

# APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE LONDON JOINERS' COMPANY, 1640–1720

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Of the several livery companies responsible for overseeing the production of furniture in early modern London, the Upholsterers' and Joiners' Companies were the most important. The majority of records of the Upholsterers' Company survive only from 1697, but those of the Joiners' Company, housed in the London Guildhall Library, are remarkably complete from the 1640s onward. Current research suggests that unlike some London Companies, whose members' relationship with their company's trade was often nominal, the Joiners' Company was composed largely of working joiners, many or most of whom made furniture.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this article is to analyse the information contained in the Joiners' apprenticeship bindings and freedoms to discover what sort of people became furniture-makers in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In the process, it is hoped to shed light on the growth and development of the Company, its status relative to other Companies, and its role in the economic life of London.

There were more than 13,000 apprentices bound to members of the Joiners' Company between 1640 and 1720. The apprenticeship bindings survive in their entirety and form the core data for this study.<sup>2</sup> The bindings record the date of commencement of the apprenticeship, the name of the apprentice, his father's name, occupation, and place of residence, whether he was still alive, the name of the joiner who would be serving as the boy's master, the length of servitude, and from 1709 onwards, the amount of the premium payment paid by the apprentice's family to the master (Figure 1). An apprenticeship generally consisted of a seven-year period of service in which the apprentice learned the trade of a joiner along with introductions to his master's family and probably to his network of tradesmen and clientele. Apprenticeship contracts often specified that there should be a period of a few months' trial before the formal binding and bonds were signed by an apprentice's guardian or parent as a security to ensure that the boy was trustworthy, honest, and well behaved. The apprentice promised to keep his master's secrets, to remain celibate, and to abstain from unlawful games and to stay out of taverns and playhouses.<sup>3</sup> The standard contract of the period indicated that a master would act in the role of guardian: 'The said master shall teach and instruct... and find his said apprentice meat, drink, apparel, lodging and all other necessities, according to the custom of the City of London.'<sup>4</sup>

A Company Ordinance of 1614 stipulated that soon after taking a new apprentice, the master had to present him to the Master and Wardens of the Joiners' Company at the Company hall: 'One month next after they retaine or take an apprentice shall take [him]... with his indenture of apprenticeship to the master and wardens of the said Company of Joyners of London to the intent they may understand under what forme the same apprentice are bound.'<sup>5</sup> At the end of an apprenticeship – or soon thereafter – the master and apprentice were expected to return to the Company hall so that the apprentice could receive his freedom on payment of a fee of 12s. 6d (Figure 2).<sup>6</sup> This was an important source

Edward Seabrook son of John Seabrook Citizen &  
Merchant Taylor of London In Consid & 40. pnts to John ...  
Bachelor Citizen & Joyner of London for 7. yres Dat as above.

Thomas Smith son of Roger Smith Citizen & Wine-  
= Cooper of London In Consid & 5. pnts to John Barratt ...  
Citizen & Joyner of London for 7. yres Dat as above.

George Newman son of Robert Newman of Hamb-  
= ington in the County of Gloster Farmer In Consid & 12. ...  
pnts to Robert Randall Citizen & Joyner of London ...  
for 7. yres Dat as above.

1. A section of a folio in the Joiners' Company Apprentice Binding (1710-1724),  
dated the 5th July 1720.

Guildhall Library, MSS 8052/4, fol. 116. Reproduced by kind permission of  
The Worshipful Company of Joiners and Ceilers of the City of London.

Thomas Wilson app Thomas Withley Citizen & Joyner  
of London for 7. yres & Ind Dat. 16. Novemb. 1708. Turned  
over to Anthony Bonnell Citizen & Master of Qu<sup>e</sup> to learn  
the art of a Joyner was admitted accordingly,

Henry Withroft app Thomas Morris Citizen and  
Joyner of Qu<sup>e</sup> for 7. yres & Ind Dat. 6<sup>th</sup> November. 1711 -  
was admitted accordingly,

Richard Oakman app Thomas Morris Citizen &  
waxhandler of Qu<sup>e</sup> for 7. yres & Ind Dat. 27<sup>th</sup> May. 1707

2. A section of a folio in the Joiners' Company Register of Freedom Admissions (1719-1731),  
dated the 3rd of November 1719.

Guildhall Library, MSS 8051/3, fol. 60. Reproduced by kind permission of  
The Worshipful Company of Joiners and Ceilers of the City of London.

of revenue for the company and was rigorously enforced. Those who failed to take up their freedom were subject to a fine of ten pounds.<sup>7</sup> However, before receiving the freedom the apprentice had to provide evidence of his abilities and this was demonstrated by the presentation of a 'proof' or masterpiece, as required by the Company Ordinance of 1614:

The apprentice shall make with their owne handes some handsome peece of worke for his prooffe peece whereby it may be knowne whether he be a good and sufficient workman or no... and whosoever reteyneth any servant before the makinge of his said prooffe peece in forme aforesaid... shall forfeyth to the master wardens and commonality... for every moneth so offendinge twenty six shillings and eight pence and shall have his shop windows shutt upp until such tyme as he hath made his proof peece [and] the said money to be payd.<sup>9</sup>

If the proof piece was judged satisfactory by the Master and Wardens of the company, he then became known as a master joiner. Although of a later date than this study, the chest of drawers in figure 3 may well be an example of such a proof piece. It is signed by Thomas Atkinson and dated 1748. The Joiners' Company apprentice bindings record that a Thomas Atkinson was apprenticed to John Belchier in June 1741 and made free of the Company in July 1748.<sup>10</sup> The timing makes it very tempting to suggest that this was Atkinson's proof piece, a conjecture which it is sadly impossible to substantiate.



3. Walnut chest of drawers. The underside of a drawer is dated 1748 and signed 'Thomas Atkinson'. This was possibly made as a proof piece by Atkinson, who was an apprentice of John Belchier and made free of the Company in 1748. Atkinson succeeded to Belchier's workshop at *The Sun* in St. Paul's Churchyard.

*Apter-Fredricks Ltd.*

Having acquired his freedom the former apprentice had then to serve a mandatory two years as a journeyman.<sup>8</sup> Thereafter, two courses were available to him; he could continue as a journeyman, or if he had the necessary means and connections, he could establish his own business.

The number of apprentices annually indentured to the company grew rapidly throughout the period. Significantly, apprenticeships increased at a faster rate than the London population as a whole. In the second half of the seventeenth century London's population increased by approximately 44 per cent, from about 400,000 inhabitants residing within and without the city walls in 1650 to about 575,000 by 1700.<sup>11</sup> In comparison, the numbers of apprentices indentured to the Joiners' Company grew two and a half times faster, with an increase of 110 per cent over the same period (Table 1).<sup>12</sup> The rate of increase also accelerated towards the end of the period; 2198 apprentices were taken between the years 1644 and 1664 and 4474 between 1700 and 1720.

Table 1: apprenticeships in the Joiners' Company, 1644–1720

Year Range	Number of apprentices bound over seven year periods	Average per year
1644–1650	517	74
1651–1657	815	116
1658–1664	866	124
1665–1671	1567	224
1672–1678	920	131
1679–1685	1288	184
1686–1692	1269	181
1693–1699	1219	174
1700–1706	1606	229
1707–1713	1256	179
1714–1720	1612	230

Source: Guildhall Library, MSS 8082/1–4, Joiners' Company Apprentice Bindings

One of the ways the Company was able to increase its membership so rapidly and consequently increase revenue was by 'turning over' apprentices. This was initially devised as a system of enforcing Company supervision of practising joiners and furniture makers who were members of other companies. In 1650 the Company attempted to impose a fine of £1 3s. 6d. on freemen of other companies who were 'using the trade of a joyner'.<sup>13</sup> The attempt was only partially successful, and over the following years several petitions were sent to the Lord Mayor requesting an Act of Common Council giving the Joiners the right to enforce their oversight. This was finally obtained in June 1658; the Act declared that 'Joyners free of other Companies to be subject to the search and ordinances of the Joiners and be bound and made free by the Joiners' Company and presented to the Chamberlain. Penalty in default of such binding is £20. Penalty to be prosecuted in the Court of His Highness, the Lord Protector.'<sup>14</sup> As well as greatly increasing the effectiveness of the Company's oversight of the trade, the Act resulted in the system of 'turning over', whereby joiners free of other Companies had first to have their apprentices bound to a member of the Joiners' Company who then 'turned over' the apprentice to his real master. From 1658

the apprenticeship bindings confirm that the Act was in effect, for every entry associated with turning over read as follows: 'Apprentice bound to the master and wardens and turned over to other men free of other companies using the joiners trade according to the late act of Common Counsel bearing the date 9<sup>th</sup> June 1658.'<sup>15</sup>

Between 1659 and 1718, an average of 10 per cent of all apprentices to the Company were turned over. Their masters represented almost all the London Companies; Thomas Farmbrow (Bakers' Company) was a cane chair maker; eight apprentices were turned over to him between 1663 and 1694. Henry Harlow (Merchant Taylors' Company) was a joiner who is recorded working at Ham House in the early 1670s;<sup>16</sup> he took three apprentices between 1660 and 1678. Jacob Foulke (Haberdashers' Company) was a cabinet maker working in Aldersgate Within. He took on two apprentices in 1659 and 1661 respectively.

Against this must be set those who did not become freemen. Table 2 shows the numbers and percentages of apprentices taking up the freedom over two sample periods. In the earlier period the average of take-up of freedoms was 47 per cent, and in the later period 46 per cent. These figures compare favourably with rates of 41 per cent for London Companies generally and even more so with provincial cities like Norwich, where the figure was only 25 per cent.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 2: take-up of freedoms in the Joiners' Company, 1685-94 and 1710-21**

Indenture Date	Number of Apprentices	Date of freedom	Number of freedom	Percentage taking Freedom
1678	136	1685	42	31
1679	117	1686	109	93
1680	160	1687	97	61
1681	203	1688	78	38
1682	257	1689	64	25
1683	189	1690	109	58
1684	222	1691	88	40
1685	140	1692	84	60
1686	217	1693	71	33
1687	225	1694	70	31
1703	251	1710	51	20
1704	227	1711	82	36
1705	228	1712	136	60
1706	261	1713	106	41
1707	237	1714	102	43
1708	236	1715	77	33
1709	165	1716	83	50
1710	134	1717	81	60
1711	137	1718	95	69
1712	151	1719	79	52
1713	196	1720	85	43
1714	200	1721	85	42

Source: Guildhall Library, MSS 8051/2 & 3, Joiners' Company Freedom Admissions

What became of the apprentices that failed to take up the freedom? Research into the social and economic patterns of apprentices in sixteenth century London has concluded that there is no evidence of large numbers of 'masterless men roaming the streets of Tudor London' and therefore those who failed to take the freedom of the City must have returned home.<sup>18</sup> This may have been the case but because Company records do not document what became of this group and as no other evidence has yet been uncovered, the answer is that we simply do not know. Therefore any analysis remains speculative. London mortality only accounted for about 10 per cent of all apprentices<sup>19</sup> and 'legal' discharges, whereby apprentices were officially released from their indentures by permission of the Company were rare. Peter Earle has suggested that life as an apprentice was not always ideal and may have been too difficult for some young men. There were cases of masters who abused their apprentices and they 'took the first opportunity to run away'.<sup>20</sup> Of those who did complete most or all of their training, some may have worked 'illegally' because despite the Joiners' Company's relative success at preventing 'foreigners' (those who were not members of a London Company) from working within their jurisdiction, by the turn of the eighteenth century there were increasing opportunities for skilled labourers to find work outside of the Companies' control. Some provincial apprentices would have come to London with the single intention of gaining top notch training so that they could return home to their native towns and villages either to join their family's business or to set up as independent tradesmen. Whatever the reasons, the failure of more than fifty per cent of its apprentices to take up the freedom naturally acted as a brake on the growth of the Company overall, but the numbers were presumably regulated by supply and demand. In other words, good employment opportunities were probably only available for a little under fifty per cent of those apprentices who completed their training. Some confirmation of this comes from the figures in Table 2, because there is a slight correlation between the number of apprenticeships and the number of freedoms taken up. When the apprenticeships were low, as in 1679, 1680, 1685, 1705, 1710 and 1711, the freedom take-up rate was 60 per cent or higher.

The growth in the overall membership between 1699 and 1724 is revealed in the Company's response to a request made by the Lord Mayor and Court of Assistants to report the 'exact number of freemen and liverymen as they stood in the companies bookes in the yeare 1699 and this present yeare 1724'.<sup>21</sup> The company declared 3289 members in 1699 and 5357 members in 1724, representing a 61 per cent rise. Of these, 4649 were journeymen and 2521 'householders' or masters. Among the latter 190 were liverymen in 1699 and 286 in 1724.<sup>22</sup> This makes a useful comparison with the Upholsterers' Company, which declared 121 and 144 liverymen respectively. If the number of liverymen was proportionate to the membership then the Joiners' Company was both larger and faster growing than the Upholsterers'.<sup>23</sup> A further indication of the size of the Joiners' Company is the number of subscribers to the Oath of Association of 1696. Subscribers were 'substantial persons and office holders', which excluded most of the population, but the figures declared for the London Companies nevertheless indicate the relative sizes of their membership.<sup>24</sup> With 441 subscribers the Joiners' Company had by far the largest number of any of the furniture-making Companies. The next most numerous was the Turners' (272), followed by the Upholsterers' (148) and the Carpenters' (80). Because subscription to the oath was property/wealth related, the number of subscribers was not directly proportionate to total membership (the Carpenters', for instance, seem under-represented), but by the

same token it suggests that the Joiners' had a high proportion of 'substantial persons' among its members.

The period 1640–1680 is of particular interest to furniture historians because it has long been associated with dramatic stylistic and technical changes in furniture making. At the same time, the first half of this period was a time of political and social upheaval which cannot, one assumes, have been conducive to economic growth or prosperity. It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that the uptake of apprenticeships in the Joiners' Company seems to have remained healthy throughout the Civil War and Interregnum, but against this it must be admitted that no comparative figures survive for the period before 1645.

The rapid rise in apprenticeships after 1660 is nevertheless notable. The number of apprentices taken on in the fifteen years after 1660 is 78 per cent greater than in the fifteen years prior. Some 10 per cent of this increase was due to apprentices being 'turned over' through the Company for the first time, but the rest was genuine growth. The figures appear to support the widespread assumption among furniture historians that the Restoration marked a significant point of departure for English furniture making. The bare numbers cannot tell us the reasons for this growth, but the single event which had the greatest impact on Joiners' Company apprenticeships was undoubtedly the Great Fire of September 1666, in the course of which 430 acres of buildings were burnt out. Amongst other losses, over 13,200 houses, 87 parish churches, and 44 Livery Company halls were destroyed, leaving tens of thousands homeless.<sup>25</sup> So great was the need for skilled labour in the aftermath that the Rebuilding Act of 1667 required the Livery Companies to lift their restrictions against the employment of 'foreign' workmen.<sup>26</sup> It appears that the Joiners' Company put in place its own measures to accommodate the extraordinary demand, for the number of apprentices taken on by its members rose dramatically. In 1666, 120 apprentices were bound to the Company. Immediately thereafter the numbers increased annually to a peak of 369 in 1669. Even more remarkable were the numbers taken on by some prominent individuals; between 1667 and 1671 just five members took on 214 apprentices between them.<sup>27</sup> In theory, Company Ordinances stipulated that each master was only allowed two apprentices at any one time, although in practise it was possible to take on one or two extra by special permission and payment of a fee, but the numbers recorded for these five men were exceptional.<sup>28</sup> None of these apprentices were 'turned over' to freemen of other city companies, but it is hard to imagine that these five joiners employed such a large number of apprentices for themselves. One clue is given in the fact that one of the men was Thomas Kenward, otherwise Master Joiner to the Office of Works (1660–82).<sup>29</sup> He was certainly in position to find employment for large numbers of men after the Great Fire, taking on 53 apprentices in 1668–9. The four other Joiners taking on exceptionally large numbers of apprentices were all men prominent in the Company: Oliver Atkinson (Master in 1672), 37 apprentices in 1670; William Harley (Warden in 1667), 35 apprentices between 1667–70; John Holmes (Liveryman), 35 apprentices between 1667–71.<sup>30</sup> Robert Gerrard (Warden 1661) was a carver working in Old Bailey, who bound 54 apprentices, of which 45 were turned over.

Clearly, the exceptional circumstances after the Great Fire evoked an exceptional response from the Company. The rebuilding certainly demanded large numbers of joiners for fitting out the new houses rising from the ashes of the old, but furniture will also have been required. While Thomas Kenward's apprentices may well have been employed

principally on architectural joinery, others were almost certainly making furniture. Between 1667 and 1673 Gerrit Jensen took on 7 apprentices, or five more than his official allowance. Thomas Pistor also took on 7 apprentices between 1664 and 1675, of whom one was turned over, and Edward Traherne took on 7 apprentices between 1662 and 1675. All three men were prominent cabinet makers.

In the fifteen years after 1675 the number of new apprenticeships actually fell slightly, which reinforces the impression that the immediate post-Restoration years were exceptional. From 1690 onwards apprenticeships rose again, showing a steady increase until the end of this study. In terms of apprentices, the Joiners' Company had more than doubled in size between 1645 and 1720.

Table 3: geographic origins of the Joiners' Company apprentices, 1645–1720

Geographic	1645–1663 No %		1664–1682 No %		1683–1701 No %		1702–1720 No %	
London: City (1) & metropolitan area (2)	517	26	773	23	1417	42	2046	51
Southeast	539	27	913	27	809	24	843	21
Midlands	428	21	684	20	450	13	367	9
Southwest	162	8	412	12	293	8	219	5
East Anglia	158	8	290	9	223	6	335	8
Northeast	41	2	69	2	59	2	59	1
Northwest	96	5	112	3	88	2	96	2
Wales	53	3	101	3	60	2	66	2
Scotland	2	0.1	4	0.1	8	0.2	6	0.1
Outside British Isles (3)	0	0	3	0.08	3	0.08	3	0.07
Subtotal outside of London	1479	74	2588	77	1993	58	1994	49
Total	1996	100	3361	100	3410	100	4040	100
Mean number of apprentices per year	105		177		179		213	

Source: Guildhall Library, MSS 8052/1–4, Joiners' Company Apprentice Bindings

Notes:

1. For components of the jurisdiction of the City of London, see D. V. Glass (ed.), *London Inhabitants Within the Walls*, 1695, London Record Society, 2, (1966), pp. xli–xlii.
2. The built-up area surrounding the city. North of the Thames: [Middlesex]; Westminster; Holborn; Clerkenwell, Wapping. South of the Thames: Southwark; Lambeth; Surrey; Greenwich; Deptford.
3. Virginia, Barbados, France and Flanders



The growing Company drew in apprentices from as far afield as Barbados and Jamaica, Virginia and Europe, but the vast majority originated within the British Isles (Table 3). The dominance of the south-east of England is not surprising considering the density of the population; 'By 1689 the four south-eastern counties of Middlesex, Surrey, Kent and Sussex contained roughly a million men, women and children, the capital itself accounting, with Southwark, for half of them.'<sup>31</sup> However, one of the most significant changes over the eighty years of this study was in the proportion of apprentices from London itself. In the period 1645–1663, London-born apprentices made up 26 per cent of the total, but by 1702–20 that proportion had nearly doubled to 51 per cent. There are several possible explanations for this, the first being the increase in London's own population, which meant that it was better able to supply its own labour needs. At the same time the growth of urban centres elsewhere increased demand for labour locally, drawing off apprentices who formerly had gone to London.<sup>32</sup> This was especially marked in the Midlands, where the proportion of apprentices entering the Joiners' Company dropped from 21 to 9 per cent between 1645 and 1720. This may well be a reflection of the rapid growth of manufacturing in the midland towns of Dudley, Stourbridge, Wolverhampton and Birmingham. By 1720, Birmingham had become an important manufacturing centre and the fourth largest provincial town in England.<sup>33</sup> In other areas of the country the phenomenon was less marked, but in all save East Anglia there was a relative decline. This data supports the findings of other studies, such as that published by Peter Earle: 'There was a tendency over time for an increasing proportion [of apprentices] to be drawn from south-eastern England as opportunities opened up elsewhere for young people to learn a trade.'<sup>34</sup> Nearly two-thirds of apprentices in Earle's sample (1660–1730) came either from London or from the eastern and south-eastern counties. In the case of the Joiners' Company, the proportion was more than three-quarters by 1720. The only period when the trend was temporarily reversed was between 1667 and 1671. As a result of the unprecedented demand for labour after the Great Fire, 82 per cent of apprentices taken on in those years came from outside London. Thereafter the trend towards a largely self-supporting industry continued unabated.

If the Joiners' Company was a large and growing Company, how did this affect its status relative to other, longer established Companies? One measure of relative status was the level of premiums paid by apprentices:

The amount of the apprenticeship premium was determined primarily by the prestige and potential profitability of any given occupation, and early modern trades and crafts fell into a distinct status hierarchy which corresponded roughly to John Stow's division of the citizens of his native London into wholesalers, retailers, and artisans, a division which also translated into a range of wealth and political influence.<sup>35</sup>

The best contemporary or near-contemporary evidence for average premiums paid in a range of trades or Companies (not necessarily the same thing) is Robert Campbell's *London Tradesman*, published in 1747. As table 4 shows, the artisan trades were generally cheaper to enter than the mercantile ones, and the two principal woodworking Companies, the Joiners' and Carpenters', were more or less on a par.

**Table 4: value of apprentice premiums, c. 1747**

Trade	Premiums (pounds)	Setting up costs
Mercers	50-200	1000-10000
Coachmakers	50-100	500-3000
Ironmongers	30-100	500-2000
Grocers	20-100	500-2000
Goldsmiths	20-50	500-2000
Upholders	20-50	100-1000
Shipwrights	10-50	500-2000
Haberdashers	10-50	100-2000
Cabinetmakers	10-20	200-2000
Joiners	10-20	100-500
Carpenters	10-20	50-500
Turners	5-20	50-500

Source: Robert Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (1747)

Note: Table includes a selection of trades and not livery companies and does not represent the entire list produced by Campbell.

Campbell's explanatory text offers some observations on why certain trades or businesses were more highly regarded than others. He described coachmakers and goldsmiths as 'most genteel and profitable', and stressed that both trades required substantial sums of money; 'Coachmakers require a great stock of ready money to set up and continue trade; they deal with none but nobility and quality; and according to their mode must trust a long time and sometimes may happen never paid.'<sup>36</sup> Mercers were involved in the wholesale and retail of expensive textiles and ornaments to 'the Fair Sex'. Their trade necessitated 'a very considerable stock; ten thousand pounds [and] a very polite Man, skilled in all the Punctilio's of City-good-breeding.'<sup>37</sup> A mercantile trade – such as the Grocers – also attracted those from affluent backgrounds. Christopher Brooks' sample of the social status of apprentices (1690-1693) found that of the Grocers' apprentices, 28 per cent originated from the gentry. On the other hand, fewer than 10 per cent of apprentices in the Joiners' and Carpenters' Companies originated from the gentry and over 50 per cent from trade-related backgrounds (Table 6).<sup>38</sup>

Although the Joiners' and Carpenters' apprenticeship premiums were roughly equal (according to Campbell), suggesting a roughly equivalent socio-economic status, were the two Companies of equal standing among the London Companies? Both were trades participating in the construction of domestic and business premises, and in that respect their work overlapped. Campbell warned that 'there are few joiners but pretend to be carpenters, so *vice versa*; but a gentleman who wants to build with security as well as beauty would do

well not to trust entirely to their skill.’<sup>39</sup> But as far as furniture production goes the ascendancy of the Joiners’ had been established as far back as 1632, and despite further disputes between the two Companies over the years, it seems never seriously to have been threatened thereafter.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, from the second half of the seventeenth century the Joiners’ were undoubtedly the larger Company, taking on 657 apprentices to the Carpenters’ 230 over the period 1690–1693.<sup>41</sup> This might suggest an apprenticeship in the Joiners’ Company – and in many cases a subsequent career in the furniture trade – was a more attractive option. Campbell tells us that cabinet-making was a ‘very profitable trade; especially if he works for and serves the quality himself.’<sup>42</sup> But the greater number of Joiners’ apprentices was also a consequence of sheer numbers, for as the Company grew in membership the number of apprentices naturally increased.

Some corroboration of Campbell’s figures comes from the Joiners’ Company itself (Table 5). Their apprenticeship premiums were not recorded until 1709, when a stamp duty was levied on the master. The rate was 6d. in the pound for premiums under £50, and 12d. in the pound for premiums over £50.<sup>43</sup> It is a moot question how accurate the records are and how far tax avoidance may have distorted the declared amount, but the penalty for failure to comply was severe and included forfeiture of double the value of the premium, half of which was to go to the Crown and half to the informer who reported the crime. There was also a strong incentive for the apprentice to ensure that his master paid the tax, for unstamped apprenticeship indentures were void from 1709 and therefore deprived the apprentice of legal rights associated with formal apprenticeship.<sup>44</sup> Therefore it is probable that in the majority of cases the value of the premium was recorded accurately. As Table 5 shows, the majority of premiums (69%) fell within the range £6–40, with the largest single group averaging between £10 and £20. This agrees remarkably well with Campbell. Among the masters charging between £10 and £20 were some familiar names. John Coxed charged £12, as did William Palleday.<sup>45</sup> Furniture survives from both workshops, and is typical of the good but unspectacular furniture sold by many shops in the St Paul’s Churchyard area.

Table 5: Joiners’ Company premium payments, 1710–1720

Premiums (pounds)	Number of Apprentices	Percentage
1–5	271	30
6–9	155	17
10–20	442	48
21–40	36	4
41–100	9	1
101–600	2	0.2
Total	915	100

Source: Guildhall Library, MS 8052/4, Joiners’ Company Apprentice Bindings.

Although the largest single group of premiums fell between £10 and £20 there was a wide variation in actual premiums both below and above that figure.

Between 1709 and 1720, 92 masters charged £20 or more. Some of these were known furniture makers, among them John Hopson (£21 10s.), George Nix (£30), John Belchier (£40) and Henry Williams (£21, £37 10s, £40).<sup>46</sup> The latter case shows that premiums were not fixed but adjustable, perhaps to suit the pocket of the aspiring parent or as a result of his having a personal relationship with the potential master, or to reflect the aptitude or potential of the apprentice.

Among the apprentices paying these higher premiums were also some familiar names. John Phillips, apprenticed in 1712 to the otherwise unknown James Hawford for £20, later became master of *The Cabinet* in St Paul's Churchyard.<sup>47</sup> Henry Flitcroft, apprenticed in 1711, also paid £20 to Thomas Morrice.<sup>48</sup> His future career as a draughtsman and architect is well documented, and it suggests that Morrice was not a furniture maker but perhaps an architectural joiner. But who were the masters receiving £50, £60 or £80? None of the names are known to us as furniture makers, nor as architectural joiners. Either they were not practising joiner/furniture makers or there were a great many important furniture makers and joiners in London of whom we know nothing.

And what are we to make of the enormous sum of £600, paid by James Small to William Astell in 1714? Although a member of the Joiners' Company, Astell seems primarily to have been a timber merchant, with a wharf on Thames Street nicely situated to supply the needs of his fellow Joiners around St Paul's Churchyard.<sup>49</sup> Could this money have represented a share in the business, as well as an apprenticeship?

Despite the paucity of hard evidence, it seems very probable that the amount of premium indicated the status of a particular master and the level of demand for an apprenticeship with him. Some furniture makers were naturally more successful than others, and many had lucrative businesses, especially cabinetmakers whose trade was at the top of the furniture making hierarchy. However, like other high-level trades, the setting up and running costs associated with cabinet making were substantially higher than those of a joiner (Table 4).

Cabinet makers often had an expensive stock of goods and raw materials and many subcontracted elements of their work to furniture makers with specialised skills, both requiring ample available money. Some acted as retailers to wealthy patrons, supplying them with bespoke furniture, and providing them with a broad level of service which included the installation of architectural fittings, such as windows and glass, and interior decoration such as japanned walls. Because persons of 'quality' were notoriously delinquent in paying tradesmen, an ample pocket was a prerequisite.

Table 6: socio-economic origins of Joiners' Company apprentices, 1645-1720

Father's Occupation	1645-1663		1664-1682		1683-1701		1702-1720		Range of Premiums 1710-1720	Median Premium 1710-1720
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	£	£
Gentry: Esquires & Gentlemen	134	7	212	6	197	6	201	5	1-600	24 (1)
Professionals (2)	8	0.4	26	0.7	27	0.7	24	0.5	3-30	14
Yeomanry: Yeomen,	425	21	698	21	485	14	432	11	10-38	10
Farmers & Graziers Husbandmen	319	16	449	13	272	8	222	5	1-20	8
Tradesmen in the provinces	617	31	1231	37	1097	32	1134	28	1-175	11
'Foreign' tradesmen in London	263	13	354	10	684	20	898	22	2-60	9
Citizens of London	194	10	314	9	572	17	882	22	1-100	10
Labourers & Servants	22	1	70	2	91	3	235	6	3-30	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3354</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3425</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4028</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1-600</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Gentry, Professionals &amp; Yeomanry</i>	<i>567</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>936</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>709</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>657</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>1-600</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Husbandmen, Labourers &amp; Servants</i>	<i>341</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>519</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>363</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>457</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>1-30</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>All tradesmen plus Citizens of London</i>	<i>1074</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>1899</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>2353</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>2914</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>1-175</i>	<i>10</i>

Source: Guildhall Library, MSS 8052/1-4, Joiners' Company Apprentice Bindings

Notes:

1. The median premium for the gentry would be £15 if the £600 premium were omitted.
2. Professionals include: Aldermen, Attorney, Doctor of Divinity, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Physics, Scriveners, and Surgeons.

It seems likely that just as there was a hierarchy of success and status within the Company, so this was reflected in the socio-economic origins of its apprentices. Table 6 shows the numbers and percentages of apprentices to the Joiners' Company analysed by their father's occupation. The different categories are based roughly on Gregory King's famous analysis of status and income published in 1688.<sup>50</sup> Although King's work is now considered 'idiosyncratic, obscure, and at times faulty' by many economic historians, it remains the only contemporary source linking income to social class.<sup>51</sup> King suggested that members of the gentry had an average annual income of £280-£450; professionals, £40-£160; those

working in agriculture, £50–£84; tradesmen, shopkeepers, and artisans, £40–£45; and labourers £15. Thus it is obvious that a craftsman or labourer would have had to sacrifice a larger proportion of his wages than would a member of the gentry in order to make premium payments for his son's apprenticeship. These financial constraints would have restricted many families from placing their sons with high status masters who commanded large premiums and, furthermore, would have prohibited a large proportion from becoming established as independent masters. Consequently, positions at the top of the hierarchy were usually reserved for the elite. As Christopher Brooks has commented, 'It is clear that the apprenticeship premiums meant that the financial position of a father had a direct influence on the point at which his son would be able to enter the urban hierarchy.'<sup>52</sup>

At the top of the socio-economic hierarchy of Joiners' apprentices were the sons of gentry. The gentry were positioned between the peerage and the yeomanry and included baronets, knights, esquires and gentlemen. An average of 6 per cent of apprentices originated from this category, all of them among the minor gentry. The majority were 'gentlemen' (498) and there were only five 'esquires'.<sup>53</sup> The definition of a 'gentleman' was nebulous by the end of the seventeenth century and 'anyone who looked and behaved like a gentlemen might be accepted as one.'<sup>54</sup> Therefore it is questionable how many of these fathers were actually members of the gentry and how many were simply wealthy. In 1730, Nathaniel Bailey suggested this to be the case: 'In our days all are accounted Gentlemen that have money.'<sup>55</sup> It is clear from the table that there was a direct relationship between the gentry's relative affluence and the amount of premium paid, endorsing Steve Rappaport's assessment that 'It was the status of the family that got him the apprenticeship with a wealthy master in the first place.'<sup>56</sup>

The records of the Herald's Visitations during the reign of Charles I show that 91 per cent of London gentry were the younger sons of country gentry.<sup>57</sup> The custom of primogeniture, whereby the eldest sons inherited the family estate, meant that the younger siblings had to find another means of support and the common way was to provide them with an education and a trade or profession. The Traherne family provides an example of a gentry family which contributed apprentices to two London Companies. The family was of Cornish decent but lived in Lugwardine, Hereford, from the 1530s.<sup>58</sup> Parish records relate Edmond Traherne's birth at the ancestral home, Middle Court, in 1533. Successive generations of Trahernes were born there; Thomas Traherne was born in 1593; he married about 1624, and he and his wife Mary produced seven children. Upon his death in 1644, Middle Court was passed down to their eldest son, Thomas. Two of the younger sons were subsequently apprenticed to London tradesmen; Philip to the Goldsmiths' Company in 1651 and Edward to the Joiners' Company in 1654.<sup>59</sup>

The two brothers were apprenticed to high-level tradesmen where they presumably received quality training and introductions to influential members of their respective trades because they had successful careers. Philip became a 'shop-keeping goldsmith' (retailer), in The Strand and Edward became a cabinetmaker in Covent Garden.<sup>60</sup> Their eldest brother, Thomas (who had inherited the family estate), subsequently apprenticed his son, Benjamin, to his brother, Philip, to become a London goldsmith. The record of this indenture relates that Thomas no longer used the title, gentleman, but referred to

himself as a yeoman, illustrating the tenuous nature of these social titles.<sup>61</sup> If social connections did help to pave the way to acquiring illustrious apprenticeships in the Joiners' Company, Edward Traherne serves as a model. In 1654 he was apprenticed to John Burroughs, a cabinet and looking-glass maker who was later in partnership with William Farnborough at 'Ye Looking Glass' in Cornhill. Burroughs and Farnborough are remembered for their supply of fashionable furniture to the royal households of Charles II and William and Mary, as well as to several city officials, who included the Lord Mayor Sir Robert Clayton, and one of his business associates, an alderman called John Morris.<sup>62</sup> Traherne was made free of the Joiners' Company at the end of March 1661, and by the autumn of 1664, he had apparently begun to work as an independent master because he acquired his first apprentice.<sup>63</sup> By April of 1666 he was located in Fleet Street, but the devastating effects of the fire in September of that year would have caused him to evacuate his family and business.<sup>64</sup> By the following spring, he was located in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, a highly fashionable area.<sup>65</sup>

Traherne had an impressive list of clients, perhaps acquired through his family connections or through his master, Burroughs. They included the Queen, two of the King's mistresses – Nell Gwynn and the Duchess of Cleveland; two future queens – Princesses Mary and Anne; and numerous aristocrats such as the Duchess of Abermarle, the Earl of Sussex and the Duke of Buckingham.<sup>66</sup> Traherne's inventory, recorded after his early death by three Citizens of London (including Gerrit Jensen) documents the scale and breadth of his stock, including numerous looking-glasses, cabinets 'inlaid with flowers and Garnished with silver' and other expensive furniture (Figure 4). The total value of his estate was £3873 1s. 4d.<sup>67</sup> Judging by the value of the estates of other late seventeenth-century furniture makers, this placed Traherne in the very top echelon of his trade, and demonstrates how successful members of the gentry could become in the London trades.

At the beginning of the period the sons of men involved in agriculture formed the second largest group of apprentices (37 per cent; Table 6). This tallies with research into other City Companies which has found that in the second half of the sixteenth century an average of 50 per cent of apprentices from various London companies, including the Carpenters', Grocers' and Apothecaries', originated from agricultural backgrounds, their fathers describing themselves as either yeomen or husbandmen.<sup>68</sup> However by the end of the seventeenth century London apprentices in that category had dropped to an average of 14 per cent and this situation was similar in the Joiners' Company. By 1702–1720 the proportion of apprentices from agricultural background had dropped to 16 per cent.

The agricultural sector was a broad category and consisted of individuals from varying socio-economic positions. Yeomen, farmers, and graziers were often wealthy landowners and in contrast, many husbandmen were tenant farmers. It was hard to distinguish minor gentry from rich yeomen and poorer yeomen from husbandmen, especially as these occupational titles were often used interchangeably. The terms farmer and yeoman frequently meant the same thing. Samuel Johnson defined a yeoman as 'A man of a small estate in land; a farmer; a gentleman farmer.'<sup>69</sup> The vague and inconsistent use of this terminology is problematic and may be one explanation for the substantial decrease in the numbers of yeomen who apprenticed their sons by the early eighteenth century and the enormous increase in the numbers of farmers' sons. It may also explain why the average ranges of their premium payments were virtually identical.

The Inventory Indented &  
 bearing date the six and twentieth  
 day of November Anno Dni 1675 of  
 all and singular the goods (hathors rights  
 and Credits which late belonged unto  
 Edward Traherne late Citizen and  
 Joyner of London deceased and whilst  
 he lived of the parish of St. Martins  
 in the filen the County of Middle  
 sex was valued and appraised by Sam.  
 Jhesse Gerrit Jonson  
 John Katham and William  
 Jackson Citizens of London  
 Sworne for the true valuation and  
 appraisment thereof before the  
 Right Worshipful R. Robert Hanson  
 Knight and one of the Aldermen of  
 the City of London the particulars  
 whereof doe hereafter Ensur (vizt)  
 Glasse in the filing Roome  
 Imprimis two nyne and  
 thirty or one forty and two  
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4. The preamble of Edward Traherne's inventory from the records of the Court of Orphans, dated 26th of November 1675.

City of London, London Metropolitan Archives, CLA/002/01/01/1177.



Table 7: agricultural occupations of apprentices' fathers, 1645-1720

Agricultural Occupations	1645-63		1664-82		1683-01		1702-20		Range Of Premiums	Mean Premium
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	£	£
Yeomen	415	56	652	57	401	53	179	27	3-30	10
Farmers	2	0.2	20	2	71	9	240	37	4-37	10
Graziers	8	1	26	2	13	2	13	2	5-15	12
Husbandmen	319	42	449	39	272	36	222	34	1-20	8
Total	744	100	1147	100	757	100	654	100	1-37	10

Source: Guildhall Library, MSS 8052/1-4, Joiners' Company Apprentice Bindings

Those who called themselves yeomen, farmers and graziers made up approximately 60 percent of this category over the period of study. Many presumably originated from prosperous origins and would have received apprenticeships relatively similar to members of the gentry. Some were apprenticed to London's leading cabinetmakers. Gerrit Jensen apprenticed the son of a yeoman and the son of farmer. The sons of graziers were also well placed in the trade. Robert Gammage, who was a cane chairmaker in St. Paul's Churchyard, took two graziers' sons as apprentices. But there are few known instances of husbandmen placing their sons with top cabinetmakers, suggesting that social backgrounds and connections *did* influence the apprentice's potential for success and that apprentices from high-status backgrounds were indentured to prominent masters.

Several sons of yeomen became independent tradesmen in London after completing their apprenticeships. Thomas Warden was the son of a yeoman from Long Combe in Oxfordshire who began his seven-year apprenticeship in 1676.<sup>70</sup> He was granted the freedom of the City in 1684 and had established a chair making business by 1687, when he took his first apprentice, who was also the son of a yeoman.<sup>71</sup> By 1692 he was located in St. Gregory by St. Paul, and was described in tax records as a 'cane chairmaker'.<sup>72</sup> His integration into the local furniture making community is evident from his inventory, taken after his death in 1701. It was compiled by two fellow residents of St Paul's Churchyard, who were also chair makers and members of the Joiners' Company, William Gardner and Samuel Welch.<sup>73</sup> There is no single piece of evidence to link these tradesmen but their close geographical proximity and common trade practice suggest that they probably had some sort of working relationship. There was, however, a clear relationship between Warden and the executor of his estate, Isaac Puller.<sup>74</sup> Puller was a member of the Basketmakers' Company and a chair caner by trade. He was also located in St. Paul's Churchyard. He served as executor to Warden's estate and became guardian to Warden's minor children. In 1713 his daughter, Sara, married Warden's son, William.<sup>75</sup> The Warden-Puller partnership continued into the following generation; by the early 1720s, William Warden and one of Isaac Puller's sons, Jonathan, were running their late fathers' chair caning businesses, Warden's business manufactured chair frames and Puller operated as a chair caner, both of them still located in the Churchyard.<sup>76</sup>

The largest single group of apprentices throughout the period was the sons of tradesmen (Table 6). This again tallies with research into other City Companies. Peter Earle found that 'increasing numbers [of London apprentices] were the sons of urban professional or commercial people or of such "middling" members of rural society as innkeepers, clothiers, millers and the like.'<sup>77</sup> As Earle suggests, this was a diverse group representing a wide range of incomes. In general, tradesmen were considered to be socially and financially privileged and by the middle of the seventeenth century amongst an emerging middle class.<sup>78</sup> Peter Earle suggests that 'middling was a description of a certain sort of life-style which was different from that both of the aristocracy and gentry and of the common people.'<sup>79</sup> Their homes were considered fashionable and their families as 'politely mannered, well spoken, fairly cultured and wanting to look and behave or try to look and behave like genteel people.'<sup>80</sup>

For the purposes of this study apprentices whose fathers described themselves as tradesmen or merchants have been classified together into a single group which includes all fathers involved in the field of handicraft and artisanal work, those involved in food supply, such as bakers, butchers, and brewers, as well as families who catered to hoteliers, coachmen, seafarers, and other members of the travelling public. Apprentices from these backgrounds made up 54 per cent of the total between 1645 and 1663, rising to 72 per cent between 1702 and 1720. Within this group there is an obvious division between apprentices from outside London and apprentices from within London. While the former group remained relatively stable over the whole period (between 31 and 28 per cent of the total) the latter made up an increasingly large proportion, rising from 23 per cent in 1645-63 to 44 per cent in 1702-20. This corresponds roughly with the rise in the proportion of London-born apprentices over the same period.

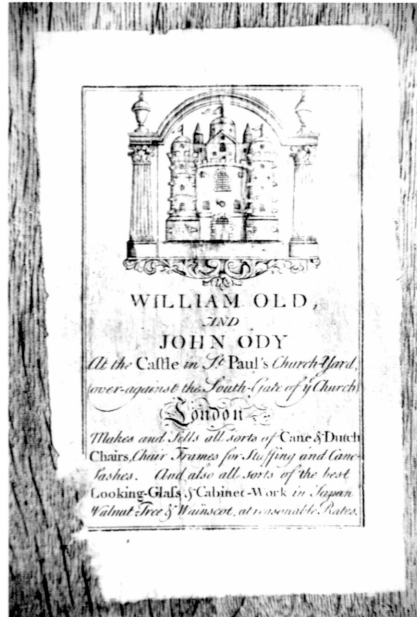
There were obvious reasons why, if he could afford it, a provincial tradesman would place his son as an apprentice to a London joiner. London was *the* place to acquire up-to-date training and gainful employment in any trade, and in view of the rapid expansion of the Joiners' Company, particularly after 1660, furniture making may have been a particularly good prospect. Certainly the opportunities for employment and advancement in London exceeded those in most provincial towns.

Many of the apprentices from this category became successful London furniture makers. John Coxed certainly did. He was a brewer and innkeeper's son from Abington in Berkshire. He was apprenticed to John Mayo in 1696 and became free in 1703. By 1708 he had established a cabinet making business at *The White Swan* in St. Paul's Churchyard with his new wife, Grace, the widow of his late master (Figure 5). By the time of his death in the autumn of 1718, he had amassed a respectable amount of money and, one assumes, considerable social recognition.<sup>81</sup>

Coxed's path to success, involving marriage into an established furniture making business, was a common one. John Ody was another provincial tradesman's son who acquired a workshop through marriage. His father was a butcher in Swinbrook, Oxfordshire. Ody began an eight-year apprenticeship in January of 1704 and gained his freedom in 1713.<sup>82</sup> By the spring of 1717 he had established an alliance with his soon to be father-in-law, the turner, William Old, at *The Castle* on the south side of St Paul's Churchyard. The marriage allegation of John Ody and Mary Old, William's daughter, states that both parties were residing on the south side of St. Paul's Churchyard.<sup>83</sup> Could John and Mary have been



5. The trade card of John Coxed at *The White Swan* in St. Paul's Churchyard.  
 Reproduced from Heal, *London Furniture Makers*.



6. The trade card of William Old and John Ody at *The Castle* in St. Paul's Churchyard.  
 Reproduced from Heal, *London Furniture Makers*.

introduced through mutual acquaintances in the furniture trade or could John have been a journeyman working in William Old's workshop when Mary caught his eye?

The Old & Ody workshop produced 'all sorts of Cane & Dutch Chairs' and 'Frames for stuffing' (Figure 6).<sup>84</sup> The last phrase indicates that they did not upholster their chairs, but outsourced this portion of their manufacture to upholsterers, perhaps someone like John Hutt whose workshop was a few doors west of *The Castle*.<sup>85</sup> Old & Ody also produced 'all sorts of the best Looking Glasses and Cabinet-Work in Japan, Walnut-Tree and Wainscott'. While William Old was a chair maker and member of the Turners' Company, it is thought that John Ody was a cabinet maker, for with one exception all the known surviving furniture from their workshop is veneered case furniture.

John Coxed and John Ody typify the entrepreneurial *zeitgeist* of their time. It was typical that they chose not to follow their father's trade; indeed, only 5 percent of fathers working as tradesmen in the provinces were themselves furniture makers, a significantly lower proportion than in London.

It has already been suggested that some provincial apprentices failed to take up the freedom because their intention may have been to return home to set up in business. By its very nature, it is very difficult to find hard evidence for this process, but Edward Everett *may* be an example of an apprentice who returned to his place of origin. His father was a basket maker from Farnham in Surrey and as was demonstrated in the example of Isaac Puller, some basket makers were involved in caning and rushing seat frames. Perhaps Everett was sent to London to acquire up-to-date skills in order to enhance the family business; he was apprenticed in 1698 to the cane chair maker, Thomas Warden.<sup>86</sup> After Warden's death in 1701, Everett was 'turned over' to Warden's business associate, Isaac Puller. Although Everett completed his apprenticeship, he failed to become a citizen of London. His whereabouts remain unknown but perhaps he returned to Farnham and joined the family firm.

The rise in the proportion of apprentices who were sons of London tradesmen (from 23 to 44 per cent between 1645 and 1720) is a clear indication that London, or at least the Joiners' Company, was becoming less dependent on provincial labour. Within that total there were two different groups of tradesmen – citizens of London and 'foreigners'. A 'foreign' tradesman was an individual working within the jurisdiction of the City who had not taken the freedom. The Joiners' Company ordinance stated that all 'foreign' tradesmen operating as joiners within London were subject to their rules and regulations, which allowed the Company to search their business premises, remove substandard produce and levy fines.<sup>87</sup> This meant that although 'foreign' tradesmen did not have the privileges associated with citizenship, they were still subject to Company regulations, which may at times have restricted their ability successfully to operate a business. Some historians believe that the Livery Companies' control over trades in London had been in steady decline from the mid-seventeenth century, with their powers of search and rights to control their tradesmen increasingly diminished, and that therefore it may have become easier to work as a 'foreign' tradesman.<sup>88</sup> The evidence of the Joiners' Company apprenticeships suggests this was not so, for apprentices from this category increased in numbers over the period. In the years 1643–1659, only 12 percent of apprentices were the sons of 'foreign' tradesmen, but by the early eighteenth century the proportion had increased to 22 percent. Thus the numbers of sons of foreigners entering the Company increased not just absolutely but

relatively over time, suggesting that the Company was either becoming more attractive to foreigners or more effective at enforcing its control. Indeed, why should foreigners not wish to apprentice their sons, since quite apart from the quality of training offered, apprenticeship led to all the rights and privileges of freedom and citizenship?

It may be significant that the average premiums paid by 'foreign' tradesmen were two pounds lower than those paid to their equals in the provinces. Possibly they were not as well-off as those from outside of the metropolis; restricting ordinances may have hampered their earning potential. Additionally, working as a 'foreign' tradesman may have made it difficult for them to secure high-status apprenticeships for their children. Nevertheless, it made sense for the Joiners to bring the sons of foreign tradesmen into the Company, thereby increasing the Company's authority and income at the same time. Several high-status masters gave apprenticeships to boys from 'foreign' fathers; in 1720 a dyer from Southwark paid £40 for his son to be apprenticed to Henry Williams of Long Acre, chair maker to the Royal Family.<sup>89</sup> Not only did the dyer have the ability to pay for such an apprenticeship but presumably he also had the appropriate social and business connections.

Only 8 percent of the 'foreign' tradesmen worked in the furniture trade; these included basket makers, chair makers, joiners, sawyers and turners. Perhaps they wanted their sons to receive the privileges and kudos associated with membership in the Joiners' Company, an opportunity that they had either refused or had been denied. Of these individuals, 60 percent were practising as 'foreign' joiners and a further 21 percent were sawyers.

The notion that an apprenticeship was an attractive proposition for the sons of 'foreign' tradesmen is reinforced by the fact that until the early eighteenth century they outnumbered the sons of freemen of London. As with the high level of apprentices from the provinces, it suggests that before 1700 the Company was unable to meet its labour requirements from within the City Companies. Citizenship was a prerequisite for full participation in the economic and political life of London. Freemen enjoyed the privileges and status associated with citizenship, which allowed a Parliamentary vote and the right to operate a business and trade within the realms of the City. Overall, an average of 16 percent of the apprentice were the sons of London freemen; these proportions more than doubled from the early period when only 9 per cent of the entire group were citizens' sons. That number increased to 22 per cent by the early eighteenth century.

Many of the fathers of these apprentices were themselves furniture makers. Nearly a fifth (18 per cent) were members of the Joiners' Company who apprenticed their own children. This is particularly interesting because the children of freemen had the right to citizenship through patrimony. In other words, the sons of freemen did not have to serve a seven-year period of training in order to earn the rights and privileges of citizenship, they could have simply inherited them and therefore there must have been a perceived benefit to a formal apprenticeship. The proportions of apprenticeships within familial relationships increases when cousins, nephews and relations by marriage are taken into account, but these are more difficult to establish. One example of family linkage is the case of the Stiles family. Lazurus Stiles was born in September 1656, the son of yeoman from Langley Marish in Buckinghamshire.<sup>90</sup> He began an eight-year apprenticeship in October 1671 and by 1680 he had taken his first apprentice.<sup>91</sup> In 1692 he was located in the parish of St. Mary Aldermanbury, which is just north of St. Paul's Churchyard.<sup>92</sup> Over thirty-nine years he indentured eighteen apprentices and this included one of his nephews, Robert, and three of

his sons: Joseph, Benjamin and Lazarus.<sup>93</sup> Two of his sons (Joseph and Lazarus) gained their freedom through indenture as opposed to inheriting this privilege through patrimony, meaning that they learned their trade in their father's workshop. Lazarus Stiles senior died in the summer of 1724 at the age of sixty-eight, leaving his business to Joseph and Lazarus, who in turn began to take apprentices through the Joiners' Company.

Over his forty-four years as a London furniture maker, Lazarus Stiles apparently managed a busy and seemingly profitable business, documented in his inventory recorded on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1724.<sup>94</sup> His front shop contained a wide selection of furniture: chests of drawers, bookcases, tea tables, dressing tables, several types of cupboards and escritaires, various kinds of boxes, sconces, and chimney, pier and swinging glasses. Much of this was seemingly made in his workshop; he had five work benches and either the materials required for manufacture or debts owing for their supply, and payments due to specialised artisans, such as gilders, scone and frame makers. In addition to this busy manufacture, he also seems to have operated as a timber merchant because his yard and workshop contained £247 13s. of wood, including mahogany, walnut, deal, wainscot, and 'ewe', cut into clapboards, quarters, slabs, leaves, and veneers. Furthermore, in the list of monies owed to him by various tradesmen were debts for 'wood' and for 'rent of the wood yard'. Like other Citizens of London, Lazarus Stiles had a lucrative career as a furniture maker and was able to pave the way for his sons to inherit this legacy.

Some apprenticeships were organised between the same families of furniture makers over successive generations, as seen in the example of the cabinetmakers Thomas Halfehide and George Nix. In 1691, Halfehide apprenticed Nix, who was the son of a member of the Joiners' Company. Nix later became a successful cabinetmaker in Covent Garden,<sup>95</sup> and in 1716 he apprenticed his former master's son, Edward Halfehide. Apparently in some instances, there was a great sense of loyalty, kinship, and reciprocal support and these interpersonal relationships were probably the key to many apprenticeships.

The remaining four-fifths of apprentices who were the sons of London tradesmen had fathers representing virtually every City Company. Many fathers were probably following the trade of their Company, but others may have been joiners or furniture makers. We have already seen how about ten per cent of apprentices were 'turned over' to joiners/furniture makers belonging to other companies, so it is logical that the sons of these men might be apprenticed through the Company. One example of this might be Henry Bell, who was the son of a Vintner. Having served his time as apprentice to John Coxed, he took up the freedom with his father's company in 1720.<sup>96</sup> Because it is impossible to know how many fathers of apprentices in this category were furniture makers, we cannot accurately estimate the total proportion of apprentices who were sons of furniture makers. Many would have apprenticed their children to people that they knew in their communities, or to business associates, or to master joiners that were members of their family. These interpersonal arrangements may be one explanation for the relatively low premiums (Table 4).

Documentary evidence contained in the Joiners' Company archives suggests that the Company's size and authority expanded at a time when power and control was rapidly diminishing in many City Companies. A major factor in their unique position must have been the rapid growth and economic prominence of the London furniture trade. The socio-economic makeup of London furniture tradesmen was comparable to that of others in the building industries but the potential for a lucrative career in furniture making clearly put

some members in a fortunate position. This article has established that in keeping with many Livery Companies, the majority of members in the Joiners' Company were middle class and often the children of tradesmen. Moreover, because London's population grew throughout the second half of the seventeenth century it became increasingly able to sustain itself without recruiting apprentices from outside of the metropolis and therefore by the early years of the eighteenth century successive generations of Londoners began to populate the Joiners' Company and the furniture trade. There was apparently ample opportunity for those within the industry to maintain a successful business and for some the ability to amass a respectable amount of capital and social distinction.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article is dedicated to my late father, Edward Abrams.

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2. Guildhall Library (hereafter GL), MSS 8052/1-4, *Joiners' Company Apprentice Bindings*.
3. Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London 1660-1730*, Berkeley (1989), p. 95.
4. London Metropolitan Archive (hereafter LMA), Corporation of London Archive (hereafter CLA), ELJL/41/1.
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6. GL, MS 8046/1, *Joiners' Company Minutes*.
7. GL, MS 8046/2, *Joiners' Company Minutes*: 'Any persons using or exercising the trades arts or misteries of a Joyner Carver and Ceiler who hath already served his Apprenticeship or shall hereafter serve his Apprenticeship in the said trades and is not yet made free and who shall exercise the said trades not being free of the said Company. That all and every such person and persons so doing and offending shall forfeit and pay for every such offence the summ of Ten pounds of lawfull money of England to be recovered by accon of debt bill or complaint'; MS 8046/3: 'Whereas a complaint has been made at this board of the small number of Apprentices that has been summoned by the Beadle to take up their freedoms to the great damage of this Company It is therefore Ordered that the Beadle doo give an exact account for the three months past of the Christian and surnames of the persons he then summoned and where and with whome they worke that due course may be taken against them and that the said Beadle doo observe the same method for the future and that he brings Two Lists every monthly Court.'
8. GL, MS 8046/1: 'An apprentice to serve two years as journeyman.' My research has shown that no freeman of the Joiners' Company acquired an apprentice until at least two years after taking up the freedom and paying his quarterage fees.
9. GL, MS 8038.
10. GL, MS 8052/5, fol. 230; MS 8051/4, fol. 141.
11. Vanessa Harding, 'The population of London, 1550-1700: a review of the published evidence', *The London Journal*, 15 (1990), p. 112.
12. The calculations are based on two ten-year samples: 982 indentures were recorded 1646-1655, 2059 indentures 1696-1705.
13. Henry Laverock Phillips, *Annals of the Worshipful Company of Joiners of the City of London*, London (1915), p. 32.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
15. GL, MS 8052/1, fol. 85.
16. Adam Bowett, *English Furniture 1660-1714: From Charles II to Queen Anne*, Woodbridge (2002), p. 46.
17. Steve Rappaport, *Worlds within worlds: structures of life in sixteenth-century London*, Cambridge (1989)

- pp. 311–12; John Stabler, 'A Dictionary of Norfolk Furniture Makers, 1700–1840', *Regional Furniture*, XX (2006), pp. 11–15.
18. Rappaport, *op. cit.* at note 17 above, p. 314.
19. *Ibid*
20. Earle, *op. cit.* at note 3 above, p. 101.
21. GL, MS 8046/5, *Joiners' Company Minutes*, 5 February 1724. The report includes liverymen, master freemen and journeymen.
22. A liveryman was someone who wore the livery or clothing of the brotherhood or Company. From the 13th century this included all freemen but an act of the Court of Aldermen, dated July 27, 1697, changed this so that 'no person shall be allowed to take upon himself the clothing of any of the twelve Companies unless he have an estate of 1000l, of the inferior Companies unless he have an estate of 500l.' [W. C. Hazlitt, *The Livery Companies of the City of London; Their Origin, Character, Development, and Social Political Importance*, London (1892), p. 77.] The Joiners' Company was amongst the 'inferior' group.
23. J. F. Houston, *Featherbedds and Flock Bedds: The Early History of the Worshipful Company of Upholders of the City of London*, Sandy (2006), p. 67. Houston only provides data on the number of liverymen – other records of membership do not survive.
24. National Archives, C 213/17. I am grateful to Cliff Webb for making his analysis of these documents available to me.
25. Roy Porter, *London: A Social History*, London (1994), p. 109.
26. Act of 19 Charles II *cap.* 3.
27. GL, MS 8052/1.
28. GL, MS 8038: 'Freemen of the said Company are tyed and restrayned to the number of two Apprentices only.'
29. Geoffrey Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England 1660–1820*, New York (1981), p. 267.
30. GL, MS 8052/1.
31. Geoffrey Holmes, *The Making of a Great Power: late Stuart and early Georgian Britain 1660–1722*, Harlow (1993), p. 48.
32. Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700–1820; Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain*, London and New York (1996), p. 45, p. 48, Holmes, *op. cit.* at note 31 above, p. 450, table L.3.
33. Holmes, *op. cit.* at note 31 above, p. 305.
34. Earle, *op. cit.* at note 3 above, p. 86
35. Christopher Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, Social Mobility and the Middling Sort, 1550–1800' in Jonathan Barry & Christopher Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550–1800*, New York (1994), p. 60.
36. Robert Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, London (1747). For goldsmiths see pp. 141–143; for coachmakers see pp. 229–230.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 197–198.
38. Brooks, *loc. cit.* at note 35 above, pp. 58–59, Table 2.1. Brooks provides a table which gives the social status of the fathers of entrants to some London guilds and he includes the Carpenters' Company: Gentry 5%; Professionals 4%; Yeomen: 11%; Husbandmen 8%; Tradesmen 57%; Citizens of London 17%. In comparison my findings for the Joiners' Company are as follows: Gentry 7%; Professionals 1%; Yeomen 8%; Husbandmen 13%; Tradesmen 51%; Citizens of London 18%.
39. Campbell, *op. cit.* at note 36 above, p. 161.
40. GL, MS 8332, *Dispute between Joiners & Carpenters*; see also Victor Chinnery, *Oak Furniture, The British Tradition*, Woodbridge (1979), pp. 42–43.
41. Brooks, *loc. cit.* at note 35 above, p. 59.
42. Campbell, *op. cit.* at note 36 above, p. 171.
43. Act of 8 Anne *cap.* 9. The master was responsible for paying the duty to Stamp Officers.
44. Brooks, *loc. cit.* at note 35 above, p. 66.
45. GL, MS 8052/4, fol. 4 (John Coxed), fol. 22 (William Palleday).
46. *Ibid.*, fol. 12 (John Hopson), fol. 82 (George Nix), fol. 116 (John Belchier), fols. 106, 119, 122 (Henry Williams).
47. GL, MS, 8052/4, fol. 17.
48. GL, MS, 8052/4, fol. 9.



49. GL, MS, 8052/4, fol. 37.
50. Gregory King, 'A Scheme of the Income and Expense of the several Families of England Calculated for the Year 1688', in J. Thirsk and J. P. Cooper (eds), *17th Century Economic Documents*, Oxford (1972), pp. 780–781.
51. John A. Taylor, *British Empiricism and early Political Economy: Gregory King's 1696 Estimates of national Wealth and Population*, (Westport, Conn. and London (2005), p. 4.
52. Brooks, *op. cit.* at note 35 above, p. 70.
53. For an explanation for the hierarchal status within the gentry, see G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, London (1963), pp. 115–120.
54. Earle, *op. cit.* at note 3, above, p. 6.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Rappaport, *op. cit.*, at note 17 above, p. 289.
57. Earle, *op. cit.* at note 3 above, p. 6.
58. Laurie Lindey, 'Edward Traherne: a study of the furniture trade in Restoration London', unpublished MA thesis, Royal College of Art (2003), p. 38. Cornish branches of the Traherne family were entitled to display a coat of arms, viz: – ARMS – Argent a chevron gules, between three herons sable, a canton barry of six or and azure, charged with a lion rampant of the third. CREST – A demi griffin erased or, gorged with two bars azure, holding between the claws a fleur-de-lis also azure.
59. Goldsmiths' Company archive, Apprentice Bindings, Book 2, fol. 44; Philip Traherne the son of Thomas Traherne late of Lugwardine in the county of Hereford gent deceased doe pot myselfe apprentice unto John Hastings Cittizen and Goldsmith of London for the Terme of eight yeares from the Feast day of the Nativity of St. John Baptiste next (I am grateful to David Mitchell for drawing this reference to my attention); GL, 8052/1, fol. 44: Edward Traherne son of Thomas Traherne late of Lugwardine in the county of Hereford gentleman apprenticed to John Burrowes Citizen and Joiner of London for 7 years from Midsummer next 15 June 1654.
60. LMA, CLA, Orphans' Court Record 1526, 8 September 1679. Phillip's estate was valued at £992.02.04
61. Lindey, *op. cit.* at note 58 above, p. 38; Goldsmiths Company archive, apprentice bindings, Book 2, fol. 181, 15 Sept. 1665: 'Benjamin Traherne, son of Thomas Traherne of Lugwardine in the County of Hereford Yeoman, do put my self Apprentice unto Philip Traherne for the Terme of seven years from this day 15 Sept 1669.'
62. Christopher Gilbert & Geoffrey Beard, (eds.), *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers, 1660–1840*, Leeds (1986), p. 133.
63. GL, MS 8052/1, fol. 95.
64. GL, MS 6540/1, Parish Records, St. Brides Fleet Street. 17 April 1666.
65. Westminster Archives, M/F 1554, Poor Rate ledger / F1112, fol. 32.
66. LMA, CLA, Orphans' Court Record 1177, 26 November 1675.
67. Lindey, *op. cit.* at note 58 above, p. 106; LMA, CLA, Common Serjeant Book 2, 21st November 1676.
68. Brooks, *loc. cit.* at note 35 above, pp. 56–59. Joiners' Company apprenticeship records do not survive prior to 1643 and therefore there is no data regarding the socio-economic or geographic origins of their membership prior to this date.
69. Samuel. Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, London (1755), Vol. 2.
70. GL, MS 8052/2, fol. 43.
71. *Ibid.*, fol. 147.
72. LMA, CLA, COL/CHD/LA/03, 1692 Poll Tax, St. Gregory by St. Paul
73. LMA, CLA, Orphans' Court Record 2439, 5 March 1701.
74. National Archives, MS 11/462, Will of Thomas Warden, 15 November 1701.
75. GL, Boyd's Marriage Index, St. Margaret Westminster, 1713.
76. LMA, CLA, MISC MSS/83/3, *The Names and Trades of Householdors*, 1721.
77. Earle, *op. cit.* at note 3 above, p. 86.
78. Peter Earle, *A City Full of People: Men and Women of London 1650–1750*, London (1994); Earle, *op. cit.* at note 3 above; Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England 1680–1780*, London (1996); Brooks, *loc. cit.* at note 35 above.
79. Peter Earle, 'The Middling Sort in London', in Barry & Brooks, (eds.), *op. cit.* at note 35 above, p. 156.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
81. A. Bowett and L. Lindey, 'Labelled Furniture from the White Swan Workshop in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1711–35', *Furniture History*, XXXIV (2003), pp. 71–98.

82. GL, MS 8052/3, fol. 97; 8051/3, fol. 22.
83. GL, Marriage Allegation, MS 10,091, 19 April 1717.
84. Ambrose Heal, *The London Furniture Makers 1660–1840*, London (1953), p. 130.
85. LMA, CLA, MISC MSS/83/3, *The Names and Trades of Householders*, 1721.
86. Laurie Lindey, 'The Orphan Court Record of Thomas Warden, a Cane Chair Maker', *Furniture History Society Newsletter*, No. 155 (August 2004), pp. 2–4.
87. GL, MS 8038: 'Ordered and established that from henceforth the said fforreine Joyners now inhabiting and dwellinge or which hereafter shall inhabite or dwell within the said Cittye of London suburbs or libertyes of the same or in any other place or places within two myles Circuite of the said Cittye of London and all wares and stuffe made or sould.... [will be subject to the search]. Hereafter at convenient tyme and in convenient manner without force.... to enter into the houses shopps sellers warehowses and boothses of any pson usuige the said trade and of enye person workinge usuige or sellenge any made by Joyners and Ceelers or Carvers aswell free as forreine within the said Cittye of London and suburbs of the same or within two myles compasse of the same aswell in places priviledged and exempt as not priviledged and exempt and aswell in ffyres and markets within the said Cittye and two myles compasse of the same as elsewhere within the said precinct and there without.'
88. John Styles, 'The goldsmiths and the London luxury trades, 1550 to 1750', in David Mitchell (ed.), *Goldsmiths Silversmiths and Bankers: Innovation and the transfer of skill 1550 to 1750*, London (1995), p. 113; G. Riello, 'The Cordwainers' Company in eighteenth-century London' in I. Gadd and P. Wallis (eds.), *Guilds, Society & Economy in London 1450–1800*, London (2002), p. 149.
89. For more on Henry Williams see Gilbert & Beard, (eds.), *op. cit.* at note 62, above, p. 980.
90. Mormon International Genealogical Index.
91. GL, MS 8052/2, fol. 2; 8052/2, fol. 76.
92. LMA, 1692 Poll Tax, ASS'BOX 6/MS 12.
93. GL, MS 8052/2, fol. 238 (Robert Stiles); MS 8052/3, fol. 94 (Joseph Stiles); MS 8052/3, fol. 146 (Benjamin Stiles); MS 8052/4, fol. 1 (Lazarus Stiles).
94. LMA, CLA, Orphans' Court Record 3197, 23 August 1724. Stiles' estate was valued at £504.12.6.
95. For more on Nix see Beard & Gilbert, (eds.), *op. cit.* at note 62 above, pp. 648–649.