

THE NOTEBOOK OF JOHN DAVIES, CABINET MAKER, CARMARTHEN

1844 — 1855

Luke Millar

The subject of this article is a notebook kept by a cabinet maker who, in his thirties, was contemplating taking over a prestigious provincial firm from his father, who had founded it some twenty-four years previously. It provides a unique insight into the work of such a firm, but before looking at it in detail, it is necessary to consider its historical background, and try to assess the importance of such firms in the development of regional as well as provincial furniture-making.

Carmarthen lies in the heart of the rich agricultural country of South West Wales, an area which for our purposes extends coastally from Cardigan in the North round to Swansea and Neath in the South, via Milford, Haverfordwest, Pembroke, Tenby, Carmarthen and Llanelli; inland, up the river valleys to Llandeilo and Llandovery on the Towy, and Lampeter on the Teifi. Strategically, Carmarthen lies at the head of the Towy Estuary, which allowed the passage of ships of substantial size up to the town bridge. A natural fortress, it was at the convergence of the two main East–West roads, from London via Gloucester and Brecon, or Cardiff and Swansea respectively, and on to Haverfordwest and Pembroke. The fertility of the area led to an export market in agricultural produce, to the English West Country ports and London, and to Bristol in return for shop goods of all kinds. Carmarthen, at the centre of a network of roads, was the natural market town of the area, and prospered accordingly. In 1652 a visitor, John Taylor,¹ described it as ‘one of the plentifullest towns I ever set foot in’, while Defoe,² in the 1720s, speaks of it as ‘an ancient but not decayed town . . . well built, and populous, and the country round the most fruitful, of any part of Wales . . . the people of this country more courteous . . . they seem to converse with the rest of the World by their commerce . . .’. In 1751 a Doctor Pocock³ writes ‘There is a good key to which ships of 150 tons can come up . . . they have a great trade in butter to London, and of wheat, barley and beans to all parts, mostly coastwise . . .’. In 1834, Samuel Lewis⁴ says ‘The town is beautifully situated . . . on a moderate eminence, which commands some of the finest views in the Vale of Towy, and imparts to the town a striking and picturesque appearance . . . The principal streets contain a large proportion of good houses and many excellent shops . . .’. Of Bristol, he says: ‘With the city, which is regarded as the emporium of South Wales, Carmarthen carries on a very extensive trade . . .’.

It follows that the populace of such a town, which grew as a centre of social and political life as well as trade, would have the wealth and the desire for fashionable goods and services of all kinds, and from its beginning in 1809 the weekly newspaper, the *Carmarthen Journal*, carried advertisements for such, giving London street addresses. Evidently the ‘Nobility, Gentry and Inhabitants of Carmarthen and District’ were expected to be conversant with the streets of the metropolis.

THE CABINET TRADE OF THE AREA

As one might expect, a thriving provincial cabinet trade developed in the principal towns of South West Wales, notably Carmarthen, Swansea and Haverfordwest, from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, growing with the increasing wealth and population of the area. The countryside was well blessed with native timber, and West Indian mahogany and other woods were available from Bristol,⁵ with some shipments direct to Swansea⁶ also. Baltic and 'Quebec' timber was shipped direct to Carmarthen quay,⁷ providing pine and wainscot oak from the early nineteenth century at least, and later American birch as well.

Fashionable influences were evident, too. A miniature version of a library table from Sheraton's *Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book* of 1793 appears on the trade card of the Haverfordwest Cabinet-Maker's Society in the 1790s,⁸ and this volume is listed in the sale inventory of Joseph Matthias, Cabinet Maker, etc. of Haverfordwest, in 1832.⁹ Ackermann's Repository was sold throughout its life by *The Camarthen Journal*,¹⁰ which also carried advertisements for Morgan and Saunders of Catherine Street, Strand (1812),¹¹ Hughes and Outram of St. Paul's Churchyard (1816),¹² and Henry Cooper, Bishopsgate Street (1829).¹³ Denon's *Egypt* was advertised for sale in 1815,¹⁴ and in 1826 a John Davies, auctioneer who also ran a saleroom, advertised 'London built' cabinet pieces and 'Mahogany Pattern Chairs', illustrating the respect shown for Metropolitan work.¹⁵ Later still, in the 1840s, the *Art Union* journal was available from local agents.¹⁶ The range of cabinet making covered the whole spectrum, from smart firms with showrooms of ready-made fashionable pieces plus, usually, bought-in furnishings, to people who provided a broad range of services, often including undertaking, joinery, housepainting, and building. Some were minor architects as well. Apart from the provincial trade, the vernacular furniture of the area is outstanding. As yet it lacks any substantial published study, but it certainly displays a variety and ingenuity of form rarely found within the constraints of provincial work.

It has been postulated that, of all Britain's rural societies, that of West Wales was one of the least likely to desire to emulate gentry fashion.¹⁷ The reason for this is that during the eighteenth century in particular there was a great merging of estates, and an anglicising of the gentry by intermarriages, which created a cultural gulf between them and the country leaders, who were the remaining smaller gentry and freehold farmers. The latter produced the tier of teachers, clergy and chapel ministers, magistrates, overseers, and later the professional class of doctors, lawyers and bankers. Welsh speaking and predominantly dissenting, they were separated from the greater gentry by wealth, language and religion.¹⁸ Paradoxically, their furniture contains a range of pieces in contemporary fashionable forms: hence one finds, for example, bureaux, secretaires, chests of drawers and clock-cases of Chippendale form, including blind fretwork, executed entirely in oak, and the predominant form of chairs found in sets were framed, in the styles of the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries.¹⁹ The only logical explanation for this paradox lies in the rôle of the cabinet maker, who presumably found it necessary to make furniture in the latest fashions, both in styles and materials, to satisfy the needs of the gentry. These designs, where appropriate, might then have been used to create pieces for the farmer, often using wood felled on the farm. Such work was usually the work of local craftsmen, so perhaps the

cabinet maker was also a source for their patterns. The idea that fashionable designs only percolated slowly to areas far from the metropolis is a myth now exploded.²⁰ 'Remoteness' in this respect is the product of poverty rather than geographical distance. The better class of cabinet maker thus takes his place as the purveyor of the fashion rather than merely the manufacturing artisan. Hence, as in the case of the Davies firm, he made both commissioned items (as illustrated in the notebook) and ready-made stock for sale in his showrooms, as seen in Davies's and other cabinet maker's advertisements. Reference to purely vernacular forms of furniture do not appear in advertisements in the *Carmarthen Journal* but a diversity of native words is mentioned, including oak and pine. This might indicate common furniture being made for a rural market. The dispersed nature of the farmsteads made it inevitable that many services to them were supplied by itinerants, and the long standing tradition of making-up furniture on the farm from the farmer's own wood is proven.²¹ It is also the case that many vernacular pieces, including framed chairs and dressers, were made of oak wainscot, which suggests an urban origin for some of them, too. However this may be, and however distinct the vernacular forms and timbers are, the influence of the provincial cabinet maker is of clear importance and thus deserves further inquiry.

The first Trade Directory for the area (the *Universal*, 1796) lists two cabinet makers in Carmarthen: David Morley and Thomas Humphries. By 1822 there were five, including Morley and Isaac Davies, increasing to six in 1830 and nine in 1835, a level which remained fairly steady throughout the century. Morley, the much respected father-figure of the trade, died in 1831 after some 45 years at work, and the increase in numbers from 1835 may represent his ex-employees starting up on their own. A number of firms were short-lived, but spans of 23 to 40 years were frequent, with Davies the longest at over 46. An interesting spotlight on the different towns is provided by the Census Abstracts, Occupational Tables, of 1841. From these, the total number of people engaged in the cabinet trade can be extracted, and also expressed as a percentage of the total employed population. The results are illuminating. It will be seen that in certain 'quality' English towns (Bath, York, Exeter) cabinet makers range from 2.9 to 2.1%, with Lancaster at a very high 3.7%, doubtless representing Gillow's export trade. By comparison, the South Wales quality towns (Carmarthen, Tenby, Neath) are much smaller in size, but have a comparable percentage of cabinet makers at 2.7 to 2.0%, but Haverfordwest has a remarkable 4.1%. Haverfordwest was only half the size of Lancaster, so the actual output was not comparable, but even allowing for a margin of error,²² the cabinet trade of the area was on a much larger scale than has hitherto been realised.

THE DAVIES FIRM

The firm of Isaac and John Davies was the longest-running in nineteenth century Carmarthen, fifty-three years or more, from before 1821 to 1874 or beyond. Isaac was born at Llangennech, on the Loughor estuary, in 1781, the younger of two brothers both destined for the cabinet trade. He may have served his apprenticeship and subsequent employment as a journeyman in Carmarthen. In 1809, aged twenty-eight, he married Elizabeth at nearby Abergwili, and in 1813 their first child, John, was baptised in Carmarthen. The firm is first recorded in 1821 with an advertisement in the *Carmarthen Journal*, in which 'Isaac Davies, Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer, near the Church,

Priory Street' records his thanks to 'the Inhabitants of Carmarthen and its vicinity, for the encouragement he has received since he commenced business in the above line', and reassures them of continuing services 'on the most reasonable terms'. This suggests that the firm may have started some years before, but in any case it must have thriven, for by 1833 it had moved the short distance into King Street within the old town, a smart shopping and business street, celebrating the move with an advertisement listing a fashionable stock (see Appendix I). Unlike some other cabinet makers, Isaac Davies does not include bought-in items, such as carpets, floor cloths, paper-hangings, although the advertisement is under the heading of 'Oil-cloth, Rug and Looking-Glass Warehouse'. Pieces listed were made in 'Curl Oak' (presumably a burr veneer), rosewood, zebra wood and mahogany: the range included 'Mahogany and Rosewood Chiffoniers', 'Parlour, Drawing-Room and Dining-Room Chairs', 'Grecian Couches', etc. 'executed after the most approved and fashionable designs', while the upholstery department carried on with 'the greatest possible regard paid to elegance and neatness'. Isaac was fifty-two when he moved to King Street, and he carried on there until his death in 1855. We learn too, from an earlier obituary notice, that his elder brother Thomas (1777-1845) 'was for the last 30 years foreman and principal carver at his brother Mr. Isaac Davies's manufactory, in King Street . . '. During these years we learn nothing of John except that he remained a bachelor until 1849 when, aged 34, he married. It seems highly likely that during the last ten years of his father's life John was playing a leading role in the firm, for this is the period covered by his notebook. John's skills were evidently recognised, for in 1855 he designed the two Gothic altar chairs for the newly-restored church at Llandeilo, where they can still be seen. (Figs. 11 & 12)

Following Isaac's death, although the firm was carried on by John apparently without a break, the stock-in-trade was put up for auction, and the advertisement entered in the Carmarthen Journal by 'Mr. Ben Jones, Auctioneer' lists a greatly increased and more varied stock (see Appendix II). This is to be expected, since the auctioneer's aim was to advertise and sell everything; even so, the greater diversity of materials (satin-wood, American birch and 'painted' furniture join the list) together with the variety of forms, such as '... four-post, Arabian, French and other bedsteads', etc., all '... executed with the highest style of finish, for which the Establishment is celebrated' indicates a substantial growth since 1833. It is not clear why the stock was put up for sale, in view of John's inheritance, nor is it known whether he bought it in or simply worked to build a new stock. However, in 1858 it is again up for auction, this time in John's name, 'in order to make room for alterations and improvements in his premises'. The whole is much as before, and described by Mr. George Goode, the auctioneer, as 'beautifully designed'. (Appendix III) This is the last advertisement found for the firm. Ten years later John is still at 53 High Street, but by 1871 he had moved, now aged 58, to 31 King Street, and is described as 'Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer and Licensed Victualler'. Thereafter, there are no more Census or Directory entries for him in Carmarthen. Within this long history, John's notebook gives us a vivid insight into some of the firm's products during eleven years, 1844-1855, with a small later group in 1858.

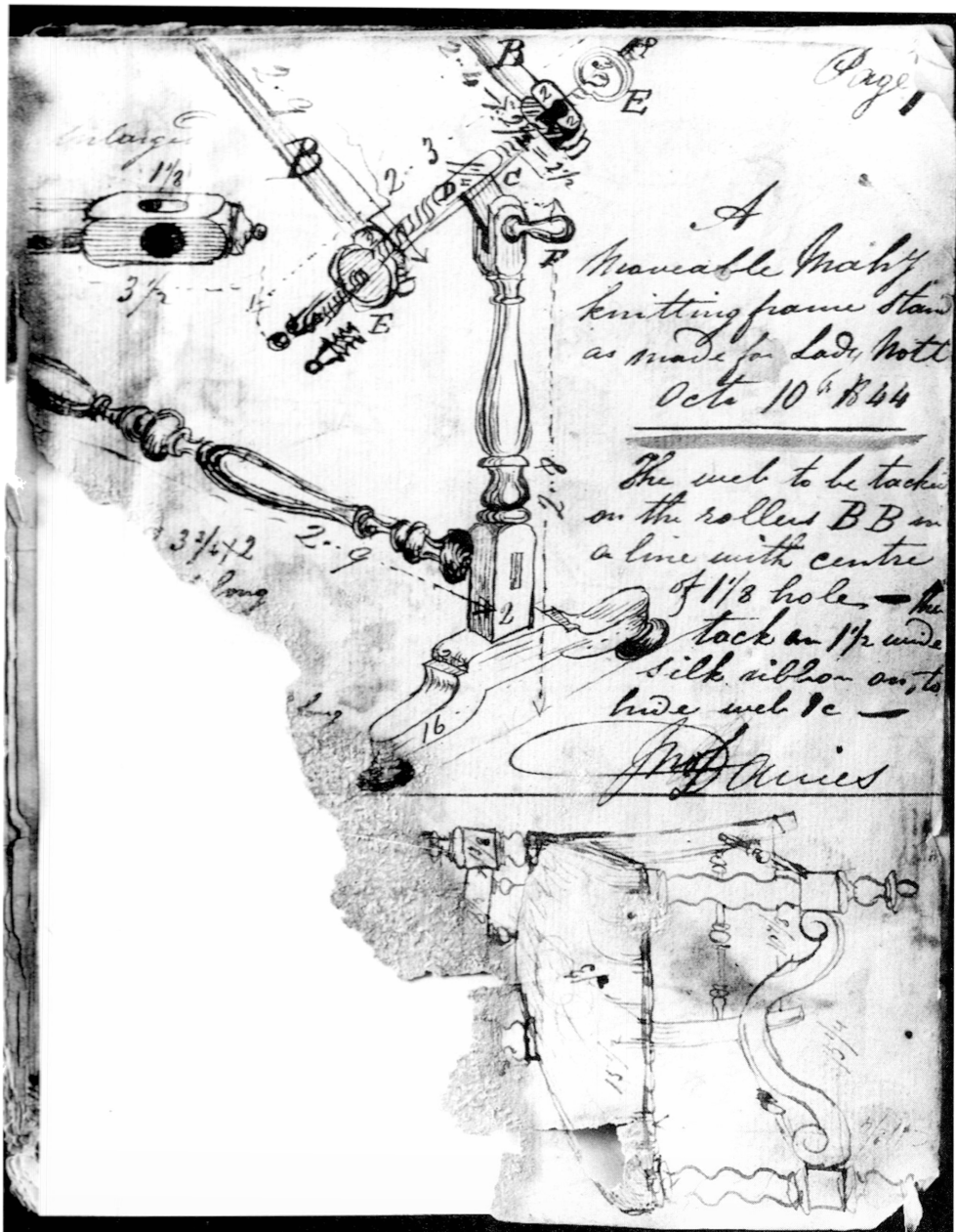
THE NOTEBOOK

The notebook is in the Carmarthen Record Office, Ref. Museum 528. It measures

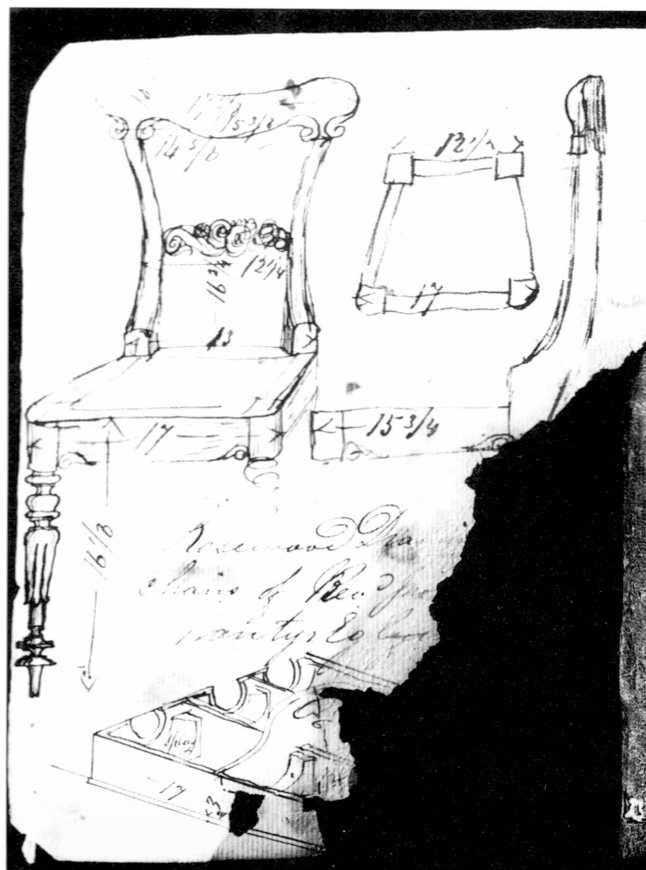
20cms. \times 17cms, and began life as a school exercise book, with pages full of 'Mensuration of Superficies rules and examples'. The inside cover of this part of the book is inscribed, in pencil, 'W. Thos. Davies, Henllan, Newcastle Emlyn'. This name is repeated beneath, followed in the same hand by 'R. G. (Thomas) Esq, Llysnewydd, Carmarthen'. R. Goring Thomas rented Llysnewydd for some years after 1840. Thomas Davies of Henllan was a land and estate agent in the Newcastle Emlyn area and would have been agent for the Llysnewydd Estate.²³ The 'mensuration' exercises would be appropriate to someone learning surveying. In 1848 the Davies firm made a 'Church stool' for Goring Thomas. (Fig. 5) The name Davies is so common that a family relationship cannot be assumed, but the fact that John acquired Thomas Davies's school book, and worked for his client, suggests at least a friendly, perhaps professional link.

From 1844, the notebook was filled from the other end with 42 pages of drawings by John Davies, ending in 1855. The intervening pages between this part and the end of the school work have been roughly torn out, but examination of the stubs indicates that they were not written on. The pieces of furniture which John illustrates are mostly things that were made to order by his firm for the local gentry and professional people. They include customer details and critical comments, and can be seen as his efforts to maintain and refine the most profitable and prestigious work where his talents as a designer, if he honed them, could secure him continuing gentry patronage. Full measurements and structural details are shown, enough in many cases to set out full-sized drawings or patterns for making the pieces. Other parts deal with various design elements, including sketches from current fashionable designer's work, which might be equally applicable to his production of ready-made stock. Considering the longevity of the firm, they must have traded successfully across a range of qualities and prices to survive in a competitive market. John exhibits considerable skill as a draughtsman, his style ranging from meticulous small drawings, sometimes crammed into the pages, to swift light sketches and firm detailed drawings in a thick pencil. His range covers both case furniture and small, unusual items, and he devotes parts of the book to making sketches from current fashionable designers' work.

Prices of items are usually expressed in code, either a straight alphabet-equivalent or a 'noughts and crosses' version, where X = 0. The pages illustrated cover most of the notebook, and every aspect of its contents, in their original sequence.

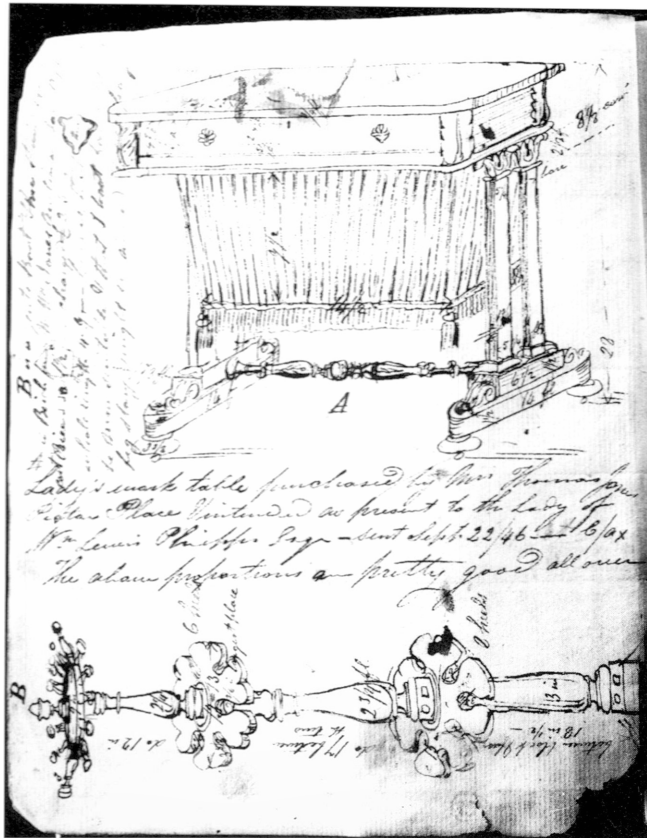


1. Two-thirds of this page are devoted to drawings of a 'Movable Mahy. Knitting frame stand as made for Lady Nott, Oct. 10th. 1844'. The design shows one of a pair of pedestals connected by a turned stretcher, as for a side-table, the tops adapted as shown to carry the adjustable frame. Measurements and instructions for tacking on the work are given. The design of this frame seems to be a standard one, and a similar example can be seen at Tredegar House, Newport, Gwent. Lady Nott is presumably the wife of Sir William Nott who, in 1844-5, commissioned the architect James Lewis Collard to build a new house on the site of the demolished 'Job's Well' on the Western outskirts of Carmarthen. He died before it was completed. The remaining third of this page is devoted to a horizontal sketch of a 'Jacobean' chair, but as a corner of the page is missing, only the lower part is seen; overstuffed seat, and spiral-turned front legs, connected by an arched stretcher with scrolled ends.



2. Most of this page is devoted to sketches of the front, side and seat plan of the 'Rosewood Drawing (Room) chairs of Revd. Jno. E (vans) Nantyreglwys'. These are fashionable light side-chairs with top rails carved with scrolls where they join the sides, a single scroll-carved cross-splat, and front legs turned and reeded. All dimensions are given: the seat height is $16\frac{1}{4}$ ", and width 17" at the front. The Reverend John Evans, 1784-1865, eldest son of David Evans of the Bear Inn, Carmarthen, bought the old house of Nantyreglwys, St. Clears, when he became vicar of Llanboidy in 1834. He improved and renovated it in 1854, and became Archdeacon of Carmarthen in 1858. At his death aged 81 in February, 1865, Nantyreglwys was described as an estate of 300 acres (*Carmarthen Journal*).

About a quarter of this page is missing, but below the chair drawings is a sketch of an open shallow box 17" long, divided centrally by a cross-handle. Each end is divided into three compartments, having $\frac{1}{4}$ -round holes in their outer ends, with blocks inside marked 'splay'. It is evidently a box for carrying six claret bottles, sloped ready to serve. Its inclusion with the Revd. Evans's chair suggests that it may have been his also.



3. This crowded page contains two drawings and notes, marked A and B. A is a 'Lady's work table purchased by Mrs. Thomas Jones Picton Place & intended as a present to the Lady of Wm. Lewis Phillips Esq. - sent Sept. 22/46 - C/ax. (£3/10 in code). The above proportions are pretty good all over'. The sketch shows an elegant work table. The frieze has a drawer and acanthus-carved corners, with a pleated silk work bag beneath, fringed bottom edge and tassels at each corner. The ends are composed of paired flat pillars with Grecian foliate capitals, standing on plain bases; the brackets are plain, with rounded ends, and scrolled decorations at the base ends. The feet are turned, with casters, and the two ends are connected by a turned stretcher. All measurements are given: overall, $30\frac{1}{2}''$ high and $14''$ deep; the length measurement is obscured. There is no mention of the wood used.

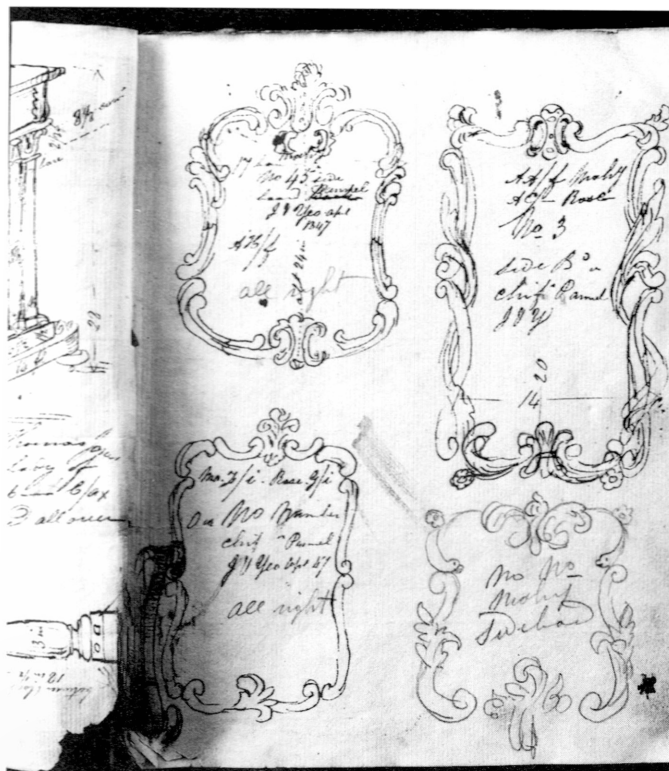
The recipient was Mary E. Jenkins, daughter of the vicar of Meidrim, who married William Lewis Phillips Esq. on 27th August 1846. The work table, sent on 22nd September, was a present from her aunt.

William Lewis Phillips was the nephew of Wm. Phillips of Cilrhenin, a timber merchant, who bought Clyn Gwyn, an old farmhouse at Llanboidy. He died unmarried, leaving the house to William, who incorporated it into a new mansion which he built in the 1850s. He took the name Lewis Phillips with his inheritance, dying there in 1895. The house was sold out of the family in 1974.¹⁴

B is 'A Gents Boot and Shoe stand executed in Birch for Mr. Wm. Jones Auctioneer Jan 12/48. Cost Price . . . charged £2-5. Whole length 4-9- blackened be more suitable & that 1 boot fan or 1 shoe peg story might be added if necessary'.

It appears to be a neat adaptation of the type of cloak stand illustrated in *Ackermann's Repository* (1809-28), Plate 124. The base is a four-footed platform, supporting a baluster-turned centre column; Ackermann's 'upper circle' with holes to accommodate umbrellas is replaced by a 'Boot Fan', a circle with heel-slots cut into it to receive eight boots, upside down of course. A second fan above it has six slots, and Ackermann's four turned hat-pegs at the top are replaced by a 'shoe peg story', a disc with fourteen radial pegs to hang shoes on. In its illustrated form, without the additional fan or shoe story mentioned, it holds seven pairs of boots and seven pairs of shoes. The legend is obscure in places, but it was probably made in birch, dyed black.

'Wm. Jones Auctioneer' is still obscure.

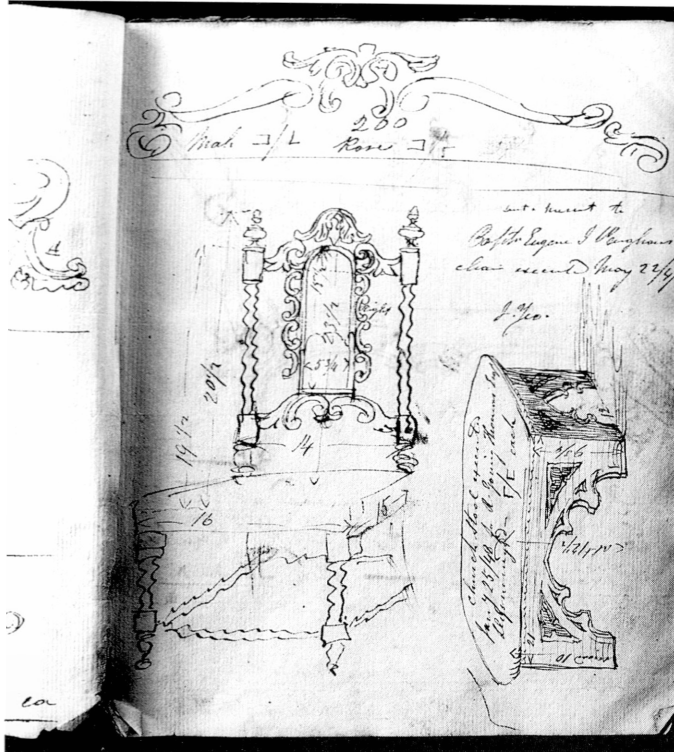


4. This page shows four sketches of carved mouldings to plant on the edges of the framed panels of sideboard or chiffonier doors. Prices are given in code (actual figures in brackets), with alternatives for rosewood and mahogany, and numbers are given also.

All are of scrolling Rococo form, and have details written in them, as follows:

'17	'AA/F Mahy	(11/6)
No 45 side	AC/Rose	(13/-)
board panel	No 3	
J V Yeo Apl		
1847	Side Bd or	
	Chf Panel'	
AB/f (12/6)	J V Y'	
all right'		
<hr/>		
'Ma F/i (6/1) Rose G/i (7/1)	'No N.	
Our No Number	Mahy	
	Sideboard'.	
J V Yeo Apr 47		
all right'.		

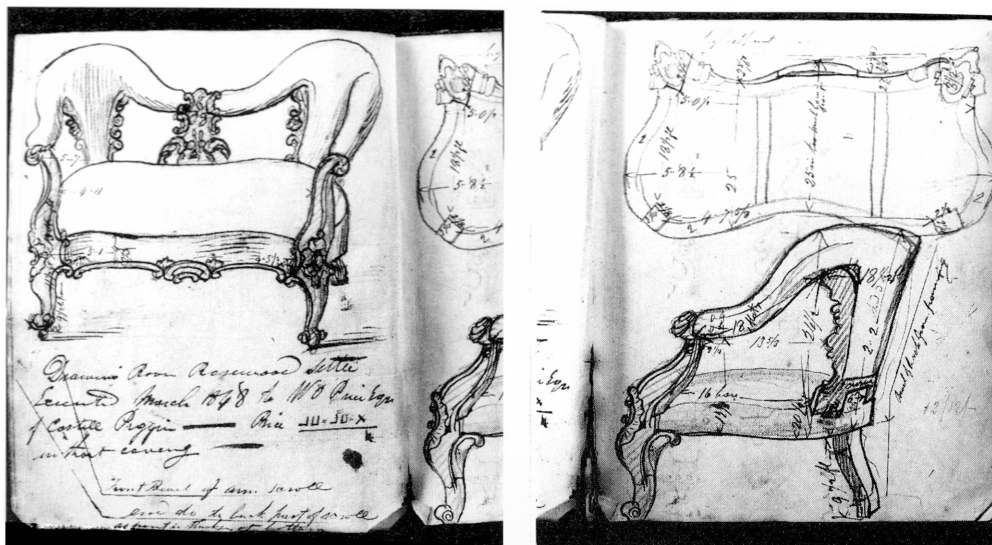
The numbers given are not in any sequence. One is marked 'Our no number' and another simply 'No number'. It seems that the numbered ones are copied from a catalogue, the key here being the 'J. V. Yeo', or 'J. V. Y.', identified as a hardware factor at 45 Edmund Street, Birmingham, 1852 to 1860 in trade directories. Thomas Jenkins, cabinet maker, of Llandeilo 'ordered ironmongery of Joseph Yeo, Birmingham' in December 1850,¹ and the close dating with the Davies sketches suggests a firm working the area. This evidence for the availability of ready-made carved ornaments is significant. On one hand, it indicates that the Davies's made fashionable furniture at different levels of quality, because they would hardly have put standard ornaments onto their best pieces. On the other hand, the availability of such ornaments must have contributed greatly to the standardisation of middle-grade fashionable furniture design throughout Britain. The 'Our No Number' is also marked 'J. V. Yeo Apl 47' and 'All right'. This suggests that Yeo may have made it up to Davies's design, with satisfactory results. There are two further pages of these designs, including some for sideboard backs as well. Comments on some of them are 'this bottom ought to be kept for a top', etc., indicating that they might be cut up, presumably where the scrolls meet, and used in a variety of ways.



5. At the top of this page is another catalogue drawing, a continuation from the previous page (not illustrated) showing one of the sideboard backs, No. '200 Mah (4/3) Rose (4/9)'. The prices are given in 'noughts and crosses' code. Most of this page is occupied by two drawings. The first is a sketch of an overstuffed 'Jacobean' side-chair, with spiral-turned legs, stretchers and back sides; the back panel, presumably also stuffed, is framed with a foliate cresting rail and lower rail, and side rails decorated with C-scrolls. The legend reads: 'sent a(s) present to . . .' and 'Batchr Eugene J. Vaughan's chair executed May 22/47'. The name 'J. Yeo' appears here, but presumably refers to the preceding sideboard backs. Eugene J. Vaughan is possibly a grandson of Eugene Vaughan, J.P., High Sheriff of Carmarthenshire in 1746, a spendthrift who lost his estate, Plas Gwyn, Llandyfaelog. He had fourteen children by two wives.

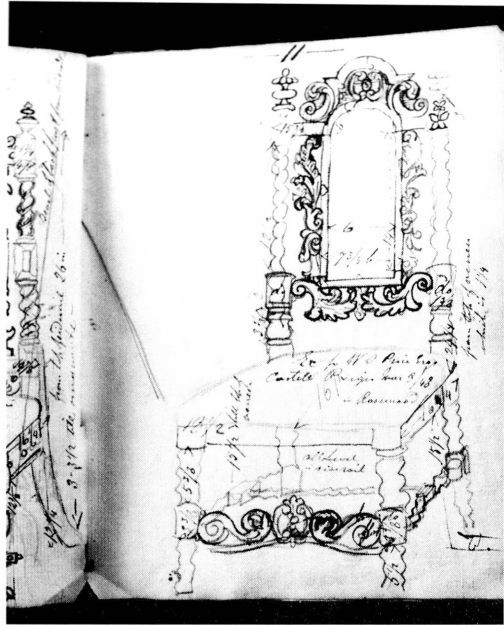
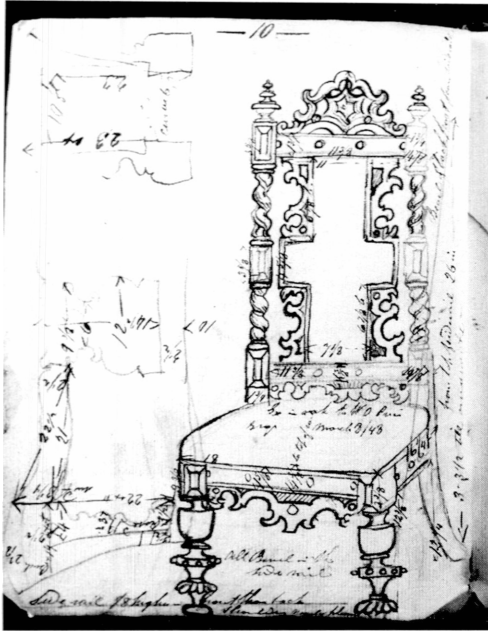
The second drawing is a low gothic kneeling stool, apparently made from four boards mitred round like a box, and shaped to form four cusped arches with recessed spandrel panels. The top overlaps the sides, and is overstuffed. The legends reads:

'Church stool executed Jan 'y 25/48. R. Goring Thomas Esq., Llysnewydd 9/6 each' (price in code).

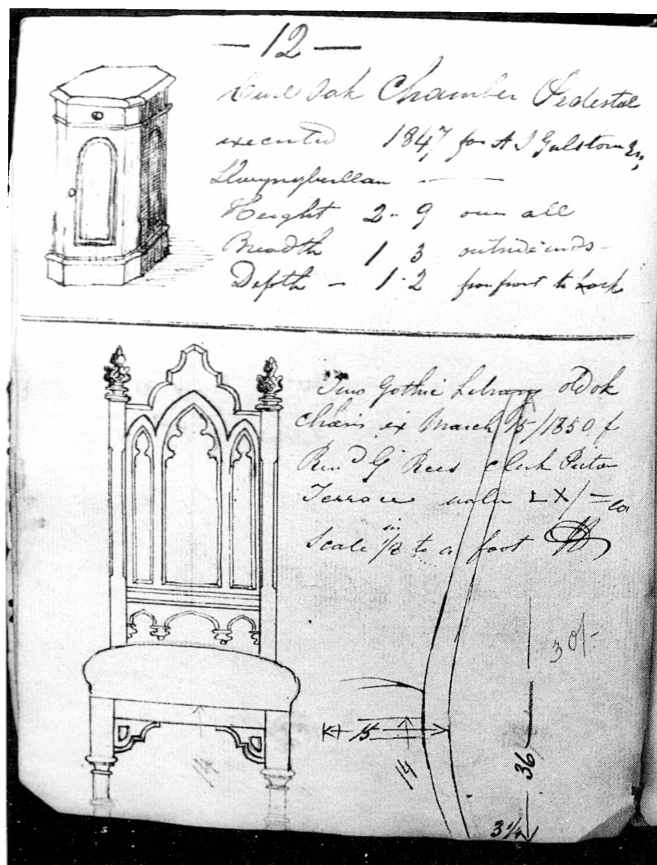


6. & 7. Both these pages are taken up with three drawings of a 'Drawing Room Rosewood Settee Executed March 1848 for W. O. Price Esq. of Castell Piggyn — Price £12-12-0 (in code) in (that) covering'. The drawings show a chair-back settee with a carved central back support, scroll arms and feet, decorated with cabochons on the knees, and a box-stuffed seat edged in front with a scrolled bead. It is shown in front and side elevations; a third drawing shows the plan of the seat-frame, leg tops and cross-rails. All measurements and angles are given.

Castell Piggyn stood on a wooded slope at Abergwili, near Carmarthen. A house was known there from the 16th century, but a new mansion was built on the site in 1711 by John Griffiths of Dryslwyn. It became a ruin after standing empty because of legal wrangles in the late 18th century, and was bought in 1831 by W. O. Price, a successful lawyer. In 1831/2 he built a new mansion close to the old one, which he pulled down. The new house is recorded as having a large double-drawing-room with folding doors, etc. on the first floor, and fifteen bedrooms on the second floor. Gutted by fire in 1970, it was demolished in 1981. John Davies enjoyed a continuing relationship with W. O. Price, making furniture and fitting up Venetian blinds, (see Fig. 28) his only known departure from pure furniture-making.



8. & 9. This pair of pages starts with a fourth drawing of W. O. Price's settee, this time an outline of the back framing, showing measurements and structure. The rest of the space is taken up by two handsome 'Jacobean' overstuffed side-chairs, the first 'executed in oak for W. O. Price Esq., March 8/48'. The first features Elizabethan strapwork ornament; the twist-turned sides end at top and bottom with squares worked as sunk fielded panels. A third panel in the centre is matched by a projection of the back, which is thus almost cruciform in shape. The whole is elaborate but well balanced, and perhaps unusual in that there are no stretchers and the back legs are plain and swept like a contemporary side-chair. The second has rococo scrolls and foliation, also with spiral turned sides, and is inscribed 'Ex for W. O. Price Esq Castell Prigin Mar 8/48 in Rosewood'. This one has a deep, foliate front stretcher, the others and the back legs being worked as spirals, consistent with the upper parts of the chair.



10. This page has two drawings, the first of a chamber pedestal cupboard, rectangular with canted corners, the door with an arched panel, the frieze with a front drawer, and a plain plinth. It is described as a 'Curl Oak Chamber Pedestal executed 1847 for A. J. Gulston Esq. Llwynberllan'. The measurements are given, 2' 9", 1' 3" wide, 1' 2" deep.

Alan James Gulston bought Llwynberllan from George Peel in 1852, but the date of this piece suggests that he may have lived there before, possibly as a tenant. In 1859 he made extensive alterations, and changed the name to Dirleton. The term 'curl oak' occurs also in Isaac Davies's sale advertisements (see Appendices I and II), and presumably refers to a burr. The term 'British Oak' appears in other advertisements and this also seems to be a burr.¹⁴ It is presumably the only way that native oak was used in cabinet furniture, apart perhaps from 'wainscot' grown on light soils in Britain.

The second drawing shows one of 'Two Gothic Library Oak Chairs ex March 15/1850 for Revd. G. Rees clerk Picton Terrace 30/- ea' (price in code) and a scale of 1/8" to the foot.

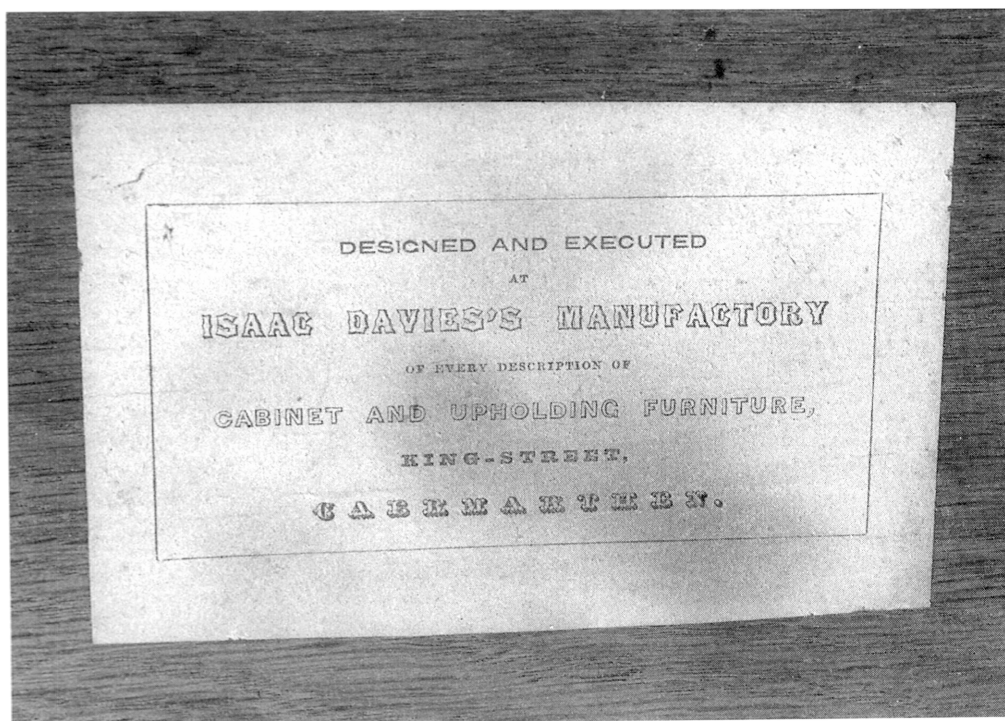
The chair is of simple, elegant gothic form, reminiscent of the 18th century. The back is in the form of a three-opening window, with cusped arches. The overall height is 36", and the seat 14" to the top of the front rail, beneath the overstuffed top. The Rev. G. Rees remains obscure so far.



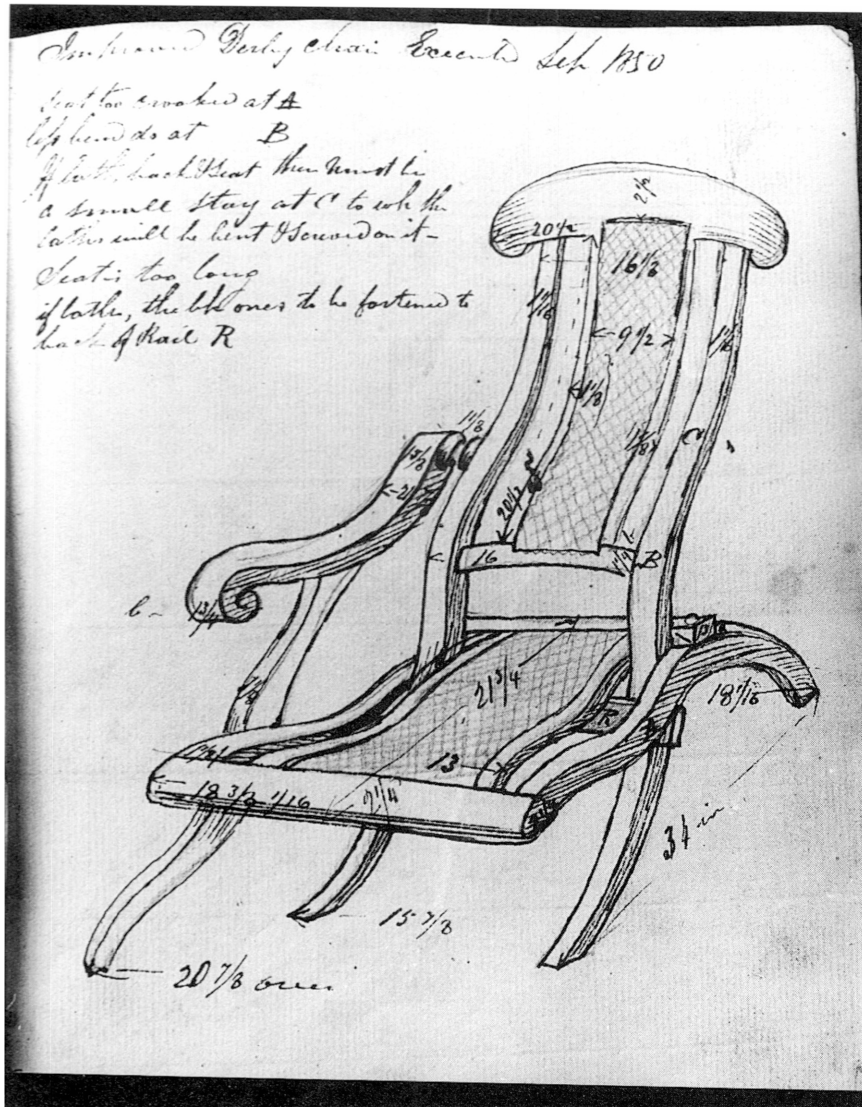
11. Contrasting with the comfortable domestic gothic chair above is this actual piece, one of a pair of majestic altar chairs made in 1850 for Llandeilo Church, restored by Gilbert Scott. The commission was recorded in the *Carmarthen Journal* with John¹¹ as the designer, although his father still had five years to live. The date 1850 is carved inside the back seat rails, and both chairs have Isaac Davies's label. (see Fig. 12)

The chairs are of great size, 173cms. high and 77cms. wide, made in heavy, straight-grained native oak, with boarded seats. The front legs are of octagonal section, as are the arm supports, which have foliate bases reflecting the carving of the three back finials. The back is much more elaborate than the Rev. Rees's chair, with deeper mouldings and recessed panels around all the spaces, and the sides project upwards to form crocketed spires.

Apart from the Davies connection, these chairs are two of a growing number of signed or labelled 19th century Gothic chairs found in churches. Links between fixed woodwork decoration and loose furniture of the 16th and 17th centuries have been much explored by furniture historians, but the 19th century has so far been neglected in this respect.



12. Isaac Davies's label, beneath the seat of one of the Llandeilo chairs described in Fig. 11.



13. This page is taken up entirely with a fine measured sketch of an 'Improved Derby Chair Executed Sept 1850'.

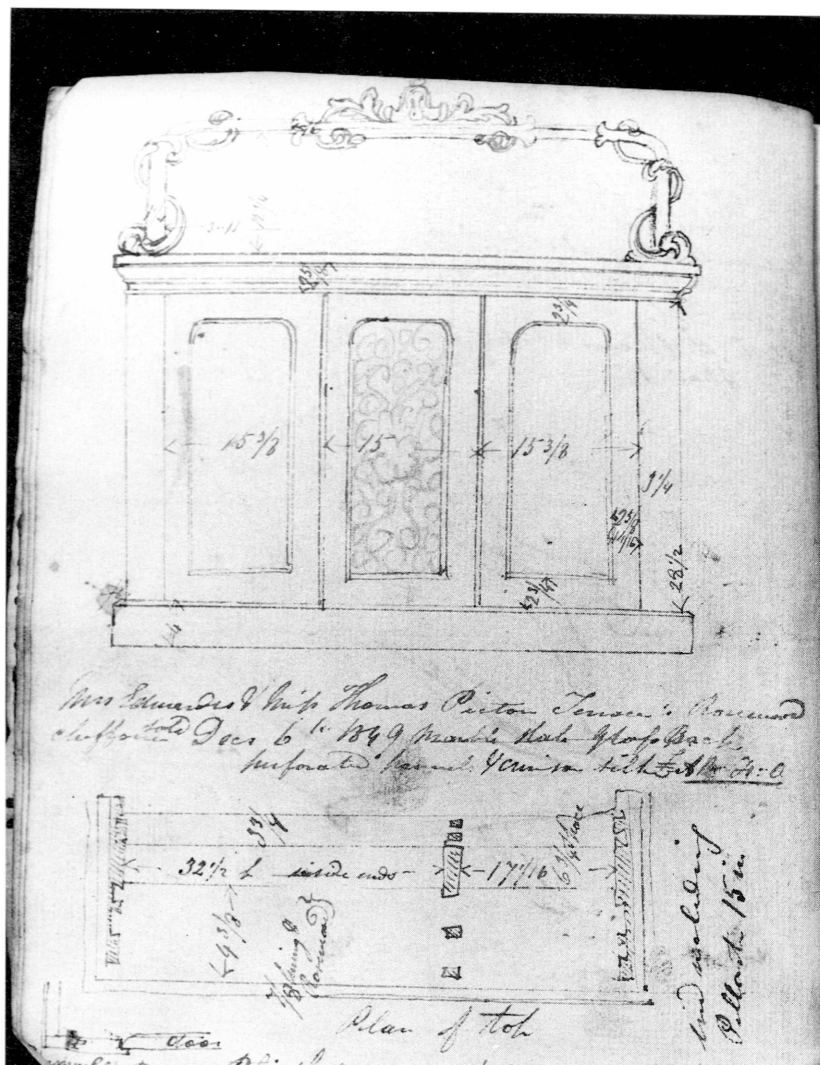
This is the standard 'Derby', later called a 'Steamer' folding chair, drawn without the left arm, for clarity. Its construction is standard, so the 'improved' may apply to the shaping of the seat-rails and the back, which has a central padded panel, and a generous lumbar curve at the bottom. John makes critical comments, as follows:

'Seat too crooked at A (the side rails, close to the back) less bend do at B (less lumbar curve)

If lath back and seat there must be a small stay at C (across the middle of the back) to which the laths must be bent and screwed on it (presumably to ensure that they would hold their curved shape).

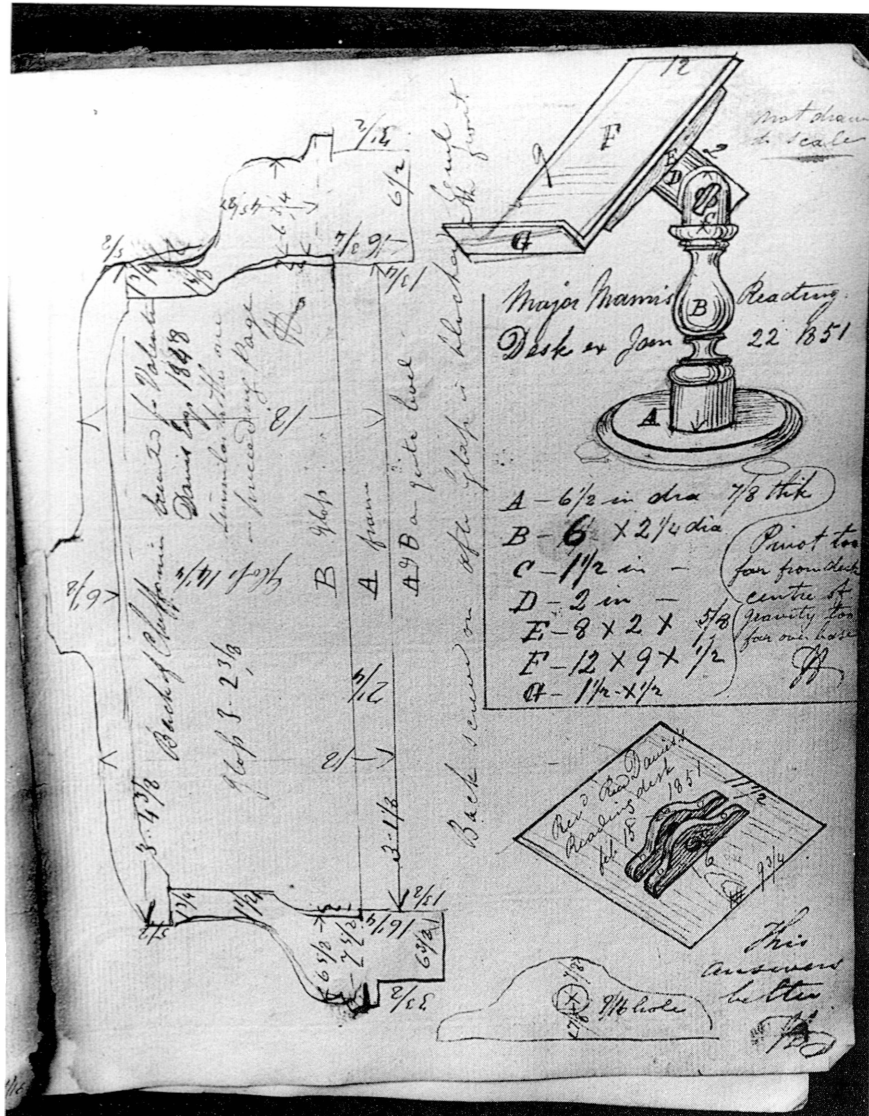
Seat is too long if laths (the seat) the bk ones to be fastened to the back of rail R'.

No customer is mentioned for this chair. It seems very likely that it was a ready-made item.



14. This page is occupied by two drawings of 'Mrs. Edwards and Miss Thomas Picton Terrace's Rosewood Chiffonier sold Dec 6th 1849 Marble Slab Glass Back perforated panel crimson silk £4 04 0'.

The top drawing shows the elevation: the cupboard base stands on a plinth, with pilasters at the ends. The doors on either side have radiused top corners to the panels, so does the central fixed frame and panel. This is shown sketchily as perforated, no doubt backed by the crimson silk. There is a moulded frieze, without drawers, and the mirror back is framed with restrained foliate decoration. The lower drawing shows the plan of the top without the slab, revealing the dovetailing of the two boards forming the top supports, and the mortising of the one vertical interior division. A second tiny sketch shows the hanging method for the doors, on centre-pin hinges, the door stiles closing behind the rebated pilasters. Full measurements are given: 32 1/4" high to the cupboard top, 3' 11" long, 15" deep, and detailed measurements of all parts. Eight years previously, the 1841 Census gives us, in Picton Terrace: Maria Thomas, aged 70: Elinor Thomas, 35; Maria Thomas, 30: Sarah Thomas, 25: and Mary Rowlands, companion.

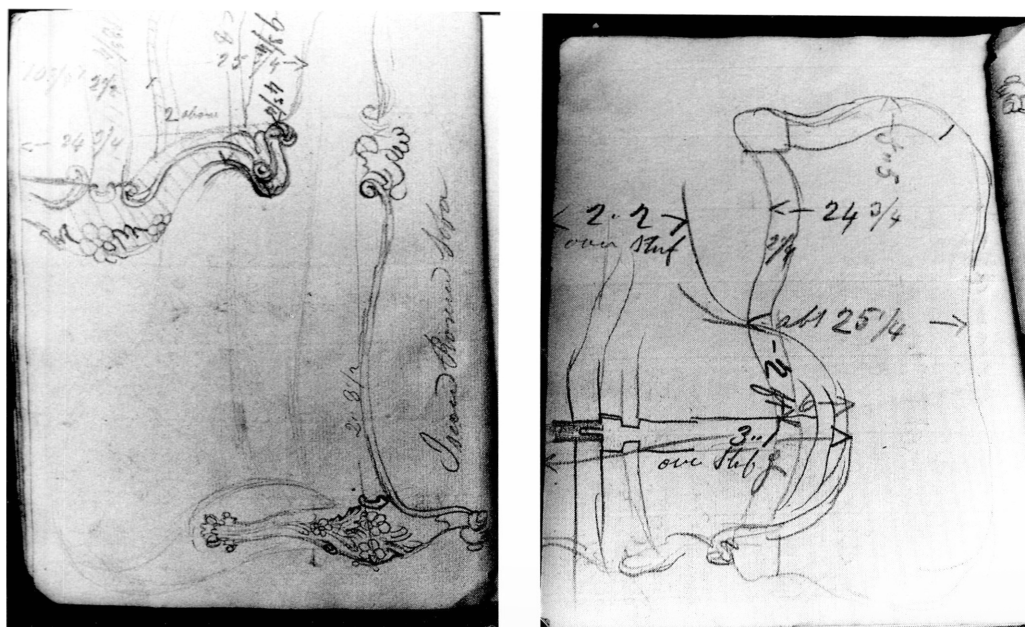


15. The left side of this page is filled with a drawing of the back framing of the top of a chiffonier, with detailed measurements of every part, inscribed: 'Back of Chiffonier executed for Valentine Davies Esq. 1848. Similar to the one on the preceding page'. The construction appears to be standard: a heavy lower rail to support the mirror plate is joined to the sides, which project downwards to form lugs which can be screwed into the base. The back rail of the top (previous page) is set in to allow for this. Below the drawing, John Davies has written 'Back screwed on after Glass is blocked . . . at front'. These drawings, with their notes and comprehensive measurements, show that John was concerned to absorb every working detail of many of the pieces he drew. Valentine Davies was a solicitor in Carmarthen.

The right side of the page shows a sketch of 'Major Morris's Reading Desk ex Jan 22 1851. Not drawn to scale'.

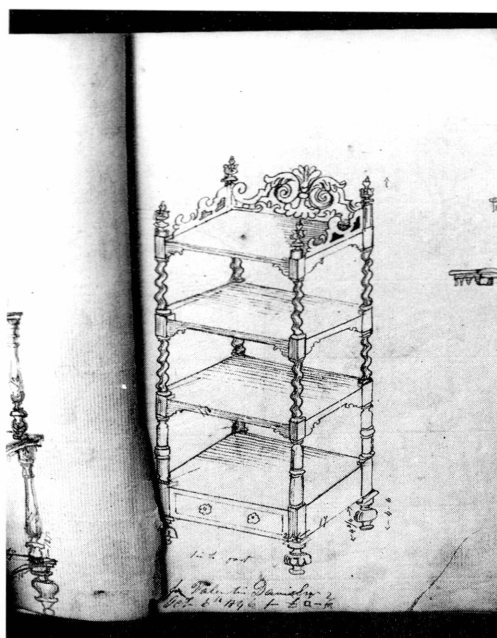
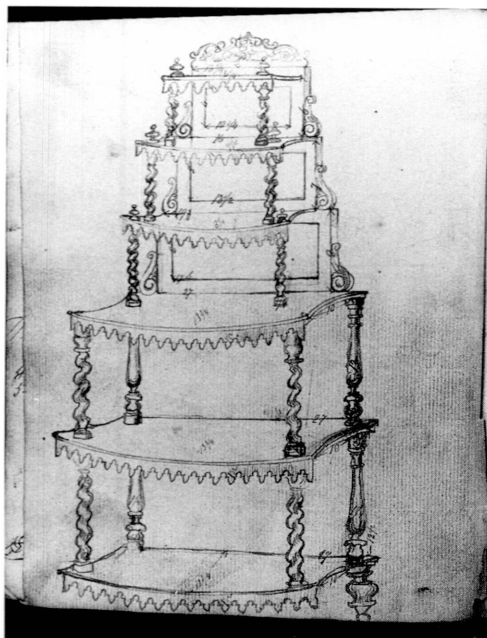
This is a table-top reading stand, a baluster-turned pillar on a circular base, connected to the desk top by a short arm and a thumb-screw. This enables the angle of the desk to be adjusted. John comments, however: 'Pivot too far from desk. Centre of gravity too far over base'. As usual, all measurements are given, in this case by lettering the various parts and providing a key beneath the drawing.

Major Morris's book may have fallen into his soup, but presumably the 'Rev. Richd. Davies' fared better, for below the major's piece is a drawing of the underside of a reading-desk which connects directly to the pillar top. It is inscribed: 'Rev. Richd. Davies's reading desk Feb 15 1851', and beside it the comment, 'This answers better'.



16. & 17. This double spread is occupied by four sketches of parts of the 'Iscoed Rosewood Sofa'. The form of this piece appears to be the same as the chair-back settee made for W. O. Price (Figs. 6 and 7). Two drawings show front and side elevations of the scroll feet, with knee ornaments of flowers, foliage and C-scrolls, and the centre ornament of the front apron. Two more show some of the framing of the seat and one chair-end; all have measurements pencilled in. This drawing has more the character of an on-site sketch, and there are no customer details, so it may be a drawing made for reference of a piece not made by the Davieses. The structural details would be exposed if the piece were being re-upholstered. The framing is carefully measured, and structural details studied. They conform to standard practice of the time."

Iscoed is a fine brick-built mansion house built in 1772 by Sir William Mansel, sold in 1804 to Sir Thomas Picton, in whose family it remained until 1917. It stands on a hill on the East bank of the Towy estuary, and is now derelict.



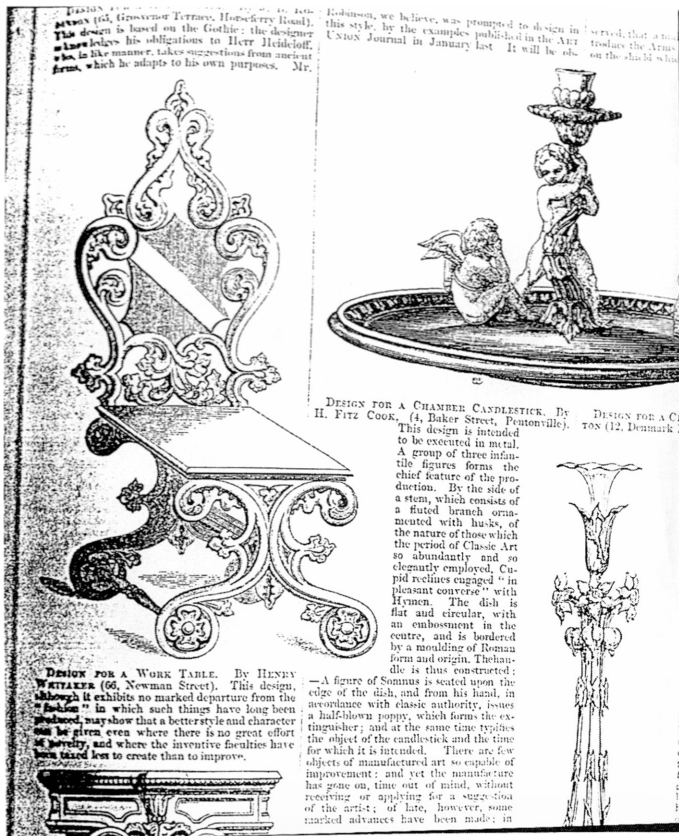
18. & 19. This double page shows a set of wall-hanging shelves and a whatnot, both presumably 'for Valentine Davies Esq. Oct 6th 1846'. A price is given for the whatnot but is obscure. It may be '£5-9'. The wall shelves have six graduated stages connected in front by spiral-turned columns. The two lower, highest shelves are connected at the back by baluster-turned and carved pillars with drop-finials beneath, but the three smaller upper stages are connected by frames and panels, decorated at the sides by voluted brackets, and finished at the top with a scrolled cresting. There is mention of a 'nut' beneath the bottom shelf front columns (see drawing on the right) which indicates that the columns were connected through the shelves by turned threads, as in the best work of this sort. All the shelves have concave sides and convex fronts, which are decorated with a fretted edging. On the right-hand page is a small side elevation of the four upper stages of the piece. It seems that it would have needed a bracket support beneath when hung on a wall. The whatnot itself is straightforward: four stages, the bottom with a drawer. It has turned and carved feet, and top finials resembling those on the firm's Gothic chairs (see Figs. 10 and 11). The top gallery has low carved sides reflecting an 'Elizabethan' style, and a high back with double foliate volutes, etc.



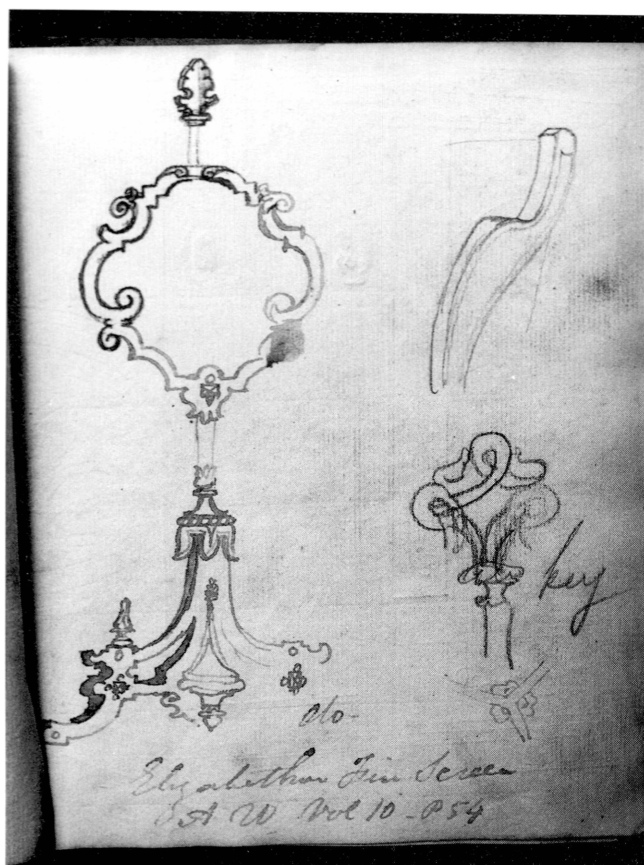
20. The drawing is the first of John Davies's copies of other designer's work. It shows a 'Gothic Hall Chair, des by B. J. Robinson 66 Grosvenor Terrace, Horseferry Road, London. A.U. Vol 10, p. 13 —1848'. The chair is constructed on the principle of a front and back frame, connected by turned stretchers. Both front and back are scrolled, with oak-leaf decoration. The source of this design is an engraving appearing in the *Art Union Journal* in 1848. It is one of a number of designs of decorative arts items (including a work-table by Henry Whittaker of 66 Newman Street) engraved in response to an announcement, whereby:

'DESIGNERS FOR MANUFACTURERS, and matters connected with Decorative and Ornamental Art, are informed that the Conductors of the ART-UNION JOURNAL will be willing to purchase, at liberal prices, such Designs as they may invent or adapt, with a view to engraving them as suggestions or models; the Artist so designing, and so recompensed for his talent and labour, having no after-control over his production . . . and become the common property of any manufacturers who desire to adopt them' . . . 'Hitherto, we have been satisfied to FOLLOW the manufacturer whom we shall now aim to LEAD . . .'

John Davies has responded by sketching B. J. Robinson's 'Gothic Hall chair' for future use. The Art Union acknowledges Robinson's 'obligations to Herr Heideloff, who, in like manner, takes suggestions from ancient forms . . . Mr. Robinson, we believe, was prompted to design in this style by the example published in the *Art-Union Journal* in January last'. John's sketch omits two corner ornaments on the back. He gives measurements, being the dimensions of the engraving, to assist in re-creating its correct proportions.

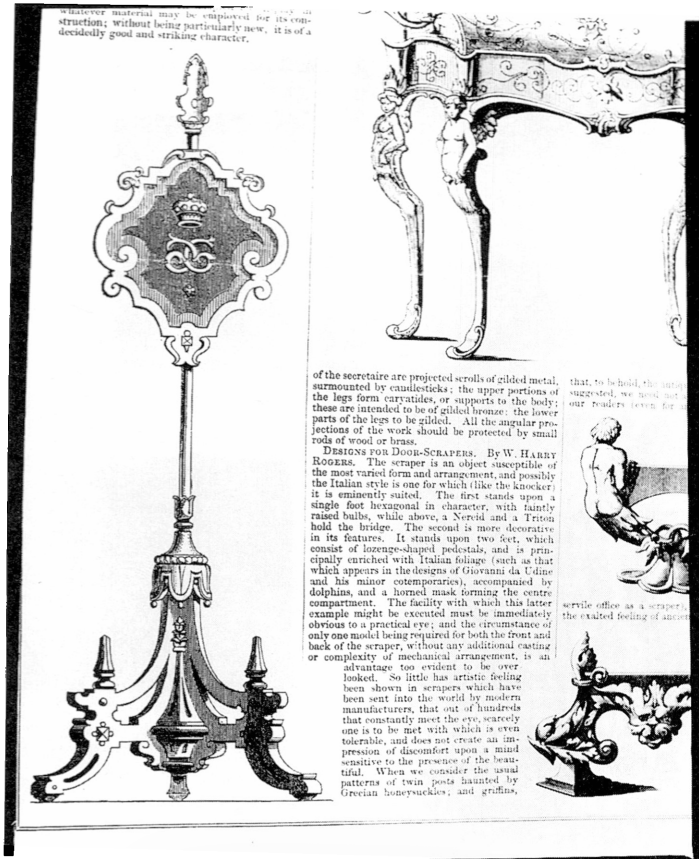


21. The *Art Union* engraving, the original of the above sketch. From a study of the engraving, it seems very likely that this chair was designed to be cast in iron, with a screwed-on wooden seat. Its whole construction suggests this, particularly the delicacy of the back support, which appears also to be continuous with the under-framing of the back, and the thin rod-like stretchers. There was a thriving ironworks in Carmarthen, but to date no locally-produced designs have been identified.

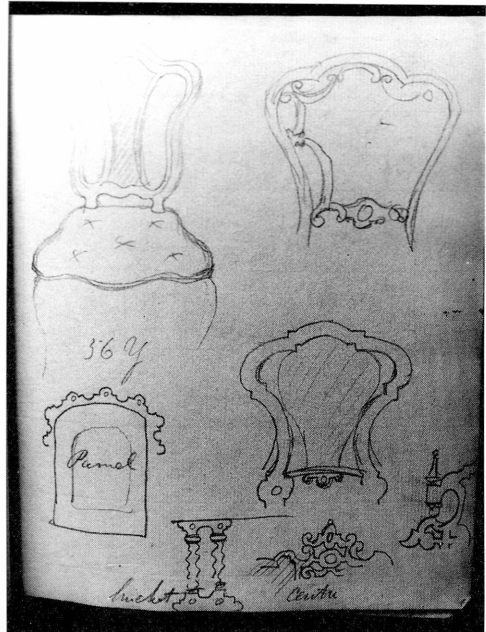
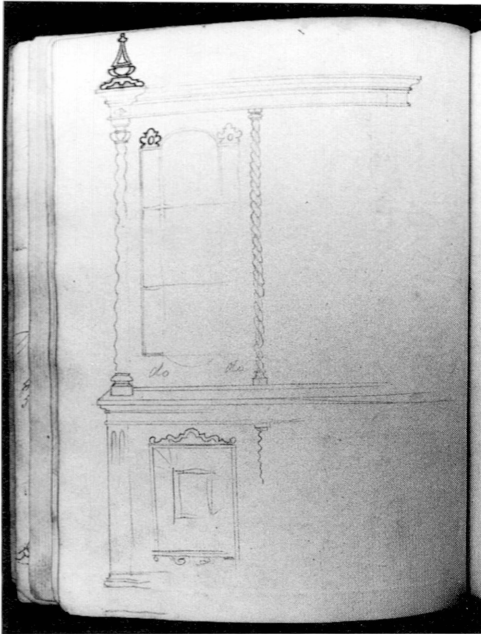


22. This drawing shows an 'Elizabethan Fire Screen. A.U. Vol 10 p. 54', another piece from the *Art Union* journal. The screen frame is reminiscent of Elizabethan strapwork, and the tripod base is in the same pseudo-tradition. On the same page is a rough sketch of the head of a key, and a light sketch of the right arm of a 'Glastonbury' folding chair.

The pole fire-screen is another design by H. Whittaker (66 Newman Street), forming part of a further collection of designs. The text describes it as '... without being entirely new, it is of a decidedly good and striking character'. The drawings preceding and following these sketches are dated 1846 and 1852 respectively, so it seems likely that John Davies's drawings were contemporary.



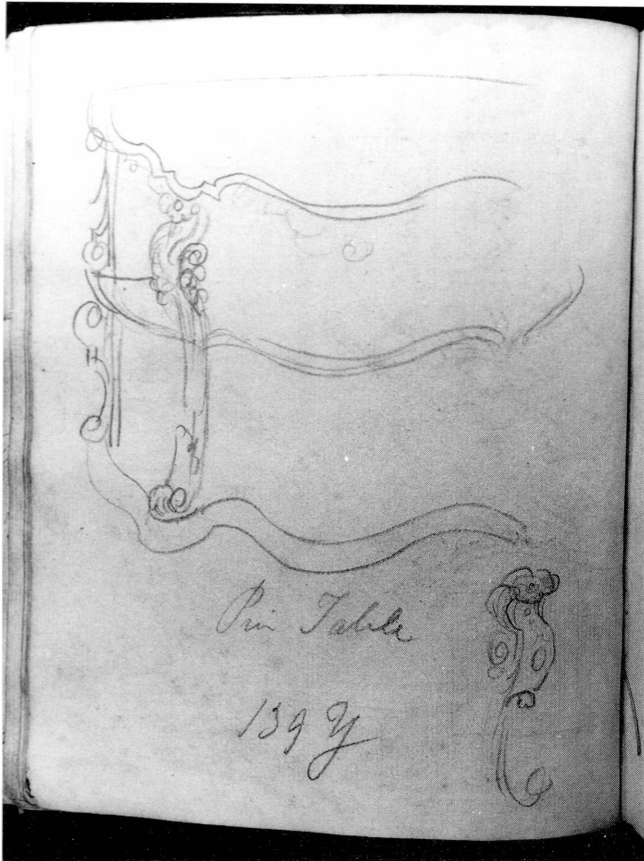
23. The Art Union engraving of the pole screen.



24. & 25. Part of the notebook at this point is taken up by 'Designs by Henry Wood', starting on the previous page (not illustrated). The source is Henry Wood's 'Designs for Furniture', an ephemeral style book of the 1850s, from which John Davies sketched a variety of designs and details.

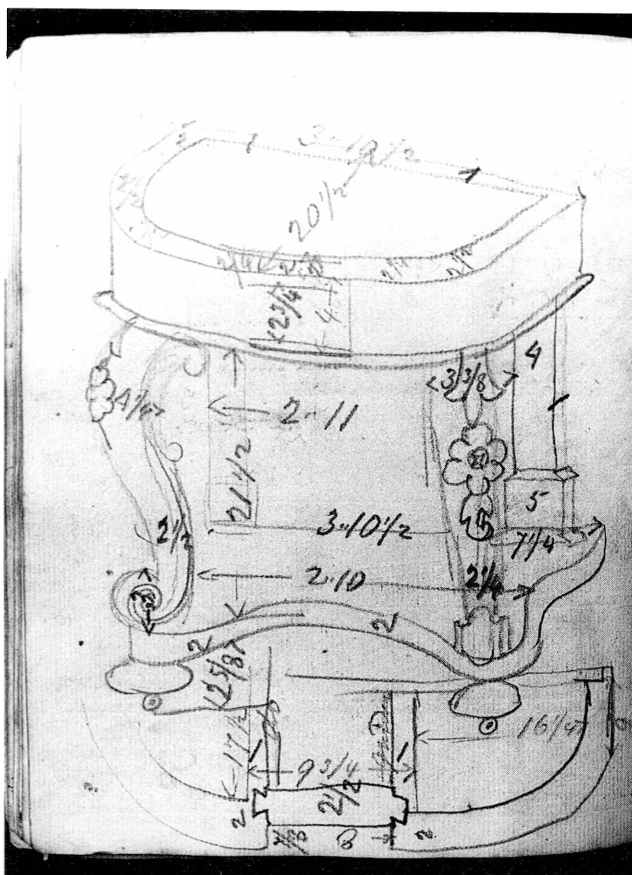
Fig. 24 is a sketch from Henry Wood page 11, a glazed bookcase on a cupboard; spiral turning, reeding, and 'Elizabethan' finials and ornament.

Fig. 25 is a page of sketches from Wood: three drawing-room chair-backs (Page 21, nos. 1 and 3; page 23, no. 2), and a panel, top-shelf support bracket, back centre ornament, and back side ornament, all from a sideboard bookcase, page 31. John Davies shows a continuing preference for the 'Elizabethan' detail in Wood's designs. Other pages, not illustrated, show sketches of beds (Wood, page 5); a 'Jacobean' stool (page 9), and four sketches of bracket-ends for occasional tables (page 91, complete). These sketches can be dated to 1855 from another drawing adjoining them in the notebook, and represent John Davies's need to keep up-to-date with contemporary fashion.

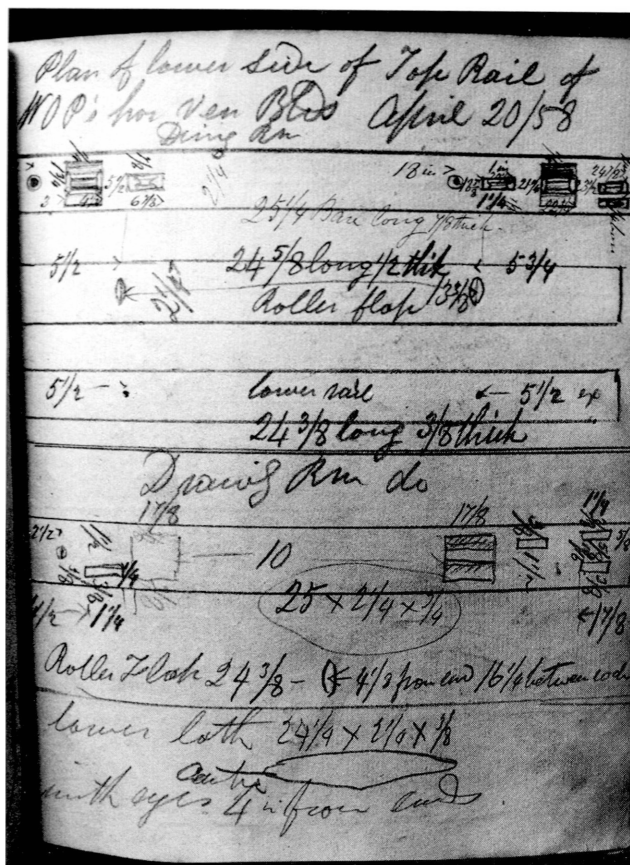


26. This page is occupied by one of John Davies light sketches, unmeasured, giving a free but graphic idea of design, in this case a 'Pier Table'. It shows the left side of a serpentine table on a plinth base, with a centre shelf, supported on scrolled outer corners with foliate knees and scroll feet, and inner corners decorated with brackets showing 'Elizabethan' detailing. Presumably, as for the Iscoed sofa (Figs. 16 and 17) a style rather than constructional record of a piece not made by his firm.

The last five pages of the notebook appear to represent a group of work done for W. O. Price of Castell Piggin. All are drawn in the same way, heavy pencil sketches with measurements written in boldly. The second is dated 1858, so they appear to be a separate group, drawn three years after the main part of the notebook was finished.

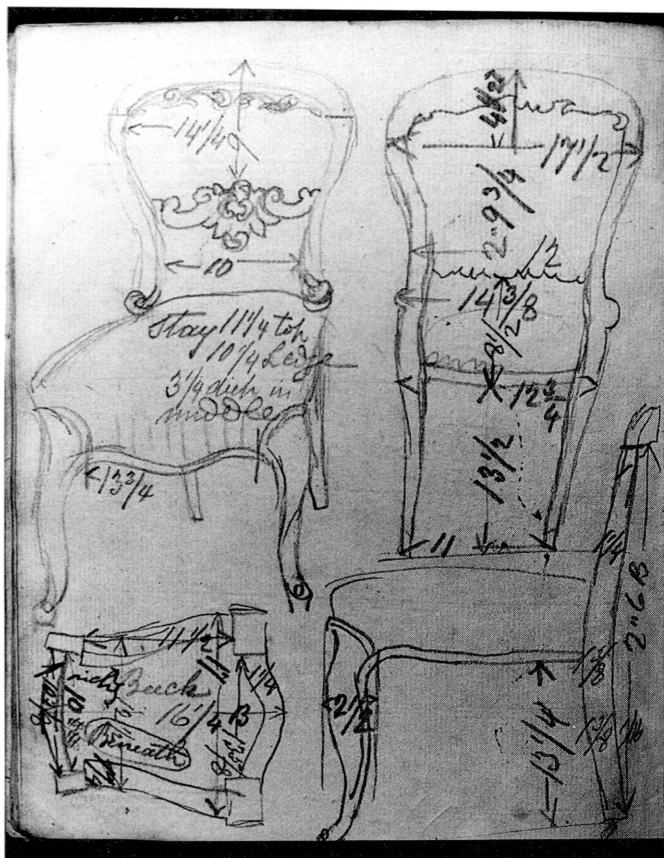


27. This shows a sketch of a half-round pier table with a slab top, presumably marble, which has been lifted off to show the construction. The table has a plinth with concave sweeps at the front and ends, and stands on casters within 'bun' feet. The front corner supports are cabriole, with scroll feet and knees carved with a flower and foliage; the back legs are in the form of pilasters with plinths, to stand flat against the wall. The frieze, which is plain, has a small centre drawer, and John Davies has been at pains to show the drawer runners and the rail dovetailed across the top, to give strength to the frieze.



28. This drawing, on the opposite page to the pier table, is the only item in the notebook not concerned with loose furniture, being a 'Plan of lower side of Top Rail of WOP's (.) Ven Blds. April 20/58. Dining Rm'.

There follow diagrammatic sketches of the parts of a set of Venetian blinds, and a second set marked 'Drawing-Room Do'.



29. This, the last page in the notebook, contains four drawings showing a contemporary style 'ballon-back' drawing-room chair with 'Louis' cabriole front legs. The back sides are carved with scrolls at seat level, while the cresting-rail has foliage carved along its bottom edge. The cross-splat is carved with a central piercing flanked by C-scrolls and foliage. A plan of the seat rails shows the front boldly swept outwards, and the sides and back gently curved. Again, it is drawn firmly with all measurements given, and 'beech' is given for the seat-frame wood, presumably 'clamped' on the outside with mahogany or rosewood. Preceding this page are two rough drawings, not illustrated, of a 'Tudorethan' arm-chair.

The picture that emerges from the details found of the firm of Isaac and, later, John Davies is that of a successful, long-lived business offering contemporary fashionable furniture of a high standard throughout its unusually long life of 46 years or more. A very few other references indicate broader activities: hence, in 1838 and 1843 Thomas Jenkins, cabinet maker, of Llandeilo bought mahogany from Isaac, indicating that he may also have dealt in this essential material.²⁹ It is likely, too, that ours is the 'Mr. Jno. Davies, cabinet maker' who in 1855 assisted in the making of an inventory and valuation of Jenkins's deceased aunt's possessions.³⁰ Clerical work of this sort was a natural and profitable progression for a cabinet maker, usually linked to undertaking as well. We know too that, from before 1871, John Davies was combining the cabinet trade with inn keeping. It is possible that he had ceased to manufacture by that time, since pure retailers were sometimes described as cabinet-makers.³¹

The status of the family, as indicated by the 'Births, Deaths and Marriages' notices in the '*Carmarthen Journal*', was that of respectable town tradespeople. Of Isaac's two daughters, one married an excise officer in Carmarthen, the other a draper in Llanelli. John had three children by Mary, and the 1871 census lists his eldest daughter as a student schoolteacher at Bristol, while the youngest was still in school, aged 14. John's son, Arthur Llewellyn, born in 1855, was also still a scholar in 1871. We have no evidence to suggest that he followed his father in the cabinet trade.

APPENDIX I

2nd August, 1833. Carmarthen Journal.
Carpet, Oil-Cloth, Rug and Looking-Glass Warehouse

ISAAC DAVIES

Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer
53 King Street, Carmarthen

Returns his sincere thanks to his numerous Friends and the Public for the very liberal encouragement he has received during the many years he has been in business

I.D. has now at his Show-Rooms for inspection a large Assortment of elegant and modern Furniture; consisting of splendid Curl-Oak, Rosewood, Zebra-Wood and Mahogany Loo Tables; Card, Sofa and Pembroke Tables; Telescope, Pillar and Claw Dining-Tables, etc.; handsome Pedestal and other Sideboards with carved Backs et. etc.; Splendid Rosewood and Mahogany Chiffoniers; Parlour, Drawing-Room and Dining-Room Chairs; Mahogany and Rosewood Sofas, and Grecian Couches; Wardrobes, Secretary Book-cases, Drawers, Bedsteads, etc.; executed after the most approved and fashionable designs, and best workmanship; all of which he is disposed to sell at the most reasonable prices.

N.B. The Upholstery Department is carried on as usual, and the greatest possible regard paid to elegance and neatness.

Carmarthen, August 2nd 1833.

APPENDIX II

5 October, 1855. Carmarthen Journal.
ASSEMBLY ROOMS, CARMARTHEN.

IMPORTANT and UNRESERVED SALE BY AUCTION
Of New, Elegant and
MODERN HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE
Mr. BEN JONES

Has the honour to announce that he has received instructions to submit to public competition, on Monday, 22nd October 1855 a most extensive assortment of

ENTIRELY NEW CABINET and UPHOLDING FURNITURE, etc. etc. Late the property of Mr. ISAAC DAVIES, Upholsterer, King Street, Carmarthen, deceased.

Consisting of Bed Room, Parlour, Dining and Drawing-Room Furniture, in Rosewood, Satin Wood, Walnut, Zebra Wood, Mahogany and Painted, of new and elegant designs, seasoned materials, and executed with the highest style of finish, for which the Establishment is celebrated.

The Catalogue, which will be ready a week before the sale, will include Mahogany, American Birch and Painted Four-Post, Arabian, French and other Bedsteads, Dressing tables, Washing Stands, Double Winged and Single Wardrobes, Chests of Drawers, Chamber Pedestals, Bidettes, Towel Stands, Dressing Glasses, and Bedroom Chairs, splendid Mahogany Telescopic and Cottage Dining Tables, several sets of Mahogany Chairs, Crown Back, and Trafalgar, both plain and richly carved, Mahogany, Rosewood and Satin Wood Cheffoneers, Rosewood, Walnut and Mahogany Whatnots, Rosewood, Mahogany and Stained Drawing Room Chairs, Cabriole and Scroll Couches and Sofas, Lounging and Easy Chairs, in Leather and Fancy Coverings, Gilt and Rosewood Chimney Glasses, Canterburies, Music Stools, Fire Screens, Ottomans, Occasional and Pembroke Tables, Trays, Stands, etc. etc.

The goods removed for convenience of sale to the ASSEMBLY ROOM Catalogues to be had on application at the offices of the Auctioneer, Guildhall Square, Mr. E. W. Shackell, Messrs. H. White and Sons, and of Mr. Wm. Spurrell, Carmarthen.

Mr. Ben Jones particularly requests the attention of Ladies and Gentlemen furnishing, to this rare opportunity of securing to themselves first class furniture, as the whole must be sold without the least reserve.

APPENDIX III

25th June, 1858. Carmarthen Journal.
Important and Extensive Sale by Auction of New and
Elegant Cabinet and Upholstery Furniture.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE

Mr. John Davies, Upholsterer, begs respectfully to announce that in order to make room for alterations and improvements in his premises, etc., he proposes submitting to Public Competition the whole of a Valuable Stock of Ready Made Furniture, in the second week of July next.

Further particulars and catalogue will be immediately published.

53 King Street, Carmarthen.

Mr. George Goode

Has been instructed to sell by public auction, at The Assembly Rooms, Carmarthen, on Tuesday 18th July 1858, without the least reserve, the whole of the very Valuable and elaborately finished Stock of Ready Made Furniture, the property of Mr. John Davies, Upholsterer, King Street.

Comprising an immense variety of Rose Wood, Walnut, Zebra, Mahogany, Oak, and Painted Drawing-Room, Dining-Room, Parlour, Bedroom and other furniture, including Dining, Loo, Occasional, Card, Ladies Work, Chess, and Dressing tables, do. do. Chairs to match, with Couches, Sofas, Easy and Lounging Chairs, Ottomans, Devonports, Canterburys, Whatnots, Music Stands and Stools, Portable Desks, Secretaries and Bookcases, Book-Shelves, Four-Post, Arabian and French Bedsteads, Gilt Chimney and Dressing Glasses. A large assortment of Iron Bedsteads, of most elegant designs, and approved construction. Wardrobes — Wing, Tripple and Single, Chest of Drawers, Bedsteps, Chamber Pedestals, Commodes, Towel Stands, Pedestal Sideboards, Chiffoneers, etc.

The whole are beautifully designed, and well made of the most seasoned materials, and warranted to stand.

The Sale to commence at 12.0 o'clock at noon of the above day. Catalogues, with full particulars will be. . . . issued in a few days.

Mr. Geo. Goode most respectfully solicits the attention of Ladies and Gentlemen to this rare opportunity of being supplied with First Class goods by public competition.

King Street, June 30th 1858.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since the Davies notebook was first drawn to my attention by Dr. Cotton in 1988, I have received much help and encouragement from many people.

Details of the Davies's customers and their houses, apart from two obituary notices, have been taken from *Historic Carmarthenshire Homes and their Owners*, by Francis Jones, and *The Lost Houses of Wales* by Thomas Lloyd, who also drew my attention to the Davies chairs in Llandeilo Church and other church furniture. Valuable help was given on the ownership of the Lewis-Phillips work-table by Stephen Rees, of the Carmarthenshire Family History Society. John Powell of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum kindly investigated possible Carmarthen sources for cast-iron furniture, and Mr. G. Ridgeley of the British Library's Bibliographical Service provided the extracts from the *Art Union* journal. Gabriel Olive and Adam Bowett have made useful contributions. I am indebted to Clive Wainwright at the Victoria and Albert Museum for scrutinising the notebook and showing some of Henry Wood's manuscript drawings, and to Christopher Gilbert for providing photocopies of Wood's 1855 *Designs for Furniture* from the Temple Newsam archive. Birmingham City Reference Library kindly provided the details, from Trade Directories, of Joseph Yeo. I am especially grateful to the Carmarthen Record Office for kind assistance and permitting me to photograph and publish the diary, and to Catherine Rivers for taking the photographs. My main debt of gratitude, however, is owed to the Furniture History Society, whose award of a grant from the Tom Ingram Memorial Fund made it possible to spend time on essential trawling through the *Carmarthen Journal* and Census Returns, without which this study could not have been completed.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted from J. V. Lodwick, *The Story of Carmarthen*, 1972.
2. Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 1724.
3. J. V. Lodwick, *op. cit.*
4. Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, 1834.
5. Bristol was a principal importer of West Indian woods from the 1720s, along with Liverpool and Lancaster, and it is presumed that mahogany came to Swansea in particular via the coastal trade. I am indebted to Adam Bowett for this information. The Carmarthen Journal carries advertisements for auction sales only, the first found being for 42000 ft. of 'Prime Honduras Mahogany' at the Cumberland basin, Bristol, in May, 1816. Thomas Jenkins of Llandeilo records purchasing mahogany at Swansea eight times between 1840 and 1867, with three purchases at Carmarthen also.
6. This trade has yet to be investigated, and may hardly have existed before the nineteenth century (Adam Bowett). One auction sale advertisement has been found in the Carmarthen Journal, for Mahogany selling direct from '... the Fanny, from Honduras, at 5s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. per foot cube ... apply to Francis Richardson & Co., Swansea, Timber Merchants', in February 1846.
7. In April 1824, John Jones & Co., Timber Merchants of Carmarthen, advertised 'MEMEL TIMBER AND DEALS ... direct from Memel ...'.
In August 1831, 'A. Timmins & Co., Timber and Deal Yard, S. Side of Carmarthen Bridge ... just imported Baltic Timber, Deals, Oak Staves, etc. ... also have a large assortment of prime North American Timber ...'.
Both these advertisements are the first of many such between 1824 and 1850.
8. The trade card of the Haverfordwest Cabinet-Maker's Society, illustrated as Plate 126 of *Welsh Furniture* by Johnes and Twiston-Davies, 1950, contains a miniature reproduction of the Kidney Table, Plate 58 of Sheraton's *Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book*, 1791.
9. Joseph Matthias of Haverfordwest, cabinet-maker, joiner, upholsterer, coachmaker and undertaker, the second of that name. The firm dates back to before 1795. His inventory, taken for the sale of his business to MacIntyre and Walsh in 1831, is in the Haverfordwest Record Office, D/PEH/2/599. Among the books listed are 'Palladio's First Book of Architecture', 'The Complete Modern Joiner', and 'Sher(a)ton's Cab. Drawing Book'.

10. Carmarthen Journal, 30th June 1810, advertises Ackermann's Repository, available from 'J. Daniel, printer of this paper'. On 15th Dec. 1826, part XLVII was advertised.
11. Carmarthen Journal, 22nd Aug. 1812. Messrs. Morgan and Saunders, 16 & 17 Catherine Street, Strand, advertised Cabinet Goods.
12. Carmarthen Journal, 1st Feb. 1815. Hughes and Outhwaite, 'No 23 on the carriage side of St. Paul's Churchyard' advertised their watterooms for cabinet and upholstery furniture, including new mechanical bedsteads and patent dining tables.
13. Carmarthen Journal, 8th May 1829. Henry L. Cooper, 93 Bishopsgate Street, advertised cabinet gods, looking glasses, and house agency.
14. Carmarthen Journal, 12th Jan. 1816. An advertisement for 'Denon's Egypt', followed on 12th Nov. 1819 by 'Egypt Delineated . . . selected from the celebrated work of VIVANT DENON . . . orders received from all booksellers'.
15. John Davies, 1770-1843, Auctioneer of Spilman St. and King Street, advertised in the Carmarthen Journal, 4th Aug. 1826: 'Two superb inclosed mahogany washstands, London built. An elegant London built MAHOGANY PEMBROKE TABLE . . . A few elegant Mahogany Pattern Chairs, complete sets of which any family may be supplied with to order . . .'
16. In 1840 William Palmer, carver and gilder, of 40 Wind Street, Swansea, was advertised in the Cambrian as 'Local Honorary Secretary' for the Art Union of London. Booksellers in various towns, including Carmarthen, also acted as agents.
17. Richard Bebb, 'A Desk from 18th Century Rural Wales', *Antique Collecting*, Sept. 1993. Meticulous research which proves the possession of contemporary fashionable patterns by W. Wales regional joiners.
18. D. Parry-Jones, *Welsh Country Upbringing*, Batsford 1948. Chapter 18, 'The Gentry'.
19. Luke Millar, 'Late Georgian Wooden-Bottomed Chairs in South Wales', *Regional Furniture*, 1991.
20. Peter Thornton, *Authentic Decor, The Domestic Interior, 1620-1920*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1984. Page 9.
- The Universal Directory, 1796, gives for Carmarthen: 'The mail coaches from London, via Bristol and Swansea, arrive every day at 10 o'clock . . . and leave at 2 o'clock. There is a post three times a week . . . together with various post coaches and stage waggons. Fashionable patterns of all kinds were thus apparently available within a week of ordering them.
21. Richard Bebb, see 17 above. Also D. Parry-Jones, see 18 above, Chapter 15, 'Our Visitors'.
22. Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 1852. Writing of the numbers of people employed in the London dust trade, he found his own estimates to be ' . . . grossly at variance with the number given in the Census of 1841 . . . But, as I said before, I have long since ceased to placed confidence in the Government Returns on such subjects'.
23. I am indebted to Thomas Lloyd for this information.
24. I am indebted to Stephen Rees of the Carmarthen Family History Society for the Lewis-Phillips family details.
25. *The Diary of Thomas Jenkins of Llandeilo, 1826-1870*, Ed. D. C. Jenkins.
26. The Furniture History Society, Newsletter No. 119, August 1995, Page 9. An illustrated miniature cabinet made by George Bullock for Queen Charlotte, now in the Ranger's House Greenwich Park. Written in ink on a drawer edge is: 'A British Oak Cabinet . . . August 1814'. The wood is plainly a burr, and is presumably described as 'British' to distinguish it from continental wainscot.
27. I am indebted to Thomas Lloyd for this information, and for drawing my attention to these chairs.
28. Blackie and Sons, *The Cabinet-Maker's Assistant*, 1853. Page 28, Fig. 51 shows the details of joining the legs and rails of a settee.
29. From the Diary of Thomas Jenkins, above:
25th June 1838. 'Bought 167ft. 6" Mahogany of Mr. Isaac Davies at 1/6 per foot. Paid 7/- per hundred for sawing'.
2nd March 1843. 'Bot. of Mr. Isaac Davies, 24ft. 3 of 1" mahogany at 1/- and 34ft. of 1/2" at 6d, and 16ft. veneer at 6d. per foot.
30. From Jenkins's diary again:
28th Feb. 1855. 'Mr. T. T. Williams came down. He and Mr. Jno. Davies, Cabinet-maker, made an inventory of all aunt's furniture, clothes, etc. amounting to £79.4.0.'
31. For example, Richard Istance, 1797-1877. He started business as a cabinet maker in Blue Street, Carmarthen in 1831, and in 1839 sold a substantial stock to raise money to move to bigger premise. In 1842, he sold his whole stock of finished and unfinished furniture, together with 'A capital lathe . . . seven workbenches . . . a variety of neat and useful household furniture . . .'. The firm, however, remained in business until at least 1861, carried on by his son. All details from advertisements in the Carmarthen Journal and Census returns.