tac variety of adhesive tape.

The reason for this is that the most common form of adhesive tape, such as the "Sello" variety, has a form of adhesive which will either rip fibres from the veneer when taken off after the glue has set. Or it will leave a rather sticky residue that is almost impossible to remove.

A lo-tac tape will avoid such pitfalls. This form of tape has more than sufficient 'sticky' qualities to perform the job we require of it, but it will leave no mess



Cutting borders and applying stringers

Choose veneer with a straight grain for your borders. (Fig 14) If you choose borders that are equal in width but have grain that is not straight, when mounted it will make the picture seem out of square.

Choose stringers that are of the same width (Fig 14). Often stringers, even from the same batch may vary. Cut the borders slightly longer and wider than required. Attach the stringer to the border with adhesive tape (fig 15) turn over and apply PVA Wood Adhesive along the whole length of the joint, rub in and again secure with adhesive tape and allow to dry. (Fig 16) Continue until all four have been prepared. (as in Figs 16 & 17 on opposite page)





Fig 15

behind when we remove it. The one I favour is the 3M Magic tape - this does the job perfectly in my opinion, I have been using it for years and never had a failure yet.

You could always fall back on using masking tape, but do remember to remove it as soon as possible. This is because masking tape has a tendency to sort of dry out and lose its adhesion. So do take care if having to resort to masking tape.

The American market uses a blue coloured lo-tac tape, which can be found in the UK if you search hard enough, but it is not as plentiful or easily obtainable as the 3M Magic tape.

An advantage with the blue lo-tac tape is that it is easily identifiable as the where it has been used on your marquetry work. And, it does not leave any residue to be



Fig 16

cleaned off after it. This 'no clean up required' is a quality it shares with the aforesaid Magic tape - an important quality in my opinion.

As you see in Figs 16 & 17 below, the stringers have glued very nicely to the border veneers. You see in these two photos the front and back views of the assembled border pieces.

The tape and glue process has made a thoroughly good job of preparing our borders ready for applying them to our ready trimmed and cut picture which has been mounted on our base-board in readiness for the application of these preprepared borders and stringers.



Fig 17

Our next instalment will be looking at the problem of cutting perfect mitres using a jig (which we will make ourselves) that will prevent overcuts and splintered ends from happening to our mitres. That is something that we all try to avoid. With this jig though, such problems are easily avoided.

We will show you how to line up the mitres to meet perfectly at the tip of each corner. See you there then.

Editor's Note: Due to the foreshortened edition of this series in the autumn Marquetarian, we have gone back over the last couple of sentences of that previous article, in order to make the flow of this edition of the series much more understandable and cohesive.

The 2025 International Pictures

Thanks go to Steve Jukes for taking the Photographs



Left: 119 - VHC Class 1 - No dimensions listed
“Locked In” by Mike Cain of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *This is an excellent profile view portrait. There’s a good graduation of shadow to light with the veneer selection on the face. Nicely done, good work. Superb future potential.*

VT: *As one of their first pieces, it is a very good attempt at a portrait, with a choice of veneers that I like, and do justice to her face, perhaps the veneer for the nose is a little too dark though. The border complements the picture beautifully, and so clean, well worthy of a VHC. Well done.*

PG: *Generally well cut with an appropriate well cut border. The facial tones were a bit harsh, but well deserving of a VHC.*

Right: 703 - Class 7A - 20 x 27 x 7 cms. “Sea Horse Box” by Les Dimes of the Harrow Group

AM: *I do like the shape of this box. The burr veneer works well on it. The sea horse is well cut and rather colourful. A very pleasing box.*

This just goes to show that Les can turn his hand to almost anything in the name of marquetry. A nice one.

VT: *A lovely seahorse box, nicely cut with a good selection of veneers that work well together.*

PG: *An unusual little box. I liked the seaweed wrapped around to the lid border. Good clean finish.*



Judges' Comments

The initials used for the Judges are:

(AM) Alan Mansfield

(VT) Vaughan Thomas

(PG) Peter Goucher

(AMJ) Artistic Merit Judge

The judges' comments are taken from their own notes. Editorial notes are based on different selection parameters to those of the exhibition judges and are related to the exhibit's presentation in this journal. However, where elements of any 'non-awards' work stand out to the editorial eye, these will be mentioned in the text.

Right 401 - Class 4 - 35 x 27 cms

“Tea Time at Bleak House (after R. Embleton)” by Janet Edwards of the Chelmsford Group

AM: *These Embleton pictures work well in the medium of marquetry. Nicely done Janet. Those mitres are perfect.*

VT: *If only the faces weren't quite so flat, and a few shadows inserted to anchor the girl and table down would have made so much difference to this picture. The*

Choice of veneer for her apron was superb.

PG: *The faces of the figures looked odd to me. A few shadows would have enhanced the scene, especially under the table. I particularly liked the maid's apron and the tablecloth.*



Left: 512 - Class 5 - 23 x 60cms

“The Farewell (aft. Eugene de Blaas 1843-1932)” by Les Dimes of the Harrow Group

AM: *Oh yes, a really attractive picture of a beautiful girl waving goodbye. What a cracker!*

VT: *A beautiful lady with a good veneer choice, especially the blouse and dress. If only the face, arms, and legs had a little bit of sand shading to take the flatness out.*

PG: *Very good veneer choices. The skirt is particularly effective. Excellent detail on the shoes.*

Right: 614 - Class 6A - Miniature

“Twiggy” by Brian Freeman of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *A clever composition. Really cleanly cut for a miniature piece - no glue lines at all. How the heck do you do that Brian? Wish that I could replicate that ability.*

Brian does these miniatures so well. Perhaps one day I'll even have a go myself.

VT: *An interesting and well cut piece, not sure whether the black has contaminated the background, but it works wonderfully.*

PG: *A clean cut picture but it appeared to me that the black had contaminated the background whether intentional or not. The whole piece was well cut and effective.*



Right: 136 - Class 1 - 16 x 20 cms

“Time Traveller” by Ben Comery of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: A jolly good picture. Recounts memories of the youngster laying there on the carpet reading her book. The bookcase and the well observed orientation of the books are so close to my own bookshelves, that being a wee bit hig-gledy-piggledy to say the least!

VT: Nice subject for a picture, the veneers for the girls hair and dress are just right, I liked the books standing up and leaning over, a clean picture with a good finish.

PG: Good veneer choice for the dress. Lacking some definition of the cupboards under the bookshelves. Good border and mitres.



Left: 110 - Class 1 - 25 x 29 cms

“Angry Dog” by George Toll an Independent Member

AM: I enjoyed this cartoon style dog having a good growl. A very enjoyable piece of work I thought.

VT: Some very good cutting in this picture, but a scraping with a cabinet scraper would have cleaned the smudges out. Some angry dog I would not like to meet, but on the wall, yes.

PG: The borders and mitres let this picture down. I liked the idea of the outline fine lines, but they were poorly executed. The right eye seems to me to be a bit odd.



Right: 532 - Class 5 - 43 x 32 cms

“Farmyard in the Snow” by John Biggs of the Thurrock Group

AM: A really good depiction of a snowy farmyard scene with the obligatory snow man in residence. The sky veneer works well for a wintry scene.

VT: This reminds me of a winter scene from the James Herriot era, a well cut and presented piece.

PG: I liked the scene and the snow was well depicted. The tractor detail and the back of the Land Rover were not quite right. A good attempt at the number plate. Generally well cut as one would expect for this class.



Right: 201 - HC Class 2 - 31 x 25 cms

“Paint it Black” by Norman Rowe of the Thurrock Group

AM: Ah yes, the classic Stones. A good example of black & white work there.

VT: Well, you can definitely see who it is, I don't know if it was the actual background veneer or the black has carried into the white background, but it works well, just a couple of mistakes in the hands though.

PG: The background veneer seemed to be contaminated by the black of the figures.



The different whites didn't seem quite right to me, especially on the hand. Good likenesses of the figures. Well cut.

Left: 501 - Class 5 - 21 x 34 cms

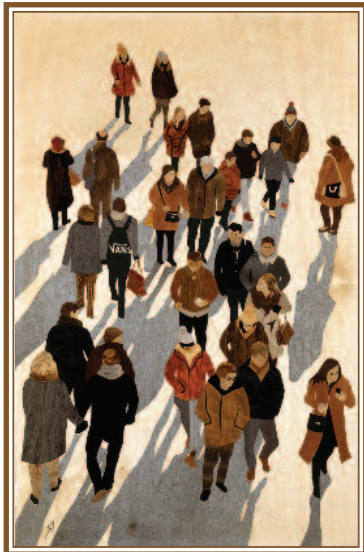
“Rush Hour, but not Lowry” by Alan Townsend of the Chelmsford Group

AM: Much in the manner of L.S. Lowry. But not match stick men here, much more representational of the real world. Nice one, well done Alan. Quality work.

VT: Pleased to see some eyes and spectacles inserted in the faces, it gives more character to the people, nice variety of veneers for the clothes and shadows.

The artist was right not to add a border as it would have ruined this picture.

PG: Well cut. The shadows were effective and the variety of figures very good.



Below: 516 - Class 5 - 33 x 42 cms **“At Rest” by Mike Roberts of the Sutton Coldfield Group**

AM: As always, a nicely detailed picture from Mike. Quality work.

VT: This pair of tigers was well cut and finished. The background veneer was too close in colour to the tigers and I had difficulty distinguishing the tigers from it. Great pebbles though.

PG: An excellent cross banded border. Very effective pebbles. The colour of the trunk meant that I couldn't tell where tiger and tree differ. Generally very well cut, especially the fur.



Right: 714 - Class 7A - Miniature - “Untamed Spirit - Key Organiser” by Zsolt Nagy - an Independent Member

AM: This is a superb key organiser in the medium of leather and marquetry.

A jolly good piece of work by Zsolt.

It is unusual as well, never seen marquetry incorporated into leather work before. I do rather like it.

VT: *Something very different, a marquetry keyring wallet.*

Excellent veneer choice for the buffalo, well cut in, not sure about the eyes though.

PG: *Good veneer choice for the buffalo body. Fragmentation of foreground grasses a bit messy.*



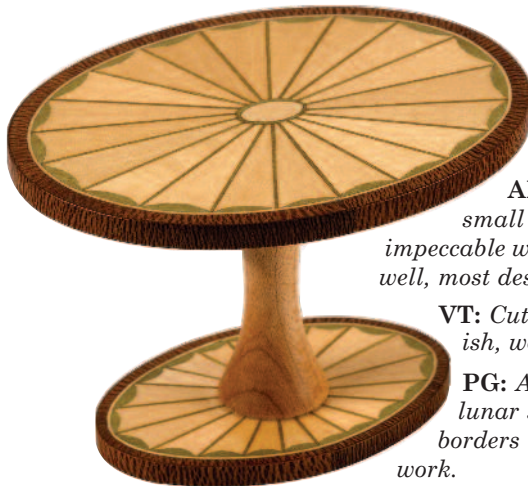
Left: 764 - 2nd Class 7C - No size given

“Oval Table” by by Martin Bray of the St. Albans Group

AM: *Another of Martin’s wonderful small marquetry decorated tables. As always, impeccable work. Martin wears Ben Bedford’s crown well, most deserving of it.*

VT: *Cutting is of the highest standard and finish, worthy of a second place.*

PG: *A very well cut piece, well finished. The lunar segments were inconsistent in size. The borders and edges worked well. Good fine line work.*



Right: 654 - VHC Class 6B - 8 x 8 cms

“Lighthouse” by Lynn Osborne of the Staffordshire Group

AM: *A lovely simple piece of miniature marquetry in the beginner’s miniature category.*

VT: *Sand shading on the lighthouse and fragmentation in the sea is of a very high standard for a beginner. The lighthouse being offset to allow the birds into view makes this picture.*

PG: *Miniatures aren’t easy! The sea fragmentation worked well and the birds added some life. The lighthouse cutting could be improved. Some shading of the lighthouse would have given a more realistic effect. A good effort nonetheless.*



Right: 144 - Class 1 - 23 x 28 cms

“Mrs Giraffe” by Joyce Hopkinson of the St. Albans Group

AM: *A most pleasing head and neck depiction of Mrs Giraffe. A kind of “who you looking at” portrait. Nice one, well done.*

VT: *A rather appealing giraffe with some fine cutting. A slightly lighter background veneer would have shown the giraffe off better. I liked the eyes and the fact there is no border.*

PG: *The background to this picture did not give much contrast to the giraffe. A bit of sand scorching would have made the giraffe more realistic.*



Left: 108 - Class 1 - 34 x 26 cms

“Market Hall, Ledbury” by George Toll an Independent Member

AM: *An enjoyable picture that one George. Keep up the good work.*

VT: *For a first picture using hardwoods, this is a very good attempt, a little more attention to the cutting of the frame is needed.*

PG: *This picture is devoid of any life. For a beginner this could be somewhat daunting, but an attempt at some life would have made all the difference.*

Careful attention to the mitres and borders is needed in future. I feel that a sharp blade and light strokes would help with the cutting.

Right: 318 - Class 3 - 40 x 28 cms “Hawkeye” by Eric Barnard of the Meopham Group

AM: *A very clever idea with that reflection in the bird’s eye. Could be Battersea power station (or art gallery these days) we see in that reflection? Something different and a good use of veneers, I like it.*

VT: *A Birds Eye view. It’s always good to see a new subject in marquetry.*

Certainly catches the eye.

PG: *I did not feel that the border really worked for the overall picture. The detail of the eye reflection (Battersea Power Station?) was well cut, but somehow the whole piece didn’t work for me.*



Right: 603 - Class 6A - Miniature

“Scrumpling” by Brian Freeman of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *A wonderful amount of detail in a miniature marquetry picture. Lots of action - very clever work.*

VT: *I know this is certainly not a beginner’s miniature, but the faces are too flat, (considering the hard work put into the shading of the stone wall) the addition of eyes and a mouth would have made such a difference, rest of the picture is excellent.*

PG: *So much going on in this picture. You can almost hear the shouting! A few shadows would have added to the overall effect. As always from Brian, very well cut and finished.*



Left: 738 - HC Class 7B - 20 x 39 x 15 cms

“Sinuosity Lamp” by Adrian Benham of the St. Albans Group

AM: *An interesting and rather inventive lamp plus a very clever idea. Well worthy of its award. I wonder if Adrian used an LED bulb for this lamp to considerably reduce any heat which an incandescent bulb would produce?*

VT: *Unusual lamp. No marquetry as such, and I wonder if the veneers will split from the heat when in use.*

PG: *An unusual piece. I struggled to find what I call marquetry, but a well cut piece well finished.*

Right: 301 - PJ Award Class 3 - 34 x 36 cms
“Hat on a Bull” by Allen Horrocks of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *Well, this bull isn’t in a china shop, he looks far too friendly for that. An amusing picture. I liked the effect of the bull’s head having just burst through the background.*

VT: *Doesn’t he stand out? Those eyes are so good. Very good cutting, and I loved the hat. A portrait with a difference and a border to complement it.*

PG: *Just as its title says – Bull in a Hat! Top mitres a bit off – baseboard too long? There were one or two cutting errors but these did not detract from the picture itself.*





Left: 536 - Class 5 - 37 x 41 cms - “Wine Reflections” by Bruce Rix of the Chelmsford Group

AM: *This picture makes me feel thirsty. The glasses are nicely transparent, a good effect.*

VT: *Nice touch to have the reflection of the bottle in the glass door, drinking glasses are well cut with shadows, but no shading under the cabinet, the label and writing should be a little more curved, beautiful border and a very pleasant picture.*

PG: *The reflection in the glass and see through effect appealed to me – very well done. The shadow of the stem of the left glass not at the correct angle. Premier Cru label needed to be curved. Excellent borders.*

Right: 538 - Class 5 - 46 x 37 cms

“Le Maillot Jaune” by Neil Micklewright an Independent Member

AM: *A clever and well made picture done in an unusual style. Excellent work.*

VT: *Colourful piece, as usual, well cut finished and presented to Neil’s high standard. I was distracted from enjoying it by all the lines crossing it.*

PG: *A very busy picture that gets over the congestion and eagerness of the peloton riders. I felt that clarity was a little lost in the busyness.*



Judges’ Notes on the Cover Pictures

Front Cover - 807 1st Class 8 - 20 x 27 cms “Wes” by Peter White of the Meopham Group

AM: *Well, of course, being a Wes Montgomery fan myself, I was instantly drawn to this picture of Wes and his Gibson L-5 CES EB guitar.*

Peter always gets the technical side of these guitar pictures correct. The fret and string spacings are always spot on, and they appear sort of ‘musical looking’ (if that’s a correct descriptive phrase)

I must go listen to some Wes now.

VT: *Yet another of Peter’s brilliant masterpieces. Just perfect.*

PG: *Excellent veneer choices, well cut. Well deserving of first place.*

Back Cover - 805 - HC Class 8 - 18 x 26 cms “???” by Ivor Bagley of the St. Albans Group

AM: *Ivor making a picture for me to drool over. What a rather attractive eye catching view, if I may be so bold as to mention.*

A good use of three veneers which do the hard light effect really well.

The roundness and smooth curves of the spine and bottom denote a most curvaceous picture to be sure.

VT *Cleverly thought out piece, highlights and shading beautifully done.*

PG: *Very well cut though finish appeared a little scratchy.*

Not too sure of the message but the task was to judge the marquetry!

Readers Letters

Making pictures from small wood granules

I am not suggesting that I am the first to use wood granules to make pictures. St Albans Group used the technique to demonstrate trees and bushes in marquetry pictures in the 1980s and it is still used today.

I am of a certain age where having done marquetry for about 45 years I feel a change would revive my enthusiasm.

I have been involved in painting and wondered if a mix of the two hobbies would produce reasonable pictures.

With marquetry the joints in the pictures are severe and rarely merge subtly. In painting it is normal to mix two adjoining colours to blend in the contents of the picture.

As an experiment I selected a suitable picture to gain this effect using veneers ground up with a spice grinder.

I was quite pleased with the result (see picture below) and when people seeing it said that it had 'atmosphere', this was just what I was seeking.

Whether it is marquetry or not does not matter to me.

Ivan Beer



Hello Ivan,

Now that is something new in the realm of marquetry as we currently know it.

I always applaud seeing new ways of approaching the art and craft of marquetry. Yes, of course we have to respect the traditional ways and methods which have been established and recognised as being the foundations of marquetry production, but there's no rules to say that experimental work cannot be tried and adopted in the name of marquetry.

If we restricted marquetry to just being traditional only, would that not turn us into being seen as elitists?

I am sure that we are much more than that, of course we are. When petro-chemically derived coloured dyes came into the equation, such as when those dyed veneers began to become popular, did we not eventually absorb them into our armoury of marquetry materials? Agreed that there were initial protests, but they are de rigueur these days. Traditionalists did not like those brightly coloured veneers to start with, but even they have now come to appreciate them - not yet at 100%, but there are no objections any more.

Hopefully this will all apply to this new form of marquetry you are showing here Ivan. Being primarily an artist, I think

that I would like to experiment with this marquetry method myself. It would save me from all of that tiresome finishing, which is the glory of the cabinet maker's fraternity. Oil and acrylic painting actually applauds impasto (the lumps and bumps of the paint) so why not marquetry? Let's, as the saying goes, give it a whirl.

Happily this 'new class' subject was discussed at the

recent AGM, but at the time we could not decide on a title for this new class. However, for starters, how about one of these as suggested by our good friend, artist Susan Bart. You choose and let me know dear reader - thanks.

- **Explorations in marquetry.**
- **Wider marquetry**
- **Open marquetry**
- **Innovative marquetry**
- **Contemporary marquetry**
- **Mixmedia marquetry**
- **Marquetry evolution**
- **Evolving Marquetry**

I look forward to hearing from you. Just send me an email or snail mail with your preference or suggestion.

All the best,
Alan.

A Useful Marquetry Tip

Hi Alan,

Many marquetarians use the Evostik wood glue (PVA) that comes in a green bottle with a red dispensing cap. The cap can either be unscrewed completely or the top portion unscrewed slightly to dispense a controlled amount of glue. This is a good idea but after a while it gets clogged up and refuses to dispense. The cleaning process involves hot water, removal of dried bits with various pointed tools and a good few bad words. Many people decant the glue into special containers that dispense only a small amount. This is fine if you have made the investment though clogging is still very frequent.

Nil desperandum a solution is at hand! I have discovered that the cap of a Fairy liquid bottle (other washing up liquids are available!) fits the Evostik bottle perfectly. Being a flip-top cap it doesn't gum up so easily. This means that you can continue working whilst the gummed up original is going through the cleaning process. It certainly works for me.

An alternative of course is that the glue could be decanted into any other suitable bottle. However, this is inevitably messy and potentially wasteful.

Kind regards
Peter Goucher

Hello Peter,

Many thanks for the excellent idea regarding those Evostik PVA bottles. I indeed have had the large ones dry up on me and the glue turn to a form of thick putty, thereby becoming useless and ending up being placed in the waste bin.

I shall use your Fairy liquid cap idea to preserve my future Evostik PVA bottles from drying out.

As you say, I do actually decant the PVA into multiple small "Precision Tip Applicator Bottles" which I purchase from Amazon in quantities of 10 to 30 at a time. They are remarkably cheap being 15 of them for a fiver (at the time of writing) - so, if they clog up and can't be rescued with a long sewing needle, they can just be disposed of and another one filled up from the large PVA bottle at a rather minimal cost. These small needle tip applicator bottles are very similar to the "Fine Tip Applicators" we used to feature in these pages some years ago. The difference being though that those 'fine tip applicators' were very much more expensive than the very similar ones I get from Amazon.

All the best,
Alan.



VIC'S MARQUETRY TIPS

Today, instead of my usual tips of various kinds which are intended to help a little with your marquetry, I am looking at compositional elements for a marquetry work which I hope will help you to produce original works in our chosen medium.

We will start with a look at aesthetic considerations as applied to original art work. So, what do we mean by aesthetic, especially in relation to marquetry?

Well, aesthetics in art is the philosophical study of beauty, taste, and the nature of art itself. We examine how we perceive, experience, and judge art and beauty. We explore the fundamental questions of what constitutes art, what makes it valuable, and how we should appreciate it, encompassing concepts like artistic elements, emotional impact, and the very definition of artistic creation.

If you stare at a light bulb for a few seconds, then close your eyes, you see a continuing image with a range of colour changes. This is due to the light overbleaching the retinal pigments which take longer than usual to recover and continue to send signals to the brain which interprets the information as though the light bulb filament was being 'seen' long after it has gone.

These after-images can be received with low intensity objects too. Stare with one eye closed, at a bright red coloured book cover for a minute or two, keeping the head still, then turn the head and look at a sheet of white paper and you will see an amorphous image of the book cover, but coloured green - the complementary colour of red - which will linger for some seconds before fading away.

Perception

If one looks at a marquetry picture, most people will agree that the picture is conveying information (the artist originating



Aesthetics starts in art in the mid 1800s

it when he/she created the picture). The marquetry picture itself is a kind of information store since the marquetarian who made it might even have passed away and be gone, yet their message continues to be conveyed. This is what we perceive.

How the information fed to the brain from the retina is 'decoded' is more interesting than the way it was gathered. The 'Gestalt' theory is that in perception, the whole is something greater than the sum of its parts.

A series of dots fairly close together in the form of a ring are perceived as having a definite form of a circle. The dots are all that the retina perceived and passed to the brain, but the brain decoded the dots and interpreted them as a circle. So, the brain is able to structure incoming information. The law of 'Continuity' states that dots arranged in a continuous line whether straight or curved, are perceived as a unit. Another important law is 'Similarity' by which familiar things tend to stand out prominently against a dissimilar background. The law of 'Closure' can also be demonstrated simply. Draw a circle on a piece of paper, but leave a small gap in it, of about a tenth of it in circumference.

Part 2 will appear in the spring edition.

ANDREW SMITH'S Random Jottings Revisited

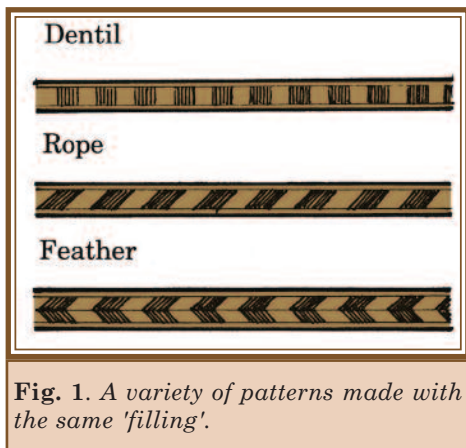


Fig. 1. A variety of patterns made with the same 'filling'.

Inlay bandings.

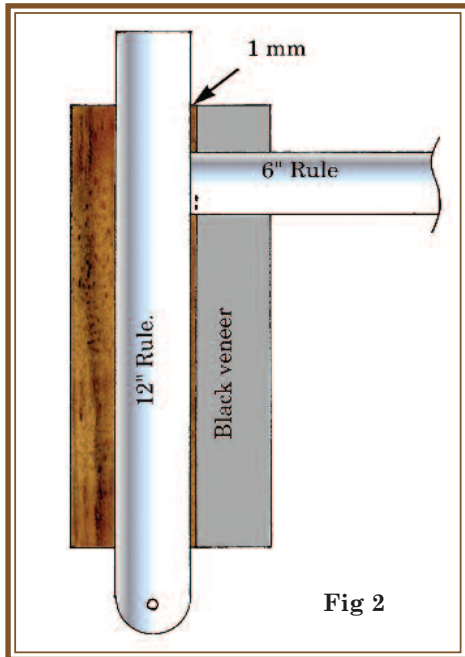
Basically, the technique consists of stringers and 'fillings' (Fig. 1) all of which can be made quite easily by following a few simple rules. Each one consists of an 'infill' pattern enclosed within two outer stringers. I will deal with the outer stringers first.

Take a piece of black veneer twelve inches long and two inches wide. We will stick to the length of a twelve-inch steel rule until experience has been gained. The finished bandings can be joined almost invisibly anyway when applied to a project. Cut the piece of black veneer longitudinally down the centre.

Now take a piece of sycamore twelve inches long by one inch wide with the edges trimmed perfectly straight. Turn this piece over after trimming and edge glue between the two black pieces.

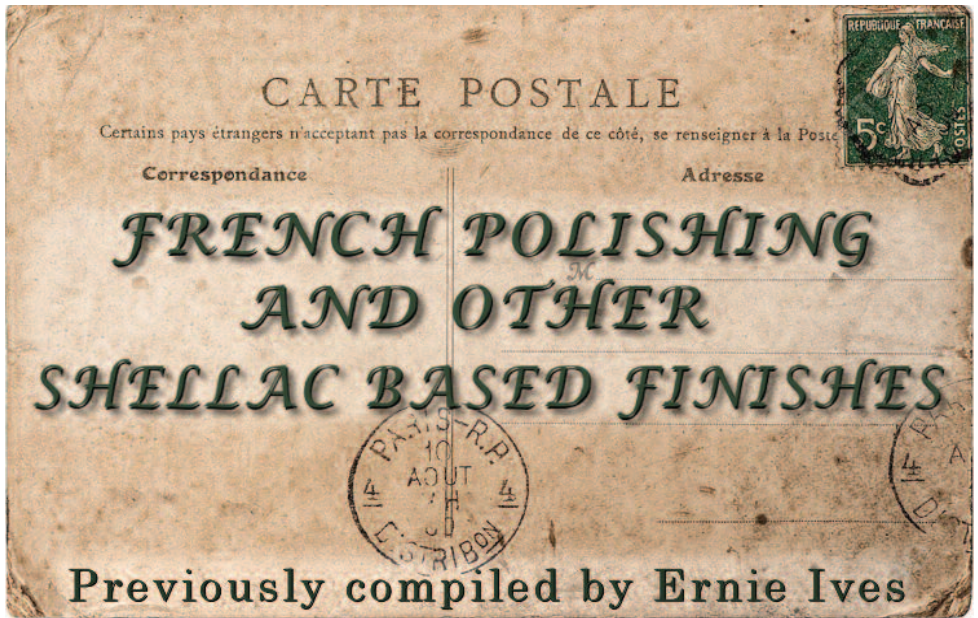
The main reason for turning the piece of

sycamore over is so that the bevels left by the knife cuts will mate up with the two black pieces. This is very important to achieve a close joint. After gluing, secure the pieces with low tack masking tape placed crosswise to pull the joints together.



Place your twelve-inch steel rule on the assembly with a millimetre of white showing. It is virtually useless to work to a pencil line on such fine limits. What I do is place a small steel rule against the main rule, measure top and bottom, then make the cut. Fig. 2 will make this clear.

Repeat with the other edge of the assembly and lay these pieces aside until the infill is made and then you are finished.



A goodly number of moons ago our previous editor Ernie Ives, after much research, put together a more or less definitive document on the subjects of French polish and other shellac-containing finishes.

We have done our best to update that document to current available information. So, now over to you Ernie:

Many craftsmen find French polish superior to varnish, lacquer or the modern synthetic finishes as it seems to become part of the wood surface and brings out the natural beauty that is in the wood.

French polish has shellac as its base. Shellac is the excretion of the Laccifer lacca insect (seen in picture on right) which feeds greenfly-like on acacia trees in India. The lac excretions produced by the colonies of these insects, cover the branches of trees, this is



then scraped off and the resulting seedlac is melted down and purified to produce the various types of shellac that are obtainable today. These shellacs are dissolved in methanol or ethanol to make the liquid polish.

Shellac finishes have a number of advantages and some disadvantages.

Advantages.

Shellac is a very hard gum which will withstand a great deal of wear.

It has a pleasant lustre and brilliance.

It can be rubbed to a high polish.

It penetrates well into the pores of the wood and fills the grain.

It forms an excellent base for a wax finish.

It is fairly elastic.

It can be repaired easily.

Little equipment is needed to apply shellac finishes.

There is no offensive smell.

No special conditions needed except that the room must not be too cold nor the air too laden with dust.

Disadvantages.

It has little resistance to water and none to alcohol.

It has little resistance to heat.

It stains easily.

Clearly it is not suitable for tabletops and similar surfaces but should be excellent for marquetry pictures.

Shellac Polishes.

While it is possible to make up the liquid polish from the solid shellac oneself, particularly if one of the darker polishes (button, orange or garnet) is required it is usually better to buy it ready made as the manufacturers are able to get fresher shellac and dissolve them in a purer spirit than we can get without a permit. In any case the bleached (white) shellac is unstable in its solid form.

Two types of shellac are suitable for marquetry or work which contains light coloured woods: white and transparent. White polish is milky in colour and fairly opaque in the bottle because it still contains a certain amount of wax. Once this has been removed the polish in the bottle is clear and resembles pale ale in colour. This then is the transparent polish.



No shellac-based polishes should be kept for more than a year or two even if stored in sealed bottles away from the light

which hastens a chemical change in the shellac causing it to become gummy so that it will not dry. Never store shellac in an ordinary "tin" container as it can react with the iron and this in turn will react with the tannin in certain woods and stain them in a similar way to the production of harewood.



Shellac Flakes

Certain other gums may be added to the shellac/alcohol mixture to accelerate or retard drying, to make the film harder or more plastic or just to lower the cost.

Applying Shellac finishes.

Shellac may be applied by brushing, spraying, French polishing, the dip and brush method or by a combination of these methods.

Brushing.

The polish for the first two coats should be slightly thinned with methylated spirits and applied with a soft brush. Work quickly and do not brush back and forth over the surface. Excessive brushing will cause the polish to pile up in ridges and will show laps. Runs and dribbles can be smoothed out by lightly stroking the set surface with the tip of the bristles. 'Holidays' (or missed spots) should be left until the next coat. Allow 3-6 hours between coats 1 and 2 and 12-24 hours between the later coats. Smooth the surface between coats with 220 - 320 grit garnet paper lubricated with a little white oil or by using 0000 grade wire wool. The garnet paper method is usually to be preferred as it will, if used with a cork block backing, flatten the surface

whereas the wire wool will only round over the high spots. Wipe off the dust with a rag dampened with white spirit (turps subs). Avoid using the shellac in a cold damp atmosphere as the moisture can cause the finish to go cloudy.

To make the polish dry more slowly and therefore brush on more easily, some finishers add a few drops of almond oil or Venice turpentine but 1oz. of pure gum camphor to a gallon of shellac is probably the best.

Rubbing the final surface with 0000 steel wool and wax will give a semi dull or satin finish, oil and pumice powder will produce a matt surface.



Pure Gum Camphor

Spraying.

Spraying is a useful method if one has the equipment particularly for the initial coats on woods such as some of the rosewoods where the colour is likely to run. Avoid too much air pressure 30 - 40 pounds are about right. Too much pressure can produce 'orange peeling' - an undesirable rippled finish. The path of the spray will generally be with the grain for clear finishes and will start at the edge nearest the operator for horizontal work and the top edge for vertical.

Dip and Rub Method.

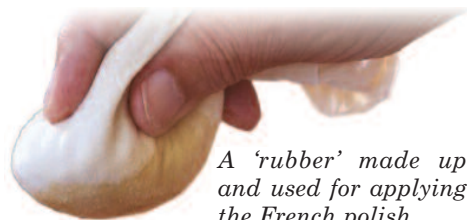
This is simpler and easier than French polishing, but the results are almost as satisfactory.

Two saucers are needed, one containing genuine turpentine and the other the French polish (white or transparent for marquetry). Make up a cloth pad, dip it

first into the turpentine and then into the polish. Rub this with a circular movement into the grain of the wood. Apply subsequent coats in the same way. Sand each coat when it is dry with fine garnet paper lubricated with white oil. Four or five coats should produce a rich soft gloss and after this has dried for a day a still higher gloss can be obtained by rubbing with a cloth dipped in linseed oil only.

French Polishing.

One of the most beautiful and durable of all finishes and one that has been used for many years on fine furniture. As with all the previous finishes, the surface must be prepared with great care. A mirror like high gloss will accentuate any faults in the surface rather than hide them.



A 'rubber' made up and used for applying the French polish

French polishing consists of gradually applying a film of shellac by means of a 'rubber'. The special skill lies in applying the polish in a way that will produce a hard, bright finish without any major flattening operation and with no mechanical aids. It is a versatile process which can produce a range of finishes from thin open grain to a full-bodied glass-like gloss. The craft depends so much on the sense of touch, the feel of the rubber on the wood. So much so that only a basic minimum can be learned by reading as it is impossible to communicate adequately this feeling for the slip or glide of the rubber on the workpiece. Judging the pressure is vital. In general, the wetter the rubber the lighter it must touch the work. As it dries out, so the pressure is increased. A hard flat surface should be produced if the rubber is worked out with increasing pressure until it is dry.



Applying the French polish with a 'loaded' rubber

The Rubber.

The size of the rubber should be such that it will fit comfortably into the polisher's hand and will cover the work satisfactorily. It is best made from unbleached wadding covered with a fine muslin, stockinette or fine linen cloth. The covering cloth must be completely lint free. Nylon and other synthetic materials are unsuitable. To make the rubber take a square of the wadding (not medicated cotton wool) and fold it into a pear shape, flat on top and with a point at the front. After charging the wadding with polish, the rag is placed over the flat of the rubber and folded over the front in such a way as to retain the point. The remainder of the rag is folded and twisted underneath to keep the whole issue in place. When inverted it is ready for use.

Charging the Rubber.

It is essential that the rubber is fully and evenly charged with the polish. One method of doing this is to pour a little polish into a wide-mouthed jar and immerse the wadding in this for a few seconds until it is saturated. Alternatively, the polish can be kept in a bottle with a small

hole in the cap or a groove down the side of the cork and the polish applied to the wadding through this. Care must be taken to ensure that the polish is evenly distributed through the wadding. If this is not done the polish will filter through only part of the rag, the remainder will being relatively dry will tend to pick up dirt which will mar the surface. Squeeze out the surplus and enclose the wadding in the cloth. Sometimes the rubber will need to be fairly wet, at other times fairly dry. This adjustment is obtained by the amount that is squeezed out.

The amount of polish left in the rubber will depend on (a) the size of the rubber, (b) the size of the job and (c) the stage of finishing that has been reached. It must not be so wet that polish oozes uncontrollably out of the sides, but sufficient polish must however percolate through the face when pressure is applied.

Store the rubber when not in use in a screw top glass jar or in a closed polythene bag. It costs a fair amount to fully charge a rubber, so it makes sense not to waste it by leaving it out in the air to go rock hard.

Applying the Polish.

French polish dries solely by evaporation of the solvent therefore time should be allowed for this to happen. Often this is done by dividing the process up into three stages:

- (1) Skinning in.
- (2) Bodying up.
- (3) Finishing.

Skimming In.

This is the application of a thin sealer coat of French polish. There are several ways of doing this. One is to charge a new rubber and apply the polish straight up and down the work several times with light pressure, pressing it evenly into the surface. After four or five passes like this, the rubber being replenished with fresh polish as required, a thin film of polish will have been applied, and it will now be necessary to vary the path of the rubber so that the surface doesn't become streaky and to pack the polish into the grain of the wood. To avoid churning up the soft polish it is now necessary to lubricate the face of the rubber with a little oil, either linseed oil or white oil may be used.

Two types of linseed oil are available: boiled and raw. Either may be used but the boiled is better as it is already partly oxidised and will therefore solidify quicker. White oil is a petroleum derivative and does not dry. Both these oils become buried in the surface film during the polishing process, the linseed oil will polymerise in the film and tend to harden it while the white oil will have a plasticising effect. An excess of linseed oil will set up a certain degree of strain in the film and lead to it cracking and crazing whereas an excess of white oil is likely to result in a dull, soft film. Oil in French polishing is a necessary evil and only the minimum needed should be applied. This is done by dipping a finger into the oil pot and flicking it on to the face of the rubber.

A somewhat similar method of skinning in involves using an old "Tad", being the wadding from a used rubber. This "Tadding in" is somewhat quicker as the tad has to be rather wetter so that it doesn't stick to the film and because of this it is better employed on large surfaces where the film has time to dry before the tad passes over it again. A little French chalk may be taken up on the tad after it has been charged with polish. This will not only act as a lubricant but will also assist in the subsequent flattening operation when the film is dry.

Another method of starting the polishing process is that of 'grinding in'. For this an old compact rubber with a coarse rag covering is charged with a solution of 1 part polish to 10 parts methylated spirit, the rubbing being worked over the whole surface in small circles. Gradually a thin sheen will result but as there is little build-up of polish there should be little need to use any oil. From time to time a little pumice powder is dusted on to the face of the wadding (inside the cloth) and the process continued until a visible film has been applied. The pounding in of the polish and the pumice chokes up the grain and a rock-hard surface will be prepared for later applications. The method will not build up a thick film and will take some time, but it will help to ensure stability of the surface.

A sealer polish made by using a slower drying alcohol with the addition of a stearate to assist the later sanding, may be sprayed or brushed on to the surface instead.

At this stage the surface should be allowed to dry hard.

Bodying up.

Bodying up is the gradual application of polish until a sufficiently thick film is obtained and for a fully filled grain finish the time spent can be measured in hours rather than minutes, but this will vary with the type of wood being polished. The aim is to apply a film which is flat and

which will serve as a good basis for the sort of finish required but unfortunately there are no measurable standards by which the polisher may judge when to stop. It is a matter of individual judgement.

To keep the layers of polish flat apply it with firm, steady pressure using three basic motions: circles, figure of eights and straight pulls. If only one type of motion is used ridges and streaks appear. A number of other faults may develop in unskilled hands. If too much polish is used the surface will become sticky and unworkable; too dry and the surface will at first become greasy and then become kneaded into a ribbed effect where the softened surface is pushed into unwanted ridges by the rubber. It is often necessary to allow the work to dry and to paper it

down before resuming the bodying up. Use a little oil as and when required.

Finishing.

Of the various ways of finishing the surface, two are of more use to marquetarians: ‘stiffing up’ and ‘spiriting out’.

For a ‘stiffed up’ surface, charge the rubber with polish and apply to the work in straight strokes for a few times and then resume the circular motion this time with rather larger circles than for bodying up. A little oil may have to be used. Only light pressure should be applied, the aim being to eliminate the tracks of the rubber at each pass.

Part 2 of this very comprehensive article will be appearing in the spring 2026 edition of The Marquetarian.



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by Ivor Bagley of the St. Albans Group
HC in Class 8

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