

Final version for N&J website: 14 July 2017

Philip Hussey

In April 2017 Wycombe Museum received an offer of a donation of documents relating to the furniture made at Nicholls & Janes. The offered donation, which is still awaiting formal acceptance from the museum, is from Professor Philip Hussey, who joined N&J from High Wycombe Technical College Art School in 1954 and stayed until 1961.

A selection of Philip's furniture designs, sketches and plans for N&J, and other donated documents are shown in the three web albums N&JPH1 (Numbered sketches), N&JPH2 (Unnumbered sketches etc) and N&JPH3 (Samples of contents of four boxes of photographs etc). These are accessible via the 'Photos' tab at www.nandj.org.uk

N&J was Philip's first employer after leaving college, but, ironically, this first job (and so his subsequent career in furniture design and education) was partly down to the flip of a coin. When he and his twin brother Trevor began looking for work on leaving the Tech, there were two vacancies that interested them: one in engineering and one in furniture design. They agreed to toss a coin to see who would do which, and Philip got to successfully apply for the N&J job.

He was quite happy with the chance to learn about furniture design: he could draw as a boy, and his father was a good amateur painter and they would sometimes paint together. However, Wycombe Tech wasn't regarded as a particularly good art school so he had a lot to learn when he started at Nicholls and Janes in 1954 aged 16. He was with N& J for seven years including five as an apprentice, but he did become a key figure in the business.

Furniture making did have a precedent in Philip's family – his father was a fine chairmaker, and the legendary furniture maker Owen Dean, who worked in Hampden Woods, early in the 20th century, was Philip's uncle.

There was not a lot of in-house guidance available but he improved rapidly in the job, working on designs in various media (see below). Sometimes he would have one or two of these to do in a day but usually there were several days between enquiries, and many of those could be answered with photographs.

He says: "The apprenticeship was longer than most and was a way of keeping your wages down. However, it did give me one day each week at H W Technical College where I accumulated several qualifications (City & Guilds Cabinet and Chair Making, Advanced Drawing & Construction and the Full Technological Certificate. Finally the National Diploma in Design, again part-time). At the same time I studied for six 'O' levels and two 'A' levels at evening classes plus one more 'O' level by correspondence as I ran out of evenings in the week. I had started on a ridiculously low wage of 25 shillings a week, and I had to work on Saturday mornings. Cycling down from Naphill each day. I think most apprentices would have been on £2 at least. I still have a pay slip hand written on a small piece of paper some 6cms square. It is undated but close to my leaving - £6.10s less 7s tax, 9s 11d Insurance, 1d Child (?), leaving me with £5.13s.

"Why I took the job I don't know, but I found that I really liked it there, it was an incredible experience with marvellous, skilled and interesting people. There had been a chap before me and he could really draw; I was very impressed by him. I can't recall his name, if I ever knew it. Some of his drawings are included and are in the catalogues.

"Harry Janes, the company director, was known generally in the factory as Mr Harry. His father Ralph Janes (6th Nov 1872 - 2nd Aug 1954) was the co-director, but I joined around the time of his death. The company would receive enquiries for furniture, or Mr Harry Janes (Mr Harry) the managing director,

would seek them. Mr Harry would usually do a small sketch of what he thought was wanted. I would then produce a sketch in colour to be sent to the enquirer together with a costing by Mr Harry. The sketch would be given a sketch number.

“My method of producing a sketch was to draw it either free-hand or on a drawing board with set-squares etc., depending on the item. The drawing would then be traced. The tracing could be transferred to paper by drawing over the back of the tracing, laying it on the paper then drawing again over the front of the tracing to transfer a faint image onto the paper. I could then colour this in with watercolours or coloured pencils and finally enhance the faint drawing with ink or pencil. Alternatively, I could trace my original drawing, usually in ink, and make a dye-line print from this which could be coloured and sent to the potential customer.

“I would use a mixture of freehand and drawing-board and tee-square work depending on the subject. Chairs, for instance, were freehand but square things, cabinets etc., were more quickly done with set-squares and rulers. Shading and wood-grain would be freehand.

“If the piece was made it would be photographed and given another number. A photograph would be added to a series of large albums, others kept in boxes to be sent to similar enquiries. Many enquiries could be answered with photographs, others required a new design and so a sketch.

“Preparing sketches for customers could be done in pencil or in ink and coloured with watercolours or coloured pencils. Both involved using a drawing on tracing paper to transfer the image onto paper and leave us with a record. The quickest method of producing a sketch was probably by pencil but this had the disadvantage that, if you wanted to use the design in response to a subsequent enquiry, you could not simply reprint the image using a dye-line printer.

“With ink drawings you could. I would use waterproof Indian ink, on tracing paper if it was to be copied, or straight onto drawing paper if it was to be used for printing in the catalogue. The problem with ink was that it was difficult to correct a mistake.

“The drawing equipment available did not help. Conventional pens and mapping pens were OK for freehand drawing but awkward to use against a ruler for an even line. The ruling pen, which allowed you to adjust the line thickness, was ideal for working drawings but not freehand. New pens began to appear: Graphos pen made by Pelican, a German company, offered a range of nibs to give set thickness's of lines but had the same limitations as the ruling pen – including having to be loaded frequently with a drop of ink by hand. The Rotring pen, again German, was a big advance. Each pen could be fitted with a range of fine tube-like nibs of different diameters and with their own ink reservoir. These could be used freehand. Their big problem was the tendency to clog up so that you could spend as much time getting them to work as doing the drawing. Now, fibre-tip pens have been developed which are easier to use but don't give such a clean line and are not reusable.

“The sketch number S1383 [see below] is an example of part of the process. When we had an enquiry Mr Harry [Janes] would come in to me with his sketch or would sketch something. I would do an initial drawing of what I thought he wanted and sometimes had to have another go. He would sometimes correct my drawing, with a rather heavy hand.

“Mr Harry would cost the design and send the sketch and costing off to the customer. If we got the order I would do a working drawing and a cutting list for the factory. The working drawing would be on a large sheet of brown paper, drawn with a tee-square, steel rules and set-squares on the top of a large table. The front, end and plan elevations would be drawn full-size, one over the other (sometimes only half of the piece was shown if the piece was symmetrical about its centre. These were sectional elevations showing the construction and each component, which was numbered. The numbers referred to the cutting list that would accompany the drawing.

“I remember introducing the practice of a coloured line round each elevation to make it easier to read: green for the front elevation, blue for the end elevation and red for the plan. This was somewhat scorned by the old hands. (At other companies I have worked for, working drawings would be drawn on large sheets of birch plywood or on tracing paper and dye-line printed. Some companies would require a drawing of each component showing and describing the sequence of machining operation on it).

“The cutting-list would list each component, the number required, its length (plus ½ an inch for waste), its width and thickness, and the species. If the component was curved, say, then a length plus 'to mould' was stated. I would prepare the moulds. These were 1/8" or 1/4" plywood shapes that could be marked round on a board to be band-sawed out. Chairs, for instance, needed a number of moulds for backfeet, splats etc. I would converse with others in the factory if there were technical problems or something I was not sure about.

“N&J wasn't an enormous enterprise. There were perhaps about 30 to 40 employees.

“ I might take a day or more to produce a presentation drawing, some of the large ones longer, but the working drawings might take several days as every joint, every constructional and machining detail needed to be shown. Any carving had to be drawn and a tracing made for the carver.

“At some point I did get an assistant who could help on the working drawings etc. I did have other duties – some rather odd. It was my duty to issue light bulbs, which I had to stamp on the end with a rubber cup-shaped tool that etched the company name with acid. This was to prevent theft. Both the tool and the acid were so old that I later found you could rub off the stamp with your finger.

“I was also put in charge of the kilns. This was a daunting job because I was responsible for drying large quantities of timber to a required moisture content, (usually 10%). This involved constantly weighing samples and estimating moisture contents and keeping the temperature and steaming correct day and night. This was made even more fraught because they would not pay for a night watchman.

“Having put the drawing and cutting list into the factor any mistake could be a disaster. I can remember a beautiful walnut chest of drawers for which I did the working drawing making it 33 inches high. When the chest was half completed I looked again at the sketch to find that the height should have been 3feet 3 inches. To correct my error pieces of wood had to be inserted in the ends at each drawer and re-veneered because so much work including carving had already been done.

“There were other tasks such as moulds to make for chairs etc., and the need to help choose veneers. I was constantly on call, because they might find something that was a problem.

“The carving took some time. John Hudson was the carver and a very fine one; I seldom drew the carving well enough for him. He did give himself licence to alter some things if necessary, but I did try to be historically accurate about changing fashions in carving, mouldings and styles etc.

My knowledge of these was largely garnered from the past work of the company and of course, reference books. However, I am aware that we often used 'shorthand' that was not strictly accurate and is relevant to the descriptions given to some of the drawings and photographs in this collection. For instance, we often described any traditional oak designs as 'Tudor Oak' when the design may have been historically earlier or later. Again, the catalogues describe some designs as 'Hepplewhite/Regency' when the work was simply based on late 18th century styles or may contain a mixture.

“Although we did make accurate reproductions in an authentic way, we also adapted some traditional styles for our times. The modern sideboard [S1771] is an example. We would also most often use modern materials and techniques where these were an improvement on the past – the use of modern adhesives and for instance, modern composite boards (plywood, laminboard, chipboard etc., and laminated shapes) where traditionally veneering would often be done on a softwood core that shrank over time and would be vulnerable to central heating.

“Of course, many reproductions were also 'distressed', that is, signs of wear were added to age them. An

indication of how authentic our work could be was shown when Mr Harry had to go to court once when someone had claimed that a piece was a genuine antique, and Mr Harry knew that we had made the piece. We did sometimes work with genuine antiques. I had once to attempt to reconstruct a Louis XV settee from what remained of an original that had been severely burnt in a fire. We also made an altar from Cardinal Wolsey's bed for Hambleden Church, Bucks, (they have the drawings and photo).

“We had a very large collection of photographic plates and it was part of my duties to print from these to maintain our stock of photographs. I had a darkroom where I printed them and developed plates. Every piece we made had to be photographed and if it was a single piece I would usually do it. I would photograph them in the yard then block out the background on the plate with red masking paint. Suites or groups of furniture were photographed commercially in the town by M.W.Keen.

The 50s and 60s saw declining demand for repro furniture and increased demand for modern designs, and N&J's efforts to adapt did include working with internationally known designers such as Robert Heritage: “I really liked his work. We made a large cabinet with a carved front behind glass sliding doors and a range of dining and bedroom furniture in (I believe) teak and sycamore. They didn't sell very well – I don't think that we could compete. If modern furniture was at the 'top end' in price then the customers wanted the real thing – Scandinavian furniture.”

“I admired Harry Janes. He was talented. He could be likeable although I was always intimidated by his different social background and status. I was rather shy of him but although he could be frightening he was never unkind to me. It didn't help that he drank and in the afternoons and was often affected by it. I'm not sure about a culture of drink. I think that he was a social drinker who joined others with a similar inclination for a liquid lunch at the British Legion. It may also have been part of the way you needed to socialize to get business. At a time when companies were struggling to come to terms with change he would look for a wide variety of work. We once had a contract to fit out vans for the civil defence. He did eventually offer me more money, but not until I was already going, when he also offered a directorship.”

There were many great characters who worked for N&J who Philip still remembers, but he was very surprised to learn about the past achievements of one of them - Reg Boreham: “He was a director and company secretary. He was a rather small man and always wore polished black boots. He took snuff and would scrub his handkerchiefs and hang them up (still brown) in the toilet to dry. Both he and George Davis, who kept the accounts, sat on high stools at high mahogany desks writing in longhand – all very Victorian. When we moved from St Mary's St., I pulled out a large set of bookshelves in my drawing office and there on the end of it was pinned a cigarette card of Reg Boreham and it revealed that he had played for Arsenal as an amateur and saved them from relegation! I never knew and he never said.”

Philip's subsequent career took him to a number of other furniture makers and designers, including Peter Haywar in Beaconsfield (modern design furniture), then to JC in Brighton (repro furniture), then White and Newton, Portsmouth. Finally he spent twenty years with Brunel University at High Wycombe, later as Professor of Design and Craftsmanship.

ref specific pics in three web albums, comments by Philip Hussey

Web album 1 **N&JPH1** Numbered sketches

46 slides

<http://www.biografix.co.uk/nandj.org.uk/N&JPH1/album/index.html>

S1162 (pic P1040672) [pic a bit out of focus] five oriental designs. I can't remember if these were ever made. Ironically, I suspect the orient would now be making them for us – and the rest of our range as well.

- S1214 (pic P1040594) The response to an inquiry for a settee in a Georgian style. It has spade feet.
- S1281 (pic P1040665): coloured presentation drawing of an oak sideboard, table and arm and small chair. We would have called this 'Tudor' style. The desk was made and a photographs are among the collection. There is what I would call gadrooning on the bulbous legs. Every piece of carving detail had a name (lunettes, egg and dart, guilloche, nulling, pie crust etc.,) and belonged to particular design styles. I cannot remember them all now and sometimes wonder if many of the terms used in the trade were universal, regional or some even peculiar to one factory. For instance, only Windsor style chairs have four legs; the rest have two (front) legs and two back feet. (There are also X leg chairs – often a form used in the design of thrones and believed to date back to the folding chairs used by itinerant magistrates during the Roman Era).
- S1329 (pic P1040639): Two small sideboards with curl mahogany veneers, one bow fronted the other with a break front. A pedestal table and Arm and Small chairs with sabre legs. The curved doors bow fronted sideboard would have been laminated with the central oval of curl veneer and cross-banding applied at the same time together with a backing veneer as a balance.
- S1375 (pic P1040592): A Tudor style oak chest.
- S1383 (pic P1040598): Mahogany Chippendale style corner cabinet with curl veneers on the base, a thirteen pained barred door above and bracket feet. An original sketch in pencil
- S1434 (pic P1040600) A mahogany bedside cabinet and walnut side table – part of a longer drawing. Both pieces have serpentine fronts. If the shape was flat enough then the fronts might have been cut from solid wood and if quite small then only serpentine on the front and left flat on the back. With larger pieces the serpentine shapes would traditionally have been built up like brickwork with short pieces of shaped wood. We sometimes did the same but we would also laminate these shapes. I do not remember if these pieces were made or, if they were, which method we used. To laminate a serpentine shape requires the making of male and female formers. If the formers did not already exist then making them for one cabinet would have been more costly than using the traditional brick method. Either way the serpentine sections would have to be veneered both sides as you cannot use curl mahogany or burr walnut in a solid form for such pieces.
- S1508 (pic P1040669): four arm chairs illustrated in pencil and watercolour. A mixture of styles with sabre an Sheraton style legs. The broad striped fabric is a Regency detail.
- S1531 (pic P1040596): An original sketch of a mahogany Sheraton type chair, but Nicholls & Janes made a lot of mahogany furniture and we even had Cuban mahogany which was the cream of mahoganies. We had a stack of it in the yard and it was so precious that we kept it for particularly special pieces, but it began to rot so we had to use it, and we could charge more. This was towards the 60s. I believe that Cuba had stopped any further felling by this time.
- S1533a (pic P1040656): circular boardroom table with plan and elevation. As no battens are shown under the 8ft 6 ins diameter the top this could not have been of solid wood. This meant that the top was made of a composite board (either laminboard or chipboard), lipped all round with a solid wood and veneered. The top was in two pieces so as to get it into the veneer press.
- S1551 (pic P1040630): A suggested arm for a shield back chair, probably Hepplewhite. I would use any of a number of reference books we held, some valuable early editions.
- S1565 (pic P1040641): Office furniture. Various item in a modern style. The 'modern' or 'contemporary' design in this collection look rather dated now or perhaps, more kindly, of their time.
- S1573 (pic P1040626): print of a mahogany dining group with a twin pedestal dining table, sideboard and side table with serpentine fronts and an arm and small chair. Late 18th century style. This would be much more typical of what we were doing, I remember we made that.
- S1575 (pic P1040638): a boardroom table in mahogany and the 4189 armchair. The table was in three sections with large leaves to give a maximum length of 24ft. The four pedestal sections and the three leaves allowed a number of configurations. Centre pedestals did not obstruct the chairs.
- S1583 (pic P1040659): similar set to S1584 but with softer lines and no scrolled arms.
- S1584 (pic P1040658): upholstered settee, easy chair, arm and small chair with Regency sabre legs.
- S1585 (pic P1040660): similar set with cleaner lines and Sheraton style legs. I suspect that Mr Harry didn't get a clear idea of what the customer wanted.
- S1586 (pic P1040662): four designs for mahogany tables of various kinds. (A) a lyre-end table, (B) and (C) Sheraton style side tables and (D) an occasional table with Thomas Hope influence.

- S1595 (pic P1040631): print of an easy chair with cabriole legs to match suite 4189.
- S1597 (pic P1040595): a mahogany corner cabinet with a curl veneer on the door and the top painted inside. This is the sort of thing we would send. This one is not painted because it is the copy we kept. This is a dye-line print and would have been painted or coloured with pencils.
- S1609 (pic P1040671): two designs in pencil and colour for carved blanket chests in oak.
- S1613 (pic P1040649): suggested designs for loudspeaker enclosures, colour wash print. Two speaker cabinets, from the early days of stereo, possibly filled with sand to make them very heavy, was supposed to improve the sound.
- S1616 (pic P1040645): A small occasional table with a fretted gallery around the top and cabriole legs. Walnut with burr walnut veneer on the top. To increase the strength of the fretting veneers were often laminated together with the grain alternating in direction. This was perhaps the earliest example of plywood.
- S1622 and S1623 (pic P1040614): Two Hepplewhite shield back chairs, the one on the right with a carving of the Prince of Wales Feathers on the back. Probably versions of ones made before.
- S1626 (pic P1040653): a two sided public table and messenger's high desk and stool. Possibly for a bank. In a traditional design with a nulled thumbnail moulding around the table top and desk.
- S1642 (pic P1040597): An arm and small chair with French style legs in mahogany. This is not an original sketch but a dye-line print coloured in. This was quicker than a coloured pencil or ink drawing and the drawing could be printed again for another enquiry. The drawing would have been done in the same way (as S1531) but on tracing paper so that it could be printed.
- S1645 (pic P1040644): 12ft table, arm and small chairs, telephone cabinet, cocktail cabinet. It would be helpful if a date had been included on the drawings. It was left off so that the drawing could be used again for a similar enquiry. Of course, there would have been a date on the quotation.
- S1650 (pic P1040640): Oak sideboard, table, side table, long-tom coffee table, settle, chairs, Tudor style, room with leaded windows. The setting might have been imaginary but it must have been for an old house. The bulbous legs were carved and of a cup and cover design. Gadrooning or nulling around the covers. This looks a bit like some of the illustrations in the catalogues N&J produced. I did some of the illustrations for these, but most of the illustrations of this furniture were done by the predecessor of mine who was very skilled. I don't know his name or age but his rather Art Nouveau style suggests that he trained around the turn of the century. He seemed as at home with the Art Deco of the 20s and 30s and so I guess that he was at N&J pre WW2.
- S1656 (pic P1040655): two mahogany jardinières for plants in a traditional style.
- S1663 (pic P1040668): a drawing of a walnut boardroom table, sideboard, cocktail cabinet and chairs, The chairman's chair has a coat of arms embossed in the leather back.
- S1684 (pic P1040617): This is the same interior as S1685 showing an alternative design.
- S1685 (pic P1040615): An interior for Fords of Dagenham completed after measuring the rooms.
- S1690 (pic P1040612): An office or reception area for Fords of Dagenham. Probably done after we had measured up. A coloured copy would have been sent to Fords.
- S1691 (pic P1040661): interview room with long-tom coffee table.
- S1692 (pic P1040627): Another reception area, possibly for Fords.
- S1693 (pic P1040625): A proposal for an interview room for Fords of Dagenham. This collection of drawings is perhaps, not a not a true representation of my work or the typical work of Nicholls and Janes during my employment there. When I left the company I sorted through the large accumulation of drawings, most of which would be throw out, to find ones that I thought might help me find a job. I hoped that this was likely to be in a company making contemporary furniture hence many sketches of modern designs. Unfortunately, there were few finished presentation drawings because these were usually kept by the customer.
- S1708 (pic P1040635): designs for a throne in traditional styles. This was a throne for some African potentate. This is the first of two sheets (see S1711). These were just to show the sort of thing we could make.
- S1711 (pic P1040636): designs for a throne in a modern style. It was one of the more unusual enquiries we got - probably got because not many people make thrones! I don't think we made it so either someone else did make thrones or the potentate was deposed before he could say yes.
- S1742 (pic P1040637): waiting area, settees etc. Again a modern design.

- S1744 (pic P1040650): two designs for corner cabinets, one adapted from a design in 'The Dictionary of English Furniture' by Macquoid and Edwards, page 168 fig 37, the other adapted from a design in 'Furniture in England' by Frances [sic][Francis] Lenygon . These were books we held. I assume that the customer had agreed to the design in the books hence the reference to them on the drawing. The drawings are in ink.
- S1754 (pic P1040648): Oak occasional table and armchair. We may have quoted for leather or fabric on the armchair, The studs suggest leather.
- S1756 (pic P1040666): a carved oak desk shown in front, end and back elevations. Elaborately carved in strapwork and linenfold panels, plus a revolving desk chair and a small chair with cabriole legs. There is an oak leaf and acorn motif on the front of the desk which is repeated on the chairs and also on those illustrated in sketch S1760 [see above]. Linenfold panelling was popular around 1480 to the mid 1500s, not just n linen chest but any furniture or wall panelling. It has been suggested that it originated from the natural rippled effect on timber when panels are riven from thicker boards,
- S1760 (pic P1040657): two designs for walnut armchairs in a William and Mary style. [see S1756].
- S1771 (pic P1030652): drawing of a sideboard and boat-shaped boardroom and occasional tables, circular table etc., in a modern style.
- S1785 (pic P1040632): alternative designs for a sewing chair with cabriole legs with shell and drop or pendent husk carving on the knees. I would have suggested the colours of the tapestry which would have been supplied by the customer. At 15 inches high to the seat this could also have been a nursing chair.
- S1786 (pic P1040623): Oak boardroom table and side table. The pencil reference to a 2760 A & S (Arm and Small chair) means that a photograph of the chairs was mounted on the copy of the drawing sent to the customer. It shows that there was still some demand for traditional boardroom designs. Perhaps the company had their offices in a period building. I think this looks rather too clunky. The underframe of the table divides in the middle to facilitate transport and access to a building. The one centre leg would be needed on a table of that length and would be less of a hindrance to seating than two legs.
- S1789 (pic P1040633): Pentagonal table with floor plan. That's another boardroom, they had five people that they wanted to sit there. I don't remember the company. I wish we had put information on these. [As stated elsewhere, info about date and customer was deliberately left so plans could be recycled if expedient].

Web album 2_ **N&JPH2** Unnumbered sketches etc

12 slides

<http://www.biografix.co.uk/nandj.org.uk/N&JPH2/album/index.html>

- Unnumbered drawing (pic P1040601): showing wall panelling. This was not my drawing and dates from before my time but I thought it so well done that, despite its condition, I kept it. There is no indication of where it was intended for. It might have been drawn by my immediate predecessor, or perhaps an earlier one. It must have been a little while before I arrived that he retired, but I don't think it was directly before me. I know he lived at Monk's Risborough.
- Sheet 1 of 2 (pics P1040618 to P1040621). 'Suggested Designs for Reception Areas' - the first large sheet of various colour illustrations of ideas for Ford's of Dagenham (ref Sheet 2 commented on at 18:10 of the first recording, see below).
- Sheet 2 of 2 (pics P1040603 to P1040611): Suggested designs for Fords of Dagenham. We were asked to quote for all the offices, reception areas and the boardroom and these two sheets were my first suggestions to see if this was the sort of thing they wanted. This enquiry must have been in the late 50s or early 60s. I left in 1961. I cannot remember if we got the contract or not. I had not visited Fords when I did these initial sketches although I did go to measure up rooms etc., some time afterwards. I don't recall doing any more work on the project before I left. There were many offices etc., and a lot of decisions to be made. I do not know whether we eventually made all, some or none of it. N & J were known for traditional furniture and did little modern furniture before I joined them. That was one of the reasons Harry Janes took me on despite my being a complete novice. It wasn't a good time for firms like Nicholls and Janes. Modern furniture was coming in and companies wanted to look up to date and desks and boardroom tables with cabriole legs did not giving the image they wanted. You will see from photographs in the boxes here that we did employ established designers like Robert Heritage with mixed

success.

Unnumbered sketch on card (pic P1040622) Suggestions for various alternative pieces for an interior. I do not remember the project this relates to. It is not for Fords of Dagenham. The stone fireplace suggests a domestic interior. This may have been on card just because the card was just there, but perhaps they wanted to display it.

Unnumbered print (pic P1040624): Wycombe swan with "Industria Ditat" motto I believe that this was carved for Wycombe Cricket Club and I think for the gates. ["Industria ditat" means "industry enriches" and was the Wycombe motto].

Unnumbered (pics P1040628 and P1040629): Three plans for boardroom tables seating for 30. A smaller table to seat 8 including a chairman.

Unnumbered colour wash drawing (pic P1040642) of carving shown full-size and on a scrap of detail paper. This was the sort of thing I would have done for the carver (but not coloured) – this may have been done to show a customer. A tracing would be transferred onto the wood then fret sawed out for the carver. The leaf design on the knee of the cabriole leg is called an acanthus leaf.

Our chief carver was John Hudson. There were a number of generations of Hudsons working at N&J, mostly as polishers (I remember them as all having black hair that looked as if it had been lacquered and probably was). It was said that it was difficult to get a job in the factory unless the Hudsons approved.

Unnumbered drawing (pics P1040646 and P1040647): the two pics show two halves of the same drawing. Modern chair designs including revolving and arm and small chairs.

Unnumbered exploded drawing (pic P1040654) of a large table showing the relative arrangement of the parts for Maple & Co, London. This would be intended to aid reassembly after being disassembled for transporting and accessing the customers building. Maples would have been the retail shop.

Unnumbered (pic P1040670): a very fine interior presentation in gouache (?) depicting the interior of a room in the 'Villa A Loncin by Albert Henet'. The work of somebody at Waring and Gillow [London W1] This dated from before my time, probably the 1930s. N & J may have made it. I saved the painting from the bin because I admired it a great deal and wished I had the time and the ability to do something as well.

That completes the description of the drawings.

Web album 3_N&JPH3 Samples of contents of four boxes of photographs etc

<http://www.biografix.co.uk/nandj.org.uk/N&JPH3/album/index.html>

9 slides

The following notes and description of photographs and catalogues looked at briefly on April 25th 2017 were based on a very small sample of the work in the four boxes of photographs, and hopefully this will be incorporated into a fuller account at a later date.

Photographs and catalogues

P1040673: 4 boxes of photographs, and pile of catalogues (three boxes labelled N&J and fourth labelled W&N in error, for White & Newton, and relabelled N&J by PH, see below).

P1040674: Nicholls & Janes business card, "established 1868" and St Mary's Street crossed out, so presumably spanning the time of move from St Mary's St to Queen's Road.

P1040675 Catalogue cover, Reproductions & Modern, Chairs and Furniture, May 1960. There are a number of fine drawings by my predecessor and not so fine ones of mine. Many of the photographs of 'Modern' office and boardroom furniture are not my designs. Some I shared in, some pre-dated me. The 4141 boat-shaped table & chairs is mine.

P1040676: Catalogue, inside page, date of price list date May 1960 and prices

P1040677: a page of the catalogue showing a photograph titled 'Hepplewhite/Regency dining room or director's boardroom in mahogany finish. This description needs explanation. The design is derived from the 2nd half of the 18th century but not specifically Hepplewhite or Regency. The term 'mahogany finish' rather than 'mahogany' was made necessary because the table and cabinet pieces were not solid mahogany but used veneers on man-made board. (as would have been the case in the 18th Cent., where curl veneers and cross-banding were used). The sideboard and side table have serpentine fronts. This was the 4115 design produced during my time.

P1040678: Catalogue, inside page, price list October 1957.

P1040679: S7802 and S7803, two small tables that appear to be alternative designs for end tables that would have joined together with perhaps the option of a leaf. The tables have pedestal supports with acanthus leaf carving on the knees and claw and ball feet. The drawing was by my predecessor.

Small folder of drawings by PH predecessor. I think these are brilliant. Beautifully done. It is all hand drawn by pen in an art nouveau style. The sketch number S9059 [no photo] may be a clue to the date this was drawn. Unless the sequence of sketch numbers was broken it would appear to be not long before my time. (The war may have been an interlude).

P1040680 print of ink drawing showing three tables, two chairs and a stool. These are an oak design.

P1040681: a drawing of S7430, wardrobe, and S7431 4ft 6in bed. Delicately drawn in pencil with mahogany curl veneers and cross banding separated by carved beading. By my predecessor.

P1040682: S1240, colour wash, two divans with sycamore headboards and bedside table etc..

This one of a range of sycamore pieces. Sycamore is one of our whitest woods with a silky figured grain. Unfortunately, if sycamore is exposed to sunlight for any length of time it will go a less pleasant yellow. This can be prevented to a degree with certain treatments. One such treatment produces a silver grey colour and called weathered sycamore. This drawing was my work.

P1040683 [not shown] an open box of photographs. Some of the photographs are very old. If they were sent in answer to an enquiry, Mr Harry would add the sentence in his covering letter: 'Please excuse some of these photographs, they were taken before the advent of panchromatic plates'. I had a darkroom and it was my responsibility to maintain the stock of photographs. The box in the photograph has W&N on it which is crossed out. This refers to White and Newton, a company I subsequently worked for. The box had been used to house W&N photographs.

P1040684: a photograph of No2014 Masonic chair. We had made several Masonic pieces. Before my time at N&J, the company had made a large number of elaborately carved pieces for King Farouk (1920-1965, tenth ruler of Egypt). I think that there are photographs of this furniture amongst the collection. I believe the pieces were elaborately carved and finished in bleached walnut.

P1040685: a sample of the information on the back of each photograph sent out and including the two company stamps. These were not my designs but I did have made a large size cut-out of the hand and plane some 3ft tall. This stood facing the railway behind the factory in Queens Road.

[There is a photo taken by Roger Pierce, of this on the N&J website]. It was not terribly well drawn but it's got the right number of fingers... I remember counting! (This was the result of an 'in' and slightly sick joke because the inclusion of a plane indicated a cabinet maker. If it had been a wood machinist's hand then there would likely to be fewer fingers. They used to say that you could estimate the length of service of a machinist by the number of fingers missing).

P1040686: photograph of a bureau designed c1960. This was part of a range of furniture made for Robert Henderson in blackbean with a light wood (I believe cherry) beading and to their design.

P1040687: photograph, bureau design c1960. As above.

P1040688: photograph, two carved columns carved by the Italian carver who carved the factory gates at St Mary's Street. These most elaborately carved gates were reputedly carved by an Italian who also carved the two columns shown here. I do not recall his name but I believe that he taught John Hudson. I do not know what happened to the gates when we moved to Queens Road. Photographs of St Mary's Street after the company moved but before the old factory was demolished show that the gates had been removed. They were not re-erected at Queens Road.

RJ 5th June 2017

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