

# NICK THWAITES FURNITURE DESIGNER MAKER

November 2019

## **New website**

After 12 years, the website that I set up when I started out - originally with photos of just four pieces - was acquiring a vintage look. I have developed a [new one](#) and I'd love to hear what you think of it.

## **New work**

The new website includes some previously unshown work: here is a preview.

### ***Elm cabinet***

Loyal readers may remember a newsletter from 2009 in which I described the felling, extraction and planking of an elm tree near Axminster and looked forward to its eventual rebirth as a piece of furniture. This is what it looks like now, made for the hall of an Arts & Crafts house in Budleigh Salterton.



I worked out a new design for the handles, one that could be cut in half to span two doors, and made them in ancient bog oak. You can see them in close-up on the [website](#).

### ***Ash and cherry tables***

I've also been working with some lovely ripple ash boards. Notwithstanding that it's our third most common broadleaf

tree, a lot of ash is imported from America (why?!) as a cheap commodity: plain, rather coarse, and often with a dizzying annual ring pattern. These boards came from Nic Buttery in Dorset, who has supplied me with much arboreal treasure over the years, and I had first pick from a large butt which showed the darker centre that ashes often develop with age. The best of them had the glorious rippled figure shown here.



I combined it with some English cherry - another favourite - jointed to form a curved and crenellated frame for the ash. Frame and top were then joined with some very precisely turned 9.9mm diameter bog oak cylinders.

Tragically, the spread of Chalara Ash Dieback - now found throughout the UK - means that huge numbers of ash trees will have to be felled in the coming years, though whether the timber is usable remains to be seen as the fungal infection stains the sap-carrying vessels that run up the outer layers of the trunk.

This table and two companion side tables were made for a fine, light-filled room in a house on the edge of Dartmoor. I was also asked to make an oak display case to fit into a large alcove in the same room. That and other new work can be seen on the website.

### ***A console table for a hall***

This hall table, the last of several tables and desks I made for a house in a hidden South Hams valley, demonstrates how small details can lift almost standard components.



In essence, this is a console table with a curved front and four legs. Joining the legs in pairs and extending them at the top to create flying supports for the top makes them into a framework, which is given extra gravity by flaring legs and supports, rounding their outer edges, and linking the front and rear pairs with a bridled rail. Line and proportion are everything here. Then the pale oak is relieved by sinuous handles in contrasting bog oak with sycamore plugs.

***And finally...***

If you have visited George Park in the last 10 years, you will raise a cheer that the kitchen - in planning for most of that time and under construction in the workshop for longer than I care to remember, is now complete, installed, and being enjoyed by all. If you are passing please come and admire it over a cup of tea.

With best wishes

