

## SHORT COURSE DETAILS

### S5D07663 LADDERBACK CHAIR MAKING

Tutor: PHIL SHIPLEY

Dates: 5 DAYS SUNDAY 25 FEBRUARY – FRIDAY 2 MARCH

#### ABOUT YOUR COURSE:

The aim of this course is to produce a complete quality ladderback chair by the end of the week. You will be introduced to steam bending techniques with seasoned air-dried hardwood and an insight into the interesting world of innovative jig-making for chairmaking.

Ladderback chairs are constructed with turned legs and rails with steam bent slats (horizontal back supports) and back legs. Some authors refer to this type of construction as 'post and rung'.

The chairs will be made in Ash, which is used mainly because it bends well after a good soaking in steam. The legs and rails will be turned using tools based on the old laddermakers' rounders – now better known as Rotary Planes. These tools produce round 'sticks' of different diameters and are easy to use. A 'Trapping Plane' will be used to produce any tapers required. These tools are used with the aid of a 'turning head' which slowly rotates the timber. All timber, apart from the arms, is prepared by the tutor prior to the course.

Apart from the chair making design, construction, styles and proportions, the tutor will also discuss different finishes for hardwood furniture, selection of timber, suitable adhesives, hand tool techniques and jig design/construction. The important first evening session will include a brief look at the many styles of ladderback chairs available including the 'shaker style'. You will be encouraged to have a significant input into your own chair design.

The chairs are constructed with a combination of hand tools and machinery. Instruction will be given at every stage. If you have skills in furniture making/carpentry you will enjoy the challenge that this type of chair presents especially when fitting slats, assembling the back frame, shaping the arms and drilling into rounded timber at an angle. For many advanced students it is an interesting introduction to simple steam bending in furniture making and they are often quite fascinated when they see the equipment and jigs we use! Absolute beginners are usually delighted by the quality of work produced with the aid of the rotary planes.

The first full day of the course will concentrate on preparation of the necessary parts for steam bending as we will ideally leave these parts in the clamps, after steaming, for as long as possible. Whilst the legs and slats are in the clamps, we will work on the front frame and shaping all the other necessary pieces of timber. By Wednesday we will concentrate on cutting the slat mortices and shaping the slats prior to assembly. Thursday is usually when the back frame is finally assembled and when the holes are drilled at the correct angle to connect to the wider front frame. The final woodworking stage is to join the back frame to the front and the final fitting of the arms. If you manage to complete your chair on Thursday evening, you can add the seating on the final day. You can opt for a seagrass, twisted paper fibre rush or 'shaker tape' seat. (Alternatively you may like to consider one of the rush seating weekends with Mary Butcher held at the college to complete this task.) Chair caning is not a suitable option for these chairs.

You will leave with a covetable item of furniture and the knowledge required to set up your own workshop to make similar chairs.

### LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

A subject focused course that is delivered to suit any level of experience from beginner to advanced practitioner. A structured start is followed by guided independent practise.

### ABOUT YOUR TUTOR:

Phil Shipley is a designer and maker of a variety of country chair styles. He has exhibited at Westonbirt's 'Festival of the Tree', and is an experienced tutor in chair making for all abilities.

### TIMETABLE:

#### Arrival day: Sunday 25 February

From 4.00pm	Arrival for residential students
6.45pm	Non-residential students please arrive by 6.45pm for welcome chat and dinner
7.00pm	Dinner
8.00pm – 9.00pm	First teaching session – <b>attendance is an essential part of the course.</b>

#### Other days: Monday 26 February to Thursday 1 March

9.15am	Morning classes start
10.30am	Coffee
11.00am	Morning classes continue
12.45pm	Lunch
2.00pm	Afternoon classes
3.30pm	Tea
4.00pm	Afternoon classes continue
5.00pm	Classes finish
From 6.30pm	Dinner
8.00pm	Evening working: workshops are available until 10pm for those wishing to work on providing this has been discussed with the tutor. These sessions are untutored.

#### Departure day: Friday 2 March

(Residential students to vacate rooms by 10am)

9.15am	Morning classes start
10.30am	Coffee
11.00am	Morning classes continue
12.45pm	Lunch
2.00pm	Afternoon classes
3.00pm	Classes finish
3.30pm	Tea then departure

### REQUIRED PREPARATION:

If you prefer you may bring some of your own items of equipment. If bringing your own tools, please mark with your name.

Please also contact the tutor in advance to specify your preferred seating material.

Email: [pwshipley@hotmail.com](mailto:pwshipley@hotmail.com).

### MATERIALS FOR YOUR COURSE:

We have a generously stocked craft shop, which opens daily from 8.30am–2pm.

For any materials you need to purchase from the shop, we suggest you do so during the first morning of your course, after having discussed with your tutor.

### Available from the tutor – additional charge:

The tutor will supply all of the timber for the course. The cost of around £70 for this timber should be paid to the **tutor** before the end of the course, by cash or cheque. For seating material, the twisted recycled paper rush will cost approximately £25, Seagrass £20 and the Shaker Tape, if available approximately £50.

**Available from the Shop:**

Abrasive papers

Note and sketchbooks

**Please bring any of the above, if you have them, and in addition:**

Tape Measure (we tend to use imperial measurements)

Pen, pencil and rubber

Paper (for making notes and sketches)

Sturdy covered footwear – essential in the workshop

Overall

**HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

The tutor instructs students in health and safety issues relevant to this course. Please note that tutor supervision is required at all times when students work in this workshop. All Personal Protection Equipment, apart from footwear, is provided by the College.

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