

# Glossary of Furniture Terms

## A

**Abrasives:** Rough material, e.g. glass paper used to shape or smooth surfaces.

**Adhesives:** Sticky substance used to glue parts together.

**Air drying:** A method for seasoning timber that permits covered stacks of sawn wood to dry naturally in the open air.

**Alloy:** A mixture of two or more metals to create a composition with specific properties.

**American cloth:** An early form of leathercloth. Made from plain-woven cotton, coated on one side with linseed oil and other materials which make it waterproof.

**Animal glue:** A protein-based wood glue made from animal skins and bone.

**Anthropometry:** The comparative study of the dimensions of the human body.

**Antimacassar:** Detachable cover for the backs of chairs and settees, originally used as a protection against Macassar hair oil.

**Arc:** Part of an unbroken curved line as drawn by a compass.

**Armchair:** Armed or arming chair as distinguished from a single or side chair having no arms.

**Arris:** The sharp edge where two surfaces meet at an angle.

**Axis:** The imaginary line about which an object such as a chair rail is symmetrical.

## B

**Back stool:** An early single chair or side chair which developed from the stool and the chest. Later examples were upholstered.

**Backing grade:** The category of cheaper veneers that are glued to the back of a board in order to balance better-quality veneers glued to the front face.

**Ball fringe:** A decorative trimming in which small balls, overwound with fine cord, hang at intervals among the long threads of the fringe.

**Balloon-back chair:** A name given to Victorian chairs with round or oval backs,

mostly mahogany or rosewood, and upholstered seats.

**Banding:** A plain or patterned strip of veneer used to make decorative borders.

**Barefaced:** The description of a joint that has one shoulder only.

**Batten:** A strip of wood.

**Bead:** A rounded convex shape turned on a lathe or a fine moulded strip of wood, also known as beading.

**Bedford cord:** A strong, finely corded fabric with a plain weave in which the cords run lengthwise. Often used as a platform cloth.

**Bergere:** Louis XIV and XV style armchairs with upholstered backs and sides and squab cushion seats. Later designs often have cane backs and sides.

**Bevel:** A surface that meets another at an angle other than a right angle.

See also **Chamfer**.

**Bifold door:** A type of sliding door made from two or more hinged panels that fold as the door is slid sideways.

**Binding:** A narrow fabric used to support and finish an edge, such as a tape or a bias-cut strip.

**Blank:** A piece of wood roughly cut to size ready for turning on a lathe.

**Bleed:** A process whereby a substance such as natural wood resin permeates and stains the surface of a subsequent coating.

**Blister:** A small raised area of veneer resulting from insufficient glue at that point.

**Blockboard:** A man-made building board with a core formed of square wood strips sandwiched between thin plywood sheets. See also **Laminboard**.

**Bolster arm:** Large upholstered arm in a bolster shape, typical of the late nineteenth century.

**Bore:** To drill a hole.

**Bosting:** Carving roughly to shape.

**Boucle:** French name for a cloth with a rough-textured surface, produced by using a fancy yarn.

**Border:** A long strip or wall of fabric used to form the sides or boxing on a cushion or mattress, for example.

**Bowed:** Twisted.

**Box ottoman:** A divan or couch with a hinged, upholstered lid forming the seat, and storage space under.

**Braid:** A flat, narrow woven fabric used to decorate and finish upholstery, cushions and curtains.

**Bridling:** A stitch used to hold down and stabilize scrim coverings, usually over first stuffings. A bridle stitch is a large running stitch, which penetrates and sets the depth of stuffing.

**Bruise:** To make a dent in timber by striking it with a hard object such as a hammer.

**Buckram:** A material stiffened by the use of 45 per cent weight of some agent such as size or glue. Base cloths are usually jute or cotton.

**Bump:** A soft, woven interlining similar to a lightweight blanket material. It is used mainly in soft furnishings as interlining for curtains, screens and wall coverings. The new 'polysoft' interlinings are flame-retardant and are used more widely in upholstery as flame-retardant barrier cloths.

**Burl:** See **Burr**.

**Burr:** A warty growth on the trunk of a tree; when sliced it produces speckled burr veneer. Less commonly, the term 'burr' can be used to describe an extremely thin strip of metal that is left along the cutting edge of a blade after honing or grinding.

**Bun foot:** A turned, bun-shaped foot that is fitted to chairs and sofas - early twentieth century.

**Button:** A wooden device screwed to the underside of a table top in order to fix it to an underframe.

## C

**Cabinet-maker:** A manufacturer of good quality furniture.

**Cabriole leg:** A furniture leg developed in the 18th century that is made with an upper convex curve that descends, tapering to a concave curve.

**Calibrated:** Marked out with one or more scales of measurement.

**Calico:** A white or unbleached cotton fabric with no printed design.

**Cambric:** A fine, plain-weave cotton fabric, often glazed on one side and used as a down proof casing.

**Canape:** The French name for a divan or sofa of Louis XV period or design.

**Cane edge:** A sprung edge built on to a chair or bed using hourglass springs and a flexible cane.

**Canvas:** A strong, heavyweight, plainweave fabric, traditionally made from flax or cotton; also a term often used by upholsterers to describe the first covering over webbings or springs.

**Casement:** A plain-weave, even-textured, lightweight all-cotton fabric that is traditionally used for sun curtains on south-facing windows.

**Case-hardened:** A term used to describe unevenly seasoned timber with a moisture content that varies throughout its thickness.

**Catalyst:** A substance that stimulates or increases the rate of a chemical reaction.

**Cauls:** Sheets of wood or metal used to press veneer onto groundwork.

**Chair bed:** A low chair made from wood or metal which is dual-function: the seat and back frames are completely adjustable for use as a single bed, with a minimum of three loose cushions.

**Chaise longue:** A French term used to describe a couch or day bed with an upholstered back.

**Chamfer:** A 45-degree bevel along the edge of a piece of wood or board, or to cut such bevels.

**Chattering:** The noise caused by a workpiece vibrating.

**Checks:** Splits in timber caused by uneven seasoning. See also **Knife checks**.

**Chenille:** A pile fabric in which the weft thread is specially prepared and twisted by machinery, or woven and cut, before being woven into the yarn to form the pile. Cotton chenille is used in upholstery.

**Chill:** The cast-iron jointing block mounted on the head and foot ends of a metal bedstead. A chill, which may be single or double, has a tapered slot and supports the angle-iron bed frame.

**Chintz:** A fine calico 90cm or 120cm wide, usually roller- or screen-printed and glazed or semi-glazed; Quilter chintz: from an Indian word meaning 'brightly coloured'.

**Chipboard:** A mat of small particles of wood and glue compressed into a flat building board.

**Circ:** A commonly used abbreviation for the small circular needles used for handsewing and slip-stitching of upholstery and soft furnishings.

**Claw:** A split hammer peen used to grip a nail by its head and lever it out of a piece of wood.

**Clear timber:** Good-quality wood that is free from defects.

**Closed-coat:** A term used to describe sandpaper that has abrasive particles packed closely together.

**Coarse-textured:** See **Open grain**.

**Collar:** A strip of cover sewn into an inside back to provide a pull-in around an arm.

**Collet:** A tapered sleeve made in two or more segments that grips the shaft of a cutter.

**Comb-grain:** Another term for quartersawn.

**Compound mitre:** A mitre that is angled in two planes.

**Contact glue:** An adhesive that bonds to itself without the aid of cramps when two previously glued surfaces are brought together.

**Concave:** Curving inwards.

**Convex:** Curving outwards.

**Core:** The central layer of plies, particles or wooden strips in a man-made board.

**Cosy corner:** A seat with a high upholstered back which could be fitted into a corner and enable two or more people to sit together.

**Couch:** A long upholstered seat with a back and one or two ends; originally a double armchair.

**Counterbore:** To cut a hole that permits the head of a bolt or screw to lie below the surface of a piece of wood, or the hole itself.

**Counterpane:** A bedcover concealing bedding.

**Cove:** A concave moulding along the edge of a workpiece or another term for hollow.

**Crest rail:** The top rail forming part of the back rest of a chair.

**Cretonne:** Originating from the French village of Creton and traditionally a copper roller-printed cotton fabric. The term is now more generally used to describe almost any type of lighter weight floral-printed cotton.

**Cross-banding:** Strips of veneer cut across the grain and used as decorative borders.

**Crosscutting:** Sawing across the grain.

**Cross grain:** Grain that deviates from the main axis of a workpiece or tree.

**Crotch figure:** Another term for curl figure.

**Crown-cut:** A term used to describe veneer that has been tangentially sliced from a log, producing oval or curved grain patterns.

**Cup:** To bend as a result of shrinkage - specifically across the width of a piece of wood.

**Curl figure:** The grain pattern on wood that has been cut from that part of a tree where a branch joins the main stem or trunk.

**Curly figure:** See **Curly grain**.

**Curly grain:** Wood grain exhibiting an irregular wavy pattern.

**Cure:** To set as a result of chemical reaction.

**Curtaining:** An undulating ridge of sagging paintwork resembling the shape of a draped curtain.

**Cushioning:** Filling for upholstered furniture and cushions.

**Cutters:** Part of tooling that cuts wood etc.

## D

**Damask:** Figured jacquard fabric, the weft forming the design and the warp composed of a comparatively fine yarn making the background.

**Denier:** The weight in grams of 9,000 metres of filament yarn, e.g. silk.

**Dimension stock:** Prepared timber cut to standard sizes.

**Double insulated:** A power tool with a non-conductive plastic casing that protects the user from electric shock is said to be double insulated.

**Dressed stock:** Another term for Dimension stock.

**Duck:** A strong, closely woven cloth of cotton or flax, similar to canvas. An average weight would be 10oz per square yard.

**Dug roll:** Sometimes called a tack roll or thumb roll, it is formed around frame edges using small amounts of stuffing rolled up in hessian. Preformed dugging is produced from compressed paper or reconstituted chipfoam.

**Dust panel:** A horizontally mounted panel that protects the contents of a drawer from the dust created by the drawer above rubbing on its runners.

**Divan chair:** Fully upholstered armchair with long seat, often with scroll arms; late nineteenth century.

**Dogs:** Large iron staples with sharpened ends, used to brace and strengthen timber chair frames.

**Drop:** A curtain measurement which is taken from the fixing or hook level down to the hem. Headings and turnings are added to the drop.

**Dyeing:** Application of a permanent colour to textile fibre, yarn or cloth.

## E

**Earlywood:** The part of a tree's annual growth rings that is laid down in the early part of the growing season.

**Easy chair:** Originally the name given to winged upholstered armchairs that were introduced around 1700. Now the term applies to upholstered armchairs generally.

**Edge-grain:** Another term for quartersawn.

**End grain:** The surface of wood exposed after cutting across the fibres.

**Embossing:** A technique used on thick cloths and leathers to create relief patterns.

**Ergonomics:** The study of the relationship between the average human body (especially that of a worker or machine operative) and its environment.

**Escutcheon:** The metal lining of a keyhole or a protective plate that surrounds it.

**Extraction:** The removal of dust etc. from the factory.

## F

**Fabric:** Cloth for upholstery.

**Face edge:** The surface planed square to the face side and from which other dimensions and angles are measured.

**Face quality:** A term used to describe better quality veneers that are used to cover the visible surfaces of a workpiece.

**Face side:** The flat planed surface from which all other dimensions and angles are measured.

**Farthingale chair:** An armless chair of the Stuart period (1603-1714) which was then used to accommodate ladies' hooped skirts.

**Feather down:** The fine downy fibres cut and stripped from the quills of large feathers and used as a filling mixture.

**Feather edge:** A fine top stitch applied to a stitched edge to create a sharp edge line.

**Feed:** To push a workpiece in a controlled manner towards a moving blade or cutter.

**Fence:** An adjustable guide to keep the cutting edge of a tool a set distance from the edge of a workpiece.

**Ferrule:** A metal collar that reinforces the wood where the tang of a chisel or other hand tool enters the handle.

**Fibreboards:** A range of building boards made from reconstituted wood fibres.

**Fibre identification:** Yarns taken from the warp and weft of a cloth and tested by burning, staining or microscopy to identify composition.

**Field bed:** A canopy type of bed, easily dismantled.

**Fielded panel:** A solid-wood panel with edges bevelled to fit grooves in a frame.

**Figure:** Another term for grain pattern.

**Filament:** A very fine, long and usually continuous textile fibre. Several filaments of silk, for example, are spun together to produce one strong yarn.

**Fillet:** A narrow strip of timber.

**Fittings:** Items to be added to furniture during manufacture, e.g. hinges, handles.

**Flat-grain:** Another term for Plain-sawn.

**Flat-sliced:** A term used to describe a narrow sheet of veneer that has been cut from part of a log with a knife.

**Flat-sawn:** Another term for Plain-sawn.

**Flax:** Strong, lustrous bast fibre taken from the stalk of the flax plant and woven into linen cloth.

**Flitches:** Pieces of wood sawn from a log for slicing into veneers; or the bundle of sliced veneers.

**Flute:** A rounded concave groove.

**Flux:** A substance used to clean the surfaces of metal prior to soldering.

**Fly piece:** A narrow strip of fabric sewn to the edge of inside backs, inside arms or sets to economize on cover.

**Foldstool:** A folding stool provided with a cushion for kneeling; similar to a camp stool.

**Fox wedging:** A jointing procedure where wooden wedges are used to spread a tenon in a stopped mortise.

**Frames:** A general structure e.g. chair frame made to be upholstered.

**French overlay:** A soft, unsprung, unbordered mattress filled with layers of hair sandwiched between new wool.

**French work:** The upholstery of chairs in the French style, using techniques such as diagonal stitching, feather-edging, rope work and deep squab seats.

**Frise:** An American term used to describe a moquette with cut or uncut pile woven from mohair.

**Front elevation:** A scale drawing showing the front view of a workpiece.

**Futon:** A simple Japanese floor bed or mattress made from strong cotton fabric and filled with cotton waste, tufted and unbordered. A futon is easily adapted and folded for sitting.

## G

**Galoon:** An old name for various kinds of braid used in upholstery.

**Garnett machine:** Produces felted fillings, such as cotton and wool, in layered and cross-lapped form.

**Genoa velvet:** A heavy velvet with a smooth ground weave and a pile figure in various colours.

**Gimp:** Edging as used in bedding and upholstery to decorate seams, etc. Made from cotton, silk, rayons or mixtures.

**Grain:** The general direction or arrangement of the fibrous materials of wood.

**Gravity guard:** A blade or cutter guard that is raised by the passage of the work, then drops back under its own weight.

**Green wood:** Newly cut timber that has not been seasoned.

**Groove:** A long narrow channel cut in the direction of the grain; or to cut such channels.

**Groundwork:** The backing material to which veneer is glued.

**Guards:** A device or an attachment that prevents injury, damage, or loss. More commonly the term is used to describe an attachment or a covering put on a machine to protect the operator or a part of the machine.

**Gullet:** The space between saw teeth.

**H**

**Hardwood:** Wood cut from broadleaved, mostly deciduous, trees which belong to the botanical group 'Angiospermae'.

**Haircloth:** An upholstery covering material woven from the tail and mane hairs of horses, with cotton and rayons added. Plain and damask weaves are typical.

**Haunch:** The shortened part of a tenon that prevents it twisting out of line with the upright member at a corner of a frame.

**Heartwood:** The mature wood that forms the spine of a tree.

**Hessian (burlap):** A plain-woven cloth of flat yarns, usually jute, and made in 7oz to 12oz weights.

**Hogrings:** Small steel open-ended rings which are clinched to fix materials and pads to spring edges and units.

**Hollows:** Concave shapes turned on a lathe.

**Hollow-ground:** A term used to describe circular-saw blades that are reduced in thickness towards their centres.

**Hone:** To produce the final cutting edge on a blade or cutter by rubbing it on or with an abrasive stone.

**Horn:** Excess waste wood left on a workpiece to support the end of a mortise while the joint is being cut. The horn is sawn off after the joint is assembled.

**Housing:** A groove cut across the grain.

**I**

**In-cannel:** A term used to describe a gouge with a bevel ground on the inside of the blade.

**Infeed:** A term used to describe that part of a machine's worktable that is in front of the blade or cutter.

**Inlay:** To insert pieces of wood or metal into prepared recesses so that the material lies flush with the surrounding surfaces.

**In wind:** A scale drawing with its main axes equally inclined, but giving an impression of perspective.

**India tape:** Twill-woven 100 percent cotton tape similar to webbing, used to bind or reinforce edges.

**Installation:** To set furniture in position ready for use - e.g. to install a kitchen.

**J**

**Jig:** A device used to hold a workpiece or tool so that an operation can be repeated accurately.

**Joiner:** A woodworker who specializes in the construction of building components such as windows, doors and stairs.

**Joints:** A way in which two or more things are joined: e.g. a mortise-and-tenon joint; flexible joints; dovetail joint.

**K**

**Kanaf:** A natural textile fibre used as a substitute for jute and claimed to be rotproof and very strong; grown in the USA, Cuba and Russia.

**Kerf:** The slot cut by a saw.

**Kickback:** The action of a workpiece being thrown towards a machinist by a moving blade or cutter. The term is also used to describe the action of a power tool when it jumps backwards as a result of its blade or cutter jamming.

**Kicker:** A strip of wood fixed above a drawer's side to prevent it tipping upwards as the drawer is withdrawn.

**Kiln drying:** A method for seasoning timber using a mixture of hot air and steam.

**Knife checks:** Splits across veneer caused by poorly adjusted veneer slicing equipment.

**Knitting chair:** An armless upholstered chair with a wooden drawer fitted under the seat.

**Knock-down fittings:** Mechanical devices for joining components, especially those that may have to be dismantled at a future date.

**Knockdown (KD) furniture:** Pieces of furniture which may be easily folded, broken down or flat-packed for distribution.

**Knock-up:** A mass-production system producing upholstered components for assembly and fitting before despatch.

**Knotting:** A shellac-based sealer used to coat resinous knots that would stain subsequent finishes.

**Knuckle:** The cylindrical part of a hinge to which the leaves are attached and through which the pin passes.

**L**

**Laid cord:** A very strong lashing cord in which the plies are laid together and not twisted.

**Laminate:** A component made from thin strips of wood glued together. The term is also used to describe the action of gluing glue strips together to form a component.

**Laminboard:** A man-made building board with a core of narrow strips of wood glued together and sandwiched between thin plywood sheets. See also **Blockboard**.

**Latewood:** That part of a tree's annual growth ring that is laid down in the latter part of the growing season.

**Laying off:** The action of finishing an application of paint or varnish using upward brush strokes.

**Lacquer:** A glossy, resinous material used as a surface coating.

**Lipping:** A protective strip of solid wood applied to the edge of a man-made board panel or table top.

**Line:** The long, lustrous fibres stripped from the bast or stalk of the flax plant.

**Linters:** Very fine cotton fibres taken from the seed after staple cotton has been removed.

**Lit:** The French name for a bed or mattress.

**Long grain:** Grain that is aligned with the main axis of a workpiece. See also **Short grain**.

**Lopers:** Rails that are pulled from a cabinet in order to support a fall flap.

**Loose cover:** A slip-cover used over upholstered furniture; traditionally employed in the summer season and made from cool linen union fabrics.

**Loose seat:** Also called a slip seat, drop-in seat or pallet. An upholstered frame forming the seat of a dining chair, supported on rebated rails.

**Love seat:** The name given to a small seat on which two people can sit close together.

**Lug chair:** Early English term for the wing type of easy chair.

**M**

**Manufactured Board:** A flat piece of wood e.g. chipboard, MDF or similarly rigid material adapted for a special use.

**Marquetry:** The process of laying relatively small pieces of veneer to make decorative patterns or pictures. See also **Parquetry**.

**Mitre:** A joint formed between two pieces of wood by cutting bevels of equal angles (usually 45 degrees) at the ends of both pieces. Also describes the action of cutting the joint.

**Mock-up:** A temporary construction made from scrap materials in order to test a design.

**Modesty board:** A deep rail fixed between the two end frames of a desk. Its original purpose was to conceal the legs of a seated female.

**Mohair:** The long fine hair of the Angora goat. Also describes an upholstery velvet made with a cotton base and a short mohair pile.

**Moire:** A fine ribbed fabric with a 'watered' surface produced by heated pressure rollers, creating a reflective surface.

**Monks' cloth:** For upholstery, a rough basket-weave fabric of cotton or jute.

**Monofilament:** A fine continuous thread, usually synthetic. Transparent types are used as sewing threads.

**Moquette:** Hard-wearing pile fabric, traditionally with a wool pile and cotton ground. Moquettes may be plain, figured, cut, uncut or frise.

**Morocco hide:** Soft goatskin leather, distinguished by its fine grain and texture. Much used by eighteenth-century upholsterers and cabinetmakers.

**Morris chair:** Early twentieth-century Arts and Crafts style chair with adjustable back, padded wooden arms and loose seat and back cushions.

**Mortise:** A rectangular recess cut in timber to receive a matching tongue or tenon.

**Motifs:** The decorative figures in a pattern applied to, or woven, in a cloth.

**Muntin:** The central vertical member of a frame-and-panel door. Also used to describe a grooved strip of wood that divides and supports the two sections of a wide drawer bottom.

## N

**Nap:** The surface of a fabric raised either by combing or using abrasive rollers.

**Nursing chair:** A nineteenth-century term for a single chair with a low seat 13in to 15in (330mm to 380mm) high.

## O

**Offcut:** Waste wood cut from a workpiece.

**Open-coat:** A term used to describe sandpaper that has widely spaced abrasive particles.

**Open grain:** A term used to describe ringporous wood with large pores. Also known as coarse-textured.

**Orris:** Crimp used in upholstering laces of various designs in gold and silver.

**Ottoman:** A long low seat without a back which originates from Turkey.

**Out-cannel:** A term used to describe a gouge with a bevel ground on the outside of the blade.

**Outfeed:** A term used to describe that part of a machine's worktable that is behind the blade or cutter.

**Oxidize:** To form a layer of metal oxide as in rusting.

## P

**Palliasse:** A mattress stuffed with natural filling such as chaff or straw.

**Pare:** To remove fine shavings with a chisel.

**Parquetry:** A similar process to Marquetry but using veneers cut into geometric shapes to make decorative patterns.

**Particle boards:** Building boards made from small chips or flakes of wood bonded together with glue under pressure.

**Patina:** The colour and texture that a material such as wood or metal acquires as a result of a natural aging process.

**Pawls:** Pivoted pointed levers designed to grip a workpiece as soon as it is thrown back by a moving blade or cutter.

**PEG:** 'Polyethylene glycol' is a stabilizing agent used in place of conventional seasoning processes to treat green timber.

**Personal Protective Clothing (PPE):** An individual's apparel specifically designed for and worn when undertaking certain tasks - e.g. wearing protective goggles when paint spraying.

**Photosynthesis:** A natural process that takes place when energy in the form of light is absorbed by chlorophyll, producing the nutrients on which plants live.

**Piece:** An accepted unit length of fabric, ranging from 30 metres to 100 metres.

**Pilaster:** A shallow rectangular column of wood attached to the face of a cabinet.

**Pile fabric:** Fabric with a plain ground and an extra warp or weft, which projects to give the surface a fibrous nap.

**Pinstuffed:** Shallow padded seat or back set into a rebated show-wood frame.

**Piping:** Narrow strip of fabric folded and sewn into a seam; used with or without a cord.

**Plain weave:** A simple weave in which each warp thread interlaces over and under each weft thread; also known as 'tabby weave'.

**Plain-sawn:** A term used to describe a piece of wood with growth rings that meet the faces of the board at angles of less than 45 degrees. See also **Rift-sawn**.

**Plan:** A scale drawing showing the top view of a workpiece.

**Plan elevation:** Another term for **Plan**.

**Plush:** A general term for pile fabrics which have a longer pile than velvet and are less closely woven.

**Plywood:** A building board made by bonding a number of wood veneers together under pressure.

**Pocket-screw:** To bore a hole at an angle through the inside face of a rail in order to insert a top-fixing screw.

**Polish:** To free from coarseness and / or to make smooth and shiny by rubbing in a wax or liquid.

**Pouffe:** A stuffed footstool which stands high enough to be used as a seat.

**Presspahn:** A strong, narrow strip of compressed cardboard used for backtacking and reinforcing edges.

**Prie-dieu chair:** A low-seated praying chair with a tall back and a narrow shelf.

**Pull-in upholstery (taped):** A fly or tape is sewn into a covered surface and pulled in to create a waisted effect; may also be hand-stitched through the cover surface.

**Pull-over solution:** A mixture of thinners used to partially dissolve a recently applied wood finish in order to shine it.

**Pumice:** A light volcanic rock that is ground to a fine abrasive powder and used to modify the texture of a wood finish.

**Push stick:** A notched batten used to feed a workpiece into a blade or cutter.

## Q

**Quarter-sawn:** A term used to describe a piece of wood with growth rings at not less than 45 degrees to the faces of the board. See also **Rift-sawn**.

## R

**Rack:** To distort a frame or carcass by applying sideways pressure.

**Ramie:** China grass, providing a strong lustrous fibre resembling silk.

**Ratchet:** A device that permits motion in one direction only.

**Rebate:** A stepped recess along the edge of a workpiece, usually as part of a joint. Or also used to describe cutting such recesses.

**Relief carving:** A type of carving where the background is cut away leaving a motif projecting from the surrounding area.

**Repp:** A heavy and firmly woven wool fabric with transverse ribs; used for upholstery.

**Rift-sawn:** A term used to describe a piece of wood with growth rings that meet the faces of the board at angles of more than 30 degrees but at less than 60 degrees.

**Ripsawing:** Cutting parallel to the grain.

**Rollover arm:** A style of easy-chair arm upholstery with a strong rollover scroll shape.

**Rotary-cut:** A term used to describe a continuous sheet of veneer peeled from a log by turning it against a stationary knife.

**Rottenstone:** An abrasive powder similar to pumice but ground even finer.

**Rubber:** A padded cloth used to apply polish, stain or varnish.

**Ruching:** Narrow knitted decorative trimming with a heading and a cut or looped surface. Used generally in place of piping around cushions and edges.

**Runners:** Strips of wood that support a drawer and upon which it slides.

## S

**Sapwood:** New wood surrounding the denser heartwood.

**Sawing peg:** A notched plate of metal or wood that is clamped or screwed to a bench so that the notch overhangs the edge. It is used to support work being cut with a piercing saw or fret saw.

**Seasoning:** Reducing the moisture content of timber.

**Secret haunch:** Another term for sloping haunch.

**Section:** A scale drawing that shows a view of a workpiece as if it had been cut through.

**Set:** To bend saw teeth to the right and left of the blade in order to cut a kerf wider than the blade itself.

**Setting in:** The fine shaping of carved work.

**Scribe:** To mark with a pointed tool; or to mark and shape the edge of a workpiece so that it will fit exactly against another surface such as a wall or ceiling.

**Scrim:** Plain open-weave cloth with hard twisted yarns, woven from jute, cotton or flax. Used in upholstery to cover first stuffings.

**Scrollover arm:** An arm which curves inwards from the seat of a chair in the form of a double scroll, breaking into a convex sweep before curving back to form an arm rest.

**Seating:** Upholsterers' term for hard-wearing cloths, for example haircloth.

**Settee:** A name derived from the seventeenth-century settle. It is usually made from wood with a high back, and large enough for several people.

**Shadow fabric:** A cloth in which the warp yarn is printed prior to the cloth being woven.

**Shank:** The cylindrical shaft of a screw or nail. Also used to describe the shaft of a drill or cutter.

**Shear force:** The force applied to a structure by a transverse load.

**Shellac:** A secretion of the lac insect used to manufacture French polish.

**Sherardized:** Coated with zinc.

**Shoe:** The adjustable jaw of a G-cramp.

**Shoot:** To plane accurately using a finely set plane.

**Short grain:** A term used to describe where the general direction of wood fibres lies across a narrow section of timber.

**Shoulder:** The squared end of a workpiece on one or both sides of a tenon or tongue.

**Show-wood:** A term used to describe the exposed timber parts of an upholstered piece of furniture (which may include arms, facings, legs, mouldings, plinths and carved areas), as opposed to the fabric-covered parts. The surface finish may be painted, stained or polished.

**Side elevation:** A scale drawing showing the side view of a workpiece.

**Skiver:** Thin leather prepared for gluing to a desk or table top.

**Skiving:** A technique used to trim leather with a knife to a fine feather edge and produce a scarf joint. Thin skivers of leather are used to trim surfaces in cabinet work.

**Slash-sawn:** Another term for Plain-sawn.

**Slip cover:** Alternative name given to a loose or detachable cover.

**Sloping haunch:** A tenon haunch cut at an angle so that it is invisible when the joint is assembled.

**Sofa:** This term appeared in the late seventeenth-century and described a couch for reclining.

**Softening:** Pieces of scrap wood used

to protect workpieces from metal vice or cramp jaws.

**Softwood:** Wood cut from coniferous trees which belong to the botanical group 'Gymnospermae'.

**Spinneret:** The stainless-steel nozzle drilled with fine holes through which synthetic fibre filaments are formed by extrusion, e.g. Rayon, Nylon, Terylene.

**Splitting out:** When a cutter or drill breaks through the bottom or back of a workpiece.

**Spoon back:** The shape of a chair back, Queen Anne style, curved to fit the shape of the body.

**Springs:** A device, such as a coil of wire, that returns to its original shape after being compressed or stretched. Because of their ability to return to their original shape, springs are used in upholstered chairs, beds etc. to absorb or lessen energy.

**Springwood:** Another term for Earlywood.

**Squab:** A loose cushion.

**Stain:** Liquids used to colour wood with a coat of penetrating liquid dye or tint.

**Stitch-up:** A stuffed and shaped edge, reinforced with rows of blind and top stitches.

**Stile:** A vertical side member of a frame-and-panel door.

**Striker plate:** The metal plate against which a latch or lock comes to rest.

**Stringing:** Fine strips of wood used to divide areas of veneer.

**Strop:** To produce a razor-sharp cutting edge by rubbing it on a strip of leather. Also used to describe the strip of leather itself.

**Stop:** A strip of wood against which a drawer front or door comes to rest when it is closed.

**Stopped mortise:** A mortise that does not pass right through a piece of wood.

**Stub mortise:** Another term for Stopped mortise.

**Stub tenon:** A short tenon that does not pass right through a piece of wood.

**Stuffover:** The name given to a chair or settee frame which is almost entirely covered with upholstery.

**Summerwood:** Another term for Latewood.

**Sweep:** A term used to describe the curved section of a carving gouge.

**Swing:** The maximum diameter of a workpiece that can be turned over a lathe bed.

## T

**Tack rag:** A cloth impregnated with resin for picking up loose dust. Also known as a tacky rag.

**Tacktrim:** A stamped metal trim which is made in a continuous length and cut off as required. It is a folded strip with holes for tacking and stapling along one side and sharp teeth along the opposite edge. Once it has been fixed in place on a chair frame, upholstery fabric can then be trimmed and pushed into the tacktrim before it is hammered down flat to create a neat, finished edge.

**Tang:** The pointed end of a chisel or file that is driven into the handle.

**Tangentially cut:** Another term for Plain-sawn.

**Tapestry:** The term originally applied to a wool fabric woven by hand, and later to power-woven imitations, figured upholstery fabrics, and to fabric where designs are partly or wholly formed by the warp.

**Template:** A cut-out pattern to help shape a workpiece accurately.

**Tenon:** A projecting tongue on the end of a piece of wood which fits in a corresponding mortise.

**Tester:** A canopy built or suspended above a bed as a frame or rails to support curtains.

**Thermoplastic:** A term used to describe a material that can be resoftened with heat.

**Thermosetting:** A term used to describe a material that cannot be resoftened with heat once it has set hard.

**Thinner:** A substance used to reduce the consistency of paint, varnish or polish.

**Thixotropic:** A property of some paints which have a jelly-like consistency until stirred or applied, at which point they become liquified.

**Throat:** The clearance between a blade of a machine such as a fret saw and its frame. Also used to describe the outlet for shavings above the mouth in a plane's sole.

**Tongue:** The projecting ridge cut along the edge of a board which fits into a corresponding groove in another board. Or a plywood strip that fits in grooves cut in two boards to be joined.

**Tool (Hand and Power):** A 'hand tool' is a device, such as a saw, used to perform or facilitate manual or mechanical work. A 'power tool' is a device, such as a power drill, used to perform or facilitate manual or mechanical work.

**Trimming:** The applying or forming of decorative effects using fabrics.

**Tub chair:** A large easy chair with a concave back.

**Tufting:** The technique of bridling and compressing stuffed areas in chairs, cushions and mattresses to hold fillings in place and set a depth and firmness of feel.

**Turkey work:** Hand-knotting of wool into canvas to produce fabrics and carpets.

**Tusk tenon:** A wedged through tenon used to join floor joists. An additional stub tenon (the tusk) below the through tenon provides extra support.

## U

**Upholstery:** Fabric furnishings - upholstery as we know it - began as a craft in chair making and bed making at the end of the sixteenth century.

## V

**Valance:** A length of fabric which may be pleated or gathered and used to conceal a rail or frame. Generally associated with bedding.

**Vandyke:** The term used in upholstery to describe a type of sewn joint in deep buttoning work; traditionally, a handstitched joint used in fine leather work and carefully hidden in the pleating between buttons.

**Velours:** A fine cotton velvet originating in France.

**Velveteen:** A very fine, lightweight cotton pile fabric with a weft pile; not of upholstery weight.

**Veneer:** A thin slice of wood used as a surface covering on a less expensive material such as a man-made board.

**Vertical grain:** Another term for Quartersawn.

**Viscosity:** The extent to which a fluid resists the tendency to flow.

## W

**Waney edge:** The natural wavy edge of a plank. It may still be covered by tree bark.

**Warp:** A yarn which runs in the length direction of a cloth.

**Wavy grain:** A term used to describe the even wave-like grain pattern on wood cut from a tree with an undulating cell structure.

**Weft:** A yarn which forms the cross threads in a cloth, selvedge to selvedge.

**Welt:** A reinforced seam used to conceal or decorate a fabric or leather joint.

**Wild grain:** Irregular grain that changes direction, making it difficult to work.

**Winding:** A warped or twisted board is said to be winding or in wind.

**Wood:** Material primarily used to make furniture processed from trees e.g. pine, oak.

**Wood machines:** Machine designed to cut wood.

**Worsted:** Made from long wool yarn fibres, combed and twisted hard.

## X

**X-frame chair:** Early seventeenth century chair upholstered and decorated with nails and fringe; became popular during the reign of King James I (1603-1625).

## Y

**Yacht varnish:** An exterior-grade varnish especially suitable for coastal climates.

