

THE MARQUETARIAN

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“Jeff Grossman calls it
“Chatoyance”

by Ivor Bagley of the St. Albans
Group

1st Class 7A



Journal of
The Marquetry Society



The Marquetry Society



Founded 1952

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Cover Background: Amboyna

Front Cover Picture: "Chatoyance" No Size Given

Back Cover Picture: "Big Soldier" 25 x 38 cms





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Deadline Dates

Final date for receipt of material for issue
296 is 12th July 2026, but please let me
have as much material as possible by
mid June 2026

Final date for receipt of material for issue
297 is 12th October 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



*And now Ivan Beer will give us a talk about
avoiding injury doing marquetry*

Cartoon theme by Vaughan Thomas & artwork by Alan Mansfield.

The 2026 Annual General Meeting

Will be held online via Zoom Sunday 7th June at 2.00pm

To participate you will need log-in details.

Please contact either our Gen Sec or editor at:

david@marquetry.org

alan@marquetry.org

for the password & pass code



Did you enjoy this year's International Marquetry Exhibition? And were you this year's favoured Rosebowl winner?

Probably strange questions to ask as the 'National' has already taken place by the time you are reading this, but the writing of this has to be done before the exhibition itself has even started. However, I shall place a photo of the Rosebowl winner on the front cover of the autumn edition, so something for us all to look forward to, I certainly am. Will it be someone new attaining the Rosebowl I wonder? I am truly eager to find out.

At last we have a new Independents' Secretary who will be able to look after the needs of all you Independent members out there.

Ever since our previous Independent Secretary Robin Moulson was taken ill with the dreadful Alzheimer's disease, we have had no "Indie's Sec" proper to take care of the needs of our 'Indies', but from today John Nichol is here to help you. Head over to page 14 where John will introduce himself to you.

Some of you may remember the article about a project starting in the USA for a children's hospital mural intended to help

brighten their lives a little. This mural will consist of many small same-sized plaques similar to your editor's contribution seen below, with the theme of 'make believe'. These were being done by many marquetry artists world wide.



A good many Marquetry Society members are taking part in this project. The original article can be found in the winter 2024 edition of *The Marquetarian* 289. I will bring you more on this once the finished project has been launched.

I hope you all have a jolly good summer and if you entered in the competition, I hope you are an award winner too.

Alan.

Summer period Password

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

b u b i n g a

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 June 2026**.

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**

It was really good to see so many of you at our International Marquetry Exhibition at the De Havilland Aircraft Museum. I certainly hope that you enjoyed the exhibition and marvelled at the magnificence of the marquetry work on display, I was impressed.

I am happy to say we do have rather a lot of very talented marquetarians in our membership, as our annual marquetry exhibitions prove, so well done everyone.

It is very pleasing to me to note that although our membership suffered a loss due to covid a few years back, our numbers are back on the increase at last and marquetry is gaining new interest. In addition to this I see that new marquetry competitions are springing up all around the world.

As our editor mentions on the opposite page, quite an amount of us are taking part in the USA mural project titled 'One Love' which is intended to brighten the lives of hospitalised small children located in Austin, Texas.

This is just one marquetry themed project, competition or exhibition springing up worldwide. It's so good to see.



Now, I have to mention that we are seeing a fair amount of our Executive Committee officers either resigning or changing posts with this 2026 AGM.

This will inevitably leave some posts open and needing to be populated by new faces. So, have we any volunteers out there? If you fancy joining the Executive Committee, just let me or our editor know and we will set the wheels in motion for you.

These days there is no travelling long distances to join in the meetings because we do our meetings on Zoom. This means that you do not have to leave the comfort of your armchair to take part - you just log-in on your PC or smartphone and you are there in the meeting - simple yes?

Marquetry truly enhances your artistic and woodworking skills, and I am pleased to see all of you are exhibiting those qualities.

Saluti, Enrico.



A panoramic view of the International Exhibition display area



Web Secretary's Letter

Greetings and welcome to my summer report. In my Spring report I stated that I had very little to say and hoped that I would get some more to report in this edition. Well, sad to say, there has been very little to add to that statement. I have had quite a bit of the usual rubbish sent in offering stuff for sale which has nothing to do with marquetry!

There have been offers of tickets for meetings for business courses, all being charged at horrendous prices! Well, as we are not running a business these offers are getting binned. Seldom do I get anything to do with marquetry. The only messages I have received since the last issue have been one very good offer of veneers and plans from a 'Men's Shed' in the West Country. It sounded like quite a good offer and has in fact been offered to the new Bristol Group who could accept it with open arms.

As time goes on there are fewer and fewer places that sell wood veneer. There are six such suppliers shown in the 'Recommended Suppliers' list in the back of the Marquetarian. If you need veneer for a new or existing project, I would suggest you contact any of these suppliers and see if they have a web site displaying their wares that could interest you.

Living now in Scotland I have to rely on these companies. I will have to think about doing the rounds as I am starting a new picture and when looking in my shed, I find that I have a good supply of brown veneers of different hues but little else. I need some lighter woods like sycamore, holly, walnut and American gum that offer me different colour. One of the problems that I find is that I often only need a small piece of a different shade, but I would have to buy a whole sheet to get what I want.

When I belonged to Redbridge Group they had a large stock, and I could buy from there and look around the different types to satisfy my needs. As there are no suppliers that I know of in Scotland I have to make my needs known to my colleagues on our Tuesday evening meeting. So far, I have been rewarded by their generosity. Recently I have been sent some veneer from one of our Group in Phoenix, Arizona which satisfied my needs. If anyone finds a good supplier who will not mind supplying small pieces of veneer to any of our members, please get in touch.

The exhibition has concluded now, so I do hope that you all did very well with your exhibit, and that you got the award you were looking for. If you missed out on the awards, Don't fret, try again next year, this often works. Best wishes to you all.

David Walker





As at the moment we do not have a social media officer, I thought I would check out our Facebook pages. Wow, there is some really good stuff appearing there from all over the world. Let me show you a couple which really caught my eye, the work is trully excellent.



And these two are just a very small example of the work appearing on our Facebook page. The work coming in from all countries shows that marquetry is certainly alive and well everywhere. The subject matter is also very varied. Take a look and inspire yourself. it really is magnificent to behold, and full of ideas.



Page 43 in the Spring Marquetrarian should have read as:

(xiv) A member achieving the necessary points in Class X for promotion to Class X+1 in the following year but who expresses a preference not to exhibit in Class X+1 may continue to exhibit in Class 10 until they elect to exhibit in Class X+1.

Apologies for the confusion.

MARQUETRY TOOLS

Instruction Booklet

Okay, if you are a seasoned marquetarian, you probably have no need for an instruction book such as you see here, which was written for beginners by our much missed previous editor Ernie Ives.

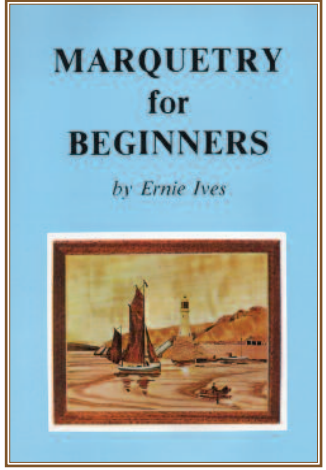
But, how many beginners found this publication very helpful? Many hundreds, if not thousands I would say, especially as this was on its fourth edition.

These books guide you through the basics, such as tools required, how to sort out designs, pressing a picture and finishing and hanging the finished piece.

Ernie also made a video of the basic contents found in this book, but, as it was on VHS tape, a resulting DVD conversion displays a few unfortunate aberations resulting from the aged tape.

Still, it's a helpful book nonetheless, especially for beginners to the art and craft of marquetry. Ernie was a previous Rosebowl award winner as well as editor.

The main reason for drawing this booklet to your attention is that a small (20) cache of 'print fresh' original copies has been found and can be made available to the first



20 of those interested in acquiring a pristine copy of this now out of print booklet.

A price of £10 will secure you a copy while stocks last. Just use the 'Donate' button on any of our payment pages on our website and include the word 'booklet' when filling out the donate form.



BREAKING NEWS

Sadly we heard of the loss of yet another highly talented marquetarian, this one being Terry Cambridge of the Staffordshire Group..

Over the years Terry has exhibited a great many superb pieces of marquetry work such as, for example, this one on the right titled "Social Gathering (after F. M. Bennett)" which won Terry a first in class 6a in the 2009 National Exhibition.

This is only one taken from Terry's rather large output of superb work from over many years of high quality marquetry.



Our archives are stacked with many examples of Terry's work and so, along with a proper obituary for Terry in a forthcoming edition of The Marquetarian, we will show much more of Terry's work for us all to enjoy.

SEE-THROUGH VENEERING

by Cliff Daniells

Over the last several months I have had many enquiries come my way asking about the “see-through” techniques brought into existence by Cliff Daniells of the late Tunbridge Group.

Cliff did some very memorable work using this technique, one especially many of you may remember. The piece in question was titled “Caledonia Bound”. I have reproduced the picture overleaf. To accompany this, Cliff wrote an article on the subject nearly 40 years ago. The article is brought up to date, and I present it here for you.

SEE-THROUGH VENEERING

by Cliff Daniells

See-through veneering is a technique which uses a very thin film of veneer overlaid and inlaid on the face of a picture to give an image of transparency. The technique is basically proven but I am sure it can be improved on with practice and ingenuity. It adds to the marqueterians’ existing practices and enables them to achieve many effects normally only within the scope of a painter.

I have done two pictures using the see-through technique; “Caledonia Bound” and “The Wedding Morning”. Both basically the same but with a variation between them. I can only explain my own practical experience, which I hope will be helpful to anyone contemplating trying this effect.

Preparation of the overlay veneer film.

For the exhaust smoke on “Caledonia Bound” I used figured ash and for the veil in “The Wedding Morning”, Sen, which I found preferable. In both cases the veneer was first thinned and then bleached.

Thinning and bleaching.

(i) Cut the overlay veneer roughly to size,

allowing about one third wastage over the area to be covered.

(ii) Reduce the thickness of the veneer as far as is practical. I use a small disc sanding head and finish with an orbital sander. A scraper too will suffice to rough down.

(iii) Using a plastic container (an ice cream carton is ideal), put in a bleaching solution diluted with about 25% water, which is strong enough for most veneers but can be strengthened if necessary. Pour on sufficient solution to cover the veneer(s).

(iv) Take a small sample of the thinned veneer and check the time it takes to whiten completely. This test is imperative as over immersion will cause its disintegration. Immerse the veneer in the solution noting when sufficiently bleached.

(v) Drain off the solution taking care not to handle or disturb the veneer. It will almost certainly remain clinging to the bottom of the carton.

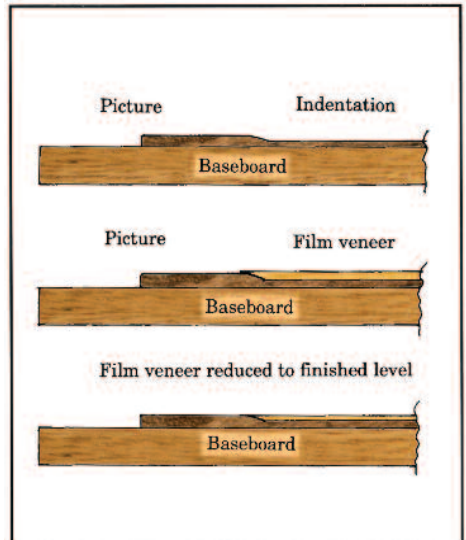


Fig. 1. Veneer thickness exaggerated for clarity.

(vi) Rinse the solution from the veneer by trickling water down the side of the carton (do not pour water directly on the veneer). When it floats it can be gently swirled and the water drained off. Repeat several times.

(vii) To remove the treated veneer allow it to **partially** dry; a process which can be speeded up by putting the carton in a warm place such as an airing cupboard until it can be slid on to several thicknesses of kitchen tissue. Place further tissues on top to dry. It may be necessary to lightly weight the veneer to prevent curling.

2. Forming the indentation.

“Caledonia Bound”.

(i) The picture complete and on the base-board, having been produced by the template (‘Stick-as-you-go’) method, was given its preliminary levelling sanding, ensuring that there was plenty of ‘meat’ left for final sanding adjustments.

(ii) The outline of the exhaust steam was marked with a pencil and a very shallow

knife cut made about $\frac{1}{8}$ ” inside the line.

(iii) An indentation was produced to accommodate the insertion, the accuracy of which was vital to the whole operation. The ‘floor’ of the indentation must be level, even and to the correct depth. I used several widths of highly honed wood chisels as scrapers to remove the surface surplus, testing often with a steel rule and using a No. 10A blade as a depth gauge. As is the usual practice, scraping was done along the grain of the veneers.

(iv) To attain the feathered edge effect the indentation edges were bevelled. See Fig. 1 on previous page.

“The Wedding Morning”

The veil in the picture covers considerable detail and has no feathered edge so producing the indentation was done differently to that described above. Again, my picture was produced by the template method.



Caledonia Bound

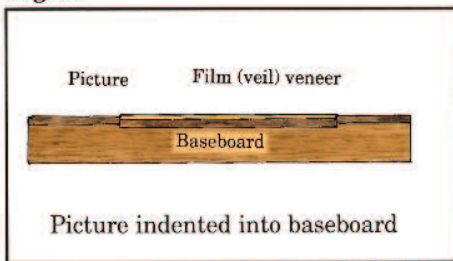
The main difference between the methods was the area covered by the veil was removed from the surface of the baseboard instead of the veneer. At the outset, the veiled area outline was marked on the baseboard and the indentation formed as previously described, taking the same care. The picture was completed with the veneers which lapped into the indentation cut to the contour of the veil.

Picture produced by the window method.

Most members use the window method when making their marquetry pictures and for them the method I would suggest is:

- (i) Complete the cutting and assembly of the picture in the normal way.
- (ii) Mark the outline of the veil and cut out the section with a fretsaw.
- (iii) Apply the picture to the baseboard and produce the indentation in the baseboard as described above and insert the cut out.

Fig. 2.



Applying the film veneer.

“The Wedding Morning”

- (i) Mark the outline of the veneer (and any joins as in the case of several veneers being employed) on tracing paper, allowing in the case of a feathered edge about



one sixteenth of an inch proud all round, otherwise a tight fit. Cut veneer(s) to this template.

- (ii) Using UHU general purpose adhesive (I have found this product suitable and have tried no other), apply a very thin coat to both surfaces and set in position.

I cannot emphasise too strongly the object is to integrate the two faces, eliminating any possibility of a layer of adhesive between them. Pressure is initially applied using a wedge pane hammer with a wood buffer block. After the adhesive ‘grabs’, the wedge end is heavily and repeatedly drawn over the veneer film working along the grain and from the centre outwards.

- (iii) Leave for at least five days, the longer the better.

(iv) Scrape and sandpaper the surplus off the face of the picture until level with the rest of the veneers. Then working about one sq. inch at a time, carefully reduce the veneer film until transparency just becomes apparent. Thus, when going over the whole surface, it will just need a final touching with fine sandpaper on a small block to achieve the full transparent effect. You are working to fine limits

here. Know when to stop.

From experience the finished surface of the film section will be slightly below that of the main picture which can be given its final sanding leaving the whole level and ready for finishing.

It is very advisable to have a small, careful trial run before attempting the technique on a masterpiece. During the trial it should become apparent that the process is not so complex as it may first appear.



Editor's Note:

The three pictures seen on this page are progressions of the 'See Through Veneer' technique as experimented with by Meopham Group member Vaughan Thomas.

The picture seen on the left was Vaughan's first experiment which worked reasonably well. The lower left picture was the technique's progress a few years later. The the picture below was the 'see through technique' reaching its zenith by achieving the Rosebowl for Vaughan in our 2024 National Exhibition.



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.

If you can't find what you need from our 1500 plus listings just contact Wood Veneers and we will aim to cover your bespoke requirements

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.

Independents' Corner

Meet your new Independents' Secretary

John Nichol



John Nichol

Who is he? Well, not a woodworker! I spent the greater part of my working life teaching maths. Over the years I had dabbled in the odd bit of marquetry so, on retirement, I was able to take a little more interest in it. After a visit to a craft fair at the NEC and a chat with Staffordshire Group marquetarians at their stand, I joined the Marquetry Society, as an independent.

During the following year I attended the Exhibition at Marlyate run by St Albans group, my closest group, which led me to joining them in 2011. I remained a member there until 2020 and covid, after which, I am sorry to say, I did not resume attending. I had got used to not driving the 25 miles there in rush-hour traffic!

Hence I reverted to being an independent. Since then I have irregularly attended the Society's online Tuesday evening meetings and more recently started doing marquetry at a local art group which I have attended for some years (only 3 miles away with daytime meetings!).

After entering a marquetry picture in their summer exhibition I was challenged

to work on one at their group meetings. It seems to have impressed them a lot more than my watercolour or pastel paintings! I accepted the challenge and have now completed a marquetry picture during art meetings. It has generated much interest but no converts yet!

What is the job specification for the Independent members secretary?

Well, I have been led to believe there isn't one, so the bottom line is to represent independent members' views at executive committee meetings. After that, it is what evolves.

I hope to represent independent members' fairly, but to do so I need to hear from them. Otherwise, the committee will only get my thoughts. Independents, please don't hesitate to contact me with your views.

As far as other initiatives are concerned, I have a couple of ideas but I think I will leave them for the Autumn edition of the magazine.

One final note!

I have been asked to point out that Peter White is offering a discount on DVDs for Independent members. See 'At Your Service' column and mention that you are an independent when you order from him.

Chairman's Chatter

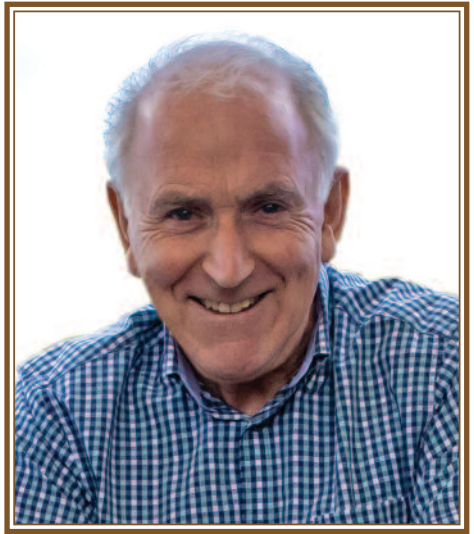


This will be the last 'Chatter' you'll be getting from me as I will not be putting myself forward for re-election as Chairman at the forthcoming AGM. It has not been an easy decision to make but, after doing committee work for the last forty-four years, for numerous reasons I have decided to step away.

Although I can't do nearly as much marquetry as I used to, I am continuing to do some and I'll remain a Society member and continue to support it as best as I can in other ways.

At our committee meeting on 22nd March we managed to get through a packed agenda in good time and covered a great deal of ground. There is nothing much for me to relay to you other than to pass on our growing concerns about finding enough volunteers to come on to the committee and to fill the forthcoming vacant posts. Remember that the whole committee stands down at the AGM and a new one elected. There may be a number of existing committee members who will offer to serve again if nominated, but this year there are several retirees, including myself, Janet our outgoing treasurer and two of our ex officio committee members, Dave Bulmer and John Biggs. Also, the post of Social Media secretary has remained vacant for some time now. Although there things happening with regards to a couple of posts and we have fortunately been rescued by Nigel Davis who has kindly stepped in as membership secretary, I'd like you to consider coming on to the committee to help with it being reinvigorated with some new blood.

The presidential term lasts for three years and that finishes this year so, we'd like to have as many nominations or volunteers as possible for all posts come the



AGM. It would be nice to have too many to choose from than too few, as is often the case.

The ex-officio committee members serve to contribute to debates and cast votes on proposals. Without enough of them we could struggle to meet the quorum we need to carry through changes that affect members. So, why not consider joining us to do that? It is so easy to do now that we meet online via Zoom. Contact me or any committee member if you are interested in becoming a member of the team.

Not an official role to fill but nonetheless a person we desperately need to have in the wings as it were, is a deputy editor. Alan would like to have someone 'shadow' him in order that we could have editorial coverage in the case of an emergency, or indeed to give us long term security.

So, finally I'd like to give my heartfelt thanks to all the fellow committee members I have ever served alongside, past and present. There could be a whole chapter in my memoirs about my experiences of Marquetry Society committee work should I ever consider putting pen to paper. But that I fear is unlikely. You wouldn't want to know about some of it anyway!

Peter

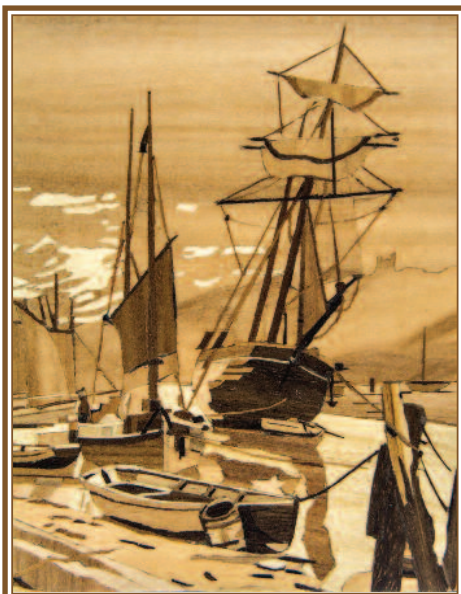
A Friend We Will Miss

Frank Brant - Chelmsford Group

Just as we went to press with the spring edition of *The Marquetarian* we heard of the sad passing away of the very talented Chelmsford group member Frank Brant.

Frank was a rather private man, and unfortunately as of yet, we do not have a head & shoulders photo of Frank to bring you, although hopefully we will uncover such a photo for our autumn edition. In the meantime let us bring you a few examples of Frank's impeccable marquetry work. As you will see, Frank was a most talented marquetarian.

I am often surprised at how many requests I get for people to see examples of Frank's marquetry work. Here are just a small handful of some of the most popular. Many other marquetarian's are using Frank's work as a good yardstick for standards to aim at. A most amiable fellow was Frank, and very talented too.



Tide's Out - a miniature piece



'Winchester in the 1800s' VHC at the 2021 National Exhibition



"Last of the BR Locos" VHC at the 2014 National Exhibition



"Canal Boat in the Lock" 2nd at the 2015 National Exhibition

SPEAR CUTTING

by Mike Roberts

This technique like most subjects has over the years been covered in the Marquetarian by other people. One such person was a serial Rose Bowl winner throughout the 1990's and into the twenty first century who could and still can demonstrate this method with such practised speed and skill it is almost like watching a machine at work. It was he that introduced me to the technique which I now use frequently.

The picture below demonstrates the main advantage of the technique in smoothing away the sharp edge that results from butting together two pieces of different shades of veneer.



Smoothing away sharp or hard edge

Sometimes a hard edge is what is needed, but at other times a smooth transition from one shade of veneer to the next is looked for. The illustration, shows the difference between a hard edge on the left and a softer transition from light to dark on the right, which is achieved by spear cutting the joint. The result always looks better from normal viewing distance than when looked at closely.

The illustration also shows how spear cutting can be used to "bend" a straight

grained veneer around a curve by altering the angle between the two pieces. This is useful when the chosen veneer is ideal for its purpose except that the grain is to straight.

Spear cutting is a very versatile technique and has numerous applications in pictorial marquetry work.

When constructing a marquetry picture, ideally it is far better to select a veneer that in its natural state has the colour, shade variations, grain direction and general characteristics required, to do the job. However this is not always possible. In addition to spear cutting there are other ways to change the look of veneers. The shade of a veneer can be lightened by bleaching or darkened by sand shading. Whilst these techniques are useful for some applications they do have limitations. For example, sand shading will just turn the veneer brown or nearer black depending on the severity of the treatment. This is bound to be the result because the process in effect entails burning the surface of the wood. Sand shading is useful for adding shade to depict shape and roundness to an otherwise flat human limb or round object such as a column or chimney.

However, spear or zig-zag cutting allows for the melding of more subtle shades rather than just the provision of a shadow effect.

The process explained

If the spears are cut in one of the veneers and this cut piece used as a guide to cut in the corresponding spear joints in the other veneer there is a risk that the points will bend as you apply the knife near the point. To avoid this problem It is recommended that a window is cut into



Fig 1

one of the veneers to be joined and the other veneer positioned behind the window extending and across the area where the spears are to be cut. The spears are then cut through both veneers at the same time.

Cutting through both veneers at the same time not only avoids the risk of the spears bending at the point end it also ensures a good fit as the cut will be in exactly the same place in both veneers.

As shown in the illustration (Fig 1 above) firstly cut out a window to the shape of the required insert but short of the line where you wish the transition between the two pieces of veneer to be. Place the other veneer behind the window and extend it beyond the area to be spear cut.

The spear shaped pencil marks are just indicative of where the spears will be cut.

They do not need to be marked. It is not necessary to follow any pre-marked line and the cuts should be randomly made.

Random irregular cuts of different shapes and length help to disguise the joints and assists a seamless transition. If the veneer being used is fragile tape the back before making the cuts.

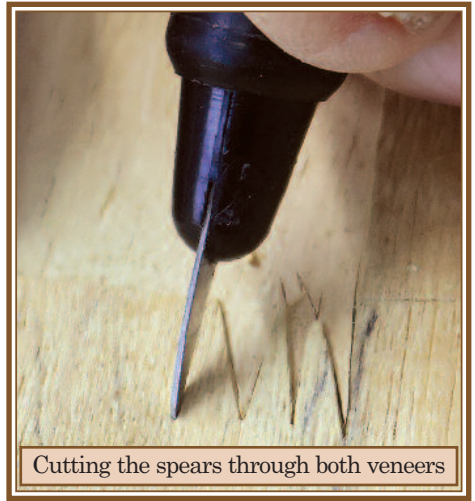
It can also help with fragile veneers to rub a little slightly diluted PVA glue into the veneer and let it dry prior to cutting.

Effect of spear cutting.

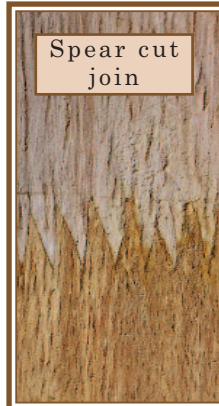
As you see in the magnified examples below, the veneer join starts to take on an almost invisible characteristic.

Effect of butt jointing.

With this butt joint the two veneer pieces have a very visible presentation. This is fine if you do need, or require an obvious join, but this will never give you a blended effect. If you are trying to achieve, say smooth shadows, use the spear method.



Cutting the spears through both veneers



THE DESCRIPTIONS A TO E APPLY TO THE AREAS DENOTED BY LETTERS SHOWN ON THE ACTUAL PROJECT PICTURE



A The shadow area at the neck would have been difficult to achieve by sand shading due to its position. Sand shading would also have scorched the wood brown irrespective of the original the colour of the veneer. Spear cutting allows for the use of complementary darker shades of veneer to be smoothed in to the surrounding lighter veneer.

B Here spear cutting is used to smooth out transition from one colour to the next.

C Another example of spear cutting giving a smoother transition from one shade of veneer to the next.

D Spear cutting is used to give a “feathery” look at the extremities of the bird.

E Often an otherwise suitable veneer is straight grained where curved grain is called for. A slight change in direction by varying the angle between the lighter upper veneer and darker lower veneer gives a sense of shape to the breast of the bird. Spear cutting smooths out the join. In hindsight an even more effective curve to the bird’s breast would have been achieved by cutting in 3 differently angled pieces rather than just 2.

On the right is the full image of the waxwing used here as an example of spear cutting.

Opposite page is Alan Townsend’s “Wilderness Man” - being a perfect example of Rosebowl winning spear cutting.





JIM BRIDGER

TRADITION

Hello everybody! I am Susan Bart from Spain, probably being as annoying as usual, but you know I love you all. I write here about my entry in this year's competition. As usual, I had lots of doubts about which class should I be putting my entry in. I decided the advanced applied one, but its not a cabinet, not a game board, not a clock, not even a box... I am always in the "etc" department! No problem!

I have been assured that this article was not going to be released before the National competition took place, so I could not influence the judges in any way. Only the Editor, Alan Mansfield, is going to read this before the competition, and he is not a judge this year.

I thought it was a good idea to present here my piece of work because I JOIN THE CONCEPT WITH THE TECHNIQUE. (Material, Shape and Meaning goes together, and they also match my views about Marquetry art)

CONCEPT here means the theme of the artwork: Ed.

Title: **TRADITION** Year: **2025** Artist: **Susan Bart** Size: **17 x 17 x 9 cm.**

TRADITION art-work is a little mouse who's afraid to leave his familiar hole, paved with stones named "tradition". These stones are very heavy, but they can help him escape if he climbs onto them, as they form our foundations. The outside part of that tree hole is made with new and interesting methods. Don't be afraid of new things, mouse! Come out!

Techniques and materials explanation:

I have used solid natural woods to make the stones. Natural wood Veneers for the marquetry, PVA glue, and water varnish. **NO PAINT OR STAINS USED AT ALL.**

There are 5 different techniques in this art work:

1- The inside marquetry (the mouse) is entirely cut with the **scalpel**. The image is also a copy/version of another piece of marquetry found on the net in Pinterest https://es.pinterest.com/pin/146155950396176996/visual-search/?x=6&y=67&w=452&h=423&cropSource=9&entrypoint=deep_link.

There is no author related to that work. I copy it to do the same as most colleagues do: copying others' and previous marquetry works instead of inventing new images. It couldn't be more traditional.

2- The base under the stones is some other type of stones in relief cut with **scissors**. Marquetry in relief or overlapped is a technique I use a lot. (Remember my entry in 2019 entitled "His condolences" *Top of next column: Ed*)

3- The 9 stones are made by sanding solid woods to make them round and the letters are **inlaid**.

T - R - A - D - I - T - I - O - N

(I avoid using natural wood because of its high cost and to save a few trees here and there)

4- The top/surface of the work is cut with laser, which is the technique I enjoy the most and I usually use. **Laser** machine is not the enemy, it's just another tool, a bit difficult to set up and use. Ash tree is the only veneer there.

5- The outside part (the bark of the tree), is made in a similar technique as fragmentation. Wood veneers, small bits of veneers, and really tiny bits of veneers all mixed with PVA glue. I call it **textural**.

I thought about using the fretsaw too for any other part, but I ruled it out because

it's the technique I like the least, and there was already enough variety. There are some others that also use chisels. What special techniques do you use? Maybe the teeth? Who cares? The main thing is that you should enjoy the process, feel free creating without limitations, and end up with an interesting piece of artwork.



His condolences

I have just written all that because you, mostly being traditionalists, seem to care very much about accepted marquetry techniques, but not me though.

I try to encourage you to open your horizons too, there's no real need for you to do it, but let's give hope to other mice like me and maybe you to explore the boundaries of what is considered as marquetry.

I really respect tradition and those who try to keep the essence of it because it's a beautiful honour. Nevertheless, I support art for art's sake, because I believe it needs it most.

Thank you for your time and to the committee who is considering to open a new Class: The "etc" class I talked about



before, for reliefs, sculptures, and a long "etc", but pitifully, also for those "new" techniques, they cannot yet really know how to judge because it is more about the art of the work than it is about traditional marquetry standards and techniques.

Susan Bart



Editor's Note: As many of you will probably recognise, I am a fan of new and original techniques where marquetry is concerned. I came into marquetry as an

artist, not a woodworker. So, my own approach is to view marquetry as another medium from which I can produce artwork, such as Susan has done here.

Tea & Iron with Veneer

No, it's not an item on a tea shop menu. It's all about the effects you can get from immersing various veneers in iron sulphate (sulphate of iron or ferrous sulphate to give it its other names) solution together with a couple of redundant ordinary tea bags.

The effects obtained are very useful for the adventurous marquetarian.

The proportions are: 3 x teaspoonfuls of iron sulphate powder or crystals mixed or dissolved into about 2 x pints (that's about one and a quarter litres approximately) of water.

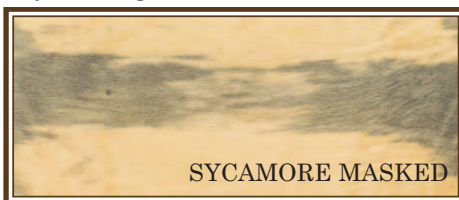
With the tea bags you want 3 or 4 brewed in about half to a pint of water for 10 minutes and then add the tea to the mixture.

The following photos show the results on a few popular veneer types.



And the final example below is a piece of sycamore Alf Murtell 'masked' with 3 applications of sanding sealer front and back'

The sealer was allowed to dry and then the veneer was immersed in the solution in the same way as the others. Below is the result. This could give a very useful cloud, random or fading effect, it's all up to your imagination!



Heavyweight Presses & Weights

Editor's Note: In the spring Marquetarian under the heading of Marquetry Tools I featured the Victorian style Bookbinder's Press.

Surprisingly, and especially to me, this seemed to create rather a lot of interest. I realise that obtaining one of these solid pieces of equipment is not so easy these days, but if you can obtain one, they are a very useful item to have in your marquetry armoury.

This all reminded me of former editor of this journal Ernie Ives using an enormous press obtained from one of his friends in the printing industry.

So, let's relate to you the story of Ernie's truly heavyweight press.

My press is an old one from a printing firm and will take about 2ft.(61cms) x 1 ft. 6ins (46cms). directly or with two boards through to extend the plattens, about 3ft.(91cms) x 2ft.(61cms) Large enough for most of my work. The extra boards were not needed for my current project. It is very important to prepare the press ready for use before starting to glue (Fig. 1). A pad of newspaper (flat and uncreased) is placed on the bottom and covered with a sheet of white paper to prevent the newsprint staining the picture, something we had a lot of trouble with some time ago when my group had a supply of cheap P.V.A. glue of obscure make. A similar pad of newspaper and white paper is made ready to place on top of the work. Nowadays I invariably use Evostik Resin W as the

adhesive, and this is spread on the baseboard (not the veneer) with one of the contact adhesive spreaders.

The backing veneer is then smoothed down on this before being turned over and the picture side of the baseboard glued.



Fig 1 The Ernie Ives Heavy Press

I had to check that the picture was the right way round as I didn't want the motif to be upside down, tape the front and back of the picture together with four pieces of gum strip to help prevent them sliding on the baseboard while in the press. Quickly the assembly is placed on the paper in the press, covered with white paper, then the newspaper pad, and as much pressure as I could muster applied.

Wait at least eight hours.

People sometimes advocate the use of polythene sheet instead of the white paper, but when I have tried this, I have had the picture bubble up and I put this down to that fact that the moisture from the glue couldn't escape and so caused severe swelling of the veneer.

Sometimes too, people recommend placing the picture under weights if they haven't a press. Again, my advice is don't. A pressure of 30lbs. (13.6kilos) per square inch (2.54cms) has been suggested for marquetry work

and in fact one of the furniture firms I visit had a new hydraulic press installed because the old one would only go up to 45lbs. (20.4kilos) and this wasn't sufficient for laying some of their veneers and inlays. The new one does 65lbs. (29.5kilos) per square inch (2.54cms). I think there must have been an error in the report concerning the pressing of a large Mural in a previous issue when it was stated that 3,000lbs. (1360.777kilos) sq. in. (2.54cms) was applied. This figure may have been the total pressure not the pressure per square inch.

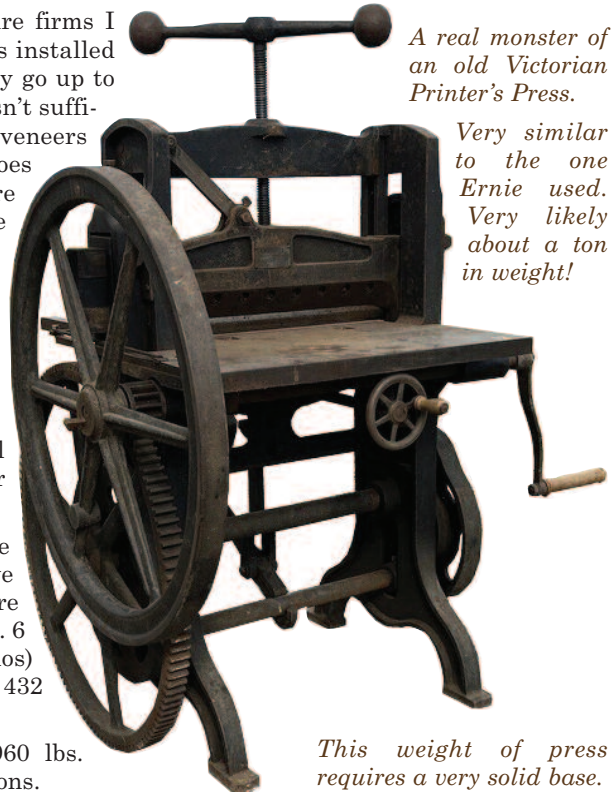
Let us do a little maths; to see how much weight would have been needed to press my picture which is about 2ft.(61cms) x 1ft. 6 ins.(46cms) at 30lb. (13.6kilos) square inch (2.54cms). Area = 432 sq. ins. (0.278 sq. mtrs)

Total pressure required: 12,960 lbs. (5878.5571kilos) — about 5¾ tons.



Translating this into a volume of lead or cast iron to give you some idea of the size of the weights required. Lead weighs .41lbs, cubic inch (2.54cms), therefore 31,609 cu. ins.(80,286.86cms) will be needed and if the base area is 432 sq. ins.(10.97mtrs) the height will be 73 ins.(185.42cms) approximately - a block of lead 2 feet (61cms) wide, 1 foot 6 inches (46cms) thick and over 6 feet (183cms) high! — not to be used in an upstairs bedroom.

Cast iron weighs .26 lbs. cu. in.(2.54cms), therefore, 49,846 cu. ins. (126,608.84cms) will be required and with the base area given, a column 9 feet 7 inches (292.1cms) high. For any given base area the height of the column remains the same, therefore for a picture 6in.(15.24cms) x 6in.(15.24cms) you will still need a block of cast iron 6in.(15.24cms) square by 9ft. 7ins.(292.1cms) high or the equivalent weight with a larger base area.



A real monster of an old Victorian Printer's Press.

Very similar to the one Ernie used. Very likely about a ton in weight!

This weight of press requires a very solid base.

Even if you halve the pressure to 151 lbs (68.5kilos) sq.in. (2.54cms) roughly that used by vacuum presses, you will still need far more weight than most people could supply, so you can see from these figures the futility of trying to press a picture using weights. It is a different thing to use the mechanical advantage of a screw thread and the leverage of the tommy bar than to just use dead weight. When a picture is too big for your press, I can only suggest that you try a contact adhesive, Glu Film, or go back to the old scotch glue. I learned the hard way that weights were not sufficient.



Glu Film Sheet

The Glu Film sheet as you see above is applied as an 'iron on' style of adhesive.

You place the sheet between your 'lay on' and the base board. Simply lay out your veneer with a sheet of the heat activated adhesive sandwiched between the veneer lay on and your baseboard, apply a hot iron with pressure, end of story.

You will probably need to do a little experimenting to find the best heat setting for your domestic clothes iron. However, if you are the husband, don't take the risk of using your wife's clothes iron and messing up the surface of the iron's 'face plate' or you'll be in terrible



A really nice largish printer's press

trouble. I speak from experience. Burnt on glue and veneer fibres are awful things to try to shift. I ended up buying her a new one, but I do now have a 'spare' clothes iron for just such an iron on veneer project in the future.

Over the decades we have had many interesting designs for marquetry presses. One, which only works with small pieces idea, involved placing your 'ready for gluing' marquetry project between two boards and driving one of the wheels of your motor vehicle on top of the picture 'sandwich' and leaving the arrangement overnight.

Whether it worked or not remains to be seen, but I will do a little research to see if I can find this article for you and reprint it for those who choose to experiment. However, I can't take any responsibility for vehicle or picture damage if it all goes wrong. This will be at your own risk. Same goes for the door frame and spare table method. That one uses a hydraulic jack (trolley or otherwise) - such pressures generated there could rather destroy a door frame or, most likely, collapse the spare table your marquetry work is placed upon.

At least those old Victorian Printer Presses were built for the job as intended.

MARQUETRY TOOLS

SELF LOCKING TWEEZERS

For all normal marquetry tasks, standard tweezers as you see below fill our needs perfectly, but for certain fiddly tasks, especially with small pieces, wouldn't it be good to have a sort of spare hand (so to speak) which would hold the small item very nicely while you, for instance, delicately glue a very fine line to the edge of it?

For such jobs I (being your editor) have found these self locking tweezers, seen on the right, to be the ideal tool for the task in hand.

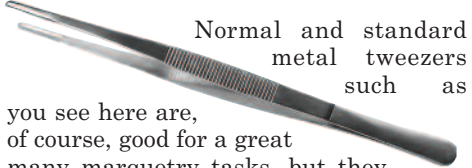
The jaw tips are serated to aid gripping of whatever you are picking up. The wooden material used for the grips on each side effectively prevents heat conduction, making them ideal for tasks involving heat where other metal tweezers might become too hot to handle.



A Pair of Self Locking Tweezers

When you are performing delicate marquetry jobs, these self locking tweezers provide the precision and control needed to handle various marquetry materials safely and effectively I have found.

I got my tweezers as a set from, yes you guessed it, Amazon. They range in price from just over £5.00 to around £12.00. I would not be without mine, I find them to be very useful. I hope you do to.



Normal and standard metal tweezers such as you see here are, of course, good for a great many marquetry tasks, but they have no locking mechanisms where, once the delicate piece has been picked up, as soon as you release your grip on the tweezers, your delicate piece falls out. With those self locking tweezers it all stays in place until you decide to release the piece when you are ready for doing so.

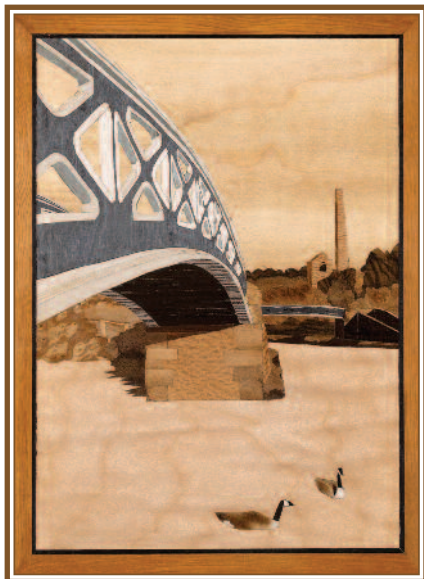
I suppose that you could look upon these self locking tweezers as sort of miniature clamps. I have often done exactly that, but do bear in mind that they are not small bench vices. The locking strength is too delicate for heavy work, but for mild and small light sanding of pieces to trim them to fit a 'window' you've just cut, these are just the job for that work I have found, they have quite a secure grip.



Self Locking Tweezer Jaws

The 2025 International Pictures

Thanks go to Steve Jukes for taking the Photographs



Left: 137 - HC Class 1 - 17 x 23 cms

“Toll End Works & Engine House” by Ben Comery of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *A good example of perspective and distance shown here by Ben. The sky and river veneers are well chosen.*

A very nicely presented piece of work. Well deserving of its award.

VT: *The veneer choice for the river and engine house are particularly good, sand scorching in the ducks is also well done. A very high standard for a beginner.*

PG: *Some reflections and shadows would have enhanced this picture. A few cutting errors but some good detail cutting of the geese in particular.*

Right: 732 - 2nd Class 7B - No size given - **“Black Box Spider”** by Lucy Bodin of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *I did find this box to be a jolly good example of something different in marquetry. Not often that we see an unusual and original design. Well done Lucy. An amusing idea, I rather like it.*

VT: *If you don't like spiders you won't open this box. What cutting there is, is cut very well indeed, just a little more scraping on top would give a better definition to the web.*

PG: *I liked the simplicity of the design very much.*



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 601 - 3rd Class 6A - Miniature

“Ready to Depart” by Brian Freeman of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: A miniature version of the 2025 Rosebowl winner. Plenty of interest crammed in here. Excellent work Brian.

VT: This picture has lots going on to look at, cutting and scorching is to a very high standard. Sorry, but I just don't like bland flat faces.



PG: I know it's a miniature, but everyone's faceless! Very well cut but shadows are absent.

Left: 116 - HC Class 1 - 15 x 29cms

“Balancing Elephants” Barbie Hale of the St. Albans Group

AM: A most pleasing picture which, for me, sure does bring a smile to my face.

This is one of those pictures worth printing out and displaying on the office wall for the next year.

Very cleanly cut, good finish.

VT: What a happy picture, four balancing elephants, all well cut with some good fine line cutting.

PG: A good clean picture, well cut and good veneer choices. I particularly liked the "wobble" effect.



Right: 153 - HC Class 1 - 32 x 47 cms

“George” by William Winfindale of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: A rather pleasing depiction of George, a long faced family dog. Looks to me that it could nearly have been a three veneer picture. Nice work.

VT: An appealing picture of George with a well cut frame to complement him. The balancing of veneers between his left and right sides is just right.

PG: Cheeks and body difficult to distinguish from background. Good borders and well cut piece.



Right: 515 3rd Class 5- 39 x 39 cms

“Waxwings” (after T.J. Bond) by Mike Roberts of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *Some very delicate cutting here. Lots of nicely done spear cutting, which really enhances the picture.*

Well up to Mike’s well established high standards. How Mike manages to produce so much good work each year astonishes me. I am envious!

VT: *What a delightful picture of three waxwings having lunch, all beautifully cut with a good selection of veneers.*

PG: *Superb in all respects!*



Left: 762- Class 1 - 6 x 6 x 1 cms

“Earring and pendant” by Philip Green of the Staffordshire Group

AM: *I rather like these ladies’ adornments. Be interesting to see them being worn.*

Nice, very clean cutting and finishing. Very decorative to be sure.

VT: *Earrings and brooch have some fine cutting giving movement/twist to the pattern.*

PG: *A pleasing design. The white veneer a bit too grainy to give a sharp contrast.*



Right: 140 - VHC Class 1 - 36 x 34 cms

“Dolly” by Maureen Keegan of the St Albans Group

AM: *A lot of well captured movement in this picture of Dolly. Certainly looks to be a very happy member of the equine family enjoying a little energetic gallop around.*

Some rather good veneer choices, plus some delicate scorching on the body and legs - that’s unless it was some very clever veneer selection.

But, whatever, it works rather nicely.

VT: *The movement of the grain in the horse’s body works very well indeed, as does the sand scorching.*

PG: *Extremely well cut dynamic picture. Excellent veneers choices all round.*



Right: 404 - HC Class 4 - 20 x 20 cms

“Celtic Knot” by Penny Greeves of the Meopham Group

AM: *A very well cleanly cut Celtic Knot. Really cleanly cut mitres. I like the intertwining of the light and dark elements of the Celtic knot. Nicely done.*

A very harmonious picture with well presented borders.

VT: *A Celtic knot nicely cut and presented.*

PG: *For an advanced class I did not feel that this entry was up to the standard expected. A pity because I liked the design.*



Left: 518 - HC Class 5 - 30 x 43 cms

“Digging sticks & sacred dilly bag” (aft. Mirrikkuriya) by Philip Green of the Staffordshire Group

AM: *There is a lot more work in this picture than first greets the eye. A heck of a lot of detail work in there.*

I like the abstract look of the inner rectangle, it gives a lovely hand-drawn appearance.

Very good veneer choices, well worthy of its Highly Commended award.

VT: *An unusual subject for a picture, clean and bright, it will look good on any wall.*

PG: *Well cut and finished piece.*

Below: 102 - VHC Class 1 - 38 x 29 cms “Polperro” by David Waldron of the Staffordshire Group

AM: *Nice one with, if you look carefully, some people populating the scene. Trees are well done also. Good perspective effect. It works very nicely. Water reflections good.*

VT: *A good, clean well cut picture with plenty of interest. A lot of thought was given to the shadows and water movement in the river, well worthy of the VHC.*

PG: *A very well cut and clean and bright picture. Some very good detail cutting. The mitres were a little off.*



Right: 708 - 2nd Class 7A - 51 x 31 cms - "Selection of Butterflies inlayed in Coffee Table Top" by Colin Roberts of the Chelmsford Group



AM: *Oh yes, this is an excellent table. The butterflies are spectacular. They really 'pop out' and are wonderfully detailed.*

VT: *All eight butterflies are realistic and beautifully cut and set neatly into the table top.*

PG: *Very well made butterflies accurately depicted. Some of the actual inlaying was not to such a high standard.*

Left: 763 - 1st Class 7C - No size given

"Columbian powder pot" by Ivor Bagley of the St Albans Group



AM: *A lovely little powder pot which is actually even smaller, or the same size as you see here. Delicate work and well deserving of its award.*

VT: *This is one of those pieces of marquetry that has to be thoroughly thought out and planned before attempting to start. It's bright and colourful, well cut and finished.*

PG: *A good attempt at 3D curved veneer. Difficult in large pieces and even more so in miniature.*

Right: 125 - HC Class 1 - 21 x 28 cms

"Windswept" by Arline Wilson of the St Albans Group

AM: *Top notch work for a piece in the beginner's class. Clean and well cut lines. A nice smoothness to the cutting in this picture.*

The nose, eye, mouth and chin are very well judged and work superbly.

VT: *Let's face it, this picture will look good on any wall.*

PG: *One or two minor cutting errors but otherwise a well cut and effective picture. I like it!*



Right: 602- VHC Class 6A - Miniatureo

“Organ Grinder” by Brian Freeman of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *Okay, I know that I ask this every time, but how does Brian manage to get such levels of high quality work into these miniatures? I only wish that I could do the same. To put so much work into each of these miniature pieces is truly amazing to me.*

VT: *Another miniature that is cut to a very high standard, with plenty of movement in the dresses and suits.*

PG: *The glee of the children comes over well.*



Left: 701 - HC Class 7A - 180 x 180 x 570 cms

“Park Your Stick” by Alan Townsend of the Chelmsford Group

AM: *And another absolutely superb container from Alan. The work is faultless as is the finish.*

This comes from many years of practice at the art and craft. It sure shows up my amateur status, that’s for sure!

Such high standards shown here, which sets an example for people like myself to attempt to emulate - if only we can.

VT: *Pleasant and a well thought out designed container, and some artificial flowers will complement it nicely.*

PG: *A good choice of well-matched veneers with excellent cutting.*



Right: 502 - VHC Class 5 - 40 x 38 cms “More Bother” by Alan Townsend of the Chelmsford Group

AM: *And it’s Alan again with a wonderfully detailed big cat picture. Presumably a follow on from Alan’s earlier piece from 1989 titled ‘A spot of bother’ which won Alan the Rosebowl in that year.*

You can really feel that this big cat is actually looking at you. That’s really well done.

VT: *I like the way the spots shrink where the body curves inwards between the shoulder and back leg to show the twist and movement. Also, the artist has got the cat’s eyes depicted so that they are just right.*

PG: *Excellent veneer choice and well selected cross-banded border perfectly executed. All cut with precision.*



Right: 610 - 2nd Class 6A - Miniature

“Mo-o-o-re” by Brian Freeman of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *You can always rely on Brian for some jolly good miniature work. And this one, once again, doesn't disappoint.*

VT: *There is some good cutting and scorching in this picture, but a little more scorching on the adults faces would have finished the picture off nicely.*



PG: *The facial expressions at the suggestion of the request for 'more' have come over well in so small a piece.*



Left: 310 - 1st Class 3 - 28 x 30cms

“Where Seagulls Dare” by David Kelmanson of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *A superb piece of marquetry art by David, well up to his high standards. Very clean cutting combined with a great veneer selection.*

Superb mitres as well.

VT: *The frame certainly draws the eye into the picture, with the three seagulls flying over the stadium, and the coastline on the horizon, it makes a peaceful picture.*

PG: *The gull wing crossing into the border works very well in this well cut picture. I'll have to watch out for my chips!*

Right: 713 - 3rd Class 7A - No size given - “Gold of Sicily” (Fruit Bowl) by Zsolt Nagy an Independent Member

AM: *I must say that I am always impressed with the magnificent applied work we keep seeing from Zsolt. There is always a lot of thought that goes into Zsolt's marquetry work.*

Well deserving of its 3rd place in class award.

VT: *It must have been a nightmare to glue the veneers onto the curve of a round bowl, especially as we can't see any joins. A very pleasant scene indeed.*

PG: *As Eric Morecambe would have said "you can't see the join!" A superb piece.*





Left: 736 - 3rd Class 7B - No size given - “Eternity” by Amanda Crank of the St Albans Group

AM: *A wonderful composition in geometric style on the lid of this small box.*

Do like the red band around the outer edge of the lid, very effective.

VT: *This trinket box has an unusual haphazard Art Deco style design which rather appeals to me, the cutting is of a good standard.*

PG: *An effective design on the top of the box. Clean finish.*

Right: 731 - HC Class 7B - 26 x 35 cms

“Look Back at the 20’s” by Mike Cain of the Sutton Coldfield Group

AM: *This is a really pleasing box with decoration on all visible surfaces. Very well made with a good visual balance.*

VT: *A nice sized box for memories and keepsakes, just one or two diamonds have the grain going the wrong direction, but a very good attempt for a beginner.*

PG: *A pity the packaging had affected the, presumably, soft finish. A good effort.*



Judges’ Notes on the Cover Pictures

Front Cover - 712 Class 1 - No size given - “Jeff Grossman calls it “Chatoyance” ” by Ivor Bagley of the St. Albans Group

AM: *Sort of an over-sized egg timer. In my mind this piece was very close to being the 2025 Rosebowl winning exhibit, but just beaten there by Mike Roberts’ truly superb picture.*

Jeff Grossman is one of our regular Tuesday evening Zoom marquetry meeting participants from the USA.

VT: *Not a lot I can say about this, except it was a first class piece of marquetry.*

PG: *Superbly made and well cut and finished item.*

Back Cover - 802 - Class 8 - 25 x 38 cms “Big Soldier (after John Colman)” by Les Dimes of the Harrow Group

AM: *A ‘Native American’ superbly depicted by Les Dimes. Les has that knack of getting faces looking good in the medium of marquetry.*

This portrait shows that “getting faces looking correct” quality off rather nicely. A good talent to have for sure.

VT *This is someone I wouldn’t like to come across, he has that defiant look captured perfectly by the artist.*

PG: *Top quality detail cutting and 3 veneer choice. I wouldn’t want to ruffle his feathers!*



Readers Letters



Editor's Note: Looking back through our archives I happened across a Reader's Letter that reflects today's situation perfectly. So let me bring you that letter from 2009 which was from edition 227, the last issue in fact which Ernie Ives edited prior to me taking over the editorial hot seat. So, it's over to you Ernie:

Dear Ernie.

When my Marquetarian arrives I turn first to Readers Letters. Unfortunately Winter 2008 had none. The previous issue had one and during the whole of 2008, only five letters appeared. This in spite of your frequent appeals for more. This caused me to look back at my twenty years as a member and as I thought there used to be far more. Issue No 151 Summer 1990 contained TWENTY ONE letters covering fifteen pages. I wonder why people have lost interest? In those days we had to write by hand put a stamp on then go and post it. Now we can tap out an email and it's gone. I believe membership is very much lower now. Total subscriptions are roughly the same but the rate was £10 then as against £16 today

Next I looked at the groups. In 1990 we had 29 groups; we now have 21. During this period 13 have folded up or perhaps combined with a nearby one and we have 5 new ones. Looking geographically, there were two in Wales now there are none. There is still only one in the whole of Scotland. Of the 21 groups we now have nearly half are within or just outside the M 25.

I once entered a picture in the local show where I lived, this won best in show against peoples prize onions, flowers cakes etc. I think this was a good advertisement for the craft as it was pictured in the local paper. I am sure a lot of our members belong to their local U3A or similar organisation. Most U3As have a

craft group, why not offer to give them a demonstration. It may get some interest. I am sure many members have ideas to increase membership. Why not send them in to Ernie or the next editor.

Well Ernie it remains for me to thank you for all the years you dedicated to this journal and to the Society in general. You will be sadly missed. I did meet you once at the Independents day in Sproughton in 1990. A very good day, good welcome, good talk, good demonstrations and a good lunch and tea. All for £5. I wish you good health and happiness for the future.

Regards.

Peter Dormer,

Caldicot,

Monmouthshire

Hello Peter,

Sadly I cannot speak for Ernie as we lost him several years ago, but I will say that everything you cover in this letter applies to today. We could certainly do with many more Reader's Letters and articles, that is for sure. It is difficult to judge what the readers would truly like to read with each edition. I hopefully estimate reasonably correctly as to what would appeal to them.

I do have the advantage over Ernie of having half a dozen proofreaders to advise me, whereas Ernie only had the one. So, for me that is very helpful when selecting material for publishing.

Surely our members and readers do have topics involving marquetry which especially appeals to them. If that is so, then please do let me know so that we can point this magazine towards such topics.

We do have archives stretching back to 1952 which we can refer back to when conventional marquetry comes into question, but we are certainly not restricted to no more than ancient practices, we have a

surprisingly adventurous stream in our membership which involves itself with all the latest trends on a technical level.

We have published articles and mini series on laser cutting over the last few years, but we are yet to investigate how AI could help with marquetry.

Some of our members do already use AI to produce original art work as the basis of a marquetry project, but I am sure there must be many more ways, as of yet not thought of, in which AI could help us with our marquetry

It may be in the form of computer controlled cutters operating under the guidance of AI which could produce some very exciting marquetry, but that would not please our traditionalist marquetarians, so a compromise would need to be sought there. But these are just a small handful of future possibilities. Perhaps you can think of more dear reader. However, this is just a start to get you thinking.

If something is on your mind marquetry wise, do write in or email, and we will see what we can provide as a useful answer.

However, if you just wish to comment about whatever's on your mind, do write or email and bring it to the attention of all the other readers. More than likely there are many more who will agree with you.

On the other hand if you have a moan you would like to air, don't sit on it, get it out into the open and feel free to tell us off. We can all benefit from some healthy criticism, it may even help us to improve the lot of the Marquetry Society.

My goodness me, twenty one Reader's Letters in 1990. These days that is no more than a dream for present day editors. That would fill up more than a third of the present magazine (journal), but although it would limit instructional articles and content, it would be very informative of the mindset of our membership, thus allowing us to steer the Marquetarian in the best direction.

Alan.

Concerning back editions of The Marquetarian

Okay, this is me, your editor, replying here collectively to a rather large amount of inquiries we have had coming into the editorial office regarding the availability of back issues of The Marquetarian.

We do have a couple of complete printed collections of The Marquetarian dating back to 1952 that I know of. These are the original printed copies up until approx edition number 200, where the following editions are also in electrical form in digital format. From edition 228 they are also archived in PDF form, so are well backed up in various formats.

All editions from number one to around number 250 were fully scanned in and converted to PDF format by one time Independents Secretary Clive Jones, who devoted many sleepless nights to the task. Surely meriting a medal there for that rather onerous task, but a most admirable effort there from Clive, for which we give him many belated thanks.

Anyway, this means that we can supply a complete collection of The Marquetarian to anyone who wishes to purchase a set. Unfortunately they are only available in electronic PDF format on DVDs, the only printed original sets reside with our Chairman Peter White and myself, your editor. It is possible there are one or two other complete sets out there, but these are the only two I particularly know about, but they're not for sale though.

If you want the full set, or parts of the set, head over to page 48 where you will find them listed under 'Marquetarian DVDs' 40 editions per disc.

These are a wonderful resource of marquetry knowledge and guidance, but they do reflect their age and standards, being that much of the content is now over eighty years old, but mostly still relevant to today amazingly! you'll also find the present day ones there as well.

Alan.

Acknowledging the original artwork sources when used for the principal design work in marquetry

Dear Editor,

Looking through back copies of your stimulating magazine, I note that it seems to be generally accepted that exhibitors may reproduce pictures or images based on the work of other artists, designers or photographers.

This, I suppose, is because traditionally craftsmen rarely have the time or inclination to become competent artists, just as many artists have neither the patience nor the motivation to become craftsmen.

The conventional marquetarian may perhaps be compared to the dramatist who re-writes a novel into a TV script or the composer who produces a symphony based on traditional folk tunes - they each work from borrowed material but then employ their own specialised interpretive skills to hatch a new artefact.

Even the copyist can be likened to the 19th century wood engraver who was hired to make facsimiles of artists' pen drawings so that they may be printed for mass circulation.

These are all functions which are well understood, respected and frequently applauded. However, it is customary for those working in the performing or interpretive arts to acknowledge their sources but in marquetry, members appear shy to declare whether their work is designed by themselves or some other hand.

This leaves me with a 'who did what' dilemma, unsure as to whether I should be marvelling at not only the often-superb craftsmanship, but also the sometimes-exceptional artistry.

Would it not enhance our appreciation if occasionally we could compare members work to their original inspiration and enjoy seeing how they have solved the problems of translating images from one medium to another?

Also, if exhibitors were invited to declare and show the origins of their work it might encourage more recruits from the art world, knowing that they would receive recognition for submitting designs based on their own drawings, photographs and research.

Admittedly, their entries may not always display the slick draughtsmanship and assured compositions of a rosebowl winner, nor might their craft skills stand comparison with the 'polished' performance of a dedicated beginner. But then I wonder how much more would a Van Gogh painting be worth if he had spent a little more time tidying up his brush work and had paid a bit more attention to the backs of his canvases?

Should we not embrace enthusiasts prepared to explore and develop marquetry as an art form and assess them for their innovation, daring and missionary zeal.

They might then discover if it is possible to do for intarsia what their predecessors did for embroidery and weaving in the 1950's, Lautrec did for printmaking in the 1890's or Kaffe Fusettt did for knitting in the 1980's.

Brian Burton,
Wrexham, Wales

Thanks for a very interesting Reader's Letter Brian.

Page 22 of this very journal (magazine) illustrates exactly what you are talking about in your letter. As I am actually someone who comes to the world of marquetry as an artist, not a woodworker, I agree entirely with the theme of your letter.

For very many years I have worked in oil and water colour paints and enjoyed and made use of the textural effects of the mediums, such as impasto which celebrates the application (or thickness) of the oil paint itself. Van Gogh used this to great effect. But marquetry only celebrates total flatness - no texture. But I'll leave the rest of this argument to another day.

Alan.

ANDREW SMITH'S Random Jottings Revisited



What is the secret of making boxes? There are no secrets, just different methods. I will devote this article to the methods I use.

The usual way of making boxes is to glue and pin the two ends between rebates cut in the sides, Fig. 1, but for someone with limited skills and few tools there is an easier way. The main purpose of the rebates is to keep everything square and in alignment. I use the following method.

I mostly use good quality birch ply for my boxes and having cut a piece large enough to cut out all the sides, I veneer this with a selected veneer on one side only. This is the inside lining of the box. I then give the veneer two or three coats of sealer and, when dry, sand smooth with fine grit paper. The reason I pre-finish is because it is very difficult to clean up the inside of an assembled box. Also, the applied veneer is the basis of the pseudo rebates.

The parts are cut and assembled as in Fig. 2. Prepare the ends first. These are temporarily taped together and planed on a shooting board. Fig. 3. The rebates are made simply by cutting a line and stripping away a small section of veneer. I now pre-drill the sides with a drill the same size as the nails or pins, I am going to use. In the case of fine pins, I insert one of the pins into a small pin vice, nip off the head and use this as a drill.

The easiest way to assemble the box is to place one end in a vice, glue both surfaces, lay the rebate over the end and drive home the pins. Fig. 4. Repeat with the other end, then the other side can be

applied on the bench as the assembly will now be stable. It is advisable to punch the heads of the pins under the surface, fill the holes and when everything is set, sand square and level.

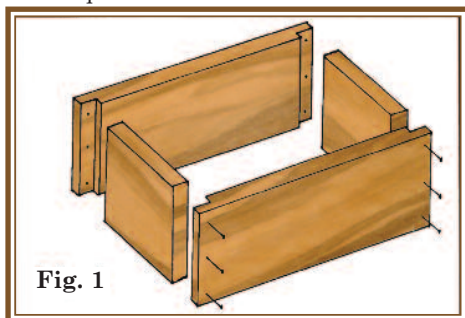


Fig. 1

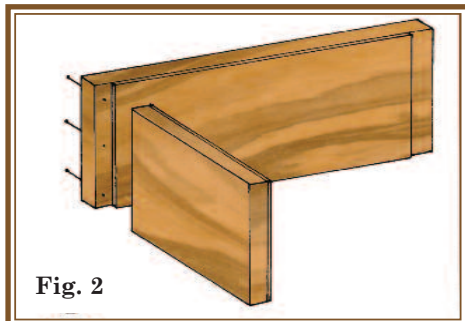


Fig. 2

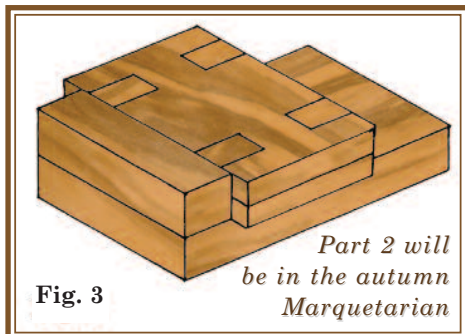


Fig. 3

*Part 2 will
be in the autumn
Marquetarian*

The Cutter Interview

Making a return visit to these pages later this year will be that favourite of many marquetarians, the Cutter Interview.

We already have some names lined up, but let's make an offer here and see if there's anyone in particular that you would like to see given the 'This is your (marquetry) life' treatment?

If you have someone you would like to put forward for 'Cutter' to put under the spotlight, then please do get in touch with our editor and let him know your preference for our next Cutter "victim".

If we do not have any of their marquetry work on file, then you will need to send us good quality photos of the interviewee's work, plus a 'mug shot' or two. Thanks.



CONVERSATION by Len Collis of the Bexley Group

This is an occasional little filler where we feature a picture from our archives that we think could have achieved a higher award than it did and has thus rather got lost in the mists of time. This is from the year 1987 and here are the judges of the day comments:

PETER WHITE. "A picture which caused some debate amongst us. The height above the figures I think actually adds quite a lot to it. The faces on the figures are reasonably well cut which again is a difficult area. Being a portrait man what do you think of those?"

EDDIE STEVENS. "I just think that on the centre one the nose has been made just a bit too obvious, but the form of the figures has come off quite well. Even the bird hanging in the background and the gun are reasonably convincing. A slight lack of shadow perhaps."

PETER WHITE. "I think it's convincing in parts and not so in others. For instance, the seat under the gent on the left doesn't quite look right and he doesn't appear to be sitting on it properly and some of the clothing is flat. But overall, it's worked."

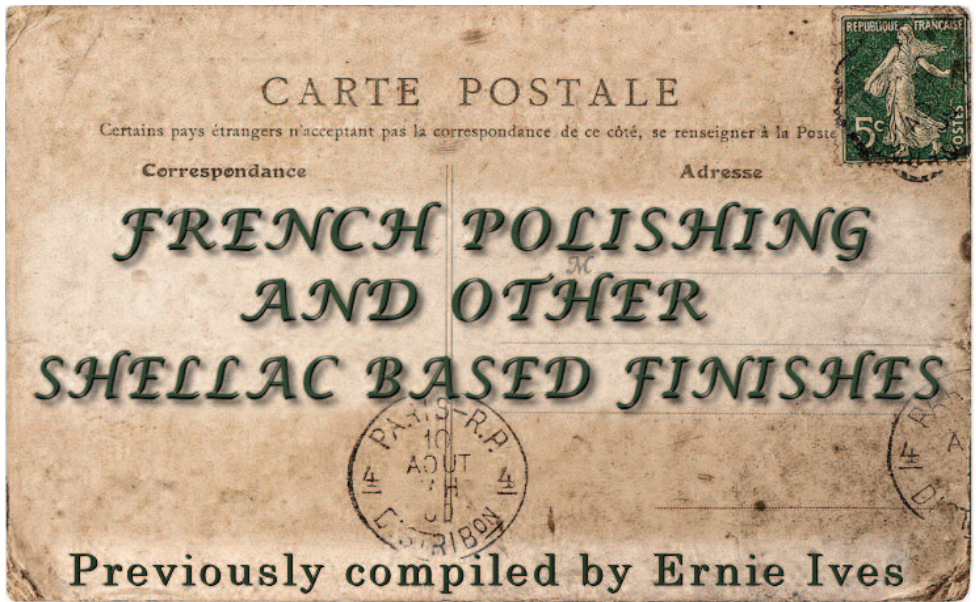
EDDIE STEVENS. "The finish is good, and the surround is quite nice."



FRANK TAYLOR. "This picture gave the correct height to the room for an old building."

ERNIE IVES. "I wasn't so keen on this one as the figures were rather flat, stiff and lifeless and the tracery at the top of the windows was obtrusively prominent. Cutting and finishing good."

Note: This delightful picture did achieve a 3rd in class 2. Comments interesting.



Apologies for making you wait an extra 3 months for part 2 of the Ernie Ives' French Polish article, but I am pleased to say that we have found the space in this Summer edition to bring you the concluding part of Ernie's article. So, no more waiting, here it is.

The rubber will need frequently recharging but the utmost control over its wetness and the amount of pressure should be maintained. The surface is now very sensitive, and carelessness could be expensive in the time it would take to put a mistake right.

Finally, the rubber should again be used with straight pulls, still with light pressure and each one overlapping and running half over the edge of the work before reversing the direction. The rubber should not be lifted, nor should the turn be made within the edge of the piece. Correctly done the surface will be clean and bright and free from oil; badly done it may be sticky or streaky and may still have some oil which may give a false appearance of brightness that will quickly deteriorate. The whole process depends

so much on a sensitive touch and the 'feel' of the rubber on the surface.

Some polishers modify the method by diluting the polish 50: 50 with methylated spirit. An example of which is seen here on the right:



This tends to give a softer finish and one which is more prone to sinking.

Spiriting out.

The half and half mixture is used for this method with an old, compacted rubber covered with a coarse linen cloth. Some pumice is frequently added to the inner surface of the rubber which is then liberally charged with the mixture. Often this one charge will be sufficient if the body up had been well done.

Start by using very light pressure so that the transfer of polish to the work is almost imperceptible. Gradually increase the pressure until the rubber is quite dry.

A little oil will be necessary in the early

stages, but as the surface becomes harder and the rubber drier no more oil will need to be added.

Considerable pressure may be put on the rubber when it is nearly dry. A gradual build-up of the pressure is crucial to the success of the procedure.

At this stage the surface should be hard, bright and blemish free, but there will still be a trace of oil, just a slight smear. This can be removed after the film has hardened overnight, with a burnishing cream or the oil can be 'spirited out'. An old rubber, cleaned of all polish and covered with a soft piece of cloth is used for this. A few drops of methylated spirit are added to the face of the rubber and tested by rubbing on the back of the hand until all the feel of wetness has gone and only the coldness due to the evaporation remains. The rubber is then applied briskly over the surface until the oil disappears. It may be necessary to repeat the process, but great care is needed as too much spirit will remove the polish from the surface.

A 10:1 mixture of water and sulphuric acid can be rubbed over the surface instead and burnished by a dusting of Vienna chalk (a mixture of precipitated chalk and magnesium oxide) rubbed on with the ball of the hand. Probably easier to use Rustins Plastic Coating or similar these days, that is a two part lacquer system.



Rustins Plastic Coating Home Kit



Do take special care with this chemical, it is very highly dangerous.

Sulphuric Acid



Vienna chalk also known as Vienna Lime

Editor's Note: Do bear this warning in mind if even considering the use of sulphuric acid. Sulphuric acid (H_2SO_4) is a highly corrosive, colourless-to-brown oily liquid used in diverse industrial applications, most notably for producing phosphate fertilizers. It has significant hazards, causing severe chemical burns on contact with skin and tissue damage if ingested.



Pumice Powder



Using the Pumice Powder



A Brand of Burnishing Cream



A ready prepared brand of "Easy French Polish" for those who prefer to avoid all the 'faff' described

Don't forget that the original article was written well over 40 years ago, so safety recommendations were not as considered as they are today. So, if you do choose to make use of sulphuric acid (*no longer recommended these days*) as Ernie wrote, do at least use thick rubber gloves and breathing masks as the very minimum of protective equipment. That chemical is very hazardous and detrimental to health. Do take special care at all times.

Although we are showing you several commercial brands of the materials you can use for your French Polishing endeavours here, do note that there are plenty of alternative brands available which

are most likely equally as good. These are just the ones I have in my own marquetry materials collection. All available as you may have guessed from Amazon, but there are other stockists around, of course, so don't feel obliged to follow my purchasing habits if you have other preferences.

The Marquetry Society



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via our editor at
alan@marquetry.org

As you may note from the picture on the page opposite, we need someone who is familiar with things like Facebook and Whatsapp and other similar platforms to look after our social media presence on the internet.

Our website takes care of itself, but our Facebook page certainly does need someone who knows their way around the way Facebook works to maintain and 'more or less' edit it.

Although it appears to be rather successful, it does need a level of 'weeding out' to remove unwanted or duplicate material from it. Alan, our editor, and Peter, our Chairman are both administrators, sadly we do not really have the time available to look after our Facebook presence properly. This is why we need someone like yourself who is at home

with platforms like this to edit and maintain such things on behalf of the Marquetry Society.

It is not a difficult job at all, just basically it amounts to deleting anything unsuitable, giving permissions to anything that was previously blocked and blocking anyone taking liberties so to speak. Just use your own discretion.

Of course, if you became our Social Media Officer you would also become a member of the Executive Committee, which gives you certain privileges such as taking part in our regular executive meetings. No travelling involved any more with these as they are now conducted online via Zoom. If you would like to consider becoming our Social Media Officer, just get in touch with Alan, the editor, let us know and we will 'put the wheels in motion'.



Veneer Examples - the A to Z of wood veneers

An occasional series featuring alphabetical listing of common (& rare) veneers



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Contact Peter on peter@marquetry.org for payment options for DVDs and downloads.



The following panel of experts have kindly placed their services at your disposal free of charge but do please be kind enough to send a stamped addressed envelope.

Veneer Identification

Any veneer identification inquiries, please contact by e-mail: info@marquetry.org for help and information

Sand Shading and General Enquiries

Quentin Smith, 15 Newport Rd.
Eccleshall, Staffordshire, ST21 6BE
Tel: 01785 850614

Email: qjsmarquetry@gmail.com

Items For Sale by the Mem. Sec.

Marquetry for Beginners by Ernie Ives. Copies of the 4th Edition of this 56 page instruction booklet may now be supplied as a PDF file in an Email attachment.

A small quantity of these collectable printed copies have become available. Apply soon while remaining stocks last. (Please enquire via the Editor)

Items For Sale by the Treasurer

Binders for the Marquetarian

Binder holds 12 issues of The Marquetarian price is £5.50 each plus £3.35 P&P for up to 7 binders.

Please apply to the Hon Treasurer for The Marquetarian binders.

Please make payments (cheques, etc) for the above 'For Sale' items to the 'Marquetry Society'. The Treasurer and Mem. Sec addresses on inner front cover.



Recommended Suppliers



Turners Retreat (Formerly Craft Supplies), Turners Retreat, The Woodworkers Source, Faraday Close, Harworth, Nottinghamshire, DN11 8RU, Phone: 01302 744344, Email: eShop@turners-retreat.co.uk.

Axminster Power Tool Centre, Tools and machinery for general woodwork / marquetry. Unit 10, Weycroft Avenue, Millwey Rise Industrial Estate, Axminster, EX13 5PH Tel: 0800 371 8222. Email: email@axminster.co.uk. Website <http://www.axminster.co.uk/>.

Breakaway Tackle Ltd., Ernie Ives Craft Knives available. Unit 65, Claydon Business Park, Claydon, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP6 0NL. Tel: 01473 832822. www.breakaway-tackle.co.uk/

Bude Time Enterprises Ltd., Clock movements. The W. I. HALL, Broad Close Hill, Bude, Cornwall, EX23 8EQ. Tel: 01288 353832. <http://www.budetime.co.uk/>

Capital Crispin Veneer Co. Ltd., Decorative and constructional veneers. Unit 1, Industrial Estate, Festival Way, Basildon SS14 3WQ. Tel: 020 7474 3680. Email info@capitalcrispin.com Web: www.capitalcrispin.com

C & L Clocks, Quartz clock movements. C & L Mail Order, Bridgerule, Holsworthy, Devon, CX22 7ED. Tel: 01288 381690. S.A.E. for price list. <https://www.clockparts.co.uk/>

Suffolk Wood Veneers, 5 Sea Lake Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 3LQ. Tel: 7881 922 146 (Lyn Tupper). Email: info@suffolkwoodveneers.co.uk. Web: suffolkwoodveneers.co.uk

Freed Veneers (Wood Veneer Hub), Veneer Specialists. Unit 4 Eden Court, Eden Way, Leighton Buzzard, Beds, LU7 4FY. Tel: 01525851166. Web: www.thewoodvenerhub.co.uk

Wood Veneers, Veneer supplies. Wood Veneers, units 1 & 2 The Courtyard, High Laver, Ongar, Essex, CM50DU. Web Address: <https://www.ebay.co.uk/str/woodveneers>

Freestone Model Accessories, Cutting mats and cardboard modelling accessories. 28 Newland Mill, Witney, Oxon, OX28 3HH. Tel: 01993 775979. Catalogue £1 & 1st Class SAE. Email: sales@freestonemodel.co.uk Website <http://www.freestonemodel.co.uk/>

Eaton's Seashells, We stock an extensive range of best quality, flat mother of pearl for inlay work and marquetry. Web: www.eatonsseashells.co.uk Tel: (0)1279 410284

Rothko & Frost Pieces of shell, stone, resin and other materials suitable for cutting and carving into inlays, for guitars, furniture and marquetry. Wide range of materials, sizes and thicknesses available. Tel: 01594 546 119 Email: info@rothkoandfrost.com Website: <https://www.rothkoandfrost.com/materials-c25/inlay-blank-t436>

W. Hobby Ltd., Sundries for box and clock making, fretsaws etc. 2 Knights Hill Square, London, SE27 0HH. Catalogue £3.25. Website <http://hobby.uk.com/>

Shesto Ltd., Piercing saw blades, etc. Sunley House, Olds Approach, Watford, WD18 9TB, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 8451 6188. Catalogue £3. Website <http://www.shesto.co.uk/>

Original Marquetry Ltd., Mother of Pearl, bandings, veneers, and all manner of marquetry accessories. Tel: 0117944264 Website: www.originalmarquetry.co.uk

Placages et Filets Gauthey, Wide range of veneers including a large stock of dyed wood. Safe shipping to the UK. Address: Quai Georges Bardin, 71700 TOURNUS, France. Tel: 0033 3 8520 2702 Website: <https://www.gauthey.fr>

Cove Workshop, Marquetry Kits. The Cove Workshop, Gobbins Brae, Islandmagee, Larne, Northern Ireland. Email: info@marquetrykit.co.uk Web: <https://www.marquetrykit.co.uk/>

Please inform the editor of any amendments, additions or deletions to this list.



“Big Soldier (after John
Colman)”

by Les Dimes of the Harrow Group
2nd Class 8