

# THE MARQUETARIAN

Autumn 2021 No. 276

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“Tiger”

by Tom Moxey Independent Member  
1st Class 2B - 1977



Journal of  
The Marquetry Society



# The Marquetry Society



Founded 1952

## Executive Committee

**Patrons:** John Bly F.R.S.A. Tony Jacklin C.B.E.

**President:** Peter White, 10 The Russets, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0HH  
Tel: 01474 814217 Email: peterwhite@waitrose.com (or: peter@marquetry.org)

**Chairman:** This position is at present vacant. All applications for this post welcome. Please advise the Editor if you are interested in applying for this post.

**Vice Chairman:** Les Dimes, 17 Chapel Crofts, Northchurch, Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, HP4 3XG. Tel: 01442 862643 Email: les.dimes45@gmail.com

**Hon. Gen. Treasurer:** Vaughan Thomas, Southview, Southfleet Ave, New Barn, Longfield, Kent, DA3 7JG. Tel: 01474 704222 Email: dthomassouth@aol.com

**Hon. Gen. Secretary:** Janet Edwards, Lavender Cottage, 181 High Street, Kelvedon, Essex, CO5 9JD Tel: 01376 573412 / 07708 334204 Email: janwards40@gmail.com

**Minutes Secretary:** Contact details as listed above for Hon. Gen. Secretary

**Hon. Editor & Webmaster:** Alan Mansfield,

**Hon. Membership Secretary:** Andrew Jaszczak, 17 Redwing Close, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG2 9FE Tel: 01438 352859 Email: andrew@marquetry.org

**Independent Members' Secretary:** Robin Moulson, 28 Tory, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire. BA15 1NN Tel: 01225 863912 Email: robinmoulson@tiscali.co.uk

**Web Secretary:** David Walker, 105 Brackenbrae Avenue, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow, G64 2DU Tel: 07722437518 Email: dave@marquetry.org

**Society USA Representative:** Ernie Mills, 14515 W Granite Valley Dr., #B407, Sun City West, AZ 85375. Tel: 623-242-9668. Email: emills21@cox.net

**Publicity Committee:** Peter White & Alan Mansfield (Contact details as above)

### **Ex-officio Executive Committee:**

John Biggs, Hazeldene, Ruskin Rd, Stanford-Le-Hope, Essex, SS17 0LF Tel: 01375 678695

A. M. Townsend, 3 Green Walk, Marden Ash, Ongar, Essex CM5 9HR. Tel: 01277 363058

Dave Bulmer, 5 Devonshire Gdns, Linford, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex, SS17 0QW. Tel: 01375 675411

Enrico Maestranzi, 19 Ravendale Avenue, North Finchley, London, N12 9HP  
Tel: 0208 445 5935

Martin Bray, 43 Melthorne Drive, South Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 0TS. Tel: 0208 845 7180

**Web Site Address:** <http://www.marquetry.org>

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# Visit the Groups

## Bexley

John Davison, 26 Meadow Way,  
Farnborough Park, Farnborough, Kent,  
BR6 8LW.

Tel: 01689 851702

## Broadlands

George Webb, 37 Sands Lane, Lowestoft,  
NR32 3ER.

Tel: 01502 515703

## Chelmsford

Karen Cooper, 32 Ashurst Drive,  
Chelmsford, Essex CM1 6TN

Tel: 01245 465509

Email: [karencooper@live.com](mailto:karencooper@live.com)

[http://www.marquetry.org/chelmsford\\_group.htm](http://www.marquetry.org/chelmsford_group.htm)

## Cotswold

For information regarding the Cotswold  
Group please contact by e-mail at:

[info@marquetry.org](mailto:info@marquetry.org)

## East Dorset

Peter Mollan, 10a Gordon Road,  
Highcliffe, Dorset, BH23 5HN .

Tel: 01425 280664.

Email: [edmg\\_stanpit@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:edmg_stanpit@tiscali.co.uk)

## Harpenden

Peter Goucher, 14 The Close, Harpenden.  
Hertfordshire, AL5 3NB.

Tel: 01582 713978

Email: [p.goucher@ntlworld.com](mailto:p.goucher@ntlworld.com)

## Harrow

Janet McBain, 39 Carpenders Avenue,  
Watford, Hertfordshire, WD19 5BS.

Tel: 07722 346350

[http://www.marquetry.org/harrow\\_group.htm](http://www.marquetry.org/harrow_group.htm)

## Humberside

Katherine Stephenson, 57 Spring Gardens,  
Anlaby Common, Hull, HU4 7QQ.

Tel: 01482 355981

## Meopham

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

Tel: 01474 814217

## Somerset - previously known as Merriott

Ken Smart, 15 Shiremoor Hill, Merriott,  
TA16 5PH

Tel: 0146074567

Email: [williken@btinternet.com](mailto:williken@btinternet.com)

## Redbridge

<http://www.redbridgemarquetrygroup.org>

## Scotland

Patrick Levins, - please contact by e-mail  
only at: [info@marquetry.org](mailto:info@marquetry.org)

## Sheffield

Graeme Johnson, 152 Hazlebarrow Crescent,  
Jordanthorpe, Sheffield, S8 8AR

Tel. 0114 237 5348 - [theegraeme@mac.com](mailto:theegraeme@mac.com)

## Sproughton

For any enquiries regarding the  
Sproughton Group please contact by e-mail  
at: [info@marquetry.org](mailto:info@marquetry.org)

## St. Albans

Corinne Barnaby, 9 Arundel Close, Hemel  
Hempstead, HP2 4QR. Tel: 07561 111278

Email: [cojoba@ntlworld.com](mailto:cojoba@ntlworld.com)

[www.marquetry.org/st\\_albans\\_group.htm](http://www.marquetry.org/st_albans_group.htm)

## Staffordshire

Quentin Smith, 15 Newport Rd,  
Eccleshall, Staffordshire,  
ST21 6BE

Tel: 01785 850614

Email: [gjsmarquetry@gmail.com](mailto:gjsmarquetry@gmail.com)

<http://www.staffordshiremarquetry.org.uk>

## Sutton Coldfield

Mike Roberts, 30 Crockford Drive,  
Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, B75 5HH.

Tel: 0121 308 0239

[http://www.marquetry.org/sutton\\_coldfield\\_group.htm](http://www.marquetry.org/sutton_coldfield_group.htm)

## Thetford

For all information please contact by e-  
mail at: [info@marquetry.org](mailto:info@marquetry.org)

## Thurrock

John Biggs, Hazeldene, Ruskin Road,  
Stanford-Le-Hope, Essex, SS17 0LF

Tel: 01375 678695

# *Editorial and Publishing Office*

E-mail:

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### **Deadline Dates**

**Final** date for receipt of material for issue  
**277** is **12th October 2021** but please let me  
have as much material as possible by  
**mid September 2021**

**Final** date for receipt of material for issue  
**278** is **12th January 2022**

### **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.

### ***Other Useful Addresses***

**American Marquetry Society (AMS)**  
AMS Pres. Dave Peck, 726 Road N, Redwood Valley,  
CA 95470. Tel: 707-485-7458  
Email: president@americanmarquetrysociety.org  
**Flemish Guild of Marqueteurs**  
Driesstraat 18, Tielt 8700, Belgium

#### **Marquetry Society of Canada**

John Ness, 89 Knightswood Blvd, Guelph, Ontario,  
N1E 3W8, Canada, Email jolyness4952@gmail.com  
Tel: 519 994 8611

#### **Marquetry Society of Victoria,.**

Mrs. Elsie Knaepple, 11 Mullens Road, Vermont  
South, Victoria 3133, Australia  
Email: secretary@marquetryvic.org.au

#### **Rencontre Internationale de la Marqueterie (R.I.M.)**

Xavier Dyevre, 15 rue du Peintre Lebrun, 78000  
Versailles, France. 01 39 51 53 66

#### **De Verenigde Marqueteurs vzw**

Tel. : 011 222 010 (Chairman)  
Club Rooms: zaal het park, oostlaan 10, 3600 Genk.  
E-mail: deverenigdemarqueteurs@gmail.com  
facebook: De Verenigde Marqueteurs vzw  
Website: <https://deverenigdemarqueteurs.wordpress.com/>

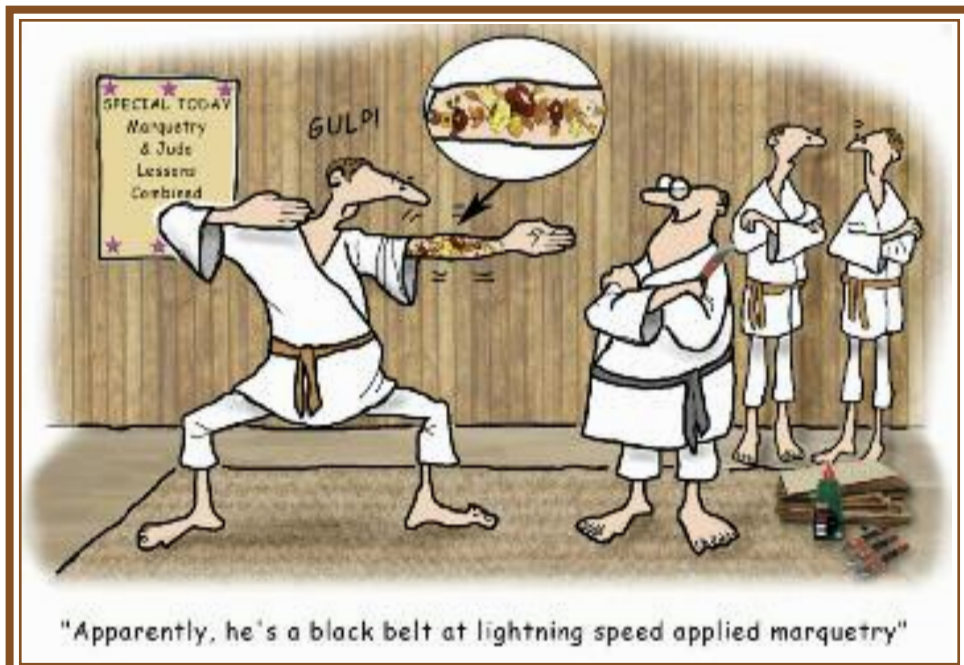
#### **Atrema**

Espace Henri-Barbusse, 60 bis 10e Avenue, 93290  
Trembley en France Tel/Fax : 331 43 84 53 54  
Email: pathooge@hotmail.com

#### **The Marquetry Guild Inc (NSW)**

Kay Underwood Tel: (02) 9570 8680  
Email: kuwood@bigpond.net.au

# Page 3 Cartoon



Cartoon story line by Vaughan Thomas. Artwork by Alan Mansfield

## *The 2021 International Marquetry Exhibition*

### *Exhibition venue:-*

*Niland Conference Centre, Rosary Priory, 93 Elstree Road  
Bushey Heath, Bushey, Herts. WD23 4EE*

### *Exhibition Opening Times*

*Saturday, 16th October 9am to 5pm*

*Sunday, 17th October 9am to 5pm*

*Monday 18th to Friday 22nd October 10 am to 5pm*

*Saturday 23rd 9am to 1pm AGM at 1.30pm to 5pm*



Well, if “you know what” allows, we should be having our long awaited (and much missed) International Marquetry Exhibition at last.

As an editor especially, it has meant that I haven’t been able to bring you any of the new marquetry works from a 2020 exhibition because circumstances would not allow us to hold one. This has meant that I have had to raid our archives in order to bring you pieces from years past that you probably will have not seen before. So I hope that you will have found them to be a reasonable substitute given the limitations of the past couple of years.

One good thing emerging out of all this is the surprising success of our regular Zoom meetings. They started out as 40 minute sessions intended to keep the Redbridge Group membership together on their regular meeting evening. But then we got requests from many others to join in, and it blossomed from there.

We are looking to expand this as these Zoom meetings, although they are very informal, do seem to benefit those who take part. If you want to know more, go to David Walker’s Web Sec page (page 8) where David will explain further and provide important information which you

will find very helpful, especially if you want to participate.

Have you sent your entry form in yet? There’s only a few days left if you haven’t, so get your skates on and get posting if you want to get your exhibit in. And the best of luck to you for a high placing in whatever class you are entering.

I have been surprised at how many of you have been requesting a tutorial on portraiture work in the medium of wood veneers/marquetry.

Well, if you head on out to page 38 you will find a hopefully helpful mini tutorial on just such a subject. If you do find it useful and interesting, there are several previous tutorials in our archives on this subject which I would be happy to revamp and bring up to date and then serialise for The Marquetarian. Would that appeal to you do you think?

An interesting benefit from this Zoom thing is that it gives me a sort of “non committal” audience that I can run these tutorial sequences by in real time and get instant feedback and thereby make changes if required almost instantly. For an editor this is a superb chance for off the cuff criticisms - a bonus indeed!

*Alan.*

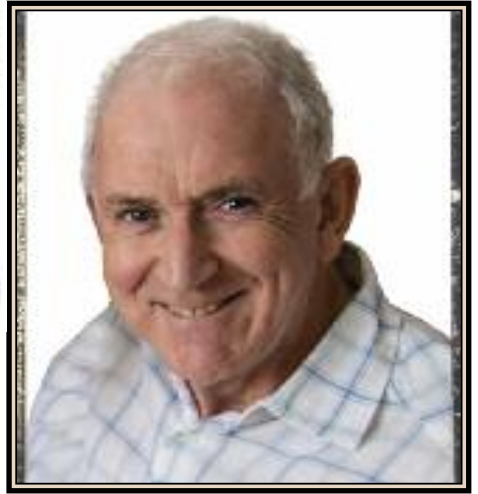
### **Autumn period Password**

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

**b o g o a k**

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 September 2021**.

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.



What an excellent magazine Alan has been managing to put together for us recently despite him lamenting the lack of exhibition photos. Thank goodness for our extensive archive and willingness of a few good people to write articles for him.

I read with interest David Walker's column about his veneer stocks. Most of us are as much veneer collectors as we are marquetarians, but that's the way it has to be. Without a diverse palette, we are always going to be wanting for something, as I'm sure you have all found. The news that some American Red Gum has become available is very welcome and well done Jim Bassett and John Coffey to have done what they have to get some into the UK for us to purchase, and to Alan and David for publicising it.

Whilst researching for my Artistic Considerations and Veneer Choice DVD, I sought permission to use many photographs of member's work to illustrate the various attributes of a great number of veneers. Skies and water effects were just a couple of examples where American Red gum worked very well. I first used it on a simple picture of a dolphin (see overleaf) and the piece I chose for the background was what really made the picture for me. The marquetry itself being almost incidental.

Have a look at the other examples of this timber in action and you'll see what a virtuous veneer it can be. It's the heartwood which is generally sold as 'red gum' whereas the creamy-white sapwood is often sold as 'sap gum'. Usually obtained

from New England, Mexico and into Central America, the veneer is also known in the US as 'gum', 'sweet gum' and 'bilsted' (heartwood). In the UK the sapwood is sometimes known as 'hazel pine' and the heartwood as 'satin walnut' all of which is very misleading.

Let me make a brief response to the brilliant article by Andrew Smith that he wrote a long time ago, shortly after the introduction of Judge's Rules and Guidelines which appeared in place of my column. I knew Andrew well and he was a marquetarian I much admired. He was a master of many techniques and his geometric applied work was breathtaking. Not everyone knew it but he only had one eye. He wrote articles for The Marquetarian for many years which I always looked forward to reading. I was instrumental in drafting the Judges Rules and Guidelines and they were honed into shape by the committee before being published. They were not something dreamed up merely as something to do by the committee, but came about by popular demand if you like. Many members felt that they ought to know by what criteria their entries into national exhibitions were being judged. The only rules as such are to do with what the judges should abide by. e.g. They may not enter the competition themselves in order that

they are available to judge all exhibits and not have to 'step back' from a class because they have an entry in it. And, because complete anonymity is rarely feasible, a judge must also declare to their fellow judges any prior knowledge of an exhibit and the other two judge's rankings should take priority.

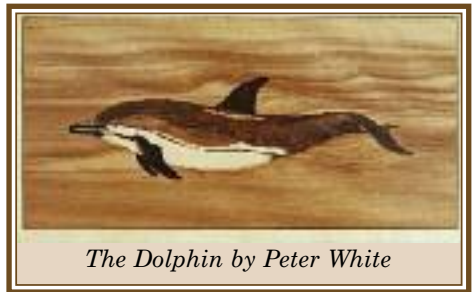
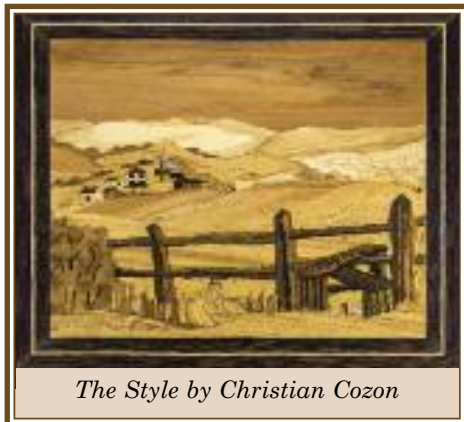
As for the guidelines, they are purely that and do not 'stifle freedom' but merely set out what should be considered a worthy piece of work, prioritised in accordance with what is widely accepted as good craftsmanship, use of veneer and artistic expression. There are no 'rules' here that dictate what is or is not allowed in marquetry. The Society has no desire to inhibit creativity and innovation. There are rules, mainly pertaining to eligibility of entries for our National Exhibition but they are separate to the Judge's Rules and Guidelines.

It was most gratifying to read how well my choice of recipient for the President's Commendation for 2020 went down. It was just a shame I couldn't surprise Anne with the award in person at a National Exhibition and had to leave it up to the postman to spring it upon her.

Everything crossed for the exhibition this year which we all sincerely hope will signal a return to near normal life.

Take care and stay safe everyone.

*Peter*







*Left: The Gathering by  
John Jeggo*

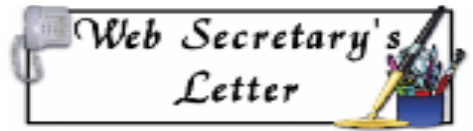
*Below: No Time to Rest  
by Arie Coetzee*



*Above: Timber by Les Dimes  
Below: The Messenger by Stan Banks*



*Moonlight by Gordon Richards*



Greetings from Scotland. One of the problems of living here is that members of the Society are spread far and wide and, unlike in England, there are no Groups. This is one of the drawbacks as far as Marquetry is concerned.

The members are living in various parts of the country and are treated as Independents. I doubt if we were to have a meeting, because of the distance to travel, there would be many who would attend. I suppose that we could set up a Zoom meeting occasionally. It is good to see and talk with other Marquetarians to share views and ideas. In Scotland we have 17 Independent members. During lockdown enthusiasm may have waned a bit because eight have not yet renewed their subscription.

Rather than have a regular meeting it would be worthwhile to have a Zoom meeting, say once a month, just to share topics and ideas. Scottish members, what do you think? If you are interested, please let me know online at [dave@marquetry.org](mailto:dave@marquetry.org). This has worked with the Redbridge Group. As I've mentioned before, we have members from as far as Phoenix, Arizona, Denver, Colorado, Georgia, Bilbao and also members from Harrow, St Albans and Independents.

Although this meeting has been organised by the Redbridge Group, the general feeling is that we can open it out to other Marquetarians once lockdown has finished. It will probably be on a different evening because Wednesday is the Redbridge Group Meeting. If anyone is interested in joining us please contact either, myself, David Walker at [dave@marquetry.org](mailto:dave@marquetry.org) or Alan Mansfield at [alan@marquetry.org](mailto:alan@marquetry.org) and we will give you the meeting identity.

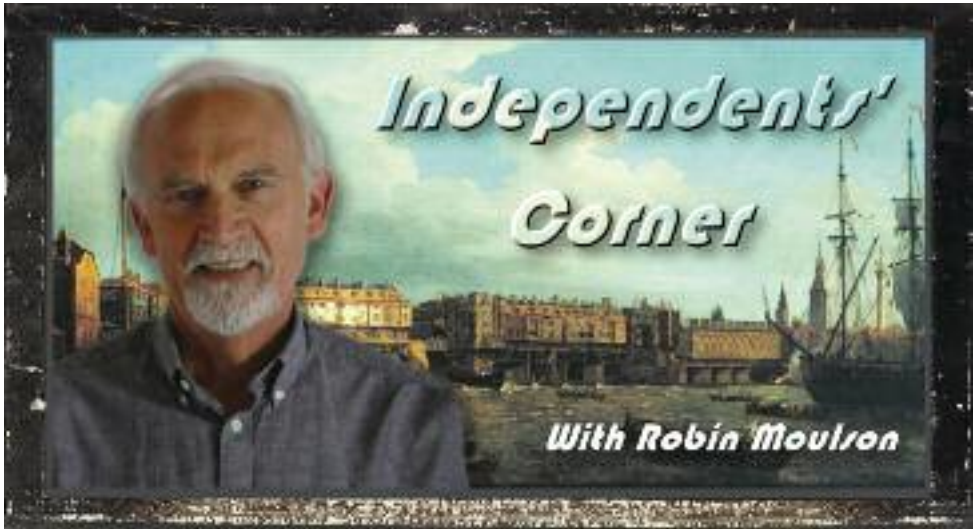
In the last edition Alan and I mentioned Red Gum veneer selected by Jim Bassett in Georgia and sent to John Coffey our Veneer supplier. Some of this has already been bought by members and there have been some great pictures either finished or still being worked on. There are going to be some very nice pictures at the National Exhibition this year. John still has some of this highly decorative veneer left. His contact details are shown on the Recommended Suppliers list on the back page.

Since the last issue there has been very little correspondence for the web page. Alan has also been struggling to find articles for the Autumn edition. Please, if anyone could write even a small article or letter it would be very much appreciated by Alan.

Obviously, we are not the only Marquetry Societies and I have been very interested in the two following ones. They both appear on Facebook Groups and have some wonderful examples of Marquetry from around the world. Go to Facebook and search on 'Marquetry Art' and 'Marquetry and Inlay'. A lot of the work is either laser cut or saw cut but well worth viewing.

I've not much else to say for this issue, perhaps we might have some more articles or correspondence for the Winter edition. Until then keep free from infection and keep working on your next piece.

*David.*



Some ideas for Independents looking for interesting marquetry subjects. Top left is a Moroccan grouping from an earlier exhibition. The other four items are photos taken by myself. The second is a group of old guys in one of the main streets. The third is a larger picture of Chefchauen.

This is much larger than number 1 and shows various possibilities. The fourth shows the streets, using a lot of blue if members use it to apply dyed veneers. The fifth is a good example in the town including a very old building close to the town and its mountain.



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**VENEER BOXES**  
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Our veneer boxes contain a good selection of light, medium and dark veneers of varying sizes to suit the needs of most marquetarians. Visit our website and see for yourself.

## MARQUETRY TOOLS

### Veneer Tape (the thinner white variety)

Something we all use without thinking too much about it (*although some do use a certain clear sticky tape - the vandals!*) is the gummed white tape.

This is specially formulated for wood-working purposes and does not tear out wood fibres when removed.

The white tape is of a higher quality than the brown gummed parcel tape and is much thinner. Usually supplied in rolls of about 200 metres by 20mm wide.

It has a superior tack and, being thinner and more absorbent, it can be more readily removed after gluing by simply wiping

with a little water, which softens the gum adhesive, and makes the tape's removal simplicity itself.

The larger rolls as you see in our photo would probably last the normal marquetarian a life time, but many groups break these down into smaller rolls for their members which are more manageable. Don't let water drip on these for obvious reasons!



# CELTIC KNOTS FOR MACHINES

by Henry Merryweather

**Preface:** Intertwining things like Celtic Knots are a very popular element of marquetry composition and/or design and have been incorporated into many a marquetry project over the years.

The variation in Celtic Knot designs is quite formidable and can be confusing. But in this second part of a new mini series on this very subject, our friend

Henry Merryweather guides us through the many variations of these delightful knot designs and shows us how they can be adapted for cutting machines and other various purposes.

So, over to you Henry for part 3 of this series that carries on with more of the graphics which follow on from the illustrations displayed in parts 1 & 2

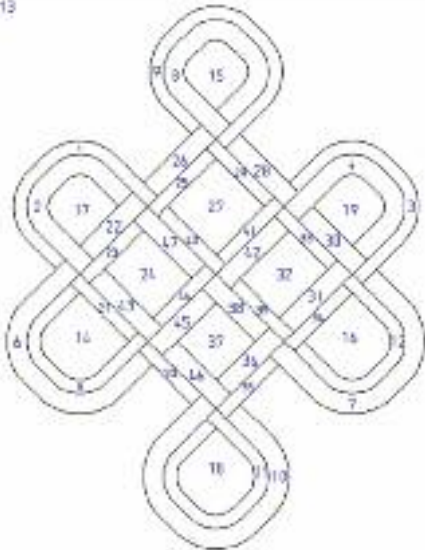
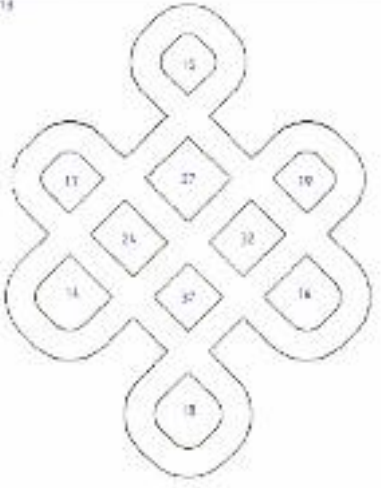
Properties of the parts can be obtained and used for analysis if required. The properties include area and the number of lines and/or arcs used in each part. The table below shows an example analysis. The parts automatically have been put into groups which exactly are the same shape and also show which are mirrored. For example in group 5:

1. Parts 1, 6, 9, and 12 have the same area
2. Parts 6 and 9 are mirror images of parts 1 and 12 (*Refer to page 14 of summer edition*)

Group	Instance (M indicates mirrored)	Part name
1	1	ming loop-11
	2	ming loop-5
2	1	ming loop-7
	2	ming loop-8
	M1	ming loop-3
	M2	ming loop-13
3	1	ming loop-18
	2	ming loop-17
	3	ming loop-16
	4	ming loop-14
4	1	ming loop-15
	2	ming loop-19
	3	ming loop-20
5	1	ming loop-12
	2	ming loop-1
	M1	ming loop-6
	M2	ming loop-9
6	1	ming loop-10
	2	ming loop-4
7	1	ming loop-2

The output could also be used to create schedules which are required if the parts are to be nested. In this case details of which material was required for each part would be added.

**b. Using the ribbon knot shown on page 11 of the summer Marquetarian**

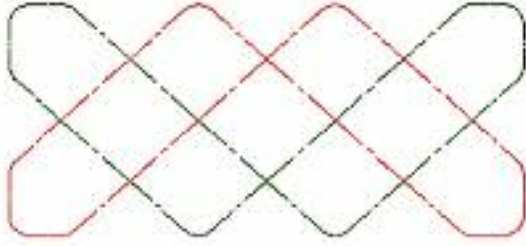
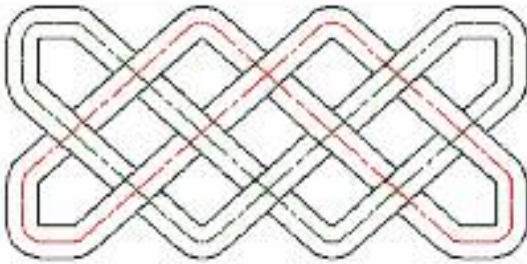
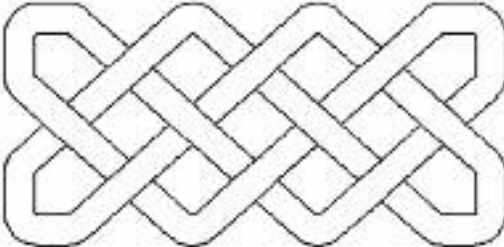
	<p>This shows the ribbon knot and annotation assigning numbers to each part</p>
	<p>When the individual parts are created it can be done so that the reference point (datum) is in the same place on the knot for all parts. This means that, for example, that another part can be created made up of the outside profile and all the inside parts in their required place. This is useful when the background material has a prominent design which will be recognised in the background parts of the completed knot.</p>

**5. Examples**

This section gives a number of examples where knots found in the reference quoted in section 2a and elsewhere have been copied.

Sturrock K is a rich source since there are over 150 examples all drawn by hand. The examples were drawn to make sure the system developed using macro tools of the Cad system were robust.

**a. Straightforward interlacing based on two closed paths**

	<p>This shows the two paths, automatically identified, used for the interlacing.</p>
	<p>This shows the knot form using equal offsets either side of the path. It can be seen that crossings are formed both of the same path and of the two paths.</p>
	<p>This shows just the final knot.</p>

**F**rom reader's feedback it seems that Celtic Knot designs are proving to be rather popular and very appealing to many marquetarians. You will therefore be pleased to know that Henry has been very inventive with such designs and there are many more to come over the next several editions of *The Marquetarian*. It will be interesting to see how many interpretations of these designs turn up at our National Exhibitions. More in the winter *Marquetarian*.

**L A P E L   B A D G E S**

**T**o purchase one these rather exquisite Marquetry Society lapel badges please send a cheque for £6.00 (this covers Postage & Packing as well) made payable to **The Marquetry Society to:**



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

## Introduction

This article explains the book method, a new and simplified way of using the double bevel technique. The book method is suitable for beginners as well as others with more experience. It builds on the setup for packet sawing, as described in the third article in this series (Issue 275: pp.15-18). Whereas packet sawing works with layers of veneers and cardboard taped together, the book method has similar layers hinged together with masking tape to make a book. Today's thin veneers, mostly 0.6mm thick, need the support of cardboard to prevent breakages and provide traction for the blade, especially when sawing only two veneers at a time. With reference to examples of projects, this article describes the making of a book and its applications (Figure 1).

## Making a Book



Fig 1. A Book for Sawing the Flower Design

The arrangement of the book's pages varies according to whether the background veneer is on top of the insert veneer, or vice versa (see Issue 274: p.17, Figure 1). Background on top, discussed in this instalment, provides a straightforward approach to making marquetry. Whole projects can be constructed using just this one technique. Insert on top is discussed in the next instalment.

A valuable application of it is for cutting in detailed parts of a picture that have been made separately, such as a butterfly. Sometimes it is more convenient to do this than to saw details directly into a large picture.

The sawing for both approaches is done with the design and the veneers face side up. For background on top, the pages of the book are arranged as follows (Figure 2):

Page 1: A copy of the design glued to cardboard about 0.6mm thick.

Page 2: The background veneer, reinforced with thin marquetry tape on the face side as needed.

Page 3: A cardboard spacer, about 1.0mm thick. The spacer reduces the sawing angle and stiffens the book (see Issue 274: pp. 16-17).

Page 4: A second copy of the design glued to cardboard. This is the same as page 1. A larger project may require thicker cardboard here.

Assemble the pages with a masking tape hinge on the longer side. Tape the hinge outside and inside to ensure that the pages stay aligned. One or two small pieces of masking tape on the right will keep the book closed during sawing. The insert veneers are taped to page 4 for sawing, after which they are taped into position in the background veneer.



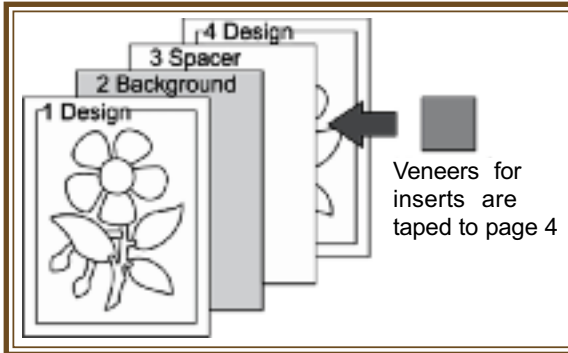


Figure 2. Arrangement of Pages for the Background on Top Approach

If the sawing angle is correct, the inserts will fit flush with the back of the background veneer.

### Planning the Sawing

Planning the sawing benefits the pace and precision with which projects are made. The following are two complementary ways of working:

**Work from the back of the design to the front.**

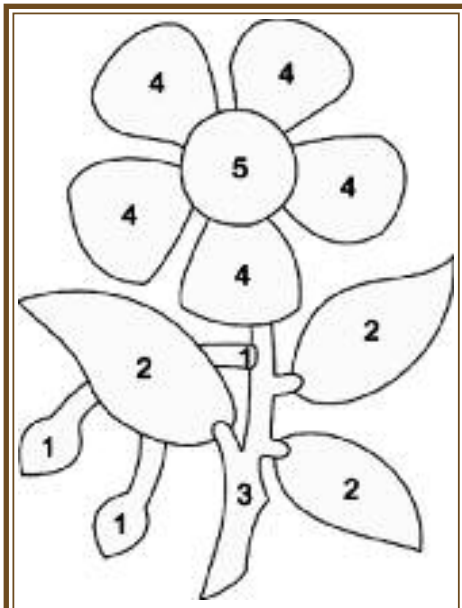


Figure 3. Flower Design with Numbered Layers

In the flower design the numbering of the pieces derives from imagining it as a picture made up of 5 layers, with layer 1 at the back and layer 5 at the front (Figure 3). The pieces are sawn in the numbered order, as far as possible starting each one from a drill hole in another piece. For example, the shoots in layer 1 are sawn from a drill hole in a leaf on layer 2, then the leaves are cut starting from drill holes in the stem on layer 3. Waste wood and drilled areas are removed as adjacent pieces are sawn.

### Overcut pieces where possible.

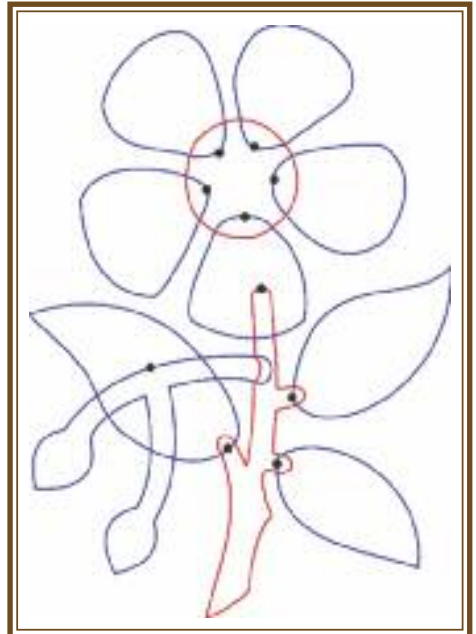


Figure 4. Location of Drill Holes for the Flower Design

Overcutting involves starting and finishing the sawing of a piece within the border of an adjacent piece. In the flower design, sawing of each petal begins and ends in the flower's centre, as shown in Figure 4, where black dots represent the drill holes. When the flower's centre is sawn from a needle hole the overcut

areas are removed. Every piece of this design, apart from the flower's centre, can be overcut. As needed, draw extra lines on page 1 to guide the overcutting.

Overcutting may not be possible where a design has some enclosed spaces, such as parts of a background enclosed by the branches of a tree. Inserts for such spaces are usually sawn first, starting from needle holes; they are then secured in the background veneer. This can avoid creating fragile areas to be sawn later.

### Setting the Sawing Angle

After preparing the book and planning the sawing, the next step is to set the angle of the saw blade. This is discussed in the second article in this series which also provides an Angle Finder, a table showing the sawing angles for a wide range of blade sizes, spacers and veneers (see Issue 274: p. 17). For many projects, the sawing angle needs to be set only once – if you keep using the same type of saw, the same size blade, and veneers of similar thickness. The sawing angle depends on the blade thickness and the combined thickness of the spacer and the lower veneer in the book. For the background on top method, the lower veneer is always the insert veneer.



*Figure 5. Setting the Sawing Angle*

Referring to the Angle Finder, if the combined thickness of the spacer and the insert veneer is 1.5mm, and the blade (2/0) is 0.26mm thick, the exact sawing angle will be 10.0 degrees. Reducing the angle by up to half a degree (i.e. to 9.5 degrees) can make the pieces easier to assemble, while still closing the gap. To set the sawing angle on the scroll saw, use a protractor and tilt the scroll saw table to the left, or the saw frame to the right (Figure 5). The angle will be measured correctly even if the base line on the protractor, which runs across its width, is above the table, as in Figure 5.

### Making a Test Piece

To check the sawing angle, a test piece can be cut quickly. To do this, with a pencil draw a shape in the middle of one of the larger parts of the design on page 1 of the book, such as a leaf or a petal in the flower design. Tape a piece of the insert veneer in the corresponding position on page 4 of the book and tape the book closed. Drill a starting hole on the pencil line and saw the test piece. Keep the pattern to the right of the saw blade and saw counterclockwise with the scroll saw.

If the test piece fits perfectly into the background veneer all is well. If the sawn test piece is too small, increase the angle slightly, if it is too big reduce the angle, then saw another test piece somewhere else. It is essential that the piece cut from the insert veneer goes into the hole in the background veneer, not vice versa.

### Sawing the Marquetry

The main sawing proceeds in a similar way:

1. Open the book at page 4 and sticky tape, to that page, pieces of veneer for the first inserts.
2. Tape the book closed. On page one, mark the pieces to be sawn and draw pencil lines to follow for overcutting.
3. Drill the starting holes, then saw the inserts counterclockwise with the pattern to the right of the scroll saw blade.

4. When a cycle of sawing is completed, open the book and trim away the waste veneer on page 4. Sticky tape the newly sawn inserts into the back of the background veneer.

5. Tape the cut-outs from the other pages in their original positions. Apply the sticky tape to the back of page 1 to keep the front clear for drawing pencil lines.

6. Both copies of the design will now be intact again and ready for the next cycle of sawing.

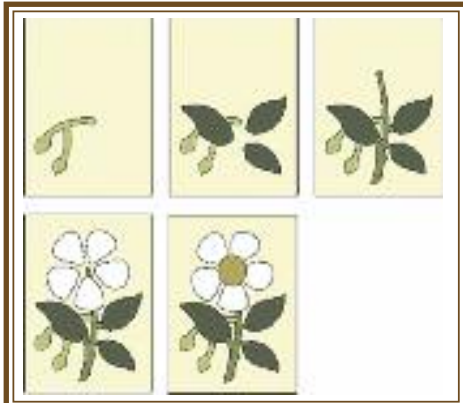


Figure 6. Stages in Sawing the Flower

### A Larger Project

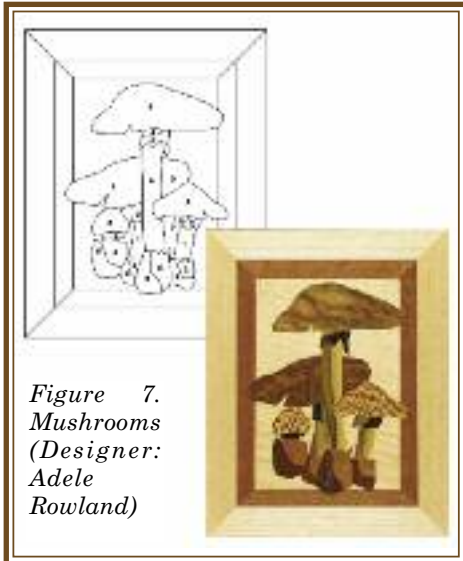


Figure 7.  
Mushrooms  
(Designer:  
Adele  
Rowland)

Making the larger double bevel project in Figure 7 proceeds in the same way. Prepare the book for the background on top method as described before. Make the pages the size of the background and the first frame. The outer frame can be added when the sawing is finished. The completed panel measures 200 x 255mm. Saw the pieces on each layer of the design in turn, starting with layer 1. The only parts that need to be sawn from needle holes are the two mushroom caps numbered 5, and the two pieces numbered 6.

### Conclusion

In using the book method, double bevel cutting of marquetry generally settles into a routine of sawing inserts, fitting them into the background veneer, and restoring the other pages of the book. The book method differs from alternative methods in that it does not use windows and reversed designs, and it does not require continual redrawing of sections of the design using carbon paper.

Instead of cutting windows, the background and insert veneers are sawn together, which is a time-saver that can also produce a perfect fit. What is absent here are opportunities to obtain preferred alignments of grain by viewing an insert veneer through a window in the background veneer. When unable to look through a window, a suitable alternative involves printing or photocopying the design onto tracing paper or transparent film. Align the transparent copy of the design with the printed copy on page 4, then put the insert veneer between them to choose its best position before taping it in place. Suppliers of A4 transparency film can be found on the internet.

The next instalment will complete this series on double bevel marquetry. It includes information on component sawing and using a fretsaw for marquetry. It also presents a handy single-page poster on the essentials of double bevel marquetry. The latter is to copy and keep with your saw.

# The Cutter Interview

**O**ur Cutter interviewee today is someone whose work you will have been very familiar with for many years, it is no other than that highly productive (he makes tons of pictures) member of the Harrow Group, Les Dimes.

Les is rightly famous for the copious amount of marquetry pictures he manages to produce. Not only are they works of marquetry art, many of them are also very recognisable and extremely attractive portraits, which certainly take a lot of skill in producing.

You may already be very familiar with Les's work, it features heavily in these pages and on our website, but you may not yet know the man, so let's say welcome to Les and let him introduce himself:

**Cutter:** *Hello Les, could I ask you first, how did you initially get into marquetry, and did you have any background in woodworking of any sort?*

**Les:** I don't have any background in woodworking at all! My dad and I used to make aircraft models when I was a lad - he progressed to making dioramas (I remember a huge model he made of the battle of Rorke's Drift with hundreds of Zulu warriors) and I went on to making wooden ship models from plans, plank by plank. I spent eight years making one French frigate as accurately as I could. I bought books on 16th century rigging to make sure I got it right, spending six months making the various blocks and deadeyes alone. The craft did teach me about getting the historical facts correct, which stood me in good stead later on. After the third wooden ship (a Portugese wine boat from a kit) took me two years to



*Les Dimes at work on his next masterpiece*

make, I called it a day and started making ships in bottles. Quicker, but much more of a fiddle!

**Cutter:** *What attracted you to the art and craft of marquetry?*

**Les:** My wife gave me a Christmas present in the late nineties which was the first marquetry kit I'd ever seen. It was "Abersoch Harbour".

Although I enjoyed making it, I found a few oddities with it. Some of the shadows were lighter than they should be and some of the shapes were odd. I realised that I could do some marquetry using my own ideas. The only place I could find veneers, though, was from a nearby art store, which was charging roughly £4 a sheet. I started looking through books and magazines to find suitable subjects. Funnily enough, the first two pictures I did were portraits - Lester Piggot and Sitting Bull!

**Cutter:** *Were you ever inspired by anyone's work you had seen?*

**Les:** In 2002 or 2003 I came across a book



*Above: Lester Piggot and Sitting Bull*

whilst on holiday. “The Marquetry Manual” by Bill Lincoln opened my eyes to what could be achieved in marquetry. Peter White’s “Tawny at the wheel” and Alan Townsend’s “Bluebell Wood” are both in that book and the two of them still consistently do amazing work.

Because of the book, I decided to join the society in 2004. Since then, I’ve also begun to appreciate the work of Alan Mansfield (Spike Milligan and Hancock works spring to mind), Mike Roberts, Frank Brant, Dave Middleton and John Jeggo, all of whom produce very clean, subtle work. I also joined the Harrow group that year and learnt a lot of techniques from my great friend Chris Crump, whose detailed work inspired me

to tackle anything. Sadly, Chris died a few years ago, but he left me bags of veneers and his bandsaw, so he’s often in my thoughts.



*Sir Spike from a life sitting  
by Alan Mansfield*

**Cutter:** *Some people have a liking for one particular type or style of design. Do you have any particular preferences in designs and what influences do they have on you?*

**Les:** I tend to veer away from anything geometrical (apart from the odd chess-board) as I seem unable to cut in straight lines! Most of my work doesn’t rely on using a ruler. I admire Martin Bray and Brian Freestone for their ability to create beautiful designs with such accuracy.



*Cathy from Wuthering Heights*

**Cutter:** *Do you carefully plan the initial stages of a new piece of work? For example, if working from a coloured picture do you also take a monochrome copy to trace from - or look at tonal range?*

**Les:** I do a lot of planning. Most of the time I do a monochrome version to get a better idea of the tonal ranges - when I worked in advertising we always reckoned that the best colour photos were the ones that translated perfectly in black and white. As a print, artwork, platemaking and typesetting buyer in advertising, I was well aware of the reproduction constraints that existed at the time and was well used to colour correcting proofs etc. With modern printing techniques, however, this is no longer necessary.

I sometimes spend hours trying to select the right veneers. This can be vital when doing a three veneer picture as they have to work with one another and you also need enough of each sheet.

**Cutter:** *Why do you choose to do any particular piece of marquetry? Is it for yourself, a present, or because it is a fascinating design - or is it for the challenge, or is it simply a commission?*

**Les:** Most of the time it's because I want to challenge my ability. I have also done quite a few for relatives who have specifically requested something (The Fab Four, for example, was a request from one of my sons, fairies for my sister-in-law etc). I have had the odd commission (a Sandfly plaque for a workmate who nearly died from its sting was probably the strangest request) and it was a pleasure to do a picture of David Bowie for one of his fans. I don't normally do commissions, unless I feel happy with the subject.



*Pueblo Street Market 1920*

**Cutter:** *Do you derive more pleasure from creating a picture or an applied piece?*

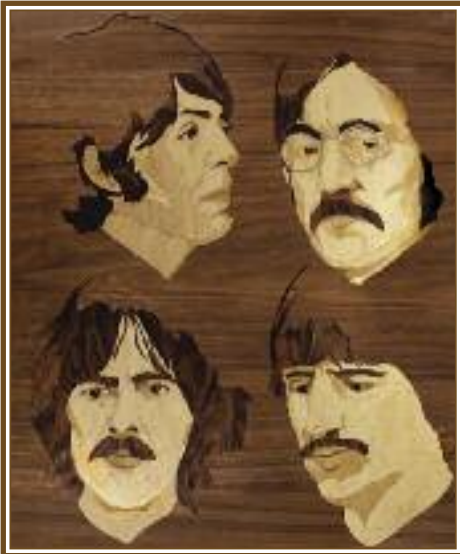
**Les:** I definitely prefer pictures. I have done a number of boxes, clocks etc, but I find them a bit of a chore as I am not naturally a maker of boxes etc.

**Cutter:** *Would you say that marquetry could be seen as a relaxation for you?*

**Les:** Not really! I think it's more of an



*The Well Digger's Daughter*



*The Fab Four*

obsession. There are so many pieces of work that I want to do before I leave this world. I am justifiably berated for doing too much too quickly (I've got 15 new pieces to date for entry in 2022 and we've still got a while to go!)

**Cutter:** *What piece of advice would you give to a beginner just starting out on his or her first piece of work?*

**Les:** From my experience (we have a one-to-one tuition at Harrow), I have found the best advice was to teach them the basics of the window method, let them



*As the fog lifted they came into view*

decide what picture or work they would like to make their first project. Sometimes you have to point out how difficult their choice may be to produce. Go through the veneer choices with them. Trying different knives or scalpels to find what they are most comfortable with also helps. Working from background to foreground (i.e. doing the smaller details last). I would always advise going to a group if possible.



*The Veteran*

**Cutter:** *Marquetarians nearly always have a piece of work that is a favourite. Can you pick such an item, from all your work that has given you most satisfaction?*

**Les:** As I have now done nearly 260 different pieces of work, I find this quite difficult to answer.

There are a lot which I enjoyed doing that never took any award at national level (that includes "The Top Hand after Tom Stivers", "Lady Marmalade's Bed and Breakfast - after B. Marriss" and "Riding out" - (after Martin Grelle). Maybe the answer is "The Veteran - after Fred Fields". Taken from a line drawing and it

won best portrait and came first in Three Veneers. Another favourite Three Veneers is "Boats and Ruins". Although it has never won anything, I think it is a perfect example of the harmony achieved by just using three woods.

**Cutter:** *Has there been any piece of work, made by any other member or marquetarian, which has left you thinking I wish I had done that?*

**Les:** Where do I begin? Anything made by the aforementioned!

**Cutter:** *Many marquetarians have mixed feelings about their finished work as far as keeping them for themselves. Do you keep all or any of your creations?*

**Les:** I have room on my walls for approx 40 pictures. I will change them occasionally.



Looking through my records (I decided to make records as I realised that I didn't have any photos of the ship models or bottled ships that I mentioned earlier), I notice that I have only twelve of the first 100 pictures that I did. A lot of my work over the years has been given to a friend who has done funding for a hospice in Southampton for over 25 years. A lot of relations and friends around the world also have some of my work. I freely give them to anyone who genuinely likes a particular piece.

I usually say to my wife "Do you mind if I give this to so-and-so?" If she likes it then it stays with us!



*Downriver*

**Cutter:** *You are well known for your expertise with portrait work, would you have any advice for other marquetarians who would like to try their hand at portrait work?*

**Les:** Most important is to convert colour pictures into black and white to get the tone values as correct as possible. I also always work directly from this - in other words, I transfer the image to the wood directly. (This is again a habit from my advertising days - reproduction was always direct from original photos - every step away from the original was known as a "removal") I usually only use a broad tracing to check against the background the image will finish up on. Contrary to what a lot of marquetarians believe, I find the mouth, nose and ears the most difficult - eyes are usually made from fewer pieces of veneer.



*Skeleton Coast Wreck*



**Cutter:** *Getting your work finished (varnished) by a professional – are you okay with that, or do you think the marquetarian should do everything themselves?*

**Les:** I remember this discussion coming up - I've always felt that a little help with the finishing for the first three classes was in order. When I was a judge, I only really took notice of the finish in the higher classes when the marquetarian should have learnt how to do it by then. I personally always struggled with my finishing and have only reached a satisfactory level in the last few years. (In 2004, I asked for assessments and Pat Austin very kindly liked my entries - but a pity about the finishing!)



*Rupert Brooke*

**Cutter:** *Taking into consideration your talents as a marquetrie artist, what is your stance on the long-standing debate about marquetrie being an art or a craft?*

**Les:** I've always felt that marquetrie is both. Painting is also both! I remember seeing a programme a few years back when items were being judged for entry into the Royal Academy of Art for their summer show. I was surprised to see that photography which had been manipulated in the darkroom was eligible. Many painters also work from photography, so I can't see why marquetrie derived from photography is not allowed. My friend, who is a professional painter and has had many paintings accepted at the RAA, agrees with me. I think we will get there eventually.



*A Serious Case*

**Cutter:** *The 'for or against coloured wood' argument has gone on for years. What are your views on it?*

**Les:** The problem I see with dyed wood is quite often there is little grain showing and it is often too acid a colour or too flat. That said, I have nothing against it being used sparingly or even largely as long as there are natural grained veneers nearby. After all, a lot of the Victorian furniture makers used them extensively. I've recently experimented using one strong dyed colour veneer as one of the three in three veneer pictures and the results are quite dramatic.



*A Look Back*

**Cutter:** *We now regularly see the 'Judges comments' for the National Exhibition award winners in The Marquetarian, do you think these comments are helpful in any way?*

**Les:** I believe these comments are helpful as long as, so the old saying goes, they are constructive and not negative.

**Cutter:** *We sometimes hear the suggestion that marquetry would be livened up by incorporating other methods. Do you think that there is any case for introducing any other media into marquetry, for example pyrography or mixed media?*

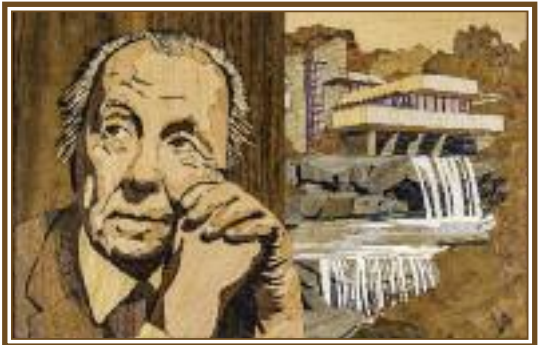
**Les:** I have seen plenty of work using paint with veneers which can be very interesting. If we had an exhibition class for mixed media, it would have to be judged by an artist rather than a marquetarian. I can't see pyrography as a form of marquetry at all - I've seen some beautiful work by this method, but the veneer used is obliterated by the burning tool. It's also taken me a little while to accept laser cut marquetry, but I discovered that the work involved in creating a design by vectors can be very challenging. Laser-cut designs by artists work well, but heavily detailed slavish laser-cut copies of photos look heartless to me.

**Cutter:** *Do you have any other crafts, hobbies or interests, which share your available time?*

**Les:** Before the advent of covid, I would regularly go fly fishing, making all my own flies (model-making again!). I also do the odd bit of carving, but most of the time, at the moment, is taken up with looking after an allotment and garden!

**Cutter:** *Have you seen changes in style of marquetry since you started and if so, have you adapted your own work to follow any changes?*

To be honest, I haven't changed a lot since my early work. I used scalpels at work, so I was used to them. MDF board has replaced the 11ply and fibreboard that I used. A couple of presses (a large one made and given to me by my friend Martin Bray) has replaced my ironing down of the picture!



*Frank Lloyd Wright*

**Cutter:** *How do you think the craft of marquetry can develop to attract more people to it or do you think that, like many other crafts, we have reached a low that will take some time to recover from?*

**Les:** I do believe it will take some time to recover. At Harrow, we were finding that we were getting more reaction from the public as we tried to sell smaller items (Xmas tree decorations, badges, fridge magnets for example) as well as pictures, chess boards etc at shows particularly near Christmas. We always tried to have demonstrations as well. Covid has obviously knocked us all back a bit. Just before the first lockdown, Harrow did have two new recruits and I hope we can get back to some work in September when our venue reopens.



*Queen of the Elves*

# FROM OUR ARCHIVES

Having a trawl through our archives, I was wondering what we have available from our earliest ventures in the 1950s?

Not a great deal is the answer I'm afraid. There were professionally shot photos taken at some of the earliest National Exhibitions, but so far, nothing has arisen. We won't give up hope. However, we do have some material we can show you from those first few years of the Marquetry Society's existence. The photographic quality isn't up to today's standards, but for archive type purposes these are not too bad. So let's start with a couple of Cliff Penny's pictures from 1954. Cliff won our top award at our very first National Exhibition.



The above picture is titled "The Elizabethan Era", and considering that it is from several decades ago, the quality and style of the marquetry is as good as being identical to today's output.

Perhaps in the early 1950s they didn't have 24 hour television and suchlike modern intruders to divert their attention

from the task in hand, that being working on their marquetry picture. But the end result is certainly up to award winning 21st century standards.



The one above is titled "The Village Inn" and it exhibits all of the qualities we look for today. So, what else have we got? How about Chillon Castle by Stan Murrell from 1957 - this is another nice one.



Happily for us, we do have a coloured photo of our very first Rosebowl winner.

So, no delay, here it is “Bridge of Sighs” by Paul Jobling - a really good example of 1950s marquetry in all its glory.



And here, below, we have a photo of one of our founders Mr N. Douglas, showing some visitors the wonderful marquetry exhibits at our 1956 National Exhibition.



But what about judging in the 1950s, was that the same as today or done differently in a less critical manner?



Well, above is judging at the 1959 National Exhibition, and I would say that there doesn't actually seem to be any difference, except for the smoking of cigars! But note taking and studying the pieces on display is no different - it's still done.



Above is our 1959 Rosebowl winner titled “Law of the Jungle” by R. J. Cotterell. One of the first of many award winning big cat marquetry pictures.

You will see even more of them in this photo of the Leeds Group stand at the 1958 exhibition. Certainly this has been a very popular choice for marquetry subjects.



And just to finish off this little 1950s section we have a picture by J. T. Higgs from 1959 titled simply “Design”. It is a pleasing little kit picture and has good depth.

We have just a few more left, but we will save them for another day for you.



So let's move onto the 1960s and 1970s where we are fortunate to have a small cache of coloured slides from the period. Again, the photography is not always top notch, but with the help of Photoshop a reasonable reproduction is forthcoming which we hope you will find enjoyable.



The above picture is titled "Crail Harbour" and it was made by D. Coulson in 1976 and it got a first in its class.

Amazingly I found some judges' comments on this picture, so let's see what they said "In many of the houses along the water front in Crail Harbour by D. Coulson, every brick and every tile was separately and flawlessly cut, with a style reminiscent of Paul Jobling at his best".



And here we have another picture from the same year, this one being titled "Prospect of Whitby" and it was made by R. A. F. Hammond. The judges said "A beautifully cut work featuring a harewood sky and river; Mr Hammond's work is somewhat reminiscent of a Roland Hilder painting".



This picture titled "Limehouse Creek" is by Ernest G. Robins of the West Kent group. This was another Rosebowl winner; comments at the time were "This was rightly chosen for the Rosebowl. Surely the test of a good picture is not only the workmanship, but you must ask the question, "Could I live with that on the wall, and continue enjoying it?" This picture certainly qualifies".



Here we have "Sistine Madonna" by Gladys Walker of the West Kent group from June 1977. Unfortunately we have no contemporary notes on this delightful picture. But we have to say that the veneer choice, workmanship and delicacy of the finished piece are superb.



“Earth Shrinkers” by E. Bath of the Leeds group got a first in the beginner’s category in 1977.

A 1977 description of this picture said “This was an unusual subject and difficult to transfer to marquetry, but an excellent job was made of it. As this was one of Mr. Bath’s first four pictures, the Rosebowl will be his within the next couple of years”. However, this never transpired sadly. We did try to find out what happened to Mr. Bath, but even the Leeds group have no idea, unfortunately.



A comment from 1977 says “Amazingly this is the second year that C. Good has not had a picture in the first three. This year “Advancing Storm” was another example of his fine work. The clouds were put in separately and on my first viewing, I thought it had been successful, but in my second time round, I was not so sure that I liked the effect. I can only put this down to the reason for it not being in the first three”



The above picture and the one at the top of the next column are both by the legendary marqueterian Charlie Good.

The year 1977 saw “The Watermill” and “Approaching Storm” only manage to achieve a highly commended for “Approaching Storm” and, suprisingly, “Watermill” didn’t get a placing at all! Such are the vagaries of a National Exhibition when judges decide.



This is “The Great Mosque” by A. Smales from 1976. It got the third in the Advanced class. Comments that year were “Flawlessly made, but was almost identical to his “Ommayid Mosque” which was Highly commended at Bristol two

years ago. A few changes to the pillar in the foreground, a different mounting, and Mr Smales moves up to third place - but is this really progress?"



Here we have "Moonlight on the Mississippi" by Andrew Smith. It was 2nd in class 3 in 1984. Comments of the day were "This must have run Eddie Stevens White Moon picture very closely for the artistic merit cup. Very effective, well cut and well finished"



This picture is "Riverside Church" by Cliff Corrie in 1977. As this appears not to be an award winning picture, we therefore have no written references to it, so we have to make do with some comments from today. Luckily we showed this, along with some others, to our Zoom participants for their comments. One rather good one was that the skiff in the foreground appears to be sinking at the stern and that the lady seated within had better disembark before she gets her nether regions swamped with murky river water!



It probably doesn't take too much guessing to work out that the above picture is titled "Radio Times". It was 1st in class 2 at the 1988 National and it was made by Arthur Lord.

Comment of the day for "Radio Times" was: "Perhaps because Arthur did not have much feedback from his beginner's page articles he had time to do this copy of the Radio Times cover. It was cleanly cut and nicely finished. We liked the distant effect of the bridge and for once the single use of the dyed red veneer seemed to come off and create the focal point of the picture"



This delightful picture is titled "This England" and it was made by W. A. Hines

in 1981. The picture got a 2nd in class 3A. Sadly there are no comments of the day available for 1981, so we say from today that Bill Hines' picture gives a wonderful impression of a picturesque English village scene inclusive of obligatory duck pond!



“Hunting Lodge” by Fred Shekyls of the Redbridge Group is the title of this picture from our 1977 National Exhibition.

As with the previous picture, there are no comments of the day for this one, so it's just a few words from yours truly. We believe this to be Fred's interpretation of Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge (a Grade II listed building), which is now a museum, on the edge of Epping Forest.



That picture bottom left of this page is “The Swan of Grassmere” by Mr. Beecher of the Bexley Group in 1976. Once again, no comments from 1976 to bring you. All we can say is that the perspective is well observed and the sky veneer fits very well.



This picture is “Swan” by A. T. Price. It gained a 1st in the beginners class in 1977. A big cheer now for we have, at last, some comments of the day, so let's see what was said of this picture. “Swan is by non-group member A. T. Price. Congratulations, a well executed picture, with a good choice of veneers”.



This last one is “A Norfolk Broad” by W. Spinks from 1976. We will bring you more of these with the winter edition of The Marquetarian, so see you then.



# BOOK MATCHED VENEERS

**M**eaning, veneering the back or reverse of a marquetry picture in book match or mirror image style.

In this article we are looking at adding an attractive mirrored style design to the back of a marquetry picture, or even a mirrored repeating effect on the border for the frontal face of the marquetry picture.

If the job in hand does not merit any type of mirrored design, but instead just involves laying a single piece of veneer, selection is fairly simple; just a case of finding the piece of veneer that lends itself best to the situation and using it, ensuring that there is enough to trim off after gluing down.

However, most jobs call for a wider area to be covered than the width of a single leaf of the available veneer. It is then a case of deciding how to use the figuring and grain to its' best effect.

The basic tools required to make up the veneer match are; a veneer saw or knife, a straight edge and a roll of veneer tape. The other main requirement is a firm surface to work on; this may sound obvious, but many a piece of work has been spoilt because of a wobble at the wrong moment! The surface used to work on will get marked so beware – however, your cutting mat does this job nicely.

## The Matching Process

### A book or 2 piece match

To make sure that the pattern repeats without a perceptible change, ensure that the leaves being used are consecutive otherwise there will be a 'jump' in the pattern which will be very obvious.

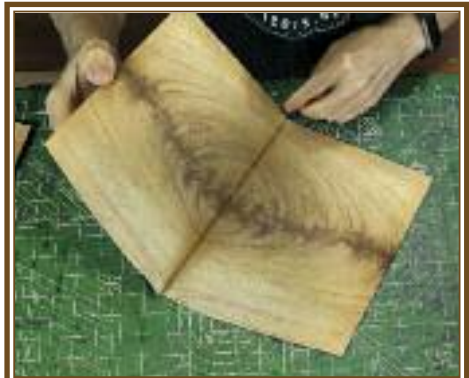
Place one leaf on top of the next, making sure that their patterns exactly coincide. Now place the straight edge about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (about 1.5cms) back from the edge to be trimmed, and, using the veneer saw/knife, cut through both veneers. The straight



*Cutting the book match pair with a veneer saw and straight edge*

edge can be secured with a clamp at each end to stop any drifting. If the veneer is brittle and tending to chip or splinter, the edge can be reinforced with veneer tape. For further security the veneers can be pinned together with veneer pins which are pushed through both layers and into the work surface below. If the wood is difficult to cut, take two or three bites at it, but make sure that the blade follows the same line every time and stays at right angles to the work.

Once the cut is complete, make sure the edges are clean and square and open the leaves, book- style, and join them together so that the patterns coincide at the joint.



*A two piece match being checked one against the other for uniformity*

Hold the two leaves together with 3 to 4" (about 9cms) lengths of veneer tape across the joint, and then run one strip along the length of the joint. Make sure that the joint stays flat. As the veneer tape dries, it contracts slightly, holding the joint tightly together. This is known as a book match.

An alternative to a book match, where the pattern is a mirror image of itself, is a simple edge joint. This is especially useful when the veneer has a straight stripey appearance such as sapele. To effect this type of joint, the process is the same as for the book match except that when laying the job up initially, the two leaves are laid up side by side and over-lapped to the point where the new joint will be cut. Using a straight edge, run along the joint until both the leaves are cut through, and then simply butt the cut edges together. Again, secure with veneer tape.



*Securing the two piece book match with white veneer tape*

**The four piece match**

A progression from the two piece, or book match, is a four piece match, which has the repeat pattern in two directions. It is made by taking four leaves, cutting as per the book match, and then cutting again going across the grain - i.e. trimming two of the four edges.

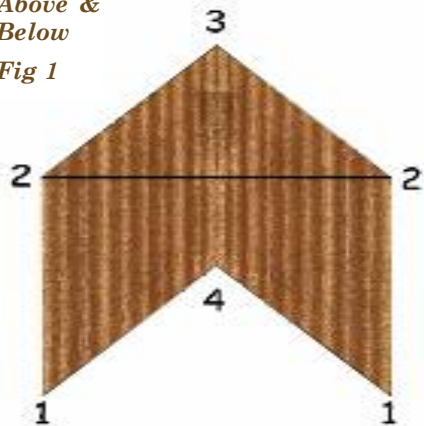
**Diamond matches**

This is one of the most popular matches, because you can use quite narrow striped veneers, such as sapele, to make into normal

sized panels. Begin with four consecutive matching leaves of veneer, with a straight close stripe. Clamp them together with a straight-edge at a 45° angle to the end, and cut through the four leaves. Do the same at the other end to produce a rhomboid shape 1 - 2 - 3 - 4. See fig. 1.

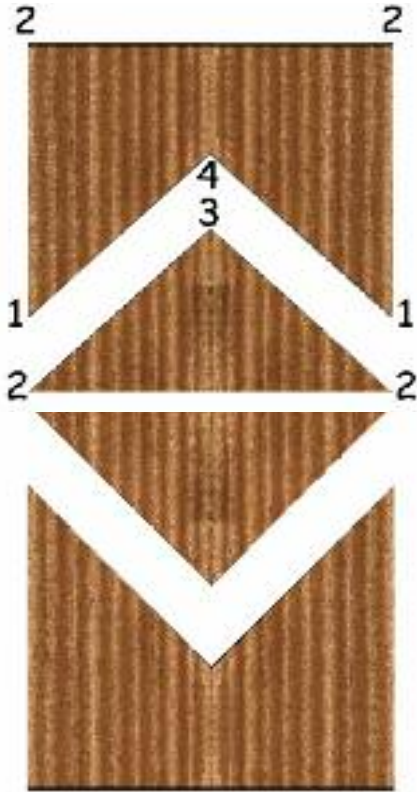


*Above & Below  
Fig 1*



Now take the first pair of leaves, open out book position along the 3 - 4 edge and tape together along this common edge. Position the straight-edge along the line 2-2, cut the triangle 2 - 3 - 2 and fit into the triangular aperture as shown in the diagram to produce a rectangular panel of veneer. Securely tape the pieces together.

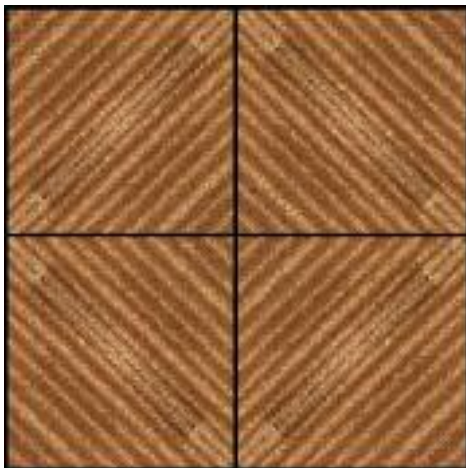
Repeat the process with the other two veneers and finally tape the complete match together along the centre line.



An excellent way of testing the cutting point of a match is to hold a mirror upright along the proposed cutting line; by moving the mirror you can get the effect of the book match. By using two mirrors at right angles the effect of a four piece match can be seen. By marking the base of the mirrors as they rest on the veneer with a pencil, you will leave a record of where the cutting lines should be. Never use an ink or ball point pen on veneers, as the ink will soak into the wood and will be almost impossible to remove. In searching for the best line for a match there is going to be a degree of waste. When ordering highly figured woods from your supplier and looking for the best effect, reckon on about 50% wastage, so order accordingly.

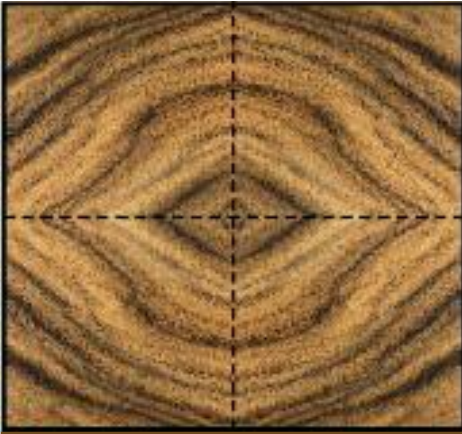
Do remember that the figure in the veneer does change very slightly with every leaf so if there is any mishap when making up a match it will be impossible to replace the spoilt piece with an identical one, so do take care.

Do also note that the traditional veneers used in matching are walnuts and rosewoods. The stripe in sapele is excellent for diamond matches. We are occasionally asked if honduras mahogany is a good choice for matches; but please note this veneer has insufficient figure to be effective in veneer matches.



*All Above: Fig 2*

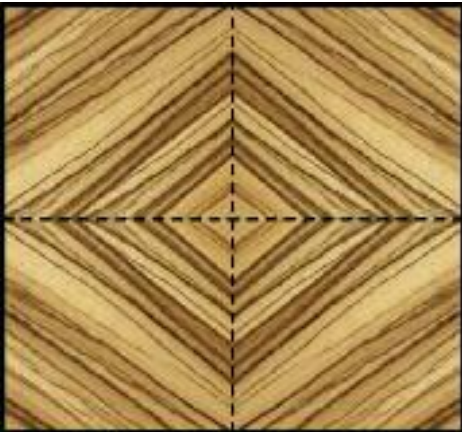
*A two piece match*



*A four piece match*



*Alternating squares*



*Above a diamond match and below a reverse diamond match*



If you are feeling ambitious enough you could even go for an eight or higher piece book match, but your problem here would be in finding a sufficient quantity of consecutive leaves of veneer to complete the match accurately enough.

Luckily for our editor, he had eight smallish leaves of walnut burr which were consecutive enabling him to make an eight piece book match for the border of the picture “Mile End Road in the 1930s”.

Those walnut burr leaves were only approximately ten inches or twenty five centimetres square. However they were more than enough to do the job required of them, which was to make an eight piece book match border. When making such a border with burr (or burl in the USA) veneers, it pays to watch out for the burr, which is often rather absorbent, swelling with the application of a water based glue and thus making accurate fixing of the border difficult. PVA was used for this job, so do take care if using the same glue.

The best policy to follow here is to “dry fix” the border pieces together and secure them with plenty of veneer tape.

Fix them in place around the picture element and fasten in place with more tape, but leave the outer edge open. Have your press ready and apply the PVA glue under the border, I apply plenty and quickly



wipe off the excess and tape the edges down with masking tape and quickly in the press with the assembly.

Leave sufficient time for the PVA to set. I leave 24 hours myself, but others take the thing out and check alignment after an hour or so, but that's up to you. I would err on the side of caution here and give at

least three hours for the PVA to fasten those warping burrs and fully flatten.

Do note, though, that the picture itself is glued down with Cascamite, which doesn't shrink over time. However the border itself is glued down with any suitable glue. In this case it is PVA, but Gorilla or Unibond or anything similar will do a good job.



## Judges' Notes on the Cover Pictures

**Front cover picture: "Tiger"**

**by Tom Moxey an Independent member**

*A first class picture looking really alive. My only complaint was that one eye looked not quite right. Also a stringer would have made all the difference, helping to balance the picture. (Note: those were comments from the day, however, I'm not quite sure about a problem with the tiger's eye, it must have cured itself!)*

**Rear cover picture: "Owl"**

**by Colin Bentley of the Leeds Group**

*This looked good from a long way off, but when approached the finish and surface was very rough. Please Mr. Bentley buy a cork block and some garnet papers and take advice from senior members of your group. Then set to and give the surfaces a thorough levelling. (Note: this was a comment of the day, but it is a lovely picture nonetheless)*

## VENEER PACK REVIEW

**Y**ou may have noticed an advertisement for veneer boxes (or packs as we generally call them) on page 10 of this journal. As the company in question, which is named “Wood Veneers”, is owned by Stephen Shadbolt, (who also owns Evolution, a specialist veneer panel and door company), your editor thought it a good opportunity to replenish his own veneer stock with one of their veneer boxes.

The veneer box, which you can buy online at their eBay address, duly arrived and, after carefully unpacking, can be seen here in all of its glory.

The veneers are reasonably sized, mostly around A4 coupled with larger and smaller pieces which are all very useable for almost all marquetry projects. We have rosewood, sapele, harewood, ash, holly, pieces of burr off cuts, etc, in these boxes as you can see.

The veneers appear to be of good quality with no old and crumbling pieces included here. There was some very useful “curvy” figuring in some of the mid toned veneers which worked rather well in the shadow areas of some portraiture work I had been doing (on and off) during the recent lockdown.

My own veneer stocks did have some useable veneer for this purpose, but it was not one hundred percent ideal. It would probably past muster nonetheless; but when the veneer box arrived, what do you think I found? Yes, you are right, there was a perfect A4 sized piece of mid toned veneer with the, this time, ideal figuring sitting there in the box - perfection!

Okay, these may indeed be off cuts, but they are good quality veneers and perfect for marquetry purposes.

I liked the variety and good selection of light to dark veneers included in the package. It was good to see plenty of mid tones in there. With these it's always very handy to have a decent selection of grain pattern and figuring in your veneers which helps to provide a convincing depth and shape to such things as portrait work in marquetry. Perhaps one day we may even (at last) get around to bringing you



a tutorial on producing convincing portraits in the medium of marquetry. Many have requested such a tutorial, so perhaps this review is the catalyst for me to get this underway. (See page 38)

It is always pleasing to find pieces of veneer which hold the perfect figuring in their grain pattern which benefits portrait work, and happily this veneer box certainly did me this favour. Obviously we can't guarantee that each box will have exactly the same examples of grain pattern etc, but the variety should present



you with plenty of variations which will be equally as useful as you can see in the contents of box number 2 above (yes, I did get two as I liked the variety - sorry to be greedy!). Those are not all one pieces either, many or most are actually multiples, and consecutive as well, which again is very handy. But, you will probably want to know how to get some yourself.

To purchase a veneer box online go to <https://www.ebay.co.uk/str/woodveneers> or for postal inquiries the address is:

Wood Veneers  
units 1 & 2 The Courtyard  
High Laver  
Ongar  
Essex  
CM50DU



**N**ot much to report for this past summer quarter, all thanks to that “you know what” thing.

Interesting to note that some groups are making their presence known on platforms such as YouTube. This is very encouraging and is certainly the way to go for the future. As an example let's check out the Harrow Group. At the time of writing they have their own established YouTube channel with 24 very interesting videos for all to enjoy and benefit from. Here is their YouTube address:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4IRq7TMPjIAIH4qOoJlxJA/videos>

It is certainly well worth a visit.

You may wonder why the Marquetry Society hasn't yet indulged itself in the fast moving world of online YouTube marquetry videos. Well, we are moving in that direction, but since “you know what” came on the scene, it has held back progress, and, without our regular executive committee meetings being conducted, we have not been able to appoint the appropriate officers yet to get such things underway. Our weekly Zoom meetings (which do usually include 5 members of the executive committee) have proved very useful, but do not constitute a quorum of execs, so could not pass any resolutions to get things underway. So we wait a little longer, unfortunately.



# PORTRAITS IN MARQUETRY

*By Alan Mansfield*

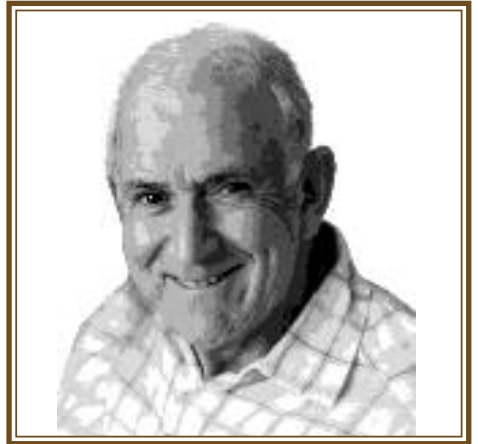
A rather popular request is “how do I go about making a portrait in marquetry?” Well, of course there are many ways of ‘painting a portrait in wood veneers’ so, for this sort of mini tutorial I will describe one of the processes I use for a slightly photo realistic approach to such things.

If you read Les Dimes’ Cutter Interview on page 18, you will see many more marquetry portraits which are more conservative, or economic, with the varieties of veneer used. Where I have used eleven varieties, Les will get away with less than half of that amount, and produce portraits which are, all would say, just as good (I agree). But I did have these veneers to hand, so I used them, it’s as simple as that.

Anyway, let’s look at what we need to start. First thing is to choose our subject for the portrait. For this demonstration I chose someone we all know, that person is our esteemed President Peter White. For reference I used Peter’s photo from page 5, which you see once again here.



So what we need to do now is convert the photo to monochrome with several levels of monochrome tone to represent the grades of veneer we need to use. Here is the sequence I used:



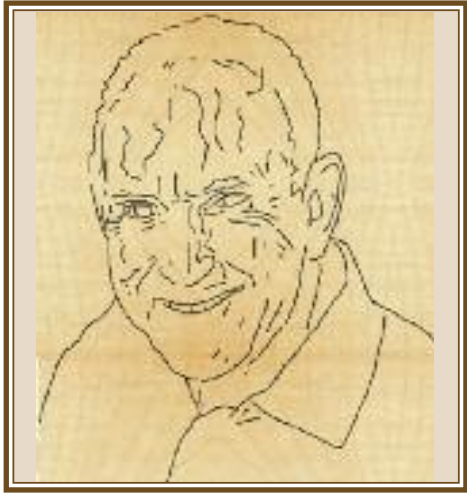
The top photo is the monochrome conversion, and the lower one is reduced to eight levels of tone to aid veneer selection.



My next step was to select the veneers to use. Because I had these to hand I used eleven varieties in all, but there is no real need to use that many. I just wanted to use up some spare off cuts for this project.

Here is a list of the veneers used: Sycamore, Mahogany, Abura, Citronella, Maple, Ash, Walnut, Daniella, Oak, Holly, and, lastly, Zebrano.

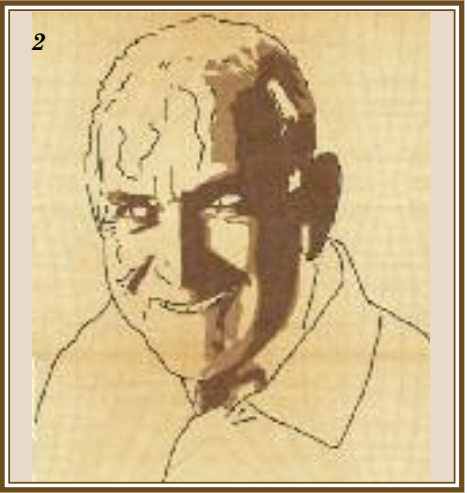
The background (*waster*) will be sycamore - so let's look at the stages of the production of the portrait. Firstly, the waster:



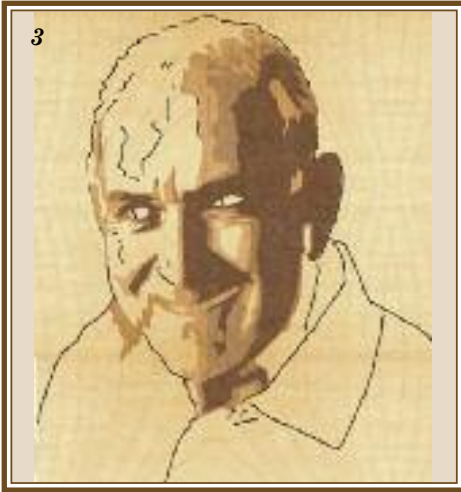
*Tracing transferred to the waster*



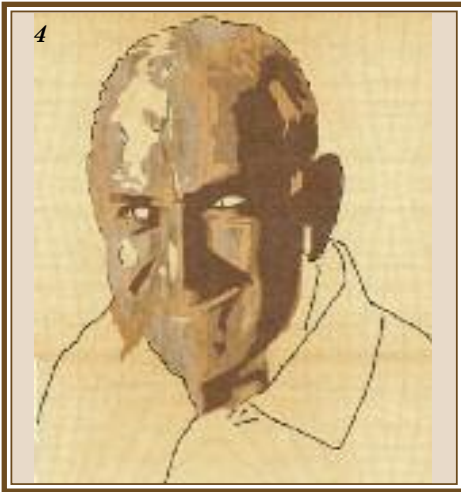
As you can see above (1), I have started by cutting in (or blocking in, using artistic terms) the largest areas I want to work on. What I have chosen here are the large areas of dark shadow. For that I have used the mahogany veneer.



Now I have added some slightly lighter shadow area (2). For this I used the abura veneer. I only used this somewhat odd veneer 'because it was there', but you could use any veneer you have that is just a degree or two lighter than the mahogany. But do try to keep the veneer colour similar (with regard to the same chroma range) as the darker mahogany veneer.



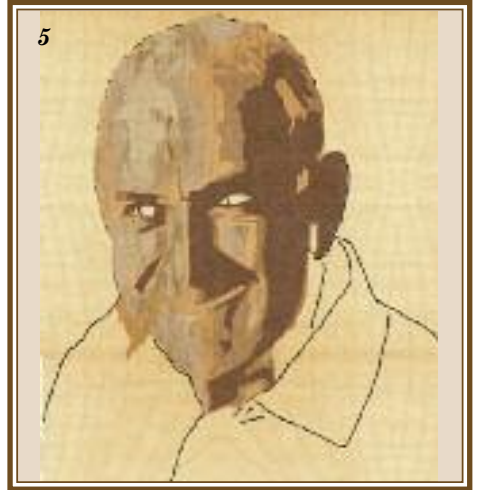
As you see here (3), we are working on the main blocking in of luminance tones (meaning here, dark to light) and we have now added the next slightly lighter veneer of citronella, but again you can use whatever you have in stock that is just slightly lighter than the previous veneer. Nothing 'written in stone' here, just use whatever you have got that fulfills the luminance and chroma needs.



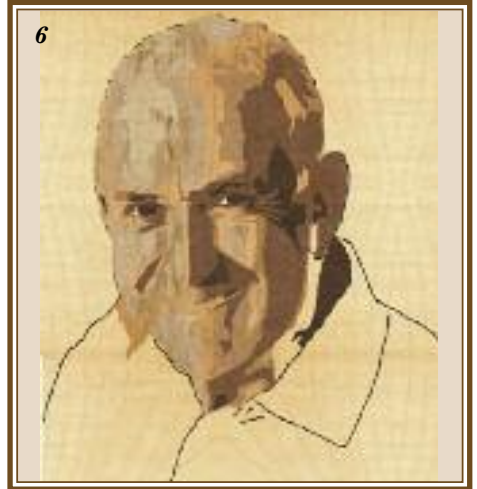
And now we have moved onto the next tonal value, (meaning slightly lighter), and in (4) the addition of maple has given a sort of useful mid tone that begins to add a noticeable form or shape to the face. This will give us some confidence that we are

moving in the right direction, even though it may look somewhat odd at the moment. Don't despair, it will all look good in the end.

Our next step (5) uses ash for some lighter skin tones. This more or less sees the end of the facial blocking in part of the portrait.

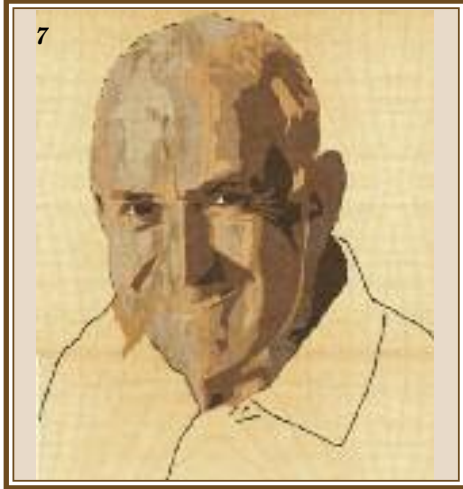


Now comes some fun parts where we add some darker detail areas. In (6) below we have added some defining walnut that at last starts to build a recognisable portrait.

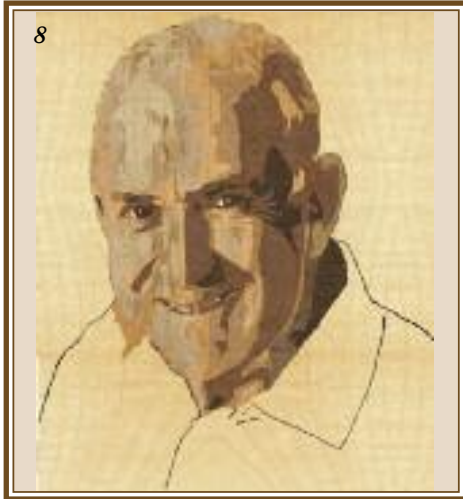


There you are, we can certainly see Peter beginning to form in the portrait. Just that addition of walnut has made all the

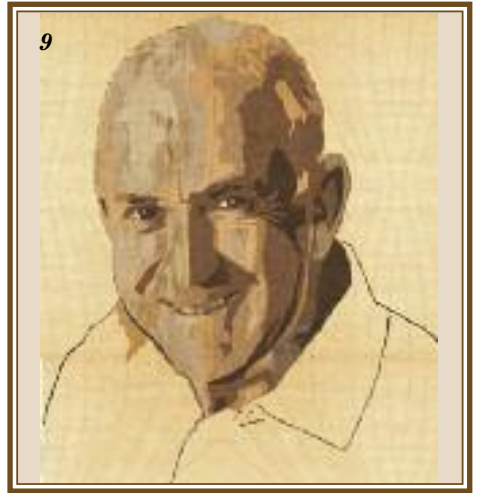
difference and is giving the portrait some life and allowing us to recognise who it is.



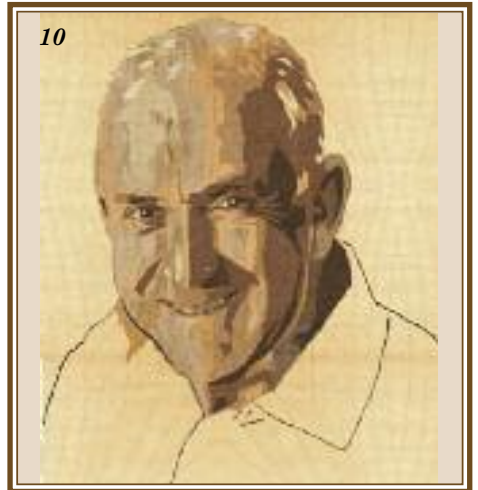
Stage (7) above has added a little daniella for some mid to dark level tones.



Moving onto part (8) I have used some oak to begin depicting the mouth and teeth. When doing things like teeth and eyes, don't be fooled by thinking that there should be white for teeth with a dividing line between each tooth - it just isn't so in art work, that is only for cartoons. Likewise eyes - no circles please for the pupils - or pure white for the 'whites' of the eyes; once again that's only for cartoon work, certainly not for portraits.

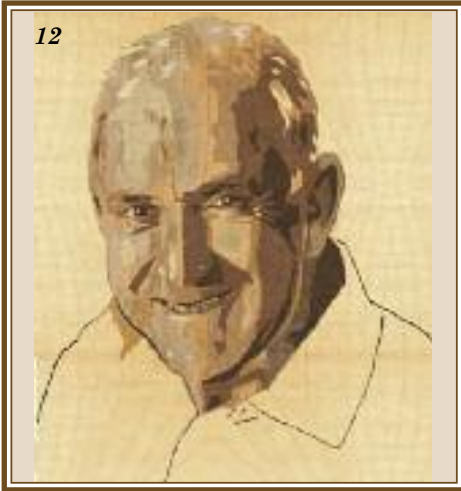
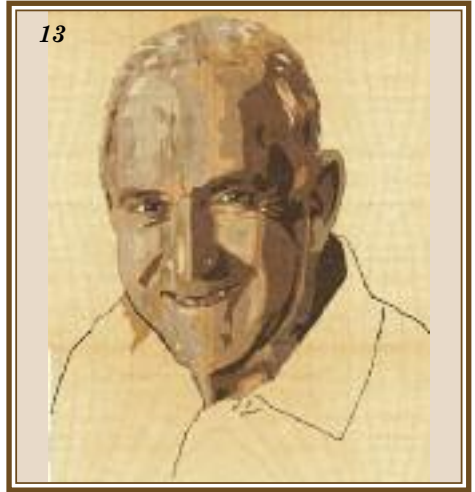
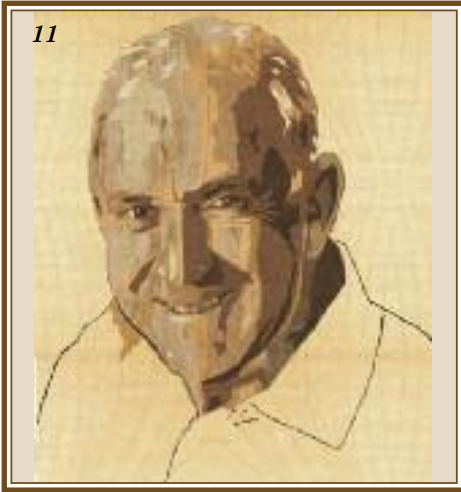


In (9) above we have added some extra detail with more walnut around Peter's chin to add more definition.



Part (10) above sees the use of holly to bring out some highlights. This has proved useful for depicting the hair and hairline. Although we will be adding even more definition a little later on, the portrait is becoming much more lifelike as we progress.

In part (11) overleaf we add even more mahogany and abura for extra detail work. We are getting to the stages now where we are defining the ultimate appearance of the sitter, namely Peter.



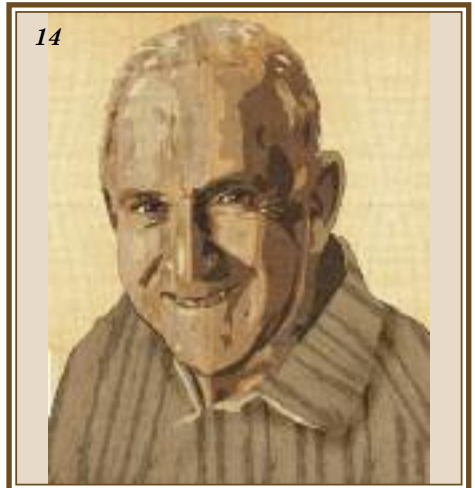
Part (12) has added some more detail with the further use of ash. However, do note that the extra detail is mostly very subtle, meaning basically that it is not always obvious. It does add just that degree of extra realism. In this case it is a subtle highlight to the cheeks.

Moving onto part (13), a little more detail is added to define the hairline (it's only just visible), but it is subliminal and your 'mind's eye' will notice it and accept it for what it is intended to be. As you see, we are working in the artistic realm here and introducing virtually hidden elements that a portrait painter would be

fully familiar with. This is where the photo realism element starts to work in the realms of marquetry.

The finished marquetry portrait can be seen below in (14) and I think we can probably agree that the portrait has worked and our beloved President is here, in the medium of wood veneers, in a hopefully, reasonably easy to follow mini marquetry tutorial.

If you have found this tutorial to be of some help and want some other topics covered, just let us know and I am sure we can accommodate your requirements in a future edition of The Marquetarian.



## From Andrew Smith's *Random Jottings*

**N**ow we come to freedom of choice. A good judge will know instinctively what is right and what is wrong. I mean there is blue and blue, and yellow and yellow. I was criticised for using too much dyed yellow in a picture when there was no dyed wood in it at all, the yellow was a creamy piece of sap yew, but I couldn't convince him. So would we be any worse off by scrapping guidelines?

In every walk of life we are ruled by dogma. What we must and must not do. In the art world we must not use black because there is no black in the spectrum and yet artists will mix all kinds of weird and muddy colours to make something as black as they can. Turner, the great English landscape painter, was once taken to task for using too much black in a picture depicting the burial at sea of an artist friend, to which he replied, "If I had anything blacker than black I would have used it". So don't be put off by dogma. Do your own thing, it is your hobby and your life. If people don't like what you do, let them lump it!

When considering the rosebowl we must not forget the statistics. In the next ten years it will only be awarded ten times, coupled with the fact that some competitors will win it more than once, which cuts the odds down to probably five or six winners in the ten year period. If you think the odds are stacked against you, don't even try. Work to your own ability and beyond. As I said before, the happiest recipient of the rosebowl will be someone who least expects it.

Of course, there are those who don't want to be competitive, even whole groups and the less able amongst us are entitled to ask, "What's in it for me?" Well, they can still enter their work in the National shows regardless of winning an award, which to some is an achievement in itself.

*This is part 2 of Andrew's talk seen in the summer edition of The Marquetarian which replaced Peter White's President's Perspective*



Then there is the magazine which I think has gone from strength to strength. I say this from comparing our present day magazine to the little grey covered one of many years ago. Then, of course, there is a sense of belonging. Have you ever been stopped in the street and asked, "What is that badge you are wearing?" and answered, "I am a member of the Marquetry Society!" Wear the badge with pride.

After the furore and the recent exchange of letters in the Marquetarian, coupled with the changes within the structure of the executive committee, there are bound to be changes especially so regarding the rules committee. My only concern about the changes that will inevitably take place is if any form of pre-selection takes place, which will surely lead to an elite society. In connection with this let me comment on the demise of the M.S.A. I don't know whether or not the I.C.M.S. was the same or connected with the M.S.A. but concerning the I.C.M.S., I think that their insistence on art / originality went too far even for 'fine arts'. I once saw a magnificent painting of a tiger in full charge which was supposedly painted from life. Every hair on it's body was delineated with great realism. Think about it. Many people including myself would have been happy to have accepted the I.C.M.S. invitation to exhibit, but I believe their rules were designed to keep us out. Please don't let our Society go the same way!

# Readers Letters

It's been very quiet on the Reader's Letter front for the last few months, but this is probably due to us answering many inquiries on the Zoom and email platforms: so pen to paper rather takes a step backwards. However, we have dug around in our desk's pigeon-holes and unearthed some interesting material for you. Here is the first one.

**Dear Editor,**

I wonder who shall be chosen to judge the '21 National? In my short membership I have noted your comments in the Magazine. On the whole they are sensible and diplomatic. I am looking at having a go at a bird picture as I think it may be an easy subject using several veneers to make the birds character etc. Anyway will only know by doing one.

I would like to take part in the judging at a National, but I suppose membership and category status would not qualify me.

It must be difficult giving a fair decision, but I personally would only judge the quality of the interpretation and not the subject. We all choose varied subjects and a very small percentage of pictures have a photographic look. It is not easy to estimate the difficulty and volume of work involved. An unfair example might be three pictures, birds, animals and flowers, all quite photographic. The floral design is awarded first. It might consist of four roses set in a two toned background. The animal picture, interpreted just as well, four animals in a highly detailed background involving much more work. For me this should be awarded first, the subject being irrelevant.

Of course pictures have an even volume of work and quality, a decision must be made on 'appeal' subject. I only comment on the highest standard here.

Here is, what I have found to be an interesting technique achieving a river-sea effect with delicate reflections.

It works well I have found, the process is:- Immerse choice of wood in straight Domestos for four hours. It turns say purple brown walnut to a muddy grey (the outer skin only is bleached). Dry out and seal both sides. Select and cut in windows. Mark out reflections etc. Using a curved blade scrape away outer skin carefully to show darker wood. The most intricate reflections are achieved maintaining the grain formation. Of course when cleaning up, one must not scrape the bleached areas and a high build filler is used to level the low spots. I do hope members will try this. It is quite simple and really achieves a realistic effect.

Yours sincerely,

F. Bradbury

*This seems to be rather a good and interesting idea for achieving river, pond, sea water effects in marquetry. I have not seen this idea used before, so good for experimenting for a future work.*

*Alan.*



**VENEER PACKS**

Veneer packs are available to Marquetry Society members from John Coffey - contact:  
email [coffeemate9@hotmail.com](mailto:coffeemate9@hotmail.com)  
ebay id **jan8753**  
mobile **07899 843227**

These packs are mainly intended for members who have difficulty in obtaining veneers.

Each pack will contain a basic assortment (including burrs) of whatever veneers are available at the time. Price £7.99 per pack which includes post and packing.

We regret these packs are only available to U.K. members. Please make your cheques out to:

**John Coffey**

# "ATLAS" MARQUETRY *Kits*

Okay, here's one for those "long in the tooth" marquetarians who liked kits.

Do you remember these from the 1960s and early 1970s? Where are they now?

1



2



3



4



# A Friend We Will Miss

## Sad loss for the Sutton Coldfield group

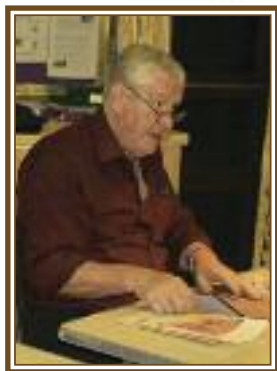
Regretfully during May we lost one of our most loyal members when sadly Dave Buttery passed away aged 76. Dave had been one of our longest serving members and attended every meeting, except during September when he took a holiday. In his quiet unassuming manner he was always ready to give assistance and advice to other members and was generous with his support. He often provided materials including veneers to meet a member's need for a particular project without accepting any recompense for his generosity.

Dave worked as a BT Engineer for 30 years, and took up marquetry when he retired. He also enjoyed growing flowers and was an avid reader.

He was a very modest person and preferred to stay in the background, rather than force himself on others; however, he was ever willing to help anyone and everyone who needed guidance.

He was Group Treasurer for several years.

Until he became ill he always volunteered to act as a steward manning the Marquetry Society stand at the National Exhibition Centre, craft shows, and subsequently at our beginner's courses arising from these shows.



As a member of the Marquetry Society Dave regularly and successfully exhibited at national exhibitions until he became ill. He was good at fine lines and his marquetry was well cut as can be seen from the examples of his work shown here. Even through his five years of illness, which he suffered without complaint, he still strongly supported our group and no doubt his loss will be felt by us for a long time.

Some of Dave's work is shown below:

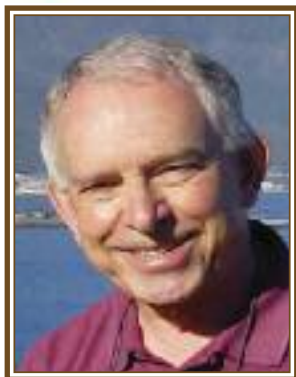


*How many human forms can you see in Dave's fun picture above?*



# A Friend We Will Miss

Geoffrey Frederick Barnet 1937-2021



Geoff got involved in marquetry in the 1960s and joined the Society through which he met up with other local members such as Frank Taylor. They helped to

form St Albans Marquetry Group.

As a founder member he played an important role in developing the group to having a membership of around eighty.

His personal interest was miniatures, such as Avicenna of Persia (See Below).

Geoff was a perfectionist which he passed on to the beginners whom he taught. He was a 'Go To' person.

Anyone with a problem knew that Geoff, who was a gentleman, would give his full attention to solving it.

Geoff practiced as a pharmacist for a few years before going into the pharmaceutical industry, becoming a marketing executive for Wellcome plc. This position took Geoff away from St Albans travelling the world and later on ill health prevented him carrying on his hobby. When he left the Group he donated a silver salver for the winner of the best exhibit in the annual group contest which is still used,

Geoff kept in touch with the Group and he will be sadly missed.

Ivan Beer



2nd Avicenna  
G. F. Barnet

*A few examples of Geoff's excellent marquetry work, including the Avicenna of Persia miniature*



## Subscription Fees For 2021

Location	New Members	Renewal Rate
U.K	£26.00	£26.00
Rest of Europe	£28.00	£28.00
Outside Europe	£31.00	£31.00

\*Please pay via our online PayPal system if at all possible, otherwise send your subs to our UK Mem Sec or our USA rep

### OPTIONAL OFFERS:

**Veneer Pack** (UK only - basic pack) £7.99 (includes P & P) available from supplier John Coffey. (Address details page 45)

N.B. We regret it is too costly to send these particular veneer parcels overseas.

All membership subscriptions are due on January 1st and run to December 31st. Please renew as soon as possible to do so.

**Prompt payment is much appreciated**

### PLEASE NOTE:

Subscriptions can also be paid online at: [www.marquetry.org/online\\_pay\\_p1.html](http://www.marquetry.org/online_pay_p1.html)

Thank you.

## *Items For Sale by the Mem. Sec.*

**Marquetry for Beginners** by Ernie Ives. Copies of the 4th Edition of this 56 page instruction booklet will now be supplied as a PDF file on CD or as an Email attachment. Printed stocks are now no longer available. (Please apply via the Editor)

## *Items For Sale by the Treasurer*

**Binders for the Marquetarian**  
Binder holds 12 issues of The Marquetarian £5.50 each plus £3.00 P&P for up to 7 binders. Please apply to the Hon Treasurer for 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.

## *At Your Service*

### *DVDs*

2019 International Exhibition:	£10
Alan Townsend Presents:	£10
Beginners Guide to Window Marquetry:	£10
Marquetry Tips & Techniques:	£10
Geometric Marquetry the Easy Way:	£10
Artistic Considerations & Veneer Choice:	
<i>(includes booklets Know Your Woods)</i>	£15
Added Dimensions in Marquetry:	£15
Bricks, Walls, Tiles & Pebbles:	£10
3 Veneers, & Making the Great Wave:	£10
Marquetarian DVDs - 40 editions per disc	
1/40 - 41/81 - 82/122 - 123/163 - 164/204	
- 205/245 - all at £20 each	

Please make cheques payable to Peter White and send to: Peter White, 10 The Russets, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0HH

Tel: 01474 814217

Email: [peter@marquetry.org](mailto:peter@marquetry.org)

USA members, please order via Ernie Mills with Checks payable to The Marquetry Society.

Artistic Consideration DVD & Added Dimensions in Marquetry DVD - \$30 each  
All other tutorial and National Exhibition discs at \$20 each

Marquetarian Discs (40 editions per disc) as described above at - \$40 each



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](mailto: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](mailto:qjsmarquetry@gmail.com)



## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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/](http://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. 12 & 13 Gemini Business Park, Hornet Way, Beckton, London, E6 7FF. Tel: 020 7474 3680. Email [info@capitalcrispin.com](mailto:info@capitalcrispin.com) Web: [www.capitalcrispin.com](http://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/>

**John Coffey Veneers.** Veneer supplies. 22 Aytoun Avenue, Kirkcaldy, Fife, Scotland, KY2 6ZL. Tel: 07899 843227. Email: [coffeemate9@hotmail.com](mailto:coffeemate9@hotmail.com).

**Freed Veneers (Wood Veneer Hub).** Veneer Specialists. Unit 4 Eden Court, Eden Way, Leighton Buzzard, Beds, LU7 4FY. Tel: 01525851166. Web: [www.thewoodveneerhub.co.uk](http://www.thewoodveneerhub.co.uk)

**Wood Veneers.** (Veneer supplies). Wood Veneers, units 1 & 2 The Courtyard, High Laver, Ongar, Essex, CM50DU. Web: <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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:info@marquetrykit.co.uk) Web: <https://www.marquetrykit.co.uk/>

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

**Please make all monies & costs payable to the individuals or firms concerned NOT to the Marquetry Society please. Your dealings will be with the suppliers.**



“Owl”  
by Colin Bentley of the Leeds Group  
1982