

EDITORIAL

Themed volumes are a tremendous stimulus to the study of one subject but a good miscellany has a wider appeal. The following collection of writings, which celebrates the great diversity of regional furniture, should satisfy everyone who enjoys a varied diet.

Lightning Stools explores the folklore and scientific background behind a rare and unusual furniture type; *Fancy Chairs from High Wycombe* takes a detailed look at a specific instance in which fashion took inspiration from established regional tradition, and *Welsh Cradles* follows on from Fionnuala Carragher's pioneering study *Irish Cradles: An Introductory Look (Regional Furniture 1992)* by providing a similarly comparative study of the type in a neighbouring country. Cradles communicate so much about regional society and traditions that they should be adopted as the emblem of our subject. Gabriel Olive continues another strand of research from past volumes by turning his attention to *West Country Tables and Forms*, having first written about dressers in that area of England in *Regional Furniture 1989*; while Noël Riley, in *A Lake District Cupboard*, makes a case for the theory that fitted furniture in the English Lakes may have been made by itinerant joiners who worked across a large area.

The next pair of articles break new ground in analysing the regional personality of fashionable frames. Laura Houliston, a new recruit to the fraternity of Scottish furniture historians, presents a comprehensive study of *Frame Making in Edinburgh 1790–1830* which includes, for reference, a *List of Frame Makers in Edinburgh* working during this period. Nessa Roche's scholarly contribution is a detailed discussion of *Irish Eighteenth-Century Looking Glasses* which introduces this subject to furniture historians and analyses the frames, their makers and production of the glass they were made to surround. *David Hughes, Ship Carver* deals with an area in which regional furniture making merged with a specialised tradition of decorative carving. More contributions on ship carving in different regional centres would be most welcome for future publication in this journal. Daniel Maudlin's short piece on *Malaysian Furniture* makes an introductory survey of this subject and explores the way in which European designs cross-fertilised with native Malay architectural carving traditions to produce furniture in a society where it had not hitherto existed. L. W. S. Petznick's concluding piece links research in Scotland and the United States by revealing the early background of a Perth wright whom, it is now known, went on to work in Williamsburg, the colonial state capital of Virginia. There is no doubt that the specialised research contained in these articles will, in due course, be used by the authors of more general books on furniture history. The original material published in *Regional Furniture* should be acknowledged in the usual fashion.

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